

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Service Above Self is a firm commitment

A- Towards ourselves and towards our fellows for development and service.

Also

B – A firm commitment to our communities and to the international community to foster worldwide peace, hope and understanding.

Through 7300 Rotaract Clubs with 190,000 members, operating in 163 countries, and Rotary International, the patron, around 31,000 Rotary Clubs with 1.2 million members, since 1906, Rotary inspires, cares, pursues excellence and leads with high ethical standards world wide communities and since the fall of the Soviet Union, in the 15 republics of the CIS and Eastern European republics.

Major goals of Rotaract

- To develop professional and leadership skills
- To emphasize respect for the rights of others, based on recognition of the worth of each individual
- To recognize the dignity and value of all useful occupations as opportunities to serve
- To recognize, practice, and promote ethical standards as leadership qualities and vocational responsibilities
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the needs, problems, and opportunities in the community and worldwide, that is, to be empathetic.
- To provide opportunities for personal and group activities to serve the community and promote international understanding and goodwill toward all people.

A - Commitment towards ourselves and our fellows:

In order to be at the service of others, that is, fellows and communities:

- 1 - We must be **self-confident and courageous** in life. Ready willing and able to lead, to perform and to sacrifice.
- 2- We must be **industrious and skillful**; our job or profession is **our closest friend** and ally throughout our lifetime. We must **not lose this wise and precious partner**. We have to cling to it until we pass away.
- 3 - We must be **creative and innovative** in the profession we exercise, by modernizing our knowledge, by research & by training.
- 4 - We must always take **the initiative** in the field of our career. It has its risks. We must attack these risks before they attack us.
- 5 - We must **not underestimate any human being** but, be respectful.
- 6 - We must be **ambitious** up to a degree that, it does not become a liability in the end.
- 7- We must not be a **burden on our community** but rather, a contributor to its well being.
- 8 – We must **respect and apply law & order**
- 9 - We must always **be grateful in life, faithful to God**, our **nation**, our **parents** and our **fellows**. Ungratefulness is one of the character illnesses of our times.
- 10 – Lastly, we must **be the engines** – the leaders in all our activities in life.

Once we have formed ourselves in the lines of my above stated presentation, we become able to face the challenges that are waiting for us.

B – Firm commitment to our communities in the countries we are living in and **to the international community.**

The landscape of our activity for community services is vast & the horizon is considerably distant and international. The world of **the underdeveloped** outweighs **the developed** communities, specially, with the increase in global population.

In many developing economies, politicians speak about “a balanced development of a country”. In Arabic, الإنماء المتوازن. This rarely happens. What a State does, in general, is **politically motivated and is not enough**. What happens consequently is that:

NGOS, the civil society, the private sector sometimes, international aid agencies, specialized humanitarian institutions, religious congregations and institutions similar to Rotary International complement the “**developmental gap**” of community needs.

What is to be done to develop communities, or in other words: Community services by Rotaract and Rotary Clubs ?

We have to set goals and prepare action plans

- a) **Assistance in improving the standard of living.** Every citizen forms the grass roots of a community. Assistance in reducing unemployment is required, as the unemployed is a burden on the society. He goes astray or emigrates. A citizen with a job is a **healthy and solid stone** of a **community structure**.
- b) Assistance to the **physically underprivileged**, that is, the handicapped, the mentally retarded, the crippled, the blind by assisting in creating jobs for them, as the market will not employ them.
- c) The way Rotary eradicated polio, by **the polio plus program**, assistance is required **to wipe out drug use and abuse**.
- d) Assistance to the **vocational schools**, in sheltering and training orphans and the distorted families' children.
- e) Assistance to **Artisans to work for their own**, self employment, by providing them with tools and equipment.
- f) In **agricultural areas**, providing material to build green houses and accessory equipment.
- g) Assistance in advising **preventive medicine** – reduction of sickness, and by **cleaning contaminated water** through water-treatment means and techniques.
- h) Contributing with other agencies to **clean land from war-left mines** that kill community members.

This list is long... too long in developmental assistance, in order to promote in communities understanding and peaceful coexistence.

These above-cited **action plans** can be realized by the creation of "**projects**" by each club, in collaboration with other clubs within each country, within the district clubs or other districts, twin clubs, and if necessary, with all other humanitarian organizations volunteering to collaborate.

To be effective and have successful results, we have to be guided by priorities that are DEMAND DRIVEN by:

- 1- Evaluating the demand and selecting the projects
- 2- Creating a service committee
- 3- Planning the work, by defining tasks and setting schedules, deadlines for the completion of projects.
- 4- Developing a budget – the financing
- 5- Contacting other clubs to raise the required funds
- 6- Following up and controlling the project execution. Reporting.
- 7- Realizing and handing over.

I mentioned the term DEMAND DRIVEN in this presentation.

What do I mean exactly?

Since in district 2450, we have members of two Rotaract Clubs from former republics of the Soviet Union, namely Georgia and Armenia, I would like to make this short intervention:

In 1992-93, when I was serving the EEC in Brussels as Central Banking consultant for the EEC's TACIS program in the former States of the Soviet Union, all technical assistance to these 15 Republics were DEMAND DRIVEN. The consultants worked on the ground, made the necessary research to find out the projects that were needed in the respective communities. The annual budget of TACIS was 400 million Euros for these countries.

The human being is the same living creature in other parts of the world. I met in the 6 republics that I served:

- The underprivileged, the deprived
- The handicapped and the war veterans
- The abnormals
- The drug users and the drunkards
- The orphans
- The old aged
- The modest artisan and farmers
- The sick
- Regional wars
- Those who appropriated the State assets, under the label of privatization.

Well, we have in the countries of District 2450, similar human creatures in the social structure grosso modo except perhaps: No appropriations of state properties'.

In conclusion:

The challenge for community services for members of the Rotaract District 2450 is tremendous. What has been done so far?

Through the collaboration of Rotaract Clubs and Rotary Clubs and the Rotary Foundation, as well as, cooperation with many NGOs and humanitarian agencies, the Lebanese chapter within District 2450 has been able, in a pragmatic approach, to assist the community needs by providing them with:

- Hundreds of wheel chairs
- Computers and laptops
- Sewing machines
- Machinery for vocational schools
- Scholarships
- Books for libraries and audio-visual equipment
- Polluted water treatment
- Cleaning land of war-mines
- Household appliances to orphanages
- Minibuses to over 50 schools
- Assistance to the mentally handicapped children.

Of course, this list is not complete.

All these projects, have been accomplished by devotion and dedication by the Rotary ensemble, in compliance with the set goals, to continue developing stable and peaceful communities full of hope, goodwill and understanding. The future is yours and ours **to serve above ourselves.**

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Speech addressed on the occasion of the 33rd district Rotaract Conference.