

ANNUAL REPORT



2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of Riecken,

Since the first Riecken Community Library opened its doors we have witnessed those we serve faced by challenges that compel us to strive to foster community, citizenship, and participation. Each library that has come online since 2000 has focused on providing concrete and actionable responses to meet the unique needs of each community, with new opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development not offered to them elsewhere.

In 2024 we saw the Riecken Library network grow to 66 libraries in Guatemala and Honduras—bringing free access to information, knowledge, reading, technology and skills development, and dynamic programming to even more communities. Each one is eager to leverage the potential of such resources and we have witnessed the transformative power of libraries in communities like these.

Our small libraries have a significant impact on the development of their communities and the individuals who live in them. We know that they have the potential to discourage migration to other countries by providing at least some chance to overcome poverty and social insecurity. The libraries strengthen youth leadership with enhanced informational and organizational skills, and each new library opened in 2024 exposes new library visitors to the possibilities of a brighter future than they had imagined before.

We are deeply grateful for the financial support you provided in 2024, that has enabled our network to welcome new libraries for the first time in 10 years. Read on to learn why we are so encouraged by your belief in our mission!

With gratitude,



Bill Cartwright
President, Riecken Foundation



Board of Directors

Allen Andersson

Dan Bradbury

Liz Davila

Jonathon Hofius

Divanny Lamas

Adrian Ridner

Jim Wilson

William Cartwright
President



2024

By the Numbers

Honduras

107,225 visits were made to the 52 libraries in the Honduras Riecken library network, supported by 4,226 local volunteers.

Guatemala

199,981 visits were made to the 14 libraries in the Guatemala Riecken library network, including support of 1,486 volunteers.

307,116

Visitors in 2024 - 53% women/girls and 47% men/boys
Under 13 yrs=130,465; Between 13-22 yrs=92,0081; 23+ yrs = 84,570

119,412

Visitors used technology in 2024. 63% of new users were women.

71,460

Technology users regularly connected to the internet.

5,712

Local community volunteers in 2024 worked 239,894 hours.

\$295,070

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

Maintaining Healthy Libraries



Riecken Foundation understands that community libraries must be in “good working order” to provide quality services. In 2024 we focused on improving the cultural infrastructure and equipment of the various libraries within our network, prioritizing those where local boards and governments are collaborating for the benefit of the community.

In 2024 the support of several Friends of Riecken donors was essential for the improvement and renovation of buildings, as well as for updating resources and equipment. Likewise, the community’s contributions and the management efforts of the library boards have been crucial to maintaining the health of the network.



In 2024, 48 Riecken Community Libraries renewed their *entire* bibliographic collections. The foundation acquired over 48,000 books with financial support from USAID/ASHA, American Schools and Hospitals Abroad. Distribution of these valuable resources will take place in 2025 by Riecken staff and volunteers who will visit libraries to deliver them.

Growing Our Library Network



The Riecken Community Library network continued to grow in 2024, with generous support from USAID/ASHA. After last year's successful opening of a new library in San Juan Chamelco, three new libraries were opened with appropriate fanfare in Guatemala: El Tejar (Chimaltenango), Palestina de los Altos (Quetzaltenango), and Catarina (San Marcos).

Local excitement grew throughout the process of building and opening each new library: from community applications consideration to final site selections, contracts and agreements, engineering plans, permits, and construction, training of library boards and librarians, and finally, opening doors to the community.



"This project is proof of what we can achieve when we work together. This building is much more than a library; it is a center of education, community, and hope for everyone, especially for the children of El Tejar, and with your efforts it will be for many years to come!"

Adrian Ridner
Board Member, El Tejar Inauguration



DISCOVER IT! (*DESCÚBRELO*): THE DIGITAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Libraries continue to make significant strides in digitizing their services, especially regarding access to information resources and the reading of books.

Three years ago, Ódilo, an online book borrowing platform was launched within the library network, allowing users of Riecken libraries to borrow books by downloading them. Discover It! (the name for the Riecken program using the platform, operates across multiple devices and platforms, with or without internet connectivity.

The *Discover It!* platform is part of Riecken Foundation's comprehensive learning plan, *Bright Minds*, which includes content that each educational center can customize according to its needs.

In 2024, thanks to this initiative and new technological equipment, 306 new users joined the digital library, bringing the total to 1,009 digital users. All of them can enjoy free access to thousands of titles in a wide variety of formats—books, audio books, podcasts, magazines, videos, movies, and much more—and can participate in different activities such as reading clubs or discussions.

The content of *Discover It!* is available in Spanish, with some books in English. Titles are organized by stages and educational levels to facilitate users' access to the works most suitable and interesting for their age.

Moreover, thanks to the technology of the platform, users can receive reports tracking their reading improvement, as well as interact with others.



RINCON DE TRANSPARENCIA

PROGRAMAS:

MENTES BRILLANTES

HORA DE CUENTO

ESTIMULACION TEMPRANA

ESTIMULACION A LECTURA

JUVENIL
TECNOLOGÍA

MONTO DE RECURSOS:

PAGO A BIBLIOTECARIA
Q.10431.00

MATERIALES DE LIBRERÍA
Q.3.126.00

REFACION
Q.7500

700 ARTE DEPORTE
MUSICA
MORADA



STRONGER LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

In 2024, great effort was focused on strengthening support mechanisms for Riecken libraries, promoting clear and respectful communication processes with leadership and for seeking feedback. Travel tours and in-person visits to each of the communities were made to reaffirm our commitment to them, while strengthening relationships with library leaders and representatives of local municipalities.

A total of 35 support trips were made to Riecken library communities in 2024 covering all 66 libraries that are part of the network. More than 1,200 people participated in the meetings, including librarians, board members, representatives from the education and health sectors, local authorities, and other civil society organizations. This outreach created opportunities to develop and enhance management and leadership skills of board representatives, showing visible support for those in the field.

This in-person connection made with the libraries allowed the Riecken Foundation to facilitate a series of workshops and working meetings with volunteer leaders who manage the libraries and librarians. 760 community leaders and Riecken librarians, approximately one third of which were women participated in these training and working sessions. Meant to empower boards of directors and librarians in their roles and responsibilities, these gatherings helped both increase community flow of information and reinforce their position within the communities as true development agents.





WITH GRATITUDE



We are grateful to so many people and organizations for supporting Riecken Community Libraries:

- **American Library Association (ALA)**
- **USAID/ASHA**
- **BFB Foundation**
- **David and Lucile Packard Foundation**
- **Friends of Riecken**
- **Global Giving Crowdfunding Project Donors**
- **Kissick Family Foundation**
- **Napoleón J. Larach Foundation**
- **Private Donors**
- **Programa Sembrando Esperanza / Creative Associatives**
- **REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking)**
- **Riecken Foundation Board Members**
- **Study.com**

RIECKEN FOUNDATION 2024 INCOME & EXPENSES

2024 Income & Expenses	2024	2023	2022
Revenues			
Revenues, Gains, Other Support	536,533	391,538	346,957
Restricted Contributions	538,182	445,961	458,845
Other Revenues	312	331	452
Total	1,075,027	837,830	806,254
Expenses	2024	2023	2022
New Libraries	111,321	255,285	143,511
Library Programming	447,793	132,855	57,248
Librarians	7,153	22,476	33,387
Library Governing Boards	1,201	1,322	1,851
Volunteers	173	32,406	7,664
Other Staff Expenses	44,324	82,717	52,152
Monitoring and Evaluation	30,931	36,282	28,990
Financial Expenses	3,809	2,100	1,620
Buildings Expenses	26,562	29,568	30,793
Vehicle Expenses	1,183	2,800	873
Office Expenses	29,548	18,090	17,693
Salaries and Benefits	207,894	206,803	178,774
Professional Services	156,085	176,632	173,594
Miscellaneous Business Expenses	14,863	6,358	3,058
Total Expenses	1,082,840	1,005,694	731,206



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.



United States

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