

Librarians Without Borders: International Service Learning Opportunities for LIS Students

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Agenda

- Background: Librarians without Borders
- Example project: Guatemala
- Learning Outcomes
- Recent Initiatives/Future Directions
- Getting Involved

Background

Librarians Without Borders is an non-profit organization that strives to narrow the information divide worldwide by supporting libraries in developing regions.



LWB collaborates with partner communities to identify their needs and then mobilize our volunteers — the core being student librarians — for in-the-field development.

History

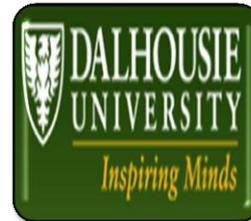
- LWB was founded by a group of students at University of Western Ontario
 - To better understand librarianship in an international context
 - To engage in social justice librarianship issues
 - Address information access inequality globally

LWB People

Executive Team (across North America)

Board of Directors (across North America)

>1,000 members (across the world)



2005

2007

2007

2009

2010

2011

On-Campus Organization

- Student Chapters
- Service Learning
 - The number of students wanting to get on board revealed a desire on their part to experience international service learning but not having a venue to participate

Guatemala



Project Overview

Project Goal
Collaborate
with the
Asturias
Academy to
implement a
library at the
school.

- Partner institution: Miguel Angel Asturias Academy
- Location: Quetzaltenango, Guatemala
- Started in 2009 by McGill student committee
- Asturias identified a need for library experts
- Ongoing fund raising
- Service-learning trips in spring 2010 and 2011
- Implementing a formal student learning assessment tool on the April 2013 service trip to Guatemala.
 - Considering the "Global Perspectives Inventory" (<https://gpi.central.edu/index.cfm>)

The Miguel Angel Asturias Academy



Introduction to the Asturias Academy

Mission

- (1) Get ALL Guatemalan children in school
- (2) Break cycles of poverty through education

- Private, non-profit Pre K-12 school
- Founded: 1994
- Serves students from varying background: Indigenous, non-indigenous, poor, working class and middle class.
- Implements teachings of Paulo Friere

The Asturias Library

When LWB arrived in Guatemala in 2010, the Asturias Library was in a pre-construction phase.

Since then, the Asturias Library has gone from being an idea to a functional library space.

The library is currently open during school hours, and is used on a daily basis by Asturias students and staff.



Partnership Benefits for LWB students



Make a positive impact on a community in need

Partner with an organization that can use expertise in the field

Apply lessons and knowledge from the classroom

Prepare to enter the workforce by getting hands on experience

Asturias Library Project – Year One

- Begin and develop relationship with Asturias
- Initial work in Guatemala – 2010 Trip
 - Manual of recommendations
 - Deliver books and school supplies
- Reflection
 - Articles
 - Presentations

Asturias Library Project - Year One

On the ground in Guatemala (April – May 2010):

- Cultural Activities

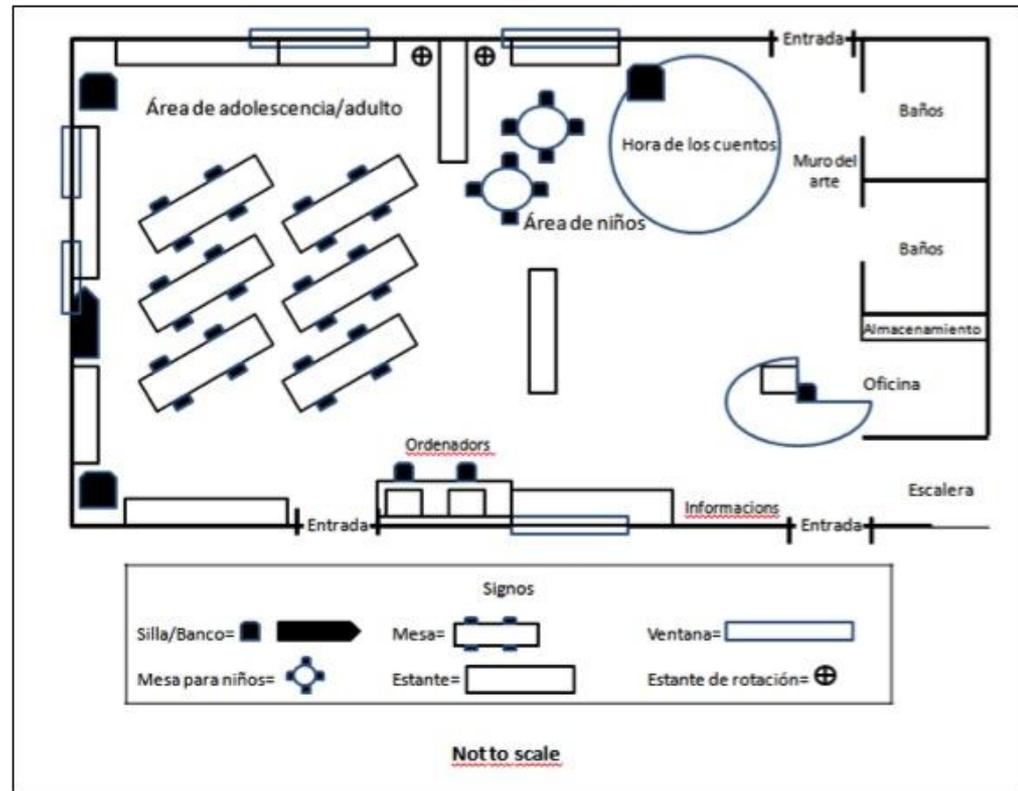
- GOAL: Better get to know the community

- One week of service work at the school

- Developed handbook of recommendations including cataloguing, layout, shelving, programming, etc.
- Met the students: classroom visits, recess, reading club
- Built relationships with Asturias staff and volunteers

Library Space Planning

Conceptual Drawings – April 2010



January 2011



First story time at Asturias Library, January 2011



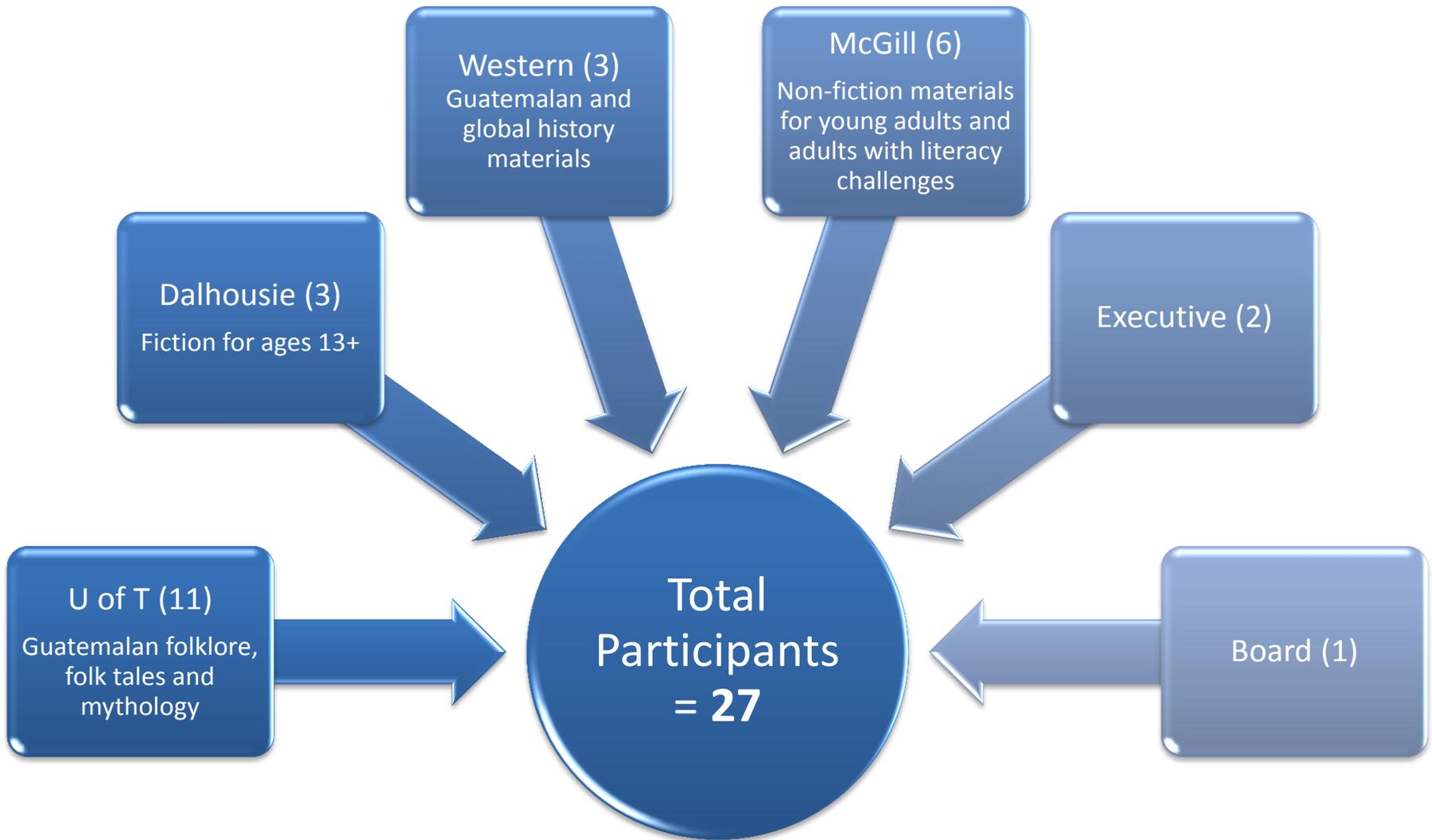
Asturias Library Project – Year One Participants

Asturias Library Project – Year Two

- Bigger scope
 - Organization wide:
 - Fundraising push
 - Collection development projects
 - 2nd service learning trip to Guatemala
 - 27 participants
 - Members from executive and 4 library schools
 - Cultural activities
 - Week of work at the school



Asturias Library Project – Year Two Participants



Activities at Asturias

Developed & based on discussions with library staff

- Day 1: brainstorm, prioritize, pitch (short & long term)
- Day 1: division into project teams; set goals:
 - Organization Team
 - Information Literacy Team
 - K'iche' Audio Books Team
 - Knowledge Management Team
 - Blogging/Photography Team
- Day 2-5: work, work, work towards goals!
- Day 6 + (in Canada): document and compile materials

Information Literacy

A handwritten table on a yellow sticky note titled 'TEMAS GENERADORAS CICLO 2011'. The table lists months on the left and corresponding themes on the right, separated by a wavy line. The themes include Education and Courtesy, Multiculturalism, Gender, Human Rights, Environment, Health, Politics and Economy, Anniversary, Independence, and Graduation.

TEMAS GENERADORAS	
CICLO 2011	
ENERO	EDUCACIÓN Y CORTESÍA
FEBRERO	PULICULTURALIDAD
MARZO	GÉNERO
ABRIL	DERECHOS HUMANOS
MAYO	MEDIO AMBIENTE
JUNIO	SALUD
JULIO	POLITICA Y ECONOMÍA
AGOSTO	ANIVERSARIO
SEPTIEMBRE	INDEPENDENCIA
OCTUBRE	GRADUACIÓN

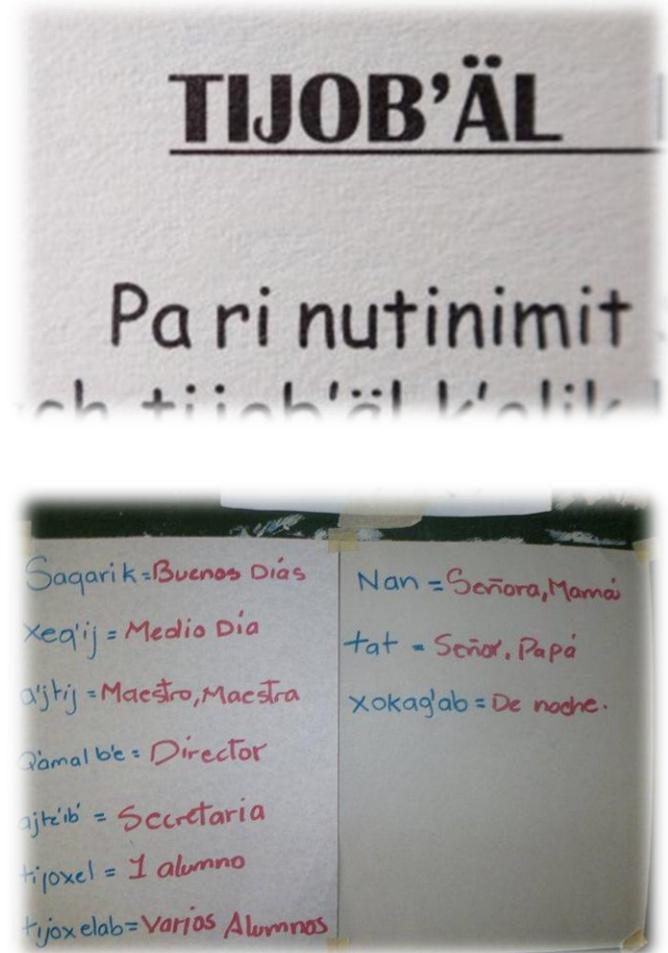
- Guides for teachers on how to use the library
 - Classification
 - Floor plans
 - How to implement library into curriculum
- Resource lists
- Book talk best practices
- Information literacy games

Knowledge Management

- Wiki
 - High turnover rate among Asturias volunteers
 - Goals
 - Capture best practices
 - Document and organize collective knowledge
 - Share knowledge with future volunteers
- Survey
 - Evaluate trip for future improvement

K'iche' Audio Book Project

- K'iche' is the predominant Indigenous language in Xela
- Audio to support Asturias K'iche' language curriculum
- Work with students to create audio material for the collection
- Build library holdings
- Give students a sense of ownership over the collection



LWB Learning Outcomes

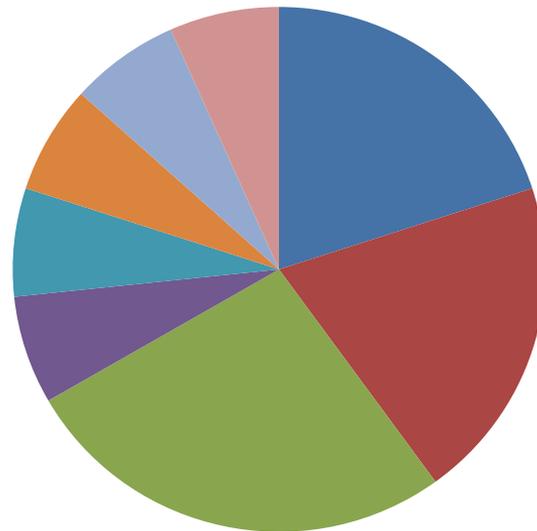


What do students learn?

- Practical application of “hard” professional skills
 - Information Resources
 - Reference & User services
 - Community Development
 - Cataloging
- Development of essential “soft” skills
 - Creativity
 - Leadership
 - Project Management
 - Time Management
 - Communication
 - Flexibility

Relevant course work

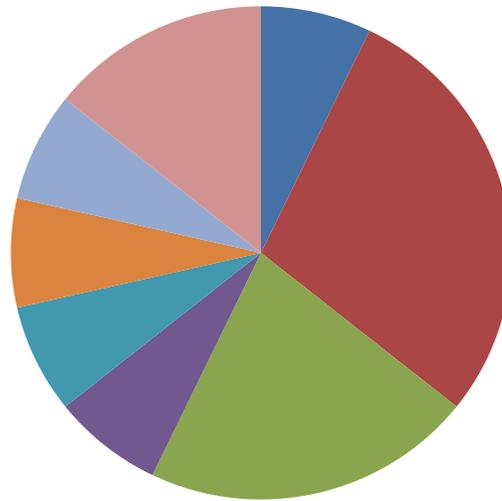
2010 Trip: “What **aspects of your MLIS program** were applicable to the Asturias Library Initiative?”



- Cataloguing
- Library Space Planning
- Collection Development
- Information Literacy
- User services
- Group Work
- Programming
- Writing Training Manuals

Relevant Skills

- 2010 Trip: “What **skills** or **knowledge** did you feel were most important during the Asturias Library Project?”



■ Spanish

■ Communication

■ Analysis of user needs

■ Cataloguing

■ Team Work

■ Presentation skills

■ Flexibility

■ Understanding needs of user group

Integrating with Partners

- 2011-12 academic year: two LIS/IS graduate students completed for-credit reading/independent study courses devoted to critical aspects of LWB's initiative in Ghana, they were both theoretical and applied components to their work. Both presented recommendations to the project partner, Libraries Across Africa:
 - Whitney Spencer (Dalhousie University): "Libraries as Space: Rethinking Roles, Rethinking Space in Africa"
 - Rebecca Ross (University of Ottawa): "Emerging Forms of Collection Development in a Global Context: Recommendations for Building a Digital Library in Ghana"

Summary of Benefits of LIS Students

Connects curriculum to real-world, complex experiences, which:

- Engages them in problem-solving, critical thinking
- Promotes deeper learning: no “right” answers
- Develops interpersonal skills and teamwork approach
- Develops leadership and management skills

Provides immersion into societal issues relating to LIS, which:

- Socializes them into values of the profession
- Sensitizes them to the realities, experiences, and needs of marginalized people
- Develops civic responsibility through community involvement

Recent Initiatives

Future Directions



Recent initiatives and kudos

- Jorge Chojolán (International Educator & Social Activist) speaking tour in Montreal, London, Toronto, Ottawa, Los Angeles, November 11-29, 2012.



- One of 18 2012 *Getting Attention!* Nonprofit Tagline Award Winners



Future Directions

- Support of University of Western Ontario's "Global Information and Development" graduate library science course (Winter 2013)
 - Providing/suggesting/helping to arrange guest speakers on curricular topics via web conferencing (relating to issues re. indigenous knowledge and development, Impact of ICTs on development, Role of information in development, and the information context for specific countries of LWB's work)
 - Encouraging student use of LWB projects and regions as context for some course assignments
- Exploring development of LWB special topics course at the University of Ottawa's School of Information Studies (for 2013-14 academic year)
- In current discussion with a graduate student who is focusing on International Development and is considering writing her thesis project about LWB's work, specifically in Ghana.

Getting Involved



Getting Involved

- Students
 - Start or join an LWB club on campus
 - Work with LWB on an independent reading or independent study course
 - Gain international experience by traveling with LWB on annual trip
- Faculty
 - Advise an LWB club
 - Volunteer with LWB on an international experience
- All
 - Become an LWB member (free)
 - Buy awesome LWB Skreened merchandise
 - Donate to the LWB stipend fund



Please visit <http://lwb-online.org/>



Thank you.