



# Spectrum



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PRESIDENT  KUSUM CHAMARIA

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## Your favorite stories from 2023

Posted on December 28, 2023 by Claudia Urbano, Rotary Service and Engagement Staff

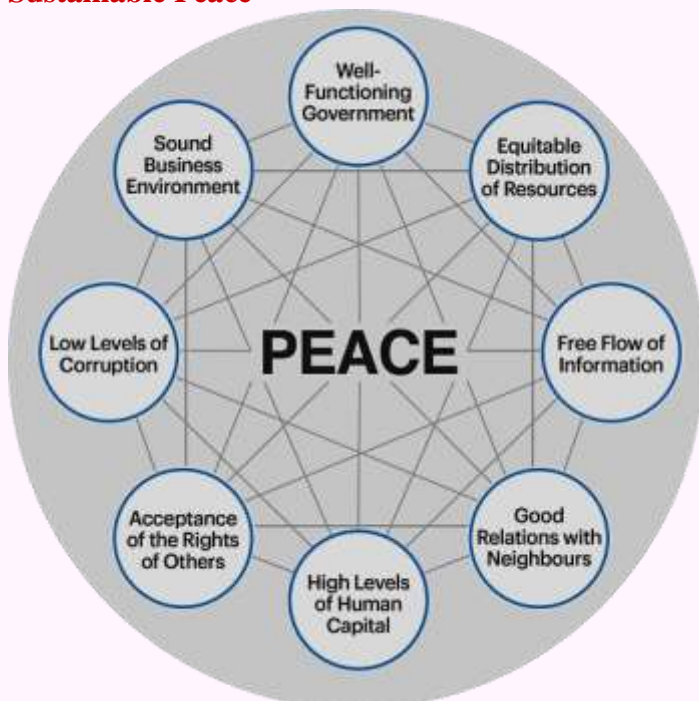
As we approach the end of 2023, we're reflecting on the stories that resonated most with our readers this year. Here are our top five blog posts:

### *The Importance of Prioritizing Mental Health and Well-Being*



In his first address as President of Rotary International, Gordon McNally called on Rotarians and Rotaractors to help Rotary make progress towards erasing the stigma associated with discussions of emotional well-being, raising awareness of mental health needs, and improving access to mental health services.

### *How Rotary Peace Activators Are Helping to Build Sustainable Peace*



In this story, Rotary Peace Fellow and Positive Peace Activator Ndzi Divine Njamsi from Cameroon shares how Rotary Peace Activators are working to build sustainable peace in their communities.

### *Collaborate with local Kiwanis, Lions, and Optimist clubs for Celebrate Community Week*



Rotary and Rotaractor clubs were inspired to collaborate with local Kiwanis, Lions, and Optimist clubs during Celebrate Community Week, a global initiative that brings together service clubs to address local needs.

### *Help Rotary Create Hope in the World with these Three Presidential Initiatives*



We gained inspiration to create hope in the world through initiatives during the 2023-24 Rotary year: prioritizing mental health, building peace through virtual exchanges, and empowering women and girls.

### *The Rotarian Public Health Fellowship Helps Address the Need for Housing*

For Rotary Fellowships Month, the Rotarian Public Health Fellowship shared how they are helping address the need for housing, a critical social determinant of health.

We meet calendar months' 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays at GPT Group, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 6.00 PM

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## Rotary History and Anecdotes

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – *across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.*

Rotary International is a global service organization whose stated human rights purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders in order to *provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and to advance goodwill and peace around the world.*

Over last 118 years, Rotary, like other surviving institutions, has changed itself to remain inclusive and contemporary *without compromising its dynamism and relevance.*

*In this section, the editorial team of Spectrum, so far, has touched upon and shared the following anecdotes of Rotary during the current Rotary year:*

- *History of Women in Rotary in the July 7, 2023 issue*
- *History of the 4 Way test in the July 15, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's two official mottos in the July 22, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Work Commemorated in Stamps in July 29, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary and the United Nations in September 9, 2023 issue*
- *Why Rotary year begins 1 July in September 16, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary & Polio – World's largest global public health initiative in the history in September 23, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary Themes in September 30, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary partners in October 7, 2023 issue*
- *Interact as Rotary's service club program in October 14, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary Peace Program in October 21, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary Youth Exchange in October 28, 2023 issue*
- *The Rotary Foundation in November 4, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in November 11, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Timeline: Founding Years (1905 to 1911) in November 18, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Timeline: Expanding our Reach (1912-1930) in November 25, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Timeline: Cultivating Leaders (1931-1957) and Global Service (1958-1984) to be continued in December 2, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Timeline: Global Service (1958-1984): continued from previous issue and Bold Goals (1985-2004) in December 9, 2023 issue*
- *Rotary's Timeline: Focusing Our Impact (2005-present) in December 16, 2023 issue*

- *New Rotary Foundation grant supports scaling proven malaria program in Zambia in December 23, 2023*

## New Rotary Foundation grant supports scaling proven malaria program in Zambia (continued)

Fighting malaria has long been a priority for the Federal Way club. For more than 10 years, club members have been building relationships and working with international partners, including Zambian Rotary clubs, Malaria Partners Zambia, Malaria Partners International, PATH's MACEPA project (Malaria Control and Elimination Partnership in Africa), the Ministry of Health's National Malaria Elimination Centre, provincial health leaders, World Vision, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other nongovernmental organizations. Since 2011, the Federal Way club has worked with its partners and several Rotary clubs to distribute tens of thousands of mosquito bed nets, drug treatments, and testing kits across Zambia's Copperbelt province. In recent years, clubs in the U.S. and Zambia used Rotary Foundation global grants to train and deploy more than 1,500 community health workers in target Copperbelt districts, after seeing this model help reduce malaria cases in Zambia's Southern province.

Building on this evidence and their experience and commitment, Federal Way members saw Programs of Scale as an opportunity to work with The Rotary Foundation to make an even greater impact in Zambia. Using the latest research in malaria and combining the strengths and resources of each partner organization, they developed Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia to bring lifesaving care to more communities.

Martha Lungu, a member of the Rotary Club of Ndola, Zambia, and executive director for Malaria Partners Zambia, says volunteer community health workers are paid small stipends and work long hours. The driving force behind their dedication is knowing that they are making a difference.

"They are well-respected in their community," Lungu says. "It's prestigious to be trained. If you ask them why they really stay on, they talk about the people they're helping, the mothers and children. They are looked up to by their community."

She thanks her fellow Rotary members for their commitment to the program and role in facilitating trainings and building relationships with rural health centers and government leaders. "Every day I witness firsthand the effects of malaria," says Lungu. "This program demonstrates that Rotary members are true partners in our communities and focused on supporting community health workers to help loosen the grip malaria has on the Zambian people."

*Rotary History and Anecdotes to be continued...*

### Upcoming club program

Rotary Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata and Rotary Serampore shall hold Anemia screening and treatment camp titled Matri Raksha under Global Grant 1991152 in association with Chowmatha Sporting Club Baidyabati on Sunday, January 7, 2024 from 10.00 AM onward.

Matri Raksha camp shall also take place on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at Rani Birla College in association with Kolkata Menopause Society.

## How Rotarians are already fighting climate change

By Diana Schoberg

Rotarians are doers. Show them a problem and they look for solutions. But a global problem such as climate change might seem daunting to even the most resourceful Rotary member. Rotarians understand that the whole world is their backyard. They can see the effects of climate change in communities they care about, and they haven't waited to take action. They're tackling the problem the way they always do: coming up with projects, using their connections to change policy — and planning for the future.

Break that complex problem down into smaller pieces, however, and you find there are many things Rotarians can do - and are already doing, with help from The Rotary Foundation.

A coalition of researchers and scientists led by environmentalist and writer Paul Hawken mathematically modeled the climatic and economic impact of potential solutions to learn which ones would yield the best results for people and the planet. The list, compiled in a 2017 book called "Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming," included some surprising possibilities, such as educating girls, promoting family planning, and assisting farmers. As it happens, all of those align with Rotary's areas of focus.

Drawdown researchers ranked solutions from 1 to 80 based on their potential to avert or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We looked at those rankings alongside global grant projects to see how Rotarians are already helping to fight climate change.

### **Family planning Drawdown ranking: 7**

In lower-income countries, the Drawdown authors write, 214 million women who want more control over their pregnancies lack access to contraception, which leads to about 74 million unintended pregnancies each year. Giving women the health care they want and need also benefits the planet, reducing population growth as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

Pregnant women who gave interviews to Rotarians in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, said that family planning was their top priority — a sentiment echoed by their families and doctors.

This led the Rotary clubs of *Finot, Ethiopia, and Darmstadt, Germany*, to develop a global grant project that trained skilled birth attendants and midwives in three health centers to provide family planning counseling. Medical staff also conducted home-based counseling for 1,500 women and organized a one-day family planning workshop for 90 women who were receiving obstetric care.

### **Girls' education: Drawdown ranking: 6**

A woman with no schooling has four or five more children than a woman with 12 years of schooling, which means that educating girls will have a huge impact on population growth. While the regions of the world with growing populations are often the ones with the lowest per capita carbon emissions, reducing fertility rates will still have massive benefits — not only for the planet but also in reducing intergenerational poverty. And, the Drawdown authors note, one study found that educating girls is the single most important factor in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, which occur more

frequently with the extreme weather events associated with climate change.



**Photo by Ijeab**

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, about 90 percent of Roma women are illiterate and less than 15 percent of Roma children go to school, leaving them vulnerable to human trafficking, among other things.

The Rotary clubs of *Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Denver, Colorado*, partnered with a local nonprofit on a global grant project that mentored 80 families with at-risk girls. Twenty students from the University of Bosnia volunteered as mentors, and 15 Roma girls enrolled in school as part of the effort. Organizers estimate that at least 1,000 parents, teachers, and girls in 20 communities learned about the importance of gender equality in education through printed materials and workshops.

### **Regenerative agriculture Drawdown ranking: 11**



Regenerative agriculture practices include avoiding the use of plows to keep from disturbing the soil; planting a diverse array of cover crops; and limiting or abstaining from pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. These methods boost the amount of organic matter - carbon - in the soil, improving its health and that of the plants growing in it.

According to the Drawdown authors, regenerative agriculture increases organic matter in the soil between 4 percent and 7 percent over 10 years, representing an additional 25 tons to 60 tons of carbon stored in the ground per acre. That reduces the need for fertilizer — which means regenerative agriculture can help cut carbon in the atmosphere while increasing farmers' production.

Forty people from Meihua village, Taiwan, were trained in organic farming techniques through a global grant project of the Rotary clubs of *Taipei Lungmen, Taiwan, and Patumwan, Thailand*.

The effort, carried out in partnership with the Organic Farming Association of Taiwan, included creating a training facility and providing internships at organic farms. Organizers expected that growing without pesticides would lower farming costs and that selling organic vegetables at a premium price would improve villagers' earnings.

**Reduced food waste Drawdown ranking: 3**



**Photo by Elena11**

One-third of the fruits and vegetables, meat, and other food the world produces never gets eaten. Instead, it rots unharvested in fields, spoils in storage, or sits forgotten in the back of the refrigerator, only to end up in the garbage.

The production of uneaten food squanders resources such as energy, land, and fertilizer. In landfills, food waste generates methane, a greenhouse gas. From start to finish, uneaten food is responsible for releasing the equivalent of 4.4 million gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, the Drawdown authors write.

Centroabastos, a food wholesaler in Bucaramanga, Colombia, generates about 20 tons of organic solid waste per day. The Rotary clubs of **Bucaramanga Nuevo Milenio, Colombia, and Woodland Hills, California**, are working with the company's nonprofit arm to set up a center that will use the surplus produce to provide training in safe food handling and processing. The project is expected to reduce food waste by 15 percent while creating employment opportunities.

**Rooftop solar Drawdown ranking: 10**



**Photo by Alexsl**

The sun is an underused energy source: The Drawdown authors note that less than 2 percent of the world's electricity is generated through solar photovoltaic panels. However, the panels have become more widely adopted over the past decade as the technology has grown more affordable.

Homeowners and power utilities are beginning to replace or supplement fossil fuels with solar panels as a source of electricity. And the more than 1 billion people in developing parts of the world who rely on kerosene lamps and diesel generators can now use affordable clean energy instead. That could make solar energy a powerful tool for eliminating poverty, even as it dramatically reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

In Gressier, Haiti, the power grid near the Respire Haiti Christian School is unreliable, so the school for orphans and disadvantaged children used a diesel generator to operate the pump for its well.

The Rotary clubs of **Leogane, Haiti, and Parker, Colorado**, led a global grant project to install a hybrid solar, diesel, and grid power system. The school saved \$4,000 a year in fuel costs and reduced air and noise pollution. The hybrid system also powers interior and exterior lighting, computers, fans, and educational tools. A new water distribution system, which uses the hybrid power, and a literacy program were also part of the grant.

**Tropical forests Drawdown ranking: 5**



Tropical forests once covered 12 percent of the world's land; today, it's 5 percent. According to the Drawdown authors, that loss accounts for up to 19 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans.

Reforestation would enhance the planet's ability to absorb carbon dioxide through photosynthesis while providing wildlife habitat, contributing to flood control, and conserving soil and water. But to be sustainable, the authors note, reforestation must demonstrate immediate social and economic value.

The Maromizaha forest in eastern Madagascar is home to 13 species of lemurs, 77 species of birds, 60 species of amphibians, and a rich assortment of other flora and fauna. But it's threatened by a push for new agricultural lands and a need for charcoal as fuel in nearby villages.

The Rotary clubs of **Antananarivo-Tsimbaroa, Madagascar; Torino Mole Antonelliana, Italy; and Annecy Tournette, France**, partnered with a local nonprofit on a project to reforest about 125 acres with native species grown from wild seed, creating jobs for area families and a tourism infrastructure. Rotarians also trained women in gardening techniques, constructed toilets, and provided 500 improved cook-stoves that reduced the families' dependence on charcoal.



**PP Uma Shankar Agarwal on January 9, 2024**

**VP Indrakumar Bagri on January 10, 2024**

**Treasurer Ashok Kumar Surana on January 10, 2024**

**PP Dr Aruna Tantia on January 19, 2024**



**Spouse Deepayan & Rtn Amrita Chatterjee on Jan 16, 2024**

**Spouse Sushila & Rtn Ashok K Surana on January 19, 2024**

**Spouse Dr Nandita & PP Dr Ankush Bansal on Jan 28, 2024**

**Spouse Rahul & Rtn Meenal Chaudhary on Jan 29, 2024**

**January is Vocational Service Month**