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Mountains in Lesotho under snow. Rudi Botha. Used with permission.

NEWSLETTER No. 25, MARCH 2022

In the last newsletter I wrote: “Your donation has never been more important – Books for Lesotho needs over \$12,000 before 30th June 2022 to breakeven for the financial year. Will you contribute?” Many of you did respond, and over \$7,000 was donated.

We are short **\$3,555** from reaching 2021/22 budget (and the budget does not include any recent rises in freight costs). You can help by donating before 30 June 2022.

I reported it is the sea freight costs (we have previously been amazed at how reasonable they have been) that have escalated by about 55%. The following email arrived from supporter Michele:

“yikes, freight costs have gone up significantly but I was expecting that, so I'm happy to pay for the pallet cost of \$1,242 & have transferred the money now. Can you please send me a receipt, thanks. I have an online business (kids sunsmart clothing) which I source from overseas and I feel that increase in freight cost pain too! It's from the profit of that business which I've funded the donations, so if you wanted to give a mention in the newsletter at any time that would be great, but also not necessary if it doesn't fit. Lightweight cotton clothing to help keep little ones covered from the sun, but still cool & comfortable. You might recognise my children James & Felicity in the photos from when they were small! I'm actually reading a great novel at the moment 'The Giver of Stars' about depression era pack horse library in the mountains of Kentucky, and it reminds me every time I pick it up about the value books and reading can bring to a community.”

Michele gave B4L permission to use her words, so I have reproduced it in full, firstly to acknowledge her generosity (for two years running), her motivation, her observation about the value of reading, and finally, a hope that you might find and check out her company website: www.threesunpossums.com.au. Thank you, Michele, for your words, and \$ donations.

And here is another initiative:

My exercise group at Mitcham has for years supported the B4L project by making small donations weekly which, over a year, has usually funded the shipping of one pallet. Cicely is a member of that group. Each year Cicely has opened her home garden on Australia Day to members of the group and partners for a BYO social event, with entry donations to a charity. You guessed it, Cicely nominated B4L for 2022! COVID rules ruled out using her garden so the group assembled in the Mitcham Memorial Gardens. It was a lovely day in the shade (on an otherwise hot day) and that must have helped with the raising of \$78. Thank you, Cicely (pictured, right, with Liz Linn at the event) and the donors.

It pays to advertise: So I'm told, or at least to get your name in the media. You've read about this in a previous newsletter; the report of the book donation by the Rotary Club of Maloti to the Mpharane community library (initiated by Ntate Mothae Moletsane). But now I've seen it written up with the image on the right in an online news service from Lesotho, www.themail.co.ls:

Here is the news item with the linked image to the right:



B4L Donates Books to Mpharane Community Library



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An Australian based non-governmental organisation (NGO), Books For Lesotho (B4L) has donated a consignment of books to the Mpharane Community Library in Mophale's Hoek district, Lesotho, as a way to improve literacy and learning among the less privileged.

The donation, comprising of a five boxes of books sourced from well-wishers around Australia was handed over to the Mpharane community by the Rotary Club of Maloti at the official opening of the library on 11 September 2020. Members of the Rotary Club of Maloti said they were proud to be in partnership with B4L to distribute the books during its 'Basic Education and Literacy' campaign in September last year.

This means that life for members of the community in Mpharane village of Mophale's Hoek, Lesotho, will never be the same again. Since then, members of the community in one of the remotest villages in the Kingdom of Lesotho, where access to electricity and good communication are out of reach, have been able to borrow books and reading material from the community library.

Like many other areas in Lesotho, Mpharane is characterized by poverty and illiteracy among the villagers - but members of the community say they want to be at par with the rest of the country, and indeed the world, in terms of access to information.

Also from Lesotho, I read the following in The Reporter <https://www.thereporter.co.ls/>:

Newtoro Books spreads literacy

By Kefiloe Kajane
Junior Reporter

Being passionate about reading and having worked as a volunteer at a library led a young woman, Retšepile Sello from Mophahong, to start her book rental service - Newtoro Books.

Sello uses social media to reach most of her readers and referrals.

Speaking to theReporter this week she said through social media her readers let her know which books they are interested in. Newtoro then sends them a catalogue, which currently has 232 titles from which they can choose a book of their preference.

"From there, we get their details and deliver the book to them through a courier services company, Skyberg. Our readers pay for the first seven days of the rental when they receive the book and they can opt to extend the period. When they finish reading they let us know so that we collect the

books," Sello explained.

She said Newtoro was launched in October 2020 but the idea had struck her a month earlier. The company was registered in the same month of September while the first books were delivered in October.

What had prompted her most to begin the business was an intention to beat unemployment and also empower people, especially the youth to become self-reliant.

"Education or life-long learning is one of the paths towards independence and entrepreneurship. So the books business seemed just a right choice for me," Sello remarked.

"I had about sixty books in my personal library and I decided to share them with some readers. I know reading is important for personal growth. Enabling Basotho to access good books at a reasonable cost is my style of contributing towards empowerment," she added.

After completing her high school studies Sello volunteered to work in a library for six months. Subsequently, she worked part-time in a library



for two years while in enrolled in college studies.

"From that experience I attained knowledge on skills to run the library through book rental service. I also gathered knowledge on collection of books," Sello explained.

She warned that the country's youth must rise and take their space in the world of business.

"I urge Basotho youth who feel called to start

businesses to do so now," she encouraged.

Sello thought that the current economic situation was not so conducive to absorb the graduating youth into the world of work. She then appealed to them to try their luck in business development.

"Mel Robbins, in her famous book, 'The 30 Seconds Rule', states that: 'Most wonderful ideas are killed by hesitation' and I agree with her. It is not necessary to figure everything out before you begin. Things will fall into place as you learn.

"When I started Newtoro, I didn't even know there was a countrywide courier services company. I wanted to use the public transport for deliveries. I had no clue about marketing or branding. I am just learning everything as I move on. So, my major advice is find something that you like, preferably something that is not saturated in the market already, and follow up on it," Sello said.

Newtoro Books can be found on its Facebook page 'Newtoro Books' to rent a book or find more details on prices.

The books are delivered countrywide through courier.

I started up an email interchange with Retšepile ("Rets") and I discovered more about her and her life and determined that she is an amazing young woman! If you want to learn more about her and her NGO, NewToro Books click here: <https://www.newtoro.org/>. Her organisation is a subscription library service offered through NewToro Books. It's purpose closely matches the aims of B4L, so much so that the B4L Board agreed to donate M5,000 to NewToro to allow the service to be expanded. The donation (equivalent to AUD450) was raised in one day through a special appeal launched by the Board.

Upon further interaction, B4L determined that perhaps 4 boxes of books would help NewToro Books grow. The 4 boxes packed totalled 335 books, a significant adding to the current stock. WOW. The boxes have been added to the shipment to the Rotary Club of Maloti which will leave B4L during April 2022. To add to the story, we understand that RCoMa and NewToro have formed a relationship to work together - a multiplication effect after my reading of NewToro Books online!

The Rotary Club of Maloti is an enterprising club! What I have observed includes partnering with B4L and distributing books, (next page) assisting with the delivery of donated books to the Morija Seminary, supporting the new library at Mpharane (see page 1), considering working with NewToro Books (at least to facilitate the book delivery, as above), and sponsoring the start-up of the Rotary Club of Montsopa (see later). We can learn a lot more about where B4L books have gone from this, off its Facebook page (my editing):

“This a short coverage of handover (by RCoMa) of Books to the school at Sisters of the Good Shepherd Centre (4 boxes for primary 1-3, 7 boxes for primary 4-5, 6 boxes for primary 6-7) and ANTS pre-school (3 boxes).”



Handover of books at the Good Shepherd Centre (left, and next row), with images from on-line of ANTS pe-school (third row)



"Ants Basic Centre is a non-profit and non-denominational institution offering qualitative, comprehensive all-round education to all manner of children irrespective of their socio-economic background at the children's formative years thus giving them strong beginnings. Developing fine motor skills in early childhood education helps build the foundation for important future skills like writing and self-care."



And a big surprise to me – a new Rotary Club in Lesotho

The morning after I discovered NewToro Books on Facebook, an email lobbed in the B4L Inbox:

*“Greetings from Lesotho David,
The Rotary Club of Mantsopa was chartered on 15 June 2021, making it the third Rotary Club in Lesotho. The average age for our members is 35. Our Club comprises more of young adults compared to the other two clubs. Our meetings are held at Victoria Hotel on Thursdays, 17:30- 18:30.
Can I kindly ask what is required to be a partner with books for Lesotho organization?
Best regards,
Makhetha Motsoari
Mantsopa Rotary Club- President”*

What can one do but ask for more details! And then:

*Hello David,
Thank you for the swift response.*

I'm aware that you are already partnering with The Rotary Club of Maloti and TRC. The Club of Mantsopa Rotary Club is aiming to distribute books to at least 3 Primary Schools, 3 High Schools and 1 community library each year. Please note that I have included Mr. Lemphane in this mail; he is Mantsopa Rotary Club- Secretary. Thank you.

*Kind regards,
Makhetha*

What can one do after that? Check we have a supply of books: Yes! Check volunteers agree that we can pack 4 more pallets (10,000 books) in a year – Yes! (Bless them) Check what the B4L Board thinks – Yes! they agree (bless them, too). But, subject to raising extra funds to cover the costs (the Board is very pragmatic!), about \$6,250 (at March's freight rate). B4L is now seeking the donations to allow a 3rd (or is it 4th) partner to receive books to give to worthy school, institutions and communities to establish or expand their library.

If the funding is available, Books for Lesotho Inc. will, before 31 December 2022, have collected, sorted, packed and shipped over **250,000 books for schools, institutions, and community libraries** in the Kingdom of Lesotho, a feat in which book donations from Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, municipal and school libraries, community groups and private individuals have all played a part. Financial support has come from many of the same service clubs, Lang Foundation, community groups and individuals. All together you have played a significant role, whatever the size and type of your donation.

And I must not forget those who give In-Kind. A BIG THANK YOU TO:

Jurlique at Mount Barker, SA – for sending B4L the 2022-23 supply of plastic pallets (which must be used for any freight passing through the Port of Singapore) - it seems to be an annual ritual which is both convenient for B4L and also cost saving (and perhaps saves the pallets otherwise going to waste!).

Preschem of Melbourne Vic – for sending B4L the 2022-23 supply of cartons - it seems to be another annual ritual which is both convenient for B4L and also cost saving. Preschem also donates the labels for the cartons.

LATE NEWS:



NewToro Books seems to have a new book promotion on Facebook every day – to the left is one of them.

On Wednesday, 30 March, we completed packing the 4th and last pallet for this shipment, destined for Rotary Club of Maloti. It included 4 boxes of books for NewToro Books – is this a new era for the subscription borrowing service!

POSITION VACANT: B4L urgently needs one or two new volunteers to help sort and/or pack books; must be available on a Wednesday morning (not necessarily every week!) Please make contact

Thank you everyone who has contributed in whatever way.

David Linn
Chairman, Books for Lesotho Inc.



TO DONATE

There are now three ways to donate – each one will produce a receipt for Australian tax purposes. Please refer to the next page.

TO DONATE

1. The easy way for you and B4L is to donate through GiveNow.
This is a secure online donation service: **CLICK** here



Another easy way for both parties is through PayPal:
[Click HERE to visit our PayPal Giving Fund page](#)
Or use the PayPal QR Code to the right.
A PayPal account is not required to use this service.



2. Send a donation directly to our bank account:
Account Name: BOOKS FOR LESOTHO INCORPORATED
BSB: 035-044 Account No: 228285
If you donate directly, and want a receipt, you **MUST** send an email to B4L with your details, the date and amount deposited.