



*African stories for
African children*

AFRICAN CHILDREN'S BOOK BOX SOCIETY

***"It is my wish that the voice of the
storyteller may never die in Africa,
that all the children of the world may
experience the wonder of books"***

Nelson Mandela

This letter is about the African Children's Book Box Society. Our society's main purpose is to support and increase literacy in Africa by providing children with their own stories and literature written by African authors. Our initiative has made a small dent in the desperate need for reading material. Over 25,000 children have benefited from this program since the Book Box Society was founded 14 years ago. However, there is still a great deal to do! Our hope is to continue to expand and make a real difference for African children.

Before the end of this year you will be able to view our new website, www.africanbookbox.org, which will have more detailed and up-to-date information.

Harambee is a Swahili word meaning "pull together" and it is in this spirit that we ask you to read this letter which describes with words, pictures and correspondence the WHAT, WHERE & WHY of our project, followed by HOW our society functions. It is our hope that a simple metal box filled with books can begin to act as a catalyst for change.

Asante sana (thank you very much)

***We continue to receive positive feedback from Kenyan
and Tanzanian children, teachers and administrators.
Mr. Mugaya, head teacher at Katesh Primary School in
Tanzania wrote:***

*"On behalf of my school I have
nothing to pay back rather than
promising you that we are going to
make sure that the books are well
used and cared for all the time."*

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JAMBO hello



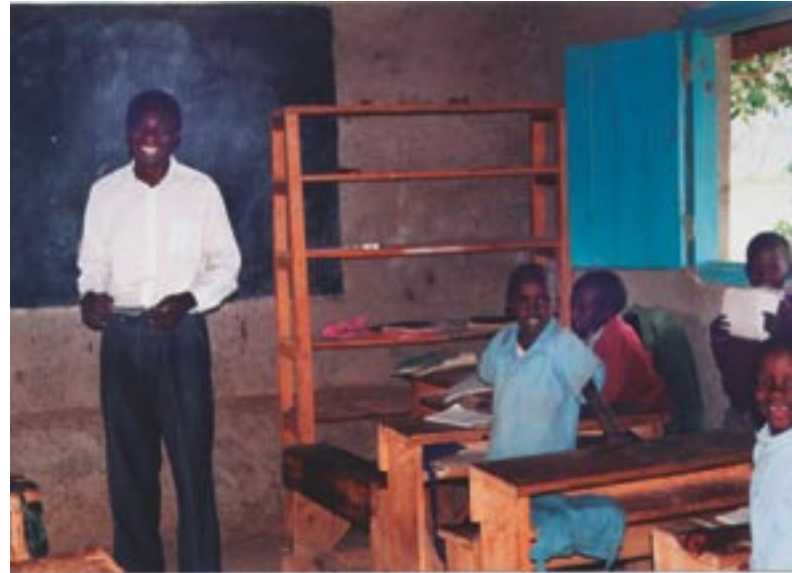
The African Children's Book Box Society has been very successful in developing and carrying out a unique project to promote children's literacy in Africa.

When Kenya gained its independence in 1963 one of Jomo Kenyatta's initial acts as the first president was to place a red wooden box of books in a few schools in Kenya. In most cases these were the first books these children had ever seen. This gesture highlighted the President's view of the importance of education and signaled the great hope he had for Kenya.

Many African children are still waiting!

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In 1990 Anne Pearson, a Canadian teacher, began visiting schools in Kenya. Stark differences from Canadian schools quickly became apparent. Classrooms of 50-70 children broke into applause after hearing a published African storybook. It became clear there were virtually no books in many schools.



SHULE school



Kenyan teachers and their students were desperate for printed material especially from their own culture. How can children learn to read and write without books?

The idea was hatched to purchase and supply books written by Africans about Africa for distribution to elementary school children. This approach is significantly different from most existing overseas agencies.

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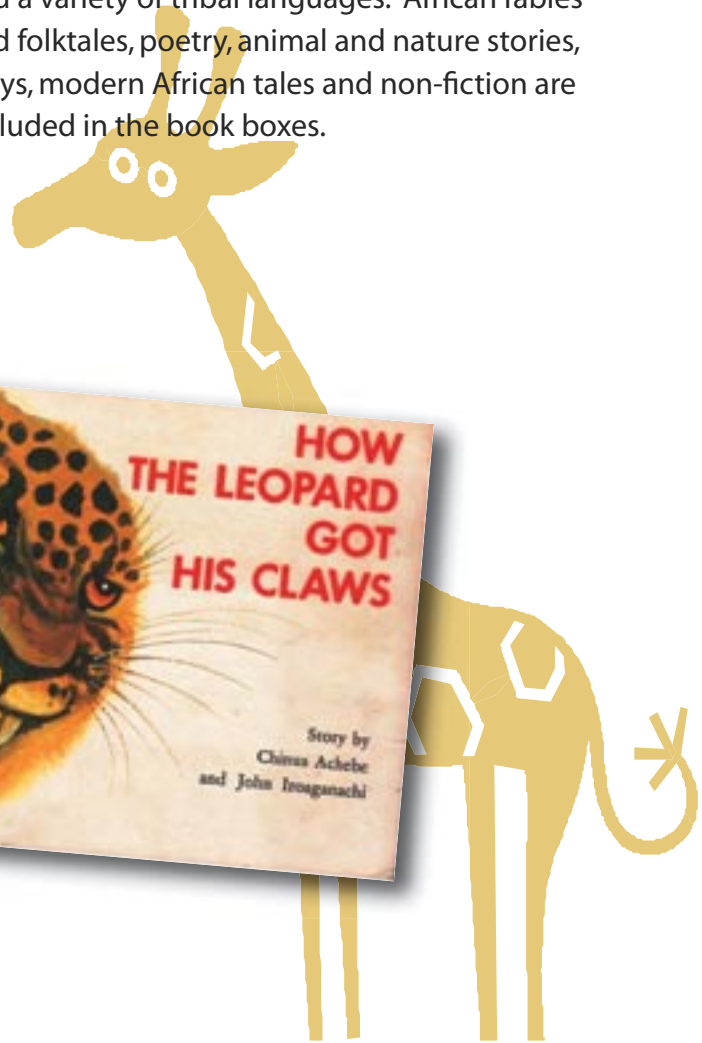
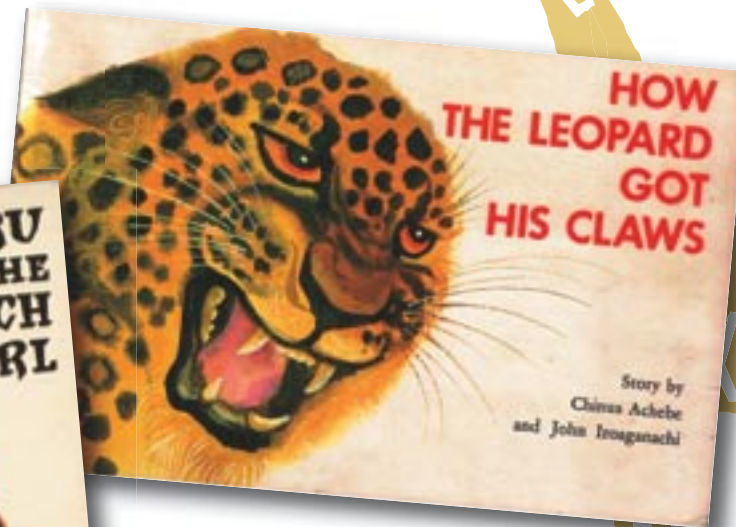
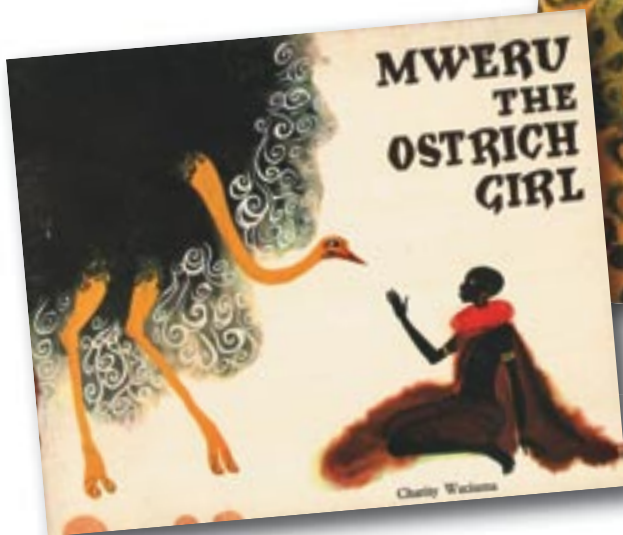


VITABU books

Despite the good intentions of donors, obsolete textbooks and culturally irrelevant material do not promote cultural pride and a love of learning. Many of the books in the book boxes are written in English, with several books written in Swahili and a variety of tribal languages. African fables and folktales, poetry, animal and nature stories, plays, modern African tales and non-fiction are included in the book boxes.

Quoting Nelson Mandela

"This continent's beloved stories are morsels rich with the gritty essence of Africa, but in many instances universal in their portrayal of humanity, beasts and the mystical." 1997



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JITOLEA volunteer

The idea was simple. African books were purchased from publishers in Nairobi, placed in strong metal boxes built by local craftsmen and distributed one or two book boxes per school. To date over 25,000 school children have benefitted from this project.



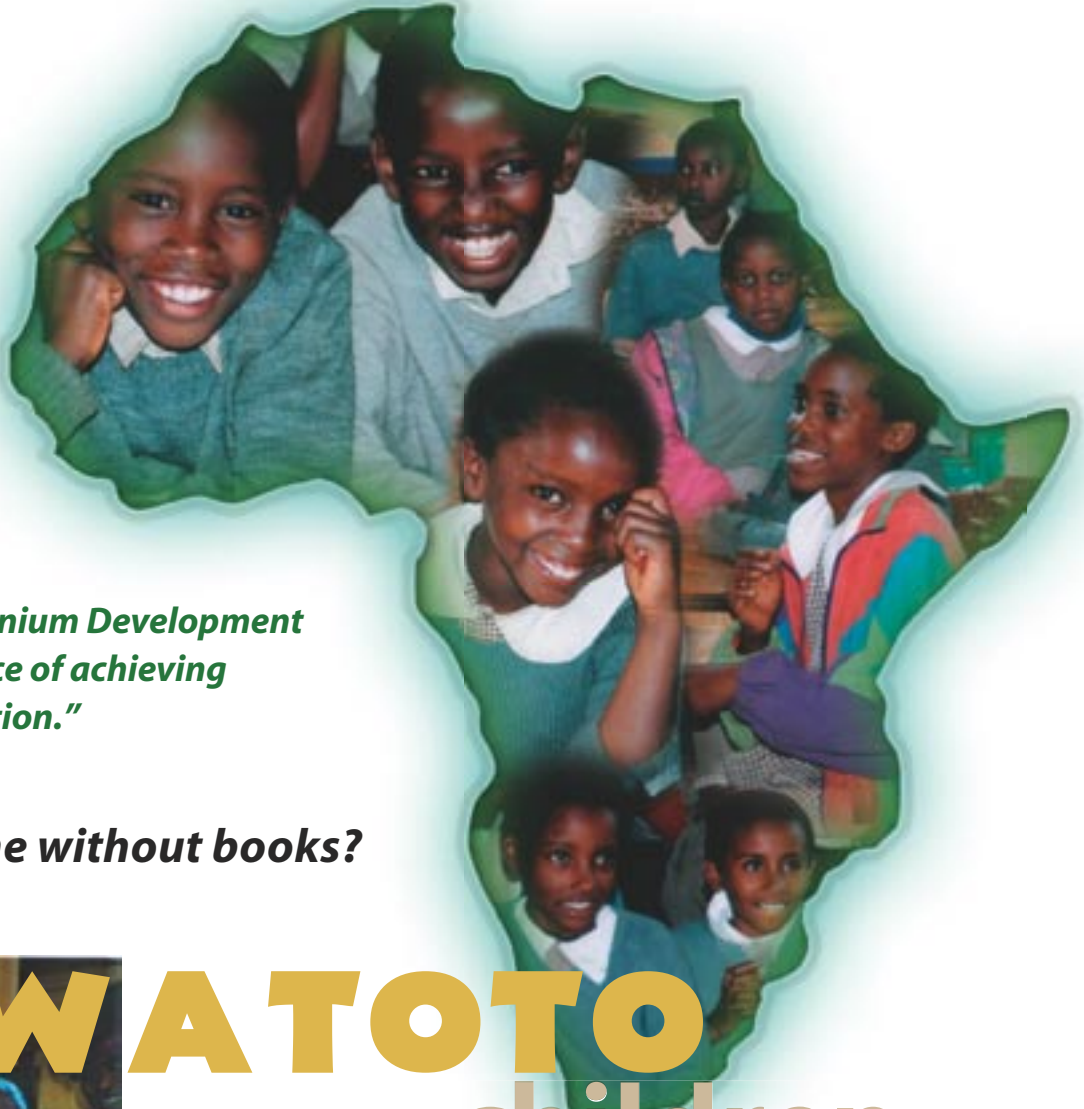
A contact teacher on each staff is made responsible for ensuring boxes are circulated from classroom to classroom. In this way an entire school population of several hundred children have their own portable library. The total cost for each book box containing approximately 80 books is currently \$200.

For the past 15 years the Book Box Society has remained modest, raising \$3,000-\$5,000 per year. Funds have been donated by family, friends, schools and churches. The response has been deeply gratifying. In total 232 book boxes have been distributed in Kenyan and Tanzanian schools. In addition 1000 books have been used to establish the innovative mobile book box program at the Nairobi Teachers Centre.

Due to an idealistic love of the project, volunteers have kept administrative costs to an absolute minimum. There are no salaried positions in the Book Box Society.



AFRICAN CHILDREN'S BOOK BOX SOCIETY



The United Nations Millennium Development goals stress the importance of achieving "universal primary education."

How can this be done without books?



WATOTO children

Today there is a growing urgency about the needs of the people of Africa. Their hopeful and industrious spirit calls out for a generous response.

We are seeking funds to nurture children's literacy. Words cannot begin to describe the sense of gratitude that is felt by teachers and children touched by the African Children's Book Box Society.

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BARUA letters



From Headmaster Mr. M Joseph
Balangdalalu Primary School

Thanks a lot for your gift of books. It's a
good fortune we've never dreamed.

I would like to insure you that the school
community will take a BIG care and make sure
all the books sent us will be in a good condition
most of the time.

From headmaster
Mr Yasinthi Nesfoni
Manyara, Tanzania

We thank you very much for your
help. The books are good and our pupils
enjoy them so much. We think they are
going to make them improve learning for
their future.

We please you to go on giving us some
more books and some learning materials.
Please be close with us because we are in
hard area, we still need your help.



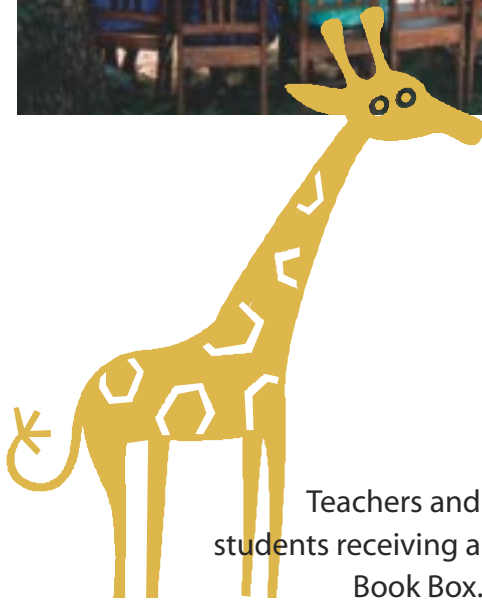
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RAFIKI friend

Katesh, Tanzania P.T.A.!



Presentation of book boxes at outdoor assembly.



Teachers and students receiving a Book Box.



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ASANTE
thank you

c/o Anne Pearson
265 Caldecote Road, Victoria, British Columbia
Canada, V9E 2H3
Phone: (250) 479-8671

YES! I would like to contribute to the African Children's Book Box Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send a cheque or money order to the address above.
Make cheques payable to: African Children's Book Box Society.

All contributions are welcome - any amount will help!
The African Children's Book Box Society is officially registered as a Canadian charitable organization by the federal government. All donations are eligible for tax credits. Receipts for taxation purposes will be sent automatically.

Thank you so much,

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