Communities
IN ACTION

A Guide to Effective Projects

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL®

RI Mission Statement

The mission of Rotary International is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

Rotary clubs engage in service projects in thousands of communities all over the world. Rotary club members form a diverse, global network of volunteers united through a common commitment to the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through service.

Representing a cross-section of professionals and business leaders in their local communities, Rotary club members tend to be knowledgeable about the local needs, priorities, customs, and resources that contribute to effective service projects. Effective projects, however, require more than an understanding of the community. They also depend on the club's ability to effectively evaluate the community's needs, plan relevant projects, and manage project resources.

How can I use this guide?

Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Projects was developed to provide Rotary clubs with the tools they need to plan, implement, and evaluate effective service projects. The methods described in this guide have been used by Rotary clubs and community development experts around the world. Your club can adapt these methods for your community.

Used together with *Community Assessment Tools* (605C), this guide will help your club conduct more effective service projects. Additional information and resources, including all publications referred to in this guide, are available at www.rotary.org.

A common language of understanding

The way people understand concepts such as community, gender, and service is deeply connected to their language, cultural background, education, and life experiences. To avoid confusion, here are definitions of some of the key terms used in this guide:

asset Anything that contributes to the success of a service project, such as individual knowledge, expertise, networks of people, and institutions in the community.

community A group of people who have something in common. Communities are sometimes defined by very tangible things, such as a specific geographic area or government, and sometimes by shared social customs or cultural traditions.

gender A socially constructed and culturally influenced idea governing the roles, behavior, and relationships between women and men, and boys and girls.

project stakeholders Individuals, groups, or organizations that sponsor a project or might be affected by a project's outcome.

service In a broad sense, any action by one or more people that benefits another person or people. Rotary has five Avenues of Service:

- *Club Service* focuses on strengthening fellowship and ensuring the effective functioning of the club.
- *Vocational Service* encourages Rotarians to serve others through their vocations and to practice high ethical standards.
- *Community Service* covers the projects and activities clubs undertake to improve life in the community.
- *International Service* encompasses actions taken to expand Rotary's humanitarian reach around the globe and promote world understanding and peace.
- *New Generations Service* recognizes the positive change implemented by youth and young adults through leadership development activities, service projects, and exchange programs.

sustainability The ability of a project or program to operate on its own without outside support or intervention. Sustainability is often used as a measure of a project's long-term effectiveness.

What is included in this guide?

This guide follows the life cycle of an effective service project through the stages of project selection, planning, implementation, and evaluation. It also includes information about some of the resources available to Rotary clubs through Rotary International. At the end of the guide you will find a checklist of the key steps involved in each stage of an effective service project. Use this checklist to review the key concepts you've learned and to ensure that your club follows these best practices when it undertakes a new service project.

What makes a service project effective?

Effective service projects do more than just offer a quick fix for problems. The most effective service projects

- Respond to real issues
- Improve community members' lives
- Incorporate the abilities of those who are served
- Recognize the contributions of all participants as important and necessary
- Are based on a realistic assessment of available resources
- Aim for specific goals and objectives with measurable results
- Build effective networks
- Empower people and communities

CONDUCTING COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

Assessing your community's strengths and weaknesses is an important first step in planning an effective service project. By taking the time to learn about your community, your club can discover new opportunities for service projects and prevent the duplication of existing assets.

Formal community assessments may involve online surveys, telephone interviews, and focus groups run by professional consultants. Informal assessments can be as simple as chatting with people at a coffee shop, reading the local newspaper, or discussing issues at a community meeting. A combination of formal and informal approaches can offer effective, yet inexpensive, ways to learn about a community.

Effective community assessments not only provide an accurate picture of a community's strengths and weaknesses but also build community support and goodwill for service projects. In order to be effective, community assessments should be systematic, involve a wide variety of community members, and engage people in a meaningful way.

Assessment purpose and stakeholders

The purpose of a community assessment is to help you better understand the dynamics of your community and provide the information you need to make decisions that will contribute to its long-term development. Before you start an assessment, consider what specifically you want to learn about your community. An effective assessment will reveal things you did not know before.

An effective assessment will include a wide range of community stakeholders, especially groups that are often overlooked, like women, young people, the elderly, and religious or ethnic minorities. Including a broad cross-section of people who could be affected by a service project is an important way to capture more diverse perspectives and uncover potential resources and problems that you might not otherwise have considered.

Types of assets

Your club's community has four major types of assets:

Human assets

One of the most important assets a community has is its people. Everyone has unique skills, knowledge, and experience that can contribute to a project's success, sometimes in unexpected ways. Often, a project's success will depend on how well the project engages and empowers people in a community. Community assessments should carefully examine the different roles played by community members, including often-marginalized groups such as women, youth, minorities, and the poor.

Organizational assets

Organizations provide vital resources for community service efforts. Formal organizations — government offices, nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, schools, businesses — usually have access to financial resources, technical expertise, and information that might be used in a service project. Informal organizations — sports teams, neighborhood associations, women's cooperatives, a group of friends who meet regularly in a coffee shop — may be less visible but can play crucial roles in supporting and promoting community service projects.

Physical assets

A community's physical assets include any existing infrastructure — buildings, parks, public transit systems, health care facilities, water and sanitation facilities, recycling centers and landfills, libraries, theaters, and meeting halls — that might be used to support a project. Knowing what physical assets a community has can also help you find ideas for projects that might enhance the existing infrastructure.

Club assets

The diverse expertise and professional skills of their members constitute a key asset of Rotary clubs. A close examination of a club's financial and human resources will help determine the types of projects that it can effectively manage. Clubs with access to large financial

resources, for example, might need to do only limited fundraising for a project, while other clubs might choose volunteer activities or projects that require little financial support. A club's reputation in a community could also be an asset.

Positive approaches to community assessments

One of the dangers of any community assessment is the tendency to look only at a community's problems or deficiencies. Problem-oriented assessments tend to ignore resources and solutions that may be found within a community, and often result in projects that create dependence on outside assistance. Taking a positive approach to community assessments is a good way to avoid focusing on what a community lacks and will help a club find more sustainable project resources. A strength-based approach asks project stakeholders to look for the best in their communities, posing these questions:

- What are the best qualities of our community?
- Why are these our best qualities?
- What projects have worked well in the past?
- Why have these projects succeeded?

Identifying past successes builds confidence and helps motivate community members to take on new projects and initiatives.

Community Assessment Tools

The following tools are effective and inexpensive assessment options that individual Rotary clubs can adapt to their communities. In-depth descriptions of each tool plus sample session plans can be found in *Community Assessment Tools* (605C).

- Survey
- Asset inventory
- Community mapping
- Daily activities schedule
- Seasonal calendar
- Community cafe
- Focus group
- Panel discussion

Analyzing and reporting results

After completing a community assessment, you'll need to share the results. A thorough analysis of a community assessment can help your club determine which service project to pursue and whether it will be effective.

The assessment process

Most community assessments follow a similar cycle.

1. Appoint a committee to oversee the assessment. (This committee will carry out the remaining steps in the process.)

2. Establish the purpose and objectives of the community assessment.

3. Decide which assessment tool(s) to use, based on the club's available resources.

4. Identify community stakeholders who should participate, including educators, government officials, law enforcement officials, hospital administrators, social workers, leaders of civic organizations, and students. Be sure to include marginalized groups as well.

5. Set a timetable with specific deadlines for completing and reviewing the assessment and for presenting the results to the club and other community stakeholders.

6. Carry out the assessment.

7. Review the assessment results. Determine which issues were most commonly identified and which issues other clubs and community organizations are addressing. Is there duplication? At this point, you may wish to meet with a small group of community leaders to discuss the results.

8. Write a brief report on your assessment findings, and share them with the club and the community stakeholders who participated.

SELECTING A PROJECT

After a Rotary club has completed an assessment of its community, it faces the challenge of selecting a service project. This decision is usually based on the relevant community concerns, available resources, and club service interests identified in the assessment.

Selecting a project can be a difficult decision. One project can't possibly address all the issues a community faces, and clubs must determine where their work will have the greatest impact. Some clubs use a consensus-building process to determine which projects to pursue, others debate and vote on issues, and still others allow their service committees to select appropriate projects. Regardless of how the decision is made, there are some common concerns clubs should consider before selecting a project.

Consider Rotary's areas of focus

Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation have adopted six areas of focus as organizational priorities:

- Peace and conflict prevention/resolution
- Disease prevention and treatment
- Water and sanitation
- Maternal and child health
- Basic education and literacy
- Economic and community development

There are countless ways that Rotary clubs can address these issues both locally and internationally. For ideas, consult the publication *Rotary's Areas of Focus* (965).

Community support and involvement

Developing strong community support and involvement helps club service projects succeed by improving access to local resources, building community capacity, and fostering friendship and goodwill. Factoring the community assessment into the project selection can help ensure that the project meets the community's needs and gains local support. Remember that a successful project requires the support of everyone involved.

Club's service history and interests

Consider what types of projects your club has successfully completed in the past. Do your members prefer to take an active role in implementing projects, or do they excel at raising and donating funds to existing community efforts? Reflecting on these questions can help a club better understand its service-related strengths and select a project that capitalizes on those strengths. However, a club's service history should not limit its choice of projects. Selecting projects that fit the evolving interests of a club will keep members interested and engaged, and will help ensure their success.

Time, resources, and project duration

A club's resources and the amount of time that members can commit to projects are limited, so clubs must carefully balance their available resources and the projects they choose to undertake. A project's success is not always determined by its duration. Projects that last a long time generally require more planning and involvement from club members, so it is important to discuss in advance how much time members are willing to commit. Setting realistic goals will help ensure that the project can be completed effectively.

Disaster relief and recovery

Rotarians have a long history of aiding victims of natural disasters. Through local club and district efforts, Rotarians donate to relief funds; send shipments of food, clothing, and medicine; collaborate with local organizations that offer emergency relief; and provide ongoing assistance during long-term reconstruction projects.

To provide immediate disaster relief, clubs are encouraged to work with well-established international relief agencies that are equipped to quickly and effectively allocate aid.

Sustainability

Sustainable projects build a community's capacity to address issues without relying on external support. When selecting a project, think carefully about both the short-term and long-term impact. For example, building a modern well and water pump for a neighborhood without access to clean drinking water might solve a community's immediate water problems. But if the community cannot maintain the well, the people's water problems will quickly return. The same might be said for a community beautification project. A club could build a park, clean up litter, or paint over graffiti in an impoverished neighborhood, but if people from the neighborhood aren't invested in the project, the graffiti and litter will almost certainly reappear. Sustainable projects take these issues into account and provide long-term solutions to chronic problems.

MAKING A PLAN

After a project has been selected, it's time to start planning. A good project plan will help you manage resources effectively, anticipate potential problems, and evaluate your project's success.

Service projects committee

The service projects committee is one of the five standing committees recommended in the publication *Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan* (245). It oversees all of the club's service projects from start to finish and is responsible for motivating club members and finding new opportunities for service. The committee's work may be closely linked to the club's strategic planning, membership development and retention, fundraising, and public image activities. For more information on the service projects committee, refer to the *Club Service Projects Committee Manual* (226D).

Setting effective goals

One of the service projects committee's most important tasks is identifying effective goals and objectives for a service project. Goals are a broad description of what the project is meant to achieve, while objectives are specific aims based on those goals. Project goals are important for organizing a project, defining its scope, and measuring its success.

Effective goals are	Examples
Shared – representing the aspirations of all involved	Our club's plan to launch a community food bank resulted from a meeting of community stakeholders, which included representatives from local businesses, charities, civic agencies, and low-income families that will benefit from this service.
Challenging – ambitious and exceeding what clubs have achieved in the past	In the past, our club organized seasonal food drives during major holidays. We intend to scale up our efforts to make this food bank a permanent, year-round institution in the community.
Achievable – based on a realistic assessment of materials, resources, and time	We have secured the backing of project sponsors – local businesses that will help supply the food and warehouse space – and beneficiaries – local charities and outreach centers that will deliver the food to people who need it. Our members, working with our sponsored Interact club, Rotaract club, and Rotary Community Corps, will provide the volunteer hours.
Measurable – having a tangible, quantifiable point to pursue	Once operational, the food bank will provide 10 pounds of nonperishable food to 100 families weekly.
Time specific – having a specific deadline or time frame for completion	The food bank will be fully operational within 12 months, at which time we will turn over administration to a local charitable organization. Our members will continue to support the food bank indefinitely through advocacy, fundraising, and volunteering.

Developing a project work plan

With the goals in mind, create a work plan — a simple, easy-to-understand schedule that documents each task involved in reaching the project's objectives. The work plan should list:

- Specific tasks
- Individual responsibilities
- Resources
- Budget
- Project timing and deadlines
- Anticipated task outcomes

Your club may also appoint an individual or a subcommittee to monitor the plan's progress and encourage, remind, and reward those working on each task.

Developing a budget

Realistic financial expectations, outlined in a detailed budget, will reduce the chances of unforeseen costs arising as the project progresses. Base the budget on your work plan. What expenses do you anticipate for each task, and what income is likely? Considerations might include:

Expenditures

- Printing of promotional materials
- Postage for promotional materials
- Transportation for volunteers
- Refreshments for volunteers
- Materials and supplies

Income

- Donated goods and services
- Funds raised for the project
- Grants

Transparency and accountability

A good budget does more than help a club manage project resources efficiently. It also helps a club build community support, protect resources from being misused, gauge a project's success, and plan future projects. Many individual donors, grant-making organizations, and foundations require detailed financial reports before they will give money for a project. Develop a transparent accounting system for project finances, keeping these recommendations in mind:

- Research local laws and regulations that may apply to a project.

- Write a statement of financial stewardship and accountability.
- Create a bank account for project funds.
- Collect receipts for all project expenditures, and provide receipts to individuals who donate money or project materials.
- Compare receipts with financial accounts regularly.
- Develop a system for independent auditing of project finances by a reputable accounting agency.
- Make regular written reports to project and community stakeholders describing project income and expenses.

Project liability and protection

Does your club have a plan in place to deal with accidents or emergencies? Are you protected legally? As you plan a service project, think carefully about these questions and consider the following measures your club can take to protect itself and project participants in the event of an accident or other emergency situation.

- Consult police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and other local emergency experts and develop a plan of action in the event of an accident, injury to volunteers, or damage to property.
- Bring an emergency mobile phone and first aid kit to project work sites.
- Collect emergency contact information for each project participant.
- Obtain the advice of legal counsel on the need for protection against liability for any club project or activity.
- If local laws permit, incorporate your club — or the club project if it is of significant size and scope — for added legal protection against liability.

The articles of incorporation for a club or club activity must comply with the RI Constitution and Bylaws and should include a statement to that effect. Submit the articles of incorporation to RI through your Club and District Support representative, who can also provide more information about RI policies on incorporation.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Working with other groups or organizations — both within and outside of Rotary — can greatly enhance a club's service efforts. Utilizing the community's existing resources and involving community groups or businesses gives ownership to a range of community members and increases the likelihood of producing real, meaningful change. Information and tips on collaborating with other organizations are available at *www.rotary.org /collaborate*. For information about working with young people, see *An Introduction to New Generations Service* (735).

Rotarian Action Groups

Rotarian Action Groups provide assistance and support to Rotary clubs and districts in planning and implementing service projects in their respective areas of expertise. They are autonomous, international groups organized by committed Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, and Rotaractors who have expertise in and a passion for a particular type of service. Learn more at *www.rotary.org/actiongroups*.

Rotary Community Corps

A Rotary Community Corps (RCC) is a group of non-Rotarian men and women who share Rotary's values and commitment to service. With the guidance and support of their sponsor Rotary clubs, RCCs plan and implement projects that address issues affecting their communities. They can also help support Rotary club service efforts. Sponsoring an RCC can be an effective way to involve community members in planning and implementing service projects, and can help ensure their sustainability. Learn more at *www.rotary.org/rcc*.

Other Rotary clubs

Make connections with prospective club partners:

- Plan a Rotary Friendship Exchange — a reciprocal visit between your club and a club in another country.
- Establish a twin club relationship with a club in another country.
- Participate in a project fair to find a partner for an international service project.

Find more tips on ways to connect with other clubs at www.rotary.org/makeconnections.

External organizations

Before partnering on a project with an outside organization, confirm the organization's integrity and its compatibility with your project goals.

Ask these questions:

- What is the organization's mission?
- Does its mission agree with the values of your club?
- What is the organization's history? Its reputation in the community?
- Does the organization have financial statements available?
- Is the organization willing to work with your club and share public relations opportunities?
- What kinds of hands-on service opportunities would your club members have in working with the organization?

Rotary Service Department

Does your club need help finding a club, district, or other Rotary entity to partner on a service project? Contact the Rotary Service Department at rotary.service@rotary.org and find out about the latest resources to help you connect to potential partners.

FUNDING A PROJECT

Great ideas and boundless enthusiasm are wonderful resources, but your project must also have the money to make it viable. Fundraising requires a plan that explains what your club wants to accomplish with the project and how the club expects to get the money to make it work. You might be able to finance a project completely through fundraising events, such as a charity dinner, celebrity auction, walkathon, arts and crafts sale, bake sale, or car wash. But in other cases, you'll need to turn to outside funding sources such as:

- Individual donors
- Businesses
- Foundations (including The Rotary Foundation)
- Nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations
- Government agencies
- Other Rotary clubs

Creating a fundraising plan

A successful fundraising campaign must be carefully planned and implemented. The service projects committee should coordinate its fundraising activities with the club's treasurer and Rotary Foundation committee. Consider what types of fundraising events will be most effective for your community, ensure that your plans comply with local laws and regulations, and take care to develop a clear, concise message that effectively communicates your club's service goals and plans to potential donors.

Following is the typical process for creating a fundraising plan:

1. Determine fundraising needs.
2. Establish a budget.
3. Identify the resources available.
4. Determine the logistics of the fundraiser.
5. Organize volunteers.
6. Publicize the event.
7. Implement the fundraiser.

8. Manage funds in a businesslike manner.
9. Recognize volunteers and contributors (if culturally appropriate).
10. Share the outcome of your fundraiser with the community via local media.
11. Evaluate the effort with the fundraising organizing committee, club president, and other club leaders.
12. Ensure continuity for future fundraising efforts by reviewing records with incoming club leaders or the club treasurer.

Working with donors

Research donors in advance to help determine how much money your club can reasonably request. Making an informed request increases your chance of receiving a donation at or near the requested level. Donors are less inclined to respond to requests that are vague or arbitrary. Appeal to donors on the basis of benefits, not needs. Many donors give for the satisfaction of making a difference, so describe the return on their investment in quantifiable terms, clearly specifying who will benefit from their generosity and how.

Be sure to develop a system for tracking project donations and gifts. These records are useful for anticipating donors' future project contributions, and can help your club avoid asking the same groups or individuals for donations too frequently.

Cultivating a close relationship with donors can lead to increased project funding in the future. Provide donors with regular reports on the use of donated funds. Donors appreciate knowing how donations are being used, and it's in your club's best interest to be as transparent and accountable as possible with project funds. Also, keep donors informed of the project's progress, and invite them to participate in project events and celebrations.

Remember to thank and recognize donors for their contributions. A thank-you note is often all that's required for small donations; some clubs choose to recognize larger donations in other ways.

Individuals

When approaching individual donors, be ambitious. Asking for large — but realistic — donations is reasonable. Give donors a clear picture of how much money needs to be raised, the donor's role in the effort, and the amount of money you suggest the donor contribute. Such requests should be made in a thoughtful, courteous manner that allows the donor to decide if the amount is appropriate. And be sure to ask individuals whether their company participates in a matching gifts program for employee donations.

Businesses

Check public records to research the giving history of a particular business and find the appropriate contact person. Customize your club's message to each company by emphasizing the benefits of sponsorship, especially opportunities for positive publicity in the community. Because most companies have much larger budgets for marketing than for charitable donations, a company is more likely to draw from its marketing funds if it is convinced that sponsorship will bring a lot of exposure.

If a company is interested in your club's work but not in a sponsorship role, suggest some other type of donation, such as labor, supplies, or equipment. Providing volunteer assistance or donations-in-kind can also go a long way toward creating a positive image of the donor that would cost much more to cultivate through advertising.

Foundations

Check public records to research funding available from foundations. Once you've identified a potential source of funding, designate one club member as the main contact to help develop your club's relationship with the organization. Most foundations require applications for project funding. Presentation is important, and poorly written or incomplete applications are less likely to receive funding.

If your funding request is approved, send a letter of thanks and ask what reporting procedures are required; the foundation will likely want to follow the progress of the project. If your request is denied, find out why. Also try to determine if the club might be considered for future project funding. If so, this is a good time to begin developing a relationship with the foundation.

Funding through The Rotary Foundation

The Rotary Foundation offers various grant packages to help fund club and district service efforts. To learn more about these opportunities, talk with your district Rotary Foundation committee chair. *The Rotary Foundation Quick Reference Guide* (219) provides a concise overview of current grants and related resources.

Nonprofits/nongovernmental organizations

In general, the same approach used with foundations and businesses can be applied to nonprofits, also known as nongovernmental organizations or NGOs. One difference, however, is that nonprofits often focus on building community capacity through technical assistance, training, or in-kind donations of project materials. If a nonprofit doesn't make grants to other organizations, find out whether it provides other forms of technical assistance for community projects. A nonprofit's expertise can be instrumental to a project's success.

Government agencies

Many local, regional, and national governments offer funding for programs. To research these opportunities, contact government offices and ask what resources are available. Many countries have international development funds that contribute to projects in other countries. Most have specific requirements for such contributions and may require a detailed application, similar to a foundation grant application.

MANAGING A PROJECT

While the details of implementation will vary widely from project to project, following these best practices can help improve your project's effectiveness.

Working with donated goods

Donated goods can make a tremendous impact on a community project. But remember, projects should be needs-driven, not supply-driven. When your club identifies the need for specific donated goods, reach out to the local community first. Purchasing goods locally may be less expensive than having them shipped, and also helps support the local economy. If you decide to accept goods from an international partner, be sure that all parties understand, and are prepared to meet, the relevant customs regulations, procedural requirements, and shipping costs.

Working with volunteers

Invite volunteers to assist your club with its service projects. When volunteers are actively engaged and invested, the project is certain to be more successful and sustainable. Be sure to keep participants motivated throughout the duration of the project, not just at the start. A positive experience often encourages volunteers to participate in future service projects, and can help attract new members to your club.

Tips for motivating volunteers

- Place people in jobs that best fit their abilities, interests, and experience.
- Provide a vision of the project's impact.
- Highlight the significance of each person's role.
- Delegate responsibility.
- Build effective teams.

One of the best ways to keep volunteers motivated and engaged is to make activities fun, high-energy events that involve everyone's skills and participation. It's a good idea to nominate a project volunteer coordinator as the contact person for volunteers.

Tips for project volunteer coordinators

- **Do some advance work.** Doing things like creating a list of project activities and asking club members to sign up for them helps ensure that each stage of the project has volunteer support.
- **Prepare volunteers.** Telling volunteers what they should bring to an activity helps prepare them for work. This may mean simply informing volunteers what they will be doing and discussing their expectations and needs.
- **Expect the unexpected.** It's always a good idea to have a contingency plan. For example, if a project site is outdoors, have a back-up plan in case of bad weather that tells volunteers where to go and what to do. If a project activity must be canceled, make sure you have a plan in place for informing volunteers. Since accidents can always happen, make sure that volunteers know whom to contact and what to do if they have an accident, get lost, or need medical attention.
- **Encourage evaluation.** One way to make volunteer service more meaningful is to solicit volunteers' input after a service activity has ended. This can be as simple as discussing people's impressions and favorite activities or asking them to fill out project evaluation forms.
- **Recognize volunteer contributions.** When people feel their work is appreciated and believe they've contributed something to a project, they're more likely to volunteer in the future. At the end of a service activity, show your appreciation for everyone's efforts. For example, you might invite volunteers to a club-sponsored celebration or award presentation.
- **Maintain contact with volunteers.** After the work has concluded, provide volunteers with periodic updates on the project they worked on, and let them know about new volunteer opportunities.

Regular communication

Communication throughout the project is essential to keeping club members and project stakeholders motivated. There should be no secrets: Everyone involved should be kept up-to-date on project news. Consider these ways to keep participants informed and engaged:

- Updates at club meetings
- Celebration of milestones
- Recognition of volunteers
- Visits from partner organizations
- Club events at the project site

Public relations

For your club's project to succeed, it must have the support of the local community. By developing a public relations plan, you can share the project's message and gain this support, while enhancing Rotary's overall image in the community. See *Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs* (257), and go to www.rotary.org, where you can:

- Find information on writing an effective press release
- Learn tips for working with the media
- Download Rotary advertisements and multimedia content
- Download images
- Connect to Rotary International's social networking pages

Using Rotary's trademarks

Using the name Rotary, the Rotary emblem, and other RI trademarks (known collectively as the Rotary Marks) in your project publicity is an excellent way to promote Rotary's mission. Be sure that your promotional materials clearly identify the Rotary club or district that planned and implemented the project.

Before developing any promotional materials, review RI's guidelines for proper use of the Rotary Marks in the *RI Visual Identity Guide* (547-EN). Submit questions to your Club and District Support representative.

EVALUATING SUCCESS

Evaluation plays an important role in ensuring the long-term effectiveness of continuing service projects and bringing closure to completed projects. In order to learn from the experience, you need to know what worked and what didn't and whether the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation process need not be expensive or time consuming. By setting measurable goals and objectives during the planning phase, you've already done much of the work. Completing the evaluation is simply a matter of collecting the data related to each of the project's objectives and determining whether they were met.

Choosing an evaluation method

Consider these factors:

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Audience (club members, sponsors, media, etc.)
- Information needed
- Information sources
- Best way to collect the information
- Date the evaluation is needed
- Resources available for information collection
- Method for reporting the results

Projects can be evaluated in a number of ways. Some of the most common methods are described below.

Data analysis

Data analysis involves a comparison of statistics from before and after the project. For example, an adult literacy project could include a test given to students at the beginning and the end of the course to determine their progress.

Survey

For results that are less easily quantified, a survey can track some measure of change. For example, you might conduct a survey of AIDS awareness in a community before and after a club's AIDS-awareness project.

Case study

A case study records the effects of a project on a limited number of people. Establishing a Rotary Community Corps (RCC), for instance, can have a profound effect on a small segment of the community. A study of that group of people can provide an in-depth look at the changes that occurred after the RCC began its work. Detailed interviews with participants can identify changes in their knowledge and skills that have resulted from their exposure to the project.

A combination of several methods will provide the most effective and comprehensive evaluation. For example, the impact of a revolving loan fund can be shown to have reduced the number of people with monthly incomes of less than US$500 by 20 percent, increased the number of people who now have a savings account, and changed the lives of two women who now describe increased self-confidence and better circumstances for their families.

Writing the evaluation report

The report should be succinct, appealing, readily understood, and useful. Consider these writing tips:

- Keep the report short.
- Use active voice and present tense.
- Feature the most important points first, and highlight key points.
- Include quotes, anecdotes, graphics, and photographs.
- Make specific recommendations for action, including suggestions for what similar projects might do differently.

Share your project story with RI

Rotary International is always looking for stories about successful club service projects that can inspire and educate other Rotary clubs. Contact the Rotary Service Department at rotary.service@rotary.org to share information about your project. Your story will be considered for publicity on the RI website or in other Rotary publications.

PROJECT CHECKLIST

Consult the following checklist to ensure that your club is following the key best practices highlighted in this guide. Refer to the page numbers listed in parentheses to review a particular step.

☐ **Answer these pre-assessment questions** (pages 3-4)

- What kind of information about your community do you want to obtain?
- How will you represent everyone in the community in your assessment?
- What kind of community assessment tool will you use?

☐ **Conduct a community assessment** (page 4)

- What needs and assets did your assessment reveal?
- What types of projects has your club done in the past?
- What types of projects are club members interested in?

☐ **Select a project** (pages 5-6)

- What financial and time commitments are required of your club?
- How long will the project last?
- Will the project be sustainable?

☐ **Appoint a service project committee** (page 7)

☐ **Set project goals and objectives** (page 7)

- Are project goals shared, challenging, achievable, measurable, and time-specific?

☐ **Develop a project work plan and budget** (page 8)

- Have you identified specific tasks to meet your project's goals and objectives, and developed timelines for completion?
- Have you identified the financial or material resources needed to complete these tasks?
- Do you have a plan in place to ensure transparency and accountability?
- Do you have plans in place to deal with liability and protection?

☐ **Identify prospective partners** (pages 9-10)

- What external organizations will your club partner with?
- What other Rotary groups will your club partner with?

☐ **Create a fundraising plan** (page 11)

☐ **Reach out to prospective donors and apply for grants** (pages 11-12)

☐ **Appoint a volunteer coordinator and engage volunteers** (pages 13-14)

☐ **Facilitate regular communication with project stakeholders** (page 14)

☐ **Undertake public relations activities in the community, both during the project and after its conclusion** (page 14)

☐ **Conduct an evaluation** (pages 15-16)

- Were the project's goals and objectives met? Why or why not?
- What lessons has your club learned from this project?

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