

社長文告

Sephi Bergerson



各位親愛的改變者：

我確信各位在以服務改善人生方面都有豐富的經驗。各位在他人人生中能促成最大改變的方法之一，就是協助他們學會閱讀。識字為我們開啟世界。它讓我們更瞭解自己社區的生活，並看見其他文化。閱讀及寫字讓人們連結，給我們另一個表達對彼此的愛的方法。

9月是扶輪的基礎教育與識字月。在我們追求減少貧窮、改善健康、促進和平的過程中，提升識字能力是很關鍵的。事實上，如果低收入所有學生離開學校時都具備基本閱讀技能，便可促成全球貧窮率大幅下降。

沒有教育，不識字的兒童會成為不識字的成人。今天，全球成年人口中有14%——7億6,200萬人——缺乏基礎閱讀及寫字能力。這群人中有三分之二是女性。識字及算術能力攸關人一生中能否取得更好的房子、醫療保健，及工作。

尤其是對女孩及女性來說，識字可能會是攸關生死的事。如果所有的女孩都能完成基礎教育，產婦死亡的人數必然大幅下降。嬰兒的母親如果識字，那他就比較可能存活超過5歲。要改善全球各地人們的收入，國家就要先移除女孩受教育的障礙。這麼做的經濟理由很明顯：在一些學校教育為男孩專屬的國家，錯失的經濟機會的成本每年超過10億美元。

透過教育來為人們增能是我們作為扶輪社員最大膽的目標之一。我們很容易在生活周遭看到那些因為閱讀有困難、依賴他人替他們閱讀、或是除了自己姓名外不會寫字的人，他們的生活因此受到多大的限制。

從這個月開始，思考貴社要如何透過識字以服務改善人生：支持提供免費課程支持成人識字或學習當地語言的地方組織，或是提供教師以閱讀及寫字為重點的專業發展訓練。成為識字輔導員，或是與「全球教育夥伴」(Global Partnership for Education)合作來增加世界各地兒童的學習機會。與當地學校及圖書館商談，看看貴社要如何支持它們現有的計畫或是協助在社區創辦必要的計畫。

在印度，扶輪社與政府成功推動的TEACH計畫，已經證明如何擴大識字工作來接觸數百萬名兒童。在印度各地學校因新冠疫情而關閉之際，該計畫的網路學習透過全國電視網接觸到超過1億名兒童。

識字是擺脫貧窮的第一步。就像諾貝爾獎得主馬拉拉所說的：「一個孩子，一位老師，一本書，還有一支筆就能改變世界。」

Shekhar Mehta

梅塔

國際扶輪社長

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS, MY DEAR CHANGEMAKERS,

I am sure you are having an enriching experience as you *Serve to Change Lives*. One of the ways you can make the greatest change in a person's life is to help them learn to read. Literacy opens up the world to us. It makes us better informed about life in our own communities and opens vistas to other cultures. Reading and writing connects people and gives us another way to express our love for one another.

September is Basic Education and Literacy Month in Rotary. Enhancing literacy skills is critical in our pursuit of reducing poverty, improving health, and promoting peace. In fact, if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, it would result in a significant cut in global poverty rates.

Without education, illiterate children become illiterate adults. Today, 14 percent of the world's adult population — 762 million people — lack basic reading and writing skills. Two-thirds of that group are women. Literacy and numeracy skills are essential to obtaining better housing, health care, and jobs over a lifetime.

Especially for girls and women, literacy can be a life-or-death issue. If all girls completed their primary education, there would be far fewer maternal deaths. And a child is more likely to survive past age 5 if he or she is born to a mother who can read. Improving outcomes for more people worldwide is possible only if countries remove barriers to education for girls. The economic argument for doing so is clear: In some countries where schooling is geared toward boys, the cost of missed economic opportunity is more than \$1 billion per year.

Empowering people through education is among the boldest goals we have as Rotarians. We don't have to travel far from our homes to encounter those whose lives are being curtailed because they struggle with reading, rely on others to read for them, or cannot write anything more than their own name.

Starting this month, consider how your club can *Serve to Change Lives* through literacy: Support local organizations that offer free programs to support adult literacy or local language learning, or that provide teachers with professional development centered around reading and writing. Become literacy mentors, or work with an organization like the Global Partnership for Education to increase learning opportunities for children around the world. Have conversations with local schools and libraries to see how your club can support their existing programs or help create needed ones in your community.

In India, the TEACH program, a successful collaboration between the country's Rotary clubs and its government, has demonstrated how to scale up literacy efforts to reach millions of children. And at a time when schools across India were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program's e-learning component reached more than 100 million children through national television.

Literacy is the first step out of poverty. As Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai has noted, "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world."

Shekhar Mishra

President, Rotary International