



A 'TO-DO' LIST FOR IMPROVING LIBRARIES

As the only librarian in the town of San Miguel Morazán, Gloria Muños Garcia has worked hard to make her small municipal library a resource for her community.

“Through Child Aid I learned to classify and organize books,” she says. “I invited teachers to bring students over for story hour, created a special activity corner for children and started a back-pack lending program to get some of the new books to the schools.”

When she started the job four years ago, Muños Garcia had little experience as a librarian and few resources to work with.

“The library only had some tables, chairs and a few books,” she says.

In fact, it was the library typical of libraries in Guatemala, where people’s expectations and definition of what a library should be are very different from the U.S.

“Since books are so rare in Guatemala and there isn’t a culture of reading among the general population, libraries have a very limited purpose.” says Child Aid Country Director John van Keppel.

They are principally used to help do homework. Schools don’t have enough books, so students come to the library to find information for a report or to complete their daily assignments. That usually means making photocopies or copying information, word for word, out of a book.

As a scarce commodity, books are kept behind a counter or in a locked area and are rarely checked out. Most library collections are out of date and limited to textbooks and some reference

books. Storybooks that might engage young readers rarely exist.

Child Aid’s library training program, along with book provision, helped Muños Garcia make her library more effective. “For librarians who have never experienced working in a fully functioning library, Child Aid’s “Characteristics of a Model Library” provide a “to-do” list for where to focus their efforts and improve their services.



Librarian Gloria Muños Garcia shows off the many changes she’s made in her small municipal library in the town of San Miguel Morazán.

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The characteristics cover 3 basic areas (see below) and also offer very specific and practical guidelines — such as creating special activity corners, and setting up lending programs.

“The typical librarian’s job is focused on making photocopies of books for student assignments,” says Director of Curriculum and Instruction Erin Conway. “So the ‘characteristics’ provide a more

complete picture of what a library can be. Even if they only implement one or two characteristics per year, they’ve made their library better.”

For librarian Muños Garcia, the Child Aid trainings have given her a vision for how she can transform the mission of her small library, implementing changes that have improved the library’s services and extended its reach into local schools. And she is bubbling with ideas for more improvements.



A Child Aid library that has implemented the 16 Characteristics. Reading Promoters Norma Guzman and Graciela Pichiya work with the librarian at the Las Canoas Bajas library.



The Municipal library in Patzun keeps its small collection of books behind a counter, out of reach.

16 CHARACTERISTICS OF A MODEL LIBRARY

Library Environment and Physical Space

- Sufficient work areas
- Special display areas that invite exploration
- Special activity corners, such as Author’s Corner or Games Corner
- Decorations and displays that highlight national culture or reinforce academic content

Administration and Management

- Books represent the needs of the population served
- Books are inventoried and cataloged
- Regular planning, evaluation and monitoring
- Access to its services: regular hours, open book stacks
- An annual budget
- Appropriate technology: computers, photocopiers, printers, Internet
- Library orientation to visitors

Program Management

- Book lending programs for individuals, inter-library and school book sharing
- Literacy programs
- Outreach programs that market the library services
- Librarian networking activities
- Established community library committees

*You can help!
Support Muños Garcia
and all the librarians
by improving their
libraries by making a gift
to Child Aid.*

For more information,
on this topic, go to
child-aid.org/characteristics

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STAFF PROFILE

Jeremias Morales Brings a Personal Touch to Teacher Training



When Literacy Trainer Jeremias Morales walks into a classroom, kids pay attention.

Whether he's reading a story, running an activity or working with a small group of students, Jeremias brings energy and enthusiasm to his work.



Literacy Trainer Jeremias Morales talks to students at the Cerro de Oro school near Lake Atitlan.

“This work is challenging and there can be problems,” he says. “But I’ve learned if you have enthusiasm it makes everything easier to handle.”

As one of Child Aid’s many Literacy Trainers, Jeremias’ work is at the heart of Child Aid’s Reading for Life program.

Much of his time during the school year is spent with teachers in their classrooms in one-on-one sessions where the trainers help teachers apply the techniques and activities they learned in 5 hour Reading for Life workshops.

“In the group workshops, the teachers are introduced to the concepts and techniques, but it is in the classroom where the new knowledge is applied,” says Jeremias.

On a typical day, Jeremias gets up early at his home in San Lucas Toliman near Lake Atitlan and hits the road to visit one of the 5 schools he manages in the region. After each workshop, Jeremias will conduct two follow-up sessions with every teacher. In the first session, he works directly with the students, modeling the activity and techniques for the teacher. In the second visit, he observes the teacher using the techniques and offers suggestions and advice.

Meeting with the 45 teachers in his assigned schools, Jeremias did nearly 200 teacher follow-up sessions this school year.

“I usually spend an hour or more with each teacher,” he says, “Since school gets out at 12:30, I can do at most three follow-ups in a day.” The regular contact is important. It helps the teachers to progress. “I like it when I can see that they understand a concept, and I know I’ve helped them get better,” he says.

Jeremias grew up in the town of Las Canoas, near Lake Atitlan, and speaks Kaqchikel, K’iche and Tzutujil in addition to Spanish. Although he was a good student, he says reading was taught by repetition and decoding and was very boring.

It wasn’t until after he reached university and developed a love of learning that he discov-

ered the value of books in his life. Only 2% of Guatemalans attend university.

“I remember when I was a kid, I never had the opportunity to talk about a book. Reading was just for homework,” he says. “Now when I hear about a book on a topic I’m interested in, I want to read it because I want to get the new knowledge.”

Jeremias hopes he can help teachers pass on this enthusiasm for reading and help students understand that learning can be fun and important to their lives. “I want the kids to get as excited about a new book as they do about playing football at recess. I show how school can be fun and not so boring. Because when reading is fun, they learn.”

When you make a gift to Child Aid, you support Jeremias and other Child Aid trainers to increase teachers’ capacity to develop literacy in their children. Make a gift today!

Video: Watch Jeremias at work during a teacher follow up session: child-aid.org/video



Morales gets down on the floor to with students in an activity called Busca Tercero (Treasure Hunt) which helps students explore the content of books.

MANAGEMENT CHANGES

Dr. Nancy Press, Child Aid's co-founder, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer. Until last Spring, academia had been her home territory and Child Aid a beloved country that she visited as often as possible. When Sam Hendricks resigned in May, Dr. Press said she found herself asking, "What if I could spend the next decade focusing my time and energy at Child Aid? Could we have the impact that I know is possible?"

This decision to devote herself full-time to Child Aid was made even easier when Greg Meenahan, hired as a consultant, agreed to take on the role of Chief Operating Officer. Press said: Greg is a consummate professional who understands all the mechanics and techniques of fundraising, "But he also immediately and intuitively 'got' the Child Aid core values of development and partnership."

As Greg describes it, "The more I learned about Child Aid, the more I knew I could help make a difference. The most significant barrier to development in Guatemala is the poorly educated population. Guatemalans attend a mean of 4.1 years of school, the lowest in Latin America. Reading for life breaks the cycle of illiteracy and can thus impact poverty itself."

Dr. Press said, "Child Aid is a capacity building organization. The teachers we train will then go on to help all the children who come through their classrooms for the rest of their careers. I'm happy to help that in any way I can."



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IMPACT UPDATE

The contributions from our supporters are making a big difference.

SCHOOLS:

We are providing literacy training to 17 new schools all located in the Department of Sololá. These 17 schools have a combined teacher count of 164 and a student count of 3,755.

LIBRARIES:

The capacity of our library program increased with the creation of a new position: Library Program Coordinator. Carlos Pos, previously a Child Aid Reading Promoter, has proven to be very effective in this new role. He has provided over 250 one-on-one follow-up sessions to the librarians we serve.



Carlos is coming up on his 5 year anniversary with Child Aid. He has finished his second year at the University Mariono Galvez.

BOOK DISTRIBUTION:

Thanks to the International Book Project and the International Book Bank, a total of 96,033 books were distributed this year. These books were transported with the help of a Guatemalan Rotary Club.