

Additional Resources

For information on Travelers' Philanthropy related projects of the organizations involved in this publication, please visit the following websites:

The African Safari Lodge Foundation

<http://www.asl-foundation.org/>

- Technical Assistance with Business Operations
- Capacity-building for Local Governance and Management
- Conservation and Ecology
- Health-Related Interventions (HIV/AIDS, Malaria)

Country Walkers

<http://www.countrywalkers.com/About+Us/Responsible+Travel>

- Dormitory/Community Center Project
- Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives

Global Exchange -- Reality Tours

www.globalexchange.org/

- Educational Awareness Campaigns
- Peace Advocacy
- Green Economy
- Fair Trade

Global Sojourns – The Giving Circle

<http://www.globalsojourns.com/givingcircle.html>

- Educational Sponsorships
- Support for Income-Generating Projects
- Wildlife Conservation

GoPhilanthropic

<http://www.gophilanthropic.com/philanthropictravel/projects.php>

- Childrens' Shelters & Orphanages
- Environmental and Heritage Conservation
- Library and Educational/Vocational Centers
- Microloan Initiatives

Holbrook Travel

<http://www.holbrooktravel.com/pages/educationexpeditions/AdvocacyOpportunities.aspx>

- Environmental Education
- Public Health
- Community Development

Intrepid Travel – The Intrepid Foundation

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

- Conservation and Biodiversity
- Health/Disability Projects
- Education
- Poverty Alleviation
- Community Safety
- Womens' Issues
- Childrens' Issues

Micato Safaris – AmericaShare Project

<http://www.americashare.org/>

- Community Centers
- School Sponsorship Programs
- Community Support Groups

Myths and Mountains – READ Global Program

<http://www.readglobal.org/>

- Library/Community Centers
- Business Development Assistance
- Health Clinics
- Microfinance Organizations
- Literacy Classes

Pepy Tours

<http://www.pepytours.com/>

- English/Computer Training
- Organic Agriculture
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Educational Scholarships
- Childrens' Shelters

The following article provides further discussion of the complexities behind donation of books to developing countries:

Think Twice Before you Donate

by Laura Wendell, World Library Partnership

Have you ever stared at a pile of old school books and wondered if someone, somewhere could use them? If so, the thought may have crossed your mind to send them off to a developing country. Surely that would be better than throwing them away!

Perhaps not. My colleagues and I have firsthand experience with the problems caused by book donation in several African countries. Here are some things to consider before you give your books to a book donation agency or ship them off to a developing country:

- Are there hidden costs? In many countries, the recipients of a book shipment must pay customs fees, port taxes and other charges. They must also pay to transport the books from the port of entry to their final destination. These costs can often be more than the books are worth!
- Are the materials in good shape? Books that are outdated, damaged and worthless here are going to be just as useless abroad. Remember that books also mould quickly when shipped by sea.
- Is the information useful? Rural African schools with no electricity don't need books on microwave cooking or skiing, both of which we have seen on library shelves.
- Are they in the right language? I know of a library in South Africa that got an entire shipment of moldy books in Czech.
- Are the materials culturally appropriate? Many books written for US audiences have cultural references that make no sense abroad. They may even be offensive. Romance novels, which seem to be popular donations, are distasteful at best to many Africans.

In addition to all these points, it is important to consider that book donation can actually HARM school libraries. Many schools do not allocate funds for books because they hope to get them donated. If the donated books are a huge disappointment, this kills support for the library. Book donation also takes business away from indigenous booksellers and publishers. I cannot stress enough the importance of local publishing. Africa is information rich, but book poor. Without more African publishing, huge areas of knowledge will be lost. Entire languages may disappear. Every dollar spent on buying books in Africa helps to ensure that African authors will be able to publish their work in their own countries.

An alternative use for your old books would be to sell them and donate the money to a program that purchases new books for schools and libraries in developing countries. This gives the librarians the opportunity to choose what they purchase, thereby ensuring that the materials will match the needs and interests of library users. If enough people ask, book donation organizations may even change their policies and start purchasing some materials abroad. When you consider the costs of shipping, you get a lot more books for the buck by buying them in Africa.

This article originally appeared in the July-August 2001 issue of the Global TeachNet newsletter. The World Library Partnership has since closed. For other global education resources and information, visit www.peacecorpsconnect.org/globaled