

We care about your climate future.

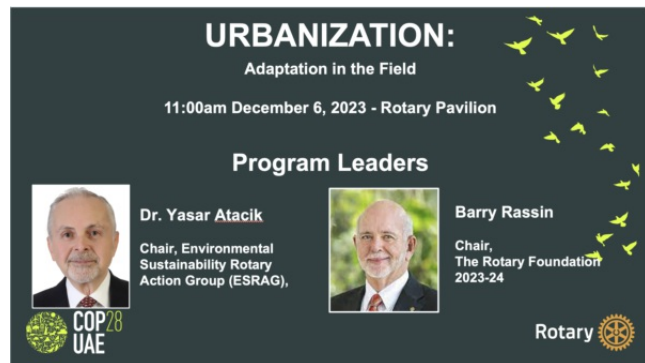
December, 2023

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Rotary creating hope from glaciers to housetops

From schoolchildren to seasoned executives, members of the Rotary family are carrying out daring, creative environmental work around the globe. We are so proud to bring you this family album at the start of the UN Climate Conference in Dubai. Here's what you will find:

- Rotary steps up for climate action at COP 28.
- PDGs at opposite ends of the globe lead a giant leap in environmental engagement in their districts.
- Habitat Solar launches huge project in Canada and challenges Rotarians to install a million panels!
- Circular economy achievements in Zambia and the United States.



And invitations to you:

- Share your skills to conserve glacial meltwater on which billions depend.
- Teach your community to mine their junk drawers.
- Serve delicious plant-rich recipes for the holidays, while enjoying the article about ESRAG's food solutions in *Rotary Magazine's* December issue.
- Showcase your project and network at ESRAG ENA's January Project Fair.

And finally, resources:

- Yale's survey of climate views around the globe, plus a course on climate communication.
- RI's Keith Madden offers an update and advice on Environmental Global Grants.

With heartfelt thanks for all you do, and wishes for joy, health, and fulfillment in the new year!

The ESRAG Comms Team

Photo: one of the eleven days of talks Rotary International is presenting for official delegates during COP 28 in RI's first-ever pavilion at the UN Climate Conference.

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Rotary springs into action at COP 28

By Ariel Miller, ESRAG Newsletter Editor



For the first time, **Rotaryâ€™s President, Foundation Chair, and CEO are all attending the UN Climate Conference.** Rotary International is hosting **eleven days of presentations at Rotaryâ€™s Blue Zone pavilion**, spotlighting the synergy of climate solutions, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and Rotaryâ€™s unique resources as a worldwide network of local humanitarians.

Many ESRAG leaders including ESRAG Chair Dr. Yasar Atacik, Past Chair Dr. Chris Puttock, Directors Eng. Felix Kimani Kariuki and Dr. Mina Venkataraman, and Salvador Rico have been working around the clock to help Rotary organize expert panels. Two of the exciting examples:

- Dr. Yasar Atacik and Rotary Secretary and CEO John Hewko lead a panel on Financing the Transition on Dec. 4
- Dr. Mina Venkataraman leads the "Land Use - Every Acre Counts" panel on Dec. 9 with panelists including Dr. Susan Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division of the United Nations Environment Programme and Lola Cabnal, Co-Chair of the Global Indigenous Caucus of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC)

In addition, Mina and fellow ESRAG members will be at **Rotaryâ€™s pavilion in the Green Zone** to engage stakeholders, help them discover Rotaryâ€™s capabilities, and explore partnerships to accelerate climate solutions. Weâ€™re thrilled that **twelve Rotaractors are contributing their passion and creativity**, including ESRAG Director Carlos Montoya.

Photo: Mina Venkataraman and Carlos Montoya during a planning meeting in Dubai with the Rotaractors.

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From Rust Belt to Green Economy

By Jeff Smith, PDG, District 7070 and Co-Chair, ESRAG Eastern North America Chapter

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) will take place from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai. This annual summit is the worldâ€™s only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change, drawing representatives from almost every country in the world.

Media emphasize the many obstacles impeding government action, but UN Secretary Antonio Guterres has implored civil society to step up as well. Rotary International and ESRAG will have a strong presence at COP 28. Rotary played a key role in the formation of the United Nations, and the two organizations have been partners ever since. This is an excellent time for Rotarians and partners to act boldly to meet the global challenge of climate change.

As a past District Governor who is now working on sustainability with several districts, I can tell you that Rotary has huge potential to catalyze regional solutions because of the expertise, relationships, and credibility our members have built through years of humanitarian service with our communities. This article offers an example: the collaborations through which Rotarians are contributing to multi-stakeholder work to build a thriving, equitable, net-zero solutions to move Central New York from Rust Belt to green economy. Weâ€™re ready to take this work to the next level through the merger of three Rotary Districts as Rotary CNY.

Letâ€™s put our human resources to work! Rotary has a wealth of past presidents and district governors that have the skill set to advocate for Rotary, develop community partners, and to manage major projects and programs. We also have a tremendous array of vocational skills. Every member of the Rotary Family - Interact, Rotaract, Rotary Community Corps, Student Exchange, RYLA - can contribute.

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How 80% of the clubs in D 9705 embraced environmental action

By David Braun, ESRAG Director and PDG, District 9675

In November, 2023 District 9705's Environmental Envoy Outreach Program won an award for Communication and Engagement in the prestigious Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Contest for New South Wales. Judges commended the extraordinary growth of environmental action by Rotarians since the Envoy program began in 2021.

In the middle of a global pandemic, a handful of Rotarians launched a program to engage and equip our clubs to embrace goals and actions many had never envisioned before. Within two and a half years, 80% of the District's Rotary clubs have put Rotary's newest Area of Focus into action. Together, our clubs have launched 122 environmental projects completed or underway by June of 2023.



Key ingredients in our success are:

- the support of district leaders
- team-building
- consulting our stakeholders
- delegation, and
- providing a menu of impactful projects and people qualified to provide technical assistance.

Here's how we did it.

Photo: Students celebrating the arrival of solar power at the Naiviivi School on Fiji, through one of D9705's recommended environmental projects. The Envoy Partner was Rotarian Rob Edwards, OAM, and the It's Time Foundation. Rob took the picture.

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Habitat Solar launches huge project in Canada

By Ariel Miller



Canada's first-ever solar Habitat project is now underway and [making headlines](#), thanks to the advocacy of Carolyn Weatherson, Past President of the Rotary Club of Guelph. And it's huge: 70 low-income families stand to benefit from lower monthly energy bills, mitigating one of the factors in housing insecurity. This ESRAG initiative advances the UN climate goal of climate justice by reducing energy poverty and enabling more people to access clean energy. It reduces community exposure to harmful particulates from the burning of fossil fuels.

Habitat's mission is to keep home ownership affordable, but the upfront costs of solar installations have been a huge barrier to

both Habitat affiliates and participating families. Adding solar panels to the Guelph project will cost an estimated Can\$750,000. Guelph Rotarians and community leaders are stepping up to apply for provincial and federal grants. When they succeed, families in the Guelph development will collectively save Can\$62,000 a year. Over the 30-year life of the panels, their impact in reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be equivalent to planting 149,200 trees.

“This project has the potential to change building practices throughout Canada,” said Rotarian Liz Henke, MD in [The Power of Solar and the Power of Rotary](#), a talk for ESRAG's Projects + webinar on Nov. 22. “This project has strong support from Habitat of Canada who see it as a model for Habitat affiliates to add solar across Canada.”

Photo by Irene Szabo of the Guelph Habitat launch party: Ryan Deska of Habitat for Humanity Guelph Wellington, Nanita Mohan, President of the Rotary Club of Guelph, Rotary 7080 District Governor Brenda Halloran, and Carolyn Weatherson of ESRAG.

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Zambian girls and boys team up to end period poverty

By Ariel Miller

Students in Ndola, Zambia are discovering their power to help each other succeed in school and prevent terrible dangers including HIV/AIDS, thanks to Ending Period Poverty for Equal Access to Education, launched by the Rotary Clubs of Ndola-Central in Zambia's Copperbelt Province and Minehead in Somerset, UK. The first goal is to equip girls so they no longer have to miss school during their periods. Participating girls now have access to cloth and sewing machines to make their own reusable pads – so this certainly qualifies as a circular economy, pollution-prevention project.



But the benefits go far beyond sustainability. The Rotarians are persuading boys to stop mocking girls: instead, to advocate for them. They are bringing role models to schools to talk about difficulties faced and surmounted on the way to rewarding careers. They invite students to let their imagination fly: where do you see yourself in the next five years? Both boys and girls are enthusiastically mastering the skills to make the pads and other products they can sell as young entrepreneurs. They are learning to be leaders and leaping into sports.

It all started with listening.

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Turning waste into wealth

By Ariel Miller



How would you feel if you built a charitable organization that has grown to provide 78 living wage jobs, generated \$200,000 in sales tax in 2022, and provided over \$100,000 a year in in-kind donations to families in need? Most of it from selling stuff that otherwise may have ended up in a landfill? And what if it equipped scores of people every year to rejoin or enter the workforce – people who society too often throws away?

That's the story of [Finger Lakes ReUse](#), the multi-faceted social enterprise led by Rotarian Diane Cohen

of Ithaca, New York. This business turns waste into wealth. Finger Lakes ReUse achieved retail sales of over \$2,000 per ton of materials from 2019 through 2022, compared to revenues ranging from \$45.83 to \$184.63 per ton for [recycled commodities in the Northeast United States](#) over the same time period.

Finger Lakes ReUse diverted almost 10 million tons of solid waste from Tompkins County's landfill from 2018 to 2022. Every year its ReSET (Skills and Employment Training) apprenticeships help people with huge barriers – refugees learning to work in an entirely new culture, citizens returning from prison, and people in recovery from addiction – to build skills and resumes so they can move into living-wage jobs. Youth also benefit from summer internships at Finger Lakes ReUse. *Graphic: Finger Lakes ReUse.*

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Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling

May 13, 2023
9 am - 1 pm
Endwell, NY

**Take charge!
 Recycle Lithium-Ion
 batteries responsibly.**

**May 13, 2023,
 9 am - 1 pm**
 Northminster Presbyterian
 711 Farm-to-Market Road

**Learn more:
 Scan QR code or visit
www.lithionrecycle.com**





Delicious planet-friendly recipes for the holidays

By Dawn Angela Byford and Kris Cameron, ESRAG Plant-Rich Diet Task Force

In these turbulent times, we welcome the traditions and comforts of holiday celebrations spent with family, friends, and lots of delicious food! We Rotarians can create hope in the world and in our own lives by weaving our platform of service to all humanity and the planet into these gatherings by conscientiously choosing what to eat.

People are becoming increasingly aware of the impact our food choices have on our personal and planetary health. Eating a whole-food plant-rich diet is one of the most impactful actions any individual can take to make a positive difference. At the end of this article, ESRAG Plant Rich-Diet Task Force Chair Kris Cameron provides a list of five easy actions you can take to make your diet both sustainable and healthy for you.



Teacher Ely Orozco and her three children found lots of delicious food at the potluck that preceded Plant-based Eating for Beginners, an event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wenatchee Confluence in Wenatchee, WA in August, 2023. Photo by Kris Cameron.

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ESRAG shines in Rotary Magazine's Food Issue



Congratulations to ESRAG's Plant Rich Diet and Food Waste Task Forces whose success in educating and engaging people is showcased in *Rotary Magazine's* December 2023 Food Issue: Consider your carbon footprint by Michaela Haas (pp. 12-14). Haas cites scientific studies on why limiting our consumption of animal protein and preventing food waste are mighty climate solutions, then goes on to feature ESRAG Plant-Rich Diet advocates Kris Cameron, Cindy Volyn, and Brittney Loveall-Talley, and Amélie Catheline and Niels Lund of the Food Waste Task Force. She also mentions ESRAG's [Green Events Handbook](#)!

Preventing food waste will have huge impact in preventing emissions of the incredibly potent greenhouse gas methane AND in increasing human food security. "Globally, we waste between a quarter and a third of food while 25% of the population is food-insecure," says Amélie, Chair of the Food Waste Task Force. Haas cites an Oxford University study that if people in the UK cut their meat consumption from 3.5 oz to 1.7 oz a day, it would be the equivalent of taking 8 million cars off the road. SO you can enjoy the delicious recipes shared by Dawn Byford in this issue WITHOUT GUILT, and you won't have to make a New Year's resolution to give them up!

If you are a *Rotary Magazine* subscriber, don't miss "How to feed a hot, hungry planet" by George Washington University professor and environmental educator Lisa Palmer (pp. 24-31). She takes you on a worldwide tour of the strategies farmers are implementing to maintain and even increase crop yields despite drought, heavy rains, depleted soils, and war. Regenerative farming will be highlighted in the "Farming Carbon to Reach Net Zero" presentation at Rotary's pavilion in the Blue Zone on Dec. 10, Food, Agriculture, and Farming Day.

ESRAG Project Fair Jan. 29-31 for Eastern North America and the Caribbean

By Caroline DeWitt, Chair, ESRAG Eastern North America Chapter

The ESRAG ENA Chapter is thrilled to invite you to our inaugural Environmental Project Fair, taking place from January 29th to January 31st, 2024, in Sarasota, Florida, USA. We will be offering a hybrid option for part of the conference on Jan. 30, but urge you to attend in person if you can. You can use the QR code in our poster or email me at cdewittc@gmail.com to register.

This event serves as a dynamic platform where creativity converges to support environmental projects with the potential to change lives and make a real impact on our communities. Beyond showcasing projects, it provides a unique networking opportunity, allowing you to connect with fellow Rotarians, ESRAG members, passionate environmentalists, mentors, and potential collaborators.

We start with cocktails and networking on Jan. 29. The conference on Jan. 30 will include keynote speakers, a talk on funding sources, and project presentations. Jan. 31 is Adventure Day: participants will get to visit projects including micro-forests and other tree planting, saving coral reefs, and mangrove ecosystems and livelihoods.

In addition to project presentations, we are excited to introduce a Showcase/Gallery of Accomplishments to demonstrate how Rotary Clubs are taking action to protect and repair the environment. This is an excellent opportunity to visually communicate your project's impact and engage with attendees. The Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay is offering the service of graphic design (more about this below).

We extend our deep gratitude to the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay (RCSB), Southface Sarasota, and Ringling College of Art & Design for generously hosting our environmental project fair. Their invaluable support is instrumental in making this event possible.

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How Rotary's Environment Area of Focus is Evolving: a talk by RI's Keith Madden

By Ariel Miller



We're delighted to provide an update on Rotary's expanding environmental action and the roll-out of environmental global grants, thanks to Keith Madden, The Rotary Foundation (TRF) Manager for the Environment Area of Focus, who spoke to the Network of Rotary Eco and Environment Clubs on Nov. 7, 2023.

Madden offered advice on how to develop successful projects to qualify for global grants. He celebrated how Rotary's capacity for effective environmental action is growing with the help of Rotarians on the front lines, such as

ECO Cubs around the world. Members of 19 Rotary and Rotaract Clubs from eight countries and four continents took part in this lively and informative session organized by Steve Solbrack of Twin Cities Rotary EcoClub, Minnesota, US.

Madden, who brings years of conservation experience to his Rotary role, is working to train colleagues at The Rotary Foundation on environmental sustainability. He encourages ESRAG and Eco club members to be vocal and well-connected to Rotary leadership to get these topics on the agenda at conventions such as the Zone Institutes, PETS, and District Conferences.

He highlighted four themes in his Nov. 7 talk:

- Adaptive management: Rotarians and TRF are learning and building their capacity to increase Rotary's impact on environmental challenges.
- Integrating environmental sustainability into Rotary's other Areas of Focus.
- Leveraging Rotary's strengths particularly for developing community-based, community-run solutions, and our ability to work at the local, regional, and global level.
- The vital importance of documenting baseline conditions and aiming for specific and measurable improvements.

He also fielded questions and offered tips to increase a global grant proposal's likelihood of being funded.

Graphic from Architect and Rotarian Doug White's slide show on the solar lighting and refrigeration funded through a Global Grant to St. Thomas East Eco Club, St. Thomas, VI.

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Yale survey maps climate change views around the world

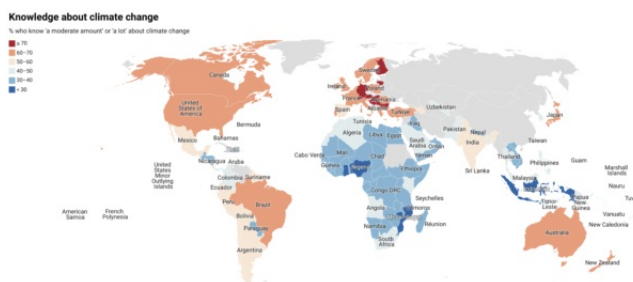
If you're working to inform and empower your Club and networks to take action on the climate crisis, check out "[International Public Opinion on Climate Change](#)," a new report released Nov. 14, 2023 by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication (YPCCC), Meta's Data for Good, and Rare's Center for Behavior and the Environment.

The report is based on a survey they conducted from Aug. 3-Sept. 3, 2023 of Facebook users in nearly 190 countries and territories worldwide on public climate change knowledge, attitudes, policy preferences, and behavior. The [appendix breaks out answers by six regions](#) - such as Europe, Southwest Asia/North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa - and the individual nations within each.

YPCCC also offers a free 10-part email course on how to communicate effectively about climate change with American audiences. More on that below.

Maps shared with permission by the Yale Program for Climate Change Communication.

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The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group

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