

1. Who are we?

Under the leadership of ...

-Walter B. Gyger, Representative of Rotary international to UN and other international Organizations in Geneva

-PDG Dr. Himansu Basu MD, Technical Coordinator in Maternal and Child Health (2013-19), Medical Director, Rotarian Action Group on Population Development (2011-), Founder/Chairman, Rotarian Doctors Fellowship (2002- 2010)

-Pr. Pierre J. Hoffmeyer MD, Alternate representative Rotary International to UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Past President RC Genève



...Rotarians from the Geneva Lake Region have decided to establish a Rotary Geneva Health Group.

2. The Issue

Maternal and child health in the world today

“Every day, around the world an estimated 830 women die from pregnancy or childbirth related causes, most in low-income countries. An additional 7000 newborn babies die each day.” This quote is taken from Jennifer M Radin MD found in the Lancet (October 2018).

These chilling numbers are amazing. Think of it... 7830 deaths per day amounts to 32 fully loaded jet liners crashing each day! Almost a thousand each month! At that rate the world’s airline fleets would soon be depleted. How long could this situation last before authorities around the globe would start taking notice and look for solutions? And more especially so, because, as in the case of the all too frequent maternal and child deaths around the world, most stem from preventable causes. Of course we all know that the problem of maternal and child deaths is immensely challenging, multifaceted and multifactorial. The same could have been said of the Polio epidemic where Rotary, partnering with WHO, has been, and is still, so successful. Preventable maternal and child deaths can likewise be greatly reduced and finally vanquished altogether. However, step by step solutions must be found to change this appalling and shameful situation. First the basics, such as the enhancement of communications, transportation and ambulance facilities, must be looked at. Early warning systems of developing or impending obstetrical and medical complications relying on novel smartphone-based telemedicine technologies are becoming more and more popular in the developed world. This technology uses inexpensive hardware that could be made available to women even in the poorest and remotest areas. Women all over the world could have access to high quality medical advice and nursing care to avoid the catastrophic complications of unrecognized eclampsia, gestational diabetes, infections or peripartum depression amongst the many life-threatening complications looming over unsupervised pregnancies. Impeccable standards of hygiene need to be applied to all institutions, even the most isolated, receiving and caring for pregnancies and child care. Acceptable basic nutritional standards must to be provided to every expectant mother in all regions. Availability of adequate medical and nursing supplies, including functioning blood banks and neo-natal care, are essential. It is a given that competent care givers are the cornerstone of maternal and child care. Locally based “teaching the teachers” programs will insure transmission of knowledge and competencies and provide long term availability of dedicated and expert obstetric healthcare providers. Basic obstetrical and surgical techniques must be taught and practiced on appropriate simulators in a dedicated teaching environment. Supportive care during pregnancy, labour and post-partum needs to be provided, thereby preventing unwanted and sometime fatal complications. As you may see the catalogue of essentials and needs is long and wide. If we are to be efficient and successful, acquisition of data will be key to direction the chosen course or courses of action. Necessary choices and decisions will have to be made if this ambitious project is to come to fruition.

3. Objectives

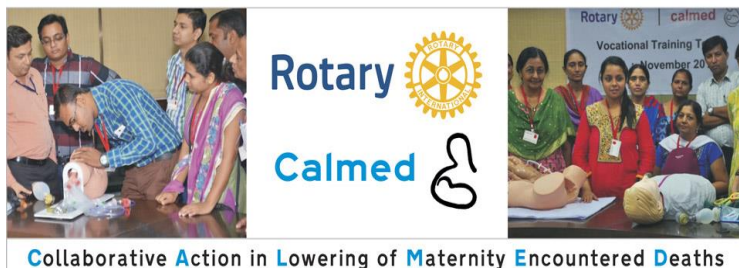
To contribute to Rotary Projects in two of the focus areas of Rotary International: “DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT” and “MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH” more effective and efficient by:

- a. Facilitating exchanges of knowledge and experiences
- b. Joining forces on data collection and evaluation
- c. Linking the top (World Health Organization) to the bottom (Clubs/Districts)

4. Focus:

To start with it was decided to concentrate on “Maternal and Child Health (MCH) with the long-term goal: **ZERO PREVENTABLE MORTALITY FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.**

Source: <https://calmedrotary.org/>



5. Plan of Action:

At the Rotary Convention 2018 in Toronto Dr. Himansu Basu sounded out other Rotarians implementing or preparing MCH GG-Projects as to whether they are interested to exchange knowledge and experiences, joining forces on data collection and evaluation and in bottom up and top down networking. These result oriented exchanges will be communicated to the group. It is intended to make a civil society contribution to the implementation of the global strategy¹ of WHO to achieve the SDGs as defined in the Global Agenda 2030.

Meetings are now underway and a successful dialogue is in progress between Rotary representatives and the leading authorities in the field at WHO.

The Rotary Geneva Health Group will organize within 6 months a meeting with the relevant WHO department to discuss how Rotary MCH projects can best contribute to the global strategy of WHO.

The Geneva Rotary Health group will prepare in collaboration with WHO the agenda and relevant documentation.

After the meeting decisions on the continuation of the work will be taken.

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¹ Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’, and Adolescent’s Health. <http://www.who.int/life-course/partners/global-strategy/en/>