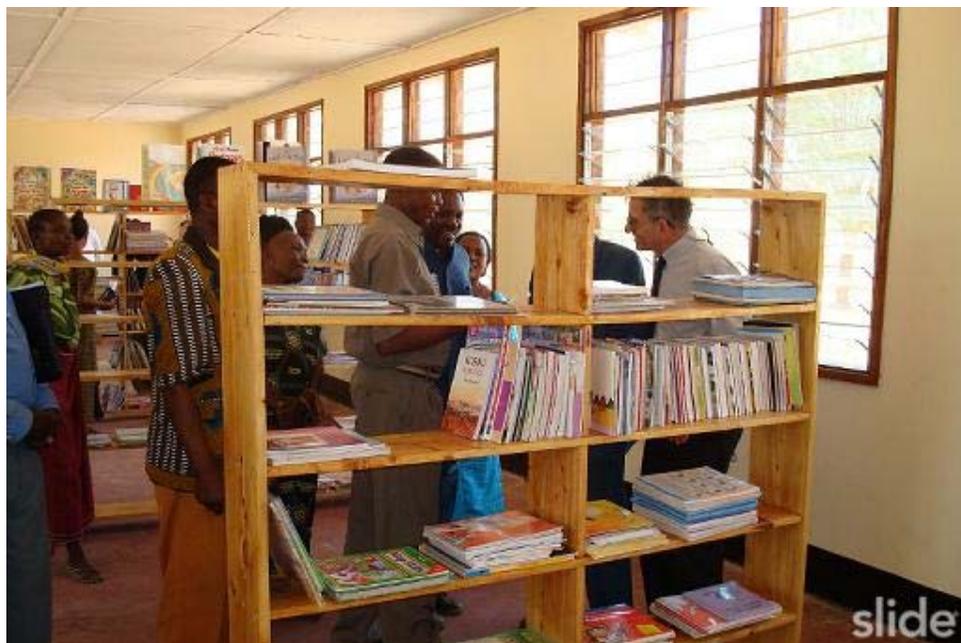


# Guide for Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL) volunteers

## Chalula Village, Dodoma region, Tanzania

Updated 28 December 2008

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## **Responsibility**

You are about to embark on a potentially life-changing trip: volunteering in a small community library in central Tanzania. The region you are going to is one of the poorest in the world. You will be surprised and challenged by what you see. People getting by on almost nothing. Children crowding around to read a book or practice their English. You will also see how lucky you are to have grown up in a developed country. The comforts and knowledge that you take for granted, you will find absent at every turn. The goal of your volunteer stay is to learn and to help. Most likely, you are a university student or recent graduate and this is one of your first experiences abroad. Choosing to go to a very tough environment is a first sign of responsibility. There will be even greater challenges ahead. At FAVL, we want to emphasize your own responsibility to be prepared to the fullest extent possible. The more you know about Tanzania, the more benefit you will get from your trip. The more you understand the dangers of travel in the Third World- particularly health hazards, but also regarding personal safety- the more effective you will be as a learner and a volunteer. So please read this manual and other materials very carefully. Ask lots of questions. Talk with friends who have traveled in Third World countries. Read websites devoted to Tanzania and East Africa in general. Read travel guides (which you can purchase easily at a major bookstore).

To be an effective volunteer in a library, you need to know how libraries work and what their purposes are. Please read the materials available on the FAVL website [www.favl.org](http://www.favl.org) especially the links to various library guides. Visit your local library and talk with the children's librarian about your trip, and how you might be most effective. Spend some time watching how the children's librarians read stories aloud with children in the library. Go to used bookstores and buy a few children's books that might be appropriate for a village setting and that you would enjoy reading aloud to children (e.g. picture books about a monkey who comes from the jungle to the city, or a bear that eats too many blueberries...). It would also be helpful if you read some well known African novels, such as Things Fall Apart (Nigeria), The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born (Ghana), The Famished Road (Nigeria), Weep Not Child (Kenya), or The Book of Secrets (Tanzania), and saw some African movies.

Your biggest responsibility as a volunteer is to communicate. The least we at FAVL expect from you is that you will write a trip report at the end of your stay where you will offer constructive suggestions about how to improve library services and the volunteer experiences, and that you write an article (for your local newspaper or college paper) about your experiences (hopefully positive and inspirational) in central Tanzania and in the libraries.

On the financial front, this is your trip and your volunteering effort, and so we expect you to be self-financing. FAVL's resources are limited, and we cannot finance airfare, lodging, food, or other travel expenses; and we ask for a fee of \$1000 to cover our administrative costs. In return we help with the logistics: meet you at the bus station in Dodoma, find you a place to stay in Chalula village, get you oriented once you arrive in Chalula, and keep you busy with work in the library. Depending on the program activities you choose to implement, FAVL may or may not cover the expenses (buying books, materials, offering payments for assistants). We work this out on a case by case basis.

This is our first guide for volunteers, so one of your responsibilities is to improve it. Take notes during your stay, and please email them back to FAVL. We would appreciate full paragraphs that we can cut and paste into the guide directly.

### What to do before departure?

- Buy a Tanzania travel guide. The Lonely Planet travel guides are excellent, as are the Bradt guides. Read the sections on health very carefully.
- Take care of health issues. You should consult your travel clinic and get all vaccines and malaria prophylaxis that are required. Read about health issues in Tanzania online at the Center for Disease Control website. Consult with your family about your health insurance and make sure you are covered for travel.
- Purchase an International Student ID card and purchase supplemental travel insurance and emergency evacuation insurance.
- Make a reservation and purchase your airplane ticket. Consider buying trip cancellation insurance, just in case. Generally a round-trip to Tanzania costs about \$1700. (You will most likely transfer in Dubai to get to Dar-es-Salaam.)
- Once you have a plane ticket, make a reservation at a hotel in Dar-es-Salaam for one or two nights, giving yourself time to explore the city. You might want to send the hotel a fax or email to make the reservation and to request a car to pick you up from the airport.
- If you are a university student or still living with your parents, then keep your parents informed. Parents will worry a lot about your travel. They are very concerned about your health and safety. The more you take the time to inform yourself and keep them informed, the more reassured they will be that you are capable of handling yourself in an emergency. If you adopt an attitude that they are over-concerned, or that knowing as little as possible about where you are going until the last minute is the best strategy, you are setting yourself up for family trouble.
- Get your passport and make sure it will not expire in the coming months and that there are enough pages for visas and stamps (if you are already a world traveler). Download the application for visa from the Embassy of The United Republic of Tanzania in Washington, DC ([www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org](http://www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org)). Get your passport photos taken (Walgreens, Costco... good idea to get a half-dozen extra just in case). Send in your passport and application and money order and return envelope. Federal Express or similar service allows you to prepay the return envelope and remember to write down the return envelope tracking number before you send it.
- Get a 'letter of introduction' from FAVL and copy it, in case you visit local NGO's and offices.
- Prepare an 'emergency card' that contains information on who to contact in case of emergency. A model of this card is on the FAVL website, and you should carry it with you at all times.

### What to bring

Checklist of what things you should bring for travel to Tanzania:

1. ATM card for withdrawing money in Dar-es-Salaam and Dodoma. ATM cards with the Visa logo are usually safe bets for being able to withdraw money, and ATM machines are the most convenient way to get local currency, the *shilling*.
2. International Health Card (Yellow card) showing Yellow Fever vaccination. You will receive this from your doctor in the US when you receive all the required shots.
3. Sunscreen—enough for the trip; usually it is not available once you arrive in Tanzania.
4. Mosquito net for a twin bed and four pieces of string about 6 feet long each, to tie to places on wall (available in many camping stores).
5. Anti-malaria pills (consult your doctor who will prescribe them and provide directions).
6. Insect repellent (Cutter's is good, and cream is much more compact than spray) for use in morning and before bed.
7. 2 twin-size sheets.
8. Small pillow (then you can have it on the airplane).
9. Iodine tablets (for purifying water—camping stores sell these in small bottles, they are good for emergencies). These are just in case, as we could find bottled water everywhere in Tanzania.
10. Half-liter, tough water bottle, for traveling.
11. A money belt that you wear underneath your pants or dress, for passport, credit card and airplane ticket when traveling.
12. Small flashlight and extra batteries.

13. Do you wear contact lenses? Maybe leave them behind and bring two pairs of glasses, one for emergencies if they break. Bring a glasses case that is hard. Cheap sunglasses are far better than expensive ones since it is highly likely you won't be returning with your sunglasses...
14. Sturdy comfortable sandals.
15. Flip flops.
16. Old clothes with holes in them... Jeans are often too hot, so make the pants khakis or other cotton pants.
17. People in Tanzania generally do not wear shorts in public except when doing physical work or around the house. Women almost never wear shorts. Don't make yourself stand out if you are a woman; bring loose cotton long pants or long skirts. Always cover your shoulders and make sure your skirt length is past your knees.
18. At least one set of presentable clothes. You'll only be in town for a couple of days, but people you meet there will be wearing nice clothes. Guys should bring two decent button shirts, cotton and short-sleeved, women should bring two decent dresses or pant-blouse combo.
19. Hat—whatever you feel comfortable with. Sometimes it is very hot, and you have to wear some kind of hat.
20. You probably will do your own wash, so consider that jeans are very very hard to wash by hand...
21. 15 Cliff/Power bars in case you do not like the food or need a snack. These are an excellent source of protein and contain many essential vitamins.
22. Any medicines such as malaria medicine; aspirin such as Advil is a must, and it's advisable to have something in case of diarrhea.
23. Women—tampons and pads—not available in the village!
24. Small towel and toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste etc.) Very good to have a small plastic toiletries bag that is somewhat stiff on the sides and opens easily- you will be bathing outdoors out of a bucket. Baby wipes are fantastic as you will not have TP in the village.
25. Day backpack or bag that is lightweight, for your water, sunscreen, and work materials.

### **What to do in Dar-es-Salaam when you land...**

Take a registered taxi only, and not an informal car, to your hotel or arrange for a car to pick you up at the airport from your hotel. The first day in Dar-es-Salaam, you may want to go to the U.S. embassy (or the embassy of your country) and register, letting the consular office know where you will be during your stay. The consular officials can be very helpful in emergencies. Stop at an ATM machine or currency counter at the airport when you arrive and withdraw about \$500 to cover your expenses for the first month. Taxis in Tanzania are reasonably cheap, and a trip in town should cost about \$25 (1,921 shillings).

### **Taxi tips**

Taxis are plentiful in Dar and you can usually bargain a fare of \$4 or \$5 wherever you are going, but it's always best to agree on a price before entering the cab. The airport is a bit more like \$20 but do remember not to pay the first price.

### **How do I get to Dodoma + Chalula village from Dar-es-Salaam?**

At your hotel, arrange for a car/taxi to take you to the bus station. You have to catch the 9AM Scandinavian bus to Dodoma and should arrive the station at least 30 minutes before departure. Our friend Mr Joseph Biseko ([joebiseko@yahoo.com](mailto:joebiseko@yahoo.com); Tel.+255 784 666 227) can sometimes make reservations and confirm the bus schedule if you give him enough notice. Take the semi-deluxe tickets which cost around \$15.00 one-way. The bus makes at least one pit stop and takes around seven hours. Try to sit as far forward as possible and make sure your window opens. Please note that there is no bathroom on the bus, so take advantage of the few times it does stop. Joseph Biseko will meet you at the bus station in Dodoma.

**Note:** There are buses from Dodoma to the village of Mvumi/Chalula, but they are infrequent and very crowded so we recommend hiring a taxi to get to Chalula on your first trip. The taxi may cost \$50 and Joseph can advise on rates at the time you are going.

### **Are there any libraries to visit while in Dodoma?**

If you have the time and interest, take a taxi to the Regional Library in Dodoma. The library is quite substantial and the librarians are very professional and have helped train the librarian at Chalula. The head librarian is named Peter Ntaki and he can be reached at [p\\_entaki1@yahoo.com](mailto:p_entaki1@yahoo.com).

### What will I do in the libraries?

The following is a set of suggested activities for volunteers. Depending on their background and preparation, they will work together with the librarians to agree on a specific program of activities. The volunteer is expected to take this as a serious commitment, and to notify the librarians in advance of planned travel. If you commit to a certain amount of work and to being present in the library for certain periods of time, please respect your commitment. The volunteer program depends on volunteers being useful, and not being “adventure tourists” who simply see the library as an interesting curiosity and are really interested in dancing, drumming and basket weaving.

- Overhaul of the accession register and inventory: From time to time the accession register will become out of date and include many damaged or lost titles, and books weeded out of the library, and the register will need to be updated, with new books replacing the old numbers (record should be kept of the old books whose numbers are replaced). This is a good job for a volunteer, especially one who has computer skills and might have the time to enter or update the accession list into Excel.
- Improve or develop a system for classifying books: many small community libraries use a “color code” system to classify books, putting pre-printed colored stickers or labels on the spine of the book to enable the librarian to quickly sort and reshelv books. For example, African novels might have a green sticker on the spine of the book. Alternatively, the volunteer might develop a modified Dewey Decimal system if the library stock exceeds 2,000 books, and includes a large section of miscellaneous fiction and non-fiction titles. That is what the Chalula Library has.
- Reading programs. One of the hardest things in a village setting is organizing and sustaining a regular reading program, where children or adults meet regularly to read together or discuss a book they have read. A reading circle, for example, would be appropriate for young readers. A “Read to your little sister” program might be appropriate for teenagers with younger sisters or brothers. For upper primary and secondary level students a “Reading Challenge” program can be very effective: students sign up at the beginning of a given period (e.g. a week or a month), and undertake to read a given number of books by the end of the period. If they succeed (either the volunteer or the librarian will need to check that they have actually read the books) they receive a certificate and a small prize. A “Grandparents read books too” program might encourage the elderly to come to the library, demonstrating the value they place on reading, and enabling them to enjoy picture books and story books if they are not literate.
- Locating book donations in large towns: Many large towns have sizable expatriate communities who often have lots of books and are willing to donate them to libraries. Peace Corps volunteers also frequently can mobilize resources for books. The volunteer can, on behalf of the library, approach these donors and arrange for book donations (and thank you letters)
- Promoting the library in schools: Most schoolteachers are very happy to have a volunteer come to the classroom and bring an interesting storybook to read in class or during recess. The volunteer should prepare a handout and photocopy many copies to hand out to the students.
- Improving the system for book circulation: No system is perfect, and many volunteers have experience with libraries in developed countries. Short of developing a computer system, which would be too much technology, the volunteer might think of ways to improve the circulation system and record-keeping. The improvements should be thoroughly discussed and potential problems anticipated before implementation, though. Experimenting with a crazy idea may lead to a big waste of time and inconvenience everyone.
- Decorating the library: The volunteer often has a good eye for aesthetics that comes from years of visiting museums and public spaces in places where art is abundant. He or she may be able to explore the marketplace for African art and paintings and drawings, and organize an exhibit for the library. The volunteer might be encouraged to raise the money for this exhibition; a typical traditional work of art can cost from \$20-\$30 dollars (with some art, such as baskets, being far less expensive), so a budget of \$200-\$300 would be sufficient. Educational posters are often available from the NGOs that are active in the area, especially United Nations organizations.

### Money

Currently there are no ATM machines or electricity in Chalula village, and so money has to be exchanged at one of various banks in either Dar-es-Salaam or Dodoma. The exchange rate is about **1 US Dollar = 1,350.81 Tanzanian Shilling or 1 Tanzanian Shilling (TZS) = 0.0007403 US Dollar (USD)**; but check on the web for the most recent figure, for example at <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter>. You should

plan on having about \$500 per month for your expenses. Typically your expenses will be less than this if you stay in the Dodoma area volunteering at the library. But if you travel around Tanzania, you will need more money. You should also plan to have a reserve fund of \$500 with you until the end of your stay, for emergencies. A credit card is also sometimes useful in the cities in emergencies, but will not be useful in Chalula village.

### **Medical facilities and health issues**

Chalula has limited emergency medical facilities. If you have any serious medical issues, then you should not be traveling and staying in Chalula. Mvumi Hospital is the only hospital in the Dodoma area ([www.mvumi.org](http://www.mvumi.org)) and is located in nearby Mvumi village. In case of medical emergency, you should go to this hospital. Be sure you have your emergency card at all times, and leave copies with the librarians, so that in case of emergency they can contact your relatives and FAVL.

### **Lodging**

Hotels are plentiful in **Dar-es-Salaam**. Check TripAdvisor.com, Hotwire.com, VirtualTourist.com There are only a few hotels in **Dodoma**. We would recommend:

- **The New Dodoma Hotel**; Tel:+255 26 – 2321641; Email: [wmaleya@yahoo.com](mailto:wmaleya@yahoo.com)  
Rooms cost around \$60 and the hotel has nice rooms and good food at reasonable prices. There is a pool, work-out room and internet room though the connections are not always smooth. There are several internet cafes in Dodoma also. You can recharge all your electronics at the hotel. Bring an adapter with a UK (3 square prong) plug.

In Chalula, FAVL will have Joseph and Aaron arrange for accommodation with a family in the village. Accommodations will be Spartan, and like most typical villages, there is minimal privacy (i.e. you will be sharing a family compound with other family members). There is no running water, and typically you use an outdoor squat toilet made private by a wall or thatch– also known as a hole in the ground. Be sure to carry toilet paper with you when you go to the bathroom. Many African societies also use the left hand to wash after the toilet, and so it is impolite to eat with the left hand.

### **Food**

The women of the village will prepare 3 meals a day for you and usually the Headmaster and/or other teachers will be joining you. The food consists of mostly meat and poultry such as chicken and cattle beef, and vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes, and fruits such as oranges and plantains. You would usually have duck eggs in the morning with some coffee and bread and fruit. The food is quite simple, but tasty and we never went hungry. **Note:** You always wash your hands before and after each meal, they will wash your hands with a pitcher. Also, the villagers are proud to share their food with you, so they expect you to eat...a lot!! Besides water, they often have soda at lunch and in the evenings might have some beer. **At the end of your stay, please tip the cooks!!!** They are working hard to feed their families as well.

### **FAVL Contact information in USA**

#### **Michael Kevane**

Friends of African Village Libraries  
P.O. Box 90533  
San Jose, CA 95109  
Home # (408) 298 4048  
Dept. of Economics  
Santa Clara University, CA 95053  
(408) 554 6888

### **FAVL Contact information in East Africa**

#### **Kate Parry**

Friends of African Village Libraries  
c/o Uganda Community Libraries Association  
P.O. Box 4262  
Kampala  
Uganda  
Tel. +256 772 699 771 (Kate's own mobile phone; please note that it is easy to call from Tanzania and that texting is inexpensive)

Note that Kate will be in Uganda from January to the beginning of August 2009. From August 22 she can be contacted in the United States:  
Tel. 718 515 0336.

### **Local contacts in Chalula**

The librarians have mobile phones, though they are not always reachable.

- **Henry Lyandallah**-Headmaster of school; Tel: +255.767.354.867
- **Joseph Biseko**-FAVL friend; Tel.+255 784 666 227
- **Aaron Chomola**-Librarian; [aaronchomola@gmail.com](mailto:aaronchomola@gmail.com)
- **Father John Nauman**; [jfnaumann@yahoo.com](mailto:jfnaumann@yahoo.com); is a retired Episcopal priest who has a large agricultural project quite near to Chalula and he knows the area quite well. He has said that he is “happy to greet and share with visitors”, and his project is very interesting. You might want to email him to let him know that you’re coming, but please bear in mind that he is very busy. If you can afford it, it would be good to make a contribution to his foundation.

### **Professional demeanor and personal conduct**

Your good conduct is what keeps this program operating. The librarians in FAVL supported libraries consider themselves to be professionals, and they expect you to act professionally. The librarians are not your tourist guide. If they take time to show you around, they are doing you a professional courtesy. They should always act responsibly and professionally towards you, and you should act the same way towards them. Your behavior in your lodgings should also be circumspect don’t make unnecessary noise, and be careful about inviting people to your room, especially people of the opposite sex; generally it’s easier and better to talk to them out of doors or in the library.

Needless to say, HIV/AIDS is widespread in Tanzania and is transmitted through sexual intercourse. FAVL’s firm opinion is that you should not have sexual intercourse with ANYONE while you are in Tanzania. It is just too risky. We are sorry to have to be so frank about personal issues, but HIV/AIDS is one of the most devastating problems of Eastern Africa, and it is irresponsible for a privileged volunteer to reinforce sexual behaviors that contribute to the spread of the virus.

### **Short history of FAVL in East Africa**

FAVL was founded by Michael Kevane (its present Executive Director for West Africa) and his wife Leslie Gray with an initial focus on Burkina Faso, from where it expanded in Ghana. At the same time Kate Parry (now FAVL’s Executive Director for East Africa) was working in Uganda, initially on a single library (the Kitengesa Community Library) and then, by 2006, on establishing the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA). Michael and Kate decided to join forces that year, with FAVL “adopting” Kitengesa as a FAVL-managed library and UgCLA, when it was formally launched in 2007, as an affiliated organization.

Also in 2006, Kate was contacted by Bruce and Rosemary Harris about the possibility of establishing a library like the Kitengesa one at Chalula in Tanzania. Bruce joined FAVL’s Board of Directors, and they raised the necessary funds with FAVL’s support. The Chalula Library was opened in October 2006 and is now managed, in Tanzania, by a coordinator, Joseph Biseko, and a librarian, Aaron Chomolla, while Bruce raises the funds in the United States and Kate provides general oversight.

So FAVL now manages two libraries in East Africa, while through UgCLA it is affiliated with 23 more. It has also established a Committee for East Africa, through which it is developing relationships with other libraries in Tanzania and Rwanda. UgCLA will help to serve these libraries with training and advice until such time as new national organizations can be established in these countries and affiliated with FAVL in the same way as UgCLA is.

By volunteering in Chalula, then, you will be participating in a much larger movement aimed at establishing a pan-African network of libraries. Welcome to the work!

### **Reflection**

Many people will ask you about your experiences volunteering in a small community library in Africa. They might tell you about their cousin, who sends books from an elementary school to African libraries, or

about a neighbor who built a library in Africa a long time ago when they were in the Peace Corps. While you are in Tanzania, it is a good idea to reflect on these activities: international charitable assistance—friendship with local libraries—what is its place in the scheme of things? At FAVL, our philosophy is that building a library as an institution—a set of persons and relationships working together to encourage reading—is more important than building one as a physical entity—a building and books. That is why we want to encourage volunteers; they add one more strand of connective tissue to what we hope will be a dense network of people, locally and internationally, who support the library. The building, shelves, books, tables, chairs, and manual of procedures ... they can all be established and turned over to a community in a month. But keeping track of the librarian, ensuring that they are excited about their job, that they see a future in the organization, that people who are responsible take on responsibilities, that authority is delegated to the right person, that village governance structures take increasing ownership over the library affairs, that volunteers from the village see themselves as having a role in the library and are effective in that role, that exhibits and programs unfold regularly in the library... all of these ongoing processes demand lots of personal attention and time, for years and years. Ask yourself what happens when that time commitment, over years, is successful? And what happens when it is not, when the effort is abandoned early on, and the library is left to itself, with an ill-trained librarian who has no institutional network and few incentives to perform well left alone in a village in rural Africa?

### **Previous volunteer contact information**

Our previous volunteers are eager to help you with advice, and to hear how librarians and libraries are progressing. Help them re-connect with Africa by sharing an email update every now and then. For Chalula, in particular, contact:

Volunteer Andrew Martrich ([amartrich@emimusicpub.com](mailto:amartrich@emimusicpub.com))

FAVL friend Lola Galla ([lolaoppd@yahoo.com](mailto:lolaoppd@yahoo.com))

You may also want to contact the Espen Stranger-Johanessen ([espens@gmail.com](mailto:espens@gmail.com)), who worked from August to November 2008 as a volunteer in Uganda:

### **Disclaimer**

Library volunteers travel to Tanzania, and to other countries, as independent volunteers, and recognize that FAVL does not have the financial wherewithal or obligation to provide them with living support during the course of their activities nor with emergency support. Volunteers undertake responsibility for their well-being while in Tanzania, and must take active steps to become informed of health and safety risks.

Although FAVL's Executive Directors for West and East Africa are employed respectively by Santa Clara University and Hunter College of the City University of New York, FAVL has no official ties with either university and operates as a completely separate non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity.

### **Annexes**

1. FAVL and UgCLA one page summary sheet. You can copy this for use in fundraising for your trip, or sharing with local librarians.
2. Osu Children's Library Fund guide to libraries in Africa
3. Report by volunteer Andrew Martrich 2008

**Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL)  
and  
Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA)  
November 2008**

Friends of African Village Libraries is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization registered in California. Its mission is to help African communities set up small libraries and thus empower people by enabling access to information and fostering habits of reading and critical thinking. Numerous studies suggest that improved literacy is correlated with higher incomes and better health. African governments are working hard to expand their formal education systems, but the dearth of books, especially in rural areas, means that the educational foundation is not being built on so as to deepen literacy and make it truly functional. FAVL's purpose then is to provide reading materials and promote their use. It also fosters relationships between African village libraries and supporters in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere by arranging visits for volunteers and special relationships with interested communities and organizations.

FAVL has two geographically defined spheres of activity. In West Africa it has set up and manages five libraries in Burkina Faso and two in Ghana. It provides training and support for other affiliated libraries in Ghana and works closely with the Osu Children's Library Fund in that country. In East Africa it manages two libraries, one in Uganda and one in Tanzania, and it is in the process of newly established, or about to be established, libraries in Rwanda and Burundi.

For supporting its affiliated libraries in East Africa FAVL works with its partner organization, the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA). UgCLA was founded as a local NGO in 2007, with the support of Uganda's National Book Trust of Uganda. interested in children's education complement the education system of Uganda and to promote the development of productive literacy practices by encouraging and supporting local initiatives in community libraries. It has developed a network of such libraries, with 23 of them signed up as members by October 2008. Membership is also open to individuals and organizations with similar aims. UgCLA supports FAVL's aims by providing training and support for librarians, while FAVL helps UgCLA in raising and managing the funds necessary for doing so.



FAVL is led by a Board of Directors, most of whom are based in San Jose in California, and is supported by an East Africa Committee, whose members are mainly in the New York area. It has two Executive Directors: Michael Kevane, a professor at Santa Clara University in San Jose, and Kate Parry, a professor at Hunter College of the City University of New York. Professor Kevane is responsible for FAVL's work in West Africa and for the organization's overall management, while Kate Parry is responsible for its work in East Africa and is also the Chairperson of UgCLA. Both Executive Directors visit the regions for which they are responsible on a regular basis and are directly involved in library activities; and they have both published research connected with their library work.

For more information, please visit [www.favl.org](http://www.favl.org) and [www.ugcla.org](http://www.ugcla.org); or send an e-mail to [info@favl.org](mailto:info@favl.org) or [info@ugcla.org](mailto:info@ugcla.org). Donations can be sent to FAVL at P.O. Box 90533, San Jose, CA 95109-3533. Donors wishing to give either to West Africa or East Africa in particular should specify West or East as appropriate in the memo line of the check.

## How to Set Up Community Libraries for Children

Prepared by: Osu Children's Library Fund

### *The Joy of Reading*

Every time we open a book, we discover something new – a beautiful story or a fairy-tale, the strange and wonderful habits of animals, the mysterious world of science, and the customs of people who live in a far-distant country. And every time we open a book, we learn something new – we learn numbers and letters, colours and shapes, poetry and songs. Books are, quite simply, windows on the world! A library is a place to read and to enjoy and celebrate books.

### *What is a children's library?*

A children's library is a place where there are books, children and committed and enthusiastic staff to assist the children to develop their reading skills. Libraries depend on financial and staffing resources and come in a variety of styles.

### *Adult libraries and children's libraries, what is the difference?*

When adults come to a library, they usually know how to read and they are seeking information on a specific topic, or a certain kind of fiction book to read. Adults will usually seek out staff and ask for assistance. If adults cannot read and if they are interested, they can be directed to adult literacy classes in their community.

Young children may not be able to read so they need to be attracted to the library and, whenever possible, assisted with their reading skills. Children need to feel comfortable in a library setting and should be gently encouraged to participate in the activities offered. The staff should play an interactive role with the children. It is a very demanding job, but also a very rewarding one.

### *Part One: Active Programming*

"Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way."...Orville Prescott from "A Parent Reads to his Children"  
The role of librarians cannot be more important for creating a nation of readers. Providing opportunities for children to read helps a great deal, but a library has the potential to offer so much more. For a child who is unable to read, active participation on the part of the librarian can play a major role and should be encouraged.

### *Story times*

Story times should be considered part of a daily library routine. By reading aloud from books or telling stories, librarians can build up the vocabulary of library members and improve their listening, comprehension and observational skills. Good listening skills provide a foundation for reading later on and are, therefore, very important. If a child has never heard a particular word before it is unlikely that the same word in print will have any meaning. Many children come from homes where their parents are not able to read stories to their children; either they don't have the literacy skills or there isn't time. A library can play an important role here.

Story times may include the following activities:

**1) Telling a story** in English or in one of the local languages

**2) Reading a story**

First introduce the story by giving the title, author and illustrator and set the stage by telling a little of what the story is about. For example, in the story of Cinderella, you could explain that it is about a young girl who lives with her stepmother and two mean stepsisters. Hold the book so that the children can see the illustrations.

**Asking questions and leading a discussion of the story**, thereby testing their understanding of the plot, the kind of characters, where the story takes place, etc.

**3) Performing finger plays and singing action songs**

**4) Hearing and reciting poetry and nursery rhymes**

**5) Providing opportunities for quiz competitions**

The types of activities will depend on the age and needs of the library members. There should also be opportunities for library members to take turns reading stories aloud. This will promote confidence in

their ability to read and will encourage others to do so.

*During a recent study, a Primary Five student achieved an exceptionally high reading score. When questioned she explained that she didn't have a book at home, but visited the library every day after to school to listen to stories and read. Daily story times play an important role at her library.*

### ***Puzzles and games***

If there are funds in the budget, the purchase of puzzles and quiet games for in-library use add a great deal. Children certainly enjoy the challenge of completing puzzles; puzzles help with motor coordination, memory skills and understanding spatial relationships. Games also encourage cooperation among others and promote social skills. Careful attention to keeping the educational materials intact needs to be given as a puzzle or game with a missing piece is not much fun! At busy libraries we arrange for children to sign out their puzzles or games in an exercise book. It is required that they be returned intact to their original spot.

*A small library in Accra takes great pride in their wooden, locally made jigsaw puzzles. The puzzles are used daily and, after 10 years, most of them are still intact!*

### ***Drama***

Libraries are wonderful places where drama can be enjoyed. Stories, both from books and the imagination, can be acted out for other library members. Simple costumes and props add a great deal to the performance.

### ***Guest speakers***

Libraries offer countless opportunities to engage others from the community to share information. This can be in the form of talking about careers, news items and health issues.

*At a children's library in Accra serving a poor, densely populated area, a doctor was invited to speak about abortions, a topic suggested by a library member. The questions asked by the teenage members of the library were well thought out and served an invaluable purpose.*

### ***Miscellaneous activities***

There are no limits to the sorts of activities that can be offered through libraries. The types of programs depend on the resources available and the talents and interests of library staff.

*A large library in Accra promotes free twice-weekly literacy classes, a wildlife club, a choir, two football teams and puts together a newsletter highlighting members' contributions. Although the range of programs seems beyond the typical library definition, books and literacy are still the essential component. One of the football teams is called the "Joy of Reading"!*

## ***Part Two: How to maintain and operate a Children's Library***

According to the dictionary, a library is defined as, "a room or building where a collection of books is kept". A library can really be any size. It can simply be an area under the shade of a tree where children gather on mats, or a small room in a house, a school or a community centre. A library can also be a larger freestanding building accommodating hundreds of children. The size doesn't really matter. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff members make the difference!

Whatever the library size, funds need to be spent wisely. The following is a breakdown of expenses excluding the costs associated with the library space:

### ***Library staff***

A library's success is wholly dependant on its staff members who, while working together, derive pleasure from their work and, more importantly, like interacting with children. It is important that the staff members work cooperatively; their roles need to blend in harmony in order for the numerous tasks of the library to be accomplished. Everyone should be encouraged to take ownership for having an organized, well-attended and attractive library and surrounding compound.

It is crucial that the library have at least one paid staff member (funded by the community, either privately or with government support) who will take the responsibility of running the library. This person will not only

need to be in command of the day-to-day running of the library but will need to have a gentle, yet, firm character to manage the large number of children who pass through the library's doors every day. In addition to paid staff, teachers and community volunteers make a valuable contribution.

If the library is at school it is helpful to have library prefects or 'monitors' assisting the one overseeing the library's operation. The students should be selected from two different years to allow for continuity. Monitors are then given the responsibilities of daily cleaning, preparing the books in an orderly fashion and demonstrating book care.

### **Books**

There is always a temptation to gather as many books as possible for a library. It is much better, however, to have a good selection of well-written and colourful books that you think the children might enjoy versus large numbers of inappropriate, drab-looking books. Keep all the books in good order and dust and clean them on a regular basis. Glossy-covered books can be wiped with a slightly damp cloth (with a small bit of diluted soap) and dried.

If the books are soft cover without a laminated finish they should be protected with a clear plastic cover. We purchase large clear bags (the ones used by the market women for selling quantities of food items) and cut them to the required book size. The plastic is held in place with clear tape. Another option is to order plastic sheeting in bulk from a plastic factory. They will make it according to the width and thickness required.

An inventory list should be kept of all books received. **If your budget is limited the books should be kept at the library and not loaned out, as it is very costly to replace books.** It is unlikely that an African child will have the financial means to replace a missing or damaged book.

*We visited a new community library (serving both adults and children) in rural Ghana and we were surprised to see thousands of books lining the library's bookshelves BUT not a single storybook seemed appropriate for an early reader.*

### **Where to keep books?**

If funds are scarce, and, if the library is small, books could be kept in durable bags or lightweight metal boxes and brought out for library use.

For larger, permanent libraries, books should be placed on bookshelves with their spines facing out allowing the children an opportunity to read the titles easily. When making shelves, think of the types of books they will accommodate, as the shelf heights need to be appropriate. It is best if the top shelf is not too high; this is both to make dusting effortless and to give children easy access to the books. The surface of the top shelf may be used to feature newly acquired books. A library looks much better if there are not too many empty shelves; low bookshelves do not require as many books. Display racks can also be made with sloping shelves so books or magazines can be displayed individually.

For young children the best way to display books is using kinderboxes, wooden cabinets that stand slightly off the floor (they are divided into four sections and each section can accommodate approximately 25 books).

Whatever furniture is built try to have it well made with carefully sanded surfaces and nicely polished. Bookshelves that are not completely smooth will damage the books as they are taken off the shelves. Occasionally, the furniture should be checked for insect infestation; if that happens the affected wood should be removed immediately.

*Sadly, many libraries make the mistake of investing large sums of money on bookshelves that line the walls. Their modest book collections tend to look insignificant in comparison to what their bookshelves can accommodate – very discouraging for all.*

### **Other furniture**

If the library is in a temporary structure mats can be used for the children to sit on and a stool or chair for the

librarian.

For a permanent facility the furniture should include a desk for the librarian, small tables, chairs or stools for the children and mats for story time. If furniture is too big, a child will most likely feel awkward and/or inadequate. This can affect how they feel about themselves and their confidence or lack of confidence in their ability to read or attempt new tasks. If literacy classes are being held for adults, larger tables and chairs should be included.

### ***Additional materials***

Every library, large or small, should have a washbasin with soap and towels for children to wash and dry their hands before entering the library. Ideally, there should be two: one for washing and one for rinsing. Books are very expensive and children (and adults!) should learn early on that books require proper care. In addition to clean hands, those reading will need to be shown how to turn the pages carefully so that they don't tear. Books will last for many years if they are treated with respect. If care is not taken, books will only last a few days before being torn and soiled.

### ***Lighting***

It is important to ensure that the lighting is adequate, either ample natural daylight or good overhead electric lighting. Good natural lighting is far superior to overhead lighting for reading. Walls that are painted in white or light colours are more suited to libraries because they reflect light. Note: For ease of cleaning we recommend using a high-gloss paint for the first five feet from the floor

### ***Ventilation***

If the library is to be accommodated in a room or building, careful attention should be paid to ventilation. When air does not circulate properly, a room can easily become hot, humid and stuffy. These are conditions that make reading and learning very difficult.

### ***Library hours***

It is necessary to assess the needs of the potential library members prior to setting out the library's hours of operation. Staff should arrive punctually and welcome the children according to the posted hours of operation. If the library is closed, notification should be posted. Regular activities including story times should also be carried out punctually. Otherwise the children will lose interest.

### ***A beautiful library***

Attention to keeping the library clean cannot be overemphasized. Cleaning and dusting the books and furniture, and sweeping and damp-mopping the floors daily take a great deal of time. The operating hours of the library should provide sufficient time for this.

Libraries should be cheerful, bright and welcoming places. Visiting the library is not a required activity and, therefore, it is important to make the place as inviting as possible. Colourful wall hangings help, as do photos, banners and children's drawings or creative writing pieces. Changing the displays is advisable and, over time, it is good to highlight work from all participating library members. Every child likes to see his or her piece displayed!

Flowers and bushes planted outside add colour and make libraries attractive places to visit. A dustbin near the entrance will keep the place neat and will discourage littering.

*Young library members were asked to draw pictures of their library and they exhibited them proudly on the notice board. Their pictures showed the library decorated with colourful flowers, curtains neatly pulled back and lots of smiling faces.*

### ***Respect for the library***

Children should feel a sense of pride in their library and treat the room and its contents as property belonging to their community. This means that children should refrain from sitting on the tables, writing on the furniture or books, and keeping hands from the wall (soiled walls look unsightly).

*"Don't touch the wall!" is probably repeated 20 times per day, in many cases by young regular members, at*

*a busy library in Accra.*

Although the library can be a lively place with quiet discussions among children and, possibly, singing at story times, shouting should not be permitted. If children are shouting or acting aggressively they should be quickly escorted out of the library and told to return another day. Food should be kept outside the library and chewing gum discouraged.

### ***Evaluation of a library's performance***

It is important to have a guest book for comments and suggestions. A written record of the library's performance also allows one to assess the library's development and progress on a monthly and annual basis. The statistical records should detail the daily attendance of all library visitors, indicate special programs offered and note concerns. Information regarding expenses could be included to provide an easy reference for annual expenses.

### ***Costs Involved in running a library***

The costs of setting up a library are completely dependent on the setting and size of the library. The initial expenses to set up a library are significant and there is often a big rush to raise funds for books and bookshelves. Sadly, very little consideration is given to planning for the month-to-month payments of the staff salaries and library upkeep. A library's success, however, relies on excellent staff and this falls apart quickly if money cannot be found for salaries. The community or school supporting the library should be involved in addressing these issues from the very beginning.

Many libraries think that they can generate ongoing funding from membership fees and user charges. Please think twice about doing so because it denies children from impoverished homes the opportunity to visit the library. On the other hand, there can be two levels of privileges: one where the member pays a fee for borrowing or one where in-library reading and library activities are free.

### ***Conclusion***

With careful planning and community support a library is a wonderful resource for children and their parents. Please keep in mind that a few good books and an enthusiastic librarian under the shade of a tree do more to foster reading than a big library with thousands of tattered and inappropriate books and uninterested staff.

**NB** Please feel free to copy these guidelines. Comments and suggestions should be sent to this address: [kknowles@mts.net](mailto:kknowles@mts.net) Our website address is [www.osuchildrenslibraryfund.ca](http://www.osuchildrenslibraryfund.ca)

*Chalula Library Project Report for Bruce and Rosemary Harris*  
by Andrew Martrich  
20 August 2008

**Usage:**

In the first few days of our arrival, we noticed a fair amount of apathy towards the library from the adult population. As the week progressed and word of our visit began to spread, some adults started to show up at the library to welcome us and many of them began to peruse the collection. On August 15<sup>th</sup> I received an email from Joseph reporting that more adults have been going to the library to read the Swahili newspaper *Nipashe* (a subscription Lola and I purchased with Joseph's help). According to Joseph, the adults have also been utilizing the collection.

The primary school students are using the library more than anyone else in the community. And since the library is in close proximity of the primary school, this only makes sense. The library is also a bit far from the center of the village (where the temporary Secondary School is located along with some shops, etc.). This area of Mvumi also has electricity, a luxury that is not taken lightly in the village—so venturing off to a ward of Mvumi that does not have electricity may seem retrograde to some villagers (even though the library does have electricity). In my brief time in Chalula, I saw many children using the library. The children come after school and on weekends to study, read and do homework. Aaron also teaches “adult classes” for students who are unable to continue their education at the secondary school.

Lola and I initiated some activities that we hope will continue in our absence. When we arrived we noticed a large amount of unused coloring books. We inquired about them and it seemed that Aaron was not sure how they should be used. So we organized an art show for some of the students. We had brought many art supplies with us (markers, crayons, paints, colored pencils, etc.) so we decided to cut pages out of some of the coloring books and have the students color them. We found some very interesting social obstacles during this project. For one, Aaron was insistent that the children would not be able to do this activity because they had no artistic training. Also, there was an almost strong adherence to the coloring process itself. Lola and I wanted the children to use their imagination (*dhana* in Swahili) when coloring—coloring outside of the lines, using many colors, and using color fantastically (hair can be green etc.). We were attempting to use the concepts of creativity and imagination to introduce ideas. But we found that the adults had a hard time understanding these concepts—they wanted the children to color in the lines and to color “realistically.” I think we were successful in the project because by the end we had Aaron and Issa (the library's Carpenter) coloring pictures. We hung all the pictures on the wall and had the children to invite their parents to the library for the exhibit.

We also organized a story hour for the children. Lola read two books in English and Stella, a volunteer teacher at the primary school, read a book in Swahili. Henry helped out by translating. By the end of the reading, we had about 150 children present.

The project that I am most excited about is the poetry project. I wanted to have some of the older primary students write poems in Swahili under the instruction of Mr. Mando. The plan was to take these poems back the United States and publish them in a book. I would then send the book back to the library so that the students could come and see their work in print. Unfortunately, Mr. Mando was having some personal difficulties and was unable to provide the poems before I left. I have been told that the poems will be sent to me by mail or email, but contacting my friends in Chalula is proving to be tricky. The only one I have been able to contact is Joseph. It is my hope that through him I will be able to receive the poems and complete the project.

Lola, Kate Parry and myself have recommended some activities that would promote adult usage. Perhaps we could initiate a women's group of some kind— a reading group, a literacy group, a news group, or even a women's football team. Literacy programs on weekends could evolve into several reading groups at varying levels of difficulty. Kate's library in Kitengesa, Uganda employs several activities that we may be able to initiate at Chalula. There are quiz competitions for the primary school students, reading challenges, a games night for families, seminars on various social issues and writing projects (similar to the poetry project) in the local language.

I do think that attracting a large amount of secondary students to the library is imperative. In Mvumi, the secondary student population embodies the educational progress of the village. The students are exceptionally dedicated to their education and could benefit from using the Chalula Library, even opposed to their own. Elizabeth recommended giving students assignments conducive to the Chalula Library—these could be research projects, projects on library use, etc. Elizabeth also recommended having a program where

the students could come in and read the newspaper to each other. This would promote discussions and ideas on current events. The only problem is that the location of the new secondary school is at least three miles from Chalula.

Another issue: people are not using the library in the evenings. They have been keeping the lights on as a sort of night light for the villagers. The library committee think that the building of a latrine and fence will promote evening usage. Also, Joseph and I do not think the lights are powerful enough for evening usage. The lights are rather dull which would make reading at night possible albeit somewhat difficult.

#### **Collection:**

The collection at Chalula is minimal. Initially, there were 1216 books in the collection, but this included the unused coloring books and some empty dust jackets. In the back room of the library there were some books that had not been put into the collection yet. When we first arrived, the collection was in disarray and the only method of classification was a book which designated each book in the collection its own number within the collection. Lola and I cataloged the entire collection, separating works into the main classes of the Dewey Decimal system (simple numbers- for instance, 000 is Reference, and 800 is Literature), and then by language. We made sure Aaron approved each aspect of the organization process. Lola and I then created a card catalog organized in alphabetical order by title. Each card contains the title of the work, its author, its number in collection, its main class number and its language.

There are a couple of decent reference works, namely *Webster's Family Dictionary*, *Webster's Abridged Dictionary*, a children's animal and wildlife encyclopedia and a junior dictionary. The main problem with the reference section is that there are no books in Swahili. A book like *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* is a great source, but unfortunately the majority of the library's users do not know English well enough to have a real necessity for it. There is one source titled *Say It In Swahili* which I feel is a good example of the kinds of books we should be trying to get into the reference section. The section could use at least one Swahili dictionary and at least an abridged encyclopedia in Swahili. As the reference section expands more adults and secondary students will begin to use the library.

There are also very few text books in the collection. I think that this is one of the major flaws of the collection. According to Henry, at the primary school there is 1 text book for every 100 students. The collection also needs more books on social issues, family issues, ethics and morals, and books dealing with AIDS/ HIV. The majority of collection consists of Children's Fiction in English and activity books in English. As I have already stated, there was a very large amount of unused coloring books mixed in the collection. Now that the library has the art supplies, hopefully Aaron will allow the students to use these books. Lola and I created a coloring book section in the Arts & Recreation section of the library. There is a decent selection of Swahili Fiction and Children's Fiction in the collection and these are the most popular books in the library. These are the books that everyone is going for. Also, there are some great young reading series books from Fountain Publishers on the shelves. We should definitely let Elizabeth know that these books are great for intermediate English students.

I think that the most important thing we can do for the library is expand the collection. What Chalula needs are books in Swahili and even Gogo: text books, nonfiction (health, social and family issues, etc.), religious books (Bible (we should be able to get a Bible in Gogo from the Summer Institute of Linguistics) and Qur'an), and periodicals and newspapers. Kate recommended a few titles (in English) that would be good for our reference section: *Cambridge International Learner's Dictionary*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, and *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. All of these can be acquired for relatively cheap in Tanzania. Because the needs are so specific to language, I believe that we should only have people donate money, not books. The books should be produced by Tanzanian publishers or at least by publishers in East Africa. We need to see if we can get help from the East African Book Development Association, and also find other organizations that are interested in getting books to Tanzanian libraries.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **Henry's Recommendations:**

The library needs more books in Swahili, primarily text books. Religious books and Encyclopedias are needed to draw more adult users. Secondary school text books would draw secondary school students. Henry believes if we can get more secondary students to the library the committee will be able to start charging for memberships.

##### **Library Committee Recommendations:**

The Library must become self sustainable. In order to accomplish this, the committee has recommended membership fees, late returns fees, damaged and lost books fees, fees for charging cell phones, charges for computer printing and photocopying, and selling stationary. The Committee

also requests the following: books, furniture, office supplies/ stationary, equipment (computer, copy machine, etc.) toilets, a Librarian's house, money for Librarian wages, electricity and a fence.

**Joseph's Recommendations:**

Joseph definitely has the most realistic vision for the library out of all the committee members. While the committee was requesting numerous things that are currently impractical, Joseph alluded that the committee had failed to address the essential details of Chalula Library's needs. The committee's report was more concerned with the needs of the community than the needs of the library, and failed to see that meeting the basic needs of the library will benefit the entire community. Joseph recommends that we build the collection to suit the needs of the community—the other things will follow.

**Peter Ntaki's Recommendations:**

The largest problem at Chalula is the lack of supplies. Text books for primary and secondary students are needed most. Aaron requires professional training in Dar Es Salaam. There should be literacy classes for adults. He believes the community is already interested in the library and will use it once the collection caters to adults and secondary students. He recommends that we look into Book Aid, CODE, and Books For All to supply books to Chalula.

**Kate's Recommendations:**

Kate invited Joseph and Aaron to her community library in Kitengesa in order to expose them to other African libraries. The more experiences Aaron and Joseph have with libraries, primarily community libraries, the more Chalula will benefit. Kate's library is apart of the Uganda Community Libraries Association and she recommends that we begin searching for other community libraries so that we can spearhead a similar organization in Tanzania. She knows of at least two other community libraries in Tanzania. If we can get the number up to half a dozen we have a good chance of being recognized by the government as TCLA. The libraries of the UCLA are recognized by the government and support each other so there is no need for any of the libraries to become self-sustaining. Once we have created TCLA, perhaps we will be able to merge with UCLA and eventually with other Eastern African nations as an Eastern African Community Libraries Association.

The top priorities of the library should be expanding the collection (books in Swahili and in Gogo are very important) and having as many activities as possible. She recommends making connections with organizations that promote reading and literacy (Children's Book Project, Tusome Group, etc.). We need to find organizations that are interested in getting books to our library. We should contact the East African Book Development Association, which is the organization that unifies the East African book publishers. Peter Ntaki told me about Mambo Poa!, an organization in Dodoma that helps libraries and schools get Health books and books on HIV/ AIDS.

Kate recommends that we begin a FAVL East Committee in New York. Each person would be dedicated to a library in East Africa. We would organize fundraisers and promote FAVL's cause in the United States.

**My Recommendations:**

There are three libraries in Mvumi: Chalula, Makulu Secondary School Library and the private Secondary School Library. I think that if we encourage communication between these libraries it will promote educational unity in the village. Having projects for secondary students at Chalula will endorse this. It is also imperative that we find other community libraries in Tanzania that Chalula can associate with. The sooner we establish Chalula as a member of a community libraries association, the better. This association will put a spot light on community libraries in Tanzania and hopefully we will be able to get some support from the government.

Establishing some kind of system for reference questions will also be a step in the right direction. At the Kitengesa library, students fill out INK (I Need to Know) forms with reference questions which they can submit. We should find out more about this method of reference. Establishing a relationship between Dodoma Regional Library and Chalula could provide a possible source for reference. Library users could fill out reference questions forms and submit them to Aaron. Aaron could then get those questions to Dodoma Regional by phone. It would be a slow process but at least it would be a start. Also, if a connection is made between Chalula and the two secondary school libraries, perhaps Chalula could serve as the reference desk for all libraries in Mvumi. I had a chance to visit the secondary library at Makulu and I know for sure that they do not have a reference service. I did not get to visit the other library but I assume that they do not have a reference service either.

For the time being, fundraising is the key factor in supporting Chalula. I work at EMI Music Publishing and every year we do several charities. I will write up a proposal requesting permission to ask employees to donate to the Chalula project. I do not think this will be a problem as I have already had several people ask me how they could help the library. We may also be able to use some of Lola's photos to raise funds. Perhaps we could auction off some of her photos or have a raffle where people could win a framed photo.

As I have mentioned numerous times already, it is vital to the library that we expand the collection. We must find the most efficient and inexpensive way to do this. We definitely want to use Tanzanian publishers—conceivably we need to see if the East African Book Development Program can help us get the books we need. We should also see what FAVL suggests. I believe that Henry has a book list with specific requests; we should ask Joseph if he can get us a copy.

I have noticed that the majority of the library committee is uninformed regarding basic ideas on libraries. I think it would be wise to have them visit some other libraries, at least the Dodoma Regional Library. It would be best if they could see other community libraries in Tanzania, but this might prove difficult. Perhaps we could have Peter Ntaki come to the library and give the committee a brief overview of the importance of libraries and possibilities that libraries offer to communities. Kate has invited Aaron and Joseph to see the community library at Kitengesa. I believe this will be a great experience for them and will ultimately benefit Chalula.

Activities are crucial to the success of the library. We need to make sure that the simple activities which Lola and I have introduced continue in our absence. We could have Aaron, Henry or Mr. Mando arrange times for primary school classes to come to the library to color pictures, draw, paint, etc.—any and all things that will encourage their creativity and imagination. Maybe we could even initiate an art club at the library. We could also use the library to host exhibitions of local crafts. We were fortunate to meet a young volunteer teacher at the primary school named Stella who Lola and I both think has a lot of potential and ambition. We should have her help us organize some activities at the library. She helped us with the story hour, possibly we could have her continue that project. We also think we should introduce a news club where students (or adults) come in, read the newspaper and have discussions.

I am very interested in starting a poetry project at Chalula where students and adults could receive instruction on writing and reading poems in Swahili and Gogo. Perhaps Mr. Mando would like to be involved. I am very passionate about this project and would attempt to fund it myself.

I think it would be beneficial for Chalula (and FAVL) to set up a yearly practicum program with Pratt Institute. We could have a Pratt student go to the library once a year to help out for college credit. If FAVL is interested, I will talk to the faculty about setting this up as a permanent practicum.