



## 2020-21 ROTARY FOUNDATION GOALS

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Good morning! A few years ago, my club, together with Rotarians from Germany, with the help of our Rotary Foundation, built a modern maternity hospital in the southern part of my country, to replace one destroyed by the tsunami.

So, when then-chair of our Rotary Foundation, D.K. [Dong Kurn] Lee, visited Sri Lanka, we took him to see our new hospital.

We saw the mothers coming to deliver babies and others bringing their newborn babies for care — hundreds of families receiving these vital services which were absent in that area. From there we went into the neonatal intensive care unit — the product of so much work and investment.

Inside it, nine incubators, every one of them with a Rotary wheel, and every one of them occupied.

In one of them lay a baby girl, weighing just 900 grams, or just under two pounds.

She could have fit in the palm of my hand — covered with tubes and wires. And she was fighting for every breath — fighting harder than someone a hundred times her size.

As I watched that tiny chest rise and fall, I realized I was holding my own breath — waiting for her next breath, and the next, and the next. Each one, a result of so much effort, from someone so desperately small.

And my heart went out to her, this little baby who had come into the world too soon.

I whispered, “Fight, baby, fight! There is a wide world waiting for you out there — if only you will fight!”

She was small, she was poor, she was sick — but she was not forgotten. She would not be left to die. She was someone’s precious child, and we had cared for her.

We had done all we could to give her that chance to live, because of the power of our Foundation, and that is what I have come here today to talk about.

Our Foundation is not static. It’s evolving and revolving and becoming more relevant to the times.

This year, the Trustees will launch a new program called programs of scale. These grants will challenge Rotary clubs to think big and approach co-partners and sponsors to join

them in comprehensive solutions to major issues, the benefits of which reach a large population.

Let me give you an example. Cervical cancer is the only cancer which is vaccine-preventable.

If one could vaccinate every child in a country, especially the girls, in the age group 8-10, and screen every woman in the age group 35-45, you can in theory eradicate cervical cancer.

But it's unlikely that Rotarians alone could achieve this in their country or region. It is the type of project that *can* be repeated everywhere, but no one organization, not even Rotary, can do it alone. It needs the efforts of multiple agencies working together, similar to our efforts in the polio program.

And that's the type of project programs of scale was designed to support. Programs of scale will award a single \$2 million grant every year, and in my view will bring about the same transformative change in our Foundation projects as the 3-H program did when it was introduced in 1978 by Clem Renouf.

Remember that's how PolioPlus began in the Philippines. But you will learn more about this in due course.

And that brings me to your other priorities for next year. This year's priorities are aligned with the new Rotary Action Plan, and everything The Rotary Foundation does helps us to increase our impact.

Our first priority is, of course, to end polio.

This is the number one priority of our entire organization. We must work towards this end with every muscle, every sinew, and every fiber in our system. We must finish the job.

True that in the last year we have seen increases in the number of cases. This is a concern, but it is a challenge we anticipated. We are confident of finding the solution.

Remember we have already reduced the number of polio cases by 99.9 percent. Remember that 18 million people are walking free today because of us. Remember that type 2 and type 3 polio have already been eradicated, leaving only type 1.

We are now down to only two countries reporting with the wild poliovirus — Pakistan and Afghanistan. We will finish the job.

Our second priority is to increase contributions to the Annual Fund and PolioPlus while building the Endowment Fund to \$2.025 billion by 2025.

Our comprehensive fundraising goal this year is \$410 million, only a \$10 million increase from last year's goal. Our goal may be broken down to:

- \$50 million for polio, duly matched double by the Gates Foundation to bring the total to \$150 million — if every club contributed just \$1,500, we would meet this goal

- Then we have \$135 million for the Annual Fund
- And another \$85 million for the Endowment Fund in outright gifts and commitments
- And \$40 million for other outright gifts adds up to a grand total of \$410 million

Let me dwell a moment on the annual giving goal of \$135 million. Nearly 20 percent of our clubs do not contribute to our Foundation's Annual Fund, nor do any of their members. Can you believe that? We can do better than that!

And I am asking this class, perhaps the best class ever assembled, to rectify those numbers. You are the best class, right? We need to hit our goals if we are to fund the ever-increasing demand for our global grants, which enable our clubs to change lives.

Equally, our Endowment Fund is a great way for all Rotarians to perpetuate their values and create a Rotary legacy which provides resources for future generations of Rotarians. A strong endowment, my friends, will guarantee the long-term financial stability of our Foundation.

Our goal is ambitious, but achievable. The 2025 by 2025 initiative is to build an endowment of \$2.025 billion by the year 2025.

By 2025 we anticipate the Foundation's Endowment having a minimum of \$1 billion in net assets, with the balance in expectancies and bequest-type commitments. Imagine the good we will be able to do with a \$2 billion endowment! The investment earnings alone will provide approximately \$100 million for Rotarians to do all kinds of life-changing projects around the globe, year after year.

Our third priority is to improve the measurable impact of our grants.

Once upon a time, our goodness could only be measured in vague perceptions of public opinion. Today we want to know the real impact our act of charity had on the community.

Gifting benches and tables to a class in a village school is a legitimate act of service, but how many children go through that class? Were there proper teachers to teach those children? Were those benches secure in that class? Would five benches do when the need was fifty?

We need to create projects that do more than make us feel good. Our projects must change lives. This is not just about dollars. It never was. This is about lives.

I started by telling you of the maternity hospital in my country that our Foundation helped us build. Nearly two years after that visit, I had the chance to visit that same hospital again. We were allowed into that same intensive care unit; this time only a few of the incubators were occupied.

And then after our visit, we all came out into the hall, where we stopped and talked to the doctors and nurses, who told us that 140,000 babies had been born in that hospital since we built it.

And there, I was introduced to a young mother with a child, who had come for her routine visit. Sweet kid, big dark eyes, beautiful smile — a year or two old, busy learning to walk and talk.

I love kids, so most instinctively I reached out, and she came to me. I carried her around, and I chatted with her mother. And just then, one of the doctors came up to me with a smile on her face and asked, “Do you remember, Mr. Ravindran, the last time you were visiting, there was the one child in the incubator you seemed so anxious about?”

“Yes, of course!” I replied. “How can I forget?”

She paused for a moment, smiled, and reached out and patted the little girl I was holding, and said, “This is that child.”

And it was I who struggled to breathe.

That was the child. There in my arms: a little girl, who lived because of Rotary. Who smiled, who laughed, who gave joy to her parents — because of The Rotary Foundation.

When you think about that — everything else just falls away.

And I am asking you all today: When you go home, when you go back to your clubs, when you make your plans for next year — keep our Foundation foremost in your minds.

It gives substance to our Rotary membership.

It changes lives.