



# ROTARY

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## ROTARY AND WATER

### **The problem**

Some 97 percent of the world's water is oceans which contain saline. More than two percent of the remainder is frozen in icebergs and glaciers, leaving less than one percent of all water available for human use. If it were possible to fit all the water on earth into a gallon (4 liter) jug, the relative quantity of water would be about one tablespoon (4 fluid drams).

Fresh drinking water and water for food production and waste disposal are essential. However, population growth and mega-cities have increased demand six times since the beginning of this century. Pollution and contaminates also threaten available water sources. The per capita supply of safe water for the next generation will be only a third of the supply available 30 years ago. Today some 40 percent of the world's countries have severe water problems.

### **Rotary solutions**

Recognizing the vital importance of safe water, Rotary encourages all clubs and districts to support efforts which help people to provide themselves with safe water reasonably close to their homes using simple, sustainable technology. This policy is reflected in Rotary projects of all sizes in all parts of the world.

Below are some examples of Rotary water projects:

### **Africa**

- The Rotary Clubs of Kisumu, Kenya and Amesbury, Maine, USA, coordinated a project to develop a supply of clean drinking water for some 500 Kenyan families. Supported by a \$300,000 Rotary Foundation grant, the project enlisted school and church leaders to create a system of village-level water management cooperatives.
- A Senegalese Rotarian created a device which forces tree roots to tap water well below the saline surface of the Sahel. Supported by French Rotarians, the device is being used to fight desertification throughout Senegal.
- The Rotary Club of Harare, Zimbabwe upgraded 900 wells in rural Zimbabwe with support from Rotary clubs in Canada and Sweden, The Rotary Foundation and the Swedish International Development agency.

### **Americas, Including the Caribbean**

- In Canton, Massachusetts, Rotarians adopted the local Neponset River. Working with the state department of wildlife, they raised public awareness with a "Rotary River Day" which has generated activities restoring the river's quality.
- Working with UNICEF, Wisconsin Rotarians funded the installation of wells providing water to some 6,000 Haitian villagers.
- Water and sanitation systems for 13 Indian villages in central Brazil are part of a comprehensive project supported by California, USA, and Brazilian Rotarians.

### **Asia**

- In Rajasthan, India, Rotarians devised a way to capture the monsoon rains, holding them long enough to increase the water table. This makes safe water available year-round. As a result,

crop yields have increased, villagers' health has improved, and local children do better in school.

- In Japan, high school students in a Rotary-sponsored service club collected 20 liters of contaminants from Omura Bay to make 35 kg of powdered soap. The soap was sold to make the public aware of the environmental crisis at their shores.
- In the Philippines, two projects helped to restore coastal ecology. A Rotary Village Corps worked with local agencies to create an artificial coral reef to restore the ecology of Davao City Gulf. The project was based on the artificial reef built out of used tires created by the Rotary Club of Tagbilaran.

## **Europe**

- Rotarians in England developed an "Aquabox" to provide water purification and medical supplies to disaster victims. It has benefited earthquake victims in India, refugees in Croatia, Bosnia and Albania, and schoolchildren in Gambia.
- In Scotland, Rotarians organized an army of 9,000 volunteers to clean the banks of the Clyde River from source to mouth.
- Belgian Rotarians, in collaboration with SMURF (Sustainable Management of Urban Rivers and Floodplains) in the World Foundation, developed an educational program on water and the environment for 43,000 primary schools in that country.