



## Fact Sheet

# United Nations Population Fund and Rotary International

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### What is the purpose of this cooperative relationship?

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Rotary International work together to alleviate human suffering and empower everyone to develop to their fullest potential. They encourage and promote full respect for the fundamental freedoms for all people and for all human rights, including the internationally accepted basic human right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education, and means to exercise that right.

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### What is the UNFPA?

The UNFPA is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. The UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

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### What is the focus of this cooperative relationship?

RI and the UNFPA promote sustainable human development and poverty reduction by addressing issues related to family and reproductive health, safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality, and the education and well-being of young people. Together, they focus on saving lives and reducing suffering through effective local interventions, in the face of statistics such as these:

- Each year, an estimated 529,000 women die — one woman every minute — from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- Adolescent girls under the age of 20 are twice as likely to die from pregnancy as women in their 20s.
- Up to 15 million women suffer complications from pregnancy, which lead to illness and disability, loss of productivity, and tremendous suffering.
- Due to poor maternal health, millions of children are left motherless each year.
- Over two million girls and women are awaiting treatment for obstetric fistula, the most tragic of pregnancy complications.
- Half of all new HIV infections occur among young people ages 15-24.
- In some countries, teenage girls face HIV infection rates five to six times higher than those for boys their age.

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### How can my club or district get involved?

Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to consult with UNFPA country representatives, who can help to identify local reproductive health needs and assist with technical advice and procurement.

*To save the lives of mothers and prevent HIV/AIDS, clubs and districts can carry out projects with these aims:*

- Strengthening basic social services, especially for accessible, quality child-spacing and reproductive health care services
- Supporting reproductive health services in emergencies, conflicts, and natural disaster situations
- Supporting emergency obstetric care
- Promoting education for all children, particularly girls
- Encouraging decent income opportunities, such as income-generating activities for women

*Project activities might include:*

- Removing barriers to education for girls and helping them remain in school
- Improving the overall health and well-being of all women, men, and young people
- Advocating against child marriages to prevent, among other things, obstetric fistula
- Promoting voluntary child-spacing programs, improving women's health, and reducing maternal and infant death
- Promoting HIV/AIDS counseling and education
- Refurbishing and providing essential medical equipment and training for local health care providers, especially in remote rural areas
- Refurbishing and providing equipment for midwifery schools, and supporting the training of midwives for local communities, especially in rural villages
- Improving communications and transport for remote rural communities to ensure that pregnant women can get to the nearest clinic or hospital
- Building and supporting emergency obstetric care facilities
- Advocating and supporting age-appropriate reproductive health education and services for adolescents and young people, including sports activities, after-school programs, leadership programs, and computer education
- Involving young people, Interactors, and Rotaractors in peer education, outreach, and HIV/AIDS prevention programs

Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to engage in projects at the local, regional, and international levels and to apply for project support through The Rotary Foundation's Humanitarian Grants Program. Take advantage of RI programs such as World Community Service, Rotary Volunteers, and Rotary Community Corps, and forward project information to RI Programs staff ([programs@rotary.org](mailto:programs@rotary.org)) for inclusion in the RI Community Projects Database.

## What else can my club do to help?

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Once you've set up a project with the UNFPA, let RI's External Relations staff know about it. They may want to publicize it in one of Rotary's publications or at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org). Send an e-mail with "UNFPA" in the subject line to [ers@rotary.org](mailto:ers@rotary.org).

## Additional Resources

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*Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Projects* (605A-EN)

[www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605a\\_en.pdf](http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605a_en.pdf)

*A Menu of Service Opportunities* (605B-EN)

[www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605b\\_en.pdf](http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605b_en.pdf)

**World Community Service Program**

[www.rotary.org/programs/wcs](http://www.rotary.org/programs/wcs)

**The Rotary Foundation Humanitarian Grants Program**

[www.rotary.org/foundation/grants](http://www.rotary.org/foundation/grants)

**RI Community Projects Database**

[www.rotary.org/programs/projectsdb](http://www.rotary.org/programs/projectsdb)

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