



# 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.





## 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







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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 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!
- You will need to raise approximately **\$650**. About \$250 to \$400\* 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. Please alert your container manager that you are raising funds in this manner.
- 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 approximately \$650 in total.**

# 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

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**Make sure you are sending the right kinds of books. Your books should be of the reading age assigned by your container manager.**

**For books you can't use, you can:**

- Re-sell to raise funds
- Donate to Goodwill, a local library, a jail, or a shelter
- Ship to Better World Books (BWB) for them to sell online. BWB will then donate a portion of the profits back to ALP, though not to your specific book drive.

**Sort your books by size to make packing easier. If possible try to sort so that each library gets a variety of reading levels.**





# PACKING YOUR BOOKS

## THE ESSENTIALS...

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To get started on your book drive, you will want to gather the following items:

**Boxes:** 12"x12"x12" boxes are preferred. When full, they are less than 40 lbs and easy to handle. You can obtain boxes from Home Depot (their double-walled 14"x14"x14" boxes are good), Uline, or UHaul. 12"x12"x14" are also good. Starbucks boxes are free and small. Do not reuse a box that has been used for alcohol, even if this is crossed out on the outside of the box.

**Extra cardboard pieces:** cut these the same size as the base of your box.- Large plastic bags to line your boxes: A trash compactor bag is ideal but any intact garbage bag is fine (except for Kenya - plastic bags are not allowed for these libraries).

**Packing tape - heavy duty or shipping:** Packing materials: cardboard egg boxes, scrunched up grocery bags, or air packs work well

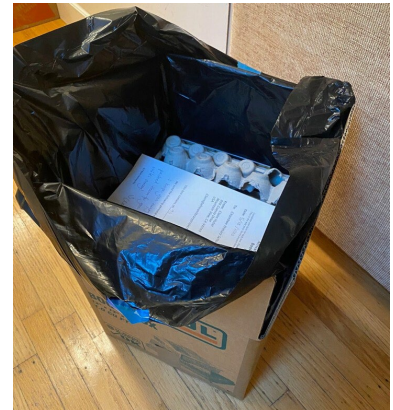
**Mailing Labels & Packing Slips:** You will receive these from your container manager and should print out a packing slip and mailing label for each box. Note that each mailing label is unique and should be used only once Please use them sequentially!

# PACKING YOUR BOOKS CONTINUED...

**To prepare your boxes**, tape the inside and outside seams, and all the outside edges with packing tape. Reinforce the bottom of your box by adding a piece of cardboard the same size as the base. Line the box with a garbage bag (except for Kenya). Your books will go inside this bag and it will protect them from any moisture on the journey.

**To pack your boxes**, organize your books according to size, and pack as many as you can into the box, making sure all the books go inside the garbage bag liner. Your box should be fully packed with books, and any spaces should be filled with packing materials. The goal is a box that is fully packed with no gaps, but not overstuffed. If your books can rattle around in your box there is a chance the box may become weak and break open. There is also a risk of this with boxes that are overstuffed. Count your books as you pack, and keep track of the number.

**Before you seal** your boxes insert a packing slip in each box. You can personalize these before printing if you would like. Including your email address will increase your chances of receiving a thank you note from your school. Close up the garbage bag and tuck the edges down the inside of the box. Tape the box shut using generous amounts of tape. Put a mailing label on the top of your box and completely cover it in tape, to protect it from moisture. Each mailing label is unique and should be used in order, making sure to use each label only once. Your box should weigh under 40 lbs!










## 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 can cost up to \$400. If your library is heavier than the average library or has more books, budget to spend up to \$400.

 **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, 19 Mantua Road, Mount Royal, NJ 08061**

\*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

