Lubuto Library Project

Bringing knowledge and enlightenment to Africa's street kids, orphans, and other vulnerable children and youth

Lubuto Library Project Newsletter No. 16 — July 2010

Lubuto's OLPC Zambian Language Literacy Project is Underway

Our last newsletter reported on the eIFL.net Public Library Innovation Initiative grant we received to engage Zambian reading teachers to create Etoys games that would teach children to read in Zambian languages on our libraries' One Laptop Per Child XO laptops.

Lubuto's partners in designing and implementing this project are: Zambia Ministry of Education, including University of Zambia liaison and the Ngwerere Lubuto Library; Fountain of Hope Lubuto Library; Mike Lee of Sugar Labs, Washington DC, and OLPC, Boston, MA; and Kathleen Harness, EtoysIllinois.org in the Office for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Mike Lee acquired six XO 1.5 laptops for the project from the OLPC Foundation which we sent off to Zambia right away, and he is currently working on Bemba and Nyanja phoneme recognition projects for the XO. Kathleen Harness created several sample Etoys projects and provided instructions on how to make them.

After an eIFL.net kickoff meeting in Slovenia attended by teacher Betty Chocha and Jane Meyers, we moved ahead full-speed. Program Coordinator Jennifer Campbell and Programming Consultant Ezekiel Miti mastered the OLPCs and Etoys, and three great reading teachers – Betty Chocha, Nchimunya Musole and Miriam Banda—are busy creating the first reading games in Cinyanja and Icibemba.

Eventually, the collection of Etoys games to teach reading in seven Zambian languages will be posted on the new www.LubutoCollections.org website as well as used in Lubuto Libraries and Zambian schools.

New Dow Jones Foundation Grant for Lubuto Libraries

The Dow Jones Foundation recently granted Lubuto Library Project $40,000 to provide books and other materials for the Ngwerere Lubuto Library (whose construction has been financed by an earlier $60,000 gift from Dow Jones & Co.) and/or other Lubuto libraries.

A portion of the grant may be used for purchase of supplies for the library, for the cost of shipping books and materials and/or for the training and education of the libraries' staff. The general intent of the grant is to complete fulfillment of Dow Jones employees' commitment to provide the 4,000-volume collection that will stock the library built by the company, making the Ngwerere Library truly a "Dow Jones Lubuto Library."

Construction of that library is still underway and the library is expected to open its doors in October.

Our colleague Anne Caputo, president of the Special Libraries Association and a Dow Jones Executive Director, has found other ways for Dow Jones to support Lubuto's work, which has put the total ammount that we have received from the company near $107,000. But in addition to facilitating monetary donations, Anne served as a great Emcee at our April fundraiser and mobilized many volunteers that packed up the "Dow Jones Lubuto Library" collections for shipping to Zambia.

New LubutoCollections.org website!

Lubuto's volunteers identify and scan Zambian stories long out of print but preserved in libraries worldwide. Our new site, www.LubutoCollections.org, is a repository for these scanned books — to inspire young readers, encourage adaptation of these traditional stories to new picture books, and other uses.

The initial collection is comprised of materials found in the African and Middle Eastern Reading Room of the U.S. Library of Congress. The collection will grow as more materials are identified and scanned from other sources. The site was created by students in Prof. Derek Hansen's "Capstone Class" of the University of Maryland's i-School: Abha Deshpande, Siddhesh Shirode, Sujata Narayanan, Arun Maheshwari and Nilay Sanghavi.

We need your continued financial support to do our important work!

Please send checks to:

5505 Connecticut Ave., NW, #368

Washington , DC 20015-2601

or make one-time or recurrent donations by credit card through www.Lubuto.org.

Volunteer with VSO to work with Lubuto Libraries

The VSO in Zambia is working with Lubuto Library Project to recruit a library trainer for a long-term posting with our first library and future libraries in Zambia.

The position is open to U.S. citizens as well as those from Commonwealth countries, and requires applying directly to VSO Canada (www.cuso-vso.org/). You must be accepted by VSO Canada before you are considered for a specific position.

We are not at liberty to directly give details on the position, but candidates are encouraged to indicate an interest in positions in Zambia and that they have a library background. The Lubuto position falls under the rubric of VSO Zambia's HIV and AIDS programme, support to orphans and vulnerable children.

International Mailing Solutions Ships Lubuto Library Collection

Our supporters at National Geographic Society asked IMS to assist in getting the second Lubuto Library collection to Zambia (after having sent our first collection at a heavy discount by air in 2007) and IMS responded by providing free transport of the entire collection door to door, from Washington, DC to Lusaka, Zambia by sea!

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This extraordinarily generous support allows us to focus our resources on direct services to vulnerable children and youth in our libraries and underscores their – and National Geographic's—confidence in the value of Lubuto Libraries. A comprehensive, balanced, relevant and expertly-selected and organized library collection is far more than the sum of its parts, merely a quantity of books.

This excellent collection, and the read-aloud, storytelling, story discussion and performance and other literature-related activities it will support, will play an important role in helping Zambia's Ministry of Education to provide equitable access to quality education in the country. "

Motivational Mentoring Closing Ceremonies

Jennifer Campbell's new blog tells the story of Lubuto's Motivational Mentoring program with great photos and a very enjoyable description of Jen's early experiences in Zambia. Follow her great blog, and her experiences during her 10-month work with Lubuto Library Project in Zambia, at http://jenatlubuto.blogspot.com/.

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