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Our children's planet: What does their education have to do with climate change?

By Christopher Thomas, Advisor to the Education Global Practice at the World Bank on January 30, 2019



Photo: Khasar Sandag / World Bank

Our world is very different than our grandparent's. In 1950, there were about 2.5 billion people; today, there are more than 7 billion. Overall, people are healthier, wealthier, and more secure.

But this has come at a cost. The stress on our planet has been immense. Human beings have dramatically altered the climate, changed the chemistry of the oceans, and triggered mass extinctions. The impact has been so great as to define an entirely new geological era - the anthropocene, turbo charged by a "great acceleration" of population, economic growth and natural resource consumption.

So what will the world be like for our children? By 2050, the population is projected to top 9 billion. People will probably live better and longer lives. Global GDP will likely triple; natural resource consumption will double. And the effects of climate change, some now inevitable, will be felt more strongly than they are today. Sea levels will be higher, weather more erratic, biodiversity less, and water and natural resources likely scarcer. People who live in poverty will be especially vulnerable to natural disasters, land degradation, water shortages, and shocks in food production.

Can the next generation capture the benefits of growth without the ills? Will technology allow us to decouple growth from natural resource consumption? We can't say for sure. But we can say that our best bets are human ingenuity, rationality, and values. That comes down to education and the steps we take now to ensure all children are educated and socialized to respect the planet.

Helping with that transition is an especially important challenge for the World Bank because most of the population growth in the coming decades will be in developing countries. By 2050, nearly half of world's youth will live in Africa and another 40 percent in Asia. Will their education systems prepare the next generation to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate? Can they foster a generation of citizens and policy makers that have the values and skills to manage natural resources sustainably? Will their schools and universities support the science, technology, research and innovation societies will need to cope with climate change?

Climate change is a human-induced problem - in large part a function of the number of people on the planet, their values and skills, and technology. Can education programs alter the trajectory? Here are some ideas of how:

First, make universal education a matter of urgency. Education change shapes demographic change. Reaching Sustainable Development Goal 4 would likely result in a global population of 8.5 billion in 2050 instead of 9.1 billion. That is because educated women tend to have fewer, healthier, and better educated children themselves. Education also helps people adapt to climate change because it enhances abilities to absorb information, calculate risk, prepare for climate shocks and recover from them.

Second, strengthen STEM education. This will help young people understand physical changes in their environment, and give them the tools they need to invent, innovate, and adopt technology. Let's aim to cultivate a generation of scientifically literate secondary school graduates. Let's support technical and vocational education and training systems that train skilled professionals to serve a "green economy"; and universities to produce leaders in the fields of climate science, engineering, natural resource management, and environmental studies.

Third, support environmental education as a standalone subject and / or as a cross-cutting theme both in the school curriculum and in teacher training programs. Cultivate the values and knowledge young people can use to live more sustainable lives with concern for animals, plants and the world of nature. Stimulate their wonder about the natural world and concern for the health of the planet.

Fourth, build schools that reflect environmental principles: Schools that are energy efficient, that spark children's imagination and use of renewable energy, clean and efficient use of water, and opportunities to interact with the environment. Schools should be strong enough to stand up in extreme weather events, and in high risk areas potentially double as emergency shelters.

In recent decades Korea has emerged as a leading voice on sustainability. It was one of the first countries to embrace a green growth national development strategy. It has been a leading voice on clean power. And today it hosts important institutions such as the Green Climate Fund and a vibrant community of environmental NGOs. All of this while upholding the "economic miracle". I like to think that Korea's embrace of sustainability was in part facilitated by World Bank supported environmental education programs in the 1990s. We can support other countries to succeed too...

Do you want to learn more?

Get inspired by reading about the environment. Some of my favorite books are:

- The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, by Elizabeth Kolbert
- Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life, by E.O. Wilson
- The Invention of Nature, by Andrea Wulf
- The classics, Silent Spring and The Sea Around Us, by Rachel Carson

Understand the latest projections and commitments to action by our member countries:

- Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Nationally determined contributions to the Paris Accords on Climate Change (click here to search for a country's NDC)
- World Resources Institute publications, data, and publications

Explore the alternative population and education attainment scenarios for member countries or regions.

Understand the links between education and adaptation to climate change:

- Universal Education Is Key to Enhanced Climate Adaption, by Wolfgang Lutz, Raya Muttarak, and Erich Striessnig, in Science
- Forecasting Societies' Adaptive Capacities Through a Demographic Metabolism Model, by Wolfgang Lutz and Raya Muttarak, in Nature Climate Change

You can also reach out to local think tanks that work on climate change or environmental issues. They can help build national understanding of environmental and climate challenges and offer options about how to partner with school systems.



Christopher Thomas is an Advisor to the Education Global Practice at the World Bank. Prior to taking this position he was Lead Strategy Officer for the World Bank Group. He has served as Advisor to the World Bank President's Special Envoy, where his portfolio included the Sustainable Development Goals, Financing for Development, and relations with Multilateral Development Banks.

Mr. Thomas served as advisor to the World Bank's Managing Director, as manager of World Bank's education programs to East Asia and the Pacific, and also as manager for human development programs in Africa. Mr. Thomas holds an M.A. in International Affairs from Johns Hopkins University and a Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University.

What it's like to escape a wildfire

Posted on January 30, 2019 by Pam Gray, past district governor and member of the Rotary Club of Paradise, California, USA



Gray's home after the fire

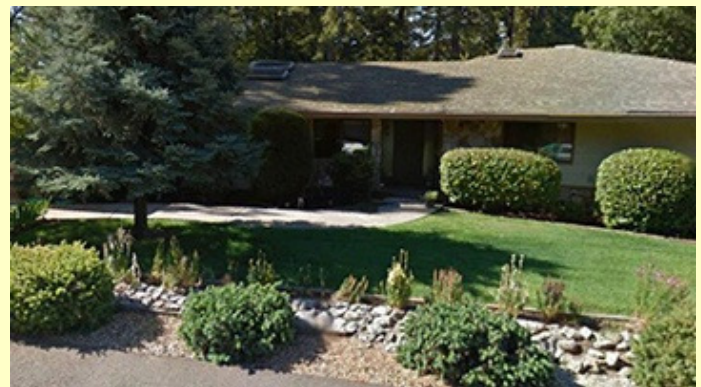
While 77 days may seem like a long time, it has been a flash for those of us who were living in Paradise, California, and the surrounding foothills on 8 November, 2018.

My husband and I are members of the Rotary Club of Paradise. I was a District 5160 Governor during year 2014-15 and my husband Brian, currently club president, was known as the "First Dude" as we traveled to visit 71 Rotary clubs the year I was governor.

The "First Dude" and I made it out safe along with our Saint Bernard and two cats. While our home is gone, like those of most other Paradise Rotarians and residents of the Ridge, the main building of my funeral home is standing. This is wonderful as we had several folks in our care and we were able to get them to my Oroville location so the families could go ahead with various services they had planned for their loved ones – on just 18 January, 2019.

Brian's business did not survive even though it was standing when we left town.

We did not leave our home until the afternoon of 8 November because we were awaiting the notification that our 'zone' was being evacuated. Zones were developed a decade ago after an evacuation resulted in traffic so bad people could not get off the Ridge and just stayed. The final notification I received was at 9:18 a.m. By noon, our son-in-law was calling from Flagstaff, Arizona, telling us to get out immediately. He was watching the news; we had no news. We walked through each room and said goodbye to our home and to our "stuff." We told our home she had been great and we were sorry we could not stay to keep her safe.



Their home before the fire

Typically it would take about 10 minutes to get to the next town. We were fortunate on 8 November we made the trip in an hour and 20 minutes when earlier in the day it took people eight hours.

As fate would have it, the Zone Institute was the following week and Brian and I decided to attend after our very gracious hostess offered to keep the pets while we traveled to Reno, Nevada. It was good to be among so many Rotarians.

How to help

Sonoma Rotarians set up a GoFundMe page the day after the fire that will benefit the Paradise Rotary Foundation. We were able to make some great contacts that are of great benefit to the Paradise Rotary Foundation. We are very grateful for our Rotary family. In between sessions, we spent the time returning phone calls from around the country. We made dozens of calls each day.

The following week, we had a surprise birthday party for our Exchange Student, Val, from Columbia. Val fled Paradise High School with her host brother (an exchange student to Brazil last year) and made their way to Chico. The youth exchange committee then got her to Burney, California, more than 110 miles northeast of Paradise. During the days since the fire began, the Rotary Club of Vacaville Sunrise about 200 miles south of Burney agreed to host Val for the remainder of the year. While Val desperately wanted to remain with her first host family, it was decided that would be impossible. Three generations of her host family had lost all of their homes and businesses. It was sad to let Val go.

Brian was able to find a place for our Rotary club to meet and we began meeting just one week after the beginning of the fire. We had two meetings before the fire was 100 percent contained on 25 November 25, some 17 days after it began.

Rotary clubs harness to tackle US opioid crisis

Clubs in Mexico, India, and Canada help members in New York launch community project

By Ryan Hyland



New York Rotary members used support from international partners to help them fight a major US problem: opioid addiction.

After attending a wrenching funeral for a young man who died from an opioid overdose, Lana K. Rouff, a member of the Rotary Club of Binghamton, New York, USA, knew she had to do something.

"It was awful," says Rouff. "I was so shaken by the shock and sadness at the funeral. The experience really stuck with me but also sparked me to do something."

Rouff immediately talked with her fellow members, as well as other local clubs, about how they could alleviate the crisis in their communities in central and southern New York.

After months of doing research and consulting with health officials, substance abuse experts, educators, and media professionals, they had a plan: a Rotary Foundation global grant project, totaling more than \$107,000.

The project's initiatives would support those directly affected by the epidemic, educate communities about preventing and treating opioid addiction, and prevent drug abuse among local young people by training them in leadership skills and healthy decision making.

130+	people die every day from opioid-related drug overdoses in the USA
11	million people have abused prescription opioids in 2016
47000+	people died from overdosing on opioids in 2017
9000+	people died in Canada in 2016-18 from opioid-related deaths

But they still needed one more thing to meet The Rotary Foundation's requirements and secure the funding - international partners.

Rouff again turned to Rotary's 1.2 million members in 35,000 clubs around the world. She found the support they needed.

A Rotary club in Mexico was the first to volunteer, and then a Rotary club in Canada. Also the Rotary clubs of Coimbatore Central and Madras Coramandel of India donated significant funds.

Harnessing international support

Finding people outside of the U.S. to help with a predominantly American problem wasn't easy, says Rouff.

"It wasn't out of indifference to a problem in the U.S.," says Rouff. "There just isn't a strong understanding outside the country of how bad the opioid crisis really is."

It took six months of searching before Rouff's club connected with the Rotary Club of Tijuana Oeste, Baja California, Mexico. Sofia Sotomayor Magana rallied her fellow members to be the project's international sponsor because she believed it was important to show support for their northern neighbors.

Some in the Mexican club were hesitant, telling Sotomayor Magana that their resources and money should be allocated to local issues such as poverty and poor health care. But Sotomayor Magana persuaded them that it's sometimes better to give than to receive.

"We have an opportunity to help clubs in the U.S. make an impact on this horrible epidemic," she says. "We know that this crisis can happen anywhere and can devastate any community. We see how bad it's gotten. I'm proud we were able to get this project off the ground."

The Rotary Club of Mississauga-Meadowvale, Ontario, Canada, also contributed funds and support to the project. Member Claudine LaRoche says that the opioid crisis isn't confined to the U.S.; provinces in Canada are also affected. Opioid-related overdoses killed 9,000 Canadians from 2016 to 2018. These overdoses are now the leading cause of death among Canadians ages 30-39.

"When thinking of international assistance, we often think of countries far away from us, but help is also well-used when the crisis hits close to home," says LaRoche.

Providing information and tools

Today's opioid crisis is the deadliest drug epidemic in U.S. history. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each day more than 130 people die from opioid-related drug overdoses, and millions more struggle with addiction. Since 2011, drug deaths in the U.S. have outpaced those caused by firearms, motor vehicle crashes, suicide, or homicide. In New York, it's the leading cause of accidental deaths.

Children and teens are not exempt from the crisis. Nearly a quarter of US school seniors have had some exposure to prescription opioids — but they are the best targets for education and prevention, Rouff says. Over the past year and a half, the global grant funded a series of weekend seminars that brought together nearly 50 high school students from 11 schools. They gathered at the Heart of New York

Teen Institute in Syracuse, New York, to gain the knowledge and confidence that will help them lead drug-free lives and the leadership skills to educate their peers about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

"We want to help produce the next generation of role models," says Rouff. "We exceeded our expectations on this front."

Jo Ann Wickman, a project lead and member of the Rotary Club of Cortland, New York, USA, has worked in social work and education for more than 25 years and was a grant coordinator for the project. She was impressed with the students' experience at the teen institute. "It was really incredible how much they learned and what they said they wanted to accomplish," she says. "It was a powerful program." Participating clubs led a broad public-awareness campaign with critical information, such as the signs and symptoms of abuse, and resources like 2-1-1, the local hotline for prescription drop boxes. Rotary members designed, produced, and distributed more than 60,000 flyers, brochures, and postcards in their communities.

"We put them up everywhere we could," Wickman says, which included schools, municipal buildings, medical and legal offices, churches, and Rotary meeting locations. Teachers even enclosed the materials with students' report cards and other mailings to parents.

The project grant also funded online ads, social media campaigns, and local TV and radio spots that listed ways community residents can help mitigate the opioid crisis and its devastating consequences. Club members created a Facebook page and YouTube ads as well.

The clubs also directed funds to the Addiction Center of Broome County to help pay for medical and administrative supplies, transportation vouchers to get patients to the clinic, and three drop boxes for safe disposal of prescription drugs. Each month, the police department collects and incinerates the unused drugs.

"It gives me hope that projects like this can happen across the country. Rotary has the resources and know-how to tackle this problem. Nothing is too big for us." Jo Ann Wickman, Rotary Club of Cortland, New York, USA

Hope for the future

In their research for the project, Rouff and Wickman went on a "listening tour" across central and southern New York, visiting Rotary members who have been affected by opioids.

The first lesson from the harrowing stories they heard: The epidemic affects families of every ethnic background and socio-economic standing. "Rich or poor, we saw it all," says Rouff.

"I must admit that this hasn't been my favorite experience," Wickman says. "We worked with folks who have lost children and other family members. It was really heartbreaking."

The two project leaders did some talking, too, recruiting members to get involved with their initiatives. Given the stigma associated with drug use, Wickman expected to encounter some resistance. "But just the opposite is happening," she says. "They are eager and willing to get involved. It gives me hope that projects like this can happen across the country. Rotary has the resources and know-how to tackle this problem. Nothing is too big for us."

Rouff acknowledges that the opioid addiction epidemic has no simple solutions. "But if the project can save one life, it's worth it."

Continued from the previous issue of Spectrum

Ordinary Rotarians can find themselves in extraordinary circumstances. Source: January issue of the Rotarian
Illustrations by Aad Goudappel

Fight for families on the border by Ruby L. Powers
Rotary E-Club of Houston

I heard that children were being separated from their families the same way everyone else did - on the news. It was mid-June, and I happened to be at a conference for immigration attorneys in San Francisco when reports started flooding in about families being separated at the U.S. border with Mexico.

My mother was born to American missionaries in Mexico, and I grew up between Mexico, Texas, and Missouri. Later, I was a Rotary Youth Exchange student in Belgium and an Ambassadorial Scholar in Barcelona, Spain.



I have a five- and a seven-year-old, and all I could think was: What if these were my children?

Previously I had taken on a pro bono asylum case at the Port Isabel detention facility, which is near Harlingen, Texas, and close to the border. Against many odds, I won the case, and a family of four, including a pregnant mom, was released. If I had taken on this family's case after the zero tolerance policy started in May, their story would have been very different.

Because I was familiar with the detention facilities, experienced in immigration and asylum law, and spoke Spanish, I felt compelled to help. I bought a plane ticket and flew to the border to see as many parents who had yet to meet with an attorney as I could in 48 hours.

I went inside Port Isabel on Tuesday, 26 June. It's in an extremely remote part of Texas. Once you arrive, you have to turn in all your personal belongings including your cellphone. I was asked to take off my jewelry. This was a new rule; I heard that someone had tried to hide a recording device in their jewelry. Then I was escorted to meet with the detainees. It's essentially a prison. A guard walked me through a number of doors that even he couldn't unlock. Someone watched us on a camera and buzzed the doors open.

I was the only volunteer immigration lawyer there that day. I spoke with four moms and seven dads. Sometimes I was the first person they told their story to. Some cried uncontrollably. Even though the executive order that began the reunification process had come out on 20 June, many parents still hadn't spoken to their kids.

Most didn't know where they were. I only had about 30 to 45 minutes with each person, so I tried to understand their story and why they were seeking asylum as quickly as possible. Then I'd offer them advice on how to prepare for the "credible fear" interview and what to expect in the process. I broke down in tears with one mother who was distraught because she'd been forcibly separated from her five-month-old baby. She was still breastfeeding at the time.

I've been practicing immigration law for 10 years, and I want people to understand who these families are. Many of the parents I met fled to the United States to get their children to a safer place. They fled domestic violence, gang violence, or political persecution. One woman I met had witnessed a murder. When she went to the police to report it, they told her she shouldn't have done that because now the murderer would come after her.

The people I met, had no idea that they would be separated from their children. The zero tolerance policy started in May. While families had been detained before, they were always held together. However, there's a law that states that children can't be held for more than 20 days in family detention. So, to sidestep that requirement, the U.S. government started charging the parents with illegal entry if they didn't cross at a port of entry, and then separated the parents from their children. This policy was in force from early May to 20 June.

I look at this like a tsunami of chaos and collateral damage. At first, the families were separated and couldn't talk to each other. Now, most are getting out and reunited, but some parents have already been deported without their children, or they waived their rights to reunification without understanding what was happening. This isn't over. We're not going to know the full impact of the damage for years to come.

I see this as a humanitarian issue, not a political issue. I've been in Rotary since I joined Interact in high school, and that's what the organization has taught me — to care about humanitarian issues. That is what Rotarians care about: other people, all people.

— As told to Vanessa Glavinskas

To be continued...

Birthdays of Rotary members in February, 2019

Sumit Agarwal on February 5, 2019

Utpal Majumdar, past Governor on February 17, 2019

Anniversaries of Rotary members in February, 2019

Spouse Koneenica & Surajit Hari on February 4, 2019

Dr Saktirupa & Spouse Dr Suranjan Chakraborty on February 5, 2019

Sp Neelam & PDG Vijay S Bhandari on February 14, 2019

Sp Suman & PDG Rajkumar Rajgharia on February 19, 2019

Spouse Rashi & PDG Sekhar Mehta on February 19, 2019

Sp Sipra & PDG Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury on February 19, 2019

Spouse Renu & PP Ranjan Kuthari on February 20, 2019

PP Kusum Chamaria & Spouse Krishna on February 24, 2019

Spouse Rani & PP BI Ajitsaria on February 28, 2019

February is Peace and Conflict prevention Month

Upcoming club's community service programs

- **On Sunday, February 3, 2019:** Distribution of 20 Cycle Vans, 2 hand paddled tri-cycles and 100 Geometry boxes at Meena Khan, South 24 Parganas District
- **On Sunday, February 17, 2019:** Distribution of 25 Cycle Vans at Amta, Howrah District

UNWIND

What will you do when your parents age?

This story of a son and father is sure to tug at the heartstrings. The author appears to be unknown, but these words of wisdom leave a powerful impression.

A son took his old father to a restaurant for an evening dinner.

Father being very old and weak, while eating, he dropped food on his shirt and trousers.

Others diners watched him in disgust while his son was calm.

After he finished eating, his son who was not at all embarrassed, quietly took him to the wash room, wiped the food particles, removed the stains, combed his hair and fitted his spectacles firmly. When they came out, the entire restaurant was watching them in dead silence, not able to grasp how someone could embarrass themselves publicly like that.

The son settled the bill and started walking out with his father.

At that time, an old man amongst the diners

Called out to the son and asked him, "Don't you think you have left something behind?"

The son replied, "No sir, I haven't."

The old man retorted, "Yes, you have! You left a lesson for every son and hope for every father."

The restaurant went silent.

TAILPIECE

Buddha Inspiration



**Do not dwell in the past.
Do not dream of the future.
Concentrate the mind on the
present moment.**