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DONATING BOOKS OVERSEAS

By Rebecca Schneider
Sabre Foundation, Inc.

In recent years there has been a great increase in the process of donating books to overseas libraries. Quite often this comes up during a weeding process. Many libraries prefer to donate books to institutions overseas. While donating books is not an easy or cheap task, there are many organizations that send books overseas to needy individuals and institutions. A Book Donation Agencies database is now available on the Internet..

The Sabre Foundation has recently expanded its Book Donation Agencies (BDA) Database to include a comprehensive international listing as well as an updated version of North American sources. The new interactive BDA Database will help those interested in book donations obtain information quickly and efficiently. Sabre is the largest donor of books to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and has shipped over three million books to over 50 countries around the world.

Prospective donors who are interested in donating to a specific country or area of the world can now search Sabre's database to find out which book donation programs are working in what area. Similarly, would-be recipients, such as educational or democracy-building organizations which would like to receive books, or Peace Corps volunteers who would like to set up a library book collection in the country in which they serve, can more easily determine who can potentially help them.

The BDA Database centralizes information from five directories and gives bibliographic information on the source of each listing. (Sabre will periodically update for accuracy. Users are welcome to contact the Sabre offices with further updates.) Each entry includes contact information, list of officers and overseas locations, geographical areas of work, a general description of book donation work, etc. Over 50 organizations in North America

are listed in the database as well as approximately a dozen based internationally. The database is located at http://www.sabre.org/books/BOOKORG.html.

Please note that each of the agencies may have particular acceptance policies and procedures regarding donations. Each organization has its own method for soliciting and sending books overseas. The scale of these operations also varies greatly, ranging from a small project run by a professional society sending books by mail, to a large-scale operation shipping books in large sea containers.

For example: Sabre's source of books for its book donation programs come primarily from publishers. There is a tax incentive for many publishers to donate books instead of pulping them. Sabre rarely accepts used materials unless they are in a subject area not normally received directly from publishers (for example, ESL materials). Books are sent in 20-foot or 40-foot sea containers - which amounts to 10,000 or 20,000 books. These books are then distributed by Sabre's in-country partner organizations to schools, universities, individuals, etc. The cost of sending a container can range from $15,000 to $25,000 depending on the country and size of container. For information on how this works see Sabre's "Life of a Shipment" at http://www.sabre.org/books/lifeship/lifeship.html

However, there are many organizations that accept used materials far more readily than Sabre. These organizations include Books for Africa, Books for Asia and the International Book Bank. All three of these organizations are listed in the Book Donation Agencies database.

Information about the costs of mailing books overseas can be found at the World Library Partnership "Library Database" at: http://rtpnet.org/~wlp/resource.htm. Their web site also contains a wealth of information about book donation in general, including "Some Facts About Book Donation Programs" [reprinted from Libraries for All: How to Start and Run a Small Library,

http://rtpnet.org/~wlp/donation.htm.

Unfortunately, funding for book donation programs is not easy to come by, for a variety of reasons. People have long memories of "book dumping," book donation is considered "procurement" (funders would often rather pay for activities, such as workshops or conferences), and, with the advent of the Internet, many donors think that "everything is on the Internet". Those public and private funders who do donate money to assist in book donation efforts rarely are interested in giving money for domestic shipping.

[Sabre Foundation is a non profit organization that is active in Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union and other "countries in transition." Project activities focus on book donation and technical assistance with an emphasis on training on the Internet and other information technologies. For more information, please see the Sabre web site at http://www.sabre.org.]

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SLA COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING
Report from Dorothy McGarry, STD Liaison

Since the annual SLA Conference, the Committee on Cataloging has responded to several documents relating to bibliographic issues sent to it from SLA's Technical Standards Committee. The two primary documents commented on dealt with whether the Dublin Core scheme should be made a standard at this time and on a proposed standard dealing with title pages for conference proceedings.

The Committee has members also monitoring bibliographic issues in other associations, in order to keep up to date with current issues. As other groups meet during January, this Committee will hear reports and discuss more issues dealing with various metadata schemes. One of the newest groups whose work will be of interest is one on uses of metadata, formed by the Standing Committee of the Section on Cataloguing of IFLA. The intent is not to develop a scheme by IFLA, but rather to determine when librarians should use the metadata schemes in existence, and when they should use traditional cataloguing .

The Committee has arranged to have Ana Cristan of LC talk about the Program for Cooperative Cataloging at the annual conference and how special librarians can become involved in various aspects of the Program. The Program is interested in reaching out more to special librarians, so here's a chance for everyone to learn more about it. One of the important documents the Committee is being asked to comment on is that on "Guidelines for OPAC Displays." The document has recently gone out for worldwide review from the Task Force on Guidelines for OPAC Displays (a Task Force of the IFLA Division of Bibliographic Control). If you are interested in input to this international effort on displays, please look at the document, which is available on the IFLAnet web site at http://www.ifla.org/ifla/VII/s13/guide/opac.htm

The ISBD(S) Revision Group is working on a revision of the ISBD(S), especially in view of discussions taking place internationally on issues such as the definition of "seriality" and the increasing number of electronic serials. It is hoped that the revision can be finished by IFLA 2000. After further internal discussion, this document will also go out for worldwide review.

The Committee on Cataloging members this year are: Paige Andrew, Margaret Lundahl, Dorothy McGarry (Chair), Adam Schiff, Jina Wakimoto, Cynthia Whitacre, and Marcia Lei Zeng. If you are interested in being on the committee in the future, please contact the President-Elect of SLA.