

Rotary International and the International Reading Association **Literacy Project Guide**



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL®



Contents

Working together to improve literacy worldwide 1

Who we are 2

International Reading Association 2

Working with IRA reading councils and affiliates 2

Rotary International 3

Working with Rotary clubs 3

Starting a new literacy project 4

Improve access to books and learning materials 6

Support schools and teachers 8

Adopt a school 8

Teacher training 9

Enhance classroom learning 10

Early childhood literacy 10

Adult literacy 11

Student mentoring 11

Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) 12

Promote community development 13

Improve community health 13

Address special needs 14

Working together to improve literacy worldwide

For most of us, reading and writing are as natural as breathing. But nearly 800 million adults worldwide lack the literacy skills needed to complete a job application, understand a child's report card, or read a prescription.

Rotary International and the International Reading Association know that literacy is an essential ingredient for reducing poverty, improving health, encouraging community and economic development, and promoting peace. Since 2002, RI and the IRA have combined their resources and skills to advance literacy in communities worldwide by

- Providing books and educational materials
- Building and supporting schools
- Mentoring students
- Training teachers
- Establishing literacy programs for children and adults

This publication is designed to help Rotary clubs and IRA reading councils to select and carry out literacy projects that meet their community's needs. You'll find examples of successful projects along with contact information, resources, and local and international service opportunities.

Whether through volunteering your time and expertise, providing financial support, or building awareness, you can empower people and communities through literacy.



Who we are

International Reading Association

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional organization dedicated to promoting high levels of literacy by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging a lifelong reading habit. The IRA network comprises 70,000 members and more than 300,000 affiliate members in nearly 100 countries. They include teachers, reading specialists, consultants, administrators, supervisors, university faculty, researchers, psychologists, librarians, media specialists, and parents.

Working with IRA reading councils and affiliates

Rotary clubs can contact their local IRA council (in North America) or affiliate (international) to seek support for literacy efforts in their community. Visit the IRA website, www.reading.org, to find your local representative.

- Search the [IRA Council and Affiliate Directory](#) for contact information by geographic region.
- Learn about the IRA's special interest group, [IRARI](#), which provides a network for Rotary and IRA members to share information and collaborate on projects.
- [Learn more](#) about the International Reading Association, including how to become a member.
- [Find out](#) about the IRA's international projects, activities, and events.

You can also contact IRA headquarters at

International Reading Association

800 Barksdale Road

P.O. Box 8139

Newark, DE 19714-8139

USA

Phone: 302-731-1600

Fax: 302-731-1057

irawash@reading.org

www.reading.org

Rotary International

Rotary International is a global service organization consisting of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs worldwide. Building upon a century-long tradition of Service Above Self, Rotary's 1.2 million members provide humanitarian service, encourage integrity in all professions, and help build goodwill and peace worldwide. Clubs are nonpolitical and nonreligious, and the professional men and women who volunteer their time and talents come from all cultures, races, and creeds.

RI has adopted basic education and literacy as one of six areas of focus, that reflect critical humanitarian needs that club members are addressing. Rotary clubs support literacy and education through local and international service initiatives.

Working with Rotary clubs

Reading councils and affiliates can find Rotary clubs in their community by

- Using the online [Rotary club locator tool](#)
- Searching for specific Rotary club websites by using the [Rotary website database](#) or an Internet search engine, such as [Google](#)

Once you've identified a local Rotary club, contact the club president or secretary. Rotary clubs often invite speakers to their weekly meetings, which can provide an opportunity for your council or affiliate to connect with members. Other ways to get involved include:

- Inviting club members to address your organization or visit a project site
- Providing informational material, such as an article for the club bulletin
- Visiting Rotary's [ProjectLINK](#) database to find active Rotary club service projects in need of support, and consider contacting the project liaison to offer your reading council's assistance
- Signing up to receive Rotary International's [electronic newsletters](#)
- [Learning](#) how to join a Rotary club

You can also contact RI headquarters at

Rotary International
1560 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201-3698
USA
Phone: 847-866-3000
Fax: 847-556-2182
rotary.service@rotary.org
www.rotary.org

Starting a new literacy project

Determining your community's needs and resources is an important starting point for any service project. Work with local stakeholders to complete a thorough needs assessment. By including the community from the start, you will not only identify the most appropriate project but also ensure support and sustainability for your endeavors. Find ideas for carrying out community needs assessments in the Rotary publication [Community Assessment Tools](#).

Consider simple, short-term goals for your first literacy project. Once you've achieved these goals, build on your success by expanding the scope of your efforts to ensure long-term sustainability. Below is an example of a project implemented in phases:

- Phase one: The project team contacts administrators of a local school to discuss the issues affecting literacy rates. The team discovers that the school has limited educational resources and low student attendance rates, particularly for girls. As an initial measure, the team raises funds so that the school can purchase educational materials.
- Phase two: To address the low student attendance rate, the team meets with school administrators and local residents. They learn that the community's unsanitary water is making students too sick to attend school. The girls' attendance rate is particularly low because they are often responsible for traveling long distances to get clean water for their families.
- Phase three: The team researches options for providing clean water. It considers factors such as the location of the community, its proximity to a water source, and local resources and technology. It also consults with community members, who offer the best insight into what is needed.
- Phase four: After identifying a strategy, the project team raises funds to improve the community's water and sanitation facilities. Greater access to clean water improves the health of students and raises school attendance rates.



Key literacy observances

Increase awareness of literacy issues in your community by planning your projects and activities around internationally recognized observances, such as

- International Literacy Day, 8 September
- World Teachers' Day, 5 October
- Rotary's Literacy Month, March

Project ideas

To help you find a literacy project that is right for your club, your council, and your community, here are some examples of successful Rotary club and IRA literacy projects. The projects have been divided among several broad categories:

Improve access to books and learning materials

- Book donations
- Dictionary donations
- Library support

Support schools and teachers

- Adopt a school
- Teacher training

Enhance classroom learning

- Early childhood literacy
- Adult literacy
- Student mentoring
- Concentrated language encounter (CLE)

Promote community development

- Improve community health
- Address special needs

Most projects are a mix of several categories, which gives clubs and council members the opportunity to match their skills and interests to the job while addressing the multifaceted needs of the community.

Improve access to books and learning materials

FACT: IN A 20-YEAR STUDY OF 27 COUNTRIES, RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT CHILDREN WHO GROW UP IN HOMES SURROUNDED BY BOOKS RECEIVE THREE MORE YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAN THOSE WHOSE HOMES ARE DEVOID OF BOOKS.

Book donations

Imagination Library

Rotary Club of Morristown A.M., Tennessee, USA, & Tennessee Reading Association

Each month, more than 1,800 Hamblen County children, from birth to age five, receive an age-appropriate book in their mailboxes from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Rotary Club of Morristown A.M. and the Tennessee Reading Association pay for the books, postage, and promotion, while the Imagination Library manages the program and mails the books to each home.



For more information

- Contact Tish Jones, tjrom@usit.net, Rotary Club of Morristown A.M. or Eva Thompson, ethompson@hcboe.net, Tennessee Reading Association.
- Learn about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library at www.imaginationlibrary.com.

Dictionary donations

The Dictionary Project

Rotary Club of Ojai West, California, USA

Since 2004, the Rotary Club of Ojai West has worked with the Dictionary Project to provide dictionaries for students in its community. The club matches dictionaries to students' age and curriculum, attaches Rotary stickers to each book, and divides the books among club members for distribution. The club donates more than 300 dictionaries every year.

For more information

- Read a how-to guide created by the Ojai West club at www.rotaryojaiwest.org/Dictionary/dic_howto.htm.
- Learn about the Dictionary Project at www.dictionaryproject.org.

Library support

International Literacy Project

Rotary Club of Laredo, Texas, USA, & Texas State Reading Association — Amistad Reading Council

Members of the Rotary Club of Laredo, along with the Rotary clubs of Nuevo Santander, Nuevo Laredo Reforma, and Villa de Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, obtained a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant for \$20,000 to create a library for a 500-student elementary school in Mexico. They purchased Spanish books appropriate for first through sixth grade, provided teacher training, and encouraged parents and children to read together at home.

For more information

- Contact Juanita Lira, juanitalira@aol.com, Rotary Club of Laredo, Amistad Reading Council, an affiliate of the Texas State Reading Association.

Support schools and teachers

FACT: TO REACH THE **UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL** OF PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN BY **2015**, MORE THAN **10** MILLION NEW TEACHERS ARE NEEDED WORLDWIDE.

Adopt a school

Child and adult literacy programs

Rotary Club of Jhang Saddar, Punjab, Pakistan

In 2002, the Rotary Club of Jhang Saddar conducted a literacy survey in a nearby community and found that only 12 percent of males and 8 percent of females were literate. The club formed a literacy committee to help carry out two large-scale projects.

First, it established a primary school that local children can attend free of charge. In 2007, 60 students graduated from the school; they are now pursuing higher education.

Second, the club set up literacy centers for women of all ages. New Century Education, a Pakistan-based organization, trained the centers' teachers, who teach classes in Urdu as well as simple math. Students graduate from the school able to read a newspaper, write simple sentences, and maintain their families' finances. The literacy centers have educated more than 2,000 women in the community.

For more information

- Contact Mohammad Awais Qureshi, awais.qureshi@shakarganj.com.pk, Rotary Club of Jhang Saddar.



Teacher training

Southern Sudan Teacher Training Initiative

Rotary Club of Ellensburg Morning, Washington, USA; Rotary Club of Juba, Sudan; & International Reading Association

This initiative helps teachers returning from refugee camps to their homes in Southern Sudan to use their education to rebuild communities devastated by civil war. It started in August 2009, when a group of Rotary and IRA members met with selected teachers and participated in the IRA Pan African Reading for All Conference. The members conducted a site-specific needs assessment and provided materials outlining teaching strategies.

The project includes student and teacher assessments, an intensive two-week training session for 12 mentor teachers, and ongoing support and evaluation provided in person and online. In 2010, The Rotary Foundation awarded a \$33,101 Matching Grant to the Ellensburg Morning and Juba clubs. The project is also supported by other Rotary and IRA members, Central Washington University students preparing to be reading teachers, and students from low-income U.S. schools who are learning about Africa and international issues.

For more information

- Contact Judy Backlund, backlundju@cwu.edu, Rotary Club of Ellensburg Morning.
- Learn more at www.ccsoe.com/litcom/international.php.

Enhance classroom learning

FACT: IN 2009, MORE THAN 67 MILLION CHILDREN WERE NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL — MORE THAN HALF OF THEM GIRLS. TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD’S 796 MILLION ILLITERATE ADULTS ARE WOMEN.

Early childhood literacy

The Souns program

Rotary Club of Peachtree City & Rotary District 6900 (Georgia, USA)

Souns is a hands-on literacy program that teaches letter-sound associations to children ages 5-36 months. Because Souns focuses only on letter-sounds, the program is applicable to many languages.

Since 2008, members of the Rotary Club of Peachtree City have traveled to South Africa twice a year to conduct three-week Souns teacher training sessions. Clubs in District 6900 provide the Souns materials to preschool classrooms while South African Rotary clubs assist in selecting the training sites.

The Knysna Education Trust, the Centre for Early Childhood Development in Cape Town, and the Basadi Pele Foundation are nongovernmental organizations overseeing Souns programs in several locations. They ensure accountability, making Souns a simple, measurable, and sustainable literacy project.

For more information

- Contact Brenda Erickson, brenda.c.erickson@gmail.com, Rotary Club of Peachtree City.
- Learn more about Souns at www.souns.org.



Adult literacy

The KwaNibela and KwaJobe projects

Rotary districts 9270 (South Africa) and 7950 (Rhode Island and part of Massachusetts, USA), Massachusetts Reading Association, Massachusetts Association of College and University Reading Educators, Reading Association of Southern Africa, Family Literacy Project, & Operation Upgrade

The KwaNibela Project promotes literacy to ensure that all South Africans are able to fully participate in society. Rotary club members collaborated with Operation Upgrade to provide training for instructors and to develop literacy materials that raise awareness of HIV/AIDS issues, hunger, water and sanitation, and poverty. The project provided 12 adult literacy classes for 247 students.

The KwaJobe Project replicates the KwaNibela Project. In collaboration with Oxfam International, it coordinated 10 classes with 200 students. This partnership promotes curriculum development, encourages the exchange of ideas and faculty collaboration, assists in the design of needs assessments, and provides funding for resources at project sites.

For more information

- Contact Frances Jeffries, francesjeffries_1@msn.com, Rotary Club of The Bridgewater, Massachusetts, USA.
- Learn more about Operation Upgrade at www.operationupgrade.org.za.

Student mentoring

Reading Secrets

Rotary Club of York, Pennsylvania, USA, & South Central Reading Council (Pennsylvania State)

This project paired first-year college students with Rotary club members, who served as mentors and helped students identify connections between reading in school, personal growth, and success in the workplace. As part of the program, students were asked to write a report about what they had learned and how they planned to apply this knowledge to improve their literacy skills and study habits.

By the program's end, students had changed personal habits that were hindering their reading comprehension and adjusted their academic goals from "reading to get it done" to "reading to learn and grow professionally." The instructor observed that they were more motivated to read and work hard after seeing how relevant reading is to their future.

For more information

- Contact Jim Poland, jimpoland@jimpoland.com, Rotary Club of York.
- Contact Julie Wise, juliebwise@comcast.net, South Central Reading Council.
- Learn more at www.myreadingsecrets.com.

Concentrated language encounter (CLE)

CLE projects in Brazil

Rotary Districts 4520, 4560, and 4760 (Brazil); 6900 (Georgia, USA), & 7080 (Ontario, Canada)

The concentrated language encounter (CLE) method teaches reading and writing through group activities. This process is supplemented by developmental language exercises that teach sentence construction, grammar, and spelling. The method requires only basic supplies, including paper, scissors, binding material (such as yarn or twine), colored pencils or crayons, and cardboard, making it a low-cost way to boost literacy.

In 1997, a nearly \$400,000 pilot CLE project was launched in the city of Contagem, Brazil, with the support of The Rotary Foundation and Rotary districts in Brazil, Canada, and the United States. As of 2008, about 1,900 teachers trained in the CLE method have taught more than 72,600 Brazilian students how to read and write.

For more information

- Read more in [Global Outlook: Focus on Literacy](#).
- View a video about this project in a segment from the [Rotary Video Magazine](#).
- Learn more in Rotary's [CLE Fact Sheet](#).

Promote community development

FACT: A 10 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO ACHIEVE BASIC LITERACY IS RELATED TO A 0.3 PERCENT INCREASE IN A COUNTRY'S ANNUAL ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE.

Improve community health

Water filtration for public schools
Rotary Club of Saida, Lebanon

The Rotary Club of Saida provided 20 local public schools with water filters. Before the project, students brought their own water to school. After the filters were installed, the children began bringing empty bottles to take clean water home to their families. As of 30 June 2011, 33 public schools had received new filtration systems, benefiting 19,800 students and 5,200 teachers and staff. The company that installed the new systems will replace the filters every three months and provide free maintenance for 10 years.

A [Rotary Community Corps](#) sponsored by the Rotary Club of Saida oversees the project. Lebanon's former minister of education, Bahia Hariri, has asked all of the country's Rotary clubs to undertake similar projects to help the 1,450 public schools in the nation.

For more information

- Contact Badreddine Ghazzaoui, ghazawib@cyberia.net.lb, Rotary Club of Saida.



Address special needs

Treating visually impaired children in local schools

Rotary clubs of Piratini, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, & Pesaro and Roma, Italy

The Rotary Club of Piratini provided more than 2,000 eye exams and 230 pairs of eyeglasses to students in local public schools. Those diagnosed with vision issues were treated by the public health service. Nearby towns also sent children to receive exams.

The schools' administrators and teachers reported that students involved in the effort have shown improvement in their academic performance. Rotary club contributions and a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant helped bring in the \$13,000 needed to complete the project.

For more information

- Contact João Antônio Dias Taddei, joaotaddei@terra.com.br, Rotary Club of Piratini.