



Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) Fact Sheet

Rotary Lighthouse Literacy Project for Alleviating Mass Illiteracy Concentrated Language Encounter Programs: A Life-Skills Approach

Alleviation of mass illiteracy on a global scale is essential to the alleviation of health, hunger and other major world problems. The first large scale international Rotary literacy project was implemented in Thailand from 1987-92 and funded by the Rotary Foundation. It used the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) or “Lighthouse” approach. The program was so successful it was eventually adopted by all government schools throughout Thailand and provided Rotary clubs and districts in other countries with the inspiration, example, and technical support needed to play a major role in alleviating mass literacy problems in their own countries.

A Brief Overview of Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) Teaching Techniques

CLE programs are “immersion” programs in which students do new and increasingly more difficult things with spoken and written language in the course of group activity. Another strong feature of the methodology is called “scaffolding” whereby the teacher first models what students are expected to do, and then provides less and less guidance as students become more and more able to work without support.

There are text-based and activity-based CLE program units. A **text-based program unit** begins with shared reading of text. Then, the learners and the teacher undertake various activities to aid understanding of the meaning of the text. Thirdly, the learners and the teacher work together to write their own text. That is followed by language activities to develop more specific literacy skills such as word recognition, sentence construction, spelling, punctuation and grammar. An **activity-based program**, primarily used in adult literacy programs, begins with the demonstration of a structured activity such as making something, step by step. Then, as in a text-based unit, the learners and teacher work together to write a text, this time telling either how to carry out the activity or what they did in the activity. Again, that is used as a basis for activities for developing specific literacy skills.

CLE programs are developed where they are to be used, by the educators who will be using them. Rotary Lighthouse Literacy projects enable and guide local Rotarians as they administer literacy projects, assist with the CLE training of local educators, and monitor and support them as they build and implement the literacy programs.

Rotary CLE programs have been implemented in four kinds of settings:

- Formal elementary school systems, such as the original 3-H literacy project in Thailand.

- Non-formal education - integrated literacy and vocational programs for adults, with a particular focus on illiterate women.
- Programs for street children (older children not at school).
- Programs for special groups such as children who are blind.

The Lighthouse Strategy

The RI Literacy Committee and Task Forces use the Lighthouse Strategy to help develop effective CLE programs in nations in different parts of the developing world as a basis for Rotary to help alleviate mass illiteracy. The Lighthouse strategy is to develop a program where it is to be used and to make it so evidently effective that it will be spread more widely – across an entire province or country. For that reason, it is recommended that program development go through trial, pilot, and extension stages.

Highlights of CLE Success

There are now Rotary Lighthouse Literacy projects in all regions of the developing world.

Bangladesh. In 1997, a second 3-H CLE project began in Bangladesh after acceptance by the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh of the pilot work there, and their wholehearted commitment to the work. The objective of the 3-H project is to implement the CLE teaching technique in all grade levels of 555 selected primary schools with 349,987 students, and finally for the Government of Bangladesh to introduce the program across the nation. Currently, the project involves 200 instructional and supervisory staff working in conjunction with the Directorate of Primary Education in Dhaka, and the CLE program is being taught by 4436 teachers, using the reusable classroom kits that have been developed within the project.

South Africa. Through a Matching Grant pilot project for disadvantaged schools in the West Cape Province of South Africa, a very successful CLE program in 3 languages was developed, using “starter” books that were printed in 3 languages. The media division of the Department of Education printed a teachers’ manual, produced videos and other items that were needed to spread the program more widely. A large-scale Rotary 3-H Literacy Project began there with full cooperation from the education authorities in the year 2000. Rotary clubs in the East Cape Province are also involved in very successful large-scale CLE programs for illiterate adults.

Brazil. Matching Grant pilot projects for elementary schools began in Brazil in 1998, and by 1999, 22 schools with 7000 students were involved. The work has extended to street children and other special groups with high need. The Trustees of the Rotary Foundation have recently approved a 3-H Grant to spread this pilot work much more widely.

Turkey. With technical assistance from an RI Literacy Task Force, Rotarians in Ismir, Turkey began supporting CLE courses for adults in 1998, under a protocol agreed on with the Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of Education. The project was extended to other parts of Turkey, through a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant, and

teachers within the projects were amazed at the rate at which their students learned to read and how the interest from prospective students increased incredibly. The culmination has been the recent approval of a 3-H Grant to spread the work nationwide.

Projects in Other Countries

Pilot Lighthouse CLE Literacy Projects have been set up in many other countries, usually through Matching Grants. Those countries include Argentina, Kenya, Nigeria, Namibia, Vanuatu, the Philippines, Nepal, India, and Pakistan. Rotary CLE programs in Egypt are particularly remarkable in that Rotary clubs, in cooperation with education authorities, have set up very successful Rotary CLE programs for illiterate adults. These are in almost all of the governates of the country, funded from within Egypt, and with technical support from past Rotary Literacy and Numeracy Task Forces.

How Rotarians can help

Rotary Lighthouse Literacy Projects are still desperately needed in many places.

PLEASE CONSIDER:

- Appointing a District Literacy Committee
- Urging your clubs either to develop a local literacy project or sponsor a Matching Grant application from an overseas club.
- CONTACT THE 2003-04 RI LITERACY and EDUCATION TASK FORCE FOR MORE INFORMATION.