**African Library Project and RISE Network**

**2015 Application Procedures**

**How to Apply for an ALP Library:**

RISE Network and the African Library Project are partnering to create small, sustainable libraries in Sierra Leone. If your school or community meets the requirements below and is committed for the long term to develop a small library, please apply. The African Library Project helps start new libraries or improves libraries with less than 2,000 books. The application process consists of four steps:

1. Determine that your community meets the requirements.
2. Complete the application form included in this packet.
3. Submit 3 letters from community leaders with your application. (see application for instructions)

**Requirements:**African Library Project provides support to African schools/communities who meet the following requirements:

* **Local sponsorship** - A mix of teachers, students and/or community leaders are committed to sponsoring a library through a library committee.
* **Facilities** - There is a **clean, dry, secure** area with adequate shelving to display the books, and with easy access to borrowers. This can even be a couple of bookshelves in each classroom (recommended for primary schools).
* **Leadership** - Two or more people can be counted on to organize the books into a library and to train others to maintain and operate the library.
* **Borrowers** - There is a community of beginning, intermediate and/or advanced English language readers who will actively use the library.
* **Accountability -** Schools must include at least one hour of library time per week for each student in their school schedule.
* **Appreciation *–*** A library representative will provide a letter(s) and, if possible, photos of the library in use to convey appreciation to the donors of the books within four months of receiving the books.
* **Completion –** The school or community will establish a fully functioning library within 4 months of receiving the donated books. Otherwise, RISE Network may remove the books to give to another location of their choosing.
* ***Application deadline to RISE Network: April 1, 2015***
* ***Expected arrival date of container: late November 2015***

**What to Expect:**After your application, photos, and 3 letters of committed support from community members are submitted to: Umaru Bangura, RISE Network, 68 Circular Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone (Phone: +232.7853.2210), Email: societyforknowledgmentsl@gmail.com, you can expect:

* Your application will be evaluated and any follow-up questions will need to be answered.
* If your library project is accepted, the African Library Project will pair your library with a book drive in the U.S. to collect approximately 1,000 high-quality, gently-used, age and reading level-appropriate books for your library.
* Attention: Peace Corps Volunteers only - We strongly encourage you to enlist friends or family to organize a book drive for your library project in the USA to ensure that the African Library Project is able to assist. Your book drive organizer must contact the African Library Project directly to learn what to do. Book drive organizers can register on African Library Project’s website. In the Notes section of the online registration form, they should state your name and village or school in Sierra Leone.
* Your library committee will use the *ALP Library Action Plan* (see below) to develop a plan customized for your community or school library.
* The books will be shipped in large containers with all the libraries for Sierra Leone shipped together at the same time. The books will be mailed by the book drive organizer to ALP’s shipping agent in New Orleans, Louisiana in the USA. Then the books will be loaded onto a container and shipped to Africa.
* Your library committee is responsible for getting the books from Freetown to the library location in your area. Once the books have arrived, you will have THREE weeks to pick them up from Freetown.
* With your library, you will receive an excellent book, *How to Set Up and Run a Small Library in Africa,* a book written by the African Library Project specifically to help volunteers and new librarians organize libraries in Africa.
* RISE Network will offer workshops in basic library management to help you turn your library into a vibrant learning center. It will be your responsibility to cover the transportation costs to this free training.
* You will have your learning center operational within 4 months of receiving the books. This includes having the books organized and displayed, accessible to readers, with adequate staff and procedures for a fully functioning library. RISE Network will help you to clarify the standards you want to meet for a successful library. Lack of timely progress may result in the books being moved to another location.
* To learn more, visit the African Library Project website [www.africanlibraryproject.org](http://www.africanlibraryproject.org).

Use the African Library Project’s Library Action Plan to help your library committee plan for success.

**African Library Project’s Library Action Plan**

**What is a Library Action Plan?** This is a planning tool to use in starting or improving a library in partnership with the African Library Project. You will receive more information in the manual that you will receive, but following these steps will help you to prepare.

**Why do this?** Sustainability! We want you to think through the important issues before you start so that you can plan for success. Every library is a little different and should be designed with the local readers in mind. A successful library needs community and school-wide support and this tool has been designed to help your library committee think through the steps in the development of a library.

**Who should do this?** The library committee should create the plan together. (Suggested committee is 3-5 people from the community of library users representing different stakeholders. Examples: for a school library, teachers, administrators, librarian, students, PTA members. For a community library: students, teachers, school administrators, librarian, village leaders/chief, men and women.)

**When? This plan should be begun before you apply and completed after your library has been approved by RISE. If your application is approved by RISE, the African Library Project will do its best to provide books for your library, though this is not guaranteed.**

**How?** Think about what works best for your group. You might meet at your new library site for a series of meetings. That way, you can modify members of your committee as needed.

Tips for working on the Library Action Plan:

1. Have fun together! The tone you set will reverberate throughout the library.
2. Break up the plan into small chunks to work on over a series of meetings
3. Actively encourage everyone to participate during the meeting.
4. Record your decisions on this form.
5. Take the parts of this form that are useful to you and leave the rest.
6. At the end of each meeting, use these questions to help improve the quality of your meetings:
   1. Were you able to contribute? If not, why not?
   2. How well did we work together as a group?
   3. Is there anyone else we should ask to be on this committee?

**Creating your library committee**

**About the library committee:**

* What skills do we need in our library committee? (transport, building shelves, organization of books, raising money for supplies, organize inventory system, leadership, publicity)
* Will there be officers for the committee? If so, who?
* Who will handle our finances?
* How often will we need to meet?
* How will decisions be made?
* **What would our ideal library look like?**
* **Who will our library serve? (Number of people, school, community\*\*)**
* Create a timetable of when things will be completed.
* Create a list of job responsibilities and who will be responsible for those responsibilities.

\*\*If your library is placed at a school, but will also serve the community, then one member of the community and one person from the school should be on the library committee.

**Building and space requirements:**

* Where will the library be located?
* Classroom libraries, small set of books in each classroom (recommended for primary)
* Separate room for the library
* How accessible is this room to the school or community library users?
* Is the room secured?
* Is the room dry?
* What kind of furniture will we need?
* Shelves, chairs, table, carpet
* How will we get/make the furniture?
* What can we use that we already have? (old, broken desks, wood and bricks)
* Do we have funds to obtain the furniture?

If not, how will we raise money? (See resources available at end)

**Library Staff:**

* Who will manage the books and be responsible for their security and organization?
* Will we have a librarian? If so, who?
* An assistant? Who?
* How will these people be trained?
* What are the librarian’s responsibilities?
  + Create a job description
  + Organize the books
  + Re-shelve books
  + Checking out
  + Clean/Dust
  + Plan events to get people into the library
* Will this person be paid, and if so, how will the funds be supplied?
* Librarians are paid through school fees
* Ask the community council or the DA, district administrator, to fund a librarian.
* Membership fees: for example: SLL 10,000 per person per year, or SLL 400 per day. SLL 20,000 per family per year. Pick a price that fits your community. All proceeds go to pay the librarian.
* If at a secondary or high school, schools could reduce or waive school fees for a student if parent/guardian works as the librarian.
* If community library, hold a community meeting to get ideas to find solutions to hire librarian.
* If school library, hold a parent-teacher meeting to get idea from parents and teachers.

**Organization:**

* What system will you use to organize the books?
* Color-coded stickers
  + By subject (Fiction, Science, Social Studies, Maths, English)
  + By reading level (upper and lower primary)
* Dewey decimal (not recommended AT ALL),
* True, Not-true, Reference and Adult

**Record keeping: What system will we use to track our books?**

* When we acquire new books? (ex. Accession register)
* When we loan books
* Visitor’s log

**Expenses: What expenses can we expect and how will we pay them?**

* What kinds of supplies will we need (stickers, posters, poster boards, paint, labels, boxes, tape, exercise book (notebook) for recording keeping, stamp, etc.) and how much will they cost?
* How will we raise the money to pay our expenses?
* Could expenses be paid from membership fees, late fees.
* Hold fundraisers: concert, raffle, wearing private clothes (students come to school without uniform and pay)
* Solicit donations

**User policies:**

* Will we charge a fee for users? (membership fees)
* Will we loan books to users?
  + How long is the check out period?
  + Who will be able to check out books? (Will Standard 1, 2, 3 students be able to check out books?)
  + Will there be a wait period before books are checked out so that users get used to books and the expectations in the library? (perhaps a couple of months)
* Will we charge late fees if users do not return books on time?
* What will we do about damaged/lost books?
  + Students and parents can sign a contract acknowledging repayment for lost or damaged book.
* Who will keep track of the library’s funds? How will they report about library finances to our committee?
* The rules for user conduct should be posted on the wall of the library.

**Library hours and operations:**

* Thinking about our readers, when is the ideal time for users to use the library? (For school libraries, remember teachers using it for reference and possible library classes during the day. Also, if teachers don’t show up, could the students visit the library?)
* For school libraries, regular library visits are required to be included in the class schedule? (ex. Regularly scheduled class visits for story time, research, pleasure reading, etc.) When will they be?
* Will the library be open during school breaks? On Saturdays?
* Post hours when library is open and be consistent.

**Library Usage:**

* How do we get people using the library?

Most African libraries find that getting the library set up is the easy part. The difficult part is getting people in to use the library. Some ideas that you could consider are scheduling classes to visit the library, story times, contests (drawing, reading, writing), workshops for teachers and students on how to use the library, local elder storytelling, culture corner, guest speakers, dramas, cultural activities, etc.

* What activities will our library offer to encourage usage?
  + How will these be scheduled and conducted?
  + Who will be responsible to make sure each happens?
  + How will we communicate with the users what is happening at the library?

**Evaluation:**

* How will we measure our success?
  + Tracking the number of users that visit the library (Visitor’s log)?
  + Tracking the number of books that get checked out?
  + Gender and age of users?
  + How will we get feedback from our users?
  + Who will be responsible for tracking this information?
  + What will we do with this information, for example, review and analyze at the library committee meetings, show Chief and other village leaders to ask for further support, report to Rise Network?