January 2021 Newsletter

Libraries Learning Centers in Kenya

Since 2013, the Rotary Club of Stevenage (UK) and Just be a Child (JBAC) have worked with remote but densely populated communities in Kenya lead to the community's development through emphasis on literacy and learning. JBAC sees its role as an enabler and advisor where necessary, Stevenage Rotary supports and helps with 'person-power', and fundraising expertise, but the project is driven, guided, and implemented by the communities themselves.

Community engagement involves both parties learning from and about each other. Evaluation - a nine month process - leads to a full partnership. Projects depend on local communities operating as true partners. Each community must meet selection criteria and show an interest and the initiative to engage in the programme. The result is construction of a community-run Library and Learning Centre (LLC) created from a converted 40ft container that shipped 40,000 books. The LLC becomes community hub for gatherings, village meetings, cultural learning as and activities co-organised by JBAC.



Community partners engage in all activities: playground construction; multi-activity days (MADays); arts & crafts sessions; Young Writer Competition; youth training sessions on health, disabilities, business, and mental health; and volunteer and librarians training programme. Throughout the current pandemic, the LLCs were the only source of education for the community, thus their importance has increased and strengthened community partnerships.

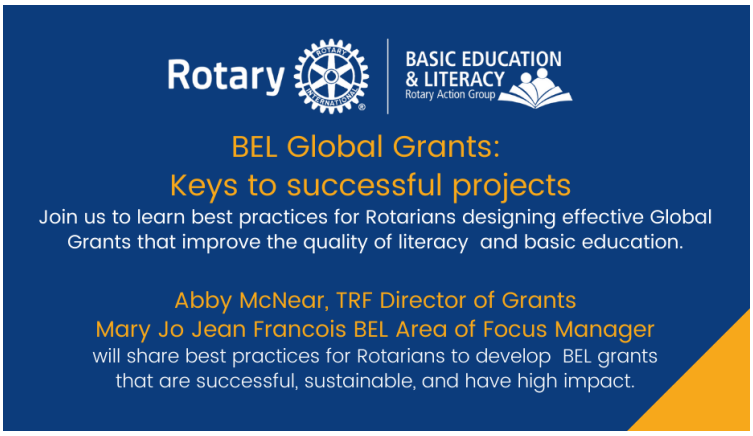
Interactions between community partners and JBAC are closely monitored and impact evaluated. It is imperative that each activity becomes sustainable without JBAC intervention. Therefore, great emphasis is placed on the development of the communities, librarians, and volunteers. Positive reinforcement of children's creativity and engagement ensures their continued growth and benefit from the activities.



In Kenya, reading for leisure or for academics is extremely limited due to the lack of age appropriate books and their cost. This is exacerbated by negative attitude towards formal education shared by many communities in the South Coast of Kenya. Communities have few opportunities to engage in creative activities. Just be a Child inspires Kenyan children to read: the basic premise on which JBAC was formed. But literacy is much more than simply reading a book. They believe that each community partner can lead their own community out of poverty. JBAC intends to construct one new LLC each year, with a goal of 30 LLCs by 2030.

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This webinar will be offered twice, please confirm the exact time/date for your area.

Session 1: Jan 28, 2021 20:00 Eastern Time
corresponds to morning, 29 January, for SE Asia, Australia, and India
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FF2sO4_uTrCqUQ-aW4iO0w

Session 2: Jan 29, 2021 10:00 Eastern Time
(afternoon for Europe, Africa. Evening for India)
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SDaHVMpRROq0opwNzTzX_A

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information to join the webinar

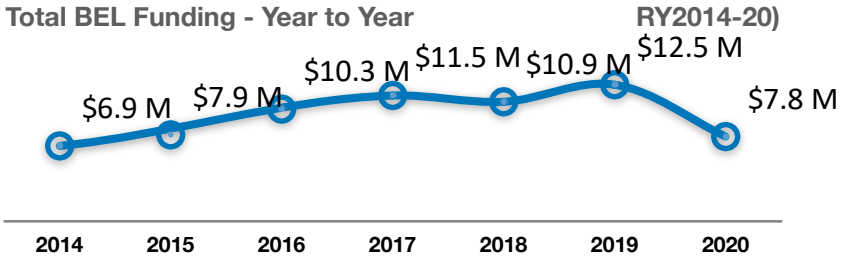
Global Grants: BEL Funding

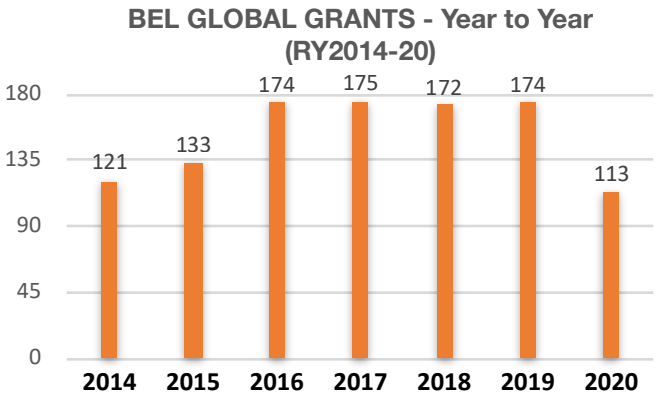
How do BEL Projects compare in fund allocation to TRF's other Areas of Focus? Since the Global Grants program began in 2013-14, a total of just over $500,000 (USD) have funded Global Grants. Approximately 13% of total grant funds were allocated to Basic Education and Literacy projects. A summary of BEL project funding:

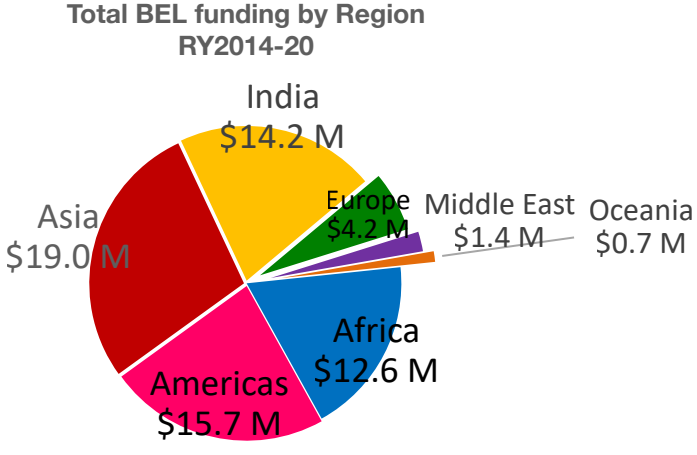
- $68 million in BEL grants
- $11 million annually toward BEL projects (RY 2016-2019), followed by a 30% decrease in RY2020 - likely due to the impact of the pandemic.



•175 BEL projects funded annually (RY 2014-2020), dropped to 113 projects (RY2020)
•Half of all BEL funding supported Teacher Training or Technology/ Training projects.
•Nearly half of all BEL funding supported projects in Asia (28%) and India (21%)







Impact of Pandemic on Learning: Will Students Return to Class?

UNESCO data shows that nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries, 94% of the world's student population, were affected by the closure of educational institutions at the peak of the crisis, a figure that stands at 1 billion today. UNESCO's projects that 24 million learners from pre-primary to tertiary education risk not finding their way back to their studies following the COVID-19-induced closures. The largest share of learners at risk, 5.9 million, live in South and West Asia. Another 5.3 million students at risk are in sub-Saharan Africa. Both regions faced severe educational challenges even before the pandemic, which is likely to worsen their situation considerably.Clearly, the need has drastically increased to support education and literacy programs. Now is the time for Rotarians to look at their own communities and connect with previous Rotary partners to determine how we can best intervene and address this global - and growing - learning gap.

Considering a Global Grant? Do Your Homework!

There are so many brilliant ideas for supporting BEL projects, Rotarians have lots of heart, great concern for others, and often go directly to a Global Grant to make a difference. When considering a Basic Education and Literacy Global Grant, it's essential to first do our homework to ensure that our efforts are well placed and successful! The first step in this process is to consult the BEL Policy Statement. A good understanding the "rules of engagement" begins the process of using your time and effort most effectively in your quest to receive Global Grant funding.

The purpose of Rotary's support of Basic Education and Literacy is to ensure that all people have sustainable access to basic education and literacy. We do this by creating programs to strengthen a community's ability to provide basic education to all, by strengthen adult literacy, and reduce gender disparity in education. We achieve these goals through these activities:

1. **Improving academic outcomes** for early childhood, primary, and secondary education *in collaboration with local school officials*
2. **educating adults** in reading, writing, and numeracy
3. **providing professional development opportunities for teachers** by using qualified trainers addressing topics in curriculum implementation, effective classroom instruction, or student assessment (*to inform instruction and improve learning)*
4. **strengthening basic education outcomes** by providing improved learning materials *supported by enhanced curricula and professional development*
5. **Improving academic support for before or after school programs** by training tutors and/or teachers (providing student assessments and providing equipment, if needed)
6. Supporting educators ability to **help students with physical or development disabilities**

Note that each of these options may include materials (books, classroom supplies, technology needed to implement the intervention), but the primary emphasis must be to improve the quality of education - and must include professional development to improve the quality of teaching and the positive impact on student learning. For more information to help guide your successful development of BEL Global Grants, the following resources are helpful:

BEL Guidelines for Global Grant Funding
Area of Focus Policy Statements
A Guide to Global Grants

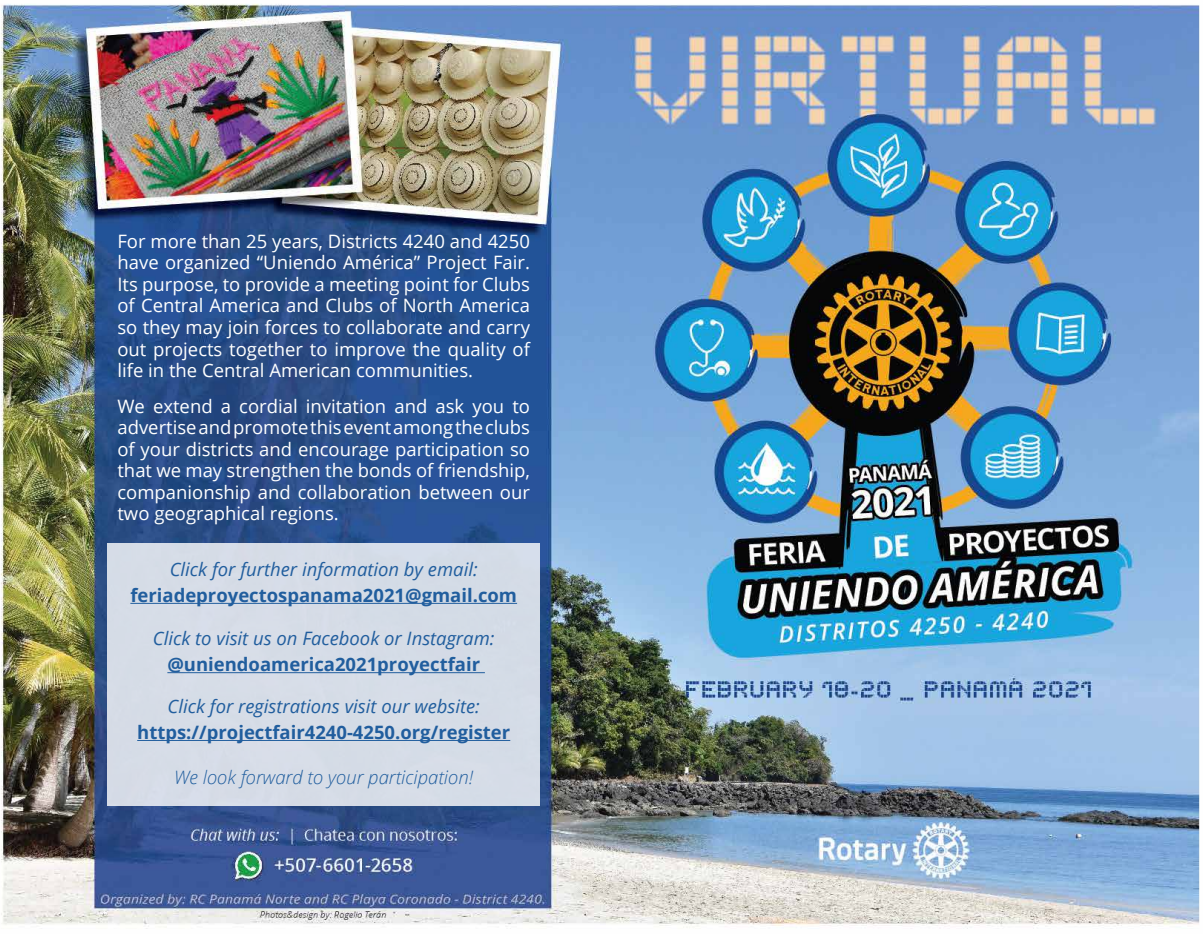
Rotarians are available to consult and advise on grant/projects development through BELRAG's advisory members https://www.litrag.org/contact or through the Cadre of Technical Advisors cadre@Rotary.org

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Rotary | Feria de Proyectos Distrito 4271 y 4281 Colombia

Colombia Projects Fair
Districts 4271 and 4281
February 5-12
Opening Ceremony, Friday, 5 February
To Register

For more information: Project Fair Website



Adult Education In Turkey: A Model of Impact and Sustainability

The NEED: In the late 80's the Turkish Government was making strenuous efforts to improve the economic well-being of the people, mainly ethnic Kurds who lived in the Southeastern region of Turkey, the poorest and most backward region of the country. Terrorist activity in the region had caused a mass exodus of Kurdish Turks to the cities in the West. The newcomers to our city of Izmir were illiterate people.

Our RESPONSE District 2440 Karsıyaka Rotary Club decided to open literacy courses to these newcomers so that they would be able to find better jobs and they could better integrate to their new environment. We quickly signed a protocol with the Ministry of Education. In accordance, they provided the classrooms in primary schools and made teachers available, while our Club paid all the additional expenses associated with conducting the classes. However with the traditional teaching method the rate of adult students who acquired basic literacy was low in the order of 25%.

The introduction of CLE (Concentrated Language Encounter) In 1998 we started using CLE technique under the auspices of the Rotary Literacy and Numeracy Task Force. The rate of students who acquired basic literacy jumped from 25% to 95%. We were greatly encouraged by the Rotary Foundation with MG-9861, MG-11430 and 3H-1179 totaling $318,750 . We trained approximately two thousand teachers of the Ministry in CLE method, and hundreds of thousands of illiterate adults acquired basic literacy. In 1995, the illiteracy rate for Women in Turkey stood at 27%, in the recent statistics it stands at 6%. Obviously, the success cannot be attributed to our efforts alone. Our Project provided very high visibility which encouraged many NGOs to organize literacy courses of their own. It became a priority for all who wanted to do good.

Why ADULT Literacy is important There are around 1 billion adults who are illiterate in the world. Covid-19 is likely to make this situation worse. It is very difficult to organize attractive adult literacy programs. One of the most critical issue is to get a strong support from the Ministry of Education. The needs of adults (in our case 14 years old and higher) greatly vary. Some younger adults are looking for ways to get into formal education programs, while the middle aged students are more interested in learning skills that could help increase the family income. The formal recognition by the Ministry of a diploma or a certificate obtained in Literacy Courses providing new beginning' attracts adults to literacy courses.



The author believes that the most important injustice in this world is the absence of equal opportunity to access education. Peace in the World is achievable through equal opportunity in education.

PDG Esat Kardicali, Leader, Literacy Turkey

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Advice to Young People

Several years ago, I accompanied Rotarian colleagues in Uganda to a rural primary school where the club had taken a keen interest to improve the quality of education. When we had visited this school on a previous trip it was three, small rooms made of crumbling adobe. There were no doors or windows. The few books that the school owned were tied in a bundle and suspended from the rafters, to keep them safe and dry. The night before, a cow got into one of the rooms, ramming the old blackboard with its horns and shattering it, and, doing what cows do on the floor. It was a mess. The Rotarians quickly mobilized, returning the following day to help the teachers clean the mess, repair the board, and install doors to the classrooms. On a following trip, a few years later, we visited newly constructed classrooms - thanks to the efforts of the Rotarians - that were clean, dry, and secure. The club had partnered with the local education officials to ensure that if new classrooms were built, teachers would be provided and the building maintained. Great partnership!

But what has stayed with me since that visit was less about the physical building and more about how much the Rotarians cared and sought to inspire these students. Most of the students at the school came barefoot. All of them walked to school, many coming from quite a distance. (school enrollment had grown from about 20 to over 100 students as a result of the Rotarians' involvement) As we visited with the students, each of the Rotarians spoke with the classes, congratulating them on being in school and being good students. But one Rotarian shared how he, as a child, attended school barefoot and walking long distances, but that his parents had impressed on him that education was the key to a better life. Here he was, a successful businessman, dressed in a fine suit and white shirt, sharing his story with these student of his humble beginnings and his belief that there was a path forward for each of these children. That pathway was a good education.

I remembered this story recently when reading a small column of Advice to Young People. Many of the wise words are familiar adages from parents, grandparents or mentors. Perhaps a few will come to you when next working with young people -and may inspire them to persevere in accomplishing their goals.

1. If you're headed the wrong way in life, remember that the road to Heaven allows u-turns
2. The future should be very important to you. It's where you will spend the rest of your life
3. It's a wasted day if you haven't laughed
4. Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important
5. If you're afraid you'll make a mistake, you won't make anything
6. If you want to leave footprints in the sands of time, wear work boots
7. It takes two people to start an argument, but just one to end it
8. if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything
9. Be the job big or small, do it well or not at all
10. Common sense isn't common - until it's been taught

Carolyn Johnson
Chair, BELRAG

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