



READING VILLAGE 2013



annual report

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Let's Look Back

If I had to choose one word to describe 2013 for Reading Village it would be *community*.

We started the year with a new (our third) partner community, with 40 teens receiving full, four-year high school scholarships and leadership development training, reading to about 2,000 children. And at the end of the year we had selected our fourth partner community for 2014.

We also saw the beginnings of a new - albeit slightly less tangible - community of Reading Village program alumni. We're proud to report that 100% of the graduates were employed in professions such as teaching, bookkeeping and nursing and we're now working with this group to build a powerful network of changemakers who are interested in staying connected to one another and to Reading Village.

In 2013, we also celebrated the inaugurations of two first-ever community libraries (see page 9), initiated and driven by teens in our program in collaboration with community members. We always said the success of our work would be communities taking the initiative to build their own libraries. The fact that it has finally happened - twice over - is a testament to our impact and your contribution.

After seven years in operation, we're beginning to see the fruits of our labor and we are nothing short of impressed with the community that has grown up around our work. Together with our local staff, community leaders, parents, educators, scholars, and alumni we are building a culture of literacy in communities that didn't even have books.

Linda Smith, Founder & Executive Director of Reading Village





Empowering youth to eradicate illiteracy and lead their communities out of poverty.

At Reading Village we focus on literacy not only because it is an end in itself, but also because it is a means to more transformative ends like economic self-sufficiency, good health, and political voice. Children who are read to before they are in school and who continue to be read to as part of a daily routine throughout their early education will outperform their peers who did not have the same opportunities. Reading for fun helps build creative and critical thinking skills, vocabularies, and communication techniques - all of which are integral to staying and succeeding in school and in life.



GUATAMALA

In rural villages, where Reading Village works, just

1 in 10

teenagers reaches high school and far fewer ever graduate

Among Mayan communities, are classified as **poor**

72%

Indigenous Mayans - a historically marginalized population - account for of the nation's **14 million people**

51%

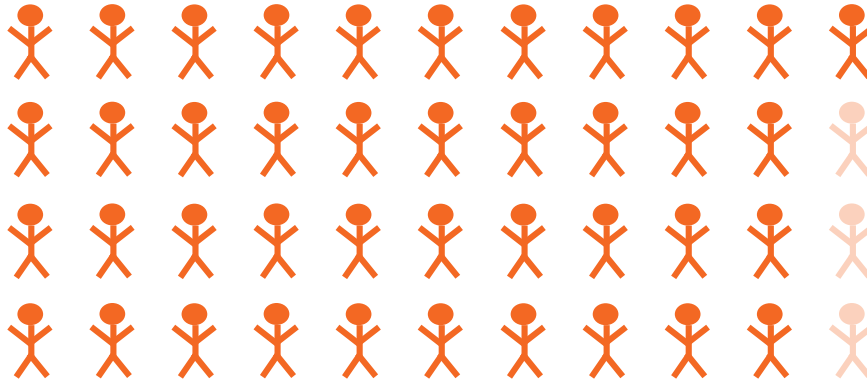
Almost **1/4** of Guatemalan women cannot read, and illiteracy rates are much higher in rural and **indigenous populations**



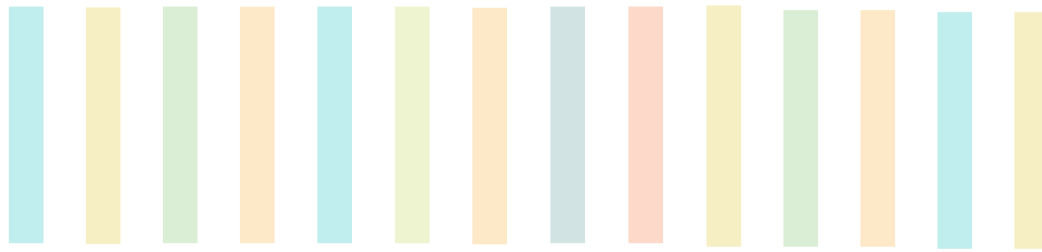
“ This program wakes up our minds
and puts us on a better path.

- JUANA ESTELA, READING VILLAGE SCHOLAR

41 TEENS

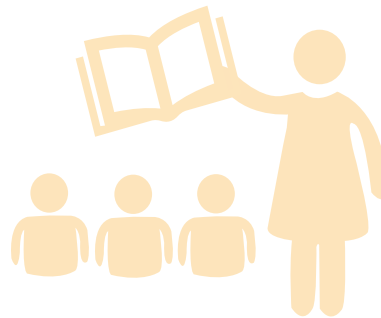


By the end of 2013 we had worked with a total of 41 teenagers. Each of these teenagers participated (or is participating) in our scholarship, leadership, and literacy program to alleviate poverty.



This year we more than doubled our income. Thanks to a robust network of generous donors, in 2013 we raised more than \$200,000 for our scholarship, leadership, and literacy programs.

2X

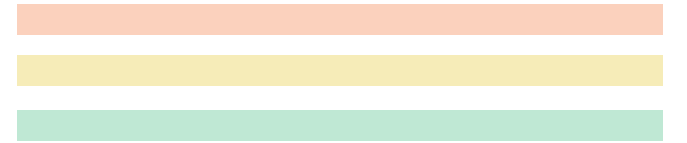


7 years

Reading Village began as little more than a dream many years ago. We officially launched our program in Guatemala in 2007 and have continued to evolve in response to community needs ever since. That's seven years of learning, improving, and creating change, and we've only just begun!

3 COMMUNITIES

Reading Village worked in three indigenous, rural communities: Concepcion, Los Morales, and Chuacruz. In these three towns, only 50% of adults are literate.



2 NEW LIBRARIES

Scholars in Los Morales & Concepcion organized local resources to open their communities' very first public libraries.

4,800 HOURS OF READING

In 2013 our 40 scholars spent more than 4,800 hours reading to young children. They are building the children's critical and creative thinking skills and their Spanish vocabulary so that they have a foundation for literacy - and success - in life!



One generation of leaders, empowering another generation of readers.

In marginalized Guatemalan communities, Reading Village provides financial support for indigenous teenagers to complete their high school educations – an accomplishment fewer than 10% of their peers achieve. By eliminating a primary barrier to education, we position this generation to bring home higher incomes than their parents. Recipients of this financial support participate in rigorous leadership training during their four years of education. Iterative cycles of action-based learning and reflection inspire the youth to see themselves not as victims of structural injustices but rather as critical actors capable of changing the social systems around them. These youth practice local leadership by spending three hours every week building literacy skills in young children in their communities. In this way, our teenagers invest in the literacy of the next generation while positioning themselves as agents of change.



“ Before I was young and fearful, I wasn’t confident, I was so insecure. But through my time in this program I have been transformed. I feel confident to speak in public, to participate, and to lead activities. This program has changed my life.

- SANTIAGO, READING VILLAGE SCHOLAR



We don't build libraries. We build leaders who build libraries.

In its effort to transform communities through literacy, Reading Village was never going to build infrastructure in the form of classrooms or libraries. If the town prioritized literacy enough to want a library, it would have to build one itself. We would plant seeds, invest in human capacity, facilitate connections, and cultivate potential. The rest was up to them.

In 2013 those dreams became a reality. Cohorts of students in Concepcion and Chuacruz rallied together to open libraries in their respective communities. In Concepcion, the town donated a spare room in a public building. Parents provided shelves and paint and brooms and together the teens led their community to revitalize a small space that now houses hundreds of books. In Chuacruz, the school principal gave the teens keys to a vacant classroom which now houses books for the school and the community at large.

In both communities, those libraries have become central to the culture of literacy Reading Village is building through our scholars. Children run to the libraries at recess, they do their homework there after school, they read with our scholars there on the weekends. These libraries - built by our scholars - are gathering places across generations and nourishment for young minds.



Linda Smith - *Founder & Executive Director*

Linda has a background in education, public health, business, solar energy, and community sustainability, in both for-profit and non-profit sectors. She has been connected to Guatemala since 1988 and founded Reading Village in 2007.

Debra Robbins - *Board President*

Debra is the Associate Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, where she has served the largest Reform synagogue in the state of Texas for 21 years. Debra also supports the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Jewish Family Service.

Martin Kruger - *Board Treasurer*

Martin is the Chief Operating Officer at Earth Island/Follow Your Heart, a Los Angeles manufacturer of natural/organic, vegetarian/vegan food products. Martin has led Reading Village's financial management and strategic planning process since 2008.

Aaron Smith - *Board Secretary*

Aaron is a Staffing Researcher at Google, where he uses data to analyze, improve and scale talent acquisition workflows. Analyst, listener, problem-solver and social entrepreneur, he enjoys working with cross-functional teams toward a common goal.

Larry Dressler - *Founding Board Member*

For over 25 years Larry Dressler has helped people mobilize their collective insight, commitment, and energy to make a positive difference in their communities. Larry is a facilitator of high-stakes conversations around the world.

Julia Young - *Board Member*

Julia Young is a co-founder of Facilitate.com, developer of collaboration tools for innovative thinking and decision making. As a facilitator and process consultant, Julia explores how collaborative and innovative thinking can augment team effectiveness.

Jan Snooks - *Board Member*

Jan Snooks has worked in education for nearly 40 years. In that time, she has been an elementary teacher, Special Education teacher, school librarian, counselor, IT consultant, even school secretary. Jan brings an intense creativity and education expertise to our team.

TOTAL INCOME \$222,479

INDIVIDUAL
INCOME

\$185,821

FOUNDATION
INCOME

\$20,660

IN-KIND
DONATIONS

\$11,998

CORPORATE
INCOME

\$4,000

TOTAL EXPENSES \$154,009

PROGRAM
SERVICES

\$104,002

FUNDRAISING

\$45,584

MANAGEMENT
& GENERAL

\$4,423



“The children have learned so much more, they take more in, they have more fun, and they don't get bored. We've learned to lead activities that make them feel comfortable, so that they are free to participate, to ask questions, to raise their hands and say 'Yes I can.'

- ANA, READING VILLAGE SCHOLAR

READING VILLAGE 2013



www.readingvillage.org