



ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

MESSAGE FROM ESRAG CHAIR, MICHAEL TERRELONGE



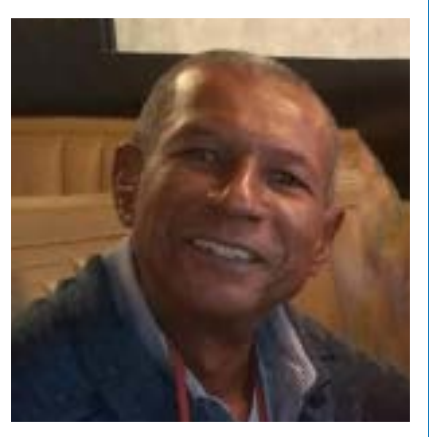
Welcome to the April edition of the ESRAG Newsletter. As Chair of the Board of Directors, it is a privilege to connect with you and share the momentum building across our global community of environmental leaders.

This month, the world's largest environmental gathering, EarthX, will take place in Dallas from April 19–22, welcoming an estimated 10,000 visitors each day. EarthX is dedicated to educating, inspiring, and mobilizing individuals and organizations to advance a more sustainable future worldwide. It serves as a powerful platform where innovators, policymakers, business leaders, and communities come together to explore practical solutions for our planet's most pressing challenges.

Through the leadership and dedication of Steve Bender, this year's conference will feature a special section, The RotaryXperience, including a presentation by Barry Rassin. This is a remarkable opportunity to showcase Rotary's impact, strengthen partnerships, and elevate the role of service in environmental stewardship.

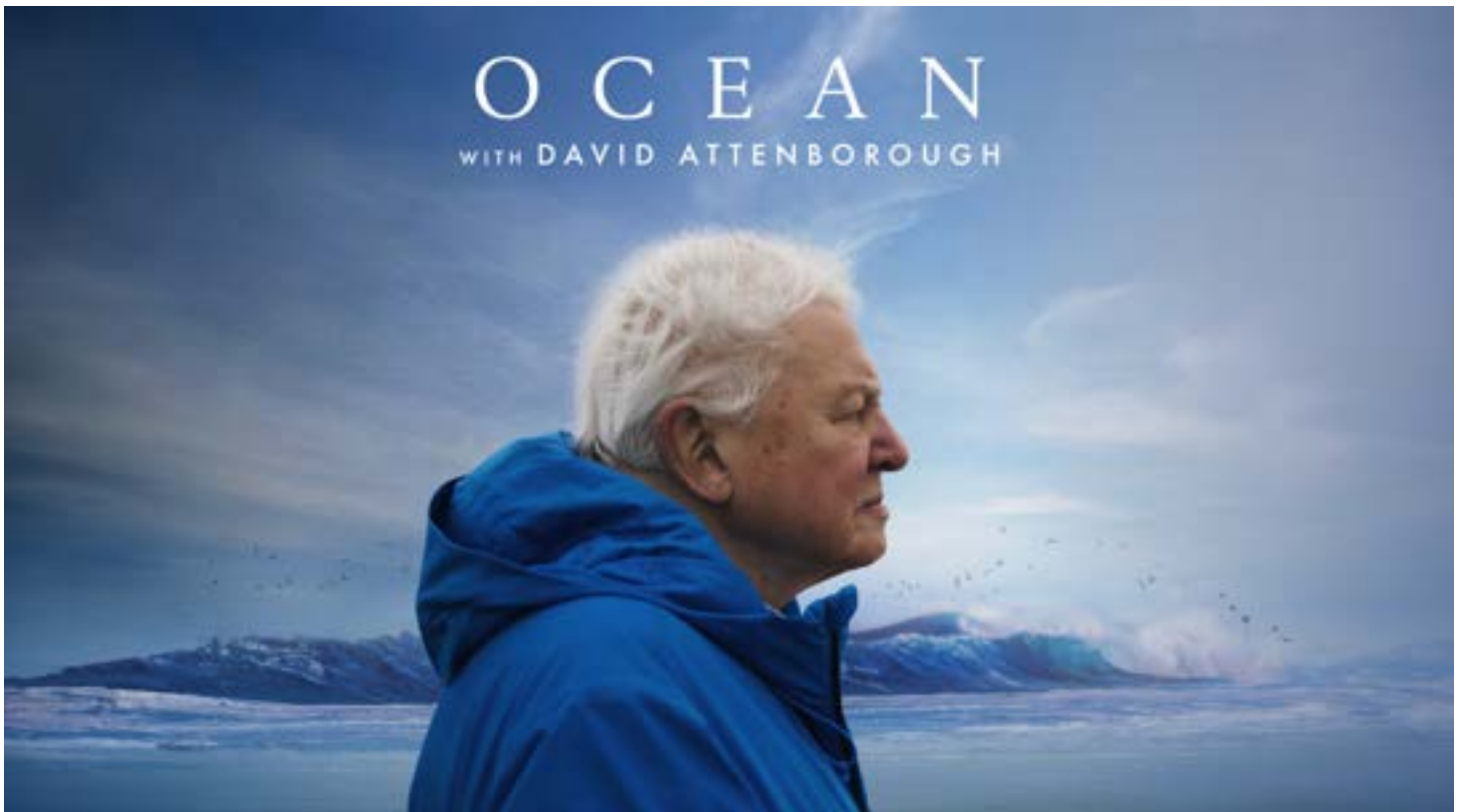
I encourage all ESRAG members who are able to attend, engage, and represent our shared mission. Together, through collaboration and action, we continue to demonstrate that meaningful change is possible when committed people unite for the good of our world.

Michael Terrelonge
Chair ESRAG



GLOBAL NEWS

OCEANS WITH DAVID ATTENBOROUGH FILM SCREENING



Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo visited London in March for Commonwealth Week. He joined 120 guests at the Aga Khan Foundation, including Commonwealth High Commissioners and Commonwealth organisations, Rotarians and Rotaractors, for a special screening of Oceans with David Attenborough. The film takes viewers on a breathtaking journey, showing that there is nowhere more vital for our survival, more full of life, wonder, or surprise, than the ocean. The celebrated broadcaster and filmmaker reveals how his lifetime has coincided with the great age of ocean discovery. Through spectacular sequences featuring coral reefs, kelp forests, and the open ocean, Attenborough shares why a healthy ocean keeps the entire planet stable and flourishing. The haunting images of the ocean's beauty and the challenges from mankind in the film set the scene. The key message of the film is that the Ocean is in crisis. But together through marine protected areas, we can revive it. Marine protected areas (MPAs) – like national parks in the ocean – are the most effective tool for restoring marine life and the remarkable benefits they provide to humanity and all life on Earth. We need 30 new MPAs by 2030. The film was followed by a far-reaching panel

discussion moderated by Kristin Rechberger, Revive Our Ocean, who co-produced the film. President Francesco Arezzo was the guest of honour on the panel. He told the audience at the start of the debate on what could be done: “Nothing is more important and vital for the world.” He said Rotary was spending millions of dollars to support mangrove planting. He said watching David Attenborough's film reinforced the need for more to be done. He said it was down to every Rotarian to be involved in supporting action. Top experts on the environment, Nicholas Hardman-Mountford and Dr Daniel Wilde, said that action was needed to control overfishing, especially bottom trawling, and to create more protected areas of the ocean. The High Commissioner of Mauritius, Dr. Rajeshwar Jeetah, said local projects were the best way of taking action. Nothing was hopeless. People's attitudes could be changed even if it meant unpopular decisions. His analogy was that once everybody was allowed to smoke cigarettes everywhere, even on airplanes. But public opinion forced this to stop. The oceans could be protected if there was enough pressure to make this happen, and we must.

Oceans with David Attenborough is available to view globally on Disney + and Hulu. National Geographic is providing free access to the film for educational and community screenings; corporate employee screenings, and events for non-commercial purposes

Host a screening – Revive Our Ocean

Judith Diment MBE

JOIN US AT EARTH X 2026 – APRIL 20-22 CONGRESS OF CONFERENCES



EarthX 2026 – Rotary’s Largest Environmental and Sustainability Conference in the world will take place April 20-22 at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas, Texas. This global gathering will bring together Rotarians from around the world and showcase environmental and sustainability projects from over 100 countries. We will unite scientists, business innovators, volunteers, and students under one roof to highlight impactful solutions, host hands-on workshops, and build the cross-sector partnerships needed to drive true systemic change.

EarthX is an international nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people

and organizations to take action towards a more sustainable future worldwide. We assemble and connect people all over the globe to explore sustainable solutions. EarthX's vision is to be the leading global connector and environmental forum to positively impact our world for a sustainable future.

Earthx2026 brings together leading voices from across the environmental spectrum—including scientists, conservationists, academics, entrepreneurs, advocates, NGOs, farmers, corporations, policymakers, educators, students, and global leaders—to exchange ideas and drive solutions for a sustainable future.

Thanks to the efforts of Rotarian Steve Bender, the conference will feature a special section called “The RotaryXperience” <https://rotaryxperience.org/>, a 30,000 square foot area where clubs/organizations can showcase their environmental activities and projects, and potentially speak about these projects to a live-streamed international audience on a dedicated stage.

Up to 10,000 visitors a day will pass through the exhibition area. We'd like to feature projects that would attract and be of interest to domestic and international audiences in attendance for the EarthX Conference. 2018-19 RI President Barry Rassin will be speaking at the conference. What an ideal opportunity to increase ESRAG's membership and visibility. Our Rotary district 5790 will be awarded premier space in the exhibition area, and our district governor, Jon Bullock, is all in.

The Xperience
Starts Here!
Are you ready?

The Environmental Xperience

Join The Xperience

~ 10K Daily Visitors 10+ Xperience Zone

Apr 20 - 22 2026
Hilton Anatole
Trinity Exhibit Hall
Dallas, Texas

2026

The graphic features a blue background with white and light blue text. It includes icons for a wind turbine, a city skyline, a white star, and a map of Texas with various flags. The year '2026' is prominently displayed in large, light blue numbers at the bottom.

ESRAG would be a most welcome addition, and we'll be featuring such exhibits as Lunch Out Of Landfills, Lithium-ion battery recycling/Redwood Materials, pollinator gardening, wheelchairs for polio, clean water solutions for India, Sri Lanka, and Kenya, and solar power. There will also be an electric vehicle demonstration in an outside area at the conference, so we can entertain a coordinated display in our dedicated area. Ideally, our

exhibits would feature some “hands-on” experiences as well. We’d love to have ESRAG participation at this important international event. If you would be so kind as to let me know of ESRAG’s interest and potential participation, that would be wonderful.

UNITED NATIONS - FAST FACT SHEETS

The UN has published a series of useful [Climate Action Fast Fact Sheets](#) on:

- What is Climate Change?
- Temperature Rise
- On Climate and the Economy
- On Climate and Jobs
- Renewable Energy
- On Climate and Finance
- On Climate and Adaptation
- On Climate Food and Agriculture
- On Climate and Health
- On Climate and Gender

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ESRAG AT RICON TAIPEI

ESRAG BOOTH

ESRAG has been successful in securing a booth in the House of Friendship at RICON in Taipei and to share the Environment Hub with other Rotary Action Groups.

If you are planning to attend the Rotary International Convention 2026, to be held between 13th–17th June, and able to help with the Booth please inform your participation to Board Director Caroline Dewiit using the Contact Form.

ESRAG HUB

This is being coordinated by Dr Chris Puttock and it will be shared with other RAGS. The ESRAG HUB at RICON Taipei is pleased to invite expressions of interest for speaker presentations during the House of Friendship.

We have eight presentation opportunities available over the course of the event and are seeking speakers whose work aligns with the following key ESRAG themes: biodiversity, circular economy, climate, food systems, pollution, and sustainability.

To be considered, presentations should:

- Demonstrate a clear connection to a Rotary club and/or district initiative
- Be delivered in person in Taipei during RICON
- Fit within a one-hour session, including a 20-minute presentation including a Q&A discussion

We need ESRAG members to help man the booth and presentations for the Environment Hub.

BREAKOUT SESSION

Neeraj Bhatnagar has been granted a breakout session on June 16th from 15.30-17.00 on “The Climate Crisis is not just Environmental – A Mindset and Communication Challenge.”

The speakers are from various Rotary Action Groups including:

- Melanie Lewis
- Deb Mccaslin RAG4Girls
- AKS Bricia Elawar
- Michaele Hayes RAGFP
- Judith Diment ESRAG

RAGTIME



RAGtime
RICON 2026
Taipei RAGTime

at Courtyard by Marriott Nangang Station, Taipei
Thursday, June 11, 2026 • 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Rotary leaders and 26 Action Groups get-together
Share your experience and look for collaborations as we better serve clubs and districts in their impact, measurable, sustainable projects.

Early Bird By April 15th: \$75.00
2026: \$100.00 After

Hors d'oeuvres • Beverages
Hosted by the RAG Council Advisory Board

Don't miss this important event!

Scan to Register:

The Rotary Action Group Council is once again organising RAGTime at the Courtyard by Marriott in downtown Taipei near the Convention Center 19.00-21.00 on Thursday June 11, 2026.

ESRAG PROJECTS SEMINAR

On Wednesdays:

Time: 10:00 a.m. EDT, 7:00 a.m. PDT, 2:00 p.m. UTC, 7:30 p.m. IST

April 1st - Speaker: Dr. Ahan Dalal - National Geographic Explorer Project In Spain

April 8th - Speaker: Steve Andrews - The Bard of Ely's songs, books, & news

April 15th - Speakers: Rtn Brian Braginton-Smith & PDG Jeff Smith - Connected Communities

April 22nd - Speaker: Ragnhild Bieltvedt Skeie - Climate Impacts of Hydrogen Emissions

April 29th - Speaker: ESRAG Secretary, Deniz Virul - Earth's Frozen Frontiers

Rotary ESRAG

ESRAG PROJECTS SEMINAR

From Stress Signals to Soil Solutions: National Geographic Explorer project in Spain

Wednesday April 1, 2026
10:00 a.m. EDT / 7:00 a.m. PDT /
2:00 p.m. UTC / 7:30 p.m. IST

[Click Here to Register](#)

During registration, please select the correct date for the meeting you wish to attend.

Dr. Ahan Dalal

Dr. Ahan Dalal is a non-binary plant scientist, National Geographic Explorer, and founder of Symbioverse UG in Germany. Born in Kolkata, India, he studied botany at Presidency University and completed his graduate training at the University of Hyderabad, where he began working on plant stress biology. He later held research and faculty roles in Israel, and was awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship to pursue research at the Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf. Across India, Israel, Germany, and now Spain, Ahan's work has focused on plant water relations, stress physiology, and practical tools for climate resilience. Through GRAINSHIELD, a National Geographic Society funded project and part of the 'Food for Tomorrow' program, he now works with partners and farmers in Spain to test regenerative agriculture approaches that can strengthen drought resilience, soil health, water-use efficiency, and biodiversity.

For any clarifications, write to: projects@esrag.org

Interested in being an ESRAG Volunteer?

For the expression of Interest to Volunteer for ESRAG at RICON 2026

Are you considering attending the Rotary International Convention 2026?

If so, we warmly invite you to join your ESRAG friends by volunteering in a way that aligns with your interests and fits your schedule.

Rotary International relies on dedicated individuals like you to inspire environmental action and help create a successful and memorable experience for everyone involved. Whether you bring specific skills or simply want to lend a helping hand, your participation would be greatly appreciated.

This expression of interest is entirely non-binding, but it will greatly assist us in our planning.

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: CLIMATE

SHORING THE SHORES: A GREEN SHIELD FOR THE SUNDARBANS

By: Dr. Aruna Tantia RC Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata RID 3291

The Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata and Young Indians (Yi) have launched a landmark environmental initiative, "Shoring the Shores with Mangroves" to protect the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove ecosystem. Supported by Global Grant #2454166, the project aims to restore mangrove forests, promote eco-friendly livelihoods, and empower local communities. The Sundarbans, battered by cyclones like Amphan and Yaas, is on the frontline of climate change. Mangroves play a crucial role in buffering tidal surges, preventing soil erosion, enriching biodiversity, and serving as carbon sinks. However, over 110 sq. km of mangroves have vanished in the last two decades. The project targets five vulnerable villages: Ramkrishnapur, Mokamberia, Kamardanga, Gadkhali, and Ramgopalpur, planting 1 lakh mangrove saplings along embankments to prevent flooding and protect 2,274 families. Community participation is key, with training programs for women in mangrove nursery management, eco-friendly product creation, and eco-tourism.

The initiative has shown promising results, with a 70% survival rate in the Ramkrishnapur plantation, where 100,000 mangrove propagules were planted. The project also promotes a circular economy using mangrove waste and encourages eco-tourism through hospitality training and local organic food initiatives. With technical backing from Prof. Neera Sarkar (Kalyani University), the project includes scientific monitoring and evaluation. Global collaboration and funding support come from Rotary Clubs in India, Switzerland, and the USA, with an estimated budget of ₹51.25 lakhs. This project demonstrates the power of collective action and community empowerment in achieving ecological restoration and sustainable development. By adopting a Common Property Resource Model, the initiative ensures sustainability and community stewardship.

For collaborations and support, contact Dr. Aruna Tantia at arunatantia@gmail.com.

CHAPTERS & TASK FORCES

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES BY COLLECTING DATA: ROTARY'S ROLE IN FRESHWATER PROTECTION

Rotary International is taking action to protect freshwater ecosystems. If your club is working on a local water project, we want to hear about it! Rotary and the United Nations Environment Programme's initiative, Community Action for Fresh Water, empowers communities to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems. Part of the initiative is to collect information from Rotary clubs about their existing freshwater ecosystem projects. We know a lot of you are already taking action, and we need a way to visually see it and quantify it to tell a bigger story about Rotary's environmental impact!

Projects can include freshwater restoration, collecting water samples (citizen science), annual clean-ups, awareness, and advocacy to protect your local waters. Take action and add your freshwater project into our new data platform: <https://map.communityactionforfreshwater.org>

The new data website allows users to:

- Locate on a map and track your freshwater project(s).
- Input freshwater project and activity details such as number of volunteers, volunteer hours for each activity, kilos (or pounds) of trash collected, number of trees planted in the watershed, etc.
- See Rotary-led project examples and restoration efforts. What do you need to do?

1) Register

your club (1 person per club that will track your information over the term of the project).

2) Enter

your projects details. Project details are confirmed by Rotary staff to ensure they are in alignment with the initiative. Your project descriptions should note general freshwater outcomes and impacts, and consistency with any local management plans.

3) Enter activity data as you

complete them – this can be done with a simple step of logging in from your mobile or laptop. Explore the Community Action for Fresh Water platform today.

Looking for inspiration to start a freshwater project? EarthWatch UK's next WaterBlitz happens the weekend of April 24-27, 2026. Over one weekend, members of the public can sign up to receive a water testing kit and become citizen scientists by testing their local freshwater bodies. Members of your club can participate, learn how easy it is to collect water samples, and provide scientists with data that help report on the UK's freshwater health. If your club is inspired to engage in longer-term citizen science in your local watershed, you can include your participation on our Rotary-UNEP platform.

SOLAR LIGHTS IN TRIBAL HAMLET MURALIDHARA K.N RC MYSORE SOUTH EAST

The Rotary Club of Mysore South East distributed 35 solar light systems to the families of Machur, a remote tribal hamlet in H.D. Kote taluk, Mysuru. This meaningful service project was carried out in partnership with SWISS Security Services, who generously supported the initiative through their CSR funds. Machur is home to a small indigenous community that lives deep inside the forest fringes of H.D. Kote.

With limited access to basic infrastructure, the village faces frequent power shortages and, in many areas, the complete absence of electricity. The residents often rely on kerosene lamps or firewood for light after sunset, which not only pose health and safety risks but also restrict children from studying in the evenings and families from carrying out essential household activities. Solar lights offer a safe, reliable, and sustainable solution, significantly improving their quality of life.

The distribution program was attended by President Rtn. Muralidhar Y.V., Secretary Rtn.Suresh, Zonal Lieutenant Muralidhara K.N., District Chairman for Solar and Renewable Energy Rtn. Chinnaswamy, and several dedicated club members. Their collective effort demonstrates Rotary's commitment to uplifting underserved communities and promoting renewable energy solutions where they are needed most.

ONE MILLION TREES. ONE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY. ONE BOLD BET.

FOREST REBIRTH, THE FIRST IN A FOUR PART SERIES OF ARTICLES

Arnil Señorón, Project Chair, Rotary Club of Luntiang Maynila Prime – the lead club that initiated the project.

Imagine standing in a degraded hillside in the Philippines, where once there was forest, now there is silence. No birdsong. No canopy. Just eroded soil baking under the sun. Now imagine committing to planting one million trees. Not as a slogan, but as a structured, long-term program with real communities at its center.

That is exactly what the **Rotary Club of Luntiang Maynila Prime** under Rotary International District 3810 set out to do when it launched the **Green Initiative: A Forest Rebirth.**

THE PROBLEM, IN PLAIN TERMS

The Philippines loses forest cover at an alarming rate. Deforestation — driven by agricultural expansion, illegal logging, and land conversion — strips hillsides of their ability

to hold water, support wildlife, and absorb carbon. The consequences are not abstract: flash floods intensify, biodiversity collapses, and rural communities lose the natural resources their livelihoods depend on.

Reforestation is widely recognized as one of the most cost-effective climate solutions available. Yet most tree-planting campaigns share a common weakness: trees are planted during a single event, then left to survive on their own. And most don't.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF AMBITION

The Green Initiative was designed from the start to be different. Operating across three strategic sites in Doña Remedios Trinidad (DRT), Bulacan — a mountainous municipality north of Manila — the program combines large-scale tree planting with agroforestry systems, community livelihood programs, and a continuous year-round planting model.

The target: **one million trees.**

That number is not a marketing figure. It is the threshold at which reforestation begins to generate meaningful, measurable impact on carbon sequestration, watershed protection, and biodiversity recovery at a landscape scale.

EARLY RESULTS THAT MATTER

Since its launch, the initiative has already placed more than 15,000 fruit-bearing and native trees in the ground — including coconut, mango, calamansi, rambutan, and papaya. These species were chosen deliberately: they provide ecological value and food security for the surrounding communities.

Three active reforestation sites have been established. A functioning tree nursery ensures a continuous supply of healthy seedlings. And crucially, a local indigenous community — the Dumagat — has been engaged not as passive recipients, but as active stewards of the growing forest.

WHY THIS MATTERS BEYOND THE PHILIPPINES

The Green Initiative is more than a local conservation project. It is a tested, operational model that demonstrates how Rotary clubs and environmental organizations can combine ecological restoration with genuine community empowerment. At scale, and sustainably.

For ESRAG members and sustainability advocates worldwide, it raises a compelling question: what would it take to replicate this in your region?

In the next article, we take you inside the three-camp operational model that makes the Green Initiative work. And explain why its structure may be the key to its long-term success.



A Forest Rebirth – restoring landscapes, protecting biodiversity, and empowering communities to grow a sustainable future, one tree at a time

Empowering the Dumagat Tribe — planting the seeds of knowledge, resilience, and stewardship for a sustainable future in harmony with nature. Year-round tree planting with the Dumagat Tribe — restoring forests, empowering communities, and growing a greener future together.

Image Sources: Courtesy of Arnil Señoron



MILLION SOLAR PANEL CHALLENGE 2025

THANK YOU FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY 2025

Because of you, 2025 has been a remarkable year. Participants in ESRAG’s Million Solar Panels Challenge have now logged over 120,000 solar panels from 65 countries, with participation from 245 Rotary Districts.

Have you, your club, or your district taken part?

Open the MSPC End-of-Year Summary MSPC Annual Report 2025 to see how you can get involved or contact the MSPC team mssp@sosuin.org to join the movement.

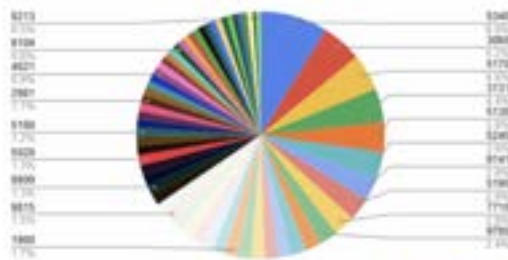


**Global Solar Impact:
Participation from 245 Districts**

MSPC: A Worldwide Movement



of Rotarians Logged By Districts (%):



Rotary ESRAG

PAGE 11 MILLION SOLAR PANEL CHALLENGE END-OF-YEAR REPORT

ROTARIANS TURNING ACTION INTO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Rotarians are not just talking about climate action, they are taking it.

By installing and logging solar panels, Rotary members have prevented nearly one million tonnes of CO₂ from being released into the atmosphere. That is equivalent to the carbon sequestration of over 1.4 million mature trees.

Cleaner air. Healthier communities. Real leadership. MSPC Annual Report 2025

Celebrating Our Solar Prize Winners

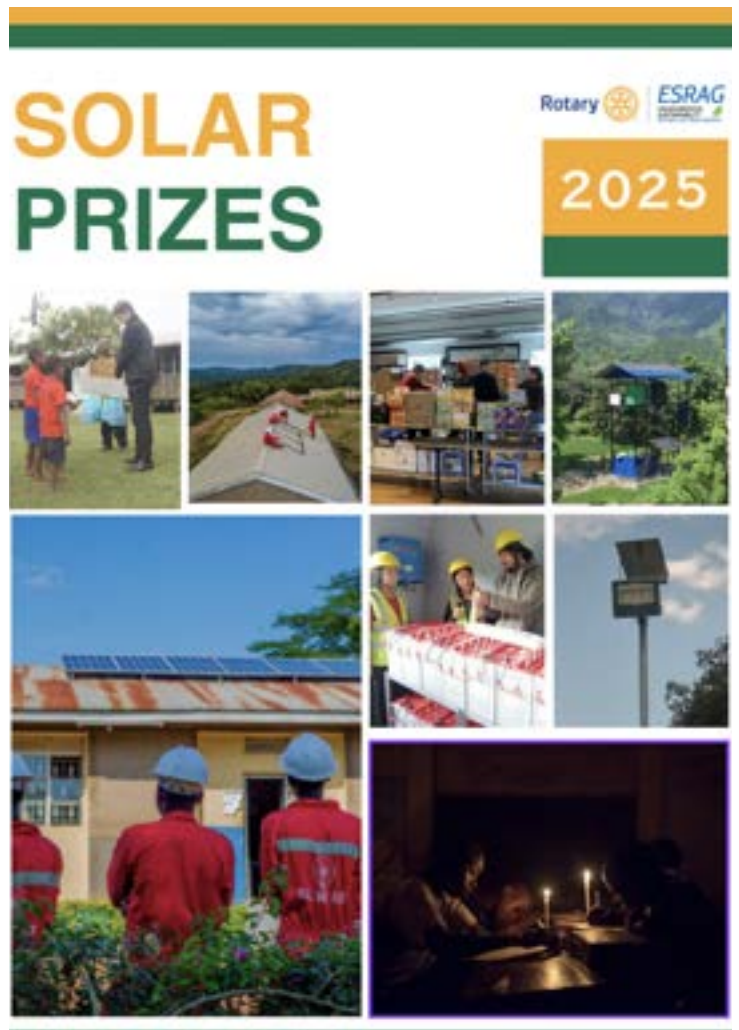
This year, we proudly celebrated seven Rotary solar project prize winners whose dedication is helping electrify communities around the world.

Their projects include solar for :

- Schools and hospitals
- Irrigation and farming
- Clean water distribution
- Refrigeration for food
- Lighting for safety

These projects are not just reducing emissions, they are changing lives. Open the report to learn more about these inspiring initiatives. If you are participating in a Rotary project that includes solar, please

Apply [here](#) for a \$1,000 ESRAG Solar Project Prize



MEET OUR SOLAR HEROES



We celebrate solar champions across the globe, and this year

We highlight three leaders who truly embody Rotary's spirit of service:

- Amy Stewart
- Uday Pilani
- Vlademir Silva

They stepped forward.

They took action.

They inspired others.

Become a Solar Hero

Whether you install solar on your own home or help your club add solar to a project, you're already part of the solution.

Now take one more simple step.

Log your panels here bit.ly/ESRAG_MSPC:

The sun shines on all of us. Let's put it to work.

RECOMMENDED READING

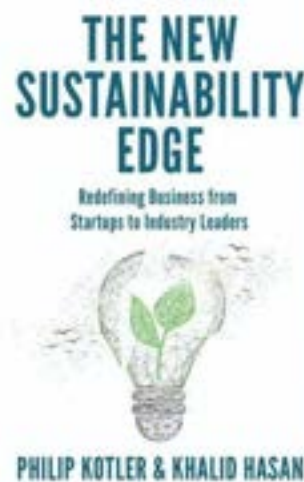
I'm pleased to announce that "The New Sustainability Edge" has just been published – a book on sustainability co-authored by Professor Philip Kotler, the Father of Modern Marketing, and Khalid Hasan, with contributions from 30 global academics, community champions and business leaders.

I am grateful to have been invited to contribute a chapter to this important project, and to be a catalyst in a conversation on our common future, centred around the themes of "people, profits and the planet".

Nilam Bedi ESRAG BOARD member

[THE NEW SUSTAINABILITY EDGE](#)

An article by Rockefeller Foundation President Rajiv Shah regarding India's approach to renewable energy. The Rockefeller Foundation is part of "Mission 300," an initiative led by the World Bank and the African Development Bank that aims to provide electricity to 300 million people across sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.



[-GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT GOOD FOR BUSINESS](#)

A look at recent Rotary projects supported by Rotary Foundation Global Grants that combined care for the environment and economic development, in Colombia, Pakistan, Puerto Rico and Taiwan.



ESRAG NEWS

JOIN ESRAG!



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group assists Rotary clubs, districts and multi-districts in:

- Planning and implementing impactful and environmentally sustainable service projects
- Educating and building awareness
- Building global and local networks
- Inspiring sustainable living/action
- Supporting Rotary International's environmental initiatives.

ESRAG inspires and empowers the Rotary family with extensive expertise, networks, education, and best practices to help implement sustainable and impactful environmental projects, informed by our six themes: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Food Systems, Pollution, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Living.

**All ESRAG members, Rotarians, and Rotaractors are warmly invited.
Check this All ESRAG members, Rotarians, and Rotaractors are warmly invited.**

FOLLOW US & JOIN THE CONVERSATION.



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