

# Books For Africa

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## CONGRESSMAN KEITH ELLISON (MN) DELIVERS BOOKS TO SCHOOLS IN 5 AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN SUPPORT OF ST. PAUL'S BOOKS FOR AFRICA

ST. PAUL, Minn. (August 2008) – On a recent trip to five African countries, Congressman Keith Ellison of Minnesota's 5<sup>th</sup> District delivered books to schools in support of St. Paul-based Books For Africa, the world's largest shipper of donated English language text books to the African continent.

In a statement about his trip, Congressman Ellison said: "In late June, I traveled to Africa with five other Members of Congress as part of my work for the House Democracy Assistance Commission (HDAC). HDAC seeks to promote responsive, effective government and strengthen democratic institutions by assisting legislatures in emerging democracies. We visited Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, and Mauritania. We met with elected representatives and government officials to underscore the U.S. House of Representatives' commitment to helping these partners build technical expertise that will enhance accountability, transparency, legislative independence, access to information, and government oversight. Meeting face-to-face with leaders on the continent reinforced my appreciation for their determination to guide their citizens to safer, more prosperous futures.

I traveled together with the goodwill of Minnesota's Books for Africa, pausing to deliver donated collections of books in each country I visited. Those gifts reinforced our personally-delivered messages of friendship, partnership and technical assistance as we seek to govern more effectively, and more compassionately in both the United States and Africa." (Photos: <http://flickr.com/photos/keithellison/sets/72157606312401422/>)

Access to education is one of the only opportunities young people have to end the cycle of poverty and attain a better life. Most African children who are able to attend school have never owned a book of their own, and many classrooms share one textbook between 10-20 students. Books For Africa's mission is to end the book famine in Africa.

Books For Africa promotes literacy and provides educational opportunity for all children in Africa. Over the last twenty years, the organization has shipped nearly 20 million books to 42 African countries. Each shipment, which contains 25,000 to 35,000 books, benefits a minimum of 20,000 students and up to 500,000 students over the life of the book. The larger community also benefits from access to reading materials, opening up a world of ideas, critical thinking and self-esteem.

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To learn more about Congressman Ellison's trip, contact:

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