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“Empowering Women and Girls around the Globe” Panel Discussion

(Madison) Learn how local access to information is critical to improving the lives of women and girls in South Africa, Kenya, Nicaragua, and rural China. How Libraries and Information Services are Empowering Women and Girls around the Globe is a free public event on Tuesday evening, February 10 from 6:00–7:30 p.m. in 460 Memorial Library, 728 State Street. Our four panelist--Araceli Alonso, Lisa Ebert, Louise Robbins and Karla Strand--will talk about their work in other countries. This event is part of the “Go Big Read” community reading program which this year features the book, I am Malala, the true story of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner. Light refreshments will follow the panel discussion.

Araceli Alonso is an Associate Faculty at UW-Madison in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies and the School of Medicine and Public Health. Dr. Alonso is also the Founder and Director of Health by Motorbike (HbM), a nonprofit that provides medical services and health literacy to women and girls from remote and isolated villages in Africa. For her work with women's health and women's rights in rural Kenya, in 2013 Dr. Alonso received two of the world most prestigious awards—the United Nations Public Service Award and the Jefferson Award for Public Service.

While completing her master’s degree in Community and Organizational Leadership, Lisa Ebert went to Nicaragua through the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners program, part of the nationwide Partners in the America organization established by President Kennedy. Her Nicaraguan experience changed Ms. Ebert’s focus for her master’s program to women’s empowerment issues and more specifically to how the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners organization helps to
empower women who participate in their Learning Centers. She has returned to Nicaragua two additional times.

Louise S. Robbins is Professor and Director Emerita of the School of Library and Information Studies of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has also taught library courses at universities in China, Korea, Japan, and Kyrgyzstan. Since 2006, Robbins has been involved with the Evergreen Education Foundation, which provides various kinds of assistance to schools and public libraries in rural China.

Karla Strand directs the Office of the Gender & Women’s Studies Librarian for the University of Wisconsin System, the premier resource for the support of gender and women’s studies scholarship and librarianship. Prior to this, she was employed at Carroll University where she served as Diversity Librarian and Associate Director. Strand is currently completing her doctorate in Information Science via the University of Pretoria in South Africa where she is researching how public librarians in KwaZulu-Natal province can help alleviate information inequality in their communities.

We also encourage you to read the remarkable story of Malala Yousafzai, in *I Am Malala*. When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, Malala refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. In October 2012, she was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school. She was not expected to survive. Instead, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. For more information about this book and companion book discussions, go to: http://www.gobigread.wisc.edu/

This event is sponsored by the Friends of the UW – Madison Libraries, Office of the Gender & Women’s Studies Librarian, Department of Gender and Women’s Studies and the Go Big Read program. For more information about this event or other Friends activities, go to: www.library.wisc.edu/friends, or email <friends@library.wisc.edu> or call 608-265-2505.

Photo 1.  Nikumbuke Project Library in rural Kenya

Photo 2.  A happy library borrower from the Nikumuke Project