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Are we actually getting an order whether it is India or the world where women are genuinely getting their voices, concerns heard? If we look at the recently concluded UN's high-level meeting of world leaders concluded last week, the head count seemed lopsided; of the 190 speakers only 23 were women. Antonia Kirkland, Global Lead on Legal Equality at Equality Now says "the dismal number of women leaders speaking at UNGA this year is very worrying given the regression on women's rights in many parts of the world, including in the United States, where the UN General Assembly meets". At the current pace of progress, equal representation in parliament will not be achieved until 2062, the global proportion of women in other levels of political office worldwide still has far to go: 21 per cent of the world's ministers, 26 per cent of national parliamentarians, and 34 per cent of elected seats of local government.

Is it not worrying? The paradox lies in the narratives as what to wear as matter of choice is being denounced and repressed in one country specifically related to women while in another the highest court is deliberating whether that is a matter of personal choice but amongst all the din the right to exercise one's own choice is getting affected for women across the world. In this context the forthcoming International Girl Child Day was celebrated through a wonderful panel discussion where Sports as a career for girls was discussed by super achiever sportswomen recently at the British Deputy High Commission supported by our Club. Finally it is the financial independence through a process of quality education and a career which shall ensure women to have greater independence of course a key element shall remain breaking socio religious taboos and regression especially in male dominated societies.

Closer home in Rotary, there is a perceptible change with more women attaining positions of leaderships but perhaps the mind set will eventually change when grace and beauty shall not be the only reasons for choosing lady members to carry the "thali" on stage and they shall stop stagnating as 'thaligirls' and start wielding the baton and take charge of the stage and the organization and to do that the condescending attitude of men in the movement too demands a paradigm shift when we shall also see "thaliboys" (if at all that is the need).

But as I would like to believe, that I am a dreamer but I am the not only one.

EDITORIAL

Subhojit Roy

Re-emergence of Polio Underscores the Need for Eradication



By Arnold R. Grahl

The detection of poliovirus, and even cases of polio, in places where it hasn't been found for years has demonstrated once again that eradicating a human disease isn't easy, especially in the final stages.

In recent months, an unvaccinated man in the United States was paralyzed. In the UK, poliovirus was detected in sewage. In Malawi, a child contracted polio. And Mozambique announced its first polio outbreak in 30 years.

But rather than be discouraged, Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) remain confident that they are making progress and can achieve their goal of a polio-free world. There are several reasons for this optimism.

A new oral vaccine, which has a substantially lower risk of causing vaccine-derived variant polio, is now available. This makes it less likely that the weakened strain of poliovirus that is used in the vaccine will mutate and spur outbreaks in communities where immunization levels are low, which has occurred in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Moreover, the number of cases of the disease caused by the wild virus has been at historically low levels in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the two countries where poliovirus transmission has never been stopped. This presents an opportunity to seize the moment and stop the wild virus forever.

Rotary's perseverance has played an enormous

role in bringing the world to this point. It's that commitment, coupled with the determination of the other GPEI partners, that is needed to complete the job.

"This year has shown us why we must stay the course on polio eradication," said Mike McGovern, chair of Rotary's PolioPlus Committee. "We have an opportunity to make history and need Rotarians to redouble their commitment by raising funds and awareness."

Rotary members have been at the center of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for more than three decades. Rotary launched PolioPlus in 1985 and helped found the GPEI in 1988, with the goal of eradicating a human disease for only the second time in history. (The World Health Organization declared the world free of smallpox in 1980.) When the GPEI was founded, wild poliovirus paralyzed hundreds of children every day, with an estimated 350,000 polio cases across more than 125 countries in one year. Since then, cases have plummeted more than 99.9%, sparing more than 20 million people from paralysis.

Through a funding partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary commits US\$150 million to fighting polio every year. Rotary members have contributed more than US\$2.6 billion and countless volunteer hours to this effort. With the GPEI partners, members engage with communities everywhere to encourage high vaccination rates and help immunize more than 400 million children annually.

As the world gets closer to having zero polio cases that are caused by the wild virus, public health experts say it is more important to track all forms of the virus, wherever they may appear, including in polio-free regions.

They also say that the re-emergence of polio in these places highlights the importance of vaccination as the only form of protection against polio and many other diseases. It draws attention to the work needed to encourage people to get vaccinated at a time when vaccination rates are dropping in some communities. And it reinforces the fact that polio anywhere is a threat everywhere, which underscores the importance of the

End Polio Now campaign.

As World Polio Day on 24 October approaches, Rotary urges its members to tell their communities about the importance of vaccination. Global donors and national governments are also expected to announce new pledges to fund the GPEI's 2022-26 polio eradication strategy. This strategy focuses on greater accountability from national governments about their work to eradicate wild polio and end outbreaks of polio caused by variant poliovirus.

With these kinds of sustained political and financial commitments, the world is still on the path toward an incredible accomplishment: making sure no person is paralyzed by polio ever again.

Rotary Youth Exchange returns: the making of a video

By Logan Johnson, Youth Exchange and Youth Protection Promotions and Engagement Specialist at Rotary International



What does it mean to tell a story about Rotary Youth Exchange?

To both celebrate its return and shine a light on the program, I worked with my colleagues at Rotary International to create a video that captured the spirit of Rotary Youth Exchange.

Our goal was simple: make a video that inspires people to participate in the program by showing a holistic view of the program and its variety of participants.

The spirit of Rotary Youth Exchange lies in its

students, who are inspired to go abroad to live and learn while immersed in a new culture. Their story is a full circle, from the initial goodbyes to parents, to the many experiences on exchange, and eventually being welcomed back home.

So, who else participates in the program other than students?

So many other people are necessary to make the program successful! There are Rotary members who facilitate exchanges and help students at every stage of their exchange; host families who often take in a series of students over the course of an exchange period; and the many teachers, parents, tutors, counselors, and more that all volunteer their time and make each exchange unique.

We were certain that the story we wanted to tell had to capture at least some of each of those participants and leaders centered around the student experience. As you watch the video, you'll notice the student surrounded by those that support them – parents, teachers, and Rotary members – all are vital participants that make the program successful.

A Moment with Rotary that Changed My Life



Rotary Foundation Trustee Dean Rohrs with a child during a National Immunization Day trip in northern Nigeria several years ago.

By Dean Rohrs, Rotary Foundation Trustee and past RI vice president

A few years back, I was taking part in a polio immunization field trip in northern Nigeria, vaccinating children against the disease. After a dusty trip on non-existent roads right into the northern Nigeria countryside, I was dropped off under a

tree with a Rotaractor translator, one other Rotary member, and the local polio immunization team. This is an area frequented by Boko Haram and although I grew up in Africa, and am adventurous, I wasn't sure that I would ever be found again.

The whole morning, women and children came to us for their polio vaccinations – winding their way to our tree through the fields. But by the early afternoon when the women start preparing the evening meal, there were no further children to immunize. I then took the opportunity to wander through the groups of compounds looking for children to immunize. While doing so, I came across a simple well with a rope and bucket and little girls – aged 10 to 12 years – collecting water, filling containers, and then disappearing into the bush with their water.

I asked the head of the village where they were going, and he told me that there were two other settlements in the area – one 2 kilometers away and the other more than 3 kilometers away. These settlements had no water. These little girls walked twice a day to fetch water for their families and thus never attended school.

When I got back to the tree and back to the team, I asked this leader what it costs to dig a simple well like that. That answer changed my life – and the realization of how little it takes to change lives.

When I got back to my hotel that night, I took out my spending money and my travel emergency fund and laid the money out on my bed. I had enough money – not only for one well – but to dig two wells and to rehabilitate the well that I had seen that day.

Leaving those funds in the hands of the local Rotaractors – 10 months later I had photos of the “Canadian wells” in those two new settlements and the cover and new surround of the original well.

Every time I look at these photos, I remember how little it took to make a difference. I remember the sight of those little girls with their small dusty bare feet, their buckets and containers on their heads, and their strong little backs as they not only faced with courage and stoicism their walk home through this dangerous bush, but also the life they lead and will lead.


Just a brief moment and a few dollars from my life – but what did it mean to those girls? A safe envi-

ronment of not walking through dangerous territory. A chance to go to school and better themselves. A community that could now focus on living instead of always stretching for the daily water.

We all have these moments in our Rotary journey. But what we do with them is really what counts.



Imagine What's Next. Register for the 2023 International Convention in Melbourne, Australia. [Learn more >](#)



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK
Rotary

Rotary's annual all-member survey is coming in October! [Get ready >](#)

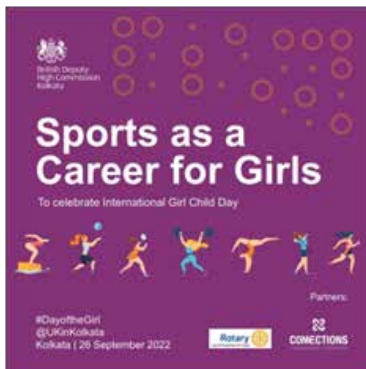
Health Camp





Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City is association with Taltolla Sarbojonin Durgotsav Committee-Lordpara organized a health and eye check up camp. 105 patients from challenged economic strata were treated for a general health check up, blood sugar test eye check up along free spectacle distribution and free cataract operations later on. 26 such beneficiaries were identified at the program. The club's RCC Vivekananda Mission Seva Pratisthan coordinated the camp and the club was represented by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy and club's former member and PP Goutam Shaw coordinated on behalf of the members.

Sports as a Career for Girls- a Precursor to the International Girl Child Day



British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata and Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City supported by Connections presented an engrossing talk show, Sports as a Career for Girls, featuring iconic women sports personalities from Bengal including the Arjuna awardee, Padma shri awardee, former India national women's swimming champion Bula Chowdhury, Double Asian Games silver medallist and Arjuna winner Soma Biswas, Olympian and Indian heptathlete having won silver and a bronze medals at the Asian Championships Susmita Singha Roy and Asian Games Gold medallist and Arjuna Award winner Swapna Burman to celebrate the forthcoming International Girl Child Day coming up on 12th October.

The panellists were felicitated by Nick Low while Rotary club President Amrita Basu felicitated Nick Low. Nick Low, Deputy High Commissioner of Great Britain opened the deliberation on the topic and

expressed hope the future is bright for young girls towards making sports as their careers. He spoke about his experiences and also mentioned about how his Government supports various sporting initiatives at the grassroots.

Senior most among the panellists Bula Chowdhury made an impassioned plea to the assembled 50 odd young girl students of the age group of 12-16 years from various challenged sections of Kolkata, she highlighted her own struggles and she received full support of her parents and family, she mentioned family support is as crucial as institutional support. She also asked the girls not lose focus. Both Soma and Susmita were of the opinion that dedication is must to achieve goals, they narrated their experiences about how despite being from suburbs they were able to make it big as they remained focussed on their targets. Swapna was the concluding speaker and she being an active sportsperson said that education is as important as sports and felt both should go hand in hand.

This followed a most interesting Questions & Answer session which went on for a while with the young girl showing a lot of interest in asking their icons their questions. Arunabha Bhattacharya conducted the entire proceedings.

Subhojit Roy, speaking on behalf of Rotary club urged the young girls attending to take inspiration from the 4 icons and he spoke about the National pride of a sports person and hoped they take up sports as a career.

Amit Sengupta offered the formal vote of thanks on behalf of the British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata

The club, apart from the above two were also represented by PP Rtn Sunando Sen and Club Secretary Rtn Arundhati Nayak.

Greetings

Subarna & Nirjhar Bhadury for 8th October!

Metro Mail wishes its readers

