

16. Increasing Your Library Stock/ Improving Your Library Skills

How can you find more stock for your library?

One guaranteed way to increase your library stock is to produce your own materials, either in English or your local language (see chapter 14 for more on this topic).

Another way to increase your library collection is to ask as many people as possible for more stock. Local families, business people, and former students are often keen to help improve the library. 'Ask publishers, parents, and children to donate books,' recommends Fikile G. Mnisi, Librarian, St. Joseph's Primary School, Swaziland.

Thank book donors by writing their names inside the books they donate. A nice way to do this is by using 'bookplates,' which are paper labels you fill out and glue on to a blank page. If making or buying bookplates is not possible, you can make a rubber stamp saying, 'This book was donated by...' or simply ask someone with attractive handwriting to write the donor's name in the book.

If there is another library near you, consider having a book swap. Offer duplicate copies of your stock or books that are seldom or never read because they are the wrong reading level for your readers.

You can also request free books by writing letters to donor agencies (see below for a list) or by inviting officials to visit your library, so that you can explain your plans for the library.

If people are unable to donate books, or gift books are the wrong level for your readers, you should consider buying books. This can be done at local bookshops or by using a catalogue supplied by overseas companies. In order to purchase books, you may need to fundraise (see chapter 17). It is recommended that you organise fundraising locally before approaching aid organisations. In a school, you may need to prove to your school's headteacher

that the library needs a bigger book-buying budget (see chapter 17).

Where can you get free books for your library?

Donated books are free. Some may have been used by people in other countries, before they are given to your library, but this is not a problem if the books are in good condition.

If you know what types of books your library needs, write a letter on headed paper explaining to the potential donor, or aid organisation, exactly what books you need.

Your letter should include details of:

- The number of students at the school or the number of people the library serves (see chapter 18)
- The readers' level of education and reading abilities
- Whether you need multiple copies (for lessons)
- Whether the books are for a classroom, school, or community library
- Whether your library is in a rural or urban area
- Any types of books or titles you particularly need. If you just say 'textbooks', you may get textbooks from a different country that are not useful to your students, but realise that you are unlikely to get the exact textbooks you want except from a donor in your own country. It's most helpful to specify the type of book you want, like non-fiction science books for readers at an upper primary reading level, or fiction books for adults who are learning to read.
- Your contact information

If you are sending a letter by mail, it should be signed by two people – the librarian and the headteacher, for example, or the librarian and a local government official. Remember to keep a copy of the letter, as you may have to wait a long time for an answer. If you have access to email to make your request, do so. You are more likely to

get a reply, as it is much easier for the donor to reply. Some organisations will not open email attachments, so it is a good idea to type the letter directly into the email.

If you have already received books from the African Library Project (ALP), please be aware that ALP does not send supplemental shipments of books. If you have not received books from the African Library Project, please be aware that we do not accept requests from individual libraries except through our partner organisations in Africa. As of 2017, we are working in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Swaziland. If you are in one of those countries, contact the ALP partner organisation in your country (see appendix D). If you are in another country, we accept inquiries only from large governmental or non-governmental organisations that can start 30 to 60 libraries each year.

Try writing to the following organisations for more information about getting free books for your library.

Biblioref International

Are you aware of a school, a children's home, or other social service institution in a developing country where children would love to read, but do not have any children's books at all? Send your request for children's books to Biblioref.

State clearly:

- What kind of institution: a school, an orphanage, or another project for child care, with a short description
- The ages of the children who are going to read the books
- How many children are going to use the books
- Proportion of boys and girls
- The official language of the region and the country

- Name, address, and a contact person of the institution where the books are to be sent
- A telephone number of the contact person and, if available, a fax number and email address

You can submit the proposal by email to lees@biblionef.nl or by post to:

Stichting Biblionef Nederland
P.O. Box 90407
2509 LK
The Hague

Website: www.biblionef.org

If you are in South Africa, you should request books from the Biblionef office there: www.biblionefsa.org.za

Book Aid International

Book Aid International (BAI) sends out more than 700,000 books a year in its work supporting education and literacy in less developed countries:

Book Aid International increases access to books and supports literacy, education and development in sub-Saharan Africa. We provided 507,787 new books to over 2,000 libraries last year alone and have sent more than 30 million books to partner libraries since 1954.

BAI books are distributed by in-country distribution partners- library services, local NGOs, or distribution committees. To request books please contact the relevant partner organisation in your country, listed on the website. Please note that the books would have to be collected from them, and they may charge a small fee to cover their costs.

Book Aid International
2 Coldharbour Place
39/41 Coldharbour Lane
Camberwell, London
SE5 9NR
United Kingdom

Website: www.bookaid.org/aboutus/our-work/can-i-request-books/

Books Abroad

Books Abroad sends carefully selected parcels weighing approximately 8 kg (20 lb.) each (approximately 50 books) directly to educational establishments outside of the United Kingdom.

Books Abroad sends educational, library, and resource books for all ages to places of greatest need. Books Abroad's service is free. To ensure continuity of service, Books Abroad prefers to communicate with a person in authority in the requesting organisation, after the initial contact has been made by a teacher or other staff person.

Books Abroad
Unit 1, Richmond Avenue Industrial Estate
Rhynie
Huntley
Aberdeenshire
Scotland AB54 4HJ
United Kingdom

Website: www.booksabroad.org.uk
Email: info@booksabroad.org.uk

Darien Book Aid Plan, Inc.

Darien Book Aid is a non-profit, all volunteer organisation that builds a foundation of peace, understanding, and friendship by distributing free books. Book Aid sends books in response to specific requests from libraries and schools all over the world.

Because of severe financial constraints, they are only able to send a small box of books weighing a maximum 8 kg (20 lb.) for each qualifying request. Keep this in mind when you provide the following information in the body of your email (they do not open attachments):

- The name of your institution and the type of education or services you offer
- The ages of the people who are the intended readers
- The English reading level of the intended readers – beginning, intermediate, or advanced
- The types of books that would best fill your needs – textbooks, reference books, story books, fiction, non-fiction, etc. (Please be as specific as possible so that they may fill your needs as closely as they can.)
- Your mailing address in the exact form it should appear on the mailing label, including a phone number if that is necessary.

Darien Book Aid Plan, Inc.
1926 Post Rd.
Darien, CT 06820
USA

Website: www.darienbookaid.org
Email: [Kitty Graves, DarienBookAid.International@gmail.com](mailto:Kitty.Graves@DarienBookAid.International@gmail.com)

Hesperian Foundation

The Hesperian Foundation, publisher of health guides, including *Where There Is No Doctor*, provides free books to health workers who cannot afford the cost of purchasing and shipping Hesperian health guides. They send thousands of free books in response to requests from community health workers and schoolteachers. Due to limited funds, they are unable to fulfil all of the requests for free books they receive, and must give priority to requests from people living in poor countries who will

be able to share the resources widely with others in their communities.

To apply to Hesperian's Gratis Books programme, please fill out the online form at the website listed below.

Website: <http://hesperian.org/gratis>

If you have internet access, the Hesperian Health Guides are available for free download, and they have useful content in their free "health wiki" which is designed for people with limited computer or internet access. Their materials are available in a variety of languages including English, Chichewa, and Kiswahili. All the digital resources are available at:

Website: <http://hesperian.org/books-and-resources/digital-commons/>

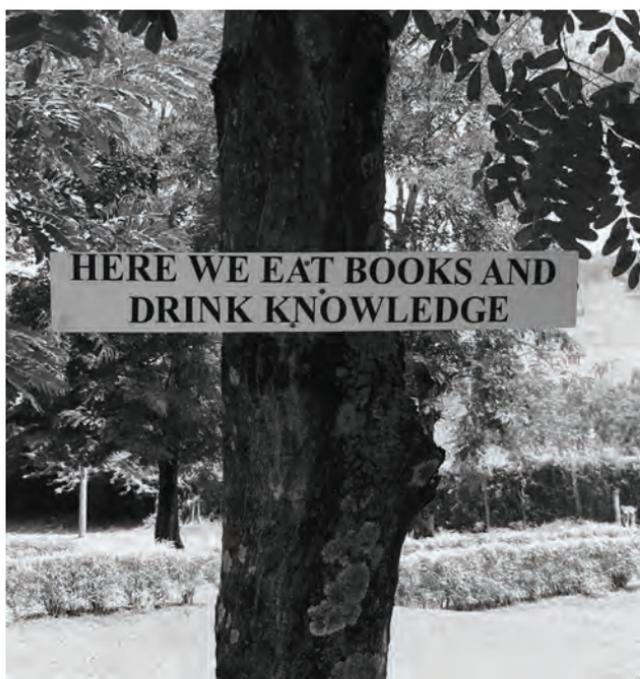


Figure 16.1. Obtaining more books for your library will “feed” people for years to come, as we see in this sign at a school in Kenya.

Peace Corps

Peace Corps is an American volunteer agency that sometimes supplies equipment such as books for school libraries. Write directly to the Peace Corps office in your country.

Website: www.peacecorps.gov



Figure 16.2. This primary school library in Kenya is off to a good start and can add more books over time.

Embassies and High Commissions

Write to the High Commissioner at the office in your country.

The British Council

The British Council has offices in many countries and its staff can offer free advice about setting up a library. They can also tell you if there is a policy for donating books or giving grants for books to schools in your country.

Although the British Council does supply some books, these are usually suitable for post-graduate study only.

Website: www.britishcouncil.org

Rotary Club

Many local Rotary Clubs can provide donated books. Rotary International often pays for shipping. Rotary Books for the World currently provides books to Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe from their base in South Africa.

Van Vuuren Road
Corner of Skeen Boulevard
Bedfordview
South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 83 308 0042 (Shirley Downie)

Telephone: +27 (0) 82 302 8171 (Anne Murray)

Email: shirley@phomella.co.za

Other Organisations

Many faith-based organisations and NGOs publish picture and reading books that readers may enjoy. Some may also run bookshops in your country and be willing to donate stock.

As well as writing to these organisations, you could also invite Embassy Officials, High Commissioners, or aid donors to visit your library. At a school library, make sure you discuss this with the headteacher and other staff before you send an invitation.

Why must gift books be checked carefully?

The books that will be most useful for the readers at your library will be books that are interesting, appropriate, and in good condition. Assess each book carefully (using the suggestions in chapter 5) and decide if people at the libraries will enjoy using it and/or if they will find it useful for their studies.

Some libraries have good experiences when they are sent gift books and some have bad experiences. If the books you receive were not appropriate from a donor, it is a good idea to thank them and let them know that these types of books do not work so that they can be more selective when sending books to fill other requests.

As you order new books or receive donated books, remember, 'You have the opportunity to create an exciting space for children. Do your best to make sure that students and school staff get involved in promoting books and including them into the curriculum,' recommends Jade Orgill, Breadline Africa Project Manager, South Africa

Where can you buy stock for your library?

If you are going to buy books, the first place to look is in bookshops in your country. You should visit these with other members of the library committee to help you select appropriate books. If you do not know which books you want, a useful source of information is the National Library. Wherever possible, you should liaise with the National Library and read their review journals.

You could also try contacting library suppliers. These are businesses that specialize in selecting and supplying books to libraries. Some offer free catalogues and others can recommend useful titles for your library.

Books by local authors

It can be difficult to obtain books written by local writers or authors from neighbouring countries. If the books you want are not available locally, try writing to overseas library suppliers or publishers for their catalogues. These are usually free.

African Books Collective Ltd

This is a non-profit-making organisation that was set up in the UK. It has a large catalogue of creative writing by African authors. You can view the catalogue online.

All orders must be sent with full payment, including postage and packing. The address to write to is:

African Books Collective Ltd
PO Box 721
Oxford OX1 9EN
United Kingdom

Website: www.africanbookscollective.com

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)

If you want to know more about children's books published in your country, you could try writing to IBBY. There are IBBY branches throughout the world, including Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia.

For more details about your nearest IBBY member's address, contact the head office in Switzerland:

International Board on Books for Young People
Nonnenweg 12
Postfach CH 4009
Basel, Switzerland
Website: www.ibby.org

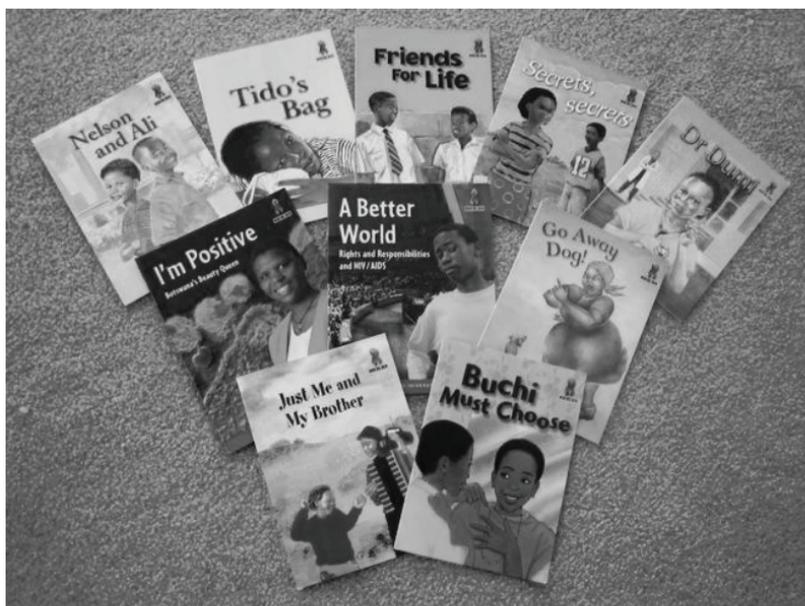


Figure 16.3. Use your limited book budget to purchase books that are culturally relevant and at the appropriate reading level for your readers.

Specialist books

The following organisations have books on more specialised subjects. You could write to them for free catalogues or more details about what they publish.

The Islamic Foundation

The Islamic Foundation produces some interesting books for children and students, such as *Muslim Nursery Rhymes* by Mustafa Yusuf McDermott. For a full list of books contact:

The Islamic Foundation
Markfield Conference Centre
Ratby Lane
Markfield
Leicestershire
LE67 95Y
United Kingdom

Email: info@kubepublishing.com
Telephone: (01530) 244944
Fax: (01530) 244946
Website: www.kubepublishing.com

Practical Action Publishing (formerly Intermediate Technology Publications)

For your free catalogue, which lists many books offering practical advice, write to:

Practical Action Publishing
The Schumacher Centre for Technology & Development
Bourton on Dunsmore
Rugby, Warwickshire CV23 9QZ
United Kingdom

Website: www.developmentbookshop.com
Telephone: +44 (0)1926 634501

Fax: +44 (0)1926 634502
Email: publishinginfo@practicalaction.org.uk

Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC)

This is a group that specialises in health topics and ideas to help children learn via the TALC programme. Popular publications include the Child-to-Child readers.

TALC
Barn B, New Barnes Mill, Cottonmill Lane
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 2HA
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0) 1582 380883
Fax: +44 (0) 1727 846852
Website: www.talcuk.org
Email: info@talcuk.org

Internet resources

If you have access to the Internet, you will find relevant materials at these sites (also consult chapter 19):

Appropedia

www.appropedia.org/Welcome_to_Appropedia

This is a site for collaborative solutions in sustainability, poverty reduction, and international development through the use of sound principles and appropriate technology and the sharing of wisdom and project information. All materials can be downloaded as free pdf files.

Project Gutenberg

www.gutenberg.org

Project Gutenberg offers over 38,000 free high-quality ebooks: choose among free epub books and free Kindle

books – download them or read them online. All ebooks were previously published by bona fide publishers.

How do you choose books from a catalogue?

The answer to this question will depend on your budget and on which books you need. It is best to choose books with a colleague, asking the advice of teachers in different subjects or members of the library committee.

Hardcover books are more expensive, but they usually last longer than paperback books. Note, however, that protective dust jackets (from library suppliers or made by yourself from strong paper or plastic) can ensure paperback books have a long life.

When you have decided which books the library needs and can afford, you will need to complete the order form. Figure 16.1 explains how to do this. Then you must send your order off. This will probably involve going to a bank and asking for an international money order or a banker's draft. If you have not done this before, ask the school accountant or a bank clerk to help.

It is important to keep a record of books you have ordered. You can do this using an exercise book, as shown in figure 16.2.

If you purchase new books, you may be very determined to keep them safe, but take the advice of Umaru Bangura, Director of the Society for Knowledge Management, Sierra Leone: 'Books are for use. Allow your pupils to use them and better themselves.'

Where can you get magazines for the library?

You may find your library is already being sent some free magazines and newspapers. If you are not on a mailing list, try asking the chief librarian or library assistant at the public library if they can help you organise some magazines to be sent to your library.

1 Qty is short for 'quantity' – the number of books you want.

2 Write down the author's name if you know it.

3 Some booksellers ask for the book's code number. If they do, put in the ISBN if you know it.

4 '@' means 'each', so five books at £2.50 each = £12.50.

QUANTITY	TITLE/AUTHOR	CODE	PRICE
5	A is for Africa	—	@2 50
Total Cost of Publications			12 50
Add Postage and Packing			3 00
TOTAL			15 50

5 Check the order form to see how much you must pay. Air mail is much quicker than surface mail.

6 Do not send cash – organise an international money order at your bank.

Figure 16.1. How to complete an order form for books.

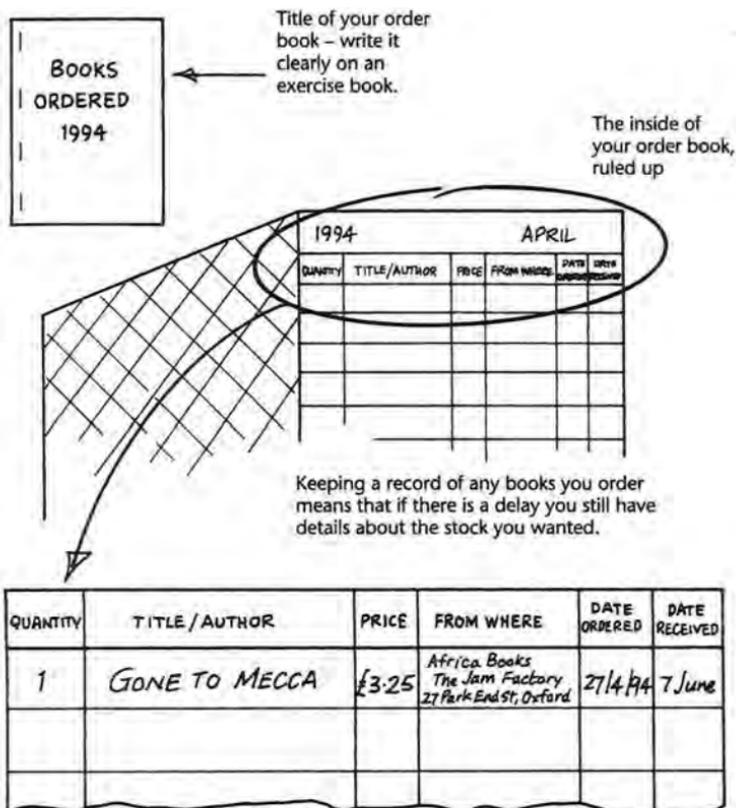


Figure 16.2. How to keep a record of books you have ordered.

How can you improve your library skills?

Many libraries welcome visiting librarians as observers or an extra pair of hands to help, which is an excellent way to learn by doing. If you are an African Library Project library, ask ALP's partner in your country to recommend some of the best libraries so that you might ask them if you can visit.

You may find your local technical college or university offers residential or distance education courses in library skills. The best place to ask is at the public library or the college or university.

Many universities offer distance education courses. Usually these require a computer with Internet access. Before enrolling in any distance education programme, verify that the university is accredited.

The University of South Africa has many courses in library science. They are offered in the Department of Information Science, which is part of the College of Human Sciences.

Website: www.unisa.ac.za

The International Federation of Library Associates and Institutions (IFLA) offers a wide range of help for libraries in the developing world. This includes scholarships for in-service training, a publications programme, the establishment of community information/resource centres, and literacy work.

For more about the IFLA's work, write to:

IFLA Regional Office for Africa
Ms. Lindy Nhlapo, Regional Manager
c/o University of South Africa
P.O. Box 392
Pretoria 0003
South Africa

Telephone: +(27)(11)471 2826

Fax: +(27)(11)471 2200

Website: www.ifla.org/regional-office-africa

Email: lnhlapo@unisa.ac.za or ifla@ifla.org

New books routine

- Add every new book to the accession register and give it an accession number (see chapter 6).
- Glue in the nameplate (see chapter 6).
- Decide if the book is fiction or information (non-fiction).

Fiction books (see chapter 9)

- Decide where the book should be filed in the fiction section. Sort books into skill levels if you are setting up a library at a primary school or a classroom library.
- Mark the spine of the book with an 'F' for 'fiction' and the first letter of the author's last name.
- Make a shelf list card and a title card for the new book.
- Tell readers about the new book.
- Put the book on the shelves.

Information (non-fiction) books (see chapter 7)

- Decide what subject each book is about.
- Classify it in the appropriate section.
- Mark the spine of the book with a classification label.
- Make a shelf list card and a title card for the new book.
- Tell readers about the new book and make a display.
- Put the book on the shelves.