One World, Many Libraries

Did you know that Sno-Isle Libraries has a bookmobile service? It’s called Library on Wheels. A bookmobile is a vehicle that serves as a mini library, bringing books to people who cannot get to a library building. Every month these vans stops in different communities, bringing books to neighborhoods, daycares, senior care facilities, and people who can’t leave their homes. They reach over 1,000 kids each month!

Bookmobiles are common in the United States, but in some parts of the world people live far from cities, in very remote areas. Sometimes it isn’t possible for vehicles to bring books to kids in those communities. Sometimes, a camel or a donkey brings the books!

Here are a few cool traveling libraries you can find around the world.
Colombia’s Biblioburro Library

In Colombia, a country in South America, grade school teacher Luis Soriano was concerned that his students had no way to read books at home, so he decided to do something about it. He packed his two donkeys, Alfa and Beto, with books, and took them to kids who would otherwise have none. With that, he created the Biblioburro Library. Biblio means book, and burro is Spanish for donkey. Luis spends four hours on each trip to reach those communities, and he’s been doing this for over 20 years.

In this picture you can see Luis traveling with his books on one of his burros. You can read more about the Biblioburro Library in two different books: “Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia” by Jeanette Winter, and “Waiting for the Biblioburro” by Monica Brown and John Parra.

Here are a few more pictures of Luis and his Biblioburro Library.
Indonesia’s Floating Library

In Indonesia, a country in Southeast Asia and Oceania, traditional *padewakang* boats have been used to spread the joy of reading. Part of the Armada Pustaka Mandar program, these “floating libraries” bring books to kids on different islands in Indonesia. They hold reading events onshore and take turns talking about the books they’ve read, just like you might do during your library’s Summer Reading program!

In this picture you can see a group of boys reading in a tree. Have you ever climbed a tree to read a book? It looks like fun!

In addition to floating libraries on boats, other areas of Indonesia, like the city of Surabaya, are served by bicycle libraries. Bicycles are a great way to travel in the crowded cities of Indonesia.

Here are a few more pictures from Indonesia’s floating library service.
In some areas of Kenya, a country in Africa, camels bring books to kids living in remote villages. It is too hard for cars to travel the sandy roads, but camels are used to walking in the desert. One camel carries as much as 500 books weighing about 400 pounds! In this picture you can see how boxes of books are strapped to the camel’s back. The second camel carries camping gear for the traveling librarians, who need to rest after their long journey across the desert. A tent can also serve as a roof for the traveling library, protecting readers from the hot sun. The Kenya National Library Service started the camel program in 1985 and it continues today.

Here are a few more pictures from Kenya’s Mobile Camel Library.
Camels are also used in Mongolia, a country in East Asia, as well as a horse-drawn wagon and a minibus. The Mongolian Children’s Mobile Library reaches nomadic herding communities and kids living in remote parts of the Gobi Desert. Nomadic means these families travel from place to place, moving across the vast, grassy plains with their herds of livestock. The library was started by Jambyn Dashdondog, a children’s author who wanted to help kids living in those desert areas develop a love of reading. His mobile library has traveled throughout Mongolia for over 20 years. Here is a picture of Jambyn with one of his library camels. Do you recognize the cover of “Green Eggs and Ham” by Dr. Seuss?

Here are a few more pictures of Mr. Dashdondog’s mobile library.
There are so many fascinating libraries around the world. In learning about these libraries, you get to dig deeper into different cultures. As different as we may seem, we all have something in common: We love to read, and we’re committed to getting books to kids who want to read.

One of my favorite resources is a book called “My Librarian is a Camel: How Books Are Brought to Children around the World” by Margriet Ruurs. You’ll learn about the libraries I mentioned, and many more.

I hope you had fun learning with me! Visit http://www.sno-isle.org/summer-reading/ for additional online and printable resources.
References

Books


*My Librarian is a Camel: How Books Are Brought to Children around the World* – Margriet Ruurs (2005)

- Spanish Edition: [https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1010259121](https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1010259121)
- Ebook: [https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1709286121](https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1709286121)
- Spanish Ebook: [https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1893566121](https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1893566121)

*Waiting for the Biblioburro* – Monica Brown and John Parra (2011)

- Ebook: [https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1645587121](https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1645587121)

Media

Biblioburro: The Donkey Library

- Hoopla: [https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1928542121](https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1928542121)

Websites

Biblioburro Flickr –
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/povdocs/sets/72157626312157815](https://www.flickr.com/photos/povdocs/sets/72157626312157815)

Biblioburro: The Amazing Donkey Libraries of Colombia –

Bookmobiles – [https://behindeveryday.com/bookmobiles/](https://behindeveryday.com/bookmobiles/)
The Camelback Library – https://www.thetrumpet.com/12152-the-camelback-library


Library on Wheels – https://www.sno-isle.org/wheels


Mobile Library Project – https://gohelp-charityrallies.weebly.com/mobile-library-project.html