



ROTARY

Rotary International | One Rotary Center | 1560 Sherman Avenue | Evanston, IL 60201 USA

Media Contact: +1 847.866.3237

E-mail: pr@rotary.org

www.rotary.org

ROTARY AND LITERACY

In 1985, Rotary declared basic literacy to be a pre-condition to the development of peace. Through this organizational emphasis, more than half the world's 33,000 Rotary clubs address the full range of literacy and mathematical challenges for primary, vocational, and adult learners as well as teacher training. Many Rotary club members promote what is termed "lighthouse" literacy projects – those that can be replicated easily, thereby increasing the scope of their impact.

Lighthouse literacy projects have been created for formal schooling, older children who are not in school, functionally illiterate adults (particularly women), special groups, and teacher's training. The purpose of these projects is to inspire, guide and support national authorities toward alleviating mass illiteracy in developing countries. In Thailand, for example, the "lighthouse" literacy effort has been so successful that the government adopted it as a national program. Similar literacy initiatives have been sponsored by Rotary clubs in Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, and South Africa.

Below are some examples of literacy projects:

Early Childhood Literacy and Primary Education

Early literacy training is critical to the success of a child's later education. Rotarians work with children, parents, and educators to encourage and build reading skills at an early age. Some 115 Rotary clubs currently support the Dollywood Foundation's Imagination Library, which provides a book each month to children from birth until age five. The program also helps strengthen families by encouraging positive interaction between parents and children through shared reading. Today, Imagination Library serves 47 states, along with parts of Canada and the United Kingdom, and has provided children with more than 15 million books.

Adult Literacy Programs

Many adults in both the developed and developing world lack the skills they need to hold a job or perform basic tasks required by everyday life. The hardships caused by illiteracy, from the difficulty in finding employment to the constant pressure to cover it up, often lead to a host of other problems.

The Rotary Club of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, sponsored a project called "Provision of Educational Materials to the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education," with the objectives to reduce the population of illiterate adults in the Rivers State of Nigeria and to boost the Federal Government Universal Basic Education (UBE).

Literacy and Women

Because girls do not have access to education in many parts of the world, the illiteracy rate among women exceeds that of men. Studies of illiteracy rates in low-income countries have shown a 20 percent difference between the genders.

The Rotary Club of Budge Budge, India, started five literacy centers in remote village centers in remote village areas extending training to children, and young girls. To attract young girls and women, vocational training is offered, such as basket weaving, tailoring, and paper bag making. With these products, they can earn a living. The club has decided to maintain centers as both literacy and vocational training