



Tuesday, November 4th, 2014

Dear Colleagues at the Lubuto Mumuni Library,

On behalf of USAID, it is a privilege and an honor for me to share a message at such a significant occasion as the opening of the Mumuni Library here in Nabukuyu. The opening of the library represents many years of hard work by those who are present. It also represents a brighter future for children in Nabukuyu and the surrounding area, so I am pleased to be able to convey this message to all who are present.

As many of you already know, reading is a 21st Century skill—it is the key to knowledge. The community has wisely named the library “Mumuni” which in Chitonga means knowledge or enlightenment. As children and young people read more, they will be enlightened by learning more about themselves and more about the world. Statistics show us that children who learn how to read will have many advantages in life. They become healthier adults. Young women who know how to read are able to earn higher incomes, and take better care of their families. In addition, when more people learn to read, the whole community benefits since people become healthier and their incomes rise. The Mumuni library is truly a wise investment.

However learning how to read takes practice. The Mumuni Library will provide just that—a place for children and young people to practice reading, and a place where they can learn and grow. The library will give them more possibilities for their lives.

Earlier this year I had the privilege of visiting the Lubuto Library in Lusaka. As a former teacher it was delightful for me to see children reading and on computers. Some of the children came from neighborhood schools, and others were homeless or orphans. All of them were hungry for more books and access to technology and the arts. All of them were learning how to read.

USAID applauds the commitment of the Zambian Government including the officials of the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, along with local education officers, all of whom are working to ensure that children in Zambia learn to read. Many of the reforms the government has instituted have contributed to better reading scores for children, including switching to reading in local languages, including Chitonga, which reflects the local culture and traditions.

In addition we also wish to recognize the good work of the “Lubuto Library Partners,” and the a long partnership between Lubuto and the Matantala Rural Integrated Development Programme, as well as all of the outstanding traditional authorities who have been involved in all of the planning of the Mumuni Library since 2006, including the local officials of the village of Nabukuyu for their support in making the vision of the Mumuni Library a reality. USAID is supporting the Lubuto Project through our All Children Reading Grand Challenge, and we are indeed honored to be a partner in this worthy endeavor.

As the President of the United States Barak Obama has said, “At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for

the better.” I wish the same for all of the children of Nabukuyu—that the magic of the Mumuni Library help them to learn how to read, and provide them with a brighter future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christie Vilsack".

Christie Vilsack
Senior Advisor for International Education
US Agency for International Development