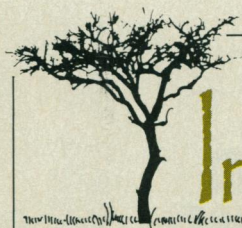


Inside AAAS



Into Africa

Providing Journals

Abdus Salam, Nobel laureate in physics, says he left Pakistan in 1954 because no library there had received any scientific journals since World War II. This is a common story in many developing countries.

AAAS is trying to meet the needs of scholars in sub-Saharan Africa by providing them with at least some journals. The effort began in 1985 when a handful of societies in the AAAS Consortium of Affiliates for International Programs donated journals as part of a pilot project.

Since then, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development have each provided 3-year grants to expand the program. The Ford grant allows AAAS and the American Council of Learned Societies to join in an effort to broaden social science participation and to fold in the humanities. The United States Information Agency provides some shipping assistance, as does the U.N. Centre for Science and Technology for Development.

The program has grown enormously. At the outset, AAAS and five other societies donated subscriptions to 25 individual journals. Today 89 learned societies supply almost 200 journal titles to 150 libraries in 35 countries. Researchers now have access not only to

journals in the physical and natural sciences, but also some in sociology, anthropology, political science, and history.

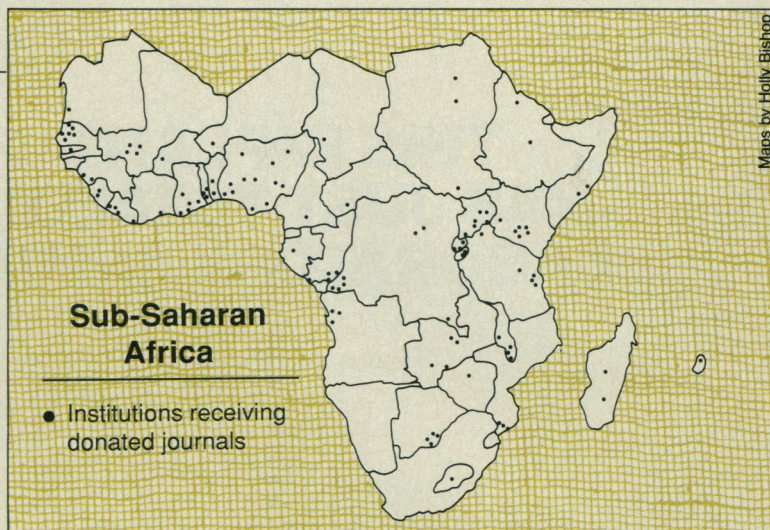
Recipient institutions are identified through in-country needs inventories, supplemented by advice from donor societies and experts on research conditions in Africa. One physicist surveyed commented that he had "scanned the list . . . much as a child looks in store windows in the week before Christmas." He was writing from Bayero University in Nigeria, which had not been able to subscribe to a single science journal for 2 years.

Some donors supply as many as 100 copies of their journals, but others cannot afford to do so. In order to maximize the fit between journal and recipient, especially where demand far exceeds supply, AAAS created an advisory committee, chaired by David Wiley, Director of the African Studies Center at Michigan State University.

Surveys help us grasp the extremely difficult conditions under which the librarians work. One library no longer has money to bind journals, so they are tied together with cord. Of the 73 libraries that responded to a recent questionnaire, only 43 have working photocopy machines.

Are the journals received? Each time a shipment leaves AAAS, we ask the recipient to let us know when it arrives.

Are the journals being used? That's more difficult to determine. Researchers sometimes write AAAS; like the head of a



Maps by Holly Bishop

science department of Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, who reported that the journals have helped the department to initiate regular seminars and begin new research. The librarian of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute is circulating tables of contents and providing photocopied articles upon request to research stations around Kenya. We gather information about journals' circulation, readership, and usage through follow-up questionnaires.

An integral part of the program is to establish U.S.-Africa partnerships. Relevant organizations in sub-Saharan Africa have collaborated on the journal distribution activity from its genesis. They recommend institutions to receive journals, and help monitor and evaluate the process.

They have recently begun implementing cost-sharing too. To date, AAAS has negotiated cost agreements with Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal. Effective 11 October, recipient institutions in these four countries (which get about 35 percent of the subscriptions provided through the program) will pay 10 percent of a U.S. member subscription for the

journals they receive. Subscriptions will increase 10 percent annually until they reach 50 percent of the cost to a U.S. member. The funds, paid in local currency, will finance scholarly activities in these countries, to be determined by advisory committees in Africa and the United States.

Next steps include enlarging the number of participating organizations, increasing the number of subscriptions, examining the use of new technologies like CD-ROM, establishing criteria for evaluating the program's effectiveness—and taking a hard look at sustaining the flow of journals beyond the life of foundation grants.

■ LISBETH A. LEVEY,
Directorate for
International Programs



Electronic Networking

Sub-Saharan African scientists and engineers are dispersed throughout the continent, a separation that is exacerbated by undependable telephones, a slow, unreliable postal system, vast distances, and expensive air fares. So AAAS, in partnership