

Facts about Vocational Training Teams

A vocational training team (VTT) is a group of professionals who travel to another country either to learn more about their profession or to teach local professionals about a particular field. Under Future Vision, Rotary Foundation district, global, and packaged grants all support VTTs, but each grant type has different requirements.

Benefits of VTTs

VTTs build on the Foundation's long-standing commitment to vocational training, first formalized with the establishment of the Group Study Exchange program in 1965. VTTs take the GSE concept of enabling young professionals to observe their profession in another country a step further by offering participants the opportunity to use their skills to help others. Hands-on activities vary from one team to the next but may include training medical professionals on cardiac surgery and care, sharing best practices on early childhood education, or explaining new irrigation techniques to farmers. A successful VTT increases the capacity of the host community to solve problems and improve the quality of life.

District Grant VTTs

Requirements: District grant VTTs must support The Rotary Foundation's mission to promote goodwill and peace, improve health, support education, and alleviate poverty.

Team composition: The district may determine the composition of the team to include Rotarians and non-Rotarians of any age.

Focus and the length of the visit: Determined by the sponsors. The districts may decide, for example, to incorporate some cultural and social activities along with hands-on training or to sponsor an exchange with the partner district.

Budget: Determined by the sponsors

Global Grant VTTs

Requirements: Global grant VTTs must align with one or more areas of focus, build the capacity of either the team members or the benefiting community, and have a sustainable and measurable impact. The VTT must be sponsored by Rotary clubs or districts from two countries. The grant may support the travel of more than one team.

Team composition: Teams must consist of at least two members (either Rotarians or non-Rotarians) with at least two years of professional experience in the designated areas of focus and a Rotarian leader who has expertise in the area of focus, international experience, and general Rotary knowledge. In certain cases, the Foundation may grant permission to designate a non-Rotarian as team leader. There are no restrictions on the age of participants.

Length of the visit: Determined by the sponsors

Budget: At least US\$30,000

Packaged Grant VTTs

Requirements: All packaged grants are carried out with a strategic partner, who defines the general scope of activities within one or more areas of focus, develops the relationships with the local professionals, and ensures that the outcome will be sustainable. Rotarians build the VTT with Rotarian and non-Rotarian participants who have the appropriate skill set for the training. For example, working with the strategic partner *Mercy Ships*, Rotarians assemble teams of medical professionals who perform or assist in life-changing surgeries and provide skills training to local health care professionals.

Team composition: Similar to that of a global grant VTT, except that the leader must be a Rotarian

Budget: The Foundation and the strategic partner pay all costs associated with the training.

Finding an International Partner

Foundation staff do not assist districts in finding partners for VTTs. Rotarians are encouraged to identify needs and find partners through ProjectLINK, the District Grant VTT Partner Forum on LinkedIn, and matchinggrants.org/global, or by developing relationships at international Rotary meetings or project fairs.

Successful VTTs

Vocational training teams (VTTs) have chalked up some notable achievements during their relatively short existence. The following examples show how Rotarians are using district, global, and packaged grants to provide training that will have long-term impact on the host community's well-being.

District grant VTTs take many forms.

Districts 6200 and 9600 exchanged teams focused on dealing with the environmental impact of oil spills, a disaster experienced by both districts.

District 9800 sent a medical team to Timor-Leste to carry out a training program for midwives in an effort to reduce the mortality rate of mothers and infants during childbirth.

A medical/legal team from District 2770 traveled to California, USA, for training in working with people with Alzheimer's disease.

U.S. District 5960 brought medical professionals from District 4855 in Argentina for training in procedures and practices involving both maternal and child health and disease prevention and treatment and in the use of equipment that the districts plan to provide using a global grant.

Global grant VTTs concentrate on one or more areas of focus.

A VTT from District 5340 in California, USA, traveled to Uganda twice to help kick-start a larger global grant adopt-a-village project. The team conducted training on business strategies, savings, and investments as they apply to family-size farming businesses. The VTT also laid the groundwork for a clean water system, trained health clinic staff, and renovated a computer room at a school, all of which spurred local government funding and a partnership with two organizations involved in microfinance.

District 5170's global grant VTT of two Rotarians and six other health care professionals from California, USA, conducted a weeklong workshop for 50 of their counterparts in Liberia on techniques for preventing transmission of HIV from infected mothers to their children. Members of a local Rotary club are distributing nutritional supplements to malnourished HIV-infected women and children and taking them to public health clinics.

VTTs from District 9400 in South Africa and District 7980 in Connecticut, USA, shared best practices in early childhood education in the face of poverty, disintegrating families, poor health, and low parental and childhood literacy. The global grant project will also include online teacher training.

Packaged grant VTTs are designed by the strategic partner, with Rotarians developing the teams.

A vocational training team sponsored by District 9110 in Nigeria traveled to Uganda through a packaged grant with Aga Khan University, a strategic partner working in the child and maternal health area of focus. The physician team leader and three nurse educators from Nigeria trained their Ugandan counterparts at the university's School of Nursing and Midwifery in teaching practices that promote student learning and improve effectiveness in education. The training covered research techniques, the use of anatomical models, simulated classroom situations, and how to assess students' attitudes through body language. Team members expanded the impact of the VTT by treating patients at a Rotary Foundation-sponsored health clinic and conducting a prenatal and health education clinic at the Mpigi Health Center, which serves about 120,000 people.