

September 2022 Newsletter

Changing and Saving Lives Through Literacy: Project Literacy

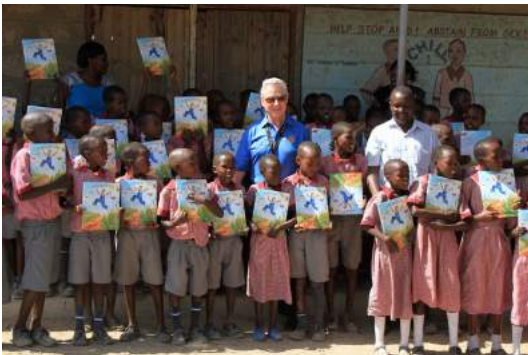
André Lewis has a passion for helping children and their families through literacy. Before the COVID pandemic, about two-thirds of U.S. students were unable to read at their grade level. The pandemic made a bad situation worse. As statistics show, underserved communities were impacted the most. This is not just personal for Andre, this is essential.

André grew up in a divorced household, he had first-hand knowledge and truly understands what it is like to not have the proper tools needed to obtain a quality education. “From a 3rd degree burn as a toddler, running into a moving car, and diving off a two-story building onto a mattress, I believe I am quite equipped to help children avoid some perils in their life... fortunately, I had mentors, teachers and coaches that saw my potential and cared enough to invest in my success. These acts of kindness are why I am determined to give back and make a difference in the lives of children that are not as fortunate as me and others.”



Andre went on to found a not-for profit publishing company, Literacy Engineers, that creates dynamic customized literature to inspire the communities. What sets us apart is our ability to use a systematic approach, working with experts in the field, and listening to our clients -children, parents, teachers and community leaders to create non-fiction, real life literature to illustrate real life situations. Some of his most requested titles are “*I Want to Fly*,” “*No More Bullies*,” “*Making It Better In Our Community*” and “*The Fitness Challenge*”

In 2017, while in an elevator in Taiwan, André met Don Whitaker, a Rotarian from Auburn California. Don spoke about an upcoming Rotary trip to Kenya to evaluate a water project. André was intrigued. Don mentioned the village had a school of about 300 kids. André decided to donate a book to each child and Don took care of the shipping – it’s Rotary, we can’t make this up! After returning from his trip, Don suggested that André become a Rotarian since he was already doing Rotary work. Since joining, André has worked with Interact, served as his club president and written a book, *Excited to Serve*, which describes the creation of an Interact Club to inspire children and their families to join a service organization.



Project Literacy Literary Portal: In 2019, Andre’s city saw their school literacy rates drop below 70% proficiency in reading. As Rotary President, his club held a city-wide event where anyone could drive up and receive

free books, a Rubik’s cube game and a free ice cream sandwich. During the spring of 2022, Andre went a step further. His publication company, Literacy Engineers, LLC designed a platform (<https://literaryportal.com>) to allow access to his eBooks, educational material, inspirational videos and much more. The cost is currently \$39.95 for one year access, but for Rotary Clubs, subscriptions this year to gift to children and their families for only \$10 per family – he calls it **Project Literacy!** E-books are available in English, Spanish, and are being developed in additional languages. A beta test of the portal was done this summer with 5 after school programs serving 300 children per parish. During the first 10 days of the test, there were over 8,000 logins! Out-of-school programs and organizations that work with children are major targets for this resource.

The Literary Portal* is design to:

- Inspire youth and their families to aspire to greatness through education
- Get children excited about learning and where it can take them
- Help youth to (re)define their dreams through learning and literacy



LET'S READ FOR FUN!

PROJECT LITERACY
Giving FREE access to Children
www.literaryportal.com
Sep 2022 - Jun 2023

SALE 75% OFF \$39.95
Only \$10 for each access code

- 1) Email order information to alewis@literaryengineers.com:
Last Name, First Name, Rotary Club Name, Address, City, State, Email,
Contact Number and Number of Codes Requested
- 2) Payment will be invoiced to you or the club
- 3) QR Code and Access Codes will be sent via email

LET'S HAVE FUN!

Literary Engineer's goal during the 2022-2023 school year is to provide free access to at least 1,000,000 families and schools especially those in underserved communities as well as internationally.

“One of my mentors told me, the best way to teach your children as well as other is to show them through your example.” This project demonstrates to the next generation how to change and save lives through literacy.

Andre Lewis is an Air Force Academy graduate, a veteran, and a 24-year commercial pilot for FedEx. He has authored 23 books, with over a million people having access to his works. He has worked with over 30 school districts in the US.

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Imagine:

A Book Cubby in Every Child's Home - with the Help of Rotarians

In 2009, Rotarian Todd H. Bol designed and built the first Little Free Library. Less than 15 years later, there are now 150,000 Little Free Libraries around the world!

Today, nonprofit **Bring Me a Book**, founded by Palo Alto University Rotarian Judy Koch in 1997— is introducing a little library that's meant for a child's home — the Bring Me a Book Cubby.

We know that books in the home are a must. Again and again, research identifies that the number of books in the home is the key to academic and personal success. Children need quality books and a place to keep them so that they are readily accessible. Based on these needs, we were inspired to design and manufacture small individual bookcases or “Book Cubbies.” Children and parents paint and decorate the cubby drawer, add foam letters to spell the child's name, and personalize the cubby for each child. The Book Cubby becomes the child's home library, inspiring pride of book ownership and establishing the child's identity as a reader.

Book Cubbies serve as a safe place to keep track of both the books children own as well as books they borrow from the library. With fingertip access to their books in their own homes, children are on their way to developing a lifelong love of reading.



Partnership Programs

Think of *Bring Me A Book* as a supporting literacy organization for Rotary Clubs. In 2019, we were deeply honored when the Palo Alto University Rotary Club (PAUR) nominated us for a Library of Congress Best Practice Literacy Award—and we won! With the leadership of Founding Chair, Jyotika RoyC, PAUR created *BooksPlus*. Its mission is to provide children with access to books —plus other literacy support programs. BooksPlus has engaged multiple Rotary Clubs in District 5170 in this work, including East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Santa Clara.

Angel with his very own book cubby —that he painted and decorated with his Aunt Yarenzti's help.

Bring Me a Book and local Rotary Clubs work together to support the following literacy programs:

Afghan Refugee Book Distribution Volunteers with the Muslim Community Center Refugee Support Team in Pleasanton CA (USA) receive books written in Dari and Pashto for distribution to Afghan refugee children. Rotarian Tony Bloome, founder of mEducation Alliance, engaged Hewlett Packard to print and send the books to Bring Me a Book to distribute, with the help of local Rotary Clubs, to Afghan refugee centers throughout Northern California

Speaker Appreciation Book Program The Bring Me a Book Speaker Appreciation program recognizes guest speakers at weekly service club meetings. Club members deliver the books to an organization or agency that serves children in under resourced communities, such as preschools, school libraries, and health clinics. For an example of the books Bring Me a Book Makes available to service clubs, see the ages 3-to-5 years collection below.



Access to Books Children choose books that match their interests, age, and cultural identity through our partner *Bookelicious*. This initiative can be combined with the Book Cubby program. Mountain View Rotary past-President Heather Stenshamn and current President Sanjay Dave stand in front of the Bring Me a Book Bookcase Library donated to LifeMoves, an organization that provides transitional homes for those without.



A Call to Action

Thanks to our board member and Rotarian Alan S. Boyko, we now have a “green” Book Cubby—made of corrugated cardboard. It’s sturdy enough to support 50 pounds of books, but lightweight enough to ship anywhere in the country. Just as Little Free Libraries are in many communities—we dream of a Bring Me a Book Cubby in every child’s home—a dream that can be realized with the stellar help of the Rotary International. Indeed, we are ready to ship Book Cubbies to you!

Bring Me a Book Executive Director Lois Bridges loisbridges@bringmeabook.org
650-625-5000 or 650-804-4502 (mobile)

To see the resources and promising practices we can make available to our Rotarian partners, visit our website, <https://www.bringmeabook.org/>, go to Partners and, in the pull-down menu, click “Community Partners.”

Application goes live Sept. 1!

Funding Opportunity for Early Learning Community Projects

APPLY BY OCT. 15

Rural eligibility requirements - see overview for details

Grants Available: Early Learning Through Community Initiatives

BELRAG and **Save the Children** are pleased to announce funding opportunities for Rotary and Rotaract Clubs involved with early learning projects. Clubs may apply for grants of up to \$15,000. **US-based Rotary Clubs with projects that serve rural, low income communities are eligible** to apply. Projects should support locally designed and implemented community-based programs that support Kindergarten Readiness, 3rd grade proficiency in Reading, or 5th grade proficiency in Math. **Save the Children** is committed to supporting innovative approaches early childhood education. Learn how your Club can apply for one of these grants to support your community-based initiative that supports early learning. Applications are available on 1 September and are due by 15 October. Additional information and project exemplars are on www.BELRAG.org

BASIC EDUCATION & LITERACY MONTH \$500 AWARDS

CELEBRATE & BUILD AN AWARENESS OF ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

FOUR AWARDS OF \$500 (USD)

THREE AWARDS FOR ROTARY PROJECTS
ONE AWARD FOR ROTARACT PROJECTS

Applications must be received by 30 September, 2022
(Project should be currently implemented or ongoing)

To enter:

- Describe your project: tell how your club determined the need, what Rotarians are doing to address that need (any community partners)
- Explain the impact, and tell who benefits from the project
- How are Rotarians involved?
- How is the project promoted?
- 2-3 photos (include a signed release for photos of children)

Include:

- Name, contact info of Rotarian submitting application
- Club name & District number
- City, State/province/Country

Send to: literacyaward@BELRAG.org

For further information, guidelines, project evaluation rubric
BELRAG.org

Rotarian submitting project must be a current member of BELRAG



VILLAGE LEARNING HUBS-

A Project implemented by Pratham, Mysore

in association with Rotary Clubs in RID 3190 & Pragathi USA

The **Village Learning Hubs** was started to engage the school children after the school hours to ensure that the teaching continues even beyond the school hours in the village. What started with the Global Grant support of the Rotary Clubs in RI District 3190 and the Rotary Foundation in 2018, to provide children with access to reading material and a trained volunteer, has become an integral part of the village life where the projects were established in the past. The program also aimed to involve the community in the development of education in their villages, rather than putting the onus solely on the school. The project was implemented in 250 rural villages.

To implement it, students pursuing their graduation and Pre-University were selected, trained by Pratham's Master trainers and asked to engage the students in their villages. The project aimed at the following skills:



Self Learning



Basic Math



Creative Thinking



Group Study

Activity Based Learning



Kannada



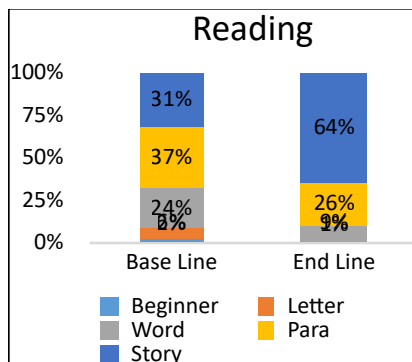
The content included charts, worksheets, models and other teaching materials. The content was divided into themes which relate to their immediate environment, such as water, growing of vegetables, living organisms such as birds, insects and other organisms, etc. The initial training was given for five days for the volunteers, followed by periodic intervals of meetings, monitoring and training which usually lasted for a day. During the training, the following points were covered:

- Entering accurate data in the sheets
- Monitoring progress and methods to encourage the child to go up the reading ladder
- Following up with parents to ensure the child comes to the class regularly

Results

The story books provided to the children are based on reading levels, where the child would gradually progress starting from letter, word, sentence and in the end, paragraph. The volunteers are trained to observe, monitor and encourage the child to go up the reading and comprehension level. The Children are grouped according to Reading level.

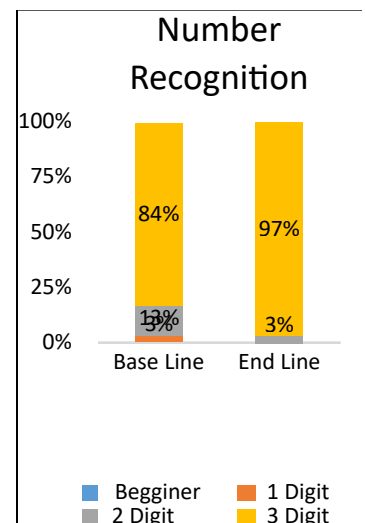
- Combining paragraph and story, the number of students in Baseline is 68%, whereas the number of students in Endline increased to 90%.

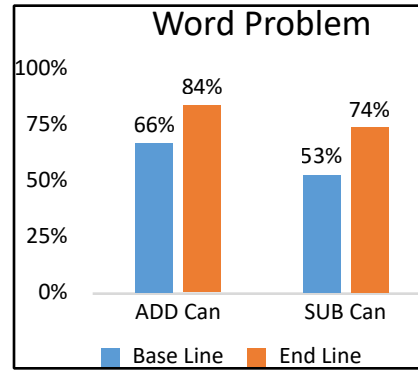
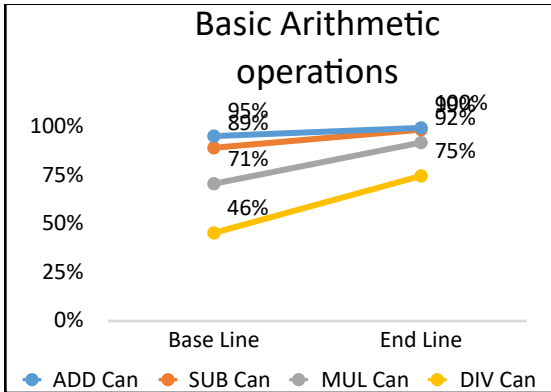


And 15% of the students have moved to reading a paragraph

- 97% of the students are able to recognise 3-Digit numbers, and the remaining 3% are at 2-Digit number recognition

- The ability of children to solve basic addition is 100%
- In the end line test, 84% of the children could solve addition problems presented in a sentence format.





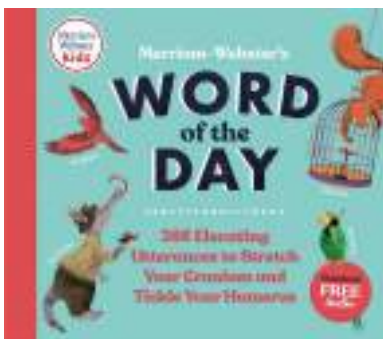
Of the 250 million children worldwide who cannot read or write, two-fifths reside in India, where for a quarter-century Pratham has been working to alleviate this crisis. PRATHAM develops low-cost solutions to improve the quality of learning and work with governments to take them to scale. Our community-driven approach has engaged hundreds of thousands of volunteers and has affected the lives of 75 million Indian children. Pratham is an innovative learning organization created to improve the quality of education in India. Established in 1995 to provide education to children in the slums of Mumbai, Pratham has grown in both scope and scale, with programs today reaching children and youth across the country.

As one of the largest non-governmental organizations in the country, Pratham focuses on high-quality, low-cost and replicable interventions to address gaps in the education system. Working directly with children and youth as well as through large-scale collaborations with government systems, Pratham programs reach millions of lives every year. Pratham's **Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)** approach has demonstrated proven impact on children's learning outcomes and is now being adapted to contexts outside India.

Rajendra Rai,
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Encyclopedia Britannica Offers Special Collection of Books

As Rotarians, we are often looking for quality books to include with the literacy projects we implement. Encyclopedia Britannica is offering a collection of quality, children's non-fiction books that clubs or districts may purchase at a significant discount. Titles include *Britannica First Big Book of Why*, *Britannica's 5-minute Really True Stories for Family Time*, *FACTopia! Word of the Day*, and *The Kids All New Encyclopedia*. These are excellent resources to include in your literacy programs or to supplement Dictionary Projects. A full description of the books available and pricing for Rotary Clubs can be found at www.BELRAG.org. For more information or to order, contact orders@m-w.com. Put Rotary in the subject line.



Empowering Women and Girls Through Education

Service through volunteering and projects is at the heart of what Rotary is all about. The motto “Service above Self” captures the ideal that Rotarians strive towards. This report is about the role that Rotarians can play in empowering women and girls through education. Educating girls should be a priority not only for country governments, but also for civil society organizations such as Rotary. Education is one of seven areas of focus of the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, yet the share of funding allocated to education remains relatively small today. For the Rotary year 2021-22, Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta has emphasized empowering girls as a priority, including through education. The goal of this report is to both inform and inspire Rotarians globally, so that through local or international projects, they can contribute to empowering women and girls through education. The report makes the case for empowering girls (and women) through education, provides guidance on good practices for projects, and showcases examples of more than a dozen Rotary-supported projects mostly related to education, but including also training and entrepreneurship for women.

This report is a product of the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development. It is co-sponsored by the Basic Education and Literacy Rotary Action Group, the Rotary Action Group for Maternal and Child Health, and the Rotary Action Group on Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration.

Most case study chapters in this report were prepared by the authors for the report, with many thanks to them. Three chapters are reproduced from The Rotary magazine. One chapter is adapted from the annual report of Rotary India Literacy Mission. The article on the investment case for educating girls is reproduced from a World Bank report.

The production of the report was inspired by the emphasis placed on empowering girls by Shekhar Mehta, President of Rotary International for 2021-22. Advice from members of Shekhar’s Task Force on empowering girls, and in particular Elizabeth Usovicz, is gratefully acknowledged.

Carolyn Johnson from the Basic Education and Literacy Rotary Action Group and John Townsend from the Rotary Action Group for Maternal and Child Health also provided valuable advice, as did Mary Jo Jean-Francois, Area of Focus Manager for Basic Education and Literacy at Rotary International.

A full copy of this report is available at www.BELRAG.org

Quentin Wodon

Rotary Fellowship for Global Development

BELRAG Newsletter: Coming Themes

BELRAG newsletters will feature stories and information based on different themes related to education and literacy. If your club or district is involved in a project focused on one of these themes, do **share your story with us**. Articles should be 500 - 750 words. Include 2-3 photos - especially those showing Rotary As People of Action (be sure that you have permission for photos to be published!) Submit your article to carolyn@litrag.org by the 25th of the month preceding publication. Themes planned for the next months include:

December - Education Supporting Children with Disabilities: up to 150 million children (*World Health Organization / World Bank*) live with disabilities (physical, cognitive, social/emotional) and those children are 10 times less likely to go to school than their peers. This newsletter will spotlight Rotarians who are providing access to education, specialized training for teachers to support every child’s learning, and community awareness programs to rally support for inclusive education.

February and March - Science, Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM): a solid grasp of math and science is essential for everyone to function effectively in a modern world. How are Rotarians encouraging and supporting an interest in STEM? We will discuss quality programs that support STEM studies - from developing basic numeracy skills to encourage girls’ interest in STEM to ensuring teachers are well trained in teaching maths and sciences and using technology to enhance learning. A broad topic that will STEM two newsletters!

April - Early Childhood Education: investing in quality early learning - the physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development of children from birth to early primary school - is shown to have a profound impact on brain development. A child’s first years affects their health, behavior, and learning capacity - ultimately affecting their productivity and earning potential. In April, BELRAG will share more about why Rotarians should be involved in initiatives that support parents and communities and what clubs are doing to support quality early learning programs.