**Bibliotecas
Comunitarias
Riecken**

IMPACT STUDY
2012

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA

"Building Opportunities"

Paola Zavala
Researcher

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IMPACT STUDY 2012

RIECKEN COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

"Building Opportunities"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Riecken Foundation (hereinafter "the Foundation" or "Riecken") is to promote prosperity and democracy through access to knowledge. Ten years have passed since the establishment of the first community library in Sulaco, Yoro, Honduras. Currently there is a network of 64 libraries located in rural communities in Guatemala and Honduras.

The Riecken Foundation decided to conduct an external investigation to better understand the libraries' contribution in providing free access to information for people commonly isolated from technology and print resources. The Foundation promotes a singularly special library model because libraries belong to their communities and are managed by a group of citizen volunteers which are subsidized by local governments (called municipalities) to cover operating expenses.

The purpose of libraries is not limited to providing traditional library services. The vision is that libraries nourish social initiatives that contribute to finding community solutions for the common good. It is important to see the Riecken Foundation in the context that, from 2008, it significantly reduced the technical and financial assistance provided to libraries because of the disruption of its principal donor's financial resources. In the past, the Foundation could count on technical personnel to visit each library monthly. The current evaluation takes place under a new scenario. The findings and lessons learned by this evaluation represent an opportunity better to understand the library operations and to implement recommendations to optimize and streamline financial and human resources.

COUNTRY PROFILE: HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA

In a socioeconomic context, Guatemala with 14.7 million people has nearly double the population of Honduras, which has 8.2 million inhabitants. The average schooling of each country does not separate them much. Hondurans average 6.4 years of schooling; Guatemalans, 4.1 years. Poverty is a challenge for both countries. In Honduras, 60% of the people live in poverty; in Guatemala, 73%. An even more urgent challenge is the rate of extreme poverty: 23% in Honduras and 26% in Guatemala.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by applying participatory surveys polling 40 libraries, reaching a sample of 63% of the libraries, with the participation of more than 9,000 users. Interviews and focus groups were conducted among volunteers, librarians, local officials, and non-users.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

55% of users are female

45% of users are male

73% of users do homework

53% of users read

33% of users use computers

79% of users are students

How many people go to the libraries?

Each library serves about 800 people per month. The 64 libraries serve about 51,200 visitors each month.

Who are the users?

Students are the most common users of libraries. About 33% are children, 50% are youths, and 17% are above the age of 23.

What are the socio-economic conditions of the users?

About 61% of users live on incomes below $100 a month, 26% have homes with dirt floors, and 28% homes with fewer than six books. Out of 100 users, 76 live in households headed by women.

How do Libraries contribute?

- They provide access to information to the community's poorest people, who are often isolated from knowledge.

- They improve school performance.

- They are among the three main sources of information in rural communities.

- They represent a safe, healthy, and trusted environment.

- They are valued by communities, enjoying their trust and credibility.

- They have built a volunteer movement with a high level of knowledge of library operation.

- They contribute to the strengthening of civil society. They promote and organize various social initiatives and social activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. *Updating resources:* Renewing the book collections and updating the technology are a priority for libraries

b. *Decentralized Technical Assistance based on results:* We recommend that the Riecken Foundation implement a "Decentralized Technical Assistance" mechanism based on "Regional Promoters" charged with providing technical assistance. This would help libraries feel supported and encouraged and also open opportunities for local residents to grow into library leadership.

c. *Youth Programming:* Youth represent the majority of library users, but their attendance is not being maximized. We suggest restructuring and streamlining libraries' youth activities, also providing spaces for children to manage their own activities with minimal adult supervision.

d. *Consolidate local programming:* Promote the development of local activities and projects since they represent the needs and interests of each community. These activities should be carefully defined and observed, keeping the best practices for later replication to consolidate the cultural and social heritage that libraries provide in democratic values, social development, and focused efforts. In the Guatemala libraries, we found adult activities of quality that promote interchange and affinity between young and old. We suggest documenting these activities and sharing them with the other libraries.

e. *Creating Collaborative Networks:* We recommend forming "Riecken Collaboration Networks" within regions. This would allow a variety of networks to function within each region, not only according to geographical proximity, but according to various kinds of affinity and identity. Libraries need to build up the practice of sharing resources and experiences, creating supportive relationships between "strong" and "weak" libraries.

f. *Strengthen advocacy for public support:* Locally, the Foundation can support the boards to strengthen the impact of their advocacy for public policies that guarantee support from the local governments, in this way reducing the risks of politicizing the library organization.

g. *Strengthen the profile of librarians:* Librarians are a valuable human resource that could be used to much greater effect by the libraries. We recommend providing stimulating occasions for exchange and cooperation between librarians and encouraging the use of ICT for self-improvement.

h.   *Promote a volunteer movement:* Libraries are an opportunity to reorient volunteer work to a volunteer corps more dedicated to creating strategies and environments for better libraries. It is necessary to redefine the profiles of volunteers and to try to simplify their functions, so that there is an emphasis on the promotion and training of new volunteers.

i.   *Information Technology and Communication:* Focus on negotiating funding for regional broadband projects for libraries. Redefine the concept of "cost sharing" with shared access for users. Explore and politick for a Library Knowledge Network initiative to enable massive expansion of the Riecken library model throughout Central America.

j.   *Involve volunteers and librarians in project development:* During the process of project formulation and funds management, it is important for the Foundation to recognize the interests and needs of communities. We recommend identifying and prioritizing the kinds of projects that communities are interested in carrying out: violence prevention, support for school achievement school, environmental protection, *etc*. This will help the Foundation to understand community needs and to guide the libraries according to those collective interests.

k.   *Strengthen outreach:* Bookmobiles represent a potential for expanding services and reaching nonusers and adults.

l.   *Document, systematize, and publish:* The libraries have generated a variety of information with local content that must be recorded and documented, for example: innovation contests, local activities, case studies, stories, *etc*. Insofar as such information is documented, it will help the Foundation and the libraries to show their actual impact and to advocate for favorable public policies.

m.   *Transmission of information is key:* Implementing a strategy for transmission of information and knowledge would help reinforce the librarians' and volunteers' capacity for the management and success of the libraries. They need to share their findings and distribute to every community training curricula materials produced by the Foundation, whether or not yet published. We observe that the technical staff gives much effort to develop training material for seminar participants, but then the material does not remain with the libraries.

n.   *Strengthen monitoring and evaluation:* We recommend designing a monitoring and evaluation system to measure population-specific indicators for goals and programs. It is also necessary to check that the system has user tools for boards and librarians to monitor their libraries directly.

o. ***Strike a balance between academics and discovery:*** The Foundation should encourage more activities and alliances that continue to support the schools' academic performance, trying to maintain a balance so that the libraries do not lose their mission of fostering discovery and innovation at all levels.

IMPACT STUDY 2012

RIECKEN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

¨Building Opportunities¨

1. INTRODUCTION

This research seeks to identify and analyze the contribution of public libraries in Honduras and Guatemala Riecken. We hope to describe the profile and habits of library users, to understand how Riecken libraries have contributed to development and the pursuit of opportunities, and to identify the share that they contribute to generating development in rural communities.

Additionally, in the case of Honduras, we undertake to conduct a study comparing the findings of this investigation to those of the Impact Study of 2007.

This investigation is divided into two stages. The first synthesizes the results of a survey of library users. The second provides a qualitative analysis of the results and outcomes achieved by the introduction of community libraries.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted through participatory processes that have applied the following measuring instruments:

a. Surveys conducted in 40 libraries: nine in Guatemala and 31 in Honduras, a sample of 63% of Riecken libraries, with more than 9,000 users participating.

b. Focus groups with library managers and foundation staff.

c. Perception interviews among library users, volunteers, librarians, members of civil society, and local organizations.

The content and methodology of the surveys was previously refined and validated by the Riecken Foundation technical team in both countries. Subsequently, staff trained the librarians, library directors, and local boards charged with conducting the surveys in the 40 libraries.

The development of the focus groups was achieved through participatory dialogues with the aim of deepening the role of libraries, retrieving colleagues' individual experiences, and understanding the ties between the libraries and other local organizations. In Honduras, perception interviews took place in four communities: Jacaleapa in Paraíso; Tatumbla in Francisco Morazán, and Esquías and San Luis in Comayagua. In Guatemala, they were conducted in three communities Xolsacmaljá in Totonicapán, San Juan La Laguna in Sololá, and Chiché in El Quiché.

Semi-structured questions were asked of all teachers, community leaders, librarians, volunteers, users, government officials, police officers, members of library boards, and Foundation staff.

1.2 HYPOTHESIS

To formulate the main hypotheses, we took as a starting point the Riecken Foundation's mission of promoting prosperity and democracy through access to knowledge. We also reviewed the institution's internal documents and held conversations with the Foundation's technical team to define the concept and scope of this study.

Considering that ten years have passed since the establishment of the first library Riecken, we decided to pose the following descriptive hypotheses:

a. Riecken libraries have helped introduce a new paradigm for community libraries.

b. Access to information in rural communities favors generation of social capital for users and for library staff.

**Users turning in their surveys
My New World Library, Huitán**

**User completing the survey
San Antonio de Flores Library**

2. WHY LIBRARIES, AND WHAT FOR?

The Riecken Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 with the mission of promoting prosperity and democracy in the rural communities of Guatemala and Honduras through access to information. Accordingly, the Foundation sees libraries as a means to provide free and open access to knowledge and technology. They cultivate user participation in reading programs, cultural activities, and youth leadership. In 2007 and 2008 both countries enjoyed significant growth in Riecken libraries, becoming a network of 64: 53 in Honduras and 11 in Guatemala).

Since its inception, the Riecken model was that libraries be established in rural communities isolated from technology and information. Using a global measure, Guatemala and Honduras have Human Development Index[1] scores of 131 and 121, respectively. Compared with other nations of Latin America, they show both countries at the lowest levels of development in the region. At position 31 among 32 countries in Latin America, Guatemala outranks only Haití. Honduras ranks 29th out of 32, barely ahead of Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Haití.

Libraries are created in communities that share the dream of a modern and dynamic library to be a catalyst promoting community leadership, social entrepreneurship, and democratic development. Research conducted in 2008 by the University of Washington, Points of Access to Information in Honduras, concludes that poverty is a major barrier to access to information and technology. It shows the importance of promoting initiatives to democratize information access in Central America.

An absolute requirement before opening a new Riecken library is that citizens form a Support Committee responsible for acquiring land or building exclusively for library functions and for assuring librarians' wages and operating expenses (water, electricity, and security). In most cases, municipalities assume salary and operational costs. The Riecken Foundation provides 80% of the costs of construction or renovation of library facilities, gives a minimum of 1,000 books, five computers, one printer, one photocopier, and furniture (shelves, chairs, tables). During construction of the library, the Foundation initiates the process of management training and of library programming. Before starting library operations, the community must have democratically elected the volunteer board members and librarians who will administer the libraries.

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[1]   Human Development Report, Honduras 2011: Reducing inequality, an urgent challenge. National Human Development Report, Guatemala 2011: A Nation of Opportunities for Youth?

2.1 Riecken Library Structure

For operating libraries, the Foundation has instituted a structure for providing services that goes beyond that of a traditional library. They have designed programs to promote reading, youth leadership activities, workshops, and activities for women and men. The purpose has been to stimulate discovery and to sharpen he critical senses through access to information.
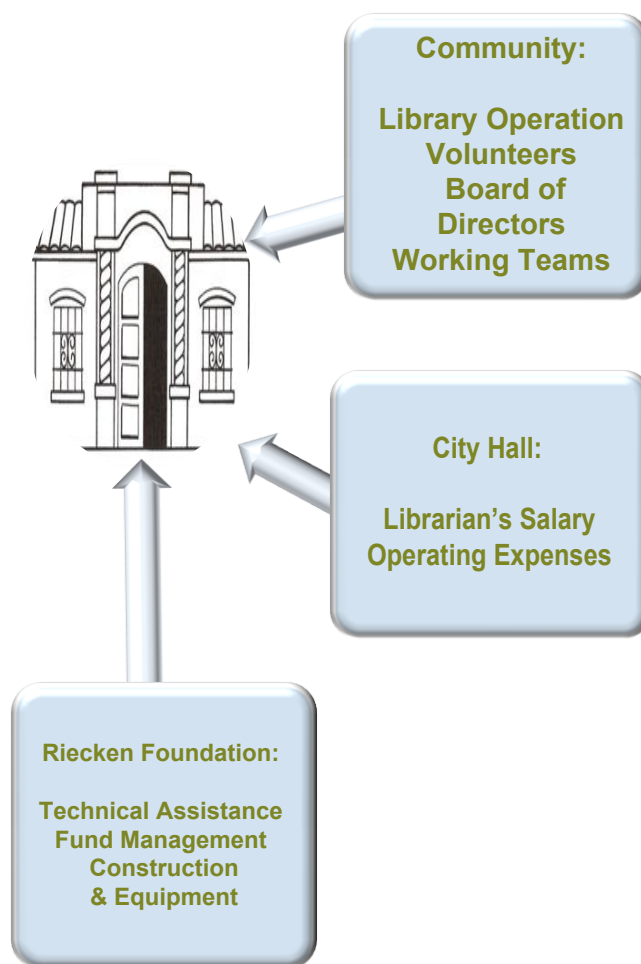
The libraries promote a tripartite model of interagency collaboration based on community participation. Municipalities assume operating expenses, while civil society governs and administers the libraries. It is worth mentioning that a few libraries have not managed to consolidate a strategic partnership with municipalities, and so have resorted to private enterprise or sponsors to cover costs. We also observe different levels of voluntary participation among the libraries. A later section will be devoted to strengthening volunteerism and local government alliances

At this point we should emphasize that, although the two countries promote the same library model, they differ in their manner of involvement with communities.

Guatemala supports the position of Library Director, a salaried person responsible for managing the library, supervising the librarian, and acting as primary liaison with the local board. The Library Directors are members of the Riecken Foundation technical team in Guatemala.[2]

This approach facilitates the implementation of activities aimed at generating social development and stimulates the libraries' relationship with other initiatives in the communities.

Honduras has no Library Director positions. The local volunteer boards are responsible for managing and energizing the libraries. The librarians oversee library operations. This approach encourages the role of volunteers, increases their impact, and creates new community leaders.

Community:

**Library Operation
Volunteers
Board of
Directors
Working Teams**

City Hall:

**Librarian's Salary
Operating Expenses**

Riecken Foundation:

**Technical Assistance
Fund Management
Construction
& Equipment**

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[2] During the interviews, the Riecken Foundation management said that they are planning a restructuring process to a more sustainable model.

We propose in this analysis to look more deeply into the advantages and disadvantages of both models of technical assistance and to make recommendations based on lessons learned from both countries.

2.2 A New Event

It must be mentioned that, since 2008, the Riecken Foundation significantly reduced its technical and financial assistance to libraries because of an interruption in financial support from its principal donor. In the past, the Foundation had staff visiting each library monthly. It provided personalized assistance and collaboration with librarians, boards, and volunteers. Abruptly, in late 2008, the Riecken Foundation had to cut back its operations by 90%. Libraries stopped receiving technical assistance for reading programs and youth leadership, and funding disappeared for internet connection and for replacement of books and computer equipment. Communication between libraries and the Foundation was limited to phone calls or e-mails every two to four months.

At the institutional level, the International Board of the Riecken Foundation went through a restructuring and a change of focus based on fundraising. Regional offices in Guatemala and Honduras conducted their own fundraising efforts, which began a cycle of operation based on the sale of technical services and presenting proposals to potential donors. This year, the Foundation has succeeded in reaching funding agreements with international entities, such as the Embassy of Finland, Development

Alternatives Inc. (DAI), The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the MACHI / INHERIT project, Spanish Cooperation (AECID), plus other fundraising initiatives developed by the International Board.

It is important to emphasize that this Impact Study is carried out under this new reality, so obviously this analysis must be more severe and more critical than the earlier Impact Study of 2007.

After three years of economic crisis, it appears that the Riecken model is sustainable. Libraries have managed to endure with only local financial support and some isolated partnerships. It is clear that all libraries in Guatemala and Honduras are open; however, library programming and services have diminished in quality and frequency. Even so, the decentralized management library model has been strengthened. Community leaders who were trained by the Foundation appropriated the concept of a modern and inclusive library. The librarians' high level of leadership has been outstanding.

It is noteworthy that both countries succeeded in carrying out a regional project with the Embassy of Finland, working closely together undertaking projects for ethnic inclusion and cultural identity in Mayan communities (with greater emphasis on Guatemala).

Of all the libraries in Honduras, 41% belong to the Riecken Network. In Guatemala, the Riecken Network represents 11% of all national public libraries.[3]

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[3] Mapping libraries: IFLA World Reports. TASCHA Public Access Landscape Study Summary.

3. Context of public Libraries in Central America

For a look at the libraries of Central America, we can start with a UNESCO4 manifesto proclaiming its faith in the Community Library as a living force for education, culture, and information, and as an essential agent of peace and spiritual values in the human mind.

At the state level, we find that some Central American nations have created public library networks supported by the central government. In Honduras and El Salvador, libraries are set up through their respective Ministries of Culture; in Nicaragua, by the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture. We also know other networks are promoted by local governments or municipalities, as in Costa Rica and Panamá. Additionally, the last decade has seen a proliferation of non-state library networks like the Riecken Foundation and other networks started by the private sector or development projects: BANGUAT in Guatemala, for example.

Despite the existence of state library networks, Central American governments do not in practice consider them a priority. This is reflected in the limited investment and sparse legislation allotted to developing public libraries. Costa Rica, Panamá, and Belize show greater advances in the field, yet their coverage is mainly urban.

Standing out among the region's efforts to strengthen public libraries

as a means of development are the regional library projects of Swedish Cooperation 2002-2006, PROBIGUA Association in Guatemala, the COMPARTIR Association in Honduras, and Riecken Libraries in Honduras and Guatemala. Other individual library initiatives in the region do not necessarily focus on networks of libraries.

It is important to mention a trend among Central American governments to recognize the importance of democratizing access to public information and of transparency of information systems. This moment presents an opportunity for institutions working in the field of public libraries.[5]

4. Socioeconomics: Honduras and Guatemala

Both countries endure poverty above 60% in rural communities.

Source: International Indicators on Human Development, PNUD 2011

	Honduras	Guatemala
People	8.2 M	14.7 M
Average Schooling	6.4 yr	4.1 yr
Life expectancy	73.1 yr	71.2 yr
Poverty	60%	73%
Extreme Poverty	23%	26%
GNP *per capita*	$ 3,443	$ 4,167

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4   IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto in favor of public libraries, November, 1994.

5   The Public Information Access Law was created in 2009 in Guatemala and in 2006 in Honduras.

History of the Oasis of Knowledge Library

Santa Cruz de Cuchilla, San José Colinas, Santa Barbara, Honduras

Santa Cruz de Cuchilla is a hamlet that enjoys a pleasant climate at an altitude of 900 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level. Its main product is coffee, followed by basic grains. We have a Basic Education Center (primary), a Preschool Center, and two churches. A point of pride for our community is a beautiful Riecken library, which has come to form leaders and to encourage the spirit of discovery. It also closed the digital divide to unite us with the whole world.

In 2003, a Peace Corps volunteer gave us Riecken Foundation pamphlets and explained to us the steps to apply for a Riecken library. That's how the President of the Board, Sr. René Rodríguez, came to call a meeting of the entire community to disseminate the idea and to form a Committee charged with preparing the project proposal. The Committee approached the Municipal Corporation for land for the library's construction. Subsequently, the Riecken Foundation convened a meeting. After four years, the foundation notified us that the proposal had been approved. In August 2007, construction began along with training for members of the Committee. The library was inaugurated on December 14.

A campesino browsing the Web
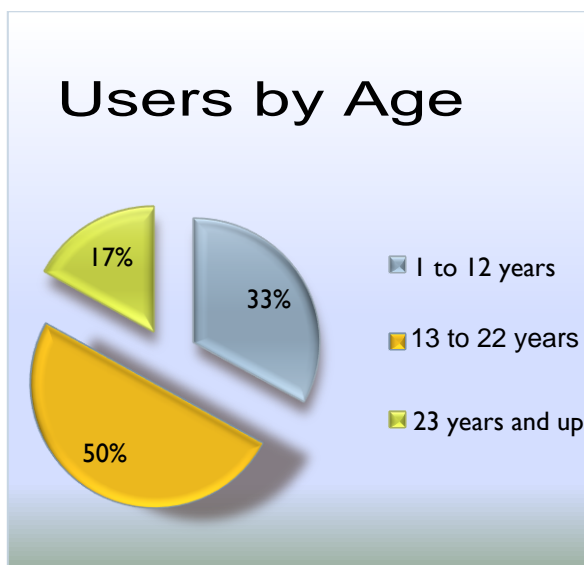
Students playing board games

5. REGIONAL FIGURES: the Riecken Library Network in Central America

We found that Riecken Libraries are among most users' three main sources of information.

Most Consulted by Users	
Guatemala	**Honduras**
1 Television	Television
2 Radio	Riecken Library
3 Riecken Library	Radio

51200 users attend monthly.

73% of users do homework.

33% of users use computers.

53% of users read.   .

5.1 Who goes to the library?

On average, each library receives 800 visitors per month; so, the 64 libraries serving 51,200 people per month. The target population is 55% female and 45% male, which emphasizes gender equality among the population served. The visitors are 33% children, 50% youths, and 17% adults.

Of the users, 61% have household incomes below $100 per month, indicating that libraries often serve disadvantaged populations. In their homes, 26% live on dirt floors, 33% have a computer, 85% have a cell phone, and 86% have a television set.

Among library families, 76% of library users live with their fathers or mothers, 20% have five or more members living in the same household, 21% of users can walk to the library in five to ten minutes, 17% in 10 to 15 minutes, and 35% must travel for more than 15 minutes to the library.

At home, 28% of users have fewer than six books, 14% have no books, and 13% have more than fifty books.

Users by Age

- 17%
- 33%
- 50%

- 1 to 12 years
- 13 to 22 years
- 23 years and up

5.2 How do visitors use the library?

Seven out of ten members visiting libraries come to do homework. Students are 82.7% of visitors in Guatemala, 75.5% in Honduras, and 79% regionally.

Five out of ten members come to read. This reflects the fact that six out of ten libraries hold story hours or book clubs to promote reading.[6] With regard to reading levels, we learn that 29% of users enjoy reading for short periods (up to 30 minutes); and 12% of users read for more than 45 minutes.

Clearly, although Riecken libraries have a community focus, the users in attendance are largely students. To understand this better, we can compare the conclusions of a 2009 study of the Public Library System in Central America: "We conclude that the greater part of those using the public libraries' services are students. This is strongly related to the lack of school libraries, so that public libraries have often tried to fill this gap."[7]

In both countries, 35.5% of library users are students at the primary level, and 54.6% at high school or diverse schools. The remaining 9.9% include pre-primary students (kindergarten), interns, and college graduates. If we compare these figures with the reality of education in rural Guatemala and Honduras, there is a direct relationship. Rural areas have improved their access to primary and secondary schools despite the limited opportunities for university or technical studies.

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[6] Internal diagnostic study on the State of the Libraries, Riecken Foundation in September 2012.

[7] Public Libraries: A look at the library systems in Central America. Sula Batsú, 2009.

5.3 What is the teachers' role in the library?

One point that leaps out is the low participation of teachers in the libraries, considering that most of the users are their own students. According to perception interviews, teachers value the work of libraries and their support for students, but do not see them as a technical training resource or as a teaching resource. Another possible influence is that most local librarians only completed high school, so teachers may not perceive them as peers.
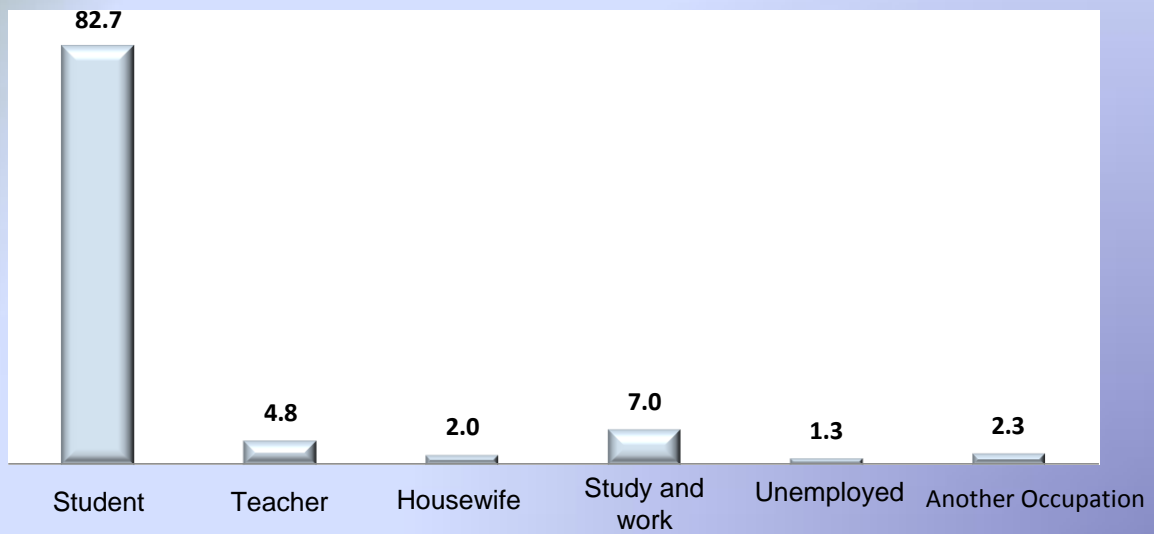
We recommend including in the library training curriculum a section of information literacy aimed at reinforcing librarians' competence in teaching. In the case of Honduras, we found that four libraries have facilitated use of the Education by Radio Program promoted by the Honduran Institute of Radio Education. In Guatemala, four libraries created a Teacher's Corner for the purpose of providing material for pedagogical support.

Considering the facts described above with the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching shows that teachers in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua show the lowest levels of specialized training in ICTs.[8] We see here the challenge of incorporating into basic teacher training the skills that will enable full use of ICT.

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[8] Action Plan monitoring, ELAC, page 25.

Guatemala: Users' Occupations

Occupation	Value
Student	82.7
Teacher	4.8
Housewife	2.0
Study and work	7.0
Unemployed	1.3
Another Occupation	2.3

Honduras: Users' Occupation Comparison

2007   2012
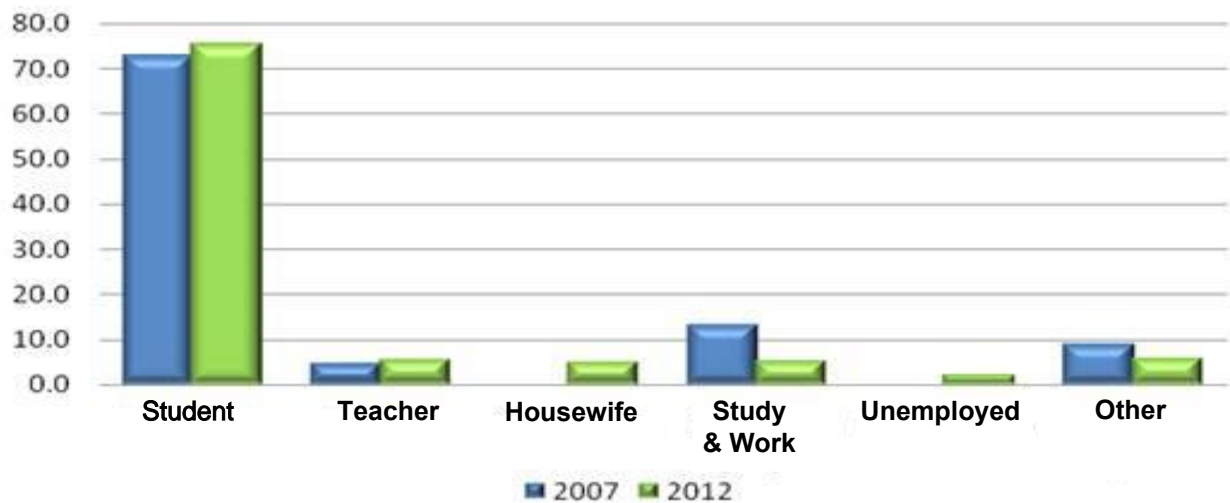
6. Services and Programs

6.1 Technology in Libraries

Three out of ten visitors use the computers. This figure makes no distinction as to internet availability; it simply reflects the general use of computers.

In Guatemala, 30.2% of visitors use computers. In Honduras, we saw the use of computers drop nine percentage points, from 45% to 36% since 2007. Arguably, the absence of renewal computer equipment and lack of funds for internet access in some libraries has caused a decrease in the use of technology.[9]

Until late 2008, the Riecken Foundation covered the costs of satellite connectivity for all libraries. The suspension of this financial contribution was unexpected and sudden for libraries, so the local boards had little time to implement a contingency plan.

Since mid-2009, communities have made efforts to reconnect libraries. At present, 14 of the 64 libraries are connected to the internet. It is noteworthy that the number of connected libraries fluctuates. We see some libraries connected for a specified time, whether for a project or from a patron's grant.[10] In other cases, the boards manage to raise the monthly payment for only a fixed period.

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[9] On average, the computer equipment is about six years old.

[10] For example, the security project hosted by the Spanish Assistance covered the connection of 18 libraries for one year.

In short, Riecken libraries face the challenge of ensuring free access to ICTs. Reducing the digital divide is one of the pillars of the Foundation's mission.

For deeper analysis, this study will introduce a new element. In Guatemala, 81.3% of users have a cell phone; in Honduras, 88.3%. This service has penetrated rural communities at an accelerated pace. We believed that 80% use prepaid calling, a trend due to the high costs of contract rates in developed countries. This indicates that the high penetration of mobile market may not represent a large flux of call traffic. The chart below shows that Honduras and Peru have the highest costs of telephony.[11]

Fixed line users / 100 people
v.
Cell phone users / 100 people
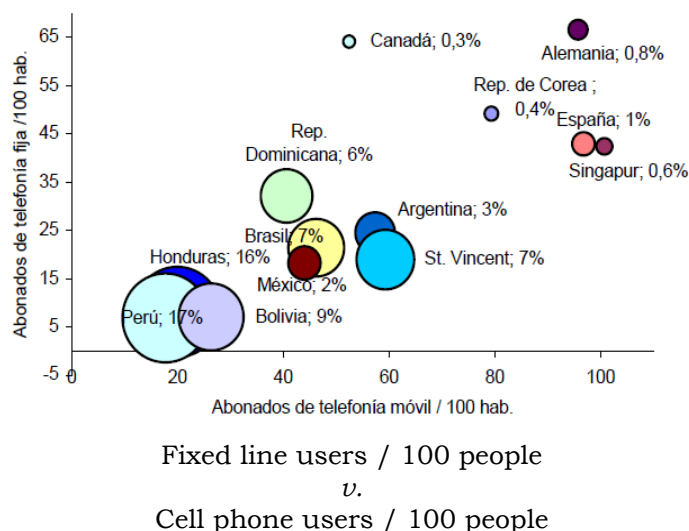
Some libraries have resorted to internet connection by modem since it is the most

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[11] World Telecommunications Indicator Database, UIT 2008.

economical solution, but its capacity is limited. The table below compares internet rates derived from a cell phone modem (mobile phone). It exceeds 25% of monthly per capita income in Honduras, Guatemala, and Bolivia.

Monthly cost for 20 hours of included connection in the mobile access fee	
Country	% of income *per capita*
Singapore	0.5%
Germany	0.7%
Chile	4%
Colombia	8%
Bolivia	22%
Guatemala	25%
Honduras	39%

Source: *World Telecommunications Indicator Database, UIT 2008.*

For libraries to develop programs to expand the use and exploitation of ICTs, they must overcome the challenge of access. "Narrowband" (modem) alternatives do not provide the right conditions for inclusion, since the velocity and discharge capacity is limited. We identified libraries that handle modem internet access on one or two computers, which is plausible with a measure of volunteer effort. But matching this practice to the homework of 76 students per computer in Guatemala and 167 in Honduras[12] shows that speed and capacity are key to achieving digital equality in libraries.

Riecken Libraries are no exception. The challenges expressed represent the collective challenges facing Latin America in technology. We suggest including within the framework of action the following considerations:

- Focus fundraising on regional broadband projects for libraries to redefine the concept of "shared costs," with shared access for users.

- Leverage the Riecken Foundation's footprint in two Central American nations to show off their potential in discussions and initiatives taking place in the region, such as the ELAC Plan[13], the Mesoamerican Information Highway, and the Clara Network, among others.

- Within the boundaries of financial possibility, launch a Library Knowledge Network to enable scaling up the Riecken library model to cover Central America.

- Analyze local initiatives to exploit the existing cellular network of more than 80% of users. For example, youth groups, librarians, reading coaches, and student cohorts could form knowledge-sharing sub-networks based on cell modem connection.

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[12] CEPAL, Learnings in the Community of Knowledge 2008

[13] Funded by CEPAL

Na'ooj Rija'tzuul Community Library, San Juan La Laguna, Sololá, Guatemala

On a typical day in the San Juan La Laguna Library, the oldest villagers come to share their histories with the children. Some 95 percent of the town's population is indigenous, and story hours are held both in Spanish and in Mayan languages.

Flory is one of the most frequent visitors. In 2009 she learned to weave with izote leaf. She is now attending school and visits the library in the afternoons.

The library is home for women and children to exchange knowledge between generations and to promote respect for all. Here, women teach youngsters how to grind grain on stone.

6.2 Programming

During 2007 the Foundation launched two programs across Riecken libraries. The Reading Program, designed to encourage reading habits in children, and the Youth Leadership Program, focused on training young leaders with critical awareness and social consciousness. Because of the economic crisis that struck the Foundation, both programs have for three years been entirely carried out at the local level. This Study will allow us to reflect on the lessons learned in library programming.

6.2.1 Reading Programs

In Honduras, reading is 24.5% of programming, breaking down into story hours (17.5%), book clubs (5.3%), and early childhood stimulation activities (1.7%). Compared to 2007, story hours have decreased by four percentage points. We believe that a contributing factor is the need to renew the children's book collections, which are outdated and/or damaged. Early stimulation activities are barely performed at all. Importantly, the Foundation failed to train all libraries in early childhood stimulation.

In Guatemala, we find that 26.3% of the promotional activities are in reading promotion. While story hours are the most popular (15.2%), book clubs (7.7%) and early stimulation activities (3.4%) are performed more often than in Honduras. We may assume that the presence of a Local Director makes these activities more frequent since the librarian can count on extra support in daily programming.

Both countries enhance the reach of books by lending between locations. There has been a proliferation of outreach through mobile libraries. In 2011, the Copán Ruinas Library created a system of ten satellite libraries for the Maya-Chortí population. We notice that other libraries have instituted bookmobile programs to serve neighboring hamlets, offering reading services and forming youth groups.

Through reading promotion activities, libraries have developed, according to each community's needs, activities with local content: declamation contests, seminars, poetry readings, *etc*. The Chiché library provides one example. It formed an early stimulation group of 25 mothers and their children for whom the health center provides children's dental checkups.

The Riecken Foundation ought to reconfigure its reading programs to align with various global development initiatives like the Millennium Goals and the Education Plan for All (EFA). In this context, the governments of Honduras and Guatemala have committed to achieving educational goals for 2015, highlighting improved academic performance in Spanish. This represents an opportunity for the Foundation to position Riecken libraries as a pedagogical arm that can contribute to improved academic performance in Spanish and reinforce the themes of

6.2.2 Youth Leadership Program

each country's National Core Curriculum. During the this investigation, we learned that the Guatemala Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has launched the National Reading Program "Let's Read Along," which presumes provision of four million books through school libraries in preschools and primary schools. Meanwhile, in Honduras the Ministry of Education (SEDUC) has begun providing 98 libraries in six states, with the expectation of national expansion. We verified that both projects considered the experience of Riecken[14] libraries in their design, a highly positive reflection on the standing and reputation of the Riecken model. This allows us to reflect that the Riecken Foundation should approach this type of initiative to form strategic alliances so that Riecken libraries may offer their technical assistance in encouraging reading, library administration, training reading coaches, bilingual intercultural education, *etc*.

Compared to 2007, we see the same trend. Youths, mostly in the range of 13 to 17 years, account for 50% of users attending libraries. According to the surveys, their activities are, in order of priority: homework, reading, computer use, and chatting with friends.

Youth groups formed in each library, better known as Zone X in Honduras and Mano a Mano in Guatemala, have stopped functioning in most libraries. Looking back at the 2007 Impact Study, it found there was already concern about the sustainability of youth groups under the guidance of a Youth Leader, an adult volunteer responsible for organizing and directing the youths.[15] Evidently, as Riecken Foundation technical support decreased in communities, groups were weakening. Currently there are about fifteen active youth groups in the 64 libraries. Even in this situation, we can see that libraries have great potential for development of youth leadership with community vision. It is necessary to simplify the structure of the groups and to empower young people so that they can organize with lighter technical support.

It is notable that in Guatemala youth eco-clubs have organized in the libraries for awareness of and caring for the environment. We recommend considering this recent experience in eventually reviving youth programs.

> "In the library I learned to read faster and say the words better. My family says that the library is a big help."
>
> *11-year-old user from*
> *San Francisco Cones, Ocotepeque*

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[14] http://www.mineduc.gob.gt/leamos_juntos/ documents/programa_leamos_juntos.pdf, page 5

[15] Impact study 2007, Youth Project Page 54.

The Foundation does not have a database of projects and activities, making it difficult to show with precision the local impact of these activities.

Focus groups found that some youths with more than four years of participation in youth groups continue going to the libraries as users, and others as volunteers. We also found that 80% of those who belonged to a youth group have also worked as librarians or as members of library boards. In talking with these young people, they speak with pride of the experiences and skills gained in the youth groups.

Through focus groups and interviews, we made an effort to compile examples of activities that citizens tell us have contributed to promote development:

> Electrified workshops for masons' and bricklayers' assistants.
> Baking courses for women to establish their own small business.
> Greenhouse for cultivating tomatoes.
> Forest nursery.
> Cleanup campaigns and environmental care. GPS mapping of cultural heritage and ecological resources.
> Publication of local newspapers and cultural agendas.
> Arts and crafts workshops.
> Intergenerational activities for children and elders.
> Medical Brigades.
> Writing and publishing books to preserve languages and cultures.
> Renewable energy project with solid waste.
> Fabrication of eco-stoves.
> Storytelling contests.

"My daughter participated in Zone X, where she learned to act as a leader. Now that she is in college, she says that what she learned in Zone X has helped her a lot in her classes. You feel secure speaking in public and you can handle the computer well from computer skills learned in the library."

Margarita Escoto, parent

San Luis, Comayagua

6.3 Local Initiatives

We found different activities and projects arising from the libraries, with local content and social outreach. These activities do not come from standardized programming provided by the Foundation; rather, they reflect the local administration, its use of resources, and the relationship of the libraries with other living resources of the community.

At first reading, we can affirm that libraries provide the space for citizens to make use of information and to take action for the common good. We can see that libraries contribute to enabling activities and projects focused on social inclusion and community collaboration on issues like environmental protection, health, promotion of reading, and strengthening of microenterprises.

7. Volunteer Human Capital

7.1 Librarians

One goal of this investigation was to better understand human capital from the perspective of librarians. The profession of librarian in Central America lacks structure and support, and is largely unrecognized. Particularly in Honduras and Guatemala, the few limited training options are offered only in major cities. Recognizing that there is little or no knowledge of libraries in rural areas, the Riecken Foundation has developed its own Librarian Training Curriculum.

To select librarians, according to Riecken policies, the library boards participate in a discussion based on the Community Librarian Profile. The requirements to qualify for this position are basic: to have completed secondary education, to read fluently, and to show interest in working with children and youth. These requirements correspond to the realities of rural areas.

During the Perception Interviews, current and former librarians were asked both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Below is the compilation of multiple-choice answers, in descending order of frequency:

What has been your main benefit from being a librarian?
1. It helps me to feel satisfied and pleased with myself.
2. I can earn an income.
3. I have gained new knowledge.
4. I am more popular; people ask me for help.

To further explore the environment and associativity librarians were consulted:

Which community organizations do you belong to?	
Church	90%
Festivities Committee	70%
Parents' Group	40%
Political party	70%

Finally, we asked about the public level of library participation:

Which of the following activities have you done?	
Attend a public meeting.	90%
Meet with a politician.	20%
Participate in demonstrations.	30%
Express yourself in newspapers, radio, or blog about a local problem.*	60%
Notify the police or a court of a problem.	10%

* Most have expressed themselves through electronic media.

In conclusion, the collected information permits the following reflections:

- ***The Riecken libraries introduced a new model of community librarian.***

The modern profession of Community Librarian had been unknown in these communities. Some towns and schools do have librarians, but they represent a traditional library model, with little user interaction and even closed stacks.

- ***They have helped to raise family incomes.***

The librarians interviewed said that the performance of their duties has allowed them to generate more income. For example, some librarians said they had worked before in electronic repair, shopkeeping, domestic help, or simply did not work.

- ***They have acquired new knowledge and skills.***

Of the librarians interviewed, 80% said they previously knew little of reading promotion or the use of technology. Librarians said that, with training and support, they have discovered their gifts and talents. They said that they feel more confidence and satisfaction.

One librarian shared that she had never touched a computer before, and now she teaches courses in basic computing.

- ***It has contributed to creating new leaders and new opportunities.***

Paradoxically, the lack of technical assistance by the Foundation in recent years and of volunteers in some boards, has allowed the librarians to gain strength as community leaders. They have even restructured boards and negotiated support from local governments and other local institutions.

It is striking that, upon interviewing two former librarians, we found that both had used what they learned in the library to improve themselves as professionals. One person said that

knowledge of management and internal control, and the prestige of having served in a transparent and trusted institution, has allowed him to currently serve as Treasurer of the Municipality.

Another person shared that, because he became popular through his work as a librarian, he decided to run for municipal councilor in the last election. Now he runs his own cyber café and photocopying business, which he recognizes started as a product of technological knowledge he acquired as a Riecken librarian.

Challenges

This investigation identified the following challenges:

1. There is a perceived degree of job instability by librarians, dissatisfaction with low wages, and, in some cases, noncompliance with minimum labor rights by the municipal government. Since salaries are paid by the municipalities, librarians are

exposed every four years to changes in local government, as well as the political party of some mayors. According to the Riecken model, the boards are responsible for advocating for the library to the new municipal governments. Even so, we must not ignore that the political affiliations of library board members may sometimes be counterproductive. We recommend training volunteers and librarians to achieve formalization of local public policies favorable to librarians. While it is true that there is always a risk that external factors may affect librarians' job security, libraries need to make use of their reputation among other local organizations to secure a public covenant that secures permanent and apolitical support for operating expenses.

2. Knowledge loss with staff rotation.

We observed that new librarians have been hired without training. Although the Riecken Foundation has reactivated its library management workshops, we suggest creating a decentralized program of librarian peer exchange. It is difficult to maintain a centralized training strategy.

Iris Yamileth Hernández, librarian
New Vision library
Guacamaya, El Progreso, Yoro

When I was a child, my family came to live in Guacamaya. Unfortunately I could not continue my studies for lack of economic resources. I would have loved to study Business Administration.

I was part of the Support Committee of the library. When it came time to choose a librarian I never thought they would recruit me, since I have no higher education. I remember that someone on the board said that I was not prepared for the job. Those words hurt, but he was right; I was not prepared for anything like that. The other board members said I should accept the post, that the Riecken Foundation would provide my training; and those words encouraged me to accept this position.

The first few days were crazy, taking questions from users who were thrilled to have a library with so many free services.

I learned a lot from the people who visit us. The books have been a real treasure for me, and through them I gained a lot of knowledge. Being in the library has let me know different places and people and to make new friends.

7.2 Volunteers

Conceptually, one foundation of the Riecken library model is social participation. Therefore, the study undertook to investigate the volunteers and the place of the local boards as library administrators.

We used the same methodology as in the case of the librarian, using the following question format for local board members:

What has been your main benefit
from being a board member?

1. It allows me to participate in the building a better future for my community.

2. It's a fun, entertaining activity.*
  *

3. I have gained new knowledge and skills.

4. I'm recognized as a community leader.

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* It is noteworthy that volunteers report that volunteering for the libraries brings them fun and entertainment. One retired person who serves as library treasurer shared that the library has helped her feel active and useful, that she had earlier suffered from depression, but now that she supports the library feels much better because it occupied her mind. Another volunteer shared that a family member has a terminal illness and that supporting the library is her "escape route."

In Honduras, 60% of board members were first-time volunteers. No one has an exact percentage for Guatemala, but we think that most of the members have already done volunteer work, considering that the indigenous communities are organized in a way that promotes social participation. We even saw one community that commits itself to reserve a specific time for volunteer community activities.

What groups are you involved with,
and for how much time ?

Church and pastoral groups	2 hours/week
Library	5 hours/week
Unions & professional associations	General assemblies
Parents' group	2 hours/month
Political parties	Occasionally

It should be emphasized that the board members in Honduras dedicate more of their time to the libraries. Some people said they (briefly) visit the library every day. Perhaps the boards in Guatemala dedicate less time because the Local Director exercises daily administration of the library.

Regarding the participation level of board members in public affairs, we verified that they have a higher level of participation than librarians.

Which of the following have you done?

Attend a public meeting	100%
Meet with a politician	70%
Join in demonstrations	80%
Express yourself in newspapers, radio, or blog about a local problem.	90%
Notify the police or a court about a problem	40%

The reflections, lessons and challenges of volunteering are summarized as follows:

- ***Volunteer activity has improved in quality and declined in quantity.***

Volunteers interviewed agree that the number of active board members has decreased. "The Foundation's technical team motivated us to stay active. Now we find it more difficult," said one respondent. Note that this situation is particular to Honduras. In Guatemala, the Local Directors more closely guide the boards.

- ***Libraries have brought forth an inclusive volunteer movement***

We observed that the volunteers who have remained active are entirely suitable for operating the library, that they share the vision of an inclusive library, and that they have internalized the library model that drives the Riecken Foundation.

It is especially notable that the principle of keeping library resources open and free to all has been maintained over time. Some volunteers expressed concern about internet fees because they recognize that free access is a principle of social inclusion. However, the issue of connectivity and access is a complex challenge that transcends the work of the boards.

- ***Volunteer management is responsive to basic library needs.***

Volunteers have focused on ensuring the minimum requirements for libraries to operate, which is positive and reflects the empowerment in decision-making. At the same time, there is a need to reorient the management for a balance between quality programming and basic operation.

- ***It is necesary to rethink the roles of the boards.***

On reviewing the profiles of board members, we found that they correspond to the stage of development and introduction of the libraries in communities. On average, the libraries have more than six years of operation.

We recommend reengineering the volunteer roles, which should be accompanied by a process of training in advocacy, public policy, negotiation, strategic alliances, networking, and the use of ICTs in development. Attention should be given to gender equity in leadership positions and decision making.

8. Riecken libraries and social capital: Ownership, trust, and transparency

To gauge the penetration of libraries into the community fabric, we employed interviews and questionnaires with users, non-users, community leaders, and local officials.

At first, the investigation conducted in both countries yielded a profile of public opinion about libraries, with the following findings:

What is your perception of honesty and transparency in the following sectors? 1 being less reliable and 5 more reliable.	
Local government officials	2
Traditional community leaders	3
Doctors and nurses	4
Teachers and school officials	3
Police officers	1
Riecken Library staff and volunteer	5
Judges and court personnel	3

When asked why people awarded the library the highest score, responses varied because it was an open-ended question. We highlight the following:

- In the library one sees the work they do.

- They manage funds transparently.

- The library serves everyone.

When we asked what major differences trouble communities, the differences most cited in Guatemala were:

1. Belonging to different political parties.

2. Long-term residents and newcomers.

3. Younger and older generations.

4. Land ownership.

In Honduras the differences most mentioned were:

1. Belonging to different political parties.

2. Long-term residents and newcomers.

3. Younger and older generations.

4. Land ownership.

It is interesting that, in both countries, respondents believe that political differences predominate, a factor that illuminates how librarians' job security is exposed to risk by municipal corporations and changing administrations.

In summary, we found that Riecken libraries enjoy a "social trust." We could say that local citizens recognize that Riecken libraries exercise the principles of equality, efficiency, and transparency. It is recognized that the library boards manage the libraries under apolitical, secular, and transparent guidelines.

9. Conclusions

We can affirm that the two main hypotheses of this Study been validated and tested:

a. Riecken Libraries have introduced a new and inclusive model of Community Library in the rural communities of Guatemala and Honduras.

b. Access to information and interaction with local citizens favors the generation of social capital among library users and library staff.

IMPACT OF THE RIECKEN LIBRARIES

- They provide access to information to the poorest part of the population, of whom 61% live on incomes of less than $100 per month, 26% live in homes with dirt floors, and 28% have fewer than six books at home.

- They contribute to improving schooling performance. Among library users, 79% are students.

- They stand out among the three main sources of information in rural communities. Each library serves approximately 800 users per month, or 51,200 visitors per month across all 64 libraries.

- They provide a safe, healthy, and trustworthy environment.

- They are valued by communities, enjoying trust and credibility.

- They constitute a volunteer movement with a high level of knowledge built around the operation of libraries.

- They contribute to strengthening civil society. They are institutions that promote and articulate diverse initiatives and social activities.

10. Recommendations:

a. Based Decentralized Technical Assistance Results:

The technical support currently provided by the Riecken Foundation in Honduras at the local level is not timely and relevant to the needs of libraries. The local technical assistance provided by the Riecken Foundation in Guatemala does not guarantee strengthening of the training and empowerment of librarians and boards, and it does not represent a sustainable intervention. We recommend the implementation of a mechanism of Decentralized Technical Assistance based on Regional Promoters responsible for providing technical assistance. This will allow libraries to feel backed up and supported. That would also provide the conditions for local citizens to take charge of administration.

b. Youth Programming:

The youth population represents most of the library users, and yet full advantage is not taken of their presence. We suggest restructuring and simplifying the youth activities inside the libraries and facilitating the conditions for young people to direct themselves with minimal adult intervention.

c. Consolidate Local Programming:

Promote the development of local activities and projects since they represent the needs and interests of each community. It is useful to systematize and formalize activities, to collect best practices for replication, and to consolidate the cultural and social heritage that libraries offer in democratic values, development, and the
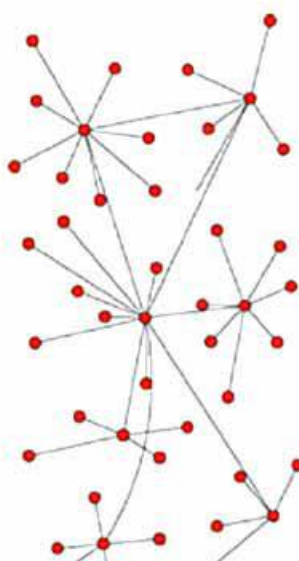

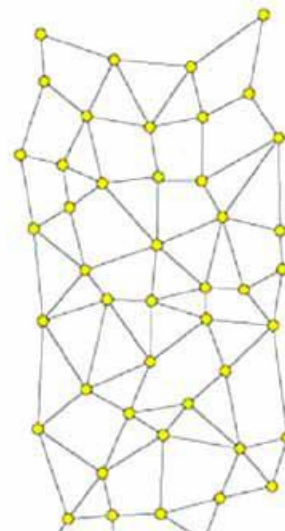Technical assistance in Honduras

Centralized
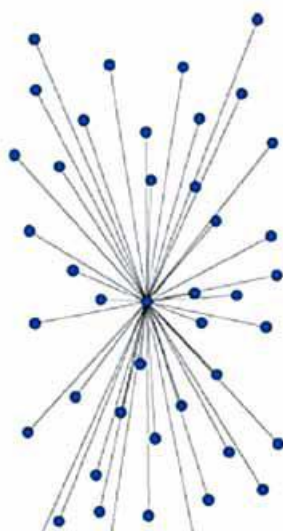
Descentralized Assistance

Proposed mechanism

Technical assistance in Guatemala

Decentralized

joining of efforts. We found that library activities for adults in Guatemala are of high quality and promote interchange and closeness between young and adults. We suggest documenting these activities and sharing them with the rest of the libraries.

d. Creating Collaborative Networks:

We found that the six library regions formed by the Riecken Foundation in Honduras under ARBICOR[16] do not meet the main objective of promoting collaboration between libraries without the direct intervention of the foundation. During interviews, several members of the boards expressed the difficulty in agreeing on agenda, time, and resources to meet with all the libraries of the same region.

We recommend integrating within regions a configuration of "Riecken Collaboration Networks." This would allow differently formed networks to function, not only defined by geographical proximity, but also by criteria of affinity and identity. Libraries need to put the sharing of resource and experiences into practice, thus creating supportive relationships between "strong" and "weak" libraries.

e. Strengthen the strategy to advocate for public policies:

Locally, the Foundation can support boards in enhancing their influence in advocating for local public policies to ensure the support of the municipal corporations and to lessen the risk of political interference in library governance.

Example of Proposed Structure: Region X with seven libraries. functioning with two Collaboration Networks.

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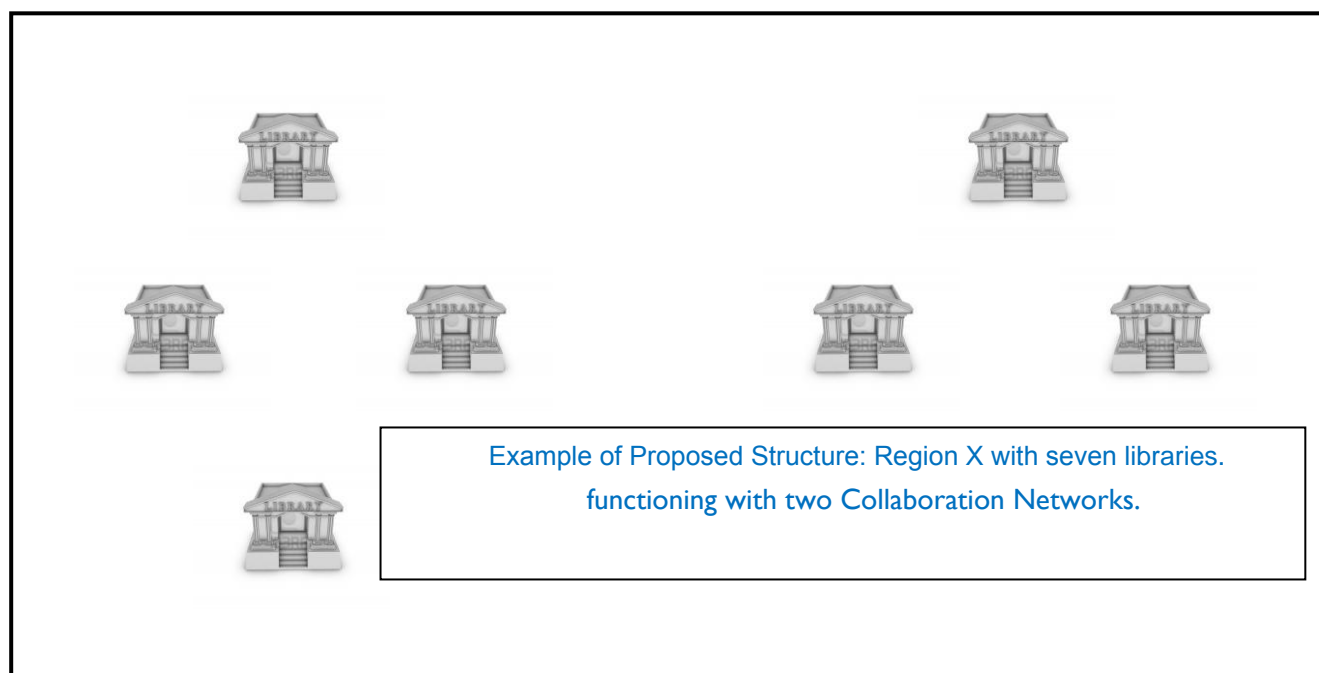
[16] Riecken Community Library Association network created in 2007.

f. **Updating Resources:**

Renewing the book collection and updating the computer equipment represent a priority for libraries.

g. **Strengthen the profile of librarians:**

Librarians are a valuable human resource that can be exploited on a large scale by libraries. We recommend shaping opportunities for exchange and cooperation between librarians and encouraging the use of ICT for self-training.

h. **Promote a volunteer movement:**

This represents an opportunity to reorient the work of volunteers with a volunteer corps more dedicated to developing strategies and creating environments favorable for library operations. Volunteer profiles must be redefined to simplify their functions so that training of new volunteers can be emphasized.

i. **Involve volunteers and librarians in developing projects:**

During project formulation and fundraising, it is important for the Foundation to recognize the communities' needs and interests. We recommend mapping out a plan to identify and prioritize the kinds of projects that libraries are interested in developing: violence prevention, school academic support, environment, *etc*. This will allow an understanding of the needs of communities and will guide libraries according to their collective interests.

j. **Information and Communication Technologies:**

Focus on fundraising for regional broadband projects for libraries. Redefine the concept of "social cost sharing" with shared access for users. Explore and lobby for the Library Knowledge Network to enable massive expansion of the Riecken library model in Central America.

k. **Strengthen outreach activities:**

Bookmobiles have potential to expand services and to reach nonusers and adults.

l. **Document, systematize, and publish:**

The libraries have generated varied information with local content that must be preserved and documented, such as: innovative project contests, local activities, publication of case studies, stories, *etc*. To the extent that this information is documented, it will be easy for the Foundation and the libraries to show their impact and then to advocate for favorable public policies.

m. **Transmission of information is key:**

Implementing a strategy for transmitting information and knowledge would facilitate the strengthening the abilities of librarians and volunteers for the better management and use of the libraries. It is necessary to share with the communities all the training materials produced by the Foundation, whether published or posted. We note that the technical staff performs various efforts to develop training material,

which is then passed out to the participants but does not become the property of the libraries.

n. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation:

We recommend designing a monitoring and evaluation system to measure specific indicators for each target population and each program offered. Each system must include applications so that boards and librarians can monitor their libraries directly.

o. Strike a balance between academics and discovery:

We need to encourage more activities and partnerships that support school achievement, striving to maintain a balance so that libraries do not lose their mission of fostering a spirit of discovery and innovation at all levels.

Motivating Volunteers

Eva Rodezno

Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Cortés.

Currently I serve as a volunteer on the local board of the Light of Knowledge Community Library in the Riecken Network. I also work as a teacher at the Santa Cruz Technical Institute in the field of aquaculture. This is a public middle school.

After having raised half my family of seven children, I feel it is time to dedicate my free time to this local development project. Previously I have worked as a volunteer in our village council, the parents' association, and the committee to support the struggle against domestic violence.

To be honest, when I was invited to the early meetings of the library committee, I came more from loyalty to the person who invited me. I said to myself, "another of so many projects that finally are only…projects."

As I became involved bit by bit, I could see the seriousness, innovation, and commitment of the Foundation. Yes, I thought: "It's time to work for something truly real, even if it's a big commitment." As a teacher, I always felt the emptiness, something missing, and frustration that our students do not have a place find things out for free; so I decided to accept the challenge.

Volunteer work is really complicated, but not impossible. It's just a matter of organization, but especially of not being discouraged by critics. You have to set goals and strive for them and motivate yourself.

In my volunteer work I would most emphasize the pleasure of being able to serve others. There is also the recognition and credibility that we have earned as a board, both among other institutions and among the general population. And I've been learning more and more every day from our users.
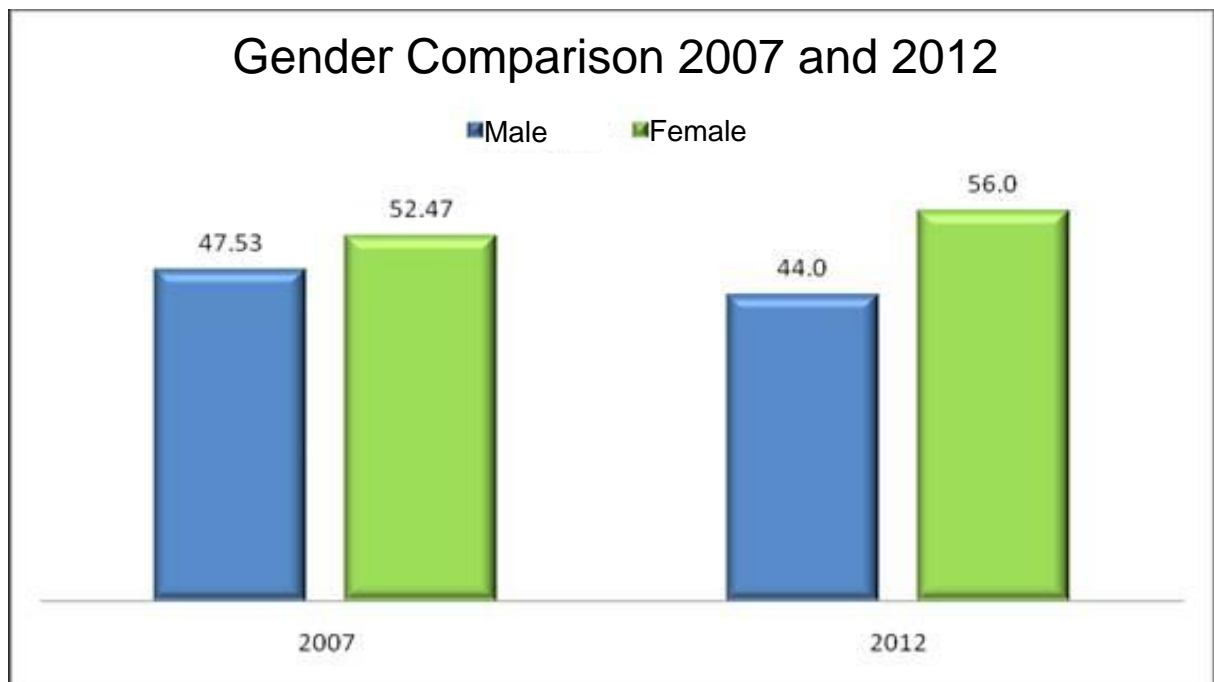
APPENDIXES

11. Appendixes
11.1 Honduras Statistical Data

A. Socioeconomic data of library users

1. Users who visit libraries are 56% female and 44% male. Compared to 2007, the male population declined by 3.53%. This shows attendance balanced by gender.
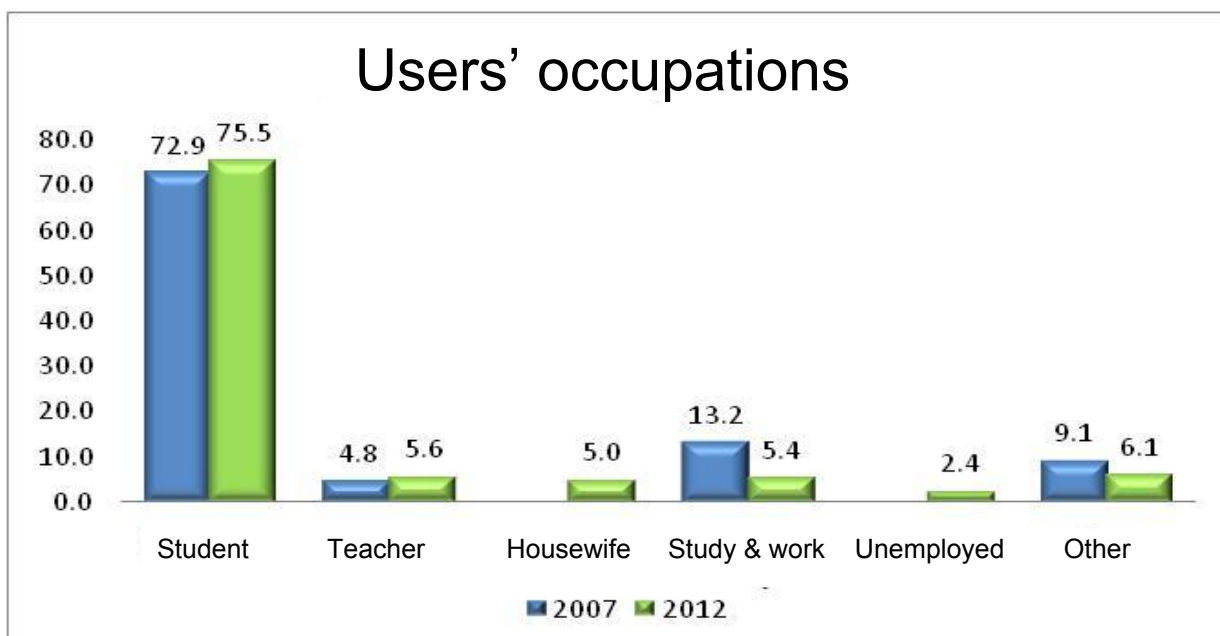
Gender Comparison 2007 and 2012

■Male ■Female

	2007	2012
Male	47.53	44.0
Female	52.47	56.0

2. We see that libraries offer their services principally to students from six to eighteen years of age. Adult and elderly users are less in attendance at libraries.
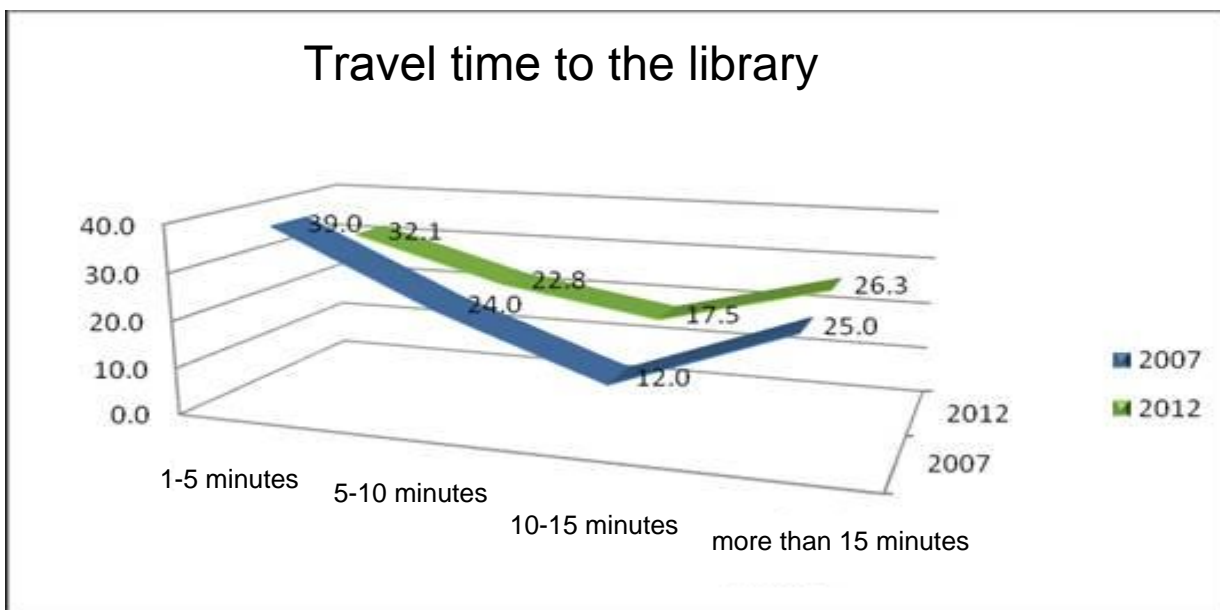
Ages of library users
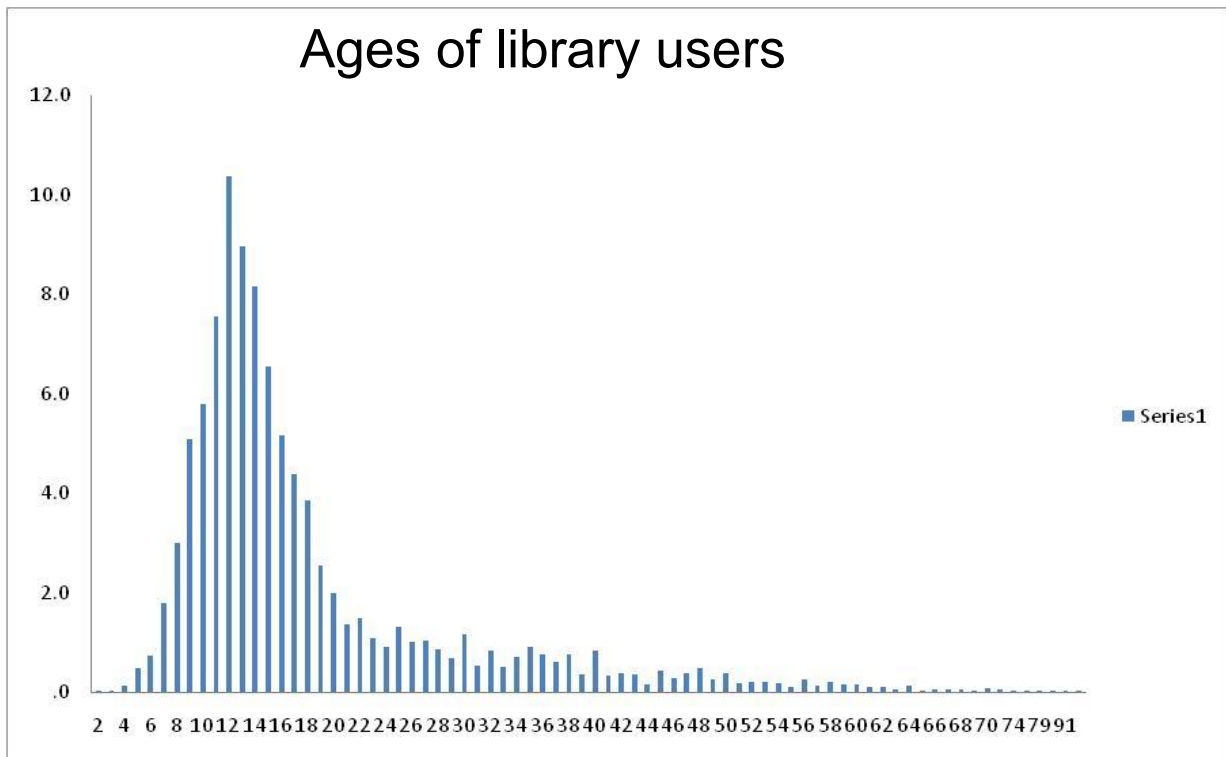
3. By age, 38.2% of users are primary students, and 48.7% are secondary students (in academic or vocational programs). Visits by academic or technical university students are substantially lower at 5.7%. Preschoolers are infrequent library users.

Users' educational levels
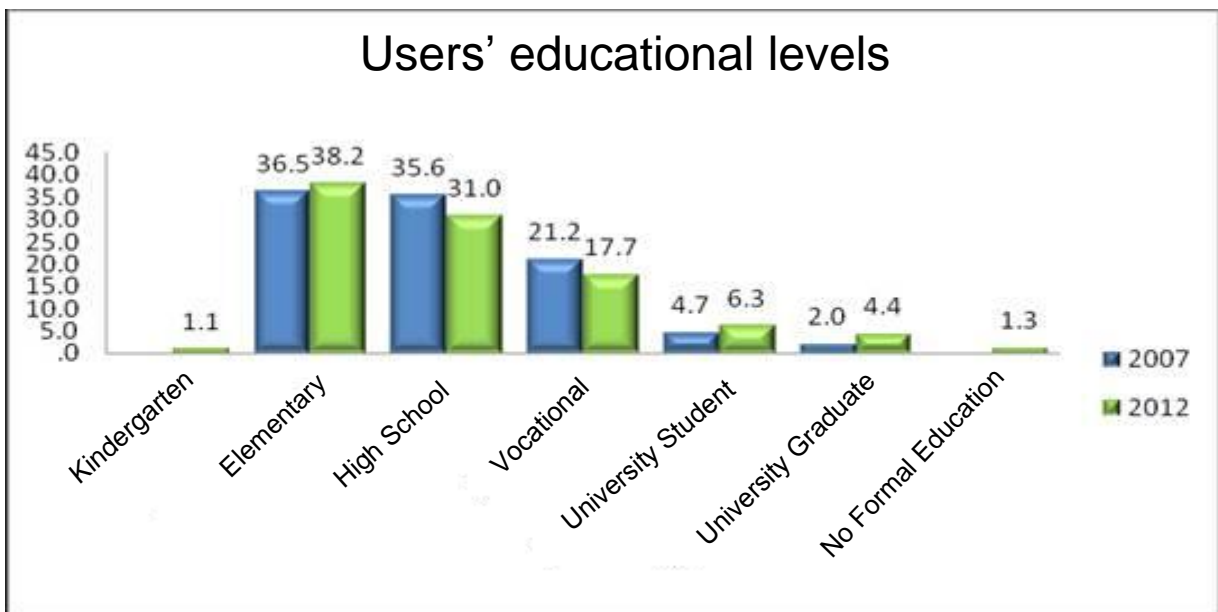
4. Analysis of users' occupations confirms that 75.5% are students, repeating the trend seen in 2007. We see a major contrast in the attendance level of teachers (5.6%). Oddly, housewives' attendance (5%) is very close to that of teachers.
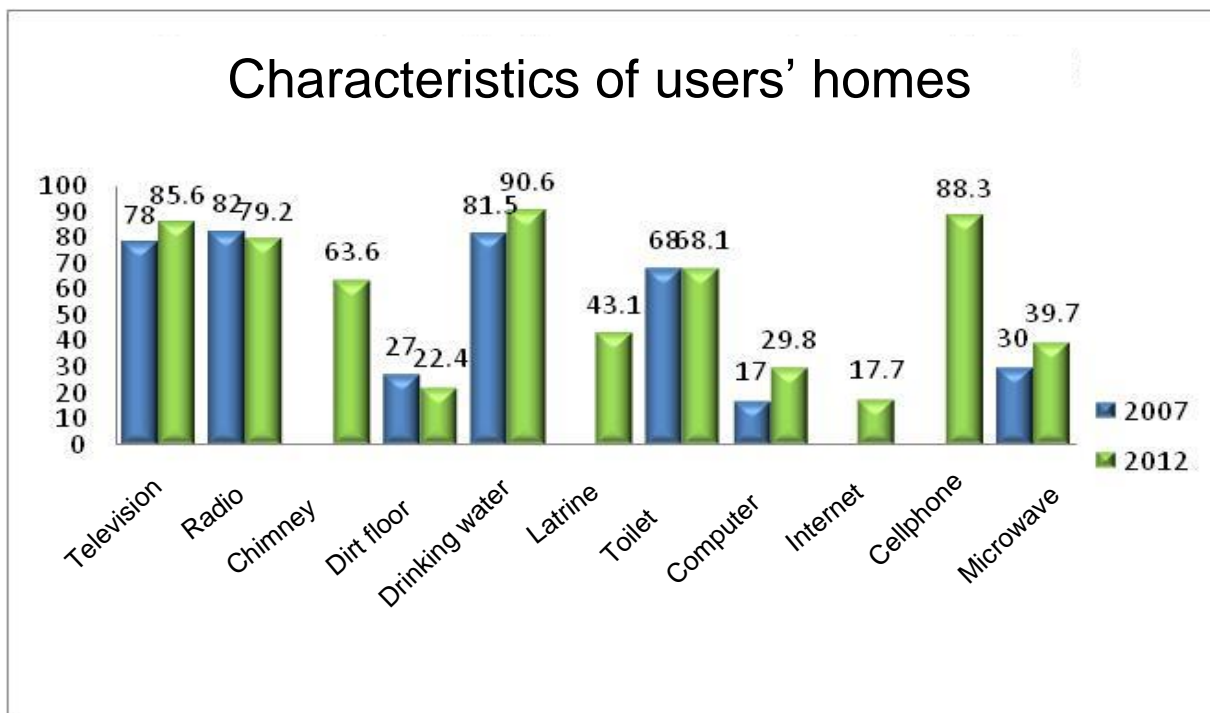
Users' occupations

	Student	Teacher	Housewife	Study & work	Unemployed	Other
2007	72.9	4.8		13.2		9.1
2012	75.5	5.6	5.0	5.4	2.4	6.1

■ 2007 ■ 2012

5. Compared to 2007, it appears that at present users who live farther from the library have increased their support to it.
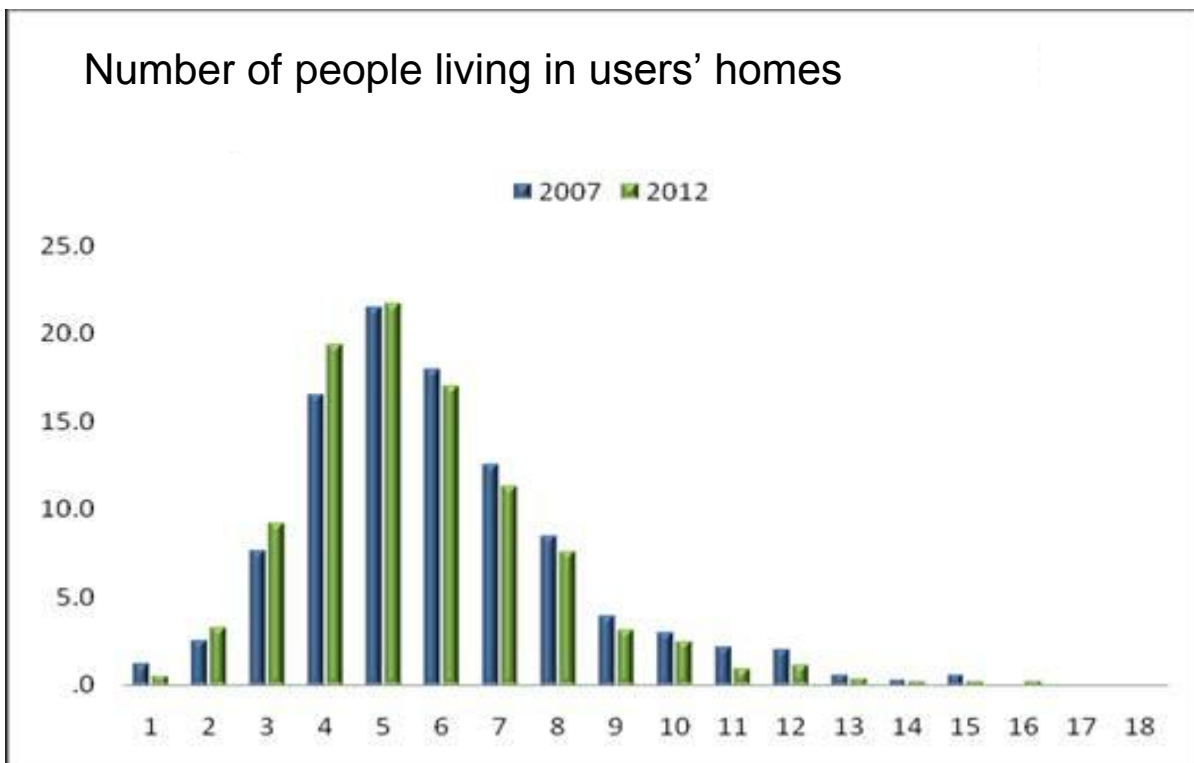
Travel time to the library
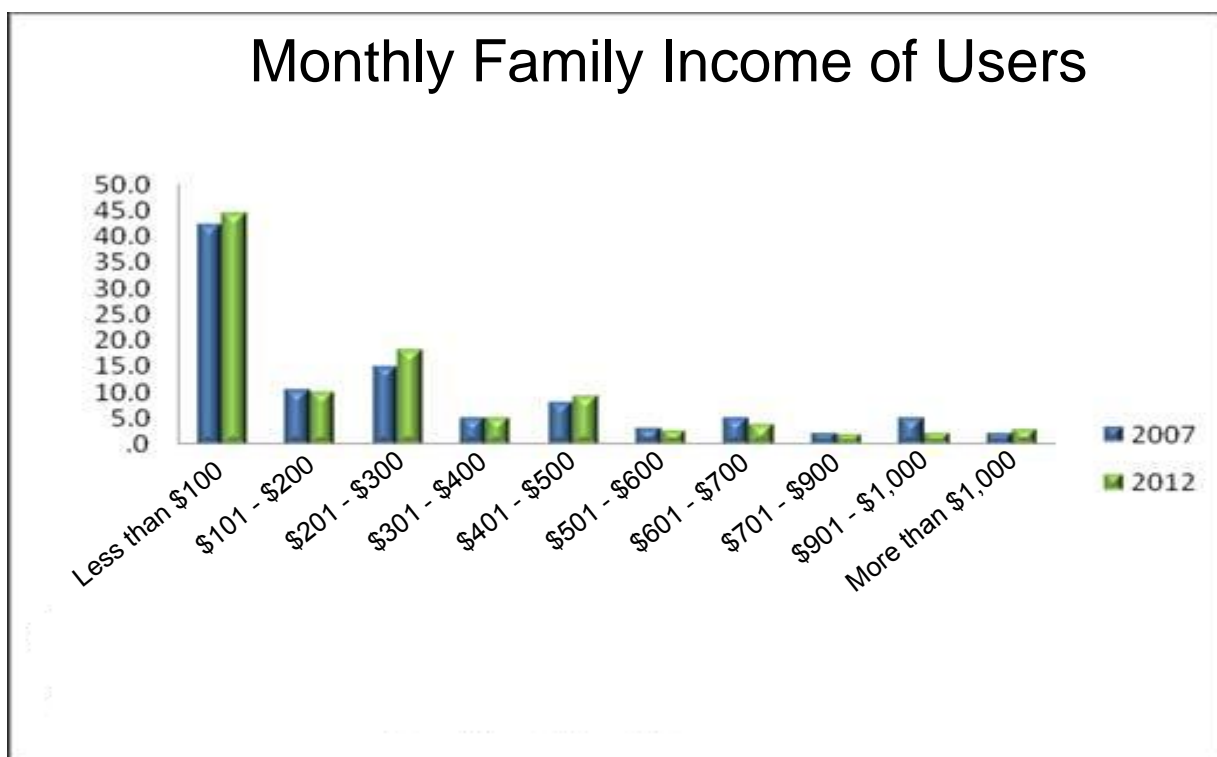
	1-5 minutes	5-10 minutes	10-15 minutes	more than 15 minutes
2012	32.1	22.8	17.5	26.3
2007	39.0	24.0	12.0	25.0

■ 2007 ■ 2012

6. Users have dirt floors in 22.4% of their homes; 43.1% use a latrine; 29.8% have a computer, and 88.3% a cellphone.

Characteristics of users' homes
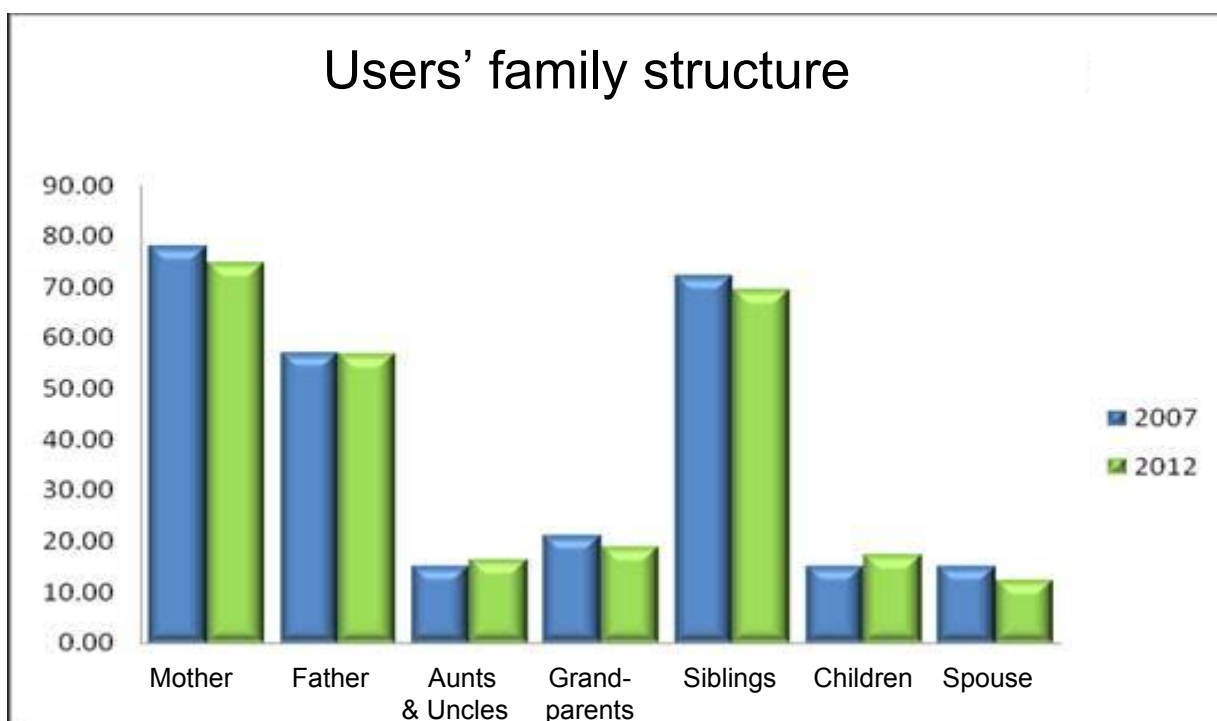

7. Users living in households of five persons: 21.7%.

Number of people living in users' homes

8. Users' monthly household income below $100.00: 44.4%.

Monthly Family Income of Users

(Legend: 2007, 2012)

Categories: Less than $100, $101 - $200, $201 - $300, $301 - $400, $401 - $500, $501 - $600, $601 - $700, $701 - $900, $901 - $1,000, More than $1,000

9. The majority of users live with their mothers (as head of household) and siblings.

Users' family structure

(Legend: 2007, 2012)

Categories: Mother, Father, Aunts & Uncles, Grand-parents, Siblings, Children, Spouse

10. The continuing trend is that the majority of users have one to five books in their homes. We do see, however, a small increase in the number of books at home since 2007.

## Number of books in users' homes
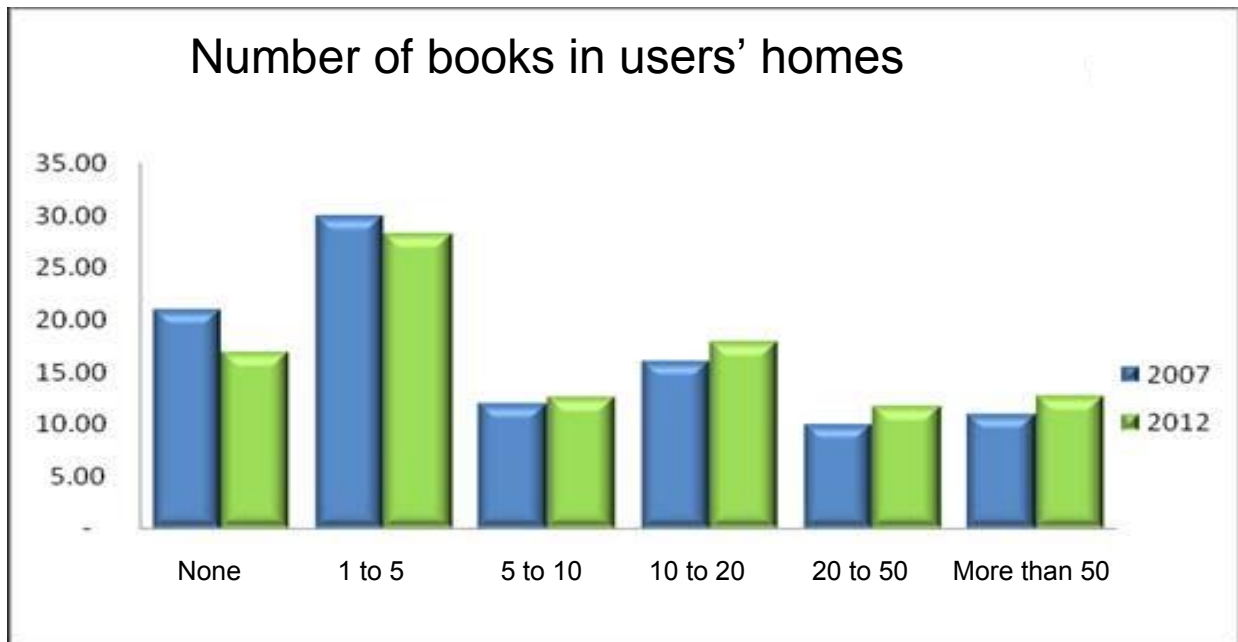
B. Library usage data

1. We continue to see that visitors come to libraries primarily to do homework. In 2012 there was an 8.9% percent decrease in the use of computers as a result of aging computer equipment and loss of internet connection in some libraries. Youth group participation shows a significant decrease from 15% down to 5.5% because youth programming was interrupted. Story times show a slight 4.5% decrease. One factor is the need to renew the children's book collection. Early stimulation activities are seldom realized. We perceive that the preponderance of adults visit the libraries to chat, to participate in meetings, and to borrow books. The category of "other" uses mostly meant using the photocopier.


Users' activity in the library
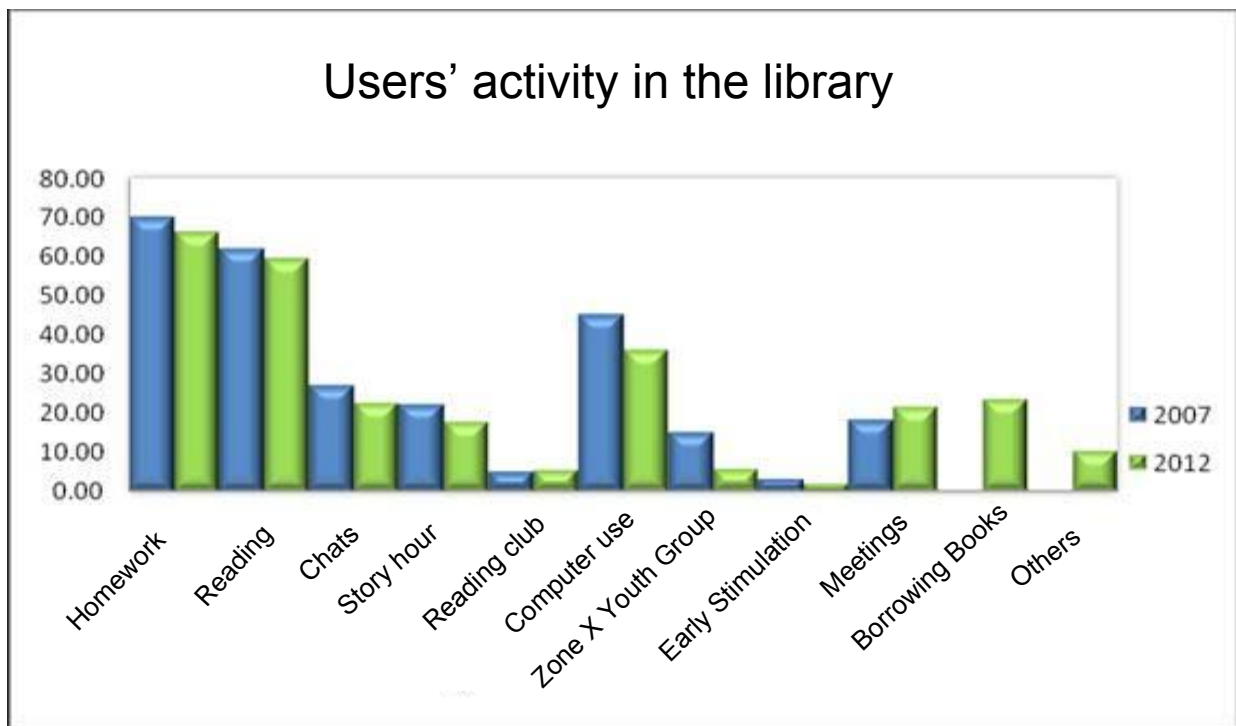
2. The frequency of daily visits has decreased since 2007, from 37% to 25.2% in 2012. Currently a plurality of users (26.9%) visits the library once a week. We believe the reduced attendance is due to the decrease of periodic programmatic activities (such as Zone X) and the fading quality of computer equipment. (Several libraries reported computers in poor condition and weak or no connectivity.)

Frequency of library visits
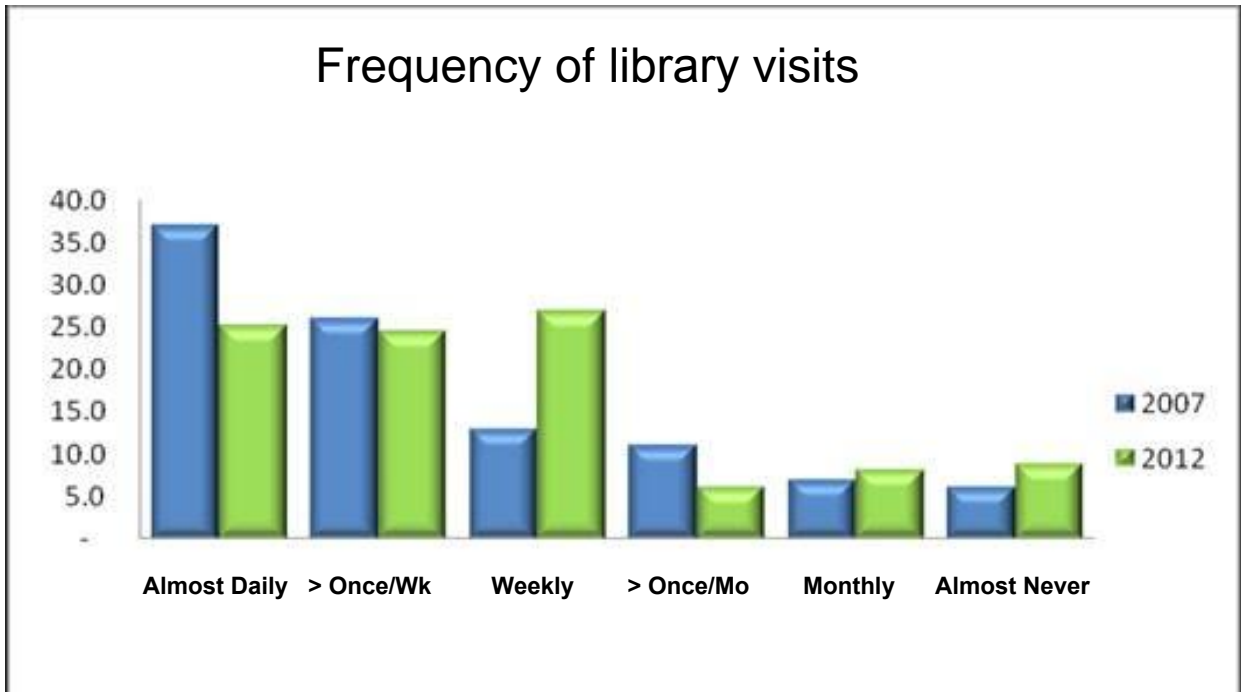
3. Short reading times have increased from 24.5% in 2007 to 29.7% in 2012. On a positive note, 2007 to 2012 shows a slight decrease (2.9%) in users who never read. On the other hand, we see that long reading periods have decreased. This is probably because the reading promotion program has not been maintained systematically, and also because of the decline in computer resources.


Daily reading times
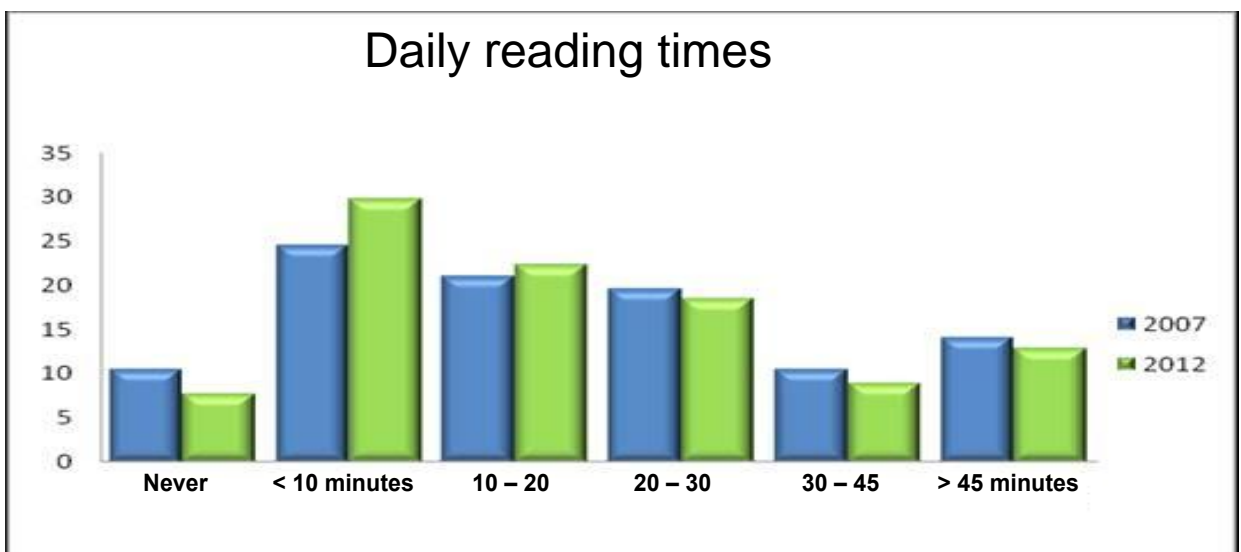
4. Users report that 56.9% read textbooks, 56.7% read newspapers, and 55.5% read magazines. Of those reporting "other" reading, 91.5% reported reading the Bible. We propose that this question be reformulated in future surveys because it does not differentiate between reading within the library and outside the library.

Users' reading preferences
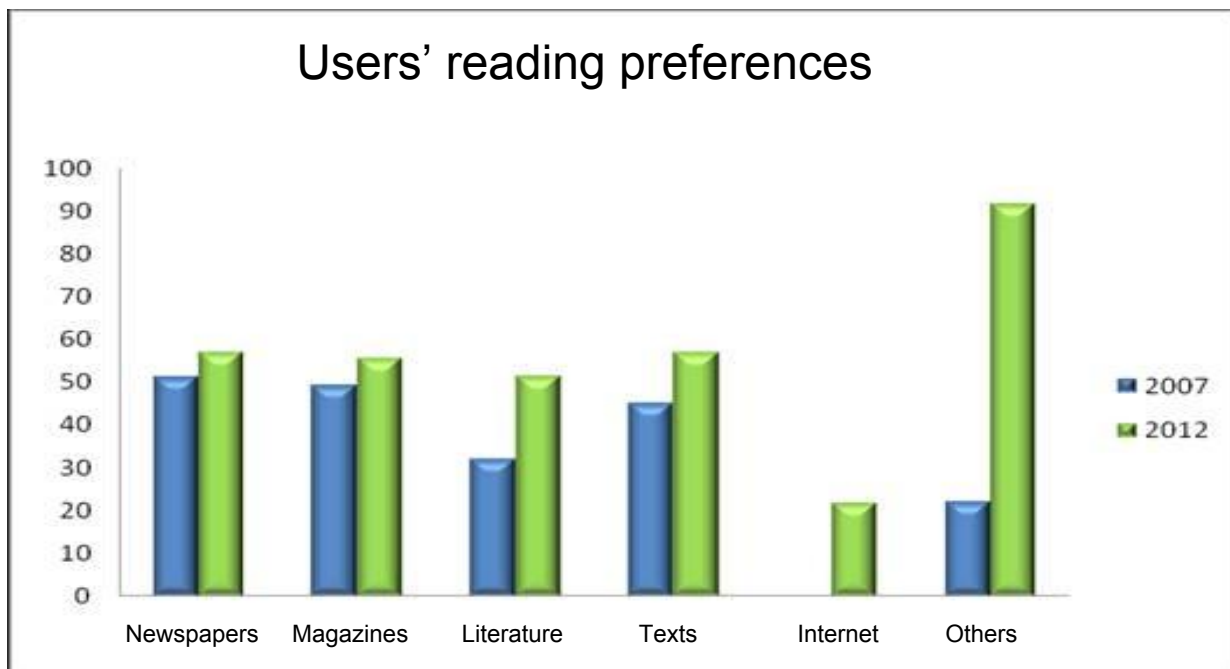
5. Users' memberships include 68.1% church, 21.1% sports clubs, 18.8% youth groups (sometimes of the same church or for a special project), and 9% Riecken library volunteers.

Organization membership

6. When we asked users about their main sources of information, 73.3% named television, 59.8% the Riecken library, and 54.1% radio. It is remarkable that libraries are the second source of information for users.

Sources of users' information

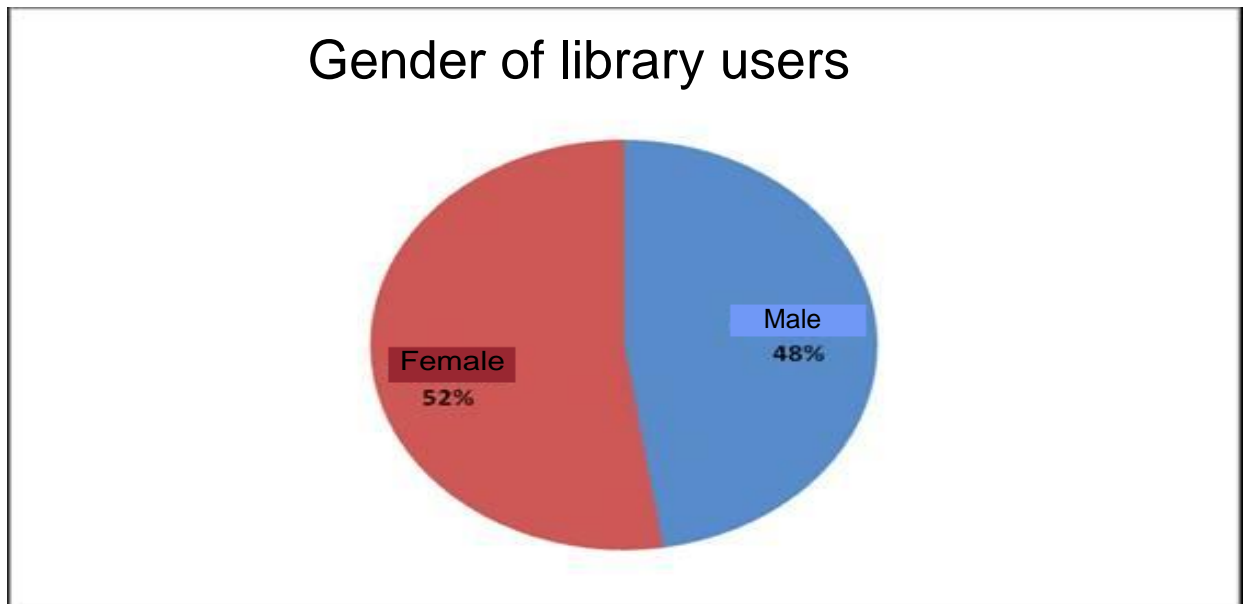|	Riecken Library	Radio	Television
	59.8	54.1	73.3
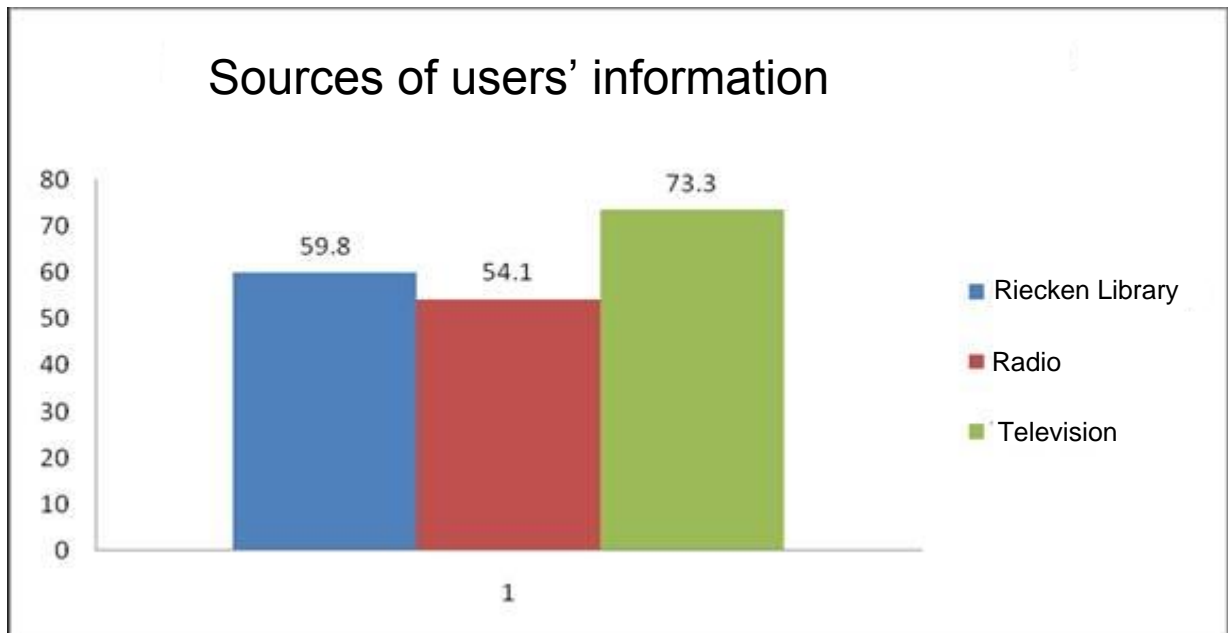
11.2 Guatemala Statistical Data

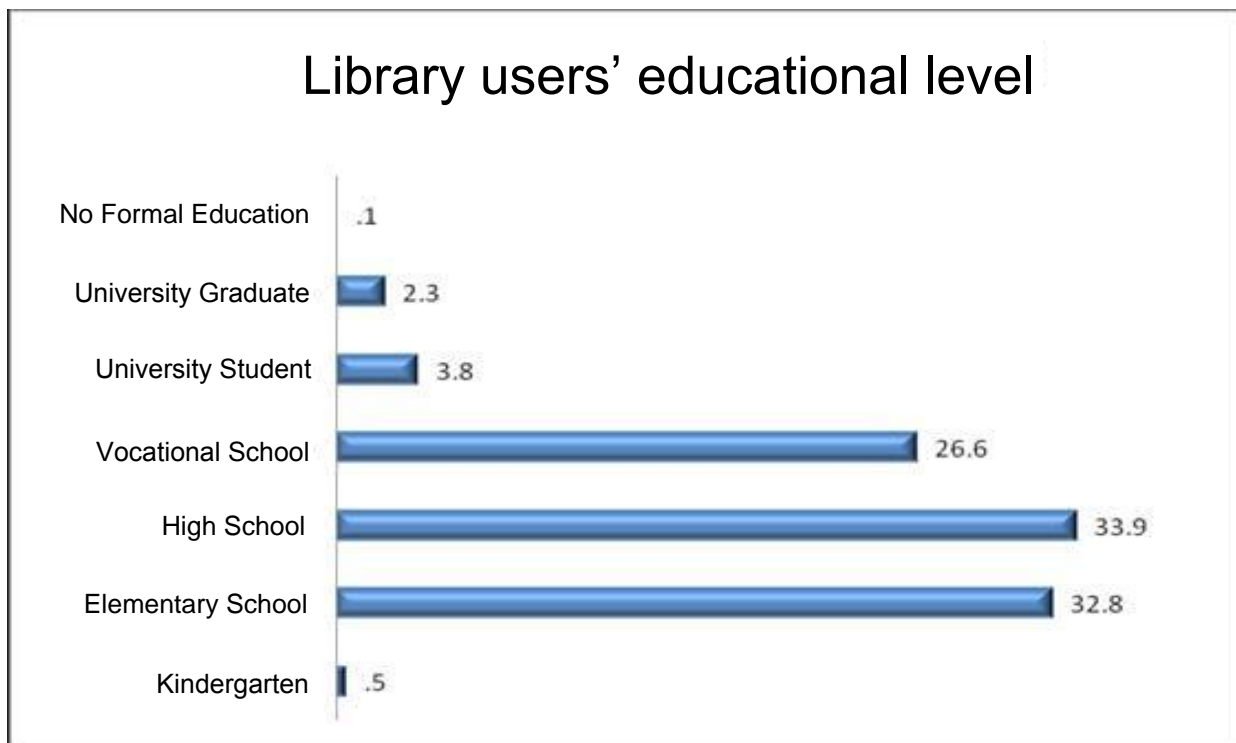**A. Socioeconomic data of library users**

1. User attendance in libraries practiced reflects gender balance, with 52% female users and 48% male.
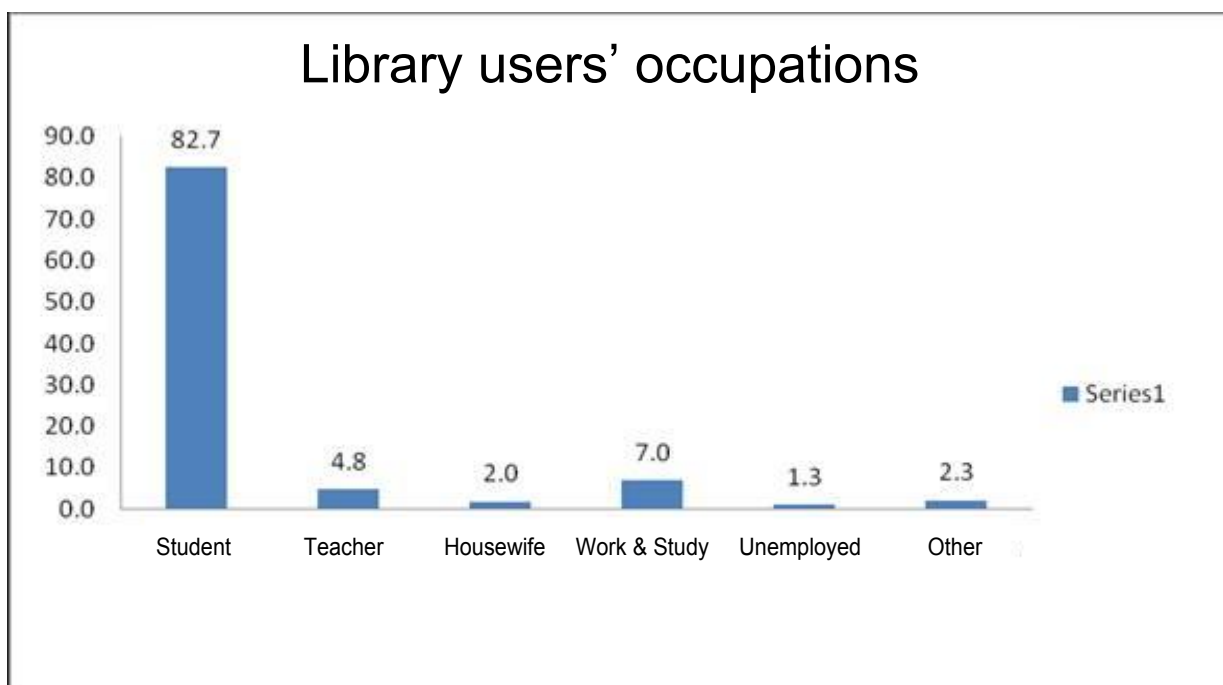

2. We see that libraries offer their services principally to students from eight to nineteen years of age. Adult and elderly users are less in attendance at libraries.
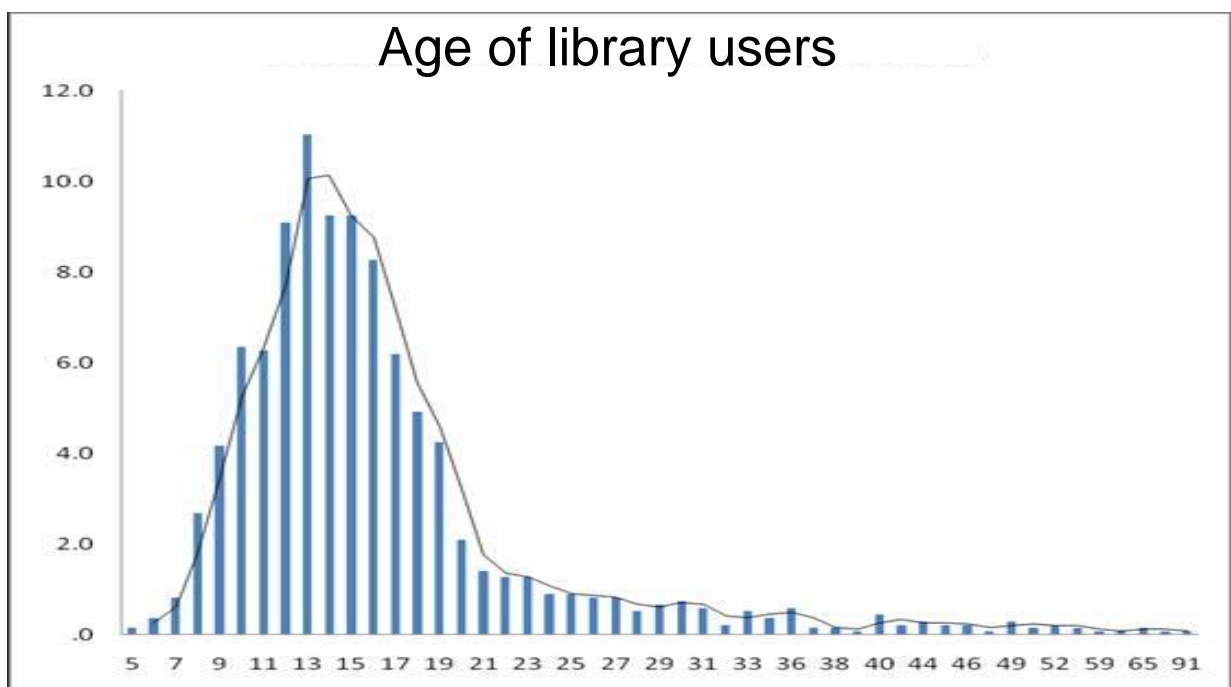
3. By age, 32.8 % of users are primary students, and 60.5% are secondary students (academic and vocational).

Library users' educational level

Educational level	%
No Formal Education	.1
University Graduate	2.3
University Student	3.8
Vocational School	26.6
High School	33.9
Elementary School	32.8
Kindergarten	.5

4. Of the library users, 82.7% are full-time students, while 7% both work and study. Teachers represent 4.8% of users.

Library users' occupations

Occupation	%
Student	82.7
Teacher	4.8
Housewife	2.0
Work & Study	7.0
Unemployed	1.3
Other	2.3

■ Series1

5. To walk to the library, 43.1% of users need more than fifteen minutes, while 20.5% can get there in less than five.

Users' time to walk to the library

Category	Value
> 15 minutes	43.1
10 - 15 minutes	16.8
5 - 10 minutes	19.5
1 - 5 minutes	20.5
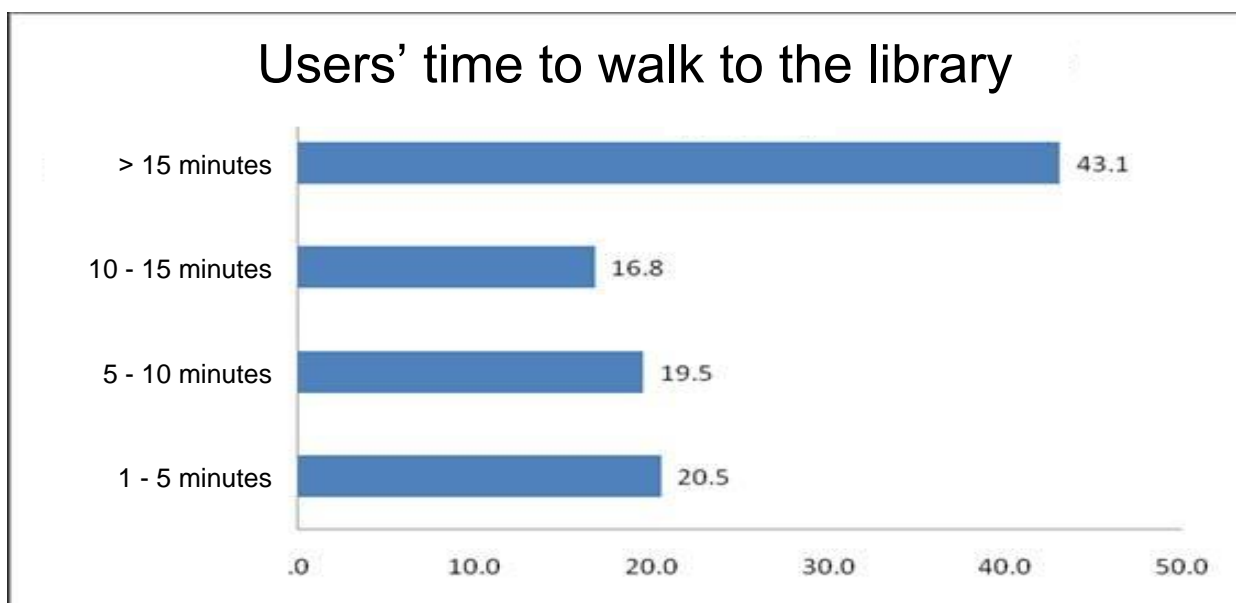
**6.** The media occupy a significant importance in the house of library users (TV, radio, and cell phone) with over 81% coverage. Basic services like water and electricity enjoy more than 85% coverage. It is noteworthy that some features reflect marginal conditions, such as wood stoves and dirt floors, but on the positive side are enhancements like computers, internet, and microwaves.

Caracteristica de las casas de los usuarios
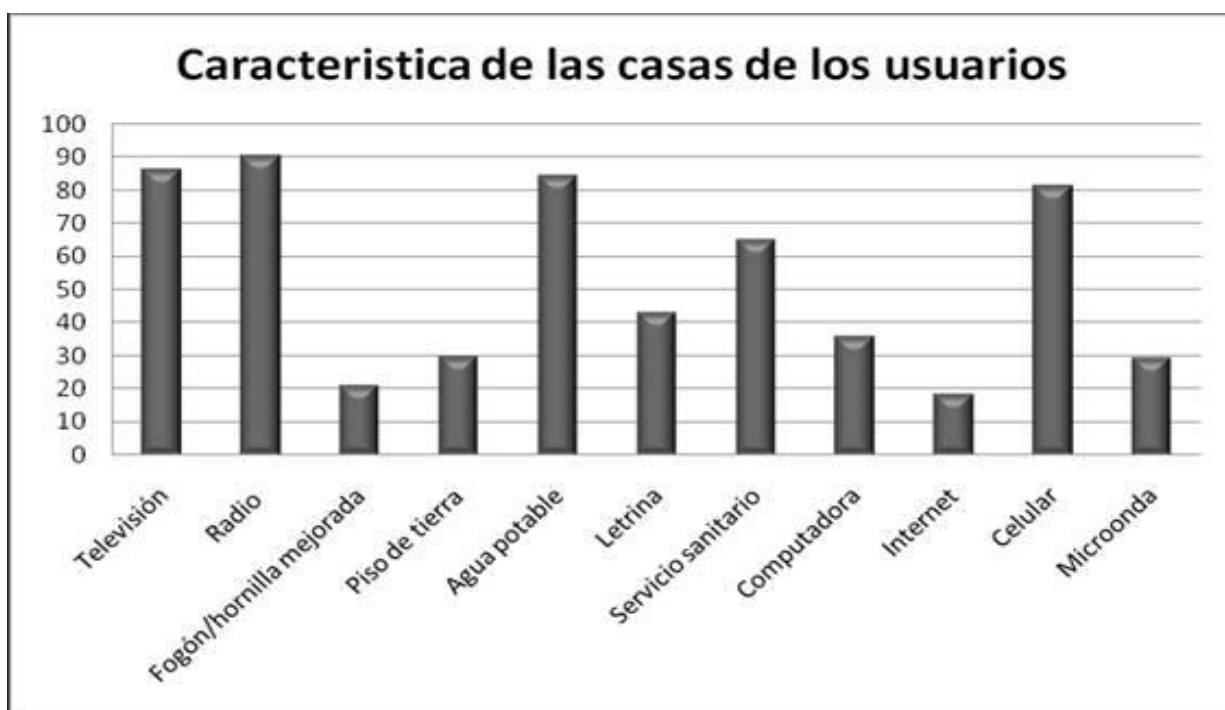
Percentage of users' homes with television, radio, wood stove, dirt floor, running water, latrine, toilet, computer, internet, cell phone, & microwave oven.

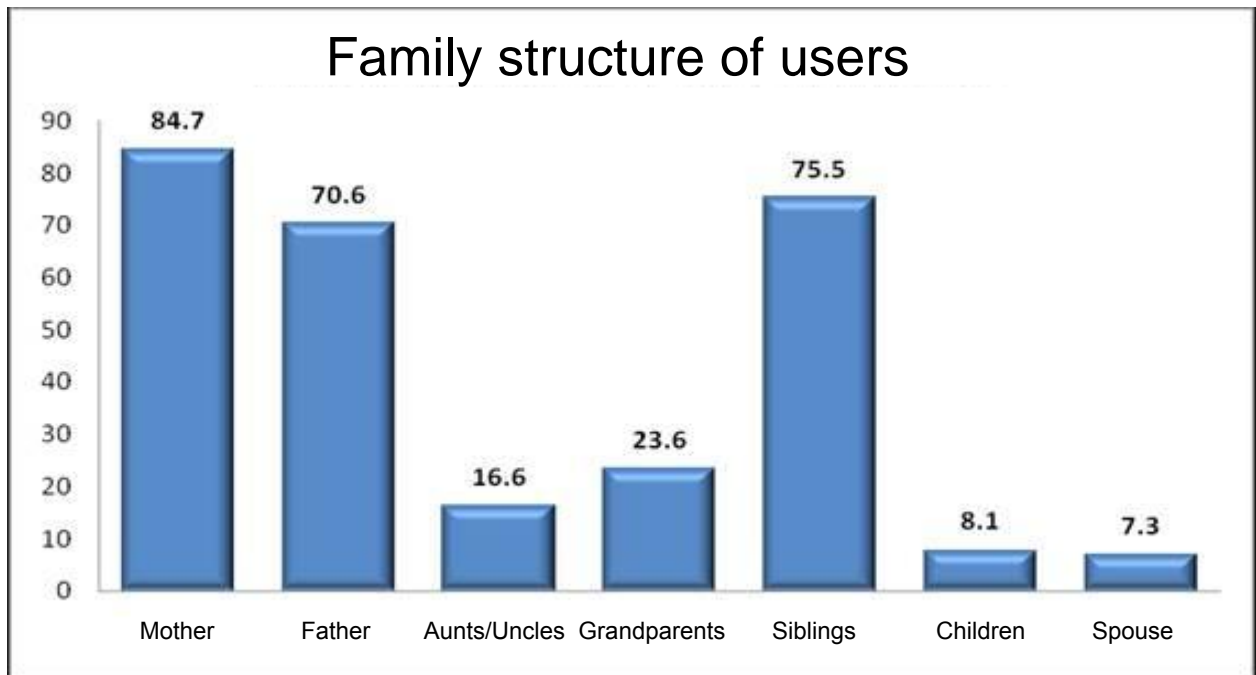**7.** The greater part of users' nuclear families range from five to eight people. Nuclear families are considered large because 75.5% of users live with their siblings. Smaller numbers of families live with other members like grandparents, uncles, or consorts. This is to be expected since most of the users are in the age ranges of childhood and youth.

Number of people living at users' home
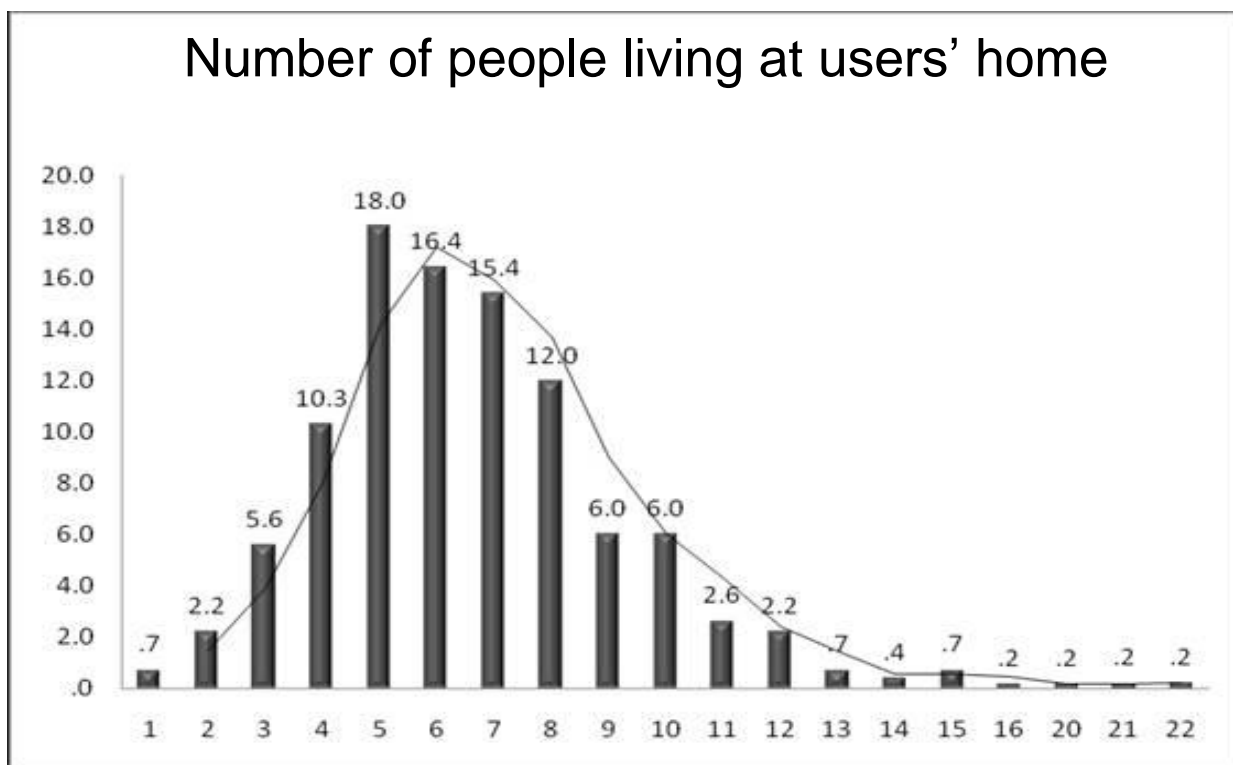
8. Income: 77% of users have household incomes below $250 per month.

Incomes	US$	%
Less than Q. 2,000	Less than $ 250	77.0
Q. 2,001 to Q. 4,000	$ 250 to $ 503	9.6
Q. 4,001 to Q. 6,000	$ 503 to $ 755	8.1
Q. 6,001 to Q. 8,000	$ 755 to $ 1,006	0.9
Q. 8,001 to Q. 10,000	$ 1,006 to $ 1,257	1.8
Q. 10,001 to Q. 12,000	$ 1,257 to $ 1,509	1.2
Q. 12,001 to Q. 15,000	$ 1,509 to $ 1,886	0.3
Q. 15,000 to Q. 18,000	$ 1,886 to $ 2,264	0.4
Q. 18,001 to Q. 20,000	$ 2,264 to $ 2,515	0.1
More than Q. 20,000	More than $ 2,515	0.6

9. This distribution reflects homes with mothers as head of household at 84.7%, followed by fathers at 70.6%.

Family structure of users

Category	Value
Mother	84.7
Father	70.6
Aunts/Uncles	16.6
Grandparents	23.6
Siblings	75.5
Children	8.1
Spouse	7.3

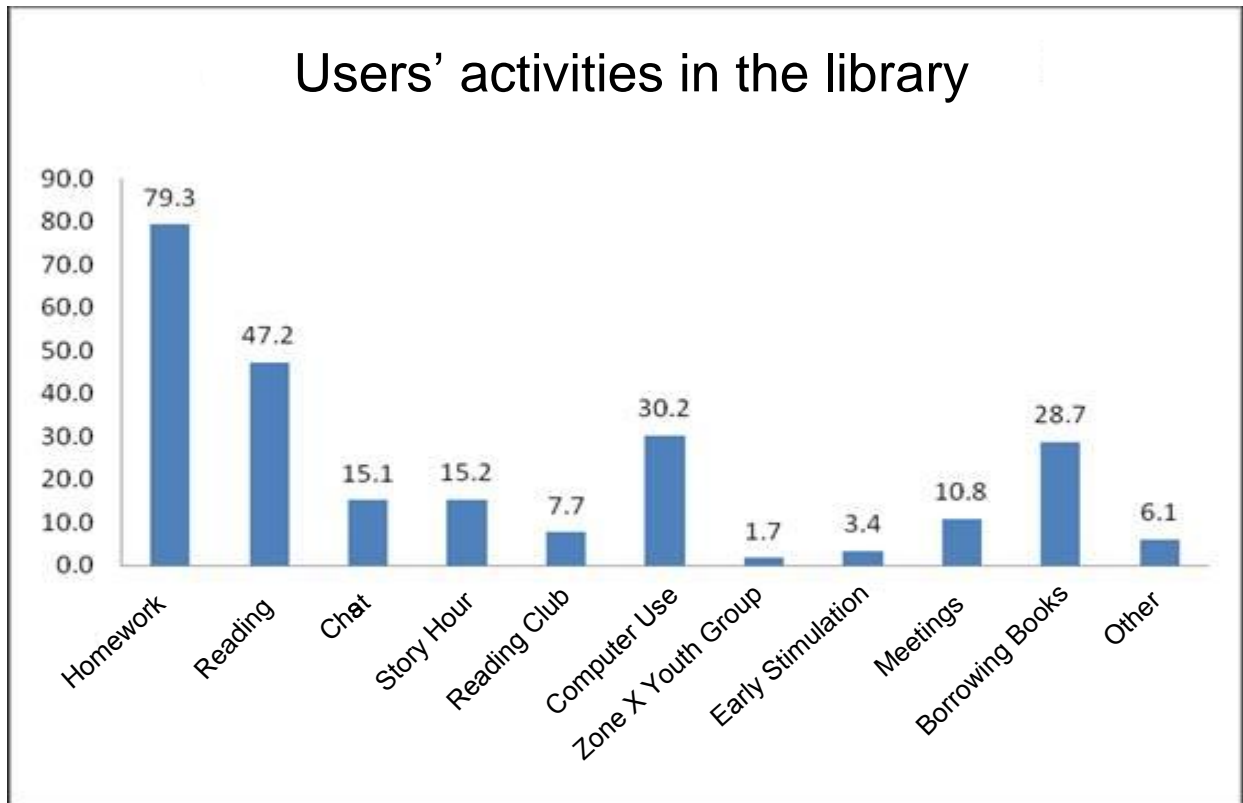**10.** Users report that 27.2% own one to five books, and 12.7% have more than fifty, while by contrast 10.8% have none at all.

Number of books in users' homes

Category	Value
None	10.80
1 - 5	27.20
5 - 10	14.90
10 - 20	22.30
20 - 50	12.10
> 50 books	12.70
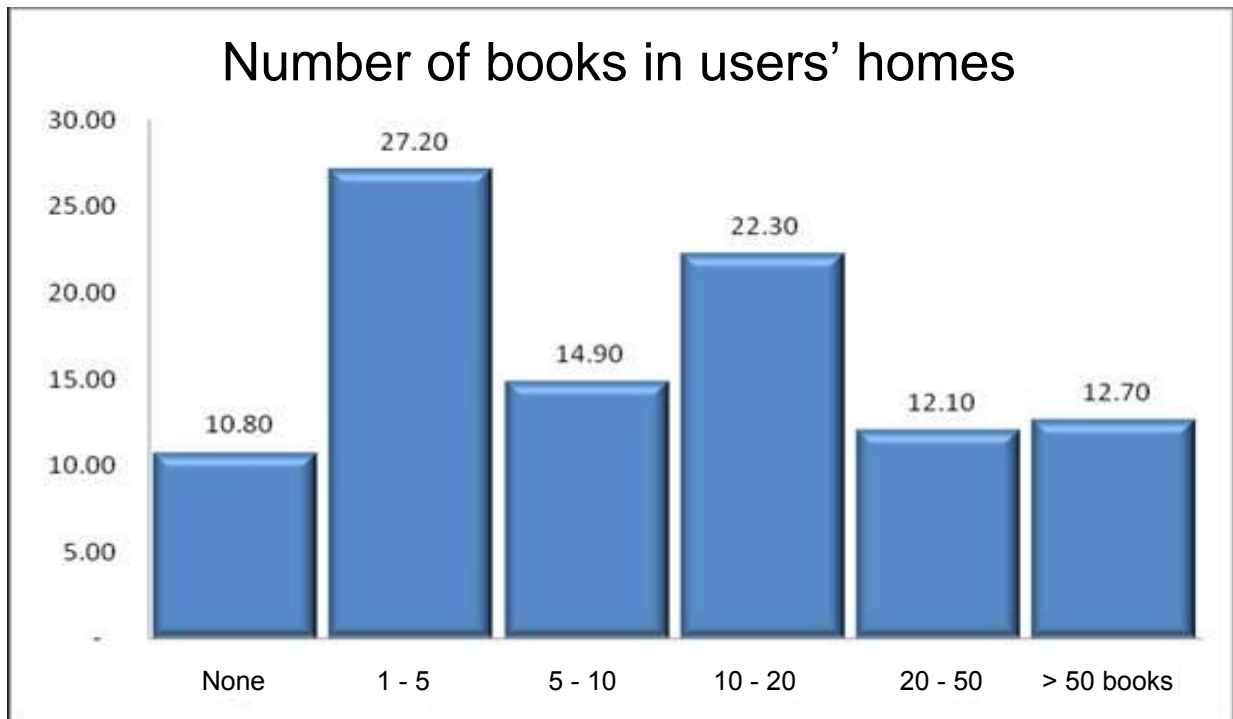
11. Library usage data

1. Users report that their three main library activities are homework, reading, and computer use.

Users' activities in the library

Activity	Value
Homework	79.3
Reading	47.2
Chat	15.1
Story Hour	15.2
Reading Club	7.7
Computer Use	30.2
Zone X Youth Group	1.7
Early Stimulation	3.4
Meetings	10.8
Borrowing Books	28.7
Other	6.1

2. This shows 90% of library users visiting weekly. Only 7.5% attend only monthly and 3.5% more rarely.

Frequency of visits by users

Category	Value
Almost Daily	28.8
> Once/Wk	26.8
Weekly	33.4
> Once/Wk	4.0
Monthly	3.5
Almost Never	3.5
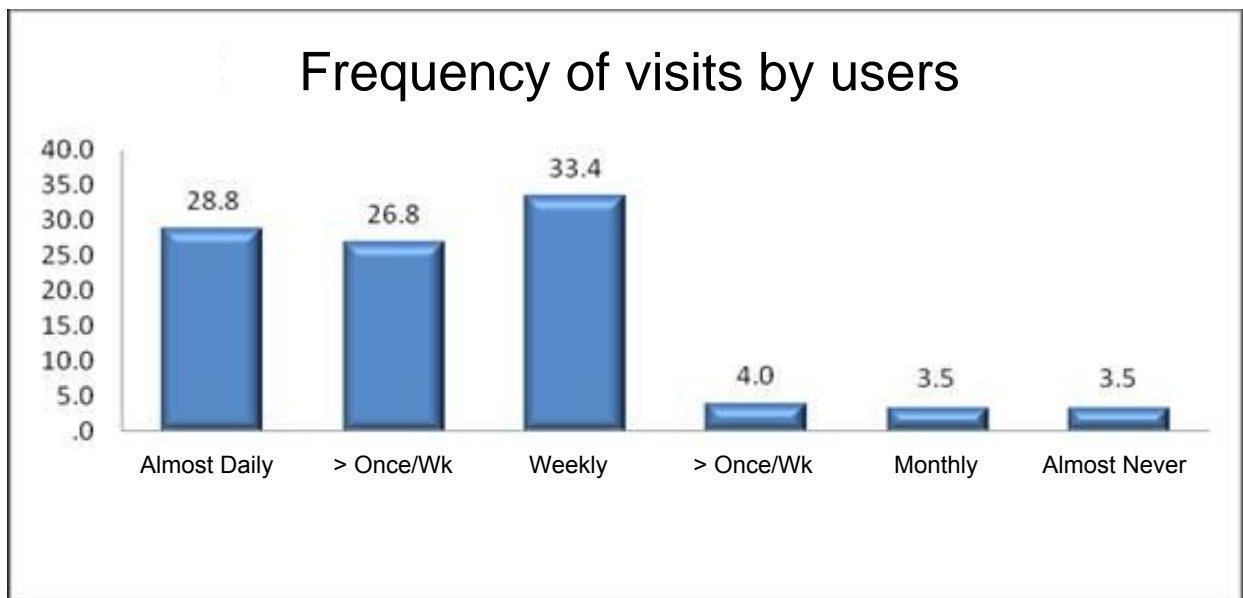
3. We observe a trend toward shorter reading times.

Daily reading times

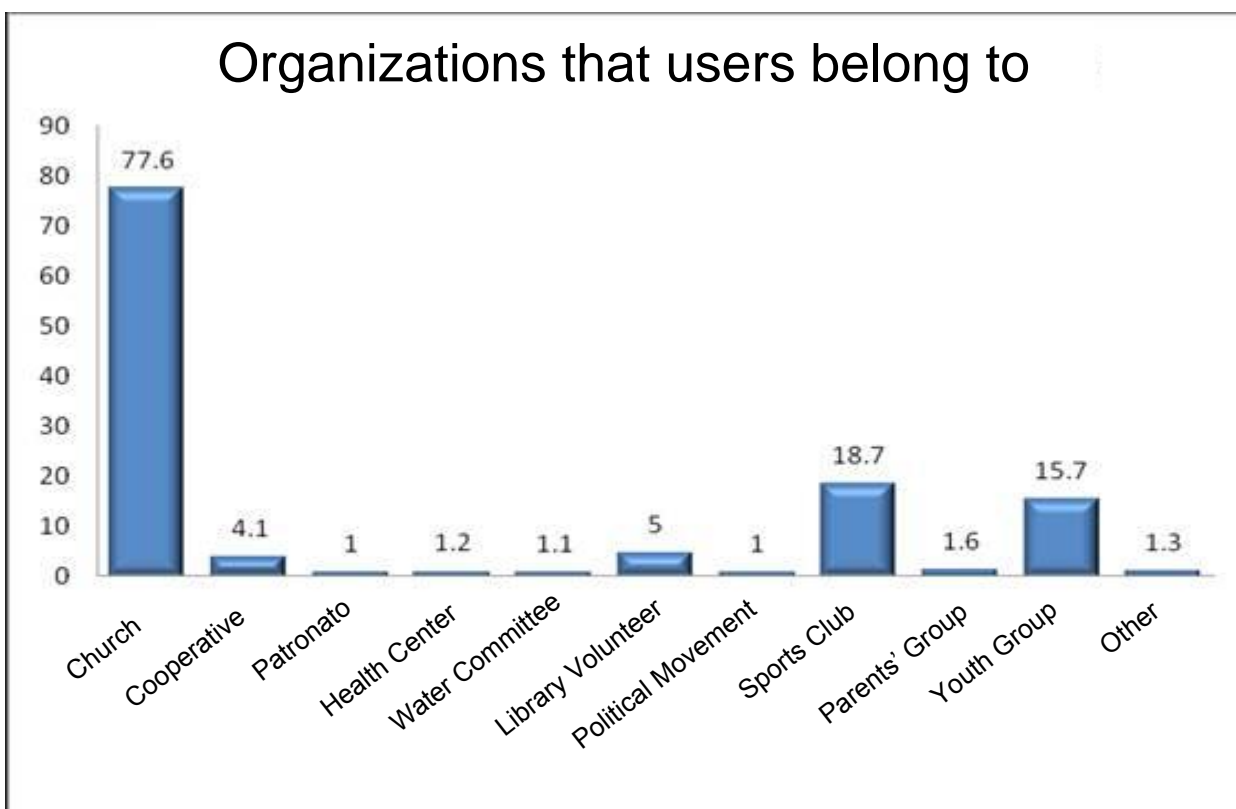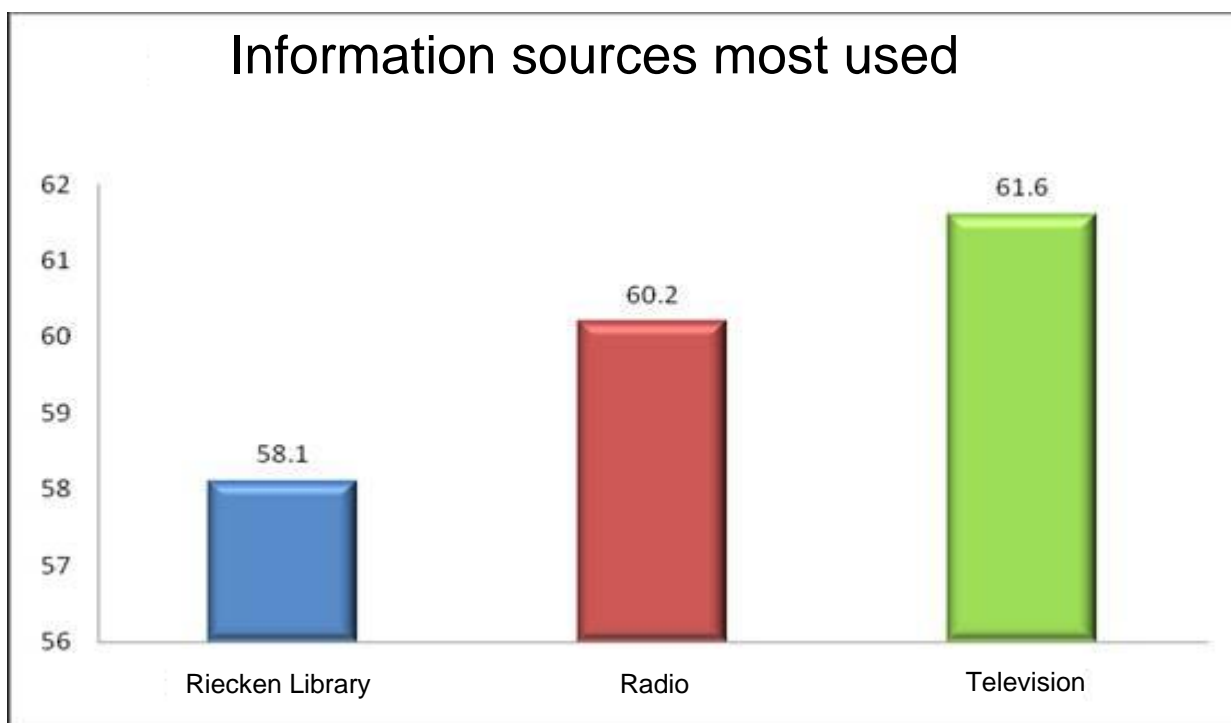| Category	Value
Never	4.3
< 10 minutes	29.1
10 – 20	24.1
20 – 30	24.3
30 – 45	7.0
> 45 minutes	11.2
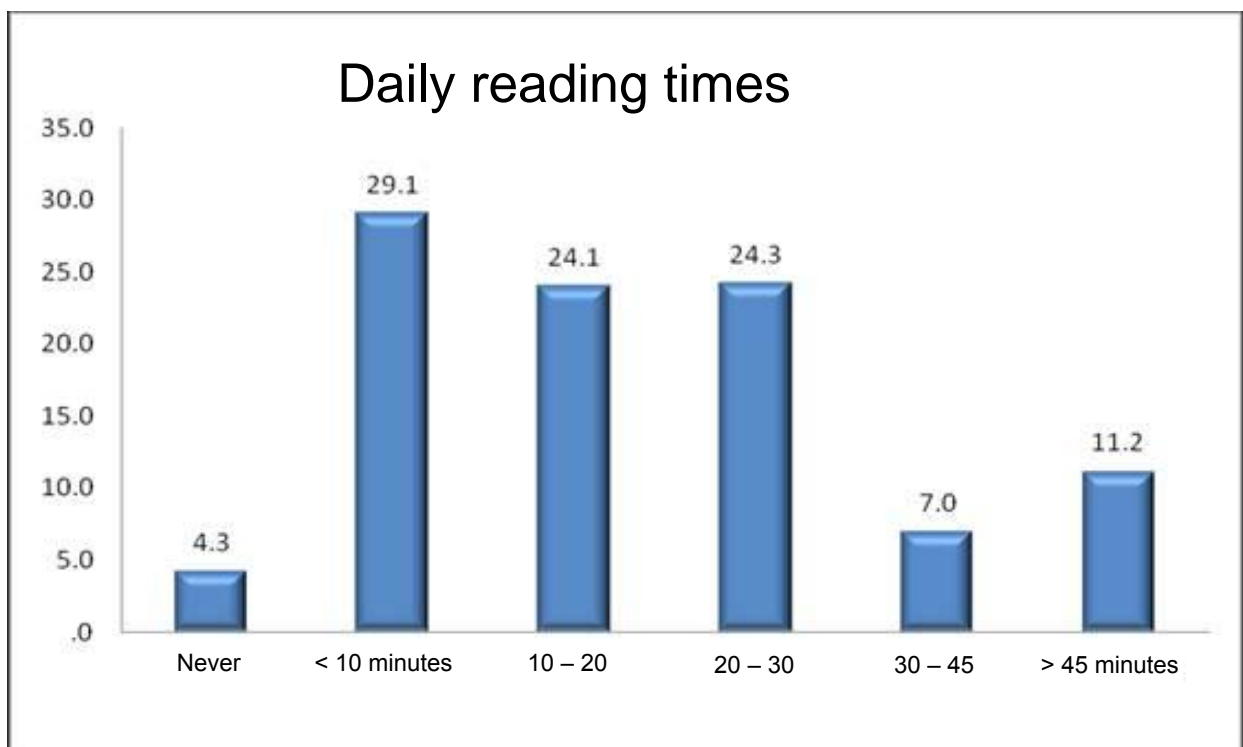
4. These data include a high level of reading textbooks. Reading online is relatively low, largely for lack of internet connectivity.

Users' reading preferences

Category	Value
Newspapers	55.3
Magazines	41.5
Literature	39.9
Texts	55.8
Internet	17.5
Others	4.8
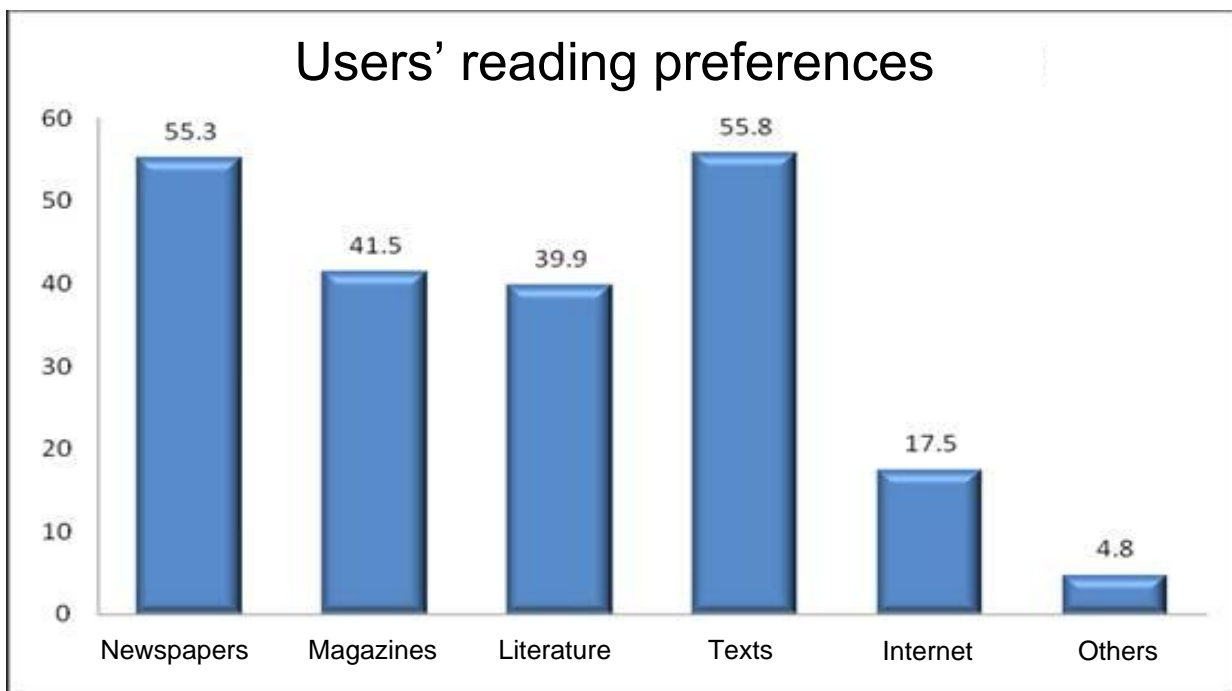
5. Church dominates as the institution with highest membership among library users. Youth and sports groups enjoy relatively low affiliation, and library volunteers constitute 5%.

Organizations that users belong to

Category	Value
Church	77.6
Cooperative	4.1
Patronato	1
Health Center	1.2
Water Committee	1.1
Library Volunteer	5
Political Movement	1
Sports Club	18.7
Parents' Group	1.6
Youth Group	15.7
Other	1.3

6. Libraries are the third most used source of information.

Information sources most used

	Value
Riecken Library	58.1
Radio	60.2
Television	61.6

12.   Libraries Surveyed

Libraries surveyed in Honduras

1. Cedros, Francisco Morazán
2. Concepción de María, Choluteca
3. Copán Ruinas, Copán
4. Dulce Nombre, Copán
5. El Porvenir, Francisco Morazán
6. Esquías, Comayagua
7. Flor del Campo, M.D.C.
8. Florida, Copán
9. Guacamaya, El Progreso, Yoro
10. Hoya Grande, Morocelí, El Paraíso
11. Jacaleapa, El Paraíso
12. La Libertad, Comayagua
13. Las Pilas, Sulaco, Yoro
14. Lejamaní, Comayagua
15. Minas de Oro, Comayagua
16. Nueva Ocotepeque, Ocotepeque
17. Rancho Grande, Comayagua
18. Rancho Grande, El Paraíso
19. San Antonio de Flores, El Paraíso
20. San Francisco de Cones, Sensentí, Ocotepeque
21. San Jerónimo, Comayagua
22. San Lucas, El Paraíso
23. San Luis, Comayagua
24. San Pedro, Copán
25. Santa Ana, La Paz
26. Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Cortés
27. Santa María, La Paz
28. Sulaco, Yoro
29. Tatumbla, Francisco Morazán
30. Yorito, Yoro

Libraries surveyed in Guatemala

1. Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
2. Cantón Xolsacmaljá, Totonicapán
3. Chiché, El Quiché
4. Huitán, Quetzaltenango
5. Rio Blanco, San Marcos
6. San Carlos Sija, Quetzaltenango
7. San Juan Chamelco, Alta Verapaz
8. San Juan La Laguna, Sololá
9. Zacualpa, El Quiché

13. Comparative statistics: Honduras Impact Studies of 2007 and 2012

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

HONDURAS IMPACT STUDIES OF 2007 AND 2012

	2007	2012
Attendance by gender: female	52%	56%
Attendance by gender: male	48%	44%
Almost daily library users	37%	25%
Users who do homework at the library	70%	66%
Users who come to read	62%	59%
Users who come to use computers	45%	36%
Students using the library	73%	76%
Primary school students	37%	38%
Monthly incomes below $100	42%	44%

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