

District 1080 International Report
DCM 21st October 2020

The Committee continues to meet via Zoom having held its last meeting on the 13th October.

District International Open Zoom Meeting

The Committee is now in the process of organising a District International Zoom Meeting which will take place on Wednesday 18th November at 7 pm. A Sub-Committee has been formed to put together a programme and registration for this meeting will be sent out shortly.

Lend With Care

The latest figures as from the 1st September are as follows:

Loans £320,038.68
Donations £11,554.37
Entrepreneurs helped 41,409
Jobs created 19,613

'Soap for Darfur' Project

This project was launched in June and continues to be the Committee's lead initiative.

To date 13 Rotary Clubs have donated a total of £3691.25 to this project. In the September issue of 1080 news I made an appeal to all those clubs who have not yet donated to consider doing so as a matter of urgency. Within the article I pointed out that since March each member on average has saved about £320 on dining costs and £380 would provide enough soap for one village in Darfur.

This pandemic is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future so as Rotarians we should reach out to the most vulnerable people in the world, who struggle to survive on a daily bases and give a lifeline to the people of Darfur. We have been working closely with the Charity 'Kids for Kids' CEO Patricia Parker who is leading this initiate in partnership with other organisations including Rotary.

COVID 19 has reached Darfur and on average 10-12 people are dying everyday especially in the towns of El Fasher and Mellit which are located in the north of Darfur. We have no idea how many people have the virus due to the fact that there is no proper diagnoses and with no health care system in place, few people report the symptoms. Medical support is non existent and social distancing is almost impossible. The people of Darfur are struggling to feed their children and they cannot afford to buy soap which is their only defense against COVID 19.

This initiative with the 'Kids for Kids' Charity means that many people can wash properly and help prevent the virus from spreading and taking lives.

We will be inviting Patricia Parker to the International District Zoom Meeting in November where she will have the opportunity to update the clubs concerning this project.

Beirut Explosion

Even before the explosions in Beirut, Lebanon had been suffering from a series of crises including the plunging value in its currency, an influx of refugees from Syria and COVID 19. Protesters have taken to the streets for several months to vent their anger on what they consider is the mismanagement of their country. The theories as to why such chemicals were stored so close to the city are being circulated on a daily basis but like all these disasters, it is the ordinary citizens who suffer the most and demand answers, but still remain resilient in the hope that their lives will improve

The request for international assistance specified search and rescue expertise, and medical supplies. Lebanon requested international help with long-term building materials like windows, wood and steel. As we know Shelter Box are specialists in emergency shelter after disaster, so this is not typically the kind of aid that Shelter Box provides. It is therefore unlikely that this organization will be required to provide appropriate additional shelter options.

It is estimated that more than 300,000 people have been left homeless, and up to 500,000 people will need some form of assistance as a result of the explosion. There are also several humanitarian organizations based in Lebanon who are offering shelter options.

Whilst there has been an international response from world leaders, Rotary is playing its part by donating directly to Rotary District 2452 in Lebanon. Putney Rotary Club and Westminster International Rotary Club are leading a campaign in London and clubs all across Rotary London District 1130 are pulling together to raise funds. They are currently working closely with Rotary Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan and Rotary Club of Batroun. There are 28 Clubs across Lebanon helping with the Beirut crisis in a coordinated effort. 9th October

This report and the associated links to donate have been circulated to all the clubs and were included in the September issue of the 1080 newsletter.

In company with Committee member Lynda Tempest we joined a Zoom Meeting on the 9th October concerning the Beirut explosion, organised by the President of the Downham Market RC Howard Philips. We were joined by the President of the Putney RC Louise McCance-Price and the President of the Beirut Cosmopolitan RC Habib Sabah. Habib gave a very powerful presentation highlighting the problems in the Lebanon and their efforts to secure major funding, to secure a Global Grant to purchase specialist equipment for the one Public Hospital in Beirut that was badly damaged by the explosion.

I would like to congratulate President Howard for organising this meeting and as a result of his efforts we will be inviting Habib to speak at the District International Zoom Meeting.

I would like to thank members of the Norwich St Edmunds RC who organized a street collection in Norwich raising £502 for this appeal. These collections are still possible despite the COVID restrictions. Well Done Norwich S Edmunds!!

Petition to RI

I wish to bring to the attention of the membership that in June of this year Committee Member Mark Little submitted a Petition to RI on behalf of his own Rotary Club namely Norwich St Edmunds, concerning Rotarians responsibilities regarding Human Rights, to be considered by the RI Board at its next meeting.

The “Petition” is a legal document, previously referred to in Rotary as a “Memorial”. Mark and his Club members did not have the time to get the approval of District (deadline submission date is 30th June) to submit a Resolution to the COL. However a Petition only requires the approval of a club or clubs as opposed to enactments to the Council on Legislation and resolutions to the Council on Resolution, but it has the advantage of being included directly onto the agenda of the RI Board.

On the 6th October the club received a letter from RI and I quote;

' In July 2020, the Board held a special meeting to discuss Rotary's current diversity, equity, and inclusion statement and to establish an ongoing action plan to create and implement policy. So you are aware, the statement is as follows:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

As a global network that strives to build a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, Rotary values diversity and celebrates the contributions of people of all backgrounds, regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Rotary will cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture in which people from underrepresented groups have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders.

At the July meeting, the Board established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force, comprising regionally diverse members who have professional diversity, equity, and inclusion experience to draft an ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion action plan that drives meaningful action and creates measurable, lasting change throughout Rotary.

The Board agreed that the recommendations in your petition should be considered by this newly appointed task force so that Rotary's actions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion are coordinated and can offer the greatest impact. The task force will be meeting throughout the Rotary year and will provide regular reports and recommendations to the Board.

Thank you for sharing your ideas and for your commitment to Rotary values'.

Signed
John P Hewko
General Secretary
RI

Mark has undertaken 5 presentations on Modern Slavery to the Rotary Clubs of Bush Hill Park, Derby, Kings Lynn, Cardiff Bay and Penrith. Mark has also been invited to talk to the Rotary Clubs of Clifton, Barnoldswick & Earby, Tavistock and Aylesbury Hundreds.

He is also working with former RIBI President Eve Conway to produce a video on the work of the Rotarian Action Group against Slavery.

Closing statement

The Committee continues to monitor International Disasters and has regular updates from the 'Shelter Box' Co-ordinators.

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Robert Lovick
District International Service Chair