



THE POWER OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

Ian H.S. Riseley
Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair-elect
10 February 2022

G'day everyone!

What a great pleasure it is for me to have the chance to talk to this group of incoming Rotary leaders.

Governors-elect, you are on a mission, a path to real achievement. You have made a commitment.

Just think, in just over 16 months' time, you will join that group of Rotarians who are presumed to know everything there is to know about Rotary. You will be a past district governor.

But you have a lot of work to do before then. And as I'm sure you are aware, the time will just fly past.

One of the things you are asked to do as governor of your district is to actively support our Rotary Foundation. It's your duty, but there are lots of other good reasons why you should provide this support.

Most of the significant projects undertaken in the name of Rotary are those supported by The Rotary Foundation. Of course, polio eradication is our central focus, but think about all the other wonderful work done in your districts that is funded by district grants and global grants, as well as the way we are making the world a better place through our Rotary Peace Centers, our Programs of Scale, and our collaboration with partners. Assistance from The Rotary Foundation makes all this happen.

Most of us who have been around Rotary for a while have a favorite project that was supported by our Rotary Foundation. Not surprisingly, I have plenty, but let me quickly mention one.

In Sri Lanka, about 2,000 children are born every year with a congenital heart defect that needs an operation so they can survive to become adults. Treatment existed, but it was not always available or effective. Imagine if you were the parent of a youngster facing this medical challenge. How would you feel?

So local Rotarians put together a plan to solve this urgent problem. Seventeen Rotary districts from around the world contributed District Designated Funds [DDF], matched by our Rotary Foundation, to provide a total global grant budget of US\$365,000, and they created the first and only human heart valve tissue bank in the entire country.

The Sri Lankan government provided the building and made a commitment for appropriate staffing and supplies, therefore ensuring the sustainability of the project.

I went to the opening of this wonderful lifesaving facility in Colombo in 2017, and it was positively uplifting. Rotarians in Sri Lanka reported that this new facility has reduced child mortality and the need for repeated surgeries.

I'm sure you are aware of our first Programs of Scale grant, which was awarded to Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, a program led by Rotarians that is building more capacity in the health system to protect 1.3 million people in Zambia from malaria.

It is already over halfway to its goal of training and integrating health workers into the Zambian health system to provide effective diagnosis and treatment for communities heavily impacted by malaria.

These are fabulous examples of Rotary making a difference through The Rotary Foundation. And I'm sure that all of you know Foundation success stories, so I encourage you to develop and share these as you serve as governor.

So, how do these wonderful Foundation programs help your Rotary district?

Successful and significant projects help improve Rotary's public image, and that in turn enables us to attract members aligned with our motto of Service Above Self, assists our fundraising, and motivates existing Rotarians. So supporting The Rotary Foundation also benefits your own district. Everybody wins.

For these reasons, it is vitally important that our projects have a real and measurable impact, and you need to encourage the clubs in your district to be aware of that.

I'm really proud of our Rotary Foundation and the esteem in which it is held by the non-Rotarians in the world. An example of this is Charity Navigator, an independent ratings agency, which has given us its highest ranking for over a decade now. And that high regard happens for a number of reasons.

Our expense level is much lower than most similar organizations, so our grant spending achieves more.

Our global grants require a community needs assessment plus guaranteed sustainability to ensure that these projects really do make a long-term difference. The high level of stewardship of our grants means people can be confident that their donations are put to good use. That's why our Rotary Foundation is one of the world's great charities.

Of course, for the Foundation to assist with wonderful projects, we need you to play a vital part in ensuring that Rotary clubs and individual members support the Foundation.

Each year, we set a goal for the various elements of Foundation fundraising. Let me tell you what the Trustees have set as our target for 2022-23. I'm an accountant, so I love figures.

I am a huge fan of our Endowment Fund, which will provide the long-term certainty that our Rotary Foundation needs to sustain itself.

You know that we have a goal of \$2.025 billion by 2025, and we need an inflow every year to take us toward that target. This is made up of cash and what we call expectancies, which are bequests.

Next year, we are aiming for new outright cash contributions of \$40 million.

For annual giving — and remember, this is the figure that comes back for grants and programming in three years' time — we are aiming for \$135 million, a slight increase on this year's goal.

Rotarians, Rotaractors, and our friends who wish to support specific projects do so via global grant cash and directed gifts. We have \$31 million as our goal for this area, and we have \$14 million targeted as coming from donor advised funds.

Our contribution to PolioPlus comes from both cash and DDF. In 2022-23, we are targeting cash donations for polio eradication to be at least \$35 million, as part of the \$50 million that we need to ensure we receive the full \$100 million match from our friends at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

To take our total contribution for PolioPlus to \$50 million, we need to have transfers, including DDF, etc., to polio of \$15 million to add to our cash of \$35 million. That \$15 million is not cash, so let's put it below the line here and put our \$35 million cash and the \$100 million Gates Foundation grant that we receive up here in the cash inflow section.

This gives us cash inflow of \$355 million.

As I said earlier, expectancies are an important part of our fundraising, and they come from people who want to support the Foundation and have greater capacity to do so when they pass on. For 2022-23, we have a goal of \$60 million in new commitments.

This gives us a fundraising target grand total for 2022-23 of \$430 million. An exciting figure!

The disruption to all societies around the world caused by COVID-19 makes budgeting difficult, but I am confident that the Rotarians of the world, under your leadership, will meet these targets and ensure the great work of our Rotary Foundation continues to flourish.

I started with a story, so let me finish with one.

In the 2019-20 Southern [Hemisphere] summer, a combination of prolonged drought, global warming, and adverse weather conditions meant that much of Australia was threatened with wildfires — what we call bushfires — and the impact was catastrophic. Images of the fires appeared on television screens around the world, and the need for assistance was obvious and substantial.

In Canada, themselves no strangers to wildfires, Rotarians wanted to help, so they made contact. Of course, as we all know, the best way to help in a substantial way is through The Rotary Foundation, and clubs and districts in Taiwan, India, and several other countries joined in.

As a result, three global grants totaling over \$280,000 were undertaken to improve the economic resilience of farmers affected by fire and drought.

We are waiting to learn the final outcome of these three projects, but I want to share with you one of the many letters we have received from the farmers helped by these grants:

Our farming community members who have received help were so grateful that a Rotary Foundation global grant supplied funding for our remote rural farming districts. They were in disbelief that Rotary clubs from Canada and other countries abroad would step up and help our relatively small farming region. They were very grateful and honored to be considered worthy of such aid.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the kind of impact that our Rotary Foundation has every single day, and is why it deserves the support of all Rotarians.

Finally, I love the theme that [RI President-elect] Jennifer [Jones] has given us for 2022-23. We can *Imagine Rotary* in all sorts of ways, and I imagine and dream of what Rotarians and The Rotary Foundation will achieve in the future, thanks to the great support we will receive in your year of leadership.

I wish you well and know that we can count on your encouragement of our Rotary Foundation in 2022-23.

Good luck.