



if only for a while

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Shipping to Kenya What to have, what to prepare and what to avoid

1. Make sure to prepare a detailed list of donations and where possible ask the donating organisations to write you an invoice with 'NILL' actual value or a letter of donation – this forms the basis of your Packing List and a commercial invoice – you will need to declare a value of your entire container with sums for each category of donated goods (e.g. furniture, books, clothes). I cannot stress enough how important it is to declare all your items. Any miss-declaration will lead to hefty finds;
2. Start packing and labelling boxes as early as possible – pack the same items in a box and group the boxes according to their content. If you at all can label the boxes such as this: box 1/30; 20 books;
3. Find an organisation such as Kenyan local Rotary club, school/college, Lions club or a charity that is exempt from paying taxes/duty and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Your shipping partner must have a PIN number in order to be able to import your goods for you;
4. That partner organisation will then act as the receiver of the goods – a consignee – and will be on all the shipping paperwork;
5. Once you finalise your shipment appoint an organisation that will carry out an inspection and produces a Certificate of Conformation (CoC) – an inspector will come and inspect your goods in a warehouse or garage or wherever it is stored. The certificate is valid for 3 months. In order for you to obtain the certificate you will also need: if you ship clothes that must be packed in clear plastic bags you will need a Health Certificate; if you ship clothes or wood of any sort you will need a Fumigation Certificate. Without those documents you will not be issued a CoC. The Kenyan Bureau of Standards introduced an electronic version of CoC in May 2017.
6. Find a shipping agent in the UK – there are many shipping companies that will ship stuff to Kenya, so shop around.
 - a. As a rule of thumb: if you would like to purchase a container it will cost between £1,200-£1,500 for 40ft container; shipping will be in the region of £1,565 which includes an insurance, UK loading and other UK based charges.



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- b. Make sure you have a copy of the shipping and insurance invoice as it will be needed by the Kenyan forwarding agent – this should be exchanged between the shipping agents.
7. Appoint a Forwarding Company in Kenya – choose a reputable company – you may want to employ a UK organisation that will oversee the paperwork on both sides (UK and Kenya);
8. Agree with the Forwarding Company for their UK agent to oversee and certify the loading of the container – your preliminary estimates of your import tax will depend on it (this should be done even if you are sending items to a tax exempt organisation). The agent will use a set of codes that (s)he will apply to your items. The final charges will be re-calculated once in port of Mombasa by the authorities;
 - a. It is always advisable to be present at the loading to ensure all your items, or at least the most important items, are loaded.
9. Your goods will need a precise weighing – if you are shipping an entire container it will have to be weighed exactly and that will be recorded on the Bill of Lading. Estimates are no longer allowed.
10. You will also need to prepare and send to your Forwarding Agent a Donation Certificate stating that all the goods are donated and not for commercial gain. Your Agent might request more paperwork but they will inform you of those.
11. You will be required to estimate the value of the donated items – the basis for which the tax (again this will have to be done even if dealing with tax exempt partner) applies. We have estimated our container at £500 and were charged \$1,000. Taxes are calculated on three different basis, so make sure your forwarder uses the most beneficial method to you. The methods are: value; volume; and weight. You will be charged VAT and Tax for every group of items, plus the entire cost of shipping will be proportioned to each group of items as well. In our case, as we ship mostly books that carry no Tax, our best option is to use the weight method.
12. Your shipping agent will issue Bill of Lading, which will need to be sent to the Kenyan Forwarding Company. Bill of Lading (B/L or BoL) is a very important document, which gives title of the shipment to a third party (in



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this case your consignee). Without this document no shipment can be received and without all the details required your container will not be loaded in the UK in the first place;

13. When the container nears the port in Mombasa your Forwarding Company will be informed of the arrival date. It usually takes a day or two for the vessel to be assigned a berth. In the same time your port agent (such as Interpel CFS) will be assigned to you. A knowledgeable and experienced Forwarding Agent will request a port agent (s)he likes to deal with. This will not always be granted.

14. Make sure your Forwarding Agent requests 21 free storage at the port. Otherwise your clearing will be much more expensive. Also make sure you clear your container/goods before the allotted time.

15. Sometime during the voyage you will need to pay the Kenyan agents' and port charges. They include:

a. Delivery order fee	our costs	\$81.20 (June 2015)
b. Mombasa THC		\$171.70
c. ISPS		\$10.50
d. Lift on/off		\$46.40
e. Destination documentation		\$58.00
f. Port authority charges		\$638.00
g. Agency fees		\$406.00
h. IDF application		\$100.00
i. Duties and Taxes		\$1,000.00
i. Import tax		
ii. VAT where applicable		
iii. Various Kenyan development charges such as the charge for the improvement of the rail system		
j. TOTAL		\$2,511.80

Please note: it is not unusual for the Forwarding Agent to charge you a larger amount in order for them to cover any additional costs. You should insist on prompt settling of the accounts and request a re-charge, where due, immediately.

16. Despite your pre-inspection in the UK your shipment will be flagged for 100% inspection – which means that everything will be unloaded, checked,



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valued and re-loaded. Be present or have a representative on site as this helps to answer any questions. We were inspected by 7 officials and it took us 3 days to clear the container and transported out of the depot. The faster you can do this the better – be prepared for some waiting around. The port agent will sort unloading and loading of your items – they have their staff and you have 21 days free depending on the port agent – make sure your container is offloaded into the correct storage unit (if it goes to a wrong hanger you will be charged storage fees);

17. Your port agent will organise for inspection by the authorities, which will conduct valuation of your items. Once re-calculated a F147 form will be given to your Forwarding Company who will organise the payment of all charges and taxes. It helps if the inspectors have your packing list too;
18. After payment is cleared, the container gets released passing by DPC, paying KEBS and its on it's way providing that the port systems (KRA) is working;
19. If you are renting a container, at a cost of approximately \$200-\$500 you may have a little say over who will transport the container to your final destination. This transport company will be appointed for you and the cost will be much higher than if you negotiate your onward transport yourself. So always negotiate and insist on your own transport company regardless of the fact that you are renting the container. If you buy a container you will have a choice of transporting companies – although you may be charged tax for the actual container. Whomever you appoint must be certified to pick up the container from the designated port agent;
 - a. If you are transporting to South of Mombasa (Diani Beach, Msambweni) you will be charged for ferry crossing – which you will need to pay both ways (in the region of £130);
 - b. You have to consider off-loading – organise off-loading while on the track; crane to off-load the entire container; or drop an empty container from a flat bed lorry providing that you have some very strong and mature tree to tie it to and some pretty dry ground. This will add anything from £400 to £3,000 to your budget depending on your final destination.



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20. After all this is done and paid for enjoy the sense of task achieved and revel in the satisfaction.

What we've learnt:

1. Nothing goes according to plan;
2. Rules and regulations change on almost daily basis;
3. There was some long waiting and nail-biting time;
4. 100% doesn't actually mean 100%;
5. It takes 7 officials to clear a container;
6. It is very important to create a good rapport with your Forwarding Agent;
7. Be present at the clearing;
8. Have some back up money;
9. Insist your refund is made promptly; and
10. Do not attempt to drop the container off a lorry unless you really have no other option.

If you have any questions about our experience, need our contacts or are looking for sharing a space in the container please let us know. We will be happy to assist further.

You can see our story at:

First Library (Dzunga) <https://youtu.be/6LC1V8crwxk>

Second Library (Chidzangoni)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDA9YbBIUqU&t=6s>