

# How to Set up and Manage a Library in Rural Africa

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Libraries for Rural Africa

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## **Gathering the Books**

*Inexpensive or free books can be gathered from either local or foreign locations, each has their positive and negative sides.*

### **Sources in the USA**

**M**ost people in the USA do not like to throw books away. They view books as valuable resources and like to keep them in their house as long as they can. They are personal property. However, circumstances change with life, a move from an old house to a newer one, the death of a spouse, a change of careers or any one of a number of circumstances may lead a family to try to get rid of books. Rather than throw away books, most people try to contact the local library or a local thrift store which resells items for a low price, such as Goodwill Industries or St. Vincent DePaul Society.

### **Libraries as resources**

**Advice:** *If you live in a developed country, contact the branches of your local library and find out when they will be going through their collection to wean out books. This usually happens once during the year to make room for new books. Sometimes these branches may have sales of discarded books which can be purchased at a cheap rate. At the end of the sale, most branch libraries are very appreciative if you offer to pick up any left over books and haul them away for free.*

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Our experience in Northeast Ohio was very positive. The Akron-Summit County Library System had 22 branches, and typically throughout the spring and summer each would hold a sale. We either approached the head librarian of each branch or a support group for the library typically called “Friends of the Library” which helps the library fundraise and put on local benefits. We offer to collect any leftover books and take them away after the sale. Some of the head librarians were very kind to us and invited us to come in during the sale and pick out whatever books we wanted for free. All of the larger towns in the USA have branch libraries, and the branches multiply your opportunities to procure books.

The small town libraries also go through the same process. The library in Richfield, Ohio was small but had an annual sale open to the public at which discarded books could be purchased. We went to the library for several years after the sales and took away more than 30 boxes of discarded books each time.

University libraries also discard books. The head librarian must be approached, but most will be sympathetic to a worthy cause which seeks to set up libraries in resource-poor areas. At these same libraries, you could approach any professor or lecturer in a subject matter which interests you and ask for donated books. Every year the publishing companies send university lecturers college textbooks as prospective texts for their classes. Many of these books are repeats or newer editions of books already on their shelves. You could ask the lecturers if they would be willing to donate older editions or extra copies. We have found many to be sympathetic to our cause.

## **The General Public as resources**

**Advice:** *Try to be interviewed by a local newspaper. Many people will save the article for later knowing that they want to donate their books to a worthy cause someday.*

We were interviewed in separate years by The Cleveland Plain Dealer and The Akron Beacon Journal. For years after the article appeared, people would call us up with books to donate and mention the article about us which they had saved. Be sure to mention your phone number in the article. People will save it and call you later.

When a relative such as a parent, an uncle or an aunt dies, many people try to give the deceased's library to a worthy cause. If you have made your library project known to the general public, they will think of you and call you. This may require that you drive to their house to pick the books up, but the books will be given for free.

### **Schedule Book Events**

When the general public has some knowledge of your library project due to newspaper articles or radio interviews, you may plan an event to which people can bring books which they would like to donate to your cause. Holding such an event will help avoid costly trips around town gathering books.

### **Clean Up After Public Sales**

Often when you approach a public sale such as a church rummage sale, a yard sale or an estate sale, you can offer to come after the sale and take away any leftover books. When you explain your project, the hosts of the sale will most likely agree to your offer since your project is worthy and you would help them in a time consuming clean-up.

### **Books For Africa, St. Paul, MN**

This worthwhile nonprofit organization has been supplying books to worthy organizations on the continent of Africa since 1988. The organization solicits donations from the public and civic minded companies. They shipped over 2.2 million books to Africa in 2012. You will pay nothing for the books, but must cover the cost of shipping and getting the shipment through customs at the

port and to your desired site. We give you information about customs and transport later in the book. If you are pressed for time in collecting the books and setting up the shipment, then we suggest that you utilize the services of Books For Africa.

The BFA website is <http://www.booksforafrica.org/> where you will find their phone number, mailing address and an order form: <https://www.booksforafrica.org/books-computers/bfa-books-computers.html>



The Basic Overview of their organization reads as follows:

Books For Africa partners with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa to ship sea containers of about 22,000 donated books. Books For Africa provides the donated books, and the recipient organization in Africa or their financial supporters worldwide pay the shipping costs and distribute the books.

Books For Africa ships only high-quality books that are relevant to African students. We provide mostly donated text and library books, and we also make a special effort to include in every shipment reference materials such as encyclopedia sets, atlases, and dictionaries. We offer computers as well.

Books For Africa will load a container of books to your specifications. You can choose the books according to age level (primary junior, primary senior, secondary, or post-secondary) and category (such as math, reading, and general library books).

We highly recommend that you look into their service. BFA does allow you to choose the reading levels and the subject matters of the books which you send, and offers to supplement your shipment with computers and special reference books for which they charge a reasonable fee. For an average shipment of 22,000 assorted books, BFA charges around \$10,500 USD which covers delivery of the container to a port in Africa; there may be adjustments to the cost according to the destination port in Africa. The port charges would then be paid by you; we discuss this later in the book.

## **Sources in Africa**

There will be local sources in each country which offer books for sale. Local publishers may have some over runs of textbooks, novels or other books. However, a better source would be a nonprofit organization like the Ghana Book Trust in Accra, Ghana which imports used books in quantity and sells them

relatively cheaply. Some retailers in Africa will try to take advantage of the demand for books and sell them dearly. Ghana Book Trust sells paperback textbooks for GH C 3 to 4 cedis each (equivalent to \$2.00 USD). The Ghana Book Trust imports about 10 containers of books a year sometimes from Books For Africa, St. Paul, MN (see above).

The advantages of buying books locally is that you avoid shipping and port costs. Our estimates for shipping are about \$11,000 USD per forty foot container which can hold about 32,000 books (in cardboard boxes, not on pallets). The port costs and duties amount to another \$3,000 USD. These prices are approximate in 2013 for West African ports.

## Getting the Books to Your Library

### Shipping the books

**Advice:** *There are two people who will prove necessary to an international shipment of books, your freight forwarder and your clearing agent.*

### The Freight Forwarder

An indispensable service to use in the shipment of books to a foreign port is that of the freight forwarder. This service will find the container in which to load your books, arrange the time of drop off and pick up of the container, and arrange the conveyance of the container to the port of your choice. They can save you a lot of money if you have them search the different shipping lines to find the cheapest and quickest land and ocean portions of the conveyance. They will also take care of all of the paper work which includes filling out a Bill of Lading forms, advising you on the packing list, and other documents demanded in the port. They will then send these forms to you and your clearing agent at the destination port. We have found the charge for this service is to be around \$300. This charge is entirely separate from the actual cost of the leasing the container, taking from your loading site to the port and across the ocean to your destination port. For over 15 years we have used Chipner International/Blaser and Mericle Inc., Diamond, OH 44412, 330-654-2066, and found them to be very reliable, helpful and reasonable.

### The Clearing Agent

Another indispensable service for a novice shipper is that of the clearing agent. This service is performed in the port of your destination. The clearing agent will help with the paper work in the port which is voluminous, aggravating and time consuming. Typically, one finds a lot of corruption wherever there is a demand. If you are in a rush, there are plenty of other customers also trying to clear goods, there are questions of duties to be paid, forms to be filled out and government stamps and signatures to be had, then one can expect to pay an under the table fee. The clearing agent helps steer you through this process. They can also save you money since they know what a reasonable “payment” would be to move the clearing of your container along.

The clearing agent will also help with the filling out of various forms, and the processing of port costs, including demurrage or rental space for your container once it comes off the ship. The clearing agent can save you time and money in the port. It is not an easy process to clear your goods through a port. We have shipped a container of books to Ghana for fourteen years, and found it to be a very frustrating experience. Unlike our experience with the freight forwarder, we have never found a clearing agent whom we trusted 100%. They always seemed to have too many customers and they overlook some ways in which we could have saved time and money. They are a necessary service in the process, however. Typically, we have paid the clearing agent between \$200 and \$300 USD.

## **Shipping Cost**

The Freight Forwarder will help line up the shipping for you. We have used a 40 foot container with an extra foot and a half height which is called a “high cube container”. Into this volume we have put 32,000 books packed in the cardboard boxes which you find in grocery stores. When you pack the books into such boxes, make sure the books are lying flat in the boxes and not standing up. We have found that the books’ covers bend irreparably when the boxes are packed on top of each other and the books are supporting the weight standing on their covers instead of packed flat in the box. We calculate that a typical grocery store box holds

around 25 books on the average (calculate 20 books per box if the books are college textbooks). Pile the boxes one on top of the other up to a height of about 5 to 6 feet throughout the container. You may have to shift the boxes higher towards the front of the container if you ship through California which has more stringent weight distribution requirements on truck entering the state. When we shipped in 2011, we paid \$10,500 for a 40 foot high cube from Phoenix, AZ to the port of Tema, Ghana.

You may use a smaller 20 foot container if you want to send about 19,000 books. A 20 foot container costs about 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the cost of a forty foot container. If you have less than 10,000 books you might want to consider shipping a “partial load”. A partial load means that you share the container with other customers. You pay a portion of the cost of shipping according to the amount of total space you take up. It can save you shipping costs, but the drawback is that when customers come to pick up their portion of the container, some of your items might get stolen.

You will be given an ocean transport cost and an overland trucking/railroad cost, and these will be combined for a total amount.

## **Expenses in the Port**

The clearing agent will help you sort out the costs in the port, but be prepared for a tedious procedure. The following are expenses which you should expect:

**Demurage:** rental space for the container. You are given 7 days and then you have to pay rent on the container which adds up to

**Customs, Excise and Preventive Service:** Books are generally not taxed. However, there are other fees which the government levies on imports. One such is a National Health Insurance tax on all imports. Included in our book shipment were some rosaries, pencils, pens, and book bags for reading contest prizes and these were heavily taxed at 100% of their value, even though the book bags were used.

Inspection of container: a customs officer must have your goods removed from the container and inspected. This fee is covered under port cost, but expect to pay an under the table fee. There are many related fees involved in having the container brought down by a huge moving crane from where it is stacked in the port and sent to a place to be inspected by the customs officer.

Shipping Line costs: Handling and freight charges (in addition to what was paid in the USA before shipping).

Deposit for container: this fee is paid in case you want the books to remain in the container and sent to your library. When you send the empty container back to the port, you will get your deposit back.

## **Transporting the Books from the Port to Your Library**

When you are in the port to pick up your load of books, you must decide whether to keep the books in the container and have the container put on a flatbed truck and sent to your library, or to have the books taken out of the container and packed into a closed truck and sent to your library. As stated above, if you choose to keep the container for transport, then you will have to pay a deposit once you bring the container back to the port. It is often easier this way, but you have to make sure that the container is returned, otherwise you won't get your deposit back.

Trucking the books to your library is less expensive than in the USA, but is still \$450 USD for a round trip of 60 miles in Ghana (2011).

It is important for you to have a group of workers or volunteers lined up at the site of your library to unload the library books. Most truck drivers are anxious to get back on the road and return to the port for another load. Hence, there will be pressure on you to unload the books as soon as you arrive, even if it is at 11 o'clock PM. Line up twenty to thirty people beforehand to be prepared to come to the place where you will store the books until you organize the library. Have one person watch the off loading of the

boxes to make sure no one walks away with them. Have another person watch how the boxes are going into your storage place, and as many as needed along the way to make sure no boxes get missing. Have some strong men at the truck to take the boxes down and put them into the hands of the carriers, and then another pair of men at the place of storage to stack the boxes from floor to ceiling.

*Tip:* A shipment of 32,000 books represents about 1,300 boxes, so be prepared to have a room 15 feet by 20 feet at least in which to store the boxes.

## Cataloguing the Books

*The reader must be able to readily identify the subject matter of a book and its Dewey Decimal Number. We write the Dewey Decimal number at the bottom of the spine of the book. When the spine is too narrow, we write the number in the upper right hand corner of the front cover of the book.*

## Using the Dewey Decimal System

The simplest and most widely used system to catalog library books is the Dewey Decimal system. It is logically based and straight forward. The following divisions are used:

- 0 to 99: Computer Science, Information, and General Works
- 100 to 199 Philosophy and Psychology
- 200 to 299: Religion
- 300 to 399: Social Sciences
- 400 to 499 Languages
- 500 to 599 Mathematics and Pure Sciences
- 600 to 699: Applied Science (technology)
- 700 to 799: Fine Arts and Recreation
- 800 to 899: Literature
- 900 to 999: Geography and History

Since rural libraries are typically pretty small, 12,000 volumes or less, we believe that it is possible to identify the most commonly used subjects and identify which books fit into



those subjects. For instance, the general category classification for Psychology is 150, but it is broken down into:

- 151 Intellect.
- 152 Sense.
- 153 Understanding.
- 154 Memory.
- 155 Reason.
- 156 Imagination.
- 157 Susceptibility.
- 158 Instincts.
- 159 Will.

Since rural libraries won't have more than two shelves of books on Psychology, it is not necessary to break the different books into categories of "intellect, sense" etc. In most cases, one need not add decimals after a category unless there are two related categories, each of which is its own discipline, such as 657 Accounting and 658 Business Management. The common categories which we have adopted for small libraries in Ghana are as follows:

## **Adult Non-fiction**

### **Philosophy and Psychology**

- 140 Philosophy
- 150 Psychology

### **Religion**

- 220 Bibles
- 240 Theology
- 242 Prayer/Devotions
- 259 Religion and Psychology
- 268 Sunday School
- 270 Church History
- 280 Inspirational Literature
- 290 World Religion

### **Social Science**

- 301 Sociology
- 306 Marriage and Family

310 Statistics  
320 Politics  
330 Economics  
331 Careers  
332 Finance  
340 Law  
350 Public Administration  
361 Social Welfare  
370 Education  
371 Educational Psychology/Special Education  
372 Elementary education  
373 Secondary Education  
378 Tertiary Education  
380 Commerce/Media and Publishing  
390 Folklore

**Languages**

415 English Grammar  
420 English/Composition  
430 German  
440 French  
460 Spanish  
490 African languages

**Pure Sciences**

500 General Science  
510 General Math  
512 Algebra  
515 Calculus  
516 Geometry/Trigonometry  
520 Astronomy  
530 Physics  
540 Chemistry  
550 Earth Science  
574 Life Sciences/ Biology  
577 Ecology and Environmental Studies  
576 Microbiology  
580 Botany  
590 Zoology

**Applied Science**

604 Technical Drawing

610 Medicine/Nursing  
612 Human Physiology  
613 Hygiene/Nutrition  
613.8 Addictions  
614 Public Health/First Aid  
615 Pharmacology  
616 Diseases  
620 General Engineering  
621.3 Electrical  
621.38 Electronics  
629 Motor vehicles  
630 Agriculture  
636 Domestic Animals  
641 Cooking  
643 Household  
646 Sewing/Grooming  
652 Shorthand/typing  
657 Accounting/Auditing  
658 Business Management  
658.8 Advertising/Marketing  
670 Manufacturing/machine shop  
690 Building construction

694 Carpentry  
696 Plumbing

**Fine Arts**

700 Art collections  
710 Landscaping  
720 Architecture  
740 Drawing  
745 Crafts  
750 Painting  
760 Graphic Arts  
770 Photography  
780 Music  
792 Drama  
793 Indoor Games  
796 Outdoor sports

**Literature**

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808 Public Speaking  
808.8 Literary Collections  
809 Literary Criticism  
810 American Literature  
820 British Literature  
880 Greek/Roman Lit.  
890 European Literature  
896 African Literature

**Geography and History**

909 World History  
910 General Geography  
914 European Travel  
916 African Travel  
917 American travel  
920 Biography  
930 Archaeology  
940 European History  
950 Asian History  
960 African History  
970 American History

**Other subjects:**

***Adult Fiction:*** we catalog adult fiction by writing a large “F” or “Fic” on the spine of the book. If you have a large selection of adult fiction books, you may want to write “Fic” on the spine of each book, and below it the capital letter which begins the author’s last name.

***Youth books:*** You may identify a book of non-fiction for youth by placing a large “Y” (for Youth) or “J” (for Juvenile) on the spine, and then writing the number of the discipline below it. We term a book “Youth” if the target age range is middle or secondary school. If your secondary school students operate at an advanced level, then you may reserve the Youth category for middle school/junior high students. Again, since our rural libraries are small, we use the following headings:

### ***Youth Books Categories:***

200 Religious for Children  
300 Social Sciences for Youth  
400 Languages for Youth  
500 Math for Youth  
520 Science for Youth  
600 Technology for Youth  
700 Art For Youth  
780 Music for Youth  
796 Sports for Youth  
800 Literature for Youth  
910 Geography for Youth  
960 History for Youth

Hence, the religious books in Youth non-fiction will be identified by:

Y

200

The Y will note the age level and the number written below it will identify the subject matter. All of the books in one of the categories above will have the same number. For instance, all science books in Youth will be catalogued by Y/520.

***Children's books:*** We have found that it is helpful to identify the reading level of each of the children's books in our libraries. We have devised a color-coded system that is easy for children to use. This reading level system is as follows:

**Orange:** for picture books with a few words per page up to one or two sentences per page.

**Green:** for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade: with from one to two paragraphs on a page with age appropriate pictures. (sometimes a book may have 3 paragraphs but the font is large and it is obviously geared toward the younger child in this age group. Use your judgment in those cases).

**Yellow:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders fiction and non-fiction with from 2 to 4 paragraphs and some pictures. They are obviously a bit more sophisticated than the Green level, but the explanations in the text are not as advanced as a middle school. Often there are easy novels with pictures every few pages.

**Fiction books for Youth:**

**Red** for fiction: these novels have fewer to no pictures as compared to Yellow, but the subject matter marks them as youth rather than adult novels.

***Reference section:*** we place an “R” or “Ref” on the spine of reference books. Typically, however, there is no need to so identify dictionaries or encyclopedias with the “R” label; they are readily identifiable. Special reference books, such as thesauruses, special dictionaries, or other general works may need the “R” label to indicate that they shouldn’t be replaced with other non-fiction books, but rather in the reference section. When the librarian goes to replace books left on the tables, back on the shelves, it is helpful to have the “R” label.

## Organizing Your Shelves

***In librarian terminology, we refer to a bookshelf as a stack of shelves. Typically, your stack of shelves would be four feet wide, six and a half feet tall and a ten to twelve inches deep. Within a wood frame of this size, one would put five shelves stacked one above the other with about 12 inches of clearance between the one above or below.***

1. It is a good idea to separate the children's, youth's, adult fiction/non-fiction's and reference sections from each other.
2. The organization of the stacks in the library should have a practical aspect. The librarian should be able to see as much of the stacks and patrons as possible. This prevents "secret spots" where individuals may be tempted to tear out or with a razor blade cut out valuable pages which they think they need.
3. The organization of the stacks should be logical as well. Since English as a language reads from left to right, so the sequence of the numbers on a shelf should have the lower number on the top left hand corner and proceed to higher numbers to the right and below. In practical terms this means that when you begin placing the Adult Non-fiction books on the first of the adult stacks, you start with 140 Philosophy in the upper left hand corner. Fill up the shelf for as many of the 140 Philosophy books as you have, and then continue with thw 150

Psychology books, then the 220 Bible Study books in sequence from left to right.

4. At the end of every shelf, leave a hand's width space to allow books to be easily taken off and put back on the shelf. This is a very important minor point to observe. Making use of every inch of space on a shelf is counter-productive. Leave breathing room for your books. When a shelf becomes too full, and one tries to stuff the book back onto the shelf, the binding of the book becomes bent. In time, your books will suffer. Leave a little space for your books to breath. This practice also allows for space for a few new books, or books that are temporarily lying on a table and being used.
5. When two stacks are back to back, the same rule applies: continue the sequence from the upper left and proceed on down. Maintain a sequence so that there is a logical flow to the shelves and the patrons can readily grasp where to find the next book in the series.
6. Post the Dewey Decimal numbers of the common books on your shelf. Print out this sequence and display it on the wall or side of the bookshelf.

Adult Non-fiction

**Philosophy and Psychology**

140 Philosophy

150 Psychology

**Religion**

220 Bibles

240 Theology

242 Prayer/Devotions

259 Religion and Psychology

268 Sunday School

270 Church History

And so on.....(see full subject numbers earlier in this chapter).

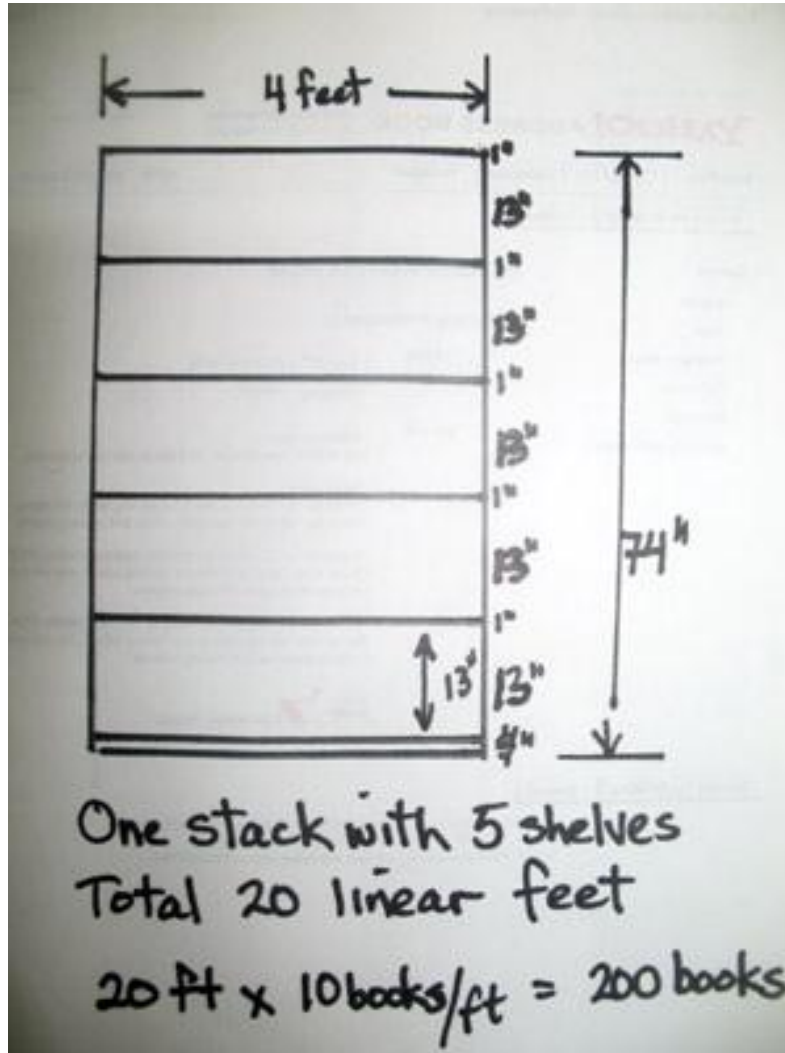
7. The Youth stacks of shelves should display the Youth numbers: Y/200, Y/300 and so on... in a similar left to right sequence. The Youth fiction should be in close proximity to the Youth non-fiction.



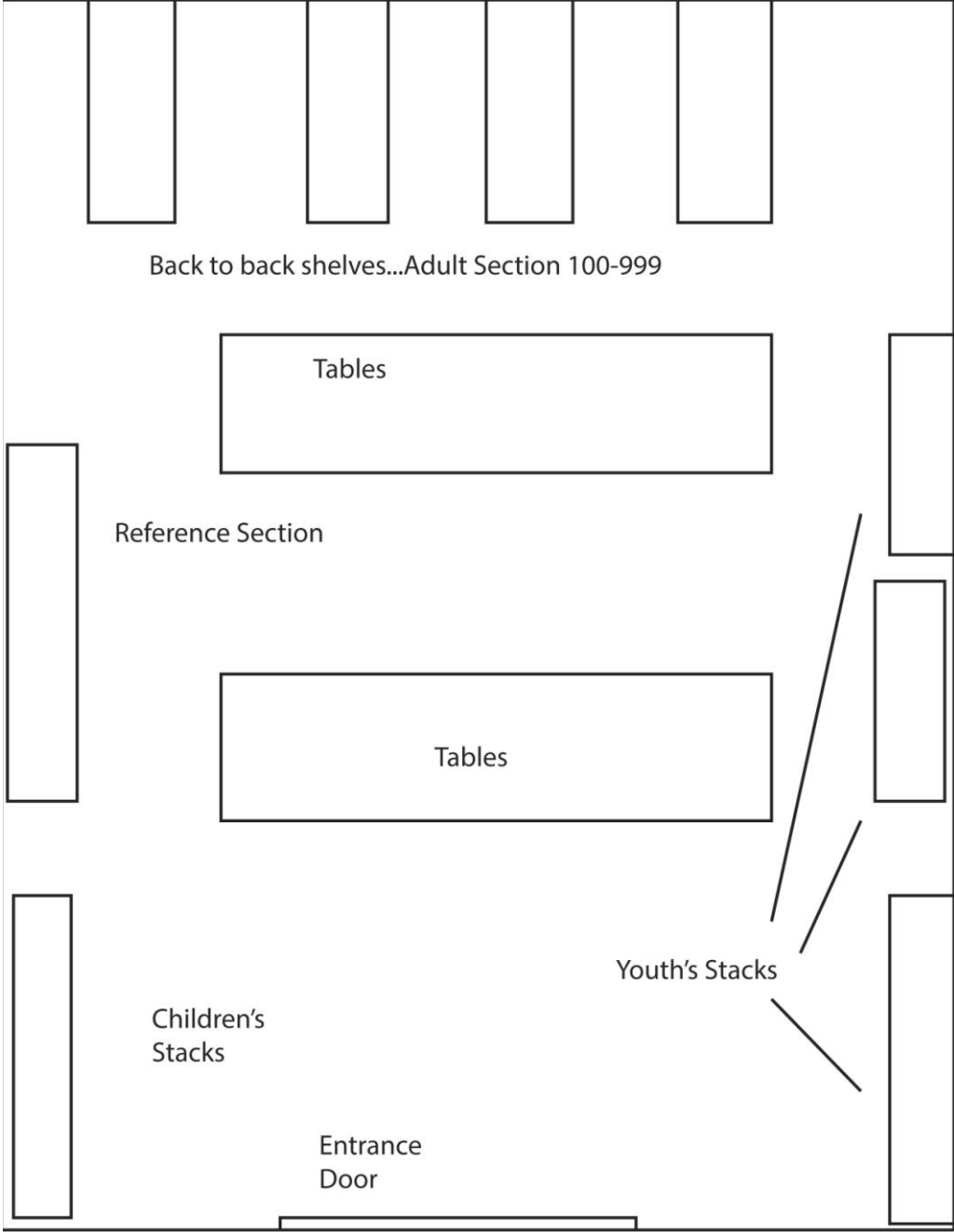
8. The children's stacks should feature the "Yellow" for class 5 and 6 books on the top two shelves, the "Green" class 3 and 4 shelves books below that, and the "Orange" primary books on the bottom shelves. The idea is to put the books close to the heights of the patrons who would be borrowing them. The Kindergarten and Class One should shouldn't have to reach to high to take down the books they want to read.

## The Carpenter's Plan

See below for a sketch of the dimensions:



# The Layout of the Room



The above drawing suggests a possible layout for a library. The youth stacks are together, as are the children's stacks and the adult stacks (back to back) in the rear of the library. The tables provide a place for the patrons to sit on benches and read. Frequently in developing countries a well-lit, quiet, public place is a real benefit to the serious student/patron. The reference section on the left side is a convenient and correct place for dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs and special collections in a series.

# Chapter

# 5

## **Your Library Board of Trustees**

*A local Board of Trustees for the library is a must for every small library. Do not expect the government to provide anything. There are always strings attached, and many times, small personal bribes to pay in order to get a little support. The library is a blessing to your whole community and spearhead for progress and community development. The library in a rural area deserves the support of its citizens. Committed, generous and forward-thinking people are present, you just have to find them.*

## **Library Board Members/ Who Are They?**

1. Most of the members for your Library Board should live in your town. You can include some wealthy citizens who live in one of the big cities, but most of the members should live locally so that when a problem comes up they are there to solve it.
2. Chose men and women for the board.
3. Choose people from different walks of life: educators, business men and women, traditional rulers (chiefs, queen mothers, elders, spokespeople), local politicians, students and mothers.

4. There is no salary for the position. It is all voluntary, hence, each library board member should be community-minded and generous.

## **What Role Do the Library Board Members Play?**

1. **Oversee staffing:**
  - a. The library board members hire and fire the library staff.
  - b. They make sure that the librarian is doing his/her job properly. If the librarian is showing up to work late, the library board members meet him/her and see that the library keeps regular hours.
  - c. They make sure that the librarian gets paid regularly. This is one of the most important roles of the library board members. In Ghana the local District Assembly is often asked to enroll the area librarians on their payroll. Very often, the District Assemblies are lax in paying the librarian. In such cases, the librarian may quit in frustration. Frequent turnover of librarians is bad for the running of the library. If your librarian is responsible, trustworthy and hard working, then the library board should support him/her and advocate for him/her with the District Assembly.
2. **Work to increase the monthly patronage at the library.**
  - a. When libraries are started in rural areas, there is no guarantee that the local students and their parents understand the benefits of a library. Parents pay school fees for their children and hence are usually very concerned that they get their money's worth. With a free, local library, attendance is optional and parents can be unaware of the value of a library. The community needs to be informed of the value of a library.

- b. With the librarian's help, the Library Board can organize reading contests, reading clubs and story times for the young children. The Library Board can hold award ceremonies for those students who do well in the library's reading contests or who consistently attend the reading club or story hour. Inviting whole schools to attend such award ceremonies will encourage new students to attend the library's programs.
  - c. See that the librarian takes hourly and daily attendance by recording the number of people present in the library at the top of each hour. With this information, the library board learns what time of day the library gets the most use. The total daily attendance will also enable the library board to see growth in library attendance after events like reading contests, award ceremonies, etc. The librarian should report to the library board at their monthly meeting the attendance for the previous month.
3. The library board should raise money for library expenses.
- a. As mentioned above, local government is often very lax in paying salaries of librarians and other local workers. It may be possible for the library board to be entirely independent of local government and its bureaucracy. We in Books for Africa Library Project were successful in persuading the library board of Kukurantumi, Ghana to take on the responsibility of raising money for our librarians. We have a donation box out at every town funeral, and townspeople put money in for the library. We approached wealthy citizens of the town who live in big towns and come home occasionally, to donate sizeable sums for the library. One couple agreed to put our three librarians on the staff payroll of their company that operates in the capital of Ghana!

- b. Every library has maintenance needs, the light bulbs burn out, a toilet facility is needed, a new coat of paint or more stacks of shelves. These are expenses that the library board attends to. It is difficult to go to the whole town for money when a light bulb burns out. Contingency funds and regular salary for the librarian should be the library boards business. It is not easy, but the library pays dividends in increased student performance and an educated populace.
  - c. The work that the library board does is true community development. When townspeople learn to be responsible for community based resources, the whole town learns to be more self-sufficient and becomes a better place to live in.
4. The library board should meet monthly at least. The challenges of developing a trained staff, raising money for library needs and increasing patronage of the library usually demands a regular commitment from library board members in the early years.
- a. The librarian should give an attendance report at each meeting.
  - b. The board should review the rise or the fall of monthly attendance and brainstorm ways to increase it.
  - c. The following officers should be appointed: a library board president, vice president (to preside in the absence of the president), treasurer and secretary. Attendance is taken by the secretary who also helps set out an agenda for each meeting, and contacts library board members before each meeting. The treasurer gives a report at each meeting. The president and vice president preside at the meeting and help the board to operate as a consensus.
5. Training the Librarian: Even though the Board of Trustees has little knowledge of librarianship, it is important that the librarian have a minimum of practical knowledge before starting the job. We strongly



suggest that a member of the board or a citizen of your town who is a willing teacher undertake to teach the curriculum featured in the next chapter to the librarian and to some of the library board members. It is always useful for board members to learn something about how a library is run.

## Choosing the Librarian

***Advice: Hiring and managing the librarian is the most important role of the Library Board of Trustees. Without oversight the librarian can keep whatever hours they want, sell the library's books on the side, abuse the students, and discredit the good name and purpose of the library.***

### Qualifications:

1. Honesty and trustworthiness are primary. The librarian must have a good character. It is also good to have a librarian who is kind and patient with children.
2. Secondary school or business school education. The person must read well. At the very least, have the candidates read to the selection committee to determine how well they can read.
3. A love for books and reading. This quality is very important. If this will just be another job for the candidate, and he/she has no interest in developing the library and attracting students, then the job is not for him/her. There should be excitement and commitment in the candidate about the library. These are the feelings of the library's board members, and so they should be reflected in the librarian.

4. A sense of responsibility. Taking care of the books in the library is an important responsibility. The library should be kept clean, the books and furniture and floor should be dusted and swept regularly, and every book taken down by itself and dusted and put back at least once a year. We have found that even young adults with a secondary school education are capable of managing and caring for a library, 23 years old!
5. For most libraries in rural areas it is not necessary to have a university trained librarian. Often the university trained librarian demands a salary that is out of step with the typical salaries in the rural town. Since some responsible young adults with a secondary school education are capable of managing a library, it is better to look for good candidates among them.

## **Interviewing the Candidates**

We advise the library board members to do a thorough interview process in selecting the librarian. The following process has worked very well for us.

### **The Interview Process**

1. Advertise for the post of librarian and list the requirements:
  - a. A secondary school leaving certificate with the results of the WAEC exam (or a similar school leaving exam).
  - b. Character references from two people.

2. Pick an interview date and have all candidates come in with their education certificates, exam results and letters of reference.
  - a. Verify all of the documents as genuine.
  - b. Have each of the candidates read aloud from a book (adult fiction or non-fiction), and make notes on how well they read. Can they sound out unfamiliar words? Do they stumble along or is their reading fluent? Do they read at an adult level?
  - c. Choose the best six of the candidates.
    - i. Call these ones aside and explain that you would like to give them a three day training course in librarianship. At the end of the course, they will be tested and based on the test score and estimation of character, one of the trainees will be offered the job of librarian. If you want to hire assistant librarians, then you can offer the next best candidate the job of assistant.
    - ii. Explain to the candidates that everyone who is trained and passes the test at the end of the three day training course will receive a certificate, regardless of whether they are chosen to be the librarian.
    - iii. By offering a free certificate for successful completion and passing of the test, each candidate at this stage will come away with something concrete. They will take a chance in not getting the job, but they will get some free training.
    - iv. The advantage to the library board is that during the training, the board will get to know the character of the candidates. The

training of the librarian must be done in any case since you are using secondary school students with no specific vocational training in librarianship. (Even candidates from a university program would need some unique re-training in order to run a rural library).

- v. A second advantage to the library board is that by training six candidates, there will be trained people to call in for interviews in the future should the chosen librarian quit or not prove satisfactory.



## Training The Librarian

**Advice:** The following is a curriculum created by Books For Africa Library Project for the purpose of training the librarians in the new libraries it sets up in rural communities in Ghana. Upon successful completion of the curriculum and passing our test on it, Books For Africa Library Project issues a certificate to the librarian. We encourage everyone associated with a rural library to review it, and undertake to practice the few skills of shelving books and numbering/cataloguing them.

# A Curriculum for Rural Librarians

The candidates will achieve the following behavioral objectives

- 1) The librarian will be able to correctly identify the shelf where any given book in the library should be shelved.

Sub skills:

- a) Note that the cover of a book always faces right; turn your head to the right to read the title on the spine.
- b) Leave a hand's space at the end of a row; don't crowd the books.
- c) The Dewey Decimal number should be listed on the lower part of the spine or on the upper right hand corner of the cover of the book.
- d) Only the librarian should be allowed to shelve books left on the tables; don't let an untrained person mix the numbers up for the whole library.
- e) Books should be standing straight up, not bent or crowded, and not lying down except in special circumstances, such as very tall books.
- f) Books should be brought forward to the front edge of the shelf, and all of the edges should be in line.

2. The librarian will be able to perform a short inspection of the shelves and correct any misplacement of the books.

Sub skills:

- a) Adjust the arrangement of the books on the shelves so that they are not crowded;
- b) Locate a book which is out of numerical order or shelved in the wrong place;
- c) Use book ends to support a row of books that wants to fall down;

- d) Identify books which have been shelved upside down or backwards.

### 3. The librarian is able to maintain the inventory of books and keep a clean environment for the facility.

Sub skills:

- a) At the end of the day or beginning of the next day, all the books left on the table should be shelved. Do not allow books to build up in piles waiting to be shelved.
- b) Sweep the floor and dust the tables, benches every day.
- c) Using a clean 4 or 5 inch paint brush, dust the tops of several stacks of books each day. Over a period of two weeks, every book shelf should have been dusted on the tops of the books.
- d) Once a year take several weeks to pull each book out and wipe the front and back covers. Also look for insect damage in the books and the shelves. If you find insect damage, get some chemicals that the farmers use to spray the trees and using a small paint brush, apply some of the chemical to the place where the insects are eating the wood or book.

### 4. The librarian will be able to assist a patron in locating a book or researching a topic.

Sub skills:

- a) Move around the library every once in a while and ask, "Are you finding everything you need?"
- b) Show patrons where their topic can be found in the Dewey Decimal system.
- c) Read stories to young children;
- d) Periodically put out interesting books on display that will attract patrons attention and arouse their curiosity to read the book; change the display after one or two weeks.

### 5. The librarian will maintain good records for the library.

Sub skills:

- a) Every hour on the hour count the number of people in the library. Even if the same person is there as in the previous count, make sure you count them again. At the end of the day,



- make a total. At the end of the week make another total. Share this information with your Library Board of Trustees and in your quarterly report to Books For Africa Library Project;
- b) Make a complete inventory of the books in the library. Beginning with Dewey Decimal Number in column one, the author in column two and the title in column three.

i. For example:

| Number or area | Author           | Title                          |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 140            | K. R. Owusu      | Philosophy for Beginners       |
| 960            | J. B. Danquah    | The History of the Akan People |
| Green          | J. Ofori Mankata | Ananse and the Elephant        |
| Adult Fiction  | K. Koranteng     | The Gold Diggers               |

- c. Keep accurate account of expenses: for light bulbs, notebooks, paper; and for income from the Board of Trustees, from fines or grants from the District Assembly.

## 6. The librarian will demonstrate how to use the Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Thesaurus, Almanac and Atlas.

Sub skills:

- Given a list of ten words the librarian will be able to look them up in the dictionary.
- Given a list of five topics, the librarian will be able to find their location in the encyclopedia.
- Given a list of five words, the librarian will be able to find synonyms in the Thesaurus;
- Given a list of five questions, the librarian will be able to find the answers in the almanac;
- Given five cities and their countries, the librarian will locate them in the atlas.

## 7. The librarian will demonstrate knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System.

Sub skills:

- a) The librarian will repeat from memory the nine general categories of the Dewey Decimal system.
- b) The librarian will explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction books.
- c) The librarian will be able to locate fiction books by the author's last name.
- d) The librarian will be able to catalog children's books by reading level:
  - i) Orange: Classes one and two: up to two sentences on a page
  - ii) Green: Classes three and four: from two sentences to a paragraph on a page;
  - iii) Yellow: classes five and six: up to several paragraphs per page and large pictures;
  - iv) Red: Middle and Secondary School fiction: several paragraphs per page and fewer pictures compared to "Yellow" level.

## 8. The Librarian will demonstrate good reading aloud techniques for small children.

Sub skills:

- a) The librarian will maintain good eye contact with the children while reading a book.
- b) The librarian will periodically show the children the pictures in the book.
- c) The librarian will read the book using good inflection so that his/her voice doesn't sound as a monotone.
- d) The librarian will read with interest, and pause to ask stimulating questions about the story to further pique the children's interest.

## 9. The librarian will explain the method of checking patrons to prevent the theft of books or pages from the books.

Sub skills: Vigilance against theft:

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- i. Each patron coming in and out of the library should be visually inspected; check any books or notebooks brought in, then check them again when they leave.
- ii. Do not allow book bags in the library;
- iii. Be aware of suspicious behaviors indicating an attempt to tear out a page from a book or hide a book on their person;
- iv. Be alert and keep an eye on the door and note who comes in and out. Be consistent in checking each person so that people will see that you check everyone regardless of whether they are a friend.

a) The librarian will explain ways to secure the library at night.

## 10. The librarian will discuss the methods for organizing and conducting a reading contest and reading club.

### a. Reading contest

i. send out letters to area schools

ii. Quiz each student after they have read their book.

Open the book to any page and look for a person's name or an action, and ask the student to tell you about it without looking at the book.

Do this five times at random in the book.

ii. At the end of a month, count up the books each student has read, and make a list of who is in first place, second and so on.

iii. Contact your Board of Trustees and with their help organize an award ceremony for your contestants.

### b. Reading discussion group.

- i. Choose a good book and have at least ten copies for each of the reading club members (to be kept at the library).
- ii. Meet regularly each week at the same time. Give an assignment at the end of the discussion for the club members to read before the next meeting.
- iii. You read the chapter ahead of time and organize at least ten questions for the reading club meeting.
- iv. Periodically give the reading club members some recognition, such as at the award ceremony for the reading contest.

## Teacher’s Guide for A Curriculum for Rural Librarians

|  | Training  | Test for the student  |
|--|---|---|
| Skill One:<br>Replace books correctly on the appropriate shelf | <p><b>Theory:</b> Go over the points on the “Behavioral Objectives” curriculum sheet.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b> Give librarian practice in replacing randomly selected books back in the correct place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Adult non-fiction using Dewey Decimal Number</li> <li>b. Adult fiction by surname alphabetically</li> <li>c. Youth fiction</li> <li>d. Youth non-fiction by Dewey Decimal hundreds</li> <li>e. Children by colour coding</li> </ol> | Give librarian ten books to replace correctly from the different categories at the right. Walk with the librarian to see that they are shelved at the correct place. No verbal or physical cues.                            |
| Skill two:<br>Check the stacks for improperly shelved books    | <p><b>Theory:</b> Go over the points on the “Behavioral Objectives” curriculum sheet.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b> Give librarian practice by purposely setting examples of errors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Set books upside down, sideways, back to front.</li> <li>b. Take some books and place them out of order numerically.</li> <li>c. Set some shelves back or books lying on their sides.</li> </ol>   | Test: Take ten books and set examples of errors a, b and c from previous practice exercise  |
| Skill Three:<br>Cleaning techniques                            | <p><b>Theory:</b> go over the points on the “Behavioral Objectives” curriculum sheet</p>  | <p>Test: the librarian should list the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Daily: Sweep the floor and dust the tables .</li> <li>2. Dust the tops of one or two stacks; complete the</li> </ol> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <p>whole row per week, the whole library per month.</p> <p>3. Annually: close the library for two days and take each book down and wipe it, then replace it where it was (use wooden boxes)</p> |
| Skill four:<br>Assisting patrons                         | <p>Theory: Read “Behavioral Objectives” curriculum</p> <p>Practice: 1. Give the nine categories of Dewey system by heart.</p> <p>2. Show how to display interesting books on table; each librarian should pick an interesting book and display it</p>   | Name four ways the librarian can assist the patrons (from the curriculum).  |
| Skill Five:<br>Maintain good records                     | <p>Theory: study “Behavioral Objectives” curriculum.</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each person make an inventory of a shelf</li> <li>2. Demonstrate how to keep attendance hourly, daily, weekly</li> <li>3. Finances: income-expense sheet</li> </ol>   | Librarians will produce on a blank sheet of paper the forms used for attendance, inventory and income/expenses  |
| Skill six:<br>facility in the use of reference materials | <p>Practise: <b>Dictionary:</b> Look up</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. enshrinement</li> <li>2. incomparable</li> <li>3. mortification</li> <li>4. nullify</li> <li>5. ossuary</li> <li>6. patent</li> <li>7. regulator</li> <li>8. sectarian</li> <li>9. titration</li> <li>10. vaunt</li> </ol> <p><b>Encyclopedia</b></p> | Similar exercise of looking up items  |

|  |  |                                     |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gabon</li> <li>2. W.E. B. Dubois</li> <li>3. Kwame Nkrumah</li> <li>4. First World War</li> <li>5. Florence Nightingale</li> <li>6. Zebra</li> <li>7. Chemistry</li> <li>8. Sri Lanka</li> <li>9. Sydney, Australia</li> <li>10. HIV/AIDS</li> </ol> <p><b>Atlas: locate</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brisbane, Australia</li> <li>2. Durban, South Africa</li> <li>3. Sunyani, Ghana</li> <li>4. Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire</li> <li>5. St. Louis, Missouri, USA</li> </ol> <p><b>Thesaurus:</b> find synonyms for these words:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. pitiful</li> <li>2. restore</li> <li>3. squeeze</li> <li>4. capture</li> <li>5. exquisite</li> </ol> <p><b>Almanac:</b> locate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The day of the week of your fifth birthday</li> <li>2. The highest mountain in Africa</li> <li>3. The biggest man-made lake in the world</li> <li>4. The winners of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1995</li> <li>5. The square mile area of Nigeria</li> </ol> |                                     |
| Skill Seven:<br>Dewey<br>Decimal<br>system | Theory: study the "Behavioral Objectives" curriculum<br>Practice:<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. repeat nine categories of system</li> <li>2. explain difference fiction and non-</li> </ol>   | Repeat all four skills for the test |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <p>fiction</p> <p>3. locate adult fiction by last name</p> <p>4. Catalog children's book by reading level</p>  |  |
| <p>Skill Eight:<br/>Reading aloud to children</p> | <p>Theory: study "Behavioral Objectives" curriculum</p> <p>Practice: demonstrate good techniques</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good eye contact</li> <li>2. Showing pictures to children</li> <li>3. Use varied inflection while reading</li> <li>4. Read with interest and ask questions to stimulate the listeners</li> </ol>  | <p>Repeat from memory the four techniques; demonstrate by reading aloud some passages</p>  |
| <p>Skill Nine:<br/>good security techniques</p>   | <p>Theory: study "Behavioral Objectives" curriculum</p> <p>Practice: State the four techniques of security</p>   | <p>Repeat the four techniques from memory</p>  |
| <p>Skill ten:<br/>encourage reading habits</p>    | <p>Theory: working with the Board of Trustees, manage reading contests; every quarter, one contest.</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. demonstrate how to ask questions from a book that you have never read</li> <li>2. Show how to keep accurate records of the patrons in the reading contest</li> <li>3. Demonstrate the ability to create discussion questions for a reading club.</li> </ol> | <p>Demonstrate how to ask questions from a book that you have never read. Demonstrate the ability to create discussion questions for a reading club.</p> |



After the librarians have been instructed from the curriculum and practiced the library skills of shelving, and caring for the books/library, use the following test to evaluate them. The overview is below, and following it is the written portion of the test.

## An Examiner's Checklist for A Curriculum for Rural Librarians

| Skill tested  | Question or activity  | Results |
|---|---|---------|
| <p><b>Skill One:</b> Replace books correctly on the appropriate shelf</p> | <p>Give librarian ten books to replace correctly from the different categories at the right. Walk with the librarian to see that they are shelved at the correct place. No verbal or physical cues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Adult non-fiction using Dewey Decimal Number</li> <li>g. Adult fiction by surname alphabetically</li> <li>h. Youth fiction</li> <li>i. Youth non-fiction by Dewey Decimal hundreds; Children's books by colour coding.</li> </ul> |         |
| <p><b>Skill two:</b> Check the stacks for improperly shelved books</p>    | <p>Test: Take ten books and purposely set examples of errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Set books upside down, side ways, back to front.</li> </ul>   |         |

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
|   | <p>e. Take some books and place them out of order numerically.</p> <p>f. Set some shelves back or books lying on their sides.</p>   |                   |
| <b>Skill Three:</b><br>Cleaning techniques  | <p>Test: the librarian should list the following points:</p> <p>4. Daily: Sweep the floor and dust the tables</p> <p>5. Dust the tops of one or two stacks; complete the whole row per week, the whole library per month.</p> <p>6. Annually: close the library for two days and take each book down and wipe it, then replace it where it was (use wooden boxes)</p> | See written sheet |
| Skill four: Assisting patrons               | Name four ways the librarian can assist the patrons (from the curriculum).  | See written sheet |
| Skill Five: Maintain good records           | Librarians will produce on a blank sheet of paper the forms used for attendance, inventory and income/expenses  | See written sheet |
| Skill six: facility in the use of reference | Similar exercise of looking up items  | See written sheet |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| materials                                 |   |   |
| Skill Seven: Dewey<br>Decimal system      | Repeat all four skills<br>for the test  | See written sheet                                     |
| Skill Eight: Reading<br>aloud to children | Repeat from memory<br>the four techniques;<br>demonstrate by<br>reading aloud some<br>passages  | See written sheet and<br>have candidate read<br>aloud |
| Skill Nine: good<br>security techniques   | Repeat the four<br>techniques from<br>memory  | See written sheet                                     |
| Skill ten: encourage<br>reading habits    | Demonstrate how to<br>ask questions from a<br>book that you have<br>never read.<br>Demonstrate the<br>ability to create<br>discussion questions | Demonstrate:  |

Here follows the written portion of the exam:

## **The Written Portion of the Rural Librarian's Test**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Skill three: List the cleaning responsibilities of the librarian:
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. Annually
  
2. Skill Four: Name four ways that a librarian can assist the patrons:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
3. Skill Five

A. Attendance sheet:

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B. Book Inventory sheet.

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C. Record of Income

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Record of Expense

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4. Skill Six: Reference look-up:

a. Dictionary:

- i. Carriage
- ii. Jealousy
- iii. Pearl
- iv. Remainder
- v. Spread

b. Encyclopedia look-up:

- i. Egypt
- ii. Charles Dickens
- iii. United Nations

- c. Atlas look-up:
  - i. Cairo
  - ii. Congo river
  - iii. Ecuador
- d. Thesaurus- look up synonyms for:
  - i. Excitement
  - ii. Mind
  - iii. Squeeze
  - iv. Weave

5. Skill Seven: list the nine general categories of the Dewey Decimal system:

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b. Explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction

6. Skill Eight: List the four techniques for reading aloud to children
- a. First
  - b. Second
  - c. Third
  - d. Fourth
7. Skill Nine: list the four measures to follow to help security in the library
- a. First
  - b. Second
  - c. Third

d. Fourth

8. Skill Ten:

- a. How do you determine whether a student has read the book in a reading contest?
- b. Give an example of a question to determine whether the student has read the book.
- c. What should the librarian do to organize a reading club?

If the candidates successfully pass both the written and practical portions of the test, then the library's board of trustees can issue them the certificate that appears on the next page. Add the names and adjust the size to fit your circumstance and preference.

## **The Certificate of Successful Completion:**

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**This certifies that** \_\_\_\_\_

has completed the course and passed the test for “The Curriculum for  
Rural Librarians” given by the

\_\_\_\_\_.



Certified by \_\_\_\_\_

President of the Library Board of Trustees

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Chapter  
8

# Building the Patronage of the Library

***Advice: Once you have your library set up, your librarian hired and your library board of trustees in place, the next important job is to build the patronage at the library. Everybody in town must know about it, and parents especially should support it.***

## The Grand Opening

What good is a library to a town, if no one comes to use it? The responsible members of the library board of trustees mustn't rest on their laurels and think they have done enough just to get the building and the books in place. The library must become an effective force of educating the children and broadening the perspective of the citizens. There is a wonderful, wide and diverse world out there waiting to be discovered by the citizens of your home town, and they won't have to pay any lorry fare to get there!

1. Plan a grand opening for your library.
  - a. Invite the chief, leading citizens and potential contributors to the maintenance of the library, head teachers, school children, local politicians. Everyone has something to gain if they can be associated with the library.
  - b. Offer some refreshments and have a band play to attract people.
  - c. Plan an exciting time with entertainment, school children involvement, ribbon cutting and a "harvest" or fund-raising activity.
  - d. Invite (and pay for if necessary) news coverage from the local radio or newspaper.
  - e. Have your library board members installed at the grand opening. This will give recognition to them for their efforts, and will introduce them to the

public so that if the board needs funds from the public later on, the public will recognize their role.

There are other activities at your library which will attract students.

## **Reading Contests**

1. Plan to hold several reading contests during the year. These contests will attract elementary students especially.
2. Set several days at the beginning of the month as registration days. The librarian records the student's name, and leaves room in the record book to write the names of the books they may read. Some students may read up to 40 books in a month (most will read less than ten; a few more than ten).
3. Begin the contest through the end of the month, 28 days. Every book which is read by the student must be quizzed by the librarian.
4. There is a special skill which the librarian must learn to assure a quick and effective method to determine whether the student has actually read the book.
  - a. The student brings the book to the librarian.
  - b. The librarian thumbs through and chooses a page at random. The librarian looks for the name of a person, animal or event on the page and asks the student "what part does \_\_\_\_\_ play in the story. The student should have a good answer to that question. The librarian continues to page through the book, and asks similar questions from other pages. If there is hesitancy and confusion, and the student can't give a good answers, then they should go back and read more of the book. In most cases, such questioning accurately determines whether the student has read the book or not. Obviously the librarian can't read all of the books in the library and know the answer from memory. So, the librarian must rely on the student to provide reasonable answers to simple questions that are natural questions from any one page in the book.
  - c. If the student answers the questions in a reasonable way, then the librarian writes the

- name of the book next to the student's name in the record book.
5. At the end of the 28 day period, the librarian tallies up the number of books registered, tested and approved and determines who has read the most books, and who came in second, etc.
  6. Plan a big celebration for all of the students who took part. The library board of trustees should use some of the funds they have raised to purchase simple prizes for the winners. We suggest giving substantial prizes such as books or dictionaries to winners 1 through 3, and then consolation prizes such as pencils or notebooks to all those who took part, even if they only read one book.
  7. Have simple refreshments available to all who attend the award ceremony. Inexpensive refreshments like water sachets, toffee, or biscuits will encourage the bystanders who did not participate in the contest to get involved the next time.

## **Reading Clubs**

Reading clubs are effective ways of attracting middle school and secondary school students to come to the library and get involved. This is how they are organized.

1. The librarian should choose a good, locally relevant novel/story book at the appropriate reading level: middle school or secondary school.
2. The librarian should approach the library board of trustees and request them to purchase ten copies of the book chosen for the club.
3. Next, the librarian should visit the different middle and/or secondary schools in town and recruit students to join the club. The club will meet once a week for an hour after school. Plan to have 8 to 10 students in each club. Fewer than five students is boring, and more than 12 does not allow sufficient time for every student to share during the hour.
4. If sufficient students are interested, it may be possible to have form a second or third club with different students on different days after school.
5. Assign a chapter for the week. The students come to the library and read the book there. They do not take it home with them. If they were to do so, it is likely

that books would be lost, and if there is more than one club then it would deprive the other students from reading the chapter.

6. The chapter should be assigned at the end of the meeting for the next club. The time during the club meeting is for discussing the book, not for reading aloud from it. The idea is to stimulate the students' interest and curiosity, and give them the opportunity to express their ideas. If the club time is spent just reading the assignment, then the opportunity for discussion is lost.
7. The librarian should prepare a list of questions on the chapter to ask the club at the next meeting. It is very important for the librarian to do their preparation as well. The librarian should ask a variety of specific questions and general questions. There will be definite right or wrong answers to the specific questions, but the answers to general questions can vary and each student should be encouraged to express themselves without excessive criticism. The following paper discusses the various kinds of questions:

## **Discussion questions for Fiction** (stories which did not really happen)

- A. The librarian should ask specific questions to make sure that the chapter assigned for the day was read and understood. Ask some specific and some general questions.
    - a. Don't ask questions which can be answered with a "yes" or a "no". Such questions don't promote discussion.
    - b. Ask questions that begin with "How...?" or "Why?" or "What?"
  - B. Specific questions for Chapter One, The Gold Diggers
    - a. Why couldn't Karanja use a real gun?
    - b. How will Karanja defend himself?
    - c. Describe the dangers in Karanja's mission.
    - d. What details are given about Karanja to make the reader feel sympathetic toward him?
    - e. What name do they give to illegal digging?
  - C. General questions (Remember to ask Who? What? Where? How? Questions):
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- a. What was unique about the setting of the books and how did it enhance or take away from the story?
- b. What specific themes did the author emphasize throughout the novel? What do you think he or she is trying to get across to the reader?
- c. Do the characters seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments?
- d. To what extent do they remind you of yourself or someone you know?
- e. How do the characters change or evolve throughout the course of the story?
- f. What events trigger such changes?
- g. In what ways do the events in the book reveal evidence of the author's world view?
- h. Did certain parts of the book make you feel uncomfortable? If so, why did you feel that way?
- i. Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought of before?

## **Discussion questions for Nonfiction (factual stories)**

- A. While many book clubs choose to only read novels and other works of fiction, there are many fascinating works of nonfiction that can make for excellent discussion. Biographies, memoirs, essays, historical and scientific accounts can all be very good reads.
- B. The following questions should help provide some ideas for discussion:
  - a. What did you find surprising about the facts introduced in this book?
  - b. How has reading this book changed your opinion of a certain person or topic?
  - c. Does the author present information in a way that is interesting and insightful, and if so, how does he or she achieve this?
  - d. If the author is writing on a debatable issue, does he or she give proper consideration to all sides of the debate?
  - e. How has the book increased your interest in the subject matter?

Set a specific time and place for the reading club and don't change it. Keep attendance at the meeting. Try to encourage each student to participate. Some general questions, such as what was your favorite part of the chapter, can be asked of each student in the group. Other questions can challenge the students to think for themselves, such as what might the result have been had the central character done such and such differently. Offer a balance between the general and specific questions, and try to get each student to participate. Some students will want to answer all the time. Explain to the club that you would like to hear from each one. Call on the quiet students. Try to avoid judgmental statements like, "That's wrong." Use statements such as: "Does someone else have a different answer?" If the question is a general question to which there is no clear right or wrong, you can respond "That's an interesting thought!" and move on.

Most of all, the reading club should be fun and interesting for the students. It's not a time to perform as the best student, but a time to learn to think and reflect on what has been read.

## **Storytimes for Young Children**

Most children enjoy being read to if the reader is lively and the book interesting. Librarians can establish a story time every week at the same time that will attract children and create a reading habit at the library. These things should be considered:

1. The librarian should take some time before the children arrive to pick out a book that will interest them. It is a worthwhile effort for the librarian to skim through the book and get a feel for it. A good reader will bring feelings into the reading of the story, and think of questions which may stimulate thought and discussion.

2. There is a skill to reading aloud to children:
  - a. Hold the book in one hand so you can see the words and the children can see the pictures simultaneously.
  - b. Use inflection and feeling in your voice. Your tone should go up and down, not in a monotone.
  - c. Keep eye contact with the children even as your eyes look at the sentences in the book. Take time during the story to glance at the children. How are they responding? Are they getting bored? Are there questions you could ask to stimulate their interest more, or to clear up any misunderstandings in their mind?
  - d. Ask an occasional question to make sure they are following the story line.
3. Try to maintain the same day and time each week so the children don't get confused about the day and time.
4. Plan on a story time of 15 to 20 minutes. To extend it further may lose their interest.



Chapter

8

## Conclusion

***Advice: You are master of your own fate. You can achieve something big for your community. You and your committee can create a library that will still be standing 50 years from now. Work with other people, gather the resources. People are willing to give of themselves if they believe you are not out for personal gain, but for something that will benefit all.***

## Final Advice

A community library is something that will have a big impact on your community. There is never sufficient opportunity during school hours for children to become good readers. They need to read outside of the classroom time. Every teacher will agree to the benefit of reading as a pastime outside of class. In too many homes, there are not enough reading material. Many families do not own very many books. The community library

is the place where people can share their resources. Mothers can raise funds to purchase books that will benefit not just their own children, but all of the children in town. When children read English books, their spoken English also improves. Test scores will rise because the children will have learned new words from library books, and be able to think more in English in their thoughts.

A community library is a project that everyone in town can support.

- It is good for the politicians because it makes them look good. It is good for teachers because they will follow instructions in English better, and become better students.
- It is good for the parents, because their hopes and dreams for a better education for their children will be realized.
- It is good for business men and women because the level of education in the town will improve and the town will become more prosperous.
- It is good for school children because in addition to helping them with their school work, the children will have found the past time of reading which they will enjoy their whole lives.

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