

RI President: Rtn. Gordon R McNally  
Dist. Governor: Rtn. Hira Lal Yadav  
Club President: Rtn. Amrita Basu  
Club Secretary: Rtn. Atreya Roychowdhury  
Club Editor: Rtn. Subhojit Roy

For private circulation only

# METRO MAIL



BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA METRO CITY

RI District 3291 | Charter Date : 14/06/1995 | Club No. : 30869



We shall soon observe another International Women's Day, when the world shall celebrate womanhood but are we moving towards an equal socio-political structure? Are women truly exercising their rights or is it still a condescending patriarchal system where women and their rights are at the mercy of the men?

107 countries have so far adopted the National Action Plan which is basically in a multilateral system, Member States hold the primary responsibility for the achievement of gender equality and fulfillment of human rights. In a presidential statement in 2004, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encouraged national-level implementation of UNSCR 1325, the landmark resolution of the

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, including through National Action Plans (NAP) to implement the four pillars of the resolution. It also encouraged Member States to collaborate with civil society, particularly with local women's networks and organizations, on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The New Agenda for Peace adopted by the United Nations in 2023 offers a unique opportunity to advance gender equality, dismantle patriarchal power structures, and promote lasting peace. As generational gains in women's rights hang in the balance around the world, so does the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda. More political will is required. Precipitating women's meaningful participation in all decision-making, eradicating all forms of violence against women, both online and offline, and upholding women's rights would not just help shift power, but also result in giant steps forward in sustaining peace

Women have voice and power to be agents of change.

Women's agency, voice and capacities, as well as a real gender perspective are critical to local dialogues, better policies and more equitable peace deals.

Challenges are patriarchy, inequalities, and discriminatory power structures inhibit effective conflict prevention, inclusive peace, women's rights and participation.

It is time to move from verbal commitments to action: Governments, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and other actors must implement relevant commitments across all thematic areas!

Ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation, protection and rights is critical, including in prevention and disarmament, protection in displacement settings, peacekeeping, policy-making and reconstruction.

Action is critical to build a sustainable and peaceful world for all of us.

**Subhojit Roy**

(The above is Editor's personal opinion and may or may not be reflection of the Club's opinion)

# RI News

## Rotary in Ukraine Stronger Two Years after War Began

**District 2232 is working to identify needs, connect with Rotary clubs worldwide, and support those affected by the war**

By Arnold R. Grah

Two years after Russian forces invaded Ukraine, Rotary members around the globe continue to raise funds and send medicine, fuel, and other essential supplies to those affected by the conflict.

A special relief fund created by The Rotary Foundation, now closed to contributions, raised more than US\$17.4 million from donors around the world and has funded 375 grants that have allowed Rotary members to provide different kinds of help.



In addition, many Rotary clubs and districts have organized local humanitarian response initiatives. Guided by District 2232 (Ukraine), these efforts have directed shipments of medicine, medical equipment, ambulances, generators, heating fuel, winter supplies, and other relief to communities in need.

Mykola Stebljanko, a past governor of District 2232, says the huge response since the Russian invasion of

Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has strengthened Rotary in Ukraine.

"We have become more active, more effective. We are a more solid organization now," Stebljanko says. "We receive a lot of requests from our communities. Lots of outside clubs want to help us. People see this and ... want to join Rotary."

Steblyanko says clubs in Ukraine have added more than 500 new members in the past two years. The growth has been so rapid, in fact, that the district spends comparatively little time on intentional efforts to attract members. It uses that time instead to help new members understand what it means to be a member of Rotary so they will remain engaged.

The increased service efforts have also drawn media attention.

"Before the war, the media did not want to mention us in the news," Stebljanko says. "At the moment, they like to tell about Rotary because of the help we are giving and because our activities are very impactful."

Myron Uhryn, 2023-24 governor of District 2232, has spent months collecting detailed reports from all regions of Ukraine to document and guide the relief efforts. These analytics, he says, will help his district collaborate with members outside Ukraine who want to help — but may not know how.

District 2232 has also formed a committee to help organize the efforts of clubs and districts outside the country, connecting them with clubs in Ukraine to support those affected by the war.

Uhryn says he receives dozens of letters every day from people all over the world offering their assistance. On a recent video call, he held up a stack of mail he had received just that morning.

"It is why we started collecting analytics," he says. "It is very useful to understand the total situation and exchange information. It makes us more effective, more able to have an impact. We want to continue our network and partnership with other Rotary clubs and districts."

## Rotary Honors Six Members as People of Action : Champions of Impact

**Members promoted mental health, protected mangrove forests, and helped Indigenous young people increase their economic opportunities**

By Etelka Lehoczky

Rotary recognized six extraordinary members as People of Action: Champions of Impact in January. This distinction celebrates the honorees' successes in projects that have had positive, long-term impact. Their work relates to several of Rotary's areas of focus, including fighting disease, growing local economies, and protecting the environment.



**Rotary Club of Nagpur, Maharashtra, India**

**Project: Wellness in a Box—Nagpur**

Rita Aggarwal has been a consulting psychologist for 35 years. In 1992 she established Manodaya, a private mental health clinic in central India. She is an officer of the Mental Health Initiatives Rotary Action Group.

Both a community assessment by members of that Rotary Action Group and a study published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine found that mental health literacy in young people in India was very low. To address the high number of students who showed signs of anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems, effective mental health services were needed.

**Rita Aggarwal**

The Mental Health Initiatives Rotary Action Group had developed a toolkit called Wellness in a Box, and Aggarwal applied it in her hometown of Nagpur. The project created a curriculum for 14-year-olds that covered depression awareness and coping skills, which helped counter the stigma that surrounds mental health care. It also taught teachers counseling skills and established sites for fieldwork, in cooperation with the Tirpude College of Social Work. Ten teachers have completed a yearlong counseling course, and another 10 are expected to complete it in March.

Wellness in a Box—Nagpur has trained 2,280 students and 768 parents and faculty members in the "Break Free From Depression" curriculum. One hundred young people have volunteered for further training as peer mentors.



**Rotary Club of Puerto Barrios, Izabal, Guatemala**  
**Project: Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund**

Steve Dudenhofer founded the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund and Asociación Ak' Tenamit 33 years ago, after selling his business in the US and moving to Guatemala to serve as a full-time volunteer accompanying rural Indigenous Central American communities in their sustainable development processes.

The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund helped develop a program of work-based learning and job placement for young Indigenous people in the country. One thousand Indigenous girls and boys receive vocational training at rural residential schools. Community education promoters visited communities to recruit students and offer scholarships. Teachers were trained in improved methodologies and taught how to provide psychological support to students who had been abused. More than 4,000 students have graduated from the program, and 86% of them are gainfully employed.

**Steve Dudenhofer**

Members of five Rotary clubs in Guatemala and 36 clubs in the United States worked with Asociación Ak' Tenamit, the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, and local municipalities to ensure the project's long-term financial and operational sustainability. The project is now managed by a board of directors composed of Indigenous graduates of the program.

---

**Rotary Club of El Tahrir, Egypt**  
**Project: Heart2Heart**

Amal El-Sisi is a longtime Rotarian, professor of pediatrics, and a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers. For four years, El-Sisi led Heart2Heart, which helps children in remote parts of Egypt, Kenya, Libya, and Yemen who have heart conditions. El-Sisi recruited 30 local Rotary clubs and 10 clubs in other countries to collaborate on the project. Rotary members also raised funds and secured global grants for the project and used surveys of community members and care providers to measure its success.

Heart2Heart treats children born with heart disease through state-of-the-art, less invasive catheterization procedures. Before it was started, patients and their families in remote areas of the region had to travel to cities to get these lifesaving procedures. Those who could not make the trip faced suffering and even death.

Heart2Heart has used highly sophisticated catheterization procedures to treat 120 children in remote areas.

It also trained 20 doctors and 50 nurses and technicians over four years. With El-Sisi's leadership, Rotary members oversaw the monitoring and evaluation of all of Heart2Heart's activities, including follow-up with patients and health care providers.



**Amal El-Sisi**

---



**Evangeline Buella Mandia**

**Rotary Club of Marinduque North, Marinduque, Philippines**  
**Project: Mangrove Rehabilitation and Aqua-silviculture Project**

Evangeline Buella Mandia is the club Foundation chair and a past president of the Rotary Club of Marinduque North and dean of the College of Environmental Studies at Marinduque State College, in Marinduque, Philippines. She is a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers.

Mandia's project addressed the decline in mangrove populations in parts of Marinduque. This decline, caused by deforestation, pollution, and climate change, has increased coastal erosion, degraded water quality, and caused a loss of biodiversity. Rotary members raised funds to plant mangrove seedlings and rehabilitate established forests as well as train community members in mangrove propagation and aquaculture. The project also established a seedling nursery and a long-term mangrove conservation plan. Mandia oversaw daily operations, communicated with everyone who was involved, monitored progress, and ensured that the project's objectives were met.

Local fishers and farmers gained better job prospects and higher earnings, while the entire community enjoyed a more dependable supply of fresh, local food. The revived mangroves protect against storm surges and reduce coastal erosion. Training improved community members' understanding of their environment and their ability to take care of it. As a result, the whole community began working together to conserve local natural resources.

---

**Rotary Club of Ipoh Central, Perak, Malaysia**  
**Project: National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing**

Bindi Rajasegaran is a past Rotary club president and past governor of District 3300. A member of the Advisory Council to Malaysia's Ministry of Health, she helped establish the National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing in 2019. Rajasegaran's project addressed youth mental health. A study found that more than 400,000 children in Malaysia have mental health problems, but many do not seek care. Family and societal pressures, bullying, and loneliness all contribute to poor mental health.

The project helped school counselors develop their crisis management skills through a Mental Health First Aid certification course. It also showed counselors how to foster supportive and inclusive school environments that promote mental wellness and reduce stigma. A series of awareness campaigns encouraged students to discuss mental health issues and seek help when they need it. The project also developed an online platform where counselors recorded case data so the results of their efforts could be measured.



**Bindi Rajasegaran**



**Walley Temple**

**Rotary Club of Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
Project: Towards the Elimination of Cervical Cancer in Guatemala**

Walley J. Temple is a professor emeritus in the Department of Oncology at the University of Calgary and the Tom Baker Cancer Centre. He established a Royal College-approved training program in surgical oncology that has drawn trainees from around the world.

Temple's project sought to identify and treat the conditions that lead to cervical cancer, a disease that one in 33 women in Guatemala will contract in their lifetime. Cervical cancer, which is caused by the human papillomavirus, can be prevented by vaccinating girls aged 9 to 14 and screening women aged 30 to 55. The equipment that is needed for screenings is low-cost and can be carried to even the most remote communities by mobile health care teams.

Under Temple's leadership, teams of clinicians conducted training, did examinations, and provided treatment. Temple and his team purchased mobile screening equipment and trained nurses in its use. The project has screened more than 8,000 women, educated more than 3,000 women about cervical cancer, and trained and certified 65 health care practitioners.

## **POLIN MAPPING GOES HIGH TECH**

*Geotracking ensures fewer children are left behind*

*By Tolu Olasoji*



**Sandrine Lina (left) and other vaccinators hit the streets with cellphones that tracked their progress during an outbreak response campaign in the Republic of Congo.**

**Image credit: Marta Villa Monge/WHO Africa Office**

When polio vaccinators fanned out across areas of the Republic of Congo last year to stop an outbreak, they carried a powerful new tool in their pockets: cell phones that tracked their progress as they went door to door. Equipped with a mobile app, the phones sent data back to a command center where staff could see on a digital map if homes were missed and redirect teams on the ground.

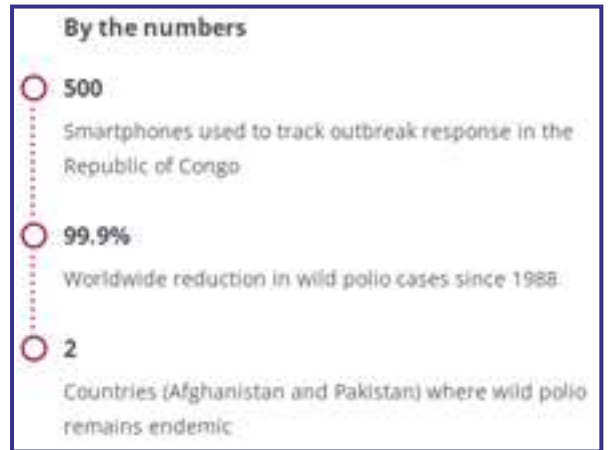
With support from the World Health Organization and other partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the country is helping pioneer the use of what is known as geospatial tracking to stop polio outbreaks. Instead of relying on hand-drawn maps that are prone to errors, response team leaders can see with pinpoint accuracy where vaccinators have been and which homes they didn't get to. This happens in real time when a wireless connection is available. Such speed and precision are crucial to ensuring that a vaccine reaches each child and outbreaks are stopped.

"All you have to do is charge your phone and make sure you turn on the tracker when you are out on the streets. I just put it in my pocket and go from house to house," says Sandrine Lina, one of the WHO-trained vaccinators.

She and others hit the streets in June 2023 with hundreds of the phones after an outbreak of variant poliovirus type 1. The WHO African region was certified free of wild poliovirus in 2020. But this other form of polio, known as vaccine-derived or variant poliovirus, remains a threat. These cases occur in rare instances when the live but weakened virus in oral vaccines circulates long enough through sewage in communities with low vaccination rates to mutate into a potentially dangerous form.

The key to stopping such outbreaks is a thorough vaccination campaign. Geospatial tracking is playing a crucial role, generating intelligent maps and models. "The platform provides an opportunity for us to identify settlements that have poor coverage, where we've not seen many tracks of vaccination teams, and we can download the information to guide processes," says Kebba Touray, the lead of WHO's Geographic Information Systems Centre for the African region.

For the June vaccination campaign, led by the Republic of Congo's Health Ministry, about 500 smartphones were distributed each morning to vaccinators. Like a fitness tracker, the mobile app counts steps and plots the coordinates on a map, along with essential details such as dates and times. Vaccinators also can use the phones to collect field data such as settlement names, household information, and reasons given by those refusing a vaccine. That information feeds a database that operations center managers can supervise in real time. It's displayed on an online dashboard through a heat map that shades areas in green and red hues. At the end of the first day, the operations center team in the capital, Brazzaville, saw that a section of the city's Poto-Poto district had not



been covered. That ability to review data and make quick course corrections is critical. In the past, planners had to rely on maps drawn by vaccinators to prepare what are known as micro plans. Inaccuracies were inevitable, and information often wasn't verified until after the campaign had ended. Today, with a lot of computing power behind it, geospatial analytics is used in everything from weather modelling and sales trend forecasting to national defense, disaster response, and agriculture. The WHO is using geospatial technology to counter public health threats across the globe, from saving people in India from snake bite deaths to COVID-19 vaccine delivery in over 90 countries to polio eradication.

Geospatial technology is important for reaching members of communities who are often overlooked. Real-time data from these tracking systems allows us to identify parts of the population that are often missed, the newest version of the technology, used in the Republic of Congo, has many improvements. Despite advancements in digital inclusion, 2.6 billion people around the world remain unconnected to the internet, a considerable share of them in Africa, according to one recent analysis. WHO African team plans to implement these tracking systems elsewhere on the continent, including for purposes beyond polio. With the introduction of new technologies, though, one thing hasn't changed: All vaccinated children are still marked on a finger with ink they can proudly display.

This story originally appeared in the March 2024 issue of Rotary magazine.

## Club News

### Blood Donation Camp in aid of Thalassaemia



A Blood Donation camp in aid of Thalassaemia was held on Sunday 25th February at Krishnapur primary school, Krishnapur, Garalgacha, Chanditala, Hooghly.

The camp was organised by Krishnapur Pally Unnayan Samiti in association with Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City in aid of The Thalassaemia Society of India. A total of 31 units were collected. Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee coordinated the camp on behalf of the club.

#thalassaemiafreeindia



## Project Thalassaemia

### Thalassaemia Awareness Camp in association with IIM&C, Sonarpur

Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City in association with Indian Institute of Mother & Child conducted its monthly thalassaemia awareness camp at Sonarpur with 50 people consisting of young mothers and young adult women with Rtn Dr Biplabendu Talukdar, hematologist on 29th February '24 at the IIM&C Sonarpur campus.

This was followed by a thalassaemia awareness session with the specialist Dr Talukdar and the Swedish and Australian volunteers who showed keen interest to learn about disease.

The club was represented by PP Rtn Jharna Mitra, who coordinated the camp, and PP Rtn Sunando Sen.

#thalassaemiafreeindia



## COMING UP

**1st March : Donation for Procuring Medicines to Thalassaemia Society of India.**

**3rd March : National Immunization Day**

### *Birthdays*

**2nd March - Sunrita Sen**

**5th March - Subhojit Roy**

*Wish you many happy returns of the day*

**END  
POLIO  
NOW**

**NID on 3rd March 2024**

Edited & Published by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy

Designed by : DARK HORSE : 9831050155