

## CONSEJO PUEBLA DE LECTURA: PROMOTING READING AND CONTACT WITH LITERATURE FOR KIDS AND YOUTHS

Consejo Puebla de Lectura (CPL) is a non-governmental organization that was established in 2000 in response to demands at the local, regional and national levels for promoting reading and carrying out research in this area.

We offer a child and young library as a public service with private funds<sup>1</sup>. It means we look every day for funds to support this public service. Attending kids and her families let us know that books and reading are important for all them: ones they don't have books in home and ones they have it.

Throughout its first ten years CPL has brought together and encouraged the participation of families, kids, and individuals from social organizations, schools and universities. Additionally we have been successful in raising support from the secretary of culture of the state of Puebla, which donated a handsome early XXth century residence. This residence is today the official location of CPL and it houses a library with more than 18,000 volumes that is open to the public.

Reading is part of the curriculum in basic education in Mexico (K-9). It is also a priority for public policy for culture in Mexico<sup>1</sup>. However it is only the past three decades that independent social organizations have emerged with the purpose of promoting reading among the public as well as discussing public policy and supporting government programs in this field.

Although Mexico is formally a federal republic, because of the size and importance of Mexico City, the capital, most existing organizations for promoting reading operate in this area. In addition, they are basically focused on private schools. In contrast, CPL operates in the state of Puebla, outside the capital city, and its chief priority is working with the kids, families, students and professors who make up the communities of public schools. Both individually and institutionally, they see in CPL a place for reading and talking about books. A sense of ownership toward CPL has gradually developed in the surrounding community as well as in academics and scientists interested in reading.

CPL was founded in November of 2000 with the specific purpose of organizing the 7<sup>th</sup> Latin American Conference for the Development of Reading and Writing, in collaboration with the International Reading Association. The Conference was a major event that in October 2002 brought together more than 3,000 participants from various countries in Latin America, most of whom were teachers, as well as academics and researchers from different institutions in the United States and Mexico. Since then, CPL has become a focus for the promotion of reading in Puebla capital and Puebla state, as well as other regions in Mexico. It has developed a variety of activities to put books with in the rich of, for training teachers in Puebla and other states.

Since 2002, CPL was organize or participate in other Conference: *National Reading Conference*, with SEP and Durango State, in 2004; *Literacy and Social Actors* in 2007,

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<sup>1</sup> The structure of government in Mexico regards the promotion of culture as an area for public policy. Therefore in both the federal and state cabinets there is a secretary of culture, charged with funding the arts and various other cultural activities.

2009, 2010; *Reading at the University*, with BUAP in 2009 and the next one conference will be in Aguascalientes, with the University at that state.

CPL has also played a major role in the selection of titles for book collections allocated to approximately 1 million public school classrooms throughout Mexico, a government program that has been implemented yearly since 2002. CPL Participation was in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

One important outcome of CPL's involvement in the book selection process is that it has brought together teachers, writers, academics and scientists who as a result of their participation in this multi-year effort have become integrated into the CPL community. Many of them today provide services to teachers, students and parents in the form of reading workshops and the promotion of science in basic education.

The public library is open 6 days a week and offers spaces for reading to the public in general and to students and teachers of basic education as well as high school. Four services areas are in our library: Non narrative or Informative, Literary, Kids books and "Bebeteca" or special area for babies and their parents or families.

Bebeteca area was born on May 10<sup>th</sup> of 2008 and since that date it growth up with more readers, more books, more space and, especially important for us, new spaces in low income neighborhoods where families open their houses for other families and kids.

Young students for public and private universities in Puebla offer philanthropic work in regular day activities and special programs. Mexico demand university student's participation as a way to offer voluntary services to community. CPL has a human capital on this youth team.

CPL has also been able to raise research funds for the study of good practice in reading in public schools as a means of monitoring the actual use of classroom book collections. As a result of this research, CPL has developed a reading guide for teachers which is now being used at the local level. This book is also being considered for publication by a commercial publisher.

Since 2007 CPL organize, whit a research center in Puebla (INAOE)<sup>ii</sup> and the state public university (BUAP)<sup>iii</sup> a spectacular reading fair (FILEC)<sup>iv</sup> with the participation of about 20,000 people every year. On February, during four days, INAOE open her gate to participate in the fair. See hand program in [www.consejopuebladelectura.org](http://www.consejopuebladelectura.org)

As part of its regular activities, CPL provides workshops for students and teachers. Individuals at CPL advise schools and other institutions on reading promotion and they are also active in local radio and television programs.

CPL team is only 17 members; three of them support regular vigilance and clean services for the building and books. Two of our team members have a handicap one is deaf and other is learning disabilities. As professionals, six of them are anthropologist, three of them have linguistic and literary studies, one is a specialist in library, another in administration and one more in education. A special resource of this team is her capacity and disposition to work in different areas and CPL's demands.

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<sup>i</sup> The primary funding sources for CPL every day actions, are product of our work. Year 2009 was good in find support for the actions: SM Foundation from Spain and Cultural local office support the Bebeteca project. CONACULTA support about 35% the cost of FILEC.

<sup>ii</sup> National Institute for Astrophysics, Optics and Electronics. [www.inaoep.mx](http://www.inaoep.mx)

<sup>iii</sup> Autonomus University of Puebla. [www.buap.mx](http://www.buap.mx)

<sup>iv</sup> International Fair of Reading. See: [www.consejopuebladelectura.org](http://www.consejopuebladelectura.org)