



# THE GUADALAJARA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR: A TRADE FAIR OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

## Guadalajara, Mexico—

- As the second largest book fair in the world, the Guadalajara International Book Fair (FIL) stands out as it targets both a professional and a public audience.
- Through its “guest of honour” feature, FIL develops ties with different countries around the world, promoting international trade and cultural exchange, while also directly supporting international rights purchasing of Latin American authors through its Rights Centre and Rights Exchange Programme.
- Since 2006, FIL has partnered with private companies and international organisations to provide funded places to local school children to attend the fair with the aim of increasing literacy and inspiring a love of reading.

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- **Geographical scale**  
City
- **Geographic scale**  
City / metropolitan area
- **Keyword**  
Sector strategies | Youth
- **Theme**  
Culture, creative sectors and global events
- **Countries**  
[Mexico](#)

## What are the objectives?

**The Guadalajara International Book Fair (known as FIL, from the Spanish *Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara*) is the second largest book fair in the world and the most prominent literary festival in the Spanish speaking world.** It is held annually in Guadalajara, Mexico and lasts nine days. Established in 1987 by the University of Guadalajara, FIL serves as a crucial platform for literary exchange, attracting authors, publishers, literary agents, and book lovers from around the globe. The fair features a wide array of activities, including book presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and cultural performances. FIL aims to support the publishing industry by providing a platform for networking and business opportunities, whilst at the same time seeking to foster a love for reading and literature, making books accessible to a wide audience and enriching the cultural landscape.

## How does it work in practice?

### **The book fair promotes Mexican and other Latin American authors to an international audience.**

The FIL Rights Centre is a dedicated space designed for the negotiation and sale of publishing rights. It serves as a hub for literary agents, publishers, and other industry professionals to network, exchange ideas, and conduct business. The Centre provides resources such as meeting spaces, promotional opportunities, and support services to facilitate these transactions. It plays a crucial role in promoting the global reach of literature, helping authors and publishers expand their works into new markets and languages. FIL also works to expand inter-cultural dialogue and learning. For example, the FIL Rights Exchange Program is a fellowship programme for editors from non-Spanish-speaking countries. The programme aims to build connections with regions where Ibero-American literature is less familiar, thereby expanding the reach of Latin American and Spanish literature globally. Since 1993, FIL has also designated a “Guest of Honour”, a particular region, country, or set of countries (e.g. the European Union), which are invited to showcase their publishing sector and authors. Each evening, the Guest of Honour also conducts performances at the *Foro FIL* and various city venues, showcasing its cultural heritage. This initiative helps to create ties with countries around the world, thus supporting bilateral business opportunities.

### **The FIL is run in collaboration with the University of Guadalajara and incorporates education and learning into all its activities.**

Alongside its many conferences, workshops, roundtables, and talks, FIL offers activities and seminars specifically for teachers and librarians, focusing on literacy, reading promotion, and educational strategies. It also offers student conferences and workshops and a significant amount of programming dedicated to children. For example, its “One Thousand Young People with...” sessions bring together children and young adults with the winner of the FIL Literary Award and other prominent writers to talk, discuss, share, and enjoy their experiences and readings. This is all in addition to “*FIL Niños*”, a dedicated programming track for children and children’s literature. This track includes workshops and shows catering to children from 3 to 12 years-old, as well as specific sessions for parents and babies from 0 to 2 years-old.

**The book fair is supported by both public and private sponsors.** Alongside sponsorship from large companies, FIL also receives sponsorship from international public institutions, such as the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, the Peruvian Ministry of Culture, the European Union, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). FIL also runs the “FILantropía” initiative, a social action programme that offers companies or individuals the opportunity to sponsor local children from low-income families to attend FIL Niños. FIL is responsible for proposing a selection of candidate groups to receive support from funders and coordinates logistics of the visit. The sponsorship covers travel to and from the venue, admission costs, refreshments, and the opportunity for each child to receive a book of their choice for a symbolic price of one peso. In return, sponsors receive a high level of visibility in event publicity

and literature, including on social media, in the FIL Children's Handout brochure, and on banners and T-shirts at the fair.

## What has been the impact?

**The FIL attracts large numbers of professionals and book lovers from around the world.** In 2023 the FIL was attended by over 857 000 members of the public, 17 000 professionals, and 2 400 publishing houses, with a further 189 000 members of the public attending the dedicated children's events. While the COVID-19 pandemic saw a drastic reduction in visitor numbers, attendance rates are now surpassing 2018 figures. For example, public attendance in 2023 was up 5% compared to 2018.<sup>1</sup> FIL organizers have estimated the event brings over USD 35 million to the economy and generates around 10 000 temporary jobs in sectors such as logistics, security, transportation, and food services. The event also generates substantial returns for the publishing sector and has helped to increase the amount of books Mexico exports internationally.

## What can other communities learn from this example?

- Including a "guest of honour" initiative in an event can be a good way to reach international audiences and strengthen international ties.
- Incorporating educational activities into event programming aimed at different audiences, such as children and teachers, can widen the impact of event content beyond entertainment value.
- Dedicated philanthropy programmes, where sponsors fund attendance for low-income groups, leverage private investment for social causes and can be a good way for events to be more inclusive.

## Further information

- [The Guadalajara International Book Fair](#)

## OECD resources

OECD (2023), How to measure the impact of culture, sports and business events: A Guide Part I; <https://doi.org/10.1787/c7249496-en>

OECD (2023), Impact indicators for culture, sports and business events: A Guide Part II; <https://doi.org/10.1787/e2062a5b-en>

OECD (2021), Implementing the OECD Recommendation on Global Events and Local Development: A Toolkit; <https://doi.org/10.1787/efa5cf5f-en>

OECD (2018), Recommendation of the Council on Global Events and Local Development; <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0444>

## Note

1. OECD calculations based on current and archived statistics from: <https://www.fil.com.mx/ingles/info/numeralia.asp>