Evaluating Lubuto Library Collections: A Case Study in Dynamic and Strategic Children's Collection Development

Elizabeth Giles
School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, U.S.A.
E-mail address: egiles@uwm.edu

Abstract:

Collection development in African public libraries is often dependent upon book donation programs from Europe and the United States, a reality that prevents many libraries from serving their communities with relevant and current resources. Children's collections are often the most neglected, and research evaluating the efficacy of children's collections in African countries is largely non-existent. Consequently, children's librarians seeking to strategically improve their collections have limited information upon which to base collection development aims.

There is a critical need for libraries serving children to explore the unique needs, interests, and perceptions of their users in order to develop collections that are holistic, responsive, appealing, and child-centered. The focus of this research is preliminary data from an exploratory, mixed-methods study being conducted at two children's in Lusaka libraries run by Lubuto Library Partners. Lubuto Library Partners is a non-profit organization that creates open access libraries for children and youth starting in Zambia. The study, comprised of interviews, focus groups, and use tracking, provides insight into collection strengths and weaknesses, use of the collections, and factors impacting utilization.

This paper makes use of the preliminary in-house use data to illustrate the existing collections and current usage patterns. The preliminary data shows wide variation in usage patterns between the libraries, providing early insight into the significance of strategic and locally responsive collection development aims based on the unique needs of children and their communities. The paper also discusses interview findings from 34 interviews conducted with library users. Insights and recommendations derived from this research will inform the development of a well-defined core collection for African children and youth. It also provides a valuable guide for collection development throughout the continent and strengthens the case for increased investment in improving the quality and impact of library services for young people.

Background

Lubuto Library Partners is a non-profit organization that creates open access libraries for children and youth starting in Zambia. Lubuto Libraries feature comprehensive book collections and integrated programs including reading, music, art, drama, literacy, computers and other activities. Currently there are three Lubuto Libraries in Zambia, two in the capital city Lusaka and a third Lubuto in the rural Southern Province village of Nabukuyu. Lubuto aims to establish at least one library in each of Zambia's ten provinces in partnership with the Zambia Library Service. Government officials have expressed interest in the extension of the model to each of the country's new districts as well. Evaluation of the three existing collections provides a springboard for creating a model to inform future collection development.

Currently Lubuto creates initial 4,000-volume core collections in the U.S. that are professionally catalogued and classified according to its specially-designed child-friendly classification system (see Appendix). Library professionals with expertise in literature for children and youth and an Africa-focused perspective build the complete and balanced book collections. Lubuto acquires books from publishers and book dealers throughout the world, and carefully selects for universality and high literary quality. Zambian language books and other locally-acquired materials are catalogued and added to the initial collection when it is delivered to Zambia. The collection development activities of Lubuto Libraries are intended to complement and support other national efforts.

Literature Review

Collection Development and Evaluation

Lubuto's collection development model is important for other libraries in Africa because of the heavy dependence on European and American book donation programs that have often been the sole source of book collections for African libraries. While the term "collection development" implies a process of deliberation and control managed by a librarian, the unfortunate reality for much of the developing world has been that a combination of book dumping, poverty and underfunding of libraries has severely limited the ability of librarians to collect relevant, high-quality resources (Sturges, 2014; Edem, 2010; Otike, 1993). These factors place librarians in a double bind where they must be, in the words of Japhet Otike, "beggars and at the same time choosers": dependent on a system of book donations that often impedes rather than enables access to quality information (Otike, 1993, p. 4). Books donated to African libraries from European and North American donor organizations are frequently dated and irrelevant to the programs or missions of the recipient libraries (Otike, 1993; Edem, 2010). Paul Sturges notes, "empty library shelves can be found in many places and where, in other cases, there are book on the shelves it is because those books are so completely unreadable as to actually repel readers. *These books are usually donations"* [emphasis added] (Sturges 2014, p. 18). When African libraries "receive" whole collections from benefactors it establishes a pattern that leaves little room for collection building on the ground. It also undermines the missions of the recipient institutions, the development of local publishing industries, and the ability of librarians to fulfill their professional roles as selectors of materials related to the needs of their communities. There is a critical need for user-centered models of collection development to be created and supported in varied African contexts.

However, a necessary precursor to the establishment of collection development models is critical reflection on existing collections in the form of user-centered collection assessment and evaluation. Use- and user-based approaches to collection evaluation focus on how, why, and how often users seek out and use particular resources (Johnson, 2009), issues that are necessarily bound up in the local context of the library and its users. Charles B. Osburn states that a "collection is of value only as it relates in subjective, cognitive ways to the community" (2005, p. 20).

Previous collection assessment studies conducted in African libraries have focused mainly on academic libraries (Nfila, 2001; Motiang, Wallis, & Karodia, 2014; Ogbuiyi & Okpe, 2013; Womboh, 1993) and occasionally on community libraries (Dent, 2008; Dent & Yannotta, 2005). There are no existing studies of user-centered collection evaluation of children's collections in Africa. This highlights the serious need for collection evaluation studies to be undertaken in a wider array of institutions and from a wider range of methodological perspectives.

Information Needs and Book Selection Strategies of Children

It is essential to understand how and why the target user group of a particular library seeks information. When children are the target user group it becomes particularly critical to consider carefully the goals and information-seeking strategies used, since children seek out and use information in different ways than adults and require specialized services in libraries based on these differences (Raqi & Zainab, 2008).

Studies focused on children's unique search behaviour and book selection patterns have been conducted in the United States (Mohr, 2006; Stanchfield, 1966, Reuter, 2007; Pappas, 1993; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Kragler & Nolley, 1996), Great Britain (Shenton & Dixon, 2004; Moss, 2004), and Malaysia (Raqi & Zainab, 2008). Most of these studies have taken place in schools (Kragler & Nolley, 1996; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Mohr, 2006; Barron, 2001; Pappas, 1993), with a handful conducted in school libraries (Moss, 2004), one conducted using a digital library (Reuter, 2007), and two in public libraries (Raqi & Zainab, 2008; Shenton & Dixon, 2004). Varied findings have emerged around the significance of gender (Mohr, 2006; Collins-Standley, 1996; Reuter, 2007), age (Reuter, 2007; Raqi & Zainab, 2008), social selection (Moss, 2004), and text, cover, and content-related selection factors in regards to children's recreational reading patterns (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Jones, 2007; Reuter, 2007; Kragler & Nolley, 1996; Mohr, 2006). The existing research does not examine context/community as a variable, and there is a need to explore how children in different communities find and select texts in different ways.

Current research highlights the significance of text accessibility (Reuter, 2007; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000), book covers (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Jones, 2007; Reuter, 2007), illustrations (Kragler & Nolley, 1996; Mohr, 2006; Reuter, 2007), and the appeal of non-fiction text in recreational reading (Dorion, 2003; Pappas, 1993; Mohr, 2006). Social patterns of book selection, such as classroom trends and the power of book recommendations, have also been identified as relevant to children's selection processes (Moss, 2004; Barron, 2001).

As well as exhibiting different information-seeking behavior than adults, children have different information needs (Raqi & Zainab, 2008). These information needs relate to age, but also to diverse factors such as gender, socioeconomic background, and educational background, which are less commonly considered in the literature. There is a particularly

significant gap around the information needs of children in developing countries, which are different in many respects than the information needs of children in developed countries (Nwagwu, 2009). While some research has been conducted on the information needs of children in developing countries (Nwagwu, 2009; Mnubi-Mchombu, Mostert, & Ocholla) existing research has rarely concentrated on the role of libraries in meeting the information needs of children.

Research Questions

An exploratory, mixed-methods study of the collections of Lubuto Library Partners library collections is being conducted using quantitative methods (in-house use tracking) as well as qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, participant observation). The research examines use, user satisfaction, and accessibility in order to present the most comprehensive picture of the collections. The following research questions are being addressed:

1. How is each of the collections currently being utilized?
2. What factors affect current and potential utilization of the collections? How can library staff better exploit the collections?
3. What strengths and weaknesses are there in the collections from the perspectives of library staff and users?

Data Collection

Quantitative Use Tracking

Preliminary quantitative data was collected on a trial basis over the course of two weeks during July of 2014. This familiarized staff with the use tracking process and helped anticipate challenges involved in the long-term data collection taking place in spring of 2015. Each day the researcher and library staff collected books from the reshelving baskets, the seating areas and the ends of shelves. The counts were conducted at 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 2:00 PM, and 4:00 PM. Staff reshelved the books after each count. While the trial period at each library was too short to generalize long-term use patterns, each week provided an informative snapshot of the library's collections and their current use. A month-long in-house use tracking period was conducted simultaneously at all three libraries in late spring of 2015.

Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at Fountain of Hope (FOH) and at Ngwerere (NGW) during the summer of 2014. A total of 34 interviews were conducted with child users of the libraries, 15 at FOH and 19 at NGW. Interviews were conducted by an experienced outside consulting group that works with vulnerable children. Two multilingual interviewers from the organization were identified and trained in the interview protocol. Each interview lasted around one hour. Interviewers recorded and translated the interviews, and the researcher coded interviews with feedback from colleagues. Codes evolved over time before being refined and clustered around thematic units by interview topic. Each codable unit is referred to as a "mention" in the data analysis, and consists of a continuous unit of conversation. Content repeated within the course of the answer to a single interview question was coded only once unless the repeated element introduced a new focus or dimension to the topic. Units of conversation that touched on multiple codes were coded for each. Codes that received more than five mentions are discussed in the data analysis. To be described as a

point of discernible difference between the libraries a code needed to have more than five total mentions and to vary by 20 or more percentage points between the two locations. All comparative data represented by percentages was normalized to account for the difference in size between the respondent groups.

Respondents and Setting

Research was conducted at two libraries in Lusaka, the Fountain of Hope Lubuto Library and the Ngwerere Lubuto Library (NLL). Library staff assisted in selecting key informants. This paper is based on responses from thirty-four respondents, 56% male and 44% female. Teenagers (ages 13-18) made up 65% of respondents, and children (ages 7-12) made up 35%. Respondents selected by staff at Ngwerere skewed somewhat younger than the respondents selected at FOH. Respondents were highly familiar with the collections: 75% of interviewees had been coming to the library for over one year, and over 85% of interviewees said they come to the library at least three times a week. 56% of respondents were patrons of the NLL, and 44% were patrons of the FOH library.

Use Type (Broad themes)	Total Men- tions	% of Men- tions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Use of the collection	56	49%	51%
Programs	34	41%	59%
Space	2	0%	100%
Misuse	3	39%	61%
Most Frequently- mentioned Sub-Types of Use			
Reading	30	49%	51%
Storytime	13	67%	33%
Mentoring	11	58%	42%
Literacy	10	46%	54%
Drama	10	35%	65%
Viewing Illustration	8	43%	57%
Computer Resources	5	0%	100%

Table 1: Library Use Types
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Primary Purposes in Reading	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Moral/personal develop- ment	53	55%	45%
Education and career goals	38	66%	34%
Social interaction	8	43%	57%
Sub-Categories of Reading Purposes			
Build knowledge on a topic of personal interest	39	55%	45%
Support school learning	18	56%	44%
Increase English vocab- ulary	12	72%	28%
Character development	9	27%	73%
Supports participation in	4	0%	100%
Exam preparation	4	79%	21%
Career exploration	4	79%	21%

Table 2: Purposes in Reading
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Established in 2007, FOH is a public library located on the premises of the Fountain of Hope drop-in shelter for street youth in Kamwala, Lusaka. There is also a volunteer-run community school at the FOH shelter. Kamwala is a lower-middle income community in Lusaka, and is not densely populated. However, library staff members identify most of the pupils of the community school as coming not from Kamwala but from Misisi Compound, a nearby slum. Other users at Fountain of Hope library are boys and young men who live at the drop-in shelter for street youth. Both of these demographic groups (community school students from Misisi, and street youth at Fountain of Hope shelter) are highly vulnerable. While they may attend the community school at FOH the quality of the education is low, as the school is overcrowded and understaffed.

Founded in 2010, NLL is located on the premises of Ngwerere Basic School in Garden Compound. Garden Compound is also considered a slum, but library staff members describe the community as more stable than Misisi. Unlike FOH's quiet, residential neighborhood, Ngwerere is surrounded by a bustling, densely-populated urban area. The school at Ngwerere is a government-run school and the quality of education is higher than at the FOH community school.

Data Analysis

Use of the Library and Materials

When asked to describe how they (and others) use the library children's responses included programs

(LubutoArts, LubutoDrama, LubutoLiteracy, LubutoMentoring), space (study, socialization), collection use (reading, storytime, computer resources, viewing illustrations) and misuse (vandalism, theft, and noise-making) (See Table 1). At both libraries use of the collection received the highest number of mentions—a sharp contrast to the many public libraries in Zambia that are used primarily as study spaces (Book Aid International, 2012).

When asked why they read what they read, children responded with a wide range of purposes related to social interaction, moral and personal development, and education and career goals. Within each theme were sub-themes—social interaction contains "share/pass down knowledge," "social reading," and "supports participation in programs"; moral and personal development contains "builds knowledge on a topic of personal interest," "character development," and "supports personal health"; education and career goals includes "exam preparation," "career exploration," "increase (English) vocabulary," and "supports school learning" (see Table 2).

Broad Classification Areas: Individual Reading Interests*	Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Stories	64	40%	60%
Science	42	63%	37%
People	27	75%	25%
World	2	56%	44%
Reference	2	0%	100%
Narrow Classification Areas			
People— Biography	17	75%	25%
Stories 2	17	53%	47%
Science— Nature	16	56%	44%
Stories 1	9	27%	73%
Stories— Tales/Myths	6	20%	80%
Science— Nature— Animals	6	56%	44%
Science— Science	6	72%	28%
Stories— Zambian Languages	5	46%	54%
Specific Titles	26	56%	44%

Table 3: Individual Reading Interests
*Broad classification areas include sub-counts for narrow classification area mentions

Personal Reading Interests

Key differences in personal reading interests among respondents were noted by library (see Table 3). Children also commonly listed specific titles when asked what their favorite types of books were.

Information Needs

Primary Dimensions	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Survival issues	26	60%	40%
Educational issues	27	58%	42%
Social issues	26	36%	64%
Family issues	23	45%	55%
Personal development issues	2	0%	100%
Most Significant Sub-Dimensions			
Inability to attend school	12	79%	21%
Literacy	10	35%	65%
Health	9	91%	9%
Theft	8	43%	57%
Fighting	6	20%	80%
Death of a parent	7	63%	37%
Abuse	7	34%	66%
Poverty	5	66%	34%
Food	5	0%	100%

Table 4: Information Needs
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Children were questioned about information needs in relation to problems that they thought "children their age might face." The question was (re)formulated after a trial interview revealed that some children felt uncomfortable discussing their personal problems with the interviewer, but that they spoke comfortably in a general sense about problems faced by their peer group. Information needs were clustered around five key dimensions, including survival issues, educational issues, family issues, social/community issues, and personal development issues.

The most commonly mentioned dimension was educational issues, which includes the subtopics inability to attend school, delinquency, school performance, low literacy, and lack of supplies (see Table 4). "Survival issues" tied with social issues as the second most-frequently mentioned area,

and included the subsets of food, clothing, poverty/economic issues, shelter, and health. By subset the most frequently-mentioned subarea was health, which encompassed four further sub-issues: pregnancy, rape, HIV/AIDS, and substance use/abuse. Survival issues and educational issues were both mentioned more commonly at FOH than at Ngwerere.

In contrast, the more socially-focused categories of social/community issues and family issues predominated as concerns at Ngwerere. Social and community needs encompassed sub-issues around social behavior and community issues, including fighting, peer pressure, opportunities for play/recreation, prostitution, theft, treatment of elderly people, vandalism, and verbal disputes. Family issues includes the subareas of physical abuse, death of a parent, disobedience, divorce, early marriage, labor at home, and parental absence/neglect.

Appeal Factors and Browsing Behavior

Respondents discussed how and why they selected books, including both browsing behaviors and appeal factors. The five dimensions identified as appeal factors were accessibility (sub-factors of language, length, condition, level, and location), content (sub-factors of character, plot, topic, and illustrations), engagement (sub-factors of connection to real life, emotional response, interest, and liking), familiarity (sub-factors of well-known material, new information, variety), and tone (sub-factors of didactic, humorous, inspirational, instructional, and "true story"). The most frequently-mentioned sub-dimensions of appeal can be seen in Table 5.

Primary Dimensions of Appeal	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions	% of Mentions
Content	86	52%	48%
Accessibility	65	54%	46%
Familiarity	54	50%	50%
Engagement	33	42%	58%
Tone	24	56%	44%
Most Significant Sub-Dimensions			
Illustrations	56	52%	48%
Known Material	33	35%	65%
Language	30	59%	41%
Liking	20	30%	70%
Level	16	50%	50%
Plot	15	53%	47%
Topic	14	49%	51%
Novelty	14	56%	44%
Length	11	60%	40%
Instructional Tone	8	68%	32%
Didactic Tone	7	34%	66%
Variety	7	63%	37%
Condition	7	17%	83%
Connection to real life	5	66%	34%

Table 5: Dimensions of Appeal
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Browsing processes were described by children both in the abstract ("How do children usually select books?") and in the concrete ("Can you pick out a book and show me how you're looking for it?"). Descriptions of browsing behavior were broken into three broad categories and multiple sub-categories (see Table 6). Social components of selection were evaluated separately. Most children said they select with help from staff (See Table 7).

Primary Categories of Browsing	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Book-based browsing	146	52%	48%
Section-based browsing	36	56%	44%
"Accidental" browsing	26	60%	40%
Sub-Categories of Browsing			
Looks at titles	86	56%	44%
Browses by topic	33	60%	40%
Looks at covers	32	50%	50%
Looks at inside pages	16	43%	57%
Random selection	15	66%	34%
Memorizes location of books	12	39%	61%
Browses in baskets	6	72%	28%
Serendipity	5	24%	76%
Uses shelf guides	3	0%	100%

Table 6: Categories of Browsing
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Collection Development

Social Selection Strategies	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Selects with help from staff	41	50%	50%
Selects with help from friends	17	53%	47%
Selects independently	10	56%	44%

Table 7: Social Browsing
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Children discussed collection development priorities by responding to an imagined scenario in which they were given money to buy new books for the library. What would they buy?

Strikingly, children responded with mentions of every broad classification area (see Table 8). The main areas requested were Science and Stories, although no

classification area was neglected— not even those rarely listed as personal reading interests, such as World and Reference. The only sub-category requested more than five times was Mathematics (6 mentions). Similarly, their suggestions of what they would buy for the library (lower left) reflect a diverse range of topics.

Acquisition Areas	# of Total Mentions	% of Mentions at FOH	% of Mentions at NGW
Science	19	69%	31%
Stories	17	28%	72%
Reference	8	43%	57%
People	8	30%	70%
World	7	88%	11%

Table 8: Acquisition Areas
*Percentages normalized to reflect differing size of respondent groups.

Requested Topics for Acquisitions

- Cooking
- Mathematics
- Biography
- "Nelson Mandela books"
- "Books about how we can be talking with our parents [about abuse]"
- Religion
- Puzzles
- Dictionaries
- English-language reference books
- Physics
- Human body
- Books related to school curriculum
- Animals
- Biology
- Stories
- Folklore
- Zambian-language fiction
- Geography
- Maps

Many children struggled with the questions related to weeding. They were told that to make room for new books libraries occasionally get rid of books. If it were their job to choose books to get rid of, what would they choose? Most children refused to answer this question— they expressed that they felt getting rid of books was wrong. Those who did answer gave responses clustered around six basic reasons: the books were 1) damaged, 2) boring, 3) difficult to read, 4) infrequently used, 5) large volumes, or 6) personally disliked. Of these reasons, difficulty was the most commonly-mentioned. Next was the physical size of the book— children felt that some books were "too big," although it unclear if children meant the books were long or difficult to handle because of their large size.
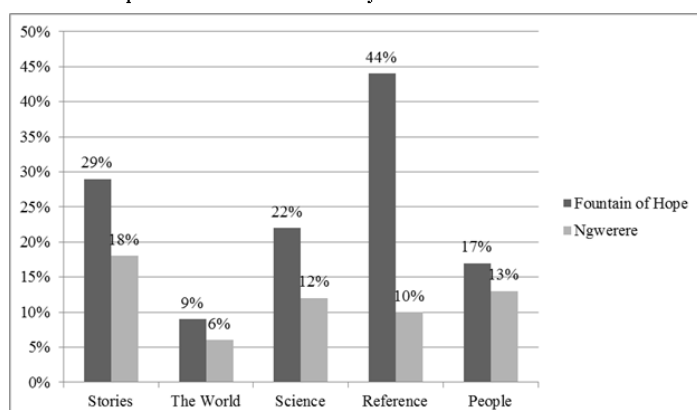
In-House Use Tracking

The FOH library has a collection size of 3,187 volumes in 95 classification areas, and exhibited an in-house use rate of 21% during the trial in-house use data collection period. The Ngwerere Lubuto Library's collection is made up of 3,675 books in 96 subject areas, and exhibited an in-house use rate of 14% during the trial in-house use data collection period. In-house use data collected during the trial period of July 2014 reveals that each library has its own distinctive use patterns. Chart 1 shows the percentages of each broad classification area that circulated in-house during the trial period.

Classification Sub-area	Average Number of Uses Per Title
Science-Mathematics	3.25
People-Society-Rights	3.00
Science-Technology-Engineering	3.00
People-Society-Education	2.50
Science-Nature-Dinosaurs	2.50
Stories 2-Kiikaonde	2.35
People-Literature-Writing	2.33
Science-Technology-Vehicles	2.25
Stories 2-Cinyanja	2.08

Table 9: Average Use Per Title for Highest-Use Sub-areas, NGW

The FOH library had higher rates of use across the collection as well as within most sub-classification areas. Especially striking was the high average number of uses in the People—Health—HIV/AIDS section (see Table 10) and the popularity of Zambian-language fiction across all language groups.

Classification Sub-area	Average Number of Uses Per Title
People-Health-HIV/AIDS	4.5
Stories 2-Icibemba	3.78
Stories 2-Chitonga	3.67
People-Culture-Customs	3
Stories 2-Cinyanja	2.67
Stories 2-Silozi	2.67
Science-Nature-Reptiles	2.57
Stories 2-Lunda	2.57
Stories 2-Luvale	2.5
Stories 2-Kiikaonde	2.13

Table 10: Average Use Per Title for Highest-Use Sub-areas, FOH

Chart 1: Comparative In-House Use Rates by Broad Classification Area

8

Discussion and Recommendations

Building Holistic Collections

Too often libraries are viewed as one-dimensional institutions in African contexts: they are study spaces for students (Mortenson Center, 2004), academic support centers (Dent, 2008; Book Aid International, 2012), or potential partners to social service organizations (Mnubi-Mchombu et al., 2009). The true role of the library, however, is a multidimensional community institution that serves many needs and desires and facilitates growth that is personal, intellectual, and social in nature. This research highlights the fact that when provided access to well-rounded, holistic collections and varied programming children view the library as a place to pursue interests and activities of all types. Collections must meet a range of needs. Children need opportunities for recreational reading on topics of interest, books that promote their social and moral development into responsible adults, resources that extend school learning beyond the classroom, and information that addresses the pressing and often serious life issues they face. When we look at a library as addressing just one type of need, even if our focus is on a critical need, we shortchange our users and fail in our mission to serve our communities.

Building Responsive Collections

Every community is different in terms of its needs, behaviors and preferences. Responsible library services are targeted to address the situations of real groups of people based on an understanding of their needs. This research highlights major differences between the reading habits, terms of appeal, and collection development priorities of two libraries serving similar demographic groups located in the same city. These disparities point to the profound need for more user-based collection studies in African libraries. Every library should engage in reflective evaluation of collections based on needs, behaviors, and interests of their unique user group. This doesn't need to take the form of a multi-year study: it can be as simple as periodically surveying, tracking use, and engaging users in conversation around these topics.

While a quality collection is made up of materials that serve both practical and recreational purposes, libraries would be remiss not to focus on the most pressing information needs of vulnerable children. These needs will inevitably vary by community: for instance, at FOH, in-house use data and interview data both suggest that health information, especially around HIV/AIDS, is important and often used. Libraries should be responsive to such needs through the provision of resources that suit the age, reading ability, and concerns of the youth in question.

Building Child-Centered Collections

When given access to quality collections, young people develop a sense of how a library collection is made. Children involved in this research understood the role of a collection is to address the needs of all, not just to reflect their own desires. We need to listen more carefully to young people about collection development, instead of making assumptions about their needs and perspectives. As librarians we can benefit from giving children a more active say in our collection development plans. There is also a need to build understanding with children around weeding and replacement, potentially by involving them in this process. This research shows that children are attentive to the issue of condition in relation to book selection, but

still experience great discomfort when confronted with the idea of weeding books. This attitude is not unique to children—staff members also expressed concern about removing books from the collection. Training and concrete, transparent weeding policies can help libraries approach this sensitive issue in a way that won't be misunderstood by their communities.

Building Appealing Collections

This research reinforces some previous findings around selection and appeal factors in children's book choices. Children frequently base their selections on external elements of a book—the cover and the title—and less commonly open books to evaluate the text inside. Covers are critical, and books need to be displayed in ways that highlight this central element of appeal. In a similar vein, this research confirms earlier findings related to the importance of illustrations and accessibility factors such as level and language. Librarians can use these insights to provide reader's advisory and formal lists targeting appeal factors that children actually base their selections on, rather than pre-defined categories that librarians consider significant. While these appeal factors vary somewhat by user group, this study supports existing research which finds that children need to be able to select from texts that are accessible, familiar, and visually appealing.

This research finds that children commonly rely on the input of staff and friends in order to select books. Social dimensions of selection can be extended, highlighted and formalized through book displays, booktalking, book clubs, and the display of staff/user recommendations and reviews. Multiple copies of popular titles should be acquired in order to facilitate shared reading. Children expressed a love of familiar books, commonly mentioning those that were shared during storytimes. Storytimes should offer a wide range of materials to connect with the needs and interests of various children and build familiarity with more of the collection. There is nothing wrong with children continuing to re-select familiar books, but the emphasis on social selection suggests that children may rely on staff and friends to make them aware of new titles and to create new familiar favorites. Librarians can respond appropriately by ensuring that they select widely from the collection when planning shared reading.

Conclusion

This study models how research can inform locally-responsive collection development based on the unique reading interests, use patterns, collection perceptions, and information needs of particular groups of young people in particular contexts. While in many cases poorly-planned donation schemes and book dumping have ruled the day in African collection development, this study demonstrates that knowledge of users is key. We cannot plan meaningful collections without understanding our communities. Mixed-method studies are one effective way of understanding children's use patterns, needs and interests to inform public library collection development models. Additional studies, however, are critical. The expansion of this research to focus on rural users in Zambia will be one contribution, but other user-focused collections research is needed from varied contexts and countries across Africa. It is only through strategic and locally-focused collection development that we will be able to create the types of holistic, appealing, responsive, and child-centered collections that young people across the world need and deserve.

Appendix

COMPOSITION OF LUBUTO LIBRARY BOOK COLLECTIONS

Lubuto Library collections contain balanced and appropriate materials in this full spectrum of literature and knowledge. Stories are divided by reading level but other fiction and informational categories contain books on all levels. A collection is complete when it contains a good selection of books in all categories at various levels.

STORIES / FICTION

LEVEL ONE
Wordless books and books for very young children: clear, simple, big pictures, few words. Introduction to the world, counting, the alphabet (e.g. ABCs, board books, nursery rhymes, Mother Goose)—in English and in Zambian languages.

LEVEL TWO
Books for beginning readers,read-aloud books. Picture book stories, easy readers/controlled vocabulary books (Dr. Seuss or other easy-to-read formats), —"beginner books," —in English and in Zambian languages.

LEVEL THREE
Novels for middle and advanced readers, longer works of fiction, graphic novels, chapter books
—in English and in Zambian languages.

TALES/MYTHS
Folklore, myths, fairy tales ; collected or individual stories from oral traditions
—in English and Zambian languages.

POETRY
By individual poets, collections, epic poetry, e.g. Homer, Sundiata.

PLAYS
Individual plays and collections.

PROVERBS
Zambian and other African proverbs, traditional stories, sayings.

INFORMATIONAL BOOKS

REFERENCE
Encyclopedias, dictionaries and language instruction books and general fact books

WRITING
Essays; books about writing; writing manuals, writing poetry and plays, drama
history (e.g. Shakespeare & the Globe).

GEOGRAPHY
Maps, atlases, books about travel, explorers and exploration

THE WORLD
Books with information about the people, culture, customs, civilizations, modern history and economies of individual countries and regions throughout the world; world history and fact books; ancient history and civilizations throughout the world; indigenous peoples of the world; archaeology of human activity and human settlements.

BIOGRAPHIES: Biography, memoir, autobiography, biography collections: true stories about famous or accomplished people.

HEALTH
Books dealing with health and staying healthy, exercise and nutrition
HIV/AIDS: Avoiding infection, living with AIDS.
HUMAN BODY: Bodily systems, anatomy.
MEDICINE: Nursing, medicinal herbs, traditional medicine, health professions, medical practice, first aid. Age-appropriate books on diseases other than HIV/AIDS such as cervical cancer, malaria, tuberculosis, avian flu, etc.
PSYCHOLOGY: General psychology and books on coping with psychological and physical trauma, abuse, grief, death, homelessness.

LIFE SKILLS AND CONCEPTS
General life skills, such as telling time, counting, introduction to the world and general concepts, ABCs, colors, shapes, relative concepts.
COOKING: How food is prepared.
FARMING: How food is cultivated and grown, including gardening and raising animals for food.

SOCIETY
EDUCATION: Books about going to school, courses of study, colleges, foreign study.
GOVERNMENT: Civics; how voting works, types of governments, politics.
ECONOMICS: Economics, business, currencies, careers, occupations, how people work and earn.
CRIME: Books on law enforcement, criminals, pirates, domestic violence
RIGHTS: Books dealing with civil, women's, children's, labor (etc.) rights.

CULTURE
CUSTOMS: Holidays, styles of dress, children's pastimes and celebrations around the world. *RELIGION*: Sacred texts, books about world religions, books of prayers or ceremony, witchcraft and the occult.
PHILOSOPHY: Ethics, peace, war and conflicts.

THE ARTS
ARCHITECTURE: Historical and contemporary buildings, building design and features.
ART: Visual arts, painting, sculpture *CRAFTS*: Practical skills such as shoe making,
carpentry, textiles, sewing, book making; working with materials such as wood, clay, paper, beads.
PHOTOGRAPHY: Books on photographic techniques and photography collections.
PERFORMANCE: Music; dance; dramatic production; stage craft and film/video performance; classical, modern, indigenous and jazz dance; musical instruments (traditional and European instruments); song books; books about orchestras, bands and individual performance; classical, jazz, rock, folk and other musical styles and traditions; acting and play production; movies and movie-making; television production.

GAMES
General books on games, card and board games, rules for playing games.

SPORTS: Books about individual sports, sports almanacs and encyclopedias, books about sports teams and athletes, rule books for sports.
HUMOR: Comic and cartoon books, tongue-twisters, jokes and riddles.
PUZZLES: Visual, word, math and logic puzzles, brain teasers, magic tricks.

MATHEMATICS
All branches of math, including instruction, books about calendars, numbers, mathematical theory and history, logical thinking and patterns.

SCIENCE
General books about science and scientific facts, books on *CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, BIOLOGY* and *ASTRONOMY*: Outer space, general astronomy, stars, galaxies, comets, black holes, quarks, quasars, the solar system and individual planets.

EARTH
Books dealing with the earth in general and:
GEOLOGY: Rocks, gems, minerals, petroleum, volcanoes, earthquakes.
ENVIRONMENT, including climate change
WEATHER: Clouds, tropical storms, wind, snow, rain, heat, meteorology.
DESERTS: Desert habitats, desertification.
OCEANS: Waves, ocean life, ecology.
FORESTS: Rainforests, temperate forests.

NATURE
General books on nature and works on specific subfields of natural science:
EVOLUTION : Human and animal evolution.
PLANTS: Plants in the wild, trees, flowers, field guides to plants, poisonous plants.
ECOLOGY: Conservation, natural habitats such as rivers and ponds.
ANIMALS The animal world in general and specific classes:
INSECTS, ARACHNIDS, BIRDS MAMMALS, including ice age, prehistoric mammals.
REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS
WATER LIFE: Fish and aquatic mammals
PETS: Including dogs, cats, caring for domesticated animals
DINOSAURS: Paleontology, prehistoric reptiles, birds and fishes.

TECHNOLOGY
MACHINES: Simple machines, familiar mechanical devices, inventions; robots; manufacturing equipment.
ENGINEERING: Buildings, bridges, roads, road-building.
VEHICLES: Cars, boats, trucks, tractors, ships, fire engines.
AIR TRAVEL: Airplanes, helicopters, balloons
SPACE TRAVEL: Rockets, satellites, space shuttle, space station, astronauts, moon walks, living in space.
COMPUTERS: Information, communication and electronic technologies, how computers work, applications, the Internet.

Acknowledgments

References

Barron, M. (2001). Doing books: Children "reading" without teachers. *Montessori Life*, *13*(4), 42-27.

Book Aid International. (2012). *Country review: Zambia*. London: Book Aid International.

Collins-Standley, T. Choice of romantic, violent, and scary fairy-tale books by preschool boys and girls. *Child Study Journal, 26*(4), 279-302.

Dent, V. F. (2008). Rural library services: Historical development and modern-day examples from West Africa. *New Library World, 109*(11), 512-532. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03074800810921331

Dent, V. F. & Yannotta, L. (2005). A rural community library in Uganda: A study of its use and users. *Libri International Journal of Libraries and Information Services*, *55*(1), 39-55.

Doiron, R. (2003). Boy books, girls, books: Should we re-organize our school library collections? *Teacher Librarian*, *30,* 14-17.

Edem, M. (2010). Gifts in university library resource development in the information age. *Collection Building*, *29*(2), 70–76. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01604951011040161

Johnson, P. (2009). *Fundamentals of collection development & management* (2nd ed.). Chicago: American Library Association.

Jones, L. A. (2007). The great cover-up. *School Library Journal, 53*(6), 44-47.

Kragler, S. & Nolley, C. Student choices: Book selection strategies of fourth graders. *Reading Horizons, 36*(4), 354-365.

Mohr, K. A. (2006). Children's choices for recreational reading: A three-part investigation of selection preferences, rationales, and processes. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *38*(1), 81-104.

Mortensen Center for International Library Programs. (2004). *Opportunities and challenges for the academic libraries of Carnegie grantees in East and West Africa.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Libraries.

Moss, G., & McDonald, J. W. (2004). The borrowers: Library records as unobtrusive measures of children's reading preferences. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *27*, 401–412.

Motiang, I. P., Wallis, M., PhD., & Karodia, A. M., PhD. (2014). An evaluation of user satisfaction with library services at the University of Limpopo, MedUNSA Campus (Medical University of Southern Africa). *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Oman Chapter), 3*(11), 41-58.

Mnubi-Mchombu,C., Mostert, J., & Ocholla, D. (2009). Information needs and information-seeking behaviour of orphans and vulnerable children and their caregivers in Okahandja, Namibia. *African Journal of Libraries, Archives and Information Science*, *19*(1), 39-52.

Nfila, R. (2001). The Botswana Collection: An evaluative study of the University of Botswana Library special collections. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science*, *11*(1), 67-73.

Nwagwu, W. (2009). Participatory gender-oriented study of the information needs of youth in a rural community in south-eastern Nigeria. *African Journal of Libraries, Archives and Information Science*, *19*(2), 129-140.

Ogbuiyi, S. U., & Okpe, I. J. (2013). Evaluation of library materials usage and services in private universities in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter), 2*(8), 33-41.

Osburn, C. (2005). Collection evaluation: A reconsideration. *Advances in Library Administration and Organization*, *22*, 1-21.

Otike, J. N. (1993). Book donations and their relevance to the Third World. *New Library World, 94*(1107), 10-15.

Pappas, C. C. (1993). Is narrative "primary"?: Some insights from kindergartners' pretend readings of stories and information books. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *25*, 97–129.

Raqi, S., & Zainab, A. (2008). Observing strategies used by children when selecting books to browse, read, or borrow. *Journal of Educational Media and Library Sciences*, *45*(4), 485-503.

Reuter, K. (2007). Assessing aesthetic relevance: Children's book selection in a digital library. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 58*(12), 1745-1763. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/asi.20657

Shenton, A. K., & Dixon, P. (2005). How do youngsters use public libraries to find non-fiction books? The results of a recent research project. Public Library Quarterly, 23(3-4), 77-98. doi:10.1300/J118v23n03_12

Sturges, P. (2014). Donations to libraries: A problem in international cooperation. In S. Chakraborty & A. Das (Eds.), *Collaboration in international and comparative librarianship* (pp. 17-27). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Swartz, M. K., & Hendricks, C.G. (2000). Factors that influence the book selection process of students with special needs. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *43*(7), 608–618.

Womboh, B. H. (1993). Collection evaluation in Africa: A case study of a university library. *Collection Management, 17*(4), 79-94.