



Rotarian Action Groups Update

November 2010

Rotarian Action Groups conduct hands-on, international service projects that advance the Object of Rotary. They're organized by committed Rotarians, Rotarian spouses, and Rotaractors who have expertise and a passion for a particular type of service. Rotarian Action Groups are recognized by Rotary International and operate in accordance with Rotary policy, but they are not controlled by Rotary International. To learn more about Rotarian Action Groups, visit www.rotary.org/actiongroups.

The Rotarian Action Groups Update is a quarterly communication distributed to active Rotary district chairs. The contents of this publication are provided by the individual Rotarian Action Groups.

[Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger & Malnutrition](#)

Hunger issues are not new to Rotarians. We have been feeding the hungry for a very long time because we know that in order to break the cycle of poverty, we must first make minds and bodies strong.

The Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger and Malnutrition provides the opportunity for Rotarians from every corner of the world to form a network of individuals working to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. We share our experiences, projects, successes, challenges and needs with one another to create a pool of information and partnerships in service. Our Rotarian Action Group works toward the alleviation of hunger by meeting the short-term needs of immediate food supply where appropriate while working to develop the necessary infrastructure that will enable communities to become self-reliant in either developing or being able to purchase their necessary nutritional needs. By partnering and coordinating our efforts with other groups and organizations working in the field, we are able to stretch our dollars and avoid duplication. Instead of random, separate hunger and malnutrition projects, the action group can connect us and strengthen our efforts to make our Rotary projects and programs effective. Visit us at www.alleviatehunger.org for more project and membership information.

[Rotarian Action Group for Polio Survivors & Associates](#)

The Rotarian Action Group for Polio Survivors and Associates would like to announce the presentation of the first 100 tricycle wheelchairs from two matching grants that will eventually produce around 1000 chairs.

The Rotary Club of Traverse City, MI was the coordinator for the first of the two grants. The Rotary Club of Casco Bay Sunrise, Portland, ME coordinated the second grant; together they totaled \$120,000. In the end, seven districts and 27 Rotary clubs from three continents joined Polio Survivors & Associates to partner with the Rotary Foundation for the total grant. It was an international affair that took 18 months from its inception at the 2007 RI Convention in LA until both grants were funded in December of 2008. The combined effort of the two grants is the largest effort to assist polio survivors in Nigeria to date. In addition to purchasing new equipment, the grants purchased enough building supplies to construct around 1000 wheelchairs for polio survivors in Northern Nigeria.

The wheelchairs will enable survivors the independence to go to school, to learn a trade or get started in microlending or other small business. The wheelchairs are built with assistance from local Rotarians and members of the Handicapped Advocacy and Rehabilitation Center in Jos, Nigeria, which has agreed to donate the labor needed for this project. They are eager because the need is great and the additional work created will benefit the community. Moreover, by purchasing and bringing into the community the machinery to build these wheelchairs, the project will be sustainable even after it is completed – all that will be needed is additional funding to procure parts.

The first 100 chairs were presented by the Rotary Club of Naraguta through assistance of the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Rotarian Action Group for Microcredit (RAGM)

Rotarian Action Group for Microcredit (RAGM)'s mandate includes supporting educational events, making us excited to share opportunities for Rotarians to get involved and learn about Microcredit.

On September 11, 2010, The Calgary Microcredit Conference kicked off with many great speakers including representatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Kiva, CAUSE CANADA, MicroEnsure and others. For complete details, please visit www.calgarymicrocreditconference.com.

Next up was The Toronto Microcredit Conference held on 2 October 2010. Their outstanding line-up was to include speakers from more than 20 organizations, including World Vision, CARE, CGAP (World Bank), Grameen Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. For more information please contact Gord Crann, gordon.crann@sympatico.ca or visit: www.microfinanceconference.ca.

Lastly, the Victoria Microcredit Conference will be held on 5 March 2011. Details are to be advised; for information contact Mary Coward at marycoward@shaw.ca, or to learn about past conferences, please visit www.rotary5020.org/newsletters/uploaded_files/20080924125148newsletter.pdf.

With over 130 million borrowers, each with an average of five dependents, Microcredit is one of the largest known anti-poverty tools, and Rotarians play a proud part in this sustainable solution. If you are interested in hosting a Microcredit Conference or learning more about Microcredit check out www.ragm.org or contact us at info@ragm.org.

Rotarian Action Group for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness (RAGMSA)

One of the success stories of the Rotarian Action Group for MS Awareness (RAGMSA) is its e-mail group. The idea behind this was to create a feeling of camaraderie amongst its participants. The members of the e-mail group were all people with MS or people whose lives were touched by MS. They were also Rotarians. The hope was that a feeling of togetherness and community would arise. This has happened on more than one occasion: when the comment was made by members that this should count as a make-up for a club meeting; and during my hospitalization when two members of the group stepped up to moderate the group in my absence. The group was allowed to continue because two of its members took on my role as moderator when I was unable to function. This shows the level of support and commitment within the group. This was what was hoped for when the e-mail group was first constructed. Now we should endeavor to build on this by getting new members for the group. With more members we can encourage more discussion and exchange of ideas about what MS Awareness is. Please contact the group's moderators at cheriebinns@verizon.net or keekee812@earthlink.net.

Rotarian Action Group for Population Growth & Sustainable Development (RFPD)

Fast and unsustainably growing world population is the root of all major challenges of today: water shortage, depletion of natural resources and the threat of war over the remaining ones, global warming, hunger and malnutrition, poverty, spread of diseases. Jeffery D. Sachs calls 'Sustainable Development' the challenge of our generation and stresses that without attention to family planning, there could be no sustainable development. Being Ban Ki-moon's Special Advisor and having served Kofi Annan, advising on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Professor Sachs is widely considered to be the leading international economic advisor of his generation. For his tireless commitment to population issues, RFPD presented him with the *Nafis Sadik Award for Courage*.

The commitment to MDG 5 of the UN- and the G8-Summit has proven the importance of this MDG for the achievement of all other MDGs. Improving the health of mothers and children and empowering women to exercise their reproductive

rights are the only ways forward to steer population growth onto a sustainable path. For years RFPD has been addressing population issues, currently preparing to scale up its successful Maternal Health Project. Past RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe recently published an article about this project, which can be found at: www.rifpd.org; see also: www.maternal-health.eu.

[Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group \(WASRAG\)](#)

WASRAG is very pleased to announce the launch of *Start with Water*, designed to support excellence in Rotary club water and sanitation work, RI's Strategic Plan, and The Rotary Foundation Future Vision Plan.

The program provides map-based listings of projects, a tool to link clubs together, technical support including "Ask an Expert" forum, resources and more. Of particular interest are the "endorsed" projects available on the site. Endorsed projects are developed by [Regional Teams](#) based on rigorous planning to improve sustainability. To learn about getting your club project *endorsed*, email info@startwithwater.org.

Research has shown that access to safe water and adequate sanitation is the foundation for effective community development. With this base, Rotary clubs can continue work in other areas of development, knowing a strong foundation has been laid. WASRAG encourages and supports Rotary club WASH projects. Remember: *Start with Water!*

Save the Date:

This year's day-long World Water Summit will be held Friday May 20, 2011 in New Orleans, immediately before the international convention. Please keep this in mind as you make arrangements for this year's convention. WWS4 information is available on the WASRAG website: www.startwithwater.org. You can also visit us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or our [blog](#).