

# Year in Review: International Service Committee

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## 2009-2010 Rotary Year

Early in our Rotary year, the chair of this committee changed. Roger Frayne took over the position of Club Treasurer, and asked Peter McKenzie-Brown to become the International Service chair. After this change, committee members included Bill Dickson, Roger Frayne, Peter McKenzie-Brown, Irene Osteneck, Bill Ross and Roy Sudipto.

The following projects preoccupied us.

### Haiti

In September, we made a \$5,000 donation to a microcredit project in Haiti. Only four months later, a dreadful earthquake virtually destroyed the country, which was already desperately poor and dysfunctional. In response, our committee led a fund-raising drive to contribute to relief efforts. We successfully raised more than \$8,000 directly. Since that money received generous matching grants from government, its leveraged value was far greater than the initial amount we raised.

Our club was also able to provide a \$5,000 to Shelterbox, an international aid agency that provides emergency shelter during disasters like earthquakes and war. This donation provided emergency shelter and household equipment for as many as 50 people.

### Southeast Asia

Working with the Rotary Club of Calgary, Alberta Community Spirit (an agency of the province) and The Rotary Foundation, we had arranged for a substantial sum of money to be invested in an educational project in Northern Thailand. Unfortunately, some difficulties within the Thai host club made the delivery of this project impossible, and so we asked had to have the money returned.

Working with our Rotary Club of Calgary partners, and with the agreement of Alberta Community Spirit, we redirected this money – approximately US\$44,000 – to Sustainable Cambodia (SC), a not-for-profit operating in Cambodia.

This money is being used to upgrade SC's arts and computer education programs; for preschool health and education and health and hygiene supplies for rural students and to assist in new student enrolment; for rooftop rainwater harvesting and the provision of biosand water filters; and to purchase a walk-behind tractor to improve agricultural productivity in target villages.

### Sri Lanka

Partnering with the Rotary Club of Capital City (Colombo), we undertook two projects in Sri Lanka. One is a project to provide prosthetic limbs in rural areas in the southern portion of the country, which has just ended a long and bloody civil war. On a trial basis, we invested \$6,000 in this project. If this is successful, our committee will likely continue to support this project in the future. A preliminary report on this project provided the following statistics:

New limbs fixed	72
Belt, foot repairs	3

Referred to Colombo	3
Make new foot drop	2 (One lady lower limb and one above knee)
Personnell from the Forces	15 (due to land mines)
Referred to Badulla Hospital	20

We also invested \$3,000 in a computer education project operated by our Sri Lankan partner. The idea is to develop computer skills within the country, to enable students to get higher-paying jobs.

### **India**

Working with the Calgary-based CHILD Foundation, the Rotary Club of Calgary and Alberta Community Spirit and a private individual, we raised \$44,000 toward a 16-bed hospital for women and children in rural India. At time of writing, this project is incomplete. We had asked Community Spirit for \$25,000, but due to budget cuts the maximum grant given was \$16,000. We did receive that amount.

Of particular interest, our committee's advocate for this project, Roy Sudipto, arranged for a newspaper columnist to write an article about this project in *The Calgary Herald*. One outcome was a \$40,000 unsolicited donation to CHILD Foundation, the project's sponsor.