FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Library door opens for a Zambian child for the millionth time

Lusaka, Zambia (31 March 2017) – When 15-year-old Martha crossed the threshold of the Ngwerere Lubuto Library on 20 March she was in for a big surprise: hers was the one millionth visit to a Lubuto Library!

Martha’s friend introduced her to the library in 2013 and she was immediately attracted to the mentoring sessions she saw there. She is now such a regular library patron that she gives ‘peer talks’ on the benefits and resources the library offers. “I didn’t know just how much I could achieve just by visiting the library,” Martha explains. “I always thought libraries were only a place to read and study. I’m even picking up acting skills from Lubuto Drama and I’m very excited about that.” On this 1 millionth Lubuto library visit, Martha came to prepare for an Environmental Science test. She was thoroughly engrossed in The Human Body by Steve Parker, a book she says will guarantee her a great result on her test.

Since the first Lubuto Library opened its doors in 2007, children and youth of all ages and backgrounds have made these exciting, free libraries their second home. Whether, like Martha, they come for the mentoring programs, or to play chess, learn Zambian Sign Language, use computers to learn to read or learn about the world, experience the world through another’s eyes playing a role in a play, watch a film, or – yes – read one or many of the library’s carefully-chosen books, they come in such numbers that, according to the Library and Information Association of Zambia’s recent poll, Martha’s library (Ngwerere) is the most visited library in Zambia, with twice as many visits as the next most visited.

An additional 13,000 young people discover this library each year – and they immediately recognize it as an important new part of their lives. Lubuto Library Partners (LLP), the organization that creates the Lubuto libraries, wants to reach out to all of Zambia’s children. With support from USAID’s American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program a new Lubuto library is slated to open at the Mthunzi Centre in Lusaka West in July. Other Lubuto libraries are operating or will open outside of Lusaka, including rural areas.

LLP works together with Zambia’s library professionals, providing leadership and training in library services to children and youth. Their approach takes into account directions outlined in Government plans.

As more Zambians learn what Lubuto libraries have to offer their children – including early childhood programming and support for children with disabilities – the 10 millionth visit won’t be far away!

ABOUT LUBUTO LIBRARY PARTNERS:

Lubuto Library Partners (www.Lubuto.org) is an innovative development organisation 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.

LLP 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.

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