

30 April – 1 May 2015

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM LUBUTO LIBRARY PARTNERS, A NATIONAL PARTNER OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA THROUGH ITS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATION
TRAINING, EARLY EDUCATION**

As President of the Lubuto Library Partners (LLP), I wish to send greetings and encouragement to our colleagues as you convene for the important purpose of furthering the creation and adoption of a National Library Policy and Bill for Zambia. From my personal involvement with the library profession in Zambia that dates as far back as 1986 (from Malawi) and includes participation in the 1999 ZLS/British Council National Symposium on the draft national library policy, I have endeavoured to work hand-in-hand with our library colleagues in Zambia to strengthen the profession and advocate for stronger support from Government and the private sector. I am proud and grateful that, in recognition of this, the Zambia Library Association (now LIAZ) granted me honorary membership in the association in 2006, on the eve of the opening of the first Lubuto Library. It was especially gratifying to again be more directly involved in the association with which I was very active during my three years' residence in Zambia, 1998-2001.

LLP, founded in 2005, specifically works in partnership with the ZLS to institute the highest quality of public library services to Zambia's children and youth, who account for almost 70% of Zambia's population, with a measureable impact. We are heartened that the first Lubuto-ZLS libraries have dramatically increased stakeholder (particularly MESVTEE) understanding of the role public libraries can play in attaining the objectives of the MDGs in Zambia. While LLP has worked closely with the Ministry of Education since 2006, with our partnership role formally delineated in an MOU signed in 2008, the direct ZLS-LLP partnership began in 2011, when ZLS leadership asked LLP to build Lubuto Libraries adjacent to all of the ZLS Provincial Libraries so ZLS could better serve the nation's young people. A formal plan was developed for LLP to also assist ZLS in renovating their facilities to better serve adults while their Lubuto libraries provided welcoming, open-access spaces, inspired by traditional architecture, as a platform for ZLS's children's services. This plan has been well-received by successive Ministry leaders and was codified in an updating of the MOU, signed in 2014.

In the 2014 MOU, MESVTEE "recognizes LLP as a National Partner:

- a) in attaining the objectives of the MDG's specifically increasing the literacy rate of children and youth and contributing to gender equity in Zambia;
- b) in providing access to high-quality non-formal educational opportunities to all children and youth in Zambia, with special outreach to those who do not attend school;
- c) for the building of libraries to serve children and youth in Zambia in support of the Zambia Library Service programme, supplying these libraries with carefully selected collections of materials in various media (including digital) from international and local sources, and building librarians' capacity in offering children library services, in order to manage these collections and deliver services;
- d) in providing professional leadership in specialized library services for children and youth and building that capacity among Zambian library and educational personnel"

The full text of the MOU is available to all participants in the symposium, but it outlines the obligations of LLP and the Ministry in detail, essentially that MESVTEE would support operations and staffing of the libraries and, to the extent possible, provide the necessary financial support for their creation. LLP's obligations, beyond construction of the facilities and providing complete, cataloged collections and technology, focus primarily on the education and training of librarians in the specialization of children's and youth services. The MOU closes with a "Schedule of Proposed Initial Lubuto Libraries," which identifies eight future Lubuto libraries to be established in association with ZLS Provincial Libraries in eight provinces.

Lubuto Library Partners (www.Lubuto.org) is an innovative development organization that builds the capacity of public libraries to create opportunities for equitable education and poverty reduction. Its mission is to enlighten and enrich the lives of children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa, especially those not in school and highly vulnerable. Lubuto constructs enduring, indigenously-styled open-access libraries stocked with comprehensive collections of well-chosen books and appropriate technology. These libraries serve as safe havens and are the center for Lubuto's programs, which offer education, psychosocial support and self-expression through reading, music, art, drama, computers, mentoring and other activities. LLP establishes libraries to illustrate to stakeholders and society at large the fact that public libraries are multifaceted institutions that not only provide access to printed and digital resources and expert guidance, but also serve as cultural, educational and social hubs for young people. The

libraries are completely owned by the host organization, but LLP has always recognized ZLS's authority over and responsibility for public library services in Zambia and, with staffing to eventually be provided by MESVTEE, ZLS's ultimate ownership of the Lubuto library network. We believe that it is important to recognize this in a national library policy.

The technical expertise, training and education that LLP provides, as a partner with ZLS and library host organizations, is wide-ranging. We are currently supporting professional education to the Master's level in Library Science, with a concentration on youth services, of a talented Zambian who will guide the libraries' work in the future. LLP has long collaborated with UNZA's LIS program, first to bring a Fulbright Professor with expertise in children's services to teach at UNZA, and now to develop a short course for children's/Lubuto librarians. We are beginning to explore the potential of MOOCs to supplement education in this area of specialization. Formal educational programs are augmented by training courses and ongoing professional development conducted by professional children's librarians working side-by-side with library staff. Specific training in working with vulnerable youth is also required for public libraries to effectively reach and served marginalized and special-needs populations. LLP staff will also continue to work with UNZA LIS faculty to develop digital and information literacy training for young people through this public library setting. LLP also provides direct expert technical guidance to ZLS on library systems development. An extensive and ongoing research project focused on Lubuto library collections will not only guide children/youth collection development for ZLS-Lubuto libraries, but will be a valuable guide for libraries that serve young people throughout the region. The first formal report of this research will be



presented by the principle investigator, Elizabeth Giles, at the IFLA Congress in Cape Town in August 2015. The research may help empower those libraries stocked by book donation programs to obtain balanced, comprehensive and relevant collections and encourage Government investment in public library acquisitions budgets and technology.

Besides LLP's mandate to establish standards of library service for children and youth in Zambia, our organization is also determining measures of impact of library services

and programs and is building a statistical evidence base in support of investment in public libraries and communicating the role that libraries can and should play in supporting youth in Africa and around the globe. LLP's programming innovations, particularly Lubuto *Literacy*, 710 digital, mother-tongue lessons to teach Zambian children how to read, have garnered the particular attention and appreciation of Government stakeholders. LLP's preservation efforts for the vast body of Zambian language literature that is long out of print has been another aspect of our work that has gained wide attention and support beyond the library profession, and makes evident the important contribution libraries make to society. Taking this digitization effort further, to cooperative work with the Zambia Educational Publishing House, we are establishing a mutually-beneficial partnership that in many respects could be considered a model for library-publisher cooperation worldwide. Finally, LLP's initiative and ongoing work to establish the Zambian Board on Books for Young People further illustrates the society-wide impact librarians can have through their specialized expertise.

Lubuto Library Partners is pleased to join and, in any way we can, support our colleagues in this very important effort to formalize a National Library Policy and Bill. We stand in solidarity with all of you and we hope that the full range of our work in partnership with the Zambia Library Service will strengthen the case. I regret that I could not be there with you, and I wish you all insight, strength and success in your deliberations.

Jane Kinney Meyers
Founder and President
Lubuto Library Partners