



# Mobile Library Book Boxes

## YOU can establish a mobile library in Africa!

Many people would love to start a mobile library in Africa. The idea of helping to promote literacy and advance education is near and dear to many hearts. With a little guidance and help from Books for Development on the logistics, this is something YOU (or a small group) could easily accomplish. This is also a wonderful way to honor people—loved ones, special teachers or mentors, departed special people. So, what are we talking about?

### A Circulating Mobile Library

Books for Development has a long history of establishing libraries in Africa, including mobile libraries. We like to do this by hiring local metalsmiths to build durable boxes out of sheet metal—about the size of a smaller foot locker many of us used for summer camp. Here’s a photo of book boxes we’ve circulated in Northwest Uganda:



Boxes can help establish a base collection for schools without any books and also can circulate in a district so that children get a constant exposure to different and exciting books.

### These Book Boxes Meet a Lot of Needs in the Developing World

- They get books on new and different subjects into the hands of eager readers
- They expose students to new subjects that they may never have had a chance to read about before;
- They give teachers new materials to help enliven curriculum
- They expose children to the much bigger world.



## What’s Involved in Creating a Book Box?

We ask your help in just two ways:

1. Collecting/curating a selection of **books (Around 50 for each book box)** on a topic of your choosing
2. Help defray the costs of buying the boxes and shipping the books to fill the boxes. We ask for a **\$40 total** donation to cover these costs for a single mobile library.

## What are Some Great Topics For a Book Box?

Anything wholesome and interesting. Here are some ideas:

<b>Basic Science</b>	<b>Health &amp; Medicine</b>	<b>World Geography</b>
<b>Technology</b>	<b>Africa</b>	<b>Religion</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Women’s Interests</b>
<b>Architecture &amp; Buildings</b>	<b>Computers &amp; Internet</b>	<b>Energy</b>
<b>African Animals</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Skills (Sewing, Carpentry)</b>
<b>Poetry</b>	<b>Stories</b>	<b>Classic Novels</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>World History</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; Education</b>
<b>General Interest</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Beginning Readers</b>
<b>Soccer</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Great Biographies</b>

## How Many Books Do You Need?

In our experience, around 50 adult-sized non-fiction books will fill a book box. We can’t give you an exact number because books come in such different sizes. The volume, in other words, the book box itself that we are trying to fill is 12” X 14” X 24”. Thinner children’s books might take twice that many.



## **How Do You Get the Books?**

This is way easier than you think! For many people all you have to do is let a few friends, your social circle, your church, your club, your Facebook Friends, etc. know what you're doing and that you could use their books on a certain subject. Tell them about the children and people in need who will benefit and ask for their help with books from their friends. Visit our warehouse and see if we don't have books you can use. Consider supplementing your collection with budget purchases at local bookstores (Half Price, Katy Budget Bookstore, Goodwill, Salvation Army, MAM, etc.) or online (Better World Books, Half Price Books, Amazon's used books). Many good books are cheaper than you think.

This kind of a project can be **ideal for a group** since each group member can be asked to bring one to three books and there is the fun of combining these books into a cohesive library.

## **What Happens to the Books When You Have Them Together?**

Books for Development several times a year sends containers of books to the developing world. Once you deliver your books to our warehouse, at 3709 Polk, open on Saturdays from 9am to noon, they will be placed in line for our next shipment. We will make every effort to email you a photo of their arrival at a school and otherwise inform you about where they will be circulating, if you leave an email address with us.

## **Where Will Your Library Go?**

We are interested in having additional book boxes circulate in many areas, including: Refugee Camps; School Districts (especially remote rural districts with limited space for libraries); islands in Lake Victoria; nursing & health schools; Teachers Colleges; and African prisons. Depending on the subject that you choose and the greatest need we know about, we will place your library.

## **What Difference Will It Make?**

We work in many areas that have essentially NO non-textbook materials for local schools and even as far as textbooks only one textbook on most subjects for every 8 to 12 children. Books that a child can choose (often for the very first time) can make all the difference--showing a child that books offer interesting and essential knowledge and that learning to read is worth it.



In the Zombo District in Northwest Uganda, (pictured) Headmasters and Headmistresses have frequently remarked that the Health & Medicine book box, for instance, routinely gets the children talking about wanting to become doctors and nurses.

Likewise, when book boxes arrive, the children often spontaneously cheer because they know that something new and interesting has just arrived! Teachers, without resources, have been known to cry at the receipt by their school of dictionaries- something they only dreamed they *might* one day receive.



We all have seen how bad acts can start vicious cycles. A circulating mobile library does the opposite—it builds interest in the world of reading and begins progress toward lives of learning.

## How To Have Additional Fun With This?

**Talk about a COOL Christmas or Birthday Gift!** Get your books together, name your library in honor of someone, photograph or present the books and then ship them off!

**Turn this into a Family Project!** Imagine Grandparents, Parents and Children all working together to start the family mobile library.

**What a way to show your values!** A School District, Church or Large Organization can do several Book Boxes together and then devote time to thinking about the people receiving them and why helping those less materially fortunate is such a good idea.

**Turn the project into a teaching moment for children!** There is no more concrete way to show children that books are a privilege not a punishment and that not all people presently share that privilege.

**Acquire a new interest/hobby by curating a library!** Choose a subject you want to learn about-e.g., The Nile River, How to Draw, and learn as you acquire your collection.