

OBSERVATIONS ON LUBUTO LIBRARY PROJECT BEST PRACTICES

Respect local and national authorities, understand cultural perspective and traditions

“The Ministry of Education will to the maximum extent possible provide the necessary financial support for the building of libraries that meet the needs of OVC throughout Zambia, in conjunction with selected resource centres on the Zone, District and Provincial levels”. – Memorandum of Understanding between Zambia’s Ministry of Education and Lubuto Library Project

“The Lubuto Library Project is indeed a source of enlightenment. This great service to the orphans and other vulnerable children will go a long way in answering the needs of many in our country still living in darkness and overwhelmed by ignorance, disease, and exploitation...” Dr. Kenneth K. Kaunda, founding President of the Republic of Zambia

“The efforts of this new and highly professional organization, whose programs are rooted in local communities and guided by prominent Zambians, are important and unique in Africa.... dozens of ... Zambians volunteer with Lubuto Libraries to provide enriching programs for their nation’s disadvantaged youth....Lubuto Libraries don’t impose western educational systems but, rather, are based upon traditional approaches....Beyond its libraries, the Lubuto Project works to identify and bring traditional Zambian stories back into print. And its buildings, faithfully using vernacular styles, are a source of pride and celebration of Zambia’s cultures.” Actor Danny Glover

Buildings designed to meet specific needs, reflect cultural heritage, and reconnect children with society

“Ms. Coromvli’s language of vernacular architecture -- her deep understanding of form that defines place and her inspired use of indigenous materials -- has elevated the "soul" of a community unique in its service to children who struggle daily to find their place in the world.” - Mary Beth O’Quinn, Architect and Urban Designer, Maryland National Capitol Planning Commission

“What I really love about Lubuto library buildings is that Zambians have been raised to think that the big western buildings of Lusaka are what represent development, what we should aspire to, and that our traditional ways of building homes were backward. We tended to believe that because our homes in the villages seemed very humble next to the big grand buildings of Lusaka. But the Lubuto Library is “more grand” than the western buildings and that makes me very proud, because Lubuto buildings are our buildings, Zambian buildings.” – Zambian official Marjorie Kambaila

Lubuto building community, capacity, ownership

“... With imagination, networking, and undaunted hard work, [Lubuto] has proved that libraries are vital in providing a link to the culture that many orphans have lost.... The ways in which [the project] has involved American children and families in gathering and organizing books for shipment to Zambia, and the sense

of connection she has fostered have been meaningful in broadening their views and concerns. So on both sides of the effort, the Project is invaluable....The first beautiful and culturally appropriate library building that the Project has completed provides tangible evidence of [Lubuto’s] vision....” – Jewell Stoddard, children’s literature and library services expert

“It was heartening ... to learn of the good and needed work that you are doing in Zambia. As an educator who works in the Adult Literacy Resource Center ..., I know full well how critical libraries can be in improving and encouraging literacy skills both for children and adults.... We are especially grateful that your focus is on children whose lives have been seriously impacted by HIV/AIDS. Thank you for the ways in which the Lubuto Library Project is bringing knowledge and light in Zambia.” - Marcia Harrington, D.C. Public Library

“After years of regarding those big-money international and governmental projects (in which the people usually get lost) I am heartened by the success of truly people-focused NGO projects like [Lubuto].” - Mary Myers, World Bank and International Monetary Fund Librarian (retired)

‘...up to today I knew that I had to keep quiet in a library, but in the workshop I learned that discussions and many programs can take place in a library.’ Other children agreed: ‘had thought a library is only for reading;’ ‘never knew how involving a library can be’ - quotes from young participants in the first Lubuto management/user workshop, May 2008

Lubuto’s professionalism and innovation

“I am most impressed with the planning and the passion behind the Lubuto Library Project. It truly is innovative in its approach, tailored to unusual needs at an unusual and especially trying time in the history of southern Africa. It also is a new and meaningful way of using books (delivered as library collections), knowledgeable volunteers, and networks of appropriate organizations and individuals to battle AIDS, poverty and homelessness.” – John Cole, Director, U.S. Library of Congress Center for the Book

“[The Lubuto Library Project] has established ... a caring library, accessible to all children, especially those who cannot attend school - it is a place of learning through story telling, drama, mentoring, and lovely books; it is a place of safety; it is based upon traditional approaches by which children learn about the world and their place in it.... The buildings ... invite people to gather and socialize.... In the safe space that this library provides the children participate in a number of programs that embrace informal education, child protection, and HIV and AIDS education. Some of these programs are the performing arts, visual arts, the environment, and a mentoring program where children receive life skills. It is a unique way to reach children that I have not seen replicated anywhere else.” - Dr. Jonathan Brakarsh, clinical psychologist and international OVC consultant, Harare, Zimbabwe

MORE OBSERVATIONS ON LUBUTO LIBRARY PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am a student doing an MSc in librarianship and my dissertation involved going to Malawi and carrying out some qualitative research at a school library there. Your approach is very refreshing - whilst carrying out my research I have come across so many organisations [that] install shelves, put books on them and think they have a Library.... [I]n all of the opinion pieces and academic material I studied for my literature review, the themes that arise are always the same.....people can see the barriers but nobody else is addressing them appropriately in practice. What you do just sounds amazing. I was getting more and more frustrated and disheartened by what I was seeing whilst working on my dissertation and finding Lubuto Library Project has given me a glimmer of hope that there is some real development going on out there!

Joanna Anderson, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, U.K.

I saw the samples of the paintings done by children considered less privileged, yet the massive talent and skills lay hidden until some one from afar unveils them. As a Zambian, I feel touched by this revelation of talent and skills. Keep on the good work. Surely god sees and He has seen this development. My prayers for you and the young are assured.

Emmanuel Ng'uni, Assistant Secretary (Projects), Ministry of Home Affairs, Zambia

It is indeed good news to know that the visual arts program was a successful one and that the vulnerable children are being given the opportunity to expose their talents because they are also normal just like any other children and deserve to participate in such programs. Keep up the good works Lubuto Library Project.

Precious Kabaso, Information and Communications Officer, PELUM Zambia

ALMA sends a signal to the world that children and youth literature is worth millions and that children and youth are invaluable. In the same spirit, the Lubuto Library Project engages numerous volunteers who gather street children and youth around the library's more than 4,000 books as well as theatre, story telling and art – all out of the conviction that books have the power to inspire, take children out of their difficult lives and offer them a look into a world of possibilities.

Embassy of Sweden, Lusaka, Zambia, on Lubuto's nomination for the Swedish Arts Council's prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

[Of books she received but wants to donate for Lubuto Libraries]: *"...they really are nice books! I want to keep them but books need to be where they are seen and used and your project provides that opportunity; thanks!"*

Marie Sweeney, Chevy Chase, DC

Jane, I couldn't think of anything I wanted for Christmas this year that compared with supporting your work with the Lubuto Project. So my wife agreed that we would send you the money she would have spent on me. (I still get a stocking with chocolate! Whew!) The Boeing match means that you get more money than she would have spent on me anyhow. Another good reason to give it to you.

Dan Trefethen, Boeing Co., Seattle, WA

I was fortunate enough to hear you speak at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim this past June about the Lubuto Library Project, and I was extremely impressed by your presentation and by the work that you have been able to accomplish in Zambia. In particular, I think that the way you have gone about creating libraries in each community, with the support and inclusion of the community members, is an excellent model for library development and one which more projects of this kind should emulate.

Kate Pritchard, Pritchard Family Foundation, Northampton, MA

The outstanding and amazing accomplishment of this endeavor is nearly beyond words, for not only are the children receiving a non-formal education, they are offered a safe place (off the streets) and hope that their future may be brighter. The project fosters partnerships with the government and other libraries and institutions in Zambia, the US, and the U.K.(thus far). The process of raising funds and providing materials as well as staff training is a global one....Through her persistence, courage, and foresight, one very special librarian with vision – Jane Kinney Meyers – is reaching out to the children their society has thrown away.

Dow Jones Factiva, "The Inside Scoop," Princeton, NJ

The Lubuto Library Project continues to enlighten the world to the need for libraries as a way of meeting the educational needs of African orphans and street children.... If these children are to be given the chance of breaking the grip of poverty then the tool they need to create a better life is education....thank you and everyone connected with the Lubuto Library Project for making this world a better place to live in by investing in the education of the less fortunate children of Zambia. As these orphans and street children through education elevate their lives and become productive citizens of Zambia they will not only be creating better lives for themselves but also making Zambia a stronger more productive country. I pray that the mission of the Lubuto Library Project will spread throughout Zambia and across borders through all of Africa.

Ed Sweeney, SKMB, P.A. Certified Public Accountants, Rockville, MD

Through my research and continued interest in sub-Saharan Africa, I am aware of the low quality of many outreach programs and library-related efforts. Aside from the widely publicized Roots and Shoots Program (Jane Goodall Institute), the Lubuto Library Project is the most impressive program I have found. It is a dream of mine to contribute to a project like this one.

Holly Morganelli, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, NY

The work that [the Lubuto Library at Fountain of Hope is] doing to provide a safe haven for street kids is impressive. The thoughtful planning and great efforts you have put into the project are very evident. You are to be commended for your efforts! It will be great to see more Lubuto libraries built in Zambia and other parts of Africa. Unfortunately with the AIDS pandemic, the number of street children will continue to rise. Everywhere you look the needs are so great....

Barbara Ringk, librarian, and visitor to the first Lubuto Library