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## Closing the Loop: Rotary's Role in the Circular Economy Revolution

This month, we're closing the loop and opening minds! The circular economy isn't just about recycling, it's about rethinking our entire relationship with materials, consumption, and waste. In this issue, we explore how ESRAG and Rotary members around the world are putting circularity into action, through repair cafés, battery recycling drives, sustainable design, and creative reuse initiatives. You'll find stories, tools, and inspiring examples to spark your next project and see how circular economy principles power real progress across Rotary's Areas of Focus:

- Closing the Loop: How Rotary Can Lead the Circular Economy Revolution
  - Circular Economy: A Powerful Solution to Pollution
  - How Rotary Can Lead the Circular Economy Revolution
  - Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling: Join the Challenge
  - Recipe for Change (and a Carrot Dog!): A Fun Circular Lesson for Kids
  - Fixing the Future: How Repair Cafés Build Community and Reduce Waste
  - Explore Climate Solutions with En-ROADS: Host a Workshop that Inspires Action
  - From Garbage to Good: Rotary-Powered Solutions for a Zero-Waste Future
  - Join the Plastic Café: Rotary's Global Conversation on Plastic Solutions
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# Circular Economy: A Powerful Solution to Pollution

## ECO ACTION NEWS

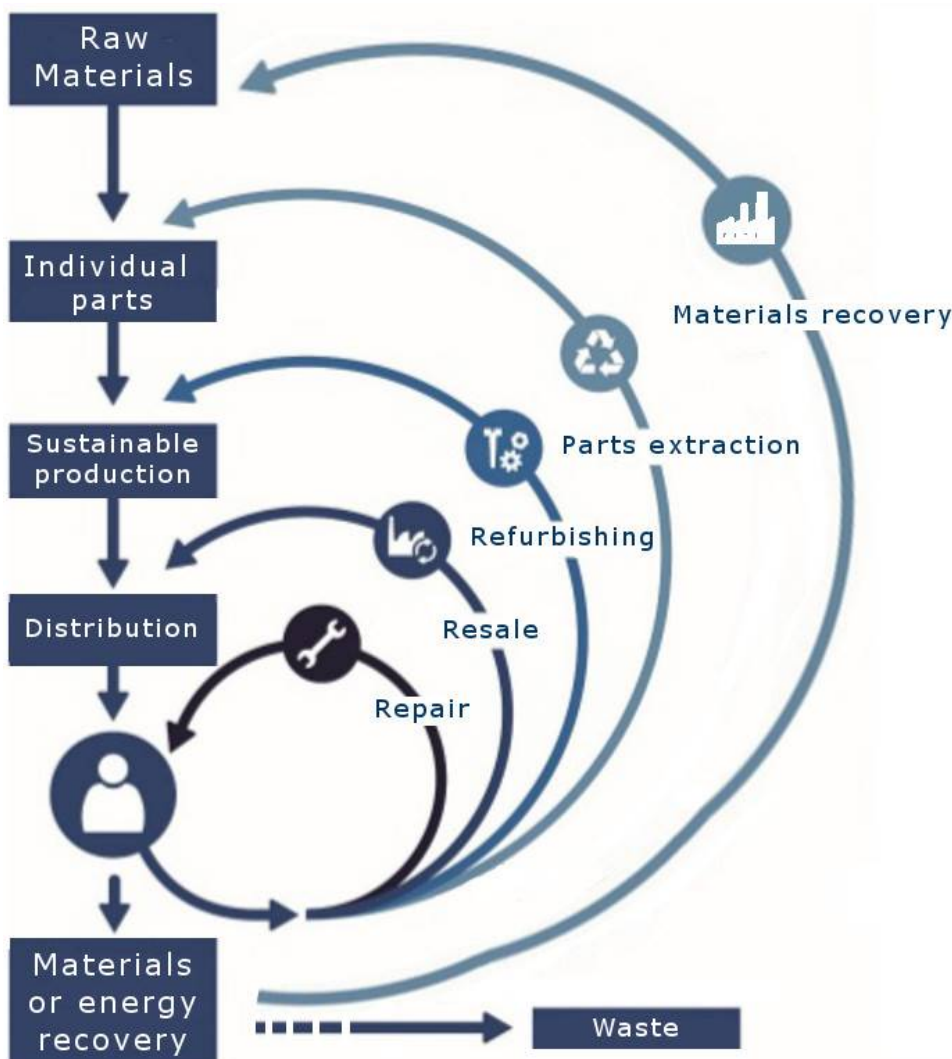


From plastic-choked oceans to air thick with toxins and soil polluted by e-waste, pollution is one of the greatest threats to people and planet alike. But here's the good news: we already have a proven way to tackle it. It's called the circular economy.

The circular economy isn't just about recycling, it's about redesigning entire systems to eliminate waste at the source. Instead of the "take-make-waste" model, circularity keeps materials in use for as long as possible, reuses and repurposes them, and restores natural systems in the process.

Why is this critical for Rotary and ESRAG?

- Pollution is one of the UN's Triple Planetary Crises, alongside climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Most pollution stems from how we extract, produce, consume, and discard materials—especially plastics, electronics, clothing, and food waste.
- A circular economy drastically reduces pollution, lowers carbon emissions, and regenerates ecosystems.



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# How Rotary Can Lead the Circular Economy Revolution



As the world grapples with mounting environmental, economic, and social challenges, a bold new vision is emerging: the circular economy. For Rotary, this isn't just a new environmental concept—it's an opportunity to lead.

Rotary has long worked to improve lives through its Seven Areas of Focus. From promoting peace to providing clean water, growing local economies, and supporting maternal and child health, Rotarians are already engaged in the interconnected issues that circularity addresses. Now, Rotary's Environment Area of Focus opens new doors for systemic change by embracing circular economy principles.

A circular economy goes beyond recycling. It transforms how we design, use, and reuse resources, eliminating the "take-make-waste" system and building regenerative models that restore nature, create jobs, and reduce emissions.

Here's how the circular economy aligns with Rotary's values:

- **Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution:** Circular systems reduce competition for scarce resources, lowering the risk of resource-based conflicts.
- **WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene):** Eliminating waste and pollution from production systems protects water quality and ensures safe sanitation.

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# Powering Down Responsibly: ESRAG's™ Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling Project



As the world transitions to cleaner energy and more electric devices, the demand for lithium-ion batteries is exploding, so is the need to responsibly recycle them. ESRAG's™ Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling Project is, a practical and impactful initiative that helps Rotary members and communities take action for a cleaner, more circular future.

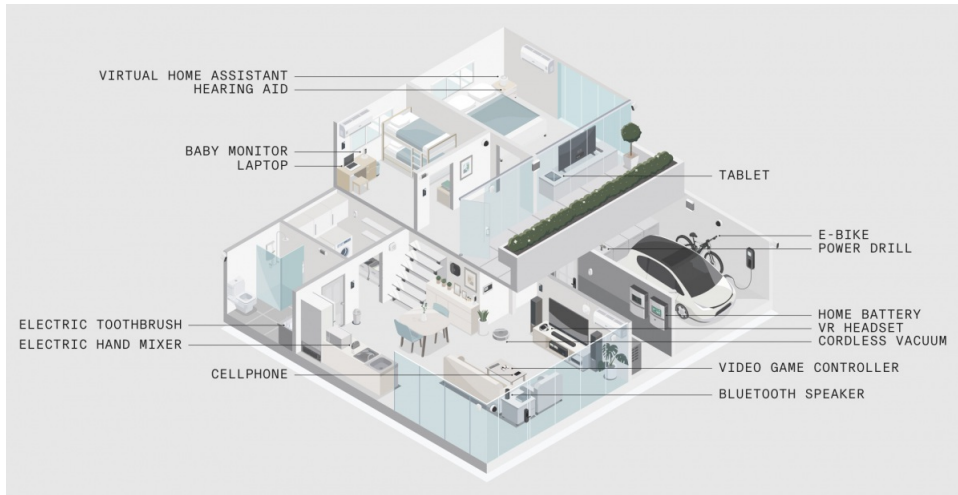
## Why Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling Matters

Lithium-ion batteries power everything from smartphones and laptops to electric vehicles. While they enable the shift to greener technologies, they come with an environmental cost when not properly handled after use. When tossed in landfills or improperly stored, these batteries can:

- Leach toxic chemicals into soil and water
- Cause fires in trash or recycling facilities
- Waste valuable metals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel that could be reused

Recycling these batteries helps prevent pollution, conserves natural resources, and reduces the demand for new mining, all while supporting a circular economy.

## How the ESRAG Project Works



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# A Recipe for Change



*By Joan Gagnon*

Thinking about eating more plants? It's not as hard, or as boring, as it sounds. In fact, it might be one of the coolest and kindest things you can do for yourself and the planet. Here's how swapping just a few meals can make a huge difference.

But First, What's a Circular Economy?

A circular economy is like giving things a second (and third!) life.

Instead of making something, using it, and then throwing it away (called a "take-make-waste" system), the circular economy tries to:

- Reduce waste
- Reuse and recycle materials
- Keep things in use for as long as possible

It's like turning your leftovers into tomorrow's lunch, smart, creative, and better for the planet!

How a Plant-Rich Diet Helps

Eating more whole plant foods is naturally circular:

- Plants grow with fewer resources, like water and land
- They create less waste and pollution than animal products
- Leftover peels and scraps can become compost, feeding the soil for more plants
- Many plant foods are easy to store, freeze, and reuse, less thrown out!

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## Fixing the Future: How Repair Cafés Build Community and Reduce Waste



In a world of throwaway culture, Repair Cafés offer a refreshing alternative, one where neighbors come together, tools are shared, and broken items get a second life. As part of ESRAC's commitment to the circular economy, Repair Cafés are a tangible way for Rotary clubs to take action on sustainability while strengthening community bonds.

### What Is a Repair Café?

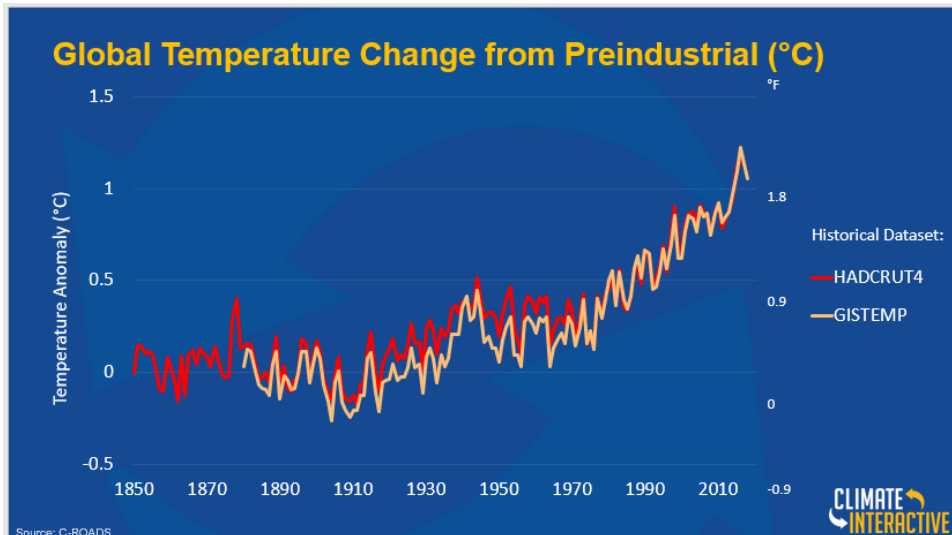
A Repair Café is a free, community-run event where volunteers help people repair household items instead of discarding them. From broken toasters and wobbly chairs to torn clothing and laptops that won't start, Repair Cafés aim to fix almost anything.

These gatherings are not just about saving money or reducing waste (though they do both!). They're also about sharing skills, fostering conversations, and creating a culture where caring for the things we own becomes second nature.

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## Explore Climate Solutions with En-ROADS: Host a Workshop that Inspires Action



In the face of the climate crisis, understanding what truly moves the needle can feel overwhelming. With so many proposed solutions and a flood of information, it's hard to know where to focus. That's where En-ROADS comes in, a powerful, interactive tool that helps people explore the real-world impact of climate solutions.

### What Is En-ROADS?

En-ROADS is a free climate simulation tool developed by Climate Interactive and MIT Sloan School of Management. It allows users to test various climate policies, like carbon pricing, renewable energy expansion, electrification, and land use changes, and immediately see their effects on global temperature and emissions.

Think of it as a "climate flight simulator": you can adjust sliders, make policy decisions, and instantly see how those changes interact across sectors and decades.

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## From Garbage to Good: Rotary-Powered Solutions for a Zero-Waste Future



What do coffee grounds, used face masks, human hair, and multi-layer plastics all have in common? In most places, they end up as garbage—but in India, Rotarian Dr. Binish Desai (Rotary Club of Vibrant Valsad, India) has engineered ways to convert all of them into affordable, durable products, including bricks, jewelry, and home décor. These products are made by formerly impoverished women. "A major criterion is lifting up women from rural areas who had no say in their families by bringing the work to them," he explains.

For Desai to launch a product, it must satisfy a "triple bottom line: social, environmental, and economic," he says. Production must benefit the workers, divert materials from the waste stream, and combine excellent functionality with affordability. Desai's products are at least 15–20% cheaper than competing products, but not lower in quality," he said in a talk to ESRA's South Asia Chapter. For example, "a standing toilet built out of our bricks has reached 10 years in a village where things are not supposed to last."

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# Join the Plastic Café: Rotary's Global Conversation on Plastic Solutions



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Rotary  



## Global plastic solutions Café

Every Third Thursday of the Month

How can we turn the plastic problem into a powerful opportunity for environmental action? That's exactly what we explore at ESRAC's monthly Plastic Cafés, a welcoming, solutions-focused virtual space where Rotarians and friends around the world come together to share ideas, learn from one another, and take action on plastic waste.

Hosted by ESRAC's Plastic Solutions Task Force, the Plastic Café aligns directly with Rotary's commitment to the circular economy, an approach that reduces waste, keeps materials in use, and regenerates natural systems. Instead of plastic ending up in landfills or oceans, the circular model encourages rethinking, redesigning, and reusing. Our monthly gatherings help people and clubs find their place in this movement, whether through local education, advocacy, or hands-on projects.

Each café features guest speakers, project showcases, and lively discussion on topics ranging from plastic bans and recycling innovations to microplastic education and creative community solutions. It's a perfect place to meet other Rotarians passionate about the environment, and to discover simple ways your club can help close the loop on plastic pollution.

When: Every third Thursday of the month

Where: Online (free, but registration required)

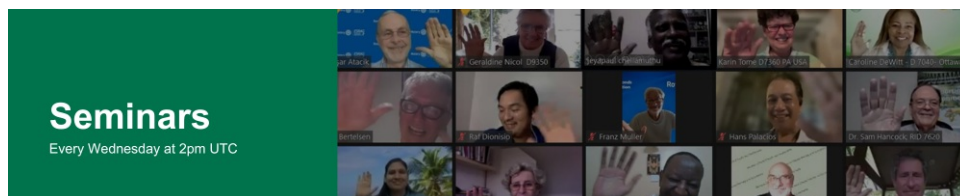
Who: Open to all Rotarians, Rotaractors, and allies

Ready to be part of the solution?

[Register and learn more.](#)

Let's rethink plastic together, and turn waste into lasting impact.

## Weekly Seminars



**Seminars**  
Every Wednesday at 2pm UTC

**August 6: Powering Change: How Youth-Led Innovation and Clean Energy Are Transforming Communities in Uganda with Nathan Thomas**

Learn how All We Are, a youth-powered nonprofit, is partnering with Rotary to deliver clean energy to underserved Ugandan communities. Discover how this scalable model has already reached 100,000 people, and the bold vision to impact millions more. [Register.](#)

**August 20: Using stories as a tool to frame issues, educate, and persuade with Judith Black**

Storytelling, one of the oldest tools of communication, invites listeners into new worlds, guiding them on a journey that can shift perspectives and spark lasting change. [Register.](#)

## Connect with us on social media

Follow us & join the conversation.



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