

READ – a good story

READ International began life in 2003/4 as a small project based at Nottingham University, founded by a group of socially entrepreneurial students following a 'gap year' teaching in Tanzania. Now there are over 1,000 student volunteers involved, operating from a network of over 45 university sites across the UK.

We collect any books from anyone, anywhere throughout the UK, but we focus our efforts on collecting textbooks and children's literature from secondary schools. We sort the books and send the most relevant, up-to-date, and high quality books to schools in Tanzania and Uganda. Any books collected which are not relevant or appropriate to send are sold online or recycled to generate funding.



Tanzania and Uganda follow a secondary school syllabus almost identical to the UK, but teachers often lack the resources needed to teach. In the UK newer editions of books inevitably replace the old (very often only a couple of years old though), which makes for good quality, but technically 'out of date' textbooks filling up school store rooms or ending up in landfill. We send them to where they are really needed, improving access to education to thousands of children in East Africa.

READ has grown rapidly since we launched on the national stage in House of Commons in 2007. Since our first shipment of books in 2005, we have shipped a total of **850,000** books to East Africa and are supporting the renovation of dozens of school libraries so that access to books is also improved. We have also sent several tonnes of sports kits, science equipment, and school stationery. In Tanzania and Uganda we work closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure that our books go to where they are most needed. Our work in UK schools has also developed. We deliver a workshop programme to secondary schools throughout the UK to raise awareness of global citizenship, recycling and student volunteering to UK school children.

We have successfully established some exciting partnerships to keep our costs low and efficiency high: **Big Yellow Self Storage** provide free storage for all of the books we collect at any of their sites across the UK; **British Airways** provide us with free or heavily discounted flights for all of our volunteers; **Latham and Watkins**, a city law firm, provide pro bono legal support; **KPMG** provide us with free office space in Dar es Salaam and Kampala; **DHL** provide free and discounted logistics support; **Staples** work with us to collect disused stationery from thousands of UK schools and students at all of their UK stores; **Waterstones** collect books for us in their stores across the West Midlands; and the **British Library** have developed an electronic book sorting database for us to more accurately sort through all the books we collect.

Since registering as a charity we have had our work recognised in a number of ways. READ International was winner of '**Best New Charity**' in the **Charity Times Awards 2007**, and '**Best International Aid and Development Charity**' in the **Charity Awards 2010** and **Best Corporate Partnership** in the **Institute of Fundraising Awards 2010**. We were shortlisted for Guardian Charity of the Year 2009 and a Charity Times Award 2009. Our founder and director Rob Wilson has been winner of Unltd awards, Social Enterprise Day Award 2006, and Enterprising Young Brit Award in 2010.

It never costs READ more than 50 pence to move one book from a UK classroom into the hands of a Tanzanian/Ugandan school child or teacher. We are an innovative model with income streams from book sales and student fundraising drives. Please find out how you can support us by visiting our website at www.readinternational.org.uk