



Rotary

RI District 3291

March 23, 2019

PRESIDENT DR ANKUSH BANSAL

CLUB NO 78956

# Spectrum

Weekly bulletin of Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata

SECRETARY SUMIT AGARWAL

CHARTERED ON APRIL 30, 2008



VOL 12 NO 38

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WEBSITE [www.rcslmk.org](http://www.rcslmk.org)

## The changing landscape of water stewardship

Posted on March 17, 2019 on rotaryservice by Moses Nyakana, recipient of a Rotary Scholarship in Water and Sanitation at IHE Delft Institute for Water Education



I graduated as an Urban Water and Sanitation Engineer, specializing in Sanitary Engineering in 2017. My studies provided me exposure to our global culture, and a head start towards understanding the global water and sanitation challenge. Understanding the land, food, energy, climate, health, jobs and water nexus as an essential link for communities to thrive gave me the inspiration to pursue my career. As Leonardo da Vinci stated, "when you put your hand in a flowing stream, you touch the last that has gone and the first of what is to come"; it is a fulfilling career to be at the heart of engineering water and sanitation solutions that leave lasting impacts on communities.

Now a member of the Rotary Club of Bugolobi in Uganda, I am glad to contribute to all of Rotary's areas of focus in my little ways as a water professional. I often describe myself as a water steward, where I always put The Four-Way Test to practice in my work. As a water steward, I often fight against unequal access to water and help ensure security of this vital resource. Through my service in Kampala, I work with communities to ensure that all primary stakeholders have their needs met in securing water.

The city of Kampala has undergone a period of rapid urbanization, population growth and industrialization in the last 20 years. However, 40% of its residents live in informal settlements lacking basic water, drainage, sewage or solid waste collection services, whilst the benefits of the manufacturing industry are offset by the pollution it creates. Undoubtedly, the scale and complexity of emerging challenges related to water and sanitation means that individual actions, despite those actions being important, are limited in their effectiveness. This is why it's important to involve companies that work in the water sector on projects to ensure a broader impact.

For example, I've been working with stakeholders in the water sector to help them better understand their role in water resource management and that their partnerships with humanitarian efforts offer a practical approach to understanding shared water risks and providing joint solutions. Industries have begun to realize that dealing with water security beyond the confines of their fences enables them to achieve better productivity and sustain markets. The public sector

has stepped up to enable equitable distribution of water and sanitation services across the city regardless of social-economic clustering.

My work also focuses on various critical challenges in securing water in Kampala as a baseline towards achieving water related Sustainable Development Goals. Differentiating physical/infrastructure related factors from non-physical factors helps me prepare comprehensive plans for water and sanitation services to communities. Working in tandem, the cultural, governance, policy/legal framework and capacities of all stakeholders should be considered to enable an effectively managed and secure water and sanitation sector in a city.

I am grateful for the education I received and the ability to use my skills to help communities in need.

## Addressing water and sanitation in Lebanon

Posted on March 20, 2019 on rotaryservice by Ahmad Husseini, Past President of the Rotary Club of Tripoli-Maarad, Lebanon

In 1999, some of my friends invited me to join the Rotaract Club of Tripoli. I spent three years in Rotaract serving as club secretary, club president and then going onto serve as Vice District 2452 Rotaract Representative for Lebanon.

In 2000, I was selected to be part of a Group Study Exchange team to District 5300, Nevada and South California, United States. During this trip, I met many Rotarians who inspired me to join a Rotary club. In 2003, I joined the Rotary Club of Tripoli Maarad and became club president five years later. Since then, I have held various roles in my district and region including Group Study Exchange and District Alumni Country Chair, District Conference Secretary, Assistant Governor, The Rotary Foundation Country Chair, Deputy District Governor, District Annual Fund Subcommittee Chair, District Grants Subcommittee Chair and Assistant Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator. Rotary has given me so many opportunities to grow as a leader and give back to my community since my earliest days as a Rotaractor.

In 2013, then-District Governor Jamil Mouawad wanted to conduct a community assessment in our region and appointed me as a member of the strategic committee to work on large-scale projects in Lebanon. 27 Lebanese clubs voted on various project proposals that took into account the findings of the assessment and a water filtration project was selected as the project the district would implement since polluted water is a major problem in the country and the project would benefit the most people.

An ambitious team of Rotary members from different clubs in Lebanon came up with a great system for carry out sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) projects/programs in Lebanon. The project was planned after members visited schools and met with experts to discuss the systems needed to provide the schools with a clean source of water. The water that reaches the schools in Lebanon needs to be filtered to become potable. Moreover, the schools are poorly equipped and their tanks and pipelines are in very bad conditions, which makes the water contaminated. Therefore, in order for children to drink clean water, we decided to change the entire infrastructure and add filtration systems that would turn the water into potable water. We added hygiene management training to supplement the new infrastructure components and help our students keep water clean and their bodies healthy. The project aimed to support 1200 public schools attended by Lebanese students and Syrian refugees.

At the start of the project, I struggled to get our first global grant approved, but with the proper experience and knowledge, I have been able to initiate and support many grants. In the last 5 years, we received 79 grants in our district (more than half for Lebanon alone) and the total funding was more than 7 million USD; 30 of these grants were to support our water project.

After the success of our first project, it became easier to find new partners and donors, as they were able to see tangible results and believed that WASH projects were a necessary need in our communities. In February 2018, we hosted a Presidential Peacebuilding Conference on Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Peace which was attended by more than 1000 Rotarians from 33 countries. Our theme was peacebuilding through access to clean water, which was discussed by national and international stakeholders.



Currently, we have installed the water filtration project, which includes changing the tanks, the pipelines, the taps and installing UV lamps and filters to provide potable water in nearly 1000 public schools all over Lebanon. We have also started to implement the project in prisons and other public institutions. As there was also a need for awareness sessions about hygiene and water conservation, we have started a second phase that includes training public school teachers who will in turn train their students. The third phase of the project will include sanitation and hygiene, such as installing proper sewage systems, pipelines and toilets seats in the school toilets.

As for the sustainability of the project, we have signed Memorandums of Understandings with the Ministry of Education and the municipalities of each area who will overtake the project after the second year to ensure the proper maintenance of the system's equipment.

Currently, I am traveling all over the world conducting presentations about The Rotary Foundation, grants and fundraising opportunities. My wife Rym is also a Rotarian, a former Rotaractor, and founding president of the Rotary Club of Tripoli Cosmopolis. We have three young children. Rym travels with me throughout our zone to provide trainings on Rotary's brand and to spread awareness about our water projects.

Rotary has transformed my life and exposed me to new thoughts and opportunities. It has helped me develop my personality and my skills. Rotary has become a way of life for me, and my family.

*Continued from the previous issue of Spectrum*

### **We didn't see this coming**

*By Bill and Melinda Gates, February 12, 2019*

*How would you describe 2018? Was it what you expected?*

*In the year's annual letter, Bill and Melinda Gates are highlighting things that have surprised them. Earlier, we posted the following surprises:*

**SURPRISE #1** *Africa is the youngest continent. Its median age is the lowest in the world.*

**SURPRISE #2** *DNA tests can find serial killers and could also help prevent premature birth. Scientists have discovered a potential link between pre-term labor and certain genes.*

**SURPRISE #3** *We will build an entire New York City every month for 40 years! The world's building stock will double by 2060.*

**SURPRISE #4:** *Data can be sexist. How much more time do girls spend on chores than boys do? 9 hours, 2 hours We don't know*

**SURPRISE #5** *You can learn a lot about processing your anger from teenage boys.*

**SURPRISE #6:** *There's a nationalist case for globalism. Countries like the U.S. invest in foreign aid because it makes the world more stable and secure.*

**SURPRISE #7** *When was the modern flush toilet patented?*

**SURPRISE #8:** *Textbooks are becoming obsolete. Software is finally changing how students learn.*

**Bill:** I read more than my share of textbooks. But it's a pretty limited way to learn something. Even the best text can't figure out which concepts you understand and which ones you need more help with. It certainly can't tell your teacher how well you grasped last night's assigned reading.

But now, thanks to software, the standalone textbook is becoming a thing of the past. Suppose you're taking high school algebra. Instead of just reading a chapter on solving equations, you can look at the text online, watch a super-engaging video that shows you how it's done, and play a game that reinforces the concepts. Then you solve a few problems online, and the software creates new quiz questions to zero in on the ideas you're not quite getting.

All of this is a complement to what teachers do, not a replacement. Your teacher gets a rich report showing what you read and watched, which problems you got right and wrong, and the areas where you need more help. When you come to class the next day, she is equipped with a ton of specific information and suggestions to help her make the most of her time with you.

When I told you about this type of software in previous letters, it was mostly speculative. But now I can report that these tools have been adopted in thousands of U.S. classrooms from kindergarten through high school. Zearn, i-Ready, and LearnZillion are examples of digital curricula used by students and teachers throughout the U.S. More than 3,000 schools are teaching a free digital course that I fund called Big History, which uses software to give students immediate feedback on their writing assignments.

What's next? The same basic cycle you go through for all software: Get lots of feedback on the existing products, collect data on what works, and make them better. This cycle is picking up steam as more states and districts gain confidence about using digital curricula in their schools. I hope this growing momentum will inspire more of the big textbook publishers, which have been slow to offer these kinds of tools.

In the meantime, I haven't heard from anyone who misses their heavy, expensive textbooks.

**Melinda:** In addition to adapting to what students know, these online tools also facilitate a new approach to teaching and learning that adapts to who these students are.

In 2019, the typical college student is no longer the stereotypical student who lives in a dorm and graduates in four years after a few spring breaks somewhere warm. Almost half of today's college students are 25 or older; well over half have a job; more than a quarter have kids of their own.

These "nontraditional" students often don't have the time or resources to effectively navigate an inefficient, inflexible learning environment designed to meet other people's needs. That's a big reason why two out of every five students who enroll in higher education will either withdraw for a while or drop out altogether.

Digital learning tools can help students meet these challenges—by making college more affordable, more convenient, and more effective. One study found that using open courseware saved students an average of \$66 to \$121 per course. (Over an academic year, that can add up to \$1,000, which can be the difference between staying in school or having to drop out.) Another found that students who used

digital learning tools for introductory classes got better grades than students who learned in the traditional way. And, of course, those students had a lot more flexibility. Not having to show up to a physical classroom at a specific time makes a big difference to students who are balancing school with working and raising a family. Put it all together, and you have students spending less for more convenient classes in which they perform better. In short, we now have the tools to redesign higher education so that it meets the needs of today's students.

**SURPRISE #9 Mobile phones are most powerful in the hands of the poorest women. Mobile phones give women the power to build an entire new life.**

**Melinda:** In rich countries, mobile phones make it easier to do things we were already doing—send email instead of snail mail, navigate the world without wrestling with a map, hail a ride without standing outside in the rain. But for the world's most marginalized women, a mobile phone doesn't just make their old life more convenient; it can help them build an entirely new life. That's because connectivity is a solution to marginalization.

If you're a woman who has never stepped into a bank, mobile banking offers you a foothold in the formal economy and a chance at financial independence. If you're expected to do all the cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing, your income potential improves dramatically as you gain opportunities to connect with customers, trainings, and professional organizations—all from your home. If you're worried about the stigma you'll encounter when you ask for contraceptives at your local clinic, an e-commerce delivery platform can help you reassert control over your body and your future.

In other words, women are not only using their mobile phones to access services and opportunities. They're using them to change social norms and challenge the power structures that perpetuate gender inequality.



**Ketteline Pierre, a high school student in Haiti, texts her friends**

The catch is that the gender gap in both mobile phone ownership and mobile internet use remains significant. A recent study of ten countries across Africa, Asia, and South America found that—regardless of their age, education, wealth, or location—women are almost 40 percent less likely than men to have used the internet.

There are a lot of reasons why this gap exists. Cost, literacy (both digital and otherwise), and social norms are three of the big ones. In response, mobile phone companies who are eager to tap into this market are creating business strategies that target women customers. In Kenya and Nigeria, gender and development programs are putting new focus on teaching women digital literacy skills. We've partnered with an initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School to begin testing solutions to the social norms barrier.

When I think about why it's so important to get more mobile phones in the hands of women, I think about Nikmah, a woman I met in Indonesia last October. Nikmah told me she'd tried for years to support her three children by selling vegetables, but she never could seem to make ends meet. Her situation became even more untenable after she had to flee an abusive husband.

Today, Nikmah is one of more than a million Indonesians making a living through Go-Jek, a popular mobile platform for rides, food

deliveries, and other services. The app connects her to a steady stream of customers and income, and she is paid through a mobile bank account, so she has total control over the money she earns. She can now afford to provide for her children without having to depend on a man who mistreats her. And through her phone, she's formed a network with other women service providers, who pool their savings to support each other through accidents or health emergencies.



**Discussing the power of mobile technology with women who drive for GO-JEK, a technology platform providing transportation and other on-demand services in Indonesia**

Nikmah told me, "Life is like a wheel. Sometimes you're under, sometimes you're on top." For women like her who have spent so much of their lives trapped on the bottom, mobile technology creates new opportunities to fight inequity and lift them up. We can help women seize these opportunities by ensuring that inequity doesn't keep them from having access to technology in the first place.

**One last surprise (maybe)**

We get asked a lot these days whether we're still optimistic about the future. We say: Absolutely. One reason is that we believe in the power of innovation. But an even bigger reason is that we've seen firsthand that for every challenge we've written about in this letter, there are people devoting their ideas, their resources, and even their lives to solving them.

When we're feeling overwhelmed by negative headlines, we remind ourselves that none of us has the right to sit back and expect that the world is going to keep getting better. We have a responsibility to do everything we can to push it in that direction.

In that way, we've found that optimism can be a powerful call to action. And it has a multiplier effect: The more optimists there are working for a better future, the more reasons there are to be optimistic.

*Bill of Melinda*

**You heard from us. Now we want to hear from you.**

We've shared the nine things that surprised us—and we're ready for more. Using the form below, tell us about something that has surprised you and moved you to take action. We'll highlight the best responses in the near future.

**Concluded**

### **Introducing young leaders to human rights**

**Posted on March 20, 2019 by Tamara C Larson, Youth Services Chair for District 5370 (West and Northwest Canada)**

For the past two years, I have had the privilege of being a chaperone and working with many young leaders as they attend the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg as part of our district's program to introduce young people to human rights. As youth service chair, I find working with these young leaders to be very inspiring. They have a strong investment in social justice, in creating positive change, and are willing to tackle tough issues without compromise.

One such young leader, Cassidy Shaw, came to me for help planning a trip to the museum with members of her school and Interact club. Cassidy was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Dawson Creek. We were able to form a partnership with the Rotary and Interact clubs, the museum and Dawson Creek Secondary School to allow 15 students to attend the museum from 25 February to 1 March.



**Cassady Shaw, left, and Tamara Larson at the Nelson Mandela Exhibit in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights**



**Shaw's class and Interact club learn about human rights at one of the museum's exhibits**

As part of their visit, the students were taking part in a national pilot program.

The program at the museum encourages students to become engaged citizens and leaders in advancing human rights. The students interacted with leading academics, thinkers, and people who have experience with human rights. Students spent three days learning about the importance of diversity and inclusion, truth and reconciliation, and how to take action for human rights in their own lives and communities.

During their visit, they talked about how they could make change, share their knowledge with their peers, speak up rather than being a bystander, show respect to others, and continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of human rights.

What steps will these young leaders take to make a difference? The participants have a desire to focus on racism, truth and reconciliation, and mental health awareness. They say they want to be more inclusive and have a better understanding of the challenges faced by those with disabilities every day, and to be respectful of gender identity. They are committed to increasing their volunteerism, creating awareness campaigns of these important topics, and working with others in their school and community to create change.

The partnership between the museum and our district will be an integral part of our program for young leaders going forward, as one of many opportunities for them to learn and grow each year.

## **Trees and forests are key to fighting climate change and poverty. So are women**

*By Patti Kristjanson on March 19, 2019*



**Liberian woman's forest product market stand by Gerardo Segura**

According to IUCN's 'Global Forest Watch', from 2001 to 2017, 337 million hectares of tropical tree cover was lost globally – an area the size of India.

A key question is what can forest sector investors, governments and other actors do differently to reverse these alarming trends?

One way to speed up our efforts is to include the role of women in the design of forest landscape restoration and conservation efforts. It is only recently that people developing forest restoration programs have thought about their impact on women, and the risks of failure that come with ignoring women's needs and potential contributions.

Men and women access, use and manage forests differently, with differing knowledge in the management and of forest resources. We see more evidence that taking into account gender differences could lead to increase tree cover and improve the livelihoods of the poor.

Gender differences in the use of, access to, and benefits from forest landscapes has led to fair and effective design of arrangements that have reduced deforestation in many countries.

For example, in Brazil, supporting women's non-timber forest product (NTFP) enterprise groups has increased incomes and empowerment, and reduction in deforestation. In India and Nepal, participation of women in community forest management led to improved forest conservation and enhanced livelihoods. In Uganda, tens of thousands of trees being planted by women for the first time both on-farm and in forest reserves, improved food security, and the election of 50% women leaders in forest management groups. In Kenya, the Green Belt Movement launched by Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, with women's empowerment at its core, has planted over 51 million trees.

The thought of designing and implementing gender-transformative landscape initiatives of any type (projects, programs, policies, capacity strengthening efforts, etc.) can be daunting for development practitioners or decision makers without experience considering gender. It doesn't have to be.

The *PROFOR (the World Bank's Program on Forests)* paper aims to stimulate potential opportunities by providing suggestions for gender-responsive actions that developers and leaders of forest projects, programs and policies can consider. Tailoring such suggestions aptly can ensure more effective and equitable impacts:

- A developer or investor in forest landscape projects can consider establishing performance-based contracts with joint spousal signatures for planting and protecting trees.
- Governments can train forest personnel in the collection of sex-disaggregated data and inclusive, participatory engagement and forest landscape management planning processes, or facilitating registration for forest-related programs in spaces where women already go (e.g. schools, health care centers).
- Investors, development agencies and private sector can find ways in which to make direct payments to women (e.g. via cellphone) for forest restoration and agro-forestry activities or supporting rural women's leadership capacity and strengthening activities.

PROFOR's paper, with a guidance note provide many more examples of how gender analysis and actions can contribute in forest landscapes and of how this research is already being applied on the ground.

Greater investment in forest landscapes and agro-forestry will be critical in efforts to address climate change and rural poverty challenges in many countries. The success of these investments will be enhanced by considering gender-responsive activities and actions

### **Birthdays of Rotary members in March, 2019**

Subimal Bhattacharya, past Governor on March 1, 2019

### **Anniversaries of Rotary members in March, 2019**

Spouse Rakhi & Governor Mukul Sinha on March 10, 2019

*March is Water and Sanitation Month*

### **UNWIND**

*War does not determine who is right. It determines who is left.*

### **TAILPIECE**

*Money may be the husk of many things but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintances, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness. -Henrik Ibsen, playwright 1828-1906*

**We meet 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays at the Auditorium at 9<sup>th</sup> floor, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 5.00 PM**

**Printed by Dr Ankush Bansal, President, the Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata - Editor: Dr Aruna Tantia**

**For private circulation only - Web site: [www.rcslmk.org](http://www.rcslmk.org)**