

[Literacy organization sends textbooks to Kenya](#)

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The Global Literacy Project, Inc. and University student volunteers sorted and boxed over 60,000 elementary, high school and university level textbooks Saturday in an effort to increase literacy in Kenya. The GLP, a nonprofit and tax-exempt organization, has served over 25 schools and has constructed several new libraries in Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean.

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"GLP is committed to creating community media centers," said Denniston Bonadie, a University graduate student and vice president of GLP. "We can help develop third-world nations by making education a priority."

The GLP and student volunteers, along with members of the Fountain Baptist Church congregation in Summit, have collected and sorted thousands of surplus and discarded textbooks donated by school systems such as Piscataway and East Brunswick and Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. In addition to donations made by school systems and by individuals, libraries also make donations.

"As more and more libraries move toward a more digitalized system, more space is given to house computers instead of books," said Wendel Thomas, the director of Corporate and Communication Relations for the project.

About 40,000 of the books collected will be distributed to the Isugunluni Village in Kenya in order to create a new library that will service several other villages in the region. Ten thousand books will be delivered to the Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology to create a library for the students. The remaining books will be distributed to three different schools in Teso, Kenya.

"We try to collect as many science and math textbooks as possible because they are very expensive and in high demand," Bonadie said. "We also have a high request for encyclopedias."

But not all books are acceptable for distribution. Encyclopedias and textbooks can be no more than 10-years-old, as the material tends to change.

"Religious books are also not accepted because we serve such diverse communities and must be sensitive to their belief systems," Bonadie said.

Donations are accepted year-round, but due to harsh winter weather, most packaging and sorting is done during the spring, summer and early fall. Once placed onto the trailers, the books are taken to port where it takes about five to six weeks by ship to reach Kenya.

Despite the heat and the heavy boxes, many student volunteers help out every weekend.

"I can definitely relate to this project as I grew up in Africa and attended school there," University College student Betty Mathangani said. "Sometimes a whole classroom had to share one textbook."

"Volunteering has always been a part of my life," Rutgers College first-year student Anne Mbui said. "Since I'm from Kenya, I was excited to hear that the GLP was involved in shipping books there, as books are greatly needed. It's very fulfilling to know that you're helping someone else."