



friends of **African**  
**Village** libraries

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***Fundraising priorities:***

- \$5,000 for hiring a coordinator for the Uganda Community Libraries Association
- \$10,000 to build up an endowment to support FAVL libraries
- \$5,000 to establish a sixth library in Burkina Faso, in the village of Boni
- \$10,000 for piloting more reading programs in all libraries

Friends of African Village Libraries is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.  
*West Africa Director*  
Michael Kevane, Associate Professor of Economics, Santa Clara University  
*East Africa Director*  
Kate Parry, Professor of English, Hunter College, City University of New York

## Announcing the *Uganda Community Libraries Association*

Kate Parry, FAVL's Director for East Africa, has been very busy with the successful launch in August of the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA). Through UgCLA, library managers throughout Uganda can get to know one another and share best practices. The association will provide training for librarians and distribute grants on a competitive basis. It will also offer NGOs and international organizations a particularly effective means of accessing village communities. UgCLA received its certification as an NGO at the end of July. Seventeen libraries joined at the launch, and others are sure to follow. A representative from the US Embassy in Kampala also attended and signed, with Kate, a grant agreement for \$15,000. This grant will enable UgCLA to begin organizing its first workshop and grants competition. If the association is to do its work effectively, it must have a full-time coordinator. So that is one of our aims in the present fundraising campaign: FAVL wants to raise \$5,000 to enable UgCLA to pay a coordinator's salary for one year. The coordinator will be preparing the 'intellectual infrastructure' of procedures manuals and inspection and evaluation assessment methods, and also offering counsel and logistical support to small community libraries. The Ugandan founders of these libraries are inspired by a burning desire to see their co-villagers well-educated and well-read. Their efforts will be made more effective by having a coordinating association with expert staff.

### **Building on schedule for Chalula library in Tanzania**

FAVL's newest library has been spearheaded by Bruce and Rosemary Harris, who have been fundraising for the Chalula library project. They traveled to Tanzania in June, and participated in a small groundbreaking ceremony. Since then construction has proceeded at a rapid pace. Bruce and Rosemary both plan to travel back to Tanzania in November for the library opening. FAVL is also happy to announce that Bruce has joined the board of directors. His experience in publishing and commitment to helping children in African villages gain more access to books is an inspiration for the rest of us!



## News and views

*Sumbrungu library moves to more spacious quarters...* The Sumbrungu library in Ghana has moved



down the road! Since its founding in 2003, the library has been housed in the District Assembly building, which was loaned to the library at no charge. FAVL partner CESRUD was building a Women's Center, located right in the heart of the village (you can see it on Google Earth!), with help from the Roden Werkgroep in The Netherlands. We saw that it would be a fantastic location for the library. So in March, FAVL

Director Michael Kevane travelled to Sumbrungu along with FAVL Burkina coordinator Koura Donkoui, and presented the CESRUD board (Rex Asanga in middle and George Akundiya at left) with about \$5,000 to complete the Women's Center, on behalf of FAVL

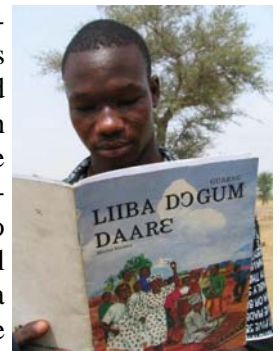
and Osu Children's Library Fund (which contributed \$3,000, thank you Osu!). The building was completed in record time, because volunteers were coming in mid-June to help with moving and classifying the books. A septic tank for the volunteer guestrooms (part of the Center) was also installed. Really amazing work, and great international cooperation.



*U.S. Ambassador Jeanine Jackson visits FAVL library in Dohoun, Burkina Faso...*

One year after her visit to Béréba library in 2006, U.S. Ambassador Jeanine Jackson visited the neighboring Dohoun village library in April 2007, on the occasion of the opening of an exhibit of traditional masks. Ambassador Jackson was hosted during the visit by the Minister of Information for Burkina Faso, Joseph Kahoun, who is originally from Dohoun village. Minister Kahoun gave a moving speech about how the village community has over the years demonstrated its commitment to education, and especially to girls' education.

*Acquiring quality reading material for the libraries...* FAVL strongly believes in making available to readers in village libraries the material that they want to read. Overwhelmingly our experience and research indicates that readers want material in local languages, novels by African authors, *bandes dessinées* like Tintin, religious texts (the Bible, the Koran) and school textbooks. We continue with our efforts to provide these materials, which are very expensive (especially compared with free donated books here in the United States, even after processing and shipping). So we are very grateful to donors, like Laura Wolford of San Jose and Emily Howe-Wilson of Wisconsin, who are willing to make cash donations to enable us to get appropriate reading material to kids. We are especially pleased to be able to now subscribe to *Planète jeunes*, a children's magazine in French produced for African readers. We also now have some material in Gurunya, the language widely spoken in the Sumbrungu area.



*So why not get into publishing?* Thanks to Kathy Knowles of Osu Children's Library Fund we have a new hit in the Burkina libraries: sets of four color books (*I like red, I like blue...*) for young readers. Our coordinator, Nabie Viviane translated the books into Dioula, the lingua franca of southwestern Burkina, with help from two Dioula professors in Ouagadougou. The books feature photographs and



text by Kathy Knowles. They really are spectacular! OCLF generously subsidized a print run of 500 copies of each book for FAVL. We are exploring ways to replicate on a smaller scale the success of these books, by having volunteers spend time in villages helping local readers turn their own stories and ideas into books. Do you have experience creating micro-books? Let us know!

## Volunteers in FAVL libraries

Student volunteers are an important way for librarians to learn new ways of interacting with children. When they return, volunteers spread the word about the importance of providing opportunities for children and adults to improve their reading skills.

Tanya Driechel, a library science student at the University of Alberta, writes from Ghana: I have been devoting more of my time to the students in Sumbrungu and Sherigu. After classes they are increasingly coming into the library for various activities. (Origami classes are a hit!) I've tried informal story circles where children (as well as secondary students) tell stories together (extended from a book). This proves to be quite fascinating: they often use traditional story motifs. I am also in the process of working out space for a small story corner. This has been delayed because of the move and then, more recently, the mural. Another project that I am working on is a "scholarship/funding binder" for the reference section.



Since I have been here I have been approached by many students asking me about scholarship and funding opportunities... There is no shortage of opportunities for grants, scholarships, bursaries etc. for African students; yet, very, very few have access to the internet to access this information. Getting to town, paying internet fees, etc., make this difficult.

Christlei Hessler and Annie Rozvar write: Our first taste of full-on Ghanaian food (we opted for the most American items on the menu our first few days here!) was *fufu*—a dish consisting of pounded yams (which forms a doughy food), tilapia or goat meat, all served in a ground nut soup. It was super spicy, and Lucas the librarian got a good laugh at our inability to eat *fufu* without coughing/ chugging water. ... We have so many ideas for programs and for organization at the library that are only possible because we went to so many libraries and after-school programs when we were kids.



## Painting and drawing in Kitengesa library

Kitengesa library in Uganda is a focus for a number of related development projects: a library scholarship scheme, a tree-planting scheme, a women's group, and a volunteer placement project. The library also experiments with various kinds of outreach activities: story-reading and opportunities to paint, draw, and write are



organized for village children on Saturday mornings; workshops are held for students, teachers, and other adults; and there is a weekly games night, when people from the village are invited to come and play games

such as Lido and checkers. The Kitengesa library is now well known in Uganda, and people who are interested in running community libraries in other parts of the country often come to visit.

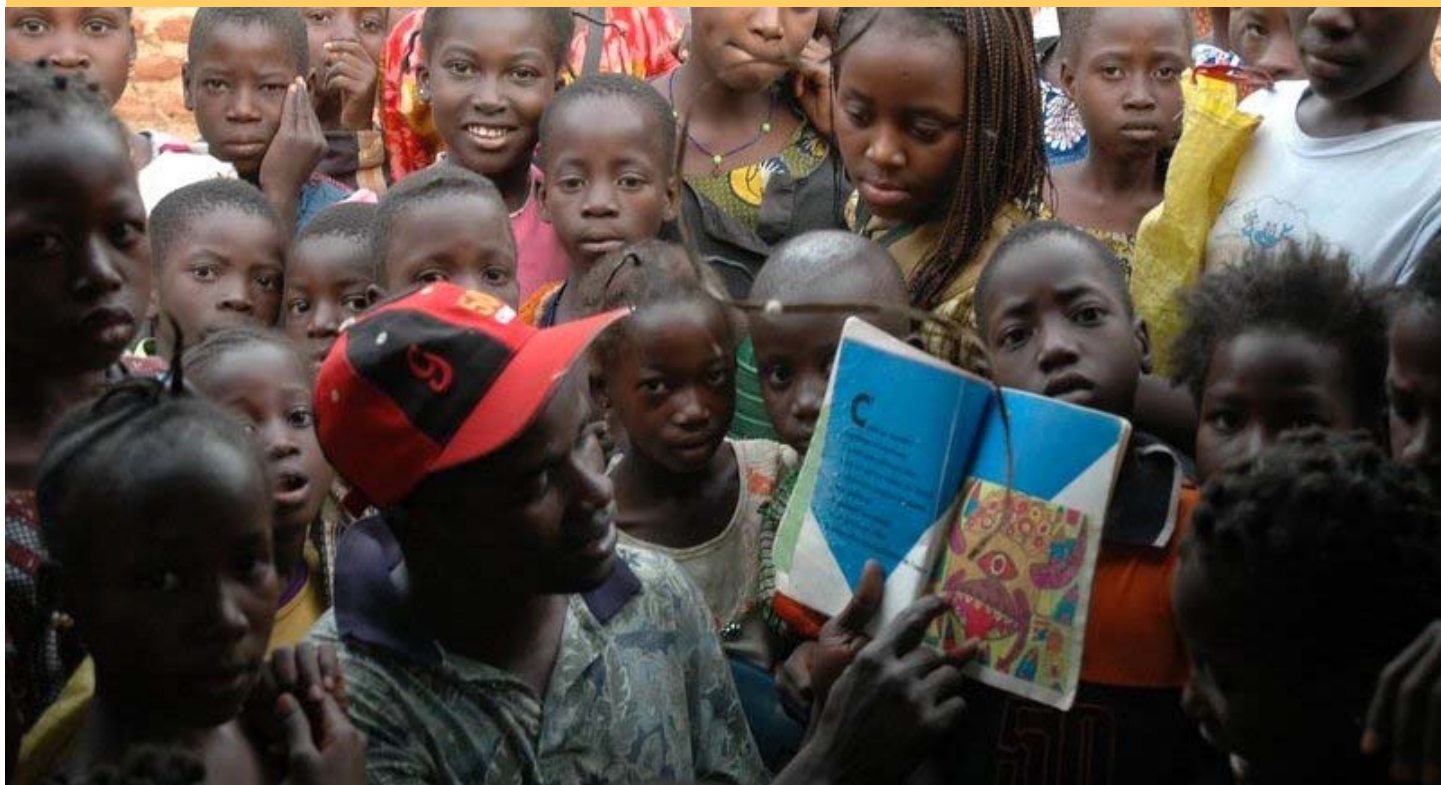
## An exhibit of Bwaba masks touring Burkina Faso libraries

What brings an old village woman who neither reads nor writes into the library? FAVL coordinator Viviane Nabie found out in August when she visited the Béréba library for the opening of FAVL-Burkina's traveling exhibit of traditional masks. She asked the woman, who had her market wares on her head, pictured below. "To see the masks,.. our culture," was the reply. To reach out to the 60% of Burkina Faso's populace that is not literate, and encourage them to see the library as a community space, we organized a traveling exhibit of Bwaba masks, made by wood carvers from the villages of Boni and Houndé. Our friend Sare Elisée did a small watercolor of the exhibit that we presented to U.S. Ambassador Jeanine Jackson, who attended the opening.



## Photographers visit libraries in Burkina Faso

FAVL was happy to host two photographers who visited libraries in Burkina Faso. Norwegian photographer Tiril Skarstein, accompanied by journalist Sidsel Hvaal, visited Béréba for a few days in February 2007. This issue we feature a photo by Tiril: Béréba librarian Sanou Dounko reads to children during story time. Next newsletter issue will feature a photo from photographer David Pace, from Santa Clara University, who visited Burkina Faso for several weeks in March. To see more digital photos, visit our Flickr.com group: "African community libraries"



### **We need your help!** FAVL's priorities for the coming year:

- \$5,000 for hiring a coordinator for the Uganda Community Libraries Association
- \$10,000 to build up an endowment to support FAVL libraries over the next five years
- \$5,000 to establish a sixth library in Burkina Faso, in the village of Boni
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