



**IFLA Section  
Environment,  
Sustainability and Libraries**



**DE GRUYTER**

## **Proposal for IFLA Green Library Award 2021**

**BiblioVerde, a space to share and learn in harmony with nature**

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## I. Summary

This report presents the *Biblioverde* project's characterization, a space developed by the Cuban Association of Librarians, Villa Clara Branch, where the population, in a general sense, can acquire information, skills, and knowledge about horticulture and sustainable gardening through talks, workshops, and conversations. The meetings will be held monthly. They will provide information on plants' care, ways of cultivation, and ideas and design suggestions for gardening (external or in pots) and the construction of gardens at home. Space contributes to reinforcing the library's performance in several Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 16, of the UN 2030 Agenda, as well as in those of the national program to confront Climate Change, called *Tarea Vida*.

The project started in August 2018, has the collaboration of several institutions in the territory for workshops and talks. It has its self-financing mechanism, which enables its sustainability. From the same, the general public is served. However, it works mainly with children and young people, and the participation of school librarians is reinforced, for their training, as multipliers in their respective work centers.

The project's general objective is to ensure that residents of the city or visitors have the relevant information and knowledge for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature. In this way, the main results are the improvement in consumption habits, the elevation of the recycling culture as a mechanism for the protection of the environment, the reinforcement of the role of the librarian in promoting the care of the environment, and high visibility of the library and its librarians in the community, considering it as a meeting point and socialization.

## II. Background

### a. *About the Cuban Association of Librarians, Villa Clara Branch*

The Cuban Association of Librarians (ASCUBI) is a non-governmental organization of a sociocultural nature, constituted in base delegations in all the provinces of the country. All the professionals who work in libraries, information centers, archives, and others are grouped. Information institutions, regardless of their degree. It is constituted in accordance with the provisions of Law no. 54 of December 27, 1985, as a legal entity representative of librarians throughout the country.

Its purpose is to contribute to the enrichment and advancement of culture, reading, and the increase of national awareness about the role of libraries as fundamental elements for developing the person, the community and therefore of the people in general.

In 1986, the Villa Clara Subsidiary of the said organization was constituted, which in its more than 30 years of the constitution has generated a space where professionals in the sector share their experiences and acceptable practices, as well as has been the means for the establishment of networks of collaboration and professional and social exchange.

The Association is currently developing a set of actions to strengthen library work in the region, raising the sense of belonging of librarians with their institution and interrelation with the community. Actions that include the development of cultural, recreational and educational activities, both for librarians and other society members. Among these actions is the development of the *BiblioVerde project: in harmony with nature*, to generate in the community a space to inform, share and learn about sustainable horticulture and gardening, thus stimulating responsible consumption and protection environment.

### **b. The BiblioVerde project and the SDGs**

The implementation of the *BiblioVerde project*, which starts from identifying the primary deficiencies in the information and training order of the user community, encourages their active participation in the workshops, courses and services that are offered as part of this, thus facilitating, a favorable environment for innovation, creativity and the acquisition of knowledge that is reverted to caring for the environment. In this way, its general and specific objectives respond to:

#### General-purpose

- Establish a space to share information and knowledge about urban agriculture, sustainable gardening and environmental protection.

#### Specific objectives

- Promote the use of existing documentary collections in libraries and other information resources, related to the subject.
- Contribute to the formation of responsible consumption habits.
- Promote recycling, recovery, reuse of materials and respect for the environment.

This is intended to achieve self-awareness, mainly among children and young people, of caring for the environment and establishing networks and collaboration channels for access, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge on the subject. To achieve this, a set of defined activities will be developed and complemented with other actions, which in the very dynamics of project development require their implementation. Among the main defined activities there are:

<b>Characterized activity</b>	<b>Synopsis</b>	<b>Frequency of performance</b>
Let's talk about...	Lectures are given by researchers on topics such as sustainable gardening, urban agriculture, flower therapy, urban landscape, medicinal plants, the art of bonsai, etc.	Monthly
Step by Step	Presentation of ideas, tricks and solutions, mainly from recyclable resources.	Bimonthly
The plant of the month	Presentation of a plant species, its characteristics, way of cultivation, including its commercialization	Monthly
The green package	Informational Package, digital, with information on the topic addressed.	Daily

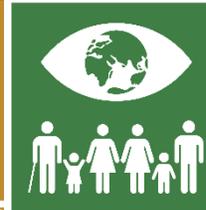
Also, as part of the project, the following dates are commemorated

- **January 26:** World Environmental Education Day
- **March 3:** World Wildlife Day
- **March 21:** World Forestry Day.
- **April 22:** International Earth Day.
- **May 17:** World Recycling Day.
- **June 5:** World Environment Day
- **June 28:** World Tree Day
- **1st Monday of October:** World Habitat Day
- **October 16:** World Food Day

- **October 31:** World Cities Day
- **December 5:** World Environmental Volunteering Day

In these events, various activities are carried out, among the most significant: the creation of the Science Circle: Information and Nature, with elementary school children, a children's creation contest, My house is my City, a paper recycling campaign and cardboard, and another to achieve a sustainable and resilient city, planting trees in the city's forest, a culinary contest: From the furrow to the table: flavor and tradition and the excursion: Discover nature as a family, with a visit to the Garden botanist of the Central University of Las Villas.

Likewise, the project has considered and taken the UN SDGs as one of its development frameworks. Contributing, fundamentally, to reinforcing libraries' performance following the Sustainable Development Goals, numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 16. Notably working on the goals:

<b>TARGET 11-6</b>  REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CITIES	<b>TARGET 11-7</b>  PROVIDE ACCESS TO SAFE AND INCLUSIVE GREEN AND PUBLIC SPACES	<b>TARGET 12-5</b>  SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE WASTE GENERATION	<b>TARGET 12-8</b>  PROMOTE UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES	<b>TARGET 13-3</b>  BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY TO MEET CLIMATE CHANGE	<b>TARGET 11-4</b>  PROTECT THE WORLD'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE
<b>TARGET 1-5</b>  BUILD RESILIENCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISASTERS	<b>TARGET 2-3</b>  DOUBLE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES OF SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS	<b>TARGET 2-4</b>  SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES	<b>TARGET 4-7</b>  EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	<b>TARGET 6-B</b>  SUPPORT LOCAL ENGAGEMENT IN WATER AND SANITATION MANAGEMENT	<b>TARGET 16-10</b>  ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

The project has conceived its self-financing mechanism by commercializing plants, which are accompanied by an explanatory leaflet called the Cultivation Manual, which provides information on the origin of the plant, forms of cultivation, uses and applications of the plant and take care of it. The proposal has resulted in creating a community of users interested in the cultivation of different plants, who support the project with ideas, suggestions for topics, and the exchange of plants and knowledge.

### III. **Biblioverde in action: developed activities**

Through the Biblioverde project, the Cuban Association of Librarians (ASCUBI) in Villa Clara has initiated and implemented 11 characterized activities, with 311 actions contributing to its objectives. These activities include:

### **a. Preparatory actions**

1. Training and exchange of ecological knowledge for library staff as environmental volunteers.
2. Development of guidelines for Science Circles, exhibitions and trips to botanical gardens.
3. Design of identity, promotional and communication products.
4. Preparation of information packages, instructional folders and development of specialized collections on the subject.
5. Signing of agreements with related entities.

### **b. Main environmental activities and their relationship with the SDGs**

In the previous section, the SDGs were enunciated, in which the project works with greater intensity; below, the main activities carried out are exposed for each one of them.

#### **Activity 1 Workshop on urban resilience**

The workshop focused on analyzing, from the perspective of architecture, how our cities can be resilient to any contingency and the possibilities to reverse them. It was in charge of Ph.D. Cristobal Rios, professor at the Central University of Las Villas.



Goal 1 No Poverty  
Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Community  
Goal 13 Climate Action  
Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution



#### **Activity 2 My Green House Project**

Program for the strengthening of urban agriculture, recycling and the care and protection of the environment. Its purpose is to promote behavioral changes that involve a more rational use of energy and water and stimulate healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature, encouraging the production of food at home and recycling, which contributes to improving the home environment and the community.



Goal 1 No Poverty  
Goal 2 Zero Hunger  
Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation  
Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Community  
Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production  
Goal 13 Climate Action

It includes talks and workshops where basic questions related to these topics will be presented, advice to help resolve all doubts and publication of materials with information and practical recommendations.

*My Green House* also contributes to socialize every day and popular practices and knowledge, which make up our identity and will generally result in a favorable economic impact on the family economy, reducing expenses and, for the community, achieving a healthier environment.



**Activity 3 Development of a specialized collection on the subject**

One of the premises of the project is to develop a collection of information resources on the environment, sustainable development and responsible consumption; in this sense, several information products have been designed, including the Green Package, specialized information packages with the compilation of knowledge and information resources on the subject, instructive folders, with information on the origin of plants, ways of cultivation, uses and applications of plants and their care. And the acquisition, employing purchase or donation, of 21 titles that address the subject, with which the availability of specialized texts has been expanded, access those attending the activities.

- Goal 4 Quality Education
- Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Community
- Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution



#### Activity 4 Training for school librarians as environmental volunteers

To achieve high incidence in the community, 31 school librarians have been trained, serving as environmental volunteers. Its main task resides in, from the school library itself, to promote in its student users good practices in the care of nature and support in the promotion of the contests, workshops, and visits that are carried out as part of the project.



- Goal 4 Quality Education
- Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Community
- Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution



#### Activity 5 Creation of the Science Circle: Information and Nature.

Working with children plays a vital role in their education, in terms of forming ideas about the protection of the environment and the individual responsibility of each one in this process. For this reason, the project has developed as an initiative the creation of the *Circle of Science: Information and Nature*. In an entertaining way, they are guided in the search for information on the subject; they are shown the ways of cultivating and caring for plants, and tours are made to observe nature and recognize the possible damage that man can cause in the environment, and its form of mitigation.



- Goal 4 Quality Education
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### Activity 6 Let's talk about... (Cycle of specialized conferences)

One of the main actions is to serve as a space for the exchange, debate, and socialization of information and knowledge on various topics. In this way, researchers and professors from the Central University of Las Villas and the University of Havana share with interested users issues such as sustainable gardening, urban agriculture, flower therapy, urban landscape, medicinal plants, the bonsai art, among other themes related to the project. Those attending these talks are offered a tea, made with cultivated plants, in the institution's own garden.



- Goal 1 No Poverty
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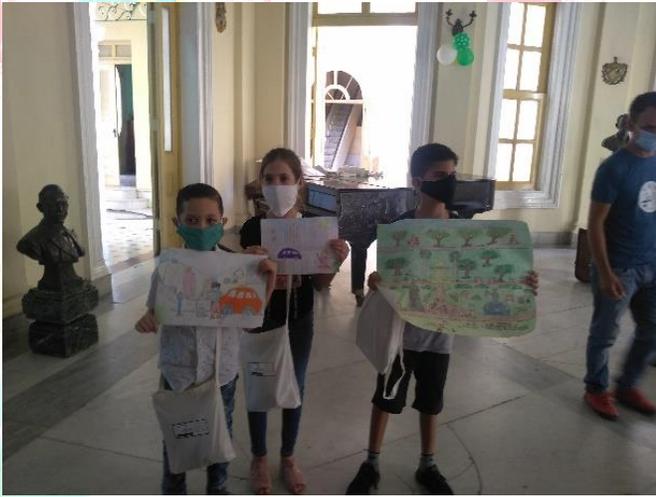
### Activity 7: Children's creation contest: My house is my city

The time of the pandemic brought us another way of doing things, that of virtual environments, and taking advantage of the Stay at Home, together with a solidarity group of the social network Facebook, we launched the call for the children's creation contest: *My house is my city*, where the children had to show, through drawing, their idea of how to care for and conserve nature in the city. Eleven drawings were presented, five of which were awarded.



- Goal 4 Quality Education
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The award ceremony took place in the summer of 2020, taking advantage of the stage of the new normal; with the corresponding measures, the *Alánimo* theater group encouraged the activity, and the little ones received their gifts.



Eric Daniel Capote García  
7 years  
Award



Marcos Gabriel Espinosa Escobar  
9 years  
Award



Mary Karla Sánchez Pérez  
10 years  
Award



Thalia de la C. Valdés Bu  
10 years  
Mention



José Alejandro García García  
8 years  
Mention

### Activity 8: Exhibition of local natural resources: Get to know the native Flora of Santa Clara

One of the initiatives to raise awareness in the residents of caring for the environment is showing them, to increase their knowledge, those typical plants of the terroir. Knowing the elements of our local identity contributes to its dissemination, care and safeguarding, to bequeath it to future generations. The activity is interwoven with the *Cuabaleando* community project children to offer a message that reaches everyone.

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Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution



### Activity 9: Get Involved! the city belongs to everyone.

The campaign was carried out to contribute together to enjoy a clean, orderly, pleasant, and healthy environment. The call encourages from the face-to-face space, and through social networks, that the inhabitants are not indifferent to what is badly done, for this, a series of elements that they must take into account are explained, and thus the city of Santa Clara it would be a space to live in harmony with nature and achieve resilience in the face of any contingency.

- Goal 4 Quality Education
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**¡Implicate!**  
Santa Clara es de Todos

Por una ciudad ordenada, responsable y resiliente

Un llamado de: **ASCUBI** ASOCIACION CUBANA DE BUENOS HABITANTES

Tu eres parte de la ciudad y puedes contribuir a que TODOS disfrutemos de un entorno limpio, ordenado, agradable y saludable, por ello:

- Cuida que tu mascota no haga destrozos en la calle y recoge sus heces fecales.
- Saca la basura en bolsas, depositala en el lugar habilitado y hazlo poco antes de que pase el carro colector. Reducir la basura en la ciudad es posible.
- Mantén limpia la acera, jardines y áreas comunes de tu lugar de residencia o labor.
- Evita arrojar cualquier tipo de desechos en el suelo de parques, calles, jardines. Conversa con tus vecinos si ves a alguien arrojar basura o pintar paredes.
- No rayas las paredes, ni pegues carteles en postes o edificios públicos.
- Cuida la fachada de tu casa. Una fachada limpia da una buena imagen a la calle y si sumamos todas, a la ciudad.
- Evita arrojar colillas de cigarrillos al suelo, los árboles agradecerán que no los abones con residuos tóxicos.
- No utilices los espacios públicos como urinario.
- Cuida los ríos, no arrojes basura en ellos.
- Da el ejemplo. Prooúpate por cuidar los monumentos históricos, que (muchas veces) son los más vulnerables

**NO SEAS INDIFFERENTE ANTE LO MAL HECHO. SANTA CLARA, DEMANDA DE TODOS**



### Activity 10: Promotion of saving water and recycling paper and cardboard

Other aspects developed by the project are the promotion of saving water, as a vital resource and a stimulus to the recycling of paper and cardboard, through the campaign: Ton of Paper that you recycle, trees that you save. Saving water is promoted through the exhibition of literature on the subject and by distributing brochures with ideas on how to make efficient use of this liquid. To stimulate the recycling of paper and cardboard, collection devices have been placed in the library areas, with their signage, so that they are not thrown into other bins and these resources are mixed with other waste. The recovered paper and cardboard is delivered to the collection point, destined for the industry.

At this time, the collection of plastic bottles, glass and aluminum containers will begin, destined for the industry and use in DIY workshops.



- Goal 4 Quality Education
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### Activity 11: Consulting and Expo-Sales

As part of the project, and as a means of self-financing, there are expo-sales of ornamental, medicinal, and aromatic plants, a service widely accepted by the community and contributes to the formation of habits of caring for the environment, from home itself. The benefits, more than economic, redound in the education that each visitor receives, who apart from acquiring a plant, takes the explanation, both orally, and through brochures, of its care, treatment, modes of development and information general interest. The way to create mini-gardens in homes with a paved patio, the preparation of compost as organic fertilizer, among other actions, is also oriented.



- Goal 4 Quality Education
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**c. Communication actions**

**1. Design of the project's identifying logo, promotional, and outreach material.**

The project has its graphic identity, and each action that is going to be carried out has its promotional banner in traditional physical spaces and now also on social networks. As part of it, paper and cloth bags and other souvenirs have been made to publicize the project.





## 2. Communication channels through social networks and other media



Through the social network Facebook, *the BiblioVerde group: cactus and succulents in Santa Clara*

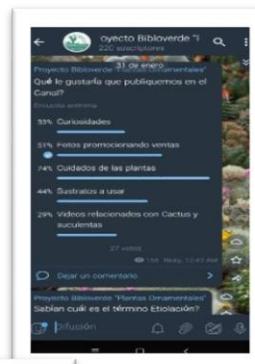
(<https://www.facebook.com/BiblioVerde-Cactus-y-Suculentas-en-Santa-Clara-2403638956366462/>) was created, where information of interest and images about these plants are shared, creating a solid community of lovers of the same, which has already with 923 followers.



With the same function, that of promoting information, knowledge, curiosities about plants, advice for their cultivation, sales, and other data of general interest, a channel on Telegram (<https://t.me/joinchat/S4rO4pWrwkIP4oIP>) is created as an alternative for communication. 219 subscribers.



Erecting both spaces, in the current epidemiological situation (Covid-19), in the new scenarios where to get everyone the information they need and disseminate the actions of the project and maintain its vitality.



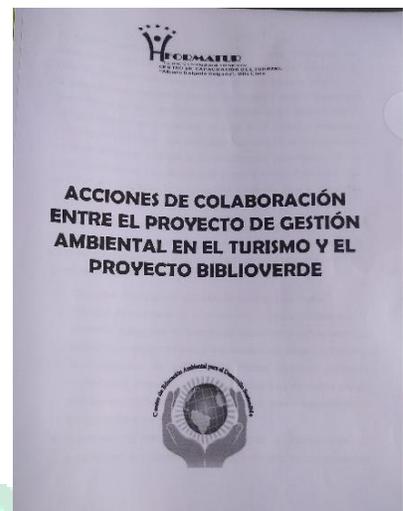
### 3. Promotion through the press.

The local radio and TV have maintained a systematic work of information on the activities carried out in the project, based on radio reports or as guests in the informative television magazines.



### 4. Collaboration and alliances

To achieve the objectives, ASCUBI has collaborated with other libraries, organizations, and business sectors. In this way, 31 school librarians have joined the Environmental Volunteering program, and Collaboration Agreements have been signed with the Provincial Tourism Office. Of particular importance for the promotion of the project was the mayor of Santa Clara's visit



**d. Complementary activities.**

**1. Nursery for the reproduction of species**

To stimulate the sowing of ornamental plants, the project has conceived a nursery, where different species of cacti and succulents are reproduced, among other varieties. This space also functions as a workshop for advice on the cultivation of plants and their reproduction. The nursery has been built promoting an ecological environment, where the plants are grown in recycled containers and organic compost is used, made on site.

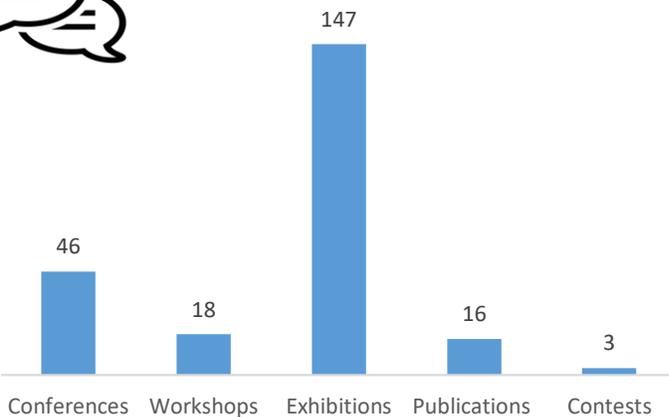


**IV. BiblioVerde: results and impacts of its implementation**

**a. BiblioVerde in numbers: general statistics**

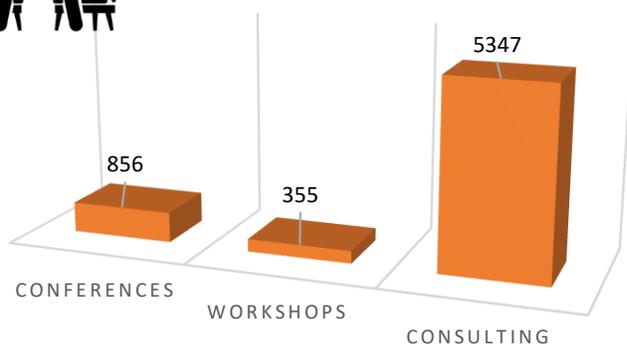


**Developed activities**



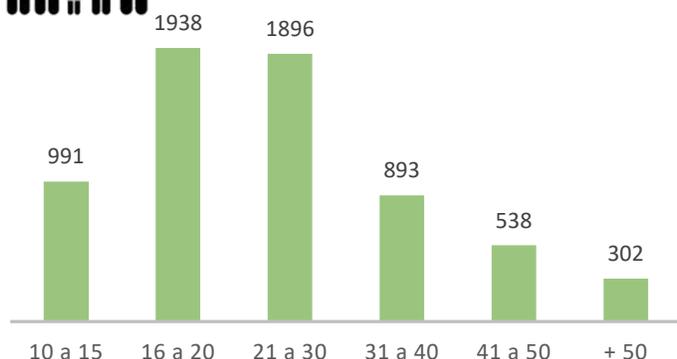
Among the activities carried out, the plant exhibitions stand out in the area outside the NGO's headquarters. Space where they interact with the population, show them various plants and advise on the ways of cultivation and care. Another of the most frequently carried out actions are conferences, where experts on the subject share their knowledge and information with the attendees.

## Public Assistant



It includes the exhibition activity, personalized advice, how to grow plants, their care and general information, each user, this being one of the most demanded services in the project and the one with the greatest impact on the community's environmental education.

## Attendees by age



Young people between 16 and 30 years old prevail as users, these being the priority sectors in the project's attention. Similarly, children and adults regularly attend the actions that are called.

### **b. Project achievements, results and impacts**

- The project has contributed to the promotion of care for the community's environment through the implementation of training programs and access to information on the subject, generating self-awareness in city residents, especially children and young people, on this issue.
- The project's implementation has favored the residents in the community, the improvement of consumption habits, lifestyles, incorporating the saving of water, energy and recycling, as practices of personal and social benefit.
- It strengthens the image of the librarian and libraries, in their role as promoter of nature care and support for the local community's development.
- A dynamic and interactive space has been created where citizens are the protagonists of a wide variety of activities to promote sustainability and care for the environment.
- Establishment of agreements with schools, entities, and government agencies, for joint work in sustainable environmental management

## V. Future initiatives

- Join programs for saving and rational use of energy.
- Expand the project to other regions of the province and the country.
- Sign collaboration agreements with other NGOs and entities involved in environmental protection to expand its scope.

## VI. Thanks

The Cuban Association of Librarians (ASCUBI), Villa Clara, extends its gratitude to a group of institutions that have been characterized by their support for the BiblioVerde project, including Central University of Las Villas, Villa Clara Botanical Garden, Villa Clara Zoological Garden, Government of Santa Clara and the Martí Provincial Library. Similarly, the project team works for the project users but for the benefit of the entire community.





Filial Villa Clara

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