

## Un Mundo Library/Literacy Program

**Mission:** Promote dignity, community, and self-sufficiency by working with marginalized populations in rural Honduras on a long-term basis, facilitating access to health care, education, and livable wages.

**Vision.** Our comprehensive approach to grass-roots community development promotes local traditions, encourages community leadership, and emphasizes collective ownership. Un Mundo (UM) seeks to improve the present and future socio-economic conditions and the quality of life of the families in rural Honduras who are living in extreme poverty by providing them with tools and resources to be self-sufficient and unified.

**History.** Our work began from spontaneous relief actions after Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras in 1998 and we grew to gain 501c3 non-profit status in 2001. Initially, the organization was sustained by volunteers from around the world. In 2007 UM hired its first permanent staff which provided a consistent presence and enabled us to expand our reach. In 2010, UM moved towards further localizing its efforts – by transitioning from foreign volunteers and staff to projects run completely by local Honduran leaders. Now, the local communities carry out the majority of the work. The expectation is that in a few years the communities in the Cangrejales Valley will be fully managing their efforts to transform their communities and assist other regions, allowing Un Mundo to fully realize its vision of self-sufficiency by local Hondurans.

**Theory of change.** Un Mundo's approach is based on strengthening and developing rural communities to set their own goals and organize themselves to accomplish their collective needs. It is a truly bottom-up process where local communities assess and prioritize their needs and develop community based solutions to address health care, education and sustainable livelihoods. Un Mundo acts largely as a resource for these community projects, providing support and structure in technical areas, training, community organizing and resource development.

Following are organizational strategic goals for regional growth developed by the local staff:

1. Ensure institutional representation and governance that embodies and models our mission and values.
2. Obtain the necessary resources to complete our current projects and expand our reach to other communities in the region.
3. Strengthen organizational capacity to make a larger impact and expand our reach.

**Current Activities.** Our present strategies include a regional focus with a holistic approach to solutions:

**1. Increase the educational and literacy levels and job readiness throughout the Cangrejales region.**

Regional Library – a large, ecologically designed library in the village of El Pital with books, story time, literacy and writing classes, a computer lab, and a network of six satellite libraries throughout the region.

Mobile Library –Bibliobandido, a mobile library, travels by burro to lend books and increase literacy of families in the isolated, remote rural villages.

New Horizons – a youth leadership training program that provides leadership skills, job readiness skills and internship opportunities for graduates of local high schools.

## **2. Improve public and environmental health throughout the Cangrejal Region.**

Water Connections – support local communities to develop a sustainable community-run potable water system that includes composting toilets, rainwater drainage and water reusal systems.

## **3. Increase the equality and access to opportunity, development and social service to the most marginalized populations in the region, particularly women and individuals with disabilities.**

Special Needs/Parents Network – access to quality special education and rehabilitation for children with disabilities and support of a strong parents' advocacy network.

Viva La Partera (Long-Live the Midwifell) – training and support of network of midwives to provide pre- and post-natal care for mothers and children.

**Library/Literacy Program Purpose.** Developed in response to needs identified by community members, the Literacy/Library Program consists of a regional library and rural bookmobile program that promotes literacy, reading and writing in the Cangrejal Valley where access to such sources of information is extremely limited. The regional library will be located in the community of El Pital and will cultivate literacy through a diverse collection of books, online and digital media resources, dynamic programming including literacy and writing classes, story time, and a computer lab. The mobile library travels by burro to lend books and increase literacy of families in the isolated, remote isolated rural villages.



### **Need Statement – Why Honduras?**

**High Poverty Rate.** In Honduras about 65% of the population lives in poverty, which is even greater in rural areas, where as many as 90-95% of people live on less than \$2 a day. As noted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 86% of Honduras's poor population lives in rural regions. Un Mundo chose to work in this region because of the almost complete lack of resources available to families living in this area.

**High Illiteracy Rates.** In El Pital, only three in five residents have a primary school education. One in five has never received any formal education at all. Over 40% of children entering school never make it to the fifth grade and as a result, 25% of Hondurans cannot read or write.

**Lack of Books and Libraries.** In an Un Mundo needs assessment, nearly every teacher in the region reported that access to books was the highest need of the school. Aside from the one-shelf “libraries” in just two private schools, there are virtually no opportunities for children to develop their reading abilities or for adults to learn to read. Additionally, with inadequate lighting and overcrowded home conditions, most students don't have a place at home to study.

**Lack of Space.** The current library exists in a small 10x 10 resource room with no adequate room for expansion. With three book shelves and one large table, the students have already outgrown this temporary space. Almost all students have surpassed their parents in education and

parents are stumped how to help their children academically. Funding does not exist for a library or tutoring staff.

**Constituency served.** More than 8,000 people live in the Cangrejal Valley region in Honduras.

### **Library/Literacy Program Description**

**Regional Library.** More than simply a room where books are kept, the regional library will be located next to the public elementary school in El Pital. Land has been donated, floor plans approved, and construction will begin as soon as funding is obtained. It will be constructed with local and recycled materials, passive solar energy, and rainwater collection. Currently, the library is temporarily housed in a small 10x10 resource room in the local high school until a new expanded library is built. Once built, it will support the community and a network of satellite libraries throughout the region with:

- Open hours that accommodate the working schedule of students, adults and seniors
- Afterschool drop-in space for students that provides tutoring, resources, and a comfortable and safe setting where students can study away from the distractions of their often crowded homes, many which do not have electricity.
- Active programming to promote literacy (e.g., adult literacy classes, computer classes, bookmaking workshops, visiting writers, story time, etc.)
- Access for teachers and students to education resources that do not exist in public schools in the region.
- New methods of teaching/learning in workshops and in-class assistance for teachers.



**Bibliobandido Mobile Library.** In 2010, the community launched the mobile library, known as Bibliobandido, making monthly visits by burro to 10 of the most remote schools of the Cangrejal Valley and led by a team of 15 youth and adult volunteers from the community of El Pital. In this program, isolated villagers have access to books, literacy programs, and story-time, a previously inaccessible resource.

**Locally Produced Books.** Wanting to encourage the youths in the village to not wait for books to arrive but instead to also produce their own, Un Mundo volunteers taught locals how to write and make their own books. The pilot program produced 62 locally made books and continues to be a source of locally produced books.

**Adult Literacy.** Un Mundo is cultivating a partnership with the municipality of La Ceiba and Educatodos to bring adult literacy and primary education courses to the Cangrejal Valley, which will be taught by local residents. Additionally, adult computer classes will be offered in the main library site in El Pital.

**Training.** Un Mundo provides annual trainings to local teachers and library board members on leading story-time, book-making, working with children and developing innovative literacy programs. In addition, Un Mundo provides training to the library board on multi-stream fundraising efforts with the objective that they will be able to financially sustain the library themselves.

## **Accomplishments to Date**

- Educational needs assessment conducted by Un Mundo (2009)
- Library Board formed from local residents (2009)
- Monthly story time led by volunteers (2009 – present)
- Library Board trained on Riecken Foundation modern library model (2009)
- Library Board developed a strategic plan for library (2009)
- Created and launched Bibliobandido to remote villages (2010 – present)
- Land donated for new library (2012)
- Drew up architectural plans for regional library (2013-2014)
- Opened small temporary space inside local high school until new building is completed (2014)

## **Literacy/Library Program Goals and Objectives 2-15-2020**

### **Goal 1: Increase literacy rates throughout the Cangrejal Valley by 12% and extend access to information and learning resources for 5,000 people in the region.**

*Objective 1A:* Design and construct a regional library and 6 satellite spaces for learning and literacy throughout the Cangrejal Valley

*Objective 1B:* Hold weekly story hour for a minimum of 10 children (K-6) including a monthly parents reading circle, to promote and teach parents how to use library resources to educate their children

*Objective 1C:* Offer reading and writing courses for adults through the Educadores program in 7 communities through the Valley, enrolling and improving the reading level of 30 adults each year

*Objective 1D:* Extend literacy trainings, activities, and resources to the 10 most isolated schools through a mobile library and story-telling program (Bibliobandido) reaching 300 students and 12 teachers a year.

### **Evaluation of Goal 1:**

- Monitor literacy rates on an annual basis through school data
- Implement community literacy surveys in 2015 and 2020
- Measure participation and reach through attendance and hours of services, as well as number of users in regional library and satellite libraries.
- Compile primary school and adult education graduation rates and numbers

### **Goal 2: Develop a strong network of 30 literacy promoters in 7 communities in the region.**

*Objective 2A:* Organize, incorporate, and build capacity in local literacy leaders through the development of a Library Board that sustains regional literacy efforts

*Objective 2B:* Recruit, train and provide guidance to satellite teams in each small community

*Objective 2C:* Support library staff and volunteers to develop a book-making press by 2020

*Objective 2D:* Organize an annual convening to facilitate conversation around literacy and to conduct trainings for other libraries or educators

*Objective 2E:* Conduct one book-making training for Library and Un Mundo staff, who in turn will hold 10 book-making workshops for the communities in the region.

### Evaluation of Goal 2:

- Measure number of local community members who actively participate in the network and workshops
- Tabulate amount of funds raised each year by the Library Board
- Conduct surveys and evaluations of promoters and literacy leaders
- Evaluate knowledge of literacy promoters through annual surveys regarding literacy topics and facilitation skills

### **Upcoming Plans**

**Build the regional library in El Pital.** The library is currently located in a small 10 x 10 resource room but land has been donated and floor plans approved for a larger, standalone library. Construction will begin once sufficient funding has been obtained using the majority of materials locally and reducing the project's environmental impact through passive solar energy, composting toilets and collection of rainwater to form part of a locally built water system. The library will be equipped and furnished with books, shelving, tables, and chairs.

**Expand mobile library reach and frequency.** Each of the remote communities and schools will be visited monthly by El Bibliobandido and his team to support teachers and local residents to promote and develop improved ability and habits around literacy, through creative educational teaching methods.

### **What Makes Un Mundo Unique?**

- There is no other project in the Cangrejal Valley working with the community to expand literacy rates, build a regional library, and reach remote villagers.
- It is based on the **20+ year relationship** between the founders of Un Mundo and the people of Cangrejal Valley.
- The program addresses **systemic change on multiple levels within the community**: personal, family, community and regional sustainability, while keeping education, literacy, health, clean water and sustainable development of the people as the focus.
- Un Mundo operates on the theory that systemic change is more effective when it is locally led by local communities with innovative **bottom-up solutions** that impact equity and provide solutions that truly address the issues needed to overcome chronic poverty.
- Commitment to **sustainability of Un Mundo** by Hondurans. Through transfer of skills and staff training, the local Honduran staff will become self-sufficient in training, implementing and evaluating programs, operating a library and literacy programs, and developing a diversified fundraising plan.

**Evaluation Plan. Goals and Objectives.** Attainment of indicators for goals and objectives is a measure of success.

*Follow up Survey.* We follow up extensively with families and the Library Board to measure indicators such as knowledge attained in trainings, completion of central library, number of books checked out, number of visits by Bibliobandido, increase in literacy rates and school attendance. *Board and Staff* examine survey results, program strengths/weaknesses, and make adjustments.

**How we will disseminate results.** Results are summarized in final reports to funders, articles in our newsletter, emails to stakeholders and Facebook posts. Outcomes will be shared with the

community in a town hall assembly and through community bulletin.

**Collaborators.** Un Mundo and the local Library Board collaborate with the following groups on the Library/Literacy program: REV – provides training, program support and development assistance to Bibliobandido. Break Arts – supports literacy program with artist referrals who emphasize art as a social practice while expanding notions of literacy. Riecken Foundation – provides resources, didactic materials, trainers, training materials and a model for community run library development. Public schools – immensely supportive with resources, space and personnel. Local municipality and Educadores – help with adult literacy project.

**Organizational Capacity:** Un Mundo has had a presence in the Cangrejal River Valley for over 20 years, organically grown into a multicultural movement that gives voice to hundreds of marginalized people through the combined efforts of advocates from around the globe. Un Mundo is currently governed by a five member Board of Directors and led by the Executive Director, Project Director, a six person local Honduran program staff, and over 100 local volunteers. UN Mundo is a 501c3 non-profit organization in the United States and the local group just recently received certification from the government of Honduras.