

The Library of the Future: Meaningful Connectivity for Rural Colombia



Project Summary

In rural, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, conflict-affected, and vulnerable communities in Colombia, internet access does not always translate into learning, opportunity, or connection. SOLE Colombia is building The Library of the Future, a community-driven infrastructure that combines SOLE Labs, open-source tools, and self-organized learning so communities can use the internet collectively, ask big questions, share knowledge, solve local challenges, and connect with others. Your donation helps turn connectivity into agency, dignity, and opportunity.

Challenge

Across Colombia, many communities remain excluded from the full promise of the internet. In some places, connectivity is unstable, expensive, or simply unavailable. In others, people may technically be connected but still face barriers that keep them from using the internet in meaningful ways: lack of devices, low digital confidence, limited local content, unsafe digital environments, and few community spaces where technology can become useful for everyday life.

This gap is especially deep in rural, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, conflict-affected, and vulnerable territories. For a young person, it can mean fewer opportunities to learn, imagine a future, or access information. For women and girls, it can reinforce existing barriers to participation and leadership. For elders, it can deepen exclusion from digital services and

intergenerational exchange. For entire communities, it can limit their ability to tell their own stories, preserve knowledge, respond to local challenges, and connect with others.

SOLE Colombia's work has shown that connectivity becomes transformative when communities can use it collectively, safely, and in ways that are relevant to their own lives. **The Library of the Future responds to this challenge by shifting the focus from simply accessing the internet to creating the conditions for meaningful connectivity: affordable, available, safe, collective, supported by appropriate tools, and rooted in local questions and knowledge.** The model is grounded in SOLE Colombia's experience with self-organized learning, community networks, open-source tools, and SOLE Labs.

Solution

The Library of the Future is SOLE Colombia's community-driven model for reimagining how people learn, connect, and share knowledge using the internet. It brings together physical spaces, digital tools, and community-led methodologies to help historically excluded communities become active creators of knowledge, solutions, and digital futures.

At the heart of the model are three interconnected layers. **SOLE Labs** are community-designed spaces with shared connectivity and devices where people gather to explore questions, learn together, and experiment with digital tools. **SOLE Voltaje** is an open-source platform that offers online and offline resources, practical connectivity guides, learning tools, and stories of community innovation. The **SOLE Movement** is a growing network of more than 40 communities that practice self-organized learning, exchange experiences, and co-create the evolving narrative of The Library of the Future.

Through this model, communities do more than receive technology. They appropriate it, adapt it, question it, and use it to respond to their own realities. In a SOLE session, people gather around a Big Question, search for information, discuss what they find, present their ideas, and generate new questions. This process strengthens curiosity, confidence, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and digital autonomy.

The Library of the Future has already taken root in rural, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian territories in La Guajira and Cauca, where communities use SOLE Labs to explore topics such as women's empowerment, environmental sustainability, intergenerational learning, and local problem-solving. The model has also demonstrated its adaptability beyond Colombia, including implementation on the Thailand–Myanmar border.

Your donation helps expand this living infrastructure by supporting shared devices, connectivity, community activation, local facilitators, learning sessions, open-source tools, storytelling, and exchanges between communities. Each contribution helps communities move from passive digital access to meaningful participation.

Long-Term Impact

The Library of the Future helps communities reclaim agency over how they learn, connect, and imagine the future. Its long-term vision is to build other internets: plural, community-owned, open, and centered on dignity, care, curiosity, and collective learning.

By supporting this project, **donors help rural, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, conflict-affected, and vulnerable communities strengthen digital skills, access knowledge, preserve and share local wisdom, create relevant solutions, and connect with other communities facing similar challenges.** The model also opens pathways for women, youth, elders, educators, and community leaders to participate more actively in digital life, local decision-making, and collective problem-solving.

SOLE Colombia has already reached more than 400,000 people through more than a decade of work in self-organized learning and has supported more than 40 SOLE communities and three operational SOLE Labs in Colombia. Between 2022 and 2024, more than 2,481 users participated in SOLE activities; 87% reported improved technology skills, 90% reported stronger collaboration, 86% improved communication, and 88% showed higher engagement.

With continued support, **The Library of the Future can grow as a scalable, low-cost, community-owned model of meaningful connectivity.** It can help reduce digital exclusion, strengthen social cohesion, expand educational and livelihood opportunities, and contribute to reducing multidimensional poverty in communities that have been historically left behind.





Suggested Donation Options

\$25 - Supports materials for one SOLE session around a Big Question.

\$50 - Help a Community Tune In and begin its journey to The Library of the Future.

\$100 - Support a recognition visit to prepare a new SOLE Lab or activity within a SOLE Lab

\$250 - helps "plug in" a SOLE Lab through community training.

\$500 - helps "recharge" a SOLE Lab with advanced accompaniment.

\$1,000 - connects a community to the SOLE Movement and The Library of the Future.

\$5,000 - supports exchanges, storytelling, and the SOLE Lab Festival.

\$10,000 - helps build a new SOLE Lab in a rural or vulnerable community.