

Executive Summary

In 2011 Pueblo a Pueblo initiated its Pathways to Literacy Project in collaboration with the Chukmuk Elementary School. More than 50% of Santiago Atitlán children never complete primary school.¹ The Pathways to Literacy Project's goal is to improve the literacy skills of partner schools' students by developing and providing the necessary materials for a well-functioning school library. Through the support of the educational community, the community in general, and through collaboration with local government representatives, the project also develops an interactive learning plan that is attractive and sustainable for the students -- increasing their literacy skills and knowledge through literacy activities that focus on reading and writing as well as information search.

With the support of Cup for Education, during the past four years (2011 – 2014), we have worked side-by-side with the Chukmuk Elementary School community to establish a child-friendly school library with more than 6,000 books and educational resources, used by teachers, students, and community individuals. We have conducted 18 teacher trainings on library management and literacy topics; we have modeled literacy-boosting activities; and we have trained a school librarian on book cataloging and classification, lending systems, and managing registers – all while creating a leadership structure to ensure future functioning of the school library.

Project Activities & Results

The main project activities conducted through Cup for Education's support to the Chukmuk School Library are;

- ✚ **Literacy Activities at the Library** The library offers a wide range of activities for students before, during and after the school day. From Monday to Friday, students are welcome to come to the school library to participate in daily recess activities, which focuses on reading, imagination, the arts, games and storytelling. The library also hosts afternoon activities one evening per week where students can get homework help or peruse the resources available to them.

A detailed schedule is created to encourage teachers to plan classes using school library resources and to lead literacy activities in the library. The schedule also ensures there is time for each grade to receive a literacy activity at the library at least once a month.

As a result,

- In 2014, an average of 82% of students freely attended library activities on a monthly basis during school recess time.
- On average, teachers use the library for literacy activities six times per month.

¹ United Nations Human Development Index Studies.

- ✦ **Book Lending Services** As a fully-functioning library, we have developed comprehensive lending systems to provide books and resources to students and teachers. Teachers are able to take materials home with them for one school week and can coordinate with the school librarian to provide books for their classes.

Students are also welcome to use the library as a resource and can borrow any book they need for their classes directly from the school librarian. They can also take books home with them to foster a love of reading outside of the classroom.

As a result,

- In 2014, more than 50% of teachers borrowed books from the library each month. This is a huge accomplishment as compared to 2013, when only 12% of teachers borrowed books from the school library.
- The number of books lent to teachers increased 150% from 2013 to 2014.
- The number of books lent to students increased 96% from 2013 to 2014.

- ✦ **Teacher Training and Mentorship** In total, Pueblo a Pueblo has provided eighteen training workshops. The trainings have included an introduction to the basics of school library management, as well as other literacy and education topics of interest to the teachers of Chukmuk Elementary School. Our project staff is committed to developing innovative methods for strengthening the knowledge and practices of literacy-boosting teaching techniques for Chukmuk's teachers. In 2013 we added Teacher Mentorship as a project activity to further support and improve in-class literacy education. The Mentorship consists in conducting structured class observations that provide one-on-one feedback to the observed teacher as well as conducting literacy class modeling, where we teach age-appropriate literacy activities directly to the students in their classrooms.

As a result,

- Pueblo a Pueblo administered a total of 18 training sessions to a group of 20 primary school teachers from Chukmuk Elementary School.

- ✦ **Book Collection and Classification** With funding from Cup for Education, as well as donations from various individuals and organizations, we have been able to purchase age-appropriate materials and books in Spanish and Tz'utujil. All materials are organized, catalogued and introduced into an inventory database.

As a result,

- A total of 6,380 books and educational materials are catalogued as part of the school library project.
- Chukmuk teachers, and the school librarian, are trained to manage book cataloging, classification, lending systems, and registries.

- ✦ **Mini Class Libraries** In 2013 our focus on literacy extended beyond the library space as we introduced mini class libraries. Designed as a cloth covered wall that contains transparent pouches, each mini library holds twenty age-appropriate books that are updated regularly. These resources make books a widespread resource in the classroom and encourage students to read at the beginning of the day or in between classes.

As a result,

- Chukmuk Elementary School has a total of nineteen mini class libraries, one for each classroom.

- ✦ **Leadership Structure Development** Setting up a school library is the first step towards improving students' literacy skills. However a library could easily just become a dusty room full of books without a group of engaged people to provide leadership and make it function. Pueblo a Pueblo's Pathways to Literacy Project implements a comprehensive approach to empower school staff, students and teachers to be organized and prepared for library management once the organization support is completed. We do this through the creation and support of School Library Support Group and Student Literacy Club;

- **School Library Support Group** At the Chukmuk School this group is composed of three school administrators, three parents, and the school librarian. During the first year of support the Pathway's to Literacy Coordinator regularly assists and guides the group through monthly meetings. In following years, the presence of the Project Coordinator decreases and the group members actively lead, fostering autonomy on school library management related actions.
- **Student Literacy Club** The *Student Library Club*, composed of six participating students, act as literacy ambassadors guiding students to sign in to the library entrance registry, organize books into the library shelves, help school librarian to keep the library well organized and read with younger students during recess time.

In result,

- At the end of 2014, where project support to the Chukmuk School Library was minimal, the results of our School Libraries Self-Management Survey are encouraging;
 - 90% of library resources were clean and well taken care.
 - 92% of books were organized and catalogued correctly upon random observation.

- ✦ **Literacy Summer Camp** During the summer, library staff and volunteers organize and lead a two-week literacy-activities Summer Camp open to 50 children from the Chukmuk community. During

the summer camp children enjoy activities focused on literacy and linked to art, science, storytelling, educational games, and theater. Healthy snacks are provided to children as part of our daily activities.

As a result,

- In 2014, Chukmuk teachers and volunteers independently from Pueblo a Pueblo organized and led a two-week literacy Summer Camp with a total of 120 student participants.

Student Literacy Assessment

It was not until the last year of support to the Chukmuk School Library that Pueblo a Pueblo was able to conduct a Student Literacy Assessment to a sample of third grade students. This tool allowed us to better track the effectiveness of the school library project on students' literacy rates.

As a result,

- In 2014, there was a 7.5% increase in the literacy rates of primary education students in Chukmuk from beginning to end of year.

Conclusion

The continuous support from Cup for Education and Pueblo a Pueblo's partnership with Chukmuk Primary School allowed us to see how books spark the imagination of a young generation of Guatemalan students by surrounding by literacy resources, boosting their will to learn more about the world around them.

Timeline of the Chukmuk Elementary School Library Project



2011:
School Library starts collecting and cataloguing book donations, and forms first School Library Support Group.



2013:
Book Lending to students and teachers begins, Literacy Activities continue, and school hosts a summer Literacy Camp.



2015:
The Chukmuk community has their own fully-functioning school library.

2010:
Pueblo a Pueblo identifies Chukmuk as an at-risk community for low reading levels and primary school graduation.



2012:
Literacy activities expand, teacher training sessions begin, and literacy class modeling is piloted.



2014:
Mini-libraries are introduced in school classrooms, assessments are developed and the love of reading continues to be encouraged.

