



*“The library will be a candle in the dark”*

*Marcel Chisi, Executive Director of AYISE, one of ALP’s partners in Malawi*

## **Mission**

The African Library Project changes lives, book by book, by starting libraries in rural Africa. Our grassroots approach mobilizes U.S. volunteers, young and old, to organize book drives and ship books to a partner library in Africa. Our method makes a concrete and personal difference for children on both continents.

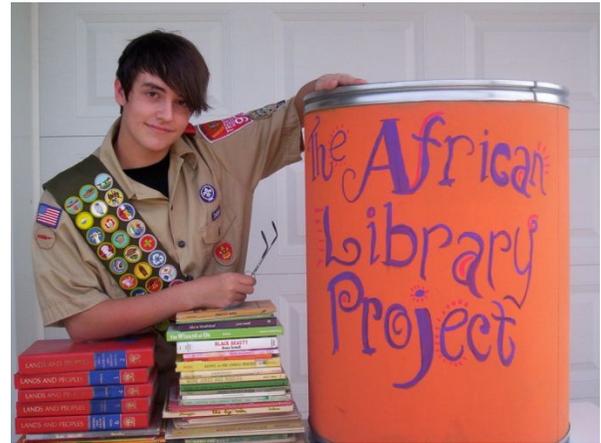
## **Accomplishments**

- Started or improved 2,009 small libraries during first 12 years in 12 African countries.
- Coordinated book drives with 1500+ American organizations from 48 U.S. states and Canada. Our hard-working volunteer book drive coordinators range from 6-88 years old, from Alaska to Puerto Rico, from individuals to corporations (but most book drives are organized by schools and Scouts).
- Recycled over 2 million gently used children’s books with an estimated new value of \$16 million.
- Developed successful partnerships with reliable African partner organizations who ensure that donated books turn into sustainable, working libraries:
  - Botswana - Botswana Ministry of Education
  - Lesotho - US Peace Corps, Lesotho Ministry of Education
  - Swaziland - Swaziland National Library Service, NGO Fundza
  - Malawi - NGOs DAPP, AYISE, Wungwero Book Foundation and Malawi Institute of Education
  - Ghana - NGO Michael Lapsley Foundation
  - Sierra Leone – NGO RISE Network
  - Kenya – Project Humanity, Rongo University
- Held international best practice Summits in Botswana (2008), Lesotho (2009), Swaziland (2011), Malawi (2013), Ghana (2015).

- Annually awards Compassion in Action Awards in the United States and Africa for outstanding contributions to African library development.

## How We Operate

The African Library Project coordinates book drives throughout the United States among schools, Scouts, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, corporations, churches, college groups and individuals. Each book drive is matched with a specific African library site. Each book drive collects 1,000 gently used, appropriate books and raises \$500 to help pay for shipping. The book drive volunteers sort, pack and ship the books to a U.S. warehouse. Then ALP ships the books by sea container to African partner organizations. Our partners in Africa include U.S. Peace Corps, African government agencies, and African Non-Governmental Organizations. Each African partner is capable of supporting the development of 30-60 libraries/year, year after year, to develop a strong network of small libraries throughout their respective countries.



## History

The African Library Project was started in 2005 by Chris Bradshaw. During a family vacation of horse packing in the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, Chris saw many villages and rural schools without books. Chris wanted to do something to support education, and after discussions with local teachers and community members, she realized that the simple act of establishing small libraries with recycled books would have a profound effect in increasing literacy.

## Need

Literacy remains a major barrier to the development of African countries. Literacy skills are fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment and participation in the local and global community.

One-third of all adults in sub-Saharan Africa cannot read or write. An underlying roadblock for literacy programs has been the lack of adequate reading materials. Most children who learn to read do not own or have regular access to books. With little reading material, people are not motivated to read and new literates relapse into illiteracy. With no books, teachers must teach from memory.

UNESCO's fourth Sustainable Development Goals for 2015-2030 is "To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." UNESCO's research shows that high literacy skills almost double the probability of holding a decent job. The needs are clear. It is up to the world community to make it happen.  
[UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report – SDG 4](#)



*“An HIV-positive female student in grade six successfully wrote a poem which she read during morning assembly relating the hardships she faces. She added how difficult life is living with her diabetic grandmother. She narrated that she was inspired by the stories she has been reading from the books in the library. She encouraged other learners that knowledge is power and she is determined to continue reading to have a bright future and help her grandmother. This really touched everyone's heart at school.”*

---- *Sindie Nkambuk, Teacher-librarian  
Mhlabubovu Primary School, Swaziland*



## Staff

Everyone is a volunteer at ALP except for one paid staff. During the past twelve years, over 17,000 individuals in the United States and Canada have participated in book drives and library development.

## Organizational structure

ALP is registered as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization, with a CEO, twelve board members, and hundreds of volunteers.

## Budget

In 2016, ALP spent \$273,000 in direct expenses to move books valued new at about \$3.2 million a year.

## For More Information

Website: [www.africanlibraryproject.org](http://www.africanlibraryproject.org)

Facebook Fan Page:

[www.facebook.com/africanlibraryproject](https://www.facebook.com/africanlibraryproject)

Email: [info@africanlibraryproject.org](mailto:info@africanlibraryproject.org)

Blog: <http://africanlibraryproject.blogspot.com>

Twitter: @AfricanLibraryP

Phone: 1.650.437.5311

Mail: PO Box 2162, Berkeley, CA 94702 USA



*“The African Library Project makes what seems impossible [for our school to help start libraries in Africa], possible.”*

*Annie McQueen, Jordan Middle School Librarian*