



THE CHATTER Newsletter September 2025



Awareness on Wheels

Awareness on Wheels is a Comprehensive Campaign against Child Marriage, Child Pregnancy, and uplifting Menstrual Hygiene in West Bengal, by Afflatus Foundation.

Child marriage and teenage pregnancy remain a critical issue in India, and West Bengal ranks among the highest in terms of prevalence. According to recent NHFS (National Family Health Survey) and government data:

In West Bengal, approximately 41-42% of women aged 20-24, were married before turning 18, according to NFHS-5 data collected between 2019-21.

According to NFHS-5, in West Bengal 16.4% of teenage girls (aged 15-19) became mothers. These early marriages are deeply rooted in poverty, gender inequality, lack of education, and social norms that prioritize early marriage over girls' rights to education and autonomy.

Goal

To empower adolescents, families, and communities in vulnerable districts of West Bengal to end child marriage and early pregnancy, and to promote safe menstrual hygiene practices through interactive, mobile, school and village-based education and reporting systems.

Objectives

To conduct awareness sessions across 100+ targeted sites in schools and villages of South 24 Parganas district.

- To educate 45,000+ adolescents, parents, and stakeholders.
- To establish a responsive feedback and reporting mechanism for suspected child marriages or early pregnancies.
- To engage district-level administration (DM, CMOH, SP, CDPO, etc.) in a coordinated follow-up and intervention strategy.
- To build the capacity of schools and local influencers for continued vigilance and support post-campaign.

Target Groups

- School-going adolescents (boys and girls), aged 11-18
- Out-of-school adolescents and young women
- Parents and caregivers
- School teachers, ICDS workers, SHGs, Panchayat leaders
- Block and District-level government officials

The project is already being supported by the West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR) and local district authorities.

The "Awareness on Wheels" van is a state-of-the-art mobile unit equipped with essential tools, including a power supply system, projector, screen, sound system, and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials.



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Awareness on Wheels

In collaboration with the WBCPCR, Awareness on Wheels shall ride across the district of South 24 Parganas including all the 23 blocks with the aim to spread the optimum level of awareness and knowledge on the ills of child marriage and teenage pregnancy and the needs for good menstrual health & hygiene, thus turning South 24 Parganas into the model district to stand as an example for the future.

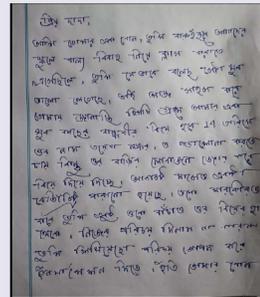
RC of Calcutta Pointers is proud to be partnering with Afflatus Foundation in sponsoring some of these camps in Canning Block II, as part of our continued commitment to community development and child rights. We have also secured the co-hosting support from RCs of Ballygunge, Calcutta Endeavour, Calcutta Harmony, Calcutta Metro City and Calcutta Victoria. They also participated in the some of camps by being personally present.

These camps are attracting packed halls of young girls and boys from classes 9-12, raising awareness and in many cases, the courage to openly discuss this issue. So far close to 45 cases have been reported of child marriages and plans of child marriages. 30 of these cases have been positively resolved by preventing the marriage and counselling the guardians and the children. The district administration has stepped in where required.

One such example, where the marriage was prevented, is given below.

Awareness on Wheels is creating a ripple in the rural interiors of South 24-Parganas, empowering young girls to stand up against a regressive social practice and having a say in their life decisions. The program is giving them the courage that there are people to listen to them and fight the battle for them, where their own voices have been muted. We are hoping that this ripple grows into a wave of social awareness and this scourge of child marriage in West Bengal is eradicated.

As one of our most impactful social projects, RCCP is fully committed to this campaign.



Rotary Values

From Rotary International

Rotary projects around the globe
November 2025
By Brad Webber

Canada

When leaders at the Rotary Club of St. Thomas in Ontario noticed a lack of engagement, the club started by adjusting its schedule to allow more time for service. The result has been astonishing, with an energized mission and growing interest by prospective members, says Barbara Warnock, immediate past president of the club. "Meeting every week was a deterrent to new members, and we felt that we needed to have more active participation in local projects," says Warnock. The club now meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, with the other Wednesdays designated for volunteering at two local organizations: Grace Café, a street mission and soup kitchen, and Harvest Hands, which collects and distributes edible foodstuffs that would ordinarily have been discarded. "Our Rotarians have embraced this work to contribute to feeding those in need," Warnock says.

United States

A talent showcase held by the Rotary Club of Carpinteria in California has raised more than \$225,000 since 2009. The club has used the funds for service projects, including purchasing about 300 musical instruments for children and awarding around 100 college scholarships. A sellout for the 16th straight year, April's showcase presented a range of entertainers, including dancers, musicians, storytellers, comedians, and jugglers. "All of our members play a role in one way or another" in organizing the show, says Club President David Powdrell. "Find what brings you joy and get involved" is our motto. "Several participants over the years have gone on to become professional entertainers, including Will Bremen, who found success on the television series The Voice, and magician Mark Collier.

India

The Rotary Club of Coimbatore Cotton City designed a project to raise awareness about the illicit practice of caging and trading wild parakeets. Volunteers meticulously placed nearly a ton of millet grains in a 1,200 square-foot artwork depicting the clipping of a parakeet's wings.

"Each grain represents hope," says Niketu Shah, a club leader who directed the project, part of a larger effort by animal rescue organization and supported by the state forest department. The artwork was completed in May at a shopping center. Last year, the club helped provide the forest department with an X-ray machine for birds in captivity, many birds suffer from disease and stress that reduces their lifespan.

Scotland

The Rotary Club of Elgin supports numerous initiatives for youth, including a Rotaract club, an Interact club, and several Rotakids clubs, which are a program of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland to build citizenship and leadership skills in children under 12. At the Greenwards school, Rotakids clubs are a go-to activity, reports teacher Kirstin Mustard. One of four club leaders. In February, the Rotakids held a rummage sale, collecting about \$100 for The Rotary Foundation. In June, they sponsored a walk that raised about \$4,200 for Harry's Hat, a charity for the condition hydrocephalus, a buildup of water in the brain. That organization assisted the family of one of the youths. Stephanie Urzicki, 2024-25 RI president, visited that month and was treated to a performance based on a history project. "It was truly inspiring to see the passion, creativity, and compassion shown by the pupils," she says. "Their community spirit shines through."

Philippines

Many people in the Philippines lack access to affordable dental care. To address the problem, members of the Rotary Club of Bacolod Central launched Project Smile, which provides dental care to teachers at public schools. Rotarians screen recipients and schedule extractions, fillings, and fittings. The club pays the costs not covered through the volunteer care. "The Negros Occidental chapter of the Philippine Dental Association and supplemental funding from the local congressional office. Thus far, the project has delivered 55 dental makeovers. "These dedicated heroes often choose to spend their own money to supplement their teaching needs rather than on their personal health and well-being," says club member Marie "Toks" Lopez.

This story originally appeared in the November 2025 issue of Rotary magazine. Rotary projects make a difference in communities around the world

Monthly Projects

CHILD MARRIAGE PREVENTION CAMP

Project date: 8th September 2025

On 8th of September RCCP conducted an awareness camp at Howramari High School, a co-education school near Jibontala, Canning. It was known from Shobhan Mukherjee, the speaker from Afflatus Foundation that child marriage is most prevalent in that part of West Bengal. It was a very successful programme. The visiting RCCP team was very impressed with the girls who were smart, confident and articulate. Sobhan is excellent as a trainer. The school administration was very receptive and welcoming. RCCP wants to do more such programmes with this school in future. RCCP held 11 similar camps at schools such as Matherdighi A. S. High Madrasa, Narayanpur Akashy Vidyamandir, Banamalpur AFSS Madrasa, South 24 Parganas Model Madrasa, Canning Govt. Model School, Bagmari New Junior High School, Sharif SSGMNS Senior Madrasa, Changdong HS, Nagatola HS, Kalkatola Milan Vidyapith, Ishwaripur Margina Vidya Niketan.

These camps were co-hosted by RCs of Calcutta Metro City, Calcutta Endeavour, Ballygunge, Calcutta Harmony, Calcutta Victoria.

The projects that cost Rs 42,000 [3500+ 12], took 18 hours to complete, benefitted 100 children in each, were led by Itn Nabanita Khan, she was assisted by Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee, Rtn Soumya Priya Mukherjee, Rtn Sarbari Ghose, Rtn Sachindra Rao, Rtn Utpal Pal, Rtn Rubali Chakraborty, Rtn Subrata Chatterjee, Mahua Swangpta, spouse of Rtn Utpal Pal, attended Sri Sengupta Roy was also present.



Monthly Projects

THALASSEMIA AWARENESS CAMP

Project date: 10th September 2025

Founded in 1974 by Dr. Samir Chaudhuri, a paediatrician with a special interest in child malnutrition, and other like-minded persons, CINI INDIA started its journey from villages around Kolkata as a clinic for malnourished under-5 children.

CINI works with children of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Orissa, Assam, Bihar and Tripura.

On 10th September, RCCP held a Thalassaemia awareness camp at CINI office at Palan. The awareness program was attended by CINI staff, both online and offline. It was conducted by Rotarian Dr. Saumitra Ray of RCCP and he received a very good response from 25 staff members in the room and 54 attendees online. The audience was 'awesome' according to Dr. Saumitra Ray. They were a group of smart shining boys and girls, keen to learn and interact. It was a satisfying experience according to him.

RCCP intends to work more with CINI in future.

The project that benefitted 80 persons and took 12 hours to complete, was led by Rtn Rubali Chakraborty. She was assisted by Rtn Nabanita Khan, Rtn Sarbari Ghose, Rtn Sutapa Roy, Rtn Gargee Dutta, Rtn Saumitra Roy and Rtn Sachindra Rao.



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AWARENESS CAMP

Project date: 15th September 2025

ANANDA ASHRAM BALIKA VIDYAPEETH was established in 1951 and it is managed by the Department of Education. Located in ..., Kolkata, the school consists of Grades 5 to 12, for girls and it does not have an attached pre-primary section. Durgali is the medium of instruction at the school which was started by a monk of Ramkrishna Mission Order. The lead was given by Ms Ruma Bagchi, a member of Mother Earth Foundation with whom RCCP did the tree plantation programme on 27th August, 2025 at Deshapriya park on Dash Behari Avenue. She is an administrator at Ananda Ashram and on her request RCCP visited the school.

Thereafter on 15th of September, RCCP organized an awareness camp on menstrual hygiene in the school premises. Eighty three students and thirteen teachers and school staff members attended the programme. It was conducted by Rtn Dr. Kaushik Sil of RCCP.

After the lecture, students unhesitatingly came up with some queries to which Dr. Sil gave detailed answers. This was the success of the programme.

The project that benefitted 96 girls and took 14 hours to complete, was led by Rtn Sachindra Rao. He was assisted by Rtn Dr. Kaushik Sil, Rtn Nabanita Khan, Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee, Rtn Gargee Dutta and Rtn Sutapa Roy.



Monthly Projects

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS TALK

Project date: 16th September 2025

Rescue and Relief Foundation is an organization which aims to support destitutes who are in dire need of basic things like shelter and food. Healthcare is also something most underprivileged of India can ill afford.

Rescue and Relief representatives have been interacting with RCCP for the last two and a half months. On its request, RCCP members had visited Opportunity cafe run by the Foundation at Ballygunge park. This is manned by traffic victims above 18 years who do everything including the cooking. Service and quality of food are impressive.

Next RCCP visited the Foundation's Koortika Protection Home for Girls at B. L. Saha Road, on 16th September to identify the kind of support they needed.

Based on the findings, RCCP organised a cervical cancer awareness session at the Home on 16th September, 2025.

The rescued girls followed the awareness talk by Rtn Dr. Saumitra Ray with avid interest, asked relevant questions which were answered by Dr. Ray. The girls were to connect with RCCP if they faced problems.

The awareness session that benefitted 16 girls and 4 to 5 office staff and took 12 hours to complete, was led by Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee. She was assisted by Rtn Dr. Saumitra Ray, Rtn Nabanita Khan, Rtn Rubali Chakraborty, Rtn Utpal Pal and Rtn Arunava Dasgupta.



DURGA PUJA DRESS DISTRIBUTION

Project date: 10th September 2025

RCCP took up a project to provide funds to purchase festival (Durga Puja) dresses for 40 children from Purbasha, the non formal school at Chargheri, Sundarban, and sarees for 18 beneficiaries of the Sundarban Widows project. This was in partnership with PEHS (Purbasha Eco Helpline Society).

RCCP has been associated with the school in Chargheri for the last 4 years, and this was the third year when sarees were distributed among a section of women in the Sundarbans. RCCP hopes this partnership with PEHS will continue for many more years.

The project that benefitted 58, cost INR 21,240 and took 60 hours to complete, was led by Rtn Aniruddha Bhattacharya. He was assisted by Rtn Soumya Priya Mukherjee, Rtn Gargee Dutta, Rtn Arunava Dasgupta and Rtn Subrata Chatterjee. Also were present Sumitava and Ujain Dutta.



Monthly Projects

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Project date: 19th September 2025

Durga Puja's significance lies in the commemoration of Goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil. It is also a joyous celebration of the Goddess's annual homecoming to her maternal home on Earth, fostering cultural unity, artistic expression, and spiritual reflection among people of all backgrounds. The festival's significance has been recognized by UNESCO in 2024 as an intangible cultural heritage.

On 19th September, Rotary Club of Calcutta Harmony and Rotary Club of Midnapur along with many other co-host Rotary Clubs, organised a programme called Bishwajoge Sharatshonghe Shaktirupeno Sangsita. RCCP was one of the co-hosts.

The cultural programme was attended by Sri Joydeep Chattopadhyay, the great grandson of Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the iconic writer of Bengal. The event that cost Rs 3500, benefitted 60 members of the audience, took 12 hours to complete was attended by Rtn Nabanita Khan, Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee and Rtn Utpal Pal.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMP

Project date: 19th September 2025

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer worldwide, with an estimated 2.3 million new cases and 670,000 deaths in 2022, and is predicted to increase in the future. While it can occur in men, approximately 99% of breast cancer cases are in women. On September 20, Rotary Club of Bellaria organized a Breast Cancer Awareness program at Rotary Sadan, Kolkata. RCCP was one of the co-hosts in this awareness program. It was an interactive session as well. Well known oncologists spoke about this disease and the precautions to arrest the disease at an early stage.

The project that cost Rs 3500, benefitted 100, and took 4 hours to complete, was attended by Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee and Rtn Sarbari Ghose.



Monthly Projects

HAPPY Birthday

Birthdays

Rtn Nivedita Sanyal
22nd September

Rtn Indrani Sengupta
23rd September





Heartfelt Thanks to our Donors

Rtn Nabanita Khan
Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee
Rtn Sanjukta Majumdar
Rtn Aniruddha Bhattacharya
Rtn Arindam Roy Choudhury
Rtn Subrata Chatterjee
Rtn Babita G. Saha
Rtn Arunava Dasgupta
Rtn Soumya Priya Mukherjee
Rtn Sachindra Rao
Rtn Samita Sarkar
Rtn Dipanjan Kundu
Rtn Ansuman Bhow
Rtn Utpal Pal
Rtn Sutapa Roy
Rtn Sugato Sanyal
Rtn Sarbari Ghose
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Rtn Nabanita Khan

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Rtn Madhumita Chatterjee

Interim Newsletter Team:
Rtns Sutapa Roy, Snehajyoti Saha

Upcoming Projects

1. Thalassaemia awareness banners in South Kolkata & Salt Lake
2. Thalassaemia awareness camp at Diksha in Kalighat
3. Breast cancer awareness camp in Mallikpur
4. Participation in Polio Day at Rotary Sadan
5. Supply of modern machinery to FOSFT

SCAN TO DONATE



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