

The BRIDGE

ICC UPDATE

4th Edition - October 2026



Building Bridges Together

Why the Future of Our Global Family Depends on Who We Invite to the Table

By Annemarie Mostert

I don't know exactly who is reading this. But I know why you picked up this newsletter.

Somewhere along the way, you decided that your one life should help build something bigger than yourself. That makes us family before I've written another word.

Our stories matter –not because they are extraordinary, but because I believe every ordinary life, lived with intention, can become a bridge. And this issue of The Bridge is, I hope, an invitation for you to start building yours.

The Foundation

Education was never meant to be a chapter. It is a discipline you never graduate from.

If you are hungry – genuinely hungry –to be useful in this world, you keep learning long after anyone expects you to. That hunger is the first bridge: the one you build towards your own future self.

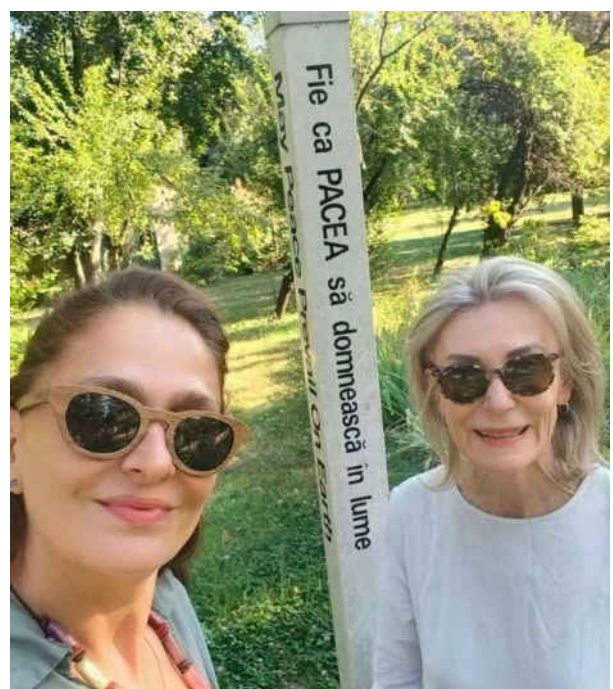
The Language

Education gave me knowledge. The performing arts gave me something education alone never could: a language that needed no translation.

I have stood in rooms, –corporate boardrooms, township halls and international stages –where the people around me did not share my mother tongue, my culture or my circumstances. I have watched a shared rhythm dissolve those distances in seconds.

Music doesn't ask you to agree with someone before you can connect with them. It only asks you to listen.

That is perhaps the truest lesson the performing arts ever taught me, and it has shaped every



partnership since: you don't wait for people to become like you before you build with them. You find the note you can both hear, and you start there.

It is a lesson I believe our global family needs now more than ever –because too often, we still wait for consensus before extending the invitation to belong.

The Vehicle

I have served in many capacities across different sectors, and I learned early that business is not the opposite of compassion. Business, done right, can be compassion with a delivery mechanism.

That is the second bridge: not simply, “I feel for you,” but, “Here is a structure that outlasts my feeling and keeps helping you long after I have left the room.”

That phrase – after I have left the room – matters to me more than almost anything else I could tell you.

A project stops being charity and starts becoming a legacy the moment it no longer depends upon you standing in the middle of it.

The World

In 1997, I joined Rotary without any idea of what it would come to mean in my life.

That is part of Rotary's genius. It doesn't ask nations to agree. It asks neighbours to dig a well together, to build a girl's confidence together, and to sit at the same table long enough to remember that the person across from you fundamentally wants what you want: safety, dignity and a future for their children.

Nearly three decades later, I remain convinced that some of the world's strongest bridges begin with something as simple as people choosing to serve together.

The Invitation

Here is why I am telling you all of this in an article, rather than simply delivering another speech to a room already full of believers.



Uniting Rotarians Across Borders



Positive Peace, Girls' Empowerment, innovation, artificial intelligence, economic development and the humanitarian challenges confronting our communities will not take the shape our world needs unless the people building solutions reflect the world they are meant to serve.

Transformation isn't a threat to what Rotary has built over more than a century. It is how we ensure that what we have built continues to matter for the century ahead.

The Thread

Education gave me a foundation. Music gave me a language. Entrepreneurship gave me a vehicle. Rotary gave me a world in which to use all three.

But none of those, alone, builds peace.

Peace happens in the space between them –when a foundation, a language and a vehicle are all pointed deliberately towards another human being's wellbeing, while making room for the next person to do the same.

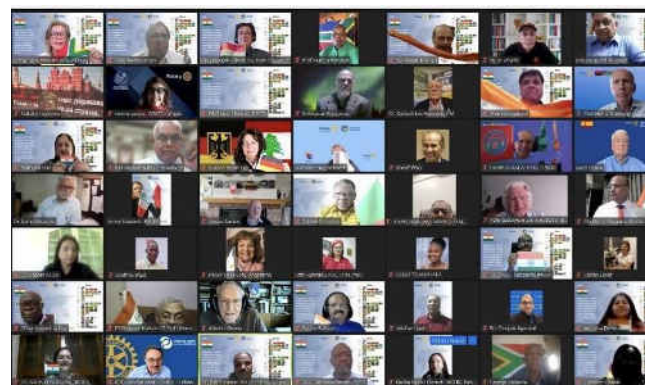
I have been given many titles throughout this journey. None of them built a single bridge. They were simply recognition, after the fact, of bridges that had already been built –by people willing to change, to listen and, above all, to make space for others.

Find your foundation, and never stop adding to it. Find your language –the thing that connects you to another person before you share a single word of agreement. Build a vehicle sturdy enough to keep serving when your own energy runs low.

And help me widen the table, so that the next bridge is built by hands and voices we have not yet heard.

I hope you'll join us.

Annemarie Mostert is a social entrepreneur, Past District Governor of Rotary District 9400 (2020–2021), and President of the ICC Executive Council for 2026–2028.



ICC Signing Africa/ India - 2 April 2024



ICC Signing Taiwan/Africa - 30 January 2024



Rotary Intercountry Committees: Mapping a Global Network of 1,340 Leaders Across 132 Countries

An analysis of the ICC leadership database reveals the scale, geographic reach and cross-border architecture of one of Rotary's least publicly understood international networks.

By Pierangelo Panozzo

Within Rotary, the acronym ICC stands for Intercountry Committees, the formal mechanism through which Rotary defines a structured relationship between districts or countries, established to strengthen intercultural understanding, fellowship among members, and international collaboration. It is one of Rotary's oldest instruments of cross-border engagement, and yet one of the least documented in terms of its actual leadership footprint.

An analysis of the ICC Sections database, exported on 1 May 2026, offers a rare, organised picture of that footprint. The figures below reflect the state of that specific database snapshot, not necessarily the network's composition today — a distinction worth keeping in mind, since appointments and section structures change over time.

A First Organised Count

The analysis focusing on those who hold an actual function within the ICC structure: Section Chairs and Deputy Chairs, Secretaries, Treasurers, National Chairs, District Delegates, and regional or zone ICC Leadership. After deduplicating 1,623 qualifying appointment records by first and last name, the database yields 1,340 identifiable leaders across what are recorded as 132 countries of identifiable leaders, not an audited headcount.

A European Centre of Gravity, and Room to Grow Elsewhere

Europe remains the most represented continent, with 819 identifiable leaders (61.3% of the total), followed by 201 from Asia (15.0%) and 177 from Africa (13.2%). South America, North America and Oceania complete the picture with smaller shares (5.7%, 4.6% and 0.2% respectively).

At the level of individual country or grouping labels as recorded in the source data, Italy-Malta-San Marino leads with 161 leaders, ahead of France (136) and Portugal (86). Germany (54) and India (51) follow, then a cluster of countries — Turkey, Ukraine, the United States — each at 33, and further down Brazil, Great Britain-Ireland (Rotary GB&I), Romania and Nigeria, all between 25 and 28. This distribution confirms the historic weight of Mediterranean and Western Europe within the network, while the figures for Africa and Asia point to meaningful scope for further organisational development and institutional commitment as ICC activity continues to expand globally.

A Gender Gap Worth Naming

The data does not obscure a structural imbalance: among the 1,332 leaders for whom the database's gender field carries an explicit value, 939 are male (70.5%) and 393 are female (29.5%). Eight leadership records have no confirmed gender value and were correctly excluded from the percentage calculation, with no inference drawn from names.

This figure should be read plainly — as a quantitative fact that raises an open question of gender balance in leadership representation, one relevant to ICC structures. Right now, we are still building with half our materials in reserve. This is an invitation, in the truest spirit of The Bridge: to the women leading clubs, chairing committees, running projects, raising families, and building enterprises quietly in the background of our districts — step forward. Your seat at this table isn't a favour we're extending; it's a foundation we're missing. And to our young leaders, still deciding whether an organisation like ICC has room for their energy and their ideas — it does, and it needs you urgently.



How Connected Are Intercountry Committees, in Practice?

The database also records that 812 of the 866 sections with a sitting Chair - 93.8% - are linked to a formally identified counterpart in another country. At first glance this might seem almost tautological: an Intercountry Committee is, by definition, an international relationship. What the figure actually demonstrates, however, is something more concrete: that in the large majority of cases, those cross-border relationships are not merely foreseen on paper but are recorded as genuinely established and, presumably, operative a meaningful distinction between formal designation and documented activation.

A Multi-Layered Architecture

Beyond the 866 sections with a Chair, the database records 170 District Delegates, 89 National Chairs, and 25 regional or zone chairs and secretaries. This is a structure built across several layers - local, district, national - which multiplies the points of contact for chairs and joint initiative across countries.

Why It Matters

At a moment when the value of multilateral and cross-border cooperation is frequently questioned, this snapshot — however approximate at its margins, for the methodological reasons noted above — offers a rare, detailed view of how one of Rotary's oldest international mechanisms actually functions in practice: a far-reaching, deeply distributed network of individuals holding defined responsibilities across six continents, with the large majority of its cross-border relationships recorded as genuinely active rather than merely formal.



Rotary Beyond Volunteering: The Professional Capital That Can Unite Countries

Pierangelo Panozzo in conversation with ICC President Annemarie Mostert

There is an international resource of extraordinary value that we often use only partially: the professional expertise of people.

This consideration is particularly relevant to Rotary and its Intercountry Committees (ICCs), created to build relationships among Rotarians from different countries and to transform dialogue into cooperation, international understanding and concrete projects.

The starting point should be simple: a Rotarian brings much more than goodwill.

A Rotarian brings experience.

Entrepreneurs, physicians, engineers, lawyers, economists, managers, diplomats, academics and other professionals possess expertise built over decades of work. When these capabilities are connected through an international network based on trust, their value can multiply.

This is where ICCs can make a significant leap forward.

We should not regard them simply as a network of volunteers, but as an extraordinary human infrastructure capable of bringing diverse professional expertise together in pursuit of common objectives.

According to ICC strategic documents, the network comprises more than one thousand national and subnational sections across over 130 countries. It represents a legacy built through decades of international relationships—one that would be extremely difficult to recreate from scratch today.

The challenge is to transform this capital of trust into measurable results. work together.





This means applying to Rotary service some of the same principles we use every day in our professional lives: clearly defined responsibilities, realistic objectives, implementation timelines, leadership continuity and measurable outcomes.

An international project cannot depend solely on the enthusiasm of one individual. It requires a team, complementary expertise and, above all, the ability to continue when presidents and officeholders change.

Project financing should also be approached with a modern mindset. A strong humanitarian initiative is not simply a request for funding. It is a structured project with reliable partners, a transparent budget, measurable results and the ability to attract resources from multiple stakeholders.

Within this model, Rotary can perform a role that is difficult to replicate: bringing together people who might otherwise never have met.

Rotaract is equally important. Involving younger generations in ICC leadership means combining experience with innovation, established relationships with digital capabilities, and institutional memory with new ideas.

Above all, however, we need to change a mindset.

The time a professional dedicates to Rotary is certainly voluntary. **Their expertise, however, is professional.**

The distinction may appear subtle, but it fundamentally changes the perspective.

We should not simply ask an engineer to “help”; we should enable that engineer to design. A physician should develop health programmes. An entrepreneur should organise resources. A lawyer should build reliable frameworks. A young Rotaractor should introduce new tools, technologies and perspectives.

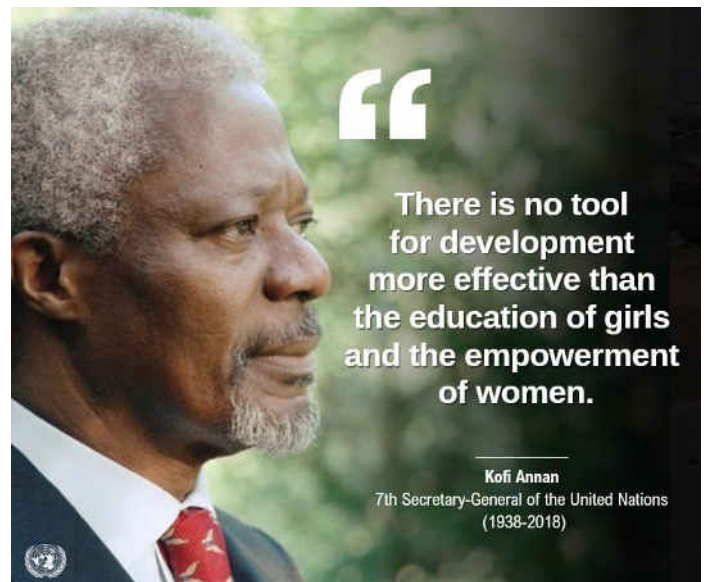
This is precisely where the strength of the Intercountry Committees lies:

transforming personal relationships into lasting bridges between countries.

Rotary already possesses people, expertise, international credibility and a global network. The next challenge is not necessarily to become larger.

It is **to make better use of what we already are.**

Because service begins with willingness, but lasting impact is created when willingness, professionalism and responsibility.



Peace Begins at the Kitchen Table: Rotary's Citizen Diplomacy in Rotterdam

By Pierangelo Panozzo

Peace does not begin only at the negotiating table. Often, its foundations are laid much earlier — at an ordinary kitchen table, over a shared dinner in someone's home. Before delegates from across the world gathered for the plenary sessions of the Rotary European Action Summit in Rotterdam (September 11–13, 2026), many had already spent their first evenings in the homes of local Rotarians, through the tradition of home hosting. It was there, over a glass of wine and conversation about family, work, and dreams, that the real work of the summit quietly began.

Friendship dinners and informal gatherings between hosts and guests proved to be the foundation on which something larger than networking was built: trust. These personal moments sit at the center of "peacebuilding through friendship" — the idea that peace starts with a single conversation between people from different cultures who discover they share more than they expected. TO BELONG, the power of Connections and Action brought together the Rotarians and Rotaractors from across Europe and beyond. When people feel they belong, they connect and dare to act. And when we make connections and act together, we create change that lasts.

This spirit ran through the entire summit and found its symbolic home in the House of Friendship, the interactive hub officially opened by Rotary International President Olayinka Hakeem Babalola. Networking zones, humanitarian exhibitions, and cultural booths showcasing local cuisine and crafts created a space where ideas moved freely among participants from around the globe. The ICC booth, purpose-built to unite Rotarians, Rotaractors, and partners across borders, was one of the most memorable spaces — a fitting tribute to everyone who made it possible.



This message found further expression during the Intercountry Committees (ICC) session, "Connecting for Peace," held on September 12. Marking more than 76 years of cross-border dialogue rooted in Franco-German postwar cooperation, the session opened with an address by President Babalola, followed by perspectives from the Institute for Economics & Peace — Founder and Executive Chairman Steve Killelea and Europe Director Mathieu Lohr — on global peacebuilding frameworks. A presentation of the Youth Peace Summit by Anastasia Moor preceded interactive panels linking the Rotary Action Group for Peace (Dirk Lustig) with Rotary's peacebuilding and conflict-prevention programs (Lies van Wijngaarden), moderated by ICC President Annemarie Mostert.

One of the session's concrete outcomes came with the signing of a Protocol of Intent by RI President Babalola, RI Director and Convenor Harriette Verwey, RI Director and Co-Convenor Emmanuel Katongole, Chair of the European Action Summit 2026 and ICC Chair of The Netherlands, Jan de Mooi and ICC President of the Executive Council, Annemarie Mostert —establishing a framework for cooperation between The Netherlands and D9400 in Southern African. It was a small, formal gesture, but one that gave institutional weight to everything discussed around it that day.

Behind the scenes, Annet Weijermars and Evelina Knowlton together with the ICC executive leadership, host and organising committees in country, organized both the ICC program and the House of Friendship — opening not just the windows of Rotterdam, but its doors.



Uniting Rotarians Across Borders



What links the House of Friendship, the ICC session, and the evening dinners in hosts' homes or the historic SS Rotterdam is this: institutions build frameworks and strategies, but relationships bring them to life. Rotterdam showed that friendship is not an accessory to citizen diplomacy — it is one of its foundations. A handshake at a front door, a shared meal, a conversation at a market stall: each becomes a small building block in the bridge between nations.

May this summit stand as a reminder that world peace is not only the distant goal of institutions, but something each of us can help build today — by opening our door to a stranger and listening to their story.



“To Belong. The Power of Connection and Action”

By Wojciech Zipser - Chair ICC Poland-Netherlands

The Eve of the Event

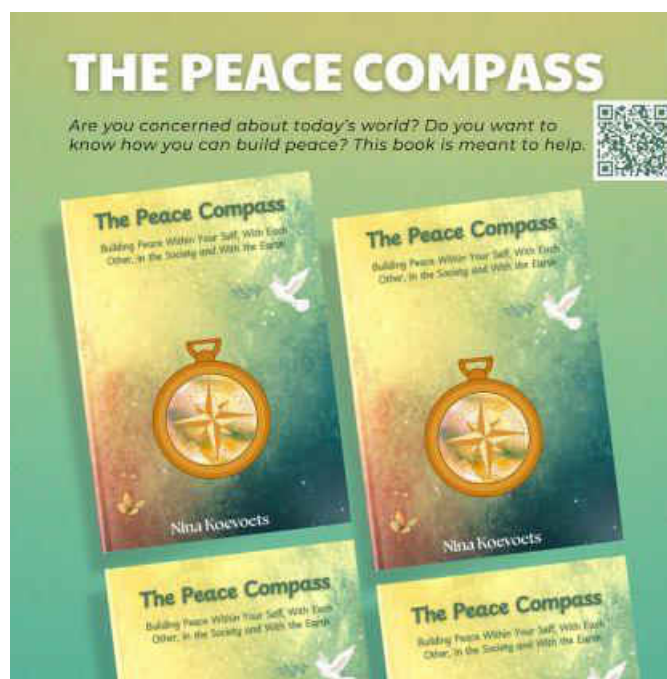
Even before the conference officially opened, participants from various countries met at the homes of local Rotarians for evening conversations. Over a glass of wine and refreshments, new connections—and sometimes warm friendships—were forged on the eve of two intense days at the conference center.

One such Thursday gathering was organized by Annet Weijermars. She is well-known for organizing numerous peace-building initiatives and fostering ties with clubs in our district. Annet took part in the signing of the agreement for the Poland-Netherlands Intercountry Committee (after which we lightened the mood a bit by treating the participants to Dutch cheese).

In the delightful, cozy atmosphere of Annet’s home—and over pizza—conversations centered on two key areas. First, how to use personal and club connections to foster informal ties that lead either to formal agreements between clubs within the ICC framework or to discussions about peace in a broader, personal context.

Second, how to approach the subject of peace not merely by aiming for the absence of war and violence, but by reinforcing positive aspects—such as mutual understanding and creativity—and, above all, by focusing on sustainability and tangible benefits for everyone involved in the process.

Several books on this topic were presented, but my attention was drawn to *The Peace Compass* by Nina Koevoets; it offers an interesting approach to engaging in peace-building in everyday life. The book has already been translated into several languages, and the idea of a Polish edition immediately came up. I believe this is an initiative worthy of support—especially given that, alongside the full-scale war right next door, we face a daily barrage of ideological and worldview-based skirmishes across all levels of society in Europe and worldwide, not to mention our own battle campaigns that gain momentum as election dates approach.



850 participants

The conference was hosted at the World Trade Center in Rotterdam. The building was considered an architectural masterpiece at the time of its construction and, for many years, towered over the generally low-rise post-war architecture of the historic city center—an area almost completely razed to the ground by the Germans on May 14, 1940, with only a few structures surviving, such as



the 19th-century town hall and the Gothic St. Lawrence Church. That bombing served as a stark prompt to seriously consider whether resisting the invader was a viable option. It was. But back to the conference: whether by coincidence or not, its themes resonated in a unique way with the history of the Dutch city that suffered the greatest physical devastation during the war.

Built in 1986, the skyscraper has since been surpassed in height by surrounding structures that shoot even higher into the sky—buildings that also dazzle with their intriguing architecture. Nevertheless, it still rises majestically over a city center where locals say, "Here, we don't talk; we work." Meanwhile, the city's detractors joke that in Rotterdam, you can buy a shirt with the sleeves already rolled up. Though perhaps that is actually a compliment.



Thematic sessions and plenary meetings took place in auditoriums boasting excellent acoustics and audiovisual equipment, ensuring that everything said and shown could be clearly heard and seen from every corner of the room, regardless of its size. Meanwhile, the spacious main hall of the WTC served as a meeting point—and not just in the literal sense. Dubbed the "House of Friendship," this area was a vibrant hub for networking, showcasing humanitarian projects, and hosting cultural stands featuring local cuisine, handicrafts, and informational materials. Refreshments and meals were also served here during coffee and lunch breaks. Many participants described the atmosphere as exceptionally energetic and motivating, noting that the exchange of information and ideas complemented the knowledge shared during the thematic seminars.

Link to the conference program:

<https://rotary-european-action-summit-2026.yellenge.nl/global-program/>

The seminars focused on three areas:

- literacy combined with basic communication and numeracy skills,
- mental health, and
- environmental protection against degradation caused by human activity.

While seemingly distinct, these topics were integrated with our overarching mission—repeatedly emphasized by Yinka—of fostering peace through various means, recognizing that its emergence and sustainability depend on many factors. Communication skills are one such factor, but joining forces in support of nature also bolsters this process. A lack of mutual understanding, and leaving groups with limited voice to fend for themselves, paves the way for a loss of trust in the state and society at large, rising hostility, and specific electoral choices. This creates fertile ground for populism and extremism.



Picture Source :

<https://eu.zonerama.com/RotaryEuropeanActionSummit2026/Album/16340350?secret=kDOo9Uo7VIuARAc4RCNx1Ll7>

Meanwhile, the Mayor of Rotterdam, Carola Schouten, spoke about actively reaching out to diverse groups of residents in a city of approximately 700,000 people representing 173 nationalities. "We have many affluent communities, but also very impoverished ones," the mayor noted. It is crucial to give a voice—particularly to those with limited financial, communicative, or social resources—and to ensure they know someone is listening and ready to help with their various challenges. I was reminded of how Rotterdam—along with other cities with significant Muslim populations—responded to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center twenty-five years ago.



Picture Source :

<https://eu.zonerama.com/RotaryEuropeanActionSummit2026/Album/16340350?secret=kDOo9Uo7VIuARAc4RCNx1Ll7>

Meetings involving people of diverse nationalities and worldviews were organized immediately to address the tragedy collectively and collaboratively. There were also televised discussion panels, and as a result, I do not recall any major acts of aggression occurring in the Netherlands between the opposing sides of the conflict at that time.

The conference theme—"To Belong: The Power of Connection and Action"—reflects a simple truth, says Yinka: when people feel a sense of belonging, they build relationships and find the courage to act. And when we join forces and take action together, we create lasting change. This summit is intended to serve as a catalyst, not merely an opportunity for conversation. Our goal is clear: to inspire, connect, and mobilize Rotarians, Rotaract members, and partners from across Europe and beyond.

Plastic Soup

We are familiar with nail soup. Besides, a nail doesn't pose much of a problem; as it rusts, it tends toward a state of equilibrium with its surroundings—something owners of older cars know well. Plastic, however, is here to stay, claiming ever-larger swathes of land and sea, while insidiously—in fragmented form – penetrating deep into the very cells of our bodies.

"End Plastic Soup" is a global initiative launched in 2018 by clubs in District 1580 (North Holland) as a foundation affiliated with Rotary International. The goal is ambitious: by 2050, the "plastic soup" will be gone from the oceans and seas, and there will no longer be plastic waste in our lakes, rivers, forests, parks, or on our streets. The program addresses not only visible litter but also plastic pollution throughout the entire product lifecycle. More than 400 Rotary clubs across 51 countries are participating in these efforts.

endplasticsoup.org/



Water-related topics were the focus of sessions accompanying the Rotary Action Summit. One session showcased WASH RAG (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group), strongly encouraging participation in this global initiative: <https://www.wash-rag.org>

Meanwhile, the issue of plastic pollution was addressed by Ralf Hardenberg (RC Nuremberg) and Gert-Jan van Domelen (RC Huizen-Gooimeer) during a [session on Friday](#).

And on Saturday at 7 a.m., words were turned into action. Gert-Jan outlined how the operation would be carried out. Yinka announced its start, reminding everyone of the power of working together.

And after some brief morning exercises...



And after Yinka introduced the topic...



Two groups boarded lifeboats and set out onto the waters of Rotterdam with trash bags and grabbers for collecting floating plastic.



Together for Peace [\(link to the event\)](#)

For us, as moderators of the ICCs (Intercountry Committees), the "Connecting for Peace" session on September 12th served as the culmination of the message of cooperation. Drawing on over 75 years of cross-border dialogue—initiated by post-war Franco-German cooperation starting in 1950—the session highlighted that peace begins with conversation, and that every conversation can open the door to understanding and mutual agreement.

Following an introduction by Rotary International President Olayinka Babalola, we gained expert insight from the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) into the global framework for peacebuilding. The event also featured a presentation on the Youth Peace Summit, as well as interactive panels linking the Rotary Action Group for Peace with Rotary's peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs.



As a group of ICC moderators, we had a booth at the House of Friendship that attracted a great deal of interest. We distributed information about the functioning of the global committee structure and, of course, encouraged people to take initiative.





As befits a PR team, we also had a platter full of treats from various countries—and, of course, Polish krówki were included.



There was also a “pompous” 3D presentation showing the reach of our ICC contacts.



What connects the House of Friendship, the ICC session, and the evening gatherings in private homes is a simple message: institutions may create frameworks, data, and strategies, but it is human relationships that breathe life into them. The Rotary European Action Summit in Rotterdam demonstrated that friendship is not merely an adjunct to citizen diplomacy—it is its foundation. Every handshake, every shared dinner, and every conversation at a local food stall in the House of Freedom during our conference served as a building block for a bridge between nations.

May this event serve as a reminder that world peace is not an abstract goal for distant institutions, but something each of us can begin building today—by opening the doors of our homes, both literally and figuratively, and by listening and showing respect as we seek common ground.





WASH-RAG at the Rotary European Action Summit, Rotterdam

S N Srikanth - Chair, WASH-RAG

I attended the Rotary European Action Summit held in Rotterdam from 11-13 Sept 2026. WASH-RAG had a booth there which attracted a good number of visitors. A WASH-RAG Action Conference & Dinner was also organized on the evening of Sept 11 at the Postillion Hotel, Rotterdam. The speakers were excellent and the audience was a very well informed and highly interested one.

I would like to congratulate our Regional Coordinator, Dilip Mirchandani, who worked very hard to make our presence at the Action Summit a success and so too our Board member, Bas Hendriksen.

Meeting with IHE Delft and RI President Yinka

Thanks to Bas, we also had a detailed meeting at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, the largest International graduate water education facility in the world. We met the Operations Director Han de Groot and his colleagues and discussed various areas of possible cooperation between WASH-RAG and IHE Delft. These included sending scholars to IHE and conducting educational programs jointly by IHE and WASH-RAG with certificates issued in both our names. We also discussed the help that IHE can offer with our '3 Districts Initiative' which they were very interested in.

At the IHE we were invited to join a pre-arranged meeting with Rotary International President Yinka Babalola, Secretary General John Hewko, Rotary International Directors Dr Harriette Verwey and Emmanuel Katongole and a few others. We elaborated on our vision of WASH-RAG as the pre-eminent vehicle not only in Rotary but also the world at large to achieve SDG6. President Yinka was interested in discussing this further. General Secretary John Hewko will shortly connect with me on Zoom.



Meeting with Rotary Club H2O

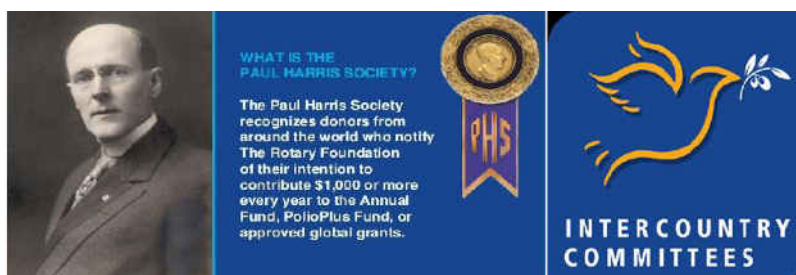
That brings us to an important point : we could promote more theme based WASH clubs. They could be key partners for us in helping us achieve our goals. We could also look at admitting clubs and not just individuals as members.

Please see pictures of the WASH-RAG Booth and Conference and the meeting with IHE / President Yinka. I would like to thank Gunes Ertas, our cadre member and Ambassador for covering the former event and posting on social media.

Finally, I would like to encourage the members of the Board and Operations Team to participate in the various Rotary Institutes and District Conferences around the world.



DINNER EVENT WITH THE ICC & PAUL HARRIS SOCIETY



When The Spotlight Moves Backstage: The People Who Made Rotterdam Happen

By Evelina Knowlton

The lights have now gone down on Rotary's European Action Summit – To Belong 2026

Five intense and wonderful days in Rotterdam. Five days of meeting old friends, making new ones, exchanging ideas and sharing some very special moments together.

Our social media feeds tell that story beautifully: hundreds of photographs, smiling faces, embraces, laughter and the unmistakable joy of being together again at an important Rotary gathering.

But now I would like to turn the spotlight somewhere else.

Let us turn it backstage.

Behind every successful event there are people whom we rarely see in the photographs. They arrive before everyone else. They solve problems that most participants will never know existed. They worry about the smallest details so that others do not have to. And when everything works perfectly, they quietly move on to the next task.

For weeks, I had the pleasure and privilege of working with an extraordinary group of Rotarians and Rotaractors to organise the InterCountry Committees Breakout Session on 12 September and our ICC presence in the House of Friendship.

They were an incredible team.

Working from Italy to organise an event taking place in Rotterdam also teaches you something important about trust. You have to rely completely on people you may never have met personally. You entrust them with responsibilities, decisions and details from hundreds of kilometres away.

I could not have placed that trust in better hands.



Uniting Rotarians Across Borders



What began as an organisational team has ended, for me, as a group of people I am now very proud to call dear friends.

Leadership Means Being There

My first and heartfelt thank you goes to #JandeMooij, responsible for the organisation of the Summit.

Despite carrying enormous responsibilities for the entire event, and despite the demands surrounding the presence of our Rotary International President Olayinka Babalola, Jan somehow always found the time to respond to my messages — usually almost immediately.

That may sound like a small thing. It isn't.

When somebody carries that level of responsibility and still makes colleagues feel that their questions matter, it says something very important about leadership.

Thank you, Jan. That was leadership in action.

Annet — My Other Half in Rotterdam

And then there is #AnnetWeijermarsCorver.

Annet was our Rotterdam team leader for the ICC event and the House of Friendship — and, during these past weeks, very definitely my “other half”!

She embodies so many of the Rotary values that we talk about but are not always fortunate enough to encounter so completely in one person: competence, commitment, generosity, respect and an extraordinary ability to bring people together.

She knows her work. She understands people. And, perhaps most importantly, she respects and values everyone who works with her and alongside her.

We worked relentlessly together for weeks, right through to the final preparation of the House of Friendship.

What visitors eventually saw at the ICC booth was the finished product. What they did not see were





the very early mornings, when preparations were already under way while many others were still waiting for the doors to open and the day's programme to begin.

That is the backstage of a successful Rotary/ICC event.

The Team Behind the Smiles

My deepest thanks therefore go to #EbedLitaay, #LauradeGroot, #AnastasiaMoor and #WillCampbell — Annet's fantastic team.

Your energy, patience, friendship and tireless contribution made an enormous difference. I will always be grateful to all of you. And there were many others who helped, supported, encouraged, carried, moved, prepared, welcomed and simply made things happen.

Every one of you contributed to what our visitors experienced.

Because a warm welcome does not happen by accident. A successful session does not happen by accident. A booth that looks effortless is very rarely effortless.

Behind it are people. And Finally... the Luggage Department!

There is one final thank-you.

To Richard Knowlton, who discovered a previously unsuspected talent and temporarily reinvented himself as our very own porter and baggage carrier!

Every successful team, after all, needs someone willing to carry the boxes. And perhaps that is the real message I take home from Rotterdam. Rotary is not only what happens under the spotlight. It is also what happens before the doors open and after everyone else has gone home. It is the person answering a message late at night, the volunteer arriving early in the morning, the Rotarian or Rotaractor moving a box, solving a problem, welcoming a stranger or quietly doing whatever needs to be done. The photographs show us the success.

The people backstage make the success possible. To Jan, Annet, Ebed, Laura, Anastasia, Will, Richard and every person who helped us along the way: thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Rotterdam gave a few unforgettable days. But what I will remember most are the people who made them possible.



New features : Section list, global map, Sessions agenda

By Pierre-Marie Achart – ICC ExCo Webmaster – A-RPIC Region 14

This Rotary ICC Executive Council's website is meant as a resource for Rotarians across the globe, whether they are ICC members or not. It features regularly updated information about what ICCs do, along with articles highlighting their impact.

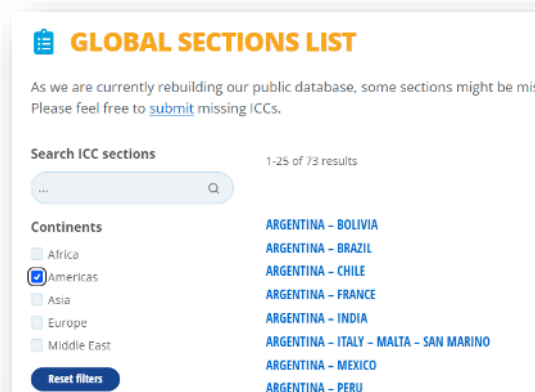
Today, we are pleased to announce several new features that we hope you will find helpful.

Comprehensive ICC Section Directory

The first new feature is a comprehensive, searchable directory of ICC sections worldwide. At the time of writing, more than 700 individual sections are listed in the system.

Some sections have not yet been published because we are still missing information about them. They will be added as soon as the necessary details become available.

As we continue building this public ICC section database, you may notice that some sections are missing or that certain details are incorrect or outdated. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and updates. You can also submit missing sections using the forms available on the website.



rotary-icc.org/sections

Global ICC Map

All listed sections are also displayed on a dynamic global map. Each section has its own marker, located approximately where the relevant club or contact person is based.

It is exciting to browse the map and see ICC sections in nearly every country worldwide. Some countries do not yet have ICCs, and the map helps identify opportunities for future ICC development in those areas.



rotary-icc.org/map

This feature has been in the making for nearly two years now, and I would like to take the opportunity and recognize the work of Executive Committee member [Bruno Scovazzi](#), who has been updating and maintaining the global ICC database for many years.

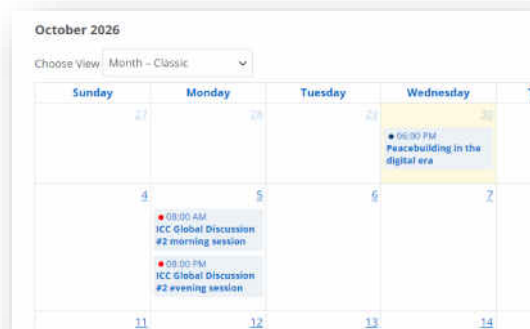
In the next stage, we plan to connect each section's page with relevant news articles about its activities, projects, and initiatives. These articles will eventually appear automatically on the corresponding section pages.

This will require considerable development work, and we appreciate your patience as we continue improving the website.

Global Agenda of Online ICC Sessions

The ICC Executive Committee has scheduled a series of Zoom meetings, to be held every few weeks. These meetings are listed in the agenda, where everyone can view the details and register. Many ICC sections also organize public online meetings that are open to all Rotarians. We invite these sections to submit their events for inclusion in the global agenda. Their sessions may also be highlighted in our monthly newsletter.

We encourage you to browse the online agenda and submit your upcoming ICC events.



rotary-icc.org/agenda

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Discover What ICCs Can Do for You, Your Club and Your District

Are you a District Governor looking for stronger international partnerships? A Club President searching for new service opportunities? An ICC Chair looking to build a more active, sustainable committee? Or a Rotarian or Rotaractor interested in working across borders?

The ICC Learning and Development Workgroup is launching a new programme to help you understand InterCountry Committees, use their networks and turn international friendship into practical action. The programme offers three ways to participate: articles in The Bridge, one-hour learning webinars, and monthly online drop-in sessions.

Who is this programme for?

District Governors and Governor teams

ICCs can help a district develop reliable international relationships, connect clubs with overseas partners and support projects involving several countries. The webinars will explain:

- How ICCs can contribute to district priorities
- How a district can establish and support an ICC
- How ICC networks can help clubs find international partners
- How ICCs can strengthen international service, peacebuilding and cultural understanding
- How District International Service Committees can work with ICCs

For Governors, District Governors-Elect and district officers, this programme will show how ICCs can become a practical resource for the whole district.

Club Presidents and club leaders

Many clubs want to work internationally but do not know how best to begin or how to find trustworthy partners. The programme will show Club Presidents and project leaders how ICCs can help them:

- Identify clubs and partners in other countries
- Develop international service projects
- Find expertise, local knowledge and contacts
- Build relationships that can continue beyond a single project
- Connect members with international Rotary opportunities

A club does not need to manage a large Global Grant to benefit from an ICC. Cooperation can begin with a modest project, a professional connection, a youth initiative or an exchange of ideas.

National and District ICC Chairs

National and District Chairs have an important responsibility: helping Section Chairs and members understand what ICCs can achieve and how they should operate. Dedicated webinars will cover the essential information they need to:

Uniting Rotarians Across Borders



INTERCOUNTRY
COMMITTEES
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- Support existing ICC Sections
- Help establish new ICC relationships
- Equip ICC Section Chairs and members
- Encourage cooperation between districts and countries
- Keep ICCs active, relevant and sustainable
- Explain the value of ICCs to Governors, clubs, Rotarians and Rotaractors

These sessions will combine practical guidance with examples from successful ICC activities.

ICC Section Chairs and members

Section Chairs are often the people who transform an international relationship into real activity. The webinars will help them understand how to:

- Establish and organise an ICC Section
- Develop a realistic programme of activities
- Engage clubs and districts
- Maintain communication with partners
- Identify opportunities for projects and exchanges
- Sustain an ICC beyond the enthusiasm of its founding members

The first practical guide in The Bridge already provides ten clear steps for establishing an ICC. Future articles and webinars will build on this foundation.

Rotarians and Rotaractors

Rotarians and Rotaractors (and their partners) interested in international service, innovative projects, peacebuilding, professional networking, or cultural exchange will discover how ICCs can connect them with people and opportunities in countries worldwide.

Rotaractors can bring new ideas, digital skills, international experience and valuable energy to ICC activities. We should aim to bring Rotaractors into every ICC Section.

LEARN FROM ICC PROJECTS THAT TURNED OPPORTUNITY INTO IMPACT

Articles in The Bridge will include stories showing what ICC cooperation can achieve.

A story in The Bridge, September 2026, described how a connection beginning with a dentist in Trinidad went through the Caribbean–Great Britain and Ireland ICC and then through the Ukraine–Great Britain and Ireland ICC. Mobile dental equipment left Trinidad ultimately reaching the area around Zaporizhzhia, in Ukraine where it could support a mobile dental surgery organised by the then DGE, in the war zone. There was no major cost. Success came from trusted contacts, cooperation and the willingness of people in each country to act.

In The Bridge, October 2026, another story explores a potentially revolutionary stem-cell spray treatment for young people suffering serious burns. Districts connected through ICCs helped finance the initiative through a Global Grant. This demonstrates how ICC networks can bring together districts, resources and innovative ideas to address serious needs.

These examples show two different strengths of ICCs: they can make simple cooperation possible, and they can also help build ambitious international projects.

Join the learning webinars

The one-hour webinars begin with pilots in October and continue into 2027. Experience indicates needs differ by area. If you want to join an October pilot please contact us.

Different sessions will address the needs of Governors and district leaders, National and District ICC Chairs, ICC Section Chairs, club leaders, Rotarians and Rotaractors. Participants will receive practical information they can apply in their districts, clubs and ICC Sections. Sessions will be offered at different times and across several time zones, giving participants around the world opportunities to attend.

Bring your questions to the monthly drop-ins

The monthly online drop-in sessions will be informal and interactive. You might want to ask:

- How do we start an ICC?
- How can we reactivate an inactive ICC Section?
- Where can our club find an international partner?
- Can an ICC help us develop a Global Grant?
- How can Rotaractors become involved?
- How do we encourage clubs to participate?
- What should an ICC Section Chair do during the first year?

Experienced members of the ICC team will be available to answer questions, discuss ideas and help participants identify practical next steps.

There is something here for every Rotary leader

- **If you are a Governor, the programme will show how ICCs can support your district.**
- **If you are a Club President, it will introduce new partners and service opportunities.**
- **If an ICC Section Chair, it will help you build a stronger and more sustainable team.**
- **If a Rotarian or Rotaractor, it will show you a way to take international action.**

Follow The Bridge for the latest stories and guides and look out for the dates of the forthcoming webinars and monthly drop-in sessions.

Whatever your role, join us and discover what ICCs can make possible—for you, your club, your district and communities around the world.

By Evelina Knowlton and James Onions, ICC Executive Council, Learning and Development Workgroup

HOW TO START A ROTARY ICC

A practical guide for districts, clubs, Rotarians and Rotaractors

By Learning & Development Working Group

An ICC Begins with People

An Intercountry Committee (ICC) starts with people willing to connect across borders. It becomes an official ICC through district approval, a shared purpose, and a clear plan. It becomes a multi-district resource.

START WITH PURPOSE

WHO CAN FORM AN ICC?

Only districts may officially form an ICC.

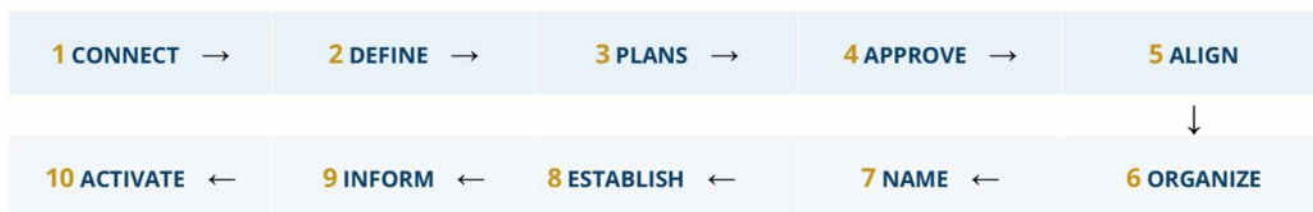
Rotarians and Rotaractors actively help plan, lead and deliver its activities.

WHO APPROVES IT?

Participating and supporting districts approve.

The ICC Executive Council supports.

The heart of an ICC is simple: trusted people, clear approval, and a first step - CONNECTION.



What Must Stay Clear

DISTRICT-LED

Only districts formally form and join an ICC – a district resource

COORDINATION, NOT CONTROL

An ICC supports districts and clubs — it never replaces them.

VOLUNTARY

Participation is voluntary, and costs should stay modest.

SELF-SUSTAINING

ICCs receive no financial support from Rotary International.

LEGALLY COMPLIANT

Every ICC follows Rotary policy and local law.

INDEPENDENT FROM RI

An ICC does not act on behalf of RI or The Rotary Foundation.

1

START WITH A REAL CONNECTION

Identify countries or districts that have a genuine reason to work together — an existing friendship, a request, a club relationship, a shared project, a cultural link, a crisis response, or a common interest in peacebuilding and international service.

EXAMPLE: *Rotarians in Lebanon and Italy already know one another through projects and visits. They decide to explore a formal ICC, because they want the relationship to grow and last.*

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF ICC

A national ICC involves two or more countries and needs the agreement of all District Governors in each country. A sub-national ICC involves specific districts and needs the agreement of the participating District Governors.

EXAMPLE: *If every district in Country A and Country B approves, it is national. If fewer Districts approve, it is sub-national with only those Districts involved named.*

2

3

FORM A SMALL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Create a small, practical planning group in each participating country or group of countries or each district or group of districts. Meet a few times, and once there is a concrete plan, contact the relevant District Governors, involve the District International Service Committee where one exists, share the purpose, suggest initial activities, and propose the first leadership team.

EXAMPLE: *One district representative, one experienced Rotarian, one Rotaractor, and one person linked to the first project or exchange — that's enough to get started.*

SECURE THE REQUIRED DISTRICT APPROVAL

The participating District Governors must have a process to approve the proposed relationship and confirm district participation, including whether additional multidistrict procedures apply under the Rotary Code of Policies – before chartering. The process may simply be a district or national ICC chair working on their behalf.

NOTE: *A friendly agreement between two clubs is valuable — but it isn't yet an ICC. The formal ICC begins once multiple districts or countries are involved and the required districts approve it.*

4

5

AGREE ON THE SHARED PURPOSE (S)

Before launching, agree on what you want to make possible. Keep the first year realistic: friendship and cultural exchange, a club twinning, a small service project, a global grant partner identification, a vocational exchange, or a peacebuilding activity.

EXAMPLE: *Instead of promising five projects, begin with one exchange and one clearly defined project opportunity. Think of a focus on involving young people. Include Rotaract.*

6

ELECT THE ICC LEADERSHIP

Each ICC should elect an ICC Chair from the participating districts, agreed through the districts processes, for a three-year term and appoint a Secretary and Treasurer who normally rotate annually. These are required by RI. Others can support lead projects, communications, Rotaract engagement, events or learning.

NOTE: *The Chair protects continuity. The wider team keeps the ICC active. Leadership should never depend on just one person. District agreement or awareness keep DGs involved.*

CONFIRM THE OFFICIAL NAME AND IDENTITY

A national ICC is named after the participating countries; a sub-national ICC after the participating districts. Name and branding must follow Rotary Brand Centre guidance and should be updated if participants change.

EXAMPLE *National: Country A–Country B ICC. Sub-national: District 1111–District 2222 ICC.*

7

8

HOLD THE ESTABLISHMENT MEETING – THE CHARTER CEREMONY

Bring the partners together — in person or online — to confirm approvals, name, elected officers, first-year objectives, communication rhythm, financial responsibilities, reporting, and the next meeting date. A protocol should be signed to mark the relationship publicly. A charter certificate should be produced naming District Governors of all districts actively involved. They will also be listed in the protocol. See examples in the appendix.

NOTE: *The protocol is the visible moment. The district approvals make it official.*

INFORM THE ICC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Send the ICC name, participating countries and districts, evidence of District Governor approvals (e.g. being named in charter protocol and certificate), Chair and officer contacts, establishment date, initial objectives, and protocol or founding document.

NOTE: *The Executive Council is a resource, support system and directory-keeper.*

9

10

MOVE QUICKLY FROM SIGNING TO ACTION

An ICC isn't successful because a protocol was signed. It succeeds when people stay connected and start working together: regular meetings (usually monthly), updated contacts, one practical activity, club and Rotaract links, and a plan for reporting and continuity.

EXAMPLE: *Within the first 90 days, hold the first working meeting and finalise one concrete activity.*

NOT THE SAME THING

District approval makes it official. The protocol marks it publicly. Informing the ICC Executive Council connects and records it. Activation is when it truly begins.

ICC FORMATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist alongside the practical guide above. Tick each item completed and use the helpful tips to keep the process on track.

1 BEFORE YOU START

✓	CHECKLIST	HELPFUL TIP
☐	Identify the partner country or district.	Start with people or districts that already share a relationship, a project, a cultural link, or a common interest.
☐	Confirm mutual interest on both sides.	A short exploratory conversation is enough at this stage. Focus on why the relationship would be useful.
☐	Decide whether the proposed ICC is national or sub-national.	National ICCs involve all districts in the participating countries. Sub-national ICCs involve specific districts.

2 BUILD THE FOUNDATION

✓	CHECKLIST	HELPFUL TIP
☐	Bring together a small planning team in each country or district.	Keep the group practical, able to meet regularly, and build Relationships of trust, secure approval and help activate the first activity.
☐	Agree on the shared purpose.	Define what the ICC should enable: trust, friendship, exchange, service, peacebuilding, projects or partner identification.
☐	Discuss the proposal with the participating District Governors.	Engage District Governors early so that expectations, approval requirements and district participation and benefits are clear.

3 FORM THE ICC

✓	CHECKLIST	HELPFUL TIP
☐	Obtain the required District Governor and district approvals.	A club relationship or informal agreement is valuable, but the ICC becomes official only through the required district approvals.
☐	Elect or confirm the ICC leadership and meet several times to build trust.	Confirm the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, and identify people to lead projects, communications, and Rotaract engagement.
☐	Confirm the official ICC name.	Use the participating country names for a national ICC and district numbers for a sub-national ICC.
☐	Hold the Charter meeting.	Confirm approvals, officers, first-year objectives, communication rhythm, responsibilities and the next meeting date.

4 AFTER ESTABLISHMENT

✓	CHECKLIST	HELPFUL TIP
☐	Notify the ICC Executive Council.	Share the ICC name, participating districts, approvals, leadership contacts, establishment date and initial objectives.
☐	Plan the first practical activity.	Begin with one realistic activity that helps the relationship activate quickly.
☐	Schedule the next working meeting.	Do not allow the charter ceremony to become the final activity. Set the next date before the meeting ends.

KEEP IT HUMAN - Build trust before building projects

This guide is part of the ICC Learning & Development toolkit. For more information go to: www.rotary-icc.org

From Relationships to Action: ICC Leaders Meet in Palanga

Intercountry Committee Meeting | Palanga, Lithuania | 6 September 2026

By PDG Marius Grigelionis – D1462 – ICC National Chair (Lithuania)

The traditional Intercountry Committee meeting held in Palanga, Lithuania, on 6 September brought together ICC leaders, District Governors and Rotarians from across Europe and beyond to discuss a question central to the future of the ICC movement: how can established relationships between countries be translated into practical resources for districts, peacebuilding and lasting international service?

The meeting formed part of an exceptional Rotary weekend in Palanga. The 25th anniversary Rotariada, Lithuania's largest annual Rotary gathering, brought together more than 1,500 Lithuanian Rotarians and family members and almost 400 international guests from 20 countries. Alongside the traditional programme of fellowship and sport, Palanga hosted a Rotary Action Summit, training for incoming District Governors and a visit by Rotary International President Yinka Babalola.

For the ICC community, this setting was particularly significant. What began in Lithuania in 2002 as a gathering of several Rotary clubs has developed into an event involving around 80 clubs and, this year, more than 2,000 participants. Bringing an ICC meeting into this environment connected international cooperation directly with the wider Rotary community rather than treating it as a separate ICC activity.

A meeting focused on the next chapter of ICC

District Governor Andrius Barniškis opened the meeting, followed by a video address from Annemarie Mostert, President of the ICC Executive Council. Andrzej Ludek, Past President of the ICC Executive Council and Senior Advisory - Continuity, then presented the 2026-2028 ICC perspective.

The international dimension continued with Robin Charlesworth of the Rotary E-Club of of Houston Vice-President of the ICC National Committee and a leader of ICC USA-Ukraine, presenting ICC activities in the United States. ICC National Chair for Lithuania PDG Marius Grigelionis presented ICC activities in Lithuania.

The presentations also illustrated the breadth of experience gathered in Palanga. The meeting brought together ICC Executive Council leadership, District 1462 leadership, and ICC practitioners from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, the United States, Ukraine and other countries. But the programme was deliberately designed to go beyond presentations.

Two 30-minute panels addressed issues that increasingly determine whether ICCs remain networks of friendship or become strategic resources capable of producing measurable Rotary action



Peace through relationships - and through action

The first panel, “International Peace Initiatives,” brought together Robin Charlesworth; PDG Jurgita Turulienė of Lithuania; Erich Prezewowsky, Chairman of the Germany-Lithuania Intercountry Committee; and Iryna Timanyuk, Co-Chair of the ICC Ukraine-USA Committee.

For ICCs, peace is not an abstract addition to their mission. Relationships between Rotarians in different countries can preserve dialogue, create trust and provide networks through which humanitarian and community initiatives can be implemented when circumstances become difficult.

That discussion had particular resonance in Palanga. During the same Rotary weekend, Lithuania hosted the Ukrainian Heroes Games for the first time. Twenty-five Ukrainian soldiers and veterans who had suffered severe war injuries and amputations participated. District 1462 has directed more than EUR 2 million in humanitarian and social assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale war, while maintaining Rotary’s distinction between humanitarian support and military assistance.

The presence in the ICC panel of representatives directly engaged in USA-Ukraine cooperation therefore gave the subject an immediate practical context. For an ICC audience, the underlying question is increasingly important: what happens after an international relationship has been established?

Friendship and dialogue remain fundamental, but their potential becomes much greater when relationships enable humanitarian action, community resilience, youth engagement, professional cooperation and longer-term recovery. In that sense, peacebuilding through ICC is not necessarily a single “peace project.” It can be the accumulated result of trusted relationships that allow Rotarians in different countries to act together when action is needed.



Can ICC become a resource that every district actually uses?

The second panel moved from mission to organisational practice. Under the title “ICC as Every District’s Resource of Choice,” Andrzej Ludek was joined by Eglė Kesylėnė, Chairman of the Lithuania-Norway Intercountry Committee; Anette Løwert of Denmark, whose Rotary service includes senior Foundation, PolioPlus, training and district leadership responsibilities; and Edita Katinaitė-Kalčiūnienė, Chairman of the Lithuania-Denmark Intercountry Committee.

The composition of the panel reflected an important point: the future relevance of ICC does not depend only on ICC leadership. It depends on how effectively ICC connects with District Governors, The Rotary Foundation, clubs and Rotary’s other professional and service resources.

For experienced Rotarians, the challenge is familiar. A club may have an excellent international project idea but lack a trusted partner in another country. A district may need local knowledge before entering a new partnership. A Global Grant initiative may require both international contacts and experienced Rotary expertise. Peacebuilding or environmental projects may need several districts rather than one bilateral relationship.



The ICC network potentially addresses precisely this gap: it already contains relationships, country knowledge and trusted Rotarians across borders. The strategic question is therefore less about creating additional Rotary structures and more about making existing international relationships accessible and useful to the districts and clubs that need them.

For District Governors in particular, this also raises the question of continuity. Governors serve defined terms; international relationships frequently develop over many years. ICCs can help preserve those relationships across successive Rotary leadership cycles while giving new district team an established network from which to work.

A new USA-Lithuania connection

Palanga also produced a tangible next step. The programme included the kick-off of a new USA-Lithuania Intercountry Committee, adding a new bilateral relationship to Lithuania's expanding ICC network. The meeting presentation gave this initiative its own place in the programme, visually bringing together the flags of Lithuania and the United States under the Intercountry Committee identity.

Its significance lies not simply in adding another committee. The measure of the new relationship will be what follows: club connections, projects, exchanges, peacebuilding initiatives and opportunities that neither side would have developed as easily on its own. That is also a useful measure for the wider ICC movement.

ICC within a larger Rotary ecosystem

The Palanga meeting did not take place in isolation. Rotariada itself combined fellowship, service, international participation and public engagement. The weekend included the Rotary End Polio charity run, support for Lithuania's Paralympic movement, the Heroes Games and the Rotary Action Summit.

That broader setting offered an appropriate backdrop for the ICC discussions. Intercountry Committees are at their strongest when international friendship is not an end point but an infrastructure for action: connecting people who would otherwise not meet, helping districts find trusted counterparts, carrying relationships across Rotary years and turning international understanding into service.

The Palanga programme brought those dimensions together: continuity, peace, district leadership and practical international cooperation.



ICC Belgium/Luxembourg Brings Rotarians Together Across Borders in Liège

By Peter Bal – Chair ICC Belux

Around 50 ICC members and Rotary leaders gathered in Liège to strengthen international cooperation, explore the evolving role of Intercountry Committees and build new connections across borders.

ICC Belgium/Luxembourg (BeLux) held its in-person meeting in Liège on 19 September, alongside the District Conference of Rotary District 2160 and the celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Liège. The meeting, initiated by Marcel Tilkin, former Chair of ICC BeLux, brought together around 50 ICC members from Belgium, Luxembourg and several other countries. A number of District Governors also joined the gathering, giving the meeting a strong international and inter-district dimension.

Among the special guests were **Annemarie Mostert, President of the ICC Executive Council, and her predecessor, Nathalie Huyghebaert.**

A growing role for ICCs

Opening the meeting, ICC BeLux Chair Peter Bal reflected on the increasing relevance of

Intercountry Committees in a world marked by growing tensions and conflicts. He highlighted the role ICCs can play in bringing people together across national and cultural boundaries, while also creating tangible value for Rotary Clubs and Districts. Strengthening the connection between ICCs and Rotary Districts is an important part of this ambition, ensuring that ICCs can contribute effectively to international service, fellowship and peace-building initiatives.

In her keynote address, Annemarie Mostert developed this message further. She stressed the importance of involving **Rotary Peace Fellows and Rotaractors** in ICC activities and encouraged ICCs to position themselves as a practical resource for Rotary Clubs and Districts.

Her message was clear: ICCs should help facilitate international actions and initiatives and aim to become the “resource of choice” for international collaboration within Rotary. She also emphasised the importance of increasing the visibility of ICCs and making greater use of modern digital tools and platforms to connect Rotarians internationally.



New international connections

The meeting also translated international cooperation into concrete action. During a video-conference session, new ICC collaboration charters with **District 9010, which includes the Maghreb**, were signed.

Hamadi Siali and Younes Saih, PDG and DG of District 9010, addressed the gathering, while several other participants joined remotely, demonstrating how digital participation can help extend the reach of ICC activities beyond geographical boundaries.

Andreas Strub, President of the BeLux–Germany ICC, presented his recently appointed role representing Rotary International towards the institutions of the European Union. Herbert Jess, President of the German section of the BeLux–Germany ICC, also addressed the meeting.

The programme was further enriched by Georges Le Beau, who presented the **End Plastic Soup** initiative and invited ICCs to support its international development.

Dialogue, friendship and action across borders

One of the defining characteristics of the meeting was its high level of interaction. Questions, comments and experiences were shared throughout the morning, transforming the programme into a genuine dialogue rather than simply a series of presentations.

The meeting concluded with a group picture capturing the spirit of the day: an inspiring gathering, but above all an opportunity for Rotarians from different countries to meet, exchange ideas and strengthen friendships across borders.

The Liège meeting demonstrated what InterCountry Committees can bring to Rotary: **connections between countries, support for Clubs and Districts, opportunities for international service and, above all, relationships that help build understanding across borders.**

A warm thank you goes to Marcel Tilkin for initiating the meeting and to everyone who participated and contributed to its success.





Sharm El Sheikh Peace Icon

By PDG Architect Yasser Assem – RPIC 2026-2029 Region 27 Zone 22

The philosophy behind the Sharm El Sheikh Peace Icon was to create more than a monument; it was conceived as a universal message from Egypt to the world. The composition brings together symbols deeply rooted in Egyptian civilization with the universal language of peace. The lotus rises from the ground as a symbol of rebirth, while the wings, inspired by ancient Egyptian imagery, open outward in all directions, embracing the globe and expressing protection, openness and the meeting of civilizations. Above, the doves and olive branches carry the message of peace beyond borders. Water, light and movement were integrated into the design so that the monument would feel alive rather than static. For me, the essence of the Peace Icon is very simple: Egypt, a civilization that has connected Africa, the Middle East and the world for thousands of years, continues to open its wings and send a message of peace, dialogue and coexistence to all humanity.

Dr. Yasser Assem

Chairman & CEO, Pavillion Architects
Designer of the Sharm El Sheikh Peace Icon

Visit The Peace Icon Memorial,
Historical places to visit in Sharm El Sheikh
<https://share.google/iu3UpC7V3Ht5OywBG>



WHEN THE EARTH SHOOK, ROTARY MOVED

By James Onions – ICC Executive Council – Learning & Development Working Group Lead

From the devastation of Türkiye's 2023 earthquakes came an extraordinary Rotary initiative. A conversation between friends became an international partnership, a Global Grant and, ultimately, life-changing treatment for severely burned children.

WHEN THE EARTH STOPPED SHAKING, THE SUFFERING DID NOT

The earthquakes that struck Türkiye in 2023 left devastation on an enormous scale. Homes disappeared, families were displaced, and communities were forced into emergency accommodation.

For some children, there was another terrible consequence.

They suffered severe burns, either directly during the earthquake or later through accidents in the cramped and difficult conditions in which displaced families were living.

The immediate earthquake had passed. But for these children and their families, the emergency was continuing.

Rotarians in Türkiye and Great Britain & Ireland saw the need and began asking a very practical question:

What can we do?

That question would eventually bring together Rotarians across several countries and lead to a Global Grant of more than \$50,000.

But it began with a conversation.

A CONVERSATION BECOMES A DECISION

At an in-person InterCountry Committee networking meeting, Grace Gibbs and James Onions from GB&I and Canan Ersoz from Türkiye discussed how Rotary might respond.



The Power of Friendship

The Tent/Container Cities



They learned about an innovative treatment for children suffering from severe burns.

The procedure uses skin cells taken from the patient's own body. These are mixed with a selected enzyme to produce a solution that can be sprayed onto a mesh-type wound dressing.

The potential was striking. The solution could be prepared in about 30 minutes. It required only around 6 per cent of the patient's skin that would normally be needed for a conventional autograft. Treatment time could be reduced, recovery improved and residual scarring substantially decreased.



Here was a possible solution.

But there was a problem.

The doctors needed the equipment and materials to deliver it.

For the Rotarians involved, this was the moment when sympathy had to become action.

They decided to create a Rotary Global Grant.

FROM FRIENDSHIP TO ACTION

That decision changed everything.

What had started as a discussion between a few Rotarians became a multi-country, multi-district and multi-club effort.

Türkiye, Great Britain & Ireland, Austria and Germany became involved. Turkish Districts 2420, 2430 and 2440, Austrian District 1920 and GB&I Districts 1145 and 1120 contributed District Designated Funds.

Together they provided \$17,000 in DDF. Rotary clubs raised a further \$19,620, with the largest club contribution coming from the Rotary Club of Hamelin in Germany. The Rotary Foundation added another \$13,600.

The result was a Global Grant worth more than \$50,000.

District 1145 became the international sponsor. The Rotary Clubs of Twickenham upon Thames, Kew Gardens and Kingston joined the team working with the host Rotary Club of Samsun, supported by the Rotary Club of Malatya.

This was Rotary's international network doing exactly what it can do best: bringing together people who would otherwise be separated by geography, institutions and borders and focusing their combined resources on a specific human need.

The Hand Over

The equipment handover from RC Samsun/Malatya and PDG Canan to Prof Mehmet



THE GLOBAL GRANT REACHES THE HOSPITAL

Once The Rotary Foundation approved the grant, the partnership moved rapidly from fundraising to treatment.

Rotarians worked with Professor Mehmet Demircan at the Paediatric Burns Centre of the Department of Paediatric Surgery at İnönü University School of Medicine in Malatya.

The project provided equipment and enzymes sufficient for up to 100 applications of the procedure.

An essential piece of equipment was a specially designed laboratory shaker. It allows skin cells taken from the child's own body to be mixed with the selected enzyme and prepared as a solution suitable for spraying onto the wound dressing.

The project did more than provide technology.

Parents were taught about the treatment and the follow-up care their children would need. They also received guidance about preventing similar accidents in the future.

The objective was not simply to respond to an emergency.

It was to leave behind knowledge and capability.

85 CHILDREN. 100 TREATMENTS. 100% SURVIVAL.

The numbers tell an extraordinary story.

Following clinical training, the medical team treated 85 children, aged from only seven months to 17 years. They received 100 treatments.

These were not minor injuries. The children had burns affecting 75 per cent or more of their bodies. Most resulted from scalding, while others were caused by high-voltage electricity, direct flames or explosions.

The reported survival rate was **100 per cent**.

Residual scarring was also significantly lower than would have been expected without the epidermal spray treatment.

But statistics tell only part of the story. Behind every number was a child.

Behind every child was a frightened family.

And behind the treatment was a chain of people, clubs and districts in different countries who had decided that distance was no reason to stand aside.

“THE MAGICAL POWER OF ROTARY”

Grace Gibbs, now Assistant Governor in District 1145, later visited the Burns Centre with Francis Hodge, Assistant Governor in District 1120, to monitor the project and see the results.

Professor Demircan summed up what the partnership had achieved:

“The magical power of Rotary has combined with the needs of paediatric burn patients... With this wonderful treatment method, our patients are recovering faster and are quickly reintegrating into society.”

Grace Gibbs saw another dimension to the achievement:

That matters because this relatively low-cost approach could potentially be relevant to



The Cell Shaker Device in use at the university Hospital Burns Centre

QUOTE FROM Prof Memhet

- The project is going perfectly and it is unique. Until today, we have treated 85 patients with 100 applications using epidermal spray. The results are extraordinary.



other disaster areas and regions where medical resources are limited.

THE REAL POWER OF AN ICC

There is an important lesson here.

An Intercountry Committee cannot stop an earthquake.

It cannot rebuild an entire city or remove the suffering caused by a natural disaster.

But it can do something immensely valuable before disaster ever strikes.



The international host visitor's meets RC Malatya

It can build relationships.

And when an emergency comes, those relationships can become pathways to action.

The people know one another. They can connect clubs and districts. They can find expertise. They can identify resources. They can bring countries together. And, through The Rotary Foundation, they can turn an idea into a properly funded and sustainable project.

That is exactly what happened here.

The earthquake created the need.

Doctors identified a possible solution.

ICC relationships brought people together.

Rotarians mobilised clubs and districts across borders.

The Global Grant provided the means.
And children received the treatment.

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT IS STILL TO COME

The story does not necessarily end with these 85 children.

Professor Demircan intends to present the experience and results at national and international congresses and publish them in a recognised medical journal, acknowledging the support of The Rotary Foundation, districts and clubs.

That matters because this relatively low-cost approach could potentially be relevant to other disaster areas and regions where medical resources are limited.

A response born from the tragedy of one earthquake may therefore generate knowledge capable of helping children elsewhere in the world.

And that leaves us with a larger thought.

WE CANNOT ALWAYS PREVENT DISASTER. WE CAN DECIDE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

The real measure of an international network is not the number of countries it reaches, the meetings it holds or the friendships it creates.

It is what happens when somebody, somewhere, needs help.

The Türkiye burns project demonstrates what becomes possible when friendship is already in place, expertise is identified and people have the determination to act.

A devastating earthquake created pain and urgent need.

A conversation created an idea.

An international network created a partnership.

A Global Grant created the means to act.

And action gave children a better chance of life.

That is the journey from friendship to action - and from action to lasting impact.

The authors would welcome enquiries:

James Onions, PDG D1145, ICC Executive Council – Lead Learning and Development Workgroup

Grace Gibbs, AG D1145, ICC Chair GB&I – Turkey
Canan Ersoz, PDG D2430, ICC Executive Council, ICC Turkey-GB&I – Learning and Development Workgroup

Evelina Knowlton, ICC Executive Council - Learning and Development Workgroup

When International Partnership Becomes Service

By Pierangelo Panozzo

On 6 September, more than 140 sponsors, partners, volunteers and members of the RBS family gathered on a beautiful terrace in Bengaluru for Sound Healing for a Cause, organised by our friends at Rotary Bangalore Social.

For 90 minutes, the gentle resonance of Tibetan singing bowls and their deep vibrations created an extraordinary atmosphere of peace, harmony and reflection. Yet behind that moment of serenity lay something even more powerful: a concrete act of compassion and service.

The funds raised during the event will help finance life-saving heart surgery for four children in need. Four young lives, four families and four new reasons to hope.

The Rotary Club Rome International was deeply honoured to serve as the International Partner of this meaningful initiative, alongside Rotaract District 3191, 23 Rotary Clubs and many generous sponsors and partners.

For us, this is exactly what international partnership through the ICC network should represent.

A project may be born within a local community, but international cooperation can give it a broader reach—connecting people, clubs and communities across borders and transforming shared values into meaningful action.

The ICCs are far more than a framework for friendship between countries. They can become powerful instruments of cultural exchange, mutual understanding, cooperation, service and growth.

Through these connections, we learn from one another, embrace different cultures and discover new ways of serving our communities.



Most importantly, we transform Rotary friendship into something real, visible and capable of changing lives.

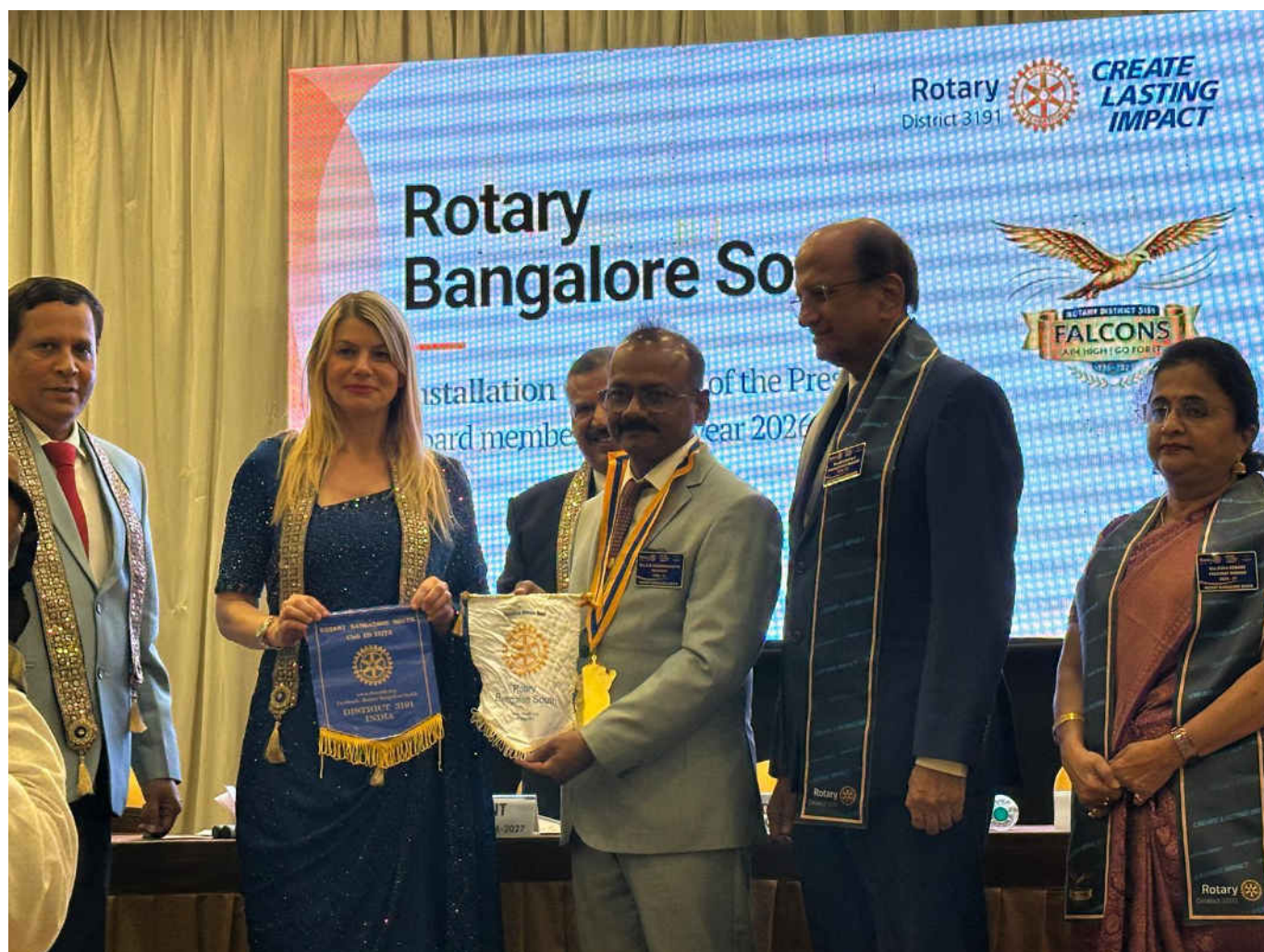
Our heartfelt thanks go to our member Jenny E. Bohlin Panozzo, President of ICC Italy–India, whose dedication, warmth and international relationships made this partnership possible.

Different countries.

Different cultures.

One Rotary family.

And, above all, four children who now have a better chance at life.



Keeping the Russian-German Bridges Alive: Music, Dialogue and Friendship Across Borders

The ICC Russia–Germany brings together Rotarians committed to strengthening mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation between our countries. Revived in 1998, the Committee has a long tradition of connecting Rotary members, clubs and districts across borders, encouraging club partnerships and creating opportunities for cultural, youth, professional and humanitarian exchange. Today, the ICC also serves as a platform for the wider German- and Russian-speaking Rotary community, welcoming the active participation of Rotarians from Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg.

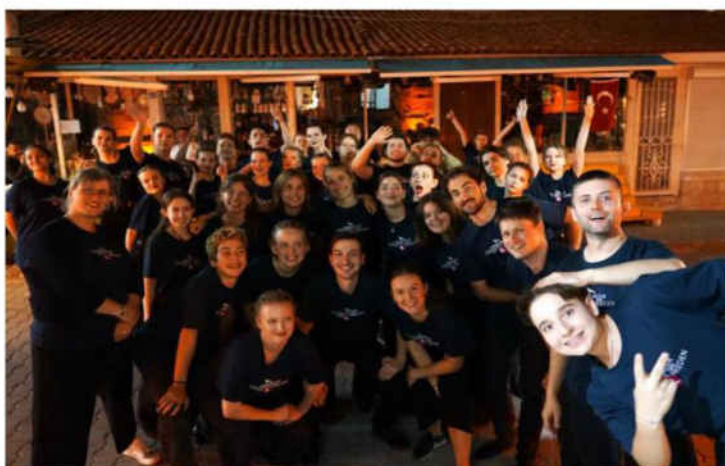
This article presents a joint interview with the leadership of the Committee and the founders of one of the initiatives it supports – “Musik für den Frieden – Музыка ради мира” (“Music for Peace”). Through their different perspectives, they share the story of how the project began, how its cooperation with the ICC Russia–Germany developed, what has already been achieved, and why maintaining personal contacts and cultural dialogue remains so important today. Together, their voices tell a story not only about music, but about friendship, mutual understanding and the human connections that continue to build bridges between Russia and Germany.

To stay in contact:
<https://iccrussiagermany.org/>
iccrfd.pr@gmail.com

What is “Musik für den Frieden” and how did it begin? What was the original idea behind the project?

Thomas and Ulrike Vogt - Founders of “Musik für den Frieden”, musicians and music educators, RC Müllheim-Badenweiler:

“Musik für den Frieden – Музыка ради мира” is a peace initiative bringing together young people from Germany and Russia. Through joint peace concerts and the production of music films, these young people aim to demonstrate that even in times of conflict it is possible to meet one another with friendship and trust. In this way, they hope to plant a seed for peaceful coexistence in Europe in the future.



For the young people involved, the successful example of Franco-German reconciliation gives hope that this initiative is not a naive illusion. Germany and France were once regarded as hereditary enemies and fought each other for centuries. Yet this hostility was ultimately transformed into a stable friendship, first through impulses and strong commitment from civil society – including teacher Marthe-Marie Dortel-Claudot, Pax Christi and trade unions – and, 19 years later, through political leaders such as French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer



taking up those impulses. The millions of school exchanges between the two countries also played a significant role.

Peace is like love: neither can simply be demanded; both must be given and lived together. Demanding love or peace can lead to conflict and violence. The encounters of young people within "Musik für den Frieden" take place in the sphere of art, music and culture – a sphere in which human beings can experience their humanity. As Friedrich Schiller wrote in his Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man: "Man is only fully human when he plays," that is, when he engages creatively and artistically.

"Musik für den Frieden" was founded in 2018 by musicians and music educators Thomas Vogt and Ulrike Vogt (Rotary Club Müllheim-Badenweiler; RPIC Zones 15–16, 2025–2028). A major motivation for both of them was the wish to leave a peaceful and liveable future to their children and grandchildren, and indeed to all children. They decided to become involved where conflicts in Europe were escalating again, where bridges were being broken, walls were being built and dialogue was increasingly falling silent. In Andrey Koryakov, director of the Premier Theatre in Tver, they found an ideal partner with whom they immediately connected both personally and artistically.

In 2019, the first encounters and joint concerts took place in Tver and Moscow. A German delegation of more than 70 participants – young people and accompanying adults – travelled to Russia for ten days. Even then, the Rotary Club Moscow Humboldt provided organisational and financial support. A few weeks later, the Russian young singers and dancers made a return visit, giving concerts in southern Germany.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, three music films were produced through online collaboration and published on the project's own YouTube channel. From 2023 to 2025, German and Russian young people met at Music Peace Camps in Türkiye, culminating in major concerts in Izmir, Çeşme and Bursa.

Regional television stations in Germany and Russia, numerous newspapers and other media – including Rotary magazines in Russia, Germany and Türkiye – reported on the peace projects. In 2022, "Musik für den Frieden" received the prestigious Göttingen Peace Prize, and in 2026 it was awarded the Löwenherz Peace Prize.

How did the project come into contact with the ICC Russia–Germany, and how did the cooperation begin?

Jens Strohschneider - Chair of the Russian Section of the ICC Russia–Germany, 2025-2026; RC Moskau Metropol:



At the Rotary Peace Conference 2025 in Istanbul, amidst the convergence of the International ICC Summit, a profound connection was forged between the Russian Section of the ICC Russia–Germany and the creators of the "Musik für den Frieden" project, Rotarians Ulrike and Thomas Vogt.

Against a backdrop of a global dialogue strictly centered on peace, Thomas and Ulrike presented their visionary initiative, using the universal language of music as a vehicle for cross-border healing. Guided by these shared values, a Belarusian Rotarian friend bridged the gap, introducing us to a project that transcended geopolitical borders.

What began as a single introduction quickly blossomed into a deep testament to Rotarian friendship. Over the following days, the historic streets of Istanbul provided the scenery for several inspiring meetings and an unforgettable dinner. Wrapped in warm Turkish hospitality, we shared ideas, laughter, and a collective commitment to harmony.

This first encounter beautifully illustrated the core essence of Rotary: that true peace is built not through abstract treaties, but through genuine human connection, shared cultural bridges, and the enduring bonds of international goodwill.

What steps have already been taken by the ICC to support “Musik für den Frieden”?

Natalia Anisimova-Krucker - Secretary of the ICC Russia–Germany; Rotary E-Club of Russia:

Since the first meeting with the project’s founders at the Rotary International Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul in February 2025, the Russian and German Sections of our ICC have been meeting online every month, using simultaneous interpretation. At these meetings, we regularly discuss, among other matters, developments relating to this project.

Under the leadership of the non-profit organisation Musik für den Frieden e.V. and with the support of the Germany–Türkiye and Russia–Germany ICCs, a Music Peace Camp took place in Türkiye in October 2025. In addition to providing financial support, representatives of the Türkiye, Germany and Russia Intercountry Committees personally participated in the programme. It is also important to acknowledge the support of the highly active Rotary Peace Committee of District 2440 for the Music Peace Camps. Following the 2025 Music Peace Camp, two articles were published in Rotary magazines in Russia and Germany.

In May 2026, two members of the German Section of the ICC attended the District Conference of Russian District 2223 in Moscow. The programme included a presentation of the ICC Russia–Germany and a talk on the “Musik für den Frieden” project, which generated considerable interest among participants.

From 23 October to 1 November 2026, the Music Peace Camp will take place once again – this time in Germany. Sixty young musicians from Russia and Germany will participate. The total cost of the project exceeds €60,000. In preparing the visit of the Russian participants – leaders and members of the Premier children’s theatre studio from Tver – our ICC assisted with visa matters at the German Embassy in Moscow.

To secure the support of Russian Rotarians for this project, which aims to foster mutual understanding between nations, the Russia–Germany ICC published a detailed article in the August issue of Rotary Russia.

As part of the ongoing development of “Musik für den Frieden”, our ICC is considering the idea of organising a major international music festival in Russia featuring artistic groups from Russia, Germany and Austria.

What does the project mean from the German perspective? What perspectives and plans are there for further cooperation?

Axel Richter, Chair of the German Section of the ICC Russia–Germany; RC Hildesheim:

The “Musik für den Frieden” project is of great importance to us as German Rotarians because it helps maintain Rotarian connections and friendships with our Russian colleagues.

Especially in times of armed conflict, the civil societies of both countries should remain connected in the spirit of Rotary’s Four-Way Test:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

At the most recent major concerts of the “Musik für den Frieden” initiative in Izmir and Bursa, Türkiye, in October 2025, we could see the powerful impact these concerts can have. Although the songs were performed in German, Russian and English, their message was understood by everyone.

What unites the worldwide Rotary community is the desire for peace and international understanding. In this spirit, we hope for regular friendly and cultural exchange with our Russian friends and, in particular, for a series of concerts in Germany and Russia.

The language of art and culture becomes especially important when communication between us becomes more difficult.

Why is it important for the Russian side to continue dialogue and personal contacts? Why is it especially important today to support such initiatives and personal exchange between Germany and Russia?

Svetlana Frolova, Chair of the Russian Section of the ICC Russia–Germany since 2026; RC Moskau Metropol:

For the Russian side, it is especially important today to preserve dialogue and personal contacts with Germany. Our relations are much deeper than the circumstances of any particular period. Russia and Germany are connected by centuries of shared history, cultural and intellectual exchange.

These connections can be seen even in the history of our countries’ ruling houses: Catherine the Great was born a German princess, and Russian and German dynasties were closely connected for centuries. German scientists, architects, musicians and entrepreneurs contributed greatly to Russia’s development, while Russian culture has long been part of Germany’s cultural landscape. Goethe, Schiller, Kant and Beethoven are as familiar in Russia as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky are in Germany.

Despite the tragic chapters of our common history, our peoples were able to rebuild trust and create strong cultural and personal ties. Today, when opportunities for communication have become much more limited, it is particularly important not to lose what previous generations have built. Circumstances change, but rebuilding lost trust can take decades.



This is why initiatives such as “Musik für den Frieden” are so valuable. They remind us that Russian-German relations are not only relations between states, but above all between people. Music and culture give young Russians and Germans the opportunity to meet, create something together and discover what unites them.

This is also where I see the special role of Rotary and our InterCountry Committee: to preserve these human bridges and create opportunities for dialogue. The aim is to ensure that, when circumstances change, we will not have to start again from zero – the bridges will still be there.

What can readers of *The Bridge* around the world do to support “Musik für den Frieden” and help the project continue?

Thomas and Ulrike Vogt:

The vision of “Musik für den Frieden” is for more and more musicians – choirs, orchestras and bands – from different countries to come together, united by a shared commitment to peace and organise joint peace concerts. This could eventually lead to major international peace and cultural festivals in cities around the world, involving not only musicians but also other artists – dancers, actors, poets, filmmakers and others – joining together to send a message of peace.

As a worldwide organisation that is not bound to the national interests of any one country, Rotary can embrace this initiative by helping to organise such festivals and supporting them financially.

For 2027, “Musik für den Frieden” is planning a Music Peace Camp in Russia. Depending on the financial resources available, additional music groups could also be invited to participate.

Concrete support could take the form of individual donations and, potentially, funding through a Rotary Global Grant for the “Musik für den Frieden” project.

Further information: www.musik-fuer-den-frieden.de



The Door Is Open: Rotarians and Rotaractors, Are You Ready to Explore the Magic?

By Annemarie Mostert

For 76 years, Rotary's Intercountry Committees have built peace one friendship, one twin club and one cross-border project at a time. Yet the 2026 Perception Survey of 442 Rotarians across 134 districts shows a familiar picture. Many Rotarians and Rotaractors stand at the window, looking in with admiration. They do not realise the door is already open and a seat at the table is waiting for them.

The numbers tell the story. 88% know of ICCs and 80% rate them essential or very important, yet only 42% say they fully understand how ICCs work. Twin Clubs and Friendship Exchanges, the tools closest to everyday Rotary life, are recognised by just 42% and 43% of members. People know our name, but far fewer know what we offer. The conviction is real and lasting. It has held steady across six survey waves, even as the sample nearly tripled. Meanwhile, 151 members are convinced or curious but have never taken part, and 90% say they are open to learning more. They are not saying no. They are waiting to be shown the way in.

Part of the reason lies with us. Members ask for proof of impact: 71% want practical project examples, 53% want clearer basic information and 51% want simple guidance on how to join. Some point to committees that exist only on paper and leaders who never rotate.

There is also a wider window we must face honestly. Entire countries, regions and even continents have very few active ICC sections or relationships, and some have none at all. Peacebuilding cannot remain a conversation among a few familiar partners.

See it for yourself. [The ICC dashboard maps](#) where sections and relationships are active and where they are missing: Find your country. Find your region. Look at the gaps. Every empty space on that map is an unopened door, and it may be waiting for you.

Then take the first step with ICC Basic, our interactive starter kit built on Gemini Notebook: [ICC literacy](#) Ask it anything, from what an ICC does and how twin clubs work to how to join or start a section. Engage, ask questions and learn at your own pace.

The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan is built to help you walk through the door:

Review every committee or section. All section+ ICC relationships published on our web site will be reviewed in Year 1, so each can be revitalised, paused or closed.

Reach more languages. A mobile-first digital hub will serve 15+ languages, starting with Rotary's eight official languages.

Show real impact. A project story library will support a target of 75+ multi-country Global Grants and three Peace Forums each year.

Pilot in 100 districts. A new ICC Chair framework will be piloted in at least 100 districts, including regions where ICCs have been absent.

Rotaractors, this invitation is especially for you. Today 34% of you are interested in ICCs, but only 12% are active, the widest gap in the survey. The new plan sets a 60% Rotaract co-leadership target across ICC initiatives. You are not being offered a seat at the back of the room; you are being asked to help lead. Open the dashboard, find a region waiting for a partner and ask ICC Basic how to begin. Are you ready to explore the magic?

So how long will you keep watching through the window? If your country shows no active ICC, you could be the one who opens the first door. Talk to your club's ICC representative, ask your district about the next ICC session, or propose a twin club or joint project.

The table has been set for 76 years, and there is a place with your name on it. Accept the invitation and join the positive peacebuilding family today.

Building Peace Every Day: My Journey with IEP and Rotary

By Habiba Bennani – Peace Ambassador

Becoming an IEP Peace Ambassador in 2026 is not merely a title—it is a methodology, a commitment, and a compass for action. As a dedicated Rotarian in District 9010 (Tunisia) since 2022, I am honored to share my experience with the strategic partnership between Rotary International and the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), where grassroots service and citizen diplomacy converge.

Understanding Positive Peace: A Shift in Perspective

For the general public, peace is often understood simply as the absence of war or direct violence—what peacebuilding experts refer to as “Negative Peace.” However, through the certification program offered by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)—a world-leading think tank in peace research and risk analysis—I explored the far broader and more dynamic concept of “Positive Peace.” Positive Peace refers to the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful, resilient societies. It is built upon eight foundational pillars:

- * Well-Functioning Government
- * Sound Business Environment
- * Equitable Distribution of Resources
- * Acceptance of the Rights of Others
- * Good Relations with Neighbors
- * Free Flow of Information
- * High Levels of Human Capital
- * Low Levels of Corruption

A Personal Evolution: From Curiosity in Cairo to the Stage in Cape Town

My engagement with Rotary’s peace initiatives has been an evolving personal journey. Out of simple curiosity, I attended the 1st Rotary Peace Forum in Cairo in 2022. That experience was an eye-opener—it exposed me to the immense potential of international peacebuilding within our network.

Driven by this momentum, my role evolved significantly: by 2024, at the 2nd Rotary Peace Forum in Cape Town, I had the honor of taking the stage as a speaker. Sharing insights with fellow Rotarians and peacebuilders on an international platform marked a major step in my commitment, paving the way toward my formal Peace Ambassador certification in July 2026.

IEP Institute for Economics & Peace

About Maps+Data Resources



Congratulations on Completing the IEP Ambassador Program

Dear Habiba,

Congratulations on successfully completing the IEP Ambassador Program! Your commitment to promoting peace and your contributions to our global community are truly commendable.

What's Next?

A Scientific and Human Alliance: IEP and Rotary

For several years, Rotary International and IEP have maintained a strategic global partnership to equip our service projects with rigorous, evidence-based tools. By combining IEP’s data-driven analytical rigor with the global reach of the Rotary network, we adopt a structured, measurable approach to community impact. To learn more about this framework, a free introductory course is available through the Rotary Positive Peace Academy. Regarding the IEP Peace Ambassador Program, two cohorts are organized each year (in April and October), offering participants the opportunity to design and implement tailored action projects inspired by the needs of their local communities. Earning my certification deepened my understanding of global metrics such as the Global Peace Index (GPI) and reinforced the importance of placing socioeconomic resilience at the heart of our community initiatives.

Intercountry Committees (ICC): The Engine of Citizen Diplomacy

To foster Positive Peace and bring the pillar of Good Relations with Neighbors to life, Rotary possesses a unique catalyst: Intercountry Committees (ICC). Created in the aftermath of global conflicts to reconcile nations, ICCs represent a genuine network-to-network platform for citizen diplomacy. By establishing direct bridges between Rotary districts across borders, they enable us to:

- * Transcend political and cultural boundaries through enduring, constructive dialogue.
- * Launch targeted cross-border initiatives in key areas such as education, youth empowerment, healthcare, and water and sanitation.
- * Foster mutual understanding and cultural respect, which are essential prerequisites for long-term stability.

ICCs prove that Positive Peace is not merely a theoretical framework—it is put into practice every day through sustainable partnerships and cross-border friendships.

From Concept to Action: Our Field Responsibility

Since 2022, my active involvement in Rotary has reinforced my conviction that the true strength of our organization lies in targeted, meaningful action. Serving as a Peace Ambassador today means bridging IEP's research with the grassroots capacity of ICCs and local clubs. Whether supporting youth entrepreneurship, mentoring the next generation of decision-makers, or building sustainable international partnerships, every initiative serves as a building block for sustainable peace.

A Call to Collective Engagement

Whether you are a Rotarian or a global citizen eager to make a difference, the takeaway is clear: peace is not the sole responsibility of governments. It hinges on our collective capacity to build networks of trust, engage in intercultural dialogue, and strengthen our local communities. This 2026 certification marks the start of an expanded responsibility: to equip our networks, share these actionable frameworks, and turn Positive Peace into an enduring daily reality.



Habiba Bennani
Tunis May 26th

Building Sustainable
Peace
Frameworks for
lasting impact

Connecting Peacebuilders Across Borders: My Journey as an IEP Ambassador

By Nevine Yassa - ICC National Chair Canada

What does it mean to build peace — and who gets to be part of that work?

For most of us, "peacebuilding" sounds like the work of governments, international organizations, or faraway conflict zones. But the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) approaches it differently. Its flagship Global Peace Index, along with frameworks like Positive Peace, shows us that peace is not simply the absence of violence — it is the presence of the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. And building it is something each of us can contribute to, wherever we are.

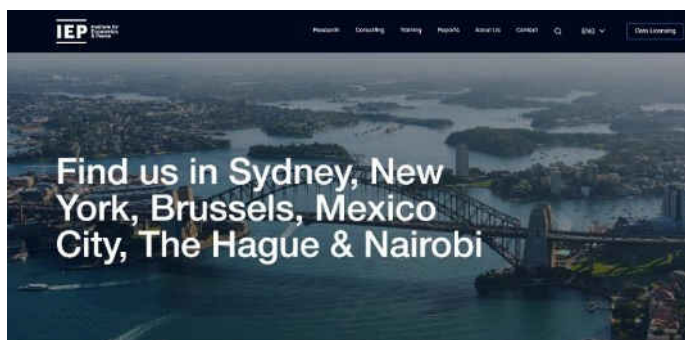
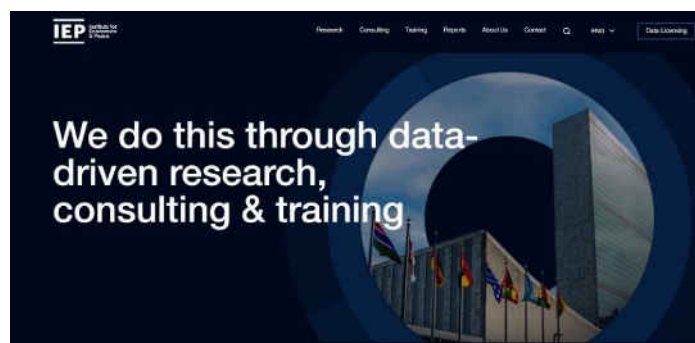
As an IEP Ambassador, I have had the privilege of being part of a global network of people who take that idea seriously. Ambassadors around the world translate peace research into action in their own communities — in schools, workplaces, civic organizations, and local initiatives — and share what works across borders. It is a community of practice that spans continents, disciplines, and generations, united by a common question: what would it take for our communities to flourish?

That question resonates deeply with the mission of the ICC. Much of the work we do — fostering connection across cultures, supporting internationally educated professionals, and building bridges between communities — is peacebuilding in the truest sense. Positive Peace is built in exactly these spaces: where trust, inclusion, and opportunity grow.

I would love to see more of us connected to this global network. If you are curious about the Ambassador program, the Global Peace Index, or how IEP's research might inform our work, please reach out — I would be delighted to share more, and to connect fellow members of the ICC with Ambassadors around the world.

Because peace, like everything worthwhile, is built together.

To learn more about the Institute for Economics and Peace and its Ambassador program, visit economicsandpeace.org



From Friendship to Service: How an ICC Connection Came Together for Children's Hearts

Different countries. One Rotary family. One cause.

By Jenny E. Bohlin, Rotary Club Rome International | President, ICC Italy, Malta, San Marino, and India

A gong sounded on a terrace in Bengaluru, and a room full of people slowed down together. I was thousands of kilometres away in Italy, yet my club was part of that moment. Barely a year earlier, **Arini Ghosh** and I were strangers. This is how an **ICC friendship became a cause**.

It started with an ICC connection

In **September 2025**, ICC introduced me to Arini, of **Rotary Bangalore Social**. For nine months we knew each other only on screen, Rome to Bengaluru. ICC gave us the introduction. **Fellowship did the rest**.

Lights of Friendship

On **12 October 2025**, Arini and I hosted **Lights of Friendship** together, an online Diwali gathering that brought Rotarians across borders into one room. ICC later featured it on its website and magazine. Diwali is the festival of light; our next chapter would be sound.

From friends to twin clubs

In 2026, I travelled to India for a special visit: Arini's installation as President of Rotary Bangalore Social. We met in person at last. During my visit, the club hosted a sound healing session for me and its members, fellowship in its quietest form.

On **1 July**, the first day of the Rotary year, our clubs signed a **twin club agreement**, the first for Rotary Bangalore Social. The idea was simple: work together, and let fellowship lead to joint projects.

Sound Healing for a Cause

Just over two months later, that promise became a project. On **6 September**, Rotary Bangalore Social hosted **Sound Healing for a Cause**, a wellness fundraiser supporting paediatric heart surgeries,



with **Rotary Club Rome International as International Partner**. Rotaract District 3191 joined as Youth Partner, and 23 Rotary clubs, ours among them, partnered with the cause. The message was simple: **rest your mind, restore a child's heart**.

Over 140 people gathered on a terrace for ninety minutes of stillness, led by Dr. Shyam Suraj (Dr. Shamrock). A gong and Tibetan singing bowls did what sound has done for centuries. When the gong first sounded, Arini says, the whole room slowed and settled together, like one long exhale.

Our club contributed, though I could not be there in person. Yet Rotary Club Rome International was named on the main poster and acknowledged at the event, so our friendship was present in the room.

"Jenny and I coined our own phrase: we are each other's sister from another mister. ICC gave us the introduction; fellowship turned it into action."

Arini Ghosh, President, Rotary Bangalore Social

Why it matters

Estimates suggest that over **160,000 children** are born with heart disease in India every year. Fewer than **5,000** get the surgery they need, fewer than one in thirty. The funds raised will go towards paediatric heart surgeries for children who cannot afford them.

Every partnership helps change that.

What's next

The response from partners was so strong that **Rotary Bangalore Social and Rotary Club Rome International** hope to take this experience to a larger audience, and to more audiences, together. To every ICC pair reading this: consider a joint project of your own. **Bring Rotaract in through ICC too**. In Bengaluru, they brought energy, hustle and heart, and they are the future of these friendships.

Friendship is where Rotary begins. Service is where it shows.



Strengthening Bridges Across Borders

Guatemala • Belize • Honduras • Canada - USA

By Nevine Yassa - ICC National Chair Canada

One of the true strengths of Rotary is the opportunity to build friendships that reach far beyond our own communities. Our recent ICC meeting brought together Rotarians from **Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and Canada** for a wonderful exchange of ideas, experiences and opportunities for collaboration.

Each country shared updates on **Rotary projects, recent visits, upcoming initiatives and future travel plans**, giving us a wonderful glimpse into the work being done by Rotarians across our four countries.

But the meeting was about much more than projects. It was about **friendship**.

We talked about how visits between our countries can help us strengthen our International Friendship and Cooperation, experience one another's cultures, and create lasting relationships among Rotarians and their families. There is something very special about meeting fellow Rotarians in person, visiting their clubs and communities, and sharing the Rotary spirit together.

An Invitation to Discover Belize

A special invitation was extended to Rotarians to consider **travelling to Belize** in the future. Such visits provide a wonderful opportunity to discover this beautiful country while getting to know our fellow Rotarians on a more personal level.

Imagine combining travel, friendship, culture and Rotary service — visiting local clubs, learning about community projects, experiencing the country, and sharing fellowship with Rotarians from across the region.

These exchanges are what make the ICC so meaningful. They transform contacts between countries into **friendships between people**.

As we look ahead, we hope to see more Rotarians travelling between **Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and Canada**, strengthening our connections and creating new opportunities for cooperation and friendship.

Four countries. One Rotary family. Many opportunities to build lasting friendships.

We look forward to continuing the journey together - one visit, one project and one friendship at a time.



Culinary Bridges and Skilled Horizons

Giuseppe Pantano on the Power of Food, Training, and International Cooperation YAOUNDÉ

By Giuseppe Pantano, ICC Chair for Italy Malta San Marino – Cameroon

In a compelling address delivered to members of the Cameroonian government, the Diplomatic Corps, and international partners, Giuseppe Pantano—President of the Rotary Inter-Country Committee for Italy, San Marino, Malta, and Cameroon, and Provincial President of Confartigianato Persone ANAP Siracusa—presented a vision where gastronomy, vocational training, and cross-border partnership intersect to create real economic dignity.

Reflecting on his deep personal and professional ties to Central Africa, Pantano detailed how food and targeted skills development can serve as powerful tools for diplomacy, youth empowerment, and cultural exchange between Europe and Africa.

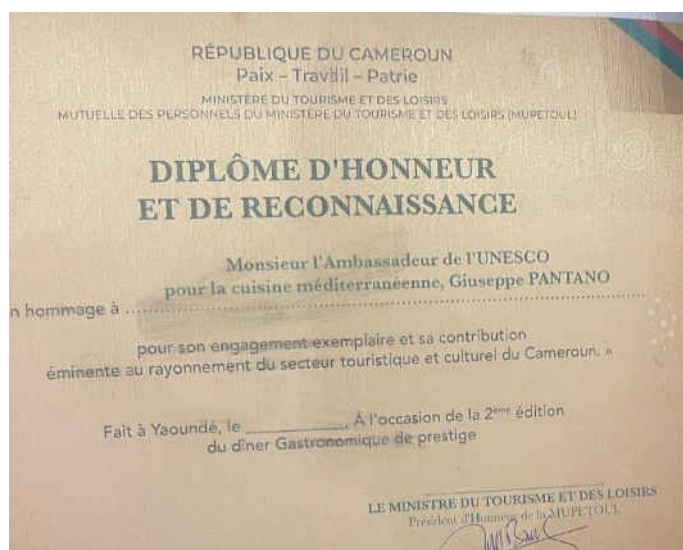
Gastronomy as a Tool for Dialogue and Development Pantano's approach to cooperation goes well beyond traditional diplomatic channels. Named an "Ambassador of Mediterranean and Italian Cuisine" in 2019 for his initiatives across Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, he views local food systems as essential drivers of social impact.

Central to his address was the role of local agriculture and the central place of African women in economic life:

Empowering Local Value Chains: Recognizing rural women as the primary guardians and processors of key staple crops, particularly cassava.

Cultural Fusion: Bridging culinary traditions by pairing local ingredients with Italian techniques—such as utilizing cassava flour for crêpes or combining indigenous produce with classic Italian ragùs.

The "Cucina dal Mondo" Initiative: Spearheaded during Pantano's tenure as President of the Rotary Club Yaoundé Étoile (2018–2019) to promote global understanding through shared culinary heritage.



"For me, cuisine is much more than simply food. Cuisine is culture, dialogue, knowledge, and friendship. It is an extraordinary tool for bringing peoples closer together—not by replacing one culture with another, but by bringing them together to create something new."

From Kitchens to Skilled Trades: Scaling the Cooperation Model Beyond gastronomy, Pantano highlighted the success of an ongoing initiative that has allowed young Cameroonians to travel to Italy for specialized professional training in hospitality and catering. Developed in close coordination with the Embassy of Italy in Yaoundé, Commercial Attaché Mrs. Siri, former Italian Ambassador Scammacca, Venerable Friend Mbombock Loga Mahop, and Professor Maurizio Franzò of the Archimede Institute in Ispica, the project offers concrete career pathways for young professionals.

Building on these results, Pantano outlined an ambitious next step through his role with Confartigianato Persone ANAP Siracusa: expanding this vocational pipeline into other technical sectors



News From South Africa

Some of the South African leaders from Rotary Intercountry Committees joined the Rotary E-Club of D9400 Portuguese International for a business luncheon at Casa da Madeira in Johannesburg, hosted by Club President Tony de Gouveia.

Guests included PDG Annemarie Mostert, President of the ICC Executive Council; Assistant Governor Shereen Hunter, a member of the ICC; Rotarian Doug Wedding; PAG Hans Mostert, IPP Manny Ferreirinha, National Chairman of the Portuguese Forum of South Africa; and Rtn. Paula Franco, Vice President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The occasion recognised the recent twinning between the Rotary E-Club of D9400 Portuguese International in South Africa and the Rotary Club of Coimbra Saúde in Portugal.

Facilitated through the work of Rotary Intercountry Committees, club twinning creates lasting relationships across borders and opens opportunities for shared service projects, cultural exchange and international cooperation.

Today's gathering reflected the ICC's commitment to strengthening international understanding, building strategic relationships and turning cross-border connections into meaningful collaboration.



RAGFP Peace Poles

Next month our partnership with RAGFP will feature. Have you registered your peace pole? Look out for the global map and ways to register and where necessary, produce your unique peace pole. ICC partnership with RAGFP...they globally map and register and produce the Peace Poles.

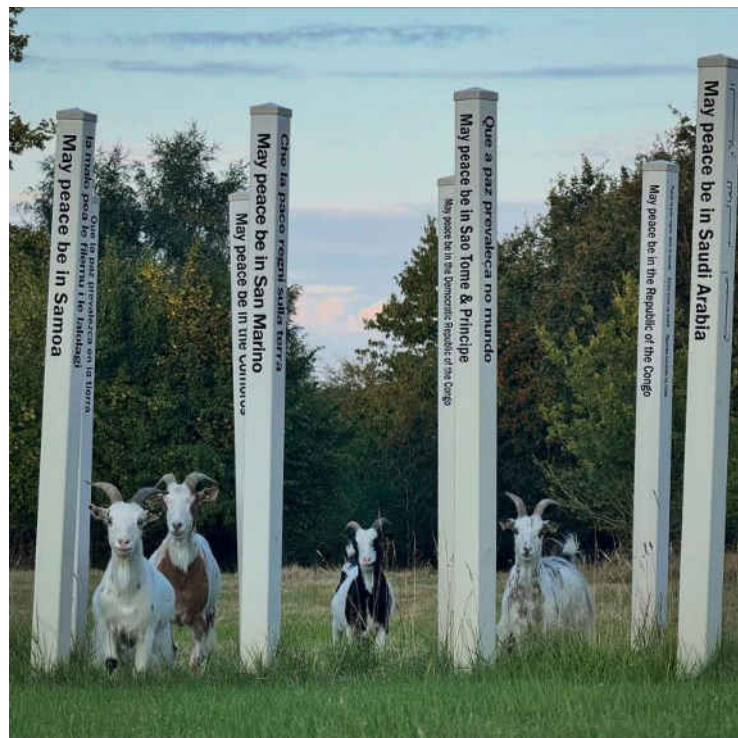
This is in Scotland :

There's something special about this photo from Allanton Peace Sanctuary in Scotland.

As visitors admired the Peace Poles, a group of local goats wandered over and quietly took their place among them, as if they too wanted to be part of the message.

It's moments like this that remind us that peace is not just a human aspiration. It is reflected in the harmony we seek with nature and all living things.

Thank you to Allanton Peace Sanctuary for capturing this delightful and unexpected scene. Sometimes the most powerful peace ambassadors arrive on four legs!



GG Project in Senegal by ICCs BeLux - Egypt

Dear ICC friends,

Please find attached information about a Global Grant project for a market gardening project in Senegal, in collaboration with the non-profit organization Casa for Life, which Christian Dohogne, IPDG of District 2150 and President of the ICC BeLux–Egypt section, would like to bring to your attention.

The project is currently looking for partners and support.

You will find further details in the attached document. Please feel free to contact Christian directly if you have any questions or are interested in supporting or partnering with the project.

Best regards,

Peter Bal
Chair, ICC BeLux



Chers amis,

Notre Club Rotary a décidé de lancer un **projet ambitieux à l'international afin de soutenir une population défavorisée en Casamance, au Sénégal.**

Nous vous expliquons tout ceci dans ce courrier. **Notre objectif est de collecter suffisamment de promesse de dons afin d'arriver à financer totalement ce magnifique projet tout en bénéficiant des subventions de la Fondation Rotary (District Grant et Global Grant).**

Le projet à Dïfanghor en Casamance et son contexte

Le projet consiste à **mettre en place un jardin maraîcher de 2 hectares avec un système d'irrigation** dans un village qui avait été déserté lors de la rébellion en Casamance. Les villageois sont revenus et l'objectif est de permettre principalement aux femmes du village de mieux nourrir leur famille et de vendre des légumes afin de pouvoir payer des fournitures scolaires ou des soins de santé à leur famille.

Comme le demande la Fondation Rotary, nous avons réalisé une « **évaluation de la collectivité** ». Cette étude réalisée avec la population locale démontre que **le besoin est bel et bien réel.**

Axe stratégique du Rotary

Ce projet s'inscrit au mieux dans l'axe stratégique du développement économique local.

Nos partenaires

Plusieurs partenaires ont été identifiés et nous sommes en relation avec chacune des parties : l'ASBL belge Casa for Life a une grande expérience en la matière et sera notre premier interlocuteur. Le Rotary de Ziguinchor (en Casamance) sera le parrain local de cette initiative et surveillera l'accomplissement du projet et sa pérennité. L'ONG Kasoumaye Casamance est une organisation locale spécialisée dans la création de ce type de jardin. Tous ces intervenants font preuve d'une **réelle expertise** et nous assurent que le projet sera mené à bien **dans le respect de toutes les règles relatives au Global Grant**. Notre Rotary Club de Wezembeek-Kraainem assume la **coordination et la responsabilité générale du projet.**

Le coût et le timing du projet

Actuellement, le **budget total** est évalué à **33.000€** (nous disposons de premiers devis détaillés, à affiner). La **construction** du jardin pourrait commencer en **août 2027**.



Les réalisations à opérer

En résumé, et afin de créer ce jardin maraîcher de 2 hectares :

- Tout d'abord, il y aura une **phase de construction** qui consiste à protéger la zone avec l'installation d'un grillage, prévoir des bassins d'eau, installer une pompe et un kit solaire, effectuer un forage, fournir le petit matériel dont les cultivatrices auront besoin et créer un petit magasin.
- Ensuite, il y aura une **phase d'éducation** pendant laquelle les cultivatrices seront formées. Ceci se fera avec l'ONG américaine **DIG** (Development in Gardening), spécialisée en la matière sur place.
- Finalement, **chaque villageoise se verra attribuer une parcelle de 10m²** dont elle aura la charge d'entretien et qu'elle pourra cultiver pour les besoins de sa famille.

Objectifs à long terme

- Renforcer la formation des femmes en maraîchage bio.
- Permettre aux groupements villageois de démarrer une activité agricole.
- Disposer de revenus afin d'améliorer les conditions de vie : scolarité, santé, nourriture...
- Aider les bénéficiaires indirects : les habitants des villages.
- Contribuer à l'amélioration qualitative du régime alimentaire des familles grâce à l'autoconsommation des produits maraîchers.



En quoi pouvez-vous nous aider ?

Afin de financer ce projet nous sommes à la recherche d'autres clubs Rotary ou d'autres organisations qui souhaitent se joindre à nous pour mener à bien ce magnifique projet.

Concrètement nous recherchons des promesses de dons (de 500€ à 2.000€) afin de financer ce projet particulier. Ces promesses doivent nous parvenir au plus tard le 10.11.2026.

Si vous souhaitez nous aider, merci de contacter le chef de projet afin de formaliser votre promesse de dons. La collecte des fonds sera effectuée plus tard, après réception du numéro de Global Grant et la création d'un compte bancaire exclusivement dédié à ce projet.

Si vous avez des questions ou si vous souhaitez recevoir une présentation plus détaillée du projet ou si vous souhaitez que nous venions vous présenter le projet lors de vos réunions (si possible accompagné de l'organisation Casa for Life), merci de contacter le chef de projet.

MERCI



Contact (Chef de Projet) : **Marc Decaffmeyer**
Vice-Président du Rotary Club de Wezembeek-Kraainem
marc.decaf@gmail.com +32 (0)476 600 558

Together for Sinterklaas in Ukraine Give The Children a Moment Free of War

We would love to bring this ICC project under your attention. The Netherlands and Ukraine share the same St Nicolas tradition. This is a great example of ICC cooperation through culture ...

Please help us to raise the funds to give over 1500 a moment to forget about war ...

Besides member of ICC UA-NL is Dirk Lustig also President of the RAG for Peace and St Nicolas under the most difficult circumstances ...

**Rotary**



Together for Sinterklaas in Ukraine

GIVE THE CHILDREN A
MOMENT FREE OF WAR



IN 2025
TOGETHER WE
MADE A DIFFERENCE

-  **9 DAYS**
-  **3850 KM**
-  **8 REGIONS**
-  **24 PARTIES**
-  **1628 CHILDREN**
were able to celebrate Sinterklaas

**CONTACT INFORMATION**
Annet +31 6 24366906
Marjo +31 6 53255065

**CALL TO ACTION**
For €10, 1 child can celebrate St. Nicholas.
Let's reach as many as possible!

DONATE HERE!

Sinterklaas Oekraïne actie
2026

Stg Beheer Global
GrantFondsen

Bank Account #
NL03INGB0008287549
(BIC INGBNL2A)

Appeal for Voluntary Contribution to the ICC Executive Council

Dear DGs, PDGs, DISC, ICC Chairs, section Chairs and leadership,

For more than 76 years, Intercountry Committees have transformed friendship across borders into understanding, and understanding into peace. Today, the ICC network continues to serve as a meaningful bridge of friendship, service, goodwill, and international cooperation among Rotary Districts, Clubs, Rotarians, and Rotaractors across the world.

As we move forward with the ICC Executive Council's vision for 2026–2028, our focus is to make this network stronger, more inclusive, more visible, and more effective. ICC receives no funding from Rotary International or The Rotary Foundation and remains self-sustaining. We therefore humbly invite every Rotary District to consider making a modest voluntary contribution to support the work of the ICC Executive Council.

Your contribution will be used to support ICC's operating and administrative needs, communication initiatives, digital resources, multilingual outreach, hybrid meetings, regional engagement, awareness programmes, and approved humanitarian support activities consistent with Rotary principles and applicable RI policies. In practical terms, this support will help make international collaboration easier for Clubs and members, ensure that distance and language are not barriers, and strengthen the platforms through which Districts and ICC National Sections share ideas, partnerships, and best practices.

The suggested voluntary contribution is based on the membership of each District:

District Membership	Suggested Contribution
0 – 1,250 members	€75
1,251 – 2,500 members	€100
2,501 – 3,750 members	€125
3,751 – 5,000 members	€150
Above 5,000 members	€175

Every contribution will be handled with care, responsibility, and transparency.

The use of funds will be guided by an annual budget, documented approval of expenditure, proper authorisation of payments, and appropriate financial reporting. Participating Districts will be kept informed through financial reports and updates.

Contributions are entirely optional and voluntary. Every District's participation is valued, whether through financial support, active involvement in ICC relationships, promotion of ICC activities, or encouragement of Clubs and members to engage in international service.

Payments may be made online through the ICC contribution link:

<https://rotary-icc.org/contribution/>

Alternatively, contributions may also be remitted directly to the following bank account:

Account holder name: Rotary International – ICC

(A registered non-profit used by the Executive Council to manage its operations)

Beneficiary address: 5 rue Joffre – 34000 Montpellier

IBAN: FR76 3000 3014 3000 0372 7959 905

SWIFT: SOGEFRPPXXX

BIC: SOGEFRPP

While making the payment, kindly mention:

“Membership 2026–27 + District Number + Treasurer's email ID”

Kindly also share the payment details to treasury@rotary-icc.org for us to update our records and issue a receipt

We thank you for standing with ICC as partners in friendship, service, and positive peacebuilding.

This letter mailed to our ICC chairs and Section Chairs for their kind consideration.

With warm regards and gratitude,

PDG Annemarie Mostert

ICC Executive Council

President 2026–28

PP Dr. CA Vijay Narayan Kewalramani

ICC Executive Council

Treasurer 2026–28



Events in 2026-2027 as of 29 September 2026

<u>10 October</u> Rome Italy	Meeting of European International Rotary Clubs
<u>22-24 October</u> Quito Ecuador	Institute for Zone 23B & Region 30
<u>22-25 October</u> Jacksonville USA	Institute for Zones 33,34
<u>23-25 October</u> Cairo Egypt	Districts 2451 / 2452 TRF Seminar
<u>30 October-1 November</u> Melbourne Australia	Institute for Zone 8
<u>10 -17 November</u> Nigeria	Project Fair
<u>13-22 November</u> India	Project Fair
<u>21-26 November</u> Cyprus	9 th Rotarian Meeting
<u>26-29 November</u> Kampala Uganda	7 th All Africa Rotary Zone Institute
<u>9-13 December</u> Pattaya Thailand,	Institute for Zones 1B, 9 and 10
<u>14-20 December</u> Colombo Sri Lanka,	Institute for Zones 4, 5, 6, 7
<u>5-7 February</u> Berlin, Germany	Rotary International Future Forum
<u>25-27 February 2027</u> Kigali, Rwanda	Presidential Peace Conference
<u>6 March 2027</u> London, UK	Presidential Peace Conference
<u>1-3 April 2027</u> Dubai	ICC Dubai Fair
<u>23-26 April 2027</u> Tbilisi, Georgia	ICC Georgia Summit 2027
<u>6-10 May 2027</u> Djerba, Tunisia	ICC Meeting
<u>26-30 June 2027</u> Barcelona, Spain	Rotary International Convention

Save The Date

ICC Global Discussion - 5 October 2026

Education was never meant to be a chapter. It is a discipline you never graduate from. Right now, we are still building with too much of our talent waiting in reserve.

So this is my invitation to you to join our 2nd ICC open discussion on the 5th of October (8AM & 8PM)

Your seat at this table isn't a favour we are extending. It is part of the foundation we are still building.

And to our young leaders, still deciding whether an organisation like ICC has room for their energy and ideas: it does, and we need them urgently.

ICC is a resource network. This is your opportunity to share your unique and collective stories of how this network can benefit our ICC relationships in building positive peace.

Please join us.

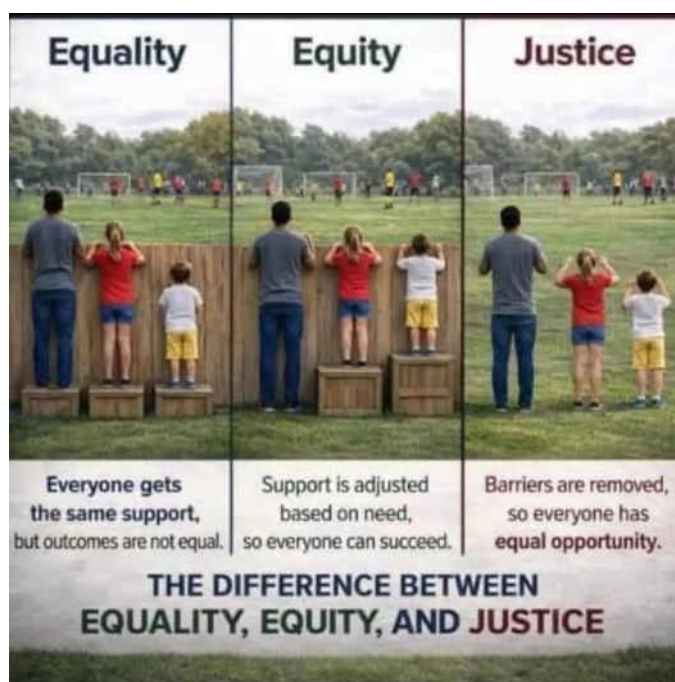
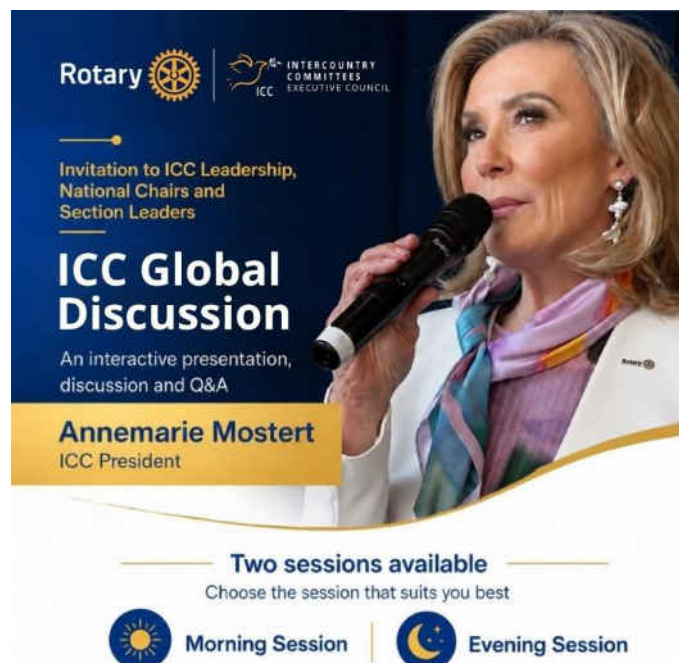
Annemarie Mostert President of the ICC
Executive Council for 2026–2028

 Morning session: 8AM

<https://uso6web.zoom.us/meeting/register/rhUtRmmtTbCzsaPfUPHNA>

 Evening session: 8PM

<https://uso6web.zoom.us/meeting/register/BDDoNcprSe2CTxtyc36uig>



Save The Date

International Day of The Girl on 11 October 2026

This Event is about our ICC RAG & MBIMB partnership

Please be sure to join us for a very special International Day of the Girl On Demand Event on October 11. Watch the amazing program by going to our website www.girlsempowermentrag.org on Oct. 11!!!

 **Girls' Empowerment
Rotary Action Group**
www.GirlsEmpowermentRAG.Org

SAVE THE DATE
October 11
Watch On Demand

JOIN OUR CELEBRATION OF

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

Join Our Girls' Empowerment Rotary Action Group Event!!!


**PDG Annemarie
Mostert**




Chrissy Sykes

Panelists


Dr. Raiza Koila


Oukje Bizot

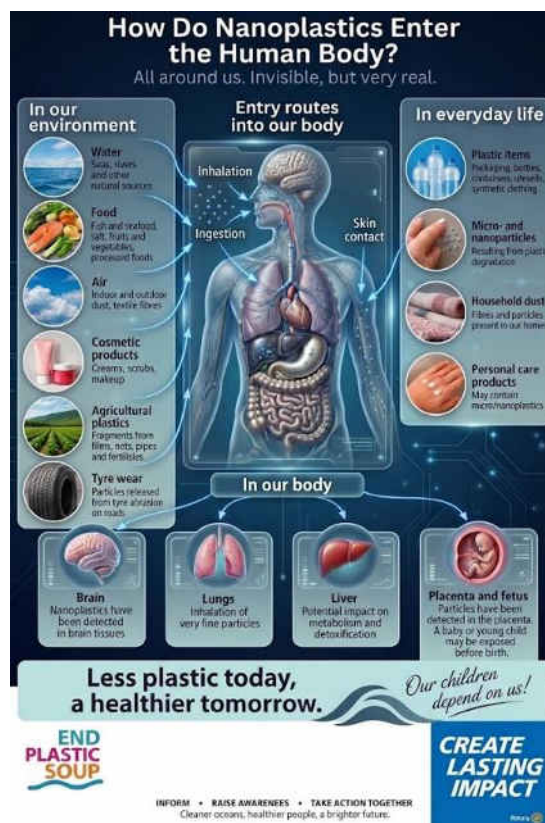

Nancy Hadi

Rotary   **Girls' Empowerment
Rotary Action Group**



Save The Date

The Week of The Sea Without Plastic on 2 to 9 November 2026




How Do Nanoplastics Enter the Human Body?
All around us. Invisible, but very real.

Entry routes into our body

- In our environment**
 - Water: Seas, rivers and other natural sources
 - Food: Fish and seafood, soft fruits and vegetables, processed foods
 - Air: Indoor and outdoor dust, traffic fumes
 - Cosmetic products: Creams, scrubs, makeup
 - Agricultural plastics: Fragments from films, pots, pipes and fertilisers
 - Tyre wear: Particles released from tyre abrasion on roads
- In everyday life**
 - Plastic items: Packaging, bottles, containers, drink, synthetic clothing
 - Micro- and nanoparticles: Resulting from plastic degradation
 - Household dust: Fibres and particles present in our homes
 - Personal care products: May contain micro/nanoplastics

Entry routes into our body

- Inhalation
- Ingestion
- Skin contact

In our body

- Brain:** Nanoplastics have been detected in brain tissues
- Lungs:** Inhalation of very fine particles
- Liver:** Potential impact on metabolism and detoxification
- Placenta and fetus:** Particles have been detected in the placenta. A baby or young child may be exposed before birth.

Is there more to life than golf and Netflix?

Would you consider investing a little of your time in a cause that really matters?

Rotary is actively engaged in the fight against plastic pollution – an environmental challenge that is increasingly also being recognised as a potential threat to human health and to future generations.

Did you know that exposure to micro- and nanoparticles can begin even before birth, with plastic particles having been detected in the placenta and other human tissues?

Did you know that recent scientific studies have also found micro- and nanoparticles in the human brain, raising important questions about their possible links with neurological and neurodegenerative diseases?

Would you like to know more – and perhaps do something about it?

Rotary Club Atlantico is an international Rotary club based here on the Silver Coast. We bring together people from different countries and backgrounds who want to use some of their experience, energy and time to make a positive and lasting difference.

Would you be interested in meeting us and discovering what you could contribute?

Less plastic today, a healthier tomorrow. *Our children depend on us!*

END PLASTIC SOUP
www.endplasticsoup.org

WEEK OF THE SEA WITHOUT PLASTIC

Rotary Club Atlantico
Região Oeste D1960

CREATE LASTING IMPACT
Rotary

Contact Georges Lebeau
Email: georges.lebeau@gmail.com | WhatsApp: 133 676 219 546
endplasticsoup-portugal.pt | www.endplasticsoup.org

Cleaner oceans, healthier people, a brighter future.

(Click on The Banner to Find out More)

Save The Date For Three Days in Cairo

TRF Seminar with Special ICC Session on 23-25 October 2026



CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT

ROTARY DISTRICTS
2451 • 2452

ONE EVENT, TWO DISTRICTS

ONE SHARED VISION

WHERE ROTARY LEADERS UNITE
TO CREATE LASTING IMPACT

The Rotary Foundation
Seminar

 23-25
OCTOBER 2026

 EWART MEMORIAL HALL
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO (AUC)
CAIRO, EGYPT



DR. HISHAM SHAWKY
DISTRICT GOVERNOR
2026-2027
DISTRICT 2451



MAY MONLA-CHMATILLY
DISTRICT GOVERNOR
2026-2027
DISTRICT 2452



PEACEBUILDING AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

TOGETHER, LET'S
CREATE LASTING IMPACT



SCAN TO VIEW
EVENT DETAILS

Save The Date

International Rotarian Ecological Conference –31 October 2026

On behalf of the ICC Russia -India and the Green Committee of D2223, we are pleased to invite Rotary and Rotaract clubs to participate and present their projects related to the water resources! Following the First Ecologic Forum in 2025 with 12 project from four countries, this year we expect much wider involvement on a more specific topic!

**II INTERNATIONAL ROTARIAN
ECOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**
«ROTARY FOR A GREEN FUTURE!»

JOIN US!

TOGETHER WE CREATE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



**NEW KNOWLEDGE
& INSPIRATION**

Gain valuable
insights and
fresh ideas.



**INTERNATIONAL
CONNECTIONS**

Find partners
and expand your
global network.



**SUCCESSFUL
PROJECT
EXAMPLES**

Learn proven cases
and best
practices.



**EXPERT
OPINIONS**

Hear from leaders
and top
specialists.



**PITCH YOUR
IDEA**

Get support to
turn your ideas
into reality.



OCTOBER 31, 2026
Saturday



**ONLINE CONFERENCE
(ZOOM)**



**PARTICIPANTS FROM
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**
Russia, Belarus, India, Italy,
Germany, USA and others.



**FREE
PARTICIPATION!**



**REGISTRATION OPENS
SEPTEMBER 1, 2026**

An excellent opportunity to present your environmental project
to the international community, share your successful experience
with peers and find like-minded partners for joint initiatives.



**TOGETHER WE CONSERVE WATER
AND CREATE A BETTER FUTURE
FOR NEXT GENERATIONS!**



OCTOBER 31, 2026
Online Conference (Zoom)

ORGANIZERS:



Rotary
EcoCommittee
District 2223



Rotary
Club of Krasnodar
District 2223







Rotary Club
of Pune Sports City
(India)

**II INTERNATIONAL ROTARIAN
ECOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**
«ROTARY FOR A GREEN FUTURE!»

YOUR PROJECT CAN BE HERE!

**Present your environmental project
to the international Rotary community.**



Present your project
to clubs around the world



Share your successful
experience in environmental
initiatives



Find partners
for joint actions



Inspire others
and gain international
recognition



**REGISTRATION OPENS
SEPTEMBER 1, 2026**



Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interact
club members from Russia, Belarus,
India, Italy, Germany, the USA and
many other countries are invited
to participate.



OCTOBER 31, 2026
Online Conference (Zoom)

ORGANIZERS:



Rotary
EcoCommittee
District 2223



Rotary
Club of Krasnodar
District 2223







Rotary Club
of Pune Sports City
(India)

Save The Date

7th All Africa Zone Institute – Uganda – 26-28 November 2026



7th ALL AFRICA
ZONE INSTITUTE
UGANDA 2026

**SPEKE RESORT
MUNYONYO - KAMPALA**

November 26-28, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ZONE INSTITUTE 2026
RESCHEDULED

380 USD

Rotarians
Spouses
Guests

220 USD

Rotaractors

Secure your seat NOW.
Register on:

africazoneinstitute.org

**UP TO
SEPTEMBER 30**

Save The Date

Presidential Peace Conference in Kigali, Rwanda

History is about to be written in the heart of Africa.

With immense pride and excitement, Rotary in District 9150 honored to invite Rotarians from all Africa, and around the world to join us for the Rotary Presidential Peace Conference, taking place in Kigali, Rwanda, from 25–27 February 2027.

This landmark event will bring together Rotary leaders, Peacebuilders, partners, and changemakers who share one common purpose: Building lasting peace through service, dialogue, and collaboration.

Rwanda, a nation that has become a global symbol of resilience, reconciliation, and hope, is proud to host this extraordinary gathering.

Mark your calendars today!

This is more than a conference; it is an opportunity to celebrate Rotary's commitment to peace while experiencing the warmth, innovation, and beauty of the Land of a Thousand Hills.

Stay tuned!

More exciting announcements, keynote

speakers, registration details, and program highlights will be revealed in the coming months.

We can't wait to welcome you to Kigali in February 2027!

Together, let's create hope, strengthen peace, and make history in Africa.



Save The Date

London Peace Conference on 6 March 2027

ROTARY PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE LONDON, ENGLAND – SATURDAY 6 MARCH 2027.

<https://rotarypeaceconference.london> Email: rippc.london@gmail.com

The 2027 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference headlining RI President Olayinka Babalola is on 6 March 2027 in London, England. The Conference will emphasise President Olayinka's call to **"Create Lasting Impact"**. Stressing personal transformation as foundational to broader impact, he said that **"To make this vision a reality, we must acknowledge and unleash the change within ourselves"**. Rotary's **Seven Areas of Focus** intertwine with the **UN Global Goals** to form a **Global Impact Framework**. The Conference will underscore the **Shared Pathways to Sustainable Peace** highlighting both sustainable development and Rotary's Peace Mission.

DATE & TIME: Conference – Saturday 6th March 2027: 9am (registration), 10am start – 3.30pm end.
Optional Gala Dinner – Saturday 6th March 2027: 7pm start – 11pm Carriages.

VENUE: Leonardo Royal Hotel – London Tower Bridge, 45 Prescott Street, London E1 8GP, UK.

REGISTRATION FEES: Early Bird Rate: Conference: £75. Conference & Dinner: £150. (ends 30th Nov 2026).

1st Dec 2026 – Conference Fee: £100; Conference & Dinner: £200.

The Gala Dinner is optional and only open to Conference Delegates.



(Click on The Banner to Find out More)

Save The Date

Georgia ICC Meeting on 23-26 April March 2027

Click on the Pictures for details

ICC Georgia Summit 2027 (draft)

Building Bridges for Peace and Friendship

Tsinandali Estate, Georgia 23-26 April 2027 250-400 Participants

ICC Leaders & Rotarians Worldwide Friendship • Peace • Cooperation



The ICC Georgia Summit is an international gathering of ICC leaders, Rotarians and friends from around the world. Over four days, participants will exchange ideas, build partnerships and experience Georgian hospitality at the historic Tsinandali Estate.

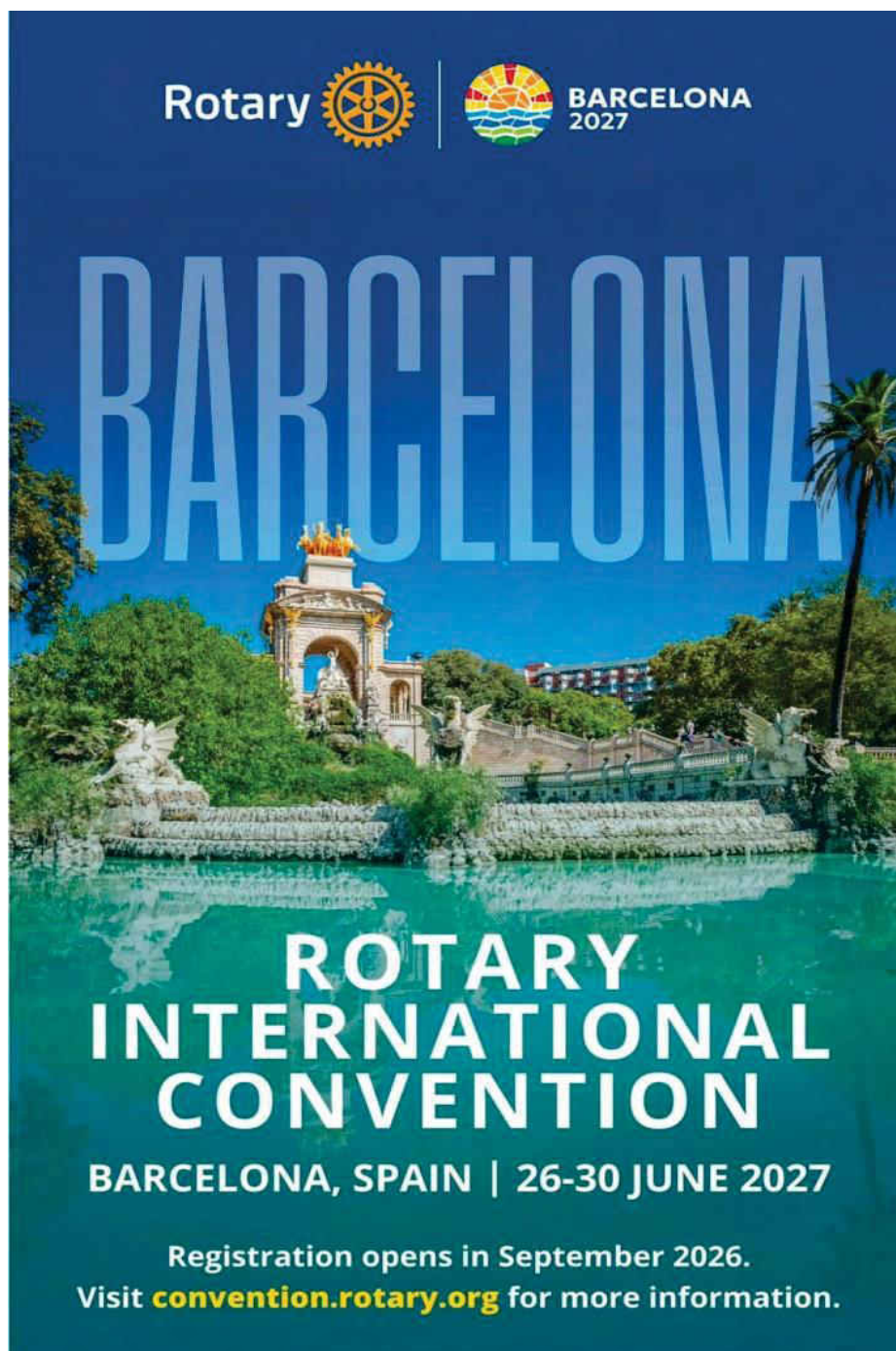


DG May Monlawith Kartlos Ivetifrom Georgia



Save The Date

Rotary International Convention 26-30 June 2027



BARCELONA
2027

Empowering Rotarians Through AI: A Valuable Knowledge Initiative

Two Groundbreaking Rotary Reference Assistants on Gemini Notebook

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

In the course of club administration and project execution, Rotarians frequently navigate complex procedural rules—from club bylaws, election guidelines, and the Rotary Code of Policies to Global Grant structuring, stewardship compliance, and TRF donor recognitions.

To simplify these regulatory frameworks, our very own Rtn. PP Dr. CA Vijay Narayan Kewalramani has compiled two source-grounded, honorary AI reference assistants powered by Gemini Notebook. These open-access tools provide instant, citation-backed answers derived directly from official Rotary manuals.

[1] Rotary International & TRF Governance Guide

Scope: RI Constitution, Bylaws, Rotary Code of Policies, Manual of Procedure (MOP), election procedures, board resolutions, and meeting protocols.

Access Link: <https://notebook.google.com/notebook/1775d446-9795-4606-a015-f40108ba3fa3?authuser=1>

[2] TRF Grants & Compliance Reference Guide

Scope: District Grants, Global Grants, Programs of Scale, Disaster Response Grants, TRF donor recognitions, community assessments, financial stewardship, and reporting compliance.

Access Link: <https://notebook.google.com/notebook/2d413c9f-d008-40bb-a80d-ef4e6a5ffd3f?authuser=1>

💡 Highlights & Usage Guidelines

Built for Every Rotarian: Ideal for Club Presidents, Secretaries, TRF Chairs, and project committees to resolve doubts in real time.

Disclaimer: This is an Independent Educational Initiative; Compiled independently for educational purposes and not an official RI/TRF platform. Final verification should always be done via rotary.org.

Data Privacy (DPDP Act 2023): Users must strictly avoid entering confidential member data, bank numbers, donor details, or private financial records.

Please explore these tools, utilize them for your club operations, and share the links freely across your Club, District, and Fellowship WhatsApp groups.

A Heart full of Gratitude for Rtn. PP Dr. Vijay Kewalramani for taking efforts to give us a AI empowered Ready-Reckoner, that shall help the clubs in better understanding the functioning of Rotary.

Thanks!!

Warmest Regards,

DG Dr Nilesh Jaywant.- RI District 3142.

Cross-Border Synergy: How Clubs, DISCs, and ICCs Drive International Service

While a DISC serves as a district's internal engine for managing international service, an ICC acts as the international bridge connecting districts across national borders under Rotary policy. Together with local Rotary and Rotaract clubs, these entities create a structured pathway for long-term club twinning, Global Grants, and peacebuilding initiatives.

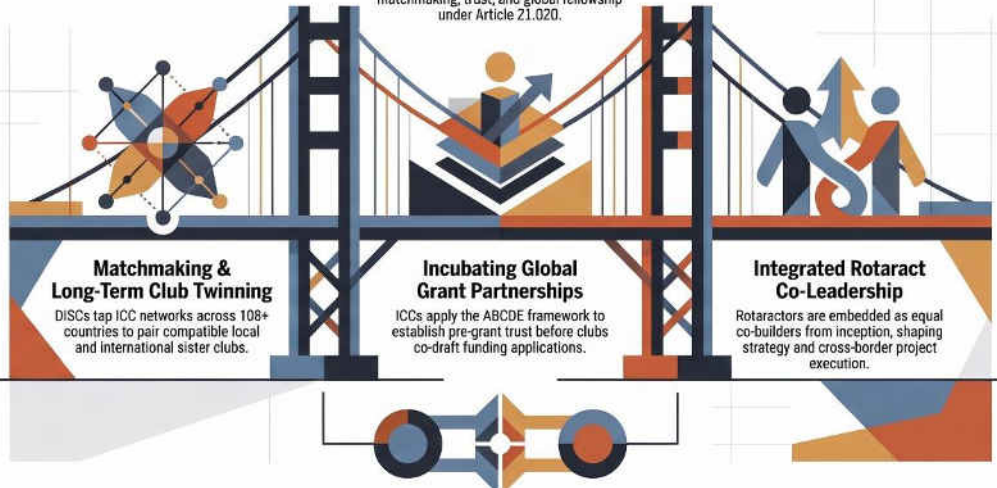
DISC: The Internal District Engine

Operates within a single district to coordinate local resources and guide club-level international projects.



ICC: The Cross-Border International Bridge

Links districts across nations to facilitate matchmaking, trust, and global fellowship under Article 21.020.



Principle of Coordination, Not Control

ICCs facilitate introductions and technical advice, but project management and funds stay with clubs.

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Getting Started with Intercountry Committees (ICC): Your Implementation Pathway

Intercountry Committees (ICCs) build peace, promote intercultural understanding, and facilitate Global Grants across international borders under Rotary policy (Article 21.020). While official ICC section formation requires district-level approval, individual clubs and members can immediately engage through two practical implementation pathways.

Pathway 1: Connect with an Existing ICC (Immediate Entry)

1. Request Partner Matchmaking

Contact your District International Service Chair or local ICC Chair for sister-club matchmaking.



2. Embed Rotaract Co-Leadership

Appoint club liaisons and involve Rotaractors as equal co-builders from day one.



3. Launch Joint Activities

Start small with virtual meetings, reciprocal Friendship Exchanges, or pilot service projects.



Pathway 2: Champion a New ICC Section (District Activation)

1. Form a Joint Planning Committee

Assemble interested Rotarians and Rotaractors across both partner districts to draft plans.



2. Secure District Governor Approvals

Obtain formal consensus from District Governors across all participating districts or nations.



3. Elect Leadership and Register

Elect section officers, appoint a Rotaract Co-Lead, and register with the Executive Council.



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In every room I learned the same truth: peace starts with you. It lives inside you as empathy, kindness and trust - values that will outlive us. Bring those values when you walk through the door, build a bridge and sit at the table. Every Rotarian and every Rotaractor across the globe are encouraged to join the living network that clubs and districts can draw on whenever they want to reach across a border. We share the stories build on friendship and mutual relationships, the story that peace begins at home.

Enjoy this special edition.
President Annemarie Mostert

