

April 2021 Newsletter

DIGITAL INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM PREPARES PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS CREATES A MODEL FOR MONITORING & EVALUATING ROTARY PROJECTS

The COVID-19 Pandemic has made our interactive digital classroom project in La Normal de Santiago, the main teacher's college in Panama, even more relevant. Although the project was conceived while schools were operating in person, we have adapted to the conditions forced on us by the pandemic. Something that did not change is the need for teachers to be conversant with the technological tools and the ability to use these tools to teach students.

“Digital Interactive Classrooms for La Normal” emerged from lessons learned from a pilot in two rural schools in the District of Arraijan-Veracruz. (Host club RC Panamá Norte, International Partner RC Kansas City Plaza (USA) From that experience we learned that the major stumbling blocks in the use of technological tools for teaching was the teachers lack of technological proficiency, as well as the frequent turnover of teachers in the schools where the training was conducted. The effort made in training teachers was lost. While the pilot demonstrated benefits from using technology, it was primarily anecdotes described by teachers.

This is not a hardware project. While hardware is important for the project, the project is intended to transform teaching methods by using the the technology available to take our education system into the 21st century. We decided the best investment was to ensure that the graduating teachers are fluent in these new technologies. No matter where they are posted, they will be able to make use of available resources to create interesting, motivating and participatory classes. We turned our attention to develop the project in La Normal de Santiago to impact all new graduating teachers.

While anecdotes from the pilot encourage us and make us believe that we need to be ambitious in motivating teachers to use technology in their classes, we realized it was imperative to evaluate the project from the beginning to make sure that we did the right thing, that the teachers are convinced of the usefulness of the technological tools for teaching and that the expected changes indeed have taken place.

As we prepare to implement the project, we are developing an evaluation that will allow us to move from anecdotes of doing the right thing to a robust evaluation to determine the project's effectiveness in creating the changes we are expect. To develop this process, we formed a work group of stakeholders and experts from the Education field. We partnered with the Technological University of Panamá because of its expertise in using technology to support teaching and the Ministry of Education of Panamá (MEDUCA), the governance of the national education system.



We also partnered with the TRF Cadre of Technical Advisors, BELRAG specialists in education, and TRF's Evaluation and Research team to design a process to allow us to monitor and evaluate the project from the start. We initiated a stakeholder analysis and are proceeding with the evaluation questions which the priority partners wish to have resolved by the evaluation. For Rotary Club Panamá Norte, this has become important to identify expertise outside the club to help in the development of the evaluation process. It is a model of collaboration among Rotarians with expertise in basic education and in project planning.

We expect that through a systematic approach to the questions identified by the group, the project will contribute to a transformation of thought in the education system as well as the development of a framework for evaluating education projects within the context of Rotary interest in its investment in BEL Projects. We want to ensure a return on investment that results in significant impact and we believe that the evaluation process will help in this process.

Educators Role in Preventing Human Trafficking: Virtual Summit

Human trafficking is prevalent everywhere, often unreported, and many victims are under 18 years old. Educators build trusting relationships with students. Usha Reddi, President of Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking (CAAHT) stated, “Educators are uniquely positioned to teach children to recognize human trafficking dangers and how to seek help if they find themselves or others in traumatic situations.”

The event is for school board members, administrators, school counselors, teachers, student teachers, teacher training program administrators, before and after school program directors, parents and anyone involved in education. The event spotlights two groups of panelists with a focus on legislation, social media, school resources, and curriculum. Registration is required. Go to [Rotary CAAHT](#) and register today.

April 10, 9:00 AM - 12:00 CDT

Welcome Remarks
 Ashlie Bryant, CEO, 3 Strands Global Foundation

PANEL (9:45 - 10:45)	PANEL (10:45 - 11:45)
Brenda Dietrich, Kansas State Senate John Culvert, Kansas Department of Education Barry Wilkerson, Riley County District Attorney	Dr. Sharon Sullivan, Washburn University Patty Allacher, Seaman School District Pamela Berry, O’Farrell School, San Diego
11:45am – 12:00pm Andrea Carter, Survivor Closing Remarks	

TO REGISTER FOR THE ZOOM SUMMIT
[CLICK HERE](#)

Usha Reddi, CAAHT Club President
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RC LUBOWA (UGANDA) SEEKS FUNDING FOR NEEDED CLASSROOMS

On March 20th 2020, The President of the republic of Uganda closed all education institutions because of a global pandemic (COVID=19). This year schools will be reopening in phases. Luther Christian Academy is scheduled to reopen in May 2021. To comply with social distancing and hygiene guidelines, additional space is needed in both classrooms and dormitories. The school is operated by PresAIDUganda is a faith-based humanitarian agency. 80% of the school’s population are former street connected children who have been rescued and enrolled in school.

Because Kindergartens in Uganda are suspended indefinitely, the school will utilize kindergarten space for primary classrooms and create the needed extra space. Classroom conversion only solves one aspect of the new mandate. Expanding the dormitories is critical, especially at Luther school where no child in need is ever turned away. A new dormitory is essential to the reopening of the school, but also for decongesting the existing dormitories. The project seeks to expand the existing dormitory structure, create more space for girls and construct indoor washrooms for them. It will be a four (4) dormitory structure with a common room, caretakers’ room plus washrooms. The project will directly benefit over 106 children who attend the school during school days and holidays.

The total amount needed to expand the dormitory building based on local bids is USD\$19,341 We are seeking financial support from clubs or individuals who can contribute to this worthwhile club project.

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Georgia Rotarians Create StoryWalks to Promote Family Literacy

Douglas County Rotary Club (Georgia, USA) and the Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville / Douglas County have worked in tandem to make a new StoryWalk® experience at Hunter Park and Deer Lick Park a reality. Local author, Kim Ichter Eldredge, is proud to have her children’s book, *The Sky is the Limit*, as the featured story. Families can enjoy the first half of the book as they walk the trail at Hunter Park, and then visit Deer Lick Park to complete the book on the trail there.



The StoryWalk® concept was created by Anne Ferguson in Montpelier, Vermont in 2007. Since then, it has spread to all 50 states and at least 12 countries. It’s a simple, but powerful idea that encourages reading and outdoor physical activity. Rotarian Samantha Rosado, Tourism Program Manager for the Douglasville Convention and Visitors Bureau shared: *“Research shows that children who are engaged in reading at an early age are more likely to succeed in higher education and have*

better outcomes in life. Economic factors also play a role in literacy learning, and in areas where there are low-income families, studies show that reading has already become an issue for children entering grade school. We believe that providing a fun and active way to read to your child while bringing families together and encouraging physical activity all at once is a win-win for our community, and StoryWalk is the answer. In July of 2020 Douglas County Rotary Club was awarded \$1,500 from the District 6900 Grant for a StoryWalk project.



This StoryWalk took the pages of a *The Sky is the Limit* and displayed them along the walking trails of Deer Lick and Hunter Park for families and children to enjoy. Each stop includes an inspiring page from the book along with the vibrant illustrations of artist Toni Friddell Jordan.

The author, Kim Ichter Eldredge, encourages parents to visit ickfridbooks.com for a list of free “conversation starters” that can enhance the overall experience. Eldredge expressed her thanks to “the Douglas County Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville / Douglas County and The Douglas County Rotary Club for making this project a reality. Special Thanks goes to Rotarians for installing the laminated pages of the book at the two parks and to Extreme Images of Douglasville who built the StoryWalk elements that the volunteers installed. A Ribbon Cutting with the Douglas County Chamber was scheduled for March 31, 2021.

Samantha Rosado
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How is your club involved in supporting literacy and education projects? Share your stories through the BELRAG newsletter. Articles should be 500 words and include a photo or two. Send to: Carolyn Johnson at cfj2@mac.com

EVERY CHILD LEARNING WELL

Programs of Scale 2020 Finalist

Congratulation to RC Pune Pride for being one of the five finalists among the applications for TRF's Programs of Scale initiative. This basic education and literacy program aims to build the reading and math skills of 200,000 students ages 6-12 at 1,500 schools in the Jalna district of Maharashtra, India. The program will apply the **Teaching at the Right Level** method, a data-driven approach developed by the Pratham Education Foundation, one of the largest nongovernmental organizations in India. It will involve community members, local education officials, school administrators, Pratham staff, Rotarians, and up to 5,000 volunteers. This program will be conducted in Marathi, the local language of Jalna, and will enhance overall learning by grouping children into learning camps at their proficiency level, rather than by age or grade, allowing them to gain fundamental skills before advancing to the next level.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

India is close to achieving universal primary enrollment, but a critical question remains: Are children learning?

Many Indian primary school students lack the reading and math skills they need for the next stage of their education, and Jalna District has some of the lowest achievement levels in Maharashtra. Research taken from Pratham's work in 5,000 schools and communities across India in 2018-19 has shown that a timely intervention of 30 to 50 days can substantially improve the foundational skills of about 80% of children ages 6-12.

WHO IS WORKING TOGETHER?

The program is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pune' Pride (District 3131), along with five Rotary clubs in Jalna (District 3132), in partnership with the Pratham Education Foundation, which has a long record of conducting successful, data-driven programs throughout India. Another partner, the Jalna District Education Office, will help demonstrate how India's National Education Policy can be put into practice effectively. The

program also will engage community members, parents, teachers, preschool workers, and village chiefs to promote a collective investment in the learning process. In addition, several local businesses have committed financial support.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM?

To learn more or to support this project contact
Rotarians Subodh Malpani and Sanjay Deshpande

posg2020.bel.india@gmail.com

Have You Completed Your BELRAG Member Survey????

BELRAG wants to find out how we can make your membership more meaningful and how members would like to get more involved. Earlier this month, a quick survey ([located here](#)) was sent to all BELRAG members. If you have not yet done so, would you complete it so that we have better information re: what areas of basic education and literacy expertise of our members and how members can be more engaged. We also would appreciate any comments or ideas on how to make your membership of more value to you and others.

Again, thank you for being a part of BELRAG Find the [survey](#) here.
Nancy Leonhardt, Membership Chair, BELRAG Board of Directors

Looking for information or resources about Rotary BEL projects? Be sure to check the BELRAG website. You can find links to webinars, information about projects, examples of exemplary projects of Rotary clubs around the world. As a member of BELRAG, you can request expert advice or support for grant projects your club is considering. Be sure to keep your membership current by renewing it though the website.

www.BELRAG.org

2021 International Service Summit
A CONFERENCE TO CONNECT PEOPLE BUILDING A BETTER WORLD
Saturday May 1, 2021 8:00 am - 1:00 pm (CDT)
EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

Meet and network with people performing service throughout the world
 Informative Presentations from Experienced leaders in international service
 Exhibits from non-profits, service organizations, & vendors

PANEL PRESENTATION/DISCUSSIONS



CHALLENGES OF SUPPORTING FORMAL EDUCATION IN RESOURCE-CHALLENGED COUNTRIES

- Understanding and maintaining established Minimum Facility Design Standards
- Compatibility of improvement projects with established criteria
- Project impacts on established staff and criteria
- Ensuring project sustainability

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT A FORMAL EDUCATION - TRAINING TO ENSURE PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

- The necessity of an educational component to achieve project sustainability in under resourced area
- The importance of supplementary education to help community members achieve their potential
- Accumulative impact of service projects and training on people with limited formal education

Registration \$10/attendee



Richard Tatara, Chairman
 2021 International Service Summit
 The Rotary Club of Naperville

e-mail: rmtatara428@gmail.com
 Website: www.InternationalServiceSummit.org

World Literacy Ambassador Program

The World Literacy Foundation is seeking applications for an international program to train and encourage individuals to become advocates in their communities for literacy as a human right. The program is an on-line learning platform of 5 modules to expand knowledge on literacy and education, leadership, advocacy, fundraising and more. Networking opportunities are arranged for interaction with ambassadors around the world to work together towards the creation of a world where everyone has the opportunity to acquire literacy skills to reach their full potential



Applications due before 19 April 2021

[Terms and Conditions](#)
[Application](#)

ROOTA (Rising Out Of The Ashes) Offers Adult Learners the Gift of Literacy

The Zabaleen community are a community of approximately 30,000 inhabitants, who make their livelihood by selling waste and repurposing trash from the garbage dump of Cairo Egypt. This occupation is perceived traditionally as a family business handed down from one generation to the next. The government school in the district cannot support those aspiring to leave this lifestyle. There is little money for books and school supplies and no funding for private lessons that students rely on to pass their exams and enter college. In most cases, the few who do manage to attend school and complete their education return to the Community to establish small businesses to help their community. Accordingly, we have seen girls earning a degree in engineering, opening accounting offices, and helping the family sifting through garbage. Education opens a wealth of opportunities and offers tremendous support to this community.

The Zabaleen Community is extremely vulnerable due to the nature of their work and the conditions to which they are exposed. ROOTA's seeks to empower community members to break this intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Supported through an international group of Rotarians, ROOTA introduced a literacy program to help break the cycle of poverty for the impoverished women of Egypt. The Concentrated Literacy Encounter (CLE) program will operate for 9 months and help 200 women.

After the completion of the 9-month course, the Zabaleen will be able to join the formal education system and eventually continue to a higher level of education enabling. They will be able to take the government exam for granting a primary certificate which will serve to measure the success of the program.



To deal with the looming economic disaster caused by the COVID19, many of the Zabaleen community also work in the informal sector which is currently not available. This situation impacts those of all economic strata, but these are especially dark days for the poor. These hardworking entrepreneurs are navigating their families through this pandemic with the help of their small, often home-based, enterprises.

Although we support both male and female entrepreneurs, there are several reasons to prioritize women. Women in Egypt have less chance than men of ever finding formal employment. There is also the problem of spousal abuse. As we have experienced in our own country, during times of crisis, especially when families are quarantined in small spaces, domestic violence is often exacerbated. In the Zabaleen Community, this is compounded by the fact that families are generally large and there are often multi-generations sharing the same small shacks! Having earning potential to fall back on can both protect a woman's perceived value in the home and assure her self-sufficiency if she needs to escape an abusive situation.

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BELRAG Coming Events!

Webinar: Trauma Informed Education - a webinar designed for teachers, parents, Rotarians - anyone with a young person in their life. Emily Santiago, Founder/Director of the Center for Cognitive Diversity will present an engaging program to help us better understand the toll on children from being isolated from peers and out of school during the pandemic - and how Rotarians can take action to support young people in their communities and educators as they welcome students back to school. Information and registration to come.

Visit us at the RI Convention: BELRAG will have a booth at this year's virtual convention. Be sure to visit us and share information about your BEL projects. Watch for information about this year's BELRAG Annual Meeting