

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS



This Bulletin is published by the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration in collaboration with the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development

UPDATES & EVENTS

Editorial/Éditorial: World Refugees Day / La journée mondiale des réfugiés / El día mundial de los refugiados

Convention/Convención: Meet us in Houston / Rencontrez-nous à Houston / Encuéntrenos en Houston

Membership/Adhésion/Afiliación: Become a member / Devenez membre / Hágase miembro

WEBINAR WITH ROTARY INTERNATIONAL & WELCOME.US

Supporting Refugees in the US: Opportunities and Resources from Welcome.US and Rotary

WEBINAR WITH ROTARY PEACE PROJECTS INCUBATOR

Five Projects Targeting Refugees, IDPs, and Migrants

- 1 – **Bangladesh:** Training Center to Empower Rohingya Women and Children
- 2 – **Germany:** ECD-based Parent Support Addressing Immigration Related Stress
- 3 – **Poland:** Human Rights Education through Arts and Sports
- 4 – **Uganda (Northern):** Partnering for Peace and Reaching Out to Refugees
- 5 – **Uganda (Western):** Refugee Regenerative Farming Project

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS – SELECTED STORIES

Case studies from Empowering Women and Girls through Education

- 1 – **Uganda:** Creating Best Futures in Nakivale Refugee Settlement
- 2 – **Honduras:** Train for Change: A Teacher Empowerment Project
- 3 – **Guatemala:** Paving the Pathway out of Poverty - Educating Girls
- 4 – **Niger:** Remember Niger Coalition
- 5 – **India:** Empowering School Children through English language Teaching in Rural Karnataka

STORIES OF ROTARIANS IN ACTION

Stories from Rotary and Rotary Voices: Two cargo planes packed with tons of medical equipment have already been flown to Ukraine - Strength in times of crisis in Ukraine - Nobody is left alone - Hungarian club overcomes challenges to help Ukraine - Suddenly, the war knocked on our door - Rotary clubs in Lviv find hope, strength in solidarity - Academy enables gifted Ukrainian musicians to continue their dreams - From Ukraine to Denmark: 17-year-old refugee finds a home with Rotarians - Millions of drops make a difference

Editorial - Éditorial

World Refugees Day

Quentin Wodon, Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration

This is the second issue of our new Migration & Development Bulletin, which we wanted to publish before the start of the Rotary International Convention in Houston. If you are attending the convention, please visit us and attend our breakout session and annual meeting – information on how to do so is provided in this Bulletin. Membership in the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration is free, as is membership in our partner for this Bulletin, the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development. Information on how to register to become a member is also provided in this issue.

You will find in this Bulletin multiple descriptions of projects being implemented with refugees, IDPs, and migrants. Rotary International is actively providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Stories of such engagement are reproduced in this Bulletin from Rotary magazine and the Rotary Voices blog. Rotary International is also encouraging clubs and districts to support the resettlement of refugees in the United States. Information from a webinar organized on this topic in May is also provided in this Bulletin.

The Bulletin also provides information from another webinar we organized in April jointly with the Rotary Peace Projects Incubator. Five projects that were presented at that webinar are featured. Finally, you will also find in this issue stories of projects aiming to empower women and girls, based on one of our publications (more such stories will be provided in the next issue of the Bulletin for the Fall of 2022).

As always, we hope that these stories and examples of project will inspire you in your own work. We also hope that you will observe World Refugee Day. The Day is celebrated each year on June 20. Information related to the Day is available [here](https://www.unhcr.org/world-refugee-day). Around the Day, UNHCR typically releases new estimates of the number of people forcibly displaced globally, which has unfortunately increased dramatically since the last estimates due to the crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan. We hope that you will find ways to support refugees, IDPs and migrants, and please do not hesitate to contact us through our website at <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.

Journée mondiale des réfugiés

Quentin Wodon, Groupe d'action du Rotary pour les réfugiés, les déplacements forcés et la migration

Ceci est le deuxième numéro de notre nouveau Bulletin Migration & Développement, que nous voulions publier avant le début de la Convention du Rotary International à Houston. Si vous assistez au congrès, veuillez nous rendre visite et assister à notre séance et à notre assemblée annuelle - des informations sur la marche à suivre sont fournies dans ce Bulletin. L'adhésion au Groupe d'action Rotarien pour les réfugiés, les déplacements forcés et la migration est gratuite, tout comme l'adhésion à notre partenaire pour ce Bulletin, l'Association (Fellowship) Rotarienne pour le développement mondial. Des informations sur la façon de s'inscrire pour devenir membre sont également fournies dans ce numéro.

Vous trouverez dans ce Bulletin plusieurs descriptions de projets mis en œuvre avec des réfugiés, des déplacés internes et des migrants. Le Rotary International fournit activement une aide humanitaire à l'Ukraine. Les récits de cet engagement du magazine Rotary et du blog Rotary Voices sont reproduits dans ce bulletin. Le Rotary International encourage également les clubs et les districts à soutenir la réinstallation des réfugiés aux États-Unis. Des informations d'un webinaire organisé sur ce sujet en mai sont également fournies dans ce Bulletin.

Le Bulletin fournit également des informations sur un autre webinaire que nous avons organisé en avril conjointement avec l'incubateur des projets du Rotary pour la paix. Cinq projets qui ont été présentés lors de ce webinaire. Enfin, vous trouverez également dans ce numéro des histoires de projets visant à autonomiser les femmes et les filles, basées sur l'une de nos publications (d'autres projets seront mentionnés dans le prochain numéro du Bulletin de l'automne 2022).

Comme toujours, nous espérons que ces histoires et exemples de projets vous inspireront dans votre propre travail. Nous espérons également que vous observerez la Journée mondiale des réfugiés. La Journée est célébrée chaque année le 20 juin. Des informations sur la Journée sont disponibles [ici](https://www.unhcr.org/world-refugee-day). Autour de la journée, le HCR publie généralement de nouvelles estimations du nombre de personnes déplacées de force dans le monde. Ce nombre a malheureusement augmenté de façon spectaculaire depuis les dernières estimations en raison des crises en Ukraine et en Afghanistan. Nous espérons que vous trouverez des moyens de soutenir les réfugiés, les déplacés internes et les migrants, et n'hésitez pas

à nous contacter via notre site Web à l'adresse <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.

Día Mundial de los Refugiados

Quentin Wodon, Grupo de Acción Rotaria para Refugiados, Desplazamiento Forzado y Migración

Esta es la segunda edición de nuestro nuevo Boletín de Migración y Desarrollo, que queríamos publicar antes del inicio de la Convención de Rotary International en Houston. Si asiste a la convención, visítenos y participa a nuestra sesión de trabajo y reunión anual; en este Boletín se proporciona información sobre cómo hacerlo. La afiliación con el Grupo de Acción Rotarian para Refugiados, Desplazamiento Forzado y Migración es gratuita, al igual que la afiliación con nuestro socio para este Boletín, la Comunidad (Fellowship) Rotarian para el Desarrollo Global. En este número también se proporciona información sobre cómo registrarse para convertirse en miembro.

En este Boletín encontrará múltiples descripciones de proyectos que se están implementando con refugiados, desplazados internos y migrantes. Rotary International brinda activamente asistencia humanitaria a Ucrania. En este Boletín se reproducen relatos de tales compromisos de la revista Rotary y del blog Rotary Voices. Rotary International también

alienta a los clubes y distritos a apoyar el reasentamiento de refugiados en los Estados Unidos. En este Boletín se proporciona información de un seminario web organizado sobre este tema en mayo.

El Boletín también proporciona información de otro seminario web que organizamos en abril junto con la Incubadora de Proyectos de Paz de Rotary. Se presentan cinco proyectos. Finalmente, también encontrará en este número historias de proyectos que tienen como objetivo empoderar a mujeres y niñas, basadas en una de nuestras publicaciones (se proporcionarán más historias de este tipo en el próximo número del Boletín de otoño de 2022).

Como siempre, esperamos que estas historias y ejemplos de proyectos lo inspiren en su propio trabajo. También esperamos que observen el Día Mundial del Refugiado. El Día se celebra cada año el 20 de junio. Información sobre el Día está disponible [aquí](https://www.ragforrefugees.org/). Alrededor del día, ACNUR suele publicar nuevas estimaciones del número de personas desplazadas por la fuerza en todo el mundo, que desafortunadamente ha aumentado drásticamente desde las últimas estimaciones debido a las crisis en Ucrania y Afganistán. Esperamos que encuentre formas de apoyar a los refugiados, desplazados internos y migrantes, y no dude en contactarnos a través de nuestro sitio web en <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.



Photo: UN visual for World Refugee Day 2021.

Updates & Events

Rotary International Convention in Houston

Are you attending the Rotary International Convention in Houston? If this is the case, we hope to meet you there! We will have a booth for the RAG for Refugees, Forced Displacement and Migration and a one-hour breakout session in English on June 7 on "Responding to the Refugee and Displacement Crisis". We will also have our annual meeting, again on June 7.

Times and places to remember (all times are CDT):

George R. Brown Convention Center

- House of Friendship, Booth # 719
- Breakout session, June 7, 2 pm, Room 310
- Annual meeting, June 7, 4:30 pm, Room 381B

Convention du Rotary International à Houston

Participez-vous à la convention du Rotary International à Houston ? Si tel est le cas, nous espérons vous y rencontrer ! Nous aurons un stand pour le RAG for Refugees, Forced Displacement and Migration et une séance en anglais d'une heure le 7 juin sur le thème « Responding to the Refugee and

Displacement Crisis ». Nous aurons également notre réunion annuelle le 7 juin.

Dates et lieux à retenir (toutes les heures sont CDT):

George R. Brown Convention Center

- Maison de l'amitié, stand n° 719
- Session thématique, 7 juin, 14 h, Salle 310
- Assemblée annuelle, 7 juin, 16h30, Salle 381B

Convención de Rotary International en Houston

¿Asistirá a la Convención de Rotary International en Houston? Si este es el caso, ¡esperamos encontrarte allí! Tendremos un stand para el RAG para Refugiados, Desplazamiento Forzado y Migración y una sesión en inglés de una hora el 7 de junio sobre el tema « "Responding to the Refugee and Displacement Crisis" ». También tendremos nuestra reunión anual, nuevamente el 7 de junio.

Tiempos y lugares para recordar (horarios son CDT):

George R. Brown Convention Center

- Casa de la Amistad, Stand # 719
- Sesión de trabajo, 7 de junio, 2 pm, Sala 310
- Reunión anual, 7 de junio, 4:30 pm, Sala 381B



Becoming a Member

This Bulletin is published by the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration in collaboration with the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development. You can become a member to either one of the two entities, or both. Membership is currently free. We are currently in the process of setting up a system whereby individuals can make donations, but this is by no means required.

Rotary Action Groups are independent, Rotary-affiliated groups made up of people from around the world who are interested in a particular field, such as economic development, peace, the environment, or water. Action groups offer their technical expertise and support to help Rotary clubs plan and implement projects to increase impact, one of Rotary's strategic priorities. This support includes helping clubs find partners, funding, and other resources. Action groups can also help clubs and districts prepare grant applications, conduct community assessments, and develop plans to monitor and evaluate projects. Anyone who wants to share their expertise to make a difference can join an action group. To become a member of the RAG for refugees, forced displacement and migration, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVXKFXL>.

Rotary Fellowships are also independent, Rotary-affiliated groups. They enable members to share a common passion. Being part of a fellowship is a fun way to make friends around the world, join a global community built around a hobby or profession, and – for Rotarians, enhance the Rotary experience. To join the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H2L67RT>.

Websites

RAG: <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.

Fellowship: <https://www.rotaryfellowshipforglobaldevelopment.org/>.



Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration



Rotary Fellowship for Global Development

Devenir membre

Ce bulletin est publié par le Groupe d'action du Rotary pour les réfugiés, les déplacements forcés et la migration en collaboration avec le Rotary Fellowship pour le développement mondial. Vous pouvez devenir membre de l'une ou l'autre des deux entités, ou des deux. L'adhésion est actuellement gratuite. Nous sommes en train de mettre en place un système permettant aux sympathisants de faire des dons, mais ce n'est en aucun cas obligatoire.

Les groupes d'action du Rotary sont des groupes indépendants affiliés au Rotary et composés de personnes du monde entier qui s'intéressent à un domaine particulier, comme le développement économique, la paix, l'environnement ou l'eau. Les groupes d'action offrent leur expertise technique et leur soutien pour aider les clubs Rotary à planifier et à mettre en œuvre des projets visant à accroître leur impact, ce qui est l'une des priorités stratégiques du Rotary. Ce soutien comprend l'aide aux clubs pour trouver des partenaires, des financements et d'autres ressources. Les groupes d'action peuvent également aider les clubs et les districts à préparer les demandes de subventions, à mener des évaluations communautaires et à élaborer des plans pour suivre et évaluer les projets. Toute personne désireuse de partager son expertise pour contribuer peut se joindre à un groupe d'action. Pour devenir membre du Groupe d'action du Rotary pour les réfugiés, les déplacements forcés et la migration, allez à <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVXKFXL>.

Les Rotary Fellowships sont également des groupes indépendants affiliés au Rotary. Ils permettent aux membres de partager une passion commune. Faire partie d'un Fellowship est une façon de se faire des amis dans le monde entier, de rejoindre une communauté mondiale construite autour d'un passe-temps ou d'une profession et, pour les Rotariens, d'améliorer leur expérience du Rotary. Pour rejoindre le Fellowship du Rotary pour le développement, allez à <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H2L67RT>.

Sites Web

RAG: <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.

Fellowship: <https://www.rotaryfellowshipforglobaldevelopment.org/>.



Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration



Rotary Fellowship for Global Development

Convertirse en miembro

Este Boletín es publicado por el Grupo de Acción de Rotary para Refugiados, Desplazamiento Forzado y Migración en colaboración con el Fellowship del Rotary para el Desarrollo Global. Puede convertirse en miembro de una de las dos entidades, o de ambas. La membresía es actualmente gratuita. Estamos en el proceso de establecer un sistema mediante el cual las personas pueden hacer donaciones, pero esto de ninguna manera es obligatorio.

Los Grupos de Acción de Rotary son grupos independientes afiliados a Rotary compuestos por personas de todo el mundo que están interesadas en un campo en particular, como el desarrollo económico, la paz, el medio ambiente o el agua. Los grupos de acción ofrecen su experiencia técnica y apoyo para ayudar a los clubes rotarios a planificar e implementar proyectos para aumentar sus impactos, lo que es una de las prioridades estratégicas de Rotary. Este apoyo incluye ayudar a los clubes a encontrar socios, financiación y otros recursos. Los grupos de acción también pueden ayudar a los clubes y distritos a preparar solicitudes de subvenciones, realizar evaluaciones comunitarias y desarrollar planes para monitorear y evaluar proyectos. Cualquiera que quiera compartir su

experiencia para marcar la diferencia puede unirse a un grupo de acción. Para convertirse en miembro del Grupo de Acción para refugiados, desplazamiento forzado y migración, vaya a <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVXKFXL>.

Los Rotary Fellowships también son grupos independientes afiliados a Rotary. Permiten a los miembros compartir una pasión común. Ser parte de una confraternidad es una forma de hacer amigos en todo el mundo, unirse a una comunidad global creada en torno a un pasatiempo o profesión y, para los rotarios, mejorar la experiencia rotaria. Para unirse al Rotary Fellowship para el Desarrollo Global, vaya a <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H2L67RT>.

Sitios Web

RAG: <https://www.ragforrefugees.org/>.

Fellowship:

<https://www.rotaryfellowshipforglobaldevelopment.org/>.



Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced
Displacement, and Migration



Rotary Fellowship
for Global
Development

Webinar with Rotary International & Welcome US

On May 11, 2022, the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Migration and Development participated in a webinar organized by Rotary International on the theme: *Supporting Refugees in the US: Opportunities and Resources from Welcome.US and Rotary*. Rotary International Secretary General John Hewko opened the webinar and sent a following email with key resources shared at the webinar. The recording of the webinar is available [here](#).

Excerpts from John Hewko's Message

Welcome.US is developing a full-country response to mobilize 100,000 Americans to sponsor Ukrainian families. With the support and service of Rotary members, and other Americans, we can help meet that goal to welcome Ukrainians fleeing the war in their country. The initiative also supports families who have fled conflict in Afghanistan.

Rotary members and/or their clubs anywhere in the United States who are interested in sponsoring Afghan or Ukrainian families can find information about getting involved using the links below:

- [Sponsoring Afghan families](#): To sponsor an Afghan family and/or spread the word to your network about the Sponsor Circle program, please visit <https://www.sponsorcircles.org>.

- [Sponsoring Ukrainian families](#): To sponsor a Ukrainian family and/or the word to your network about this opportunity to support Ukrainian refugees, please review the resources found on the [Ukraine Hub](#).

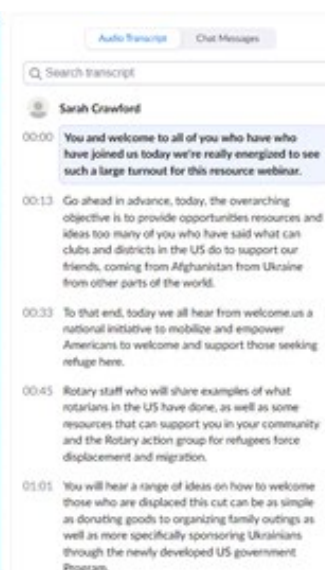
Additional Resources:

- [Rotary responds to Ukraine crisis webpage](#)
- [Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement and Migration webpage](#)
- [Presentation from Welcome.US](#)
- [Answers to questions posed during the webinar attached](#)

Thank you for embracing Rotary's commitment to supporting refugees and displaced people. We remain inspired by the club and district-led engagement around this work and recognize growing interest in connecting with others within the Rotary family and external organizations committed to this cause. We hope these resources provide you with the information necessary for your clubs and districts to take action.

Thank you for your leadership and your service,

John P. Hewko
General Secretary and Chief Executive Office



Webinar with Rotary Peace Projects Incubator – Featured Projects

On April 22, 2022, together with the Rotary Peace Projects Incubator, the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement and Migration co-sponsored a webinar entitled “Responding to conflicts and the refugee crisis: Opportunities to support RPPI projects.” Five projects that are welcoming Rotary club or district funding were presented. Short descriptions for each of the five projects are provided below. For more information and full description on these projects, please visit the [website of RPPI](#).

1 – Bangladesh: Training Center to Empower Rohingya Women and Children

A crisis with Myanmar nationals from Rakhine state who are referred to as Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs) began in late 2017 when these individuals fled Myanmar to the safety of Bangladesh in large numbers in the face of unprecedented atrocities and crimes against humanity committed against them. Bangladesh was faced with the challenge of accommodating over a million Myanmar nationals. Many had lost loved ones and had first-hand experience of savage brutality, leaving them scarred with deep psychological trauma.

While living in Myanmar under control of a military junta, many Rohingyas had systemically been deprived of modern secular education. Now residing in temporary shelters in Cox’s Bazar, secular education is still wanting, and these camps are becoming fertile grounds for radicalization and growing fundamentalism. More than 250 Islamic schools have been established in and around these camps over the last three years. These schools focus on Islamic education, but do not find the wider exposure to a variety of cultural activities and opportunities for intellectual development one finds in secular approaches to education.

Within this background, we argue that there is an urgent necessity to adopt deradicalization measures including secular education. Without these, the futures of Myanmar youth may fall prey to radicalization, leading to unfortunate consequences in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and beyond. It is within this framework, the concept of setting up a multipurpose training center for these displaced Myanmar citizens (youth and women) has been proposed.

The project aims to create an atmosphere of secularism and progressive thinking and learning among these young people preventing radicalization, ensuring deradicalization and helping develop their skills and assets. We believe this project to be first of its kind in Cox’s Bazaar.

For students, it would provide:

- Informal education: The center will offer non-formal education to 70 Rakhine students. A special curriculum will be developed to include Rakhine, English, mathematics, science, and history. We will strive to provide this within a supportive learning environment.
- Development of inter-cultural awareness and competence: Additional focus will be to accustom the students to Rakhine culture. This will include learning of languages/their own culture/language and other cultures. For this purpose, teachers will preferably be recruited from educated Rakhines.
- Sport for inclusion: There will be special emphasis on physical training and sports to enhance factors of social inclusion, social cohesion, and psychosocial wellbeing for children and youth including girls and individuals with disabilities among others.
- Music and arts will be used to develop creativity and other skills.
- Computer skills, e-learning process: A hybrid educational model will be followed to provide education at the center. Faculty members from across Bangladesh will provide non-formal education to the children and women attending the center using online platform.

For women, it would provide:

- Training in entrepreneurship, skills, training to use these skills on the labor market. The center will also have a vocational training unit for Rakhine women. There will be emphasis on handicrafts and computer literacy among others.
- Informal education: There will be provision for non-formal adult education with emphasis on Rakhine women. The aim will be to provide non-formal education to 30 Rakhine women (mothers of children attending the center).
- Commercialization of products produced by Rohingya women, help with finding markets and occupations, and healthcare training.

For both target groups, to keep the program participants attracted to the center, a mid-day meal will be provided each day of operation.

- Health Center: The center will have a primary healthcare facility to provide basic healthcare

as well as create health awareness among the attendees and their family members. Given the scars born of traumatic experience, the center will also provide services to help participants cope with the effects of trauma and post-traumatic stress.

Where possible, in both the health care and the vocational services elements, a hybrid model will be employed, and specialized resource persons will render their services using online platform. Audio-visual contents will be developed in Rakhine and English for providing non-formal education, healthcare, vocational training as well as cultural and sports activities at the center using online platform.

Initially the center will be established in a rented property in Balukhali or Kutupalong with good access to the camps. Over time, the aim will be to construct a multi-storied, multi-purpose building in the future as alternate sources of funding become available. If the center can be relocated to its own building, the building will be constructed so that it can also act as a cyclone shelter.

One strength of this proposal is that it draws on existing resources including very strong team (Rotarians) with experience of working with refugees and many connections. For sustainability of the project following measures will be considered: Commercialization of the products produced by the Rohingya women receiving vocational training; Faculty members providing online non-formal education and training will mostly render their services complimentary; To reduce the operational cost of the center, a hybrid model will be adopted and emphasis will be given on the best utilization of the online platform; Alternative sources of funding, including from the government of Bangladesh, will be sought.

2 – Germany: ECD-based Parent Support Addressing Immigration Related Stress

In 2020 according to German Federal Statistical Office the share of people with a migrant background rose to 21.2 million and this is one of the largest immigrant populations in Europe. Relocation to another country is a stressful process and a major life change for anyone but the most vulnerable group can be pregnant women and young children. The first years of life represent a particularly vulnerable phase for brain development and maturation of the key physiologic systems.

Mothers with young children are at increased risk of becoming isolated and the restrictions associated to

the prevention of spread of Coronavirus have highly contributed to social isolation, as well as development of various psychological disorders including postnatal depression. The consequences on the child of maternal postpartum depression are not restricted to infancy, but can extend into toddlerhood, preschool age and even school age. This represents a bad spiral. Immigration-related environmental factors exacerbate parental depression and maladaptive parenting that lead to parental stress and increase likelihood of domestic conflicts with a probability of domestic violence. Early childhood exposure to domestic violence is associated with higher rates of violence in adulthood and thus creates a significant challenge for those working for sustaining peace.

Family-based approaches, such as parent support programmes for migrant parents are suggested to tackle the problems described above. The program focuses on ECD (early childhood development), prevention of children maltreatment, reduction of immigration-related stress and promotion of better parental practices and families' overall wellbeing.

The major goal of the project is to protect children of migrant families in distress by supporting the remodeling of family space into nurturing and responsive environment to help children from early age to develop secure bonding, trust and self-esteem with the perspective on the formation of their pro-social behaviors in the future. Expected outcomes include: Increased knowledge among the participants on how to increase positive parental practices and families' wellbeing; improved the sense of parenting competence; mothers' postpartum depression and its impact on mothers' everyday life is recognized and if possible prevented/treatment started; mental health of both parents and children is improved; increased awareness about the social- and welfare system, legislation and policy of the new host country is increased; and others.

It is planned that every participating family will be assigned to specific project consultant (with the background in psychotherapy and child psychology) who will assist them through all project activities.

- For Mothers: Weekly visits of Hebamme (Midwife in German) within first 6 months after birth; Traditional Birth closure ceremony for every participating mother to process traumatic memories of the birth; Information services on host country legislation and social protection benefits; Coaching assistance and skill-based trainings for mother willing to re-integrate into labor market; "Burn-out preventive emergency assistance service" – wide range of support types: cook, clean, stay, etc.

- For Child's physical well-being: Course on Baby massage; PEKIP course; etc.
- For both parents: Support Groups, support line on all questions related to child's health and well-being; Reference to the existing governmental (ex. Jugendamt, Agentur für Arbeit, Krankenkasse) and non-governmental institution (ex. Profamilia, Caritas, etc.); Intensive training programme at the resort over weekend (the focus is shifting parents' perspectives on prioritization of child's well-being, transforming the patterns of stress-driven family communication, etc.)

Sustainability of the outcomes is provided through the following factors: participants are invited to be consultants for next projects and encouraged to start new or support existing local initiatives addressing the needs of families with small children or families in need. Upon successful completion the project can be conceptualized as a model and shared relevant organization for further implementation. After final evaluation, an article for academic journal will be submitted.

3 – Poland: Human Rights Education through Arts and Sports

Poland (and other European countries) faces a rise of intolerance and xenophobia. Alarming, in the case of Poland it can be particularly observed among the younger generation. Intolerant attitudes among the young have grown in the last years on issues such as acceptance of migrants and refugees, and generally speaking there is a lack of acceptance of social diversity. The challenge requires educational remedies, including in the field of informal education through popular culture: it is a field where social values and identities are shaped.

The Polish Woodstock Festival, also known as Pol'and'Rock Festival is a unique opportunity to promote a positive message of peace and respect for

diversity. It is an annual open-air music festival and takes place every summer near the Polish-German border. It is the biggest such festival in Europe, with around 500,000 participants every year. The event is inspired by the legendary Woodstock Festival of 1969, which positioned the peace movement in cultural history. The Polish Woodstock participants come from Poland, Germany, and many other countries.

The 'Never Again' Association and its partners intend to provide special trainings in the field of peace education for festival participants, using an innovative approach based on the methodology of interactive informal education, using quizzes, visual arts and musical activities. The project aims to develop workshops specifically focusing on peace education to be conducted during all three festival days. It is also an opportunity for the Rotary movement to reach a wide audience where it is seldom present.

The workshops will involve well-known musicians as peace ambassadors. An amateur soccer tournament will be organized at the festival site, too, providing a friendly environment where diversity can be experienced and cherished. The context of the Polish-German border provides an opportunity to engage with the issue of reconciliation and commemoration of past conflicts and genocide in the framework of positive peace. The workshops will be designed before the festival under the guidance of Dr. Rafal Pankowski. Some workshops will also be held online enabling the participation of those may not be able to attend the festival personally.

The participants will be trained and empowered to deal with conflict and hate speech as local peace ambassadors and the skills gained will benefit their communities after the festival. It is expected many of the participants will be inspired to become peace and diversity activists and they will also become volunteers and team members at the festival in the next years. All stages of the project will be monitored and evaluated continuously by the implementation team. Moreover, a comprehensive evaluation report will be prepared at the end of the project by a qualified social scientist, based on participant- observation.



Photos: Polish Woodstock Festival, provided by Natalia Sineaeva.

4 – Uganda (Northern): Partnering for Peace and Reaching Out to Refugees

Women's Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in Uganda have experience managing successful loan programs from combined savings but want larger loan pools for larger, more frequent loans. In January 2020, Chris Roesel of TCP Global received a request for \$1500 from several VSLAs. Within a week, there were 8 more requests. Today TCP Global partners with 31 VSLAs in the Yumbe area including 7 in the nearby BidiBidi Refugee camp. VSLA members want to improve their businesses as market vendors, subsistence farmers, goat herders, etc. to increase their earnings so they can pay for school and provide adequate nutrition for their families. There are no possibilities of affordable loans for VSLA members who lack collateral and credit history.

The goal is to expand a successful, collaborative effort of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and Rotarians in Northern Uganda supporting economic development; Foster collaboration between a marginalized community and nearby

refugees; Provide \$1,500 each to add 10 new VSLA lending groups to the TCP Global program: Yumbe-7 and BidiBidi-3. (\$15,000); Provide \$2,500 each to 10 qualified sites (Yumbe or BidiBidi) that want to increase their permanent loan pool. (\$25,000); In year one, issue at least 500 loans worth at least \$80,000; Maintain at least a 98% repayment rate.



Photo: Chandiru is a Sudanese refugee who has lived in the BidiBidi Refugee Camp for six years.

VSLAs are already sustainable and working successfully for at least one year before they partner with TCP Global. Each VSLA has three elected leaders: president, secretary, and treasurer, who conduct transactions in the open for full transparency. With the added loan funds through this project, they will continue to be sustainable, but now with a larger loan pool to support the larger and more frequent loans they want.

Since VSLAs typically lack bank accounts and internet access, they cannot work directly with TCP Global. Care Community Education Center (CCEDUC) in Yumbe serves as their fiscal agent. CCEDUC receives funds sent by TCP Global (or Rotary) and distributes 100% of those funds to the VSLA to use 100% for micro-loans. As monthly payments are received, new loans are issued. Once

the total value of loans issued is at least twice the value of funds sent, the VSLA qualifies for an additional allocation of \$1500-\$2500, assuming a good repayment rate. The VSLA loan pool continues to grow in this way until it reaches the level VSLAs set as their goal in a 2020 survey. To keep everyone fully invested in making the program successful, a portion of the VSLA's potential earnings go to CCEDUC as compensation for time and resources spent in support of the VSLAs and to support community projects.

As main outcome, within 3 years, each VSLA will have a permanent loan pool of \$4500, sufficient to support 300 open loans of \$300 each. The 30 borrowers in each group will increase their income by 10%, be able to pay school fees, provide 3 daily meals for their families and have resources to improve their lives.



Photo 2 - Innocent Ajaga and Community Child Education Centre (CCEDUC) in nearby Yumbe.

5 – Uganda (Western): Refugee Regenerative Farming Project

Uganda hosts over 1.4 million refugees settled across 14 settlements in the country. Nakivale refugee settlement in Uganda is the oldest refugee settlement in Africa, and hosts over 120,000 refugees. The increased flow of refugees in Uganda has put the already scarce resources in the host communities under immense pressure. Refugees and host communities conflict over farming land, water,

forests, and other resources. This has left refugees with limited opportunities to achieve self-reliance and resilience. The situation is exacerbated by WFP's cut of food rations by 60% at the end of 2020 - leaving the most vulnerable women, children, and the elderly at risk of becoming malnourished, which can in harshly impact their immune systems and make them more likely to be infected by diseases, amid a pandemic. The remaining hope for refugees and host community is to utilize the already depleted small pieces of land to grow their own food; yet they

struggle to increase incomes and become food secure; due to poor farming methods, climate change effects and lack of knowledge and skills to implement regenerative farming practices.

The project's goal is to improve food security, regenerate soils and build resilience to climate change effects for refugee and host community households in Nakivale refugee settlement. Specifically, by end of the project, the target beneficiaries will be able to have: Improved food security and nutrition in their households through planting and eating of nutritious vegetables; Improved resilience and climate change adaptation for target farmers; and Improved co-existence between refugees and host communities

By working in Nakivale refugee settlement, refugee and host communities will be supported to produce food and learn about regenerative farming under the new and changing conditions. The project is aimed at Promoting healthier lives, regenerated soils and peaceful co-existence between refugees and the host community. The intervention will implement a series of activities including the development and delivery of regenerative farming content, providing access to appropriate and high-quality indigenous seeds for first

growing food, fruit tree planting and environmental conservation training and tailored positive peace training for refugees and the host communities. The project will also embed regenerative diaries to facilitate evaluation of its impact. Regenerative diaries are a set of simple assessment questions that will be administered for at least 50% of the target beneficiaries at the start of the project (baseline), and thereafter, 5-10 beneficiaries will be interviewed bi-weekly.

For beneficiaries to continue benefiting, we are building the capacity of local volunteers that will continue training groups and offering them with tips and skills to continue producing their food. The Farm Agents will be hired from within the refugee community and will be trained in business skills, irrigation skills and permaculture practices so that they can continue reaching out to the community even when the project has ended. We would engage the Office of the Prime Minister to identify any other partners that would continue serving the groups and continue with the good work we shall have created. We would also continue fundraising so we can reach to more farmers and continue impacting communities.



Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration



**Rotary
Peace Projects Incubator**
rotary opens opportunities

**Responding to conflicts and the refugee crisis: Opportunities to support RPPI projects
in collaboration with the Rotary Action Group for Refugees**
22 April 2022 – 17.00h CEST



(Credit: Reuters)

- Rock for Peace: human rights education through arts and sports at Polish Woodstock Festival (Poland) - Project Details [here](#)
- Partnering for Peace and Reaching Out to Refugees in Northern Uganda - Project Details [here](#)
- Let There be Light: Establishing a training center to empower Rohingya women and children living in Bangladesh - Project Details [here](#)
- ECD-based Parent Support Program addressing Immigration Related Stress and Children Maltreatment, Germany - Project Details [here](#)
- Refugee Regenerative Farming (Re-Farm) Project - Western Uganda - Project Details [here](#)

www.rppi.ch - contact@rppi.ch
www.ragforrefugees.org

Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://bit.ly/3DUGtJZ> - Meeting ID: 845 5999 5128 - Passcode: 053284

Photo: Flier for the webinar.

Empowering Women and Girls: Selected Stories

The Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration, and the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development occasionally publish reports in the areas of focus of the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. A few stories of projects from one such report on empowering women and girls through education are reproduced below, together with part of the introduction to the report. If space permits, additional stories from the report will be featured in the next issue of this Bulletin. The report in its entirety is available on our website at www.RAGforrefugees.org.

Stories of Projects Aiming to Empower Women and Girls through Education

Quentin Wodon

Service work through volunteering and projects is at the heart of what Rotary is all about. Membership surveys suggest that the main reason why members join and remain in Rotary is the opportunity to serve. Fellowship and networking are also very important, but service is first. The motto “Service above Self” captures the ideal that Rotarians strive towards.

At the core of Rotary is the local club. Rotarians come in many shapes and forms, beliefs and passions. There is amazing diversity in the types of service work they engage in. This is a strength as members choose to contribute to the causes they are most passionate about.

For the Rotary year 2021-22, Rotary International President Shekhar Metha is emphasizing empowering girls as a priority. While empowering girls is a broad theme and is not restricted to education, education is clearly central to that theme. In this context, the objective of this report is threefold: (1) to make the case for empowering girls (and women) through education; (2) to provide guidance on good practices in this area; and (3) to showcase examples of Rotary projects that have done so.

Overall, 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. This overview follows the structure of the report, considering first the investment case for girls’ education and good practices, and next case studies of projects not only in the classroom, but also beyond.

In terms of stories, a dozen projects are featured. Chapter 5 tells the story of Razia’s Ray of Hope Foundation, which provides young women and girls in Afghanistan with safe, nurturing, and inspiring educational environments so that they have access to brighter futures. In the current context of the country where the rights of women and girls are at risk, the Chapter, which was written before the fall of the government in August 2021, indeed provides a message of hope.



Service Above Self Series



Empowering Women and Girls through Education

Edited by Quentin Wodon
August 2021



Chapter 6 is about the Best Future School founded by Venas Chirimwami Julius with the support of the community members in the Navikale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Julius was a member of the Nakivale Rotaract Club. In 2019, he helped built the school from scratch. Rick Olson, a Rotarian from Prior Lake Rotary Club, Minnesota, visited the school in 2020 and has been helping out ever since through a non-profit he created in the United States.

Chapter 7 is about the Piyali Learning Center which provides education for more than 200 girls in India. Each student receives a state-approved academic education, books and supplies, uniforms, breakfast and lunch, hygiene kits, medical care and life skills training. PACE Universal is a 501c(3) charitable in the United States that supports the Center. Deepa Willingham established PACE and the learning center to provide a better future for girls. This story

originally appeared in the October 2020 issue of Rotary magazine.

Chapter 8 is about Train for Change, a Honduran Teacher Empowerment project that began in 2017 through a partnership between the Rotary e-Club of San Diego Global and the El Progreso Rotary Club. With a Vocational Training Team Grant, the project focused on building skills, strategies, and leadership in teachers, most of whom are women. The project is continuing to expand through a recently approved grant in Santa Barbara, Honduras.

Chapter 9 is about the Guatemala Literacy Project, one of the largest grassroots, multi-club, multi-district projects in Rotary. More than 600 clubs and 80 districts have been working together since 1997 to improve education for underserved students. In that time, nearly 225,500 students have been served through four sustainable programs that are tested and proven to work. In 2017, then-Rotary International President Ian Riseley called the GLP “the gold standard of Rotary projects” for its sustainability and impact.

Chapter 10 is reproduced from the Rotary magazine. In a seemingly affluent Chicago suburb, poverty stops many adult students from affording classes to advance their skillsets. Local Rotary clubs are helping pay for school. This story is about empowerment and adult education, with programs that have especially benefitted women.

Chapter 11 is about Remember Niger Coalition, a non-profit dedicated to expand quality educational opportunities in Niger. Through a holistic approach and by working side-by-side with Nigerien partners, Remember Niger Coalition is aiming to ensure that more children receive a high-quality education.

Chapter 12 is about EDU-Girls, an innovative program in South Asia. Edu-GIRLS focuses on the education of impoverished girls. The non-profit customizes its program delivery to overcome constraints faced by such girls due to economic hardships, gender biases, pressure to get married young, and demands on their time at home.

Chapter 13 is about a joint project between Rotary and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In Turkana County, Northern Kenya, where cases of early marriage, girls dropping out of school due in part to social norms, and lack of access to quality education are an unsettling norm, girls are 1.3 times more likely not to go back to school against their male counterparts. The GPE-Elimika Project consists of a three-year comprehensive pilot to improve the quality of the education being provided.

Chapter 14 is about Manos a la Obra, an economic and community development project in poor areas of Guatemala that enables women (and some men) to benefit from vocational training so that they can learn a trade.

Chapter 15 is about the Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM), and in particular a comprehensive program called T-E-A-C-H (T-Teacher Support; E-E-Learning; A-Adult Literacy; C-Child Development; H-Happy School). TEACH is implemented in partnership with the Government, corporate entities, national/state specific NGOs and international organizations. The chapter provides excerpts from RILM’s 2019-20 annual report.

Chapter 16 is also about India, a country where professional careers in medicine, engineering, and similar fields can lift rural children from generations of poverty, but require knowledge of English. This is what led a group of Rotarians to create a project to empower school children through English language training in rural Karnataka in India.

Finally, chapter 17 is another case study of women’s empowerment through work. In Oaxaca, Mexico, a group of (mostly) women started to make chocolate, mole, and mushrooms to sell in the local market. Their initiative represents an opportunity to develop a genuinely sustainable social enterprise for wealth creation and sharing. The project benefits from support from Rotary Peace Fellows.

Rotarians see themselves as people of action. The goal of this report is not only to inform, but also to inspire Rotarians globally in taking steps to ensure that all girls benefit from an education of quality. Through local or international projects, Rotarians can contribute to empowering women and girls. Hopefully this report helps illustrating how this can be done.

In what follows, selected stories from the report are reprinted. Please note that the stories were finalized at the end of the summer of 2021, and thus reflect the projects at that time.

1 - Creating Best Futures in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda

Rick Olson

The Best Future School was founded by Venas Chirimwami Julius, aka Julius, with the support of the community members in the Navikale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Julius was a member of the Nakivale Rotaract Club. In 2019, Julius and the community manufactured the bricks and built the school from scratch. Rick Olson, a Rotarian from Prior Lake Rotary Club, Minnesota, visited the school in 2020 and has been helping out ever since through a non-profit he created in the United States. More information is available at <http://bestfuture.center/>.

Origins of the Project

In 2017, the Rotary Club of Roseville Minnesota helped found the Nakivale Rotaract Club in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. This was noteworthy because it was the first Rotaract club formed in any refugee settlement in the world and received world-wide recognition in the Rotary International magazine. Kyle Haugen, former District Governor of Rotary District 5960 of my Prior Lake Rotary Club traveled there in 2018 and through him I learned about Nakivale.

Nakivale is an old refugee settlement opened in 1958 in SW Uganda, about a 6 to 7 hour drive from Kampala, the nation's capital. Many of its residents have lived there for over 20 years. The refugees come from countries all around Uganda, but over 50 percent of the over 140,000 refugees in Nakivale came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they speak French (vs. the official language of Uganda which is English). There were about 60,000 refugees there in 2014 so there have been many relatively recent arrivals.

When the refugees arrive at the Welcome Center, they are given some food, clothing and some basic supplies, including some materials to build their own mud huts. They are allocated a 30 meter by 30 meter plot on which they can build their houses and grow food to survive. Supplementing that, they receive less than \$6 per person per month to live on (this can be compared with \$1.90 per day or \$57 per month, which is the World Bank definition of "extreme poverty").

Julius, one of the Rotaract members found me as one of Kyle Haugen's Facebook friends and we began messaging. Julius had organized members of the community to manufacture bricks from the local clay and together they built a three-classroom school building. They began running a free, non-

discriminatory, boys' and girls' primary school and early childhood development center (the "Best Future School"). The school started with 370 students in early February 2020 on a hope and a prayer – no school supplies and no money for teacher wages.

I really liked their initiative and went to visit there in late February 2020 with the idea that I might be willing to help or, if I did not like what I saw, to walk away. I left having donated some solar panels installed, an Internet hub, office furniture, a computer, printer, speakers, a projector and some teaching supplies. They were connected to the world and on their way. You don't go there and get to know the refugees and leave quite the same person you were before you went.



Photos: The school before the project with students in a small, crowded classroom.



Founding a Charitable Organization

When I returned home, I founded a non-profit organization, Best Future Center (<http://bestfuture.center/>), as I knew there needed to

be a tax deductible funnel to get donations for food and wages. The Prior Lake Rotary Club funded the construction of a school kitchen to feed a mid-morning cup of porridge for young children. They have also started a commercial bakery out of that kitchen to help make Best Future School more self-sufficient.

Donations through Best Future Center funded the construction of a 5 meter x 10 meter building in which there now is a sewing center with 30 women in each cohort learning how to sew for 3 months so they can become more self-sufficient. An Australian group donated the 30 sewing machines. The staff and volunteers (and more donations from Best Future Center) constructed another 5 meter x 8 meter building. Surrounding property has been acquired for future school buildings.



Photos: School kitchen/bakery (left) and sewing center and school kitchen (right).



Meanwhile, we have been working with two Rotary International Global Grants. The first for \$35,000 will provide school supplies, furniture, laptop computers, a gas generator to provide a backup supply of electricity to the unreliable "government power", 8 hand washing stations and 12 latrines. The second

Global Grant of \$79,500 will extend a pipeline to Best Future School to supply safe drinking water and also install a 100,000 liter water tank on top of a hill in a Rubondo, new part of Nakivale, to provide more water to about 280 families.

In March 2021 I brought 8 laptop computers purchased from PC's for People for Best Future School so they could start a computer school. We have also applied for a \$10,000 grant for bed nets to help control malaria which sickens many in Nakivale.

With all of the activity at Best Future School even during the pandemic, the school compound is an attractive busy place. The activities include the meals from the kitchen, the bakery, the sewing center, entrepreneurship classes, a motivational club, English lessons, and now the computer classes. From time-to-time classes are taught regarding young girls' menstruation in an attempt to reduce the stigma of their periods and to keep them in school.

To date, since February 2020, 49 Rotary clubs have contributed to the Rotary Grants sponsored by the Prior Lake Rotary Club or to Best Future Center to aid the refugees in Nakivale.

Looking Ahead

Once school opens up again fully, 570 students are expected there in addition to all of the teens and adults. The great need is classroom space, so we are currently requesting another grant from Prior Lake Rotary for more classrooms.

I have found in the settlement an abundance of talented people who have had to flee for their lives from their home countries to reside in the settlements. The challenge is to bring to them sufficient resources so they can learn how to help themselves. They don't want to be dependent. The parents desperately want their children to be educated, as they see education as the only chance their children have in life.

But the adults too need to survive. My hope is that once we get the school up to standards to perhaps be absorbed into the U.N.'s "government school" system, we can provide training in better growing of crops to reduce the severe food insecurity. In refugee settlements where few may ever leave, support for self-sustaining enterprises is critical to allow the refugees to break out of their dependency. Malaria prevention will also be a huge task to improve their lives. We hope to build Best Futures.



Photos: Various activities in the new facilities.

2 - Train for Change: The Honduran Teacher Empowerment Project

Maxie Gluckman, Katey Summers, and Mia Wallace

Train for Change is a Honduran Teacher Empowerment project that began in 2017 through a partnership between the Rotary E-Club of San Diego Global and the El Progreso Rotary Club. With a Vocational Training Team Grant, the project focused on building skills, strategies, and leadership in teachers, most of whom are women. For more information, please visit the project's website or send an email to maxie.gluckman@instructural.com. The project is continuing to expand through a recently approved grant in Santa Barbara, Honduras.

Origins of the Project

The Train for Change project emerged as a teacher professional development program focusing on building teaching capacity, creating leadership opportunities, and increasing student achievement. Through partnering with Students Helping Honduras (SHH), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization focused on improving school infrastructure in Honduras, we focused our intervention on schools who had previously engaged in a school construction project with SHH. Over the first three years of the program, we were able to train 160 teachers in 24 schools, as well as 314 parents, improving the quality of education for more than 4,000 students.

Maxie Gluckman, Rotarian Past President and Vocational Training Team lead for the project, worked under the guidance of Rotarians such as Maureen Duncan and Carolyn Johnson, among others, to spearhead this work. Maxie's interest in Honduras emerged from her time spent on the ground volunteering with SHH and meeting with teachers from community partner schools, as well as hearing of their challenges with regards to teaching, receiving training, and maximizing student learning. Through several months of on-going conversations, a team of U.S. bilingual educators called the "Vocational Training Team" and Honduran teachers created a training program which was transformed into a series of four modules presented over a two-year period.

With the help of a Rotary Global Vocational Training Team Grant, this vision came to life and has continued to be adjusted and adapted to new struggles and emerging challenges such as Covid-19, natural disasters, and political shifts, while focusing on building skills, strategies, and

leadership in teachers, many of whom are women. By focusing on enhancing the quality of education children received through empowering local teachers with opportunities and skills, we are able to create a sustainable and scalable program that will continue to reach more students as long as these teachers continue in the profession.



Photo: July 2019 training where teachers learned about dynamic exercises for use in the classroom.

Initial Intervention

Our original intervention focused on supporting teachers in rural schools to improve techniques, share knowledge, and create a collaborative network to improve teacher self-efficacy as a means to positively transform their communities. We chose this approach because of the stark educational realities many Honduras face, especially those in more rural or marginalized areas and circumstances. For instance, the average Honduran only completes four years of schooling, as compared to the global average of 12 years (Orozco & Valdivia, 2017).

Currently less than 50% of Honduran youth enroll in secondary school; by strengthening the capacity of teachers in under-resourced communities to support basic education and literacy, we are working to create positive systemic change and improve children's educational attainment and outcomes (INE, 2016).

Most of the schools we work in are PROHECO schools which are community-run schools in rural areas, consisting of approximately 10% of Honduras' primary school population (Secretaria de Educacion de Honduras, 2018). PROHECO teachers often have little to no formal teacher training, and face ongoing challenges such as low teacher qualifications, high teacher turnover, and budgetary concerns (Di Gropello & Marshall,

2011). Our project works to improve student attendance and graduation rates as well as educational attainment through better teacher quality through strategy-based teacher training.

Throughout the three years of our grant, we focused on supporting rural schools because they are some of the more underserved population in a country that holistically faces underperformance across the education sector. Children in rural schools have statistically less schooling, with only one third of 12-14-year-olds enrolled in secondary schools in 2016 (INE, 2016). In these areas, overall 48.7% of children and youth are outside of the educational system (FEREMA & IAD, 2017). Within rural schools, our main focus is improving literacy and teaching these skills because while only 12.8% of 15-year-old Hondurans are illiterate nationally (CIA, 2020), this number is considerably higher in rural areas where illiteracy jumps to 21.5% for 15-year-olds (OECD, 2016).



Photos: Above, two teachers collaborating on a partner assignment. Below, teachers holding up their Rotary plaque, recognizing their school's completion of the two-year training program.



Instilling children with a love of reading and core literacy competencies can support improving other educational outcomes and enhance work opportunities. Beyond teaching literacy strategies, part of our project involved the creation of a dedicated school library space. Once this space is created by the school and their community, we donate culturally relevant reading materials and train teachers on appropriate reading strategies to continue fostering literacy through stories in which children can see themselves reflected. By accessing books that contain imagery and text that relate to these students' lived experiences, the children will have more opportunities to connect classroom themes to the wider world and see themselves and their experiences represented in other mediums.

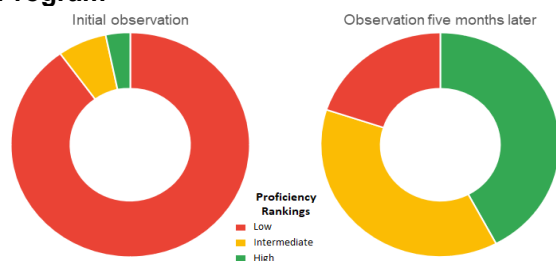
Given that 15% of the Honduran population is non-schooled, this reality contributes considerably to the cycle of poverty and violence that is currently driving much of recent migration. Education provides an opportunity for the country to heal and grow considerably starting with the next generation. Our work builds upon the Honduran Educational Standards, pushing for additional rigor in terms of critical thinking, building connections across subjects, and connecting learning to students' everyday lives. We also go beyond the traditional Honduran model, instead being grounded in a constructivist approach to teaching and learning in which teachers are facilitators for student active learning. We also lean heavily on the social-emotional aspects of education, focusing on creating a safe and welcoming space for all children in each school. We evaluate our work through analyzing students' reading and math test scores, teacher observation results, and determining demonstrated growth, as indicated through increased attendance records, measures of participation, and critical thinking.

Impact of the project

Figure 1 provides an example of one teacher's growth from initial observations at the beginning of the program and a follow-up observation five months later. Several times throughout the two-year program, Train for Change's lead teacher developers visit teachers' individual classrooms to observe and give feedback on their efforts to incorporate strategies, skills, and tools from training into their classroom activities. The teacher developers fill out observation forms listing over 60 indicators, such as "did the teacher ask open ended questions," "did the teacher explain the theme of the lesson," and "did the teacher leave time for the students to practice the lesson". The

graphic is based on proficiency rankings (low, medium, or high) from over 60 indicators which look at how teachers have incorporated strategies, skills, and tools from training into their classroom activities. As you can see this teacher improved considerably after only 5 months in the program.

Figure 1: One Teacher's Growth through the Program



Source: Authors.

Next Steps

Moving forward, we are drawing on the lessons learned and success of our initial Global Grant and are turning our focus to our newest Rotary collaboration between the Rotary Club of Santa Bárbara and Chula Vista Sunrise Rotary Club. As we continue to provide teacher training and support increased literacy achievement for students, we are adapting our methods to the context of COVID-19. Our project aims to support 18 schools in Santa Barbara, Honduras, reaching approximately 150 teachers and 2,000 students over a three-year period. Santa Barbara is a neighboring town which faces similar educational realities and whose teachers and students are facing an immediate and urgent need for support due to the educational disruptions caused by COVID-19.

While still emphasizing interventions for rural and marginalized student populations, our new program includes an additional focus on providing educational continuity to support the students who have been outside of the school system since the national lockdown in early March 2020, providing alternative lessons in core subjects. Given that half of Honduran students lack reliable internet access, there is a salient need for educational programming and training to support teachers in serving students who are at a greater risk of dropping out.

We will provide blended learning modules for teachers to implement, teach valuable technological skills, and aid teachers in adjusting

their practices to COVID-19 realities. We have created a YouTube channel with training modules for teachers to use as well.

Additionally, we piloted a text message program that provided education to 600 students who lacked access to internet. This pilot program is informing efforts to support schools as they begin re-opening. Long-term, we will build an educational community across the 18 schools to provide avenues for teachers to learn, share, and grow, inspiring innovation and leadership as Honduran schools emerge from COVID-19. We will continue to collaborate with and reach for innovative solutions to this pressing educational challenge in Honduran schools through this Global Grant project. We would like to thank all of our generous donors for contributing to this vision a reality.

3 - Paving the Pathway out of Poverty: Educating Girls in Guatemala

Howard Lobb

The Guatemala Literacy Project (GLP) is one of the largest grassroots, multi-club, multi-district projects in Rotary. More than 600 clubs and 80 districts have been working together since 1997 to improve education for underserved students in Guatemala. In that time, nearly 225,500 students have been served through four sustainable programs that are tested and proven to work. In 2017, then-Rotary International President Ian Riseley called the GLP “the gold standard of Rotary projects” for its sustainability and impact. For information, go to <https://www.guatemalaliteracy.org/>.

Origins of the Project

In 1996, I went to Guatemala for a week to see a developing country and to explore volunteer opportunities. I was in awe of how beautiful Guatemala is—home to tropical rainforests, mountains, valleys, lowland forests, beaches, and more than 30 volcanoes. But during my first exploratory week in Guatemala, I just couldn't get over the heartbreaking condition of the villages, towns, and Guatemala City. The roads, schools, and living conditions of the people were unlike anything I had ever seen before. I found out that Guatemala's Western Highlands exhibit one of the most extreme combinations of systemic poverty, illiteracy, and inequality in the hemisphere—even to this day, 79% of indigenous Guatemalans live in poverty.

Compounding the problem, the majority of the Maya population does not have access to affordable, quality education. Teachers in rural schools often lack the formal training and resources—like books and computers—they need to facilitate learning. As a result, educational attainment is low, and illiteracy and dropout rates are high. A staggering 90% of children living in poverty never graduate from high school. Young people lack the education to secure higher-paying jobs, and the cycle of poverty continues. For indigenous girls, the situation is even worse. Their families often spend their limited funds to educate their male children first, pulling the girls out of school after just a few years.

In addition to witnessing poverty around me every day, I was told stories from the civil war that had just officially ended that year—stories of military trucks driving down the road picking up boys as they walked home from school, "recruiting them into the Army," just like that. During that same short week, I connected with several Guatemalans who were helping out at the school and we had such a good time together, despite me not knowing Spanish yet. Everything was so raw and exciting. There was so much opportunity for me to learn, and it seemed like a country with great potential, where so much could be done in terms of development and improvement to the quality of life of its people.

After that trip, I was offered an opportunity to come back and volunteer for a Catholic mission by helping to teach in their middle school. It turns out that the school, "La Labor," was where two brothers, Joe and Jeff Berninger (who would go on to found the nonprofit organization Cooperative for Education or "CoEd"), had just started their first textbook cooperative. The brothers had combined some of their personal savings with a grant from Jeff's former

employer, Procter and Gamble, to purchase textbooks for the school, which couldn't afford to provide these vital educational resources on their own.

But the brothers also wanted to make sure that their gift would outlast their initial investment, and so they helped the school set up a system where students would "rent" their books for a small fee each year, which they called the "revolving fund" model. Once enough money had accumulated in the fund, the school would be able to purchase brand new textbooks with no further investment needed, making the program 100% sustainable! I met Jeff and Joe, and we quickly became friends as we realized that we had many shared values, including a passion for education.

Joining Forces

I wasn't the only one whose attention was drawn to the textbook project the Berninger brothers had started at La Labor. Every year, a dentist and Rotarian from Lander, Wyoming—Walt Girgen—would come down to Guatemala to volunteer his services at a free dental clinic. And when the La Labor school community received their new textbooks ecstatically, with all the children gathered in their bright red school uniforms to celebrate and dance to the marimba band, all the excitement caught Walt's attention. Walt was the first Rotarian who told me (and Joe and Jeff) about what Rotary did—and more specifically, how interested Rotary would be in the sustainable revolving fund used to provide textbooks in perpetuity to the La Labor school (which, by the way, still has up-to-date textbooks to this day thanks to that initial investment more than 20 years ago—and the magic of the revolving fund model!)



Photos: Left, Howard teaching in "La Labor" school in 1997. Right, Howard showing the new computers to female students and their mothers in the GLP Computer Center in 2004, Hacienda Maria, Guatemala.

As the Berninger brothers left the corporate world behind to form a nonprofit organization (Cooperative for Education or CoEd) that would enable them to expand the model to additional schools, Walt took news of the project back to his club in Lander, Wyoming. The club quickly agreed to join the brothers' efforts, recruiting additional clubs to partner on a matching grant: Raleigh, North Carolina and Guatemala West, Guatemala City. That was the beginning of the Guatemala Literacy Project (GLP) partnership—a network of Rotarians and CoEd that improves education for underserved students in Guatemala. The project soon grew beyond textbooks to include computer, primary literacy, and youth development / gender equality programs.

Service above Self

In 2001, I also left my corporate career in engineering to help start the second of GLP's four educational programs in Guatemala: the Computer Centers Program. This program provides young people with access to state-of-the-art technology, using a similar revolving fund model to the Textbook Program. This was so important because while almost 60% of entry-level jobs in Guatemala require computer skills, children in rural communities lack access to computer instruction. With a GLP Computer Center, 95% of graduates go on to find a job or continue their education in high school.

Even though the GLP was only a few years old, I jumped right in and wanted to help provide a vision for expanding the program into the vital arena of technology skills. Back then, I had no idea that this leap of faith would root me in Guatemala for the next 20 years. But here I am, two decades later, still working with our Rotarian friends and our team at CoEd to help more students break the cycle of poverty in Guatemala through education. Now, as Director of Partner Development for Cooperative for Education, I work to build relationships with CoEd's supporters all over the globe. After I started working for CoEd, and as the years went past, I met and worked with more and more Rotarians who would come down to Guatemala to volunteer for GLP programs. More than 300 Rotarians from around the world have traveled with the GLP over the years!

With time, I realized that Rotary was a good fit for me. I had absorbed the same affection for Rotary; its passion for service and the fun that I saw the members have over the years. I realized how lucky I was to be surrounded by such good people. In 2018, I was fortunate enough to be asked by the eClub of District 6600 Ohio Pathways to become a member, and so I joined!



Photo: Howard (right) with 2022-23 RI President-Nominee Jennifer Jones and other Rotarians in front of a world map showing 600+ clubs who have supported the GLP since 1997.

Since the GLP was formed in 1997, more than 600 Rotary clubs from around the world have banded together to support these projects. Together, the four programs have served nearly 225,500 children! In 2017, then-RI President Ian Riseley visited the GLP headquarters in Guatemala and described the GLP as “the gold standard of Rotary projects” for its sustainability and impact.

Girls' Education

In Guatemala, the lack of access to quality education is compounded by the lack of *equal* access to education for both genders, as girls are traditionally not supported in their desire to go to school. Often, when parents have to decide which child to educate on their meager earnings, they prioritize the boys, and the girls get left behind. In some parts of Guatemala (where CoEd works), there is a boy and a half in school for every girl. In Guatemala as a whole, 80% of men are literate, compared to 58% of women. In the publication “What Works in Girls' Education,” the Brookings Institution identifies Guatemala as a “girls' education hot spot,” where girls are enrolled “at low rates relative to the global average, and also relative to boys.”

Ever since I came to Guatemala in the first place, I knew it was so important to help expand access to education for girls. I saw young girls getting left behind, and I knew the value in helping them get back into school and reach that ever-critical 12 years of education that it takes to support a two-person family above the poverty line.

According to a growing number of experts, “girls' education is the world's best investment with the widest ranging returns” (also from “What Works in Girls' Education”). Educating girls improves the health and survival rates of infants and children,

leads to higher rates of school attendance and completion in the next generation, improves the status of women within families, communities, and the political arena, and much more!

Thankfully, Rotary is also on the cutting edge of smart investments in international development, and our GLP partners recognized the need for a program that would help address the need for gender equity in education. That's why the youth development component of the GLP gets girls into school and keeps them there, helping them reach that critical milestone of high-school graduation. I'm so proud of the girls that we serve in GLP programs, and it's incredible to see them grow up and develop from shy middle school girls to confident, well-spoken young ladies as they graduate from high school. Specifically though, I'm touched by the story of Lesly Patzán.

Lesly's Story

Many students like Lesly come from regions where the average level of education is less than two years. Families often live on less than \$4 a day and can neither afford the direct cost of attending school (tuition and fees) nor the opportunity cost of keeping children in school when they could be working and contributing to the family's income. In addition to economic challenges, students face many other pressures to drop out, including alcoholism, gangs, child marriage, abuse, and a lack of support from their families. In Lesly's case, her father was diagnosed with cancer when she was still a child. Because of this, Lesly decided early on that she

wanted to do something in medicine. Her mother started working at a vegetable packing plant to pay the medical bills. With seven children and only one income, they were struggling to put food on the table. Lesly was on the verge of dropping out of school to start working. Fortunately, Lesly was selected to enter our Rise Youth Development Program, enabling her to continue studying after primary school—a must if she was going to achieve her dream of working in medicine someday.

The Rise Program identifies promising young students like Lesly who would otherwise be forced to drop out of school, and gives them the tools to break the cycle of poverty. The program focuses on selecting mainly girls, who face increased barriers to education, and as a result, 73% of Rise scholars are female. Rise offers comprehensive support services from mentors, counselors, and psychologists, and engages students in workshops, community service, and visits to local businesses and universities that transform the way they think about their futures. In addition, all students participating in the program are matched with sponsors from around the world who cover a portion of their costs of participating in the program, including a full academic scholarship. Many of the students are sponsored personally by Rotarians who are also involved with the Guatemala Literacy Project.

During her time in school, Lesly also benefitted from GLP textbooks and computers. With the help of our programs, she was able to stay in school and graduate from high school as a nursing assistant.



Photos: Left, Lesly traveled to Cincinnati to share her story at CoEd's annual fundraising event. Right, Lesly at her high school graduation.

Only 1 out of 10 kids in Guatemala graduate from high school, and she was now one of them! Her father is back in good health now, and could not be prouder of Lesly's accomplishments. A proud papa in every way, he constantly brags about how she has been first in her class since sixth grade.

But what really touches me is that she was able to get hired as a nurse in the maternity ward of one of the best hospitals in Guatemala City—in the same maternity ward where both of my sons were born! Imagine that...an impoverished young girl from a poor, rural town is close to having to drop out after primary school, but Rotary and CoEd come together to give her the opportunity to continue studying. Not only that, we ensure that she gets a high-quality education with textbooks and computers. And then, in what seems like the blink of an eye, she goes on to work in a first-class hospital where she could have been helping my own newborn children. I am moved at how our lives crossed paths, and I am so proud of Lesly.

Just like Lesly, 8 out of 10 Rise students successfully graduate from high school. The Rise Program has perhaps the most sustainable impact of any of the GLP's programs—transforming the lives of indigenous young people who then contribute to the development of their entire country. The education that Lesly obtained thanks to Rise will endure and benefit her throughout her lifetime. Currently, 53% of program graduates are even helping to pay for their younger siblings' education—breaking the cycle of poverty for more young people in their own generation!

The GLP's projects are based in the belief that all children born into the cycle of poverty deserve the opportunity to rise above their current circumstances, and leveling the playing field for girls in education is a key component of this. We envision a future where indigenous youth—especially girls—are not only educated, but empowered to become leaders. As Rise expands to more and more youth across Guatemala, we are slowly building an entire cohort of educated graduates who are pulling themselves and their families out of poverty. As more and more young women like Lesly graduate and take on leadership positions, entire communities reap the benefits. When enough girls are educated, levels of poverty, malnutrition, parasitic disease, and illiteracy all fall. The girls that the GLP serves through the Rise Program will lead the way to a stronger future for all of Guatemala.

4 - Remember Niger Coalition

Ray Panczyk with contributions from Kara VanderKamp

Remember Niger Coalition is dedicated to expand quality educational opportunities in Niger. Through a holistic approach and by working side-by-side with Nigerien partners, we are able to ensure that more children receive a high-quality education. For information, go to <https://www.rememberniger.org/>.

Origin of the Project

My first contact with the Remember Niger Coalition (Remember Niger) was in early 2016. Kara VanderKamp, their Executive Director, was a guest speaker at a regular weekly meeting at my Club, Montgomery Village Rotary in Maryland, U.S.A. Kara's presentation was a snapshot of Remember Niger's projects across the field of education for young girls and boys in Niger.

I was struck by the close cooperation with the local communities in establishing and then, jointly, successfully managing all of the 13 schools now up and operating. All had the needed host government authorizations and emphasized respect for all aspects of the local culture. Remember Niger's previous activity with Rotary International was part of a Global Grant coordinated by a number of Rotary Clubs in the U.S. Midwest.

As background, Niger is located in West-Central Africa on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. It was recently listed on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index as 189th out of 189 countries. This makes it a target country for international aid and development.

I saw that myself in the mid-1970s. It was during the prolonged Sahel Drought. I traveled through a number of drought-affected countries carrying out survey work related to the impact of the drought in that part of Africa. Niger was one of those countries. I later testified at a U.S. Congressional Subcommittee meeting on the Crisis in West Africa (Sahel) to present my findings.

In that first presentation at my Club, Kara discussed the Remember Niger's Girls Advancement Program, making special mention of the Hamsa Girls Education Center in Tahoua. As Kara has described it, the goal of Remember Niger's Girls Advancement Program is to reverse

the negative gender statistics that affect the lives of millions of girls in Niger. By providing families, schools, and communities with an example of the value of educating girls, Remember Niger works to break down barriers of gender perception and stigma.

Further, by keeping girls in school, Remember Niger's Girls Advancement Program helps increase the age at which girls get married. The length of time a girl in Niger stays in school is most often correlated with the age at which she marries. By increasing the number of girls that stay in school, the program is contributing to overall systemic change to increase the age at marriage for girls in Niger. Studies show that a combination of education and age at which girls marry are also indicators of the health of their children, family income, and whether or not they educate their female children.

Girls in Niger face significant cultural and socioeconomic barriers to obtaining education. Mitigating these barriers are complex and have proven to require multifaceted approaches to break down.

Niger ranks among the top five poorest countries in the world. The economic position of the country directly impacts girls access to education. With limited resources, families in Niger prioritize boys education and keep girls home to help with house, water supply, and agricultural work. Although Niger has a free public education system, costs related to school fees, uniforms, books, and meals are too expensive for families to afford for their children, in general, and the choice between educating male over female children continues to negatively impact girls.

Another important barrier to education in Niger is the incidence of early marriage. Overall, in Niger, 28% of girls are married before the age of 15 and 76% are married before their 18th birthday (Girls Not Brides). Early marriage is a main factor in girls ending their education before middle school because of the demands placed on young girls to manage their households and start families. Scholarships and Hamsa Girls Education Center

School scholarships at the primary and secondary level provided through Remember Niger's Girls Advancement Program are an effective tool to remove the economic barrier to girls' education. Families with limited financial resources are more likely to send/support their daughters' education when there is not a financial impact associated with it. In addition to providing scholarships,

Remember Niger helped establish the Hamsa Girls Education Center (HGEC) in 2019.



Photo: The first class of students.

HGEC addresses a critical need for female-focused secondary education. In Niger, only 7% of girls complete secondary school. Furthermore, because girls leave school at early ages, they miss critical opportunities to learn about health conditions, reproductive health, and illnesses that impact their lives. In addition to two-thirds of Nigerien girls marrying before the age of 18, Niger has the highest fertility rate in the world at almost seven children per woman.

The compounding factors of low-levels of female education, high levels of early child marriage, and high fertility rates, contribute to poor health, economic, and childhood indicators across the country. By providing an all-girls school with in-school health programming and professional skills courses, HGEC seeks to improve the futures of adolescent girls across Niger.

Under local community leadership, HGEC provides a safe space that offers both formal and informal learning opportunities for adolescent girls and young women in Niger. Through a culturally sensitive, diverse approach that offers both formal educational opportunities such as tutoring and test support, as well as skills training, the Center seeks to help break the cycle of multi-dimensional poverty, reduce early marriage rates, and improve the overall quality of life for this generation of young women and generations to come.

This project caught my attention because of the clearness of its focus, its needs such as solar-powered electricity to pump water from depths of over 100 ft., and the necessary physical security for the entire school compound.

School Facilities

Remember Niger had carefully considered the complexity of girls' education in Niger before constructing HGEC. In concert with their partners on the ground, they designed the construction and implementation of the projects and programs with all of the challenges to girls' education in mind. For example, the first projects at HGEC included the construction of a security wall, the construction of a well and water tower and the installation of a solar-powered pump, as well as the construction of private latrines with wash stations.

The construction of these elements in the beginning were critical for giving parents confidence that their daughters would be safe at school. Additionally, it's estimated in Niger that girls in secondary school are absent 25% of the time because they don't have access to private bathrooms and wash stations during menstruation. By addressing these issues early, the school was able to begin successfully and they had a nearly 100% attendance rate their first year.

Later, members of my Rotary Club met to plan how our Club could help finance current needs at the HGEC. At that point, we learned that the solar-powered funding had just been financed by other sources, including the Gaithersburg Rotary Club in Maryland. What remained was the construction of the important security wall. We applied our Club's Foundation funds to start the wall. Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary, also in Maryland, joined our initial funding efforts.

At various stages, we used the detailed planning and cost estimates quickly provided by Remember Niger. Additional funding came from the Rotary Club of Niamey-Gaweye. A number of businesses in Niger also provided significant cash and in-kind support for the Center's needs.

As the security wall construction progressed, we studied Remember Niger's architectural plans and budgets for a state-of-the-art latrine block for the young women students. For that project, following our cash input, we secured additional funding from Gaithersburg Rotary and Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary.

Along the way, timely progress reports, photos, and financial data came in from Remember Niger. Their U.S. representatives also gave presentations at all three of the above-mentioned Rotary Clubs. Note that with a small office in Maradi, Niger, Remember Niger is better able to

maintain timely on-the-ground coordination with all of their partners.



Photos: The Hamsa school building (above) and latrines (below).



Early in 2020, recognition of Remember Niger projects led to an invitation from the Literacy Rotary Action Group for Kara and me to be panelists in one of the major breakout sessions at the Rotary International Conference scheduled for July 2020 in Hawaii. The panel topic was: Educating Girls: A Long-Range Community Investment. Because of the threat of the emerging Covid-19 virus, as we know, the Conference was cancelled. However, in its place, there was a successful webinar in July 2020 with over 180 registrants. Kara and I were pleased to be the two panelists for the Remember Niger segment of the Webinar.



Photo: A student in the school.
Future Projects

Future cooperation with Remember Niger looks promising. For the Hamsa Girls Education Center, funds are needed for:

- A solar-powered electrical system to support classroom lighting, fans, laptops and other technology. This project also includes a computer training program for young women from a nearby college in Tahoua. Funding still needed.
- On a larger scale, funds are needed for capital improvement projects: Construction of a kitchen, cafeteria, and three classrooms.
- Support is also needed for remedial health and skills programs for out-of-school youth.



Photo: Water tower and bricks for construction.

To look at other programs underway in Niger, please take a glance at the latest Remember Niger Annual Report on their website. The annual report shows a number of areas where interested Rotary Clubs, other funding agencies, and individuals can play an important role in Niger's education programs.

Empowering School Children through English language Teaching in Rural Karnataka, India

H. Rajendra Rai, Ashok Shanbhagh, Satish Rao, and Jagadeesh

In India, the professional careers in medicine, engineering, and similar fields can lift rural children from generations of poverty. One of the key ingredients to such careers is proficiency in English. Undergraduate and graduate classes are taught in English, which makes it very difficult for students who lack the ability to comprehend lectures in English to perform well in college. Beyond college, it is difficult to confidently face interviews to secure and thrive in high paying careers. This is what led us to create a project to empower school children through English language training in rural Karnataka in India.

Community Needs Assessment

When preparing our project, the Community Need Assessment conducted in close coordination with the execution partner M/s Pratham in Mysore brought forth the following realities on the ground:

- English assessment results showed that 87% children were not able to read a paragraph fluently and 74% of parents and community members expressed that their children need support for reading, writing and speaking in English. As English plays important role in education and professional areas, children need English interventions to improve their learning levels in the subject and enhance parent's involvement in their progress.
- Reading assessment results showed that 28% children were able to read a simple story. This meant that almost 70% children were lagging behind the expected learning levels. Meanwhile, most of the parents were educated only up to 10th grade or below in the rural areas. They can help their children in reading, writing, and other education related activities, but this is limited. Almost 90% parent in the villages expressed that they needed additional support for the quality of the education provided to their children. Overall findings showed that community libraries, where

children learn together by accessing reading and learning materials after schools hours, provided a supportive role.

The Identification of community needs was done through a national survey (Annual Status of Education. Report or ASER) which is the largest household survey of children done in India each year. Even though the English language is prescribed as a subject of study in government schools, learning outcomes are far below expectations. The medium of instruction being in Kannada, the absence of an English-speaking environment on the one hand, and lack of practice in reading and writing in English on the other. makes it difficult for children to learn English as a language. Either they become passive listener or they completely lose interest in learning English as a medium of instruction.

Assessments of Basic English in the ASER survey for 2016 indicate that (1) 68% children in Standard (Grade) III cannot read simple words; (2) 75.5% children in Standard (Grade) V cannot read simple sentences; (3) 54.8% children in Standard (Grade) VIII cannot read simple sentences; and (4) of those who can read words (regardless of grade), roughly 40% cannot explain the meanings of the words read. Of those who can read sentences, 35.5% in Standard (Grade) V cannot explain the meaning of the sentences. Both these levels are virtually unchanged since 2014.

Literacy Projects in Rotary District 3190

The Rotary Club of Bangalore West and the Rotary club of Bangalore Yelahanka have been associated since 2007-08 with Pragathi, an NGO based in Texas, USA. The common objective is to promote literacy among primary and secondary level school children in Government schools in the state of Karnataka in India. The three organizations have collaborated with each other in more than 10 Literacy projects with support from the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International under the Matching Grants program and later through Global Grants.

The first Global Grant project started in 2014. Entitled "Teach India", it focused on Kannada, Math, and Library programs, reaching 29,556 children in its two-year duration. After successful implementation of the project, two more Global Grants were executed using the same template. They were also well received by the community, reaching 33,327 children. The fourth Global Grant focused on a Math Fair and Community Library for a one-year period, reaching 14,961 children.

Improving proficiency in English among school children in the Government schools in Karnataka was the fifth Global Grant project, heeding to the requests from the community, schools, and parents. Their request was aspirational as children would benefit from learning the language and take the first steps to being at par with peers in private schools. Hence this Global Grant project aimed to complement the school curriculum, providing support not only for basic English reading competencies, but also for reading at the Advanced levels. Overall, the children would be able to benefit more from the regular school syllabus.

Project Profile

The project took into account identifying participating schools, and pooling in resources such as manpower, training, materials (teaching aids) and monitoring to ensure quality. It is hoped that good practices developed under the project will become a part of the Government's policies at the grassroots level, with government teachers carrying the project forward.

In the first year of the English project, the project reached 12,651 children, covering 208 schools. In the second year, it reached 12,038 students from around 200 schools. Together, more than 25,000 children were therefore engaged. Overall, the Global Grant projects as a whole have touched the lives of 114,945 children.

The objectives of the English project were to: (1) teach English as a second language for children, with Kannada as their mother tongue; (2) improve English language among 24,000 children from 400 Government schools from grades 3 to 8; and (3) develop phonemic awareness among children and promoting listening, reading, and writing.

In every district, 4-5 teachers were identified. Almost all the teachers were part of the Global Grant projects for three years. They were assigned duties and tasks as Quality Educators. A block leader (called a Literacy Leader) was responsible for monitoring. Together, the project had 30 Quality Educators and 7 Literacy Leaders. When schools were open, each Quality Educator was responsible for conducting classes for 4 hours in a school, for a period of 30 days, covering two batches from grades 3-8, with 30 students in each batch (a total of 60 students per school). The Quality Educators were trained and each of them was given a kit, which consists of flash cards, work books, charts, and alphabet chunks to be used across levels in the classroom. Formats and data sheets also form part of the package.



Photos: Girls participating in the project.

To showcase what the children have learnt and demonstrate the teaching aids used in the program, English fairs were introduced. The fairs were held usually at the end of the program, gaining attention from the community, government officials, and surrounding villages. As a result, more schools are now interested in implement the program. Government officials see how the project is changing the perception of parents and hopefully increasing student enrolment, generating interest in other villages.

The community consists mostly of daily wage laborers and farmers. Among them are also those who own small shops and small businesses such as manufacturing wicks, incense sticks, baskets, pottery, sweets, and others. They cannot afford private tuitions for English. Though Government schools have qualified teachers, they are unable to allocate additional hours and they do have access to specialized content. It is also a challenge for them to work after school hours in the community, and to create awareness that education is crucial for every child in the village. Therefore all stakeholders need to work together. The Rotarians, Quality Educators and Literacy Leaders ensure that this indeed happens.

Table 1 shows results from both years, suggesting that initial targets were exceeded, in some cases substantially.

Table 1: Selected Results from the Project

	Target	Year 1	Year 2
Readers (children who can read a sentence and above)	40%	42%	41%
Picture identification (ability to identify actions, professions, objects using English words)	70%	74%	84%
Children able to tell the meaning of words from common vocabulary	50%	87%	89%

Source: Authors.

Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, during the months of September 2020 to April 2021, to supplement the classes which were held in the communities and in classrooms (for a brief period), content was sent through WhatsApp and SMS to mothers' groups who were trained in using technology like Zoom and WhatsApp video calls. This was adopted as a regular practice along with face-to-face interventions, which ensured that the children had assignments given to them when they went back

home. Also, in villages where the projects were completed, the messages were sent to the mothers' groups and volunteers for a month. This helped to ensure the sustainability of the project. In addition, adjacent villages apart from the current one were made part of the Distance Education project. This ensured that they were prepared for classes before the project began. Parents, volunteers, and teachers appreciated the efforts of Rotary, which strived towards teaching a foreign language like English, given the circumstances.

Conclusion

More students can be reached in further projects, and the lives of girl students can be shaped with access to quality resources the Global Grant provides. This will enable more students to aspire to become scientists, engineers, or doctors, and help them give back to the communities where they come from. Gender disparity will be addressed, enabling young women to have access to more opportunities and a better quality of life.



Stories of Rotarians in Action (from Rotary and Rotary Voices)

In the Spring 2022 issue of Migration & Development Bulletin, a series of blog posts on what Rotarians are doing to respond to the refugee crisis were shared. These posts were published by Rotary Voices and Service in Action, the two blogs of Rotary International. Additional posts were recently published, as well as other articles available on the Rotary International website. A selection of those stories is provided below. We hope that they will provide you with inspiration for your own work.

Two cargo planes packed with tons of medical equipment have already been flown from Chicago, USA, to Ukraine where members helped to unload the supplies

by Arnold R. Grahl

This story was published online on the website of Rotary International in April 2022 ([link to the story](#)).

Rotary members in North America, Argentina, and Europe are collaborating with a U.S.-based association of Ukrainian health care workers and using their connections to collect and ship more than 100 tons of critical medical supplies to Ukraine.

Two cargo planes packed with tourniquets, blood-clotting gauze, blood pressure equipment, and other items have already been flown from the city of Chicago in the United States to Europe, where members help unload the supplies and get them to Ukraine.

Rotary members in Ukraine, where Russia's military action has caused a humanitarian crisis, are in daily contact with hospitals to determine what supplies are needed most.

"It is Rotary doing what Rotary does best," says Pat Merryweather-Arges, a Rotary International director-elect and member of the Rotary Club of Naperville, Illinois, USA. "It networks, pulls people together, and gets the job done."

North American and Argentine Rotary clubs are combining their resources to purchase items from the list of needed supplies. They're also working with contacts at pharmaceutical companies and medical equipment manufacturers to arrange donations. A hospital in Peoria, Illinois, sent an ambulance, and members in Maine, USA, secured a C-arm, a mobile

imaging device that can be used to X-ray people for shrapnel.

Supplies are streaming into a warehouse operated by the Ukrainian Medical Association of North America (UMANA) near O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. And more are on the way. Rotary clubs in the U.S. states of Nebraska and Iowa are collecting supplies to fill several large cargo trucks that will drive hundreds of miles to the warehouse in Chicago.

Inside the warehouse, UMANA and Rotary volunteers organize, sort, and bundle the items before they are shipped. Several donors have made contributions that offset the cost of shipping.

"It's amazing what one Rotarian talking to another Rotarian can accomplish," says Marga Hewko, president of the Rotary Club of Chicago.

Hewko is the spouse of Rotary International General Secretary and CEO John Hewko, who is of Ukrainian descent and is a charter member of the Rotary Club of Kyiv. The Hewkos lived in Ukraine for five years during the 1990s.

Earlier this year, Marga Hewko and the Rotary Club of Chicago had been working with doctors in Chicago and Ukraine to establish a stem cell storage facility for cancer patients in the Ukrainian city of Lviv that would allow the cells to be stored longer and enable more complex research.

That initiative shifted to a new focus when the war began.

"We were reaching out to the Ukrainian community in Chicago to learn how we could help, and at the same time, we already knew these doctors," says Marga Hewko. "That is how I found out about UMANA."



Photo: Medical equipment bound for Ukraine.

It was an ideal match. UMANA, founded in 1950, promotes education through conferences and exchanges of doctors between the U.S. or Canada and Ukraine. After the war started, UMANA volunteers began sending medical aid to Ukraine and using their network of doctors and pharmaceutical companies to get supplies and equipment. Rotary clubs soon joined the project.

Marga Hewko, who is from Argentina, used her contacts there to bring Argentine clubs into the effort, and those members are also using their connections to obtain funds and equipment.

During a tour of the UMANA warehouse, Marga Hewko, Merryweather-Arges, and Jane Hopkins, the governor of District 6450 in Illinois, praised the efficiency and scale of the operation.

"UMANA is simply amazing," Merryweather-Arges says. "We opted to work with them because they are well connected to the Ukrainian community in Chicago and have worked to sort and pack nearly 400 pallets of supplies."

Members in Ukraine continue to develop the list of needed supplies. Olha Paliychuk, who is a surgeon, a member of the Rotary Club of Cherkasy, and a member of the Turkey-Ukraine intercountry committee, calls hospitals each night.

The delivery of the items to hospitals is coordinated by Paliychuk in Cherkasy; by Borys Bodnar, of the Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity Passport, in Lviv; and by Mykola Stebljanko, of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine, in Odesa.

Marga Hewko says the actions of members in and outside of Ukraine demonstrate the power of Rotary's network.

"In the middle of the war, when some of the targets of the Russian army are hospitals, the fact that we have volunteers in Ukraine driving supplies across their country — if that is not Service Above Self, I don't know what is," she says.

Strength in times of crisis in Ukraine: Past and current conflicts have had a significant impact on Rotary in Ukraine — which has only made members there more resolute.

This article, which comprises of a five different stories, was published in the April 2022 issue of Rotary magazine ([link to the story](#)). On the webpage for the story, you can also listen to it narrated by award-winning broadcast journalist Linda Yu.

Ukraine is an agricultural powerhouse and a country of significant technological and strategic importance, but it has had a turbulent history. The buildup to the Russia-Ukraine war that began in February preoccupied many members of Rotary around the

world, who worried about the future of Rotary within Europe's second-largest country.

Yet amid this turmoil, Rotary members in Ukraine continue to demonstrate resilience and an unwavering commitment to peace. To learn more about Rotary's circuitous journey in Ukraine over the past decade, Rotary Magazin for Germany and Austria compiled this report. As the war is raging throughout the country, we'll bring you updates about Rotary's situation there and how Rotary clubs around the globe are pitching in to help with Ukrainian refugees.

A look back — and toward the future.

Rotariets, the regional Rotary magazine in Ukraine

Let Rotariets provide our readers some background information about Rotary in Ukraine. The first Rotary clubs within the current borders of Ukraine were chartered in the 1930s in the cities of Uzhgorod, Chernivtsi, and Lviv. During World War II, Rotary clubs disbanded in territories under conflict, and clubs were forcibly dissolved during the Cold War in countries under Communist rule.

After the collapse of the USSR, several clubs in Europe and North America sought to reestablish Rotary's presence in the former Soviet countries. Lubomyr "Lu" Hewko, the father of John Hewko, Rotary International's CEO and general secretary, played an important role. Lu's family fled Ukraine during World War II, and years later, as president of the Rotary Club of Clarkston, Michigan, he organized several Rotary projects: delivering medical equipment to Ukrainian hospitals, assisting the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and recruiting doctors to perform eye surgeries for the needy. After Ukraine declared its independence in 1991, Lu helped to charter the first Rotary club in the capital, Kyiv. John Hewko is a charter member.

In the early 1990s, Ukraine was part of District 1420, along with all the clubs in the former USSR, as well as some in Finland. Other district affiliations followed, until finally, in November 1999, RI decided to integrate Ukraine and Belarus with Poland in District 2230. This came to fruition on 1 July 2000. With the steady growth of Rotary in these three countries, the district was split into Districts 2231 (Poland) and 2232 (Ukraine, Belarus) in July 2016.

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively known as the Donbas) have hindered Rotary's development in Ukraine. In 2013, there were seven Rotary clubs (with a combined total of about 110 members) in Crimea and the now-occupied areas

of the Donbas. Only two clubs remain, and both are in Crimea: the Rotary Club of Simferopol and the Rotary Club of Alushta. They have a total of 14 members.

In the rest of Ukraine, however, Rotary is undergoing robust growth on the strength of an influx of members who have joined since the beginning of that conflict. The national impulse to engage in humanitarian work and disaster assistance remains strong in Ukraine. Since 2014, Rotary has grown from 49 to 62 clubs, with an additional six satellite clubs. Membership has increased from 800 to 1,100 — and members of Rotary in Ukraine are very optimistic about the organization's continued growth.



Photo: Lubomyr "Lu" Hewko (right) participates in a 1993 service project in Ukraine.

A virtual club

Tetiana Godok, president-elect of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine

My history with Rotary began when I was a senior in high school. The newly formed Rotaract Club of Yalta ambitiously set out to establish an Interact club, and I was fortunate enough to be a part of it. I didn't know much about Rotary, and the complex club organization befuddled me at first. But over several months, we visited Interact clubs in Kharkiv and Cherkasy, and I came to learn more about Rotary and gradually immersed myself in the ideas and values of this service organization. With strong convictions about the role I might play, I joined the Rotaract Club of Yalta, serving as president and treasurer, and set a goal to get to know Rotaract all over Europe.

Until the annexation of Crimea, I had a very active and rewarding Rotaract career: I often traveled to Rotaract Europe Meetings (REM) across Europe, to Rotary Youth Leadership Awards events in Turkey, to Portugal in western Europe, and all over Ukraine, countless times, for conferences, for seminars, or just

to visit Rotaract friends. We gladly and proudly hosted all-Ukrainian and district events in Yalta.

Unfortunately, the annexation forced many Rotaractors and Rotarians to flee the turmoil and conflict on the peninsula, where it had become impossible to conduct our normal service duties. I moved to Lviv in western Ukraine, but the emotional trauma from the migration was such that it took me a long time to settle down and integrate into my new life. The good news was that a Rotary e-club had been established in Ukraine, enabling former Crimean residents and Rotarians from other occupied territories to continue to be part of Rotary. The mutual support was enormously helpful, especially in the early days.

I later moved to the United States, first to New York City, where I studied biology, and then to Philadelphia to work in a research lab. Fortunately, the virtual club has allowed me to remain a Rotarian regardless of where I live, although accommodating members from the different time zones can be tough.

It is good that our club has enriched itself over the years with new members from all over Ukraine. Last year, I was elected club president for 2022-23. I am very grateful for the trust placed in me and look forward to presiding over our first meeting. I definitely want it to take place "virtually" against a backdrop image of the Yalta Mountains in Crimea, which is — and always will be — my home.



Photo: A father and son share a happy moment in Kyiv.

In the spirit of peace

Yulia Zharikova, secretary of the Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance

The history of the Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance began at the end of 2013, when several like-minded people formed the Rotary Club of Donetsk Advance. We

were united by the idea of community service and our passion for art and music. The club supported young talents and devoted its energies to the development of educational programs in the city.

In 2014, after the outbreak of military conflict in eastern Ukraine, many members of our club fled to different parts of the country and even abroad. Subsequently, four club members who had moved to Kyiv decided to resume our club activities under the name Rotary Club of Donetsk Advance. Four other members who had ended up abroad or remained in Donetsk subsequently decided to keep their membership as well. So, we retained eight members.

In 2020, our club officially changed its name to Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance in accordance with the policies of Rotary International. Since relocating to Kyiv, our club has attracted many new members and even received an award from the District 2232 governor for adding the most new members in the 2019-20 Rotary year.

Given our experience from the conflict in eastern Ukraine, we have made peacebuilding and conflict prevention a main focus of our community projects. One such project, running since 2017, offers training to various groups to promote dialogue toward reconciliation at multiple levels of Ukrainian society. In addition, for the past five years, club members have been involved in a large international project for the psychological rehabilitation of children affected by war and military conflict in the east.



Photo: St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery is the headquarters of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

Rotary transcends borders

Mykola and Olga Stebljanko, the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine

Our Rotary life began in 1996, when we joined what would become the first Rotaract club in Crimea: the Rotaract Club of Simferopol. Since then, Rotary has

been an integral part of our lives. Our 10-year Rotaract past has become a classic example of young leadership development that creates the conditions for a natural transition into the ranks of Rotarians.

In 2007, I became the editor of the official Rotary publication, *Rotariets*, in Ukraine and Belarus. Since 2011, Olga has supported the production of the digital version.

I was president of my club in 2013-14, but when the Crimean Peninsula was annexed during my term, we had to move to Odesa. To continue our Rotary activities, we established the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine. This type of club, which was fairly new then, helped us and other Rotarians from Crimea and the Donbas keep our Rotary ties and sustain our community. Our club brings together people scattered across thousands of miles. I was elected District 2232 governor for 2019-20 and now serve as a Rotary public image coordinator at the zone level. Olga chaired the District Scholarship Subcommittee for two years, and the District Rotary Youth Exchange Committee since 2018. Together, we continue publishing *Rotariets* and providing virtual Rotary events in District 2232 and Zone 21.



Photos: Above: Olga and Mykola Stebljanko. Below: Mykola later joined the Rotary Club of Simferopol.



Nobody is left alone

Oleksiy Kuleshov and other Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Sloviansk

The year 2014 became a time of testing for us, a test of endurance and humanity. On the positive side, Rotary brought us new strength, uniting a large number of people of different nationalities, faiths, and levels of prosperity with a common idea: to serve society. In Ukraine, Rotarians from Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Poltava, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and the conflict areas of Donetsk — they were still holding on at that time — helped people who had fled the war, as did Rotarians from Moscow and Krasnodar in Russia.



Photos: Above: Children in eastern Ukraine through a mobile dental practice. Below: Piotr Wygnańczuk, then governor of District 2230, poses with Olga Stebljanko.



We reached out to those Ukrainians who had lost their livelihood and were left alone in misery. Some helpful Rotarians had sent groceries, baby food, and clothing; others sent personal care products and medicine. We organized logistics to help refugee resettlement. We served meals, distributed gifts, books, and clothes to people in the disputed territories, and, in the evening, delivered grocery packages to large families. Together with the Rotary

Club of Lviv, we also organized a mobile dental practice.

Hungarian club overcomes challenges to help Ukraine

Beatrix Turner, Rotary Club of Budapest-Margitsziget, Hungary

This story was published in May 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)).

My Rotary club wanted to do our part to help the people of Ukraine after hearing about the terrible war in their country. We were honored to be able to join three other clubs, Berlin-Gendarmenmarkt, Germany, Paris-Quai d'Orsay, France, and Milano Sud-Ovest, Italy, to coordinate an €18,000 project to collect and deliver donations to help Ukrainian refugees.

Robert Rojak, the president of the Intercountry Committee for Ukraine-Hungary and a member of the Rotary Club of Uzhgorod, Ukraine, helped us compile a list of needed supplies. He has been instrumental in coordinating incoming donations and distributing them to places where they are needed inside Ukraine. We received our list of essentials for daily life and spent a busy two weeks collecting items.

The Bethesda Children's Hospital in Budapest helped us prepare medicines, bandages, and blood infusion supplies. We collected a huge amount and were happy with the results.

Our next challenge would be transportation. We connected with the Hungarian Reformed Church Charity Service, a lovely team of people who were a pleasure to work with. They provided us with an experienced driver who had a diplomatic passport, and the entire border crossing went smoothly.

During the entire operation, we were amazed by the cooperation, love, and spirit of selflessness demonstrated by all the people we worked with.

To be honest, I was very tense when we reached the Ukraine border. We were transporting a valuable cargo of relief supplies and wanted the operation to go well. We made it across the border quickly and met with Robert, who helped us unload everything. I was so relieved and happy that it had worked out successfully.



Photo: Medicine bound for Ukraine.

Robert's wife asked if we had been afraid and I answered that we were not because of the skilled people we worked with. It was an exciting project and a wonderful example of Rotary in action.

Academy enables gifted Ukrainian musicians to continue their dreams

Alexander Ostrovski, a member of the Rotary Club of Dortmund-Romberge and director of the Phoenix Music Academy

This story was published in May 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)).

Having grown up in Crimea, when it was both a part of the Soviet Union and then Ukraine, I was shocked when I saw the news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

From 2002 to 2008, I worked professionally with the Ukrainian national chamber orchestra, and before that, spent half my life in Moscow. I studied at the Moscow Conservatory where my colleagues were Russians and Ukrainians. Our differences didn't matter. Ours is the musical tradition of Tchaikovsky, Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. The brutal attacks that began 24 February trampled on this beautiful culture. In many ways, I feel personally attacked by the war.

My first thought was how can I help? As director of a music academy for gifted musicians, I have been

helping children and young people from Ukraine continue their education in Dortmund, Germany.



Photo: More than 40 gifted young musicians from Ukraine are continuing their education through the Phoenix Music Academy in Dortmund, Germany.

In the Ukrainian education model, musical training for the very talented starts as early as the first grade. At these special institutions, music is the main subject, while other subjects such as mathematics and science are secondary. It is a kind of vocational training with the goal of mastering music. The Phoenix Music Academy which I founded in Dortmund in 1998, is partners with several of these special music schools.



Photo: Alexander Ostrovski performs at the Moskaufestival.

When the war started, I contacted the directors of several of these institutions with the following offer: As long as our capacity allows, we would accept Ukrainian music students wanting to maintain their education in the primary subject of music. They receive their instrumental lessons with us and, if necessary, a minor subject such as harmony, while

they continue to get lessons in other subjects online from Ukraine.

We have accepted more than 40 students. For most of them, it is a question of existence. These are students who would be labeled “highly gifted” anywhere in the world. They place such a high value on their culture and musical education, that they simply can’t imagine a life without music.

With the help of many Rotary members and some other service clubs, we have been able to place students with families in Dortmund. A travel company helps bring the students to Germany via bus with the cost offset by Rotary members. Several of our students are staying with Rotarian families. The hosts are taking such great care of the students, that I almost feel like they have been adopted. It’s been a family environment from day one.

We have also organized a series of peace concerts with the money going to support our students. The concerts send a message of reconciliation and understanding. We play the works of Shostakovich, whose life and music reflected the problems faced by people in the Soviet Union post-World War II. It is very appropriate to play these works again.

Any Rotary clubs that would like to organize benefit concerts in their cities can contact me, we are open to suggestions. We have set up a donation page for anyone wishing to help support these young Ukrainian musicians at <https://www.phoenix-charity.eu/>. I strongly feel the best way I can help in my profession is by enabling my future colleagues to continue their education.

Suddenly, the war knocked on our door

Oksana Havryliv, Rotaract Club of Lviv International

This story was published in May 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)).

Before the war, I was a student in international relations at the university in Ukraine and had been pursuing a master’s degree in political science through the University of Vienna. I dreamed of becoming a diplomat and representing Ukraine. I was busy with studies, planning my life, and hanging out with friends, especially those in Rotaract. That all changed on 24 February when Russia invaded my country and the bombs began to fall.

Children woke up not to the bright rays of the sun, but to the sounds of rockets and bombs falling in Odessa and Kyiv, the country’s capital. The war came

knocking at our door. Almost overnight, we forgot the normal rhythm of our lives and became a united front with a clear purpose, to resist the aggression and help the people of our country.

My life has changed drastically, and I feel it will never be like it was. Before all this, I actually loved the subject of history in school, and believed that the world had learned from its two bloody world wars in the 20th century. History wouldn’t repeat itself with another brutal war in Europe, right? Sadly, no.

Living in Lviv and Lemberg, a wonderful city in the western part of Ukraine, I didn’t experience any of the bombing that central and eastern parts of the country felt at the beginning of the war. But I was highly motivated to act knowing my fellow Ukrainians in those affected areas were living in basements, shelters, and subways.

My mother and I decided to act by creating a hub to funnel humanitarian aid. The bureaucracy of communicating with non-governmental organizations in Europe and the U.S. was daunting and took a lot of time. But it didn’t stop us from our goal of helping civilian populations that were suffering from the war.



Photo: Oksana Havryliv takes a selfie with some of the volunteers bringing medicine, food and other relief supplies to be reloaded and distributed.

Thankfully, I am a very communicative person and have many contacts in other countries. I started by asking Ukrainian friends in Germany to help collect warm clothes and durable food. They sent almost 60 tons of relief supplies to us.

My relatives and other volunteers began sorting items in the yard of our farm. But we ran out of space, so we found a warehouse. I wrote to all my friends worldwide asking for their help, and I was very surprised with the positive response and how many were willing to assist.

The logistics of funneling supplies from European countries as well as to Ukrainian cities was difficult. Buses filled with our relief supplies were in constant danger from attacks by Russian military. The bus drivers knowingly risked their lives. They are heroes. Each passing day in the warehouse, our team became more and more efficient. Everyone did their own part, bringing us closer to our goal.

On 26 March, my city was targeted by Russian aggression with missiles fired from the occupied city of Sevastopol. But we're alive and still doing our thing. And so the story goes on. I have decided, as a true patriot, to stay in Ukraine. I have set aside everything: my job, my studies in Vienna, ordinary everyday life, and time with my own family. We spend almost 20 hours a day in the warehouse. But we are driven by the conviction that the participation of each and every Ukrainian will lead us to victory. Because "The truth is with us."

Rotary clubs in Lviv find hope, strength in solidarity

Orest Semotiuk, Chair of the Public Relations Committee of the Rotary Club of Lviv International, and a member of the District 2232 Public Relations Committee

This story was published in April 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)).

The morning of 24 February began roughly as any normal morning would. I woke up, went for a jog, and had breakfast. While eating breakfast, however, I heard the news on the radio that Russian bombs were falling on my country, Ukraine.

I immediately called a few friends and acquaintances in other cities to find out how they were doing. Fortunately, most of them were unharmed and safe. Then in the afternoon, a TV station from Regensburg, Germany, where I had spent time during a research assignment in 2018, called me for a comment. Then more media, with an avalanche of requests, and my real work started.

Further interviews with journalists from Western Europe, Asia, and America followed. At the beginning of April, the editor of the Rotary Magazine for Germany and Austria visited us to research and report about our relief efforts and to interview Rotary District 2232 Governor Volodymyr Bondarenko.

Right from the first chat messages, I witnessed how Rotary members worldwide supported each other and extended that support to non-members who were in need. Rotary clubs in District 2232 immediately organized fundraising efforts and humanitarian aid for residents in areas under attack. Our district public relations committee launched a social media campaign to share current developments in Ukraine with our friends in Rotary around the world.

The Rotary Club of Lviv International put together a task force only a few days after the war began to coordinate, among other things, the supply of medicines, hygiene items, and medical equipment to Ukrainian hospitals and children's homes. In addition, my own club, Lviv International, established useful contacts with international partners – both Rotary clubs and other charitable organizations in the United States, Germany, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Latvia.

In daily Zoom conferences, we determine the needs of different recipient groups – whether refugees, children or wounded people – and plan further activities. We do this in close cooperation with the State Agency for Medical Care of Ukraine. We set up several warehouses for relief supplies in the Lviv region.

The items we supply through these warehouses range from mattresses and beds for hospitals to first aid kits, protective vests, clothing, and food. Everything is shipped to Lviv via the Polish-Ukrainian border where the relief supplies are sorted and then transported to areas affected by the war. A fundraising campaign to purchase more medical equipment for hospitals is also underway.



Photo: Volunteers stand in front of pallets in one of several warehouses in Lviv set up for relief supplies.

In the meantime, some of our Rotary members left the country. Others have remained in Lviv and open up their apartments, offices or production halls to be

used as accommodation for refugees. Some even offer these refugees jobs so they can earn some money.

One of the things that helps us the most is the broad solidarity. On our club web page and on the “Rotary in Ukraine” Facebook page we regularly report about our actions and receive daily greetings, encouraging comments, and inquiries from all corners of the world. Other Rotary clubs, our partners, but also grateful people and institutions that we were able to help, get in touch. This enormous encouragement from the Rotary network gives us strength and new hope.

From Ukraine to Denmark: 17-year-old refugee finds a home with Rotarians

Artem Ziablov

This story was published in April 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)). Editors note: Like many Rotary members, Rotary Foundation Trustee Per Høyen, a member of the Rotary Club of Aarup, Denmark, had a desire to take action in response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Through the Rotary network, he and his wife learned of a 17-year-old Ukrainian refugee, Artem Ziablov, temporarily staying in Germany. In this second of two blog posts, Artem shares his journey from Ukraine to his new host family in Denmark.

I am a student of Karazin Kharkiv National University where I am in the first year of my studies for a bachelor's degree in math and computer science. One week before the war started, my mother took me from Kharkiv to Irpin, a city in the Kyiv region, where I lived before my studies. On the morning of 24 February at five in the morning my mother woke me up to tell me that the war had started and that the country was under attack. I looked out the window and heard the bombs being dropped on Gostomel airport, 10 kilometers from our house. Ukrainian fighters were in the sky very close to us and Ukrainian missiles were firing at Russian troops, so it was very scary to stay there.

We gathered up clothes, and the first night we went to a bomb shelter. But it was very crowded with many people complaining so we stayed at another house instead. We each had a backpack, our passports, and laptops. We had booked tickets for a train, but the trains were all so packed that we decided to leave by car. Since we don't have a car, I phoned my best friend to ask him if he could take my mother and me to somewhere in western Ukraine. But he said that he had a problem, as he was already transporting seven other people. Nevertheless, we all packed into the

one car, and we left our dog and cat in our neighbor's care.

We went to Khmilnyk, a city in the Vinnytsia region of western Ukraine, and stayed there for one day before moving on to Lviv. There, we had a friend, Lars, who is a Danish Rotarian. We stayed in his flat for a week, and then I went with my mother, a friend, and his mother to Poland, where we spent a few days. From there, my mother and I went separate ways. Because she could keep working in Bulgaria, she went there to stay with friends, while I went with my friend and his mother to Germany. It was there that the Høyens came to get me.

The trip from Ukraine to Europe was difficult. It is hard to leave your home and it is hard to see images of places where you have spent lots of time and realize some of those places no longer exist. It is very emotional. At the same time, you understand that your life is much more important than all the stuff you are leaving behind.

In a sense, there is less uncertainty now that the invasion has happened. Before, everyone at the university was speculating on what would happen if Russia invaded. Many were thinking it would be like in 2014, and that there would be sanctions but nothing else. Seeing how the rest of the world has responded has been amazing. When we were crossing over into Poland, all the volunteers were extremely friendly and there were so many people helping.



Photo: Artem Ziablov looks over his new clothes, courtesy of a merchant in Denmark.

I am still in touch with many of my friends, some are in France, Germany, or Poland. We have been talking through social media and chatting asking, “How are you” and “what are you doing” in this and that country. I also have a friend who is in the Ukrainian army and we are in touch trying to help each other.

At first, I couldn't think of doing anything. I just sat around watching the news. Recently, I've begun to have time to think about and reflect on all that has

happened. A few weeks ago, I was able to get in contact with one of my teachers who stayed behind at the University to make the best of it. The teachers are providing many of us with lessons remotely so we can carry on our studies.

I am starting to be able to resume some kind of daily life. I had actually been to Denmark a few times before the war, and it is very nice. The Høyens have been gracious hosts. I'm grateful of all the Rotarians and other organizations who have been helping.

Millions of drops make a difference for Ukraine refugees

Per Høyen, Rotary Foundation Trustee

This story was published in April 2022 in Rotary Voices, one of the two Rotary International blogs ([link to the story](#)). Editors note: Like many Rotary members, Rotary Foundation Trustee Per Høyen, a member of the Rotary Club of Aarup, Denmark, had a desire to take action in response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Through the Rotary network, he and his wife learned of a 17-year-old Ukrainian refugee, Artem Ziablov, staying in Germany. In this blog post, the first of two parts, Høyen shares their decision to welcome Artem into their home.

Like most of the world, my wife and I were concerned when we heard of the buildup of Russian military on the Ukraine border. As a Rotary Director, I had been to Ukraine six years ago for a club charter and have Rotary friends in Ukraine. Knowing that my friends were in danger was awful. The day the invasion happened was very hard for us. And seeing the pictures of what was happening brought tears to our eyes. We asked, "who could do this to small children?"

I started communication with my Rotary friends in the Lviv International Rotary Club on a daily basis, and I learned there were two Danish members of the club, which made it even easier to communicate. They kept me informed what they were doing, and one day, one of them, Lars, called to tell me they had this young man from Ukraine staying in Germany who needed a place to stay. He asked me if my club could find a place for him somewhere.

Prior to that, my wife and I had been talking about what we could do to help, even feeling a bit helpless. When we got the call from Lars, we said yes, without a doubt, we would make a home for him. Hosting Artem has given us something very tangible to do.

We went and picked him up in Germany. Before that, we had gone to a store in town and let them know we had this young man coming and that we didn't know how many clothes he was bringing with him. The shop owner was very gracious and let Artem pick out two of everything: two trousers, two briefs, etc., and we didn't have to pay anything.



Photo: Artem checks out a Danish fire engine.

For us, it has been an eye-opening experience. When you are sitting back in your own environment, you have one way of thinking about things. But then something like this happens, and it changes your perspective on the world.

We've had a lot of discussions with Artem. Along the way we have learned a lot from him, about our cultural differences, the history of his country, and the background on Soviet-Ukraine relations, which we didn't know a lot about before.

I am also realizing that all my years in Rotary and as a senior leader have prepared me to be more equipped to help and want to help in this situation. Rotary teaches us we need to be flexible and accommodating of different cultures, and we need to do what we can for people who do not have the same opportunities as ourselves. I'm not sure I would have had that same view if it had not been for Rotary.

We are doing our small part. It's just a drop in the ocean. But millions of drops make a difference.

The response we have seen in Denmark, and all over Europe really, has been tremendous. We all understand Ukrainians need a place of peace. No one would want to be pushed out of their country. When I see what Rotarians are doing worldwide to support Ukraine, it makes me proud to be a Rotarian.

Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

This Bulletin is published on a quarterly basis by the Rotary Action Group (RAG) for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration in collaboration with the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development. Findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in the articles in this Bulletin are entirely those of the authors of the individual articles and should not be attributed in any manner to the RAG for Refugees or the Rotary Fellowship. Information contained in this Bulletin may be freely reproduced, published or otherwise used for non-commercial purposes without permission. However, we require that the original Bulletin be cited as the source.

In particular, Rotary clubs and districts are free to reuse or post individual articles or the Bulletin as a whole, provided they mention the source. If you are citing an article in the Bulletin, considering the article by William Corby in the Spring 2022 issue, as an example, a typical citation would be as follows: Crosby, W. 2022. The Gift of Dignity, in Q. Wodon, editor, *Responding to the Refugee Crisis: Inspiring stories*. Migration and Development Bulletin, Issue 1, Spring 2022. Washington, DC: Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration. All queries on rights and licenses as well as suggestions for articles or submission of articles should be addressed to the editor of the Bulletin through the RAG's website at www.RAGforrefugees.org. Both Rotarians and non-Rotarians can join the RAG and the Rotary Fellowship for Global Development, and being a Rotarian is not a requirement to submit an article.

© 2022 Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration.