



COMMITTING TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

This Committing to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion textbook is partly extracted from RI online Learning Center course. Please visit the Rotary Learning Center for further information needed on the Rotary website: [Rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org)

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COMMITTING TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Rotary's focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion will be central to our success in the 21st century. By increasing our efforts to put this concept at the core of the Rotary experience, we create an environment that makes everyone feel welcome, included, and valued, and one that represents Rotary at its very best.

Learn how Rotary's history laid the foundation for this approach and how diversity, equity, and inclusion can be part of everyone's Rotary experience.

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Lesson 1

ROTARY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

A History of Diverse Backgrounds

When Chicago attorney Paul Harris founded Rotary, he invited his colleagues and friends to create a club where professionals of diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas and form meaningful friendships. Over time, that expanded to giving back to their communities.

Since its first club meeting more than 100 years ago, Rotary has grown into an international organization with clubs in nearly every country in the world. Our membership comprises people with countless individual identities who share a singular passion for making the world a better place for everyone.

In recognition of Rotary's history as a diverse organization, and in our careful planning for our future, Rotary has reaffirmed the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Rotary's Board of Directors voted in 2019 to adopt a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement:

As a global network that strives to build a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, Rotary values diversity and celebrates the contributions of people of all backgrounds, regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Rotary will cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture in which people from underrepresented groups have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders.

This statement is an exciting step forward in Rotary's commitment to creating a positive environment for current and future members, as well as the communities they serve.

Rotary's Action Plan

Rotary's strategic plan, known as the Action Plan, is rooted in our values and builds on the remarkable capabilities and spirit of Rotarians. It's our way of ensuring a stronger and more effective future for Rotary. The four priorities of the Action Plan are:

- 1 Increase our impact.** Find new ways to use our expertise to make a difference in our communities and around the globe.
- 2 Expand our reach.** Build connections and opportunities that allow people who share our drive to make change.

3 Enhance participant engagement. Recommit to putting the needs, expectations, and growth of our participants at the center of all that we do.

4 Increase our ability to adapt. Find new opportunities, create more paths to leadership, open our conversations to more diverse voices, and simplify how we operate.

The priorities of the Action Plan — especially increasing our adaptability — align with our position on diversity, equity, and inclusion. When we embrace this concept, we advance our organization and create positive experiences for everyone who engages with Rotary.

Engaging people from all cultures, experiences, and identities, and making them feel welcome and a part of the Rotary experience, will allow us to increase our membership, which is vital to the health and longevity of the organization. Inviting diverse perspectives will offer us new and bold ideas to keep Rotary relevant for the next century.

Making diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority is everyone’s responsibility — from club members to Rotary staff members.



Participants at the Rotary Peace Symposium at the Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Germany.

“We believe in diversity, because Rotary at its best unites the world, and therefore must reflect every part of humanity. You cannot properly serve the world unless you can see and hear that world accurately. Diversity ensures that Rotary represents all voices and speaks in every language.”

— Barry Rassin, 2018-19 Rotary International president

Lesson 2

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

DEFINING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



Diversity

Rotary welcomes people of all backgrounds, experiences, and identities regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.



Equity

Rotary strives for the fair treatment and advancement of all Rotary participants. Embracing equity means carefully considering how to provide differing levels of support, opportunities, and resources so participants have a welcoming and productive experience.

When we embrace equity, we create an environment built on respect and dignity for all participants.



Inclusion

Rotary is committed to creating experiences in which all people feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

By embracing inclusion, we create an environment where every person knows their contributions are valued.

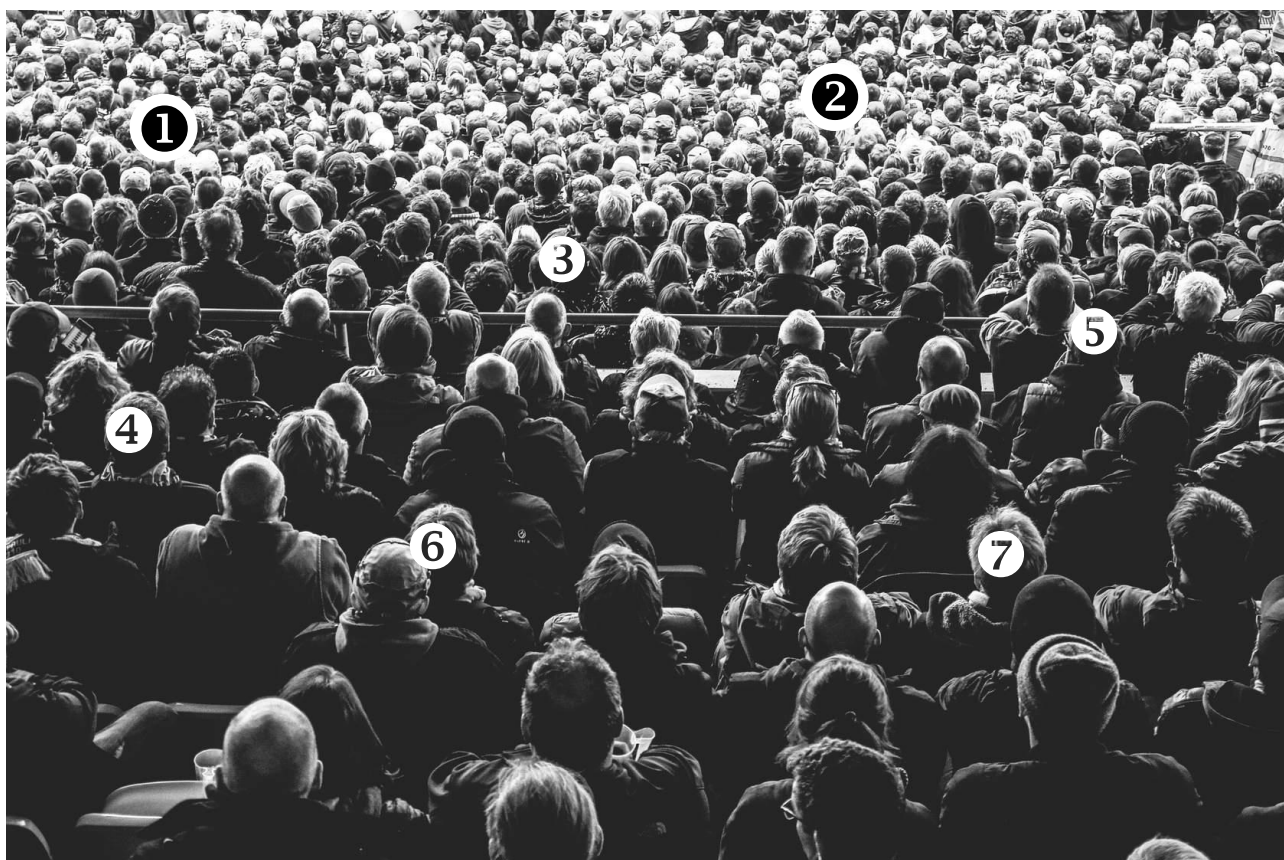
What does it all mean?

Here's how diversity, equity, and inclusion can be applied to a real-life situation. Imagine you're planning a party for members, friends, and family:

- Diversity means that everyone is invited to and welcome at the party.
- Equity means that everyone has the chance to help plan the party and make decisions.
- Inclusion means that everyone is fully engaged — dancing, talking, eating, laughing — together.

How does Rotary embrace these values today?

Below are some examples of how initiatives that support diversity, equity, and inclusion are already part of the Rotary experience.



1 Club flexibility

Clubs are free to create new types of memberships, dues structures, and meeting formats to make their clubs more accessible to current and potential members.

2 Rotary events

Ensuring accessibility for people of all abilities is a top priority when Rotary selects event venues.

The Rotary International Convention also provides space that members of all faiths can use for worship and prayer throughout the day.

3 Programs for young leaders

Rotary's programs for young leaders focus on developing the next generation of problem-solvers. This includes building their leadership and professional skills, instilling the value of service, and providing young people with other Rotary experiences.

4 Rotary Fellowships

Rotary Fellowships are global groups that are based on shared interests of all kinds and are dedicated to creating inclusive, understanding, and welcoming communities within the Rotary family. Young Rotarians, Rotarios Latinos, and the LGBT Rotary Fellowship are among those related to matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

5 Global communication

Rotary provides materials in a variety of languages to create a more inclusive experience and give everyone a voice.

Many of Rotary's communications, including its website, are available in several languages. Major events like the Rotary International Convention and the International Assembly offer simultaneous interpretation to ensure people can participate in real time.

6 International leadership

Rotary's Board of Directors and the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation are selected from many regions of the world to make sure that our leaders represent our members.

7 Women in leadership

Rotary's goal is to increase the number of women in leadership roles at all levels to 30 percent by June 2023.

More women are being appointed to serve as training leaders, regional leaders, and Rotary International committee members.

How can we each increase our efforts in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Under each heading below, find ideas about how you can increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within your Rotary club or district. Think about how your club can incorporate these ideas into your activities. If you're already involved in efforts like these, share your experience and success with other clubs in your area.

At club events

- Assess how welcoming your meetings and events are to people of various backgrounds and abilities, and identify any opportunities to improve
- Plan events at venues that are accessible
- Manage event costs to keep them affordable
- Promote events in all areas of your community
- Invite people from across the community to participate in your club's service projects

In club and district leadership

- Select leaders who are representative of your community and your club's membership
- Eliminate any club requirements that prevent newer members from seeking club leadership positions
- Encourage people from underrepresented groups to take on leadership positions and support them when they do
- Have selection committees for leadership positions that are made up of diverse members
- Ensure that district and club committees have members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives

When we recruit new members

- Identify demographics in your community that aren't represented in your club
- Focus on offering a club experience that's important to the people you want to recruit

In programs for young leaders

- Involve young leaders in your events
- Treat young leaders as equals and assign them tasks that allow them to contribute in significant ways
- Empower young leaders to engage in meaningful opportunities, projects, and roles that advance and support their goals

In club flexibility

- Take advantage of Rotary's club flexibility options to make your club more accessible to a wide variety of members
- Listen to your members and adjust your meeting schedule or costs to make sure everyone can participate
- Offer a variety of membership types to meet the needs of current, new, and prospective members

Lesson 3

RESOURCES

What's next?

Think critically about how you, your club, and your district can increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Rotary experience.

Find more information about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the resources list below. The list includes Rotary resources for clubs and districts along with resources from other organizations that are focused on promoting this concept.

Rotary resources

Links open in a new tab or window.

- [Rotary's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement](#). Read the text of the statement and learn what clubs and the Secretariat are doing to create a more open and inclusive organization.
- [Diversity Assessment](#). Evaluate the effectiveness of your club's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
- [Building a Diverse Club](#) online course. Learn how to build diversity through membership initiatives.
- [Rotary Voices](#) blog. Read success stories from Rotary clubs around the globe.

External resources

Links open in a new tab or window.

- [Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter](#). Part of a website dedicated to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion across the nonprofit sector.
- [Nonprofit Leadership Alliance](#). A library of articles and resources related to creating a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in work and social environments.

WE'RE BUILDING THE FUTURE OF ROTARY

A bold plan, for and by People of Action

Rotary is charting a new course to a stronger, more effective and vibrant future. At the center of the effort is our Action Plan: a multi-year strategic roadmap that will help us become the Rotary we want to be—and the Rotary the world needs us to be. The Action Plan builds on the remarkable capabilities we've developed in our own professional lives and careers, and it plays to our strengths as leaders, as clubs, and as a global community of people of action.

To create our plan, we looked at data, membership projections, and emerging social trends. And we listened to Rotarians, Rotaractors, and others who shared their hopes for the future of Rotary and told us we needed to:

Be more nimble and open to new ideas and faces, so we can evolve along with demographic and social changes

Gather and use data more rigorously to improve programs and make a lasting impact on humanitarian needs

Capitalize on new technologies and provide more enriching, engaging, and accessible experiences, so more emerging leaders will connect through Rotary

We assessed what it would take to move from where we are now to where we want to be. Our Action Plan is ambitious—and achievable.

The Action Plan's Four Priorities

PRIORITY 1
**INCREASE
OUR
IMPACT**

PRIORITY 2
**EXPAND
OUR
REACH**

PRIORITY 3
**ENHANCE
PARTICIPANT
ENGAGEMENT**

PRIORITY 4
**INCREASE
OUR ABILITY
TO ADAPT**

Want to know more?

Take action with us to help create Rotary's future.
Visit rotary.org/act