

BOOKS FOR AFRICA  
2001 ANNUAL  
REPORT

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## BOOKS FOR AFRICA

*A simple name, for a simple organization with a simple mission: We collect, sort, ship, and distribute books to children in Africa.*

*That's all we do.*

Our goal: to end the book famine in Africa.

Since 1988, Books For Africa has shipped more than 6 million books to 21 African countries. The books are on once-empty library shelves, in classrooms in rural schools, and in the hands of children who have never before held a book. Children who are hungry to read, hungry to learn, hungry to explore their world in ways that only books make possible.

We've sent millions of books.

*Millions more are needed.*



Dear Friends,

We generally use this space to provide an overview of the past year's activities—an introduction to the more detailed accounts you'll find in the pages that follow. We use it, in other words, to talk about what Books For Africa has achieved since our last report to you. Indeed, this has been another year of tremendous accomplishment for BFA, and we're eager for you to read all about it. But for the moment, and at this moment in history, we'd like to talk briefly about why it is that we—and you—have chosen this work.

We've chosen it because we believe, as Henry David Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, that “books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations.” We've chosen it because we believe, with James Russell Lowell, that “books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind.” We've chosen it because we believe, in the words of Barbara Tuchman, that “books are the carriers of civilization.... Books are humanity in print.”

And we've chosen it for personal reasons—because, beginning in childhood, books have been of inestimable value in shaping our minds, our dreams, our very selves. Having grown up in a society where books were plentiful, having received their gifts so liberally, so easily, we are compelled to do whatever we can to end the book famine in Africa. Over the past 13 years, BFA has made remarkable progress toward this goal. At the same time, our work has barely begun.

As you consider your year-end or new-year gift to Books For Africa, we'd like to ask you a question: What's the most important book you've ever read? Not necessarily the best book, the most critically acclaimed, the weightiest or most ambitious, but the book that was most important to you. The one that unfolded a world you'd never imagined, filled you with an awe you'd never experienced, showed you a future you'd never thought possible, offered you a comfort you'd never dared hope for. Think of how that book made you feel, physically and emotionally; think of the sheer trembling excitement of discovering such a book. Then multiply that feeling a million-fold, and you begin to get a sense of what we can accomplish, together, for the book-starved children of Africa.

Thank you for your contribution to this vital work, and may all of us, throughout the world, know peace and happiness in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,



Lane Ayres  
President



Robert Kowalczyk  
Executive Director

# 2001

**"Where there's a will,  
there's a way"**  
**NO SMALL  
ACCOMPLISHMENT  
IN SIERRA LEONE**

The relief was palpable in St. Paul, Minnesota and Freetown, Sierra Leone when 25,000 textbooks finally reached that war-torn West African nation in March 2000. The shipment culminated four years of effort between BFA and its partner organization in Sierra Leone, SHARE (Save Heritage And Rehabilitate the Environment). An indigenous, non-governmental organization focused on national development, SHARE's motto is: "Putting people in the center of things." SHARE's incredible persistence and determination to address its country's book famine in the midst of a decade-long civil war is a fascinating story that illustrates how BFA works.

April 1997 – Initial Contact: SHARE first learns about BFA through an Internet search. Following this cyberspace contact, Program Director Zainab Kamara explains that SHARE's purpose is to help people become self-sufficient through education and development projects. She describes Sierra Leone's 4.5 million people as on the brink of hopelessness, second to last of all nations in poverty (\$500 per capita income) and illiteracy (69%). With the civil war destroying much of the educational infrastructure, SHARE's commitment to education, she writes, is "as towering as the sky above us."

BFA Director Bob Kowalczyk replies immediately, describing BFA's mission and how it gathers large contributions of new and used textbooks from American schools, libraries and publishers. He explains that BFA donates each container of 25,000 books, but it will be SHARE's responsibility to raise the shipping costs. However, he also explains how SHARE can apply for a BFA grant to cover up to half the costs.

May 1997 – A Plan Is Made: Zainab articulates SHARE's connection to several prominent educational



// SHARE EXPRESSES SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR THE CONTAINER OF BOOKS THAT YOU DONATED TO US. WE WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT IT HAS GONE A LONG WAY TO REDUCING THE BOOK FAMINE IN OUR COUNTRY. THE WAR CREATED SUCH DESTRUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT OUR EFFORT WAS GREETED WITH COUNTLESS NUMBER OF REQUESTS, FAR MORE THAN WE WERE ABLE TO SATISFY. //

*Elvis Gbanabom Hallowell,  
Executive Director, SHARE, Sierra Leone*

institutions throughout Sierra Leone, reporting that over 2,000 students hold voluntary memberships with SHARE. She provides the specific needs for primary, secondary, and college textbooks, and makes a commitment to raising funds.

**November 1997** – *The Realities*: Zainab writes that a military junta has toppled the newly elected democratic government. Outraged, 90% of Sierra Leone's citizens have become active in civil disobedience and the junta is eventually overthrown. But more chaos ensues. Schools and postal services close. Even more distressing, the corporations that had offered shipping funds months earlier have now either declared bankruptcy or left the country.

**August 1998** – *Renewed Contact*: After nearly a year of no contact, SHARE writes to pledge again its commitment to help repair the country's educational sector. More information on the devastation in the country is relayed, and then again communication is suspended. Finally, in October 1999 BFA receives an e-mail from SHARE's Executive Director Elvis Hallowell. A former teacher, journalist and poet, Elvis explains: "The organization lost your address in the inferno of fire that ate the city. This morning as I was going into the Internet, I thought to myself that if I should type [www.booksforafrica.org](http://www.booksforafrica.org) I would definitely be hooked up. And there I was browsing into your website!" Hallowell's perseverance has paid off.

**November 1999** – *Grant Secured, Plans Detailed*: Hallowell notifies BFA that the international relief agency CARE has approved a grant to cover half the shipping costs. BFA quickly responds in kind, providing SHARE a grant for the other half. Details regarding SHARE's textbook needs are again worked out. *(Continued on page 4)*

## **MALAWI BOOK PROJECT FORMS PARTNERSHIPS**

Executive Director Bob Kowalczyk and Board Vice Chair John Ziegenhagen traveled to Malawi in April to firm up plans for the Malawi Book Project. Launched last year, this innovative project will place a 25-book reference library in every public and private primary and secondary school in the country, which has a literacy rate of 48 percent. They secured pledges of support from all three Malawi Rotary clubs, sought advice from other education-related non-governmental organizations, and visited several primary and secondary schools that had received BFA books in the past. In addition, the U.S. Ambassador in Malawi pledged the embassy's support in publicizing the project during the book distribution phase.

The coming year will focus on completing project fundraising from U.S. Rotary clubs, foundations, corporations and individuals; firming up partnership agreements with major book publishers; and refining the project's training and evaluation component. Minnesota Rotary clubs provided significant funding support for the early planning phases. If successful, the project could be replicated in other nations in which BFA operates.





## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dr. Natalie Hahn**, senior advisor for the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, met with BFA's staff, volunteers and Advisory Board.
- \$25,000 capacity building grant from The St. Paul Companies provided a sprinkler system, sign, cardboard baler and new brochure for BFA.
- First Lady of Tanzania Mama Mkapa met with BFA regarding the development of the Nyerere Memorial Library in Tanzania.
- 1,400 copies of *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African-American Experience* were distributed throughout eight countries in Africa. The books and funds to distribute them were provided by the Citigroup Foundation in partnership with [Africana.com](http://Africana.com).
- Tom Warth, BFA's founder, publicly recognized:
  - Harriet Van Meter Humanitarian Award for International Relations
  - International Children's Champion Award
  - The Warth Library named in Mbinga, Tanzania
  - 2001 Twin Cities International Citizen's Award

January 2000 – BFA Prepares SHARE's Shipment: In the basement of BFA's donated warehouse space in St. Paul, thousands of textbooks contributed by schools, libraries, publishers and individuals are stacked. Supervised by warehouse manager Tom Parry, volunteers congregate weekly sort books for quality and appropriateness. The volunteers come from diverse backgrounds — many through their love of books, others through their connection to service organizations or their keen awareness of the need for books in Africa. Patiently they work their way through the mountains of unsorted books, until the warehouse tables are neatly laid out with stacks of books separated by grade level and subject matter.

With SHARE's book request list in hand, Tom calls in Ramsey County's Sentence to Serve "volunteers" (those given community service sentences through the courts) to pack books. In three weeks, 650 boxes are sealed and carefully labeled, secured on pallets, and loaded into a 20-foot sea container for shipment to Sierra Leone.

March 2000 – SHARE Meets the Ship: A month after the container leaves the warehouse, SHARE sends word the shipment has arrived. It is a joyous occasion. The 25,000 books are trucked to SHARE's central distribution point and are then given to beneficiaries determined by SHARE and the Sierra Leone Ministry of Education. Twenty-five percent of the books go to primary schools, 25% to secondary schools, and 50% to colleges. In all, 52 schools receive books.



Recipient schools range from the Methodist Boys High School to the Freetown Secondary School for Girls, from The Sierra Leone Grammar School to Makeni Teachers' College, from the Flaming Evangelical Ministries School to the Muslim Congress Secondary School, from The College of Medicine & Allied Health Sciences to the College of Business Studies.

December 2000 – BFA Evaluates Its Accomplishment: Following distribution, Elvis provides BFA with documentation of the distribution process, including photos and a sheaf of thank you letters from school principals. On BFA's book evaluation form he indicates that the textbooks are appropriate and useful. None have gone unused.

In his final letter, Elvis writes: "SHARE expresses sincere appreciation for the container of books that you donated to us. It has gone a long way to reducing the book famine in our country. The war created such destruction to educational institutions that our effort was greeted with countless requests, far more than we were able to satisfy." In closing, he requests consideration for another shipment of books.

Although more complicated than most, the Sierra Leone project demonstrates "where there's a will, there's a way." Now multiply this project by 40. That is the number of projects that BFA carried out during 2001. Through those projects, children throughout Africa are the beneficiaries of BFA's ever-growing list of partners and supporters.

#### **PARTNERING WITH ROTARY CLUBS**

Rotary clubs in Minnesota and across the country joined forces with BFA this year to help address the book famine in Africa. The Rotary clubs of North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale (MN), Grand Island Sunrise and Noon (NE), Woodbury (MN), and Savannah South (GA) partnered with BFA to send 200,000 books to the children of Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Uganda. BFA provided the books, while the shipping costs were paid by the sponsoring Rotary clubs, matched by their respective Rotary District Foundations, and then matched again by the Rotary International Foundation.

Complementing these efforts, the Inver Grove Heights-South St. Paul (MN) Rotary Club conducted a Minnesota statewide public school book drive resulting in over 100,000 books being donated to BFA. Rotarians gave willingly of their time to pick up books and deliver them to BFA's St. Paul warehouse – where Rotarians regularly donate their time sorting and packing books. In addition, Rotary clubs in Districts 5950 and 5960 and their foundations contributed \$50,000 toward BFA's Malawi Project. Rotary clubs have partnered with BFA since its founding in 1988. Thirteen years later, Rotary's commitment to the children of Africa is stronger than ever.

// I WRITE TO THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR THE CARTONS —FULL OF BOOKS DONATED TO THE SCHOOL. WE REALLY APPRECIATE SUCH A TIMELY AND THOUGHTFUL GESTURE. //

*Mrs. A. C. Roberts, Principal,  
Annie Walsh Memorial School,  
Sierra Leone*



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\$2500 - \$4000

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UBAH Education Services  
WEM Foundation

\$1000 - \$2,499

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Blake Upper School  
Bloomington Schools  
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Buxton School  
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Carleton College, ACT Office  
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Century College  
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Friends of the Plymouth Library  
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Ramsey County Library  
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Gillette Children's Foundation  
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Gustavus Adolphus College Bookstore  
Hamline Law School SBA Bookstore  
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Hastings Sr. High School  
Hawaii Prep. Academy  
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Hennepin Technical College  
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Highland Catholic School  
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ISEM  
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Winona Public Library  
Winona Schools  
Woodbury Schools  
Wyeth-Ayers Research Library  
Zimmerman Elementary School

*Thank You!*

# FINANCIALS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2001	2000
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets	\$222,559	189,261
Net Property and Equipment	14,367	3,662
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$236,926</b>	<b>192,923</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current Liabilities	27,535	29,581
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	121,720	108,342
Temporarily Restricted	87,671	55,000
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>209,391</b>	<b>163,342</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$236,926</b>	<b>\$192,923</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

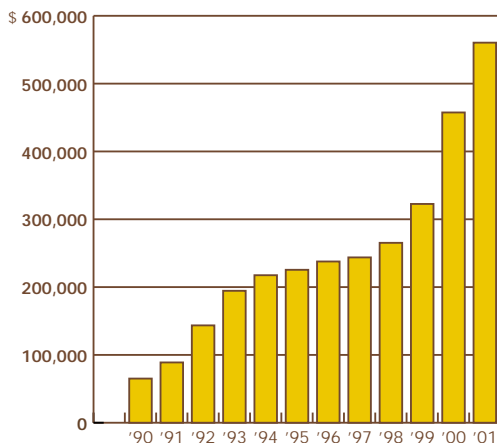
	2001	2000
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>		
Tew Foundation Contribution	\$171,474	\$131,200
Other Contributions	235,127	258,570
Interest Earned	4,558	3,629
Grant-Other	149,245	64,080
Warehouse Space Contributed	67,420	41,430
Books Contributed	8,031,331	6,289,725
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>	<b>8,659,155</b>	<b>6,788,634</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Program Operating Expenses - Overseas	8,477,066	6,664,430.
General and Administrative Expenses	94,975	78,928
Fundraising Expenses	41,065	15,278
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>8,613,106</b>	<b>6,758,636</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$46,049</b>	<b>\$29,998</b>

Year ended June 30, 2001

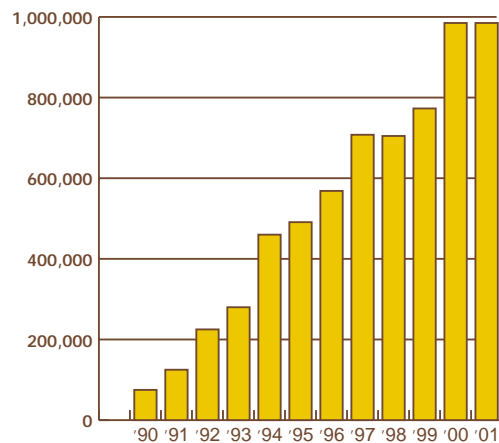
\* Copies of the full audit and the IRS 990 are available upon request.

\*\* The Charities Review Council, an independent organization that researches and reviews national and local non-profit organizations that solicit funds in Minnesota, has found that in fiscal year 2001 Books For Africa met accountability standards in all four areas: Public Disclosure, Governance, Financial Activity, and Fundraising.

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WITH THANKS AND DEEP GRATITUDE YOUR  
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