



STAND UP FOR THE RIGHT TO READ!

SUMMARY

Historically, society and culture have generated and reproduced traditional patterns of roles and relationships between men and women. This form of socialization generates stereotypes, giving greater value to one than to another, with the characteristics assigned to women being the least valuable. Cultural learning is acquired through what children see and hear, and how women and men behave and relate to each other. This is one way discrimination and inequality between the sexes is perpetuated, this way of behaving and relating. It means that opportunities for development, access and participation are greater for men, while women face enormous difficulties in gaining equal access to these opportunities.

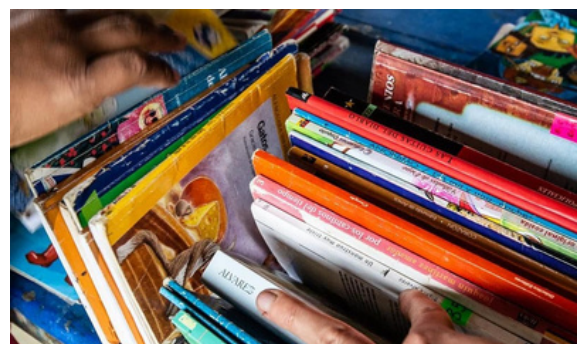


A few years ago, Clara Luna started a program that deals with two local social issues:

1. In the community, 50% - 60% of pregnancies are from teenage mothers, because a high percentage of minors begin sexual relationships early and do not receive timely sex education. They also do not receive training in gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. There is a lack of access for girls, boys and young people to an education process based on a development education that informs, forms, raises awareness, and encourages and commits individuals to address short- and long-term development problems.

CHALLENGE:

In Ecuador, the issue of inequality is being addressed but it is a long road. Towns like Puerto Lopez do not have access to quality and truthful information, which allows women to develop skills in contexts of education in rights and non-discrimination. For more than a decade Ecuador has remained the second country in the region (after Venezuela) with the highest rate of teenage pregnancies.





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Now more than ever, it is urgent to prevent pregnancy in girls and adolescents, as the crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic further aggravates these vulnerabilities, as being a woman often means being unprotected, far from safe environments and without access to protection. In Ecuador, official statistics confirm that every 72 hours a woman, girl or adolescent is a victim of gender based violence. Between March and July 2020, there have been 190 more pregnancies among girls between the ages of 10 and 14, compared to the same period in 2019. The figure rises to 489, when girls and adolescents aged between 10 and 19 are considered.

SOLUTION:

Libraries are educational, meeting and recreational spaces, allowing people to obtain and exchange information, contact other people, and, above all, learn. Libraries play an important role in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. They are called on to address gender diversity, and to give women and girls visibility to achieve equality and equity of opportunity.

The proposal is the implementation of the first community library accessible to the whole community, which will be a safe and pleasant meeting place where programs and services are provided, designed to sensitize its users to rights, and thus to avoid discrimination against women, and especially girls.

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Clara Luna has designed a local volunteer program to promote implementation and sustainability of this community library project. Our young people (girls and boys) have benefited from our programs over the past 7 years, they have been trained and empowered with the information and resources needed to become agents of change in their community. They are a committed group who are actively participating in achieving justice and equity through books and libraries; they are the protagonists of this work, giving voice to the right to read, proposing local initiatives and giving sustainability to projects. Help us to provide education to empower women and girls and to defend the right to read!.





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MEMBER TESTIMONIALS



FILM NEGATIVE



FILM NEGATIVE

Romina González is 13 years old and an active member of Clara Luna's Club de Jóvenes or Teenagers' Club, as well as a student in one of our English classes. She has been coming to Clara Luna since she was 5 years old for Club de Niños and English classes. She has grown up with Clara Luna and doesn't remember her life before coming here. Romina says that by attending Club de Niños, she learned to read earlier than her classmates at school. She says that what she likes most about coming to Clara Luna is learning new things and making her parents proud.

Romina has a facility for picking up English as well as a dedication to learning new words. She also displays a talent for creative writing while participating in Club de Jóvenes' workshops writing puppet shows, which the teenagers later perform at Clara Luna events. Romina is a bright, hard-working girl who shows a desire to learn and excel. Her skills in English and writing will make her a very competitive applicant when it's time to apply to university. Her goals for the future are to continue her education, make her family proud, and continue to grow as a person.

Romina González, CLF Member from 2013.



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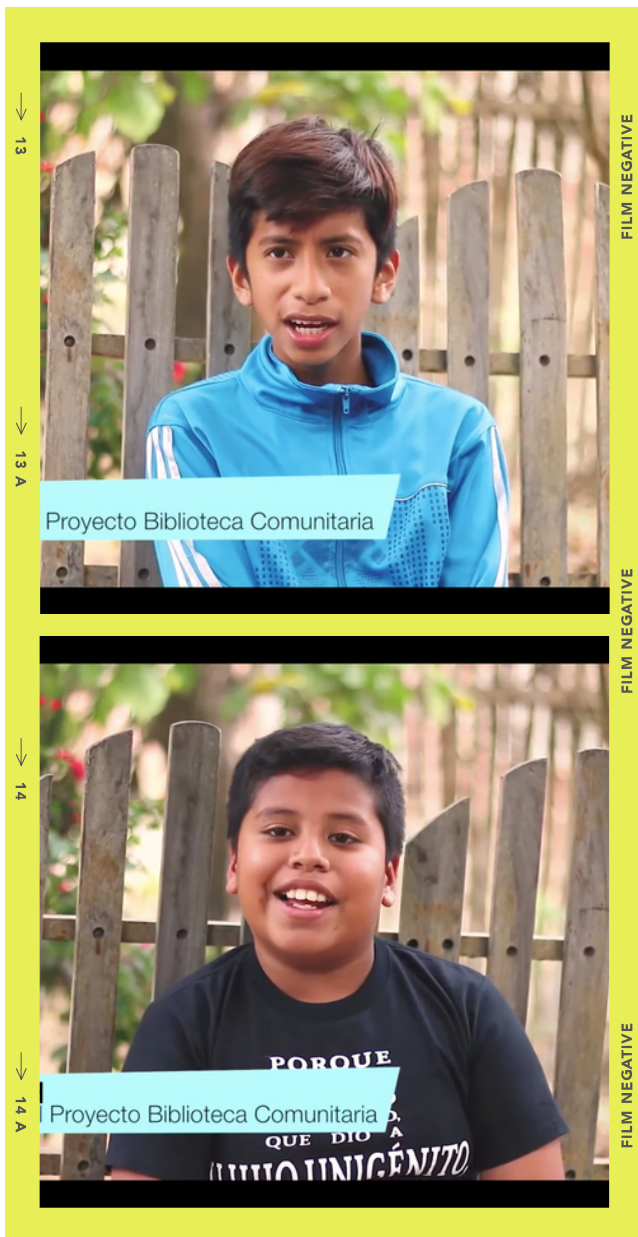
Melissa Contreras is 14 years old and a longtime member of Clara Luna. She started taking our English classes and attending Club de Niños, our reading program, at the age of 7. She says that she started coming here because her mother wanted her to learn English, and soon after starting those classes she enrolled in Club de Niños. This is a common occurrence at Clara Luna, since English is hugely sought after by parents in Puerto López. Once their kids are enrolled in English classes we pull them into Club de Niños! Melissa has participated in our Rainbow Days program, which teaches kids about life skills such as resilience, self-esteem, and healthy coping mechanisms in the face of trauma or setbacks. She has also participated in our GLOW/BRO (Girls Leading Our World/Boys Respecting Others) camp, which focuses on gender equality, values, communication, and sexual education. Melissa says that what she likes most about coming to Clara Luna is that she gets to read books and that Clara Luna helps many kids connect and communicate with people. Melissa is an avid reader in both English and Spanish and has shown great responsibility and leadership with the roles she takes on in Club de Jóvenes. We owe a great deal of our library's Dewey Decimal System organization to her! Melissa says that her plans for the future include staying in school and continuing to attend Clara Luna. We know she will continue to be a great student in high school, university and beyond and can't wait to see what she accomplishes.

Melissa Contreras, CLF Member from 2013.



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OUR LIBRARIANS



Meliss



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