



# **“Youth is the agent of change”**

By Dr. Michel Jazzar, District 2452 Governor Elect.

Rotaract Global MUN, Beirut – Lebanon August 17, 2017.

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**Fellow Rotaractors, Rotarians and friends of Rotary,**

May I thank Rotaractors Maxton Scotland, Natalia Hermida and of Rotaractors of Sahel Metn to give me, as former PP of Rotaract 1976-1977, and, RI 2452 District Governor Elect for 2018-2019, this opportunity to share with you a hearty message based on my experience embracing youth, peace and UN-SDGs.

It is with great pleasure that I have received an invitation as RI Representative to the United Nations – ESCWA to address you during the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Rotaract Global Model of UN under the main theme of **“A Nuclear Free world”** connecting to the 13<sup>th</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goal.

**Fellow Rotaractors, Rotarians and friends of Rotary,**

Since its establishment, Rotary has worked closely and in partnership with the United Nations and other organizations toward a better and more peaceful world.

Rotary currently holds the highest consultative status offered to a nongovernmental organization by the UN’s Economic and Social Council-

ECOSOC, which oversees many specialized UN agencies. Rotary maintains its relationship with a number of UN bodies, programs, and commissions [e.g. ESCWA] through its representatives. Serving as Rotary's informal "ambassadors" the representatives work toward strengthening Rotary's participation and reputation at the United Nations and the international community.

One of my specific objectives, as RI Representative to UN-ESCWA, since 2006, is to identify programs, projects or activities where Rotary clubs might coordinate their efforts with the ESCWA at national or district levels.

The common effort between ESCWA and Rotary clubs of Lebanon brings back a book *"MDGs during Transition: Towards an Inclusive and Comprehensive Development"* in a special version. This new issue of ESCWA's MDG Report edited late 2011, renewed year 2013 and updated with the new indicators of the 17 SDGs was printed out into 3000 items and addressed for the university students at the Institute of Social Sciences (Lebanese University) adopted as part of their curriculum, and to the teachers of Social Sciences and Economics at public secondary schools (in coordination with Ministry of Higher Education).

**Fellow Rotaractors, Rotarians and friends of Rotary,**

I would have loved to keep going to tell you a story from the past, but I think it is the future that interests us. While the past is attached to the history of self, leadership is projected into the future.

That is why I adapt my address to be consistent with our vision as 2018-2019 Governor of District 2452 which brings together nine countries (across 3 continents and 5 different languages).

Because you are the future, “Nuclear Free world” keeps you highly concerned and a civic education within Rotary values could draw a path map for a world free of nuclear.

So these are two strong directions of the Rotary coming year and I invite you to be part with conviction, confidence and passion:

- 1- “Youth is our Future” being the District 2452 theme for 2018-19
- 2- “Civic education and Peacebuilding” being the customize District area of focus.

### **1- District 2452 theme 2018-2019: “Youth is our Future.”**

We presently have the largest population of young people that the world has never known.

The UN GS said: “The NGOs must reach across ALL generations to create transformational and change.”

I am strongly convinced that the **YOUTH is** our “agent of change.” Using “is” instead of “are” in the District theme “Youth **is** our Future”, because we believe that youth is not only a matter of age, but of spirit as well.

Rotarians and Rotaractors, with their spirit of volunteering, the passion into engagement, the same grit in front of negativity, have many in common.

Rather than letting young people work in isolation, intergenerational joint projects are evidence of mutual trust **to serve society together and give young people the opportunity to shape the future.**

This initiative is to be accompanied by dialogue and to promoting the intergenerational exchange to reach together the unreachable!

Through partnerships with Rotary Clubs, community groups and leaders, **YOUTH** can demonstrate the benefits of their actions, into any field? Education, health, peace, environment ...

Such communication, planning, acting, monitoring and evaluating channels enable young people and Rotarians to explore common problems they face and to tackle them together, thus participating in the emergence of sustainable solutions and demonstrate that “Youth is our Future”.

By valuing the end of the action we will tie people within different groups, we will reduce the gap between generations and we push for an intergenerational dynamic of “osmosis and diffusion.”

To succeed, the District theme 2018-19 implementation needs your support, involvement and engagement in the program that it will be set by Rotarians former Rotaractors and current Rotaractor clubs members. The highlights of this program will be discussed during brainstorming retreat and meetings with you, so we will be fine for its implementation starting 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2018.

## **2- Civic Education and Peacebuilding.**

Surrounded by violence, civil wars, fear, Lebanon and many other countries of District 2452 are crushed under the weight of, refugees flooding from Iraq, Syria, Palestine and in addition to already existing infrastructure, environmental, economic and social issues!

This apocalyptic panorama has different roots. One of them is the lack of belonging to humanity and the movement of peoples enlightened by positive peace, that social peace which is at the basis of world peace. Our project is to train educators, in pilot governmental or private schools, by Rotary trainers with a specific curriculum and adapted materials, through cooperative games, participatory and creative conflict resolution activities which stress upon peaceful existence, civic engagement and awareness about larger issues, and thus to highlight the Rotary core of values which are: **Diversity, leadership, friendship, integrity and service.**

Knowledge of civic rights and development of the skills and practice of peaceful social engagement form the core of civic education. Effective programming in civic education requires special focus on classroom techniques; modeling good civic behavior in the classroom is necessary to impart civic skills for participation, in addition to knowledge of rights and processes. Case studies of civic education programming in District countries illustrate the challenges of working in post conflict contexts and prevent new conflicts. These challenges can be met partially by a focus on high-quality materials and teacher training, engagement with education officials at the highest level possible, and sustained attention and adaptation following

lessons learned. The cases also show that opportunities arise continually to use civic education more informally, as in periods of constitutional reform or elections, when attention fixes on issues of governance and participation.

Using creative techniques, such as music or theater, can carry the message to a wider audience, often more effectively, than printed materials. Together, the theory and practice of civic education stimulates attention to the importance of civic knowledge, skills, and practice in designing peacebuilding support for post conflict societies or to prevent new conflicts.

Civic competency includes not only civic knowledge, but also civic skills and interpersonal/intrapersonal dispositions.

In the areas of peacebuilding within community, we have witnessed the need for civic education.

The RI District 2452, through high level educated Rotarians will start brainstorming and managing inter-relationships between Rotary, young generation and UN agencies that can be interested in the project to set its strategy and curriculum content before the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.

To wrap up the “civic education and peacebuilding” , I believe that the limitations of particular resources has never been hindered the philosophy of civic education and engagement and we have witnessed cooperation in the local and the international scales from offering a way to actively tackle in order to promote good behaviors

Cooperation among Rotary family and friends of Rotary has often reached a valuable end. It is your role, young people, to tangle hands , to work together on challenging the systems in place with a philosophy of inclusiveness and a

vision of tomorrow leaders – a matter, in my humble opinion - that the world is in dire need of.

**Fellow Rotaractors, Rotarians and friends of Rotary,**

Rotary brings together a global network of volunteers dedicated to tackling the world's humanitarian challenges.

Rotary, within societies and young leaders, builds peace, international understanding through education, humanitarian service.

You are those young leaders and we believe in your capacity to change the world for a better place to live. **YOU ARE THE AGENT OF CHANGE.**

“If you ever think you're too small to be effective, you've never been in bed with a mosquito!” — Wendy Lesko

Thank you!