



GREETINGS, DEAR CHANGEMAKERS OF ROTARY,

One of Rotary's founding principles was to use your vocation — whether as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or another profession — to do good in the world. As we attempt to overcome and recover from the pandemic, this principle is vital in retraining people who have lost their jobs. In response, the Rotary E-Club of Tamar Hong Kong organized seminars for young people, with the aim of preparing them for the changing world of work.

This type of training must happen on a large scale. According to the United Nations, global unemployment is expected to exceed 200 million people in 2022. Women and youths are likely to be disproportionately affected.

This is why I've placed such a strong emphasis this year on projects that empower girls, and I've been delighted to see some of these projects in action. Of course, access to education and the path to employment can be blocked by a lack of water and sanitation infrastructure.

A project in Pune, India, focuses on providing girls and women with an affordable, reusable sanitary pad. The project provides employment for production and distribution of the pads, and it will reduce the pollution caused by the disposal of 12.3 billion sanitary napkins in the country annually, many of which end up in India's landfills.

Others have used vocational service to advance the empowerment of women. The Rotary Club of Poona, India, conducted workshops to teach martial arts to young women, for self-defense against the threat of abuse or human trafficking.

I've also been fortunate to use my vocation to do good through Rotary. The Indian Ocean tsunami in

2004 devastated the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are part of my district. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and many areas lost electricity and running water. On my visit to Little Andaman Island, the builder in me immediately wanted to build homes for the homeless islanders there. We decided to construct 500 homes on Little Andaman.

On the last of my seven trips to the island, I could see something glimmering below as my helicopter was about to land. I realized that what I was seeing were the roofs of new homes. I was overjoyed by the sight, and soon a realization dawned upon me. As a builder I had built many beautiful buildings. In comparison, these 500 homes were the most ordinary buildings I had ever built, and they were in a place I likely will never visit again, for people I will never meet again. And yet the satisfaction I had in handing over these houses was greater than from anything I had previously built. Probably because for once I was using my vocation to Serve to Change Lives.

You, too, may have had opportunities to use your vocation to Serve to Change Lives. I welcome your stories of performing vocational service through Rotary. Also, I want to close by congratulating every club that has engaged with the Each One, Bring One initiative, which asks every member to introduce one person to Rotary. Increasing our membership gives people from all walks of life the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills in transformational service.

Shekhar Mehta
President, Rotary International