



# LIGHT

WEEKLY BULLETIN

*September - Basic Education & Literacy month*

TOGETHER, WE

# MENTOR

Sharing knowledge and wisdom drives lasting change. That's one of many reasons Rotary members dedicate their time to help others reach their potential. Mentoring and inspiring generations of leaders – that's what people of action do. Learn more at [Rotary.org](http://Rotary.org).

Rotary  PEOPLE OF ACTION

**Today is our 2145th RWM  
Members attended last RWM : 25**



**Sappy Anniversary Greetings :**



Sept 19th Rtn. Capt. Mritunjay Singh  
Sept 22nd Rtn. Debasis Das  
Sept 27th Bhavna, Daughter of IPP Capt. Naresh K Jain  
Spouse Leema, Wife of Rtn. Chiranjib Sha

## The Future of Afghanistan's Schools – and its Children – is at Stake



Life and death issues are on the table in Afghanistan. The international community is negotiating with the Taliban over the country's future, and people across Afghanistan are waiting to find out what their lives are going to be like. For every Afghan family, the question of whether their children will be able to continue their schooling hangs in the balance. This is a critical moment for education in Afghanistan.

Afghan parents have reasons to fear. The Taliban's near total denial of education for girls and most education for boys when they were last in power was one of the many egregious human rights abuses cited by the US and its allies when they ousted it in 2001. The new Afghan government and its foreign supporters cited the rehabilitation of its school system as a chief success.

Students and teachers in Herat, Kandahar and Kabul told me how eager they were to study and teach; parents shared how eager they were for their children to learn. "I want my daughters to be something in the future," a mother sending all five of her daughters to school told me. "I regret not being educated myself."

But even as educational opportunities opened, Afghanistan remained a country in conflict. Women told me that their hopes were tempered by the sheer lack of schools nearby, corruption, insecurity and targeted attacks.

Still, millions kept attending schools and universities, and women kept teaching. But as Taliban forces advanced in recent years, few among them allowed girls to attend school past puberty; others banned girls' schools entirely.

The attacks on schools by all sides during Afghanistan's long armed conflict exemplify tactics that brought countries together to establish the Safe Schools Declaration, a political commitment to protect education in war. Currently, 111 countries, including Afghanistan, have endorsed the declaration.

As reports trickle in of restrictions on girls' education and women's ability to work, the international community should help protect the right of all Afghans to education under international law and remind the Taliban of those obligations.

Donors should come up with a plan to provide international assistance, on which Afghanistan's education system is utterly dependent. They should pressure the Taliban to allow all schools to operate, and to allow girls and women to attend at all levels, without intimidation or threats. Donors should also continue to assist nongovernmental groups that provide crucial supplemental support for education and run schools outside the government system.

Second, the international community should impose hard consequences for attacks on education. International accountability for crimes against children overall, and specifically attacks on education, is

notoriously weak, especially in times of crisis when other crimes tend to take priority. But this is the time to take action.

The UN Security Council actively monitors attacks on schools and teachers, and the use of schools for military purposes, including in Afghanistan. The Security Council has the authority to refer parties to conflict for sanctions and to the International Criminal Court. It should use that power.

The International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor has already signalled its intention to investigate attacks on education buildings by all parties in Afghanistan as a war crime and the Taliban's denial of education to girls as a crime against humanity. These priorities should remain front and centre.

At its upcoming session, the UN Human Rights Council is rightly considering creating an international monitoring and accountability mechanism for Afghanistan. It should address violent attacks on education by any party, military use of education buildings, restrictions on school and university attendance, and the effect of any Taliban policies on education. The Syria Commission of Inquiry's approach to its mandate offers a useful example: it has addressed these issues in virtually all of its reports.

Third, the international community should live up to its promises to educate Afghan refugees wherever they are. Shamefully, half of all refugee children around the world are out of school.

Sept. 9 is the International Day to Protect Education from Attack. As countries around the world begin their new school years, they should remember Afghanistan's children. As a girls' school principal told me in Kandahar: "Education is the backbone of the country. If the backbone is broken, what will be the country's future?"



*"Nivedita"- Vocational Centre for Art & Craft for Tribal Women & Child was inaugurated on September 14th, 2021 at Raipur, Birbhum.*

*This centre is supported by Rotary Garden Reach, RID 3291 and in association with Nayantara Memorial Charitable Trust at Daranda, Ilambazaar. The centre was conceptualised by AG Tanu Roy.*

*DG Prabir Chatterjee & Rtn. Rubena graced the occasion along with 11 members of Rotary Garden Reach.*

*NMCT had organised a splendid event inaugural programme with wonderful decorations & gifts galore for the guests, attending the do. All the preparations were done by the tribal women of Raipur with the able guidance of Mr. Tapas Paul, the resource person of the vocational centre.*

*Art kits were distributed to the deserving students of the vocational centre and the kits were sponsored by*

*Rotary Garden Reach. Mr. Sudip Majumdar, the convenor of NMCT has really made the event a memorable one and the icing on the cake was the sumptuous lunch served by our host. DG & First Lady really appreciated the initiative.*

*Rotarians present at the event were AG Tanu, President Amitav, Secretary Tamal, PP Mousumi, PP Prosenjit, PP Kumud, PP Asit (Rotary Calcutta Megacity), PE Abinash, Rtn. Shweta, Rtn. Sudip & Mr. Debasis Bhattacharyya.*

## We need to increase awareness on organ donation

Dr. Mahesh Kotbagi, RI Director, 2021–23



Not many Rotarians may be aware that India ranks second to the United States in doing the largest number of transplants in the world. However, there remains a huge gap between those requiring transplant surgery in India and those who get it. And this is mainly due to lack of awareness, ignorance, and access to appropriate organ donors and proper medical facilities.

India's organ donation is an estimated 0.65 per million population, and there is a crying need to promote awareness on voluntary pledge to donate organs. The government has set up the Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation at the national, zonal and regional levels to address this issue.

There are two types of organ donation, living and deceased donation. Under Indian laws, the donors and their families must agree for donating an organ. After death, the consent of an immediate family member is required. Incidentally, the Rotary Pune Gandhi Bhavan, D 3131, holds a Guinness Record for making a record number of people sign up for organ donation from across 950 cities in 2018.

Kidney donation is the most popular donation in India, followed by liver transplant, with very few

opting for heart and lung transplants. Rotary Hyderabad has also been instrumental in setting up one of the first-of-its-kind skin bank in Telangana to aid burn and trauma patients.

While there is no data available on the rate of organ donation in India, a huge disparity remains between the demand and supply. However, with increased awareness, we can expect a larger population to donate. In 1994, the Transplantation of Human Organs Act was passed to regulate the removal, storage and transplantation of human organs; this was amended in 2011 to address inadequacies.

Non-profit organisations like Rotary are actively working to raise awareness and simplify the process of organ donation, and also increase awareness about the need to donate to help people. We have to educate our local communities that the process of pledging to donate is quite simple. But the entire process needs to be transparent as cases have been reported in the past of sale of organs, particularly kidneys.

Unfortunately, in India, only 0.01 per cent of the population has shown willingness for organ donation and to give consent to donate organs. A lot of work is still required in this area, and we Rotarians need to spread awareness on this crucial and critical service that a human being can render after he or she passes on.

### What Does Service Mean in Rotary? Simple Stories of Inspiring Rotarians

#### Scholarships for the Hearing Impaired

*Pat Kasuda from the Catonsville club*

Being deaf affects one's opportunities and one's ability to live and function in society. One of the most unique institutions in the United States serving the hearing impaired is Gallaudet University, an undergraduate and graduate school located in Washington, DC, that only accepts deaf students and whose staffs and

teachers are also deaf. Our Rotary district has been giving scholarships to students in need to facilitate their attendance at the university. Pat, a past District Governor from the Catonsville Club and a recipient of the Service above Self Award from Rotary International, has served on the Gallaudet University board for the last 15 years. Together with other Rotarians, she has helped raise funds for the Rotary Gallaudet scholarship fund. The aim has been to collect \$500,000 for scholarships, an objective that is close to being met. The first scholarship was presented in 1976 to Vera Confectiones from India, who is now a software designer and developer at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory operated by the University of California and the U.S. Department of Energy. Since then 147 more students have benefitted from the fund. This year, on March 12, 2013 during the annual Rotary Day at Gallaudet, eight more scholarships were given to four American and four international students. Over 60 Rotarians attended and toured Gallaudet's Student Academic Center, including the Student Tutorial Center, to which the Rotary contributed over \$65,000, and saw an ASL (American Sign Language) and deaf culture presentation by Department of ASL and Deaf Studies Professor Benjamin Bahan. Pat's commitment to the project is unwavering but when she first heard about the idea she thought that this might not be a good fit for her. When asked how she got involved, she laughed and explained that a Rotarian friend had recommended her to join the board and she got hooked. As she puts it, "all cultures should be shared and heard and the deaf culture is no different." Her advice to Rotarians is to serve but also to take risks and try out new avenues of service. Even though Pat wasn't sure that becoming a board member was right for her, she tried it and now she can't imagine a world without helping students experience the deaf culture.



Rotary Garden Reach in association with Swarnym Foundation organised a Medical Camp for the female patients at Swarnym Foundation, Liluah. More than 80 patients' medical check-up was done. Team from KPC Medical College & Hospital was also instrumental in making this Project a success. 6 doctors including PP Dr. Arabinda & 4 technical assistances were present. Also present President Amitav, Secretary Tamal, PP Ashfaque, PP Kumud, Rtn. Anupam, Rtn. Samiran & Rtr. Chayanika.

## Making the visually-challenged digital-savvy

Rotary Thane West, RID 3142, along with Rotary Thane Green City, Rotary Khargar Midtown and Rotary Creekside, distributed **Braille Me** devices to 15 visually-challenged people in Thane and Mumbai.



Braille Me is a sleek, multi lingual digital Braille display device that helps the visually-challenged access

books, files and notes. It can work as a stand-alone or can be connected to a computer or a smart phone.

The device is equipped with 6-dot Braille cells, Bluetooth and an SD card facility. “The visually challenged can now send messages on WhatsApp or SMS using this device. It also helps them in sharing text files and Excel sheets,” says Sadhana Vaze, the –project lead and a Past President of Rotary Thane West. Rotary Thane West is celebrating its golden jubilee this year and “we plan to distribute this device to 50 people to mark the occasion,” she says, adding that each device costs Rs. 30,000. Snehankit, an NGO working towards empowering the visually-challenged, is helping the club in identifying the beneficiaries.

## Lesson plans

Anne Stein

### Smart strategies to improve learning in low- and middle-income nations

Education is a good investment: It can transform the prospects of a community along with the lives of individuals. But if you want to improve education, what kinds of investments work best? A recent World Bank report, “Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning,” looks at different interventions and how well they work in low and middle-income countries.

It includes recommendations from education and policy experts convened by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office and the World Bank. “The report identifies ways to spend money effectively on education,” says Deon Filmer, director of the World Bank’s Development Research Group.

Smart education investments are even more important in the wake of the pandemic, says Halsey Rogers, lead economist with the World Bank’s Education Global Practice. “Children may have lost half a year’s worth of learning or more,” he says. “So the question is, how can governments prioritize with constrained resources so those children recover as quickly as possible?”

Remember that context is important: What works in Tanzania might not work in Ecuador. Here we lay out some of the effective strategies outlined in the report

and some of the potential pitfalls.

### Cost-effective strategies supported by strong evidence

- ☀️ **Share** information with parents and children on how education can increase income, on available sources of funding, and on the quality of local schools. When parents know what they’re paying for, how much children are learning, and how much money is going to schools, they can demand better outcomes.
- ☀️ **Provide** structured lesson plans with linked materials and ongoing teacher monitoring and training. In a randomized, controlled trial in Gambia, scripted lesson plans, after-school supplementary classes, and frequent monitoring and teacher coaching dramatically improved learning outcomes for students.
- ☀️ **Target** instruction by learning level, not grade. When one classroom serves a wide variety of learning levels, some students can get left behind. Group children for all or part of the day based on their learning levels, with help from teacher assistants or volunteers.
- ☀️ **Reduce** commute times to school. Building new schools closer to students can be prohibitively expensive. A more cost-effective strategy entails setting up schools in existing community buildings or reducing travel times through other methods. In one study, when girls in the Indian state of Bihar received bikes, their secondary school attendance increased by 30 percent.
- ☀️ **Give** merit-based scholarships to disadvantaged children. Merit-based scholarships targeted at disadvantaged young people can act as an extra incentive to improve attendance and student effort.
- ☀️ **Provide** software that adapts to a child’s learning level. Adaptive or self-paced software targeted to the individual student can be very effective. But reliable electricity, internet connections, teacher training, and available hardware for all students are critical to this strategy.
- ☀️ **Support** pre-primary education (ages 3-5).

Poor children tend to start school with lower levels of cognitive and language development than children from higher-income households. Intervention in those pre-primary years can have long-term economic benefits.

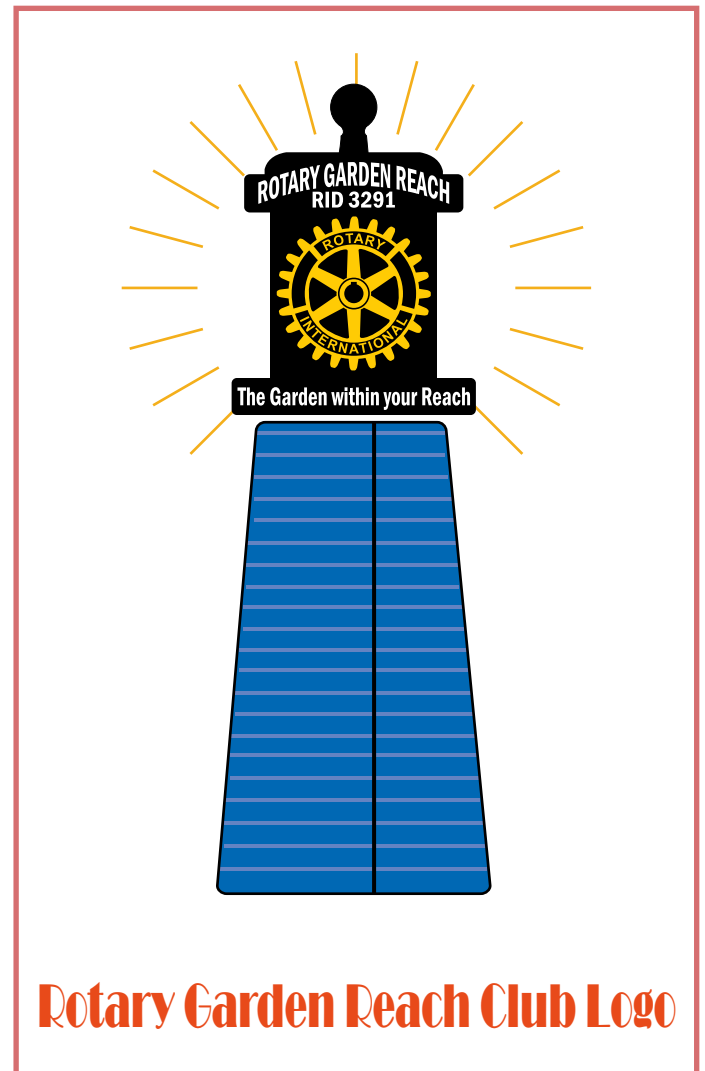
## Tips for avoiding pitfalls

Studies have shown that providing money or supplies alone — whether it's books, computers, school buildings, grants, salaries, or libraries — without addressing other issues is often ineffective. Donated laptops, for example, won't improve learning if the school doesn't have reliable electricity or teachers aren't trained to use them. Even providing textbooks might not be as simple as it seems. In one case, new textbooks in Sierra Leone went unused because administrators weren't assured that damaged books would be replaced.

For any intervention to be effective, “you need to have a real sense of what those schools need,” Rogers says. “You need to build that relationship and have a sustained commitment.” And whatever the strategies, Filmer advises, pay attention to outcomes, learn from them, and adapt. Come back in a few months to see whether donated books are being used. Come back in a year and replace them if needed.

Rotary members can also use their influence to improve global learning. “Rotarians can help get the private sector involved in telling the government that education is the future of our country, and we need to invest smartly in our country,” Rogers says. “It really packs a punch when business leaders like Rotarians say that.”

“When countries have made learning for all children a priority, they can achieve remarkable results,” Filmer adds. “We've seen that happen around the world, whether in Korea or Finland or



## Rotary Garden Reach Club Logo

### Minutes of the 2144th RWM held on September 11th, 2021 at BNR Officers' Club

1. President Amitav called the 2144th RWM to order and requested members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President welcomed all the club members and their family, Rotaractors of Garden Reach and wished them all a 'Happy Charter Anniversary Day' of the Club and requested the members and guests to rise for the national anthem lead by PP Mousumi.
3. President informed the members that Secretary Tamal and himself visited the house of the Charter member Raj

- Mangal Singh and felicitated him with a gift, cake and flower. President also informed the house that in spite of sincere effort Charter member Amar Ghosh could not be contacted; he would be contacted in the coming days and felicitated accordingly.
4. President informed that the Vocational Training Centre for Art & Craft to be inaugurated by DG Prabir Chatterjee and First Lady Rubena Chatterjee at Raipur, Birbhum, jointly with Nayantara Memorial Charitable Trust, as initiated and scheduled by AG Tanu on the September 14th, 2021.
  5. President confirmed about the medical camp to be held for 100 beneficiaries comprising of elderly, middle aged women and girl children to be held at the school and office of Swarnym Foundation, GT Road, Liluah on September 19th, 2021. The project to be conducted jointly with doctors, nurses and technicians from KPC Medical College & Hospital as to be arranged by PP Dr. Arabinda Ray.
  6. President informed and discussed with the members about the Medical camp and clothes distribution camp to be held on September 26th, 2021 at Daspur Shri Shri Ramkrishna Sevashram, West Medinipur.
  7. President informed the members that the 3rd Board meeting of the club is to be held on the September 29th, 2021 to be hosted by PP Dr. JK Singh, PP Capt. Ashfaque Ahmed, PP Sanjay Bhatt & PP Ranjit Basu.
  8. On the arrival of Chief Guest PDG Ajay Agarwal, PP Mousumi welcomed him and requested him to the top dais; President Amitav and Secretary Tamal welcomed him to the dais.
  9. The Club Logo was inaugurated by PDG Ajay Agarwal. AG Tanu Roy conceptualised & designed the same. President and Secretary along with the past Editors of the club was present on dais during the launch of the Rotary Garden Reach Club Logo.
  10. Rtn. Abhijit Das was recognized for his contribution to TRF by PDG Ajay & Club TRF Chair, PP Tapan.
  11. PDG Ajay Agarwal gave the induction speech and inducted Rtn. Shubhayan Sengupta to the family of Rotary Garden Reach. Rtn. Shubhayan was proposed by AG Tanu Roy. Along with the induction new member spouses were felicitated.
  12. President welcomed DGE Ajoy Law and Spouse Rtn. Mita along with the District Team 2021-22 present at the do.
  13. AG Tanu Roy, PP Kumud Kar, PP Mousumi Bhattacharyya and Rtn. Sudip Dey, Rtn. Gautam Purakayastha, Rtn. Dr. BN Jha, Rtn. Abhijit Das, Rtn. Biswajit Saha, Rtn. Abbas Ali Halder, Rtn. Anupam Pal, PE Abinash Singh were all recognised and felicitated for their Rotary Service by the President and the dignitaries present.
  14. PP Dr. JK Singh shared some memories about the Charter members PP Raj Mangal Singh & Rtn. Amar Kumar Ghosh.
  15. On the request of the President, Club Secretary Rtn. Tamal conducted the club business.
  16. The minutes of the last RWM were confirmed. With no other business to conduct the president terminated the meeting.