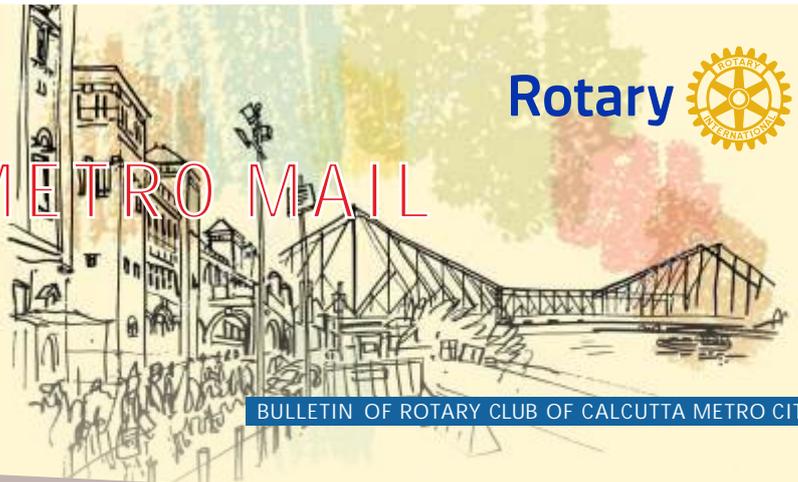


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Rotary can make a decisive difference in underdeveloped economies by addressing gaps that governments and markets often leave behind — through grassroots action, local leadership, and sustainable development.

First, Rotary empowers communities through skills and livelihood creation. By supporting vocational training, entrepreneurship, and micro-enterprises, Rotary helps people move from dependency to self-reliance. Small interventions — tailoring units, agri-based enterprises, digital skills—create lasting economic impact.

Second, Rotary strengthens human capital. Investments in education, literacy, healthcare, clean water, and sanitation improve productivity and reduce long-term poverty. Healthy, educated communities are better equipped to participate in economic growth.

Third, Rotary promotes women's economic empowerment. Supporting self-help groups, microcredit, and leadership training for women multiplies development outcomes, as women reinvest income in families and communities.

Fourth, Rotary's global network enables knowledge transfer and funding through Global Grants, bringing best practices and resources from developed to underdeveloped regions.

Finally, Rotary's ethical, volunteer-led model ensures transparency, speed, and trust, often reaching the last mile faster than state machinery.

By combining compassion with capability, Rotary doesn't offer charity—it builds sustainable, resilient economies, one community at a time.

Subhojit Roy

Do You Have Questions about Rotary’s Pledge to End Polio? We’ve got Answers

By Etelka Lehoczky



You’ve likely heard a lot about polio in recent weeks. Rotary members talk about it all year, but never more than in the month leading up to World Polio Day on 24 October. It’s one of the most important days of the

year for Rotary — a time to reaffirm our nearly four-decade commitment to eliminating this disease from the world.

Polio eradication may seem complicated, but it’s actually fairly straightforward. If you’ve ever wondered about the science of the disease, the history of Rotary’s fight against it, or the progress of the global eradication effort, find the answers to those questions and more below.

What is polio, and why is it such a threat?

Poliomyelitis, also known as polio, is a highly infectious disease that mainly affects nerves in the spinal cord and brain stem. Most people infected with the virus don’t show any symptoms, but a small number become paralyzed. Polio primarily targets children under age five.

Polio can spread rapidly from person to person, such as through a cough or a sneeze. If an infected person doesn’t wash their hands after coughing or using the toilet, they can transmit the virus even if they don’t know they’re infected. Polio can also spread through contaminated water in areas with poor sanitation.

Wild poliovirus occurs naturally in the environment and has three types. Type 2 and type 3 were declared eradicated in the 2010s, but type 1 remains. Variant poliovirus occurs when the weakened strain of virus contained in the oral vaccine circulates for a long time and mutates into a form that can cause paralysis like wild polio. Variant poliovirus cases are rare.

Why does Rotary care about polio eradication?

Rotary members are determined to end polio for many reasons — including that its effects are terrible, and its main victims are young children. Rotary International began working to vaccinate children against polio in 1979. In 1985, Rotary created its PolioPlus program to amplify these efforts. Then in 1988, Rotary and our partners launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

We’ve come a remarkably long way since then. Polio was endemic in 125 countries in 1988; that’s down to two now. The global effort to eradicate polio has prevented an estimated 20 million cases of paralysis.

Wiping out this disease is possible. We are very close to ensuring that no child suffers from polio ever again.

How widespread is polio? Can it affect me?

Wild polio remains endemic in only Afghanistan and Pakistan. But because it spreads so easily, one or two cases can quickly multiply. In our world of global travel, an infected person can carry the disease to the other side of the world even if they aren’t sick themselves. In 2022, an adult in New York, USA, contracted polio and was paralyzed. Genetic testing of the virus infecting that person linked it to polio viruses found in London and Jerusalem. This shows that as long as polio exists somewhere in the world, nobody is truly safe.

How do we fight polio?

Polio is fought primarily with vaccines and environmental surveillance. The GPEI promotes both routine and supplementary campaigns to immunize young children. Surveillance consists of identifying and promptly reporting polio cases and monitoring sewage water for the presence of the virus.

What role does Rotary have in the GPEI?

Rotary helped create the GPEI, whose other core partners include the World Health Organization, the Gates Foundation, UNICEF, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Rotary members fight polio in many ways, including :

Raising funds

Soliciting support from governments, non governmental organizations, and corporations

Immunizing children

Raising awareness in their communities

Rotary has helped immunize 3 billion children against polio, contributed more than US\$2.9 billion to global polio eradication efforts, and helped secure more than US\$11 billion from donor governments.

Rotary knows that a world without polio is within our grasp. On World Polio Day and throughout the year, we’ll keep fighting.

— October 2025

Rotary Foundation Receives Highest Rating from Charity Navigator for 17th Consecutive Year

By Rotary International



For the 17th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from Charity Navigator, the largest and most utilized independent charity evaluator in the United States.

The Foundation earned the recognition for adhering to sector best practices and executing its mission in a financially efficient way, demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

“We are delighted to provide the Rotary Foundation with third-party accreditation that validates their operational excellence,” said Michael Thatcher, president and CEO of Charity Navigator. “The Four-Star Rating is the highest possible rating an organization can achieve. We are eager to see the good work that the Rotary Foundation can accomplish in the years ahead.”

Charity Navigator analyzes overall non-profit health and performance based on four key areas: Leadership & Adaptability to help donors understand if a charity has clarity of purpose, Accountability & Finance to explain if they are transparent and fiscally capable, Culture & Community to show how they engage with their constituents, and Impact & Results to explain what they have accomplished.

— October 2025

Can peace be measured?

Co-founded by a Rotary Peace Fellow, one research group is trying to do just that

By Clara Germani



Colombian 20-something Yuliana Andrea David Hidalgo's life has been defined by the crossfire in her nation's decades-long war between government and rebel forces, complicated by the violence of drug cartels and criminal gangs.

While a 2016 peace accord has taken tenuous hold, her country still ranks among the least peaceful places on earth in the Institute for Economics and Peace's 2025 Global Peace Index, based on nationwide indicators like numbers of deaths from conflict, incarceration rates, military spending, and public perceptions of criminality.

And yet, to listen to Yuliana and others in her village of Las Cruces, there are more immediate, quotidian ways to measure peace. Her neighbours and compatriots have picked up on similar signals of returning stability and peace, such as being able to safely hold a traditional days long funeral; well-maintained roads; the humane treatment of stray animals; and not needing to sleep with boots on (once a reasonable precaution in case the need arose to flee in a hurry).

An innovative new approach to measuring and fostering peace is built around the insight that such everyday habits and behaviours can tell you as much — maybe more — about the peacefulness of a place than high-level statistics on crime rates and arms imports.

Everyday Peace Indicators, a pioneering nonprofit organization, has started gathering hundreds of these seemingly ordinary and unremarkable data points in an attempt to better capture difficult-to-measure concepts of peace, reconciliation, and governance in areas affected by conflict. With this fuller picture of peace at a community level, the group hopes, people in power can make better decisions.

"We see ourselves as trying to be vessels, communicating everyday people's priorities to policymakers and to decision-makers," explains Pamina Firchow, EPI founding executive director and Brandeis University associate professor. She and professor Roger Mac Ginty from Durham University incubated the EPI concept after she completed a Rotary Peace Fellowship in 2005.

EPI's work is part of a "grounded accountability" movement that brings power, ownership, and decision making for peace building to the communities most affected by conflict, says Carl Stauffer, a former United States Institute of Peace expert. "You can persuade people to sign [peace accords]," he says. "But if you haven't transformed relationships at multiple levels in society, more than likely that agreement is going to fall apart."

Firchow recognized the need for EPI early in her career when she worked in arms control policy far from the field and felt frustrated. "Recommendations on what were do's and don'ts in arms control came from the Global North without much, or sometimes any, consultation," she says, noting that a more bottom-up approach could have prevented mistakes. For example, in some disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, she explains, ex-combatants returned only broken guns and kept working ones but still received benefits; or ex-combatants who gave up their arms were targeted and killed because sufficient protection wasn't offered.

Instead of allowing outside experts to determine the terms of peace, wouldn't it be better, Firchow wondered, to ask people in areas affected by conflict what peace looked like to them?

Over the past decade and a half, Firchow — often collaborating with other Rotary Peace Fellows — has done just that, bringing this "everyday peace" approach of community-level assessment to countries such as Colombia, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Uganda, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Afghanistan. EPI, formally incorporated as a nonprofit in 2018, has also worked in Oakland, California, on public safety reform. The body of indicators collected, says Firchow, "really tells you a story that peace is not just the end of violence. Peace is so much more."

EPI partners with peace-building groups looking to design effective projects. The organization's data gathering is an intimate process with community members in small groups generating long lists of how people measure peacefulness for themselves. Working with a wider group of people, EPI refines and ranks items on the lists. Then those data points are used to help design programming that will sustain and build the peace envisioned by local people. The same data is then used to measure the effectiveness of the programming — whether it worked or needs refinement.

By the numbers

- \$20 trillion - Impact of violence on global economy in 2024
- 98-Countries involved in external conflict in last 5 years
- 13%-Share of conflicts that end with peace deal or clear victory

Source : *Global Peace Index 2025*

EPI's work can help funders drill down to community-defined needs for safety and social cohesion, like clean water, safety for motorcycle taxis, or secure education for girls.

This zoomed-in approach adds to the higher-level data analysis by groups like the Institute for Economics and Peace, which has produced its annual Global Peace Index rankings of countries since 2007. It also builds on work that the institute, Rotary, and others have done to promote Positive Peace, the concept that sustainable peace requires conditions like good relations with neighbors and more equitable distribution of resources, not just the absence of violence.

Some of the EPI's most defining work is in Colombia. The group's executive director for that country, Eduardo González, says findings there have "revolutionized" the understanding of peace from a policy perspective. He points to EPI's recent report to the magistrates hammering out the nation's war reparations process. Thousands of indicators were gathered across dozens of communities giving nuanced definitions of reparation, truth, and justice.

Based on such findings, war victims don't necessarily want international tribunals or even prison for perpetrators. Sometimes restorative justice can be more useful to them. "Day-to-day knowledge, wisdom, and experience" related to the violence of war, González says, reveals a yearning for "a more expansive vision of truth ... emotional truth," beyond just the "little bit of reality" of forensic truth in traditional retributive justice proceedings.

He describes feeling moved by some people's definition of justice for those who committed war crimes in their village. They told him they wanted to see the perpetrators "sweat." "They wanted to see people doing actual works in the community, where these things happened," González explains, "so they will build a school; they will build a road; they will build a hospital."

In Colombia, EPI has adapted a research method known as photovoice in which participants use photography to identify and discuss community issues. Yuliana, the young woman from Las Cruces, captured a haunting image of two little kids peering out from under a bed. Its ambiguous depiction — fun or fear — illustrated the peace indicator she identified of whether people need to hide for safety.

In Nepal, Rotary Peace Fellow Yvette Selim's research echoed a core EPI principle: Real understanding of peace comes from listening to those living it every day. On one occasion, an upper-caste interpreter suggested to Selim that the "poor, simple" Nepalese she was interviewing about peace and post-conflict justice would not understand her questions. That turned out to be far from true. "I believed that people, whether they were illiterate, educated, or otherwise, would have opinions on these matters, all of which were valuable and valid," she says.

Selim, who is now EPI's research and communications adviser, says Rotary members, too, can incorporate the EPI approach into the community needs assessments clubs carry out before designing service projects. It puts the community at the center of solutions. "Community members are experts in what matters to them," she says.

This story originally appeared in the November 2025 issue of *Rotary* magazine.

Club News

Birthday Greetings

Nirjhar Bhadury for 4th Nov.

Deepanwita Banerjee for 10th Nov.

Preetam Ghosh for 13th Nov.

Wedding Anniversary

Nausheen & Md Firoz for 14th Nov.

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