

July, 2023
Volume 8, Issue 1

Rotarians Walking the Talk of Sustainable Living

This issue provides resources for advancing sustainable living at every level, from homes to national economic policies, through first-hand reports from ESRAG members:

- Dr. Nilam Bedi connects you to powerful datasets, with an urban and national case study
- Malcolm Rooney shows how one person can walk the talk in Scotland
- Mario Figus reveals how to mobilize a district and then scale up exponentially in Italy.
- Laurie Zuckerman shares how she sustains hope.

PROJECTS DIVISION			
MINA VENKATARAMAN			
SEMINARS	PROJECT IMPACT ASSESSMENT	GLOBAL GRANTS TRF CADRE	TASK FORCES
 Karin Tome Caroline Dewitt	Chris Puttock Mina Suresh A Dave Simon May O'Brien Bryan Ingram	Mina Nilam Bedi Salvador Rico Doug White Rick Randolph Chris Puttock Olderico Cavigala Franz Muller Ratnakar Vallabenini	Plant Rich Diets Clean Cookstoves Renewable Energy Food Waste Operation Pollinator Plastic Solutions

We also give you a glimpse of the breathtaking progress of ESRAG's capacity to provide technical assistance to Rotarians. As people struggle to work and survive under record-shattering heat waves and particulates from wildfires blanket North American cities, we urge you to read ESRAG Chair Yasar Atack's Roadmap for 2023-24 to learn how the Board is working to rapidly increase Rotarians' understanding of the world's environmental crisis and what they can do to reverse it.

Watch the recording of ESRAG's Annual General Meeting! ([Click here](#) and scroll down.) See and share Dr Rebecca Huntley's wonderful keynote on effective climate change communication (see top take-home points below). IT Director Mike Terrelonge reports the progress of our database, website and communications tools, and Communications Director Laurie Zuckerman takes you on a tour of ESRAG's online resources. Starting just past the one hour mark in the recording, Projects Director Mina Venkataraman gives an amazing update on the worldwide growth of Rotary environmental projects, and explains how to get help with global grants and impact reporting.

We send a heartfelt thanks to ESRAG's beloved 2022-23 Chair Dr Pat Armstrong (thank goodness, continuing to guide educational initiatives) and the twelve ESRAG members who were honored with volunteer awards at the Annual General Meeting.

All of these stories are appearing on ESRAG's [news blog](#) throughout the month, so it's easy for you to

share links with fellow Rotarians who can put this information to use. ESRAG's website now has a translation tool with 12 languages including Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, and Korean. Follow our social media (widgets below), from which you can share ESRAG's empowering news with your networks.

Connect with us on social media



ESRAG's Roadmap for 2023-24

By Dr. Yasar Atacik, ESRAG Chair

Dear ESRAG Members,

As we begin the new year, I would like to share my vision for the coming year with you. As we all know, the climate crisis is a massive threat to nature and future generations. We believe that this threat to humanity needs to be addressed seriously by Rotarians, just as Rotarians supported the creation of the United Nations after two catastrophic world wars. As the voice of the environment, it is up to us, ESRAG members, to galvanize Rotarians to act on the climate crisis.

ESRAG has increased its reach, achieving impact at every level in Rotary, through presentations to the Rotary International Convention, Zone conferences, districts, clubs, and individuals. For the second year in a row, ESRAG members attended the global COP climate meetings as part of official Rotary delegations led by RI Presidents. A Rotary International Director (Faiz Kidwai of Pakistan) and a past Trustee of the Rotary Foundation (Jorge Aufranc of Guatemala) have volunteered to serve on ESRAG's board. They join the outstanding team of ESRAG Directors you elected this spring.



We're able to build on the strong foundation laid by outgoing chair Pat Armstrong. Under her leadership the board significantly strengthened ESRAG's systems and organizational structure, and enhanced ESRAG's role as a trusted catalyst and a strategic influencer within and beyond Rotary. I want to thank Pat for making all of this possible.

Before we get into the details of our action plan for the year ahead, here are some of the other developments on which new activities will be based.

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Thank you, Pat!



The past three years have brought an exponential growth in ESRAG: members, task forces, projects, webinars, and online resources. With love and brilliant systemic insight, Dr Pat Armstrong has worked nonstop to make sure ESRAG has the structure and the teamwork we need to expand Rotary's environmental impact.

She's just completed an incredibly demanding year as ESRAG Chair while supporting ESRAG's Oceania Chapter in orchestrating unprecedented visibility and excitement for environmental action at the Rotary International Convention in Melbourne. She persevered through multiple Covid lockdowns in Australia and the utter transformation of ESRAG's educational work through webinars and digital conferences. Pat's leadership has been unflaggingly cheerful and bracing, despite illness, wildfires, and floods.

If you've been at a conference, webinar, or meeting with Pat, these images will evoke the spirit with which she infuses them: warmth, a wicked sense of fun, and utter dedication to saving us from environmental catastrophe. The photo above comes from her convivial 2021 chat about Rotary and the environment [with Ian and Juliet Riseley](#) in a garden. Click below for more delightful glimpses of Pat in action.

[Read More](#)

Share Dr Huntley's Talk: Great Tools for Climate Communication

By Ariel Miller, ESRAG Newsletter Editor

Dr Rebecca Huntley, one of Australia's leading researchers on climate communication, provides a roadmap for talking about the climate crisis in ways that will inspire and equip enough people to make a difference. She gave a fabulous overview as the keynoter for ESRAG's 2023 Annual Meeting, and you can watch and share it from the ESRAG website. Click on this "[climate](#)" link and scroll down to find the recording.



You don't have to be a climate scientist to earn people's attention: if people with PhDs were the right voices to get the world to change, "we'd already be there," she said. But because of your community relationships "you are already powerful." Think of the networks you are part of – in Rotary, at work, your friends and shared pastimes. The affection and esteem in which they hold you gives real influence. Understand your audience - their values and experiences – and appeal to those as you share your climate concerns.

Click to find more of her advice and excellent online resources you can use.

[Read More](#)

Tools to Restore Sustainable Living

By Dr. Nilam Bedi

The accelerating impacts of climate change are driving increasingly urgent calls to action, with the goal of sustainable living at their core. Sustainability means living within the limits of the planet to regenerate itself in the face of mounting human demands upon its resources. Our human demands are multi-dimensional, stressing the limits of land, forests, water, biodiversity, and the atmosphere. Within this broad framing, understanding our carbon footprint and our ecological footprint are both important.



More and more people realize our situation has evolved from seeing “climate change” as a distant concern to witnessing an ever-growing succession of current climate disasters like the 2022 floods in Pakistan and this summer’s wildfires across Canada. We’re now in climate emergency. The data and analytical frameworks shared here help identify effective choices to restore balance between human consumption and planetary capacity. I also share examples of how this approach is being successfully used by nations (Switzerland) and cities (Kamikatsu, Japan).

[Read More](#)

Sardinians Scale Up Solar Safe Water

By Ariel Miller ESRAG Newsletter Editor

Fresh from winning support from clubs throughout Rotary District 2080 in Italy, Mario Figus and the Rotary Club of Cagliari are ready expand their impact exponentially by inviting industry to contribute to the Solvatten Solar Safe Water project. This campaign will enable businesses to buy top-quality carbon offsets by equipping Kenyan families to reduce deforestation, prevent illness, and save time and money. D 2080’s strategy provides a road map for Rotarians to scale up effective climate action.

Spearheaded by Swedish Rotarians as a collaboration between ESRAG and WASH RAG, the [Solar Safe Water initiative](#) is based on the prize-winning [Solvatten](#) solar-powered water treatment kit, a suitcase-sized device that uses heat and UV light to purify 10 liters of water in 2-6 hours. An indicator light tells the family when the water is safe. Figus is an environmental engineer specializing in water quality systems. Excited to discover Solvatten, he decided to challenge the Clubs of D2080 (Italy) to fund 100 kits at \$145 each.



72 of the District’s 98 Clubs have already contributed, funding 110 kits which have liberated over 600 people in communities in the Tharaka-Nithi region who struggle without access to community water treatment systems or electricity. For people enduring this plight around the world, Solar Safe Water is a major advance in sustainable living because it greatly reduces their need for firewood to boil water.

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YOU are an ESRAG Project: Walk the Talk!

By Malcolm Rooney, ESRAG Director

Over the past year ESRAG has achieved a huge amount of good work through its Projects Programme, led by Dr. Mina Venkataraman. All ESRAG members are encouraged to either participate in one of the highlighted [projects on the ESRAG website](#), and/or suggest new ones. However, I want to suggest an additional approach to projects: that **Every ESRAG Member is an ESRAG Project**. In other words, we don't just talk the talk or get involved in what I would call "out there activities:" we walk the walk. As ESRAG members, we lead by personal action. And so, here are some thoughts about the actions we can take that others could copy.

I have divided these actions into a number of categories:

- National initiatives
- Big projects that cost money
- Low-cost projects to reduce or offset your impact
- Easy, free projects: several will save you money!

Photo: Malc Rooney in tartans he's had for more than 20 years.
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3 Ways to Sustain Meaning (and Joy) in the Age of Climate Crisis

By Laurie Zuckerman, ESRAG Communications Director



The daily news and projections of humanity's future are bleak. Despite this, or maybe because of it, my environmental activist friends live with a sustained sense of purpose, connection, and joy. What have they taught me and others to ask?

First, what are our gifts and passions? How can we use them to make our little part of the world better? No matter how insignificant it seems, even small actions matter. For now, I've let go of what I can't yet accomplish like reaching a net zero lifestyle or getting my politicians to make better laws.

Instead, my environmental activist friends and family, have taught me to celebrate what I can do and then take the next step.

Second, who are our friends? Every one of my environmental activist friends and family have created deep, lasting friendships. They look for the good in others and situations, and they amplify the good. For that reason, people want to be around them and help them.

Third, what is going well in this moment? COVID taught us to be grateful for every breath. Contributing to the Rotary Foundation, especially the ESRAG [Carbon Compensation fund](#), taught me to be grateful for every glass of water, every bite of nutritious food, education, and health care. Why? because I remember all my friends around our planet who make these essential services possible. We are connected to each other.

My lifestyle and humanity's lifestyles must go below zero carbon and zero waste NOW. It's a bitter pill – Or maybe it's like a bitter cup of coffee that wakes me and motivates me; I need to remember to add some crème and sugar. YES, to friends and small victories!

Welcome, New Directors!

The results are in! Seven Rotarians start new terms on ESRAG's Board this year. They represent six nations and

bring an array of environmental knowledge, professional expertise, and Rotary leadership experience to ESRAG. Clari Nolet, and Michael Terrelonge were elected to second terms. Felix Kariuki, Tim Conners and Malcolm Rooney were newly-elected, and Past Rotary Foundation Trustee Jorge Aufranc and current RI Director Faiz Kidwai have agreed to serve as

appointed members. "The Bylaws empower the Board to appoint up to two directors who can have exceptional contributions to ESRAG," says ESRAG Chair Yasar Atacik. "This also helps ESRAG to have a better geographical representation on the Board."

Click "read more" below to learn more about the outstanding people joining or re-elected to the Board this year.

Picture: top row, from left: Joining the board this year are Jorge Aufranc, Felix Kariuki, Faiz Kidwai, and Malcolm Rooney. Second row: starting a second term: Tim Conners, Clari Nolet, and Mike Terrelonge.

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Annual Meeting Highlights Vital Role of Volunteers

Dr Keith Tovey ESRAG Environment Volunteer of the Year
2023



Ariel Miller

Award Recipient 2022-2023



Lori Cloutier



Mike Cloutier

Joint Runners Up

Rotarians with all kinds of expertise are stepping up to help their clubs, communities, and regions meet environmental challenges. ESRAG's Regional Chapters and specialized teams are growing and developing fast. At this year's Annual General Membership Meeting, the ESRAG Board announced a new initiative to support volunteers, and honored twelve volunteers for their contributions in 2022-23.

ESRAG Director David Brawn, who brings tremendous experience [recruiting and training Rotary environmental leaders](#) across Australia, will lead a new Volunteer Engagement Group to "help ESRAG attract, retain, and support suitably motivated volunteers for ESRAG and Rotary Projects." He asks you to watch for a short survey soon that will be the first step in creating a database of skills and interests of ESRAG members and friends.

Newly-elected Director Malcolm Rooney, Coordinator of the Regional Chapter Chairs, announced nine **Regional Chapter Volunteers of the Year** who stand out for an array of qualities and achievements, including teamwork, enthusiasm, project implementation, representing ESRAG effectively with Rotary International, and many more.

This year's winners are: (click "read more" to reveal!)

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Send Your News on Upcoming Themes

By Ariel Miller

ESRAG's newsletter and [blog series](#) will highlight **circular economy in August** and **pollution in September**. We welcome your articles on either topics or would be glad to interview you. We want to publish resources that give insight to problems, as well as solutions that Rotarians can implement. Please [email me](#) with your story leads and project reports on either topic. The deadline is the end of the month preceding publication. Also, if you are working with any group who will be participating in the upcoming COP conference, share what you're doing! ESRAG now has a fantastic team of social media editors who are getting this content out around the world. Share your good news and Create Hope in the World!

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group

operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.
