Planning and Completing a Book Drive for Malawi

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Planning and Completing a Book Drive for Malawi

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In the Spring of 2017, the UNM Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center conducted a book drive for the Malawi College of Health Sciences in Blantyre, Malawi. The College’s library serves about 700 students, as well as health care professionals from a neighboring hospital. However, the library lacks sufficient resources, with most of their books being outdated or in poor condition, which diminishes health care quality in Malawi.

Malawi College of Health Sciences is primarily engaged in the training of health workers that form a vital component of government plans to improve the health of the nation’s population. It has three campuses located in Lilongwe, Zomba, and Blantyre. The College offers courses in Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Medicine, Nursing Sciences and Midwifery, Dental Therapy, Ophthalmology, Pharmacy, Optometry, Environmental Health, Community Health Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing and Radiography.

Malawi

Malawi is considered one of the world’s least developed countries. The economy is heavily based in agriculture, with a largely rural population of approximately 15 million.

According to the World Health Organization there is a severe shortage of healthcare providers, made more complicated by uneven distribution in rural areas of the country. Malawi suffers from a high burden of disease, and outbreaks of infectious disease.

For more information about Malawi, go to the WHO website: www.who.int/gho/countries/mwi/country_profiles/en/

Methods

The first step was to research ways to get the books to Malawi. We decided to work with the African Library Project (ALP), an organization that coordinates book drives and ships books to libraries in Africa.

We created a set of collection criteria based on the needs of the College to ensure that all the books we sent were as relevant and recent as possible. We solicited donations at our campus and within our community, and collected books from February 2017 to April 2017.

As we received donations, we discarded anything that did not meet our collection criteria. We also solicited monetary donations to help cover shipping costs.

Shipment Details

- 413 books
- 38 boxes
- 2 pallets
- Total weight 1,455 pounds

Estimated Project Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting/sorting</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packing</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Project Budget

- ALP fee: $250.00
- Shipping (to New Orleans): $966.00
- Shipping supplies: $80.00
- Total: $1,396.00

Conclusion

The books were shipped to ALP’s facility in New Orleans in May 2017, and were shipped to Africa in July. Our shipment arrived at the Malawi College of Health Sciences Library Friday, September 29, 2017!

“It is a milestone for us in the history of the college.” – Christopher Kondwani Finye, Associate Dean, Malawi College