

## **Empowering girls: Background and talking points for governors-elect and senior leaders**

Equality is a fundamental human right that's necessary for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Still, girls and women worldwide face inequities in areas including health and education, and they experience violence and poverty at higher rates than men.

As one of his key initiatives, President-elect Shekhar Mehta is prioritizing projects that focus on improving the health, education, well-being, and economic security of girls across the globe. He is encouraging clubs and districts to empower girls in all of the service initiatives they undertake during the 2021-22 Rotary year.

Empowering girls means supporting them to ensure that their basic needs are met while working to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. It includes helping girls develop self-confidence and make their voices heard.

According to the United Nations, empowering girls includes five components:

- Their sense of self-worth
- Their right to have and to determine choices
- Their right to have access to opportunities and resources
- Their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home
- Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally

### **TOP MESSAGES**

- We encourage clubs and districts to engage in one or more projects that address the inequities affecting girls.
- A club or district might identify inequities that girls face in one region or culture that are different from the inequities they face in other regions and cultures. Clubs and districts should aim to address inequities in the regions and cultures where their projects will be implemented.
- Empowering girls aligns with Rotary's areas of focus and the goals of our Action Plan. We can increase our impact through projects that protect, empower, and create equity for girls. These projects could focus on:
  - Supporting access to health care and nutrition
  - Ensuring access to water, sanitation, and hygiene resources
  - Preventing exploitation, neglect, and physical and emotional violence

- Supplying menstrual health and hygiene resources
- Providing access to basic education, skills training, and technology
- Preventing or raising awareness about child labor and child marriage
- Offering opportunities for girls to elevate their voices and articulate their views, ideas, and opinions
- The success of a project is determined by systemic, cultural, and behavioral changes that result in greater gender equality and better lives for girls.
- Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. [Learn more about Rotary's comprehensive approach to youth protection.](#)
- We encourage Rotary members to share proposed projects for which they are seeking partners as well as their completed projects on [Rotary Showcase](#).
- Clubs that need help designing projects to empower girls can contact their district international service committee to consult with a member of the district resource network, which includes representatives from Rotary Action Groups and The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers.
- More information, including project ideas and resources to help clubs empower girls through their service projects, will be available on My Rotary by 1 July.