



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

When planning for the 20th Anniversary of Riecken Community Libraries, no one foresaw what the year 2020 held in store for the libraries, for Central America, or for the rest of the world. As COVID-19 forced the libraries to temporarily close, the need for the access to information and services that the libraries provide to their communities became even more evident.

Working remotely, Riecken library staff worked tirelessly to provide critical health and safety updates to the communities, while locally, librarians and volunteers took on leadership roles in distribution of any available food, medicine and vital supplies, some applied by international organizations.

To make matters worse, the disaster presented by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in November completely flooded our La Libertad library in Guatemala, adding more challenges to an already difficult scenario. Volunteers from the community did their best to save books, computers and furniture, but the damage resulted in devastating losses.

While the circumstances our communities faced in 2020 were dire, our experiences there brought daily opportunities to witness their resilience – as they have met other challenges in the last two hundred years or more. Rural and remote communities learned long ago that it is necessary to work together for the common good, and to leverage assets and opportunities such as those represented by community libraries.

Despite these difficulties, the librarians and volunteer governing boards have found creative ways to provide valuable services to the communities, such as comprehensive protocols for safe re-opening of the libraries, businesses and other organizations, connectivity – which has been restored to about a third of the Riecken Library network, and of course, delivery or curbside pick-up programs for books and other educational materials.

We are hopeful that 2021 will be a year of rebuilding and growth for the library network, with new and expanded programs to meet the needs of our communities. We celebrate our 20 years of service in Central America, and are so proud of the resilient communities in which we work.



Bill Cartwright, President and Board Chair
Riecken Foundation





Key Riecken Library Statistics 2020

100,599

Visits in 2020 - 47% women/girls and 53% men/boys

34,592

Under 12 yrs=34,592 ; Between 13-22 yrs=36,513 ; 23+ yrs = 29,494

40,029

Visitors used technology in 2020. Just over 1,000 were new users.

22,056

Technology users regularly connected to the internet

2,613

Local community volunteers in 2020

\$115,686

Volunteer hours value = avg. of 3 hrs/week/volunteer @ \$1.23USD

Our Work in 2020

Focus on the Community



Programs underway in 2020 prior to the pandemic - and those able to restart later with creative modifications - were aligned with long-held objectives of Riecken Community Libraries.

- More than 2500 community members are helping to build healthier communities, after learning about nutrition and infant malnutrition through family reading programs.
- Online collaboration tools enabled staff to provide vital information to communities and distance classes were offered where Internet was available. The importance of digital literacy became even clearer.
- Opportunities for rural women, fundamental in the creation of social equality, were centered on leadership development, business skills, anti-violence and women's rights awareness, and financial literacy. 200 women in five communities were active participants.
- Youth leadership programs inspire a new generation of leaders with critical thinking skills, strong study habits and problem solving. Despite the library shutdown, 4,000 young people participated in youth activities, such as *Mentes Brillantes*, in small groups or online.
- Home delivery, curbside pick-up and outdoor reading rooms have been set up in some communities to provide access to books and materials to the public.



Perhaps the most important impact Riecken Community Libraries had in their communities in 2020 was the leadership support provided in the creation of local solutions to their local problems.



Riecken Community Libraries: A Community-Based Model

Community	Riecken Community Libraries	Local Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governing Board • Local Volunteers • Local Programming Initiatives • Fundraising Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners/Donations • Technical Advice • Training • Building Construction • Institutional Visits • International Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Librarian's Salary • Utilities • Land/Building • Legal Recognition for Local Management



Many rural libraries in developing countries perish early from neglect, and lack of on-going management, relevant programs, or sustained community involvement. The key to the sustainable success of the Riecken Community Library networks in Guatemala and Honduras is the on-going cooperation between:

- * An organized group of volunteer citizens who manage and lead construction, maintenance and staffing of the library, and are responsible for the ongoing success of activities and programming
- * The municipal government that provides land and funding, and supports the library's work as a recognized part of the community infrastructure
- * The Riecken Foundation, who guides the overall establishment of the library, providing direction, financial resources, ongoing training and programming.

Riecken Foundation Income/Expenses 2020

Income and Expenses	Not Audited
	2020
Income	
Grants/Individual Contributions	370,638
Other Income	351
TOTAL INCOME	\$370,989
Expenses	
Library Programming	6197
Librarian Travel	97
Library Boards of Directors	2931
Volunteers	-580
Training and Program Expenses	36,050
Follow-up and Monitoring	5107
Financial Expenses	2833
Building Expenses	26,019
Vehicle Expenses	1091
Office Expenses	10,543
Staff Salaries	147,110
Benefits (Local)	19,875
Professional Services	143,035
Operations Expenses	3,123
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$403,433

Total Revenues, Grants, Other Support	\$370,989
Total Expense	\$403,433

Percentage of Expenses by Category

Human Resources	15.11%	Programs	64.92%
Operations	7.25%	External Services	7.31%
Fundraising	5.42%		

With Gratitude to Our 2020 Partners

Friends of Riecken
American Library Association (ALA)
Global Giving/Crowdfunding
David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Study.com
Kissick Family Foundation
BFB Foundation
ReForma (ALA's Latino services &
resources committee)



"It's not very often that I see something as remarkable and transformational as your project. I really want to share that what [Riecken] library teams are doing in Honduras and in Guatemala is very very important. It sends a signal that... there is a friendly hand out there, and a sense that we are doing this for the common good of everybody. We are here to share and to find a way forward together. It really is important that we continue to support projects like these -- especially ones that are so closely linked with the fabric of the local community. I really commend you for this effort. It's very very impressive."

- Anne Dix, program director for USAID/ASHA (American Schools and Hospitals
Riecken Community Libraries funding partner



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