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GETTING STARTED

Register for a Book Drive
This is the most important step. You can't receive a school match without completing it. By registering for a book drive, you will learn:

- What school you are matched with and in what African community
- The types of children’s books you’ll need to collect
- The deadline for mailing your books

Find Book Donors
We have received storybooks from many sources, so get creative! Be sure to remember what types of books you’ll need via your ALP match email then visit:

- Schools
- A library near you
- “Friends of the Library” programs
- YMCA and other local clubs
- Friends, family, and community members

THINGS YOU’LL NEED

A SMALL CORE COMMITTEE OF PEOPLE TO HELP

SPACE TO STORE, SORT, AND PACK YOUR BOOKS

A PROJECT CALENDAR WITH AN OFFICIAL START DATE
We establish partnerships with African-based organizations that specialize in education and library or community development.

We look for countries that have a significant need for books and feature political stability, reliable transport of books to destinations, and a network of local organizations capable of organizing our books into real, working libraries.

Get More Buzz Going
Having support will help you gather all the books and funds you need as seamlessly as possible.

- Develop a book drive in action website and share it across your network
- Shout out your book drive on social media with a post
- Livestream parts of your book drive to rally online support across social media channels like YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitch
- Create a Facebook page for your book drive
- Be visible in your community - You can print flyers to put on bulletin boards, make displays for schools and community spaces (stores, etc.)
- Attend local events to spread the message
- Make decorative donation bins with your friends, family, workplace, or community to collect books
- Host a book collection competition with your friends, family, and/or coworkers
- Visit the African Library Project website for resources we have created specifically to help book drive organizers share why this work is important

WHERE WE START LIBRARIES

We establish partnerships with African-based organizations that specialize in education and library or community development.

We look for countries that have a significant need for books and feature political stability, reliable transport of books to destinations, and a network of local organizations capable of organizing our books into real, working libraries.

WE HAVE HELPED START LIBRARIES IN 11 OF AFRICA’S 22 ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES. WE’RE CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN:

- Botswana
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Sierra Leone
- Uganda
**Fundraising Examples from Past BDOS**

**Sent a Press Release to Local Media Outlets That Gave the Basics of the ALP Campaign as Well as Drop-Off Locations and Start/End Dates.**

**Partnered with Local Small Businesses to Distribute Book Donation Bins Across Their Communities**

**Held Bake Sales at School and Local Events**

**Hosted Parties Where All Proceeds Go to the Shipping of Books**

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**Fundraise for Your Book Drive**

Shipping 1,000 books is no easy feat. While finding inventive ways to raise money, keep in mind:

- You can fundraise money from multiple sources
- $250 of your total collection will cover the cost of shipping your books to our warehouse while the remaining $250 will go to the cost of shipping them to your school abroad.
- A library of more than 1,000 books - or of heavy, hardcover books - will increase mailing costs.**
- If you use websites like GoFundMe, as many successful book drive organizers have, remember that GoFundMe will charge a 10% fee for all funds raised.
- Include some educational content in your fundraiser to spread the love of Africa and her nations! Our resource page can help.
- Paperback books are less expensive to mail.

**About $250.00 will go towards mailing to New Orleans warehouse. This may vary based on the weight of your books. Therefore, book drive organizers should plan to raise slightly more than $500.00 required.**
DURING YOUR BOOK DRIVE

The heart of your book drive is collecting gently used books that will be treasured by African readers.

Collecting Your Books

- If you are collecting books in a public space, set up large, waterproof containers (box, barrel, basket, etc.) in central, convenient areas. Make a display to explain your project. Be creative - make your display big, bold and beautiful!
- In some cases, you or your donors may want to purchase books. You can leverage the Amazon wish list of culturally diverse titles that we have put together for recommended primary books or secondary books.
- Keep track of the books you collect. Post a progress report or a progress "thermometer" near the collection box to keep people updated and engaged.

WHAT BOOKS SHOULDN’T YOU COLLECT?

- Books filled with small, dense print that might be too intimidating or unfitting for the age level
- Books with lots of slang, which may be difficult for English learners to follow
- Books for young children that have many references to appliances and electronic gadgets
- Books written in any language besides English (U.S. or U.K.)
- Adult paperback romance novels
- Books about the United States or Canadian history or government that do not have any ties to African-Americans
- Books about North American or religious holidays (Easter, Halloween, Christmas, 4th of July, etc.)
- Anything that evangelizes or promotes a particular religion
- Magazines except for children's educational magazines and National Geographics less than five years old
You will want to sort by size in order to get ready for packing. You will need to sort by level to ensure that each library gets a range of reading levels, particularly if you have collected for multiple libraries. Sorting takes time, so sort regularly to avoid an intimidating mountain of books at the end of your book drive.

The purpose of sorting is to send to African students only the books that are truly useful for their library. The remaining books can be swapped, sold, or donated elsewhere. This will save you postage money and ensure that every book you send is well used.
Packing Your Books - The Essentials

Packing your books well is critical to ensuring your library gets to your matched school! Don’t skip any steps. Poor packing leads to collapsed boxes and lost books.

- Use packing tape to reinforce all seams on the bottom and on the side edge of the box.
- Line the box with a clean, dry trash compactor bag (the books go inside the garbage bag). This protects the books from moisture. **Do NOT do this for boxes to Kenya - there is a national ban on plastic bags.**
- Organize the books according to size 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. Boxes that are overpacked will rip open.
- Count the number of books as you pack and write the total number of books in each box somewhere on the outside of the box to keep track.
- Be mindful of the weight of each box - 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.
Packing Your Books Continued...

- Before you close the box, place one Packing Slip in each. This is for the students & teachers to know where the books came from. Include a special message and pictures of your group to add a little personal touch!
- Carefully fold the trash compactor bag shut and tuck the edges down the inside edges of the box. Do not do this for boxes to Kenya.
- Close and tape the box securely with multiple layers of tape. If the boxes have printing on them (e.g. product information, old labels, etc.) use a magic marker to cross through the writing so there is no confusion about the contents or destination.
- Securely tape a mailing label to each box. Go in number order of the labels (e.g. Box 1 label, Box 2 label,, etc.). Completely cover the mailing label with tape or a sheet protector - otherwise rain can make it illegible.
- Complete the online Book Drive Summary Form to share the date the boxes are mailed, the total number of books, total number of boxes, and cost of mailing.

HELPFUL TIPS
- Line the bottom of the box with a second layer of cardboard for extra strength.
- Include your group's name, address, and email address on your Packing Slip so your library knows where the books came from and can contact you.
- If you like, include pictures or letters from your group to your African school match. Some African libraries post these letters, photos and messages in their new libraries to put a personal face on where the books came from.
- The United States Postal Service will not accept Media Mail boxes over 70 pounds.
- USPS will not accept wine or alcohol boxes.
- 12x12x12" boxes are preferred. When full, they are less than 40 pounds and they are pretty easy to handle. Home Depot double walled 14x14x14" boxes are also good. Double walled means they are super strong. 12x12x16" are also good and are actually smaller in volume than the 14x14x14" size. Starbucks boxes are free and small.
Mailing Your Books

Your container manager will email you the mailing instructions about one month before your mailing deadline. Please send your books as close as possible to your deadline, as we are charged storage fees on books that arrive early at the warehouse and are awaiting shipment.

Regardless of the delivery option you choose, you must use the mailing label that your container manager sends you. This label includes information to help the warehouse get your library to the right country, and helps our partners in-country get your library to the right school or community.

United States Postal Service (Most Popular) - Mail from your local United States Post Office using "Media Mail", the least expensive domestic rate for books. A typical library of 1000 mostly paperback books will weigh about 400-500 pounds, so your postage costs to our shipper’s warehouse will be roughly $250. If your library is heavier than the average library or has more books, budget to spend up $50-100 extra.

Personally deliver - Not far from New Orleans? Take a road trip and drive your boxes directly to our shipping partner. Tell your container manager so they will expect you.

In-kind donation from shipping company - Companies like FedEx are sometimes willing to provide free shipping. This can take months to arrange, so make sure you get started in plenty of time before your shipping deadline.

On the same day that you send your books to the New Orleans warehouse, regardless of your method, please send the $250 international shipping donation. This fee for each library helps to cover the international shipping from the New Orleans warehouse to our partners in Africa. You can use our online donation form or mail a check made out to African Library Project to: ALP Treasurer, P.O. Box 24556, Oakland, CA 94623, USA.

***Whichever method you use, be sure to include the code for your book drive, which was sent in emails (e.g. UG1-05), and include the book drive organizer’s name in the memo/comment section.

Note on tax deductibility of these fees:

Domestic Shipping Costs - The domestic mailing cost (e.g., U.S. Postal Service media mail expense) is tax-deductible to the person(s) who pays for the domestic shipping and has the USPS receipt. ALP cannot provide a tax-deductible receipt for this portion of your costs because ALP is not handling, paying for, or getting a receipt for the domestic shipping.

International Shipping Costs - The $250 per library, paid directly to the African Library Project for international shipping expenses, is tax-deductible. We will send you a thank you/receipt for this contribution.
AFTER YOUR BOOK DRIVE

Tell Your Story

We want to know if you enjoyed your book drive experience and how we can improve it. Telling your story is the number one way to inspire others to get involved with African Library Project. If you have a story to tell, we want to hear from you! Here are so ways to share your experience:

- Send photos of your book drive
- Write a blog about your experience to be featured on our newsletter or website
- Fill out our feedback form
- Share a social media post about your book drive - We'll share it too!

Stay In Touch

We always encourage our book drive organizers to stay up to date with African Library Project by subscribing to our monthly newsletter and following us on social media. You’ll get to see photos and updates to your container and many others like yours!

STAY CONNECTED
YOUR BOOK DRIVE CHECKLIST

☐ Register for your book drive on the ALP website.
☐ Mark the mailing deadline on your calendar and make your game plan for a successful book drive (1,000 books & $500).
☐ Read your match email from your container manager in its entirety. Note the type of books you need to collect and read the application from your school match to learn more about them.
☐ Share the news of your book drive to encourage support from your community. Social media is a great way to get people engaged and to send updates (use #???).
☐ Learn about the country you’re donating to. Use the resources from our website to get useful information to share with your supporters.
☐ Identify places to collect (and store!) about 1000 books. Make it a priority to collect books that are diverse and feature black characters. Note: Not all of your book donations will be right for your school match so plan to collect more than 1,000 books.
  • Stay in contact with your container manager - they are there to support you and help make your book drive a success!
  • Sort as you go using our sorting guidelines. You can give books that are not appropriate to local charities in your area. Keep your supporters informed of your progress by sharing your book numbers regularly!
  • “Fun-raise” $500 - Approximately $250 will go to shipping your books to our holding facilities in New Orleans and $250 will go to subsidize international shipping. Note: If your library is heavy because it has a lot of hardcover books or has more than 1,000 books, plan to spend more than $250 on mailing. Use creative fundraising strategies that get people excited and/or look for donation matching opportunities. Again, keep your supporters informed so they can help you across the finish line.
☐ Get ready to pack once you have 1,000 books that fit your school match. Read and re-read “Packing Your Books - Essentials” from our Book Drive Guidelines to ensure your boxes get to their final destination.
☐ Mail your boxes on or no more than 1 month before your mailing deadline. Complete the online book drive summary form to submit the final results of book drive.
☐ Share your story - Inspire others to get involved by sharing the highlights of your book drive on social media (use #???) and by emailing us at marketing@africanlibraryproject.org. We love for book drive organizers to write as guest bloggers on our website or other publications.
☐ Complete the book drive feedback survey to tell us about your experience!
☐ Celebrate & watch out for emails announcing the arrival of your library!