

2024/25

RYALT

Setting Up a Literacy Hub: Handbook



Rural Youth &
Adult Literacy Trust

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The Team

Literacy Hub Team Leader

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Other staff

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You can contact any staff member by sending a message on Slack or by calling 09 280 4348 or 0800-891-339

Background

The Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT) was founded in 2011 in Port Waikato. The Trust receives no government funding and relies solely on grants and donations.

RYALT began because isolated or rural adults who could not read & write and were not close to an adult literacy centre had no way of learning to read and write, no way to make change for the better, to progress their learning, and in turn progress the possibilities and opportunities they are capable of achieving. As one student put it, "When I was at school, I never thought I would be able to do anything like this. It's more fun than school and has given me confidence"

In 2018 RYALT started working with teenagers, and in 2020 the decision was made to give greater emphasis to this work, as an initiative that would prevent adult literacy.

Why is there a need for literacy programmes?

International research puts the number of adults who are seriously affected to the point that they can't handle the literacy requirements of everyday life as 11.8%. Another 8% are employed and struggling with literacy at work. UNICEF (October 2020) reported that 22% of NZ teenagers have very low literacy levels.

What do we do?

Provide free literacy tuition, usually by phone or video-conference, one-to-one, at the student's pace, tailored to their learning needs.

Help break the cycle of low self-esteem and inter-generational benefit dependency. The majority of our students are teenagers or young parents. The parents come because they don't want their children to be ashamed of them and they don't want their children to struggle the way they have - they want to help them with homework, to read them books and to get a job.

Who do we help? Rural, Urban, Adults, Teenagers

Rural

The illiteracy rates in rural areas tend to be higher than in urban areas, as lower priced accommodation attracts people like our students - usually with no jobs and without much money. In these rural areas there are isolation and fewer opportunities.

Isolated

We work with a small number of students living in urban areas because they can't get help from their local centre - they work shifts or are on home detention or are isolated by fear and shame so great that they cannot walk into a literacy centre. Low literacy is almost always accompanied by a great deal of shame and fear due to the stigma associated with it. The causes of the illiteracy are usually parents with low education and/or childhood neglect, or neurodiversity which causes students to learn differently from the majority - not lack of intelligence.

Teenage Students

Our research with schools showed that schools have only enough funding to help with reading but not enough for the more labour intensive teaching of writing, and that attendance at remedial programmes is poor because of disengagement of students. With RYALT they can work from home and fly under the radar if they want to.

Although we support teenagers of any age, the goal is to work with boys and girls who are 13-14 so that they get help well before they sit NCEA.

RYALT runs a day to day virtual, after-school, literacy programme for rangatahi (Tuhituhi Rangatahi).

Donations

We gratefully accept donations to support our work.

We have a dedicated Give-a-little page at <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/adultliteracy>

How it works

To become a student, you need to live in a rural area anywhere in NZ, where you can't get to an adult literacy centre, or to be isolated by other circumstances.

Our volunteer coaches work with an adult student from 3-5 days a week for 30 minutes a day, using phone, mail, Zoom or in person. Alternatively a student may meet with their literacy coach once a week and have volunteers ringing them to help with spelling or reading on other days. All remote teaching is one-to-one.

We send the student reading material and there is also online practice software the student can use. As more and more students have smart phones, there is the opportunity for coaches to share a screen for the student to see the reading materials, and for students to take a photo of their writing and send that to the coach.

We work with students to help them get access to cheap internet if they need it.

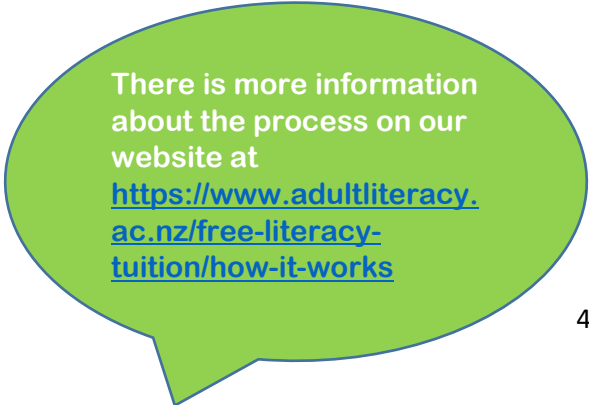
The lessons

We can help in lots of ways. Some students just want short courses to meet a specific goal. Others want ongoing help with reading, writing and spelling. The things that change the most for all students is their confidence, self-esteem and love of learning.

What happens when a potential student makes an enquiry

When a potential student calls RYALT, they go through an assessment process. We identify if they meet our criteria and how we can help them. Following the assessment the student is matched with a volunteer coach, and the student and coach work out when and how they are going to do the lessons.

Once a student and coach have been matched, we put together a programme tailored to that student, that helps them meet their goals.



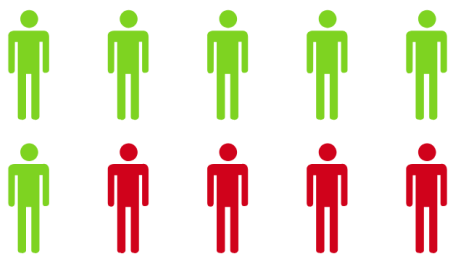
There is more information about the process on our website at <https://www.adultliteracy.ac.nz/free-literacy-tuition/how-it-works>

Why Literacy Matters

"Literacy is the written and oral language people use in their everyday life, learning and work. It includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Skills in this area are essential for good communication, active participation, critical thinking and problem solving." nzqa.govt.nz



The economic costs of low literacy in New Zealand



■ Literate (60%) ■ Struggle to read and write (40%)

40% of New Zealanders
do not have the literacy skills they need for home, work and life.

\$3 Billion lost



The literacy skills gap causes an estimated \$3 billion in lost economic and social opportunity in New Zealand every year.

Unemployment

those with low literacy are twice as likely to be unemployed for 6 months or more.



Adults with low literacy skills earn 30-42% less than those with high literacy



90% of offenders have low literacy skills.



Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

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Sources: <https://www.adultlearning.co.nz/our-story/literacy-numeracy-matter-21st-century/>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/comment/100621789/literacy-rates-do-not-make-a-good-readand>

Breaking the cycle

"Parents play a vital role as their children's first teachers. They play a major part in their children's education success, because children spend more time with their families than at school. However, not all parents know how to support their children to learn and be successful in education."

adultlearning.co.nz



Intergenerational poverty - Intergenerational literacy

Children are more likely to have low literacy if their main parent also has low literacy



57% of low literacy NZ adults have a mother with less than 3 years secondary schooling

Children who enjoy reading are 3 times more likely



to have good mental wellbeing



of children are performing at the lowest literacy levels

In 2018 442,000 kiwis didn't read a book



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<https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/comment/100621789/literacy-rates-do-not-make-a-good-readand>

STARTING A LITERACY HUB

We are very flexible

The Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust can work with your organisation in a variety of ways. We know each organisation has different facilities and resources and different challenges.

We encourage you to talk to us about what would work for you so that together we can create a programme that is an ideal fit for your organisation and its community.

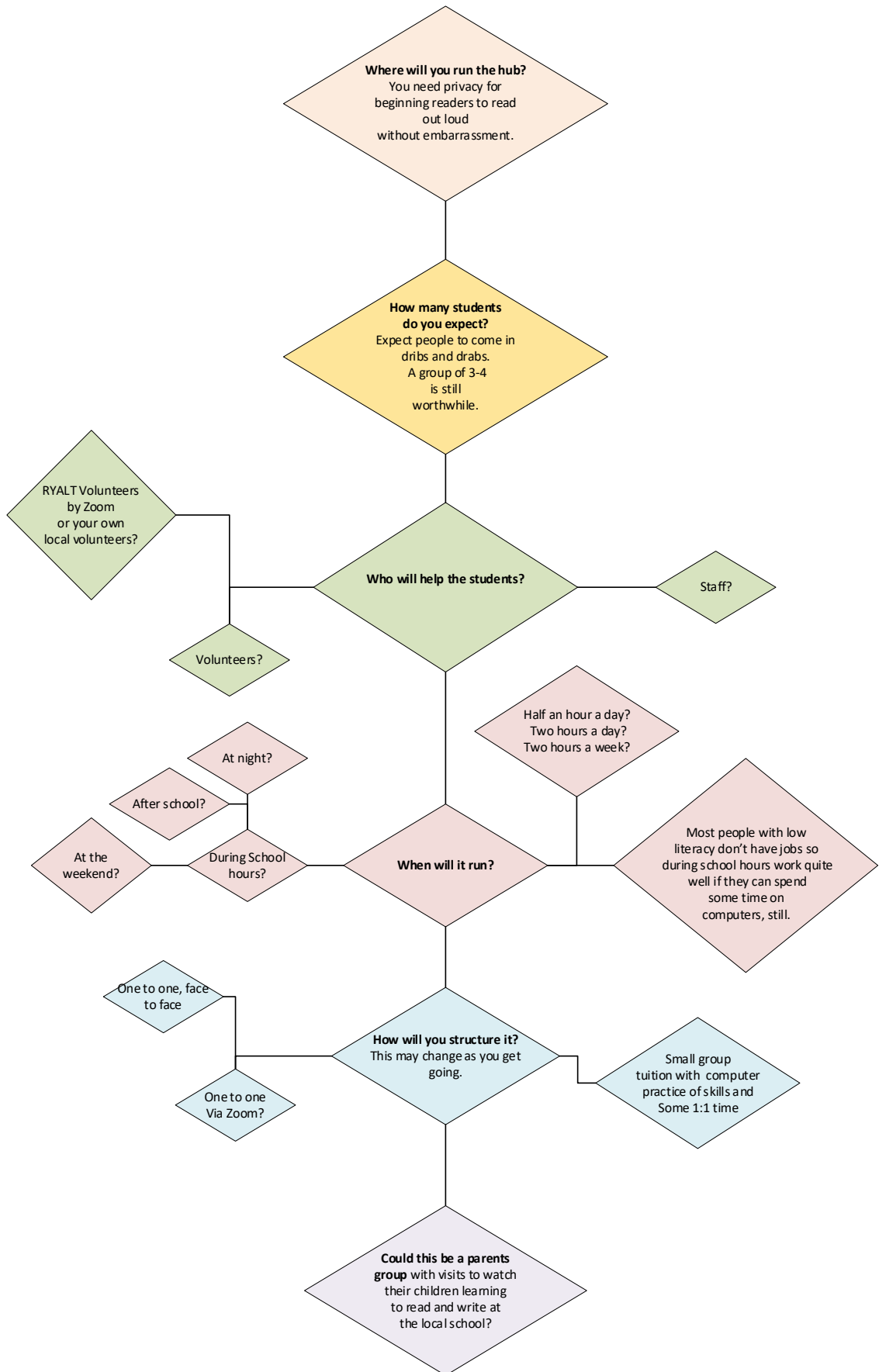
Our service is free. We are a grassroots non-profit organisation and apply for funding in order to provide our service.

Here are the things you would need to contribute:

1. The people, the place, the computers and the internet.
2. A designated liaison person.
3. Enrolment forms for each student.

Following are some of the options you might like to consider.

Things for you to consider:



Here are some things we can contribute to your hub:

Training for volunteers

If you have a larger group of learners or you want to have someone local work with them in person, we run a volunteer literacy coach training. We can run a training for you, or your helpers can join in one we are already running.

- A literacy coach is like a parent helper in schools, given training on helping adults with reading, writing and spelling.
- The training involves 5-6 weeks of a self-access course. The person doing the training needs to be confident in using computers and internet.

Ongoing supervision and support for the literacy coaches

Via Zoom, Slack and with occasional visits to the school we can provide supervision, guidance, and mentoring by an experienced trainer and senior tutor.

Excellent Adult Literacy Practice Materials Online

We have access to many literacy teaching sites, but in particular we use Starspell and Stepsweb.

A volunteer literacy coach

If you only have one or two people needing adult literacy tuition we can set them up with one of our volunteer literacy coaches. Our coach can meet with them via video-conference for 30 minutes and then the learner can practice on our online software for 30—60 minutes. The coach can view results online.

OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR SERVICE

Volunteer Regional Community Ambassadors

Word of mouth is the most effective way of recruiting new students. Those who cannot read and write feel a lot of shame and sense of failure. They cannot read flyers and posters and research has shown that most young people and adults who seek out literacy support do so on the recommendation of someone they trust.

That is why our Ambassadors will be reaching out to people and organisations in their community who will help, direct and support teens and adults to seek life-changing literacy support. We need your community talking about literacy and where to get help!

The role

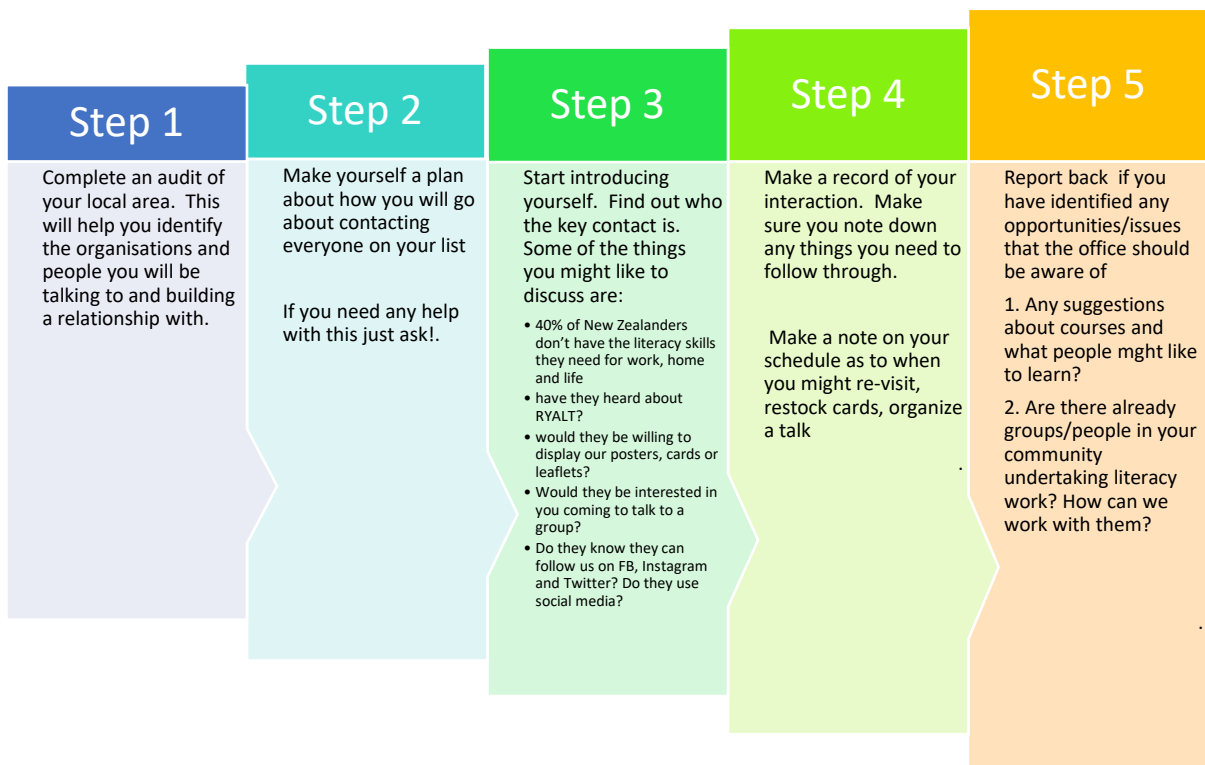
To promote the services of and represent the Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust within a specified area. If you are not comfortable doing everything below, or don't have the time, that is OK. Even doing one of these tasks is a help and in some areas we may end up having a team working together on ambassador work.

Make and maintain contact with key local organisations that could refer and reach out to potential students. There may also be groups/people you meet who are interested in volunteering with the Trust, either as an ambassador, giving admin support or working as an Online Literacy Coach.

1. Give out leaflets, posters and first contact cards.
2. Attend local community network meetings/ events/talks/community initiatives.
3. Help to maintain a relationship with local media and help to identify opportunities to promote the Trust in local newspapers, newsletters and social media pages.
4. To report monthly, and maintain regular contact with RYALT Community Coordinator and share experiences with a network of regional ambassadors through Ambassador Facebook Group.

Our ambassador team leader is Lillian Haskins. See p3 for contact details.

An Ambassador at work



Recruiting Volunteer Literacy Coaches

RYALT relies on volunteers to provide its free lessons. To be a coach a volunteer needs to be good at reading and writing and passionate about helping someone else learn to read. They do not need to be an experienced teacher. Full training is provided. The commitment for a volunteer tutor is for about 2 hours a week. Typically, the volunteer tutors for 3-5 times a week and each lesson is about 30 minutes. The volunteer needs to have internet access and we do have tech support volunteers who provide our volunteers with technical support.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering can find out more about volunteering by ringing the office on 0800 891 339, [filling out our contact form](#), or emailing admin@adultracy.ac.nz.

Our volunteer positions are advertised on Seek Volunteer and with Volunteering Waikato, Volunteering Auckland, Volunteering Northland and Volunteer Marlborough.

Kaye Healey is our literacy expert. See p3 for contact details.



**There is a short video
on our website about
coaching**
<https://www.adultracy.ac.nz/volunteer/>

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

www.adultliteracy.ac.nz

<https://www.literacy.org.nz/busting-myths-around-adult-literacy-nz>

https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/115611363/international-literacy-day-more-than-440000-kiwi-adults-not-reading-books?fbclid=IwAR08PAseYVFBKvd7jk6id40F8_m3UtOv_bp45L-xWm1nnSnHgxc8oJZ-sY

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jun/24/andy-mcnab-at-the-age-of-16-i-learned-to-read-and-that-knowledge-was-everything>