



# VIBRANT CLUBS IN ACTION

This Vibrant Clubs in Action 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)

Translating Committee  
Rotary Centre in Thailand  
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# Vibrant Clubs in Action

## Course Description

Learn from clubs around the world that are taking intentional action to engage members — creating distinctive experiences, conducting meaningful projects, and trying new ideas that make them more vibrant, active, and visible in their communities.

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# What is a Vibrant Club?

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A vibrant club is one that engages members by meeting their evolving needs, making sure they feel a sense of belonging, and offering an experience that exceeds their expectations.

When participants feel a club is doing all of this, their satisfaction and engagement increase. Engaged members take action, creating clubs that are powerful catalysts for lasting change. Select each marker on the image below to find the key elements of a vibrant club:



## ① Action

Vibrant clubs take action that makes an impact in communities locally and globally. They develop sustainable service projects that improve people's lives, and they mobilize their networks to build solutions that last. Vibrant clubs evaluate their activities to learn what's working and determine how to focus their efforts. Measuring and defining its impact can help a club cement its legacy.

## ② Innovation

Vibrant clubs welcome a variety of perspectives and find new ways to be leaders in their communities. They develop more engaging opportunities by including these different perspectives in the conversations and decisions. These clubs adapt to changes in the world by initiating creative ideas that build a strong foundation for innovation, sustainability, and growth.

## ③ Meaningful experiences

Vibrant clubs consider every encounter an opportunity to show people what Rotary offers participants as individuals and as members of the community. Making participants the focus of what we do means we offer opportunities to make personal and professional connections, develop leadership skills, and find new ways to be inclusive.

#### **④ Diversity and inclusion**

Vibrant clubs are inclusive and recognize that diversity is a strength. They understand that having members with different backgrounds, views, and life experiences expands their capacity to find solutions and make an impact. To be leaders ourselves and to develop future ones, we need to make sure everyone feels welcome and at home in Rotary.

Every Rotary and Rotaract club has a compelling story to tell. In the next sections, we'll explore some examples of clubs that are making an impact, bringing in new perspectives, caring for members' needs, adapting to change, and offering people meaningful experiences.

# STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

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## Making an Impact Through Service

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Connecting with their communities and giving back are among the top reasons people mention for joining a Rotary or Rotaract club. Service projects give members and participants a way to make a difference by working with local leaders and residents, strengthening communities, and changing lives in a positive way.

Select the plus sign next to each item to learn how some clubs are doing this.

### Growing with each other and the community

**Location: United States**

Each January, members of the Rotaract Club of Florida's First Coast, in Jacksonville, Florida, spend a day helping build houses in the city's New Town neighborhood. The club works alongside neighborhood residents and in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Jacksonville on the building effort. Members help create lasting change in their community by:

- **Building a rapport with the residents**  
Working with community members helps Rotaract members and participants gain people's trust and develop relationships with New Town residents.
- **Getting to know other club members**  
By spending a day together, club members get to know one another better and share learning experiences through service.
- **Developing a sense of project ownership**  
Because Habitat for Humanity requires people who will live in the homes to participate in the building process, neighborhood residents often work alongside the club members. They all take pride in what they accomplish as a team.



## Cultivating justice with future peacemakers

### Location: Ecuador

Fighting the injustice of human trafficking requires awareness, especially among young people who are often targets of the crime. The **Rotary Club of Quito** helped establish an Interact club dedicated to educating people about and taking action against this modern slavery.

The Interact Club of Quito Against Slavery RAGAS encourages young people in South America and beyond to recognize the signs of trafficking, understand the online dangers, and learn what goods might be made using trafficked labor. Since establishing the Interact club, the Rotary Club of Quito has had more engagement as members got more involved. The Rotary club's support includes:

- **Collaborating with the Rotary network**  
The Rotary Club of Quito works directly with the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, which helped establish the Interact club. It was the first cause-based Interact club to educate about, raise awareness of, and take action against modern slavery. The action group also trained a Rotary Club of Quito member who is now the coordinator for South America. The coordinator is responsible for organizing events that promote awareness all throughout the district.
- **Working with allies**  
Rotary club members connected with local foundations and research organizations that help people who have been trafficked. One of them, Fundación Alas de Colibrí, has helped extricate more than 300 youths from being trafficked since 2012. The club works with these organizations by coordinating ongoing educational efforts about the effects of modern slavery with communities and schools.
- **Mentoring Interact members**  
Rotary club members actively mentor the Interact members and work with them to raise awareness and oppose all forms of human trafficking.





# Creating a Welcoming Environment

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As a membership organization, we need to make sure that everyone who engages with Rotary feels welcome and that they belong. Our meetings and events need to be accessible to all, not just for members but for participants and partners. To share our values with new audiences, we bring together people of different backgrounds and perspectives.

Select the plus sign next to each item to learn how some clubs are doing this.

## Organizing to help others

### Location: Korea

Members in Korea who have disabilities formed the **Rotary E-Club of Seoul Arirang**. Some of them had previously had difficulty attending in-person meetings or finding clubs that were accommodating. So, with support from District 3650 and other Korean clubs, they established their new club. The club has about 20 members, many of whom have limited vision. The club engages in service by:

- **Collaborating with like-minded groups**  
Members provide rice for and dine with older people who live alone. They also volunteer with the Korea Association of Welfare for People with Disabilities, which supports independence and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.
- **Choosing causes that members identify with**  
The club organizes an annual concert and uses the proceeds to buy canes for people in developing countries who are blind or have partial sight. Members also participate in a walkathon with members of other District 3650 clubs. They proceed together through a 3.5-kilometer course, assisting each other and strengthening their fellowship.
- **Tying projects to current events**  
In 2021, as part of COVID-19 prevention efforts, members distributed personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer to people in Seoul who have limited vision.



## Changing people's perceptions

**Location: Germany**

The **Rotary Club of Overledingen-Rhauderfehn** serves three rural communities. Many community members previously thought of Rotary as an organization for lawyers and doctors but not for those who worked in skilled trades or crafts. The club was founded with a membership base that reflects the people who live in the area and with the understanding that members with different backgrounds and experiences expand our capacity to make an impact. The club changed people's perceptions of Rotary by:

- **Recognizing community values**

The club introduced an award to honor young workers in the skilled crafts sector who are socially committed. The award also honors businesses that are committed to vocational training and the trades. This award has attracted public attention and sparked interest in the trades sector as a career path.

- **Supporting economic development**

The club supports sustainable projects such as developing young apprentices in the trades. These types of professional development opportunities offer an incentive for younger members of the community to stay in the area and help sustain the region's economy.

- **Fostering an inclusive atmosphere**

The club invites people who value crafts and trades to become members. Its members include mechanics and people who work in construction, heating, and plumbing, as well as proprietors of painting, upholstery, and electrical installation companies. The club plans to expand by making sure all craftspeople and business owners in the area feel welcome at club events.



# Building Meaningful Relationships

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When we care for our members — welcoming them, ensuring that they feel a sense of belonging, helping them learn about Rotary, asking for their input about the club and acting on it — we are able to make meaningful connections.

Select the plus sign next to each item to learn how some clubs are doing this.

## Engaging people through experiences

### Location: Belgium

Members of the **Rotary Club of Charleroi-Val de Sambre** know that maintaining a healthy club goes beyond recruiting new members. The club creates fun experiences that keep members engaged. These members then contribute to the club's goals, serve the community, connect with other Rotary participants, and build a positive image of Rotary. The club remains vibrant by:

- **Bonding through nonclub activities**  
Club members are open to ideas for positive and uplifting experiences. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they connected virtually to do yoga online and arranged for home meal deliveries so people could participate in virtual social hours. They also met for walks in the forest to be social while following physical distancing guidelines.
- **Planning out-of-the-ordinary challenges**  
Club members appreciate different experiences, such as challenging themselves to conduct their meeting aboard a steam train. The goal was to begin the meeting exactly at 12:30 at one station and end the meeting at 14:00 upon arrival at the next station. The club worked with the train's engineer to make the trip last an hour and a half, and members bonded over planning and accomplishing the task.
- **Bolstering community ties**  
The club's activities increase community bonds locally and beyond. For the train meeting, the club strengthened its connections with partner clubs from France and England by inviting them to attend. The club also extended the experience to about 20 children from a school that members regularly support. The children visited a railway museum after the train ride.



## Pivoting to fit what people need

### Location: Japan

The **Rotary Club of Aichi Sanshu** took a forward-thinking approach to meetings when it was established in 2018. Formed as a hybrid club that meets two evenings a month and has lower membership dues, it attracted younger members who found that format appealing. The approach was tested by the COVID-19 pandemic, and proved its worth. The club focused on:

- **Overcoming any isolation**

Members normally can take part in meetings in person or online. During the pandemic, the club held meetings, club assemblies, and board meetings virtually. Members used online tools and social media platforms to share photos and information about projects and facilitate participation among members.

- **Modifying how it fundraises**

Many Japanese clubs have a tradition of setting out a "smile box" at meetings where members donate to The Rotary Foundation and club projects in honor of birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestones. During the pandemic, members missed this tradition. So the club began using online payment tools, and now that the club has returned to its original hybrid format, members can use both methods to donate.

- **Adapting its service projects**

The club's community service projects focus on restoring the environment and providing food and mentorship to local children. During the pandemic, the club continued its activities by adopting safety measures, such as shifting the children's cafeteria project from in-person meal service to the use of delivered bento boxes.



# Leading Through Change

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Rotary members are inventive, entrepreneurial, and resilient. This is reflected in the way vibrant clubs engage new members, welcome fresh perspectives, open more pathways to leadership, and lead communities through change.

Select the plus sign next to each item to learn how some clubs are doing this.

## Becoming champions of change

### Location: Togo

The **Rotary Club of Lomé** has a vision for sustainable change in the region, which includes combating poverty and hunger that affect children and elevating the role of women by addressing the socioeconomic issues that affect them to improve their financial situations.

Club members are involved in projects that cultivate land around primary schools to provide healthy food to school facilities. But children continue to go to school hungry. Separately, women aren't able to own property in rural areas. Instead, they cultivate land for their husband or for their husband's family. This greatly affects their economic situations. The club saw an opportunity to address children's hunger and women's poverty simultaneously. Members adapted their service efforts by:

- **Advocating for change**

The club launched a program giving women the opportunity to develop crops and take part in income-generating activities such as beekeeping, fish farming, and growing mushrooms — all of which yield products they can sell at markets. The honey, fish, and mushrooms, along with vegetables and other crops, also mean there's more healthy food at school.

- **Involving community leaders**

The club worked with the chief of one village, who offered 2 hectares (about 5 acres) of land for 50 women to cultivate. And if a woman's husband dies, she can keep cultivating the land and collecting revenue from it.

- **Applying for grants**

The club applied for grants and secured funding from a partner in order to be able to plant the crops. The club is seeking funding to expand the project, which it hopes can be a model for other villages to combat poverty and help women be more financially secure.



## Bridging cultural differences

### Location: Korea

With support from the Rotary Club of Ulsan Daeduck, immigrants from North Korea chartered the Rotary Club of Ulsan Freedom — a fitting name for those who risked their lives for their freedom. About half the Ulsan Freedom members are former North Korean refugees who use their experiences adjusting to a new country and overcoming prejudice to help others adapt.

Refugees often experience trauma, feelings of loss, and discrimination. For some, settling in a new country can be daunting. The Ulsan Freedom club aims to bridge the gaps in culture and ideology to help refugees adjust and become engaged members of their new communities. With help from the district and other Korean clubs, Ulsan Freedom helps people adapt by:

- **Alleviating their loneliness**  
To help refugees who are separated from their families and may feel isolated during holidays, club members invite them to holiday celebrations. Being among club members and other refugees can help ease loneliness and create a sense of belonging.
- **Collaborating with other service organizations**  
Using their connections and knowledge of the community, the club works with social service organizations to help refugees and immigrants find employment, medical care, legal services, and education.
- **Initiating community service projects**  
The club sponsors scholarships and provides medical screenings and dental care to refugees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the club worked with other clubs to deliver personal protective equipment to more than 500 North Korean immigrant families in the Ulsan area.



# RESOURCES

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## Putting Everything into Practice

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Being a vibrant club like the ones you've just learned about requires planning. Members of clubs with strategic plans are more satisfied and have more positive feelings about their clubs and Rotary than members in clubs without strategic plans. Rotary's Action Plan (opens in a new tab) offers guidance on how clubs can reflect our values and fulfill the vision of Rotary as people of action.

By understanding these values, clubs can plan activities that strengthen their impact, create meaningful relationships, encourage a culture of innovation, appeal to diverse audiences, and bring people together to experience what Rotary members do for the world.

Here are some more tips about how to build vibrant clubs.

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### 1

#### **Think about what your club could be like in three to five years.**

- Plan an annual session where you talk about your aspirations for the club.
- Use the Club Health Check (opens in a new tab) to identify your club's strengths and areas to improve.
- Use the Strategic Planning Guide (opens in a new tab) to help you set long-term goals.

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### 2

#### **Determine your annual goals.**

- Identify something your club is good at, and focus on becoming great at it.
- Provide updates on monthly goals to your committees.
- Use Rotary Club Central (opens in a new tab) to document and share your goals

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### 3

#### **Hold meetings that members find engaging and informative.**

- Use the Member Satisfaction Survey (opens in a new tab) each year to find out what new, current, and recently terminated members like and don't like about your club.

- Try different meeting formats([opens in a new tab](#)) to include a mix of traditional and online meetings, service projects, and social gatherings.
- Talk with members to think of a lot of fun ideas and encourage their input for creative activities that everyone can enjoy and take part in.

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## 4

### **Communicate openly in your club.**

- Ask members regularly how they're feeling about their club experience.
- Share information at club meetings, on your website, and through social media.
- Use the templates and resources in Rotary's Brand Center([opens in a new tab](#)) to create your club brochures and newsletters.

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## 5

### **Prepare members for leadership roles to smooth transitions.**

- Talk to members throughout the year about the leadership roles that are available, the responsibilities these roles have, and the personal or professional growth opportunities they offer.
- Ensure continuity by making leadership appointments for multiple years and including the current, incoming, and past chair on each committee.
- Offer members incentives for completing the professional development courses in the Learning Center.

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## 6

### **Adapt your club's bylaws to ensure they're inclusive.**

- Make sure members are involved when you review your club's bylaws every year.
- Consider ideas from newer members and be open to trying something new.
- Adapt the Recommended Rotary Club Bylaws([opens in a new tab](#)) template to reflect your new practices and procedures.

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## 7

### **Develop strong relationships within your club.**

- Help build connections using suggestions from [Introducing New Members to Rotary](#)([opens in a new tab](#)).
- Sit with different people at each meeting or work with different people during club activities.



- Start club meetings with activities that help everyone get to know one another better and that allow everyone to share something about themselves.

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## 8

### **Offer members opportunities to develop their skills.**

- Survey members about their interests and use the results to plan projects, activities, and engaging meetings.
- Help new members get involved quickly by finding out what they're interested in and giving them a relevant role in the club.
- Make sure members know about Rotary programs(opens in a new tab) such as Rotary Fellowships, Rotary Friendship Exchanges, project fairs, and other ways they can combine service with social opportunities.

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## 9

### **Emphasize the ways in which all members can be leaders.**

- Appoint a club learning facilitator to oversee learning events for members.
- Create a mentoring program in your club.
- Find roles for people that fit their skills and the time they have available, perhaps starting with smaller projects and progressing to roles with more responsibility.

# What's Next?

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Now that you know how some clubs around the world are keeping their members engaged and active in their communities, you can bring that same vitality to your club.

Take the actions below with your club and ask your members questions to involve them in creating club experiences that truly reflect their interests. Select the plus sign next to each action to find details.

## Survey members

- What ideas do you have to gauge how people rate their club experience so far?
- How can we ensure that all members feel that their input is being considered?

## Create a strategy

- How can we encourage members to take part in determining our club's goals or aspirations?
- What creative ideas do you have to help everyone have a role in making our club vibrant?

## Set your goals

- How can we keep members engaged to achieve our shared club goals?
- How can every member use their unique skills to help us become great?

## Review club bylaws

- Do members believe that the bylaws reflect our club values and support the activities that we want to participate in?
- Can we update our club bylaws to be more inclusive?

**Thank you for completing this section of the course. We can't wait to find out how you apply what you've learned to become a more vibrant club!**

**Select the X to proceed to the next item in the course.**