



Friends of African Village Libraries

December 2005 Newsletter



friends of **African Village Libraries**

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Literacy Is Life

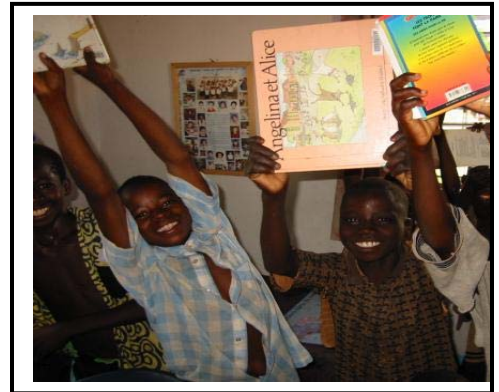
The ability to read provides a lot more than a fun-filled hobby. For some, it is a lifeline.

Research shows that literacy can significantly impact the lives of people living in Africa. It is linked with a higher quality of life and reduces child mortality rates. Even in the small-scale, agricultural settings of developing countries, schooling is strongly correlated with improved economic outcomes.

Yet opportunities to read are scarce throughout rural villages in sub-Saharan Africa.

Schools are grossly undersupplied with reading material. Schoolchildren commonly share textbooks and purchasing a book is simply out of reach for most village parents.

The result is low reading levels: in Burkina Faso, for example, the literacy rate is only 15% for women and 25% for men.



Readers from a FAVL-sponsored library

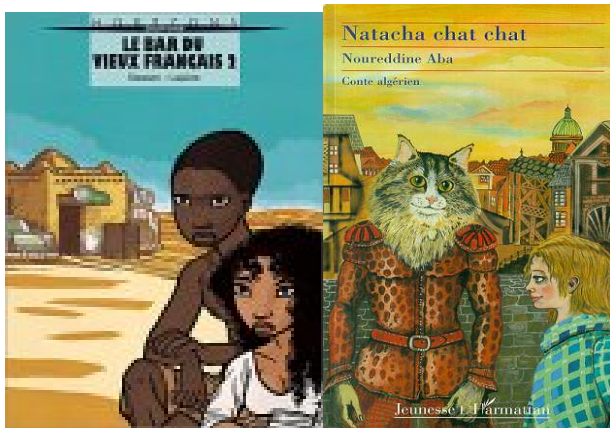
That is why FAVL's mission is to help establish libraries in rural villages in Africa.

In four years, FAVL has established and successfully operated seven village libraries in Burkina Faso and Ghana.

FAVL helps the village hire a librarian, purchase books and refurbish a building for the library. The typical library houses 1,000 books aimed at younger children, secondary school students, and literate adults. The books are in English, French, Arabic or local languages. Libraries have a reading room and circulation room with an office for the librarian; some are equipped with solar panels for evening reading hours. FAVL also trains library staff to implement programs, such as children's story hour, a young adult reading program and an adult literacy program.



In November, FAVL's Burkinabè librarians and the new FAVL Ghana librarians and coordinator traveled to Accra, Ghana to participate in a two-day training offered by the Osu Children's Library Fund. In a trip briefing to FAVL Vice President Leslie Gray, the Burkinabè librarians marveled that the Accra libraries had *four* librarians each, enabling them to have many children's programs. The Burkina librarians are eager to implement some of the programs they learned, such as having older children take turns reading to younger children, having the children wash their hands before entering the library, and having picture contests for the young readers. But before they do that, they are showing off the salty water from the Atlantic Ocean they brought back with them in a jar. It was their first visit to the ocean!



FAVL librarian Domboué Hakahoun gives birth in September to a baby girl! She was so concerned about the library being open for the school year that she seems to have cut her *maternité* short and went back to work!

FAVL said goodbye in October to our two Ghana stalwarts, Emmanuel Asiyure, Sumbrungu librarian, and Rex Asanga, CESRUD coordinator. Emmanuel has gone on to divinity school, and Rex is pursuing a certificate in development studies in Accra. We will miss both of them, since they have been instrumental in making the library in Sumbrungu a success. They will be replaced by Rose Azupoka from CESRUD and Lucas Amikiya (see page 7). Rex and Emmanuel got to close out their FAVL experience with a visit by FAVL volunteer James Hooper (read James' account on Page 4).

During a two-day library visit at the end of July, FAVL librarians visited three public libraries in the town of Bobo-Dioulasso in southwestern Burkina Faso. Mohamed Maiga, librarian at the Henri Matisse French Cultural Center, showed the FAVL librarians a Chinese-made rebinding machine: loss of binding is one of the major problems in the FAVL libraries, as locally-made books do not stand up well to repeated readings. The librarians then visited the Dafa Information Center, a public library sponsored by the United States Embassy, and the library of Konsa, supported by the French organization Edukafaso. FAVL librarians reported back that their own libraries—with their children's story hour programs—were in some ways even more advanced than their urban cousins!



While in town, the librarians also visited the only bookstore of Bobo-Dioulasso. Each librarian had a budget of 75.000 CFA (\$150) to purchase new books for their libraries. Some of the librarians had never been to a bookstore before. They witnessed how expensive local books were, and what a poor selection there was available. They remarked how FAVL libraries were almost better stocked than the bookstore.

Two new webpages available! The first provides some pictures from FAVL-supported village libraries; the second is a lively record of FAVL intern David Guo's stay in Bereba village in fall 2004. See FAVL's homepage www.favl.org for the links.

Newly-joined FAVL staffer, Sarah Sennott, is developing a Read-a-Thon program for schools throughout the U.S. The purpose of the Read-a-Thon will be to raise cultural awareness of children in the U.S. and to raise money for FAVL-supported libraries. Participating children will be encouraged to read books about Africa or by African authors. If you are interested in hosting a read-a-thon in your local school, contact Sarah via her email, sarah.sennott@gmail.com.

Your donation...an investment in a better future for African children

You are probably inundated with requests from charitable organizations like FAVL all the time. So, with all the charities in the world, why care about FAVL?

- At FAVL, a little goes a long way... you can help add new children's books to existing libraries for as little as \$5 a book- these are culturally appropriate and locally produced books that are in high demand by our young readers.
FAVL is run by a committed cadre of long-term, unpaid volunteers, meaning exceptionally low overhead
FAVL has strong and established partners for support services and feedback
FAVL's library model emphasizes:
- A sense of library as a village community space
- Book collections appropriate for children, students and indigenous language learners
- Local management and responsibility
- Replicable and low-cost infrastructure
- Continual and sustained oversight and auditing

Friends of African Village Libraries Donation Form

YES! Enclosed is my contribution to help children in African villages read.

\$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Please send this form and your donation to: FAVL, PO Box 90533, San Jose, CA, 95109-3533. Don't forget, your donation is tax deductible!

Your Name and Address:

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Please check if you prefer that we do not publicize your name as a donor on our website, newsletter and annual report. Beginning with the next newsletter, we will print the names of donors as is customary for non-profits, both to recognize and thank donors and also so that you can be sure your contribution has been received.

**Donor addresses will not be released to third parties under any circumstances without prior consent.



New Library Personnel in Ghana: Welcome to FAVL!

Rose Azupoka is the CESRUD board member acting as FAVL's new counterpart in Upper East Region, Ghana.

Here is what she writes about herself:

I was born in the Upper East Region on the 15th of March 1959. I attended the Gbewaah teacher training college from 1978 to 1982. After completion, I taught in a number of basic schools until 1996, when I began courses at the University College of Education, Winneba, where I was awarded a diploma of English and a Bachelor in Education (English). I have been teaching English language and literature in English at Bolga Girls Secondary School since my graduation in 2000. I am married with four children, the oldest being twenty one and the youngest, thirteen. I like dancing, playing outdoor games and reading.

Bernard Ayindenaba is the new librarian of Sherigu Community Library. Here is how he describes himself:

I was born on 17th March 1982 in Sherigu in the Upper East Region of Ghana. I am the only son of my mother. I had my Primary Education at Sherigu Primary School. I completed Sherigu Junior Secondary School in the year 2000, making the second best student in the school that year. For my secondary education, I studied Pure Science at the Bolgatanga Senior Secondary School (Big Boss). I hope to continue my education either at the University or the Nurses Training College to meet my future career as a medical doctor. I am a Catholic Christian and belong to many societies in the church, including Charismatic Renewal, Mass Service Association, Choir, Users and lectors. E-mail akulga@yahoo.com

Amikiya Aligire Lucas is the new librarian of Sumbrungu Community Library. Here is his brief biography:

I was born in Bolgatanga on the 18th March 1979. This was during the money exchange period, hence, I was named Aligire. After completing the Navrongo Secondary School in 1999, I proceeded to Gifam Computer Training School to build my secretarial and computer skills. I received a diploma in Business Studies, Secretarial at Tamale Polytechnic in May 2004. I have worked as a field worker for the Navrongo Health Research Center, a storekeeper for Tolaram & Co, Ltd and as a salesman for Star Assurance Company. My hobby is reading storybooks, particularly by African Writers, and I like working with computers. E-mail Address: aligirelucas@yahoo.com



**Friends of African
Village Libraries**
P.O. Box 90533
San Jose, CA 95109-3533
www.favl.org
email: info@favl.org