

International Project Development and Partnering

Projects are initiated usually by a club or district in a developing country reaching out to a club or district in a developed county which will provide humanitarian assistance to and through the requesting club.

Ways to find a club in some other part of the world which needs help on a worthy project include:

1. Contacting our District 5100 International Service Committee or another club in our District that is already doing an international service project or has done one in the past, in the country your club wants to support with a project.
2. Attend one of the monthly District International Service Committee meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the conference room of the AGC building in Wilsonville, where our District Office is located. Contact International Chair [Kathy Stromvig](#) for more information.
3. Clubs can go online to look for partners by using [ProjectLink](#), which lists dozens of worthy activities in developing areas. This list maintained by RI/TRF in Evanston, Illinois. Clubs which need assistance, or are seeking another club to help with a humanitarian project, may register their needs with the ProjectLink.
4. Clubs may also find a club partner at [D5340's Global Grant Listing Exchange](#). Both of these sources list dozens of worthy activities in developing areas. It outlines projects, provides estimated costs, and gives names of appropriate contacts.
5. Attending the annual [Uniendo America Project Fair](#), which is a good source for projects in Central America (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama). This rotates between Central American countries and is usually held starting the last Thursday of January. In 2014 it will be in Antigua, Guatemala. Other Project Fairs are held as well and may be found on the Rotary International website. The closer a country is to the United States, the cheaper it is to get there and time zones changes are usually minimized. This means that it is usually more likely that the project(s) undertaken will be sustained over time.

Whether your club is looking for a particular type of project or hoping to work in a particular country or geographic area, your district's INTERNATIONAL SERVICE Committee stands ready to provide coaching assistance and help to secure long-lasting partners. Award-winning projects from our district span the globe and cover a wide range of interest and success, from projects to obtain potable water, medical or dental supplies, wheelchairs, clean air efficient stoves, and small loans (micro banking) to start or grow a cottage industry or home-based business to providing scholarships, drip irrigation systems, reforestation, and more.

What Makes a Successful Project:

There are four primary ways to make a successful INTERNATIONAL SERVICE project:

- 1) through a real need being identified by the receiving community,
- 2) through on-going and regular communication
- 3) through solid partnerships and relationships; and
- 4) superior stewardship and fiscal responsibility.

Communication is essential to the viability of any project. That means, good communication with

- a) project sponsors (host club – Rotary clubs in developing countries)
- b) recipients (usually through project sponsors)
- c) local officials and other community leaders (usually through project sponsors)

Excellent partnerships are formed by

- a) other Rotarians,
- b) project co-sponsors
- c) community leaders
- d) recipients, and
- e) leadership activities

Stewardship and fiscal responsibility become the backbone for solid partnerships. To excel in stewardship and fiscal responsibilities

- a) maintain clear and complete accounting,
- b) keep copies of receipts for at least three years,
- c) remember that copies of receipts for items with a cumulative value of US\$1,000 or more are required with project final reports,
- d) send a bank statement showing both the deposit and disbursement of funds with the final report
- e) if a competitive grant, conduct an independent financial review once the project is finished and send it to TRF with your final report
- f) ensure that ALL expenditures are within TRF (The Rotary Foundation) guidelines.

NOTE: a) through f) are normally conducted by the host club. However, as a partner it is your duty to make sure they are done.

Develop and Implement a Successful Project

‘Vet’ the Project, means: “*check things out ahead of time!!!*”
Do you have a good partner(s)?

Ask: 1) Do you know the Rotarian(s) involved or have a relationship with them? 2) Does their club have a successful history with international projects and with Matching Grants? Check with other District 5100 clubs or call TRF to confirm the status of the club in question. 3) Do you know that they will “tell it like it is” and tell you what you need to know? 4) Will they follow through to resolve difficult customs or other government issues? 5) Will they submit paperwork in a timely manner?

Check with The Rotary Foundation for answers to questions #2, #4, and #5. Also, ask The Rotary Foundation if the District the club is in is in good standing.

Point to Ponder: Is the Club able to partner with you?

Ask – 1) Is the club “in good standing” with R.I. (e.g., paid their dues, etc.)? 2) Does the club have overdue reports? 3) Does the club have more than five (5) existing Matching Grants outstanding? **Check with The Rotary Foundation.**

Consider further: 1) If the club is not in good standing, the project will be delayed, 2) the grant may be approved, but NO dollars released until overdue reports are submitted, 3) the grant may be approved, but will be “on hold” until one or more projects are completed.

Point to Ponder: Is the proposed project feasible?

Ask -- 1) Do you have a host partner? 2) Have you and your partner really determined that the project “can be done”? 3) Can the host partner really help “make it happen”? 4) Local resources may exist, but can you buy or get what is needed for the project in the project country? If not, are you prepared to purchase products in your community and arrange for and cover the payment for shipping fees (or get the fees donated)?

Establish a Partnership

Because one of the goals of the program is to foster international Rotarian fellowship and understanding, **every project should be in cooperation with and initiation of a Rotary club** in the country where the project is being established, if it is to be successful. And, if the project is being done with a Global Grant, you **must** involve the participation of a Rotary club in the country where the project is located. This partner is called a Host Partner. Your club is called the International Partner. Both clubs and/or districts are equally responsible for the project design, implementation, monitoring, and final reporting (even if one club takes the lead).

Other places for locating partnerships:

- The International Assembly
- The International Convention

- A Rotary Ambassadorial or Peace scholar from the project country or one from your club or district who has returned from studying overseas
- Other Rotary Foundation program participants or alumni, such as Group Study Exchange (GSE) team members
- Rotary Youth Exchange students who may be studying in your district
- Attending a Rotary Project Fair, such as Uniendo America Project Fair, held each year in a Central American country.