



By Valentine B. Lah (MD), May 2011,
Bamenda, Cameroon

Books For Africa (USA) and
Mary T Inc. (USA) donate 22,000 books
and 15 computers to schools in
Cameroon.

Partners to the program:

- Books for Africa USA
- Mary T Incorporation USA
- Heifer International Cameroon
- Noah's Ark Cameroon



Goals of the program:

To Improve learning in schools in Africa, in this case Cameroon, through high quality textbooks which provide expertly designed lessons and reference material for scholars, and solid teacher's guides and reference material for teachers.

Main Activities:

- At the international level Books for Africa and Mary T Incorporation put the goods together in the US and ensured that they got delivered to Cameroon.
- At the local level Noah's Ark Cameroon and Heifer International Cameroon did the following:
 - Inform the administrative and educational authorities on the program
 - Organize the recipient schools
 - Collect the books and computers from the seaport
 - Organise transportation to Bamenda
 - Distribute the books and computers to the schools

- The container with 15 computers and about 22,000 books in 585 boxes arrived the Douala seaport in January 2011.
- After 25 days we cleared the container from the port (there are no pictures from the port, for it is forbidden).
- The contents were transferred to a truck for transportation to Bamenda, and the empty container returned to the port.

Books and computers are being transferred from the container to the truck.





Loaders at work, ...

... transferring goods from container to truck.



After a 17-hours journey the truck arrived at the Heifer house at Bamenda.



Dr Henry Njakoi of Heifer (left), and Dr Lah of Noah's Ark (right) who travelled with the truck



Offloading the truck, ...



- Offloading the truck, cont.

The books and computers are temporarily stored at the Heifer house where there is enough space at the garage.



Some of the boxes appear fairly battered. Luckily, no computer monitor sustained damage from that, but we did have some problems, however, with 3 computer towers. The problems have been managed.



This somewhat blur picture shows all the boxes packed at the Heifer house, with Dr Henry Njakoi and Dr Valentine Lah at the foreground.



The boxes were later reorganised according to content. Those with similar content (e.g.. P Sr Math) were grouped together. (Every thing got mixed up during loading/reloading processes.)

The following groups of boxes were identified:

Item	No of Boxes
Primary Junior English learning skills	28
Primary Junior Reading skills	84
Primary Senior Math	140
Secondary Literature	56
Secondary Math	56
Post secondary Math	28
Post secondary Leisure reading	140
Computer towers	8
CTR Monitors	15
Power cords and DVDs	1
Mixed boxes	8
Post secondary med&health	1
Pens	1
Dictionaries	5
General Library and P Sr English (both not on the official list)	14
	585

Note: The General Library boxes contained mainly Leisure Reading books, while the P Sr English boxes mainly secondary literature books.

Comments on the goods

- Although we received all the boxes we discovered on arrival in Bamenda that two computer towers had been removed from their Boxes. Since the boxes concerned contained two computer towers each, and one tower was left behind in each, this theft was not immediately noticed. We cannot tell how this happened, but we are sure it happened in Douala.
- The boxes labelled Gen. Library and P Sr English were not mentioned on the official list. The General Library boxes contained mainly Leisure Reading books, while the P Sr English boxes mainly secondary literature books.

Distribution

- In order to ensure fairness in the distribution a plan was made, whereby all primary schools got 11 boxes of the same composition of subjects, and each secondary school got 13.
- Any remaining boxes were given to those who come late.
- All the boxes that were specially labelled for specific institutions by Mary T were delivered to their owners.



Boxes labelled for the Margaret T school at Merfobe Santa is delivered to them

Photo with some of the head teachers and principals of beneficiary schools



Also present were educational authorities from the ministries of Basic and Secondary education, but shots with them did not come out well.



Dr Henry Njako of Heifer oversees the Distribution



While the Majority of schools collected their books from the storage facility, we delivered directly to some remote schools, like here at the Government Bilingual Secondary and High School at Akum, ...

..., or here at the Government High school at Muwugne, Awing.



Other schools at Awing at Awing that benefited include Presbyterian School Panjah, Technical Collage Fon's Palace, and FERUC (Federation for the Education of the Rural Child) primary and secondary sections.

..., where parents and teachers expressed their gratitude to Books for Africa and Mary T. Inc, and to advise the students, ...



..., “These books contain treasures that once you possess nobody can steal from you”.

List of Schools that benefited:

- The list is attached in a separate file (BFA –List of beneficiary schools.docx).
- Altogether, 46 schools benefited, 24 secondary and 22 primary.
- The computers went to 6 of these school. (Some schools said the computers were too few to solve their problems, while some did not believe it was real.)

Appreciation

This exercise is being greatly appreciated by all the beneficiary schools and government officials.

Some copies of appreciation letters are attached to the email as separate file.

Here is a sample.

To
Books for Africa and Mary T Incorporation

Through
The Director
Noah's Ark
Bamenda Cameroon

Subject LETTER OF APPRECIATION

The Principal of G.B.H.S. Down Town Bamenda on behalf of the students and staff acknowledges receipt of five hundred and **thirty (530)** books from your organization Books for Africa channelled through Noah's Ark. We thank your organization immensely as this largesse will go a long way to improve on studies and consequently the development of humanity.

May the Great God replenish your sources abundantly.

The Principal



Nkwenti Patrick Che
ELEG

Finances

At the local level the sum of US\$ 8,000 donated by Mary T was used to defray the following costs: (sorry for the French appellations)

Item	CFA	US Dollar
Fiche de suivi du GUCE :	12,500	26.3
Validation déclaration douane :	150,000	315.8
Frais de dossiers:	38,850	81.8
Manutention:	340,000	715.8
Vacation douane:	200,000	421.1
Taxe PAD:	50,000	105.3
Droits de douane:	500,000	1,052.6
Passage au scanner:	100,000	210.5
Visite douane:	180,000	378.9
Livraison zone portuaire:	200,000	421.1
Frais de sortie:	100,000	210.5
Honoraires:	200,000	421.1
Assurance maritime :	20,000	42.1
Autres débours:	200,000	421.1
Offloading /transportation to Bamenda:	1,250,000	2,631.6
TOTAL:	3,541,350	7,455.5

The values in US\$ differ from the originally requested values as a result of a change in the exchange rate (475 CFA to \$1.00) at the time the money was transferred.

The rest of the money helped us to defray the costs of Lodging in Douala, 13 extra days of storage if the container at the seaport, handling charges in Bamenda, and the facilitation for obtaining a waiver on the AVI by the Minister of Finance. In total we spent about 900,000 CFA (\$ 1,894.7) on these.

For more on the AVI see extra document attached.

In order to cover these costs we raised money by appealing on the beneficiary school to make a contribution as gesture of appreciation and local participation. Not all promises have been kept, but we have enough, and a little more to spare.

Finally,

This was a very rewarding exercise which has made many schools to experience support they never thought possible, and staffs of both Heifer International Cameroon and Noah's Ark Cameroon have enjoyed with much appreciation the participation in the program.

The appreciation letters (attached to email) say it all.

This is not the end of the exercise, for we still have to follow-up and see exactly what the schools did with the books.

Long live Mary T. Incorporation!

Long live Books for Africa!