

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Despite an ongoing pandemic and the challenges it presented to our communities, Riecken Community Libraries began 2021 as a year of rebuilding and growth that would raise the spirits and hopes of our library users, volunteers, and staff alike.

Our key objectives were to:

- **Seek and leverage new opportunities** to solve local problems, beyond surviving COVID
- Fully **re-open and reconnect** with the world beyond our communities,
- Prepare for the **construction of new libraries** by the end of 2022 or early 2023, and,
- Effectively **support programs and equipment implementation** provided through the generosity of our funding partners.

We ended the year having made great progress on each of them with creativity and energy of Riecken staff, librarians, volunteers and our community members, and supplemented by generous financial gifts from some very special friends of Riecken.

An **impact survey**, in which over 850 Riecken library users, volunteers, and librarians participated, reinforced our long-held belief that the work of our libraries strengthens resilience in our communities and of the individuals who live in them.

We are deeply grateful to all who have shared and supported this belief as we continue our mission to change lives through access to information in Central America.



Bill Cartwright
President, Riecken Foundation





2021 by the Numbers

Honduras

107,708 visits were made to the 52 Honduras Riecken library network, supported by 3,468 local volunteers.

Guatemala

68,598 visits made in 2021 to the 11 libraries in the Riecken library network in Guatemala, including support of 1,079 volunteers.

176,306

Visits in 2021 - 54% women/girls and 46% men/boys

Under 13 yrs=60,656 ; Between 13-22 yrs=59,138 ; 23+ yrs = 56,512

75,287

Visitors used technology in 2021. 49% of new users were women.

42,263

Technology users regularly connected to the internet

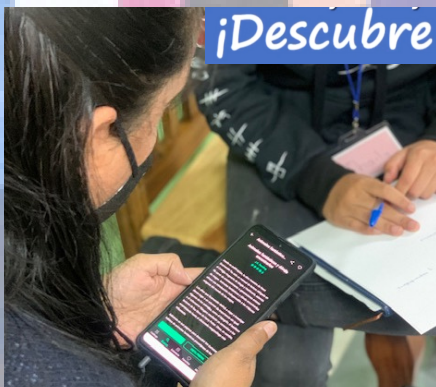
4547

Local community volunteers in 2020

\$201,341

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

2021 HIGHLIGHTS INITIATIVES AND IMPACTS



New Libraries

Funded through generous USAID/ASHA grants, four new libraries in Guatemala will be built to expand our network to 69 libraries. After extensive due diligence with eight communities vying for the opportunity to have a library, four were selected: Palestina, El Tejar, Chivarreto, and Catarina.

Opening new libraries has been a long-held goal by everyone who supports the life-changing impacts of our work. Creation of programs relevant to the library communities and fully trained librarians who can deliver them will be critical. We are grateful for generous gifts incremental to planned annual gifts that are providing training and programming for four years.

Major Repairs in Nine Libraries

In Guatemala, the Riecken libraries worked with Engineers Without Borders on badly needed remodeling and construction in nine existing libraries in Guatemala.

Technology Equipment

In Honduras, the delivery of technology equipment to 30 of the 53 libraries has been completed. The project continues with training of librarians and community members on basic use of technology, as well as its most efficient and creative uses.

[Watch a video about our USAID/ASHA partnership.](#)

Digitalization of Services

Riecken has joined the world of online book-lending, with the *Odilo* platform that allows our library users to borrow books through download from the library. Descúbrelo, or 'Discover It', is part of a comprehensive reading program with customizable content to facilitate access to works for users' age and interests, enables collaborative learning, creation of content, and participation in reading clubs or debates with authors.

Thanks to the generous support of USAID/ASHA, Study.com, and Friends of Riecken, three large librarian trainings for 51 librarians and reading promoters were held. 29 Community Libraries were trained to use *Odilo*, and more than 500 eBooks were downloaded in 2021.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS INITIATIVES AND IMPACTS

Impact Survey: Riecken Community Libraries Strengthen Resilience

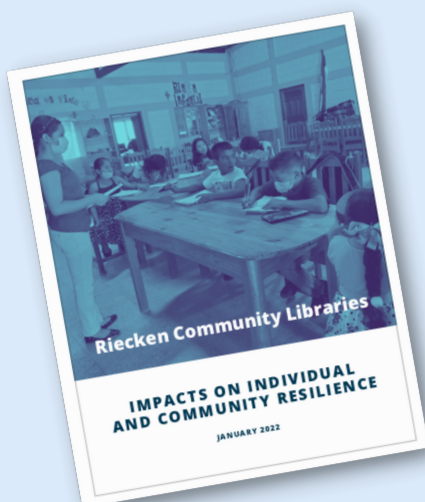
Despite a second year of pandemic-related challenges making life even more difficult in the region we serve, we are witness the strength of families in the communities on a daily basis. In the 2nd half of 2021, we created and admin-ed a survey with the goal of obtaining useful validation of our belief that Riecken libraries change lives in meaningful ways and an understanding of how.

Through enthusiastic promotion of this project by staff and librarians in 20 libraries, 32 librarians, 160 volunteers, and 665 library users completed an astounding 857 surveys online!

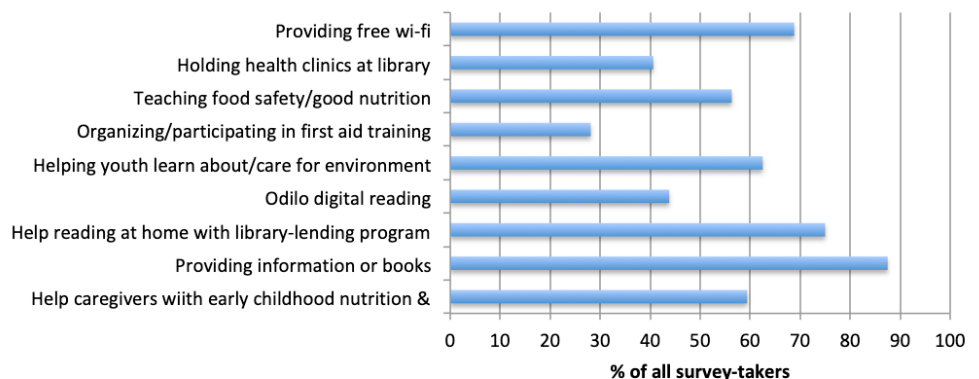
We heard from survey-takers that Riecken Community Libraries contribute to the well being of their communities, have helped families during the pandemic, helped individuals find employment, support community development and educational interests, and provide useful programs supporting local needs. Individuals who work in, volunteer for, and visit the libraries have become more engaged with communities and experience greater self-esteem.

- 90% of users surveyed said that their library had helped their community during the pandemic and 77% said it had helped their family. Access to free Wi-Fi was key.
- Users, librarians, and volunteers alike said that because of their library, they were more engaged in their community, had more friends, were more curious or felt they had better personal relationships – all factors in personal development.

Internet access was generally considered to be of high value to survey takers, especially during the pandemic. This critical resource drives many creative solutions to local challenges, and has been a lifeline to the world outside the local community. Our long-term plan to leverage digitalization of library programs and services to enhance and expand our reach, has been reinforced by these survey findings.



How does the library contribute to the wellbeing of the community?



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 2021 INCOME & EXPENSES

INCOME AND EXPENSES	Unaudited		
Revenues	2021	2020	2019
Revenues, Gains, Other Support	871,732	370,638	456,949
Restricted Contributions	45,500		
Other Revenue	361	351	430
Total Revenues, Gains, Other Support	917,593	370,989	457,379
Expenses	2021	2020	2019
New Libraries	43,080	-	-
Library Programming	372,188	6,197	8,651
Librarians		97	6,012
Library Governing Boards	4,911	2,931	16,440
Volunteers	11,025	-580	27,491
Other Staff Expenses	29,356	36,050	52,330
Monitoring and Evaluation	25,111	5,107	18,729
Financial Expenses	2,335	2,833	1,820
Building Expenses	25,939	26,019	25,055
Vehicle Expenses	2,730	1,092	1,216
Office Expenses	14,835	10,543	17,039
Salaries and Benefits	162,736	166,986	243,136
Professional Services	160,157	143,035	53,337
Miscellaneous Business Expenses	459	3,123	2,621
Total Expenses	854,862	403,433	473,878
Net Assets, End of Year	62,731	-32,443	-16,499





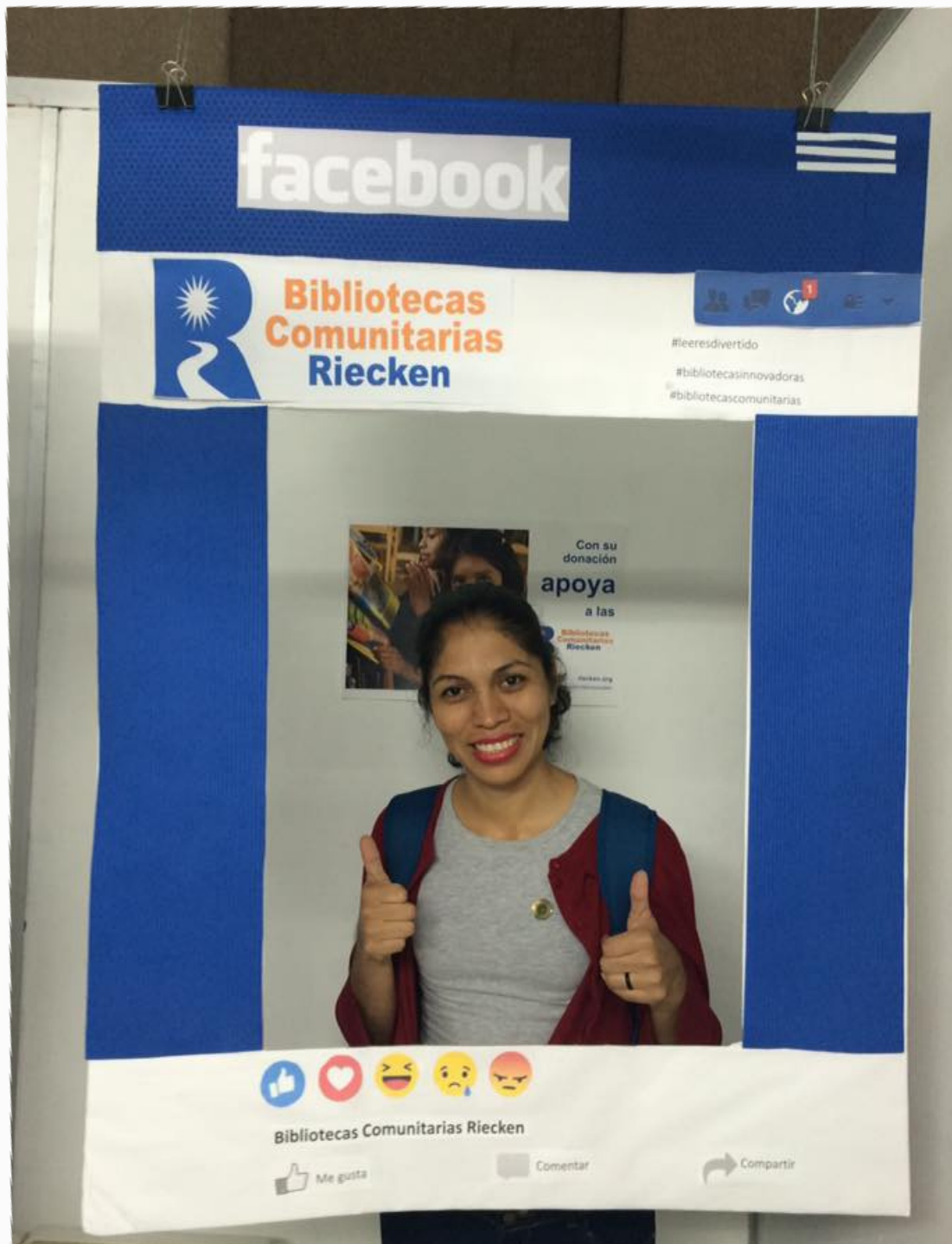
With Gratitude to Our 2021 Partners

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



"I have been going to the library since it opened in 2005 taking computer and digital story courses. I used it to acquire information to carry out tasks, to help me to hold meetings or attend them. For more than four years, I was the librarian in each workshop that Riecken Foundation gave. It has been useful in my life . . . I love my library and being a volunteer is an honor . . . Today, we have the dream: Internet and more in our library with the support of the new team. This has been a great blessing, and technology has become part of us with our library. Children, youth and adults help each other more now."

- *Daniely Yorleny Rostrán Rivas/Diamante de Sabiduría, Jacaleapa, Honduras*



US OFFICE

The Riecken Foundation
c/o T. Grover, ESG, Inc.
15 Roszel Road, Suite 10
Princeton, NJ 08540
USA

Tel: (650) 206-2539
info@rieckenlibraries.org

HONDURAS REGIONAL OFFICE

La Fundación Riecken
Colonia Florencia Oeste,
3ª calle, Bloque B, casa 3619
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Tel: +504-2243-4629
info@rieckenlibraries.org

GUATEMALA REGIONAL OFFICE

La Fundación Riecken
Condominio El Injertal,
casa 7, zona 1
San Felipe de Jesús (La Antigua
Guatemala), Guatemala

Tel: +502-7831-1859
info@rieckenlibraries.org