



Summary of Sabre Foundation's Work with Iraqi University Libraries, the Iraq National Library and Archive, and Other Educational Institutions

The goal of Sabre's book donation program is to help fill the need for high quality, up-to-date educational materials in developing countries and countries in transition throughout the world. In the last two years, Sabre has shipped close to 160,000 new books, CD-ROMs and other educational materials with a fair market value of over six million dollars to Iraq, in support of schools, universities and libraries.

Books are selected from Sabre inventory lists by NGO partner organizations. Instead of trying to send as many books as possible, regardless of demonstrated need, Sabre asks its partners to select titles and quantities of books and CD-ROMs from offering lists sent by e-mail. Partner organizations for the shipments to Iraq include: Association of University Lecturers (Mosul); Kurdistan Reconstruction Organization (Dohuk); Iraq Health Access Program (Baghdad); and International Relief and Development (Arlington, VA). Orders are packed and shipped in ocean freight containers from Sabre's book distribution center in Lawrence, MA.

Over 200 publishers have participated in the book donation program in the last 22 years. From thousands of titles offered throughout the year, Sabre carefully chooses only the materials likely to interest its constituencies abroad. Donated books cover such diverse fields as business and economics; medicine, science and technology; English language and literature; agriculture; the environment; computer science; political science and government; law and democracy; American history and culture; the humanities and social sciences; and general reference. The books are in English, a widely preferred second language of choice.

The broad range of available inventory means that Sabre has the capacity to respond to very specific requests. In Iraq, Ph.D. students have requested materials in such areas as African-American literature and modern American theater, and relevant titles on these subjects are represented in Sabre's current holdings. In cases where requests can not be met through existing inventory, Sabre offers the service (provided funding is available) of purchasing books and including them in the donated book shipments. For example, a purchase project focusing on the rule of law is underway for the Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team, with advice on title selection provided by the Law Library of Congress; subject areas represented in the project include international, constitutional, and comparative law, treaties and conventions, and bilingual law dictionaries.

A summary of completed shipments follows:

Completed

- For universities in the north: 13,026 books on engineering and medicine, specialized titles on agronomy, architecture, communication technologies, environment and biodiversity, gas and oil refining and processes, and veterinary science.

- For schools in the north: 39,467 educational children's books and manipulatives (including rulers, scales, calculators, etc.)
- Iraq National Library and Archive: 6,101 books, sent in September 2008 and comprised of the following:
 1. Humanities and social sciences books (in no more than three copies per title) selected from titles offered by Harvard University Press, MIT Press, and Yale University Press; the books will be shared with the Central Library of Mustansiriyah University, the Central Library of the University of Technology and the Central Library of the University of Baghdad
 2. Arabic-language law materials donated by the Harvard Law School Library
 3. Arabic-English/ English-Arabic dictionaries in social sciences and humanities
- University of Mosul: 14,817 new books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on medicine, engineering, science and environmental science; sent in August 2008; OCLC electronic cataloging records to be provided
- College of Medicine, University of Baghdad: 10,882 new books, atlases, CD-ROMs and flash cards in medicine and health sciences; sent in July 2008; OCLC electronic cataloging records to be provided
- University of Anbar, with a small portion for the Ramadi Public Library: 25,348 new books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on medicine, engineering, computer and natural science; two shipments, sent in June 2008
- College of Education and Trading in Zakho: 13,891 new textbooks, reference books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on business, education, science and social sciences; sent in December 2007
- University of Dohuk: 11,613 new textbooks, reference books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on computer science, science and medicine; included MIT's OpenCourseWare "mirror sites" (hard drives with operating instructions) for both Dohuk and Mosul universities; sent in July 2007
- Universities of Salahaddin, Koya & Sulaimani: 10,375 new textbooks, reference books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on science, engineering and medicine; sent in May 2007
- 20 University Libraries and Iraq National Library and Archive: 1,504 books on constitutional design, multi-ethnic/multi-religious countries, and truth and reconciliation processes, selected by the Harvard Committee on Iraqi Libraries; purchased and sent in March 2007
- University of Mosul: 12,545 new textbooks, reference books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on business, engineering and medicine; sent in October 2006

Additional Requests

Sabre has also received requests for shipments to the following universities: Al-Muthanna University, University of Babylon, University of Baghdad, University of Basra, Diyala University, Kerkuk University, Kerbala University and Mustansiriyah University.

Funding

The following institutions provided funding to cover Sabre Foundation's costs of organizing, packing and sending shipments to Iraq:

- The Ministry of Higher Education, Kurdistan Regional Government
- Mosul University
- IRD (International Relief and Development), Arlington, VA
- The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad
- United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC
- Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, New York, NY

Assistance to Sabre's Iraq program has also been provided by the Hawaii-Iraq Higher Education Partnerships programs at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



At the “Education, Health and Socio-Economic Developments in Iraq Today” conference, March 27, 2008, Library of Congress: Tania Vitvitsky, Executive Director, Sabre Foundation, with Dr. Samir A. El-Swaify (Soil Scientist), Director, Hawaii-Iraq Education Partnerships, University of Hawaii at Manoa and Sabre Foundation Advisory Committee member, Dr. Ekhlass A. Jarjees (Entomologist), Manager, Hawaii-Iraq Education Partnerships, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The Status of Iraqi Libraries

For information on the status of Iraq libraries, please see *Iraqi Libraries and Archives in Peril: Survival in a Time of Invasion, Chaos, and Civil Conflict, A Report*

http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document_id=10241

The report was prepared by Jeff Spurr, Islamic and Middle East Specialist for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University, and a member of the Sabre Foundation board of directors. He is also head of the MELA (Middle East Librarians Association) Committee of Iraqi Libraries, and member of the Harvard University Committee on Iraqi Libraries.

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