

Rotary and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, United Nations member states agreed to eight goals to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for people worldwide. These goals parallel many of the volunteer activities in Rotary's 33,000 clubs, dating back to its founding in 1905 as a humanitarian service organization for business and professional leaders. Today, many of the service projects implemented by Rotary's 1.2 million members worldwide support the Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1 Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Target 2 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

Target 3 Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

To help alleviate poverty and hunger, Rotary clubs establish microcredit loans and banks, provide agricultural development training and materials, organize community food banks, and distribute nutritional supplements and a wide variety of other projects.

Madagascar

The system of rice intensification (SRI) is an ecologically oriented technique that helps low-income farmers boost rice yields and profit. Using SRI methods, farmers can cut seed requirements by 90 percent and irrigation water requirements by nearly half. The Rotary Club of Lille-Est, France, is working with villagers in Madagascar and other French Rotary clubs to implement SRI projects.

Honduras

Through a US\$500,000 Rotary Foundation grant, Rotary members established microcredit programs in five Central American countries. Thirty Rotary clubs in Honduras and North America formed the Uniendo América Foundation, creating 12 banks to give loans to local entrepreneurs. Some 1,000 families have received loans to date.

Worldwide

Rotary members in Wisconsin and Minnesota, USA, fund and manage the PowerFlour Action Network, which packages and ships a malt flour nutritional supplement to severely malnourished infants and adults in the developing world. PowerFlour supplements have boosted nutrients for more than 50 million meals in 66 countries.

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

Target 1 Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

To work toward universal primary education, some 16,000 Rotary clubs worldwide have supported literacy and numeracy programs through building schools, serving as tutors, donating books, leading literacy classes, and other volunteer efforts.

Brazil

In 2004, Rotary clubs in Brazil established Educafé, a primary school for the children of coffee farmers in a remote part of Bahia State. Previously, 80 percent of local children had not attended school or received regular meals. The school provides education, meals, uniforms, transportation, books, supplies, and preventive health care for nearly 80 children.

Pakistan

Working with Human Rights Now, the Rotary Club of Lahore Midtown in Punjab, Pakistan established the Kasure Village School. Rotary members pay teachers salaries and provide materials for students who would otherwise have no access to education.

Canada, UK, and USA

Rotary clubs in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States have joined with country music legend Dolly Parton's foundation to support early childhood reading. As part of the international cooperative agreement, children enrolled in the program receive a free, age-appropriate book each month from birth until age five. Rotary support helps ensure that every child in the program – currently, 496,000 worldwide – has books at home, regardless of family income, and that reading is integrated into family activities.

Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 1 Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

To promote gender equality and empower women, Rotary members expand educational and vocational training opportunities for vulnerable populations, such as basic education and vocational training classes for girls and women and mentoring for at-risk girls.

Turkey and Egypt

For more than 20 years, Rotary has led literacy programs for children and adults using the concentrated language encounter (CLE) method, which teaches reading through text-based and activity-based strategies in group settings, often paired with vocational training, microcredit, and other empowerment initiatives. In Turkey, nearly 10,000 adults – 95 percent of whom are Kurdish Turkish women – have participated in Rotary's CLE programs, where they acquire basic literacy skills and vocational training. Similarly, Rotary members in Egypt have managed a CLE program that has provided nearly 5,000 students with basic literacy skills, reproductive health education, and sewing instruction.

Afghanistan

In 2008, the New Zabuli Education Center, a free year-round school located 30 miles outside of Kabul, Afghanistan, opened for girls from poor families, who were not educated under the Taliban reign. Funded and organized by a U.S. Rotary club, the center has enrolled more than 200 girls, ages 4-15, in both academic and vocational classes. Vocational training is also planned for adult women.

India

Deepa Willingham, a Rotary member in California, USA, who was born and raised in Calcutta, established the nonprofit Promise of Assurance to Children Everywhere (PACE) Universal in 2003. With support from Rotary clubs in California, Texas, India, and beyond, the organization aims to nurture the educational, health, nutritional, social and cultural development of girls in impoverished areas. The first PACE Learning Center was built outside of Calcutta, with volunteer and financial support from the Rotary Club of Calcutta Metropolitan. The school serves 145 girls (with 200 on the waiting list) and 10 mothers in PACE's vocational training classes. Future plans include construction of a school for 600 girls, a vocational training center, medical and dental clinics, and a community center, enabling a holistic approach to combating poverty through literacy and education.

Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

Target 1 Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Since 1985, some 1.2 million Rotary members worldwide have been united in PolioPlus, which aims to eradicate polio, a disabling and sometimes fatal disease. Many Rotary efforts address other causes of child mortality. For instance, more than 10,000 Rotary members worldwide attended child survival conferences in 2008-09, raising \$500,000 toward related projects. Rotary supported REACH, the UN's child undernutrition initiative.

Worldwide

Through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, Rotary and its partners — the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — have reduced polio cases by 99 percent since 1988. At that time, some 350,000 children were paralyzed by the disease each year.

In the past 20 years, Rotary and its partners have immunized more than two billion children against the virus. Five million people, many of them children in the developing world, are not paralyzed because they have been immunized against polio. Rotary members have contributed countless volunteer hours, assisted with vaccine transportation, administered the vaccine, and contributed \$850 million toward the effort to eradicate polio. Rotary members are currently working to raise another \$200 million by 2012 to match a \$355 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

India

The Rotary Club of Chalisgaon Milk City, Maharashtra, India, partnered with a local organization to help 108 severely malnourished children under age five in local villages. The club provided nutritional supplements, including protein powders and fruits, and monthly medical exams, and also encouraged community members to support the children. At the end of the project, all of the 108 children were alive, and 90 had completely recovered from malnourishment.

Romania

Rotary clubs have worked with Heifer International to create a project called Farmers Feed the Children. Animals are given to farmers who, in turn, give the first female offspring of those animals to other farmers. Some of the milk from the cows and eggs from chickens go to children in local hospitals, schools, and orphanages.

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

Target 1 Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Target 2 Achieve universal access to reproductive health

Nigeria

Rotary members in Nigeria, Germany, and Austria launched a pilot project in Northern Nigeria to prevent and treat obstetric fistula, a life-threatening condition that can have dire consequences for both mother and newborn. An estimated two million women — about half of them in Nigeria — experience stillbirth and chronic injury as a result of fistula. The \$1.2 million project includes a public awareness campaign on fistula prevention, production of an educational radio drama, special training for health professionals, and a patient rehabilitation and microcredit program.

Nepal

Rotary clubs in Germany and Nepal partnered to improve reproductive health services in rural areas of Nepal. Through the project, 60 young women are selected to participate in a two-year training course and practicum to become auxiliary nurse midwives. Each ANM is provided with furnishings and equipment in a small remote clinic, where she offers basic medical and midwifery services and provides education on health, nutrition, and family planning. In addition, the ANMs return to Kathmandu for an annual refresher training to improve their skills.

Grenada

The Rotary clubs of Grenada East, Grenada, and Warwick Valley, New York, USA, partnered on a women's health education initiative in Mirabeau, St. Andrews. Following the devastation of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, the newly reconstructed Princess Alice Hospital served a population of 40,000 local residents. The Rotary clubs equipped and furnished the women's wing of the hospital and facilitated examinations and special care for female patients, with a particularly emphasis on high-risk patients with hypertension, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes. In addition, educational programs for local women were developed on the topics of nutrition, family planning, and prenatal and infant care.

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Target 1 Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 2 Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

Target 3 Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Rotary clubs work to improve health care for millions of people around the world by expanding HIV/AIDS prevention, education, testing, counseling, nutritional and medical intervention, and hospice care. In addition, Rotary members worldwide lead projects to combat malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, and other diseases.

Dominican Republic

To address the high rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the Dominican Republic, the Mother-Baby AIDS Project was launched with support of the local Rotary clubs in La Romana and Rotary clubs in New York, USA. The project, which provides medication, counseling, and prenatal and postnatal care, has lowered the rate of mother-to-baby HIV transmission from 40 percent to less than 1 percent and benefits more than 100 HIV-infected mothers and their newborn babies each year.

Solomon Islands

Building on previous malaria projects in rural areas, Rotary members in Honiara, Solomon Islands, and in Kenmore, Australia, developed a large-scale project reduce malaria infections in urban Honiara. As a result, all residential areas receive equipment and safe chemicals for spraying, education campaigns for all residents and travelers and, in collaboration with the government, durable insecticide-treated bed nets for all residents.

Lithuania

For the last decade, Rotary clubs in Lithuania and Denmark have worked together to reduce infections and fatalities caused by tuberculosis in Lithuania. The current efforts use a three-faceted approach: providing improved equipment and training for better testing and analysis of TB, targeted TB awareness campaigns for the general public and physicians, and initiating treatment more quickly for TB infections. Lithuania's Ministry of Health has supported the project.

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 1 Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 2 Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Target 3 Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 4 By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

For more than 100 years, Rotary clubs have implemented environmental projects such as tree planting, water purification and sanitation, conservation area protection, park building, and recycling programs. In addition, Rotary clubs address sanitation and other challenges of urban slums in their regions and abroad.

Kenya

More than one million Kenyans live in Kibera, Nairobi, known as the largest slum in Africa, where the most basic necessities are lacking. The Rotary clubs of Nairobi-Langata and Denver Southeast, Colorado, USA, have implemented a water distribution, storage, and sanitation system for 9,000 of Kibera's residents. Through the project, 10 structures with showers, toilets, and clean drinking-water kiosks will be built. In addition, a community kitchen will use methane gas harvested from a bio-gas latrine facility being built by the Nairobi-Langata club. The club is also assisting with the project's building, management, training, and educational phases, while the Denver Southeast club is providing technical expertise and training.

Mali

To combat greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation in Mali, Rotary clubs in Illinois, USA, sent high school students and teachers to deliver solar ovens from Sun Ovens International and teach Mali villagers how to use them. The ovens, made of recycled materials, help villagers to cook hot meals and pasteurize water. The solar oven technology also reduces the amount of time that women and children spend gathering firewood and decreases the likelihood of mudslides caused by deforestation.

Worldwide

Rotary members in 10 countries have undertaken an innovative project to reduce – and boost awareness of – carbon dioxide emissions. Through the Sustainability Trust, individuals can calculate their CO₂ emissions (e.g., an airplane flight) and donate the monetary amount to the trust (TheSustainabilityTrust.org). The trust helps fund Rotary projects that reduce carbon dioxide levels and promote public awareness of emissions. Funds have already been donated to Rotary-led reforestation and solar-oven projects.

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- Target 1 Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries, and small island developing states
- Target 2 Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system
- Target 3 Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt
- Target 4 In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- Target 5 In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Many Rotary clubs establish local and regional partnerships with charities, governments, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, and other groups to address development challenges across the globe.

Worldwide

Rotary International and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication initiative — UNICEF, WHO, and CDC — work closely with pharmaceutical companies to provide the oral polio vaccine at greatly reduced costs to national governments and purchasing agencies.

Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

Rotary members in Sebastopol, California, USA, established the Adopt a Village project in 2006. The effort is now supported or funded by more than 75 clubs in Canada and the United States. Through the project, Rotary clubs “adopt” villages in developing countries, initially providing necessities such as clean water, mosquito nets, agricultural assistance, and educational support. As conditions improve, more advanced economic development and quality-of-life projects follow. Adopt a Village projects are currently underway in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

India

Since 2003, the Rotary clubs of Calcutta Metropolitan, West Bengal, India, and Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, have partnered to lead a large-scale, integrated community development project to address myriad challenges in rural India such as health care, education, and vocational training. As a result of project, 54,000 adults and children are receiving health care and have access to new tube wells and toilets, 300 children are studying in three new schools, 250 adults have received microcredit loans, 150 adults have received stipends for vocational training, 50 adults have attended literacy classes, and 10,000 trees (80 percent of them fruit-bearing) have been planted.