



THE SCOPE AND SCALE OF ROTARY VOLUNTEERING

A special report prepared for Rotary International by the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies

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Service has long been recognized as a fundamental feature of Rotary membership.

- But neither Rotary nor any of the other major service organizations has been able to gain a meaningful handle on the actual scale or economic value of the volunteer effort they mobilize.
- But now, thanks to a recent internationally recognized methodology for measuring volunteer work, it has become possible to close this gap. In this report we present

Survey forms were sent via email by Rotary's President to a carefully selected sample of Rotary club leaders in every Rotary region around the world.

- Club leaders were asked to distribute the surveys, either in electronic or paper form, to all of their club members. The survey asked respondents to recall and report information about each time they participated in Rotary-sponsored volunteer activities in the previous 4 weeks.
- Responses were then tallied, weighted by region, and adjusted to account for potential non-response bias.

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- FINDING 1: Rotary's volunteer workforce—
 - ✓ 5.8 Million Hours in a 4 weeks period
 - ✓ Maintaining this effort even over a 9 month in a typical year equals to 47 million hours of service hours
 - ✓ Just Rotarian does not include friends & relatives
- FINDING 2: Leveraging Rotary's paid staff
 - ✓ Rotary International staff of 563 paid staff is mobilizing a workforce for social progress each year that is equivalent to nearly 27,000 full-time equivalent workers
- FINDING 3 The economic impact of Rotary volunteering
 - ✓ If communities had to pay for Rotary Services it would cost @ 850 Million Dollars a year

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- FINDING 4 Capturing the benefits of Rotary's emphasis on service
 - ✓ The overwhelming majority of Rotary International members identified Rotary's emphasis on service as one of the organization's major attractions to its members.
 - @ 75% Extremely or very important
- FINDING 5 Gender and Rotary volunteering
 - ✓ By contrast, though only representing 24% of Rotary members, Rotary women accounted for a disproportionate 26% of Rotary volunteer hours, suggesting that women were either more likely to volunteer than men or volunteered more hours, or some combination of these two
- FINDING 6 Age and Rotary volunteering
 - ✓ 55 + 55 % membership 53% of Service Hours
 - ✓ 25 – 55 34% membership 32% of service Hours

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- FINDING 7 Rotary volunteers contribute in a variety of fields
 - ✓ Half of all Rotary- organized volunteer time is devoted to health, education, and social assistance (e.g., child, elder, or disability care, soup kitchens, refugee support services), with culture and arts a close fourth

- FINDING 8 Rotary volunteers do a variety of jobs
 - ✓ Rotary volunteers do a variety of jobs
 - Manager, organizer, or coordinator 49.1%
 - Manual work 33.3%
 - Technical or professional services 14.1%
 - Not declared 14 %

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- FINDING 9 Rotary is succeeding in initiating new members into service
 - ✓ Not surprisingly, long-time Rotary members (those who have been members for 6 years or more) account for nearly two-thirds of Rotary-organized volunteer work, roughly proportional to their share of members.
 - ✓ Significantly, however, those who have been members of Rotary for 3–5 years account for 20% of volunteer hours, exceeding their 17% of membership
- FINDING 10 Rotary volunteer rates and hours vary by region
 - ✓ Lowest US & Canada 3.7 average hours per person
 - ✓ Highest Latin America 6.4 average hours per person

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Conclusion

- ✓ *This report provides the first systematic empirical analysis of the extent of volunteer activity generated by a major global service organization*
- ✓ *Complicated estimating procedures had to be deployed to deal with the survey's relatively low response rate and the wide variations in the scale of Rotary membership among regions.*
- ✓ *Despite these complexities, therefore, readers can be confident that the results reported here are a reasonable approximation of the scale and character of the volunteer effort generated by Rotary*
- ✓ *Translated into economic terms, Rotary is annually generating a scale of social and economic problem-solving effort that is worth nearly nine times more than it costs the organization to produce.*

For a world challenged to meet a demanding set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the face of withering environmental catastrophes and limited governmental and philanthropic resources, the lesson is clear:

- ✓ *volunteer service is not only a feel-good calling—it may provide one of the more promising, and one of the more fulfilling—avenues through which to achieve the ambitious goals that the international community has set for itself.*

By putting itself through the demanding inquiry described here, Rotary may thus have done a special service by opening this avenue for all to see. If so, this work will have more than met its objectives.