# Creating Service Projects

I am a vital part of a worldwide service organization meeting needs in communities.

## Session Goals:

- Identify the qualities of a good service project
- Relate the culture of your club to meeting the needs of your community
- Explore effective strategies and best practices for creating and leading successful service projects in your club.

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### Resources

- Community Assessment Tools
  https://my-cms.rotary.org/en/document/community-assessment-tools

- The Rotary Foundation's 7 Areas of Focus
  https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes

- Tips to a Successful Project
  https://www.rotary.org/en/tips-successful-rotary-project

- Lead Your Club Service Projects Committee
  https://my-cms.rotary.org/en/document/lead-your-club-service-projects-committee

- Rotary Community Corps
  https://www.rotary.org/en/our-programs/rotary-community-corps

- Toxic Charity
  https://www.luptoncenter.org/toxic-charity-holistic-overview/

- John Kotter's 8 steps to leading change
  https://www.kotterinc.com/methodology/8-steps/

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*All PDF materials are available at www.rlifiles.com*

**Session Topics**

1) What is a service project? *Discussion*

2) Why do they matter? *Note: after discussion, reference the first service project in Rotary. A "comfort station" in 1907, Chicago, Illinois, USA.*

Transition: Let's talk about how we identify the best projects for us…

3) What is the best way to find a project? How did you find your last project? *Talk to community leaders, do a community assessment (review the tool – what other questions could you ask?) Do you do the same thing every year?*

   a) Why this approach? *(review Toxic Charity) Projects must come from the recipients/beneficiaries to be effective. Consider ethics.*

Transition:  Once you find a project, how do you get the club on board?

4) How do you present the project to your club? What steps could you use? *(refer to the attachment: John Kotter's Eight Steps to Leading Change after discussion)*

   • Validate the need.
   • Establish buy-in
   • Gain support of club members and the community
   • Time, costs, level of involvement, and size of project are important
   • How does the project fit in with other club activities?
   • What role does ethics play in planning and execution?

5) Develop a "business plan" for a service project.

6) How will you evaluate the success or lack of success of your project? What are your benchmarks?
*Possibilities: Survey the beneficiaries, survey club members who participated in the project, maintain records of number of users, consider whether budget was adequate, consider hurdles that were not anticipated, etc.*

7) What new ideas did you try to include? How could you make it "bigger, better, bolder?"
*Examples: (1) A club might partner with another Rotary club, a Rotaract or Interact club, another district, or another non-Rotarian organization in the community, such as a government agency, church, or other non-profit group to duplicate the project or make it bigger. (2) A club might expand its service "footprint" to include more beneficiaries or a related group of beneficiaries. (3) A club might expand into related areas based on project success, such as expanding a school literacy project to include mentors for children, child nutrition education, or actual meals served at the school.*

8) What options do we have for fundraising?

   a) Discuss the differences between a community service project and a purely

fundraising event. Can the two be combined?

b) How can a fundraising event also be a membership event for Rotary?
*Telling the story of your project can attract like-minded people to your club.*

c) What are some of the best fundraising events you have been involved with or have heard of?

**SUMMARY**

Good Rotary Service projects require:

- Meeting a community identified need today
- Creativity
- Sustainability
- Risk taking
- New ideas
- Keeping prior projects only if they are still needed

## Service Project A

Rotarians and community leaders have been concerned that there are not enough recreational facilities and activities for teenagers in the community. With little to do and no place to "hang out," teenagers have been gathering at the shopping mall or the town square, sometimes getting into trouble and harassing older people and other teens.

A team of Rotarians visited the Mayor, who agreed that more recreational facilities and activities are needed for teenagers, but the town budget cannot pay for a youth center, etc. The Mayor did say that the town has a vacant lot that could be donated or used for some purpose. It also has a vacant two-room school building that could possibly be repaired and used for teen activities; however, it has not been used for several years and is not in very good condition.

## Service Project B

Members of your club have talked to the head of the local welfare department about possible projects, and she told them of an elderly couple who were largely confined to their home because they couldn't navigate the 6 steps to the front of their home. They also had trouble climbing the steps to their bedroom and often ended up sleeping on a couch or even on the floor. The head of the welfare department asked if Rotary could help the couple.

## Service Project C

Members of your club have talked with the principal and some teachers and guidance counselors at an elementary school in town to learn the major issues for the students. Unfortunately, there are a lot of problems, but the educators believe that the most significant issue is that some third graders are far behind in reading skills, and some can't read at all. What can your Rotary club do to help third graders become better readers?

## Service Project D

Members of your club are concerned about the impact of mowing roadside hedgerows on the environment and local wildlife. There is also great concern about the water quality of the local stream. After talking with local politicians, you have found they are supportive, but have no specific plans. What can your Rotary club do to address these problems?


## Service Project E

You have become aware that many elderly people in your local community live in loneliness either by living alone in their homes or by living in a nursing home. Many of the older people want to be participants in society but have no arenas to participate on.

At the same time, there are several young people in your local community who have little to do and are walking rootless around in the local community.
How can you as a Rotary club contribute to young and old people finding common meeting arenas where the old ones can participate, and the young ones can find meaningful activities?

## Service Project F

In recent years, many young people have gathered in the city on public holidays and have been obviously influenced by alcohol and other drugs. Several are 16 years of age or younger and are not allowed to drink or buy alcohol.

On the last public holiday, many young people gathered in the city center and the police warned against a negative youth culture and called for more sober adult role models in the city center on these days.

How can you, as a Rotary, take part in preventing a negative development in the city center and how can you get more elderly people on board?

# Service Project G

Many youngsters do not know what they are going to study when they have finish secondary school and are unsure of what courses they should choose on high school.

Many Rotarians have long professional experience from many different professions and can tell young people about their experiences from professional life.

A secondary school has contacted your local Rotary Club to organize a career day where young people can get advice on which education they can choose to achieve their goals.

Decide how your Rotary club can organize a career day in collaboration with the secondary school.

# Service Project Questions

- Can a Rotary club do anything to help?

- If so, what can Rotarians do "hands on" to help?

- How much funding is required? Fundraising?

- How can the project be designed? What is needed?

- Will the project generate good publicity for the club?

- Can the members be "sold" on the project?

- Is this a one-year project or a continuing project?

- What other community resources are available or what other organizations should be involved?

- What are the steps necessary to move forward?

> *"The time we take to serve those who need us can be the turning point, not only in their lives but also in our own."*
>
> *1980-81 RI Pres. Rolf Klarich*
> *— Take Time to Serve*
> THE ROTARIAN, *July 1980*

# John Kotter's Eight Steps to Leading Change

https://www.kotterinc.com/methodology/8-steps/

1. **Create a sense of urgency**

   Inspire people to act – with passion and purpose – to achieve a bold, aspirational opportunity. Build momentum that excites people to pursue a compelling (and clear) vision of the future… together.

2. **Build a Guiding Coalition**

   A volunteer network needs a coalition of committed people – born of its own ranks – to guide it, coordinate it, and communicate its activities.

3. **Form a Strategic Vision**

   Clarify how the future will be different from the past and get buy-in for how you can make that future a reality through initiatives linked directly to the vision.

4. **Enlist a Volunteer "Army"**

   Large-scale change can only occur when massive numbers of people rally around a common opportunity. At an individual level, they must *want to* actively contribute. Collectively, they must be unified in the pursuit of achieving the goal together.

5. **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**

   Remove the obstacles that slow things down or create roadblocks to progress. Clear the way for people to innovate, work more nimbly across silos, and generate impact quickly.

6. **Generate Short-Term Wins**

   Wins are the molecules of results. They must be recognized, collected, and communicated – early and often – to track progress and energize volunteers to persist.

7. **Sustain Acceleration**

   "The way that you can guarantee success in a difficult change… is to not skip any of the steps or the learnings."

8. **Institute Change**

   Articulate the connections between new behaviors and organizational success, making sure they continue until they become strong enough to replace old habits. Evaluate systems and processes to ensure management practices reinforce the new behaviors, mindsets, and ways of working you invested in.

# Toxic Charity by Robert Lupton
## A Synopsis

**Toxic Charity the Book**
Toxic Charity was a book that Bob Lupton published in 2011. At the time of its publication, Bob Lupton and his wife Peggy had lived and worked in Atlanta for nearly 40 years. The organization Bob founded, which was initially called Family Consultation Services, was working to revitalize neighborhoods in Atlanta that had been deeply affected by systemic injustice.

Living alongside neighbors in Atlanta, Bob started to notice the ways many charity programs were unhelpful at best and at worst downright degrading. At the same time, he knew that everyone coming to his neighborhood to do charity had their hearts in the right place. Many of them truly wanted to help. They simply had no idea what they were doing was harmful. Bob wrote Toxic Charity to illustrate the reality of what was going on for his mostly white, mostly middle and upper class, mostly educated, and overwhelmingly Christian peers. He wanted them to see the true effects of their charity and offer them a new model.

**What *is* Toxic Charity**
At its core, Toxic Charity is trying to address chronic ongoing poverty through one-way crisis relief. Common charity models like toy giveaways, school supply handouts, food pantries, and the like are examples of short-term fixes focused on transferring resources. The issues they address tend to be much broader, larger, and more systemic. As a result, one-way charity rarely solves the underlying issue, but results in a cycle of continual one-way giving and receiving.

Unfortunately, Toxic charity can end up reinforcing assumptions about givers and receivers, namely the idea that receivers core issue is that they "lack" items or resources and "need" someone to provide them. This paradigm can bolster deeper biases, like the idea that low-income people don't know how to manage money or don't work hard enough.

Toxic Charity can get even more dangerous when a "giver" or program has little geographic or relational tie to the people they're giving to. Commuting into a neighborhood to give hand-outs can make it more difficult to form relationships based on dignity and trust.

**Common Toxic Charity Mistakes**
We talk to Change-Makers who really want to make a difference every day. Here are a few common Toxic Charity mistakes:

**Only Focusing on Resource Transfer**
Sometimes it can be tempting to try to transfer resources, only in a slightly more dignifying way. For example, we've encountered Change-Makers who realized that handing out Christmas presents to children can be really embarrassing for parents — it's toxic charity. The next step they take is hosting a Christmas store where parents can come and select toys for their kids, wrap them, and give them to their children. This is an absolutely improved model, and it's one

we use ourselves every year for Pride for Parents! What's key is that we know the toy store won't solve material needs. Resource transfer can be a healthy ecosystem and a way for organizations to engage, but it is not in itself the solution we are pursuing. This toy store isn't the only way we come alongside a neighborhood here in Historic South Atlanta.

## Shifting to Development without Relationships
 Proximity, or being emotionally, physically, and geographically integrated with the neighborhood where you want to work is absolutely essential. Change moves at the speed of trust. Trust is impossible without building neighborhood relationships. Relationships are shallow without time spent listening, learning, and seeking to understand. Yes, it can feel slow, and we know it can be tempting at times to change the systemic realities of a place without investing in relationships. Unfortunately, working on a systemic level without collaborating with neighbors can look like doing development *to* people without their consent. Building new roads or businesses can be great, but if they're completed without community buy-in, they will rarely make a difference and can even cause harm.

## Locating Toxicity in Neighbors
We all have biases. Interrogating them is critical to being a trustworthy partner. One common error we've seen is change-makers trying to change their models without changing their own hearts. We have seen some people try to make change while still viewing their neighbors or neighborhoods as deficient. We've had tough conversations with some people who come to the conclusion that Toxic Charity is toxic because recipients are greedy or lazy. These biases will get in the way of trust and true partnership. Beliefs like these also tend to ignore local history and the realities of systemic injustice. We encourage everyone to examine their internal biases and to examine the histories of systemic injustice. We're all part of systems that oppress some and give others an advantage. We're all also un-learning prejudices and assumptions we have. It's a journey!