A brilliant World Book Day

World Book Day was on 5 March this year and as ever, we were overwhelmed by the inventiveness and creativity of many of our supporters. Thousands of children dressed up for school as their favourite book character, there were bake sales, book sales, sponsored readathons…you name it, someone did it for us on World Book Day! One particular favourite this year was the wonderful Zoe Toft, who built a den for her family…entirely out of books!

Overall, World Book Day 2015 has raised more than £111,000 for Book Aid International and we are so grateful to each and every person who took part.

Thank you to Rae and to all our supporters!

Rae’s six hours of knitting raised a wonderful £185.50, which will help us send more brand new books to libraries in Africa. Thank you to Rae and to all our supporters!

Knitting for books!

Here at Book Aid International, we are always impressed by the creativity of our supporters. We were delighted earlier this year to hear from Rae, who is 10 and who decided to raise money for us by doing a sponsored knit. Rae said:

“I chose to do a sponsored knit for Book Aid International because I had recently learned to knit and I wanted to do something with that ability. I am a complete bookworm so I thought Book Aid International was a perfect charity. I knitted for six hours stopping for half an hour so I could have a bike to eat. The piece of knitting went to a local yarn bombing event (a bit like a temporary art installation made of knitting) and was part of the display. I would like to say thank you to the lovely people who sponsored me and helped me raise so much money.”

Rae’s six hours of knitting raised a wonderful £185.50, which will help us send more brand new books to libraries in Africa. Thank you to Rae and to all our supporters!

Brand new Christmas cards

It’s never too early to get prepared for Christmas and we have a range of brand new cards on sale this year at £4.99 per pack of 10. You can view the whole range online at www.bookaid.org/mas, and place your order by calling 020 7733 3577 or emailing info@bookaid.org to request an order form.

Partner update: Mathare Youth Sports Association

Recently, we were privileged to have David Thiru, Executive Director at MYSA visit us at our offices in London and we took the opportunity to find out how Samuel is getting on. We were delighted to hear that Samuel’s studies at the University of Nairobi are going well, and that he still sees the library as a second home. Once he graduates, Samuel is considering looking for a job with MYSA - we think he’d be a great ambassador for their work. Samuel also still sees Bilha, who he mentors. Bilha has recently joined a high school outside of Nairobi, but Samuel tells us that because of the reading culture she grew up in the library, she still visits the library whenever she is back at home.

While David was visiting, we were excited to hear of MYSA’s new Moving Books programme which seeks to supply books to primary schools which do not have any books of their own and are in areas of Mathare too far away from the MYSA libraries for students to visit either with their school or out of hours.

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You may remember Samuel Musembi, who we featured in our Christmas appeal last year. Samuel grew up in the Mathare Slum in Nairobi, where he was overjoyed to discover the Mathare North Library, run by the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and stocked with books from Book Aid International.

As part of MYSA’s numerous community activities they run four libraries in Mathare, to which Book Aid International is proud to supply books. In fact, we dispatched nearly 3,000 novels and simplified readers to MYSA in July this year and we will be sending them further books, including children’s and school books later on this year.

Breaking our books target

Last year we were delighted to break all our previous shipping records and send one million books to libraries in Africa. This was almost double our volume for the previous year (2014) and was due to a new warehouse inventory system, the generosity of the publishing industry and the continuing support of our donors. As we near the later part of this year, we are delighted to announce that we will be way ahead of our original shipping target of 650,000 books for 2015. In fact, we have already beaten this target!

We know that every book we send to Africa is highly valued by our partners and that they are always keen to receive more. We believe that reading gives people the opportunity to change their own lives, and we want to make this possible for as many people as we can. But we need your help – can you make a gift to support book donations today and help us to ship as many books as possible to Africa this year?

Visit www.bookaid.org/donate or call us on 020 7733 3577.

The perfect gift for book lovers

What gift do you get a book lover? How about a Reverse Book Token which makes the perfect Christmas, birthday or thank you gift? Instead of buying a book, you can make a donation on their behalf and enable us to send books to communities where they are needed most. A £20 token can send 10 brand new books to a school library in Africa. You simply choose the value, we send you the card, and then you can add your own message and forward it on.

You can find out more about Reverse Book Tokens on our website and place your order by calling 020 7733 3577, or emailing info@bookaid.org to request an order form.

Calling on book lovers to help: The reverse book tokens

Christmas cards

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We are always keen to receive more. We believe that reading gives people the opportunity to change their own lives, and we want to make this possible for as many people as we can. But we need your help – can you make a gift to support book donations today and help us to ship as many books as possible to Africa this year?

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www.bookaid.org
Restock and recovery: helping a flooded library in Zimbabwe

In January 2015, the Astra Campus of Bindura University of Science Education in Zimbabwe was hit by flash floods which destroyed millions of pounds worth of property. Science and computer laboratories, lecture halls and staff offices were flooded, as was the Campus library where thousands of books were ruined. We were contacted by the British Council in Zimbabwe to see if we were able to help. We were pleased to be able to work with our partner, the Harare Distribution Committee, to arrange to supply the Astra Campus library with a variety of new and relevant books on applied sciences, business and agriculture as well as numerous teacher training materials to help them with the enormous task of restocking.

Thanks to a generous donation from the US arm of Elsevier, the RELX Group’s health, science, technology and higher education publisher, we have been able to supply the university library with more books far sooner than we had expected. Elsevier US have provided higher education books in science and technology. To help us achieve this, we are currently running a project in Kenya to help children get to grips with reading basics. Thanks to an extremely generous donation of around 300,000 phonics books from publisher Pearson, we have been able to support young readers develop their reading and literacy skills.

When we talk to our partners in Africa, they often tell us they are worried about the lack of ‘reading culture’ in their communities. A lack of books has made it more difficult for the habit of reading regularly for pleasure to flourish, which means children often associate reading only with study and many adults actually start to lose their literacy skills. We believe that one way to tackle this, as well as providing relevant, up to date books to as many libraries as we can, is to encourage children to develop a love of reading from a young age.

To help us achieve this, we have been able to support training for librarians to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology.

Digital Futures

At Book Aid International, we believe in the power of the written word in all its forms and we know that in the right setting, digital content can bring the written word to life for children. The use of tablets and e-readers can be particularly effective for children who might otherwise struggle to use library resources, such as children with special educational needs. With this in mind, we have recently been piloting use of digital content in Kenya.

Three Children’s Corners in Kenya received tablets and e-readers loaded with educational content, as well as specialist training for librarians to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology. This project has seen increased numbers of children in the libraries and librarians have reported high levels of activity and engagement. As a result, we are now working to help young children in Uganda. Thanks to a partnership with WorldReader, we are able to supply e-readers to help children engage with the technology.

The children will learn good vocabulary at a very early age. The books are progressive and can be used for different levels.

Patrick Mutta, Librarian, Mwingi branch

Promoting a reading culture in Kenya

Children caring for parents with HIV and AIDS: global issues and policy responses donated by Policy Press.

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Solar Sketchbook: a brief partner’s African adventure donated by the book’s author and illustrator, Martin Woodcock.

Children caring for parents with HIV and AIDS: global issues and policy responses donated by Policy Press.

International Malaria & Child Health Care: A practical guide for health workers donated by Malaria & Child Health Advocacy International.

Books change lives

The books we send with your help...

Stargazers series donated by New Africa Books of South Africa.

We have sent these teenage level books to our new Children’s Corners in six public libraries run by the Zambia Library Service.

Cubbies and the Boy Who Was Caught Up in a War donated by Walker Books.

Copies of this story of a young prince’s experience of war and peace have been sent to Children’s Corners in public and community libraries, in places such as Uganda.

First Q&A series donated by Miles Kelly.

These little books present information in the simplest, most format of questions and answer and have been sent to our partner Zambia Open Community Schools which supports the establishment of community primary schools.

Phonics is used as a teaching method in Kenya, and Book Aid International staff have often been delighted to hear young children enjoying trying out different sounds and phrases from the books we are able to supply. Through our partner Kenya National Library Service, we have been able to distribute the books to 20 branch libraries in Kenya. These libraries then group the books in book boxes and deliver them to 200 local schools, where more than 17,000 children will enjoy them in the first year alone. The book boxes will be exchanged between schools regularly to ensure children have a constant source of fresh books from which to learn.