

50 years of Rotary in Malta

ROBERT VON BROCKDORFF

Rotary is a worldwide network of 1.2 million men and women, set up 112 years ago by an American, Paul Harris, who wanted like-minded people to share their ideas and working experiences. Within a few years, the organisation extended to Canada and from there the world over. Lady members joined Rotary in 1989/1990.

The motto of Rotarians is: 'Service above self'. Our guiding principles have been the foundation of our values, service to the community, integrity, leadership, diversity and fellowship among the members and their families. Some of our aims and objects are to provide clean water, sanitation and hygiene to the people living in those countries that we take for granted and where such facilities are not available. We also combat disease, support education, promote peace and good will, and grow local economies. There are many Rotarians who offer their services for a time at no remuneration.

On October 6, 1967, Rotary Club Malta was chartered, having been set up by the Rotary Club of Messina, Sicily. The first and founder president was the late Anthony Miceli-Farrugia. Then, in December 5, 1967, the Charter document was presented to the club by Luther Hodges, then president of Rotary International, at a dinner at the Hotel Phoenicia. Several foreign Rotarians attended this charter dinner celebration and the guests of honour were Sir Maurice Dorman, the Governor of Malta, Dr George Borg Olivier, the Prime Minister, and Archbishop Mgr Sir Michael Gonzi.

Rotary Club Malta held a very low profile on the services the club provided for many years since it was formed. On a change of policy, information and details are now shared with others.

Throughout the 50 years since it was founded, Rotary Club Malta has achieved recognition for its community services in



Rotarian with kids in Uganda.

Malta and overseas. It was involved in the setting up of Dar il-Kaptan, a leading respite home, operating in Malta since November 10, 1991, during the presidency of William Caruana, who was the one who saw it through.

In 1992, the club was involved in the setting up of the San Blas Rehabilitation Centre for Drug Addicts, providing the highest levels of care and assistance to those afflicted by drug addiction.

Rotary Club Malta members have also been prompt to support and help areas hit by disasters and poverty. In 2004, a school was built and furnished in a small village in Sri Lanka that was hit by the devastating tsunami. It was also the time that our club contributed towards the building costs for a boys' home for orphans and poor children in Tamil Nadu in Southern India. This area was also badly hit by

the same tsunami where many lives and homes were lost.

Our club has supported a Gozitan priest of the Missionary Society of St Paul in Arequipa, Peru, with building and furnishing four classrooms for poor children.

In 2008, our club also set up a Telecentre in Ankober, 180 km from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where there was a great shortage of electronic equipment. The Telecentre was powered by solar panels, supported by a diesel-powered generator. We purchased five computers, a printer, a photocopier, a TV, a projector and a screen. We also financed the training of a manager to run the centre and teach others how to use the internet. The care of the running of the centre was then handed over to the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa.

We have also installed five solar panels at a children's home in Uganda and a PV electrical system to provide electricity to a section of the village where the electricity supply was very unreliable.

Another project was to provide for the building of a primary school with boarding facilities in a small poor village in Nkose Island, Lake Victoria, Uganda, where no school was provided for the children to receive their schooling. This was a joint effort with a generous donation from the Malta government and Kids of Africa, a Swiss-based orphanage near Entebbe, Uganda, which provided local support to erect and complete the project. The school was inaugurated in November 2015.

Our club has also made donations to support earthquake victims from time to time and to

support initiatives of the Rotary clubs of the affected nations.

In 2017, we contributed towards equipping an ambulance of the Malta Red Cross that is specifically dedicated to transporting sick children.

We also contribute to the End Polio campaign that was initiated by Rotary International, who together with WHO and UNICEF, set up the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988 to combat and eradicate polio.

In 2013, they were joined by the Gates Foundation (Bill and Melinda Gates), who contribute very generously financially. Rotarians also administer the vaccine when medical services and facilities are not adequate in the third world countries. Since the campaign against polio was introduced, the number of polio cases worldwide has been reduced by 99.9 per cent.

"The motto of Rotarians is 'Service above self'"

Rotary Club Malta has provided scholarships through the Rotary Foundation for graduates to further their studies, carried out away from Malta. Several applicants have benefitted, and received grants that have assisted them to achieve their goals. These schemes exclude the participation of Rotarians and their families.

Rotary Club Malta has sponsored the setting up of Rotary Club La Valette and Rotary Club Gozo and all form part of the Sicily-Malta District, consisting of over 90 Clubs. The Rotary Club of Malta has had the honour of having five District Governors, with the current one for 2017/2018 being John de Giorgio, whose father was a founder member of our club.

Our club members are proud to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our setting up, and we are honoured to be of service to those whom we can help to make the world a better place to live in.

