

## **Overview**

The Empowering Girls initiative is one of three Presidential Initiatives for Rotary year 2021-2022.

The initiative is focused on club-level projects through which Rotary clubs can create positive change in the lives of girls. Specifically, the initiative challenges clubs to:

- Engage in a project or projects of their choice that empowers girls.
- Address the needs and inequities that girls throughout the world face on a daily basis.
- In addition to implementing a project, monitor and measure the impact of the project.
- Disseminate and create awareness of Rotary resources and subject matter experts, including but not limited to: Rotary Action Groups, Rotary Foundation cadre and Peace Fellows.
- Tell the stories of successful projects and their impact to the general public, using a variety of media channels.
- Share the stories of success and their impact across their region and post them on Rotary Showcase, as well as on social media channels.

## **The Challenge**

Club and district leaders alike need encouragement, information and resources to engage club members in this initiative. This is especially the case in the current environment.

One of the most effective ways to encourage and inspire is to tell the stories of clubs and districts that are engaging in projects that empower girls. It is also important to provide information that allows Rotary club members to connect with others who are implementing projects in their region, as well as across the world.

Keeping this initiative alive and vibrant for club and district leaders on a regional basis will increase participation and emphasize its importance in Rotary's mission to **Serve to Change Lives**.

## **The Ambassador Concept**

Every member of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors is an advocate for this initiative. Club and district leaders observe what we say and do, and take action based on their perceptions of our words and actions.

Yet, our role as Directors has multiple responsibilities and our schedules are busy. It could also be helpful for us to identify an Ambassador for this initiative in each of our respective paired zones. Depending upon regional needs, the Ambassadors may also select assistants and assign them to specific districts. Regional Ambassadors can help to promote the initiative by communicating with clubs, districts and the regional coordinator teams, guiding clubs and districts to resources and encouraging them to implement projects.

Advantages to this approach are that it can:

- Help to keep the initiative at the forefront of club project activity.
- Encourage clubs not only to engage in projects, but also to monitor them and measure the impact and report the results.
- Capture lessons learned and regional approaches.
- Champion and help to tell the stories of successful projects.
- Provide updated information and resources, as appropriate, to the RI website page created to house information on the Presidential initiatives.

Perhaps most importantly, the Ambassador concept allows each Director in each region to define the role of a Zone Ambassador and to work with the initiative in the ways that are the most effective and relevant for the region.

### **The Ambassador's Role**

The Ambassador for each paired zone will be appointed by the Director. Depending upon regional needs, the Ambassadors may appoint assistants, in consultation with the Director. Assistants would be assigned to work with the leadership of specific districts.

The key responsibilities for the Ambassadors and assistants are:

- Inform district and club leaders about the initiative.
- Build enthusiasm for participation in the initiative.
- Simplify the process for a club to select a project, by providing access to resources, such as connecting with other Ambassadors, Rotary Action Groups and organizations with missions and programs focused on empowering girls. These resources will be provided as a page on a website, available 1 July 2021, featuring President Mehta's presidential initiatives.
- Provide ongoing resources, encouragement and support to districts and clubs as they implement projects.
- Encourage district leaders to include Empowering Girls club projects in district trainings, assemblies, conferences and other events.
- Document success stories and communicate them to the Zones RPIC teams for external and community distribution.
- Encourage clubs to post their success stories on Showcase, social media channels and community media outlets.

- Identify and collect zone-level success metrics, such as the number of clubs and projects, types of projects, as well as the impact of individual projects, such as the number of beneficiaries and the increase/decrease in key conditions as a result of the project.

## **Resources**

The following resources are currently being developed and prepared for translation to support this initiative:

- Menu of Opportunities – A list of point-of-departure service project ideas, contacts for Rotary Action Groups and links to other resources, including subject matter experts within Rotary, partner organizations and other entities.
- Initiative Talking Points - Facts and statistics regarding the issues that girls face globally are included in the Appendix. The Task Force has also discussed identifying and mapping the geographic prevalence of specific issues.
- Power Point presentation – an overview of the initiative that is suitable for a zone-wide virtual meeting to launch the initiative, and/or for use in district meetings.
- Website for Presidential Initiatives, including links to resources and information for club members and Ambassadors.

## **Examples of Projects**

- A WASH in schools project that provides girls with access to education by providing gender-segregated toilet facilities, improving sanitation in schools and enabling girls to attend regularly. (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene).
- Enrollment and retention of girls in schools (Basic Education and Literacy).
- Scholarships for girls to continue education (Basic Education and Literacy).
- Distribution of items, i.e., Bicycles, solar lights, etc. that help motivate the girls to continue education (Basic Education and Literacy).
- Teaching self-defense techniques to girls (Basic Education and Literacy)
- Skills development project for girls (Economic Development).
- A project that provides girls with reusable sanitary napkins and hygiene education also allows girls to stay in school, provides health education and also creates a sustainable solution to disposable menstrual hygiene products. (Disease Prevention, Environment, Economic Development).
- Nutrition programs for girls (Material and Child Health, Disease Prevention).
- A project that supports a safe house or recovery program for girls who are victims of human trafficking, by providing supplies, repairs, equipment, funding for counseling or other needs, to enable abused girls to re-enter a normal, non-violent life. (Peace, Economic Development).
- Counselling for victims of violence and discrimination (Peace).

## **Regional Implementation and Proposed Timelines**

- Identify Ambassadors and assistants, as regionally appropriate (April/May 2021).
- Launch the initiative and introduce the Ambassadors (May/June 2021).
- Celebrate “Early Adopter” clubs that have identified a project (July/August).

Launch activities, as regionally appropriate, could include but are not limited to:

- A paired Zones Zoom presentation/discussion of the initiative and Ambassadors, using the Power Point template (see Resources below).
- Email/social media introduction of the initiative and Ambassadors.
- Short video promotion on the paired Zones Facebook/social media channels or a Zones newsletter promotion.

## **Board Conversations and Updates**

The extensive agenda of Board meetings does not allow for open-ended conversations about the initiative. The Task Force therefore proposed holding periodic informal meetings of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors to discuss the initiative. This will allow all of us to learn from our respective experiences, and to gain insight into the regional factors that influence how the initiative takes shape in different regions of the world.

The Task Force supports President Elect Shekhar’s recommendation to hold a meeting twice a year, immediately preceding a regularly scheduled Board meeting, to discuss the three Presidential Initiatives. Additionally, progress reports on the three Presidential Initiatives will be included periodically on the Board meeting agenda.