

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

READING VILLAGE



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OUR MISSION

Working in indigenous Guatemalan communities, Reading Village empowers youth to eradicate illiteracy and lead their communities out of poverty.



A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

READING VILLAGE

IS DEEPLY PASSIONATE ABOUT IT'S MISSION.

From its inception Reading Village has been an organization deeply passionate about its mission. We are committed to working alongside partner communities to ignite their own potential while paying sober attention to actual results and ideas that emerge from the communities themselves. This past year was no exception.

In 2014, Ana Palax stepped into her potential as she became the first alumna we hired and the first Community Facilitator in the village of Chuiquel, our fourth and newest partner community. This is a milestone of which we are very proud. We always knew that the best Community Facilitators (employees who teach and mentor youth leaders in our program) would be graduates from the program itself.

By growing to a fourth community we added more teen scholars/reading promoters and more children who benefit from their reading activities. And with another year came more alumni. But we didn't just go broader, we also went deeper. Upon reflection we realized that empathy is a key ingredient in our success. Research show that students involved in programs designed to increase empathy have stronger scores in higher-order reading comprehension than comparison students. Other studies have confirmed that training in empathy enhances both critical skills and creative thinking.

And the results are starting to show. For the first time, we measured the reading comprehension rates of the sixth-graders in each of the four communities. In the community in which we'd

partnered the longest (6 years), the sixth-graders have had a reading promoter in their classroom for every year of their elementary school experience. We are proud to report that the students in this community have a higher comprehension level, read more time each week out of school for pleasure and have a greater love of reading.

In 2014 we also attempted to build on that love of reading by encouraging a daily habit of reading among local elementary students. Unfortunately, our pilot program was unsuccessful but in evaluating its short comings our teens were able to identify an even better strategy. In 2015 we will create a neighborhood book distribution system to further support independent reading among local children.

Brilliant ideas are also coming from program alumni. One graduate expressed a desire to open a school in his community – one in which children really learned. We took his idea to the highly respected Asturias Academy, resulting in the creation of three-year fellowships to make master teachers and administrators out of two of our alumni, to bring higher quality education to our partner communities.

I'm proud of our core values, that we live by them and that they produce real results.



Linda Smith
Founder and Executive Director

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



EDUCATION

IN THEIR WORDS:

"It's for lack of money to pay for school. The truth is, without the scholarship from Reading Village I would be working in the fields. But today I have a degree in bookkeeping. I earned it! I think now I have better possibilities for my life." - Juan Carlos, Reading Village Graduate

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN EDUCATION:

Education is the cornerstone of community development. The research shows that education benefits maternal health, household income, and child mortality. Educated girls will marry later, delay having children, and will space pregnancies to improve health outcomes. Furthermore, every year of education increases an individual's earning potential by 10%, making it an integral means to prosperity in low income communities.

In rural, indigenous communities where only 10% of children reach high school, we provide scholarships for Mayan teenagers who would not otherwise have the chance to finish their educations. In 2014 Reading Village added an additional community partner to bring the total to four. We provided scholarships for 50 youth and graduated eight more students. We also launched a rigorous monitoring and evaluation program to test a theory that increased literacy will enable elementary school students to stay in school longer. We are proud of our graduation rates and eager to measure the impact that our program can have at other levels of the Guatemalan education system.



8 NEW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

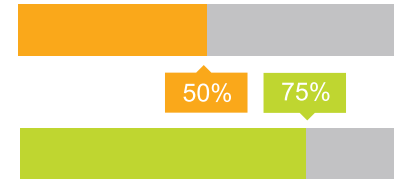


50 NEW HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS



↑42

TOTAL GRADUATES REPRESENTING
A GROWING AREA OF IMPACT



50% OF OUR ALUMNI ARE
STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL
& 75% ARE EMPLOYED

LEADERSHIP

IN THEIR WORDS:

"I want to be a proud leader and improve my community. I'm already known in the community. I've been to district-wide forums representing my school, addressing issues like education and citizen safety. I've taken leadership in the opening of our community's first-ever public library. I hope it is fruitful now and for generations to come." - Erick, Reading Village Graduate

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN LEADERSHIP:

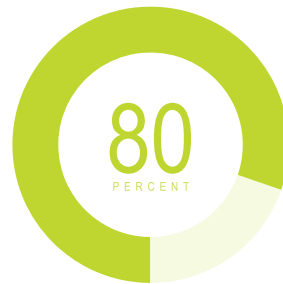
Local leadership is a key indicator of a community's development. Reading Village's focus on education and literacy is a means to foster self-determining communities where children have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. To that end, all of our youth leaders participate in rigorous and routine leadership training throughout the duration of their participation in our program.

In 2014, we expanded this support to connect our alumni with opportunities for university scholarships, fellowships, job openings and support for creating new ventures. Our goal is to help these young adults navigate the transition from high school student to professional or university student or entrepreneur. Two of our graduates are in a fellowship to prepare them to open a school in their community. Another wishes to expand her family's school supplies store. Many more desire to continue their studies at the university level. These are the wishes we would like to make come true.





2 OF OUR GRADUATES ARE
TEACHING FELLOWS TRAINING
TO OPEN A SCHOOL IN THEIR
OWN COMMUNITY



80% OF YOUTH LEADERS ARE
IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
AT SCHOOL, CHURCH, OR IN
LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS



60% OF TEACHERS ARE
EAGERLY LEARNING FROM OUR
TEENS AND IMPLEMENTING
THEIR READING TECHNIQUES

LITERACY

IN THEIR WORDS:

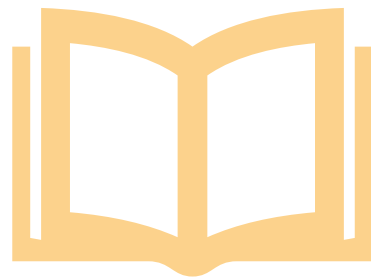
“One book is not enough anymore. After I finish reading the children always ask for more stories. They miss me when I am away and demand to know where I was when I return. They always greet me with hugs, and there is no better feeling!” - Hendri, Reading Village Youth Leader

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN LITERACY:

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. In Kaqchikel-speaking communities where we work, Spanish is a second language and 50% of adults are illiterate. Being able to navigate the Spanish-speaking world is crucial to one's ability to do well in school, find work and advocate for him or herself.

Reading Village is committed to promoting literacy among young generations of children in the communities where we work. To that end, all of our youth leaders spend at least three hours every week practicing their leadership skills by leading literacy programs for young children. Our teens have been successful instilling a love of reading in the children that they work with, and we're eager to refine our strategy to help children create a habit of reading every single day. In 2014 we evaluated the impact of our youth leaders' work across all four communities and are proud to report that the communities in which we have worked the longest show the highest rates of comprehension, daily reading, and love of reading.





2 COMMUNITY LIBRARIES HAVE
BEEN OPENED AND TEENS ARE
LENDING BOOKS DAILY TO
PROMOTE A HABIT OF READING

2110
TWO-THOUSAND
ONE HUNDRED TEN
CHILDREN REACHED

IN 2014, 2,110 CHILDREN BENEFITED
FROM INNOVATIVE LITERACY
ACTIVITIES LED BY OUR YOUTH
LEADERS

THE IMPACT OF YOUR INVESTMENT



YOUR IMPACT

IMPACT PER DOLLAR

In 2014, the entire organization budget from paper clips to scholarships was \$206,171. Divided by child read to (2,110), this equals just \$98 per child per year. For that small investment, every child receives 60 hours of reading activities per year.

The ultimate cost was \$1.63 per child per hour of reading activity. That \$1.63 also funded 50 high school scholarships, along with mentoring, leadership training, retreats and educational excursions for our youth leaders - activities that transformed these youth as individuals and also their communities at large.

COMMUNITY + FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Earth Island
Estelle Friedman Gervis Family Foundation
Dewan Foundation
GlobalGiving
Kathryn Conway Preyer Fund
Koebel Family Foundation
Lake Atitlan Libraries
Lewisville Rotary Club
MacEwan University Global Education Fund
Microsoft YouthSpark
PEG Partners
Salesforce.com
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
StepWare
The April Fund
The Good People Fund
Wise School

\$1.63

PER HOUR OF READING PER CHILD





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