

SIERRA LEONE BOOK TRUST

BOOK PROGRAMME REPORT 2008



BY

SALLIEU TURAY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Board and Management of the Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT) acknowledge with profound appreciation to our Book Programme Partners, SABRE FOUNDATION for supporting the people of Sierra Leone with relevant up-to-date books and learning aids since 2003. By the end of December 2008 SALBOT had received 105,161 books, 20 desks and chairs and 41000 Gel Activella pens from Sabre Foundation for distribution to Libraries, Schools, Colleges, Community Development Organisations, Non-governmental organisations, the disadvantaged and needy groups.

Also SALBOT acknowledge with profound appreciation the intervention of the FOUNDATION FOR WEST AFRICA (FWA) and EVE JAFFE MEMORIAL FUND in funding shipment of books, school furniture and learning aids and supporting reading promotion campaign in public libraries and schools in Sierra Leone.

SALBOT is further appreciative of the people and government of Sierra Leone for the support it is receiving in the furtherance of the aims and objectives of the organisation

Sincere thanks and appreciation is extended to all Board Members and volunteers for the tireless effort and time given to the work of the organisation

BACKGROUND

The Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT) is an indigenous voluntary non-governmental, non-profit making organization formed in April 2002 to salvage education and help create a literate society in post-war Sierra Leone. The challenge faced by SALBOT is to contain the high level of illiteracy rate which is still at 63 %, promote indigenous writers and publishers, stock libraries and complement book programmes that will enhance quality education.

There is a chronic shortage of relevant and up-to-date books for all levels in our education system. The few available relevant and up-to-date books available in few Bookstores are still beyond the reach of many Sierra Leoneans.

The efforts of SALBOT in the areas of book support, literacy and education are complemented by Sabre Foundation; a registered charity organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, The Foundation for West Africa (FWA) based in Barrinton, Rhode Island, USA and the Eve Jaffe Memorial Fund.

PROGRAMME PROFILE

In an attempt to stem the downward trend of events in the area of education, book provision and promotion, SALBOT embarked on a number of strategies in book distribution such as restock book corners, reading rooms, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries and school libraries; provide books for groups of students and professionals, creating outlets up-country for easy access to books and engaged in activities related to the promotion of the indigenous publishing industry.

Programmes initiated and implemented by SALBOT have been of great benefit to Sierra Leone in the area of capacity building, book promotion and support. In July 2002 Sabre Foundation supported SALBOT to train ten information professionals in computer and Internet search skills at the Centre for Media Education and Technology in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In order to foster this Tim Nikula from Sabre Foundation facilitated the two-day training. In June 2003 four hundred and ninety two (492) indigenous languages texts were purchased by SALBOT after a needs assessment survey in schools and colleges. Texts in four main indigenous languages such as Themne, Mende, Limba, and Krio were the focus as they were taught in secondary schools and polytechnics. The objective of the acquisition of these books was two folds: (1) to provide access to local languages texts for students and lecturers (2) to promote and encourage indigenous writing and publishing. Based on the findings of the needs assessment survey and taking cognizance of the limited funds available for book

purchase; the Board and Management of SALBOT concentrated all energy to one out of the six tertiary institution that offer courses in indigenous languages. The Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) in Goderich, Freetown benefited from the first book donation of SALBOT. Four hundred and seventy eight (478) indigenous languages texts were presented to the college on the 20th June 2003. Five other colleges are yet to benefit from similar donations.

In September 2003 Sabre foundation shipped a 20-foot container of books to Sierra Leone through SALBOT. The container contained 9781 books. The books were distributed to public libraries, schools, colleges, and non-governmental organizations.

In February 2004 a three-day Book Exhibition was held at the headquarters of the Sierra Leone Library Board, Rokel Street, Freetown. The Guest Speaker at the formal opening of the book exhibition was the wife of the former United States of America Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Her Excellency Mrs. Lucille Cheveas.

A key outcome of the Dialogue of African Partners II held in Dar-Es-Salam, Tanzania in December 2004 was the shipment to Sierra Leone of a 40-foot container with 15783 books by Sabre Foundation in February 2005. The books were distributed to educational institutions, libraries, community development organizations, the disadvantaged, students and professionals.

The first National Book Week after almost two decade was held from the 16th to 21st May 2005. The theme for the 2005 National Book Week was 'We Love Books'. The six-day nation wide programme of activities was designed to promote the importance of books, benefit of reading and role played by Sierra Leonean writers. The launching ceremony was held at the British Council-Sierra Leone auditorium. The Guest Speaker was the Honorable Minister of Education, Science, and Technology, Dr, Alpha T. Wurie. SALBOT mounted an exhibition of books, teaching and learning equipment donated by Sabre Foundation and Sierra Leonean writers.

In November 2005, Topher Hamblett, president of the Foundation for West Africa (FWA) met with the Board of SALBOT in Freetown. It was revealed in this meeting that money for the third shipment of a container of books to Sierra Leone was provided by FWA. The money was used by Sabre Foundation to ship 'Sierra Leone 3' (SL3).

In November 2005 the Executive Director of SALBOT, Sallieu Turay was invited by Sabre Foundation to attend Sabre Foundation's 35th anniversary

dinner in Washington DC. A key outcome of this visit was the commitment made by USA government officials to help meet the shipping cost of books to Sierra Leone.

In February 2006, SALBOT received SL3, which is a 40-foot container with 14480 books from Sabre Foundation. FWA helped in meeting the shipping cost for SL3. The books were distributed to various educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and community development organizations. Individuals with certified credentials also benefited. The 2006 distribution list is attached.

In July 2006 SALBOT received an outside evaluator sent by Sabre Foundation by the name of Shelley Quezada. Shelley traveled to Sierra Leone with her sister Catherine. The purpose of the visits was to officially monitor and evaluate the book programme in Sierra Leone. In Freetown visit were made to the Central Library, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions such as: Njala University, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Institute of Public Administration and Management, St Helena Secondary School, Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School, Young Women Christian Association Primary School, J. T. Reffell Primary School, Kingharman Preparatory School and Tower Hill Kindergarten.

The Executive Director of SALBOT, Sallieu Turay, Shelley, Catherine and Harold Koroma, a volunteer left for the provinces to conduct the evaluation. The first city visited in the provinces was Makeni in the north of Sierra Leone. The evaluator and team visited the Northern Polytechnic and Regional Library of the Sierra Leone Library Board. A meeting was convened at the Northern Polytechnic where principals, teachers of secondary schools, lectures, students have the opportunity to interact with Shelley after her presentation. Suggestions and recommendations were made after the interactive session. It was a very fruitful meeting with learning outcome from both parties. After the meeting the evaluator and team left for the city of Bo in the southern province. In Bo, visits were made to the Regional Library of the Sierra Leone Library Board and schools. The evaluator and team met with heads of institutions, teachers, pupils and parents. After a lot of deliberations the team left for the city of Kenema in the Eastern province of Sierra Leone. In Kenema, visits were made to the Regional Library of the Sierra Leone Library Board, Eastern Polytechnic and Kambui Lebanese International School. The evaluator and support were able to meet with beneficiaries of the book programme. At the end of the evaluation process in kenema, the evaluator and team left for Freetown. Shelley and Catherine left Sierra Leone for the USA.

In December 2006, SALBOT received another 40-foot container (SL4) with 12782 books from Sabre Foundation. The USA government and FWA contributed to the shipping cost of the consignment. The distribution process was carried out successfully.

In July 2007, SALBOT received a 40-foot container (SL5) with 14081 books from Sabre Foundation. The distribution process was carried out nation wide and individuals also benefited.

This time around the distribution process was coordinated from the new SALBOT headquarters at 57 Campbell Street, Freetown. Operations at the new headquarters started in November 2006.

In January 2008, SALBOT cleared from the Port of Freetown SLN6, a 40-foot container of books shipped by Sabre Foundation to Sierra Leone. The contents of the container were 20,999 books and 20 desks and chairs. All 20 desks and chairs plus 891 books were presented to the Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary School, Mahera, Lungi. Forty and more educational institutions, libraries, outlets and study groups were presented with books from this consignment as included in the appendix. In January 2008 the Sierra Leone Library Board received 1050 current and relevant books for use by the clientele from SALBOT.

In a bid to expand on the Book Programme in Sierra Leone and to ensure that remote areas of Sierra Leone benefit from the Sabre/SALBOT Book Programme, in March 2008 an International Non-Governmental organization, The Christian Children's Fund (CCF) received 3604 donated books for eleven (11) schools in the Koinadugu and Bombali districts in the north of Sierra Leone. The schools in Koinadugu District were Kalakoya, Yamandugu, Kamaya, Heremakono, Kagbasia Community Schools and those in Bombali District were Bandakoro, Kamanka, Kathata, Makaray, Kabatay and Madiffe Community Schools. A similar presentation of 1349 books was made in April 2008 to Masanga Children's Fund, a local non-governmental organization for distribution to schools in part of the northern and southern region of Sierra Leone.



Happy children who have received books from SALBOT

PROJECTS

The Fatima Institute in Makeni, northern Sierra Leone is a tertiary institution that offers degree and diploma courses. The Institute is being funded by the Catholic Diocese of Makeni. SALBOT started supporting this institute in 2006. Students, Lecturers and Administrators of the institute have come to appreciate SALBOT's Book programme so much that they collaborated with SALBOT in the creation of a branch of SALBOT in Makeni City 112 miles from Freetown. In a letter written to the Executive Director of SALBOT, they stated clearly that they would provide office space and book outlet free of cost to SALBOT. The Board on receiving this letter decided that I should meet with officials of Fatima Institute in Makeni and assess the potentials of expanding the program in the northern region with a branch in Makeni. On Saturday June 7, 2008. I paid a courtesy call on the principal of Fatima Institute Father Joe Turay, after which I met with the Dean of Academic Studies, Mr Silas Kinyaki and Mr Unisa Kamara- Public Relations Officer of the Fatima Institute. The Librarian of the northern Polytechnic Mr Mosses Turay attended briefly and asked to be excused for another meeting.

In the meeting it was agreed that all book programme activities should be in consonance with the policies of our key partner Sabre Foundation. It was also made clear at the meeting that though Fatima Institute will be the focal point for the book programme in Makeni, the programme in the northern region will be geared towards meeting the book needs of the northern region. Moreover a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed within seven days and signed by Fatima Institute and SALBOT. Key items in the MOU were

- (1) Rent-free office and outlet space initially for 5 yrs.
- (2) Provide free voluntary service to manage the programme
- (3) SALBOT Board will be responsible for supervising, monitoring and evaluating the book programme.
- (4) Fatima Institute to partner with SALBOT in the promotion of reading and encourage indigenous publishing.
- (5) A signpost with the inscription Sierra Leone Book Trust Makeni Branch be erected.
- (6) Fatima Institute to assist SALBOT in the transportation and distribution of books in the Northern Province.

Time, effort and resources were put to ensure that the project was realised. In September 2008 SALBOT/Fatima Institute book distribution outlet was officially commissioned in Makeni.



The launch of the Makeni Branch of SALBOT
Sallieu Turay in blue national costume

Moreover, in summer of 2008, a project dubbed 'Summer Reading Room 2008' was implemented by SALBOT through funding from Rochelle Harriet Jaffe, an American very much interested in reading and inculcation of reading habits in

children. She provided \$233 for the purchase of 120 copies of Pampana Comics volume 1 published by Pampana Productions in Sierra Leone. The comics were distributed to regional and branch libraries of the Sierra Leone Library Board. The Comics were used for story and reading hours in the libraries during the summer holiday of 2008. In the report of the Children's; Librarian Maude Hanciles, she mentioned that 'this project attracted new members, especially from the special holiday school, as it made the children realise that the library could be a fun place'. The project was monitored by SALBOT.



Summer Reading Room 2008 session at the Children's' Library in Freetown

SALBOT AND THE U S A EMBASSY IN SIERRA LEONE

There has always been a close working relationship between SALBOT and the Public Affairs Section of the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone since 2004. The close working relationship was manifested in 2004 with the participation of the Embassy in a three-day book exhibition organized by SALBOT. The guest speaker for the formal opening of the exhibition was Her Excellency Mrs. Lucille Chaveas, wife of the then USA Ambassador to Sierra Leone. In addition, the former Public Affaires Officer in the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone, Brenda Soya participated in activities like book exhibitions organized by SALBOT and had also acted as guest speaker in one of the book exhibitions.

With the launching of the American Corner in the Bo Regional Library, The cooperation between SALBOT and the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone moved a



Sallieu Turay presenting books for the American Corner to Mr James Taylor of the USA Embassy in Freetown

further step. Since 2006, SALBOT has been supporting the American Corner in the Bo Regional Library through the Public Affairs Office of the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone by providing books. They were mainly children texts and easy readers for literary programmes, American history, Culture, Politics, Geography, Business and Quick reference books.

The creation of the American shelf in the Kenema Regional Library saw an increase in SALBOT's book support to the Public Affairs Section for the stocking of the American Shelf in the Kenema Regional Library. The Information Resource Centre Director in the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone, Mr. James Taylor stated "I have found the books from SALBOT very useful and relevant for the American Corner project in Sierra Leone."

Besides support to the American Corner in Bo and American Shelves in Kenema, SALBOT also work with the Information Resource Centre in the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone in literary programmes. SALBOT has been providing relevant and current books to the Information Resource Centre Literary Programmes to schools. SALBOT had made five book presentations totalling 394 books to the Information Resource Centre Director of the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone, Mr. James Taylor.

The new Public Affairs Officer in the USA Embassy in Sierra Leone, Danna Van Brandt invited the Executive Director of SALBOT, Sallieu Turay to a dinner at her residence in February 2008. The purpose was to officially meet with her and learn about SALBOT and its partners.

CONSTRAINTS

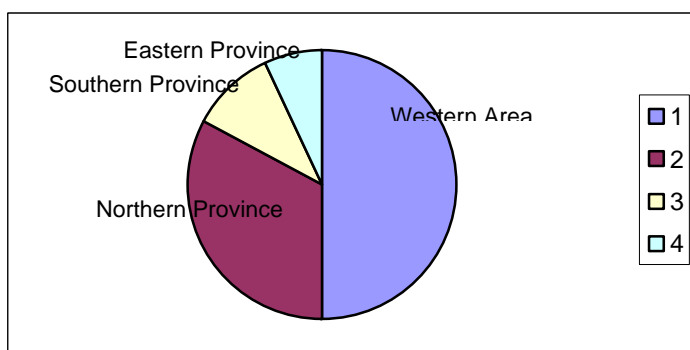
The shuttling of books from the store to various locations scheduled for donation involved added protection of the books from damage, a lot of money and time wasting in cases where vehicles were hired. Since the programme is intended to reach remote areas of the country, it is essential for SALBOT to have a book distribution vehicle to protect the books, save cost and time in reaching target beneficiaries. Moreover, handicapped in meeting the huge number of requests from potential recipients. The book shipment is less frequent due to scarce funding for shipping charges, which is a challenge for Sabre Foundation. I am appealing to well meaning organizations to come on board in support of Sabre Foundation's effort in providing humanitarian aid for the mind in a country with literacy rate of 37%.

CONCLUSION

Book accessibility in Sierra Leone is critical and it is likely a contributing factor to the low literacy level in Sierra Leone. There are ongoing programmes to increase the literacy level from its current 37% through increase support to basic education, construction of more schools and liberalization of tertiary education. The key resource to go with these programmes is beyond the reach of many Sierra Leoneans. There is absolute book famine in Sierra Leone. Lectures and teachers teach without relevant and up-to-date textbooks. Similarly, pupils, students and adult learners learn without the relevant and up-to-date textbooks and for most with no books.

It is a general belief that local and international non-governmental organizations should intervene in the area of book provision if Sierra Leone is to meet its objectives of education for all by 2015. More support is solicited for SALBOT Book Programme in Sierra Leone. SALBOT is requesting charity organizations, related agencies, non-governmental organizations and government institutions within and without Sierra Leone to support the efforts of SALBOT to improve on the level of literacy and standard of living of many Sierra Leoneans. This could be done by supporting SALBOT pay for freight charges for container of books assigned for Sierra Leone and provision of a vehicle for book distribution. It is hoped that continued support for SALBOT Book Programme in Sierra Leone would put SALBOT in a secured position to sustain the Book Programme in Sierra Leone.

APPENDIX A



Book distribution by region-2008

APPENDIX B

SALBOT

LIST OF BENEFICIARIES FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2006 OF THE BOOK PROGRAM IN SIERRA LEONE

N O	INSTITUTION	LOCATION	REGION
1	Sierra Leone Library Board	Freetown	Western Area
2	Sierra Leone Library Board	Kissy	Western Area
3	Sierra Leone Library Board	Bo	Southern Province
4	Sierra Leone Library Board	Kenema	Eastern Province
5	Sierra Leone Library Board	Kabala	Northern Province
6	Sierra Leone Library Board	Bonthe	Southern Province
7	Anty Isha Primary School	Kalaba Town	W/Area
8	Tower Hill Kindergarten	Freetown	W/Area
9	Kambui International Sec. Sch.	Kenema	W/Area
10	Northern Polytechnic	Makeni	Northern Province
11	Inst. Of Public Administration (USL)	Freetown	W/Area
12	Dele Primary School	Wellington	W/Area
13	New England Primary	Freetown	W/Area
14	Independent Media Commission	Freetown	W/Area
15	Kono District(Thro NGO-CMET)	Kono	Eastern Province
16	Statistics Sierra Leone	Freetown	W/Area
17	J T Reffel Primary School	Freetown	W/Area
18	Njala University	Njala/Bo/F/Town	Southern&W/Area
19	American Embassy	Freetown	W/Area
20	Beckley Preparatory School	Allen Town	W/Area
21	School Library Programme(coordinated by USA Embassy)	Bo	Southern Province

22	Browndel High School	Wellington	W/Area
23	S L Muslim Congress Boys' Sec Sch.	Kissy	W/Area
24	Government Technical Institute	Kissy	W/Area
25	Bonthe Technical College	Bonthe	Southern Province
26	Leone Preparatory School	Freetown	W/Area
27	Milton Margai College of Education & Technology	Goderich	W/Area
28	Maforika Primary School	Maforika	Northern Province
29	Zenith Tutorial College	Freetown	W/Area
30	National HIV Aids Secretariat	Freetown	W/Area
31	SLMDEC School	Mahera	Northern Province
32	ST. Helena Sec Sch.	Kissy	W/Area
33	Statistcs Sierra Leone	Freetown	W/Area
34	Annie Walsh Memorial Sch.	Freetown	W/Area
35	Masanga Leprosy Hospital	Masanga	Northern Province
36	Bo Government School	Bo	Southern Province
37	Kalakoya Community School	Koinadugu	Nothrern Province
38	Yamandugu Comm Sch.	Koinadugu	N/Provinve
39	Kamoya Comm Sch	Koinadugu	N/Province
40	Heremakono	Koinadugu	N/Province
41	Kagbasia	Koinadugu	N/Province
42	Bandakoro Comm Sch	Bombali	N/Province
43	Kamanka Comm Sch.	Bombali	N/Province
44	Kathatka Comm Sch.	Bombali	N/Province
45	Makaray Comm Sch.	Bombali	N/Province
46	Kabaray Comm Sch.	Bombali	N/Province
47	Madiffe Comm Sch	Bombali	N/Province
48	Masanga Childrens Fund	Freetown	Freetown
49	The Fatima Institute	Makeni	N/Province
50	Modern Elementary	Freetown	W/Area
51	Modern High School	Freetown	W/Area
52	Liccsal Business College	Freetown	W/Area
53	Eastern Polytechnic	Kenema	E/Province
54	SLMB Mahera	Mahera	N/Province
55	IAMTEC	Kissy	W/Area
56	IBATEC	Wellington	W/area