

Current Status Books for the World

1.0 Summary

Books for the World ships textbooks, reference books, and library books which are discarded by schools, libraries, and individuals to Rotarian operated distribution facilities in selected developing countries. The criteria for selection are simply need and the ability to clear customs without charge adhering to the ethical principles of Rotary. The containers are purchased and provided to a local Rotary Club as a gift to be converted into a library, classroom, clinic, etc. The reason for purchasing the container is to avoid rental charges while the container is being unloaded by volunteers. Moving and sorting the volume of books in a container can take weeks to months.

The project is loading its 150th, 40' sea container which will make over 1 million pounds of educational material for calendar year 2011. One million pounds has been our level of shipping for the past three years. The shipments this year brings the totals which the project can document to about 5.5 million pounds over its ten year history. A single container is limited to about 40,000 pounds which yields at least 32,000 books per container. Our costs for the first 9 months of 2011 have been about \$217,000. This represents an increase of about 30% over previous years due to the increased cost of containers and shipping to more remote locations.

The most frequently asked questions are:

- 1) Are the books being used? The answers are in the requests for certification to receive books which has expanded by tenfold in Johannesburg this year even though the distribution center in Johannesburg has been open for fourteen years.
- 2) Are they making a difference? The Rotary Club of Pinetown used their first container to establish a library for after school reading and mentoring. Their club literacy efforts resulted in a matriculation rate increase of 200%-300%.

2.0 Collection Groups

The primary currently active collection groups are in the Texas Rotary Districts; Los Angeles, CA; Beaverton, OR; Seattle, WA; Madison, WI; Central New York State; Bentonville, AR; and Houma, LA. Rotary Clubs support the project through both funding and the collection and transport of books to the warehousing facility donated by Exel Logistics, La Porte, TX. Shipments are all made from the Port of Houston.

3.0 Distribution Facilities

Permanent distribution facilities exist in Johannesburg and Capetown, South Africa; Manzini, Swaziland; Harare, Zimbabwe; Lusaka, Zambia; and Islamabad, Pakistan. Shipments have also been made to Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Ghana, India, and to Rotary Clubs in Pinetown and Port Shepstone, South Africa. New permanent distribution facilities are being established in Ghana and Namibia. Operating agreements are in place with the Departments of Education in South Africa, Swaziland,

and Ghana. The government agencies are starting to underwrite the in country costs of the book distributions.

We have planned 15 containers for libraries in the area of Pune in India. The first container was passed through customs with no problems. The second container encountered a customs agent demanding additional funds which he forced the Rotary Club to pay. This killed to remaining 13 containers until we find a way to import to India without extra fees being collected. The previous year we sent a container to Chennai, India without paying the additional fees.

4.0 Futures

Our immediate goals are the startup of the distribution facilities in Ghana and Namibia; the expanding of the Capetown distribution to cover most of the Western, Eastern, and Northern Cape provinces; the continued expansion of the Swaziland distribution which we may try to expand to the Kingdom of Lesotho also; the opening of a partnership with US Air Force for transport of books to Afghanistan; expansion of Pakistan distribution; and the expansion to Papua New Guinea. In partnership with the Aall Foundation we are developing six libraries at schools where the Aall Foundation has funded clean water for the schools. The first library has been awarded to Swaziland. Aall Foundation is funding the conversion of a container. The Second Wind Foundation is providing the container and books. The Rotary Club of Manzini is providing project management, supervise, and additional funding if needed.

5.0 Contacts

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