

# Expanding Our Reach: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



**IMAGINE DEI**  
2022-23 Presidential Initiative

# Message from 2022-23 RI President Jennifer Jones



Dear fellow Rotary member:

In Rotary, we celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). It does not matter who you are, who you love, how you worship, whether you have a disability, or what culture or country you are from. What matters is that you want to strengthen communities and take action to create lasting change.

Rotary, with input from our DEI Task Force, has strengthened its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The result is a greater focus on DEI, through which we celebrate each person's contributions, advance equity, and create an inclusive culture where every person knows they are valued. DEI is not just a recommended practice. It is necessary to Rotary's success in providing meaningful leadership, networking, and service opportunities today and in the future.

During 2022-23, I encourage all of us — as individuals, in our clubs, and in our districts — to exemplify our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We can each do our part to advance DEI by:

1. Learning more about DEI in Rotary
2. Determining why DEI matters in our own club and our own area, and how using these principles can help our club grow and make it stronger
3. Raising awareness and increasing understanding about DEI
4. Taking action on DEI in our clubs and in our communities

In this brochure, you'll find a sampling of things you can do for each of these steps. Use the suggestions to spark your own ideas and bring your unique perspectives and experiences to this vital endeavor.

So much of what will help your club, your district, and Rotary itself achieve our goals depends on this. With a strong commitment to DEI and good strategies, we can create more meaningful leadership, networking, and service opportunities for all of us. By embodying our DEI values, we can build stronger partnerships, plan more life-changing projects, and adjust more nimbly to our evolving world. If we ensure that everyone who interacts with us feels welcome, respected, and valued, we'll make Rotary more rewarding for all of us. We must make sure that each person is fully heard and appreciated. Each of us must be given the same opportunities to succeed, to lead, and to make an impact through Rotary.

Imagine Rotary — Imagine DEI: Our efforts will increase our ability to lead within communities and around the world, will broaden acceptance of values that we hold deeply, and will expand our power to change the world for the better. We all have so much to gain from this effort. I can't wait for us to take these steps together.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Jones  
2022-23 Rotary International President



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# Four ways to strengthen your club

We can each do our part to advance DEI ourselves, in our clubs and in our communities. Although our DEI experiences are deeply personal, we share the responsibility to ensure that everyone we interact with feels respected and valued. The suggestions below are not instructions, but are ideas meant to help you, your club, and your district decide how to start or continue your own DEI work. You can also find more information and resources by visiting [rotary.org/dei](https://rotary.org/dei).

## 1 To learn more about DEI in Rotary, you could:

- Read about [Rotary's commitment to DEI](#).
- Review [Rotary's DEI code of conduct](#).
- Complete the [courses on DEI](#) in Rotary's Learning Center.
- Use the assessment in [Diversifying Your Club](#).
- Read literature or opinion pieces, listen to speeches or lectures, watch videos, or take online courses that explore the meaning and value of DEI.

## 2 To determine why DEI matters in your own club and your own area, you might consider how advancing DEI can:

- Create a safer, more comfortable environment to ensure that everyone who engages with us feels welcome, respected, and valued
- Strengthen your club or district and help it grow
- Help your club or district better engage members
- Help you connect with new and prospective members
- Help you make a greater impact in your community
- Help your club gain access to more resources, ideas, and partnerships

## Consider partnering with other Rotary, Rotaract, or Interact clubs by:

- Holding discussions about DEI with other clubs — Rotary, Rotaract, or Interact. Offer all members the opportunity to share their perspectives on diversity, equity, inclusion, and empowerment in their schools, workplaces, communities, etc.
- Organizing a multiclub forum to exchange DEI ideas
- Inviting Rotarians and Rotaractors to share the best DEI ideas from their professional, academic, or volunteer experiences with club and district leaders

### 3 To raise awareness about and increase understanding of DEI, you could:

- Create a club DEI committee that reflects the demographics of your community and invite club members to take part. Its chair should serve on your club's board.
- Make sure that your focus on DEI is reflected in your club and district newsletters. Feature content that reflects the diversity and issues of concern in your community. Consider including a section dedicated to exploring DEI issues or concepts in each edition.
- Review your policies and governing documents through a DEI lens. Consider changes that will make your policies equitable for all current and future members.
- District governors: Encourage district and club leaders to seek out new voices when they fill roles and expand leadership opportunities to people who have been underrepresented in these roles. Recognize and overcome your unconscious biases, especially when you're choosing or suggesting people for district leadership roles.
- Create a district DEI committee that reflects the demographics of your region and invite members to take part. Its chair should be added to the district management team and should serve a three-year term.

### To share what you learn from your club, district, and community DEI activities, you could:

- Create opportunities for Rotarians and Rotaractors to tell their own DEI stories.
- Use inclusive language, photos, and videos in all your communications to show people from all groups that they have a place in Rotary and that their contributions are valued.
- District leaders: Recognize Rotary and Rotaract clubs that develop the most effective DEI action plans.
- District leaders: Promote flexible club models that accommodate people who have traditionally been excluded from Rotary (by high club dues, other costs, meeting places or times that aren't convenient or accessible, or other reasons).

## 4 To act on DEI in your club and in your community, you might:

- Educate yourself about underrepresented groups in your community in order to become a more knowledgeable and effective advocate for DEI. Seek opportunities to hear a speaker or attend an event, follow people from these groups on social media, and read books or articles that they've written.
- Host a community forum or discussion series to introduce DEI to a larger audience and describe Rotary's commitment to DEI.
- Include speakers, examples, and programs about DEI issues at club and district events and training meetings. Make sure the demographics of your community are reflected in the content as a whole.
- Host a book club that reads books about DEI issues or by diverse authors.
- Support or sponsor events that celebrate diversity in your community.
- Recognize local businesses for their diverse and equitable practices or for participating in LGBTQ+ pride events, multicultural events, or United Nations observances like International Women's Day.

### DEFINITIONS

**Diversity** — Variety in a group of people's backgrounds, experiences, and identities, including their age, ethnicity, race, color, disability, learning style, religion, faith, socioeconomic status, culture, marital status, languages spoken, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity

**Equity** — Differing levels of support, opportunities, and resources so all participants have a welcoming and productive experience according to their needs or circumstances

**Inclusion** — Creating experiences in which all people are welcomed, respected, and valued

**Unconscious bias** — Feelings, impressions, assumptions, or fears that we're unaware of and that can influence our decisions and judgments or cause negative behavior or harm toward a person or group

To find more DEI-related terms and definitions, visit [rotary.org/dei](https://www.rotary.org/dei).

# Our commitment to DEI aligns with our Action Plan and our strategic priorities.



## To increase your impact through DEI, you could:

- Develop a DEI strategy for your club and emphasize the importance of meaningful service projects to that strategy.
- Conduct a community assessment to determine which DEI issues are top concerns in your area.



## To expand your reach through DEI, you could:

- Engage with service clubs and other organizations in your community and learn about their DEI strategies.
- Identify real or perceived barriers to joining your club and find ways to eliminate them.



## To enhance participant engagement through DEI, you could:

- Build connections with all Rotary participants and invite them to offer their ideas and observations.
- Hold innovation forums and brainstorming sessions with members and participants to gather ideas on DEI in your community.



## To increase your ability to adapt through DEI, you could:

- Review club roles and processes and look for ways to make them more equitable and more inclusive.
- Establish a continuity plan so that your DEI efforts will be more cohesive.