

RI President Shekhar Mehta - Changing lives: A look at the year ahead



Dear change-makers,

Welcome to the new Rotary year — a year when you will be called upon to Serve to Change Lives and achieve big dreams. Because of your passion for achieving great things, we will grow more and do more.

Our Action Plan, Rotary’s strategic road map, sets our course and strengthens us for the future by focusing on four priorities: increasing our impact, expanding our reach, enhancing participant engagement, and increasing our ability to adapt. This year, I am honored to move these priorities forward by leading with vision and implementing several initiatives that I believe will result in positive growth during 2021-22 and beyond.

Expanding our reach through Each One, Bring One

Rotary is a vibrant organization that has spread to nearly 200 countries and geographical areas and has a rich legacy of fighting to end polio. Don’t you think we could have a greater impact on the world if more people were practicing Service Above Self?

Members like you are our greatest asset. But for the last 20 years, Rotary membership has remained stagnant. Through a program I am calling Each One, Bring One, I ask each of you to commit to welcoming one new person into Rotary or Rotaract in the next 12 months. This one act of growing Rotary will make you true change-makers, because you will have helped us achieve in just 12 months what we could not do in 20 years. Of course, you will need to engage and retain these members as well. Member engagement is equally important for our organization’s growth.

As we welcome new members, let us continue to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are ingrained into all aspects of Rotary. We believe that anyone who gets involved with Rotary — whether as a member, partner, or participant — must feel valued, respected, and welcomed. It is only by embracing the full diversity of the world that we will be able to grow and to achieve our goals.

I am thrilled that Rotaract membership continues to grow. This year, we are taking further steps to reaffirm and promote Rotaract as a distinct membership type in Rotary. I encourage Rotary and Rotaract clubs to find ways to connect with one another, perhaps by creating a mentorship program or

partnering on a club-based initiative, district grant, or global grant. We achieve more when we work together!

Serve to change lives

Service is at the heart of my own connection to Rotary, which is why I want all of us to showcase Rotary's good work by hosting Rotary Days of Service. Invite your members, neighboring clubs, local civic organizations, program alumni, friends, family, and the public to join you for a community service event. Let Rotary Days of Service be a celebration of our passion for doing good.

As your club decides which causes to support this year, please consider projects that focus on empowering girls and creating equity for them. Whether it's through a global grant project or a local program that your club supports, we can all contribute to the important work being done all over the world to expand access to education, improve sanitation, and fight gender discrimination and inequality. Girls are equal stakeholders in this world, and they should have equal rights.

We also need to let others know about all the wonderful work Rotary does. Each of you is a Rotary brand ambassador, so use social media, local media, and your club's website to show your community — and the world — how you and your fellow Rotary members are people of action.

Increasing our impact

My friends, you are resilient, and you are doing amazing things to fight COVID-19. We adapted quickly to support our communities at the start of this pandemic, and we are committed until the very end. Let's work to ensure that vaccines are made available equitably worldwide and that people get vaccinated as quickly as possible.

We recently awarded our first \$2 million Programs of Scale grant to Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia and will name our second Programs of Scale grant recipient this year. This award and our efforts to eradicate polio and fight COVID-19 are examples of how Rotary addresses significant needs on a large scale. These programs serve as models for how we can demonstrate our measurable and sustainable impact.

We have so much to look forward to in the year ahead, and together, we will do so much. Nothing is impossible for Rotarians and Rotaractors!

I am so honored to be on this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Shekhar Mehta
Rotary International President, 2021-22