

Tech Talk

Rotary 

Newsletter of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers • January 2014

2013-14 Technical Coordinators

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Message from the Chair

Michael Webb

As I write this letter, we have just finalized the latest round of assignments. We have tried very hard to involve new cadre members, in instances where their skills match those required for the grant review. It is only by exposing new members to an assignment that we can learn about their reporting and review skills. Thus we are able to strengthen the standards of the cadre and provide a better service to the Trustees.

Stewardship is one of the cornerstones on which The Rotary Foundation grant structure is built. It gives confidence to our donors, be they Rotarian or non-Rotarian, and ensures that the quality of the work on grant projects is of a high standard.

If you plan to attend the 2014 RI Convention in Sydney, Australia, I encourage you to arrange your travel so that you will be able to attend the cadre training session on Friday, 30 May. It will be an opportunity to meet with Foundation stewardship staff as well as discuss best practices with your fellow cadre members.

Meantime, I wish you and yours a festive season and a healthy and safe 2014.

Mike Webb



Sydney
Australia 1-4 June 2014



---Save the Date---

Friday, 30 May

The next cadre training will be held on Friday, 30 May, during the 2014 RI Convention in Sydney, Australia. All cadre members are welcome to attend, as are any Rotarians interested in becoming cadre members or learning about the stewardship of Rotary Foundation grant funds. Details will be shared as they become available.

In Our Own Words

An Interim Monitor Site Visit in Thailand

PDG Dr. Babu Chacko, Rotary Club of Kottayam, Kerala, India (District 3211)



The mobile hospital will also include a fully equipped dental station

Editor's note: Some identifying details, such as names of the project location and sponsors, have been omitted, to ensure confidentiality.

Large numbers of people living in the hilly areas of northern Thailand, including a substantial tribal population, have limited access to medical facilities. One of the major hurdles faced by the hospitals is an acute shortage of blood. For example, a teaching hospital had a demand for 63,739 units of blood in a year, and only 32,593 units could be provided. Promotion of voluntary blood donation and collection of blood through camps are the solutions.

I will modify a well-known saying to suit our context: "If the mountain will not come to *you*, then *you* must go to the mountain." That is why some Rotary members decided to send medical teams of doctors, dentists, nurses, blood-collection workers, and health educators to the 17 provinces in northern Thailand, which include hilly and remote areas. And they plan

to visit the area regularly, on prearranged dates.

The Rotarians quickly realized that to execute their plan effectively, they need a mobile hospital. Through their efforts and support from international partner Rotary clubs, a global grant was approved by The Rotary Foundation to modify and equip a bus as a mobile hospital. The unit will have four blood-donation couches, one fully equipped dental chair, a small laboratory, and an area for medical consultation.

Sustainability is an essential component of long-term projects and the Rotarians were lucky to find a partner in a medical university teaching hospital, which agreed to organize and conduct medical camps; provide staff and medicines; and cover maintenance, fuel costs, insurance, and driver salaries for the bus.

I received a warm welcome when I landed in Chiang Mai, a city about 800 kilometers north of Bangkok. I had productive discussions with the project committee members in the limited time available, and was introduced to the dean of the medical university and his team. This gave me an opportunity to assess their capabilities, commitment, and facilities. I was also able

A Rotarian sponsor tries out a reclining chair that the new mobile hospital in northern Thailand will provide for blood donors.

to meet some of the people who will benefit from the mobile hospital. Conversion of the bus was being carried out about 600 kilometers south of Chiang Mai, in Rajburee. I was accompanied on the drive there by three senior Rotarians, and we were met en route by Rotarians from different clubs. The drive was a spectacular experience of dense forests and sylvan scenery.

The next morning, we visited the workshop where the conversion work was in progress. Another mobile unit, built for the Red Cross Society of Thailand, was made available for demonstration. I was impressed with the quality of workmanship, and during our discussion, the company executives promised to deliver the converted vehicle on time.

I left that afternoon so that I could catch my flight back home. Although my time with the Rotarians was very brief, we established a strong friendship, and the departure was touching.

As I complete each cadre assignment, I am convinced anew that we are Doing Good in the World.



In Our Own Words

A Post-Project Site Visit in Brazil

Jos Nolle, Rotary Club of Welland, Ontario, Canada (District 7090)

Editor's note: Some identifying details, such as names of the project location and sponsors, have been omitted, to ensure confidentiality.

My work on behalf of the cadre over the past eight years has taken me to Ecuador, Mexico, Ethiopia, Mozambique and, most recently, Brazil. Using my engineering background and experience in international medical relief and vocational education management, I have conducted site visits and technical reviews in both urban and rural areas.

Earlier this year, I was asked to visit Santarem, a city in a relatively remote area in the Amazon delta of northern Brazil that has not benefited much from the country's recent gains in economic and social development. Because the city's health infrastructure falls short of today's standards, young medical professionals tend to leave for better opportunities elsewhere in the country. The local Rotarians, together with some Rotary clubs in the United States, decided to bring in better medical and dental equipment in an effort to retain more of those health professionals.

The project, funded by The Rotary Foundation and several clubs, supplied X-ray and ultrasound equipment to three hospitals. I was able to visit only two of them, as travel to the third involved a two-day boat trip. The public hospital in the city of Santarem serves as a referral

hospital for about 1.2 million people. Its donated X-ray machines (one fixed and one mobile unit) clearly are helping the medical staff perform proper assessments of trauma patients. This hospital was incredibly busy; I had never seen so many motor accident victims. The city's other two hospitals are privately owned, and offer limited access for the general public.

The second hospital I visited is located about an hour's drive from Santarem, in a small town that has known better times. Most of the staff there work only during the mornings, because there is not enough money to pay a full-time staff. As a result, the X-ray technician had to be called in for our late-afternoon visit, but he gave us a wonderful explanation of the use of the two X-ray units. This hospital also received an ultrasound machine, which already has reduced the incidence of pregnancy-related health problems in the community. Hospital staff were very happy with the donated machines, which appeared well maintained. Better-motivated health staff means better public health in any community, and generally improved social circumstances.

The second part of the Rotary project focused on a dental clinic operated by a local nongovernmental organization that offers free (or almost free) dental hygiene and care services to those who otherwise would not have dental care. The Rotary donation was used to expand the clinic's dental equipment and to put its patient data into a new computer system. This clinic rivals any dental clinic

Jos Nolle traveled to Brazil for his latest site visit.



in North America, and the professionals were delightfully positive and motivated.

I visited the hospitals and clinic three years after the equipment had been donated. I found it was being used well and excellently maintained -- the best evidence of the sustainability of a project. Also, the numbers of returning health professionals is encouraging. The word is out that Santarem has become a better place to practice medicine.

For the local and international Rotarians, the final reporting to The Rotary Foundation had been a challenging process, and that had raised doubts about the project among some newer members of the local club. My visit showed them that their club's efforts do make a difference. The current club president had not visited the two hospitals before, so our visit together provided this young Rotary member with new motivation.

For me, the experience was another humbling one. We tend to assume that our health care is the norm, and we often take it for granted. Visiting places around the world where The Rotary Foundation and local Rotary clubs are making a difference always makes me realize that we should take nothing for granted.

Sustainability in Global Grants

For global grant projects, The Rotary Foundation is now emphasizing grants designed for long-term impact rather than short-term needs. The Foundation describes this concept of sustainability as “ensuring that grants provide long-term solutions to community needs that the benefiting community can maintain after grant funding ends.” To make this happen, sustainability must be designed into grant projects from the start. In many cases, this means planning for a training or behavior-change component to the project.

Though the Foundation has funded many types of projects over the years through a variety of grants, we had never studied their long-term sustainability. But now we are investing in evaluating global grant projects’ long-term results. We began these evaluation efforts in 2011-12 with cadre members’ site visits in Honduras, India, and Kenya.

What we have found is that the more clubs learn about local needs, the more they understand how the needs can be interrelated. For example, a lack of clean water in a community might be causing disease, which might be connected to a lack of hygiene education and a low literacy rate that makes it difficult to teach community members how to address these issues. By conducting a careful needs assessment and involving community partners in the process,

clubs can be sure they are designing a grant project that will address the root causes of multiple problems in a community, rather than just alleviate one or two of the symptoms.

The Foundation should consider our grants a long-term investment in the future of the benefiting communities. Helping clubs design more effective and sustainable projects that have an impact in the areas of focus not only means doing more good in the world but also helping to attract donors, members, and partners to our efforts.

To ensure that global grants achieve sustainable results in the areas of focus, the Foundation will increase grant evaluation in coming years, and the cadre will play a critical role in that effort. Future issues of Tech Talk will provide information about training sessions related to project planning, sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation.

Remember to visit the cadre’s shared site

If you’re a registered cadre member, you can use the site by signing in to My Rotary at www.rotary.org and visiting the Rotary Workgroup section in your profile. The site serves as a document resource, survey tool, and news and information center. Contribute to discussion groups, download training documents, access the *Tech Talk* archive, view photo galleries, and more.

Recent Cadre Visits



Santanu Banerjee (top row, second from right), visited a project in Thailand that is providing assistance to families affected by HIV/AIDS.



Shashikant Dhamne (center) visited a Matching Grant site that provided sewing equipment to women in India.

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