Riecken Foundation
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Impact Study 2007 Recommendations
Community Libraries

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**Introduction.** Drawing from key findings throughout the assessment, the evaluator was asked to consider some guiding questions and offer recommendations.

- Internal considerations: How do Riecken libraries impact their users?
- External considerations: How Riecken libraries impact their communities?
- Recommendations: What can be learned from the impacts and experiences of Riecken libraries that can their improve design, implementation, expansion, and other future objectives?
- Suggest monitoring and evaluation processes for the future

**Recommendation 1: Continued Emphasis on Library Attendance**

- Total library attendance is high – over 6,000 different users attend Riecken libraries weekly
- There is large variation in attendance in different libraries and variation in the users who attend
- In terms of how representative users are of their communities, children are most representative, followed by youth, and finally, by adults. In more rural communities users are more representative than in larger communities.

In light of these key findings elaborated in the assessment, the evaluator suggests that libraries continue to foster overall attendance in libraries. The many impacts of libraries, discussed in earlier sections, depend on high and consistent levels of attendance. The Foundation should not lose site of the importance of actively promoting overall attendance, while strengthening other initiatives.

Secondly, libraries should focus critically on encourag diverse in communities to use libraries. While they do remarkably well attracting children and youth, adults may be a neglected group. Informants discussed how adults use libraries to meet more practical, daily needs. Librarians and members of governance committees observed a possible disconnect between the information content in libraries and the promotion of the libraries themselves: A large proportion of the collection, which often goes unused, is dedicated to vocational books oriented toward adults with more than a 6th grade education. However, information for adults is not promoted in the same way as information for children and youth.

Finally, the consensus in the narrative surveys completed by adults demonstrated a lack of publicity for library resources and programming in communities. This may also be a factor that needs improvement in order to promote attendance. Apart from the long-term impacts of bolstering programming to increase library attendance, the Foundation should give thought to publicity in communities. In summary, the Foundation should:

- continue to emphasize the importance of high attendance in trainings with governing committees, particularly in communities where attendance is weak (later recommendations underscore specific strategies)
- engage Foundation staff and governing committees in thinking about what sectors of the community the libraries are serving. Since information on the demographics of library users was previously not available, the evaluator observed that user demographics were seldom considered.
- examine publicity of libraries in communities, particularly for adult populations
Recommendation 2: Identify sources that generate the information needs of users

- Riecken libraries are the primary source of information for children and youth in communities. In communities without Riecken libraries, the information needs of individuals are either met by dispersed sources, or they are not met at all.
- The information needs of children are often generated by the libraries themselves along with schools; the information needs of youth are generated almost exclusively by schools; and, the information needs of adults are generated by practical day to day needs including health, education, and vocational sources.

The core finding of the 2006 internal evaluation conducted on the Use of the Collection demonstrated that schools generate the information needs of youth. This evaluation reaffirms this finding, considering that nearly 90% of youth attend libraries to complete school assignments. However, the evaluation also shows that library use is more layered. Attendance for youth is, in fact, often motivated by independent reading and use of computers and internet. Furthermore, for youth, libraries are a social outlet that serve a role beyond the information they directly provide.

Conversations with informants, indicated that neither governance committees nor the Foundation identify the factors that generate the information needs of users. Identifying these information sources would (1) enable libraries to work with information sources in communities that preexist libraries, and (2) tailor information in libraries to the needs of users.

Two specific factors are common across all communities: Schools and health clinics. The former generates the information needs of children and youth; the latter, those of many adults. This reality should be considered by the Riecken Foundation to multiply their impacts in communities and bolster participation in library programming.

Despite nearly 90% of youth users completing school assignments in libraries, teachers are by and large unaware of the resources in Riecken libraries. The Foundation, along with governance committees, should consider offering teachers with bibliographies of the collection and possibilities for specific uses of the libraries for education. Many teachers and school administrators were receptive and even suggested a ½ - 1 day training session to discuss the resources of libraries and strategies for library/education collaboration.

The impacts of partnering with schools should not be understated. A large body of educational research details the positive impacts of libraries on schools, particularly when libraries have the human and physical resources common to Riecken libraries. The evaluator also notes the benefits associated with the caution on the part of Riecken Foundation leadership to maintain autonomy from schools and to not act solely as a pedagogical support. However, this evaluation stresses that collaboration within communities already exists and that collaborating in a systematic way will:

1. Deepen the impacts of informal partnerships that already exist between community libraries and local schools.
2. Improve the quality of education in classrooms.
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(3) Attract a diverse audience to the libraries. The main reason child attendance is more representative than youth or adult attendance, is that primary school classrooms frequently attend story hour, and thus expose a group of students to libraries who would otherwise not attend.

(4) Finally, a lack of collaboration may even have a negative impact on schools. Discussed in the assessment, secondary school teachers commented that libraries were often used as “auto-teachers” because teachers themselves, lacked knowledge on conducting research or on the resources of the libraries.

Second, the impacts of Riecken libraries on health institutions are less pronounced but have considerable potential. The vast majority of rural nurses and doctors alike had not entered Riecken libraries and were unaware of the possible impacts of information in Riecken libraries on public health. Circulating a bibliography for health professionals in rural communities along with a training in new libraries would be well-received and would have real multiplier affects.

The recommendations in health and education are straightforward: bibliographies and a training on useful resources for two public sector institutions. The approach is part of a broader lesson the evaluator emphasizes in the Recommendations:

Integrating with local institutions and promoting attendance through factors that already exist in communities furthers the Foundation’s goals for expansion and sustainability. Local partners will expand impacts.

Recommendation 3: Recognize that different communities have different needs

- The demographic baserates in communities may predict their performance
- Social and economic realities between communities may be so different that they require distinct objectives.

Both, conversations with informants and survey findings, reveal an important pattern: the socioeconomic characteristics of the library users in a community, predict the performance of their library as measured by the bi-annual performance reviews conducted by Foundation staff. The finding is remarkable, and amongst the most salient in the evaluation.

Apart from the comparison between internal evaluation indicators and the socioeconomic characteristics of users compiled in this study, survey data itself demonstrates that, across the board, programming is better attended in more affluent communities. Lower education levels, higher rates of malnutrition, and other characteristics of communities adversely shape the performance of libraries.

Existing programming, services, and support appear to work more effectively in communities where users are more educated and more affluent. Libraries are tidier, finances are better managed, and programs are better attended. The finding suggests that in the poorest communities with Riecken libraries, programming and services may not have their desired impacts on library users.
The link between library performance and the demographics of communities has key implications. The fact that libraries in poor communities underperform indicates: (1) Programming initiatives in libraries that serve poorer demographics do not work because these communities have different needs, and (2) the consequences of socioeconomic indicators on library performance should be anticipated and accounted for during site-selection.

Finally, the evaluator hypothesizes that these poorest libraries also consume disproportionate financial and human resources. If this is the case, then these costs should be anticipated in site-selection and in expansion. Alternatively, if the Foundation wishes to expand only in communities where they anticipate success (measured by existing indicators), then these findings establish a socioeconomic threshold.

Differences in library performance based on community demographics raises specific considerations for monitoring and evaluation. If current monitoring merely affirms that poor libraries will perform poorly and more affluent libraries will perform better, then perhaps metrics should be reconsidered. Emphasis could be given to libraries that over or under-perform, given levels of community affluence (see Figure 4a on p. 85).

With this in mind, the evaluator encourages the Foundation to continue considering other models for growth in poorer communities. There are possibilities for new peri-urban libraries to act as hubs for poorer libraries in surrounding municipalities and aldeas. Since this evaluation shows that performance of a library, given the current programming and guidelines for governing committees, depends a good deal on the community, demographic factors should be considered in site selection because they predict performance (see Figure 4a on p. 85).

**Recommendation 4: Programming works -- solidify what exists and focus on sustainability for growth**

- Programming significantly increases the likelihood and frequency of library attendance for both children and youth
- Participants in library programming are the most frequent users of libraries – they read diverse sources of information, they attend for a diversity of reasons, and for many, the library becomes a part of their daily routine

The evaluator commends the Riecken Foundation for their forward-looking vision and notes that the programming available in Riecken libraries are, in fact, what makes the “books come alive,” in the words of one librarian. Programming is what sets the libraries apart from the other similar initiatives in the field of community development and information centers.

Two questions confront the Foundation: How can we deepen the impacts and expand access to programming? and, how can programming become more sustainable and feasible as the Foundation begins a broad based expansion?

The evaluator emphasizes the three programming components assessed in the evaluation: (1) story hour; (2) book clubs; and (3) youth group (Zona X).

Findings in Section 3.4 (p. 45) elaborate the individual successes of these programs. The evaluator emphasizes that both quantitative findings and informants both in
RECOMMENDATIONS

Communities and in the Foundation found story hour to be most sustainable, followed by book clubs, and then by youth groups. Story hours reach large audiences and attract a diverse set of children to libraries; book clubs have deeper impacts are supported by youth; and finally, youth groups appear to have the most sustained impacts on participants, but require the largest investments from the Foundation.

The evaluator notes a common denominator in effective libraries: a backbone of committed youth to support and participate in programs. Integrating and reinforcing the role of youth in programming leadership will benefit the sustainability of these programs.

Strengthen existing programs, emphasize sustainability. Further, the evaluator suggests that the Foundation focus on the programming that exists, as opposed to expanding programming options, due to three core reasons:

**Sustainability:** Increased programming can threaten sustainability – instead the Foundation should deepen the impacts of what exists. Both story hours and book clubs are well situated for the scale-up of Riecken libraries in Fall 2007 and in 2008. However, focusing on components that are already strong in libraries will enable programming to be more sustainable. This sustainability may mean enhancing the roles of youth for leadership in libraries. The youth group requires larger investments and conversations with informants stressed the difficulty of placing more responsibility on the VJ, the member of the community governance committee responsible for youth development. Instead, the Foundation should look at ways that enable youth groups to function autonomously.

One suggestion from Foundation staff that is to develop program materials for the youth group that could enable them to organize independently with specific objective, and with the support of the VJs, but not dependent on their leadership. Concretely, the suggestion was to develop a youth group curriculum where groups would be guided to achieve certain objectives throughout the year: for instance, developing a “transparency/civic engagement activity,” or an “environmental education activity.”

Sustainability may also mean to enable youth with a curriculum that does not depend on an individual VJ to organize.

**Community Variation:** The variation in performance across libraries can be predicted by the demographics of the users. If performance of libraries continues to reflect the demographics of communities, then serious consideration should be given to tailoring programming to the needs of communities. The evaluator does not imply that each community requires a different approach, but instead, that findings show that libraries fall into 2-3 distinct groups based on demographic characteristics. Table 4a on p. 82 suggests these possible groups. Programming would be more successful if these needs were taken into account in a critical and thoughtful way.

**Scalability:** Like sustainability, the expansion of the Riecken library model and the broad based impacts for development processes depends on scalable growth, replicability, and cost-efficiency. The more programming that libraries add, the less likely expansion is to take place. Furthermore, the three core components of programming do work well, and as the evaluator emphasizes, future initiatives should look outward toward integrating with local institutions to deepen the impacts of libraries as opposed to looking inward, placing more responsibilities on governing committees and expanding programs.
Integrating programs. Finally, many informants within the Foundation and in communities also indicated that library programs were not integrated. The consensus of informants, expressed in various ways, suggested that the programs be treated as a single integrated program with various parts and be communicated in these terms to the governance committees. There was desire was specific desire for an integrated curriculum in light of the ambitious expansion beginning in the fall of 2007.

Informants identified two strengths for integrating programs: (1) internally the Foundation would view the programs as sequential from one age group to the next, and participation in the programs would be mutually reinforcing. Consistent with this, some Foundation informants envisioned an integrated programming manual to be used with governing committees that could enable them to be more self-sufficient, and; (2) governing committees viewed the programs as independent components of the library. In light of the many findings on the socioeconomic representativeness of child users and the contributions that committed youth make to libraries, integrated programming could transition individuals from one program to the next. Finally, community members did not perceive links between the programs.

For review, the core recommendations for programming:

- Deepen the impacts and effectiveness of the programming that exists as opposed to creating new programs; this may mean diversifying approaches in communities with different needs. Instead, more energy should be invested in partnerships with local institutions rather than new programs that rely on the Foundation/library partnership.
- Focus on how youth can strengthen library programs. The frequency of youth attendance and their use of library resources suggests that they could play a stronger role.
- Consider how the individual programming components could be integrated. This may be beneficial for the three goals of: sustainability, scalability, and replicability.

Recommendation 5: Libraries are in need of a coherent strategy for Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D)

- Internet in libraries motivates attendance and allows thousands of users in rural communities to have access to a new information medium.
- Internet access in communities does not diminish the use of books; to the contrary, the medium promotes the use of other sources of information.
- Access to internet in Riecken libraries has similar effects as elsewhere in rural communities in developing countries where ICT4D is introduced.
- There is a limited understanding of the uses of ICT4D in Riecken communities and amongst staff in the Foundation itself.

The impacts of ICT4D in rural communities in developing countries hold much promise. The Riecken Foundation should be commended for the technical support it provides to community libraries. This aspect sets the work of the Foundation apart from other ICT4D initiatives in developing countries with scant technical support.
All users and Foundation staff would benefit from an internet literacy strategy. The lack of knowledge was both conceptual and practical. Conceptually, ICT4D was interpreted as a communication and research tool by Foundation staff and by library users. Practically, library users frequently used chat/messenger programs and consulted web-based resources for school assignments. The evaluator notes that both communications and research are core areas of impact for ICT4D, but, the Foundation would benefit from an internal understanding of how an internet connection should be used in rural communities. Unfortunately, without a strategy, internet is frequently used for plagiarism on school assignments and gaming.

Finally, are there other possible areas of expansion for ICT4D? Some community technology centers in rural Africa are experimenting with wireless fiber optics that allow villagers, equipped with cell phones, to communicate at very low costs around the world. Are there new areas the Foundation should consider, given their rapid expansion in Central America?

- The evaluator suggests that the Foundation develop an action plan for internet literacy, and more broadly, for ICT4D in the community libraries.

**Recommendation 6: Integrate youth in library leadership from the beginning -- youth may be the key to sustained growth**

- Youth, specifically those involved in youth groups, are the most committed and regular users of Riecken libraries

One youth informant in the Comayagua province described youth attendance:

“A GROUP OF US COMES SO OFTEN BECAUSE WE BENEFIT MOST. WE MAKE THIS OUR SECOND HOME AND WE JOKE HERE, DO OUR SCHOOLWORK, USE COMPUTERS, AND WE READ.”

Because of the frequent and consistent library use, by a core group of youth involved in programming, there is potential to deliberately incorporate these individuals in library governance. A current challenge for library leadership are low levels of commitment among adult committee members. The infrequent attendance of adults, many of whom serve on governing committees, decreases the capacity of libraries to comply with Foundation expectations. As the most frequent users, youth may be a natural complement to these committees.

- Consider integrating youth in library governance committees in a deliberate way from the beginning.

**Recommendation 7: Recognize the local institutions impacted by libraries, form partnerships, integrate them from the beginning, and enable their use of libraries**

- Nearly 40% of adults who attend libraries, do so for meetings of community organizations.
- Local institutions in communities often generate the information needs of users. These needs are met in libraries.
Recommendation 8: Create an enabling policy environment

With the future growth of the Riecken Foundation in mind, community libraries require an enabling policy environment at both a national and local level. To fulfill their basic mission, libraries require the sustained service of librarians funded by local municipalities. The Foundation is taking the right steps to ensure this sustainability by forging longterm agreements with municipal mayors and beginning to have some access to national book and library policy. The evaluator commends the recent focus to lay this groundwork for an enabling policy environment for Riecken libraries in Honduras.

Beyond a favorable policy environment for Riecken libraries to grow, would it be in the Foundation’s interest to champion key issues of public policy? This may be premature. However, the growing scope and visibility of the Foundation at a national level may soon place it in a position to affect national policy on local information and public libraries.

The evaluator also calls attention to the policy context of various other international NGOs implementing projects in Honduras. Many of these organizations have explicit policy objectives in addition to providing direct services in underserved communities. Therefore, the evaluation recommends that the Foundation remain forward-thinking with the future role that it may play for public policy in the region.
Recommendation 9: Develop a system for Monitoring and Evaluation (M/E)

The evaluation identifies a pressing need for a monitoring and evaluation (M/E) program for the Riecken Foundation. A coherent system is necessary for four reasons: (1) the rapid growth of the Foundation, beginning in the fall of 2007, will require that Foundation leadership receive consistent monitoring of growth targets and objectives for strategic decisions; (2) effective monitoring will reduce the costs of individual libraries and allow the Foundation to make accurate and comprehensive cost/benefit analyses for strategic planning; (3) M/E will provide project managers in Central America with criteria to identify success and failure, and; (4) consistent M/E will provide continual feedback and justification to donors.

At present, there is no coherent M/E program for Riecken libraries. Apart from two internal evaluations conducted in 2006 and bi-annual monitoring of specific libraries, this evaluation is the first impact assessment of the libraries as a whole. Based on the need for an M/E program, this recommendation discusses (1) some considerations for an M/E program, and (2) how this evaluation may contribute.

Current Monitoring. Foundation staff conduct bi-annual monitoring of individual libraries. Project managers assess each library based on a criteria that evaluates components of the libraries’ operation. The process has weaknesses: (1) the assessments rely on the sole opinions of the project managers directly responsible for the specific libraries; (2) the assessments do not involve local stakeholders in the monitoring; (3) the process is time intensive for project managers, whose time may be better spent on implementation and oversight in libraries, (4) informants in the Foundation see little practicality and use for the indicators, and (5) the assessments do not account for how characteristics of library users effect performance criteria (described below).

This evaluation compares the results from the bi-annual monitoring of individual libraries with the socioeconomic characteristics of users in these communities. The evaluation finds that the performance of libraries, assessed by Foundation staff, corresponds almost perfectly with the socioeconomic characteristics of users in that community.

Box 4a lists individual libraries by their mean performance, calculated by averaging the scores assigned to different criteria in the bi-annual evaluation (November 2006). Tatumbla was ranked the highest performing and El Guante was ranked the lowest performing library. The SES index is calculated as a weighted average of the socioeconomic characteristics of library users, combining household characteristics and income. The SES index for the hypothetical ‘mean’ group of library users would be 0. Therefore, negative SES indices highlighted in red bold are groups of library users who are below average, whereas those in gray are groups of users whose socioeconomic status is above average.

Box 4a shows that a negative SES index corresponds with low library performance. There are some exceptions. Libraries with low performance and high SES can be understood as underperforming, like the case of Yuscaran, whereas libraries with high performance and low SES are overperforming, like the cases of San Antonio de Flores and Concepcion de Maria.
With the weaknesses of the current monitoring in mind, the evaluator proposes a possible framework for an M/E program: What are the goals of the Riecken Foundation? How are they being met? What evidence do we have to prove these achievements? The design of an M/E program is an evaluation unto itself, however, there are some useful frameworks developed by other organizations that may be practical for the Riecken Foundation to follow.

**Considerations for an M/E Program.** The evaluation identifies three audiences for an M/E program: (1) library communities, governance committees, and librarians; (2) Foundation field offices and headquarters; and, (3) donors. The M/E program should meet the needs of these audiences by: demonstrating both short and long-term change to donors; highlighting success and failure for project managers and other Foundation staff; generating clear benchmarks and targets for community libraries and assessing outputs; and develop training for Foundation staff and local communities to enable them to track change.

### Comparison of Library Performance with SES of Users

**Source:** Riecken Survey (2007) and bi-annual assessment of individual libraries (November 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riecken Library</th>
<th>Mean Performance</th>
<th>SES Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. El Guante</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Las Pilas</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Santa Maria</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. San Jose de Po.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Sulaco</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Yuscaran</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Guacamaya</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Guajiquiro</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. San Jose la Paz</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Santa Ana</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. San Lucas</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Florida</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. San Antonio Yoro</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Minas de Oro</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Jacaleapa</td>
<td>3.28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Esquias</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Yorito</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. San Jeronimo</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Cedros</td>
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<td>11. El Porvenir</td>
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<td>10. El Tular</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<td>9. San Luis</td>
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<td>8. Rancho Grande</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>7. San Antonio de Flo.</td>
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<td>6. Con. de Maria</td>
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<td>3. Morolica</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Lejamani</td>
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As this evaluation makes clear, with projects like community libraries clear impacts are difficult to quantify. In similar initiatives, like UNESCO’s Community Technology Centers, development organizations employ a Results-Based Monitoring approach for M/E designs.

The Results-Based approach can deliver useful results for complex projects where impacts are anticipated in multiple sectors, as well as in the short and long-term. The methodology emphasizes outcomes as opposed to implementation. Box 4b highlights a possible M/E design.

Box 4b

1. Gather baseline data on users in communities to establish pre-library situations.

2. Develop outcome indicators.

3. Ongoing data collection on outputs at clear intervals.

4. A strong focus on the perceptions of change among stakeholders. If the Foundation does not have the resources to implement a more comprehensive results-based monitoring system, emphasis should be given to this step and the M/E program should rely on:

   a. Ethnographic Action Research (EAR): The approach relies on community participation in assessment and is used by UNESCO in their M/E of Community Technology Centers.

5. Regular and systemic reporting with both quantitative and qualitative information on progress toward outcomes.

   a. Incorporate existing data collection in libraries on attendance and computer use.

   b. Provide training on data collection and assessment for project managers and basic training for librarians.

   c. Account for variability in baserates between communities.

   d. Translate objectives into performance indicators and select targets

Box 4b highlights a Results-Based M/E to meet the needs of the Riecken Foundation. In any event, the current system, without significant modification, is inadequate for present needs, particularly with the ambitious expansion in mind.

However, the bi-annual monitoring by project managers does identify key performance indicators/objectives. These indicators are very useful and should be incorporated into an M/E program. The problem with these indicators is how they are currently measured. Furthermore, basic training on data collection is necessary for project managers and librarians (see 5b in Box 4b). In libraries, data collection by librarians on attendance is inaccurate. The Foundation should develop a better system for measuring daily attendance.

One approach, pioneered by a community library in Uganda, requires each library user to take a kernal of corn from a bowl and deposit it in a jar when entering the library.
At the end of the day, the librarian would weigh the jar and the weight would correspond to an attendance figure. The library found that even during busy hours, when the library was overwhelmed by users, patrons would still take the time to drop a bean in a jar. Furthermore, the approach accounted for illiterate users.

The point remains, that both librarians and Foundation staff require training in basic data collection. Additionally, the evaluator suggests that the Foundation contract a full-time position for M/E. In light of projected growth, the Foundation is at an ideal point to initiate an effective M/E program. Finally, the findings in this evaluation establish a good beginning for a Result-Based M/E program, should the Riecken Foundation choose to move forward.

**Using this evaluation for M/E.** This evaluation contributes in some key ways. First, it provides a set of findings on library use, information, and programming. These findings translate into practical targets for the Foundation. For December 2008, for instance, the Foundation could set concrete goals for Zona X participation and attendance in Barrilete Viajero. The Foundation could also make a concerted effort to encourage library use in poorer parts of communities and measure change.

The Foundation can now measure concrete outcomes. Specific indicators may include: participation in youth programs; use of literature; attendance from areas outside the community; time spend reading by different age groups; and library use by adults. The targets themselves should be established by Foundation staff, but this evaluation enables an M/E program to test for these results.

Second, the Foundation can include demographic characteristics of communities when setting targets. The Foundation should adjust their expectations and have different strategies to encourage the information use of different groups. In the interim, while the Foundation establishes an M/E program, this finding is useful for the bi-annual evaluations by project managers. The evaluator suggests that the Foundation use the findings in the sections on library use, information, and programming to set short and long-term objectives for the library use of different groups.

Third, the evaluation will be able to measure success and failure in concrete ways. This evaluation provides strong evidence of specific impacts, but it also lays the groundwork for factors to include in an M/E program. Key elements of this evaluation should be replicated in the M/E program:

1. **consideration of community demographics when assessing library performance.** Some communities, as demonstrated in Box 4a, outperform expectations whereas other groups underperform, given the SES of users.
2. **measurements of participation in library programming and information use.**
3. **periodic use of narrative surveys in libraries to assess the different needs of users.**

Fourth, this evaluation also shows clear differences between how children and youth spend their free time in communities with Riecken libraries and those without. A future M/E program should gather periodic data on the pre-library situation of communities. This evaluation views time-use diagrams as a good method to assess the use of time among children and youth in pre-library communities.

Finally, the evaluator is happy to discuss the use of this evaluation for an M/E program in greater depth. Since the dataset is complex, there are many other possibilities depending upon the objectives of the Foundation.