

By Mubanga Lumpa and Jabulani Moyo

TALKING Information is so inspired by Lubuto library projects and on Thursday January 23, 2014, we had an opportunity to talk to the founder and President of Lubuto Library Project Jane Kinney Meyers, a lifetime member of the Library and Information Association of Zambia (LIAZ, formerly Zambia Library Association) who passionately highlighted to us on the kind of tailor made programmes Lubuto Library Project has implemented in the two libraries i.e. at fountain of hope in Kamwala and Ngererere Basic School in garden compound. They will soon open a new library called "Mumuni Library" in Nabukuyu village, Monze, Southern province. Lubuto Library project aims to empower youths through integrated library programming is very welcoming to all youths in their open access spaces libraries inspired by traditional architecture. Traditional architecture is one unique feature of Lubuto libraries as they are not housed in a modern type of buildings but are round huts with grass thatched roofs to reflect the Zambian indigenous design that looks like a village type of a house. These building house a whole range of literature including stories/fiction of tales/myth, poetry, plays, proverbs, informational books including references, geography, health, life and concepts, culture, art games, mathematics, science, nature, technology and so on. One interesting feature of this collection is the Zambian language story books of which most of them are out of print and nonexistent in schools or libraries.

With the implementation of "Let's read Zambia" policy on education we need indigenous literature available in all schools such as these in Lubuto library collection. But the biggest challenge is that many indigenous literatures are inaccessible because they were not been preserved due to inadequate libraries in place. And a library in this respect is said to be a repository of wisdom of great thinkers of the past and the present. It is a social institution charged with the responsibility of disseminating knowledge to the people without any discrimination. The holdings of the libraries are the priceless heritage of mankind as they preserve facts, ideas, thoughts, accomplishments and evidences of human development in multifarious areas, ages & directions. The past records constitute a natural resource and are indispensable to the present generation as well as to the generations to come. Any loss to such materials is simply irreplaceable. Therefore, preserving this intellectual, cultural heritage becomes not only the academic commitment but also the moral responsibility of the librarians / information scientists, who are in charge of these repositories.

Lubuto library collects every material they get their hands on be it in English or any Zambian local language. For instance they have more than 38 Zambian story books written by Zambians, the first 33 titles were discovered, uncatalogued, in the pamphlet files of the Africa and Middle East Reading Room of the U. S. Library of Congress, and were scanned by volunteers who worked at the library. Lubuto's library identify and digitize these Zambian stories which are long out of print but preserved in their original printed form in libraries worldwide and in Zambia, as well as in Zambian schools and households. Another large number of additional titles were identified in the collection of Boston University's African Studies Library and they plan to digitize and add them to their collection. These are titles that no even the national archives have in stock.

Among the titles that are in the library collections are *Ze patezwi ba Banca* (1967) by O. Kwibisa Sibetta, *Shalapo Canicandala* (1967) by S.M. Kapwepwe, *Litaba za Makwangwa* (1952) Ikacana N.S., *Hafuma kukangwoka Chandumba* (1969) by C.N. Lansdown, *Folktales of Zambia* (1969) by Vyas Chimani L., *Shikalume kalyonse* (1953) by Sefuke Edward M., *Maanu a Sulwe* (1974) by Mwiinga Bruno, *Vishimo vya Kuuko* (1962) by Moses C.B. Mulongesa, *Yishimu Yawantu Natunyama* (1964) by J.

Lubuto: preserving Zambia indigenous collections

Oswell Katota, *Mulenga wa Mpanga* (1962) by Daniel Chola Musatwe and many other titles to omany to mention.

These are story books that were in existence before and slightly after independence but of these are actually nonexistent. Most of these story collections of indigenous writers were commonly known as 'Utushimi', the stories parents used to read to their children before going to sleep. This helped in improving the reading skills of the children of that generation and that's why many of them grew up as inspired writers.

One common complaint in the Zambian education system is

poor reading culture among children. They only read only when they have tests or final exams and even adults are non-booklovers. But the question could be, are there interesting books/materials in the libraries or homes that our children can read? The answer is No! We as 'Talking information,' believe society cannot have a poor reading culture as long as there are no interesting books to read. How many people have seen an interesting newspapers headline and do not desire to read it? Any headline that is eye-catching stimulates anxiety to read the whole content of a piece of article. Similarly for children there are not attention-grabbing books

available to kindle a reading desire but they would rather be entertained by playing video game or watching cartoons on DSTV. This then perpetuates their poor reading skills thereby growing up with a poor reading culture. But this is what differentiates Lubuto library, their library collections and the kind of programs they have for children are far more exciting. They have in stock fascinating and superb collections that children would read or be read to by librarians. Lubuto storytime is one such a program, it is a read-aloud and storytelling program offered every day in the library. An adult would take time to read with children or to share

an inspiring and entertaining book with a group of children and young adults as it give far more enjoyment or knowledge offered by the book. And in that respect children tend to grow their reading skills and love for the book.

These Zambian story books are actually out of print but can be accessed in their digital form through Lubuto library collections website (www.lubutocollections.org). The challenge is that Lubuto is limited in terms of locality even as they desire to cater for all poor children especially in rural areas they do not have the capacity to do so, but government which is heavily

endowed with the capability to reach everyone and everywhere in Zambia can intensely work with Lubuto Library to reach out to more areas. The government and other stakeholders should also supplement in the strides made by Lubuto in the preservation of our indigenous literature and establishment of libraries in rural areas.

The authors are professional librarians and are active members of Library and Information Association of Zambia (LIAZ, formerly Zambia Library Association). For comments send to talkinginformationinzambia@gmail.com



CACC

Central African Correspondence College Zambia

PUBLICATION OF DECEMBER 2013 RESULTS

The Central African Correspondence College wishes to inform all the students that the December examination results have been released from Monday the 27th January 2014

We are therefore requesting all the students to make necessary arrangements to collect them, before the new semester commences

Results will be sent to all students living outside Lusaka
NOTE: All students must settle their outstanding balances.

CONTACT THE ADMINISTRATION FOR MORE DETAILS

BANK DETAILS

First National Bank (FNB)
Industrial Branch
Acc. number: 62344119905

Finance Bank
Downtown Branch
Acc. number:0324198970008

Investrust Bank PLC
Lusaka Main Branch
Acc. #: 1101359611001

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