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METRO MAIL



Rotary at the Crossroads: A Wake-Up Call for District 3291

Globally, Rotary faces a harsh reality. North America has lost over 100,000 members since 2004, with its global share now below 30%. Europe sees steady decline, while Africa grows slowly. Asia stands out, driven by India's 26% membership growth. Yet, District 3291 lags behind.

The core problem :

- An alarming 15% annual attrition rate persists.
- Clubs lack relevance, engagement, and a clear value proposition.
- Youth and women remain underrepresented, and digital outreach is minimal.

The Way Forward :

- Reinvent Projects for Impact – Shift focus to measurable initiatives like digital literacy and climate action.
- Strengthen Youth Engagement – Aim for 20% annual growth in Rotaract membership with structured mentorship.
- Adopt Data-Driven Retention – Systematically track attrition through exit surveys and analytics.
- Embrace Digital Transformation – Double online membership inquiries and boost virtual event participation by 25% in a year.
- Promote Inclusivity – Launch targeted campaigns to increase women's membership by 15% annually.

The future of Rotary lies in bold leadership, clear strategy, and relentless action. District 3291 must not just follow trends but lead the way in redefining what it means to serve and connect in the 21st century.

Subhojit Roy

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola selected to be 2026-27 Rotary International President



Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27. His term will begin on 1 July 2026.

The Board, guided by the RI code of policies, conducted a special session to select the organization's leader after the **resignation of RI President-elect SangKoo Yun**, who decided to step back from his Rotary responsibilities and focus on his recovery from recent cancer treatment.

Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1984 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi 10 years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor (2011-12), RI vice president (2019-20), and member of the RI Board (2018-20). He was also an active leader and participant in RI committees such as the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee (2017-23) and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (2013-present, adviser 2016-present).

Babalola received a university degree in engineering in 1988. He worked for 25 years in the oil and gas industry, holding senior positions in Shell PLC. He is the founder of two companies: Riviera Technical Services Ltd., an oil and gas infrastructure delivery company, and Lead and Change Consulting, an executive coaching and organizational performance advisory group.

Babalola's professional affiliations include the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria, and the Association of Change Management Professionals. He is a member of Jericho Businessmen Club, an organization in his birth city of Ibadan that provides input to governments on economic and social policy.

Babalola and his wife, Preba, live in the city of Port Harcourt. He supports The Rotary Foundation with a named endowment and as an Arch Klumph Society member. A trustee of ShelterBox UK, he is a recipient of the Africa Centennial Heroes Award, the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, the RI Service Above Self Award, and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

The president of Rotary International serves a one-year term, presiding over the Board of Directors and providing inspirational leadership for the organization. As the spokesperson for the global network, the president visits clubs around the world to promote Rotary's values and represent the organization at major events. Rotary chooses its president from members who have demonstrated extensive leadership experience within Rotary, including service as a club president, district governor, and member of the Board.

Neighbours are helping neighbors through time banks

By Michaela Haas



Rotarian Michael Fels (right) and his partner, Jesada "Wee" Simla, learn to make croissants through their local time bank.
Courtesy of Sebastopol Area Time Bank

In a quiet corner of Northern California, among the misty orchards and rolling vineyards that power the region's rich agricultural economy, a curious kind of wealth is quietly accumulating. It doesn't shine like gold or flow like cash. It's not tracked on Wall Street or stored in Swiss vaults. But for those who trade in it, it may be the most precious currency of all: time.

When Michael Fels and his partner, Jesada "Wee" Simla, wanted to learn how to make butter-laced croissants, they didn't turn to online videos or enroll in a pricey cooking class. Instead, they posted a request on their local time bank in the city of Sebastopol, 50 miles north of San Francisco. Soon, a retired professional chef invited them into his kitchen, where they spent afternoon rolling dough and laughing together, an experience that yielded more than just pastries. "He really was a master chef," Fels recalls, smiling as he flips through photos from the day of flour-dusted smiles,

crispy crescents, joy captured in crumb and crust.

This, Fels explains, is what a time bank is all about. "You give an hour of your time and earn an hour in return," he says. "And sometimes, what you get back is so much more."

Time banks operate on a premise that feels both old-fashioned and quietly revolutionary: that everyone has something to offer and that everyone's time and skills are valued equally. In this benevolent economy, an hour spent fixing a neighbor's faucet is worth the same as an hour of tax prep or Thai cooking.

In brief, a time bank does with time what other banks do with money: It stores and trades it. People receive credits — typically measured in hours — when they provide a service to another time bank member. Those cashing in credits for a service have their account debited. Through an online platform, registered users can offer and request services and log their credits and debits.

Money isn't exchanged, though members might agree to cover expenses such as supplies or gas money. The system is flexible, allowing people to offer as much or as little time as they want and even the option to donate their credit hours to a friend or a community pot.

Thousands of time banks with several hundred thousand members have been established in at least 48 countries, stretching from the rural villages of Senegal to bustling cities in Japan, from China, New Zealand, Malaysia, Argentina, and Brazil to countries throughout Europe with millions of hours exchanged. In the United States alone, more than 500 local networks are helping more than 40,000 members reimagine what it means to belong, to be needed, and to give back. Some time banks specialize in clearly defined missions, such as a focus on support for parents of children with disabilities or to provide eldercare and hospice services to fill a need other organizations can't address. There are even time banks that aim to reduce recidivism for juvenile detention and help with social reentry for people leaving prison, on the belief that it may support their well-being and strengthen their relationships and social ties to their community.

In Sebastopol, a town of just over 7,000 people, the local time bank boasts 300 members. Fels, an author and playwright, offers his expertise in editing, and his partner, Simla, who hails from Thailand, volunteers rolling authentic Thai spring rolls. Others exchange rides to the airport, plumbing repairs, or a few hours of company on a lonely afternoon.

For Fels, the president of the Rotary Club of Sebastopol Sunrise, his engagement with Rotary and the time bank go hand in hand: "The idea of both is to bring the community closer together." His Rotary club focuses on community service, and in a recent survey, more than half of its 40 members overwhelmingly noted community service as the most important aspect of their membership. "We might help a member with some house repairs they can't manage on their own," Fels says, offering an example of where the time bank and Rotary overlap.



He learned about the time bank through his friend David Gill, Sebastopol's time bank coordinator and unofficial time tycoon. Gill has 384 hours in his "savings" account, "but I haven't recorded any of my hours since 2022," he says. "I probably need to record another 750!" Gill likes to offer his expertise with computer programming, editing, and financial planning. In return, he asks for help when he needs a ride to the airport or to transport heavy furniture.

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If he had called professional repair and taxi services, the expenses would have been significant. However, the interest, so to speak, goes beyond the value of a mere transaction. The time banks are building social capital.

Many time banks are volunteer community projects, but the one in Sebastopol is funded by the city and operates under the nonprofit status of the Community Cultural Center. Some cities find that support for time banks more than pays for itself in the services their members provide for populations like older adults. Time bank members in St. Gallen, Switzerland, for example, regularly help older residents run errands, shop for groceries, get to the doctor, or simply find company — all of which can ease demand on government-funded services.

The idea of time as a bankable currency goes back several centuries to the labor theories of early economists. In the U.S., civil rights lawyer Edgar Cahn rediscovered the idea of time banks while looking for ways to fight poverty in the early 1980s after money for social programs dried up.

Today, time banks are like the 2.0 version of what used to happen organically in small communities: Neighbors helped raise barns and children alike. But in an increasingly atomized world, those natural support systems have frayed. Michael Fels sees the time bank as a way to repair them.

And maybe that's the deepest truth of time banking: It fosters human connection and the quiet transformation of time into care, beauty, and belonging. Given freely, time — like kindness — comes back tenfold.

Tree Plantation



Metro City Celebrating 30 years planted 30 trees and also maintaining them for 3 years under Miyawaki process of tree plantation.

On 29th August 2025, our club, in association with Hari Mitti Foundation, planted 30 tree saplings at the BD Block Green Verge, Action Area 1, New Town. Of the 30 saplings planted, 15 are fruit bearing and 15 are flower bearing. 30 saplings were planted to commemorate 30 years of our club.

Our club was represented by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy, Rtn Shanker Das, Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee and President Sunando Sen at this Environment Project of our club.

A cheque of ₹30,000 was handed over to Mr. Suhrid Chanda of Hari Mitti Foundation. Har Mitti's staff arranged, planted and will be taking care of the saplings for the next 3 years, so that the saplings become full grown trees and bear fruits and flowers.

Miyawaki forest is a densely planted, fast-growing mini-forest created using the Miyawaki method, developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in the 1970s. This technique involves planting a variety of native species close together (3-5 saplings per square meter), mimicking natural ecosystems to accelerate growth and create self-sustaining forests in small, urban spaces. The resulting forests are highly bio diverse, grow much faster than conventionally planted ones, and become self-sufficient after 2-3 years.

Recognition for Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City



Together We Can Make a Difference



Rotary's bandwidth and brand visibility, here is what we have been doing for the past 2 months across 19 countries and 2 more to come, ending in Kolkata...

From the UK to China, we have journeyed across 19 countries, so far, carrying one simple but powerful message:

"Diabetes Awareness saves lives."

Along the way, we've met health officials, community leaders, fellow Rotarians and countless people — spreading awareness wherever we could. This mission has been possible - thanks to the support of Rotary International, Rotary Club of Kings Lynn and Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City.

Birthday greetings

PP Rtn Jharna Mitra for 10th September!



**UNITE
FOR
GOOD**