

Rotex International Annual Report 2021-2022

1. The Board of 2021-2022

The year started with the newly elected board after the General Meeting in August 2021. From the previous board Emma Mulhern (USA) and Emiliano Giles (Mexico) continued their two-year terms and three new board members were elected: Leonie Kommoß (Germany), Aaryaman Upasani (India) and Julia Töytäri (Finland).

Emma continued as a Co-President and Julia joined her the other Co-President, Leonie was chosen to be the Head of Networking and Aaryaman held the position of Secretary and Treasurer. Emiliano was responsible for the position of Head of Leadership and Development, but unfortunately had to leave the board in the middle of his term. The board decided that Julia would take over the responsibilities of the Head of Leadership and Development until the next board elections.

2. Challenges RXI Faced in 2021-2022

The year 2021-2022 was challenging for RXI. Due to a lack of manpower as well as issues with knowledge transfer, RXI was on survival mode during the past year. The pandemic had resulted in a loss of momentum within Rotex worldwide.

Quite soon after the new board started their term, Emiliano became less active and eventually disappeared. This partly affected the knowledge transfer in general but also within his previous position as Head of Networking as well as his new position as Head of Leadership and Development. Emma was left alone when it came to onboarding the three new board members.

There has also been a more general lack of knowledge transfer which was noticed in a few different projects and situations. It has made the work of the RXI board more difficult but also made us realize that better documentation and internal structures need to be created. The work with knowledge transfer and RXI's internal structures will continue during the following year (2022-2023).

There was also some lack of commitment and motivation within the board and committees. The board had many great ideas to work on, but they were forced to wait for the next year since there was not enough manpower to complete them.

Loss of momentum within the Rotex community was evident since events organized by RXI had significantly less participants than in previous years. In our social media channels, the PR Committee noticed overall less engagement which was highlighted during Rotex Week.

Additionally, the 5th Rotex International Convention had to be unfortunately cancelled due to the low number of tickets sold.

The board organized a few events during the year and for the first one, no one came. With the following events, we tried personally reaching out to clubs on social media. Some people participated, which was great, but events in the past have been more successful.

Within the RXI board, we have tried to figure out what is the reason for low participation rate. We are not sure if there is just a general lack of interest or if the information was not received by interested people.

3. Connecting Rotex Around the World

Rotex International aims to help Rotex clubs/associations to connect with each other and to help former participants of the Rotary Youth Exchange program find a Rotex club/association to participate in. Another big goal for RXI is to connect with Rotex clubs. This year this goal was even more important than before because of the loss of momentum.

3.1. Personal Meetings and Virtual Coffee Chats

In order to create more personal connections with Rotex clubs the RXI Board had personal meetings with clubs/associations. We continued with these meetings in the beginning but then came up with the idea of Virtual Coffee Chats.

Virtual Coffee Chats bring together several clubs/associations at once to discuss how their clubs are doing and network with each other. The objective of these meetings was for us to get to know the clubs personally but also for them to get to know us. The participants were able to talk about challenges they are facing, share successful projects and learn from each other.

In total four Virtual Coffee Chats were organized during the spring of 2021. The RXI Board wants to make these regular meetings that happen once or twice a year. In addition to this, the RXI Board is still, and will always be, available to have a personal meeting with Rotex clubs/associations when requested.

3.2. Hangout Nights

Rotex International also wants to provide fun activities for Rotex, so during the past year two hangout nights were organized. We organized one hangout night in December as an end of the year celebration and another one in May to finalize Rotex Week.

3.3. Yearly Survey

For the first time, we have created an RXI Yearly Survey. One of the objectives of the survey is to gather the contact information of Rotex clubs for us to be able to keep up with them and be connected. It also includes a few questions about the club's activity and their

relationship with RXI. We are interested in this data to get an overview of Youth Exchange Programs as well as Rotex.

You can answer the yearly survey here: <https://link.webropol.com/s/rxi-yearly-survey-2022>

3.4. Club Directory

The board regularly gets contacted by individuals looking for a club/association to get in touch with. Often these people have moved to a new country or city and have no connections with Rotary or Rotex in the area. Unfortunately, we are not always able to help them since we do not have a complete list of all existing clubs. We are constantly working on adding more clubs into our directory and contacting them through social media for example. Clubs are encouraged to add their information to our online directory at:

<https://rotex.org/club-directory/>

3.5. Rotex Week

Rotex Week takes place every year on our social media channels and in 2022 it was organized between May 16-21. There were interesting topics that had not been covered before, including: Postcard Day – send a postcard to an exchange friend, Exchange returns – what is happening now? and Favorite Rotex projects from 2021/2022. This year Rotex Week wrapped up with a hangout night organized in Zoom.

Similar to what we have noticed throughout the year, the participation and engagement were not as high compared to before the pandemic. However, we were still very happy to see some participation and are already looking forward to Rotex Week 2023.

4. Connect with Rotary

Besides connecting with Rotex, Rotex International also works on making better connections with Rotary at an international as well as regional level. We want to establish the place of Rotex within Rotary International and Rotary Youth Exchange. This year it was done by Emma's strong attendance at different Rotary conferences. The objective with participating in the conferences is to keep in touch with the youth exchange community, learn about what they are working on and find out what difficulties they are facing.

4.1. Virtual Conferences

During this year Emma participated in the following virtual conferences: EEMA 2021, ABIJ 2021, and NAYEN 2022.

In EEMA 2021, Rotex served as moderators in the online sessions, and it was a huge success. This was organized by the previous board, but we are working on establishing the presence of Rotex and collaboration in future EEMA conferences as well.

In NAYEN 2022, there was a wonderful presentation held by North American Rotex about how to get Rotex involved with the Youth Exchange and why Rotex is an asset.

4.2. Rotary International Convention and YEO Pre-Convention

The Rotary International Convention was organized in Houston, Texas in June 2022. Emma participated in-person at the convention as well as the YEO Pre-Convention, and it was a beneficial experience not only for her but also for RXI.

At the YEO Pre-Convention, she gave a speech at the general session about what Rotex means to her, what it has been like to serve on the RXI board during the pandemic and what the future of the Youth Exchange Program looks like.

She also held a workshop called “Rotex During the Pandemic: What We Learned and How Can We Move Forward.” This workshop included discussions with the Youth Exchange leaders on how they could help Rotex and what Rotex learned from the pandemic.

The main takeaway from this convention are all the positive relationships that were built with other Rotex as well as Rotarians, especially from the Youth Exchange Program. Emma had many productive discussions about RXI, and we are certain that these relationships help us to better collaborate in the future.

In the convention, Emma also met with the people in charge of the Rotary Youth Network (previously known as Rotary Interactive Quarantine). They discussed a future collaboration between RXI and Rotary Youth Network. We are excited about this opportunity.

5. Rotex International Convention

The 5th Rotex International Convention was meant to be organized in 2020 in Curitiba, Brazil. Due to the pandemic the convention had to be postponed and was supposed to take place in August 2022. Unfortunately, due to lack of momentum within Rotex, the convention had to be cancelled.

The Rotex International Board worked together with the convention organization team to define the program and workshops of the conference. Ultimately, together we made the decision that cancelling the convention was the only option.

Since then, the RXI board has been working on opening applications for the next Rotex International Convention in 2024.

6. Committees

At the moment only two of our committees are active: the PR Committee and the IT Committee. As a team of few members, the PR committee has been responsible for all of

our social media content. They have also supported the board with organized events. The IT Committee only had one member, but they have come up with new solutions for the RXI board. One of the biggest updates is the new events feature on our website.

The Inbound Service Committee and the Inclusion and Diversity Committee (formerly known as the LGBTQ+ Committee) are other previously active committees, that unfortunately have been inactive for a while. It is unfortunate that these committees are not currently active, but we are looking to re-establish them as soon as possible. We are looking for Rotex that are willing to take the initiative to work on re-establishing them.

We believe that there is a need for better training materials for both newly formed Rotex clubs and already operational Rotex clubs. For this reason, RXI launched a new committee called "Training and Development Committee." This committee focuses on creating resources for our website as well as organizing workshops. The committee will also be in charge of creating materials and events related to professional development.

RXI will focus on starting the Training and Development Committee during 2022-2023. For this committee to start their important work, we are looking for members to join it.

If you are interested in joining any of our committees, please send us an email at info@rotex.org for more information.

7. Changes to the Board

Both Aaryaman and Leonie are stepping down from the board after their first year due to personal reasons. RXI does not have official procedures for this situation so the RXI Board together with the Board of Advisors made the following decision:

Leonie (Germany) and Aaryaman (India) are stepping down after their first year on the board. Alberto Domenighini (Italy), who was a candidate in last year's board elections, will step up to finish Leonie's term. As there were no other candidates in last year's elections, Emma (USA) will remain on the board for another year to complete Aaryaman's term.

This decision was made to secure knowledge transfer and the continuity of the staggered election system. The decision was approved by Rotex Clubs in the RXI General Meeting on August 6, 2022.

8. General meeting

The Rotex International year 2021-2022 ended with our General Meeting held in August 2022. The recording of the meeting is available here: <https://fb.watch/eUIM9fwaZJ/>

At this meeting, two new board members were elected, Kyla Christianson from Canada and Albert Hönich from Germany.

9. Summary

Aside from all the challenges, this past year was filled with successful projects and good times. We learned a lot and have a long list of projects to work on for the year 2022-2023!

We want to thank Leonie and Aaryaman for their inputs in improving Rotex International. We are excited to have Leonie stay as a part of our PR Committee and keep up the amazing work she has done.

We also want to thank our PR Committee. Throughout the year they have done an outstanding job with our social media. Thank you to Albert, a longtime member of the PR Committee and thank you to Gayatri who joined the committee in early 2022. A special thank you goes to Alexandra who has gone above and beyond with the PR Committee.

Congratulations to the two new RXI board members Albert and Kyla. We look forward working with you!

Finally, thank you to all the members of the global Rotex Community who have participated in our activities and projects. We are excited to connect with all you in our future projects and events.