



## **Sarah's Rural Library Fund**

### **Family Library Box campaign**

#### **The Big Give Christmas Challenge Awards 2020**

Target £2250 Amount raised with gift aid during The Big Give week £2,537

As a small UK based charity supporting the Rural Libraries Network in the Andes of Cajamarca, Peru, we were very pleased to be given the opportunity to take part in the Big Give Christmas Campaign 2020. Sarah's Rural Library Fund in the UK is run by volunteers as is the Rural Libraries Network in Cajamarca, Peru. As a volunteer organisation all the funds go directly towards our aims of bringing literacy and education to the indigenous farming communities of the High Andes.

Sarah's Rural Library Fund are the only organisation funding the core costs for this inspiring work.

From the day we were accepted for the Big Give in June we started to plan how to increase our online presence as COVID had resulted in all other events being cancelled. Historically Sarah's Rural Library Fund has funded the Rural Libraries Network in Peru through a variety of events with participants and supporters who are connected through the trustees. However we knew that we needed to increase our base to raise funds in these unusual times.

#### **The Big Idea – generate interest through directly contact with Library members in Peru**

Firstly, in May, the trustees used zoom to hold an initial discussion with the members of the executive committee of Rural Libraries in Peru. This was brilliant as it was the first time some of the trustees in the UK had 'met' face to face with the librarians despite the charity's work over the past 10 years. We discussed the needs of the Rural Libraries community during COVID as Peru had been badly hit and the country was in a state of emergency.

The executive committee in Peru had met virtually and decided the priority was getting books to those families who had little technology and few books at home. There are 40 co-ordinators who are responsible for a 500 libraries and librarians in total, all of whom are volunteers. The librarians know their readers well and could encourage vulnerable families to sign up for a family library box which would be sent to them directly. This would support the children with their home learning for those who had no access to school through the internet and no books at home.

## How did we do it?

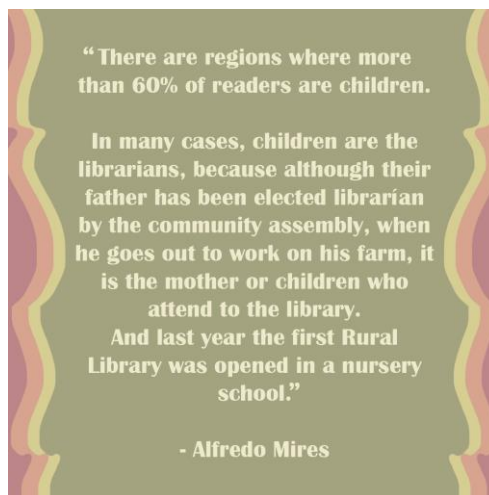
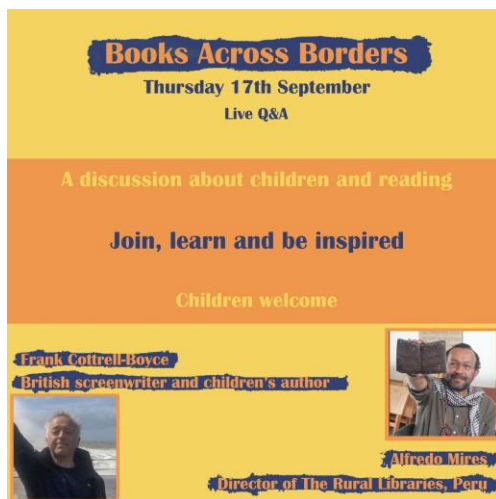
We held our first webinar on 9th July where our regular supporters could hear from Alfredo Mires, Executive Director of The Rural Libraries in Cajamarca talk about how the community libraries work and to enable long term supporters to put questions directly to Alfredo.

33 people watched this webinar directly and 83 more watched it on Facebook live. The feedback was very good. The audience wanted to know how they could help during the COVID pandemic so we introduced the idea of the Family Library Box campaign and told them about The Big Give. 11 people offered to be our pledgers.

## What next?

We took the advice from the excellent support documents and webinars on the Big Give website, analysed all our contacts and thought about the stories we could tell.

My 10 year old nephew Sam wrote to his favourite children's author Frank Cottrell-Boyce and asked him to support us with our next webinar 'Books across Borders'. Frank agreed and we set up the webinar which would be a discussion between Frank in the UK and Alfredo in Peru on the general themes of children and reading in both countries. This enabled us to start promoting the webinar to a wider group of people and to generate a wider interest in our charity.



This was also very successful as we had brought in 2 volunteer interpreters who could do simultaneous translation to enable a more flowing discussion. We had 100 people watching from 8 different countries including Peru, Colombia, Canada, USA, France and Italy. This was increased with a further 134 webinar recording views and a subsequent 110 views on You Tube.



Feedback included;

*'Interesting and inspiring speakers.'* *'It was a really good discussion.'*

*'Wow this is an amazing and far reaching conversation on the subject of reading.. between Frank Cotrrell Boyce and Alfredo Mires'*

*'From Peru - Congratulations Senor Alfredo for sharing his wisdom and deep reflections on reading and books linked to the Rural Library of the Cajamarca Network.'*

*'I'm watching now and is wonderful - I will be sharing it. I've had to take a little break to recover from Frank's story about the woman who read Heidi - I burst into tears at that point.'*

At the end of the webinar we were able to tell the audience about the Christmas Family Library Box Campaign and explain how the Big Give worked.

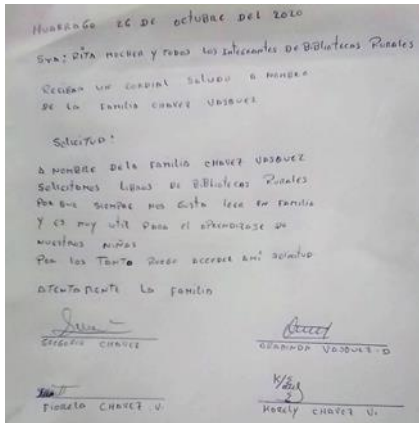
We used webinar content from Frank Cottrell Boyce who has a large twitter following to explain the importance of reading and this generated more visits to watch the recording of the webinar which we had put on our new charity YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyvPlIcHdWA> Using another volunteer to add translated subtitles to this had really helped our ability to use short clips efficiently.

### **The campaign stories**

We started planning the campaign stories. Following a push to recruit young trustees, (half our trustees are under 35) one of the trustees is now our social media editor and was able to advise on the roll out and content of our posts.

### **Story 1 – Application letters for a Family Library Box**

Due to our increased connectivity with the office in Peru we were able to request photos and videos of the potential recipients of the Family Library Boxes. The families had to make a written request if they wanted to receive one of the boxes detailing who would benefit, why they needed it and what impact the Family Library box would have. The letter had to be signed by the whole family.



We were able to use photos of these letters with photos and videos of the families to tell the story of who were the beneficiaries of the campaign.

### Story 2 - Books change lives

We used short clips from our webinars to explain how important books are to the communities of the Rural Andes. We used the story of Zelma from an indigenous farming family who had appeared in the 'Books across Borders' webinar. She is a long term beneficiary of the libraries and is now at university thanks to the education provided by the books of the Rural Libraries network and the encouragement of the librarians.

'I learnt to read with books from the Rural Libraries and I then became a librarian. Being part of the network has helped my development into a university student. The inspiration of the rural libraries in my life has been very important' - Zelma



### Story 3 - Supporting families of children with disabilities.

All the family have signed this request for a family library box. 'We love to read and we know it is good for our formation and for our future. We have no access to books from the library where we live.' - Dona Angela. The books in the Family Library box have disabled themes and characters to raise awareness and reduce discrimination in the rural communities.



#### Story 4 Maxima Acuna – Knowledge is Power

Maxima Acuna, an indigenous farmer, won the Goldman Environmental prize in 2016 for standing up against the world's biggest goldmine. She's a member of the Rural Libraries community, and has been using the books to help fight her cause for over 10 years.



#### Story 5 - The Family Library boxes

We started tracking the books from packing to delivery with daily tweets asking for regular photos from the librarians in Peru as they packed and delivered the boxes.



## The Big Give Week analytics

Instagram, Facebook,- one paid add emails, twitter

Using gifs, short videos, music, stories, 2x the impact

Number of followers before and after on Facebook, twitter, insta

We then sent an individualised Christmas and thank you card to all new donors.



## Overall achievements

- Even though we were not chosen by a sponsor with the Big Give week and subsequent donations we raised a total of £4500 with Gift Aid - enough for 30 Family Library Boxes
- We increased our online presence significantly and have made links to other small international charities based in the UK
- We introduced webinars and learnt a lot about social media
- We have a new YouTube channel
- We reached a much bigger world audience
- We increased our number of monthly donors by 10%
- We gained 16 new donors out of 33 and regular donors gave double their usual donations
- We increased our direct contact with the Rural Library community and the beneficiaries.