

African Library Project

Book Drive Guidelines

Revised October 2008

This document provides guidelines and tools for U.S. volunteers to plan and conduct book drives to bring the gift of reading to Africa.

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Plan your book drive

- ◆ First, **read these guidelines completely**. You may be surprised!
- ◆ Contact us by email or phone **before you get started** to let us know you want to organize a book drive.
 - ◇ We will match your group with an African community or school that will receive your book donations.
 - ◇ We will tell you which kinds of books to collect, so that you only send books that your African partner can use.
 - ◇ We will give you a target date for completion of the book drive, so that we can ship your books on the next available container shipment date.
- ◆ Identify the types of donors you want to ask for books.
 - ◇ We receive fabulous books from a wide variety of groups. Consider asking: schools, local businesses, libraries, neighbors, sports programs, religious groups, YMCA's, youth groups, service organizations, friends and relatives, book clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts...you name it!
- ◆ Talk to people to get the buzz going!
 - ◇ Speak about conditions in Africa and why they desperately need books.
 - ◇ Explain the purpose of the book drive and tell them why you want to take action. Ask them to join you to start a library in Africa!
 - ◇ Show our documentary DVD at a school assembly, at a church service, Girl Scout gathering, or wherever you would like to collect books. Everyone will learn more about Africa and will be inspired to help.
- ◆ Form a small group to run or support the book drive.
 - ◇ You may have a primary leader to get things organized, but a book drive is a team effort, and you will want to get others actively involved.
 - ◇ Make sure everyone understands which kinds of books to collect. The clearer you are about your criteria, the more "shippable" books you will receive.
- ◆ Set a goal for the number of books you will send. This provides an inspiring target to achieve and helps you plan for shipping the books.
 - ◇ A small library is about 1,000 books, which is a challenging yet achievable goal. (Note that you will need to collect more than your goal because some books will not be appropriate to send.)
- ◆ Decide a timetable for your book drive. Allow six weeks or more from the time you announce the book drive to the end.

Collect Your Books

The heart of your book drive is collecting gently used books that will be treasured by your African readers. **The key to success is to communicate widely and repeatedly.** In our experience, almost everyone wants to contribute, but many people need frequent reminding and encouragement to bring in their books.

- ◆ Identify a central, convenient area to collect the books in a large container (box, barrel, basket, etc.)
- ◆ Create an attractive display that explains the project and describes the kinds of books you are collecting.
- ◆ Download our flyer and customize it for your collection site (go to: <http://africanlibraryproject.org/resources.htm>)
This flyer is ideal for posting in classrooms, hallways and anywhere you may have potential book donors.
- ◆ Use poster board or similar materials for the display.
 - ◇ Consider giving it an African feel by using a woven basket to collect the books or by decorating your display with earth tones, black, red, orange and yellow colors.
 - ◇ We encourage you to use our pictures and logo (available for download at our gallery on the website: <http://africanlibraryproject.org/gallery.htm>)
 - ◇ You may wish to include African art or artifacts in the display.
- ◆ Describe on the display the criteria for books you are collecting.
- ◆ Keep the display simple and attractive.
- ◆ Keep track of the books you collect. Post a progress report or a progress “thermometer” near the collection box to encourage more participation.
- ◆ Keep communicating about the book drive and make the most of every opportunity to promote awareness about Africa. You could:
 - ◇ Publish an article about the project in the school newsletter, online newsletter or parent e-list.
 - ◇ Provide weekly updates with news of the book drive’s progress. Everyone is busy, and it often takes multiple reminders for families to remember to bring their books.



- ◇ Make posters for each classroom or other places around the school.
- ◇ Use student teams to speak to each classroom to explain the project.
- ◇ Announce the drive on the school's outdoor signs.
- ◇ Promote the book drive at a parent/teacher meeting.
- ◇ Discuss book drive progress at a staff meeting.
- ◇ Announce your book drive's progress over the public address system or in school assemblies.
- ◇ Have a special library display featuring books about children's lives in developing countries. Check our resource page (www.africanlibraryproject.org/resources) to find booklists for various age groups.
- ◇ Two weeks before the drive ends, begin a countdown, e.g. "Two weeks left...one week left..."
- ◇ The day after the drive ends, remove the collection box and thank everyone involved with a sign at the collection site and with messages everywhere you have announced the project. Feature a grand total and a sincere thank you.

Sort your books

The purpose of sorting is to send to Africa **only** those books that are truly useful for your African readers. The remaining books should be donated, swapped or sold elsewhere. This will save you postage money and ensure that every book you send is well used.

- ◆ We suggest you sort periodically while you are collecting to avoid an intimidating mountain of books at the end of your book drive. It can be a lot of fun to sort with a group.
- ◆ Sort your books that fit your African partner's type of library.
 - ◇ Preschool – sturdy baby cardboard books and children's picture books.
 - ◇ Primary School – preschool through 4th grade books.
 - ◇ Secondary School – 4th through 8th grade books. (Only a few books should exceed 8th grade level.)
 - ◇ Community – preschool through adult books with most books aimed at 8th grade level and below. Include a wider variety of subjects than you might for a school library, e.g., agriculture, animal husbandry, gardening, science, health, business, current events, ecology, National Geographics less than 5 years old, recent paperback novels, etc.
- ◆ Focus first on paperback books, as they are cheaper to ship. Send hardbound books if your funds allow.

DO SEND – Typical requests are for these kinds of books:

- ◆ Baby board books
- ◆ Children's picture books
- ◆ Children's fiction and non-fiction
- ◆ Early readers
- ◆ Juvenile literature
- ◆ Teacher books for school libraries
- ◆ Children's dictionaries
- ◆ Children's encyclopedias
- ◆ Encyclopedias less than 15 years old
- ◆ Accurate atlases
- ◆ Thesauruses
- ◆ Paperback textbooks in math, English, geography and science at appropriate level
- ◆ Books with universal themes (friendship, animals, love, etc.)

DON'T SEND BUT DONATE ELSEWHERE – Some books are not appropriate to send to Africa, but you can donate them to your local library or sell them to raise funds for transporting books to Africa:

- ◆ Books that are filled with small print, no pictures, etc. (too intimidating or boring)
- ◆ Books with lots of slang (too difficult to follow)
- ◆ Books for young children that have many references to appliances and electronic gadgets
- ◆ Adult paperback romance novels
- ◆ Books about American or religious holidays (Easter, Halloween, Christmas, 4th of July, Thanksgiving, April Fools Day, Valentines Day, Chanukah, etc.)
- ◆ Books that evangelize or promote a particular religion

Still have questions? Contact us at info@africanlibraryproject.org

Pack your books so they arrive in great shape

Now that you know which books to send, it's time to pack them up and get them on the way to Africa!

- ◆ Gather the right supplies.
 - ◇ Wide packing tape (optional: with tape gun)
 - ◇ Heavy duty, large plastic bags (trash compactor bags are ideal.)
 - ◇ Small-sized cardboard boxes (about 10x13x12 in.) in good condition. (Ask grocery stores and coffee shops for sturdy boxes. USPS will not accept boxes that originally carried wine or liquor, unless you wrap these in brown paper.)
 - ◇ Bold felt-tip permanent markers
 - ◇ One **Book Packing Slip** for each box and one **Summary Worksheet & Evaluation** form (see appendix.)
- ◆ Follow these steps to pack the books.
 - ◇ Reinforce the seams of the box on the bottom and on the side of the box (where the box is glued together) with tape.
 - ◇ Line the bottom of the box with a second layer of cardboard for extra strength.
 - ◇ Line the box with a clean, dry trash compactor bag. (This protects the books from moisture.)
 - ◇ Organize the books you have sorted according to size.
 - ◇ Think of the box as a jigsaw puzzle and **pack as many books as possible into the box**. This may take several tries, but a box that is loosely packed may be crushed in transit to Africa. Small and medium boxes that weigh under 40 pounds handle and ship the best. The United States Postal Service will not accept Media Mail boxes over 70 pounds.
 - ◇ Important: We need an accurate count of books for each box. As you pack the books, count them and write the total on the **Book Packing Slip** and the **Summary Worksheet & Evaluation** form (see below).

- ◆ Fill out completely one **Book Packing Slip** (see Appendix) for **each** box that you send.
 - ◇ Place this form on top of the books in the box. Be sure to include the date, the number of books in the box, and your group's name and address so your library knows where the books came from and can contact you.
 - ◇ Optionally, include pictures or letters from your group to your African partners. Some African libraries post these letters, photos and messages in their new libraries to put a personal face on where the books came from.
- ◆ Fill out one **Summary Worksheet & Evaluation** (see Appendix) to tell us how many boxes and books you are mailing and other pertinent information.
- ◆ Carefully fold the trash compactor bag shut and tuck the edges down the inside edges of the box.
- ◆ Close the box securely. Squeeze the box flaps together tightly, then tape all remaining edges to seal the box.
- ◆ If the boxes have printing on them (eg. product information, old labels, etc.) use a magic marker to cross through the writing so there is no confusion about the contents. Note: USPS will not accept wine or alcohol boxes, even if you cross through their marking.
- ◆ Write clearly on the box the address of our shipper's warehouse and the code for the books' final destination. We will provide this information – just contact us if you don't have it.

Write clearly your return address on each box as follows:

Your Name
Your Organization (if applicable)
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip
 USA

- ◆ When you have mailed all the books, send the **Summary Worksheet & Evaluation** to:

African Library Project
 Attn: Book Drive Coordinator
 727 Bayview Way
 Emerald Hills, CA 94062, USA

Raise funds to cover shipping and related expenses

Each book drive organizer is responsible for covering the costs of transporting the books to their African destination. For a library of 1,000 books (mostly paperback), total costs are about \$500 (\$200 for domestic postage, \$300 for international shipping and related expenses.)

There are many traditional and creative ways to raise these funds. The best kind of fundraiser gets your entire community into the spirit so that everyone is talking about it. Make it super fun! Here are some ideas that have worked well:

- ◆ Find two favorite personalities at your school who are willing to help you raise money. Ask them to stand on a chair or ladder about 3–5' off the ground next to the wall in the gym. Sell 5' pieces of duct tape to students for \$2 each. One piece at a time, have the students race to tape their favorite to the wall of the gym for the sake of African literacy and guaranteed fun.
- ◆ Ask the principal or favorite teacher(s) if they will support your efforts by challenging the school to do something crazy if you reach your book and fundraising goals. For example, get a Mohawk haircut in front of the entire school, wear an embarrassing costume, or become a human ice cream sundae.
- ◆ Hold an African Library Project Fashion Show. Contact local clothing stores to ask if they will donate their clothes for an evening (to be returned) for the sake of African literacy. Ask students, teachers and administrators to be models. If you organize it...they will come!
- ◆ Launch a “Give It Up” campaign to encourage people to give something up and donate the money saved to sponsor a library. This might be a morning cup of coffee, a newspaper or magazine, a movie, a dessert, etc. There is a long list of things that we can do without for a day, and this helps us think about how valuable a small personal sacrifice of ours can be in making a difference to another. Try for 100% participation no matter how small the donation.
- ◆ Ask students and teachers to donate \$1/day for 10 days or until you make your goal. By making the amount so small, you should get a tremendous response.
- ◆ Organize a special “Fun & Games” event. This might include old carnival games, competitions, craft activities, etc. One of our partner schools is holding a “Cornhole” Tournament during lunchtime. Each team pays in to play and the proceeds go to the shipping costs.

- ◆ Ask for donations from parents and students. Some people do not have books to donate but are glad to support the project financially.
- ◆ Ask for a cash donation at your book collection box. Place an envelope or slotted container near the collection box with a sign asking for donations.
- ◆ Request a grant from your school's student council or parent organization.
- ◆ Ask a local business or service club (e.g., Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Soroptimists, etc.) to sponsor the library by donating the shipping costs.
- ◆ Hold a book sale with the books you have collected that are not suitable to send to Africa. Use the money to pay for shipping the African-bound books.
- ◆ Hold a plant sale, car wash or bake sale. You can even take orders in advance and make baked goods from your customer's favorite recipe.
- ◆ Ask families to donate prizes and hold a raffle. Prizes might include tickets to sporting events, passes to dance/exercise classes and special outings among many others.
- ◆ In lieu of gifts for your birthday, Confirmation, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, or other special occasion, request that friends give a donation to the African Library Project in your name.
- ◆ Ask children to donate coins and put them in a 5 gallon water container. See what \$500 in change looks like!
- ◆ Organize students to "Read for Africa". Each student estimates how many books they will read, then asks family and friends to sponsor them for a specific amount per book, e.g. \$1/book for 15 books equals a \$15 donation. This is a great way to promote reading here and in Africa at the same time.
- ◆ Ask children to do an extra chore at home and donate the \$1 they earned.
- ◆ Children can donate 25 cents to see the librarian or other favorite teacher/administrator read from the school's roof.
- ◆ Put on a theatrical/singing/talent show and use ticket sales to fund the library costs. Partner with an already established drama/singing group. You don't have to do it all yourself!

Remember that anyone is more likely to be generous what you are trying to do. Try to show our the African Library Project dvd to your donors to kick off your fundraising and book collection efforts.

As you find other fun and successful fundraising ideas, please let us know so that we can share them.

Mail your books to our U.S. warehouse

- ◆ Send the books to our shipper's U.S. warehouse from your local United States Post Office using Media Mail. Please mail your books as close to your shipping deadline as possible as we are charged storage on books awaiting shipment.
 - ◇ **Contact us for specific address information** to write on each box.
 - ◇ At the Post Office, ask for Media Mail, an inexpensive domestic rate for books. Postage will be \$.37–\$.43/pound, depending on the weight and size of each box. The maximum allowable weight for Media Mail boxes is 70 pounds, but we find that the ideal weight of a box of books is 35–40 pounds.
 - ◇ A typical library of 1000 paperback books will weigh about 400–500 pounds, so your postage costs to our shipper's warehouse will be roughly \$200.
 - ◇ To learn more about regulations and rates for Media Mail, visit the USPS website at:
<http://www.usps.com/rates/media-mail-rates.htm>
- ◆ **On the same day you mail your books**, mail a \$300 check, payable to: African Library Project, to the address that we designate. These funds will contribute to fees for container shipping to Africa and to our related costs. This portion of your project is tax deductible. If you wish to receive an acknowledgement of this, please include a note with your check to let us know.

Ship your books to their final destination (we handle this part!)

- ◆ Our shipper will receive your boxes of books and store them securely in a U.S. warehouse.
- ◆ We schedule container shipments to Africa on a regular basis, and we will reserve a spot for your books in a specific container.
- ◆ When we are ready to ship, the shipper will palletize, shrink wrap and load your boxes into a container bound for Africa. Finally, your books will be transported by rail or truck from the African port to your library destination.
- ◆ At last, your books will be unpacked, organized into a library, and made available to people who are eager to read! Congratulations!

African Library Project Book Packing Slip

Complete one form for each box. Place this form inside the box on top of the books.
This is the way your library project knows who sent their books.

Date: _____

To: *(African partner name)*

From: *(U.S. book drive organizers' names, address, other contact information)*

This box contains (#) _____ books.

We send the following personal message (optional):

African Library Project Summary Worksheet & Evaluation

Complete one form per project. Send to African Library Project after books are mailed.

From (U.S. organization)	
Contact Person	
Address, City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Email	

To (African recipient name)	
Name of Peace Corps Volunteer (if applicable)	
Address, City, Country	
Other contact information, if available	

Total No. of Boxes Mailed _____
 Total No. of Books _____
 Date Sent _____
 Total Postage \$ _____

Box No.	No. of Books
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Box No.	No. of Books
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	

Box No.	No. of Books
15	
16	
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19	
20	
21	

Book Drive Evaluation

Please comment on your experience with African Library Project.

- ◆ What worked best for you? What satisfied you the most?

- ◆ What worked least for you? How could you and others have been more satisfied?

- ◆ Were there books your partner requested that you were unable to collect and send?

- ◆ What else would you like us to know?

- ◆ Looking forward....how would your school or organization like to participate with us next year? (e.g., sponsor a book drive, donate money for shipping books, or other ideas?)

Thank you! Your generous efforts help to bring the gift of reading to Africa.

We appreciate your support, and so do the many Africans who will enjoy the books you sent.

Please send this form to:

African Library Project
727 Bayview Way
Emerald Hills, CA 94062

Email: amelia@africanlibraryproject.org; telephone/fax: (650) 369-5164