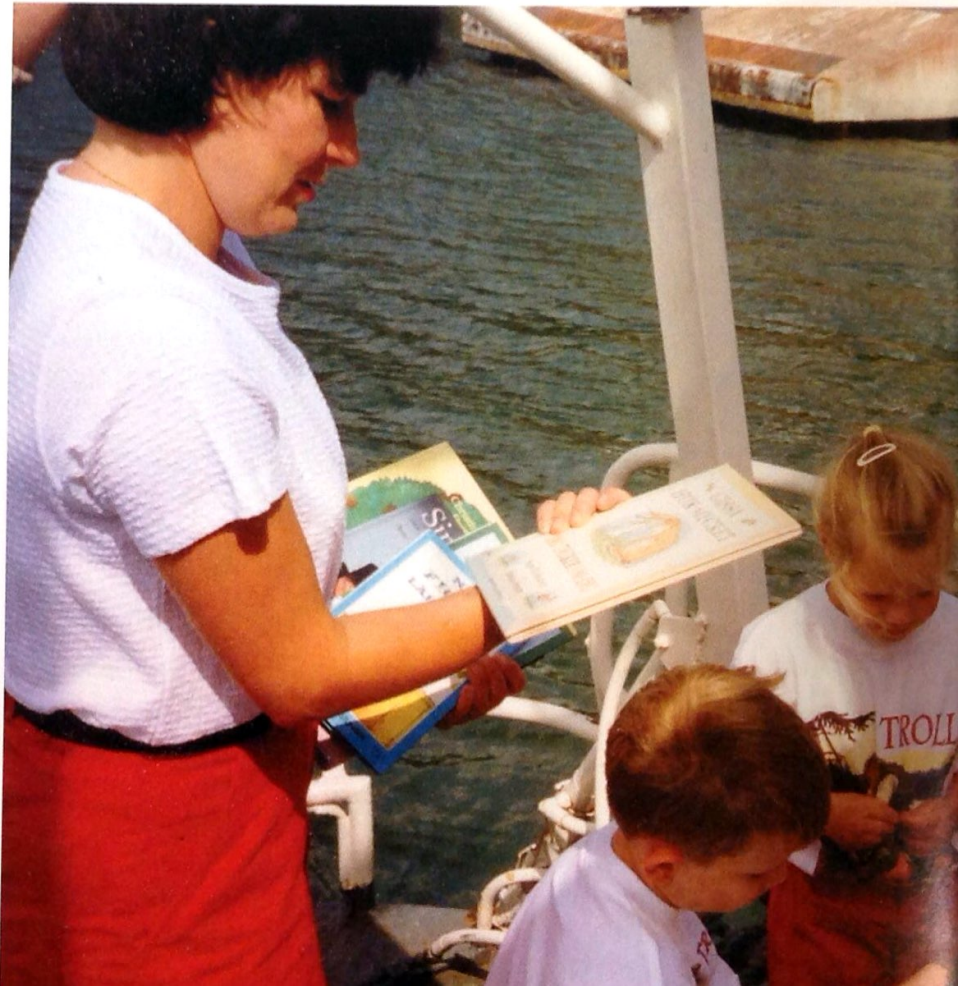


FINLAND

The south coast of Finland skirts the Gulf of Finland. The archipelago, in the southwest, consists of thousands of rocky islands. Some islands have only summer visitors, but others are populated year-round. People in this area of Finland speak both Finnish and Swedish. Since 1976, the

In the middle of Aboland Archipelago is a big water called Gullkrona, meaning "Golden Crown." It was given its name by Queen Blanka of Namur (1316–1363). According to an old legend, while on a voyage to Finland, Queen Blanka promised her golden crown to the most beautiful thing she would see along the way. This turned out to be the bay in the south of Finland, and so she let her crown sink into the waves! The bay is now called Gullkrona Bay.



Pargas Library has been bringing books to the people of these islands by book boat: *Bokbåt* in Swedish or *Kirjastovene* in Finnish.

The boat, called *Kalkholm*, meaning "Limestone Island" in Swedish, measures 4 meters wide and 12 meters long. It carries about six hundred books. The boat, with a crew consisting of a librarian and an assistant, sails among the islands, making about ten stops. Kids come scrambling down the rocky shores to collect their books. Since winters are severe in Finland, the boat goes out only from May to October.

Maj-Len, the chief librarian in Pargas Stad, oversees the operation of the book boat. "Reading has become very important to our book-boat children," she says. "If the book boat didn't come, they might not be reading at all. They are always happy to see us and their supply of new books."



Republic of Finland

Capital: Helsinki

Estimated population: 5,156,000

Finland lies in North Europe. At least a third of the country is north of the Arctic Circle. It is known as "the land of lakes and islands" for good reason. Finland has more than fifty-five thousand lakes, and many thousands of islands. The country has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. Other languages include Lappish and Romany.

Lapland is a region that stretches across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and part of Russia. Most of Lapland is within the Arctic Circle, and parts of it are under snow and ice year-round. Nomadic Lapps have lived here since the first millennium B.C. Most Lapps are now settled, but some still lead nomadic lives and still depend on reindeer for food, clothes, and shelter.

In Northern Lapland, four towns share a mobile library bus, which also carries children's books. What makes this bus special is that the service is shared by communities in three countries: Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

INDONESIA



Children from villages along the river come running when Indonesia's floating library tugs into sight.

Among the many islands of Indonesia, rivers are the main means of transportation. So it is no wonder that some libraries here float on rivers.

The country has seven floating libraries. The Kalimantan Floating Library consists of a wooden boat, 8 meters long and 3 meters wide. The boat, which is powered by a diesel engine, can carry up to five hundred books.

When the boat first began bringing books to the villages along the river Kahayun, it had to stay until people finished reading their books. That took too much time, so the librarians decided to leave behind containers filled with books. This allowed them to continue traveling the river, bringing books to other villages. Now the children in the villages along the river come running when the library boat tugs upstream. They are all excited about rummaging through a new box of books to read.



In the city of Surabaya, a bicycle library makes its rounds every day. The East Java Library Board decided that a bicycle was the most economical way to deliver books to readers. The library is powered by man and environmentally friendly. The bicycle makes it easy to get around the narrow, winding streets of the city. It carries books and promotes reading around the city, at schools in the countryside, in villages and kampongs, which are urban communities designed to look like villages in the countryside. Children and their parents can borrow books from the bicycle library and exchange them the next time the library visits.



Republic of Indonesia
Capital: Jakarta
Estimated population: 238,000,000

Indonesia consists of many islands. It is the largest group of islands in the world, consisting of more than 17,500 islands that lie between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The islands of Indonesia include Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Bali, Timor, and many more. The people speak a language called Bahasa Indonesian, but there are also more than two hundred other languages spoken, including English.



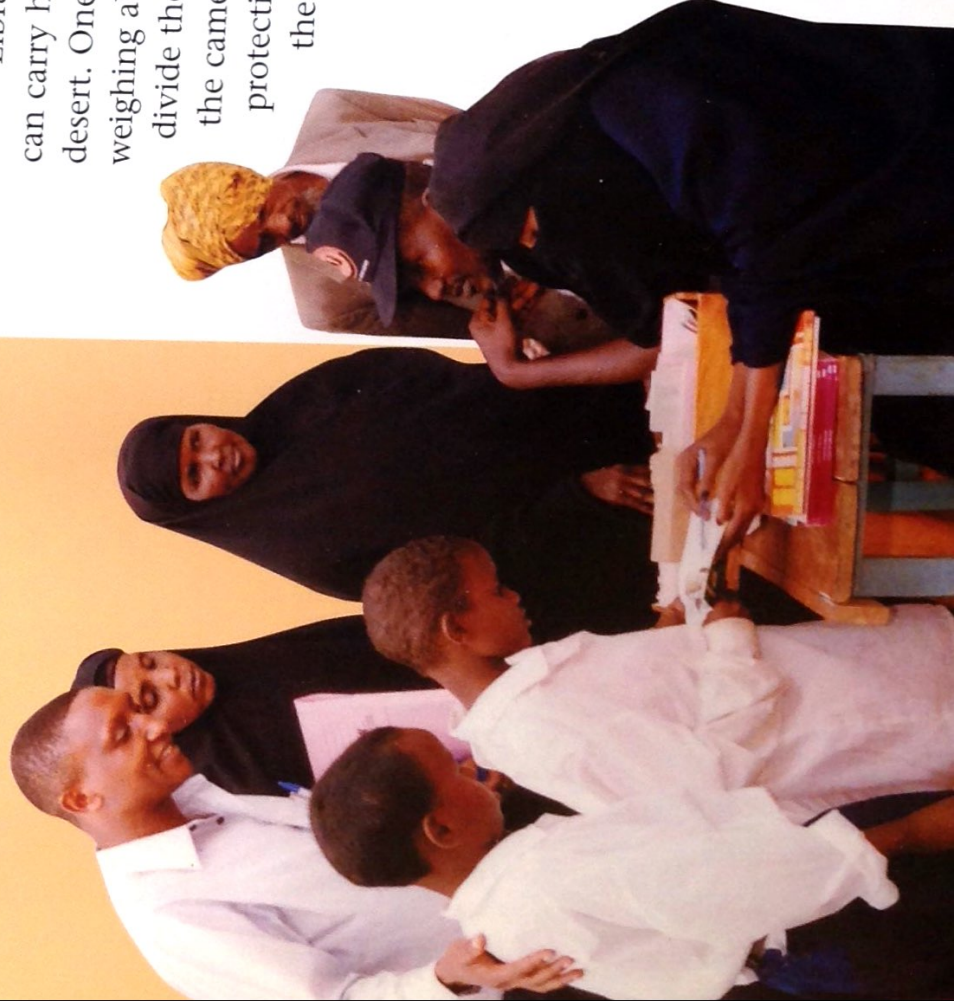
In Surabaya, children and adults gather around a bicycle library.

KENYA

The roads to Bulla Iftin, two hundred miles northeast of Nairobi, are impassable because of the desert sand, even for cars with four-wheel drive. But young people who live in nomadic villages in the area are hungry for books. So librarians use the most economical means of transportation — camels!

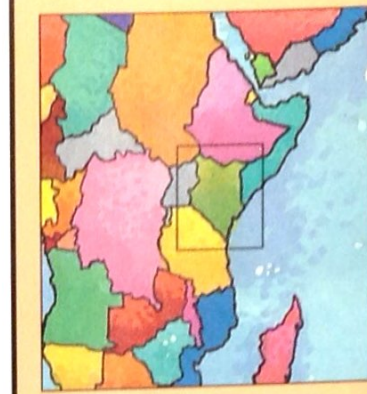
Library camels are on the road five days a week. They can carry heavy loads and need little water in the heat of the desert. One camel may carry as many as five hundred books, weighing about four hundred pounds. A driver and a librarian divide the books into two boxes. They saddle them on the camel's back, which is covered with a grass mat for protection. A second camel carries a tent that serves as the library roof.

These young readers are grateful for the books brought by camel.





The students of Bulla Iftin eagerly await the arrival of the camels. When the library caravan finally reaches the village, the children watch as the librarian pitches the tent and displays the books on wooden shelves. The librarian places the grass mats on the ground in the shade of an acacia tree, making a place where the children can sit. The students can treasure their new books for two weeks. When the library camels return, the children can trade their books for new ones.



Republic of Kenya

Capital: *Nairobi*

Estimated population: *32,000,000*

Kenya is a country in East Africa. Kenya's climate varies. The coast, which lies on the Indian Ocean, is hot and humid. Inland, the climate is temperate, but the northern part of the country is dry. The official language is English. The national language is Kiswahili.



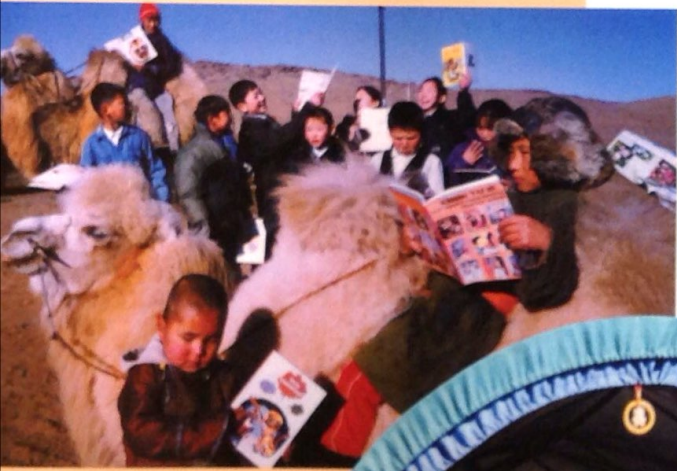
These camels are ready to bring books to children in remote villages.

MONGOLIA



For centuries, people in Mongolia have led a nomadic lifestyle, moving across the steppe, a vast grass-covered plain, with their herds. Many people are still herders of livestock, moving with their herds as they graze. The life of the nomads has not changed very much since the old days except that nowadays the herders like to use “iron horses,” meaning motorbikes, instead of real horses. Very few people have telephones, television, or access to computers, but most people can read! There is almost no illiteracy in this country.

Jambyn Dashdondog is a well-known writer of children’s books in Mongolia. He was looking for a way to bring books to the many children of herders’ families, who live scattered across the Gobi Desert. A horse-drawn wagon (as well as a camel) is used to carry books into the desert.



Mongolian readers reading a book right in their library!



Together with the Mongolian Children's Cultural Foundation, Mr. Dashdondog was able to obtain a minibus and ten thousand books, mostly donated by Japan. The Japanese books are being translated into Mongolian, and Mr. Dashdondog makes trips with the minibus to bring the books to children in the countryside.

The book tour is called *Amttai Nom* which means "candy books." Why? Because before they share the books, the children are given food, including some sweets. After the children listen to stories and choose books, Mr. Dashdondog asks: "Which was sweeter: books or candies?" And the children always answer: "BOOKS!"

"I just returned from a trip to visit herders' children in the Great Gobi Desert," said Mr. Dashdondog, who has visited nearly ten thousand children in the past two years. "We covered some fifteen hundred kilometers in two weeks. And this was in winter, so it was cold and snowy. We had no winter fuel for our bus, so we had to use summer fuel, and the fuel froze at night, making the bus stall. But we weren't cold: the stories and their heroes kept us warm!"



Mongolia

Capital: Ulaanbaatar

Estimated population: 2,300,000

Mongolia is a vast country in northeast Asia, more than one and a half million square kilometers in size. With fewer than two and a half million people living in it, there is lots of empty space throughout the land. The official language is Khalkha Mongol.

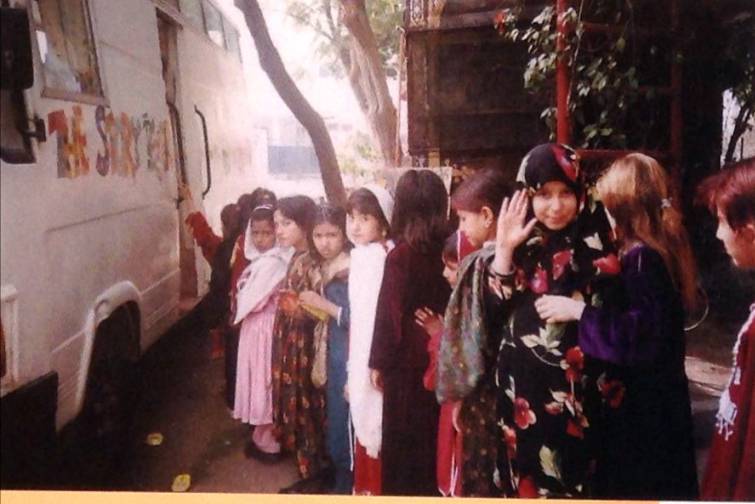
To preserve traditional culture and traditions, children are being taught the old Cyrillic Mongolian script, which is written vertically from top to bottom.

The country has high mountain ranges as well as vast desert plains, with the Gobi Desert in the southeast. Snow leopards, wild horses, and ibex still roam the Gobi Desert. Most of the roads that run through Mongolia are unpaved and rough. The climate is one of extremes: cold in winter, hot and very dry in summer.

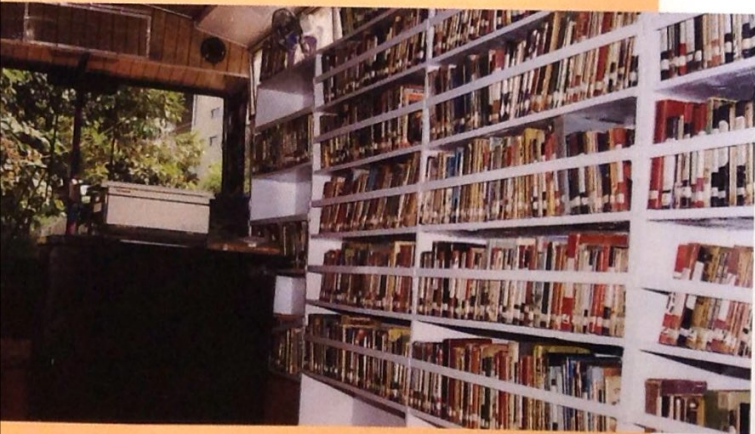
Even five thousand years ago, nomadic people lived in the area we now call Mongolia.

The country has been in existence since the thirteenth century, when Ghengis Khan conquered a huge part of Europe and Asia. The boundaries have often changed under the rule of China and Russia. Since 1924, the Mongolian People's Republic has been an independent country with its own constitution.

PAKISTAN



There are not many libraries in Pakistan, and libraries for children are especially rare. Most schools don't have libraries either. That is why the Alif Laila Bookbus Society ran a children's library in an old double-decker bus. But in order to reach more children, they needed to put a mobile library on the road. Thanks to help from the Jersey and Guernsey Trust and the United Kingdom's Save the Children, they now have a very popular bus that travels to schools. The bus is called *Dastangou*, or Storyteller.



The bus carries about six thousand books in English and Urdu (the two official languages of Pakistan) to children in schools. Some schools get a weekly visit, but in most places, the Storyteller can come only once every two weeks. This bus full of books has opened up a whole new world to children.

Before the storyteller bookbus came, these Pakistani children didn't have access to books.



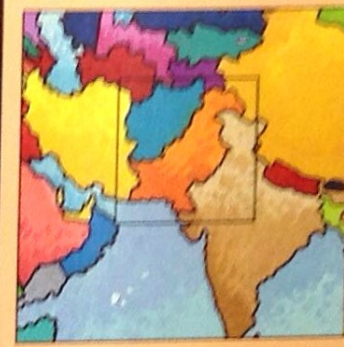
Ashar, thirteen, says, "I didn't know what a library looked like before! This bus is magic! It brings stories and books. I just wish it came more often or stayed longer!"

Bushna, from eighth grade, says, "When the Storyteller arrives at the gates of our school, we file out of the school in orderly lines and find our books. Then we take them back to our classrooms to read for an hour."

Mrs. Syeda Basarat Kazim is the coordinator of Storyteller. She explains that there aren't enough books to allow the children to take books home. "If we did, there wouldn't be enough books to take to the next school."

Tabbassum, twelve, says, "The first time the Storyteller came, I ran to it and picked up a book of poetry. I started copying verses from it because I didn't know if it would ever come again. But then Miss Nosheen, who travels with the bus, told me not to worry. It would visit every Tuesday. That really made me happy!"

All that Dastangou needs now is more books on the shelves.



Pakistan

Capital: Islamabad

Estimated population: 150,000,000

Pakistan, an Islamic republic in southern Asia, is bordered by the Arabian Sea, India, Iran, Afghanistan, and China.

The country is twice the size of California and its climate ranges from hot and dry desert in the south to arctic regions in the north. Ethnic groups in Pakistan include Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, and Baloch. Religions included Muslim, Christian, and Hindu.

The official language spoken in Pakistan is called Urdu, and English is the second official language. Other languages spoken include Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiki, Pashtu, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, and Burushaski.

Alif Laila, which sponsors the book bus, is an organization dedicated to children's education. The name fits well with a library. Alif Laila wa-Laila is the Arabic title of The Thousand and One Nights. In this classic collection of tales, the king has sentenced Scheherazade to death in the morning. The night before her execution she tells the king a story. The story is so exciting that he wants to hear another. Thus, by telling stories night after night, Scheherazade saves her life.

PERU

Children in Peru can receive their books in several different, innovative ways.

CEDILL - IBBY Peru is an institution that delivers books in bags to families in Lima. Each bag contains twenty books, which families can keep for a month. The books come in four different reading levels so that children really learn how to read. The project in Spanish is called *El Libro Compartido en Familia* and enables parents to share the joy of books with their children.



In small, rural communities, books are delivered in wooden suitcases and plastic bags. These suitcases and bags contain books that the community can keep and share for the next three months. The number of books in each suitcase depends on the size of the community. There are no library buildings in these small towns, and people gather outside, in the plaza, to see the books they can check out. In the coastal regions, books are sometimes delivered by donkey cart. The books are stored in the reading promoter's home.


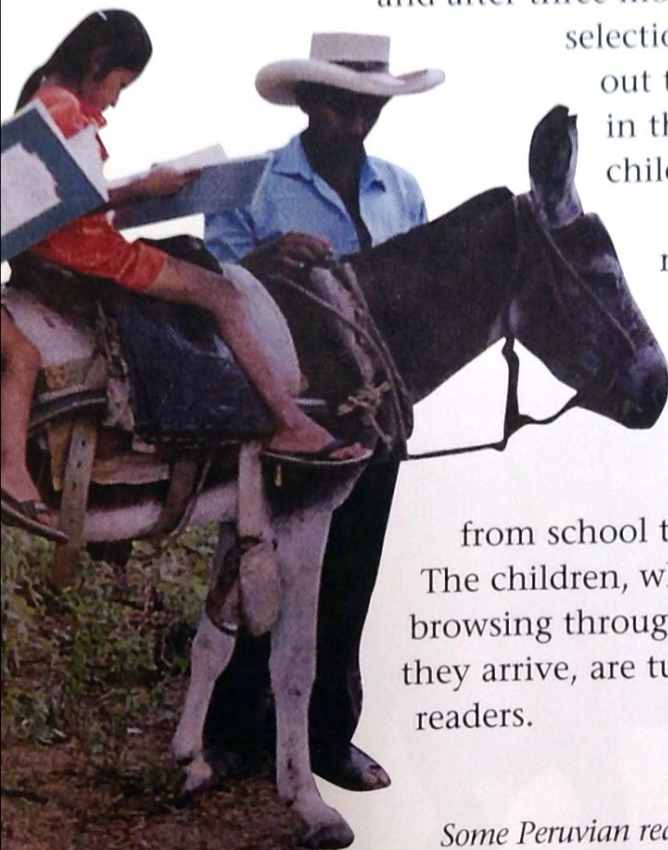
In the ancient city of Cajamarca, reading promoters from various rural areas select and receive a large collection of books for their area. The program is called *Aspaderuc*. The reading promoter lends these books to his or her neighbors, and after three months, a new

selection of books goes out to each area. Books in this system are for children and adults.

And last but not least, *Fe Y Alegria* brings a collection of children's books to rural schools. The books are brought

from school to school by wagon. The children, who are excited about browsing through the books when they arrive, are turning into avid readers.

Some Peruvian readers receive their books by donkey cart.



Republic of Peru
Capital: *Lima*
Estimated population: *28,000,000*

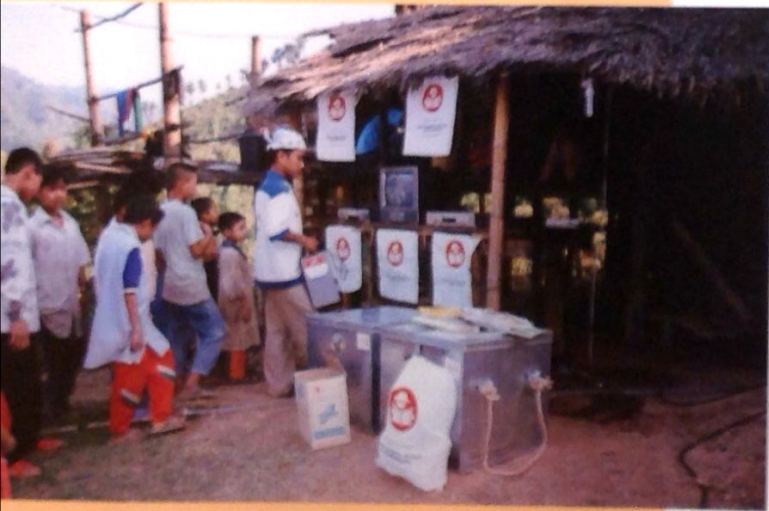
Peru, in South America, borders the South Pacific Ocean, between Ecuador and Chile. The tropical coast, the Andes Mountains, and the Amazon River make Peru a diverse and interesting country. The Peruvian people speak Spanish. Quechua is the country's other official language. Peru's history includes the Inca civilization, which occupied much of the South American continent five hundred years ago.



THAILAND

In Omkoi, a region of northern Thailand, there are no schools or libraries. Tribal people cannot read or write. The government of Thailand hopes to change that with a literacy program that includes bringing books to remote villages in the jungle.

A number of these villages can be reached only on foot. This makes transportation difficult, especially during the rainy season. How do you get books to people who need them most, when they live in hard-to-reach mountainous regions of northern Thailand? Elephants!



The elephant library is headed for remote villages in northern Thailand.



The Chiangmai Non-Formal Education Center had the idea to use elephants as libraries. Elephants are already being used here to plow the paddy fields and to carry logs and crops. Now more than twenty elephants in the Omkoi region are used to carry books. The elephant teams spend two to three days in each village. Each trip covers seven or eight villages, so it takes each elephant team eighteen to twenty days to complete a round-trip.

The Books-by-Elephant delivery program serves thirty-seven villages, providing education for almost two thousand people in the Omkoi region. They have even designed special metal slates that won't break when carried on the elephants' backs across the rough terrain.

These slates are used to teach Thai children to write and read. (There are also two-person teams carrying books to about sixteen villages, bringing learning materials to another six hundred people.)

In Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, old train carriages have been transformed into a library. The train is called *Hong Rotfai Yoawachon*, which means "Library Train for Young People." The train serves the homeless children of Bangkok. The Railway Police Division in Bangkok realized there was a need for a safe place for street children, so they refurbished the old train carriages at the railway station, where many of the kids were hanging out. The police restored the trains to their old glory, complete with wood paneling and shining copper light fixtures. They turned the railway cars into a library and a classroom. Here the children learn to read and write. The police have even transformed the area around the train into a garden, where they grow herbs and vegetables.



Kingdom of Thailand
Capital: *Bangkok*
Estimated population:
62,860,000

Thailand (Tie-land), which means "the land of the free," lies in Southeast Asia. The climate varies from season to season: dry in January and February, hot in March and May, wet from June to October, and cool in November and December. The official language of the country is Thai.

