

**2019-2020**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**

**rotary**  
**youth**  
**exchange**

Rotary 

# 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## CONTENTS

A message from 2019-20 Rotary International President Mark Daniel Maloney	1
2019-20 program highlights	2
2019-20 program statistics	3
Survey method	3
Program participation	3
Program reach and impact	7
Long-term exchanges	11
Short-term exchanges	14
Ending an exchange early	17
Alumni engagement	18
2019-20 program evaluations	20
Rotary Youth Exchange: Resilience amidst a pandemic	21
Early returns due to the pandemic	22
Crisis management	23
How the community came together	24
2020 Virtual Youth Exchange Officers Postconvention highlights	25
2019-20 Youth Exchange Committee	25



## A MESSAGE FROM 2019-20 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT MARK DANIEL MALONEY

During the 2019 Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Germany, I talked about all the incredible ways that Rotary Youth Exchange connects the world and maintains those connections over generations.

During my year as president, those connections were tested like never before. Rotary Youth Exchange students and volunteers had to adapt to stay-at-home and physical distancing orders — and some students had to return to their home countries earlier than expected. I want to thank everyone in the Youth Exchange program who did an incredible job ensuring the health and safety of our young people. Rules varied country to country, and sometimes by the city, state, or province as well. I am proud of the work our members and volunteers have done — and continue to do — to keep young people and host families safe in this very difficult situation.

I am also very proud of how Rotary Youth Exchange students have risen to the challenge and made the most of their opportunities. One inspiring story came out of Italy, one of the first countries to go into lockdown. Youth Exchange students in that country adjusted rapidly — continuing their lessons from home, spending time with their host families, and embracing Italian culture more than ever.

Because Italy experienced the challenges of the pandemic earlier than many other countries, the students there felt that they had useful information to share with the rest of the world. So one Saturday, they created a video detailing many ways that Youth Exchange students could make the most of their homebound lives — watching TV, studying, reading books, playing Ping-Pong or board games with the family, learning how to cook Italian food ... and exercising some of it away. And all with the goal of encouraging fellow students and volunteers to stay engaged while doing their part to help control the spread of the coronavirus. They helped educate their fellow Youth Exchange students and young people across the globe — and, hopefully, they helped a few people stay indoors and save lives.

Another inbound exchange student from Venezuela grew frustrated with the lack of participation by both her home and host Interact clubs and challenged them to find innovative ways to connect during stay-at-home

orders. This resulted in #InteractiveQuarantine, a virtual meeting every two weeks to develop action plans for service projects related to COVID-19.

The scope of this program broadened and all youth in Rotary were invited to participate, including Youth Exchange, RYLA, and Interact. Their second meeting included several outside speakers via videoconference — including me! It was a great pleasure to hear about their activities and to shine a spotlight on a job well done.

These young people proved once more that *Rotary Connects the World*. I am so proud of Rotary Youth Exchange. It is the gold standard of youth programs, and I am very pleased that we have found alternatives like virtual exchanges that allow us to safely continue the program in the 2020-2021 year on a limited basis despite the obstacles of the ongoing pandemic.

Youth Exchange will continue — but no doubt it will have difficulties in the year ahead. Parts of the world will not be able to participate for a time, and we expect that the number of students and families that choose to join in will be down for the year. If your district will not be administering exchanges, I urge you to keep youth engaged with Rotary — whether through virtual online exchanges or by encouraging them to participate in Interact or RYLA. Do not despair from these bumps in the road — our priority is student safety, and I am certain that despite these challenges, Youth Exchange will endure and will grow even stronger in the years ahead.

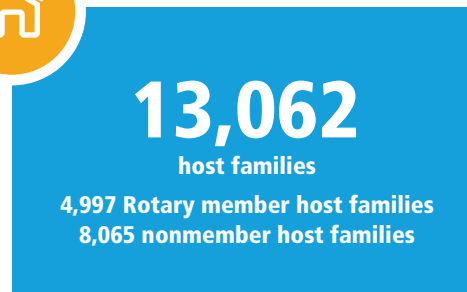
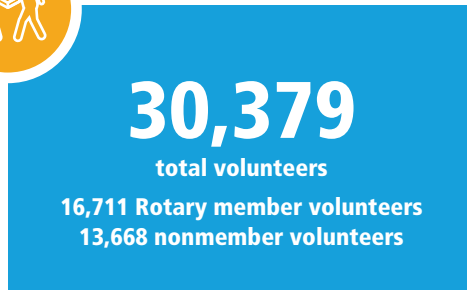
Rotary Youth Exchange is one of Rotary's most-loved and well-known programs, and it will remain strong.

Thank you for all that you do to engage Rotary's youth and families as *Rotary Connects the World*.

Kindest regards,

Mark Daniel Maloney  
Rotary International President, 2019-2020

# 2019-20 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



# 2019-20 PROGRAM STATISTICS

## SURVEY METHOD

Rotary Youth Exchange district chairs were asked in July 2020 to provide information about their district Youth Exchange programs for the 2019-20 Rotary year. We also asked questions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local programs, and those results appear later in this report.

We received responses from **466** out of 490 districts that are certified to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange — a **95%** response rate. Of the 466 certified districts that responded, **401** reported that they actively participated in long- and short-term exchanges during 2019-20 (hereafter referred to as “participating districts”).

Districts in Germany did not complete the annual survey due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) concerns. These districts are not included in the aggregate data on long- or short-term exchanges reflected in this report.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

### Reported number of exchanges

Participating districts reported **8,183** total exchanges in 2019-20. The tables below show the number of exchanges by type of exchange and geographic area.

Type of Exchange	Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Total Exchanges Reported
Long-term	5,977	73%
Short-term	2,206	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,183</b>	<b>100%</b>



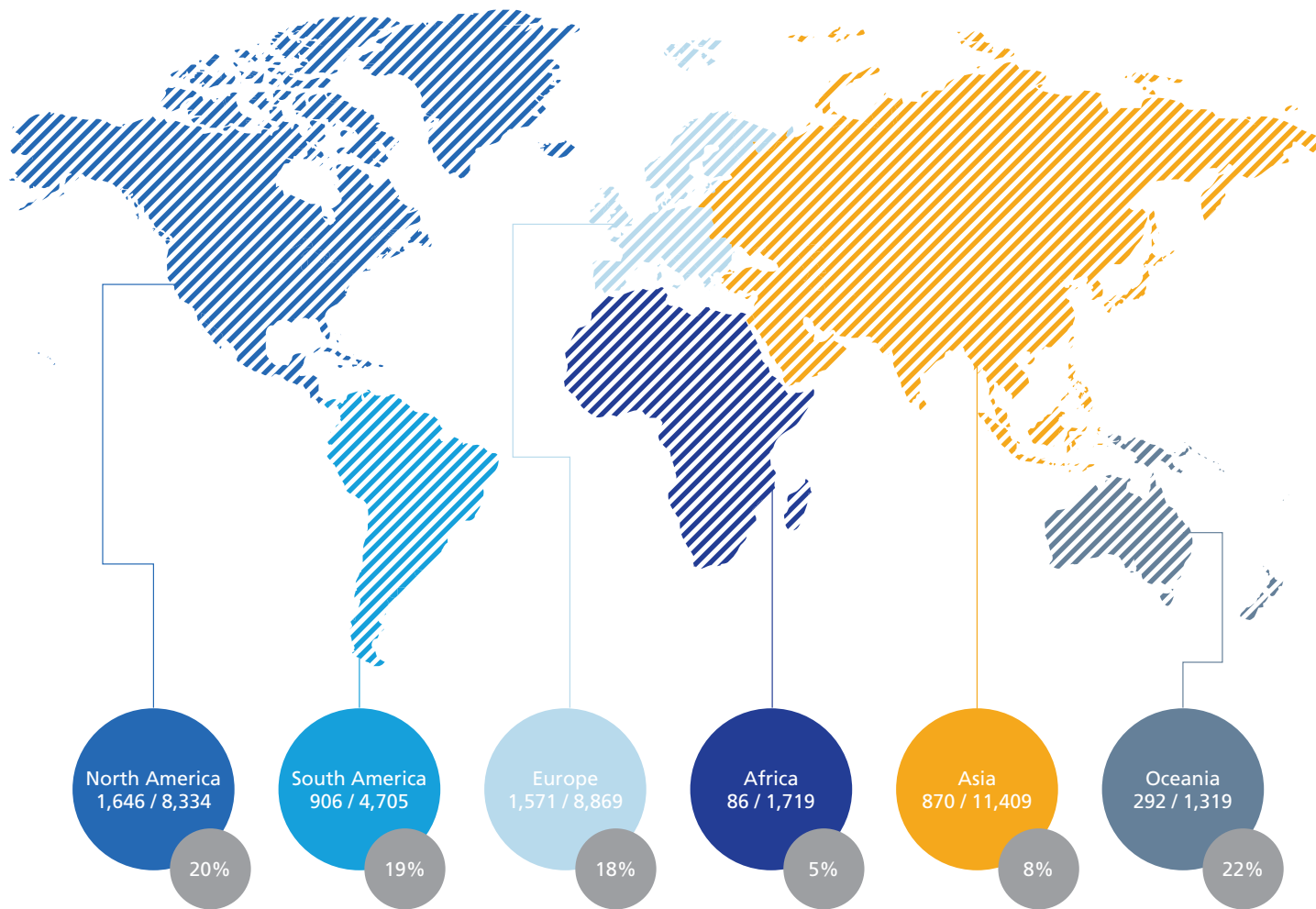
Geographic Area	2019-20		2018-19		2017-18	
	Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Exchanges	Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Exchanges	Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Exchanges
Africa	184	2%	222	2%	170	2%
Asia	961	12%	1,400	15%	912	10%
Europe	3,122	38%	3,523	38%	3,524	39%
North America	2,110	26%	2,349	25%	2,381	26%
Oceania	235	3%	273	3%	283	3%
South America	1,571	19%	1,566	17%	1,783	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,183</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,333</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,053</b>	<b>100%</b>

Although the totals aren't included in this report because of GDPR concerns, Rotary Jugenddienst Deutschland e.V. (multidistrict Rotary Youth Exchange program in Germany) provided these figures for students hosted in Germany during 2019-20:

- Total long-term inbound students: 515
- Total short-term inbound and outbound students: 548
- Total short-term inbound and outbound camp participants: 372

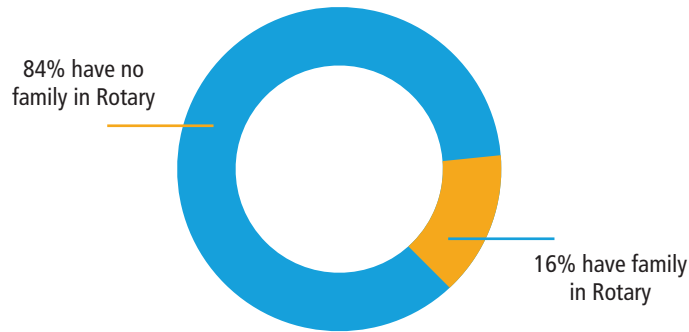


## 2019-20 ROTARY CLUB PARTICIPATION BY REGION



The Rotary Youth Exchange program still has the opportunity to grow through club participation. Increased club participation would not only lead to more students getting involved in the program and benefiting from greater support, but it could also inspire existing clubs and members to become more actively engaged with Rotary. Inviting students to share their exchange experience at a club meeting, organizing activities for inbound students, or perhaps having a veteran club work with a club interested in hosting a student are just some of the ways more clubs can become and feel more involved in the program — and in Rotary.

## 2019-20 EXCHANGE STUDENTS WITH A FAMILY MEMBER IN ROTARY



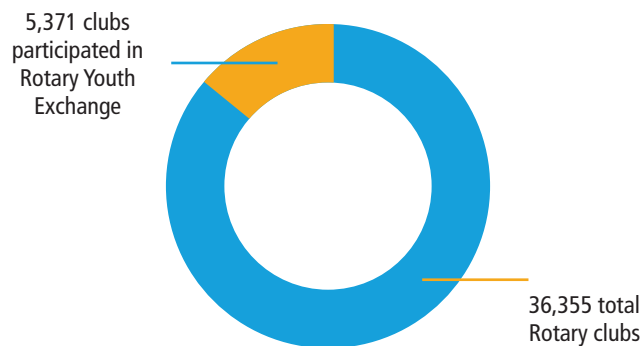
## Number of exchange students with a family member in Rotary

Participating districts reported that **1,348** Youth Exchange students, or 16% of the total, had a family member in Rotary, while **6,834** (84%) did not. This is consistent with previous years.

## Rotary club participation

Participating districts reported that **5,371** Rotary clubs participated in Youth Exchange during 2019-20 — that's **16%** of the total number of Rotary clubs worldwide. The graphic on the previous page shows the number of Rotary clubs by region that reported participating in Youth Exchange during 2019-20.

## 2019-20 ROTARY CLUB PARTICIPATION

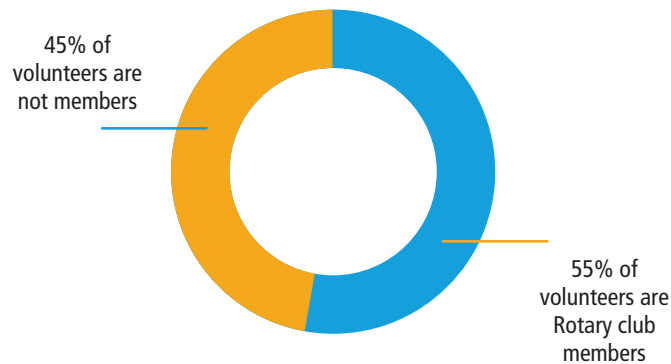


The opportunity to expand Rotary's reach and build public awareness through our exchange program is significant. Finding new and innovative ways to engage students whose families may not be familiar with Rotary can help foster new relationships and engagement with Rotary, and encourage a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment in Rotary.



## PROGRAM REACH AND IMPACT

### VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



### Volunteer engagement

To understand how Rotary Youth Exchange expands Rotary's reach and ability to engage communities around the world, we asked participating districts to tell us how many volunteers participated in the program in 2019-20. A total of **30,379** volunteers, both Rotary members and nonmembers, supported the program. Of the volunteers, **13,668**, or **45%**, were nonmembers, showing Rotary's ability to engage and connect with communities through Youth Exchange.

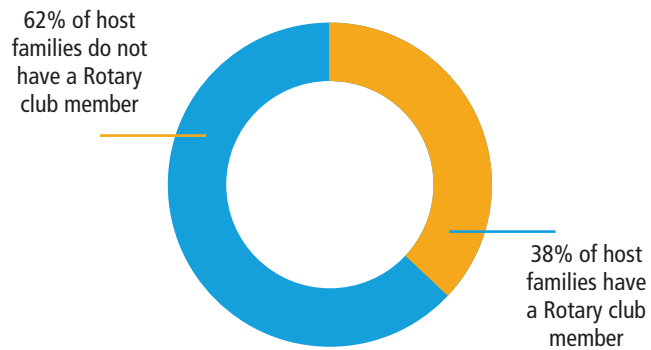
### Host school involvement

Long-term exchange students are required to attend school while on exchange, giving them the opportunity to connect with local peers and teachers while experiencing academic life in a new culture and language. A total of **5,772** schools hosted Rotary Youth Exchange students in 2019-20.



**5,772**  
schools around the world that hosted exchange students

## HOST FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Region	Host Families With a Rotary Member	Host Families Without a Rotary Member
Africa	14%	86%
Asia	70%	30%
Europe	30%	70%
North America	38%	62%
Oceania	34%	66%
South America	31%	69%

## Host family engagement

Participating districts were asked how many host families participated, and of the total, how many were Rotary club members. They reported that **13,062** volunteers served as host families during 2019-20. Of these, **4,997** (38%) were members of Rotary, while **8,065** (62%) were nonmembers.

Often in Rotary Youth Exchange, families choose to volunteer to host students because a student in their family is also going on exchange that year. This is called a reciprocal exchange. Exchanges are not required to be reciprocal, but most exchanges are. Of the participating districts surveyed, **4,658** of total exchanges, or **57%**, were reported to have been reciprocal. It's important to note that some short-term exchanges, such as short-term camps or short-term tours, do not include a host family experience.

The table shows the percentage of host families by region, arranged by those who were members of Rotary and those who were not. In Asia, the majority of host families had a parent who was a member of Rotary, while the majority of families volunteering to host students in Africa, Europe, Oceania, and North and South America did not have a parent who was a member of Rotary.



A host family has always been a vital part of a successful exchange, helping students experience a new culture while also providing for their overall well-being and safety. In 2019-20, Rotary host families not only cared for their students, but they did so in the midst of a pandemic, which posed an entirely new and unexpected set of challenges (working from home, home-schooling children, travel restrictions, etc.). Because of all they do, finding better ways to support Rotary's host families locally is essential — and it's something host families themselves expressed a strong desire for in the 2019 Member and Participant Experience Feedback survey. Connecting host families with one another might be one way to give them the additional support they need.



## DID YOU KNOW?

According to Rotary International's 2019 Member and Participant Experience Feedback survey:

- **89%** of host families are still in contact with at least one or more of their former students
- More than half of host families choose to host in order to expose themselves and their children to other cultures, to serve others, and build an understanding of the world
- Host families want to:
  - "Act locally while thinking globally"
  - "Get to know people from all over the world"
  - "Share [their] culture"
- **75%** of host families would promote the program to family, friends, and colleagues

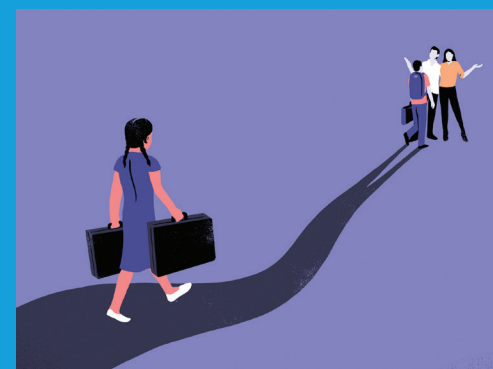
*The survey was sent in November 2019 to 70,158 people. Of the respondents, 2,136 identified themselves as current or former host parents.*



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## HOST FAMILY STORY: WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HOST TWO GENERATIONS OF ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS

"In general, host families find that they make a connection if they see the student not as a guest, but as a member of their family." Members Janet and Randy Wilson of District 7150 have been hosts to many exchange students over the course of their Rotary involvement, and have had a truly special hosting opportunity.



## COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Contributing to the care and development of their host communities is an important part of the Rotary Youth Exchange program. In 2019-20, **282** participating districts, or **70%**, reported that they involved their inbound students in service projects with the local community. To help their host communities, students:



**Cleaned up waste along riverfronts and in public spaces**



**Made masks to curtail the spread of COVID-19 and distributed them in their community**



**Painted public schools and hosted virtual language classes**



**Helped with various fundraisers benefiting End Polio Now, ShelterBox, and local homeless shelters**



**Collected clothing for children in need**



**Hosted awareness campaigns, such as ones discouraging single-use plastic, and collected and packed donations for a local food donation center**





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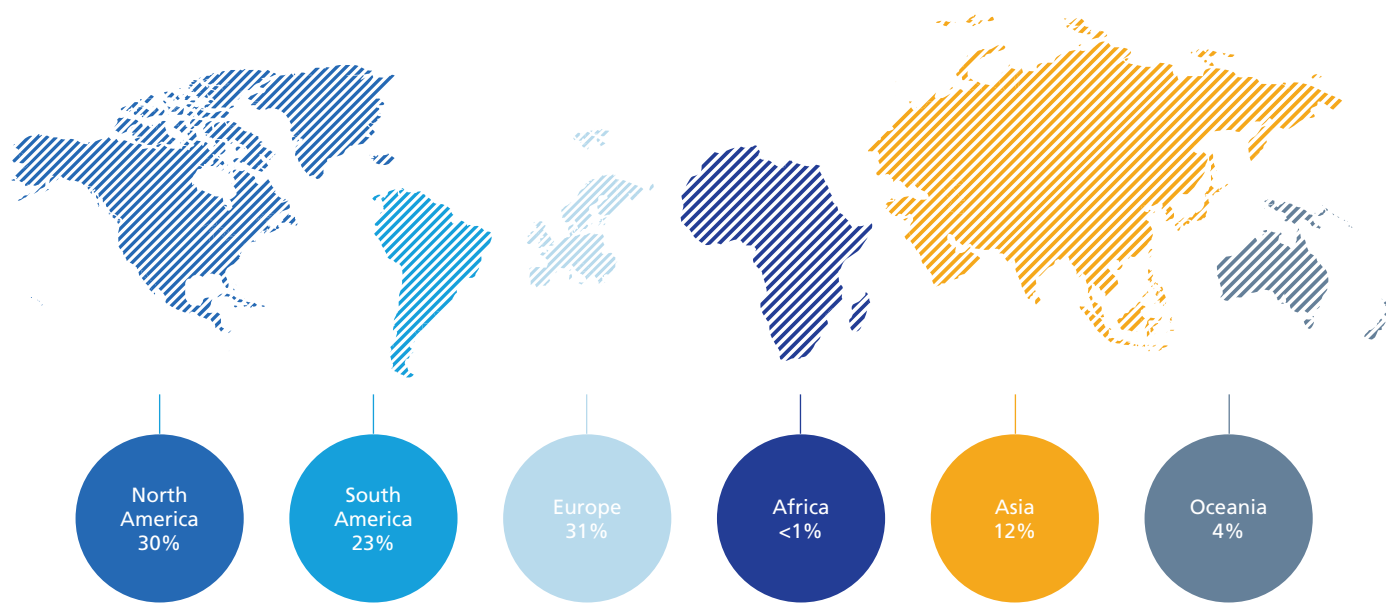
## LONG-TERM EXCHANGES

Long-term exchanges usually last a full academic year. Students often live with more than one family in the host country while attending school. In 2019-20, **368** participating districts hosted **5,977** long-term exchanges, representing **73%** of all Youth Exchange activity.

### SERVICE ABOVE SELF: "THE CHANGE OF TOMORROW" THROUGH ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

Rotary Youth Exchange can provide students with an opportunity to serve in ways that deeply affect them. For Julia Caussil, her exchange to the United States from France helped her more firmly establish her passion for the environment. Emboldened by the movement across Europe that sought to convince leaders to more directly confront climate change, she joined in the weekly climate strikes at city hall during her exchange.

### 2019-20 LONG-TERM EXCHANGES HOSTED BY REGION



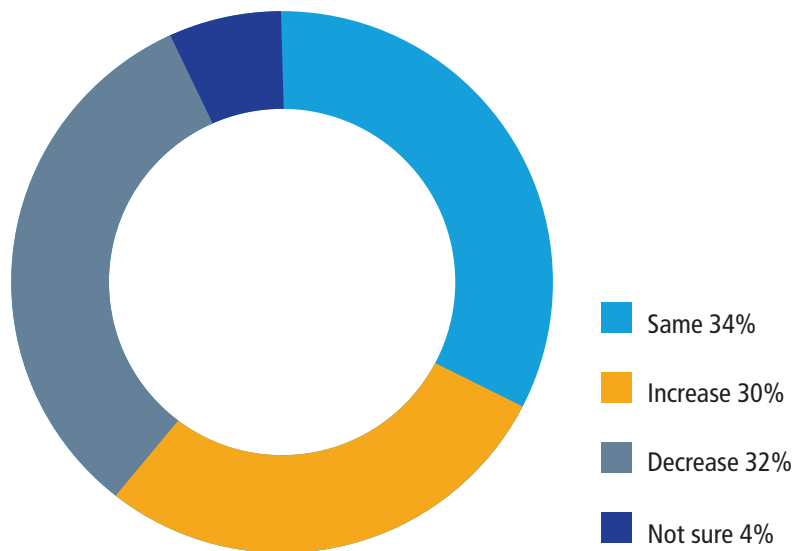
## LONG-TERM EXCHANGES BY COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

HOST COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
United States	1,112	19%
Brazil	672	11%
France	489	8%
Mexico	484	8%
Taiwan	283	5%
Argentina	237	4%
Italy	233	4%
Belgium	208	3%
Australia	186	3%
Canada	184	3%
Japan	170	3%
Denmark	141	2%
Switzerland	136	2%
Chile	135	2%
Spain	120	2%
Finland	105	2%
Thailand	100	2%
India	95	2%
Colombia	94	2%
Ecuador	85	1%
Peru	72	1%
Netherlands	60	1%
Austria	54	1%
Sweden	49	1%
Poland	47	1%

HOST COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Czech Republic	44	1%
Korea	41	1%
Hungary	39	<1%
New Zealand	39	<1%
Bolivia	32	<1%
Norway	32	<1%
Slovakia	30	<1%
Paraguay	26	<1%
Russia	23	<1%
Indonesia	20	<1%
Turkey	17	<1%
Romania	16	<1%
South Africa	16	<1%
Croatia	15	<1%
Lithuania	12	<1%
Philippines	8	<1%
Zimbabwe	4	<1%
Iceland	3	<1%
Portugal	2	<1%
Réunion	2	<1%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	<1%
Faroe Islands	1	<1%
Namibia	1	<1%
Nigeria	1	<1%
Uruguay	1	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,977</b>	<b>100%</b>

This table shows the number and percentage of long-term exchanges hosted by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

## NUMBER OF LONG-TERM EXCHANGES



### Long-term exchange trends and challenges

Participating districts were asked to compare the number of long-term exchanges in 2019-20 with previous Rotary years.

The top reasons districts cited for an increase or decrease in long-term exchanges are listed below. The data suggests that interest and participation from communities, especially students and Rotary clubs, are vital to the growth of Youth Exchange. This is consistent with previous results and further reinforces that idea.

#### Top reasons for an increase in long-term exchanges

1. Increased participation from Rotary clubs
2. Increased interest from youth
3. Stronger relationships with partner districts

#### Top reasons for a decrease in long-term exchanges

1. Lack of interested Rotary clubs
2. Lack of interested youth
3. Lack of interested host families

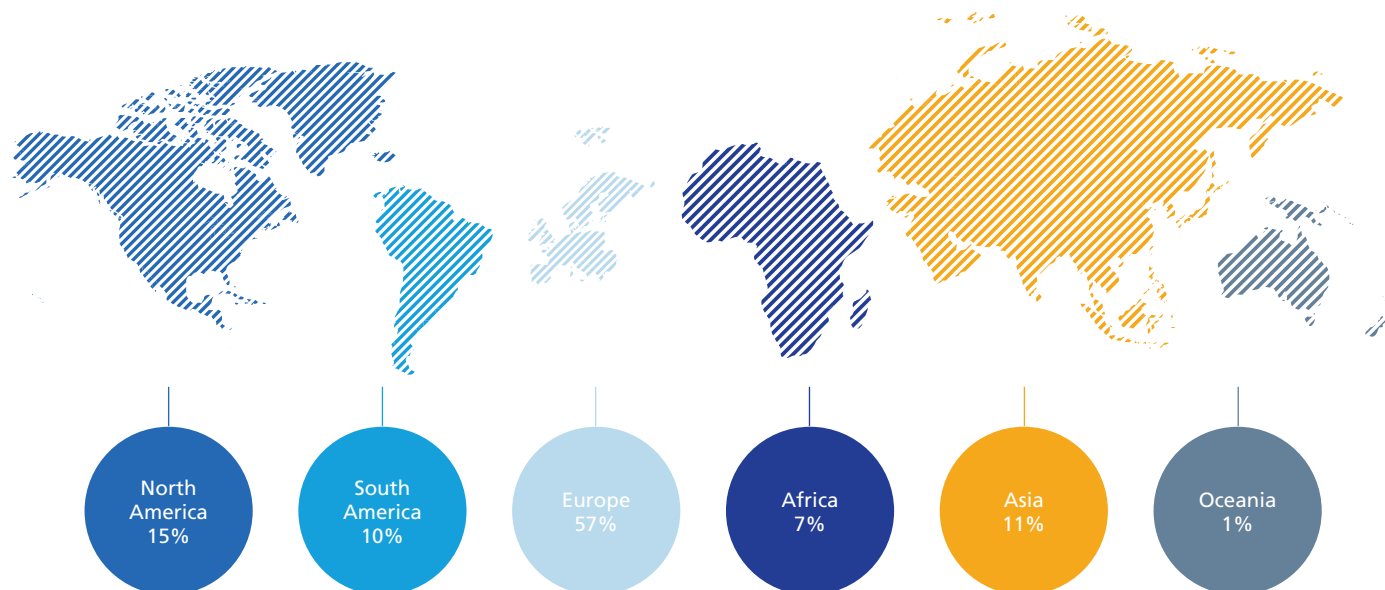


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## SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES

Short-term exchanges last from several days to three months. They are often structured as youth camps, tours, or homestays that take place when school isn't in session. In 2019-20, **169** participating districts hosted **2,206** short-term exchanges, representing **27%** of all Youth Exchange activity. The chart below shows the percentage of exchanges by region.

### 2019-20 SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES HOSTED BY REGION



## RETURNING HOME AGAIN: HOW ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE BUILDS RESILIENCE

Now, I am more mindful of taking care of my physical and mental health, compassionate towards others (especially to those facing challenges), and inspired to do meaningful work.

As Einstein once said, "Adversity introduces a man to himself." I couldn't agree more.

While "surviving reverse culture shock" may not be a selling point at first for the Rotary Youth Exchange program, it is indeed an important by-product.

I am very thankful to Rotary for providing me with such an amazing opportunity.

Living in Japan and returning "home" to Canada afforded me many experiences. Perhaps most importantly, my experiences acquainted me with the qualities of resilience and loving kindness. Two qualities I am proud to possess.





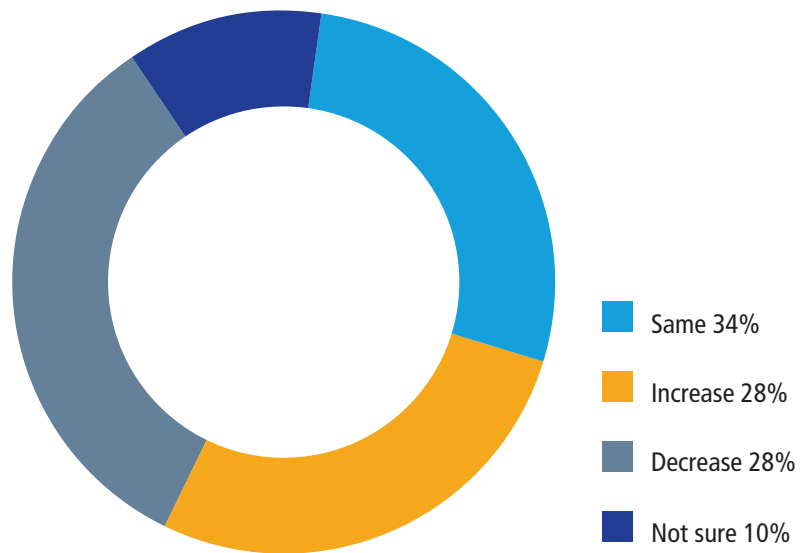
## SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES BY COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

HOST COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Italy	346	16%
United States	264	12%
France	210	10%
South Africa	124	6%
Brazil	114	5%
Taiwan	107	5%
Argentina	98	4%
Denmark	95	4%
Turkey	82	4%
Spain	64	3%
England	58	3%
Czech Republic	51	2%
Romania	51	2%
Switzerland	50	2%
Finland	49	2%
Japan	46	2%
Canada	39	2%
Slovakia	37	2%
Austria	36	2%
Hungary	34	2%
Poland	31	1%
Egypt	28	1%
India	28	1%

HOST COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Mexico	27	1%
Malaysia	23	1%
Belgium	21	1%
Netherlands	21	1%
Croatia	15	1%
Korea	10	<1%
Singapore	9	<1%
Thailand	9	<1%
Botswana	8	<1%
Australia	6	<1%
New Zealand	4	<1%
Chile	2	<1%
Indonesia	2	<1%
Peru	2	<1%
Sweden	2	<1%
Colombia	1	<1%
Russia	1	<1%
Wales	1	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>100%</b>

This table shows the breakdown of short-term exchanges by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

## NUMBER OF SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES



## Short-term exchange trends and challenges

Districts were asked to compare the number of short-term exchanges in 2019-20 with previous Rotary years.

### Top reasons for an increase in short-term exchanges

1. Increased interest from youth
2. Increased participation from Rotary clubs
3. Stronger relationships with partner districts

### Top reasons for a decrease in short-term exchanges

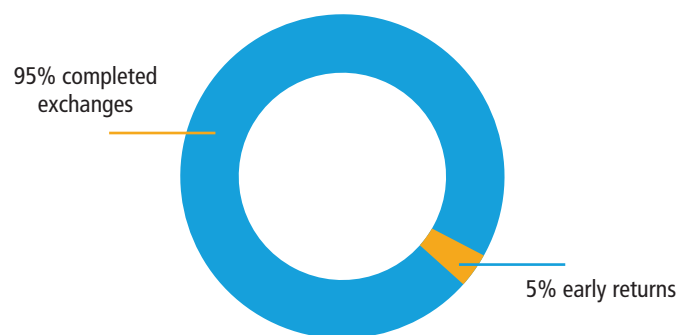
1. Lack of interested youth
2. Lack of interested Rotary clubs
3. Lack of interested host families

## ENDING AN EXCHANGE EARLY

### ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE COMPLETION RATE

Participating districts reported that **398** long-term exchanges ended early in 2019-20, or **5%** of the total number of exchanges.

**This figure does not include early returns due to the pandemic**, which are discussed in another section.



### REASONS FOR ENDING AN EXCHANGE EARLY

Excluding early returns related to the pandemic, homesickness was the most frequent reason given for students returning early from their exchanges. These are the reasons districts cited for early returns.

Early Return Reasons	Number
Rule violation	84
Homesickness	78
Physical health	23
Mental health	23
Problems with host family	20
Problems at school	17
School requirements in home country	9
Breach of law	4
Problems with host club	3
Other	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>

## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

A total of **eight** new Rotex alumni associations were chartered during 2019-20, including two countrywide Rotex alumni associations in Austria and Japan. Rotex alumni associations are groups of Rotary Youth Exchange alumni who come together to network and volunteer with their local Youth Exchange program.

### Rotex alumni associations chartered in 2019-20:

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Rotex Austria Alumni Association

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Rotex Japan Alumni Association

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Rotary District 2050 Rotex Alumni Association — Italy

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Rotary District 2080 Rotex Alumni Association — Italy

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Rotary District 2380 Rotex Alumni Association — Sweden

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Rotary District 4621 Rotex Alumni Association — Brazil

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Rotary District 5360 Rotex Alumni Association — Canada

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Rotary District 9710 Rotex Alumni Association — Australia

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In 2019-20, **366** districts, or **91%** of participating districts, reported involving Rotary Youth Exchange alumni as volunteers for their district-organized Rotary Youth Exchange activities.

According to the survey results, **2,607** students who participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in 2019-20 planned to actively participate in other Rotary programs in 2020-21.





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## DID YOU KNOW?

According to Rotary International’s 2019 Member and Participant Experience Feedback survey:

- About one-third (**32%**) of nonmember Rotary Youth Exchange alumni would like to join a Rotary club, Rotaract club, or a nonclub-based participation model - “The program [Rotary Youth Exchange] is the reason I joined [my] Rotary club.”
- Nearly half of the alumni surveyed (**45%**) anticipate eventually becoming lifelong members of Rotary
- Almost half of alumni (**48%**) reported getting involved as volunteers for club-organized service projects
- Many alumni surveyed chose to serve as a host family as a way to reciprocate

*The survey was sent in November 2019 to 70,158 people. Of the respondents, 858 identified themselves as former Rotary Youth Exchange students.*

“As a past student, I really found you grow as an individual when exposed to other cultures, people, families, and new travel experiences. I knew my son would grow emotionally and make lasting connections [on his own exchange].”

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE EXPANDED MY VIEW OF THE WORLD

Alumna Xolisile Sithole gained a new perspective during her year in Canada. After returning home to South Africa — with some trepidation about leaving behind routines and relationships in her host country — she realized that her experience allowed her to welcome more of the world into her life.

“My youth exchange year taught me how to appreciate cultures that were different from my own. And I can move fearlessly in the world because I know that as a member of the Rotary family, I have family everywhere.”

— Xolisile Sithole



## 2019-20 PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Rotary Youth Exchange certification supports student safety by establishing minimum requirements for participating districts. All certified districts are subject to a program evaluation, which protects the high standards of Rotary Youth Exchange. The evaluation, conducted by RI staff, is designed to determine a district's compliance with the Youth Protection and Rotary Youth Exchange sections of the **Rotary Code of Policies**. It also provides assurance to RI that a district is upholding its commitment to implementing certification requirements. Through a document review and a series of in-person interviews, RI staff and a Rotary counterpart who is unaffiliated with the district under evaluation:

- Analyze the district's procedures for governing the program in accordance with local laws and RI policies
- Obtain information about the program, including its distinctive qualities, its best practices, and its common challenges, from club and district leaders, students, and other volunteers
- Gather participant commentary about various aspects of the district program
- Assess and present an unbiased opinion of the district's strengths and areas for improvement
- Help district leaders address any policy compliance concerns about student safety or overall program management

During 2019-20, these districts were evaluated in person:

District	Country	Date
2360	Sweden	Sept. 2019
4281	Colombia	Oct. 2019

Both districts successfully completed their evaluations, implementing any corrective action if and where necessary.

Evaluations planned in Japan, Korea, and Mexico for March and April 2020 were canceled due to COVID-19.

# ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE: RESILIENCE AMIDST A PANDEMIC

During the 2019-20 Rotary year, **the coronavirus pandemic affected Rotary International and the Rotary Youth Exchange program** in unprecedented ways. In early 2020, within just the first few months of the pandemic, thousands of students, families, and Rotary volunteers made the difficult but necessary decision to end exchanges early and return students home. For some students, remaining in their host countries was the safer choice — whether due to travel restrictions, health concerns, or at the discretion of their parents or guardians. In both situations, students received support from their sponsor district upon their arrival and from their host districts until they could safely return.

Despite the many unforeseen challenges the pandemic posed, the Rotary Youth Exchange community remained strong, turning each challenge into opportunity. During stay-at-home orders, students recorded videos of encouragement to share with one another and their communities. Rotary members stayed in contact with students whose exchanges were cut short, finding new ways to support them through the abrupt transition of returning home earlier than expected. Some districts began exploring and developing virtual exchanges, providing students with an opportunity to connect with other cultures through safe and meaningful online experiences.

The 2019-20 year was unlike any other, but it reminded us of what we've always been known to be true: The Rotary Youth Exchange community is resilient and capable of overcoming any challenge. Thanks to the dedication of Rotary members, eager students, and passionate volunteers, we will come through this together and stronger than ever.

It's important to realize that this is not the first time that international exchange programs have been challenged by an international crisis, and most study abroad programs have historically rebounded very quickly. In the 2020-21 year, COVID-19 may close some doors temporarily, but we know that with any challenge comes great opportunity.

A pause could provide a chance for clubs and districts to strengthen their programs and to find new, innovative ways to engage young people with Rotary. I have no doubt the program will come out of this challenge even stronger.

— James Anthony “Tony” Black, 2019-20 RI Director





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## EARLY RETURNS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

Rotary Youth Exchange was directly affected by the coronavirus in 2019-20, especially in terms of total early returns and total number of exchanges worldwide. The complete impact on the program is still being determined, but these numbers have been reported by participating districts as of 15 September 2020.

Participating districts reported **2,475** early returns, **30%** of total exchanges, for reasons related to the pandemic. The majority of these early returns were students on long-term exchanges. Some short-term programs were canceled entirely.

Of participating districts, **87%** reported that some or all of their inbound students had to return home due to the expanding pandemic. This demonstrates how the coronavirus affected nearly all participating districts in some way. A total of **400** districts reported that they were committed to either create or improve their crisis management plans to ensure that future students and district officials are prepared for another crisis.

For districts whose inbound students continued their exchanges, **282** districts reported that they kept students engaged through:

- Virtual Rotary club meetings
- Online language and culture lessons
- Virtual check-ins and socializing

## ROTARY MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: HOW TO SUPPORT ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

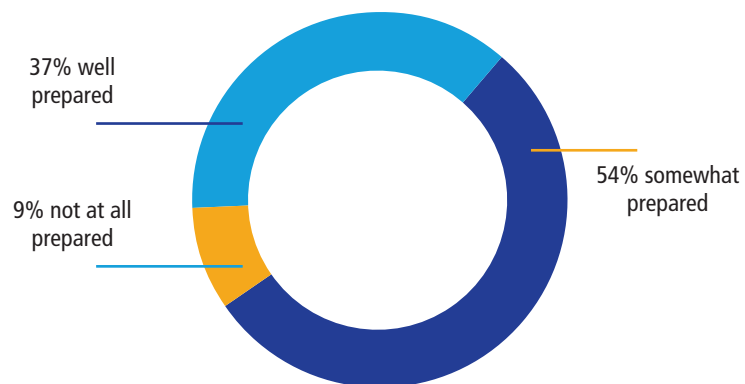
During the early days of the pandemic, Rotary Youth Exchange Outbound Coordinator Pat Carson of District 5080 shared her advice for supporting students' mental health and staying connected to host families. This advice came at a crucial moment as the world was beginning to understand the long-term effects of the pandemic and the toll it can take on people's mental health.



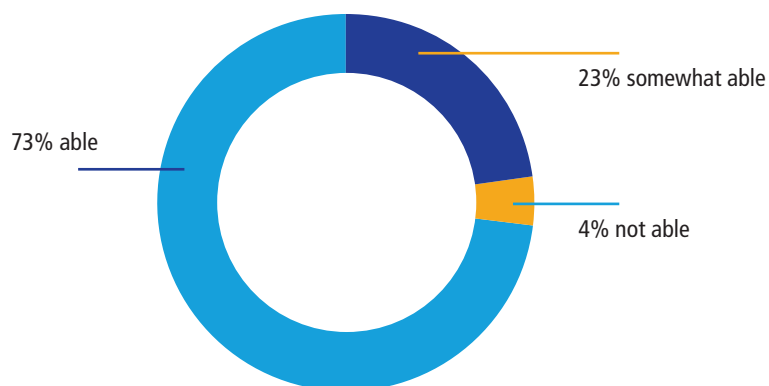


## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

### DISTRICT LEADERS' LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS FOR CRISES



### DISTRICT LEADERS' ABILITY TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



When district leaders were asked about their level of preparedness for a crisis like the coronavirus, **37%** responded they were well prepared, **54%** said they were somewhat prepared, and **9%** said they were not at all prepared. This indicates that many districts had some form of plan in place to respond to crises, but that there's a significant opportunity to improve crisis preparedness and management.

Leaders were also asked about their ability to make informed decisions at the beginning of the crisis, based on communications from local governments and Rotary International. Nearly **73%** of leaders said they felt able to make informed decisions, **23%** said they felt somewhat able to do that, and **4%** said they did not feel able to do so.

#### New resources

Rotary International released two new resources to help clubs and districts address the challenges of the pandemic:

- **Developing a Crisis Management Plan**
- **Rotary Youth Exchange – Virtual Exchanges**

## HOW THE COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER

As the Rotary Youth Exchange community began adapting to the pandemic and a life of shutdowns, students, volunteers, and alumni alike volunteered their time in a multitude of ways — from actively working to combat the coronavirus in their local communities to posting uplifting videos showcasing their improved language skills. Here's how the Rotary Youth Exchange community came together to support one another and their communities:

As the lead staff member for community connections for the city of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Rotary Youth Exchange alumna and Rotary Peace Fellow Lorelei Higgins undertook a **community assessment** as part of understanding current COVID-19 response efforts and what's required for a long-term recovery in the city.



The North American Youth Exchange Network (NAYEN) developed a comprehensive online course and training, **Coming Home in the Coronavirus World**, that covers the challenges for students who returned home early from their exchanges due to the pandemic.

Multidistrict Chair Laura Brianza in Italy shared a video detailing how students who were on lockdown in the country used their time productively, improving their language skills, embracing Italian culture, and encouraging others to stay safe.



Rotex International, a collective of Rotex alumni associations from around the globe, hosted a series of live, online panel discussions and workshops on topics from youth protection to how to leverage an exchange experience in a professional context.

Samantha Walley, the youth exchange chair for District 6840, helped an inbound Venezuelan student organize a **virtual conference** called Interactive Quarantine about safe service projects to carry out during stay-at-home orders for Interact clubs and Rotary Youth Exchange students in Venezuela and the United States.



Many participants and alumni started campaigns to raise funds for both local and international nonprofits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus and to assist those in need.

# 2020 VIRTUAL YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICERS POSTCONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

An estimated 4,750 members of the Rotary Youth Exchange community gathered online for the first virtual **Youth Exchange Officers Postconvention**, 27-28 June 2020. Participants from around the world had the chance to network, take part in webinars hosted by Rotary International and a youth protection expert from the abuse-prevention organization Praesidium, and learn from Rotary Youth Exchange leaders. Videos that were made available on demand served to illustrate the best practices and inspire the leaders of Rotary Youth Exchange.

## **Youth Exchange Officers Postconvention highlight: Virtual exchanges**

Multidistrict Vice Chair John Koetz presented on the important topic of creating and hosting virtual Rotary Youth Exchange programs while the pandemic prevents exchanges from proceeding as usual. Many participants have used this presentation as a starting point for their own programs, which helps ensure that Rotary Youth Exchange continues despite the circumstances. To learn more about facilitating virtual exchanges, please refer to **Rotary Youth Exchange — Virtual Exchanges**.

**Find all of the Youth Exchange Officers Postconvention presentations here.**



## **2019-20 YOUTH EXCHANGE COMMITTEE**

### **Chair**

Maria Letícia Martins Campos Ferreira — Brazil

### **Vice Chair**

George N. Wood — United States

### **Members**

Marcelo Gustavo Angione — Mexico

Yuan (Tiffany) Chen — Taiwan

Andrea Cremoncini — Italy

Liisa Stjernberg — Finland

### **Director Liaison**

James Anthony "Tony" Black — Scotland

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Email [youthexchange@rotary.org](mailto:youthexchange@rotary.org) for questions about the program.