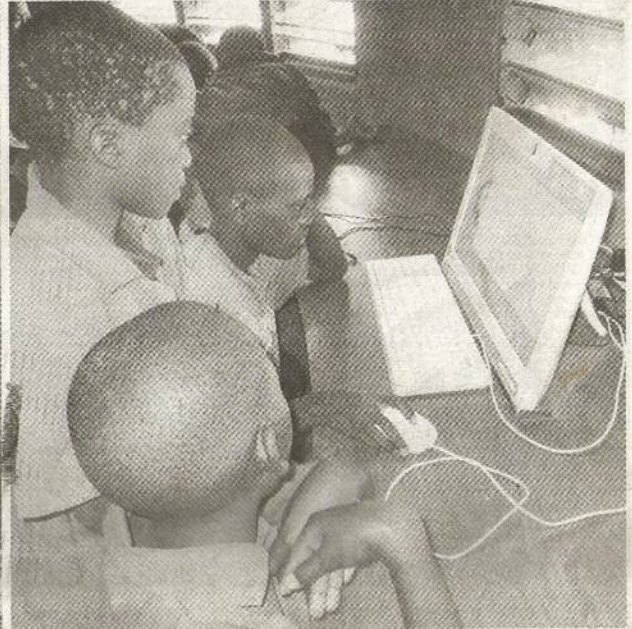
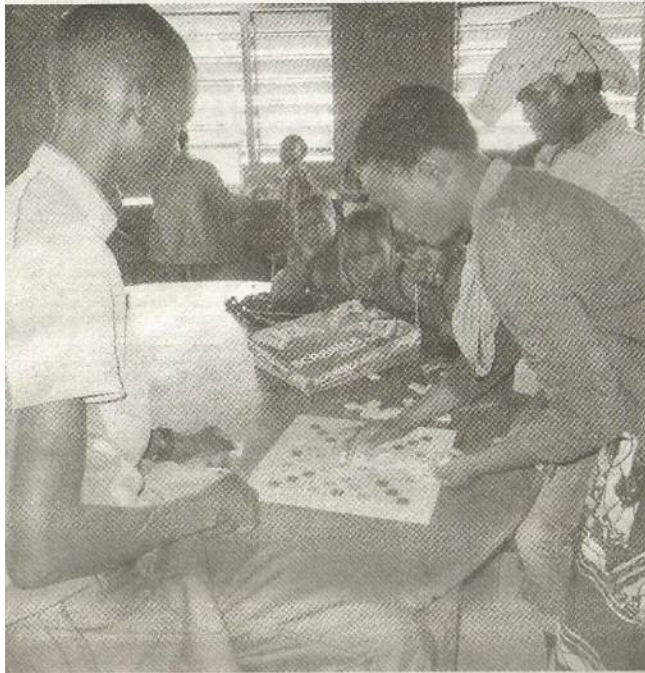


**Also
inside**

**Only date quality
people...I didn't
say Rich!**

**Monze commemorates
Mumuni Library**



Nabukuyu pupils learn through using computer. Left, pupils play word games inside the library

Story and pictures by Ben Mhangu in Monze

THE reading culture in Zambia remains a big challenge. It has devastating impact on education outcomes especially in rural areas where facilities such as libraries are not available.

The importance of library facilities in the delivery of education to any nation cannot be overemphasised, especially in changing lives of children. It is also a well known fact that knowledge and skills are better preserved if documented in books and other print media.

For Monze district commissioner Cyprion Hamanyanga whose area two weeks ago hosted the commemoration of Mumuni Library that was opened in 2014 in Nabukuyu village in Monze by Lubuto Libraries, libraries, as public institutions, must respond to community needs in order to remain relevant.

Hamanyanga says libraries cannot operate in a vacuum hence their dependence on a community's support.

"Zambia's social, economic and intellectual development is dependent on the inclusion of all members of society. While Lubuto Libraries are wonderful resources for all young people, they always aim to especially reach the most vulnerable," Hamanyanga says.

He says the influence of the

Mumuni Library will enhance children's education - Hademu

traditional leadership is critical to ensuring that all children in their communities are able to access and benefit from facilities such as Mumuni Library opened in their vicinity.

"Lubuto Libraries offer programmes of storytelling, drama and art that empower children through self-expression," he says.

And training librarian for Lubuto Libraries in Zambia, Elizabeth Giles, explains that libraries are very important because they open up the world to children and give them new experiences as well as opportunities.

"The opportunity for informal education that libraries offer is unparalleled to society. Children can use books to advance their education, to learn about things that they have personal interest in and to develop as well as empowerment through library programme," Giles says.

She says the most valuable part of libraries in education is that they offer children who are disconnected a means of

connection and sense of belonging to the community.

Giles says it is important for parents to encourage their children to develop a love for reading that will enable them to be successful in school.

"As parents you need to encourage your children to read and find opportunities to read with them. If you can't read with them then find time to talk to them and tell them stories because the more you engage them verbally, the more their mental capabilities increase," Giles emphasises. She expresses happiness that despite children in Nabukuyu village in Monze having little experience with books, they were always crowding the library to access services.

"As Lubuto Libraries, we have partnered with the Ministry of General Education; they have asked us to build modern libraries in each province. Our goal is to see these libraries sustainable and spread throughout Zambia supported by local communities and government so that as many children as possible, especially the

vulnerable, can access the opportunities that libraries offer. So far we are in four locations: Kamwala and Garden compound in Lusaka and we are building in Lusaka West as well and here in Southern Province, we have Mumuni Library in Monze," she explains.

Giles says she believes that motivation is a key element in children becoming successful readers.

"Children become successful passion readers because they are engaging appropriate meaningful books to read things that are relevant to them. When you give children a wide selection of books, not just storybooks, textbooks but non-fiction books about hundreds of different topics, when you give children access to all those different resources, they will find something interesting to read about and every positive experience the child has with the book builds their level of motivation to read," she explains.

Giles says reading is an activity that isn't only limited

to books but extends to storytelling.

She says every culture in the world has a story to tell.

"Reading is just one form of story-telling. Whether children here like to read or not it's not about their culture but is due to lack of exposure to books and to books that are good. Books donated in Zambia and the entire Africa are not good books; they have things that are outdated and are irrelevant to the Zambian context. Children will not have enthusiasm even if they wanted to read in the same way they would have if they are given books that have interesting things about Zambia. Based on that observation, I don't agree with people who say that the reading culture in Zambia is poor," Giles says.

She says Lubuto Libraries is in line with government efforts of improving the standards of education in the country and has partnered with the Ministry of General Education as well as its agencies such as the Zambia Curriculum Development, Zambia Library

Service and Zambia Education policy.

"For example, as Lubuto Libraries, we offer computer literacy lessons. We developed new reading curriculum and we work with reading teachers and reading experts from UNZA to make sure that it is in line with the curriculum and it is being evaluated by the Curriculum Development Centre in Lusaka now. So children here are not only reading books but have access to other new things, especially the new curriculum installed in the computers," says Giles.

And Lubuto Libraries programme manager Hadassah Kasukumya says the facility has helped many school children in the area to have a feel of computers, which they were just learning about in abstract and access books that are not available in their institutions.

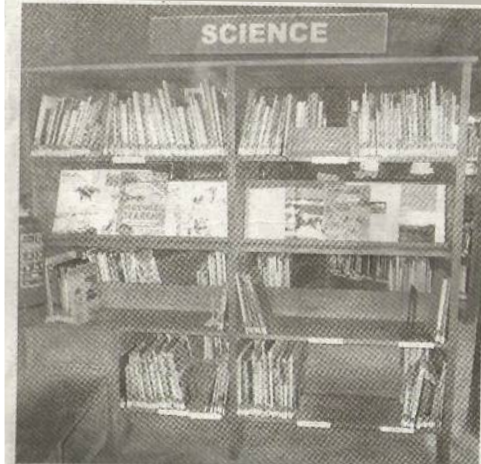
Kasukumya says the Lubuto Libraries management also offers teachers from government schools that have no computers an opportunity to conduct classes at the libraries to enable children have practical experience of the same.

"Here in Monze at Mumuni Library we usually have about 200 visits on daily basis from school children and villagers.

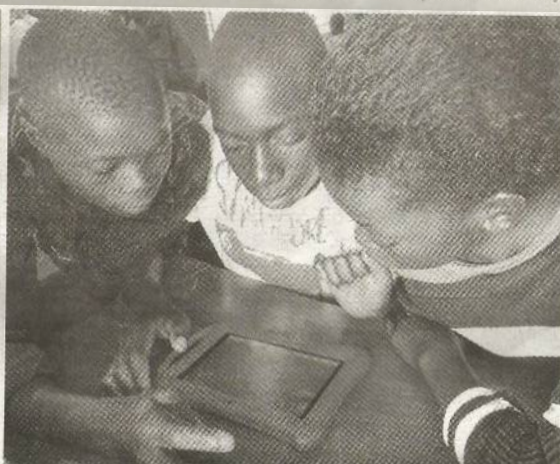
Our facilities are offered for free because our aim is to have a society that is knowledgeable," says Kasukumya.

And training the traditional leadership during the commemoration of Mumuni Library, Choma Children Development Project (CCDP) coordinator Cornwell Hademu said public libraries such as Mumuni play an active role in collaborative efforts to improve community resilience and well-being.

"As traditional leaders, it's very important to educate your people on the importance of using library facilities such as this one and always ensure that you protect it because it is from such things that your children's education will be enhanced," says Hademu.



Mumuni Library



Pupils use a Zedupad inside the library