

AUGUST, 2025

**Rotary**  
Alumni Association



Rotex  
International

# 2024 / 2025 Annual Report



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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

During the past year, I have had the opportunity to lead both the RXI Board and Rotex Belgium. As this year draws to a close, there are several things that stand out to me. Firstly, working with RXI is a very different experience than working with local associations. In local associations, you can see the change you are creating in the community first-hand, in your work with inbounds and outbounds, or with Rotarians. It results in tangible outcomes. RXI is a much more abstract experience. At times, it feels as though there has been no progress, despite many efforts.

However, looking back at the year 2024-2025, we can still see great things happening. In my work reaching out to local associations with my fellow board member Gayatri, I have had the pleasure of working with many motivated Rotex, helping several of them found Rotex associations and become a part of our global network, and learning of amazing initiatives undertaken by Rotex the world over. I have seen another fellow board member, Maya, take great strides in pushing for our representation within Rotary International, helping us to be taken more seriously. She led a great Rotex effort at the Rotary International Convention which both showed the progress of our year, as well as defined our direction for the coming year. We are going to continue to strengthen our connections with all associations, and our ties with the Rotary, as well as continue to spread our wealth of experience in the world of RYE.

These experiences lead me to the following conclusion: all our efforts make a difference, no matter how big or small, or whether we can see the direct effects of our efforts. We can't become discouraged from continuing in the amazing work that our network does across the world. No matter how small your Rotex association, you can still make a difference. I should know, I started my Rotex experience as one of only three Rotex in D5440. Let's look to the future, and seize the coming year to continue to make a difference. I can't wait to welcome my incoming board members and get started on our agenda. I hope to see you all at our Rotary International Convention in 2026. Until then, continue making a difference!

Christopher Hood

Rotex International President 2024/25





## OTHER ACTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

### MAYA POVHE, CANADA



Maya is the Head of Policy for Rotex International. She champions the interests of Rotex associations globally, acting through Rotary International networks and the Council of Regional Exchange Leaders (COREL). As Rotex International works to foster trust within local districts and take a more active role in shaping Rotary Youth Exchange program policies and administration, the Head of Policy develops and executes strategies to enhance trust, integration, and collaboration among all Rotary Youth Exchange stakeholders.

### GAYATRI LODHA, INDIA



Gayatri serves as the Head of Leadership and Development for Rotex International. In this role, she assists local Rotex groups in starting new associations at the zone, region, and district levels, and supports national organization efforts (such as with Rotex Germany and Rotex Brazil). She also conducts outreach to areas without existing Rotex associations and helps groups understand the requirements and benefits of becoming a Rotary Alumni Association.



# 01 The Rotex International Convention in Brescia

Brescia, Italy served as the vibrant setting for the 5th Rotex International Convention! It was the first in-person convening of the global Rotex community since the COVID-19 pandemic. From the 1st to the 4th of August 2024, our gracious hosts, Rotex 2050, welcomed participants from across the world into a city renowned for its stunning architecture, deep history, and the warmth of Italian hospitality. Attendees enjoyed not only the rich tapestry of Italian culture and cuisine, but also a unique opportunity to network, learn, and grow together.

Gathered under the theme “A World of Opportunities,” this convention was a timely response to the evolving landscape of the Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotex, and Rotary. We were joined by multiple members of Rotary International’s board, including the Rotary International President Elect, as well as Rotary International’s staff alumni specialist.

With a central focus on rebuilding and revitalizing the global Rotex community, the convention aimed to recover the talent, knowledge, and innovative spirit that were disrupted during quarantine. Although youth exchanges had resumed in many countries by 2024, the landscape remained markedly changed. As we adapt to new realities, and the enduring effects of the pandemic continued to shape the way exchange alumni connect, lead, and serve.

Our agenda focused on rebuilding institutional memory, overcoming digital and geographic divides, and reimagining the Rotex role worldwide. Sessions explored a variety of urgent topics, with some of the most popular touching on the history of Rotex International and on supporting the mental health and well-being of exchange students.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to our Italian hosts for their dedication, generosity, and the unforgettable experiences shared. Their enthusiasm ensured the convention was an occasion marked by connection, inspiration, and lasting memories.



# Session Topics

**THE ALUMNI JOURNEY IN  
ROTARY**

**ROTEX PAST, PRESENT, AND  
FUTURE**

**COMMUNICATION  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**ROTEX CHARITY PROJECTS**

**ROTEX GOES ROTARY**

**ROTEX UMBRELLA  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**HOW TO ENGAGE SHORT  
TERM EXCHANGE ALUMNI IN  
ROTEX**

**SHIFTING TO FIT ROTARY  
INTERNATIONAL'S  
CONSTRAINTS**







# Workshop

## Topics

**HOW CAN ROTEX  
CONTRIBUTE TO THE RYE  
PROGRAM ON ALL LEVELS**

**JUST GOT BACK. WHAT'S  
NEXT?**

**COMMUNICATION  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**TELLING ROTEX STORIES TO  
THE WORLD**

**ROTEX'S PRESENCE AT  
FUTURE INTERNATIONAL  
EVENTS**

**BEST PRACTICES FOR  
RUNNING A ROTEX  
ASSOCIATION: INBOUNDS**

**BEST PRACTICES FOR  
RUNNING A ROTEX  
ASSOCIATION: OUTBOUNDS  
AND REBOUNDS**

**ROTEX'S ROLES IN  
SUPPORTING EXCHANGE  
STUDENTS MENTAL HEALTH**



*Hans Lee, a co-founder of Rotex International and IT committee member, smiling as he holds up the Rotex International Convention flag for the first time since his 2018 convention in Taipei, Taiwan.*



*A photo of the convention's attendees after the first day of sessions. Alberto Domenighini, the convention's organizer and a former board member, now proudly holds the Rotex International Convention flag.*

*The newly elected board members alongside the formerly serving board, posing shortly after the election.*







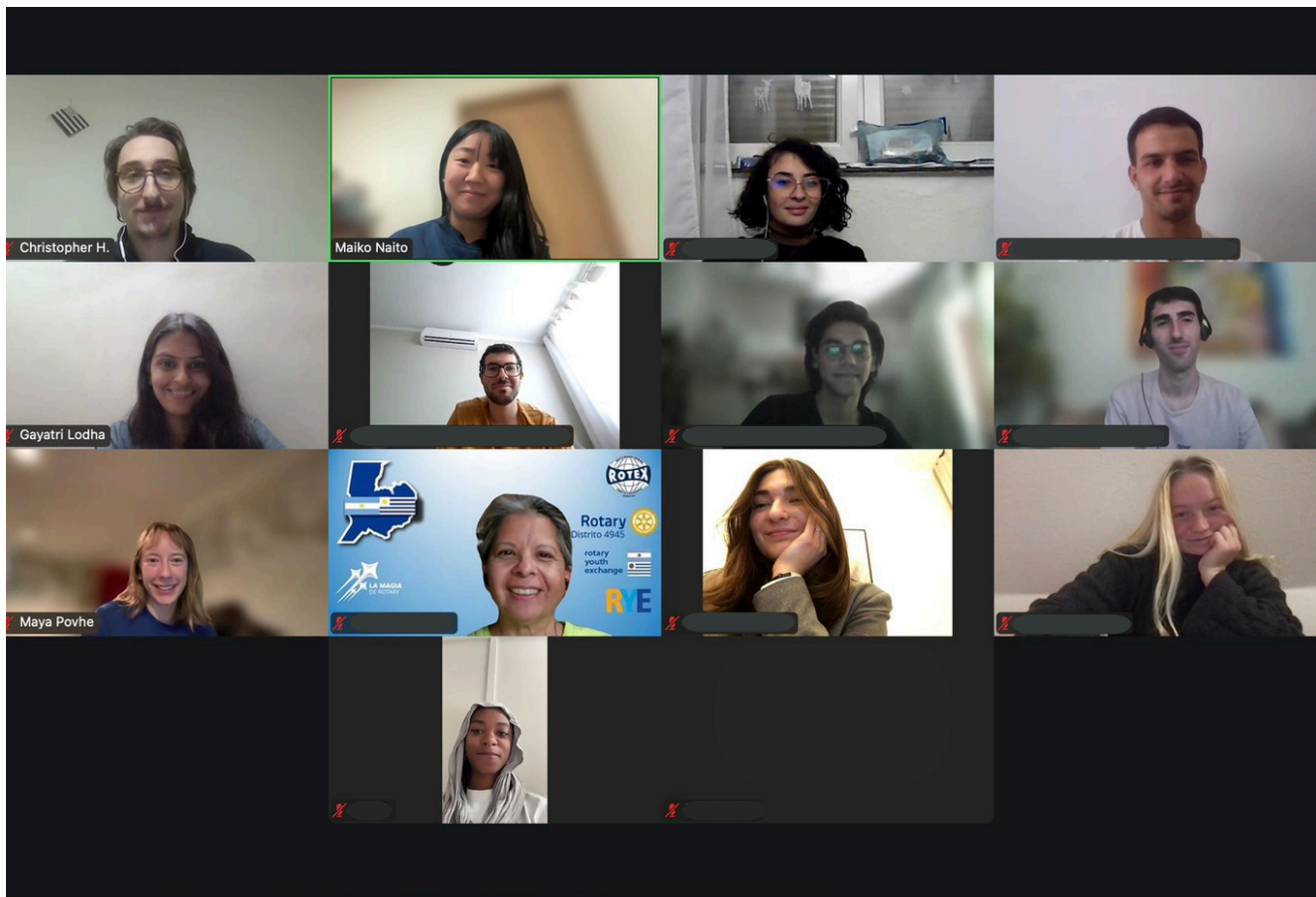


## 02 The Start of a New Chapter

The energy and sense of renewal generated at the Brescia convention continued to grow in the months that followed. This excitement inspired the newly elected Rotex International Board to reevaluate and reshape its leadership structure to better address the changing needs of our global community. In response to the engagement and enthusiasm seen at the convention, especially from the many new volunteers, the board decided to move from a co-presidency to a single president model. Additionally, two new roles were created: Head of Committee Relations, to coordinate the increased number of active committees, and Head of Policy, to provide clearer governance and oversight.

These structural changes were designed to foster more focused and responsive leadership. The Head of Committee Relations position, in particular, reflected the large number of members who signed up to join a committee during the convention.

Despite these positive steps, challenges also emerged. The variety of timezones the board members lived in complicated logistics and scheduling meetings across time zones became increasingly difficult as board members became less engaged, creating a disengagement loop.





*The winners of our first Rotex International photo competition, District 2241 in Romania & Republic of Moldavia.*



## ROTEX WEEK INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

**11 Posts**

**29 369 Views**

**25.6% from Non-followers**

**1429 Likes**

**490 Profile Visits**

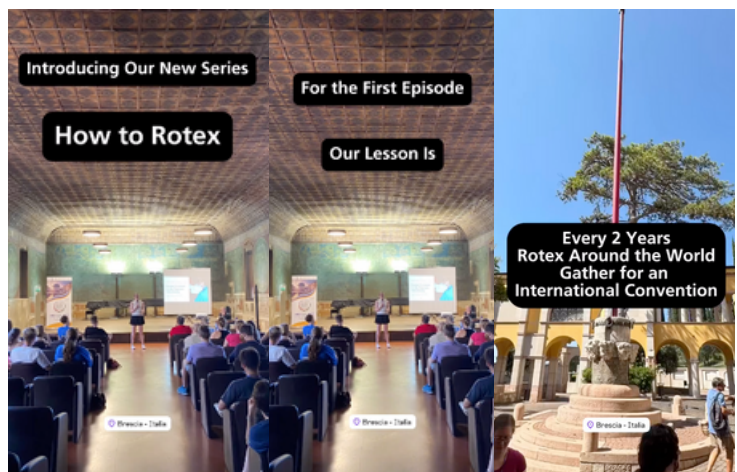
Eventually, board members Marcus Stephens and Maiko Naito stopped responding to the board's messages altogether. This significantly strained the remaining board members and caused the committees they had been managing to be left without leadership.

From the committees that continued to run, their conversations became fragmented, with board members trying to balance their time between core leadership responsibilities and managing committee members. Reports from their meetings to the board were difficult to interpret, misaligning the objectives, resources, and capacity of Rotex International and the board to make strategic decisions.

Without a head of networking, our social media presence slowed significantly, and we struggled to connect with our global members online. Prior to Rotex Week, from May 18 to May 24, 2025, the board developed a simplified social plan to carry us through to the end of the year.

Reflecting on these experiences, we recognize the future need for clearer channels of communication, increased membership interaction, and a leadership structure that balances inclusivity with effectiveness.

*Our new video series, How to Rotex, was introduced during Rotex week. It was one of the most-viewed posts of the week and we will prioritize the series in the coming year.*



# 03 Rotex Outreach and Findings

Over the past year, Rotex International embarked on a strategic outreach effort to consult with existing and emerging Rotex associations across the globe. While board members contacted all the associations in our global directory, most of the emails yielded no responses. In upcoming years, we will take greater care to widen the methods and breadth of our outreach to successfully contact the majority of our documented associations.

In total, the board engaged in official meetings with representatives from eight districts spanning four continents, including newly formed associations in Mexico (D4185) and France (D1680), as well as a variety of established groups. While these findings come from a small number of Rotex associations, we still think they are worth sharing given their diversity of experiences.

**“I DIDN’T GO ON EXCHANGE TO BE AN EXCHANGE STUDENT, I WENT ON EXCHANGE BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE ABLE TO BECOME A ROTEX.”**

**An Inbound Exchange Student  
at an Orientation**



A central finding across these consultations was the strong desire for structure and official recognition within Rotex associations, coupled with the flexibility to innovate. New groups often raised practical questions about how to set up an effective core team, what officer roles were needed, and how to create a constitution and bylaws that balanced Rotary's guiding principles with their own creative identity. Several associations, such as those in Mexico and Romania, asked about the ideal composition of committee leadership, eligibility for membership, and how to ensure that new volunteers were driven by genuine service rather than social motives. The consultations emphasized the value of “interviewing” prospective members and maintaining clear distinctions between Rotex and general rebound alumni. The importance of maintaining Rotary's ethical standards (the 4Ds and related rules) and good relationships with inbounds and outbounds was repeatedly emphasized.



Another recurring theme was the challenge of engaging and supporting exchange students in the face of geographic dispersion and limited resources. Representatives from Australia highlighted the difficulty of organizing activities or providing peer support to students spread across vast areas. Similarly, Romanian and Moldovan associations, where most members are under 18 and have little direct Rotarian involvement, focused on questions about funding, adult supervision, and project types appropriate for their young membership. This feedback made it clear that guidance on best practices, templates for association documents, and ideas for inclusive programming are essential offerings Rotex International can provide to ensure equitable and vibrant experiences worldwide. Associations requested “How to Rotex” guides, toolkits for rebound meetings, and accessible mental health resources, such as the example from Italy of inviting a psychologist to foster meaningful connections among inbounds and outbounds.



*Rotex Associations, including Rotex Belgium (of which Christopher Hood is a part) and Rotex 4100 sharing their perspectives at Rotary youth exchange conferences and orientations.*



Finally, there was a general call for better communication and stronger international dialogue among Rotex associations. Participants suggested more regular sharing of best practices, both through webinars and exchanges during cultural events like Oktoberfest, as well as increased transparency from the Rotex International Board itself. Italian Rotex members recommended IG posts and recaps to disseminate information about board decisions and encouraged small and emerging associations to register officially, regardless of their size. These consultations highlighted the enthusiasm of Rotex leaders to learn from each other, to build deeper networks, and to ensure their work has lasting impact on both individuals and the broader Rotary community. Moving forward, the board is taking to heart these requests for clear, accessible guidance and more avenues for international connection and learning, aiming to empower every association, no matter how small or dispersed, with the knowledge and support to thrive.



# 04 The 2025 Rotary International Convention

*Maya Povhe speaks about her exchange and Rotary's alumni engagement to a stadium of ~15 000 attendees at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary.*

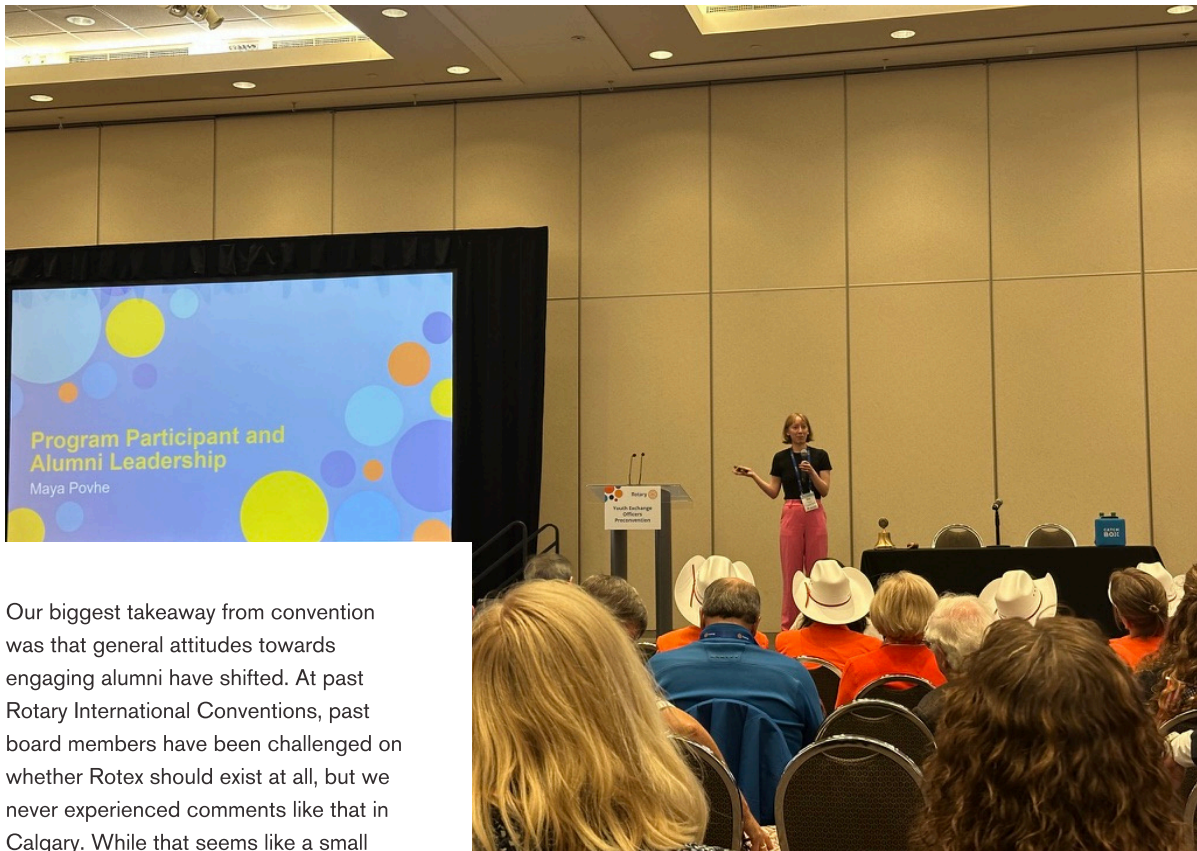


The Rotary International Convention in Calgary was a milestone for Rotex International, marking our strongest presence at a global Rotary event since Hamburg in 2019. Maya Povhe's leadership on both the Rotary International youth advisory council and Rotex International meant that Rotex was constantly being mentioned even in spaces that were intended to be dedicated to all youth program participants.

Rotex International was intentionally recognized in six sessions and one evening event. Four of the six speaking engagements had over 100 attendees. One was on the main stage of the convention's second general session, and another was on the main stage of the youth exchange officers pre-convention.

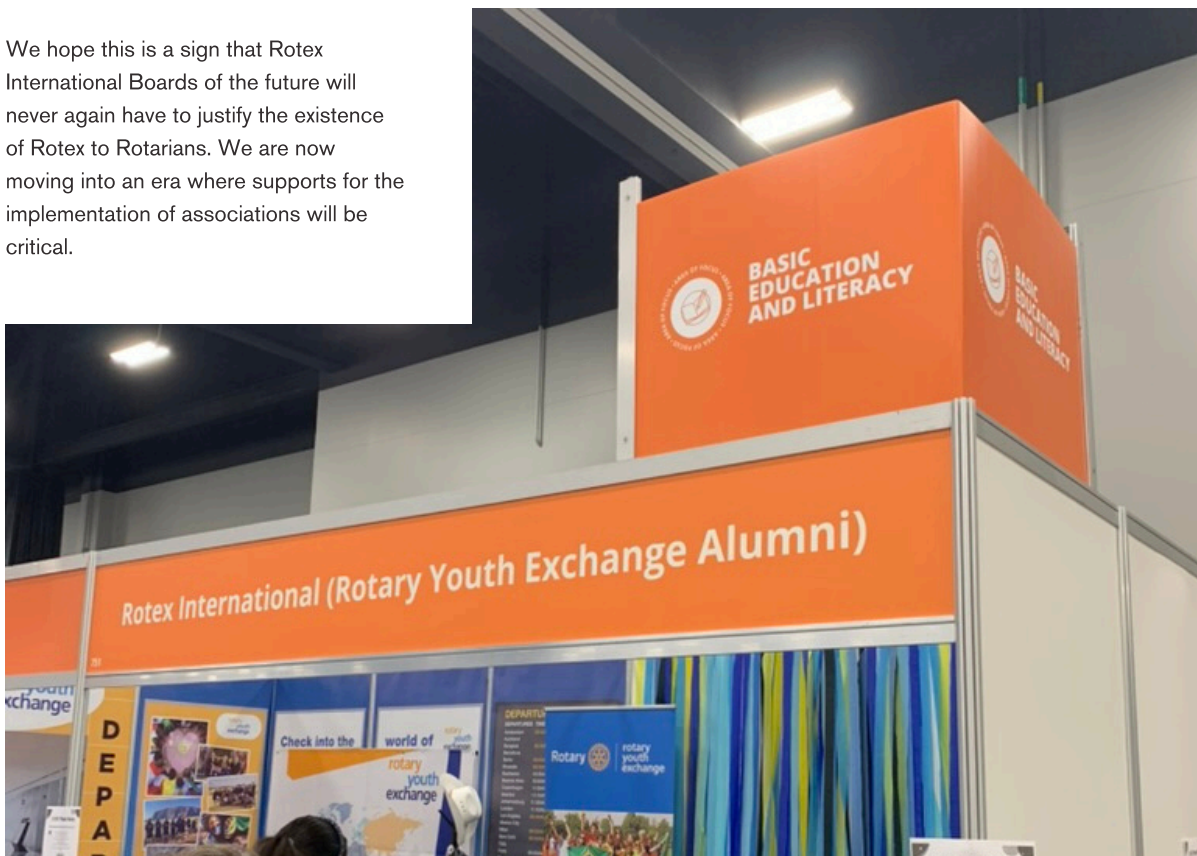
In the House of Friendship, we partnered with the Rotary Youth Exchange and the New Generations Service Exchange to make an exchange-focused super booth. It was a great way to allow interested attendees to see all the forms of exchange engagement depending on their age group and experiences.

Our booth got a steady stream visitors throughout the convention totalling in the thousands. The conversations were as diverse as the attendees, ranging from questions about how to do an exchange to bold visions for alumni leadership and innovation. We appreciated the engagement from everyone who stopped by and were happy to hear an overwhelming amount of interest in strengthening Rotex associations.



Our biggest takeaway from convention was that general attitudes towards engaging alumni have shifted. At past Rotary International Conventions, past board members have been challenged on whether Rotex should exist at all, but we never experienced comments like that in Calgary. While that seems like a small step forwards in a world continuing to struggle with forming and growing Rotex, it is a massive feat for our global strategy.

We hope this is a sign that Rotex International Boards of the future will never again have to justify the existence of Rotex to Rotarians. We are now moving into an era where supports for the implementation of associations will be critical.





# 05 Rotary Outreach and Findings

*Maya Povhe posing at Rotary International Headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, during meetings with the Rotary International Programs Committee.*

Our policy team was focused on building solid, consistent relationships between Rotex International, the Council of Regional Youth Exchange Leaders, and Rotex International this year. Initiating and maintaining those relationships comes with challenges, including the cost and time needed for travel, the availability of others for meeting times, and varying levels of seriousness with which Rotarians engage with Rotex's ideas.

In total, Rotex International board members were present at 10 international Rotary events, including conferences, committee meetings, and zone institutes throughout the year. Engaging with Rotarians at these events, we often found that they understand the broad concept of Rotex generally, but are usually unaware that Rotex have governing structures or international representation.

In an effort to get a better measure of how Rotarians see our organization and plan, we dedicated one of our breakout sessions at the Rotary Youth Exchange Officers Pre-convention in Calgary to asking over 100 Rotarians what they think of us and what they think we should do. The aim was to gather candid input on integration, support structures, challenges, and opportunities for maximizing the impact of Rotex within the broader Rotary movement.

Our findings from these discussions are detailed on the next page.





## ROTEX INTEGRATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Rotarians overwhelmingly valued active Rotex involvement at all stages of the Youth Exchange program, from selection and orientation to ongoing support for inbound and outbound students. Many districts reported success by integrating Rotex into leadership roles within their organizational structures.

## DISTINCT IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY FOR ROTES

A recurring theme was the desire for Rotex to have a clear identity distinct from broader Rotary alumni groups, given differences in age, interests, and experiences. Participants noted that bespoke Rotex programs and projects, along with a formalized structure mirroring Rotary roles, significantly boosted engagement and retention.

## TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Several districts called for standardized toolkits and best practice frameworks to help rebounding students establish Rotex chapters and engage meaningfully upon return. Practical suggestions included digital directories, “club finder” widgets, and orientation resources tailored for Rotex leadership.

## COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION CHALLENGES

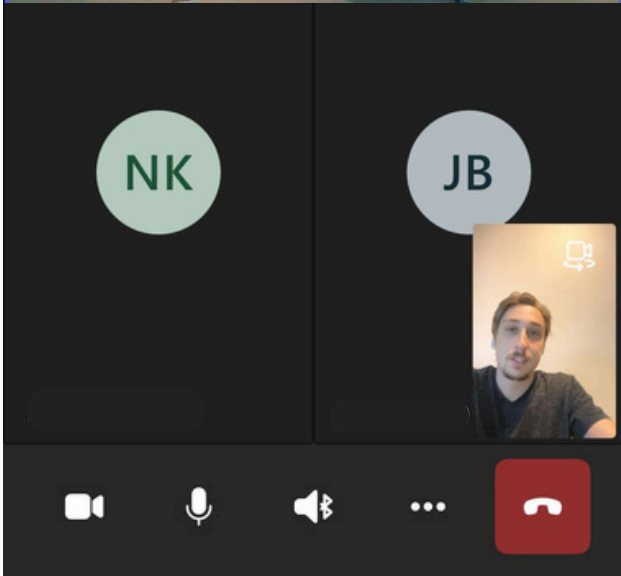
Despite the enthusiasm, several participants flagged difficulties in maintaining connections with Rotex alumni post-exchange, largely due to students moving away for university or careers. There was consistent interest in more systematic ways of tracking, connecting, and empowering Rotex members across geographic boundaries.

## ROTEX AS MULTIPLIERS AND INNOVATORS

Rotex are recognized as uniquely positioned to connect with both current exchange students and the wider community. Their familiarity with the program and enthusiasm make them “phenomenal” ambassadors and peer mentors. Digital communication, peer-led activities, and leveraging social media are central to their success.

## OVERALL

The 2025 Rotary International Convention focus groups underscored Rotex’s vital and evolving role within the Rotary ecosystem. While integration and youth leadership remain strong, ongoing challenges in connection, autonomy, and continuity require renewed investment. Standardizing support, facilitating digital connection, and ensuring meaningful roles for Rotex alumni will be key to sustaining vibrant programs worldwide. Rotex International is committed to implementing these insights, building on the grassroots expertise and passion shared during our sessions, and driving positive change for the next generation of Rotex and Rotary leaders.



**“ALL ROTARY LEADERS  
SHOULD ENCOURAGE  
PEOPLE TO DO WHAT  
THEY'RE PASSIONATE  
ABOUT. IT'S THEIR JOB TO  
ASK PEOPLE WHAT THEY'RE  
PASSIONATE ABOUT AND  
HELP ENABLE THEM TO DO  
THOSE THINGS.”**

**A Rotarian Commenting on  
Rotex's Youth Exchange Focus**

We recognize that many Rotarians are still unaware of Rotex International's importance and existence. Furthermore, as the network dedicated to supporting, connecting, and empowering Rotex associations globally, we understand that our credibility and legitimacy represent not just ourselves, but every Rotex association striving to make a difference locally.

In the coming years, we are committed to doing more than ever to raise awareness within the Rotary community, to encourage them to invest in local Rotex. By targeting both groups with similar urgency in our outreach, we aim to build global trust and create a more unified, supportive environment for Rotary alumni everywhere.

Giving Rotarians the tools to champion Rotex means supporting the future of all Rotex, both within Rotex and Rotary communities. We look forward to building ever stronger bridges in the years ahead.



*Rotex International Board  
Members connecting with  
Rotarians and Rotary  
Staff at events.*

THE 2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT WAS  
WRITTEN BY MAYA POVHE WITH EDITS BY  
CHRISTOPHER HOOD AND HANS LEE

# Interested in Connecting with us Further?

## Reach out!



Rotex International is available on  
Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn  
@rotexinternational. Our website is  
rotex.org, where you can find our most  
up-to-date vision and goals. The best  
email to contact us is info@rotex.org.