



Visions



June 2009 Volume #6

“The gift of sight . . . Protect it, Save it, Restore it”

A Message from our Action Group Chairman

My Fellow Rotarians

The 2008-2009 Rotary year has been a difficult one for all of us due to the current worldwide economic crisis. However, in spite of this, Rotarians around the world continue to work tirelessly to prevent blindness and bring sight to those who have lost it.

We ask ourselves why we are Rotarians, and how we can individually or collectively make a difference. This is the beauty of Rotary . . . through our clubs and districts and through our Action Group there is a place for us to develop and promote our particular service interest.

Eliminating needless world blindness is a place to make a huge difference. That is why I am so proud to be a member of the ***Rotarian Action Group for Blindness Prevention*** and serve as your chairman.

The World Health Organization estimates there are 37 million people in the world who are blind, plus another 124 million who have severe visual impairment. And somewhere in the world another adult goes blind every five seconds, and a child every minute. Human suffering from blindness and the economic impact of this tragic disability is staggering. Seventy-five percent is avoidable, either curable or preventable. This is our opportunity to make a difference through Rotary.

This year, during our annual convention in Birmingham, England, our Blindness Prevention workshop focused on the value of developing partnerships to further the work of our RAG. ORBIS has been a major partner for several years and the example of this relationship will now be used to

build additional partnerships that will move us more quickly toward to end blindness.

At the 2009 annual meeting and Board meeting, new changes were recommended and approved by both the Board and the membership. We've included copies of the minutes in this newsletter so you will better understand how we are changing.

Our Rotarian Action Group for Blindness Prevention is changing . . . and growing . . . to create new opportunities for service. As we approach the full implementation of Future Vision in 2013, we will learn to adapt to better use the new aspects of The Rotary Foundation that will enable us to grow our work to serve even more of those who need our help.

This year, the Blindness Prevention Donor Advised fund assisted 35 blindness prevention matching grant projects by providing additional funding. These projects were wide and varied and the support of this fund has enabled clubs and districts around the world to serve those with the greatest need.

Yours in Rotary service.

Ken D. Tuck, MD
Chairman
Rotarian Action Group for
Blindness Prevention



Officers

Chairman

Immediate Past Chair
PRIP Frank J. Devlyn

Vice Chairman

Executive Secretary
Harriett Schloer

Treasurer
PDG David Gallagher

Board Members
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PDG Rob Ketron
PDG Bill Peloquin, MD
PDG Walt Schloer
PDG Phyllis Nusz
Kula Sabaratnam
Philippe Caron
PDG Rekha Shetty
Dr. Ravishankar Kowshik
Venkatasubbiah



Be sure to check all of the latest Fellowship news on the Eye Care Fellowship website!

Draft Board Meeting Minutes—June 2009

DRAFT MINUTES

2009 Board Meeting

Rotarian Action Group for Blindness Prevention
June 19, 2009 - 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
(Board Room) Ibis Center Hotel
Birmingham, United Kingdom)

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting opened at 6:00 PM with Chairman, Dr. Ken Tuck introducing himself and then asking everyone to introduce themselves.

Present were the following:

Chairman: Ken D. Tuck, MD

Executive Secretary: Harriett Schloer

Current Board Members: PDG Walt Schloer, PDG Rekha Shetty,

Advisors to the Board: Selvarajah Sunderavel and Kulasgaran Sabaratnam (Board Member-Elect)

The following officers and Board members were not present at the Birmingham Convention (Treasurer, PDG David Gallagher; Board Members - PDG Bill Peloquin, PDG Rob Ketron, Patrick E. Devlyn, Philippe Caron, Dr. Ravishankar Kowshik Venkaatasubbiah.

Board Members PDG Phyllis Nusz and PRIP Frank Devlyn were present in Birmingham but had conflicting meetings at the time of the RAG Board meeting.

Minutes: The minutes of the 2008 Board meeting were presented for approval. No additions or changes were required. Kula moved and Rekha seconded that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Harriett Schloer presented the Secretary's annual report. The full report is included with this annual report. Following is the brief summary:

Membership:

Membership June 30, 2008: 217

Members Eligible to Vote on May 1, 2009: 217

Members as of June 19, 2009: 217

Annual Online Elections: Three Board positions were open with five individuals standing for election. The online election period ran from May 1 - 15, 2009 with 30.88% of all eligible members voting and the following individuals being elected.

Board Member: PDG Walt Schloer - USA (2009-2012)

Board Member: PDG Phyllis Nusz - USA (2009-2012)

Board Member: Kula Sabaratnam - Kuala Lumpur (09-12)

Executive Secretary Responsibilities: Reported that she had prepared and submitted the Annual Report to RI (copies available at the meeting); handled all applications for exhibiting at the 2009 RI Convention; processed the 2009 Convention Workshop application; ordered banners to replace the custom booth for display in the UK in order to reduce shipping charges; handled shipping of the banners and all related booth supplies to and from the RI convention; also shipped the custom booth to the AAO convention in Atlanta; processed all submissions from members for placement on the annual election ballot; setup online voting; scheduled the annual meeting for the 2009 Convention; scheduled the annual Board meeting for the 2009 Convention; set up the Convention Booth staffing schedule; prepared the newsletter for online publication; continued to work on the 501(c)(3) application for submission to the IRS; set up a new online registration system to replace the Sporg system which is no longer available; renewed annual Non-Profit status with State of Oregon and filed annual report with the Oregon Department of Justice; arranged for printing of all material to be used in the booth during the convention and the AAO meeting; duplicated more copies of the DVD for handout at the convention and AAO meeting; printed an additional 1000 postcards for handout; created a RAG promotion post card to be used in making luggage tags; ordered luggage tag packets and loops and small laminating machine to make luggage tags at conventions; managed the RAG web site and kept the site updated and current. Chairman Ken moved and PDG Walt Schloer seconded that the Secretary's report be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: As the Treasurer, David Gallagher, has been seriously ill and just had major surgery and was not present, the Exec. Secretary presented the financial report as of June 10, 2008. The year-end financial reports are included with this report. The loss this year is due to the expense of exhibiting at the Birmingham Convention (including additional booth displays and services); mailing of all booth materials to the UK (and related duties); and the expense of exhibiting at the AAO meeting in Atlanta and the Vision West meeting in Las



20-23 JUIN/JUNE

MONTREAL 2010
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

**Attend the 2010 Rotary
Convention in Montreal,
Quebec, Canada.
Register Online at**

<http://www.rotary.org>

2009 Draft Board Minutes (continued)

Vegas. It was moved by Kula and seconded by Rekha that the financial report be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Update on RAG ByLaws: The RAG's updated ByLaws were submitted with last year's Annual Report and were accepted as submitted.

Board Members' Annual Reports: ExecSec Harriett reiterated that each Officer and Board Members' Annual report needs to be submitted in writing to the Secretary no later than July 31, 2009 in order for there to be time for her to prepare the annual report to RI which is due October 1, 2009. She noted that last year, no reports were received from Board members. Kula (Board member-elect) did take the opportunity to update the Board on the various ophthalmological projects that are being completed in the Sri Lanka area.

Blindness Prevention Donor Advised Fund Report: PDG Walt Schloer, administrator of the Blindness Prevention Donor Advised Fund, reported on the past year's activity in the BP-DAF. A copy of the full report is included with this report. Here is a brief Summary:

Contributions (3 donors)	\$ 9,172.00
Earnings (2008-2009)	\$ 8,594.89
# of Grants Awarded (2008-2009)	35
Total Grant Dollars Awarded	\$72,896.07
TRF Management Fees	\$ 3,212.46
Change in market value during year	(\$8,122.85)

Schloer indicated that the negative change in value this year had to do with the current economic crisis. Until this time, the fund's investments have grown annually. He anticipates that the loss will be less for 2009-2010 and should turn around within 2-3 years. He also indicated that he is still not receiving final reports on the projects that are being funded by the DAF. The Executive Secretary has requested reports on all Blindness Prevention projects whether they are funded by the DAF or not. She would like to post these on the RAG web site and would like to include them in the newsletter(s) and the annual report to RI. There was discussion on whether or not submitting a report should be made a "requirement" in order to get a DAF grant. It was decided not to do this. Instead, Schloer will inform Board / RAG members when a project is being hosted / sponsored by a club in their geographic area and have the RAG member contact the club involved to "encourage" them to write a report and forward it to Schloer and to the Executive Secretary for posting on the web site. Unfortunately, the Matching Grants forms are not the best source of information for these types of reports.

Exhibiting at Conventions and Exhibitions: A discussion was held regarding the high expenses of exhibiting at the AAO and Vision west events and it was unanimously decided to no longer exhibit at Vision West (at least for the time being). The custom booth as well as the new pop-up display banners will remain in storage in Bend, Oregon and will be transported by the Schloer's to the RI Conventions in Montreal and New Orleans and to

upcoming AAO meetings in San Francisco and Chicago. As we are a "lifetime membership" organization only and do not have annual "membership dues" and thus no annual income stream, the idea of assessing our members an annual "administrative" fee was discussed in order to help defray the expense of exhibiting at these various events. All were in agreement that this is an excellent idea and it was unanimously agreed that this will be put on the agenda for the annual membership meeting during the 2009 Birmingham convention. All were also in agreement that even though there is an expense for exhibiting at these events, the benefits far exceed the cost as each year new members are added to our ranks, new volunteers are added to our roles, new honorary members are obtained, and new partnerships are forged. The AAO convention, in particular, is extremely valuable and we need to insure that we obtain enough funding to continue exhibiting at this annual event. During the 2008-2009 Rotary year, the RAG exhibited at the following:

RI Convention - Los Angeles, CA (June 2008)

Vision West Expo - Las Vegas, NV (October 2008)

American Academy of Ophthalmology Convention - Atlanta, LA (November 2008)

RI Convention - Birmingham, UK (June 2009)

Application for Non-Profit Status with the IRS: Executive Secretary Schloer reported it has taken much longer than anticipated due to the complexity of the application based on our outgrowth from the original task force and fellowship. She hopes to submit the application to the IRS by the end of the year.

Strategic Plan: As the plan was approved at last year's meeting and it's Chair, PDG Tom Kwako was not present in Birmingham, any additional discussion on the plan will be deferred until the 2010 RI Convention in Montreal.

- **Duty of the RAG to its Membership:** A lengthy discussion was then held on the overall "duty" of the RAG to its individual members. All agreed that the RAG has a well stated mission but what is missing in that mission are the "specifics" which the RAG has chosen to focus on. These are as follows:
- **Celebrating World Sight Day:** This occurs each year on the Second Thursday in October. Through its membership, the RAG will encourage each and every Rotary Club to hold a Blindness Prevention activity of some type during October as close to World Sight Day as possible. This could be a speaker at a club meeting, a community awareness activity, or a project specifically related to Blindness Prevention.
- **School Vision Screening:** Much of the world's blindness could be prevented by performing vision screening early with all school children. RAG members will be asked to work with their clubs and districts to establish vision screening programs in schools to enable early identification of vision problems in order to prevent blindness.
- **Getting Involved:** All RAG members will be asked to become "proactive" and take an active part in

Draft Minutes of Annual Board Meeting—June 2009

Blindness Prevention, not merely be a BP-RAG member in name only. Just as the RAG has responsibilities to its members, members have a responsibility as well and that is to take on the mission of the RAG to the greatest extent possible in order to help in the prevention of avoidable blindness.

- **Organize an ABC in Every Rotary District:** It shall be the responsibility of the RAG Board of Directors and all RAG members to establish lines of communication with each and every Rotary district in the world and endeavor to organize Avoidable Blindness Conferences on a Bi-Annual basis. Kula and Rekha are the “experts” in this regard and will be asked to develop a “generic” program that can be offered to each and every RAG member for each and every Rotary district to begin the process of developing Blindness Prevention programs and organizing ABC’s.
- **Collection and Distribution of Eye Glasses:** Collecting and distributing used eye glasses is one of the easiest possible ways in which to help with vision problem. Refractive error can be easily corrected and the collection / distribution of eyeglasses is a well established program that has many models that can be replicated. Information on these programs will be made available on the RAG web site for all to use.

Membership Recruitment and Reduced Dues: The Board then held a lengthy discussion on how to increase our membership, particularly at the local level, while at the same time taking into consideration the cost of dues in developing countries. The following was decided: In “Fully Developed Countries”, there will be a \$100 Lifetime Membership fee (\$50.00 Rotaract Lifetime) and no annual Dues). In “Developing Countries”, there will be a \$50.00 Membership fee (\$25.00 for Rotaract) with an annual dues fee of \$10.00 (for both Rotarians and Rotaractors). In “Underdeveloped Countries”, there will be a \$25.00 membership fee (\$15.00 for Rotaract) and an annual Dues fee of \$5.00 (for both Rotarians and Rotaractors). All of these fees will be **paid in \$US** and will be deposited with the RAG Treasurer. Conversion rates will be determined quarterly and will be based on the World Bank conversion rate. Classification as a “Developed, Developing, or Underdeveloped” country will be determined by current World Bank and United Nations classification. This shall be administered by the Executive Secretary and the Treasurer with the assistance of the Board Member that is responsible for membership development.

Membership Recruitment

Rekha requested that some type of “Membership Form” and Brochures be developed in order to assist in the recruitment effort at the local level. The Executive Secretary shall develop such a form and make it available in PDF format that can then be translated into the local language for printing and recruitment purposes. Costs for said printing will be absorbed by Rotarians at the lo-

cal level as the RAG does not have the funds to cover this expense at the current time.

Partnerships: Kula once again opened the discussion on establishing “partnerships” and wanted to know how this would be viewed under the impending “TRF Future Vision” plan. PDG Schloer explained that the FVP is very “open” to establishing partnerships in order to further the work of TRF. This is a reversal on Rotary’s previous stand on such relationships. The new partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation went a long way to make the Trustees and the Board realize that we can do a much better job in helping the developing world if we work with other others that have the resources to make it happen. We have the personnel and the organizational structure, others have the \$\$\$\$. Kula then resolved to become more “proactive” and endeavor to pursue Memorandums of Understanding / Agreement” with organizations such as: ORBIS, World Blindness Union, International Association for the Prevention of Blindness World Vision, And others . . .

Date of 2010 Board Meeting: The Executive Secretary stated that as soon as RI provides the necessary applications and paperwork for the 2010 RI Convention, a Board meeting date will be set. All present agreed that the Friday evening prior to the start of the convention is the preferable day to hold the Boards meeting due to RAG and CGF Fellowship conflicts on Saturday and Sunday. The Schloer’s will be staying in the Hotel Le Dauphin Montreal (across the street from the Palais de Congress) which has a Board meeting, the meeting will be scheduled for that location on Friday evening at 7:00 PM prior to the opening of the Convention just as it was this year. All present agreed to the day / date / time

Annual Meeting of RAG: The Executive Secretary announced that the RAG annual meeting will be held on Saturday, June 20th at 3:00 PM in the Galley Hospitality Suites #17-18. This has been published on the RAG web site for the past three months since the meeting arranged.

Adjournment: As there was no further business to come before the board at this time, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriett Schloer
Executive Secretary

Contact the Secretary at in2dtp@empnet.com

Draft Minutes of Annual Meeting—June 2009

DRAFT MINUTES

2009 Annual Meeting

Rotarian Action Group for Blindness Prevention
Saturday - June 20, 2009 - 7:00 AM
The National Exhibition Center
Gallery Hospitality Suites (17-18)
Birmingham, UK

1. **Welcome:** The meeting was opened at 7:10 am by Dr. Ken D. Tuck, Chairman of the RAG. There were 22 members of the RAG present at the meeting who then introduced themselves. Dr. Tuck then turned the meeting over to PRIP Frank Devlyn to give a brief welcome to all present.

1. **Secretary's Annual Report:** Executive Secretary, Harriett Schloer, presented her annual report (copy included with this report.) It was moved and seconded that the report be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

2. **Minutes:** Minutes of the 2008 Annual meeting were presented for review. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

3. **Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's report was presented by Harriett Schloer in the absence of the RAG Treasurer. It was moved and seconded that the report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4. **Development of Partnerships:** Dr. Tuck discussed the development of Partnerships on the part of the RAG. He brought the membership up to date on what the RAG's goals are regarding partnerships and how these relationships will be viewed under the Future Vision plan. He then presented the following resolution that had been adopted by the Board at their annual Board meeting on Friday evening:

"Be it resolved to become more Proactive by securing Memorandums of Understanding with ORBIS, the World Blind Union, International Association for Blindness Prevention, the International Society for Rehabilitation & Research for Low Vision and other similar organizations. Be it resolved that once a relationship has been established, the RAG will work to carry out Blindness Prevention projects with the assistance of these organizations." It was moved and seconded that the resolution be adopted. The motion carried.

5. **New Dues Structure:** Harriett Schloer then presented the new dues structure as approved by the Board at its annual meeting on Friday evening. It is as follows:

Developed Countries (\$100 Lifetime . . . no annual)

Developing Countries (\$50 Lifetime . . . \$10 annual)

1 Underdeveloped Countries (\$25 Lifetime . . . \$5 annual)

This new structure will allow Rotarians in these countries to become members of the RAG at a rate that is commensurate with their country's economic standard. Country / Regional chairs will be appointed by the Board during the coming year in order to get the network organized. After a brief discussion, it was moved and seconded that new membership / dues structure be adopted. The motion carried.

6. **Membership Recruitment Materials:** The Board has proposed that the executive Secretary develop a brochure and Membership Form which will be available in PDF format for recruiting members around the world. This shall be posted on the RAG web site for download. It will be a fillable document that can be edited to meet the needs of each geographical area. It was moved and seconded that these items be developed under the direction of the Board. The motion Carried.

7. **Code of Responsibilities for RAG members:** The Board has approved the establishment of the "Code of Responsibilities for RAG Members" as a requirement of RAG membership. This is essentially an expansion of the RAG mission. These responsibilities shall consist of the following:

- Encourage clubs and districts to plan an activity, each year, to celebrate World Sight Day (2nd Thurs. in Oct.)
- Encourage clubs and districts, where applicable, to establish School Vision screenings on a regular basis
- Encourage clubs and districts to become involved in blindness prevention projects at either the local or international level.
- Work with District leaders to organize an ABC (Avoidable Blindness Conference) annually during the District Conference or the District Training Assembly. (*List of recommended activities will be made available on the RAG web site*)
- Work with clubs and district to establish a local and / or district program for the distribution and collection of used eyeglasses.

It was moved and seconded to approve this Code of Responsibilities. The motion carried.

8. **Blindness Prevention Donor Advised Fund:** RAG Board member and BP-DAF Administrator, PDG Walt Schloer then presented his annual report on the grant activity by the BP-DAF for the past year. He answered numerous questions on the process of

Annual Meeting Minutes (cont'd.)

getting a DAF grant. This will be discussed further during the Blindness Prevention workshop on Monday. Those interested in a DAF grant were invited to visit individually with PDG Schloer at the RAG booth. (copy of the DAF report is included with this annual report).

9. OTHER BUSINESS:

- **Annual Voluntary Administrative Assessment** (for Lifetime members only) Harriett Schloer once again discussed the RAG's finances. Discussion was held on the expense of exhibiting at the Convention and the AAO meeting on an annual basis and how this is impacting the RAGs assets because we do not have an annual income stream, due to all of our members being Lifetime members with no dues. The Board has recommended an annual \$25.00 minimum "voluntary" assessment to the RAG to assist in covering these annual expenses. After a brief discussion, it was moved and seconded to approve the Board's recommendation and to leave the annual amount at the discretion of the Executive Secretary. The first such assessment will be handled by a worldwide "snail" mailout to get all members to update their contact information. Motion Carried.

- **Presentation:** Board member, PDG Rekha Shetty then presented Harriett Schloer then with an Indian token (hanging token) in friendship and congratulations for being named a Service Above Self Award recipient.
- **2010 Annual Meeting:** As soon as the Executive Secretary receives information from RI on dates and times available for the 2010 Annual meeting, the date and time will be set and all members will be notified.

As there was no further business to come before the RAG, Dr. Tuck thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:00 in order to get the booth opened in the House of Friendship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Harriett Schloer



Executive Secretary
"Rotarian Action Group
for Blindness Prevention"

Matching Grants (MG) against Blindness in Pakistan 2007-09, launched by RC Ferney-Voltaire, D.1710, France

MG Nr. (initiated by RC F-V)	PHP (Host)	PIP (International)	Achieved	Total MG amount	RC Ferney-Voltaire Contribution	Leverage Factor F-
22) Lahore I Pakistan <u>MG 63132</u>	RC Lahore Garrison	RC Ferney-Voltaire, France	580 IOL + 220 funded by a Lahore donor 800 IOL total	14'500 \$	2'000 \$ -	7
26) Lahore II <u>MG 65967</u>	RC Lahore Cantt	RC Wentzville, Missouri USA	Microscope for LRBT Hospital Lahore	60'000 \$ (\$ in Lahore)	12'000 \$ incl 3'000 \$ from EU Clubs	5
28) Multan <u>MG 65847</u>	RC Multan Cantt	RC Ferney-Voltaire, France	Pakistan 830 Ops (30\$/IOL)	25'000 \$	6'000 \$	4
Total Pakistan	3 PHP Clubs	2 PIP Clubs	1630 IOL + Eqpt.	99'500 \$	20'000 \$	<u>5</u>

Birmingham Convention had “Challenges”

Once again this year, our BP RAG partnered with the Convention Goers Fellowship to setup and staff a joint booth, in a prime HOF location, during the 2009 RI convention in Birmingham, UK. As you'll note by the photo to the right, we did not use the 10 foot custom display booth this year. The cost to ship the booths to the



UK was prohibitive. Instead, we manufactured 2 pop-up display banners that were easily transported by two Board members as “luggage” on their flight to the UK. We acquired Velcro-receptive panels in blue and gold for the back wall and attached laminated photos and posters to represent our organization. Finally, we rented a “front desk” to accommodate all of the information that we were distributing throughout the convention.

Overall, the booth display was a great success with a lot of positive comments. What was NOT positive was the negative impact that the current worldwide economic crisis had on the number of new members we were able to add to our roster. Only four new members joined . . . The lowest in our history. It is our sincere hope that we will see a reversal in Montreal next year.

Luggage Tags



To help promote our RAG, this year we offered free luggage tags with individual's business cards on the reverse side. The lines were long in getting these laminated but well over 500 Rotarians went home with a RAG luggage tag on their suitcase, purse, briefcase, etc. We used the illustrated “business card” and then backed it with the individual's personal business card. HUGE success and a great marketing technique.

DVD's

Once again, we distributed free DVD's illustrating various RAG projects. In addition, the DVD was running on a computer that had been set up in the booth.

Our Blindness Prevention workshop was a big success in

terms of the response of those who attended. However, the room setup in the Convention Center was definitely not “ideal” and we have a lot of difficulty with the “overflow” sound from adjoining workshops. We hope this will be resolved before the 2010 Montreal Convention.

Once the convention was over, all of the booth supplies were bundled and mailed back to the US. The cost to send materials to the UK and return them was very expensive this year. For the next couple of years, two of our Board members will be transporting everything by car as they will be driving to the conventions in Montreal and New Orleans.

2010 Booth Staffing to be Announced

As soon as we have approval from RI for our booth(s) for the 2010 Montreal convention, we will be posting a booth staffing schedule on the RAG web site. Be sure to watch the site and your email for convention updates, RAG updates and meeting updates.



RAG Board members at the 2009 RI Convention in Birmingham, England. (L-R) Advisor to the Board, Selva Sunderavel, Immediate Past RAG President, PRIP Frank Devlyn, Executive Secretary, Harriett Schloer, Board Member and BP-DAF Administrator, PDG Walt Schloer.

Launching a Vision 2020 Project by Networking



Editors Note: As we move to establish partnerships with other organizations, we are once again publishing the following article provided by our Chairman, Dr. Ken D. Tuck, MD. In

2013 we will all be working under the Future Vision Plan. These types of partnerships will enable us to work more effectively under the FVP to further the work of our RAG.

A hundred years ago, the Paris-based “Les Ballets Russes” fascinated the world by combining artistic talents as diverse as those of Nijinsky, Picasso, and Stravinsky. With no pretension to equal fame, *Vision 2020* could also be credited with effective synergies in the field of Community Eye-Care and the “best practice” example provided below could inspire other initiatives to be based on international networking and partnerships.

In the April 2006 issue of IAPB News, Marijs Carrin, *Vision 2020*'s Programme Resources Officer, highlighted synergies by partnerships as advocated by the UN's Millennium Development Goal Number 8 (MDG 8). That very approach is being already followed by Rotary Clubs in their efforts against Avoidable Blindness (AB), as already indicated in IAPB News of July 2004 and April 2005.

The present example of the *Dindigul Community Eye-Care* in Tamil Nadu, Southern India has been chosen from 24 projects supported in the last couple of years by Rotary Club Ferney-Voltaire, France (near Geneva), because it considers the diverse needs of a poor Community and could not have taken place without the *Vision 2020* approach.

In 2004, the Dindigul Society for Social Service and Child Care Trust (SOSSACC) had tried to present a Community Eye-Care project to local Health Authorities and to Rotary Clubs. These however could not be convinced to grant their support, although SOSSACC was already most credibly engaged in an important 2002-2005 project supported by Andheri Hilfe, Germany, for Community Based Services to Mentally Handicapped Children.

Meanwhile in Switzerland, after speaking before a Lions Club, Dr. Anita Eggmann, a Swiss ophthalmologist with previous experience at Aravind, Madurai, personally pledged about 840 USD to help such a Project. This news was relayed by Swiss Rotarians to the Rotary facilitator in Geneva. He asked WHO-Consultant Dr. R. Pararajasegram, the Father of *Vision 2020* (in 1999) and a honorary Member of the above Rotary Club Ferney-Voltaire for advice how to lead Indian Rotarians into reconsidering their position towards the SOSSACC

request. He suggested to the Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO) that they might want to help SOSSACC make their project more attractive by embedding eye-care professionally into the other Community needs. Thus, the ambitious aim to enable a population of 130,000 to benefit at low cost from quality eye-care services made the subsequent follow-up appear as both credible and very challenging.

The comprehensive plan was then submitted for ca. 1.26 million Rupees \$29,390 (US\$) jointly by SOSSACC and Aravind to the regional Rotary Governor in Tamil Nadu. Together with his own Club Tiruchirapalli Rockcity, he could pledge \$1,200 (US\$) This prompted the French Club to justify raising \$8,300 (US\$) (28% of the total needed) and to obtain moreover another \$7,200 (US\$)(25%) from Rotary Club Gent, Belgium, which thus became the Principal International Partner in submitting the matching application to the US-based Rotary Foundation (TRF). The two Clubs had already cooperated previously against AB in Mexico with good results. Therefore TRF in Illinois, USA, as well as its specific California-managed AB Sub-Fund, found that its matching rules now permitted to pledge the last and most important \$11,850 (US\$) (40%). These amounts do not include most valuable Aravind medical contributions, nor the personal expenses of benevolent Rotarians.

This exercise was achieved exclusively by e-mail over the whole of 2005, without involving any travel expenditure and officially launched on March 4, 2006 in Sanarpatty, one of the 164 Dindigul villages concerned.

Many other much larger projects could of course be mentioned, starting with the 100,000 Intra Ocular Lens surgeries being jointly funded in 2006-07 for India by Rotary and OEU, Canada. What this paper modestly attempts to show, is that humanitarian globalization can be very cost-effective for smaller projects too. Indeed, is networking over 14 Time Zones, from the Bay of Bengal via Europe to the Pacific Ocean, not a stimulating example for *Vision 2020* in the spirit of Millennium Development Goal Nr. 8 (Partnerships) ?

So, for the benefit of future projects, let the main **Lessons Learned** be summed up as follows :

1. The **Internet** is a definite and obvious prerequisite for efficient networking. It should be combined with a few introductory or complementary phone calls. Concise **project drafts** should be established, dated, numbered, circulated and reviewed very conscientiously.
2. **Leverage** can be reached by approaching potentially interested supporters in the **right sequence**, i.e.

Launching a Vision 2020 Project . . (cont'd.)

demonstrating to each of them that support has already been pledged by other “up-stream” sources. In the above example, the contributions came in the following order : 7% seed-money (3% + 4%) + 53 % from the main sponsors in Europe (28% + 25%) and 40% matching from the USA = 100%. Therefore **leverage factors** range from 2.5 (for the matching sponsors) to 4 (for each main sponsor), to 25 (for each of the seed-money provider), in direct relation with the diminution of the risk taken at each step as the fund-raising process progresses.

3. **Community projects** will become more and more important with increasing awareness for domains affecting whole populations, like environment (water-supply), hygiene, vitamins, care for mother and child, primary education, etc. This complexity has to be approached more and more holistically and not just by unrelated separate projects.
4. **Involvement of local Health Authorities** therefore becomes increasingly important : external help should be mostly provided in the frame of corresponding national efforts. On 27 May in Geneva, the 59th World Health Assembly strongly urged all Member States (in Doc. WHA 59.25, § 1.5 and 1.6) “to encourage partnerships between the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, civil society

and communities in programmes and activities for prevention of blindness at all levels”; and “to develop and strengthen eye-care services and integrate them in the existing health-care systems at all levels, including the training and retraining of health workers in visual health.”

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- Dr. Thulasiraj Ravilla, Executive Director, LAICO (Aravind), Madurai, Tamil Nadu
- Past Governor M. Elangovan of Rotary District 3000, Tamil Nadu
- President Sivarama Krishnan of Rotary Club Tiruchirapalli-Rockcity, Tamil Nadu
- Past IAPB President and Honorary Rotarian Dr. R. Pararajasegram, WHO, Geneva
- Past President Dr. Jacques Beugnet, Rotary Club Ferney-Voltaire, France
- Past President Philippe Caron, Rotary Club Gent, Belgium
- Past Rotary District Governor Steve Brown, Del Mar, California, USA
- The Rotary Foundation staff in Delhi, in Zurich and in Evanston, Illinois, USA

The BP-Donor Advised Fund Helps Fund Projects

PDG Walt Schloer is a RAG Board member as well as the administrator of the Blindness Prevention Donor Advised Fund (BP-DAF). This fund is a sub-entity of The Rotary Foundation and is used to provide support funding to various Blindness Prevention Projects.



During the 2008-2009 Rotary year, the BP-DAF helped to fund 36 Blindness projects worth more than \$75,000. These funds are then matched \$.50 on the dollar by The Rotary Foundation prior to the final funding for the Matching Grant.

Even in these difficult economic times, BP projects are still being completed around the world. But now, more than ever, projects need funding assistance from every possible source. Blindness Prevention is our organization's #1 mission and the DAF supports that mission through its financial resources.

RAG members can request assistance from the BP-DAF by completing the paperwork that is necessary and then submitting it to PDG Schloer.

All of the information necessary to complete the paperwork is available on the RAG web site at

<http://www.rag4bp.org/daf.htm>

If you have additional questions, you can contact PDG Schloer at the following:

[Email: wschloer@empnet.com](mailto:wschloer@empnet.com)

In addition, Schloer recommends that all who are seeking funding for projects, post their projects on the Matching Grants web site at <http://www.matchinggrants.org>

Funds will continue to be scarce for a while, but there are others ways to get your projects funded. You just need to think creatively.

Conflict and Views

RC Kandy Metropolitan, RI District 3220 and the Rotarians of RI District 3230 enhance the vision of the Sri Lankan Community.



Sri Lankan beneficiaries wearing the spectacles

The intensity of the conflicts raging in the northern parts of Sri Lanka had not deterred the Rotarians of RC Kandy Metropolitan, RI District 3220, Sri Lanka from discharging their services to the innocent civilians residing here who are in dire need of health care. One of the most important tasks was to restore the vision of people who were affected by various eye ailments. The incessant war that was being fought in these areas had prevented the residents from gaining access to proper eye care facilities.

Habarana is a quaint town in Ananthapura District, surrounded by wildlife sanctuaries, ancient ruins and cultural sites. The town nestles in the heart of Sri Lanka's famous Cultural Triangle of Kandy-Anuradhapura-Polonnaruwa. RC Kandy Metropolitan, Sri Lanka, RI District 3220 conducted a massive health camp here. Qualified doctors from various medical fields rendered their services for the benefit of the economically weaker sections of the

district. A comprehensive eye check-up camp also formed a part of this health camp. Thousands of people from the neighbouring villages thronged the camp to avail treatment. Many of them were referred for corrective and cataract surgery which was immediately attended to at the Kandy Hospital. Some of the patients with defective sight were prescribed spectacles and RC Kandy Metropolitan pitched in to distribute these prescription glasses.

The Rotarians of the Club appealed to their Indian counterparts across the Palk Strait to provide these prescription glasses. With help from the Rotarians of RC Madras T. Nagar and RC Ambattur, RI District 3230, the prescription eye glasses without any compromise on the quality were made ready for dispatch to the Habarana Eye Camp. DGE Bhashkumar Rajan from Kandy came to Chennai to collect these glasses. He was amazed at the quality of these glasses and the frames. He had thought that they would be fitted with

old, used spectacle frames but found that they were "comparable to the best we can get in our optical shops."

When these spectacles were distributed to the needy patients at Sri Lanka, their joy knew no bounds. This is yet another occasion where Rotarians have found an opportunity transcending borders to serve humanity and the divide caused by nationality, religion, caste or colour or a war-torn atmosphere is immaterial for implementing humanitarian service. The Rotarians of RI District 3230 have delivered a quality product thus living up to the Rotary aphorism — 'give to charity something we would use ourselves.'

With the conflicts now drawing to a close, the thoughtful and committed Rotarians have braved the battle and made it possible for the islands' underprivileged community to enjoy a better vision of the world.

*Jaishree
With inputs from RAG for Blindness
Prevention*

Our Mission . . .

It shall be the mission of the Rotarian Action Group for Blindness Prevention to:

- Bring together, in fellowship and service, those Rotarians and Spouses and Rotaractors who have an active interest in the prevention of blindness and the promotion of eye health and vision worldwide.
- Provide both a platform and a forum to discuss ideas and develop appropriate cooperative programs to further our shared goals.
- Promote international understanding and peace through our common purpose and efforts.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Action Group members must be Rotarians in good standing, spouses of Rotarians in good standing or members of Rotaract in good standing. They may be eye care professionals (ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians) or other individuals interested in blindness prevention and eye care.

Annual membership is \$25/year or you can become a **Lifetime member** for \$100 and never pay dues again! **JOIN TODAY** on our web site at <http://www.rag4bp.org>

Seeking Help

The RAG for Blindness Prevention is interested in expanding the promotion of eye health and vision worldwide. Our organization has regional representatives and coordinators that work with our Board and officers to develop various eye care projects.

If you are interested in becoming part of this worldwide network of eye care volunteers, please contact our Chairman, Dr. Ken D. Tuck or our Secretary, Harriett Schloer and let them know of your interest. Their email addresses are as follows:

Ken D. Tuck, MD
Email: kendtuck@aol.com

Harriett Schloer
Email: in2dtp@empnet.com

The Blindness Prevention Action Group at work around the world



Conferences
Eye camps,
800,000+
Cataract
surgeries,
Scholarships
Eyeglasses,
World Sight
Day,
Matching
Grants,



Conventions,
the AAO.
All of this is
the RAG4BP.
Become part of
it. Join us in
helping to
preserve sight.

