

**2023-2024
ANNUAL
REPORT**

rotary
youth
exchange

Rotary 

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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A MESSAGE FROM 2023-24 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT R. GORDON R. MCINALLY

Rotary clubs and districts have been facilitating youth exchanges since the 1920s, and Rotary Youth Exchange has been an official program of Rotary International since 1975.

We have nearly 100 years of this program to celebrate and reflect on. And after the second year of offering in-person exchanges since the pandemic and introducing virtual exchanges to the program, we have even more to celebrate.

I can't help but wonder what that Rotarian who first proposed the program, which later took shape as Rotary Youth Exchange, would think of our program today. He'd probably have difficulty comprehending the idea of a virtual exchange.

But I believe the basic building blocks of Rotary Youth Exchange have remained the same. The program creates connections, offers new experiences for young people, and expands their sense of the world. Young people need these experiences today just as much as they did 100 years ago — perhaps even more so.

That's one reason virtual exchanges are so important. Virtual exchanges reduce barriers to participation, especially for students with health or geopolitical considerations that may not allow them the traditional in-person experience.

And with structure, safety precautions, and specific goals, virtual exchanges can be just as valuable for young people as exchanges are for those physically traveling abroad.

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred the creation of virtual exchanges, but these exchanges are still an important way to offer young people a chance to have meaningful conversations that promote respect and understanding across cultures.

In 2023-24, Rotary districts hosted 53 virtual exchanges, nearly doubling the number from 2022-23. Overall, virtual exchanges represented 0.8% of all Rotary Youth Exchanges. To me, that means there is room for this program to continue growing as long as we continue to make the well-being of our participants our top priority.

Now, more than ever, it is also vital to prioritize mental health support for both students and volunteers. The positive, lasting impact this program has on those who participate is only possible when we make supporting physical, emotional, and psychological safety and well-being a priority.

Over the past year, we have worked hard to prioritize mental health in Rotary, and the future of that endeavor is in the capable hands of the Rotary Action Group for Mental Health Initiatives. But young people have their own unique experiences and thus their own mental health challenges. And they deserve our utmost attention and care.

The benefits of this program extend beyond the young people who participate. Rotary Youth Exchange also introduces host families and their communities to new cultures, traditions, and practices.

While living and studying abroad, many students participated in service projects. Last year, one exchange student helped with English classes at a local primary school in Catalonia, Spain. Her work helped her get to know the area better, and she also raised money for polio eradication.

It can take a great deal of courage for a young person to leave behind everything to venture into the unknown. But if we continue to support Rotary Youth Exchange, students who participate in the program will expand their knowledge, their sense of empathy, and even their family. And who knows? They might join our Rotary family one day, as well.

Let's inspire our young people through travel and cultural intelligence and instill in them a sense of purpose and curiosity that will lead them to unforgettable experiences in and beyond Rotary.

R. Gordon R. McNally
Rotary International President, 2023-24

A PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE

During his time as president of Rotary International, Gordon R. McNally was a strong advocate for using virtual exchanges to foster peace. He regularly emphasized the power of these online connections to build relationships and broaden understanding, encouraging Rotary members to embrace them as an accessible and impactful way to promote global unity. That encouragement may have inspired higher participation during his presidential year.

Read more about virtual Rotary Youth Exchanges on page 18 and about President McNally's presidential initiatives on the [Service in Action blog](#).

2023-24 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



461

Rotary districts certified to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange
384 districts actively participated.

4,139

participating Rotary clubs

127

countries and territories certified to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange
52 countries actively hosted or sent students on exchange.



9,440

host families
3,604 Rotary and Rotaract member host families
5,836 nonmember host families



6,655

exchange students



21,737

total volunteers
12,896 Rotary and Rotaract member volunteers
8,841 nonmember volunteers



230

host districts, or about 60% of participating districts, involved students in community service projects.

2023-24 PROGRAM STATISTICS

ABOUT THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

In June 2024, Rotary International asked district Rotary Youth Exchange leaders for information about their exchange programs in the 2023-24 Rotary year. This report reflects the aggregate data that those leaders provided about their districts.

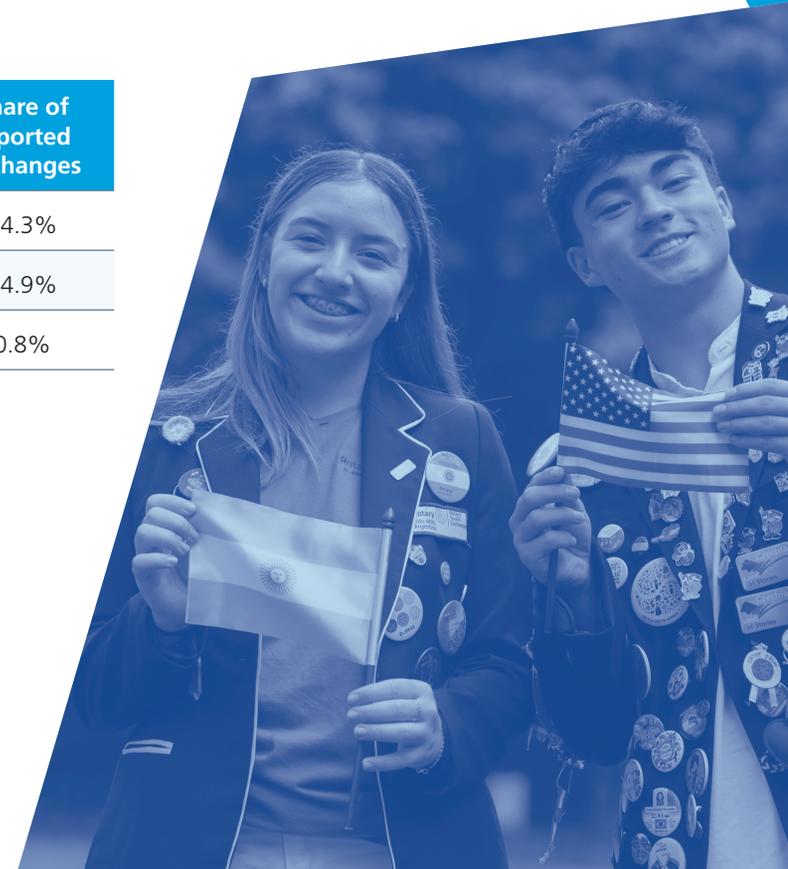
For 2023-24, we received responses from **430** of 461 districts that are certified to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange — a **93%** response rate. Of the 430 districts that responded, **384** said that they actively participated in long-term, short-term, or virtual exchanges during the 2023-24 Rotary year. They'll be referred to as “participating districts” throughout this report.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Participating districts reported **6,655** exchanges in 2023-24. This is a **17.5%** increase in exchanges overall from the previous year, and every geographic area experienced growth in program participants.

EXCHANGES BY TYPE

Exchange type	Exchanges reported	Share of reported exchanges
Long-term	4,276	64.3%
Short-term	2,326	34.9%
Virtual	53	0.8%



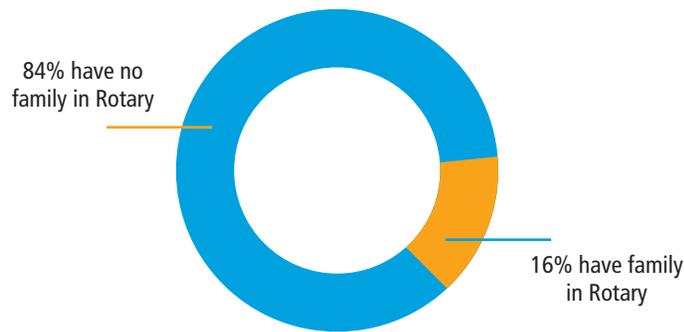
NUMBER OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS HOSTED BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Geographic area	2023-24		2022-23		2019-20*	
	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges
Africa	203	3.1%	160	2.8%	184	2%
Asia	716	10.8%	453	8%	961	12%
Europe	3,190	47.9%	2,861	50.5%	3,122	38%
North America	1,318	19.8%	1,256	22%	2,110	26%
Oceania	161	2.4%	37	0.7%	235	3%
South America	1,067	16%	897	16%	1,571	19%
Total	6,655	100%	5,664	100%	8,183	100%

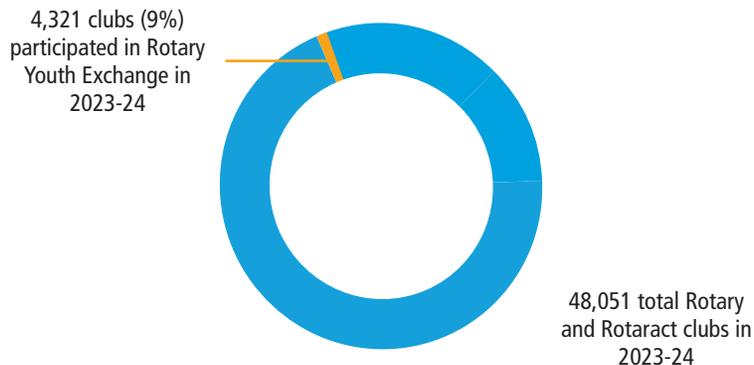
* Exchanges were widely unavailable in 2020-21 and 2021-22 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increased participation from clubs to host young people and send them on exchanges remains the single greatest factor in creating more and better exchanges through Rotary Youth Exchange. Increased club participation not only leads to more students getting involved in the program and benefiting from greater support but also can inspire other clubs and members to become more actively engaged with Rotary Youth Exchange. Clubs that successfully continue their programs offer students opportunities to talk about their exchange experiences at club meetings or organize activities for students. These experienced clubs can work with and guide clubs that are interested in hosting or sending students to help more clubs get involved in the program — and more involved in Rotary.

2023-24 ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS' FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO ROTARY



2023-24 ROTARY AND ROTARACT CLUB PARTICIPATION



Family connections to Rotary

Participating districts reported that **1,047** Rotary Youth Exchange students, or **16%**, had a family member in Rotary, while **5,608** (84%) did not. This proportion is consistent with that of previous years and shows that Rotary Youth Exchange continues to be a primary entry point and introduction to Rotary.

The opportunity to build public awareness and expand the reach of Rotary through our student exchange program is significant. Rotary Youth Exchange leaders can find new and innovative ways to engage students and families unfamiliar with Rotary International, which can foster new relationships and encourage a more diverse and inclusive environment for our organization.

Rotary and Rotaract club participation

Participating districts reported that **4,321** Rotary and Rotaract clubs participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in 2023-24. That's about **9%** of all clubs worldwide. All the statements about "clubs" in this report refer to these clubs.

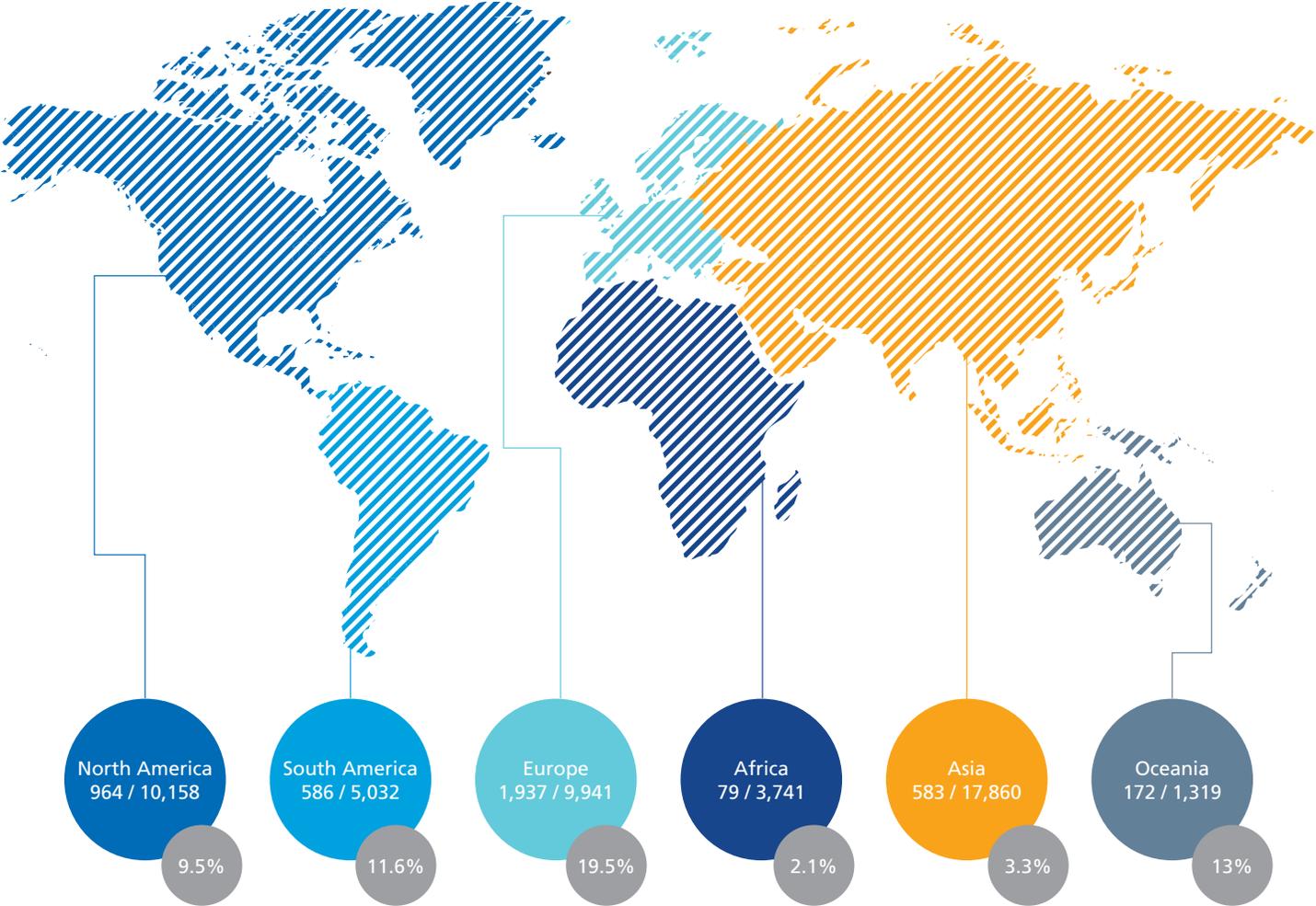
Financial assistance in Rotary Youth Exchange

Although it's not required, many clubs and districts support students by paying for part or all of their exchange experience. In other cases, the students' families are expected to pay for their child's participation. Clubs and districts said that they spent a total of **US\$563,000** on financial support of exchanges in 2023-24.

A total of **103** districts around the world provided financial assistance to students going on exchange. The number of students who received financial assistance was **584**. Districts that offered financial support provided assistance to an average of **5.67** students.

CLUBS THAT REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE, BY REGION

Worldwide, **9%** of clubs reported participating in Rotary Youth Exchange.



District partnerships

No matter how hard local districts and clubs work to send young people on exchange, they also need trustworthy and reliable partner districts in other countries and regions that can receive these students. And in most cases, districts have many partner districts in various countries and regions. In 2023-24, **districts had an average of 10 partner districts** they worked with to allow their students many possibilities for placement in various host countries.

To continue building Rotary Youth Exchange, districts must build relationships with new district partners. In 2023-24, **217 (57%)** participating districts found new partner districts.

Region	Average partnerships per district
Africa	5.06
Asia	6.76
Europe	14.65
North America	6.91
Oceania	6.53
South America	13.98
Global	9.8

Top 3 methods districts used to connect with new partner districts:

1. Using the Rotary Youth Exchange Officers Directory
2. Connecting with a regional multidistrict group
3. Attending regional conferences

In 2023-24, **328 (85%)** participating districts reported that they both hosted students and sent students abroad on exchanges. Reciprocal exchanges are strictly voluntary, but equal responsibility in hosting students between districts (where it is possible) is how many districts sustain and grow their local programs.

It should be noted that many exchanges are conducted each year from outbound-only certified districts that need the support of their partner districts despite the inability to host students in their district in return.



CLICK TO LEARN MORE

VOLUNTEERING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A DISTRICT GOVERNOR-ELECT

Jenn Wong is not a lifelong Rotary Youth Exchange advocate, but she has given the program all she can for the last few years. In May 2024, when she was governor-elect of District 9910 (New Zealand), she wrote a post for the Rotary Service in Action blog about serving as coordinator of outbound students from her district. She describes how Rotary Youth Exchange has given back to her through countless new experiences and adventures.

on.rotary.org/jennwong

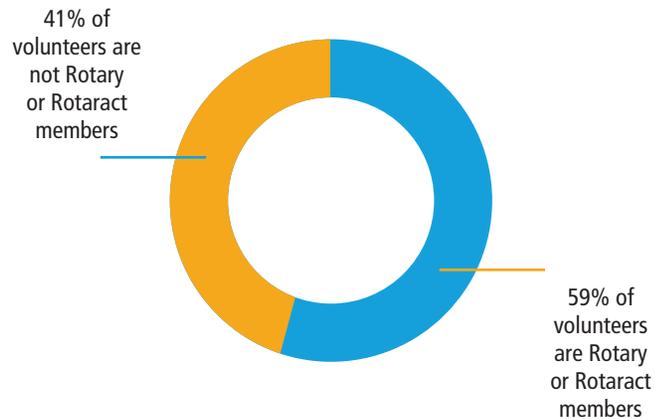




CLICK TO LEARN MORE

PROGRAM REACH AND IMPACT

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Volunteer engagement

To understand how Rotary Youth Exchange expands Rotary's reach and its ability to engage communities around the world, we asked participating districts to tell us how many volunteers participated in the program in 2023-24. A total of **21,737** volunteers, both Rotary and Rotaract members and nonmembers, were involved in the program. Of the volunteers, **8,841**, or **41%**, were nonmembers.

Rotary Youth Exchange is a decentralized program, meaning each exchange is largely facilitated on a local level. This year's numbers are consistent with data from years past and show that there were three times as many volunteers as students.

VOLUNTEERS ARE AT THE HEART OF ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

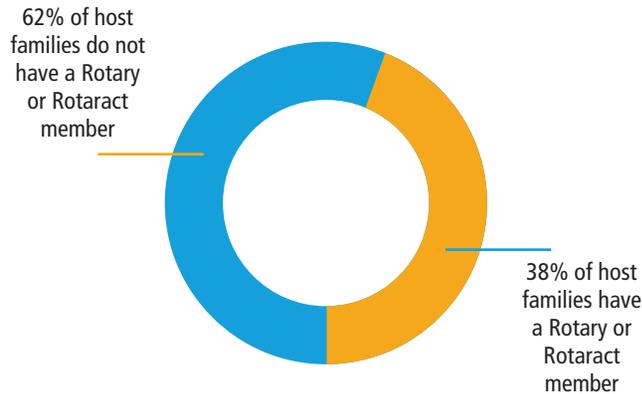
Whether you have experience as a volunteer for the Rotary Youth Exchange program or have witnessed a volunteer working hard to facilitate successful exchanges, it's clear how important volunteers are to the program as a whole. There are many people in the Rotary world who are less familiar with the volunteering needs of the program, other than serving as a host family for exchange students.

This story is a guide to most of the opportunities to serve exchange students, their parents, and the thousands of Rotary and Rotaract members worldwide who support this great program. Send the link to your friends, family, and others who are curious about Rotary Youth Exchange.

on.rotary.org/rvevolunteers



HOST FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Region	Host families with a Rotary or Rotaract member	Host families without a Rotary or Rotaract member
Africa	18%	82%
Asia	77%	23%
Europe	22%	78%
North America	39%	61%
Oceania	51%	49%
South America	38%	62%

Host family engagement

9,440 of the reported volunteers hosted exchange students in 2023-24. Of all host families, **3,604 (38%)** included at least one Rotary or Rotaract member, and **5,836 (62%)** were made up of nonmembers. Note that some short-term exchanges, such as short-term camps or tours, do not include a host family experience.

The table shows the percentage of host families, by region, that include a member of Rotary or Rotaract. In Asia and Oceania, the majority of host families had someone who was a member of Rotary or Rotaract, while the majority of families volunteering to host students in Africa, Europe, and North and South America did not have a member of Rotary or Rotaract.

In the 2023-24 Rotary year, **304 (79%)** participating districts recruited new host families to house students and share the responsibility of welcoming them to the country. Host family recruitment and retention are among the most challenging aspects of a successful Rotary Youth Exchange program. The role of host requires a family that is committed, empathetic, and well prepared to host students for several weeks to months at a time.

Districts that recruited new host families by holding events recruited **5.7** more families on average compared to districts that did not recruit this way. Other methods did not show increased recruitment. In fact, districts where club members reached out to friends and family recruited **12.9** fewer families on average than districts that did not use this method.

Top methods that districts used to recruit new host families:

- Club members reached out to friends and family.
- The district held events in the community.
- The district posted on social media.

HOST SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Long-term exchanges by school type

School type	Number of students	Percentage of students
Public	2,556	59.8%
Private	1,443	33.7%
Vocational	66	1.5%
Fine arts	10	0.2%
Other	21	0.5%
Unreported	180	4.2%
Total	4,276	100%

Host school involvement

Long-term exchange students attend school in their host countries. This gives them the opportunity to connect with peers and teachers while experiencing academic life in a new culture and, often, a different language. Students may be placed in various types of schools, depending on their goals. Most often, students can expect to attend a typical public school (usually government funded), but in some cases they may attend a private school (often funded through tuition or other sources) or a school that focuses on the arts or vocations.



[CLICK TO LEARN MORE](#)

MOTHER-DAUGHTER HOSTING DUO

For Emanuelle and Sabrina Barreto, Rotary Youth Exchange is a family tradition in every sense. Sabrina has not only gone on exchange herself but also witnessed the program in action in her own home as her family hosted several exchange students from all over the world during her childhood. The mother and daughter have come away from their experiences with different but valuable outlooks on life.

on.rotary.org/motherdaughterduo



COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Contributing to the care and development of the host community is an important part of a Rotary Youth Exchange. In 2023-24, **230** participating districts, or about **60%**, reported that they involved their inbound students in community service projects. To help their host communities, students:



Took part in charity walks or runs that either raised funds for a cause or raised awareness about a particular community issue



Cleaned up waste along beaches, riverfronts, and in parks or other public spaces; planted trees in needed areas



Visited and socialized with patients in nursing homes and children's wards in hospitals



Raised funds for causes and organizations including End Polio Now, ShelterBox, homeless shelters, and sending medical supplies to victims of floods and earthquakes



Gathered and donated household items for refugees



Packed food and necessities into bags for people in flooded areas and collected and packed donations for food donation centers

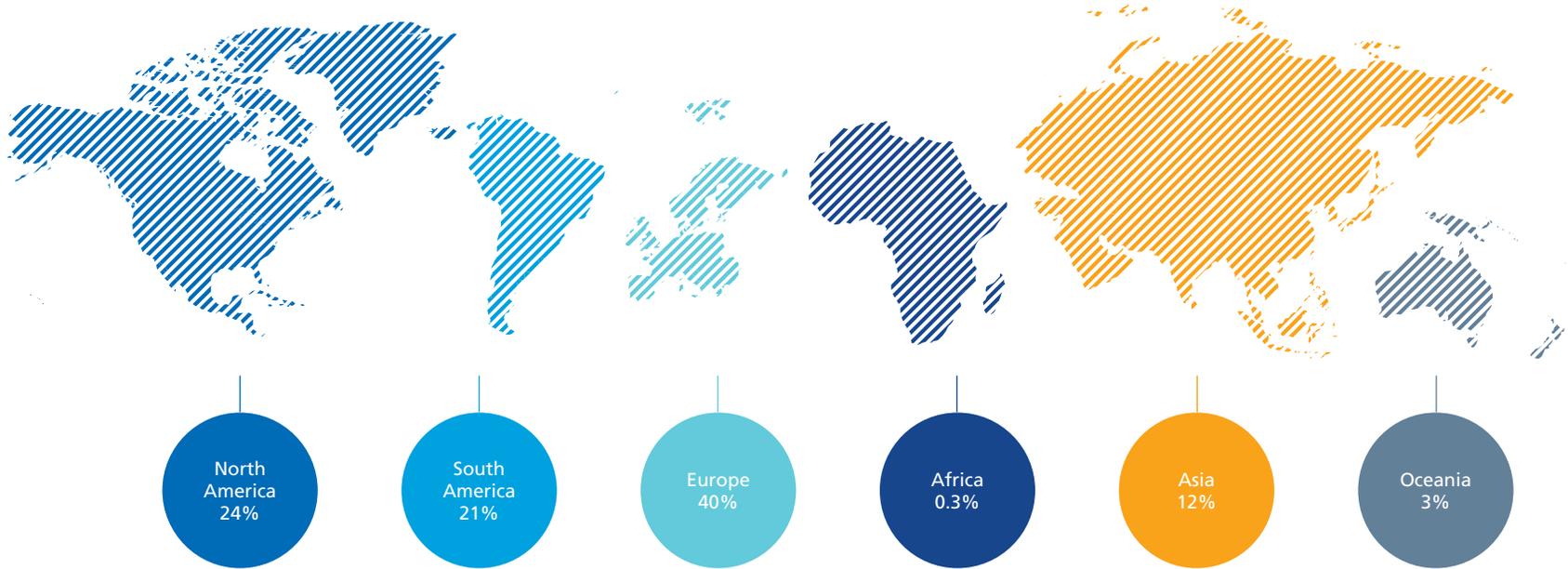




LONG-TERM EXCHANGES

Long-term exchanges usually last a full academic year. In 2023-24, **330** participating districts hosted **4,276** long-term exchanges, representing **64%** of all Rotary Youth Exchanges.

2023-24 LONG-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST REGION



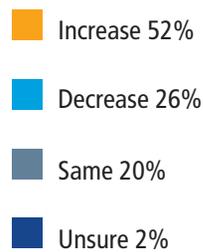
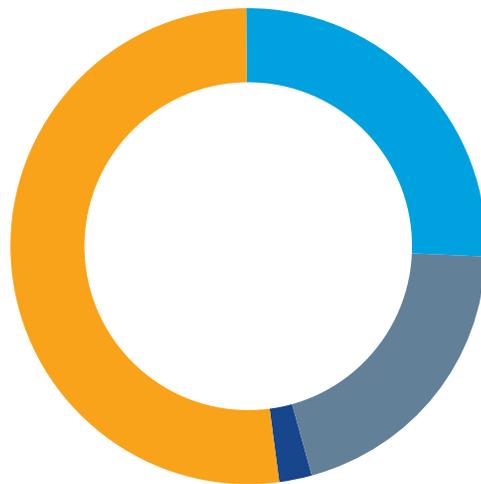
LONG-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
United States	575	13.45%
Brazil	478	11.18%
France	386	9.03%
Germany	350	8.19%
Mexico	286	6.69%
Taiwan	218	5.10%
Belgium	204	4.77%
Argentina	186	4.35%
Italy	165	3.86%
Canada	163	3.81%
Australia	121	2.83%
Japan	121	2.83%
Denmark	98	2.29%
Finland	86	2.01%
Spain	85	1.99%
Thailand	83	1.94%
Colombia	74	1.73%
Chile	73	1.71%
Austria	68	1.59%
Ecuador	57	1.33%
Switzerland	50	1.17%

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Czech Republic	47	1.10%
Sweden	43	1.01%
Hungary	39	0.91%
Poland	36	0.84%
India	31	0.72%
Netherlands	29	0.68%
Turkey	25	0.58%
New Zealand	18	0.42%
Norway	16	0.37%
Indonesia	15	0.35%
Peru	15	0.35%
South Africa	9	0.21%
Romania	8	0.19%
Korea, Republic of	4	0.09%
Croatia	3	0.07%
Lithuania	3	0.07%
Zimbabwe	3	0.07%
Philippines	2	0.05%
Bolivia	1	0.02%
Malaysia	1	0.02%
Venezuela	1	0.02%
TOTAL	4,276	100%

This table shows the number and percentage of long-term exchanges hosted by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF LONG-TERM EXCHANGES



Long-term exchange trends and challenges

While 2022-23 had many districts evaluating the number of students sent on exchange compared with the number sent in years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, districts experienced growth in long-term exchanges overall in 2023-24 compared to the previous year.

Community interest and participation, especially by students, volunteers, and clubs, are vital to the growth of Rotary Youth Exchange.

Top reasons for increases in long-term exchanges:

1. Relaxation of restrictions prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Increased participation by clubs
3. Increased interest from young people

Top reasons for decreases in long-term exchanges:

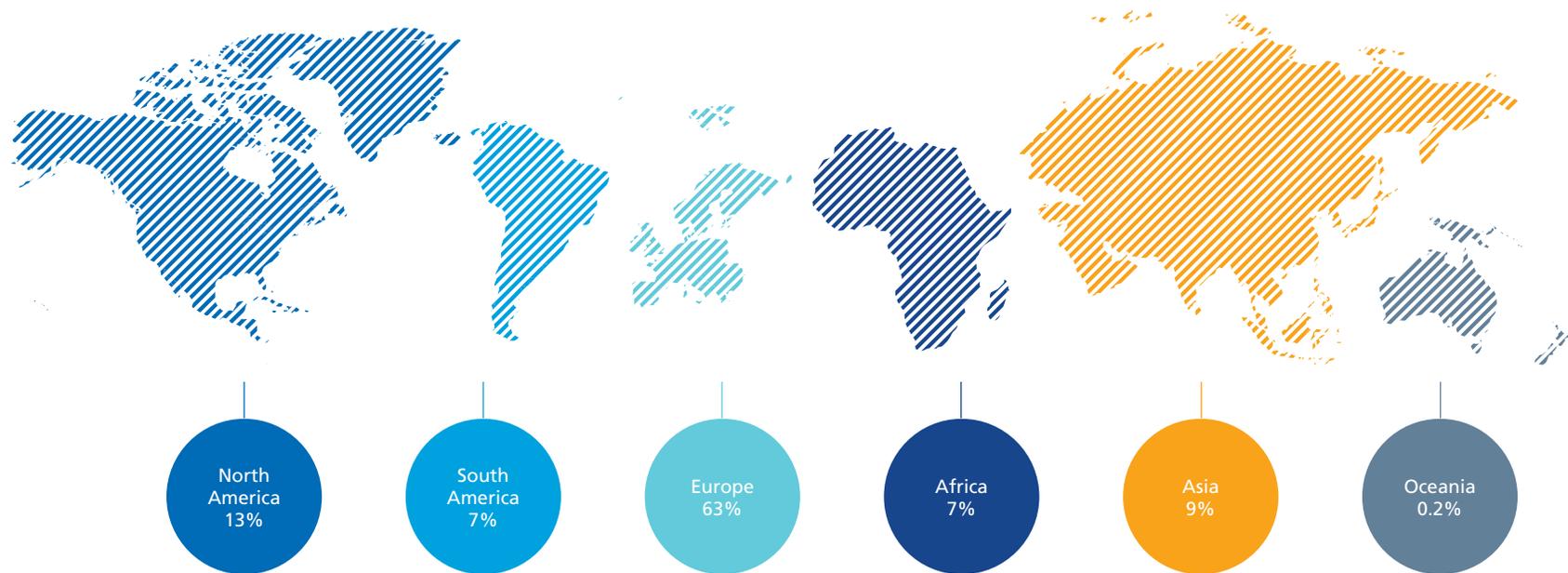
1. Lack of interest from young people
2. Lack of interest from clubs
3. Lack of interest from host families



SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES

Short-term exchanges last from several days to a few months. They often take the form of a camp, tour, or homestay and take place when school isn't in session. In 2023-24, **185** participating districts hosted **2,326** short-term exchanges, representing **35%** of all Rotary Youth Exchanges.

2023-24 SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES HOSTED BY REGION



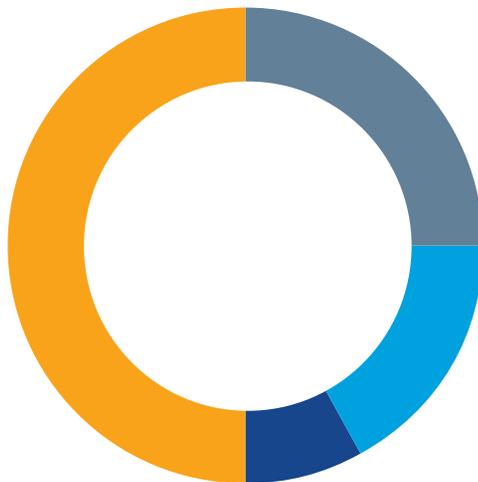
SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Italy	384	16.51%
Germany	342	14.70%
France	196	8.43%
United States	167	7.18%
Taiwan	165	7.09%
Spain	129	5.55%
Brazil	116	4.99%
Norway	113	4.86%
Turkey	87	3.74%
Mexico	80	3.44%
Switzerland	79	3.40%
South Africa	64	2.75%
Finland	61	2.62%
Czech Republic	58	2.49%
Belgium	56	2.41%
Canada	47	2.02%
Argentina	34	1.46%

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Japan	30	1.29%
Australia	22	0.95%
Hungary	16	0.69%
India	16	0.69%
Romania	13	0.56%
Austria	8	0.34%
Colombia	8	0.34%
Ecuador	8	0.34%
Netherlands	8	0.34%
Thailand	6	0.26%
Chile	3	0.13%
Portugal	3	0.13%
Sweden	3	0.13%
Denmark	2	0.09%
Peru	1	0.04%
Poland	1	0.04%
TOTAL	2,326	100%

This table shows the breakdown of short-term exchanges by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES



- Increase 50%
- Same 25%
- Decrease 17%
- Not sure 8%

Short-term exchange trends and challenges

Top reasons for increases in short-term exchanges:

1. Increased interest from young people
2. Relaxation of restrictions prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Increased participation by clubs

Top reasons for decreases in short-term exchanges

1. Lack of interest from young people
2. Continued impact of COVID-19 on the ability to conduct the program
3. Lack of interest in hosting students



CLICK TO LEARN MORE

EVEN A SHORT EXPERIENCE CAN BUILD A LIFETIME OF CONNECTION

Think back to times when you traveled. Can you remember any moments that changed your perspective on the world? On your country? Even on your hometown? Each time a student goes on an exchange, there are countless opportunities for growth — even in a short-term exchange!

Rotary member Shauna Ganes describes how she has seen Rotary Youth Exchange impact young people who go on exchange both to and from her district. Read about why she calls the program “the shining jewel in the crown of Rotary youth programs.”

on.rotary.org/shortexperience





VIRTUAL EXCHANGES

Virtual exchanges are an alternative to in-person exchanges that offer young people unique opportunities to interact and collaborate online with people from other cultures and communities. When virtual exchanges are structured and safe and are developed with specific goals in mind, these experiences can be just as valuable as physically going abroad.

Virtual exchanges remain a wonderful way to offer young people — especially young people who are underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized — chances to engage in meaningful conversations that promote respect and understanding across cultures. They can also help students challenge stereotypes, increase empathy, and develop intercultural competencies, all of which can help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to become global citizens and peacebuilders.

In 2023-24, **4** participating districts hosted **53** virtual exchanges in Brazil, the Netherlands, Nigeria, and Taiwan, representing **0.8%** of all Rotary Youth Exchanges. This is a **77%** increase from the 30 virtual exchanges reported in 2022-23.

Virtual exchange trends

We asked districts to tell us about their methods of facilitating virtual exchanges.

Top types of interactions in virtual exchanges:

1. Student to student
2. Student to Rotary or Rotaract members
3. Student to teacher

Top platforms used for virtual exchanges:

1. Zoom
2. Google Meet

Top reasons that districts decided to participate in virtual exchanges:

1. Virtual exchanges are more affordable.
2. Virtual exchanges are more accessible for some or all our students.
3. There are more opportunities for us to partner with other districts.
4. Virtual exchanges create a bridge between students and host families prior to an in-person exchange.

ALUMNI OF ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

In 2023-24, **345** districts, or **90%** of participating districts, reported actively engaging Rotary Youth Exchange alumni in some way after they completed their exchanges. These alumni are often referred to as Rotex. They are frequently asked to serve as volunteers for district-organized Rotary Youth Exchange events or invited to participate in other Rotary youth programs in service projects and club events.

Top ways that Rotary Youth Exchange alumni were engaged by Rotary or Rotaract clubs:

1. Student orientation (279 alumni)
2. District conferences (200 alumni)
3. Club meetings (190 alumni)

District leaders said that **1,877** of the 6,655 students who participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in 2023-24 planned to participate in other Rotary youth programs, such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) or Interact, in the future.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS:

1

The intercultural entrepreneur
on.rotary.org/interculturalentrepreneur

2

The life of a Rotary Youth Exchange student
<https://on.rotary.org/ryelife>

3

Smera Chandan (top left) celebrates the new year with her host family.



ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO YOUTH PROTECTION

The safety and well-being of young people and youth program participants are Rotary's highest priority. Rotary International has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and harassment of young people.

Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Reporting incidents to Rotary allows our Youth Protection staff to guide local leaders in responding to, investigating, and resolving these matters in accordance with our youth protection policies and procedures. Reporting also allows our Rotary staff to monitor members when appropriate and prohibit them from interacting with youth if they are found to have violated policy.

What is reported to Rotary International?

Rotary encourages anyone who has a youth protection concern to use our online form to report it. Follow the link on our [Youth Protection page](#) to get to the form. Reports can even be submitted anonymously. Reported concerns may involve any minor who is participating in Rotary in any way, whether by being a Rotary Youth Exchange student, attending a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) camp, belonging to an Interact club, or even just attending a Rotary or Rotaract club meeting. We require our members to report any allegations of abuse, harassment, or misconduct that involve a minor in Rotary, as well as medical incidents, accidents, Rotary Youth Exchange early returns, and allegations against Rotary or Rotaract members that involve minors that arise outside of Rotary programming.

Trends in youth protection during 2023-24

Even the most robust, proactive youth protection efforts cannot prevent all misconduct, accidents, and other youth protection concerns. Thorough reviews of each situation and a commitment to taking corrective action ensure that we do everything we can to prevent any problems from happening again.

Rotary International supports districts that are involved in Rotary Youth Exchange by analyzing trends in the youth protection concerns that are reported around the world so we can identify potential root causes and develop resources and support to reduce risk and keep our young participants safe. Consider how your district can enhance your commitment to youth protection in some of the following key areas we've identified.

Growing your network of youth program volunteers

Every volunteer in Rotary who works with young people makes a commitment to uphold our Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth, but the real work of safeguarding young people happens when we work together. Districts are encouraged to appoint a youth protection officer to coordinate with youth program leaders for Interact, RYLA, and Rotary Youth Exchange and connect clubs active in other youth-serving activities. The officer can share information and practices that build safe environments as well as support club and district leaders in responding to youth protection concerns. But don't stop there. Create a youth protection committee that brings everyone together, including youth-serving leaders, program alumni, and community experts such as social workers, educators, law enforcement professionals, and those with special knowledge or experience in working with youth.

Host family recruiting

Placing students with willing and enthusiastic host families is vital to the success of an exchange. And recruiting safe, welcoming, respectful, and supportive families that can bear the financial responsibility of hosting has become more difficult. Most important, we want to place students with families that want to host, not ones that need to be incentivized or persuaded to host, which could result in tension, hostility, or a lack of support for our students. Every family must freely commit to hosting without pressure (actual or perceived), and understand in advance the added responsibility, challenges, and costs of hosting. So-called "forced hosting" is strictly prohibited in Rotary Youth Exchange, but more importantly families that feel supported return year after year feeling excited and connected to the Rotary family. Support your host families just like you support your students by keeping host families engaged throughout their program experience. Offer regular check-ins and robust learning opportunities for host families before and during the exchange experience. Write to youthexchange@rotary.org to get resources that can help you place students with host families successfully.

Responding appropriately to youth protection concerns

When youth protection concerns arise it can be a challenging experience for everyone involved — including our volunteers and members who take the lead in responding. Responding appropriately to any concerns and all youth protection concerns not only prevents further harm to individuals involved, but also safeguards the reputation of our organization. When our volunteers respond to concerns quickly, thoroughly, and compassionately we build confidence in our communities that Rotary takes youth protection seriously. [Rotary's Youth Protection Guide](#) provides best practices and resources for members and volunteers to understand the importance of reporting and responding to youth protection concerns, how to receive reports with confidence and compassion, and the unique barriers and considerations when youth are involved.

Barriers to reporting

The decision to report harassment or abuse is a personal decision, and it can be a difficult one, especially for young people experiencing a different country, culture, and language. Young people especially tend to minimize and deny abuse, not exaggerate or over-report incidents. People who have experienced trauma may not report it for many reasons, so it's especially important to recognize the signs of abuse and barriers to reporting. Reaffirm your commitment to reporting, investigating, and following through for all youth protection concerns that are expressed in good faith.

Resources

If you need advice or assistance, write to youthprotection@rotary.org, or call +1-866-976-8279 from 08:00 to 16:00 Chicago time (UTC-5 or UTC-6) to talk with Rotary's Youth Protection staff. Our staff members are experienced and are trained in receiving reports of abuse or misconduct that involves youth. Each situation will be handled with care and confidentiality.

Resources to make your programs safer:

[Rotary's Youth Protection Guide](#)

[Rotary's Youth Protection page](#) — with the link for reporting youth protection concerns

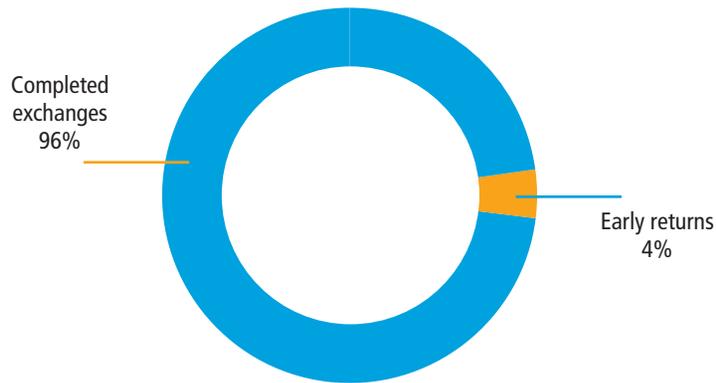
[Protecting Youth Program Participants](#) (online course)

[Preventing and Addressing Harassment](#) (online course)

ENDING AN EXCHANGE EARLY

EXCHANGE COMPLETION RATE

Participating districts reported that **282** exchanges, or **4%**, ended early in 2023-24.



Mental health and Rotary Youth Exchange

In the 2023-24 survey, we asked whether districts made efforts to support student mental health, and **330** districts (**86%** of participating districts) responded that they did. When we asked how districts addressed mental health, they cited many methods, but they generally strived to communicate about mental health more openly with students.

Top methods that districts used to address student mental health:

1. Invited speakers to events for students
2. Provided professional mental health counseling to students
3. Offered additional mental health education to students

Reasons for ending an exchange early

Homesickness was the most frequent reason given for students returning early from their exchanges.

Reasons given for early returns	Number
Homesickness	77
Rule violation	44
Mental health concern	30
Medical health concern	25
Problems at school (grades, attendance, expulsion)	25
School requirements in home country	22
Problems with host family	15
Breach of law	4
Problems with host club	3
Other	37
Total	282

2024 YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICERS PRECONVENTION

About 300 members of the Rotary Youth Exchange community gathered for the 2024 Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention, 24-25 May in Singapore. Participants from around the world had the chance to network, take part in breakout sessions to learn from one another, and hear inspiring speeches from both alumni and fellow leaders.



2024-25 Rotary International President Stephanie A. Urchick addresses attendees at the preconvention



Attendees at the closing session of the 2024 Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention



Rotary Youth Exchange students in Singapore

RESOURCES FOR ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

1

VIDEOS

Overview video for Rotary Youth Exchange

on.rotary.org/ryevideo

Overview video for virtual exchanges through Rotary Youth Exchange

on.rotary.org/virtualexchangevideo

2

PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

Promotional materials available on the Rotary Brand Center (photos, graphics, printed materials)

on.rotary.org/ryepromo

3

YOUTH PROTECTION

Rotary International takes all youth protection concerns seriously. You can access our online youth protection reporting form at rotary.org/youthprotection.

Email youthexchange@rotary.org for questions about the program.

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ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE
ON [ROTARY.ORG](https://www.rotary.org)**