The Lubuto Library Project:
Analysis of the Collection Development Policy

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INFO665-901-200915

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October 11, 2009
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Overview

Mission & Goal Recommendations

Knowledge, enlightenment and light; this is the meaning of the Bemba word *lubuto*. The Lubuto Library Project is focused on the mission to “serve orphans and vulnerable children and youth, giving them hope for their futures by enriching their lives and stimulating their imaginations” (Lubuto Library Project (LLP), 2008). The goal of this project is to “reach large numbers of Zambia’s street kids, orphans and other vulnerable children…and to offer them an opportunity for informal education, constructive engagement with society and personal fulfillment” (LLP, 2008). This goal of meeting the informational, educational and recreational needs of children who would otherwise be lost in the vastness of Africa is an extraordinary venture, and is recommended to continue to provide these children with an opportunity of hope. Historical Africa was one filled with oral tradition, with information transmitted verbally through legends and rituals (Matare, 1997). Currently, our world is one based mainly on transmission of information through the written word, and it is essential for children to develop a healthy foundation in literacy in order for them to be a proficient functioning member of their society as an adult (Machet, 2001, p. 70-71).

*Support for this recommendation was is from the official website of the LLP, an article by E. Matare titled, ‘Libraries and Cultural Priorities in Africa,’ and an article by M.P. Machet titled, ‘Young people’s reading interests in South Africa.’ The recommendation is made because of the importance of both literacy development in the world, and in the current ways information is transmitted and learned in society.*

Service Community Analysis

The Lubuto Library Project provides “high-quality, open-access libraries to service Africa’s street kids and other vulnerable children and youth...[as an] information gateway, a space for social interaction and entertainment and a beneficial physical environment” (LLP,
2008). These libraries provide a safe-haven for these children and a place that can assist in preventing a future life of crime and terrorism in their communities (Special Libraries Association (SLA), n.d.). Many of these children are disadvantaged right from the onset; often these children do not have access to educational services, have limited parental guidance in their lives, and do not have a safe environment in which to grow and develop (LLP, 2008). Therefore, there exists a great need for such a library for these children, as it may be the only way for them to learn, read and interact socially in a comfortable and stable environment.

*This information is from the official website of the LLP, as well as from a website by the Special Libraries Association, Social Science Division.*

**Demographic Analysis**

The African children of the Republic of Zambia, in which the Lubuto libraries are primarily located, are surrounded by hardship, devastation, and loss. Zambia is a poverty-stricken area that has a predominant working force consisting of subsistence farmers, who are only permitted seven free years of education (U.S. Department of State, 2009). Zambians are currently struggling with a widespread AIDS epidemic with 14.3% of its population infected by the virus (U.S. Department of State, 2009). It is estimated that as many as 14 million children in this sub-Saharan region of Africa under fifteen years of age have lost one or both parents due to this devastating illness; it is expected that by the year 2010, 25 million children total will lose their parent(s) (LLP, 2008). As these numbers continue to climb, children are forced to look outside their family structure for support, education, and compassion. The Lubuto Library Project is dedicated to these children because of the awareness of the instability in their lives.

*The demographic information is found from the official website of the LLP and the U.S. Department of State official website for the Republic of Zambia. More resources concerning demographic information about this area can be located at the following websites: CIA - The World Factbook -- Zambia, Zambia: History, Geography, Government, and Culture — Infoplease.com, and African Studies: Zambia.*
Parameters & Limitations of the Collection

The Lubuto Library Project is accomplishing their mission of meeting the needs of the children of Zambia through “[its] self-service libraries, providing information, learning, literacy, cultural awareness, artistic expression and social services” (LLP, 2008). Meeting these objectives require a set of parameters established concerning the development of the collections housed in these special libraries in order to create a collection suitable for the intended service community. The majority of the collections in these special libraries consist of donations from all across the world. The suggested parameters for the special collections of the Lubuto libraries fit the needs of boys and girls under the age of eighteen who most likely do not speak English as a first language (LLP, Inc., 2009). Approximately 80.6% of the population of Zambia over the age of fifteen can read and write in English (CIA, n.d.). The suggested parameters include books that have a variety of pictures and illustrations; fiction and non-fiction books; reference books that are complete sets, informational in nature, and that include illustrations and explanations for the appropriate reading level of the children (LLP, Inc., 2009). The suggested format of these materials is in hardcover, however exceptions will be made in the case of paperback books that can withstand heavy use (LLP, Inc., 2009). These parameters assist in helping to create a well-rounded collection for the desired users in mind.

There are certain limitations in regards to the parameters previously suggested. Unacceptable formats for the special collection include “pop-up books, magazines, textbooks, instruction manuals, pamphlets, study guides, school readers, publishers’ advance reading copies, single volumes [of books] from an incomplete set, movie and television tie-ins, or books that strongly seek to promote a particular cause or religious or ideological point of view” (LLP, Inc., 2009). Also included within the unacceptable materials are those that suggest “a very
affluent lifestyle” or those that promote particular causes, religious beliefs, or a particular ideology (LLP, Inc., 2009). With the opportunity to enhance the lives of these disadvantaged children, it is of utmost importance that the collection is complete, educational, enlightening, and will last for the future generations of Zambia.

The preceding parameters and limitations are based on the ‘Guidelines for Donating Books for Lubuto Library Collections’ from the Lubuto Library Project, Inc. The parameters are appropriate because they strive to address the informational, educational and recreational needs of the intended service population. The limitations presented address the difference between materials that are appropriate in nature versus those that do not fit the intended service parameters.

**Library Programs & Patron Needs**

The special collections of the Lubuto Library Project must focus on fulfilling the needs of the intended service population, the Zambian children of Africa. In order to meet this goal, Lubuto libraries must provide various programs and materials that meet these children’s informational, educational, and recreational needs by providing “opportunities for educational growth, discovery and joy” (LLP, Inc., n.d.). These opportunities come in the form of programs, intended to “support [these] children in developing their talents, skills and self-esteem,” and include venues such as “Performing and Visual Arts; Literacy; Read-aloud and Storytelling; Motivational Mentoring; One Laptop Per Child XO Laptops; HIV/AIDS and Health; [and] Environment,” designed with these vulnerable children in mind (LLP, Inc., n.d.). The Lubuto Library Project provides a safe-haven for these children, offering programs which keep them returning to the libraries and offering guidance in facing their current-life issues. “Lubuto libraries open the world to children with no opportunities, allowing them to explore their heritage and learn about others through varied and enriching library programs” (LLP, 2008).

The needs of these children extend beyond the basic literacy skills many children require in other areas of the world; the Zambian children are lacking many of the needs most children
take for granted, such as a stable home environment, the opportunity to build confidence in themselves, and to build their self-esteem. The reading materials within the Lubuto libraries “let children be just children with books to help them dream, imagine and envision a better future,” enabling them to leave the trying circumstances they face outside the walls of the Lubuto libraries, even if only for a short while (LLP, 2008). Because of the limited special collection of the Lubuto libraries, materials within this collection do not circulate. If the collection is not complete due to missing, damaged, or broken materials, the Lubuto Library Project is not truly fulfilling its important mission to provide informational, educational and recreational materials for the betterment of these African children.

Information concerning the library programs and patron needs is found from the official website of the LLP, as well the ‘Guidelines for Donating Books for Lubuto Library Collections’ from the Lubuto Library Project, Inc. The information may not be completely sufficient because of the source and does not provide specific information about percentage attendance, literacy rates, etc. The decision to restrict circulation of materials is a Project decision; staff members of the LLP ensure that the books are appropriately handled within the libraries. If the materials were permitted to circulate, it is difficult to determine whether or not these materials would return or incur possible damage beyond the normal ‘wear-and-tear’ repair.

Subject Areas & Format Details

Analysis of Users

As stated above in the ‘Service Community Analysis,’ the Lubuto Library project is commissioned to provide libraries “designed for street kids and other marginalized children and youth in Africa…a refuge from their harsh life [and] give children excluded from school the opportunity to learn to read and progress with their education” (LLP, 2008). These children are the primary users for this library, as they are the ones that need this safe-haven the most in this service community. It is of utmost importance for an individual to begin reading and become literate as soon as possible in their young life; the drawbacks to the neglect of this important skill are immense. Research suggests that without a fluent reading skill, one is “unlikely to do well at
school or after school…[and are] likely to be less flexible in their ability to solve problems, and are generally less exposed to new ideas and experiences” (Machet, 2001). Only permitted a few years in school in Zambia, these children are already at a disadvantage; without the Lubuto Library Project these children are limited in accessing the resources they need to foster their love for reading, as well as bringing about the necessary changes in their lives in order for them to better themselves as individuals.

*The LLP stresses the users of this special library be the African children of Zambia. More resources pertaining to this particular user group can be found on the following websites: Zambia: History, Geography, Government, and Culture — Infoplease.com, and African Studies: Zambia. Because this special library is dedicated to the informational, educational and recreational needs of children in Zambia, there are no secondary users for these special collections.*

**Collection Formats**

“Libraries set priorities, or levels of collecting intensity” (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p.57). As stated above in the ‘Parameters & Limitations of the Collection,’ the collecting intensity of the Lubuto Library Project is focused on the format of books, particularly in hardcover. The guidelines of what types of books that are acceptable and not acceptable are outlined in the named segment as well. The Lubuto Library Project has extensive guidelines within these suggested parameters on the types of books acceptable for this special collection. At the onset of each new Lubuto library, its collection “starts with a high-quality, balanced and comprehensive collection of 4,000 sturdy books” (LLP, Inc. n.d.). Other materials are provided through donations from across the world, and the guidelines for these materials are extremely specific. The Lubuto Library Project asks that benefactors send books in excellent condition; limit the amount of materials that are focused on “subjects relevant only to the U.S.”; focus heavily on “books about or set in Africa” and materials that are specifically intended for an
African-American audience (LLP, Inc., 2009). This specific collection format and topics of these materials adhere to the special service community in mind.

The Lubuto Library Project also provides specific suggestions on choices of fiction and non-fiction materials to those who wish to donate, based on the reading interests of the Zambian children. Fiction suggestions include “stories, poetry, drama…[particularly] classical and folk literature…shorter and easily-readable… contemporary stories, mysteries, science fiction, historical fiction, classic titles for young readers…easy chapter books…[and] books that embody the ways in which reading brings hope into the world” (LLP, Inc., 2009). Suggestions for non-fiction materials include “well-presented illustrated books on nature, science, sports, crafts, technology, geography, history and…biographies; simple, clear [materials with] explanations of how things work; simple science books; [and] factual stories about how children live all over the world” (LLP, Inc., 2009). The suggestions made by the Lubuto Library Project are for well-rounded topics that will cover the variety of interests among these children. Underlying the suggestions for the fiction and non-fiction materials lays a common thread; “good books have several layers or levels of meaning as those layers/levels have some sort of commonality of the human spirit as their basis” (Van Der Walt, 2005, p.119). Even though these children are living in an area of the world that is stricken with poverty and sickness, the human spirit of these children continue to thrive, and books from the Lubuto libraries can help to improve their human spirits.

The suggested format of books in hardcover is provided for the intent that the Zambian children use these books in future generations. The preferred topics of these materials are suggested because they cover a wide range of interests, and are focused on topics that interest children around the world. More details on these particular formats is available through contacting the main office of the LLP in Washington, D.C., or the regional office of the Project in Ridgeway, Lusaka.

Selectors of Collection
Even though donations can be provided by any that wish to donate, volunteers with the guidance of professional children’s librarians select from these donations materials appropriate to add to the collection of the Lubuto libraries. This Project “is not simply a book donation program…the project is unique in providing comprehensive library collections of expertly selected and organized children’s books…gifts of books from corporations, publishers and individuals are catalogued…and shipped as a self-ready collection” (LLP, 2008). The guidance of professional children’s librarians to volunteers selecting the materials ensures that the Lubuto libraries are receiving materials that are appropriate, will last for future generations, and will serve the informational, educational and recreational needs of the intended service community.

*The selectors of the collection are chosen because of their expertise and training in selecting the appropriate materials for the Lubuto libraries. Adhering to the collection guidelines of the LLP ensures that the service community is provided access with the best materials in a variety of subject.*

**Selection Criteria**

The professional children’s librarians and volunteers assigned the task of selecting materials appropriate for the special collections of the Lubuto libraries must follow a standard set of criteria during this process. Materials received that are in poor condition, outdated, are not complete sets of reference materials, and those materials falling under the unacceptable formats specified in the section ‘Parameters & Limitations of the Collection’ will not be added to the collections. The Lubuto Library Project provides detailed guidelines on what is acceptable to include in these special collections and what is unacceptable; donors of these materials should not expect that all would be included within the collections. G. Edward Evans and Margaret Zarnosky Saponaro (2005) explain, “Whatever criteria the library chooses, the collection development policy must clearly state the criteria to answer questions that may arise about why something is or is not in the collection” (Evans & Saponaro, p.61).
Selection criteria for the LLP are heavily influenced by the ‘Guidelines for Donating Books for Lubuto Library Collections’ from the Lubuto Library Project, Inc. These guidelines are appropriate for the intended service community of Zambian children.

Selection Aids

Even though much of the collection of materials housed by the Lubuto libraries are from donations from individuals across the world, it is still important for the Lubuto Library Project to rely on selection aids. Selection aids are described by Evans and Saponaro (2005) as “time-saving tools essential to the efficient function of the library” (p. 82), and should prove resourceful in assisting the collection developers in analyzing the collection and making possible recommendations on what materials are still needed. The selection aids that are most useful in enhancing and improving the collection of these special libraries are current sources for in-print books; the recommended, best, and core collection lists; and subject bibliographies.

Reasons for the listed selection aids for the LLP are the following, from G. Edward Evans and Margaret Zarnosky Saponaro (2005): Current sources for in-print books provide selectors to stay informed of new releases and cover a large range of topics (p. 83). This selection aid may prove useful to analyze donations received and compare to the current materials published, because if relevant, they are added to the collection. The recommended, best, and core collection lists provide a listing of suggested materials to purchase (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 84). These listings are beneficial to the LLP because they can be for a specific service community (for example, ‘Best Books for Children: Pre-school Through Age Six,’ 7th ed.), which can prove very beneficial for selectors who are analyzing the current collection. Lastly, subject bibliographies are excellent resources in providing listings of materials on certain subjects (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 84). Based on the ‘Guidelines for Donating Books’ from the LLP, these bibliographies are an immense help for selectors of this collection for non-fiction materials.

Additional Information

Gift Policy

Gifts received by the Lubuto Library Project include the generous donations of books provided by those more fortunate across the world, but the acceptance of gifts is not limited to this format. Other ways of acceptable gift giving include “organizing a book drive, raising or
donating much-needed funds, volunteering…to build and catalog book collections, or by starting a Lubuto Library club/support group” (LLP, 2008). The Special Library Association provides a listing of many gift-giving opportunities for those interested in helping these children, including fundraising opportunities, communication to inform and educate the world about the Lubuto Library Project, volunteering one’s time and talents to serve these children, and research opportunities for those interested in helping with future endeavors of the Lubuto Library Project (SLA, n.d.). Another gift provided to the Lubuto Library Project is in the form of assistance from important “partnerships with government, community-based organizations, and professional groups” (LLP, 2008).

Among these various forms of gifts to the Lubuto libraries, special gifts from authors and illustrator are also accepted. Many authors and illustrators can autograph and send mint condition books as donations for the Lubuto Library Project. This is a very special way for the children of this service community to feel important, cared for, and special.

Gifts in the form of books are subject to the selection criteria guidelines; the Lubuto Library Project will accept all books, but may dispose of any of these materials it deems are not necessary for the special collection or fall into the guidelines for unacceptable donations. Conditional gifts are accepted as long as there is a definite need for certain genres of materials and the intended library is able to house the additional materials.

This gift policy is recommended because it provides donors with a variety of options, depending on their level of commitment. Book donations, if acceptable under the selection criteria, will be added to the collection. Monetary donations assist in filling in the gaps of materials not received from the book donations. The volunteers and those willing to help through communications and research help to fulfill the need for awareness of the LLP, the current situation of the intended service community, and the future direction Lubuto libraries are headed.

Deselection & Discard of Materials
The deselection process in place takes into consideration materials of relevance, accuracy, and the normal wear-and-tear due to the use of the materials. Deselection or weeding of materials provides an increased amount of shelf space for new materials to take residence. If it is found that materials are no longer relevant to the collection, due to their non-use by the children or is dated information, a weeding process will proceed accordingly, and these books are to be discarded. Materials are also screened for accuracy; if materials are deemed to project inaccuracies, weeding of these materials is to occur, and these books are to be discarded. Normal wear-and-tear of materials will also occur, due to their frequent use by the children of the Lubuto libraries. Even though there is no circulation policy, materials will still become worn due to their use. At the point where these materials no longer are useable by the intended service community, weeding of these materials is to occur. These materials may be given to the children instead of discarding them. If it is beneficial for the libraries to purchase the materials that were discarded due to the normal wear-and-tear of use, requests can be placed for their replacement.

The deselection policy is in place for this special library because of its special circumstances. In order for the LLP to continue and thrive in the communities of Zambia, it is necessary for a deselection/discarding process to be in place. Materials no longer relevant or accurate are disposed; material succumbed to the normal wear-and-tear of use by the service community are weeded from the libraries, but can be offered to the children if they are of interest. The process of deselection is designed to foster a relationship between the service community and the library itself; it will encourage these children to return because of the variety of materials within the library.

Evaluation of Materials

The evaluation process of the Lubuto Library Project is based on suggestions from G. Edward Evans and Margaret Zarnosky Saponaro; the collection of the Lubuto libraries is evaluated with a focus on its strengths and weaknesses (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p63). In the evaluation process, if it is realized that the collection is lacking in certain topics or genres, donation funds will be allocated accordingly, when available, to improve the collection. It is
very important that the Lubuto libraries provide a collection that is comprehensive, informative, and encompasses a wide variety of interests pertaining to the service community, and evaluation of the materials within these special collections accomplishes this.

This evaluation policy is in place because of the importance of assessing the collections housed within the Lubuto libraries to ensure that needs of the service communities are met. Without an effective evaluation process, children may become disinterested in what the Lubuto libraries provide with respect to its collection. The Lubuto libraries are provided for these children as a safe-haven; it is so important for these libraries to keep the children interested in its materials.

**Complaints & Censorship of Materials**

Evans and Saponaro (2005) suggest that, “it is easier to handle questions about what is not [in the collection]” (Evans & Saponaro, p.63). If the children who are the primary users of the collection request that the libraries provide more materials on a certain subject, evaluation of the current collection on that subject is to occur and if the request is deemed appropriate, materials will be added based on donations received. Questions will also arise from this service community as to why certain materials are included; staff must adhere to the “Guidelines for Donating Books for Lubuto Library Collections,” and offer explanations based on this policy.

The issue of censorship is also an issue for this special library. Based on the “Guidelines for Donating Books” by the Lubuto Library Project, there are materials that are unacceptable in regards to donations; please refer to the above section ‘Parameters & Limitations of the Collection’ for what materials are deemed inappropriate for including within the library collections.

The policy regarding complaints and censorship are in place because of the structure and guidelines of the Lubuto Library Project. The “Guidelines” are an appropriate source of information for questions raised as to why certain materials are included and not included within the collection. Adhering to these guidelines ensures that the intended service community is provided with the necessary materials to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.
Bibliography


