

Sabre Foundation

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

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Dr. Nour Al Mousawi and other members of the Iraq Health Aid Organization team of young medical doctors, receiving and displaying books from the shipment to the College of Medicine, University of Baghdad, and other medical schools, clinics and hospitals in Baghdad.

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 three and a half years, Sabre has shipped more than 320,000 new books, CD-ROMs and other educational materials with a fair market value of more than 16 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 Aid Organization (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.

Sabre's inventory is further enhanced by the work of dedicated, knowledgeable volunteers who regularly assist the staff in processing a wide range of high-level—and often highly-specialized—materials in current editions. For example, members of the MIT graduate-student organization ASPIRE (American Students Promoting IRAqi Education) devote much of their available time to helping screen, sort and inventory books in science, medicine and technology for shipments to universities and medical colleges in Iraq and elsewhere.

In cases where requests can not be met through existing donated inventory, Sabre offers the service (provided funding is available) of purchasing books and including them in the donated book shipments. For example, the first phase of a purchase project focusing on the rule of law has been completed 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 included international, constitutional, and comparative law, treaties and conventions, and bilingual law dictionaries. The second phase of the project, which focuses on Arabic language law materials, is now under way.

A summary of completed shipments follows:

Completed in 2009

- University of Dohuk: 17,285 new books, atlases and CD-ROMs with a focus on medicine, nursing, dentistry and pharmacology, as well as science, engineering, computer science, business, social science, humanities and the arts; the shipment also featured a collection of specialized titles on biology and ecology from Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press; sent in December 2009

- Institutions of higher learning in and around Baghdad and the Iraq Museum in Baghdad: 16,665 new books and CD-ROMs on medicine, business, economics, English language and literature, Arabic language, science and mathematics, social sciences, computer science, engineering and agriculture; the shipment also included a special collection of archaeology titles (826 books) for the State Board of Antiquities & Heritage at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad; sent in December 2009
- University of Baghdad and nearby institutions: 17,116 new books and CD-ROMs featuring titles in science, medicine, engineering, business and economics, social sciences, English language, humanities and the arts; sent in November 2009
- University of Muthanna: 15,898 new books, atlases and CD-ROMs, with a focus on medicine, business, economics, science, engineering, agriculture, ecology and environmental science, computer science, social sciences, humanities and the arts; the shipment also featured approximately 50 recent titles on veterinary medicine, most of them sent in multiple copies; sent in September 2009
- For Baghdad medical colleges and affiliated institutions: 14,808 new books, atlases, CD-ROMs and slide sets on medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacology and radiography, as well as science, engineering and selected technical subjects; the shipment also included 20 Perkins Braille®s, one embosser (computerized Braille printer) and boxes of special Braille paper; sent in August 2009.
- University of Kirkuk: 15,740 new books, atlases and CD-ROMs on agriculture and veterinary science, medicine, science, business, economics, engineering, ecology and environmental science, social science and humanities; sent in July 2009
- Nahrain University: 16,818 new books and CD-ROMs on medicine, science, law, business, economics, computer science, social science, humanities and the arts; sent in July 2009
- University of Basra: 30,878 new books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on medicine, business, economics, science, engineering, social sciences, humanities and the arts; two shipments sent in April 2009
- For University of Mosul: 17,043 new books and CD-ROMs, featuring titles in medicine, law, business, economics, science, social sciences and humanities, sent in March 2009

Completed in 2008

- University of Erbil and other institutions of higher education in the north: 13,026 books on engineering and medicine, specialized titles on agronomy, architecture, communication technologies, environment and bio-diversity, gas and oil refining and processes, and veterinary science; sent in November 2008
- For schools in the north: 39,467 educational children's books and CD-ROMs and other educational materials (rulers, scales, calculators, etc.); sent in November 2008

- Iraq National Library and Archive: 6,106 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 business, economics, medicine, mathematics, engineering, science, psychology and social sciences, sent in August 2008
- 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
- 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

Completed in 2007

- 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 and 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

Completed in 2006

- University of Mosul: 12,545 new textbooks, reference books and CD-ROMs, with a focus on business, engineering and medicine, sent in October 2006

New and Ongoing Requests

Sabre has also received requests for shipments from the University of Babylon, Diyala University, Kerbala University, University of Kufah and Mustansiriyah University, in addition to ongoing requests from institutions that have received Sabre shipments in the past, including University of Baghdad, University of Dohuk, University of Erbil, University of Mosul and the Iraq National Library and Archive.

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
- Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), Iraq
- United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC
- Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, New York, NY
- Muthanna Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), Iraq

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.

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

The report was prepared by Jeff Spurr, former 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 on Iraqi Libraries.



Dr. Nour Al Mousawi and other young medical doctors on the IHAO team, examining books from the Sabre shipment to benefit medical schools, clinics and hospitals in Baghdad.

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