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METRO MAIL



BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA METRO CITY

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Last week, thanks to our club member, PDG Shyamashree Sen, we heard a wonderful talk by Brian Rusch, Vice Chair, DEI, Rotary International on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A topic which is sensitive, yet of utmost importance, especially in systems and communities which face rigidity, patriarchy and ofcourse religious intolerance. Inclusion and diversity would actually be achieved in the true sense when people of diversity are part and parcel of every club, region, and country organically. The process has just begun; it would need a major change in our own outlook, sensitivity and most likely a generational change of mindset to fulfil DEI in its truest form.

I have a strong feeling the leadership at RI, District levels are yet to be mentally trained or equipped to handle DEI, I was witnessing a live transmission of the RI Zonal Institute at Bengaluru, RISE, and the Frankly Speaking session conducted by PRIP Ravindran and his googly' question to RIPE Mário César about a possibility of a 'Gay' President exposed the hypocrisy of both the past and future leaders was a giveaway that they are equipped to handle diversity. First, what did Ravindran mean by the word googly when it concerns a gay, lesbian? The guffaws in the auditorium and RIPE Mário César and his long pause were dead giveaways, but his response was surely smart when he said that the person has to be competent. Most importantly let Rotarians first accord equality to women, which is still a distant dream in many countries and even in India. Another obstacle is ofcourse Rotary also exists in countries which do not accord any protection under its judicial systems, thanks to its religious doctrines and social taboos. Remember India itself hasn't given rights for same sex marriages, there are 64 countries that have laws that criminalise homosexuality, and nearly half of these are in Africa. Out of the 53 countries in the Commonwealth - a loose association of countries most of them former British colonies - 29 have laws that criminalise homosexuality. Remember, most of these countries have thriving Rotary communities. So are we living a utopian dream, since USA is waking up to the rights of the LGBTQ+ community so does it think that the rest of the world will do the same.

First step should be to sensitize members themselves and also that diversity is not only about a certain section it should ideally involve diversity in gender, religion, ethnicity, specially challenged and many others (who fulfil the eligibility to be members of a Rotary club). The biggest challenge is acceptance and self education and the rest should organically follow.

I sincerely hope Rotary one day shall reflect the diversity and be an inclusive organization to the diversity in this world.

(This editorial is based entirely on my personal views and may not reflect my Club's Views)

EDITORIAL

Subhojit Roy

RI News

Presidential Message - Dec. 2023



In December, I will attend the United Nations COP28 climate change summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. There, I will speak about the convergence of two global crises: climate and mental health. As the World Health Organization has noted, climate change worsens risk factors – such as disruptions to homes and livelihoods – for mental health problems. The emotional distress of a disaster also makes it difficult for people to recover and rebuild.

Rotary partner ShelterBox is an international disaster relief charity that has helped more than 2.5 million displaced people in approximately 100 countries with emergency shelter, essential household items, and technical support. I wish to share this month's column with their CEO, Sanj Srikanthan, who explains that the words we choose to describe disasters matter.

Shelter Box

The term "natural" disaster has long been used to describe tropical storms, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, but there needs to be an urgent shift in the language we use. While the term may seem harmless, and we've not always gotten it right, we've learned through our work with disaster-affected communities how it perpetuates a dangerous myth that nothing could have been done to prevent people being so badly affected. This misleading and harmful narrative can lead to a lack of action to help people who need it.

The language we use matters. When we frame disasters as natural, we fail to acknowledge the complex interplay

between nature and the role of human actions and how they impact communities around the world.

Earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and extreme storms, drought, and flooding occur because of natural processes on Earth. But it is how these events affect people or the environment that has the potential to make them a disaster – outcomes influenced by human factors like where people live, what types of homes they have, political instability, and the lack of proactive measures to protect vulnerable communities. A disaster is the result of systemic inequalities in access to resources and power. Where we live and how much money we have often determines our ability to recover. The people worst affected are those living in poverty, with the least means to protect themselves and few resources to withstand the next event.

By framing these events as natural, we undermine the need for proactive measures to protect vulnerable communities, masking the underlying social, economic, and political instability that makes marginalized and disadvantaged communities disproportionately affected. Our teams see firsthand how issues like inequality, poverty, urbanization, deforestation, and the climate crisis can make communities more vulnerable.

At ShelterBox, we simply say "disaster" or are more specific, describing the extreme weather, earthquake, tsunami, or volcanic eruption. I urge everyone to help us in breaking this cycle by committing to language that accurately reflects why people are affected so badly.

Only then does it pave the way to address the underlying causes of vulnerability and work toward a more just and equitable future for all, with the necessary investment, resources, and proactive measures to help protect affected communities.

Disasters are not natural. Let's stop saying they are.

Sanj Srikanthan, CEO, ShelterBox

Rotary leads 28 sessions at United Nations climate conference



Presentations and workshops at COP28 highlight community-led solutions, partnerships.

By Etelka Lehoczky

Rotary experts are hosting more than two dozen sessions at the 28th United Nations climate conference, addressing how a changing climate intersects with health, poverty, and other factors. Rotary International President R. Gordon R. McNally will discuss the mental health effects of climate-linked disasters.

The two-week conference in Dubai, also known as COP28 (short for Conference of the Parties, now in its 28th year), is the world's highest decision-making process addressing climate issues. It brings together more than 70,000 delegates from 197 countries and geographical areas as well as thousands of nongovernmental organizations, companies, and others.

Rotary is taking part in the conference for the third time, highlighting community-led solutions, partnerships, and dialogue.

Recognizing the central role of young people in shaping a sustainable future, Rotary is sponsoring 12 youth volunteers to attend COP28. This amplifies young voices in the climate discussion and offers the volunteers learning opportunities and international experience.

Rotary's 28 sessions include presentations by Rotary representatives to the UN and international organizations, as well as UN agencies, NGOs, academia, and corporate entities. Meenakshi Venkataraman, a member of the Rotary Club of Nilgiris West, Tamil Nadu, India, will discuss how invasive species cause biodiversity loss. Salvador Rico, a member of the Rotary Club of South Ukiah, California, USA, will offer an introduction to community-led watershed protection efforts.

In addition, Elif Selin Calik, author of "The Renaissance of Smart Energy" and a member of the **Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group**, will talk about how artificial intelligence can revolutionize areas like energy, agriculture, and disaster resilience.

Yaseen Mohamed Jaffer Mohsen, president of the **Association of Rotary Clubs in the United Arab Emirates**, will explore how environmental projects can be financed through corporate partnerships.

The "Climate Crisis and Health Consequences" panel, held in partnership with GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, will address the escalating health threats posed by climate change. Moderated by Rose Cardarelli, Rotary International representative to UNICEF, the panel will feature health professionals from Rotary, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and GAVI.

Other sessions focus on food systems, Indigenous land rights, and related topics.

From supporting vulnerable populations to forging partnerships across the public and private sectors, Rotary members are motivating progress and inspiring action on the environment. Members in the United Arab Emirates are planting 50,000 mangrove trees in partnership with the government. The restoration of mangrove forests, which help protect coastlines and marine life, is a Rotary priority.

"Mangrove ecosystems in the tropics and subtropics around the world are in peril because of their position along coastlines," says Christopher Puttock, chair of the Rotary Action Group Council. "Because of the rapid sea-level rise we are experiencing, and the persistent need for human coastal development, these ecosystems are being squeezed out of existence. Working with governments and local communities, Rotary has the unique opportunity to assist in mangrove restoration projects."

Rotary's COP28 delegation includes Trustee Chair Barry Rassin and General Secretary John Hewko, as well as Judith Diment, dean of the Rotary Representatives to the UN and International Agencies; Mohamed Delawar Aly, Rotary Representative to the Arab League; Yasar Atacik, chair of the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group; and K. Neil Van Dine, chair of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group.

Rotary International has long worked to protect the environment by collaborating with communities to implement clean water and sanitation, alleviate poverty, and promote sustainable energy technologies. The Rotary Foundation has committed more than US\$23.7 million toward environmental projects led by Rotary members around the world.

Club News SNID



Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City observed SNID on 10th December 2023 at its designated KMC Ward No 61 with over 1200 children being immunized on Sunday itself.

The Club Polio Chair PP Rtn Md Firoz conducted a pre SNID sensitization campaign in the nook and corner of KMC Ward 61 and President Amrita Basu was also present with Rtn Firoz on SNID to conduct and oversee the immunization program.

Rtn Firoz also brought his youngest daughter Zafeerah to get her immunized with polio drops. The total number of immunized were over 1200.

Thalassaemia Awareness Program with IIM & C, Sonarpur



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City in association with Indian Institute of Mother & Child, Sonarpur organized its monthly thalassaemia awareness program on 15th December 2023. The District Chair for Thalassaemia Awareness & Prevention, PP Rtn Dr Arabinda Ray spoke to nearly 60 women and young adults about thalassaemia and means to prevent the spread of thalassaemia. PP Rtn Jharna Mitra and PP Rtn Sunando Sen attended the program.

Congratulations to the gorgeous duo!



Lucyna Katarzyna & Atreya Roychowdhury

Warmest congratulations!

District Governor
HIRA LAL YADAV
& District Conference Team
cordially inviting you with
Spouse and friends to attend
District Conference 2024.

UTKARSH
5th, 6th & 7th January, 2024
Taj Taal Kutir Convention Centre
Newtown, Kolkata

Early Bird Registration extended
till **20th December 2023**.

Rotary
Singapore 2024

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SINGAPORE | 25-29 MAY 2024

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XMAS**

<p>1.4 million</p>	<p>47 million</p>	<p>\$333 million</p>
<p>WE CONNECT PEOPLE</p>	<p>WE TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>WE FUND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS</p>
<p>1.4 million members worldwide</p>	<p>Approximately 47 million volunteer hours each year</p>	<p>\$333 million awarded for global service initiatives in 2020-21</p>