

IBBY-Yamada Fund

Project reports 2025

IBBY Dominican Republic

BIBLIOCAB: rotating library of
books



Every child has the right to become a reader

FINAL REPORT BIBLIOCAB' PROJECT – 2025 Year

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW
2. OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS
3. ACTIVITIES AND METHOD
4. TARGET GROUPS AND SCOPE
5. QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND INDICATORS OF CHANGE
6. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS
7. SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUITY
8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IBBY Section : Dominican Republic
Project title : BIBLIOCAB'
Implementation date : October 2023

02/27/2026
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OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT LAUNCHED IN OCTOBER 2023

The BIBLIOCAB' project primarily aims to encourage the love of reading and motivation to read through a monthly rotation system of varied books for all ages in the 48 rural elementary and primary schools in school district 14-2 of Cabrera, on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. This covers a territory of 270 square kilometers, with 4,090 children enrolled during the 2024-2025 school year.

There is a significant gap in access to reading between urban and rural populations. In many rural households, resources are limited, and the love of reading is rarely developed, often because the parents themselves cannot read. Therefore, the first contact with books frequently occurs at school, starting at age three.

During our first visit, many schools had very few or no books at all for elementary level.

Additionally, the town's only library was destroyed several years ago and has not yet been replaced. The current mayor shows little interest in setting up a space.

The broader objective of the project is therefore to contribute to the development of a sustainable reading culture in Cabrera, at the primary then secondary school level, and in the longer term, through the creation of a school library in the heart of the village.

In parallel, we are also working to facilitate children's access to educational, artistic, and sports activities.

Definition of our “Mission, Vision, and Values”:

VISION: To enable children and adolescents to access reading, educational, artistic, and sports activities, and open the doors of imagination, knowledge, and personal development through human values, to encourage them to discover their own potential, strengthen their self-esteem, and become actors of a respectful, confident, and prepared generation for the future.

MISSION: To establish and maintain long-term a regular free lending system of books in multiple languages, rotating between Cabrera's rural schools throughout the school year. Create a library for children and adolescents in the heart of the village and set up a program of varied activities promoting their development.

VALUES: Respect for children's and adolescents' rights, self-esteem and confidence, personal development, exploration and understanding of the world, to enable them to face challenges, achieve their own balance, and freedom of action.

OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

- MAIN OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED :

Spark interest in books and encourage the love of reading from the start of schooling in Cabrera's 48 rural schools.

Set up a monthly rotation system of a varied selection of quality books adapted to all ages, to encourage reading and track student progress.

Involve teaching staff in the management, distribution, and proper use of books, providing support during each visit.

Allow children to take books home, benefiting other family members as well.

Distribute and circulate 1,800 books during the 2024/2025 school year, benefiting approximately 4,090 students.

Ensure an equitable number of books per school, based on its size.

Regularly add books in English and French.

- WRITING CLUB and YOUTUBE PODCAST :

The Reading Club project is temporarily suspended due to Mr. Juan Colón's unavailability, and the podcast is canceled due to restrictions on broadcasting images of minors.

- WORKSHOP "LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AND STORYTELLING ART" FOR TEACHERS :

We organized a full-day "Library Management and Storytelling" Workshop on 16.03.2025 with 40 participants (DREAM PROJECT).

- TEMPORARY LIBRARY :

The Education District Director, Ms. Austria Bonilla, had reserved a space in the multipurpose hall to host the children's library and the teachers' book fund. After announcing a lack of space, we turned to Cabrera Town Hall. After months, a commission was finally created, with no results to date.

In parallel, we are working on funding from a Canadian foundation that wants to create a library in Cabrera. Due to the lack of space allocation from the town hall, we will start in March 2026 with a Reading Point in a private space in the heart of the village. Collected books are being recorded in a database, and shelves have been purchased. This space will initially be dedicated to the 800 secondary school students in the village.

PROJECT METHOD CHRONOGRAM

1. PROJECT PRESENTATION TO THE EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

- a) Formal letter addressed to the director
- b) Meeting with the director and the preschool, primary, and language program officers
- c) Signature of a written authorization or agreement with the Educational District, allowing access to schools and the ethical publication of photos and videos

2. COLLECTION AND RECEPTION OF BOOKS AND TEACHING MATERIALS

- a) Collection and purchase of books in Spanish, English, and French, classified by reading level
- b) Organizing the transport of donations from abroad
- c) Sharing BIBLIOCAB's objective with all parties already involved
- d) Checking the content, quality, and condition of each book
- e) Labeling each book with a note indicating it is on loan from BIBLIOCAB and must be returned to the nearest school if lost
- f) Sorting and packing books by reading level, based on the profile of each school

3. SCHOOL AND TEACHER SURVEY AND CONTACT

- a) School list: enrollment, address, ID number, location, names of principals and contacts via WhatsApp, language and PE teachers, etc.
- b) Identifying the main contact for BIBLIOCAB activities related to Spanish-language books
- c) Coordination with language teachers
- d) Virtual or in-person meeting with all reference teachers to present the concept, book rotation system, logistics, and motivate them

4. LOGISTICAL TOOLS

- a) Creation of a WhatsApp group with the reference teachers
- b) Completion of a form with school data and specific needs
- c) Creation of an Excel file compiling all data: first, last, and next delivery dates
- d) Mapping the schools with their profiles
- e) Classification of schools (awaiting form, awaiting books, or with a visit scheduled)

5. ROUTE PLANNING

- a) Designing the most efficient routes to reduce cost, time, and environmental impact
- b) Planning the visit schedule taking school holidays into account

6. COMMUNICATION WITH EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

- a) Posting the full schedule in the WhatsApp group
- b) Checking with the District for any planned activities (e.g., Micro-Centre)
- c) Notifying schools a few days in advance of each visit
- d) Asking contacts to gather the books beforehand to save time during the visit

- e) Awaiting confirmation from the schools
- f) Confirming the visit to all schools on the same route the day before – awaiting replies
- g) Confirming with the first school when leaving home – awaiting validation
- h) Always confirming with the next school when leaving the previous one, so they can organize themselves and be ready

7. FIRST BOOK DELIVERY

- a) The quantity is determined based on school size, book availability, and languages taught
- b) A 30-minute session is scheduled with all students - requiring a table and a large enough space
- c) Goal: to capture students' attention and establish a bond of trust and mutual respect
- d) Ensuring students understand the concept and asking them to explain it back
- e) Once understood, a formal pact is established between BIBLIOCAB and the students:
 - **BIBLIOCAB:** to provide diverse and appealing books and return each month
 - **STUDENTS:** to take care of and read the books
- f) Books are placed on a table for students and teachers to browse and touch - it must be a magical moment!

8. FOLLOW-UP REGULAR VISITS

- a) Sorting and packing books according to reading levels and school profiles
- b) Quantity determined by school size and book availability
- c) Friendly and empathetic conversations with students about reading, favorite books, and needs
- d) Recognizing readers and boosting their self-esteem – motivation is essential
- e) Strengthening emotional connection to build trust in the program
- f) In large schools, visiting only one class, based on teacher consultation
- g) Conversations with teachers about the program's impact and emerging needs
- h) Participation in internal school events upon invitation
- i) Organizing additional educational visits and donations
- j) Organizing workshops (Cultural Routes of the BIJRD)
- k) Reorganizing books returned by the last school
- l) Checking the condition of books and repairing them if needed

9. MONTHLY ROUTINE

- a) Repeating the process from section 8 about 7–8 times a year, from September to early May, based on the school calendar
 - b) Books are always passed on to the next school on the route. At the end of a route, returned books are identified and passed on to the first school of the next route to avoid repetition
 - c) Sometimes, students from the first integrated schools alert us that they already received a title (which shows they care). In that case, we make the effort to fetch a different book from the car, so they feel valued by BIBLIOCAB
 - d) On average, books circulate for over a full school year, since each route covers more than 7 schools with 7 deliveries per year
- For example, a batch of books delivered in September to the first school on a route will

reach the last school by the end of May

10. CREATION OF A BOOK FUND AND A CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

- a) Once the number of books allows, a fund managed by the Educational District can be set up, so teachers can borrow specific titles or exchange books without waiting for the next rotation
- b) Likewise, it is recommended to establish a children's library to allow children and teens more frequent access to books
- c) Volunteers and District technicians should be designated as staff

11. DONATION COLLECTION - VOLUNTEERS

- a) Family and friends
- b) Through FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM accounts
- c) Support from some IBBY Dominicana members
- d) Villa ANACAONA and its committed guests and other hotels or villas
- e) Foreigners' community in Cabrera
- f) By reviewing content and announcements on social media
- g) Publishing houses and authors of children's books and youth literature
- h) Rotary Clubs of Les Sables d'Olonne (France) and Nagua (international level)
- i) Various local, national, and international foundations
- j) Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Major obstacles:

- **Inadequate school infrastructure**
Schools lack the resources and space to organize and make books accessible to students. A low-cost solution could be a cart to transport books from classroom to classroom or suitable shelves to create an attractive reading corner for the small ones.
- **Teacher motivation and training**
The creation of a “magical reading space” remains rare. It is essential to motivate teachers and provide them with an effective organizational model, including a secure book lending system.
- **Very high cost of books in the Dominican Republic**
The price of a single book can easily reach 25 USD. The average cost of the new books we were able to purchase - with a 50% discount in some cases (Lexus Editores)- is 9 USD, compared to 4 USD (including shipping) for so-called "used" books in very good condition, purchased from other countries or international websites.
- **Reduction of the circuits number**
We had to reduce the number of planned monthly circuits from 10 to 7, as it turned out that all the schools refused to receive new books at the end of May, saying that the students had a very busy schedule and that the available books would be sufficient until the start of the new school year in September. The younger students will be on vacation starting June 11, 2025. We face the same pattern at the end of December 2025. (See calendar)

Alternatives et solutions :

- Participation in the **Santo Domingo Book Fair in September** to buy second-hand books
- Establishment of an alliance with some **IBBY committees in the Caribbean and Central America** to promote regional synergies. We are aware that this long-term project would require the agreement and active support of the IBBY Dominicana committee. I am traveling to Bogota in April 2026.
- **Training program for 8 centers with libraries and librarians** conducted by Mrs. Farah Hallal, with the formal approval of MINERD and Mrs. Austria Bonilla – has to be confirmed

TARGET GROUPS AND SCOPE

Here's an overview of the resources provided in the 48 schools:

Date	Number of books	Number of schools	Students impacted
January 2025	640	25	1,369
End of May 2025	1,423	46 rural + 2 village	4,090*
Library project	400	Village center	Local population

* Student numbers may change at any time.

As planned, since September 2025, we have been gradually increasing the number of books in the larger schools and in some smaller schools, which, in fact, prefer to work with the same books over a two-month period.

The goal of reaching a total rotation of 1,800 books will be exceeded in January 2026, with the next batch of books arriving from Canada, Argentina, France, and Santo Domingo.

Here is the current breakdown of books distributed, by school, with the following details:

Name of educational center

Number of students

Age group

Quantity of books distributed

Quantity of books for the CM2 level (at the students' request)

Quantity of books in English

Date of our first visit

Date of the last book rotation

EL CALLEJON	35	3-9	40	X		15/11/23	12/11/25
AGUSTIN CAMILO / LA JAGUITA DEL PUJADOR	66	3-11	40	24		25/01/24	12/11/25
LA JAGUA	11	3-8	16			19/03/24	07/10/25
E. GARCIA FERNANDEZ / SANTA MARIA	55	3-11	32	7		22/01/25	07/10/25
RAMON PERALTA PEREZ / SAN RAFAEL	261	3-12	70	X	30	18/04/24	12/11/25
BENITO RUIZ GARCIA / LA TIERRA	14	3-11	28			10/10/23	12/11/25
ANDRES HILARIO / DOÑA JULIA	32	3-9	32			05/03/25	12/11/25
PAULINO PAREDES / LOS PLACERES PAYITA	135	3-12	60	0		18/04/24	12/11/25
COLASA VASQUEZ DOMINGUEZ BAOPA PUEBLO NUEVO	82	4-12	40	8		28/01/25	13/11/25
SIMEON VILLAR GUZMAN / LINEA QUINCE	67	3-12	40	12		28/01/25	13/11/25
EDUVIGES BRAVO / BAOPA DEL PINAL	114	3-11	50	11	10	18/09/24	13/11/25
ANSELMO J. DE LA CRUZ LOS PAJUILES	14	3-8	10			28/01/25	13/11/25
ANACLETO ESCOLASTICO DIAZ / PAYITA	447	3-12	60	10	10	05/12/24	13/11/25
RAUL MARTINEZ HERNANDEZ / PUERTO RICO A PIE	104	3-11	40			18/04/24	08/10/25
LOS PAJONES	37	3-13	32	X		07/02/25	13/11/25
MARIA VARGAS / OCHOA / BAOPA	30	3-8	21			04/12/24	13/11/25
DOMINGO ABREU / EL ZAPOTE	22	3-9	30			15/02/24	14/11/25
JUAN FRANCISCO BONILLA ALONZO / CAYA CLARA	13	3-8	20			12/10/23	14/11/25
RAMON MARTINEZ BATISTA / CATALINA ARRIBA	69	3-13	50	7	10	19/10/23	14/11/25
RAMON SANCHEZ GIL / LOMA DE LA JAGUA	5	5-8	5			14/11/23	09/10/25
RAFAEL ALCEQUIEZ GUZMAN / CATALINA ABAJO	79	4-12	35	15	10	10/10/23	14/11/25
EL BRETON	7	3-9	15			30/10/23	09/10/25
MAXIMO ACOSTA / ABREU	227	3-12	20	X		02/04/25	
JESUS MARIA FALETTE / LOS ROMERILLOS	55	3-11	40	8	5	27/01/25	14/10/25
SIRILO ALCEQUIEZ MARTINEZ / CRUCE DE LA AMAPOLA	11	3-7	10			21/03/25	18/11/25
LA PIONIA	48	4-11	40	5	5	27/01/25	18/11/25
BEJUCO ALAMBRE	138	3-13	30	X		05/03/24	18/11/25
SAN JOSE DE PASTRANA	40	3-12	40	13	5	05/03/24	18/11/25
SECTOR MELLA	25	3-12	26			07/11/23	18/11/25
EFIGENIA GARCIA SANCHEZ / JOBO CLARO	18	3-13	10	10	5	05/03/24	18/11/25
LA CABIRMA	47	3-13	20			05/03/24	18/11/25
ALFONSO RODRIGUEZ / POZO HONDO	12	4-9	10			04/03/25	19/11/25
DILIA ALTAGRACIA NUÑEZ / LOS CACAOS	6	5-9	12			15/11/23	19/11/25
BENIGNO MORONTA / LOS PINITOS	7	5-9	22	X	5	07/12/23	19/11/25
DOMINGO CONFESOR MOSQUEA / LA CAPILLA	102	4-11	40	10	10	04/03/25	19/11/25
ANDRES PEREZ / LAS ABEJAS	12	3-10	24			25/01/24	19/11/25
FELICIANO MEDINA / LA VEREDA	12	4-8	22			15/11/23	19/11/25
ALFREDO GONZALES / POZO AMARILLO	57	3-11	40	4	10	03/12/24	15/10/25
PASCUAL TAVERAS / EL NARANJITO	13	4-8	16			16/09/24	04/09/25
ERNESTO NUÑEZ / LOS VALLES	45	3-11	35	X	1	24/11/23	17/10/25
PR. AURELINA DEL ROSARIO DE LA CRUZ / LOMA ALTA	61	3-13	40	X	5	04/03/24	17/10/25
ANA JOAQUINA VILLA / EL BROCAL	26	4-11	35	8		21/02/25	12/11/25
HERMANAS MIRABAL / CAÑO AZUL	161	3-11	70			05/12/24	20/11/25
RAMON ANTONIO TEJADA / LA ENTRADA	159	4-12	50	X		05/12/24	20/11/25
JOSEFA ACOSTA / LA LLANADA	77	3-12	17			24/03/25	20/11/25
EL JAMO	352	3-14	50		10	06/05/25	20/11/25
ARISTIDES FIALLO CABRAL / 16 DE AGOSTO	586	3-14	70	X	10	19/05/25	20/11/25
LUCAS ABREU EUSEBIO / EL PUERTO	54	4-10	40		10	07/03/25	20/11/25

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND INDICATORS OF CHANGE

Collaboration avec le District d'Éducation 14-02 de Cabrera

1. Collaboration with the Education District 14-02 of Cabrera

Since its creation, BIBLIOCAB' has benefited from the support of technicians from the Education District 14-02 of Cabrera, as well as its new Director, Ms. Austria Bonilla. A written partnership agreement is currently being finalized in August 2025.

We are truly very satisfied!

The strongest impact is seen among young children (around 3 years old) and early readers, who are especially enthusiastic about discovering new books at each visit. They often enjoy sharing what they've read. In small schools, where we can speak with each child, progress is very visible.

As planned, we have established the title of "Ambassador" since September: at each visit a new student becomes the representative of BIBLIOCAB' and receives a badge which gives him full authority over the management of the books.

In larger schools, due to lack of time, BIBLIOCAB's interaction is usually limited to one or two classes, in agreement with the teachers.

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS – RELATION TO BOOKS

- The youngest children love board books.
- Young readers are drawn to science and animal topics.
- Older children prefer short, varied books.
- Monthly book rotations stimulate a desire to read quickly.
- Some schools allow students to take books home; others don't, due to fear of loss. Only a few books have been lost or damaged.
- The introduction of the book carts has completely changed the situation. The books are easily identifiable, the children know where to find them, and this has reduced the number of lost books (thanks to their identification, they very often end up reappearing...).
- Among the sixth-grade students, some admit they don't like to read. However, we have managed to capture the attention of the majority of students by allowing them to choose a book themselves from a selection, and for which they are responsible.
- Some children ask their teacher, "When will the book lady come back?" Some prepare drawings or short stories for us. They have now grasped the concept of book rotation.
- Some wish to keep their book a little longer, which we gladly allow.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES (mostly in large schools)
Excellent feedback in small schools	Limited impact due to time constraints
Strong emotional bond with children	Still insufficient number of books
Children's motivation and curiosity	Lack of dedicated reading spaces
Spontaneous interactions at each visit	Poor book management
Older children want to continue reading in high school	Lack of time in an already packed school schedule
Student initiatives (writing texts)	Difficulty in mobilizing collaborators
Recognition from teachers	Teacher involvement varies *

Teacher Responsibility:

Teacher engagement is crucial for the project's success. Differences often stem from individual personality, vocation, or motivation. Two examples:

- **Case #1:** A whole class engages comfortably with the books, showing evidence of effective educational supervision. The content is clearly understood, and each child is immersed in their reading.
- **Case #2:** A substitute teacher made her 7 students feel so guilty after losing a book that they no longer want to receive any. We hope the rotation will resume in September 2025 with the regular teacher. On our last visit, the children looked sad and frozen.

It's difficult to give specific examples; it's more of a general evolution, a change in attitude, and the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust.

The teachers have adapted and learned to make the most of the books they receive regularly. They are all extremely grateful for the changes brought about by BIBLIOCAB'. The district education technicians are full of praise for BIBLIOCAB's impact on reading in educational centers.

Furthermore, BIBLIOCAB' has become a springboard, enabling specific initiatives such as the renovation of a school, a substantial donation of sports equipment for schools, the organization of various competitions, and participation as a judge in the International Language Olympiad. Some volunteers regularly offer their assistance to English teachers, etc.

We are awaiting confirmation from the BIJRD – National Youth Library – regarding the organization of three consecutive days for their "Ruta Cultural" event, benefiting seven of the largest schools, with a whole range of reading-related activities.

This is just one example among many.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

You will find attached the main results of the BIBLIOCAB' evaluation by the 48 schools.

It is still a little early to measure the impact of BIBLIOCAB', as we do not have benchmarks on which to base comparisons. For your information, here are the official results of the DISTRICT 14-02 READING FESTIVAL - between September 2024 and May 2025:



SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUITY

In conclusion, the main objectives of BIBLIOCAB' remain unchanged:

To maintain the long-term distribution of quality books and enriching content in Spanish, English, and French in the elementary and primary schools of Cabrera.

To become an inspiring pilot project for the majority of students in Dominican public schools, starting from their first year at school.

BIBLIOCAB' is a long-term project:

In a medium-sized school, a child who benefits from the book rotation from their first year at school will have had access to 2,016 books (9 years * 7 rotations/year * 32 books) before the age of 13.

He will then have had access to an additional 3,000 books during his secondary school years (6 years × 5 rotations/year × 100 books),

for a total of 5,016 books.

What has evolved very positively is the willingness of the Educational District and most teachers in Cabrera to collaborate, as well as their recognition of the relevance and tangible results of the project.

It is now clear that the administrative team of District 14-02 is fully willing to manage the project in case of a major impediment to its founder (training is still necessary).

This new dynamic encourages us to persevere by integrating, starting in October 2025, the first-year students of all high schools in Cabrera - around 400 additional students.

It will be a slightly different concept: a library, still operating in "rotation" mode, will remain available to the students for as long as necessary so they can choose a book that sparks their interest.

We will also continue to increase the number of books in English and French for all levels (up to the Baccalaureate level) with each rotation, as donations come in. Currently, district 14-02 in Cabrera hosts 2,687 English students and 1,966 French students.

Once the project is stable and the network of donors expanded, we plan to submit the BIBLIOCAB' project to the Nagua Regional Directorate, which oversees 363 schools (48 of which are already integrated), most of which are also located in rural areas. BIBLIOCAB' could very well become an inspiring pilot project for a large number of students, since the Dominican Republic has 32 provinces with more than 5,000 schools with a similar profile.

Attached you will find our report addressed to a Canadian foundation that wishes to financially support BIBLIOCAB' in the implementation of its second phase, which aims to continue distributing books to the 6,000 students in Cabrera, from kindergarten through high school.

As part of this collaboration, and with the support of Mr. Juan Colon, we were able to negotiate with Ediciones Unidas del Caribe, through its president, Mr. Robin Lara, a significant price discount of 35% for new books with quality content (see attached Excel file).

Ediciones Unidas del Caribe

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the **IBBY Foundation** for its trust, demonstrated through the **YAMADA FUND award**. This support, beyond financial assistance, has provided invaluable legitimacy to the emerging **BIBLIOCAB'** project, enabling it to gain credibility and open promising doors, both in Santo Domingo and internationally. We have gone from a humble individual project by a French resident based in Cabrera to the status of a recognized project for a foundation with international prestige.

I am also very grateful to **the members of IBBY Dominicana**, particularly **Elizabeth Balaguer, Dulce Elvira de los Santos, Geraldine de Santis, Virginia Read Escobal, and Farah Hallal**, who, like kind guiding stars, have supported during the different steps of this project. Their commitment has allowed **BIBLIOCAB'** to take flight while establishing a solid and balanced foundation.

My thanks also go to **Villa ANACAONA** in Cabrera, to **Alexandra MacDonald**, and especially to **Blanca Garcia**, its administrator, who gave us her full trust from the beginning with an initial donation of books, and especially Blanca Garcia, whose daily involvement on a personal level, her economic contribution and her work in raising awareness among some of the villa's guests, are a valuable support.

Thank you to **each contributor to the success of BIBLIOCAB'**, all of you have enabled me to light the path to reading for thousands of children.

Nicole Lambert