

out of the ashes

a story of resilience

2021 annual report



LUBUTO
LIBRARY PARTNERS

message from the president



We summed up 2020 as a year of reflection, rediscovery and refinement, as we adapted to the “new normal” of the Covid-19 pandemic. The necessary coronavirus precautions persisted into 2021 for everyone, but at Lubuto we experienced another challenge that further tested our mettle: a fire that destroyed the Reading Room of our flagship Model Library in Lusaka. The experience added a fourth “r” to our story – resilience.

Our 2021 annual report tells that story, one that perhaps has a surprising silver lining. Certainly we, Lubuto’s supporters and the communities we serve, learned how resilient we are, that we never for even a moment lost sight of why we were there and what our priority focus needed to be in the fire’s aftermath. The children needed us, and we were there for them, restoring their faith in us and instilling hope that a new library would be built back better than ever.

That no one was harmed physically by the fire seemed almost miraculous. We were gratified by the widespread outpouring of support we received from the community. This made the deep importance and impact of their beloved library even more evident. **It was perhaps never appreciated more than when it was no longer there.**

Thanks to Lubuto’s concerned and generous supporters, we were able to continue our work, training new staff, continuing beloved programming at our libraries like coding workshops for girls, and mentoring young people during a significant national political shift and the loss of Zambia’s First Republican President. We are extremely grateful for our friends, without whom we could not have been as resilient as we were in 2021. But we know that the future will always hold more challenges for our small but essential organization, and Lubuto needs our friends and their support now more than ever.

Jane Kinney Meyers
Founder & President



“I felt bad to see the Library get burnt to ashes, but I was happy to be part of the kids who saved a few books.”



Given Besa—the Library Manager at the Lubuto Model Library in Lusaka—received a frantic call from a local teacher at 12:15 pm on Sunday April 11, 2021. The library’s Reading Room was on fire.

Besa rushed to the library immediately and found that the grass covering the roof had burned off and the door had been broken down. Community members had jumped over the fence to try to salvage items inside, saving more than 500 books. Soon after, the fire brigade arrived.

It took more than three hours to put out the fire. By the time it was extinguished, the roof and the contents of the library—including the majority of the 4,000+ volume collection and a desktop computer—were reduced to ashes.

But we were relieved to learn that no one was injured.



“Why was the library burnt?”



It was determined that the fire was set, accidentally or deliberately, on the roof by one or more youths who had scaled the library’s wall. They were seen fleeing by community members after the fire started.

The burned-out Reading Room was a hideous and horrifying sight to everyone, but the children’s reactions were heartbreaking. They were so hurt and had so many questions.



“I feel bad because I am one of the people who has received a lot of help from this library and my children also come to use this place. Now I am wondering where they will be going.”



“Are you going to build another library? I wasn’t there when the library was being burnt but I was shocked to see a library in that state with no books.”



The children needed Lubuto library staff, and Besa knew best what would bring them comfort. She chose the book Owl Babies, a story of loss, anxiety and reassurance by Martin Waddell, for an impromptu outdoor storytime.

It was a good choice because the children loved it so much that they asked Besa to read it again and again. We know they love Besa too!





Despite first Covid and then the Reading Room fire, Lubuto library staff did what they always do: serve the children who need them. Even with a backdrop of scorched books and a missing roof, Lubuto staff followed Besa's lead and immediately carved out their own nurturing spaces.

They read other favorite books to the children in the days that followed. The facilitator of Lubuto's popular art program, Enesto Mwale, guided the children to express their feelings and thoughts through art.



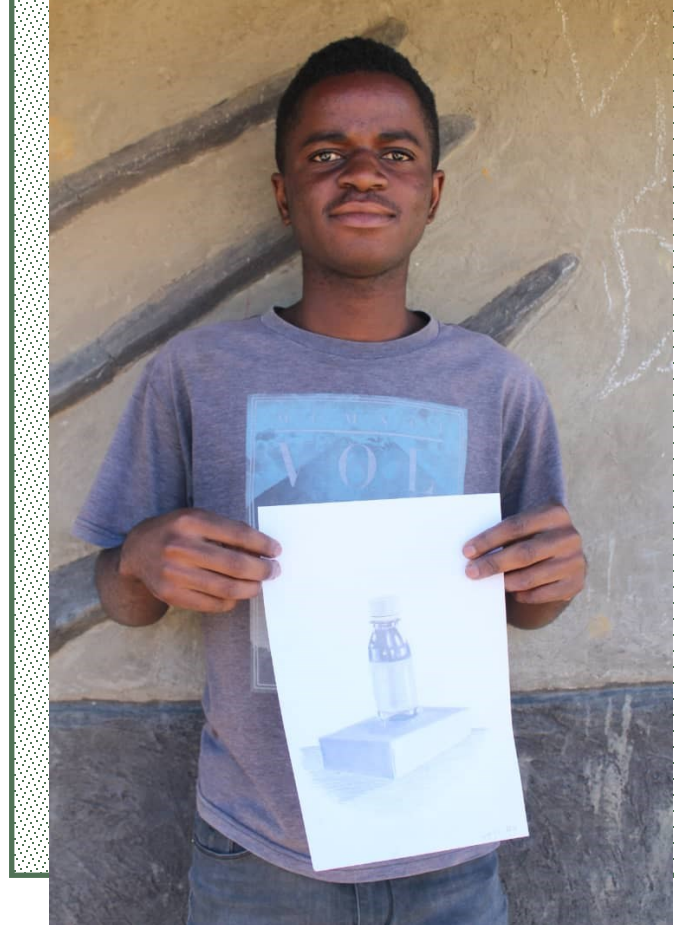
Prior to the fire and Covid, the Lubuto Model Library had an average of 2,500 visits per week—it was by far the most visited public library in Zambia.

The Model Library opened to *much* community fanfare on November 10, 2010. The opening ceremonies were attended by some 500 children, youth and adults. We were greatly honored that Zambia’s First Republican President Kenneth Kaunda enthusiastically welcomed the community to their new library.

Thousands of children have discovered and grown to love the library over the past decade, with many visiting every chance they had.



“I couldn’t believe that the library was burnt. I was so emotional and I began to reminisce about the good times I had at the library, the books that I read, and a lot of other activities that the library offered. I am glad that not everything was lost.”

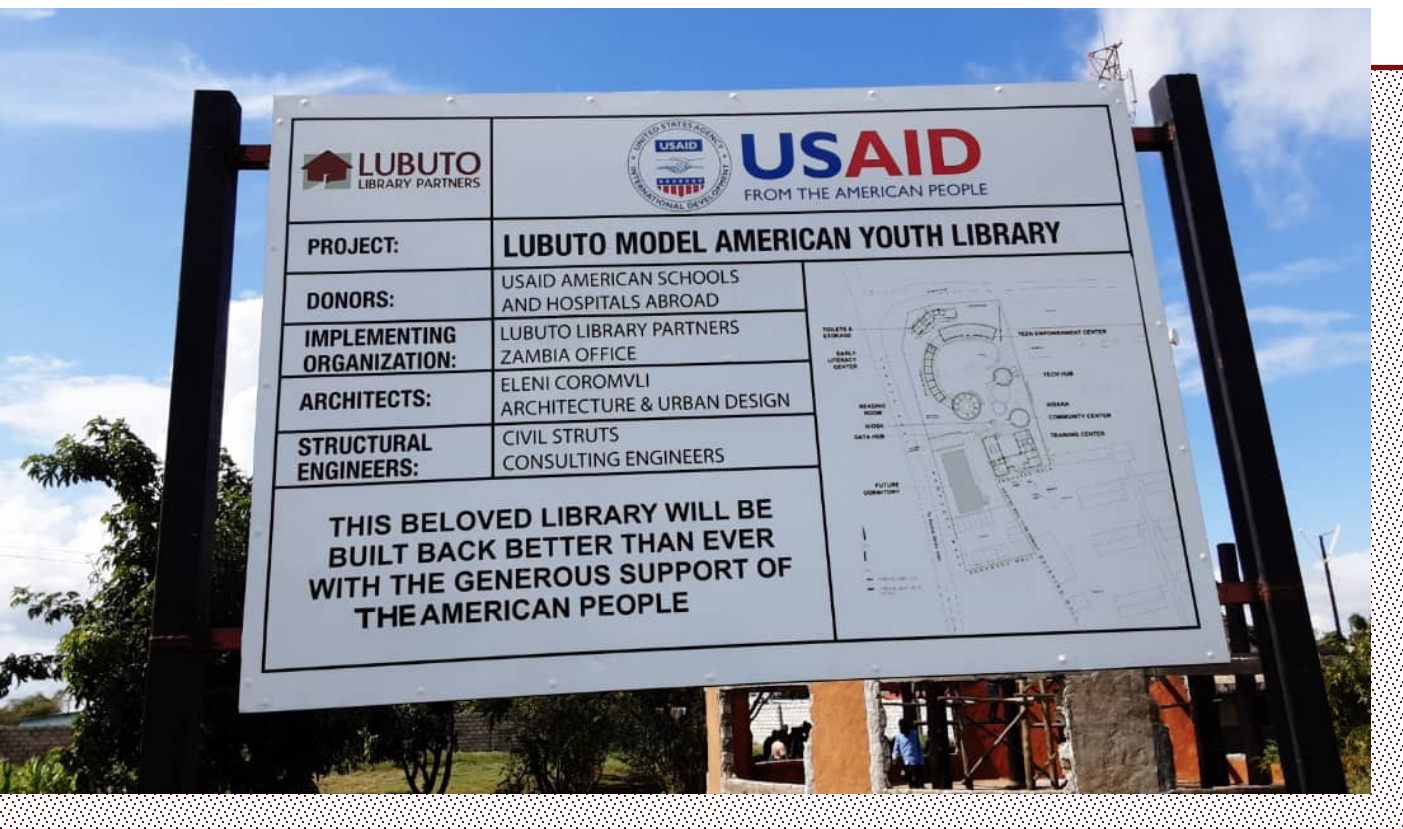


While the April 11th fire and Covid marked sad turns in the beloved Model Library’s history, there was a silver lining.

At the time of the fire, we knew that we already had in place grant funding for complete renovation and expansion of the library from USAID’s American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Initiative.

ASHA’s goal is to “foster mutual understanding between the people of the US and people of foreign countries...by partnering with schools, hospitals and libraries that promote American values and ideals overseas.”

ASHA Program Analyst Lauren Chitty stated that “Lubuto Libraries are a shining example of American innovations and best practices in librarianship and increasing Zambian understanding of American values such as free and open access to information, gender equity and youth empowerment, civic engagement, inclusivity and the building of resilient civil society. ASHA is pleased and proud to partner with Lubuto Libraries, and have been actively doing so since 2014.”



“I was sad to hear that the place I come to do my homework was on fire. All the books I loved are gone.”



It was unbelievably fortunate that, at the time of the fire, we already had funding from ASHA to construct new buildings to support early childhood programming, a dedicated space for teenagers, another space for community meetings and training, a hub for data gathering and storage and sanitation facilities.

But even more amazing was realizing that this grant provided for purchasing a completely new book collection, computers, early learning supplies and equipment to support disability programming—**and they were already on their way to Zambia by ship**, thanks to another important partnership with World Vision.

The shipment arrived just a few months later.

ASHA allowed us to revise our renovation and construction plans and budget. We received the necessary environmental and engineering approvals of a revised plan barely a month after the fire decimated the Reading Room.

The renovations required a necessary transition away from the lovely thatched roof to a metal one, which has been an emotional change. Many people who have been to any Lubuto library over the years have commented on how wonderful it is sitting in the talking circle and looking up at—being enveloped by—the beautiful thatched roofs.





Eleni Coromvli, architect of both the original Model Library and its reconstruction, devised a plan to maintain a timber frame but cover it with steel roofing sheets. This will have a similar overall appearance to the original roof, but will be much safer. To maintain the feeling of warmth, the metal roof will be covered by wood on the inside of the building.

The library has remained open for a variety of programs in its large outdoor spaces while construction continues.

Enesto has kept the art program going



Brendah Mkandawire continues her life-changing family literacy program with young mothers



Kenny Hau is back to working with his drama group on a new song... about a fire that couldn't keep Lubuto down



and Besa continues the beloved storytime... no longer surrounded by debris and burned books.



Thanks to amazing partners like ASHA and World Vision, supportive community members, friends of Lubuto from around the world and our nurturing staff, the Model Library is being built back better than before. We can't wait until the library is able to fully open again for the children who so sorely miss it!

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Kristen Budlong (Peter Eckhardt)
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Bridget Hillery (Ashley Lotz)
Linda Leonard (David & Leslie Leonard)
Chris Matthews (Nancy Matthews)
Jeanne McDermott (Anne McDermott)
Jane & Ken Meyers (Susan Fifer Canby, Judy Daniel, Jackie & Brian Kovach)
Norah Pride (Jennifer Sundeen)
Ed Rumsey (Sarah & Ryan Noel)

companies that matched
donations:

BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



financials



statement of financial position

assets

Cash	\$481,876
Furniture and equipment.....	\$74,787
Vehicles	\$110,310
Accumulated depreciation	(\$97,098)
Total Assets.....	\$569,875

liabilities

Loan payable	-
Accounts payable & accrued expenses.....	\$3,824
Refundable advance	\$158,434
Total Liabilities	\$162,258

net assets

Without donor restrictions	\$293,862
With donor restrictions	\$113,755
Total net assets	\$407,617

Total Liabilities and Net Assets..... \$569,875

statement of activities

support and revenues

Grants and contributions.....	\$310,361
Government grants	\$123,194
Contributed services	\$114,665
Other revenue	\$912
Interest income	\$747
Total Support and Revenues.....	\$549,879

expenses

Program services	\$522,795
General and administrative.....	\$47,518
Fundraising.....	\$7,540
Total Expenses	\$577,853

other

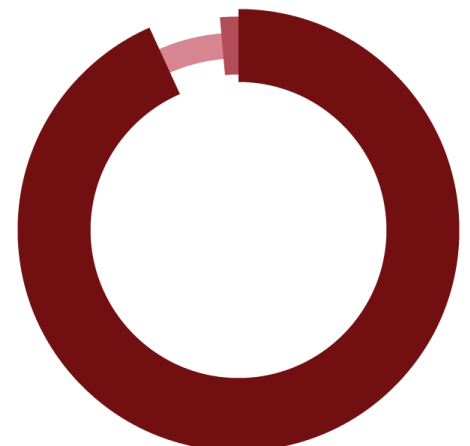
Extinguishment of dept/	
Exchange rate loss	(\$5,619)

Change in Net Assets..... (\$33,593)

Audited financial statements prepared by GRF CPAs & Advisors

expense breakdown:

Program services: 91%
General & administrative: 8%
Fundraising: 1%



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