



Books For Africa is the world's largest shipper of donated text and library books to the African continent. Since 1988, Books For Africa has shipped over 22.5 million books to 45 African countries. Our mission is to end the book famine in Africa.

Spring 2010 Newsletter

Radiating a World-Class Education Throughout Somaliland with BFA Books

"The BFA shipment has an incredible assortment of books. The books have allowed students to research what they are learning in class on their own, and have helped enable us to develop a reading culture in school."

—Kiette Tucker, Abaarso Tech in Somaliland

When a sea container of over 20,000 BFA books arrived at their school in late 2009, leaders at Abaarso Tech filled the shelves of their newly built library in pursuit of their goal to educate Somaliland's most promising youth. In hopes of serving the especially deprived rural population, Abaarso Tech also donated many boxes of books to a couple of schools in Erigavo, a remote, nomadic area in the far eastern region of the country, as well as to a school in Gebilay, on the far west side of Somaliland.

Lastly, they gave some BFA books to a women's organization and a school in nearby Abaarso Village, a small, rural community with no resources, no water, no medical care, no electricity, and little education. Students from Abaarso Tech teach English and math to primary students in the village every day, and use BFA books in these classes on a regular basis. ■



Above: Sihaam (left), a secondary student at Abaarso Tech in Somaliland, reads some BFA books to children at Abaarso Village school.

Below: Every afternoon, a group of secondary students from Abaarso Tech teach English and math to the primary school students at Abaarso Village school. They use BFA books in these classes on a regular basis.



A secondary student from Abaarso Tech reads BFA books to Abaarso Village students. The coursework in all classes at Abaarso Tech is structured around BFA textbooks.



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Ambassador Daniel Ohene Agyekum of Ghana Headlines BFA Fundraiser

“I ended up living in a larger town [in Ethiopia] where schooling was available. On the contrary, my two brothers were unable to learn further than 4th grade. My brothers did not get the chance they deserve. Only the opportunity for education set us apart.”

Asratie Teferra, BFA board member

Below left: Touring the Lerner Publishing warehouse in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Lerner is donating another pallet of books for a BFA shipment. From left: Harry Lerner (Chairman of Lerner Publishing), Pat Plonski (BFA Executive Director), Ambassador Agyekum of Ghana, Asratie Teferra (BFA board member), Tom Warth (BFA founder), and Tom Gitaa (BFA board president).

Below right: BFA board president Tom Gitaa and Ambassador Agyekum of Ghana sign a Memo of Understanding to send over 20,000 BFA books to the Ghana Library Board.



Books For Africa was honored to welcome His Excellency Daniel Ohene Agyekum, Ghana’s Ambassador to the United States, as the keynote speaker at the annual BFA fundraising luncheon on April 28, 2010, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

At the luncheon program, BFA board member Asratie Teferra described how he was born in a one-room hut in a rural village in Ethiopia and how the course of his life was changed profoundly by access to education and books.

In honor of the Ambassador’s visit, Books For Africa is sending a 40-foot sea container of 22,000 books to the Ghana Library System to promote literacy. At the signing ceremony at Eastcliff with BFA President Tom Gitaa, Ambassador Agyekum said, “I would like to express my government’s commitment to working with you [Books for Africa] on this.” Mr. Gitaa noted that Ghana is one of the top recipients of book donations in Books For Africa’s history, adding, “We at Books For Africa are ready to help Ghana in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.”

The Ambassador also held meetings with members of the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce and executives at Thomson Reuters. The company provides core law libraries for BFA’s Jack Mason Law & Democracy Initiative, which sends books to African law schools. ■



Above: Ambassador Daniel Ohene Agyekum of Ghana greets BFA supporters at a reception at Eastcliff at the University of Minnesota.

Below: Ambassador Agyekum shakes hands with Tom Pfeifer of Thomson Reuters. The company has generously donated core law libraries for BFA’s Jack Mason Law & Democracy Initiative, which sends books to African law schools.



BFA Staff & Volunteers Conduct Site Visits in Africa

Books For Africa staff members and volunteers conducted site visits this year in multiple African countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, and Senegal. Gathering feedback from recipients helps BFA monitor the effectiveness of book shipments.

BFA Executive Director Patrick Plonski visited existing and potential partners in Nigeria, Ghana, and Morocco in January 2010. His trip was covered by the largest newspapers in Ghana and Morocco. "I was impressed with the dedication to literacy and the strong demand for English-language books in West Africa," Plonski said.

"We are very grateful to you for providing us with such a rewarding and fruitful great amount of books to help us foster the English language and the America culture in our region in particular and in Morocco in general."

— Mr. Mustapha Walaf, who organized a BFA shipment to Morocco funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)



BFA Executive Director Patrick Plonski presented students at Al Mansour Dhabbi Secondary School in Morocco with BFA T-shirts.



In February 2010, Lane Ayres, director of Books For Africa's Law & Democracy Initiative, visited law schools and legal organizations in Ghana and Liberia. As a result of his visit, the National Bar Association is sponsoring a container of school books to Ghana, which will include a West core law library for the Ghana Bar Association. Ayres also spent a day at the Grimes School of Law in Monrovia, Liberia, which received the first shipment of West law books from Thomson Reuters in January of 2009. In discussions with the Dean, faculty, the librarian, and students, everyone gave testimonials as to how the books had improved teaching and learning at the law school.

In February 2010, Carole Patrikakos of Books For Africa delivered English reference and reading books to classrooms in Dakar, Senegal. The books will support the English teachers' resilient efforts to teach classrooms packed with up to 60 students. Université Gaston Berger, in St. Louis, Senegal, received a 40-foot container from Books For Africa in 2009 sponsored by the Nichols Foundation. UGB officials reported, "Your helping hand will indeed improve immensely our students access to knowledge and fill an important gap in our library." ■

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South African Students Receive BFA Books Thanks to Donaldson Company

Thanks to generous funding from Donaldson Company, students in South Africa are now the proud owners of over 20,000 BFA books. The Rotary Club of Kirstenbosch handled the distribution of the shipment. Some of the books were donated to the Shine Centre in Cape Town, who gave books to multiple schools in the area.

Sally James, Programme Manager at the Shine Centre, writes: "We always have fantastic days at the Shine Centre, but this one was made particularly special because we were able to use your books to enhance the Grade R Graduation, which is a very formal occasion at Prestwich Street School. Each child took home a special book at the end of the presentation, which was geared towards helping parents help their children learn to read. Most of the families we work with do not have a single book in the home, so this special treat of a 'take home and keep book' is particularly special." ■



Above: A student at Shine Centre in Cape Town reads a BFA book provided thanks to funding from Donaldson Company.

Left: A student at Shine Centre peruses all the new BFA books.



"It is like receiving gold every time we open one of the Books For Africa boxes. Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you to everyone involved!"

Sally James, Shine Centre in South Africa

Help BFA End the Fiscal Year on a Strong Note!

Our current fiscal year ends in June, so I hope you'll consider making a gift that will help us send even more books this year. If you have an interest in a particular region, check out current projects listed on the BFA website at www.booksforafrica.org/donate-to-project.html. You can make your gift by mailing it in the enclosed envelope or simply go online. Whatever option you choose, know that your gift will pass along the gift of reading as it helps us move books from our warehouse to waiting hands in Africa. ■

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