

# BOOK DRIVE GUIDELINES





Photo Credit:  
Leading Through Living Community LLC  
Lynita Mitchell-Blackwell et al.

# 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 books from many sources, so get creative! Be sure to remember what types of books you'll need via your ALP match email.

Some great places and people to contact for book donations are schools, local businesses, libraries, community groups, youth groups, sports groups, faith-based organizations, service organizations, neighbors, friends and relatives.

### THINGS YOU'LL NEED

**A DEDICATED TEAM OF PEOPLE TO HELP WITH YOUR BOOK DRIVE**

**SPACE TO STORE, SORT, AND PACK YOUR BOOKS**

**A PROJECT CALENDAR WITH AN OFFICIAL START DATE\* FOR YOUR DRIVE**

\*ALLOW 6 WEEKS OR MORE FROM THE TIME YOU ANNOUNCE YOUR BOOK DRIVE TO THE END.





Holy Trinity International School, Ghana

## 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 12 OF AFRICA'S 24 ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES. WE'RE CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN:

- Botswana
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Sierra Leone
- Uganda

## 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 page on Classy (see container manager for more information) 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





Los Alamos Fire Department Recruit Academy et al.



Karabo Megaming Ramosamo et al.

# FUNDRAISE FOR YOUR BOOK DRIVE

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

- You can fundraise money from multiple sources so get creative! The best kind of fundraiser gets your entire community into the spirit of contributing to a great cause!
- **About \$250\* will cover the cost of shipping your books to our warehouse in the US while the remaining \$250 is your international shipping donation, which covers shipping to Africa.**
- A library of more than 1,000 books - or of heavy, hardcover books - will increase US 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 the country you are donating to. Our resource page can help.

**\*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 the \$500.00 required.**

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

## FROM PREVIOUS BOOK DRIVE ORGANIZERS TO YOU

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-  Launch a “Give Something 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.
-  Host a geography or spelling bee and feature African sites and words? The Zambezi River flows between what two countries? Can you spell Ouagadougou? Charge entry fees and admission fees. Get local personalities to enter! Get press and with it more books and monetary donations
-  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. Kids can vote with their wallets on whether the principal or a teacher should dye their hair pink or purple :) Or they can cast votes of confidence for \$1 each on which teachers will win an arm wrestling contest.
-  Ask for donations from parents and students. Some people do not have books to donate but are glad to support the project financially.
-  Ask a local restaurant if they will donate a percentage (usually about 15%) of all the meals purchased by your supporters on a certain day or week. This attracts new and different clientele to the restaurant. The website GroupRaise makes it easy to identify restaurants in your area that support nonprofits in this way and to request their help.
-  Ask every child in your class/school to do chores for change at home or for neighbors and donate their wages to the African Library Project.
-  Request a grant from your school's student council or parent organization.
-  Find more fundraising ideas on our website.



## 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 on our Resources page 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.

### BOOKS YOU SHOULD TRY TO COLLECT

- Mix of children's fiction, books with universal themes (friendship, animals, love)
- Children's nonfiction - Scientific books for students, reference materials like dictionaries
- Children's books teaching life skills about topics such as health, hygiene, adolescents and careers
- Books about Africa or African-Americans
- Children's books with diverse characters



## WHAT BOOKS SHOULD YOU **NOT** COLLECT FOR YOUR BOOK DRIVE?

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- 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 that are heavily focused on United States or Canadian history or government
- 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



## SORTING YOUR BOOKS

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.

- Sorting takes time, so sort regularly to avoid an intimidating mountain of books at the end of your book drive.
- You will want to sort by size in order to get ready for packing.
- If possible, sort by level to ensure that each library gets a range of reading levels, particularly if you have collected for multiple libraries.

### WHAT TO DO WITH BOOKS YOU COLLECT BUT CAN'T DONATE...

- Resale to raise funds
- Donate to Goodwill
- Donate to local library, jail, or shelter
- Ship them to Better World Books (BWB) for them to sell online, and BWB will donate a portion of the profit to African Library Project. Note: Not to your specific book drive.

# 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.

- Before getting started you'll need:
  - Boxes
  - Packing tape
  - Large plastic bag for inside box (not for Kenya book drives)
  - Mailing labels
  - Markers
  - Air packs or other packing material to go in empty spaces in the boxes
- Try getting the above items through in-kind donations.
- 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. Post office also does not accept boxes previously used for alcohol. Just crossing out the name is not enough.
- Use packing tape to reinforce all seams on the bottom and on the side edge of box
- Line 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.**



# PACKING YOUR BOOKS CONTINUED...

- 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.
- 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.
- Securely tape a mailing label to each box. The mailing label and packing slip will be provided by your container manager. 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.



## 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.
- 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 the mailing deadline. Please send your books no more than 1 month before 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 to \$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.



# WRAPPING UP YOUR INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING FEE

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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. Supporters can donate your book drive by putting in the book drive code.

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 African Library Project for international shipping expenses, is tax-deductible. We'll send you a thank you receipt for this contribution. Others can donate on your behalf but must include your book drive code so it is attributed to you.



## 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 drive to [marketing@africanlibraryproject.org](mailto:marketing@africanlibraryproject.org)
- Write a blog about your experience to be featured on our newsletter or website or submit to other organizations such as the Girl Scouts, Rotary International, Boy Scouts, etc.
- Fill out our feedback survey
- Share a social media post about your book drive - We'll share it too! Use #VolunteerALP

### 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

