Local-to-Local Solutions for Global Problems:
The Partnership between
The Rotary Clubs of Savanna la Mar and Indianapolis

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Executive Summary
For nearly fifteen years, the Rotary Clubs of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Savanna la Mar, Jamaica, have formed and sustained a unique local-to-local partnership addressing the problem of poverty in Jamaica. First established in 1992 to give Indianapolis Rotarians experience with an international project and to secure medical equipment for the hospital in Savanna la Mar, this partnership has blossomed into much more. For the first five years, cash and other resources were transferred from Indiana to Jamaica. Schools were repainted and furnished with donated books and desks. The hospital was refurbished and Indianapolis was able to assist with equipping it. Annually, Indianapolis Rotarians would visit their Jamaican counterparts to deliver money and donations. In the late 1990s, when the Savanna la Mar Club was struggling with internal disorder and the Indianapolis Club became preoccupied with other interests, relations between the two Clubs lapsed for more than two years.

With the renewal of the partnership in 2000, activities took a very different pattern. In addition to continuing to help schools, two large projects defined the second stage of this partnership. A team of Rotarians and experts from the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana worked with the Dyslexia Association of Jamaica and the Jamaican Ministry of Education to redefine the way Jamaican schools identified, diagnosed, and treated children with dyslexia. Additionally, Indianapolis Rotarian Tim Dudley, DDS, led several trips to Jamaica, providing free dental services to more than a thousand people who would otherwise have had no care. These projects were explicitly designed to grow and mature over the course of three to five years. They were also able to receive support from Rotary International as they requested and received matching grants. The projects also involved much more complex relations among the Rotary Clubs and non-Rotary partners. Hoosiers and Jamaicans agree that this new approach to the partnership enabled the benefits from the projects to flow both ways. In large part because of the closer relations they established during this second wave of activities, the two Rotary clubs today are preparing to go together to Kenya for a seven-to-ten year initiative to address the severe problems of poverty and disease facing that country.

The partnership between the Rotary Clubs of Savanna la Mar and Indianapolis could point toward a new understanding of foreign assistance. An intuitively plausible notion sees assistance flowing from rich countries to poor countries: the US government, for instance, collects taxes and sends money to the Jamaican government, which distributes the money to its citizens in need; or the Rotary Club of Indianapolis collects money and other donations from its members and the community, takes the money and goods to Jamaica to give to the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar, which distributes them to the needy in Savanna la Mar.

However, during the second wave of activities, the partnership looked much different. The distinctions between donor and recipient were less clear as benefits flowed in both directions. A priority was not only to send resources from Indiana to Jamaica, but also to preserve and strengthen the partnership between the two clubs and, to a less degree, between their two communities. Rather than a one-way flow of resources, then, the partnership in the second wave of activities was characterized by a dense and complex network of mutually reinforcing linkages and relations between the two Clubs, individual members in both, and members of their communities. We call this an interdependent model of foreign assistance.

Thanks to the diligence of both Clubs, members were able to culminate and preserve a high degree of trust which had formed between them. They also were able to carryout long-term projects. The trust also streamlined establishing new projects since each Club could be counted on to form an optimal coalition of partners from groups in its community (Hoosiers, for instance, did not
have to spend weeks and months seeking partners in Jamaica since their Rotarian counterparts could identify partners almost immediately).

Based on the development of relations between the two Rotary Clubs, we would make the following recommendations, both for the Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar Rotary Clubs’ initiative in Kenya and for many other organizations seeking to form local-to-local partnerships.

- Making use of all the resources made available through a large organization such as Rotary International is likely to be beyond the abilities and experience of a small organization from an underdeveloped country, making paperwork a natural task for the richer and larger organization. But the purpose of the partnership ought to be strengthening all members, so projects should build in ways to give the less experienced partner a chance to learn how to navigate bureaucratic and international seas on its own.

- The two Rotary Clubs served as “one-stop shops” for assembling coalitions of non-Rotary partners. The Indianapolis Club was responsible for pulling together teams of American organizations, the Savanna la Mar Club responsible for Jamaican partners. The danger is that valuable contributors to activities could be inadvertently or unintentionally excluded. All partners should work hard to bring in new coalition members.

- In a very poor country such as Kenya, with so many resources flowing in from the US government, multilateral organizations, and other non-Rotary donors, it will be important to keep informed of the activities of these other donors in order not to duplicate efforts and, if possible, to amplify the Rotarians’ contributions.

- Be prepared to walk away from a partnership if necessary. Structure long-term projects so that they will have yielded real changes for the better even if they are unexpectedly terminated before their conclusion. Uncertainty permeates poor countries of the world. A five-year project that yields very large benefits in the final year and hardly any before that is risky: political or economic disruptions that force a premature end to the relation could mean that several years of work are wasted.

- Make sure that you leave self-sustaining initiatives behind when finished. Train your partners or someone else to continue doing good work even after partner organizations have gone home.

- With these relations it is imperative that the partner outside of the project country allow the locals to identify the project. Never dictate to them; otherwise, you will just waste funds.

The Promises and Challenges of Glocalization

Globalization has had serious consequences for communities, villages, and provinces in poor countries: national governments that might have been expected to solve problems at the local level find themselves helpless. Local players (e.g., local governments, religious groups, informal business groups, schools and universities) now must bear responsibilities for which they are not prepared. Fortunately, globalization also means that local actors and groups from other countries and continents are able to form direct linkages and partnerships with beleaguered local players in poor countries. The resulting coalitions — “local-to-local solutions for global problems” — may offer an alternative or supplement to foreign aid provided from state to state or provided by multilateral agencies. These coalitions promise to transform lives in poor countries and in the wealthier partner countries as well. Think of this process of connecting local partners and global problems not exactly as “globalization”—it is “glocalization.”

Many of these partnerships are off the radar screens of researchers, who are accustomed to looking at national capitals and multilateral organizations. They are neglected by national policymakers, who in most countries denigrate or ignore local players. This is unfortunate: these coalitions are too often learning through trial and error important ways to define problems jointly, to collaborate across countries and cultures, and to broaden their objectives.

We also need a better understanding of how resources flow from wealthy countries to poor communities. A simple and intuitive model would see public or private actors commit resources to intermediate organizations, which in turn transfer the resources to those in need. This intuitive model focuses attention on the decision by donors to commit resources, and on the outcomes of these resources transferred by intermediary organizations to those in need. While this intuitive model has important policy implications for increasing the quantity and quality of resources committed, it neglects relations that last longer than a one-time transfer of resources from donor through intermediaries to recipients. It misses feedback loops of information at each stage. It ignores the different ways that donors, intermediaries, and recipients collaborate with each other. More importantly, it cannot explain how the goals and interests of all three sets of actors are transformed by their collaboration with each other. Thus what we require is a better way of analyzing new patterns of partnerships.

This is a case study of one local-to-local partnership devoted to solving the problems associated with poverty.
For nearly fifteen years the Rotary Clubs of Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar, Jamaica have worked together to repair hospitals, expand and refurbish schools, treat disease, diagnose and treat dyslexia, and provide dental care. In itself, this partnership is a tribute to the ideals of Rotary and the optimism of the Rotarians who have devoted their time and other resources to community development. More importantly, this partnership can help provide ideas that can guide other attempts to solve global problems.

The Trajectory of a Partnership

Rotary in the context of American ways of distributing foreign aid

Americans often stand accused of being unwilling and stingy donors of foreign aid. Critics identify extremely low per-capita rates of foreign aid as reflecting Americans’ lack of interest for those who live in underdeveloped areas of the world (for instance 0.17 percent of US GNI compared to a small country such as Sweden’s contribution of 0.76 percent of its GNI). However, the figures supporting this charge reflect only those foreign-aid contributions distributed by the US government. Most critics fail to realize that Americans are more willing and likely to give foreign aid through private rather than public channels because: (1) Americans possess a cultural distrust of the government and its ability to assess properly where needs and to distribute assistance accordingly; and (2) many Americans seem to prefer some sort of direct contact with the recipient, contact that is precluded by government control of foreign aid. According to former USAID official Carol Adelman, US private provisions of foreign aid are three-and-one-half times that provided by US Official Development Assistance (ODA). Private provisions total $62.1 billion compared to $16.3 billion provided by public provisions.

Historically, Americans have seen the distribution of state-controlled foreign aid as deeply problematic. One problem has been choosing who should receive assistance: during the Cold War, selection of a recipient was often tied to the country’s East-West alignment and to its form of government, not to the needs of the people. Today, America’s strategic allies still receive preferential treatment in many ways. And the focus on “good governance” means the type and quality of government an applicant country possesses still determine whether it receives any aid. A second problem arises during distribution of assistance: certain requisites are usually attached to how the recipient country can use the aid. For instance, recipients may be required to spend the money on goods and services produced by US companies, or may be expected to repay the money within a designated time, or may face other controls over the use of the money.

“Leakages” are another problem: a substantial percent of foreign aid does not make it to the recipient, but provides the salaries and wages of American government officials, or to the administrative expenses of private contractors responsible for distributing the aid money. Another type of leakage happens when little of the aid reaches those in the recipient country who most need help, but instead stays at the government level (or worse, somehow finds itself in the bank accounts of government officials).

Thus, many Americans seek alternate ways to help address poverty and other global problems—ways that do not consider a country’s or individual’s political ideology as a prerequisite for assistance, ways that do not require the aid to be spent in ways dictated by the donor, ways that do not waste substantial amounts on administrative fees. Instead, they want to ensure that individuals in need receive the greatest share of funds they contribute.

Rotary International provides one way for individuals to provide foreign aid while, mostly, bypassing governmental bureaucracy. Founded in 1905 by Paul Harris, Rotary mainly served the social interests of its members; however, the outbreak of World War II broadened the interests of Rotary and greatly increased its involvement around the world. As “a global network of community volunteers,” Rotarians established the Rotary Foundation in 1917, and formalized it as a nonprofit organization in 1928, launching the Ambassadorial Scholarships for graduate fellowships. The Foundation receives annual contributions totaling $80 million to support humanitarian grants and educational programs that promote international understanding. (Rotarians express satisfaction knowing that Rotary International does not allow its funds for projects to be used for administration, unlike government practices, or from other service organizations, which sometimes charge more than 30 percent for administration.)

Since 1985, Rotary International’s main focus has been PolioPlus, a world campaign to eradicate polio, but the organization goes beyond this one initiative, asking its local clubs to commit members to numerous other community development projects around the world. These projects have included repairing schools and combating illiteracy, working to prevent HIV/AIDS, resolving conflicts and assisting with disaster relief. “Since 1947, the Foundation has awarded more than $1.1 billion in humanitarian and educational grants, which are initiated and administered by local Rotary clubs and districts.”

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Through Rotary International’s World Community Service Projects Exchange Database, Rotary Clubs around the world can find community service projects sponsored by other Rotary Clubs on which they can twin (collaborate). The database provides project details: necessary funds, materials, and technical and professional assistance, allowing Clubs to select a project that best matches their capabilities. The following is a story of two Rotary Clubs that found each other through the World Community Service Projects Guide, and formed a partnership to try to solve the problems faced by an underdeveloped country.

The brink of a partnership: Savanna la Mar Club 1990-1992

Jamaica in the mid-1980s was pulling itself out of an economic slump created by the policies of its socialist government, collateral damage in the worldwide struggle between communism and democracy, and increasing problems caused by US economic sanctions. Though Prime Minister Michael Manley sought to alleviate the poverty among Jamaicans of African descent, economic conditions actually worsened for everyone.

The needs of impoverished communities in Jamaica were (and still are) enormous. Despite the intentions or desires of its members, meeting these needs was beyond the capability of the small Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar. Jamaica’s status as a tourist destination has long attracted numerous visitors from abroad, many of whom have witnessed the social and economic devastation of the country and have felt compelled to assist organizations such as the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar in trying to improve the situation. Unfortunately, much of this assistance had little impact on the Savanna la Mar community. The Club needed to implement a better system to guide donations and channel offers of assistance: this better system fell into place under Gregg Keesling’s leadership.

As president-elect for the Savanna la Mar Club, Keesling attended Rotary International’s President-Elect Training Seminar (PETS), where he learned about the World Community Service Guide (WCSG), through which a Rotary Club could “twin” with another Club to work jointly on a project. This partnership could include the sharing of knowledge, resources, supplies, labor, and most importantly money.

Rotary International matching grants can fund WCS projects. “The Rotary Foundation provides a 1:1 match for District Designated Funds SHARE contributions and a 0.5:1 match for new cash contributions.” For instance, if successful in receiving a matching grant, a Rotary Club could take $5,000 it had raised and have it matched by Rotary International at a rate of $0.50 to $1 and by Rotary District organizations at a rate of $1 to $1, turning $5,000 into $12,500. In addition, the WSC partner could do the same, allowing the two clubs to have $25,000 for their project. This is a very exciting prospect for many small Clubs with limited resources.

The process begins: Savanna la Mar lists the Hospital Project with the WCSG

Keesling convinced the Savanna la Mar Club that the WCSG would be the most efficient way to attract resources for community-development projects that were beyond the Club’s means; and he had already identified a project to list. However, the process of obtaining a matching grant is considered by many to be so confusing and complicated that many Rotary Clubs are unwilling to request them. In fact, Savanna la Mar has never applied for a matching grant due to the complicated process.

Keesling openly admitted that his reasons for listing the Savanna la Mar Hospital as a project with WCSG were not completely altruistic: since the local hospital did not possess a heart defibrillator, tourists with heart conditions were reluctant come to the region. This negatively impacted Keesling’s resort.

However, it was a matter of enlightened self-interest: Keesling was well aware that an increase in tourism would improve the economic situation of all, since many Savanna la Mar Rotarians and other citizens of Westmoreland Parish made their living through tourism. Besides, any improvement in the healthcare services would be beneficial for everyone in Westmoreland Parish.

Learning from experience

One of Savanna la Mar’s first responses for the hospital project was the Rotary Club of Merced County, California. The Merced Club had heard about Savanna la Mar and the Hospital’s needs through a member’s daughter who was a missionary in Jamaica. When Merced Rotarians traveled to Jamaica to assess the needs of the hospital, they were informed by Dr. Jeffrey East, Head Surgeon and fellow Rotarian, that his hospital had a more pressing need for a laparoscope, since at the time Jamaica had one the world’s highest incidence of stomach cancer. The Merced Club returned to California and began a search for the requested laparoscope.

Once the Merced County Club found a laparoscope, a delegation brought it to Savanna la Mar. Keesling and the Savanna la Mar Club, excited about receiving such a remarkable gift, put together a reception at the hospital, which included the “Custos Rotulorum” (the Westmoreland Parish’s British Commonwealth Representative to the Governor General and the Queen).
They even went so far as pulling East out of surgery in order personally to receive the laparoscope. After such a grand reception, it was quite embarrassing when two weeks later East informed Keesling that the laparoscope was not functional since it was missing the air-water line source. Keesling contacted the Merced Club to ask if there had been a mistake, whereupon the California Club informed him that they had assumed Savanna la Mar Rotary and the hospital would be able to acquire the missing component elsewhere. The useless laparoscope from Merced was consigned to the hospital’s “Room of Good Intentions” to collect dust with other pieces of medical technology donated without spare parts, user manuals, proper power supplies, and so on.

*Changing how assistance is requested*

The disappointing experience with the Merced County Club motivated Savanna la Mar to learn how to communicate and express the type of assistance and donations they needed in a more effective manner—without offending possible donors. This, of course, carries risks, as many potential donors want to address the needs that they see. (This is how a “Room of Good Intentions” develops). But it was an urgent task, especially since the Club was witnessing actions such as the burning of schoolbooks, a result of the overwhelming number of unusable donated books: some had language problems, written in American English rather than the British English used by Jamaicans; others were culturally offensive in their portrayal of history, with descriptions of Christopher Columbus as a great explorer and conqueror. The sheer volume of donations indicated people’s willingness and desire to help, but the uselessness of the donations suggests they were unaware of how to do so effectively.

It was the Club’s responsibility to educate donors about what the community needed; but it was also the responsibility of donors to demonstrate respect by asking what the Club and the Savanna la Mar community needed, not just assuming they knew best. Donors have to realize that just because they see a need in Jamaica does not mean that the Jamaicans see the same thing, or that the Jamaicans possess the means to maintain and sustain an item. Moreover, the responsibility of the donor does not stop with the donation, but includes providing any necessary education, training, and guidance that the item might require. The defibrillator provides a good example of how a good deed can go awry. The donated defibrillator was a portable one that the Jamaicans placed in an ambulance; unfortunately, none of the emergency medical responders knew how to use the new equipment.

The Savanna la Mar Club had its opportunity to implement its new approach for receiving assistance when, in 1992, its members received a request for information from President James “Jim” McClelland of Rotary Club of Indianapolis, about how his Club could help with the Savanna la Mar Hospital Project, which he had found in the WCSG.

The first step of the new system was to establish a sense of trust between the Jamaicans and the Americans, which meant developing relationships built on commonalities. Keesling thought it was important to inform McClelland that he is a native Hoosier. McClelland was surprised to find a fellow Hoosier living in Jamaica, which motivated him to learn more about the Hoosier transplant by visiting his family in Keesling’s Indiana hometown. Through the sharing of personal backgrounds, each of the two Club presidents gained a better sense of the person with whom they were going to work, thus creating an environment that would allow for openness and honesty.

In addition, to make sure the relationship started off well, Keesling made it a point to inform the Indianapolis Club that certain donations would not be well-received by the Jamaicans, including the issue of encyclopedias and books with references to Christopher Columbus. (1992 was the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s voyage to the New World, an event viewed very differently by the US and countries in the Caribbean.)

The Savanna la Mar Rotarians, well aware of what they hoped to accomplish with Indianapolis, chose to continue the process of earning the trust of Rotary Indianapolis by selecting other community-development projects which they considered “safe”, i.e., that would not misuse the Club’s resources and would demonstrate the capabilities of the Savanna la Mar Club. However, this approach did not always work as well as the Jamaicans would have liked. (See the section “Establishing the relationship” and the discussion of Paradise Preparatory School).

**The Indianapolis Rotary Club poised to partner:**

*1991-1992*

In the early 1990s, the Rotary Club of Indianapolis was the third-largest Club in the world, and had the potential to be one of the most affluent. When McClelland became president-elect for the Club in 1991, he noted that it was underutilizing its resources, which could be put to good use in the international Rotary community. A veteran of several international projects with Goodwill and other organizations, McClelland was well aware of what the Indianapolis Club could accomplish, but was also conscious that it would take some persuading to get his members to fully support an international project. Thus he outlined five key requirements that he felt would be necessary to make a project attractive to his fellow Rotarians.
Moreover, it was important for Indianapolis to have a well-established international project to demonstrate its strength and capabilities for the 1998 Rotary International Conference, which it was hosting.

Requisites for project and selection of Savanna la Mar
McClelland’s first requirement was that travel to the destination had to be cheap and convenient (the rule at this time was that no money from the Indianapolis Rotary Foundation, which would be funding the project, could be spent on a project that was more than three hours away; Jamaica is approximately a three-hour direct flight from Indianapolis). Second, the official language of the country had to be English since not everyone in Indianapolis who would want to be involved would be bilingual. Third, the host country could not be so impoverished that it would overwhelm the Indianapolis Rotarians and thus lead them to believe that they did not possess the ability to make a difference (McClelland had been to Calcutta, and knew first-hand what witnessing extreme poverty could do to the spirits of Americans.) Fourth, the project had to allow the Indianapolis Rotarians to see tangible results of their work. Fifth, the host country had to be somewhere Indianapolis could make a three-year commitment.*

Savanna la Mar met all of these requirements and more. An additional bonus for Indianapolis was that Keesling was an American, and a native Hoosier. Furthermore, his dynamic personality and eagerness to work with Indianapolis provided a crucial but unconscious continuity for the partnership.

Establishing the relationship
Indianapolis launched the partnership with a $1000 donation to the Savanna la Mar Club in 1992. The Savanna la Mar Club, still wary of offending international donors who might not know what Jamaica’s real needs were, decided that the best and safest use of the money would be the PolioPlus Campaign, an initiative that all Rotarians could support. They used the money to purchase polio vaccine, igloos, and to repair the Ministry of Health’s automobile, which is used to take the vaccine to rural areas of the community.

Rotary International’s PolioPlus Campaign was not necessarily where the need in Jamaica was at the time, nor was it the Jamaicans’ first choice for where to use the donation. However, in hindsight Savanna la Mar does take pride in the fact that they assisted with the eradication of polio in Jamaica with this donation.

Indianapolis Rotary sent a delegation to Jamaica, in 1993, to assess the Savanna la Mar Hospital’s needs and to deliver donations of medicines, money, school desks and supplies; after their return to Indianapolis, they sent a shipment of hospital beds and equipment. The delegation’s assessment was that the hospital was in dire shape and would need much assistance. However, East requested that before any equipment was sent to the hospital, the renovation project should be complete. While the hospital was undergoing its construction project, Rotary Indianapolis began the search for an incubator, which had been identified as one of the hospital’s more urgent needs. The Americans found the equipment long before the end the hospital’s renovation. Rotary Indianapolis, though well aware of East’s request, sent the incubator to Jamaica, where the hospital staff put it in storage for safekeeping until it could be installed in the remodeled hospital, which led to an inter-club relationship problem the next year.

The following year, 1994, Indianapolis returned to Jamaica with some old and new volunteers led by Bill Douthit, by then president of the Indianapolis Club. The Indianapolis Rotarians assisted with building a fence and painting Paradise Preparatory School—hot, dirty, difficult work. Some Hoosiers were not happy that their first project was to help a private prep school rather than a public school. Savanna la Mar Rotarians chose Paradise Preparatory not because it was the neediest (although its needs were nearly as great as a public school’s), but because it would be “safe”: since many Savanna la Mar Rotarians enrolled their children in Paradise Prep, they knew they could do follow-up to make sure the work was completed and maintained. Indianapolis Rotarians, thus, would not be disappointed that their Jamaican counterparts had mismanaged the project. However, Indianapolis had some members who were uncertain if its Club should return to Jamaica in the future, if their assistance was not going to serve those people who were truly needy.

Important lessons emerged during this project both on an inter-club and intra-club level. An intra-club lesson Indianapolis learned was the need to thoroughly inform new volunteers about what took place during previous trips. For instance, those who returned on the second trip were delighted at how much progress had been made with the renovation of the Hospital; while those who were making their first trip were appalled at the Hospital’s poor condition. Also, new volunteers from Indianapolis were shocked to learn that the incubator that had been donated to the hospital the year before was not in use, and many of the nurses were unaware that the hospital possessed one. The incubator, as stated earlier, had been stored for safekeeping during the renovations. In addition, it had a broken bulb and could not be used until Indianapolis sent a replacement. It was only much later that the Indianapolis delegation’s new volunteers learned the whole story about the incubator: it was not consigned to the “Room of Good Intentions,” and was eventually installed and frequently used.
A second lesson for Hoosier volunteers was the reality that by doing work at the school, they were actually taking away job opportunities from the locals. Moreover, Jamaicans often did not appreciate the value of outsiders’ work. Instead, they prefer to do the work themselves, and take pride in that. Having learned this lesson Indianapolis Rotary now donates money for the labor and supplies, thus contributing to community development on many more levels than members would have by doing the work themselves.

For Savanna la Mar, the concern for choosing “safe” projects is a valid one; however, in this instance, Hoosiers were not properly informed about the needs of private educational institutions in Jamaica and how they face the same resource and economic challenges as the public schools. Had this been made clearer, it could have prevented the rise of distrust on the part of the Indianapolis Rotarians. This episode underscores how little miscommunications and misunderstandings can break down a newly forming relationship.

The Indianapolis Rotary Club also had contributed to actions that could have been misconstrued and could have caused the relationship to break down. For instance, some of the medicines the Club donated had expired, which troubled some of the Jamaican Rotarians who were not closely connected to the budding friendship; those who were closely engaged say they were impressed by the size and sincerity of the Indianapolis Club’s generosity.

A very important aspect of this initial relationship is Jamaicans traveling to Indianapolis. The first such trip took place in 1994, when East and Nurse Briscoe of Savanna la Mar Hospital traveled to Indianapolis to learn more about how to treat burn victims effectively. Briscoe even extended her stay to learn additional burn treatment techniques.

The partnership intensifies: 1994-1997

The mid-1990s represents the crest of the first wave of the relationship between Savanna la Mar and Indianapolis. During this time, four delegations visited Savanna la Mar, twice in 1995, taking medications for the hospital pharmacy and a desperately needed blood serializer for the new burn unit of the hospital. The delegations also assisted with landscaping the hospital grounds as part the final stages of the hospital renovation.

The Savanna la Mar Club was making significant progress on its own, as well. The Club largely focused its attention on sustaining its membership. However, its status in Jamaica received a boost when a new president took office in 1993. David Prebble, president of the Savanna la Mar Club, was responsible for stepping into the post of president when Michael Samuels unexpectedly left the Club. Prebble had never been Club president, nor had he even attended the PETS. He remained as president through 1994, keeping the Club going when it could have easily fallen apart with the abrupt and controversial departure of Samuels. Moreover, he was responsible for the decision to honor the Jamaican Prime Minister Percival James “P.J.” Patterson with a Paul Harris Fellow Award, which provided an immense boost for the Savanna la Mar Club’s public image and morale. A few years later, Indianapolis contributed $1,000, the necessary amount to award a Paul Harris Fellowship, to honor Prebble as a Paul Harris Fellow for his efforts during this difficult time.

The fifth trip by Indianapolis Rotarians in 1996 was the last of its kind until 2000. On this occasion Bob Seymour (executive director of the Indianapolis Club) and the Savanna la Mar Club negotiated how they could best serve the Little London School, a vocational school. As part of the Little London initiative, Indianapolis brought with it manual typewriters for the business department and athletic equipment for the School of Hope, which serves the developmentally disabled.

Hiatus: 1998-2000

The latter third of the 1990s was a turbulent time for the Savanna la Mar Club. The energetic Keestling relocated his family to Indianapolis, leaving a gaping hole in Savanna la Mar (both the community and its Rotary Club). In addition, the Club began to suffer from internal conflict and low morale, shifting its attention away from the partnership with Indianapolis. Also at this time, Indianapolis, though promising still to be there when Savanna la Mar worked out its problems, had its attention diverted by the preparatory work needed to host the Rotary International Convention in 1998.

Fortunately, in 1996 Eric Clarke took over the office of president for the Savanna la Mar Club, and he was determined to repair the partnership with Indianapolis. First, he had to strengthen his own Club, so that it would be in a position to work with Indianapolis. Clarke spent the next year mediating intra-club conflicts and resolving the Club’s financial problems. His successor, Roger Allen (1997-1998, 2001-2002), an equally motivated man, spent his tenure increasing Club membership (including opening membership to women, a first for any Jamaican Rotary Club) and organizing ideas for Club projects. They were also able to shift the administrative positions of the Club to younger and energetic members, who were able to get more involved and accomplish more hands-on type projects. Due to the hard work and dedication of these two gentlemen, the Savanna la Mar Club was able to survive. However, Clarke and Allen soon learned that Savanna la Mar was
incapable of accomplishing certain projects (such as acquiring the necessary matching grant for a project at the Little London vocational school) without a partner like Indianapolis Rotary. Clarke states that he was simply overwhelmed by the required paperwork; thus, he turned to Indianapolis for assistance.

Renewal: 2000-2001
Once Keesling settled his family and professional life in Indianapolis, he turned his attention back to his friends and family in Jamaica. He joined the Rotary Club of Indianapolis (and was named Honorary member by the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar), became a member of the World Service Committee, and was able to direct attention once again to Savanna la Mar.

By 2000, the Savanna la Mar Club was once again fully functioning, and Clarke had returned to the position of president. He and Keesling began diligently working to renew the relationship between the two Clubs. In addition, Steve Smith, Chairman of the Indianapolis World Community Service (WCS) Committee, had his own agenda: he wanted the WCS Committee to learn how to make major impacts with international projects. Along with Bob Seymour, the relationship was once again able to thrive.

To reestablish the relationship, an Indianapolis delegation, led by Smith and Seymour, traveled to Savanna la Mar to assess the needs of Waterworks Basic and Ketto Basic Schools. Both required the installation of running water, restrooms and kitchens that would provide the children with hot healthy lunches. The Indianapolis Rotary Foundation and District 6560 of the Rotary International provided $11,900 of the $17,000 needed for the project, achieving for the first time a matching grant from Rotary International by Indianapolis. More important, perhaps, was that Indianapolis openly announced its commitment to a three-year (later extended to five-year) partnership with Savanna la Mar: the Jamaicans were impressed by this announcement by Seymour.

The relationship quickly took off, as goods, people, knowledge, and money flowed once more. Later in 2000, Savanna la Mar nurses Claudette James and Verona Beckford traveled to Indianapolis to observe obstetric procedures at St. Vincent Hospital and Morgan County Hospital.

The first year of the five-year commitment started with a trip in 2001 by an Indianapolis delegation, which delivered a large donation of educational supplies on behalf of the Education Committee of the Indianapolis Club, and began strategic planning with Savanna la Mar for several large and ambitious projects. During the summer of 2001, a delegation of Savanna la Mar Rotarians visited Indianapolis (the first time they had gone out of Jamaica as a Club). Clarke presented the strategic plans that the two Clubs would carry out over the next four years.

The year 2001 was a momentous year for the Savanna la Mar Club, and its members enjoyed sharing it with Indianapolis Rotary. The Club announced that Jenepher Baugh would be the Club’s next president, the first female Rotary Club president in Jamaica. Additionally, due to Savanna la Mar’s assistance with the Indianapolis Greenway Project, Baugh proposed a similar project for Savanna la Mar, which came to fruition in 2002.

The renewed partnership grows: 2002-2003
During the second year (2002) of the renewed relationship, a small delegation from Indianapolis traveled to Savanna la Mar to lay out the plans for the next projects: the Indianapolis WCS Committee had approved the Ferris Primary School project and provided funding for it with a matching grant from District 6560 and the Indianapolis Rotary Foundation, totaling $9,000, which was 75 percent of what would be needed to fence in the school grounds, build an athletic field, and purchase playground equipment. With this project, as one Rotarian said, “we were picking up the pieces of the past relationship.” Also during this trip Lana Taylor of the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana and her Jamaican counterparts from the Dyslexia Association of Jamaica gathered and compiled information on dyslexia (including how dyslexia and other learning disabilities are diagnosed and what instructional techniques are used in the classroom to assist with the student with learning) in Savanna la Mar and began planning the Dyslexia Project that would begin in September 2002.

In addition, Don Griffith, Bob Seymour and Gregg Keesling surveyed Great George Street, which would be the site of Savanna la Mar’s Greenway Project. Supporters of the Savanna la Mar Greenway Project had a difficult time persuading the two Clubs that it was a worthwhile venture. Several members in both Clubs viewed the project as a waste of time and energy, arguing that the money that would be spent on the Greenway could be better used by schools or for healthcare. In the end, the two Clubs did approve the Greenway; and while the project is still in progress, most Jamaican and Hoosier Rotarians agree that it has been, and will continue to be, one of the most successful projects of the relationship. In a region suffering from deforestation, efforts such as a Greenway Project are especially necessary. Moreover, as Edward Speke (former Savanna la Mar Rotarian) observes, the Greenway promotes the development of civic pride, all too often lacking in impoverished countries but vital for community improvement.
The Dyslexia Project began with Lana Taylor and a delegation from Indianapolis that conducted a series of psychological, hearing, and vision examinations on Jamaican schoolchildren. The exams were led by Rotarians Judge David Dreyer, Dr. Tim Dudley, Dick and Sue Tempero, Peter O'Scanaill, and Steve Kaiven. The team conducted a battery of preliminary tests that must be performed before diagnosing any learning disability. The tests were able to identify the level of learning problems among Jamaican schoolchildren, and differentiated those learning problems associated with hearing and vision from those related to dyslexia. In fact, the testing yielded an unintended benefit. Initial testing for dyslexia had to be halted because so many children in Jamaican schools were shown to have severe hearing and vision problems. No one was aware of how severe the situation was. Once those students had been screened, testing for dyslexia could resume; and the kids with vision and hearing problems could start to get treatment. The psychological testing was helpful in modifying the British version of the Orton Gillingham method for Jamaica’s cultural and linguistic differences.

An interesting fact about the members of the delegation from Indianapolis was that most of them were not professionals in the field of dyslexia or education. In order for the Rotarians to carry out the exams, Indianapolis Rotarian John Wagner of Prevent Blindness Indiana provided the delegation with training on how to conduct vision tests; and Indiana University Medical Center provided the necessary equipment for the hearing tests.

In October 2002, Taylor and her husband, James, presented the findings of the testing at a forum on identifying learning disabilities in Jamaica, co-sponsored by the Jamaican Ministry of Education and Savanna la Mar Dyslexia Association. Taylor’s findings generated great interest among the Jamaicans, leading to the decision to increase the size of the testing sample to include older children in order to ensure the original findings’ validity. Taylor agreed and carried out the testing in January 2003.

Other Rotarians from Indianapolis accompanied Taylor on her return trip to Savanna la Mar in January 2003, and assisted with finalizing the installation of playground equipment at Ferris Primary School; they also conducted the psychological, vision, and hearing testing necessary for the Dyslexia Project. Also during this trip the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar honored Seymour for his hard work and dedication to community development in Jamaica.

As a true demonstration of a partnership which focuses on providing skill-building opportunities for the host partner that will have a lasting impact, three Jamaican teachers (one of whom, Joyce Green, Principal for Cokes View Primary School, became a Rotarian due to her experience) were selected by the Jamaican Ministry of Education, the Jamaica Dyslexia Association, and the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar to travel to Indianapolis to receive intense training in the Orton Gillingham approach in December 2003. As yet another outgrowth of the Dyslexia Project, this training was presented by Rosie Hickle of the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana. The trainees were responsible for returning to Jamaica and sharing and implementing what they had learned in their schools.

*Wrapping up and finding new directions: 2004-2006*

Dudley joined Rotary Club of Indianapolis in 2002 in search of international projects through which he could provide dental services. He and his wife, Cindy, were two of the certified volunteers who conducted the hearing and vision tests the previous year. While in Jamaica in 2003, Dudley discussed and assessed the need for dental care in Westmoreland Parish. What he learned was that the region possessed several dental clinics, but lacked dentists to staff them. As a result, many Jamaicans would seek out the services of non-dentists, who often relied on a painful process that requires the patient to consume a large quantity of over-the-counter painkillers, before removing the aching tooth with a pair of pliers.

Once Dudley compiled all of the necessary information about how he and a team of three others could provide free dental clinics to the citizens of Westmoreland Parish, he returned to Indianapolis and consulted with Keesling about writing a proposal for a Rotary International matching grant to cover the costs. Rotary International approved the grant for $8,000. Dudley launched the project in 2004, and he and his dental team, with great assistance from the Jamaican dental nurses, Rotarians, and the humanitarian tourist organization Ambassadors for Children (which arranged the shipping of the dental supplies) were able to provide dental care to 285 patients in the first year. The Savanna la Mar Rotary Club presented Dudley with a Paul Harris Fellow Award for his commitment and dedication to the Jamaicans.

Cindy Dudley, a non-Rotarian, expanded the Dental Project from its original scope of just offering free dental clinics to include schoolchildren. She felt she could better utilize her services by providing fluoride treatment to schoolchildren at Hudson Street and Cokes View Schools, and thus touching more people’s lives.

The following year (2005), the Dudleys were able to bring additional volunteers from the Ambassadors for Children. These volunteers worked in the schools along...
with the Savanna la Mar Rotarians and enthusiastically distributed 300 hygiene kits.

Simultaneously, Rosie Hickle and Rex Camp concluded the Dyslexia Project with a seminar in Jamaica on dyslexia and the Orton Gillingham approach. Attending were 85 Jamaican teachers, principals, university students, representatives from the Ministry of Education, and several Rotarians from both Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar. Hickle worked very hard to put together a workshop that would address dyslexia problems as they exist in the Jamaican culture and educational system.

The partnership would also bear fruit in other parts of Jamaica. In 2004 Negril, Jamaica possessed several business-oriented organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association, but none that had service and fellowship as its main objective. Moreover, if a Rotarian wanted to attend a Rotary Club meeting while vacationing in Negril he/she had to travel at least a 30 minutes to Savanna la Mar or Lucea to do so. In 2004, Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar sponsored the establishment of a new Rotary Club in Negril. This was a very special achievement for a Club of Savanna la Mar’s size and stature, for which it should be proud.

In January 2006, the two Clubs began wrapping up the five-year commitment that began in late 2000. Several large projects have been completed during this half-decade, more than what had occurred in the first five years of the relationship. This is partly due to the change in membership in the Savanna la Mar Club to include younger and more energetic members, and with having Keesling, a person intimately connected with the needs and capabilities of Jamaicans, able to guide Indianapolis Rotary’s energies in Savanna la Mar.

On this third and most recent trip, Dudley once again brought a team to provide free services in the dental clinics. However, he and his team could not provide the wide range of services he had anticipated since (because of an error with paperwork submitted by the Savanna la Mar Club) the dental supplies were impounded by Jamaican customs and not released until the middle of the week. Cindy Dudley and the Ambassadors for Children volunteers were also stymied as the fluoride kits were with the other impounded dental supplies. However, like her husband, she did not let the situation hold up her work; she was still able to deliver 830 hygiene kits to eight schools in Savanna la Mar.

The Dudleys and other Indianapolis Rotarians plan to continue traveling to Savanna la Mar even after the formal five-year commitment concludes, as they and the Temperos believe that their work in Jamaica is not yet complete. Resources will thus continue to flow to the Savanna la Mar Club, and Savanna la Mar Rotarians will continue making their way to Indianapolis. Many participants agree that friendships have developed that cannot and will not end just because the relationship of the two Clubs has changed.

The future and Kenya

The Rotary Clubs of Savanna la Mar and Indianapolis have found a new way for them to partner, and it is Eldoret, Kenya. The two Clubs traveled to Eldoret in November/December 2005. Together, the Clubs assessed the needs of Eldoret, and how they might be able to assist the Rotary Clubs in that region in meeting those needs. Indianapolis is hoping to apply and receive a $300,000 grant for the Eldoret Project, which will entail educating local women on micro-enterprise, including how to apply for small business loans and teaching them business management skills.

To pave the way for Indianapolis Rotary’s role in Kenya, Andrew Williams, past president of the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar, has already written a letter of endorsement to Dr. S.R. Mishra, past chairman of the Rotary Club of Eldoret.

The partnership between Savanna la Mar and Indianapolis has been one of successes and challenges from which each Club has grown. Rotary Savanna la Mar members believe that the partnership with Indianapolis and the projects they have been able to accomplish have elevated the Club’s status in the Westmoreland Parish, in Jamaica, and in Rotary District 7020. According to Edward Speke, over the lifetime of the partnership Savanna la Mar has contributed three district assistant governors, where even one for such a small Club would be noteworthy. Savanna la Mar Rotarians credit it, in part, to the confidence they have acquired partnering with the Rotary Club of Indianapolis. The Temperos are especially impressed with Savanna la Mar’s achievements, “The Savanna la Mar Club was very, very small at the time we became involved, but it has been very exciting to see how the Club has grown…and the kind of impact that they have been able to make.”

The Jamaicans see other benefits of their partnership extending far beyond the transference of resources from Indianapolis to Jamaica. They note that without the partnership they would never have considered attending Rotary International’s conferences, where they have been able to connect with other clubs from around the world, providing them with new partners and opportunities to twin. The partnership also increased the Jamaicans’ skill and confidence in understanding the paperwork required for Rotary International and District matching grants, and thus has allowed them to take on
larger, more extensive projects with more complicated budgets.

According to Clarke, “Indianapolis can carry us to another level by giving us international exposure with the Kenya Project, which is a level that no other Club in Jamaica has reached. The Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar is now focused on international activities, not by receiving funds for projects in Jamaica but by getting involved with assisting projects outside Jamaica.”

The Jamaicans are not the only ones benefiting from the relationship’s new form; the Rotary Club of Indianapolis is finding its way into Kenya much smoother because of the credibility its Jamaican partnership lends: Indianapolis Rotarians have proven their ability to commit to a long-term partnership of equals with a much smaller Club from an underdeveloped country, with counterparts possessing a very different culture.

The Jamaicans believe they can see real changes in the Indianapolis Rotarians over the years. They show a greater cultural sophistication, and as a result of this partnership the Indianapolis Rotarians better appreciate the meaning of the Rotary’s core value, fellowship.

Perhaps more than anything else, this illustrates why the constantly evolving fifteen-year partnership cannot be crammed into a simple analytical framework based on resources flowing from rich country to poor country, however intuitively plausible this simple framework might seem. This partnership not only transferred resources, but it also transformed both partners. In hindsight, both partners seem to understand that the essential purpose of the partnership was this mutual transformation. Thus, we clearly need a new way of thinking about these sorts of partnerships.

Waves, Streams, and Interdependent Coalitions: Aspects of the Rotary Indianapolis-Savanna la Mar Partnership

Considered just on its own terms, the partnership between the Rotary Clubs of Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar is a story worth telling. In the name of making the lives of impoverished people a little better, members overcame significant cultural and social obstacles to form a lasting friendship. In a world without this partnership, poor and developmentally challenged children in Jamaica would receive a less satisfactory education, residents of Westmoreland Parish would have insufficient health care and for some no access to dental services, and Savanna la Mar would be a less verdant place. Jamaican doctors, nurses, and educators would not have had the opportunity to receive valuable training. Without this partnership, lives in Indiana and in Jamaica would not have changed, and that would be a loss.

Real resources flowed into Jamaica that otherwise would not have. School equipment and medical technology was donated in Indiana and shipped to Jamaica. Plus, not insignificantly, money flowed as well. According to Keesling’s estimates, for non-matching grants from Indianapolis to Savanna la Mar:

- Savanna la Mar Hospital $3,000
- Visiting Doctors & Nurses $5,000
- School Desks $6,000
- Little London High School $2,000
- Waterworks Basic School $15,500
- Ketto Basic School $6,500
- Ferris Basic School $16,000
- Jamaica Dyslexia Project $18,000
- Jamaica Greenway $24,000

With matching grants, the amounts of money increase:

- Waterworks Basic School $24,000
- Ketto Basic School $12,000
- Ferris Basic School $24,000
- Jamaica Dyslexia Project $36,000
- Jamaica Greenway $48,000

This is nearly $100,000, not insignificant at all for a small and poor community such as Savanna la Mar.

On the other hand, $100,000 over fifteen years seems insignificant compared to the $500 million the US government gave to the government of Jamaica in foreign aid during the 1990s. Compared to this flood of government resources, it is no wonder that DC-based policymakers and researchers do not pay much attention to such local-to-local solutions for global problems (poverty, poor education, and disease).

However, ignoring this partnership would be a mistake. The partnership has transformed disparate communities and teaches us lessons. The Rotary Club of Indianapolis is just one of hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of local groups in Central Indiana seeking to partner with groups in other countries. Churches, middle schools, universities, civic organizations, even ambitious and idealistic individuals are connecting with counterparts around the world, unmediated (and unfettered) by national governments. Add these initiatives up and the flow of resources from Indiana to less developed areas of the world is significant.

Moreover, the contribution of these local-to-local partnerships could grow. Most of these local-to-local relations are new. Many are short-lived and ephemeral, frustrated by unforeseen obstacles such as resource limitations, cultural misunderstandings, and failed expectations from new partners. With its fifteen-year history, the Indianapolis-Savanna la Mar partnership may have something to teach these other local-to-local initiatives. But in order to draw possible lessons, we
first need to examine more carefully and from several perspectives how the partnership grew and developed.


One noteworthy aspect of the partnership between the Rotary Clubs of Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar is the break in the relation at the end of the 1990s. Even though contacts between the two Clubs continued, for two years no joint projects were carried out, and no official trips went between Jamaica and Indiana. Why? The reason given for the hiatus by Bob Seymour was that Indianapolis hosted the Rotary International Conference in 1998, an enormous endeavor. After such a big effort, some Indianapolis Rotarians were “burned out,” and needed to step back and reassess their Club’s projects. On the Jamaican side, the Savanna la Mar Club lost several critical members during this period, dropping to a low membership of sixteen. (One of these critical members was Keesling, the former Hoosier who moved back to Indiana in 1996. It could not have helped the Jamaican Club to lose such a dynamic source of ideas and enthusiasm.) Preserving the existence of the Club and restoring lost membership was a priority of the Savanna la Mar leaders.

Another possible reason for the break, however, was simply that the Indianapolis Club had achieved the goals it laid out at the beginning of the relation. President-elect of the Indianapolis Club Jim McClelland had a clear idea of what he wanted to accomplish in 1991: he sought a way for his fellow Rotarians to share his international experiences through a long-term World Service Project. McClelland’s carefully considered goals for Rotary Indianapolis in Jamaica had by 1997 been met. The five years saw many Indianapolis Rotarians visit Jamaica to work on refurbishing schools and delivering medical and educational supplies. Likewise, a few Jamaicans visited Indianapolis, where they acquired professional expertise and formed friendships with their Hoosier counterparts.

After five years, however, the creative possibilities of this sort of relation might have been exhausted. Not all the needs of the Jamaicans had been met, of course, and some Hoosiers surely wanted to maintain international connections. But it seems that it was time to reassess the nature and purpose of an international partnership for the Indianapolis Club. Simply continuing a one-way flow of donated resources from Indiana to Jamaica may not have seemed very inspiring. When the partnership was revived in 2000, the second wave of projects looked very different.

Two Streams of Resources: Medical and Educational

Before examining the second wave of projects, we should note a second interesting feature of the Indianapolis-Savanna la Mar partnership. Within the two waves of projects (1992-97 and 2000-2005), there were two discernable streams of activities: a medical stream and an educational stream.

The partnership began with a stream of medical initiatives. It began with a donation to Jamaica’s PolioPlus program, thus cementing the relation between Clubs with roots in Rotary’s greatest international success. The project Keesling listed in Rotary International’s World Community Service Guide was to help the Savanna la Mar Hospital, a project that resonated with the long-time strengths Indianapolis possesses in health and medical sciences. Other initiatives in the medical stream continued through the first wave of activity: medicines donated in Indianapolis were shipped to Jamaica, the Indianapolis Rotary Club raised money for equipment such as a blood serializer, and Indianapolis Rotarians helped refurbish the Hospital the few days they were in Savanna la Mar. A nurse and doctor from Jamaica visited hospitals in Indianapolis to obtain ideas and techniques they could use to improve medical care in Jamaica.

By the time the first group of Indianapolis Rotarians visited Jamaica, they had begun a second stream of assistance to local schools: the School of Hope, the Waterworks Basic School, the Ketto Basic School, and the Paradise Preparatory School. These two streams of assistance seem to have flowed relatively independently of each other: there were no special linkages between the hospital and the schools before, during, or after this first wave of projects. It may have been that conducting two separate streams of projects increased the support for a Jamaican partnership within the Indianapolis Club, appealing to those with medical interests as well as those who cared about education. The two distinct medical and educational streams did resemble each other in several crucial ways:

- The bases of both streams were mainly shipments of donated (and it seems often used) equipment supplemented with annual brief visits to Jamaica by Indianapolis Rotarians.

- Neither stream required Indianapolis Rotarians who were particularly skilled technically. Obtaining donated medications and used hospital equipment and shipping or delivering them to Jamaica did not require doctors or scientists. Nor were innovative education theorists needed to send used desks to Savanna la Mar. This was probably necessary to achieve the goals McClelland set from the beginning: technically demanding projects could have led the majority of Indianapolis Rotarians to feel unneeded and even excluded from the initiative. It was better to engage a large number, even if it meant pursuing uncomplicated projects.
• The contributions of Indiana Rotarians visiting Jamaica consisted mainly of simple labor (painting and planting), delivering donated goods and cash, and observing the good works to which the Indianapolis Club contributed. These are genuine contributions that surely enriched and perhaps even transformed the lives of Hoosiers and Jamaicans; but they were also superficial.

• As a Jamaican observes, activities in the first wave of the partnership were relatively impersonal, directly touching the lives of few people in ways that could be seen. It was in the second wave that Indianapolis Rotarians such as Tim Dudley received cards and notes of gratitude from Jamaicans whose lives had been altered.

These activities are not surprising when one considers the nature of the Indianapolis Club and its members, busy people drawn from a very broad array of professions. The relation between Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar thus seems straightforward, intuitive. Individuals donate money, time, and other resources to an intermediary organization such as the Rotary Club of Indianapolis, which through the Rotary Club of Savanna la Mar delivers the donated resources to recipients that need them. It is basically the same pattern as the US government collecting money in taxes that it transfers in aid to the government of Jamaica, which disburses the aid to its needy citizens. Adding private flows of cash and other resources from US individuals and private organizations to the public flow of assistance from the US government provides a different picture of American aid to the rest of the world. The US may or may not be the most generous nation on earth, and may not give as much aid as it should. However, it is not the world’s stingiest rich country either.

The reality of the first wave of projects between the two Rotary Clubs was, of course, different than this intuitively plausible view of the flow of assistance. Rotarians might not even recognize this simplified model. Members of the two Clubs got to know one another, and started friendships. The two Clubs learned to trust one another. Hoosiers grew more comfortable in a country marked by poverty unlike anything seen in Indiana. Both sides learned how to ask questions honestly, and learned how to compromise when the answers they received were not what they expected or wanted to hear. Perhaps most importantly, members on both sides were able to see what might be possible when they restored their working relation. Their experiences laid the groundwork for a much more ambitious second wave of the partnership.

The Second Wave of Projects: 2000-2006
Projects in the second wave of activities (from 2000 to the present) have been more intentional and strategic, involving longer-term and more complex relations. They have engaged a broader coalition of Rotary and non-Rotary partners. They have been more demanding of all partners in terms of technical competence and expertise, while still offering opportunities for non-experts to make real contributions. They have perhaps demanded changes in many of the partnering institutions. So great are the differences between the first and second wave of activities that the second may illustrate an entirely different pattern of international assistance: rather than resources simply flowing one-way from donor to recipient as in the first wave, the second wave reveals interdependent relations of assistance in which roles of donor and recipient are less clearly defined, in which resources flow in both directions, in which the goals and interests of partners change over time, and in which long-lasting institutional and social changes are at least as important as resource flows. We will return to this idea below.

While the first wave of activities was generated by McClelland’s desire to provide his fellow Rotarians with an opportunity to experience international service (a desire that the first wave largely satisfied), the second wave was initiated by Indianapolis World Service Committee Chair Steve Smith’s interest in the effectiveness of international projects. The second wave began by reproducing the first wave’s division of activities into two distinct and disconnected medical and educational streams — Jamaican nurses visited Indianapolis hospitals, Hoosiers helped refurbish Jamaican schools — reestablishing the partnership with familiar patterns of activities. But the two most important sets of activities in the second wave mingled and merged the medical and educational streams. In fact, at least one of them would likely not have been successful without being able to draw on both streams.

Mingling Streams of Resources
The dentistry projects led by Dudley depended on a much greater degree of technical expertise than the first wave’s projects. But while Dudley and his teams of dentists and dental hygienists are professionals, the project has been defined in a way that allows non-experts to participate, for instance by distributing dental hygiene kits in schools. Note the blurring of medical and educational streams.

The second distinctive set of activities in the second wave, devoted to dyslexia, intermingled the educational and medical streams even more. Drawing on the Orton Gillingham approach to dyslexia, Lana Taylor, Rosie Hickle, and Rex Camp from the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana tried to bring a medical approach to a problem that has been traditionally defined as a learning disability. The educational establishment in Jamaica was not easily persuaded by the Institute’s findings and the
validity of this approach. Without the previous work by the Indianapolis Rotary in Jamaican schools, Taylor and her colleagues might have found it impossible to collect the information necessary to convince the Ministry of Education and the school administrations.

The dyslexia initiatives managed to combine a high degree of technical expertise with activities that could engage non-professionals. The Orton Gillingham approach to dyslexia is based on a century of neurological and medical research, and requires sophisticated visual and hearing testing. Prevent Blindness Indiana and the Indiana University Medical Center donated testing equipment to the initiative. But these organizations also trained non-professional Rotarians to conduct visual and hearing examinations in Jamaica schools. The Dyslexia Project was much more ambitious than anything yet for the partnership. The goal was not only to provide testing and diagnosis of many children (although that is in itself extremely ambitious). The goal was to change the nature of education in Jamaica—and that is a grand ambition. Inducing this sort of structural reform was qualitatively different than the intentions of the first wave of activities for the Indianapolis Club in Jamaica.

Although it may seem less apparent, the dyslexia project sought to induce changes on the Indiana side as well. Working in Jamaica and with Jamaicans required mastering a new set of cultural and social information. Hickle (of the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana) was responsible for the month-long training of the three Jamaican teachers who came to the Institute in 2003. She describes the necessary immersion she underwent in Jamaican educational methods, classroom practices, and family life in order to ensure that the training was culturally adapted to the realities of Jamaica. Likewise, the repeated testing that Taylor conducted in Jamaican schools in order to demonstrate to Jamaican officials that the Orton Gillingham approach was culturally appropriate represents a unique opportunity to obtain empirical data and to refine a conceptual framework developed primarily in the US and UK. Thus the benefits flowed not only from Indiana to Jamaica, but from Jamaica to Indiana as well. As cities such as Indianapolis become more culturally diverse, this richer understanding of dyslexia and learning disorders will pay off at home.

Engaging Coalition Partners: A One-Stop Shop Model
Both waves of activities involved an array of partners that was broader than the two Rotary Clubs and broader even than the family of Rotary programs and organizations that exist to strengthen and facilitate partnerships. From the onset, Rotary’s infrastructure and conceptual framework was essential. McClelland and Keesling contacted one another through Rotary International’s World Community Service Guide. The Indianapolis Club launched its engagement with a donation to the Jamaican wing of Rotary International’s grand initiative to wipe out polio. Trust and shared bonds of fellowship caused by the Rotary relation provided underpinnings to the first step in a partnership. The second step came when resources were collected and donated by Indianapolis Rotarians, which were amplified thanks to matching grants from both the Rotary Foundation and Rotary International.

At the same time, Rotary International established many programs, fellowships, and organizations in an effort to foster collaborations. Unfortunately, few collaborations took root. Reasons for this may be the newness of the programs, unfamiliarity with them, the challenges of application, and perceived restrictions.

The Savanna la Mar-Indianapolis partnership has drawn many non-Rotary collaborators. These include:

**Jamaican coalition partners**
- Jamaican government, from then Prime Minister Patterson to Jamaican Ministry of Education
- Dyslexia Association of Jamaica
- Sam Sharpe Teacher's College
- MICO Teacher's College
- Jamaica Ministry of Health
- Savanna la Mar Hospital
- Dental Clinics, Westmoreland Parish
- Sandals Resorts

**American coalition partners**
- Ambassadors for Children, Indianapolis
- Dyslexia Institute of Indiana
- Indiana University Medical Center
- Prevent Blindness Indiana
- Food for the Poor
- Wishard Hospital
- St. Vincent Hospital
- Morgan County Hospital

At first, collecting resources from Indiana that could be transferred to Jamaican recipients was the primary focus. Coalition partners in Indiana included doctors, hospitals, and schools that donated equipment and/or supplies. Intermediary organizations assisted with cost-effectively transferring these donations to Jamaica. For example, during the first years of this transfer, donated equipment and supplies went from an Indianapolis Rotarian to Miami, where a Jamaican Hotel conglomerate, Sandals Hotels, shipped the containers for free. Then, Food for the Poor, an international agency, helped clear the donations and deliver the
equipment and supplies to Savanna la Mar, where Rotairians distributed donations to hospitals and schools.

By contrast, the second wave directly engaged many more non-Rotarian partners, such as the Dyslexia Institute and Ambassadors for Children. Volunteers from these organizations helped test children using the supplies and helped with distribution of hygiene kits.

Participants in the Savanna la Mar-Indianapolis partnership, like Keesling and Seymour, now say they wish more non-Rotary partners had been engaged. But Rotary philosophy assumes that if a problem is worth a Club’s attention, then the problem can be solved by Rotary resources. In practice, a division of labor emerged between the two Clubs: Rotary Indianapolis assembled a coalition of non-Rotary American partners and the Savanna la Mar Club maintained the partners on the Jamaican side. Savanna la Mar worked with non-Jamaican groups exclusively through the Indianapolis Club, and vice versa. No instances were found of Jamaicans bypassing the Indianapolis Club to recruit American partners, and virtually no instances were found of Hoosiers circumventing their Savanna la Mar Rotary partners to find new non-government organizations or private sector partners in Jamaica.

This division of labor saved time and energy because the Clubs served as a “one-stop shops” for each other. However, such a division of labor risked blocking possible fresh and new alliances with non-Rotary groups. One Club, for example, could have jealously excluded potential contributors for selfish reasons. Each needed to trust that the other would make wise and proper choices about forming partnerships.

The Clubs shared a trust that was rooted in a shared commitment to the Rotary philosophy. It was a trust that grew with experience from working together over the years. Therefore, relations with non-Rotary coalition partners grew more complex during the second wave.

Life-Cycle of Partnerships
The two waves of activities between the Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar Clubs present another way of viewing the partnership’s evolution as a life-cycle, progressing through particular stages in response to emerging problems.

I. Intention

During the first stage, a large number of potential players disconnect from one another by space (often in different countries), professions, segments of the economy, and so forth. Each potential player has a wide range of ideas (sometimes vague) about possible projects and initiatives and often has a poorly defined sense of other potential players. Three critical processes at this stage are: (1) formation of communication lines between different potential players, (2) issue-sifting as potential players reject ideas and define a limited number of problems they wish to address, and (3) internal clarification of interests within groups as they proceed through the necessary process of reaching agreement among members.

a. Institutions, ideas, and accidents form lines of communication in the partnership. Rotary International’s guide helped initiate discussion, making it possible for Keesling in Jamaica and McClelland in Indianapolis to learn about each other. Keesling’s Hoosier background, as an accident, made it easier to bring consensus among Indianapolis Rotary members about partnering in Jamaica.

b. The first stages of this partnership relied strongly upon leadership. Neither McClelland nor Keesling were able to dictate what projects their Club members would adopt. They were, however, able to set an agenda for such a discussion and help guide steps to taking action.

II. Initiative

As lines of communication develop and as issues become refined and sifted, potential players progress into prospective partners. Prospective partners can work through challenges, such as language barriers, differing goals, and misunderstandings of prospective partners’ resources. The critical process at this stage is redefinition of interests among prospective partners as they search for fruitful grounds for collaboration. This entails excluding ideas and projects that particular prospective partners find appealing, but ones that could stymie coalition-building.

a. The failure of the partnership between Merced and Savanna la Mar taught Jamaicans that they must assert their interests. Hearing the story surely taught Hoosiers the value in listening.

b. Jamaicans made a crucial compromise at the beginning of the partnership: they devoted Indianapolis Rotary’s initial contribution to the PolioPlus Campaign rather than to other more pressing needs because Keesling and Savanna la Mar leadership wanted to gain Indianapolis Rotarians’ trust and respect. Likewise, Hoosiers accepted helping the Paradise Preparatory School rather than a public school. Both decided it would be worthwhile to compromise in order to lay the groundwork for future relations.

c. A similar compromise arose again when the partnership was revived for the second wave of activities: both sides gave up things they wanted in order to agree on the Greenway Project.
III. Coalition

Once prospective partners redefine their interests so that they align with agreed-upon problem-solving initiatives, partners then pool their resources (only some of which are financial) and form a coalition. Two critical actions by coalitions are searching for new partners (coalitions are often strengthened by prospective partners they reject), and internally assessing the coalition’s effectiveness in solving problems as defined by each partner (each partner likely defines the essential problems differently than other partners).

a. This partnership rested on a natural division of responsibilities as each Club served as a “one-stop shop” assembler of non-Rotarian coalition partners.

b. For this sort of division of responsibility to work effectively, a high degree of trust is necessary. In this case, the trust came from Rotarians’ shared values and, with time, from experience working together.

c. The division of responsibility surely meant that possible valuable coalition partners were entered into the programs. Such partners could have included the US government and international organizations trying to fight poverty in Jamaica, non-Rotarian foundations wanting to be donors, and Jamaican nongovernmental organizations.

IV. Goal (re)assessment

Problem-solving coalitions are living and evolving creatures. As they carry out initiatives, they encounter new social problems that they may decide to address. They may discover that they are ill-equipped to solve the problems they originally set out to solve. Partners sometimes drop out or are replaced by new coalition members. The critical process is to set measures and standards for achieving the goals of each partner of the coalition, and to redefine goals according to achievements. These assessments and reassessments are both formal and informal.

a. A vague understanding about the Indianapolis Rotary Club’s plans to establish a long-term relationship may have contributed to the partnership’s hiatus in the late 1990s. Jamaicans learned of this plan at much too late a date. If each side viewed the partnership simply as an annual transfer of resources from Indianapolis to Jamaica, both surely found it easier to walk away.

b. The second wave depended on a shared and openly expressed desire for a long-term partnership, which meant programs were evaluated by measures in addition to resource transfers.

V. Learning and adaptation

In addition to assessing, reassessing, and redefining goals, partners in problem-solving coalitions may consider forming new local-to-local coalitions to address new problems, thus returning to the beginning the stage of intention. The crucial process in the “intention” stage is whether or not experienced potential players can learn from the lessons of previous coalition-building case in order to build new coalitions.

Partnership Life-Cycle Model

I. Intention
II. Initiative
III. Coalition
IV. Goal
V. Learning & Adaptation
(back to) I. Intention
II. Initiative, etc.

This brings the partnership to the present as Jamaicans and Hoosiers now decide how to proceed together into new initiatives in Africa.

An Interdependent Model of Foreign Assistance?

Most people imagine that “foreign assistance” means a flow of cash and other resources from wealthy countries to countries in financial need. In other words, the US government takes money from taxpayers, transfers this money to a poor country’s government, and this recipient government is responsible for distributing the money to its citizens.

The private version of “foreign assistance” looks similar: a group like the Rotary Club of Indianapolis takes voluntary donations from its members, transfers the money to a counterpart Club like Savanna la Mar, which then distributes the money to members of its community. Not all donated or taxed money makes it to the intended recipients: some is lost to “leakages” such as governmental administrative overhead or corruption. This is called an “intuitive model of foreign assistance.”

An obvious criticism of this approach is that it only looks at quantity, not quality. It looks at the size of the resource flow rather than how effectively resources are used. Some poor countries (and their governments) are in such disarray that they are barely able to deliver resources to people in the greatest need. Because donors care greatly about how effectively their aid is used, a
more sophisticated version of this intuitive model would incorporate information feedback. Thus the donor (for example, the US government or Rotary Club) must observe the final uses of resources that flow to poor countries, and must monitor undesired leakages. Using this information, the donor can either adjust resource flows or cut them off entirely if none of the money seems to be reaching its intended destination.

This more sophisticated version of the intuitive model of foreign aid has informed the Bush Administration’s approach. Aid is increasingly being directed toward countries that are able to demonstrate that they will design and implement effective programs. Transparency and accountability by recipient governments are emphasized as ways of getting better information back to Washington about how the aid is distributed on the ground. Most of the major multilateral donor agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program share this approach. The Clinton Administration in the 1990s even launched a similar track.

The sophisticated version, however, does not alter the intuitive model’s fundamental assumption that the purpose of foreign assistance is to flow resources from the rich to the poor.

An examination of the two Rotary Clubs’ partnership reveals a very different pattern, perhaps even a different model of foreign assistance. By the end of the second wave of programs, resources and benefits (psychological as well as material) were not only flowing from Indianapolis to Jamaica, but from Jamaica to Indianapolis as well. As Savanna la Mar members made important contributions to their Hoosier counterparts and to joint projects, the roles of “donor” and “recipient” blurred over time.

Let us call this an “Interdependent Model of Foreign Assistance.” It is too complex to explain via diagrams or charts because the linkages between all participants and recipients result in a very dense network of connections and bonds. Instead of being rooted in resource flows or benefits, it is rooted in individuals connecting with other individuals. A priority in this interdependent model of foreign aid —arguably the main priority—is to preserve and develop the partnership itself as an entity separate from the flow of resources from donor to recipients. To preserve their relationships, partners will compromise, redefine their goals and interests, and emphasize common values. Partners will treat potential outside alliances with caution because these alliances could threaten the precious core partnership.

Implications of this foreign-assistance model deserve further analysis. Assessing the effectiveness of foreign aid in the intuitive model is relatively straightforward: one measures how many resources were contributed and how much of the flow reached its intended recipients. The interdependent model, on the other hand, is more ambiguous as it has a subjective component. This component is the value that partners place on the partnership itself. This could create a problem because partners might forget that aid ought to be effectively utilized if it deserves to be called “aid.” It seems likely that the interdependent model would be particularly useful in cases relying on long gestation periods for assistance to become effective, or other cases when projects last several years.

We can also imagine other dark sides to such a relation. For instance, the need for the sort of compromise that sustained the Indianapolis-Savanna la Mar partnership opens the door to feeling betrayed if one’s partner does not appear to be making the equal concessions. One can imagine manipulation of the other side’s interests, or suspicions of hypocrisy when shared values are so important for preserving the relationship.

Thus, interdependent partnerships are more idiosyncratic than straightforward one-way flows of resources. This makes it difficult to aggregate the myriad local-to-local partnerships between Indianapolis individuals and organizations and counterparts around the world. Each partnership could pursue very different sets of interests; success for one partnership might look like failure for another.

Regularities and commonalities are shared by many of these particular and idiosyncratic partnerships. The research agenda for analyzing local-to-local solutions for global problems involves uncovering these regularities, generalizing from them to see patterns, and classifying different types of interdependencies. As indicated by this Rotary Club partnership, it is a research agenda that ought to be pursued in the future.

Recommendations
Based on extensive interviews with Jamaican and Indianapolis participants in this fifteen-year partnership as well as the study of Rotary International structure and policies, the authors offer the following practical suggestions.

- Neither Club has been able to provide the extensive oversight of projects that they would like. To solve this problem the twinning Clubs should create a committee of three Rotarians from both the host and international partner as recommended in the Terms and Conditions of Matching Grants Award for $5,000-$25,000.
- Indianapolis might have more experience with writing matching grants proposals, but it struggles
to understand the complicated process; thus, it may be beneficial for the Clubs hold a workshop (for those serving on project committees) that explains grant-writing and offers advice on completing government forms required for international projects.

- Indianapolis is a large Club and thus will struggle with communicating all pertinent information about projects to all members, but it is extremely important to maintain intra-club communication (especially within the World Service Committee) about what the various projects have done and what they will do. The partnership suffered in the past because the Club was not successful at ensuring that everyone one was completely informed.

- One of the more important aspects that helped enhance this relationship was the use of homestays for visiting Rotarians in both Jamaica and Indianapolis. Homestays allow for fellowship, which leads to discussions on possible projects, which develops culture awareness, which builds friendships and creates more solid partnerships. Not everyone is comfortable with this, but Savanna la Mar Rotarians commented during their interviews that they wished they had provided more opportunities for Indianapolis Rotarians to stay in their homes where they could not only fellowship, but truly experience Jamaican culture.

- As the Indianapolis Rotarians learned, activities such as painting and construction take away job opportunities from Jamaicans. What recipients really need are projects that provide skill-building, which will enhance their lives in the long-run. Both Clubs seem to have already recognized this need, but after interviewing members from each, it seems they wish they were doing more.

- Rotary matching grants allow each member of the twin partnership to acquire the necessary resources to complete the joint project. In addition, the most important aspect of twinning is for the host country Club to learn how to access these grants. Moreover, if the host country Club is not applying for matching grants once it is capable it is not taking equal responsibility in the twin partnership.

- Each Club needs to conduct thorough evaluations of past and on-going projects in order to assess their impact on the lives in the host country. In addition, these evaluations will also tell the Rotarians if the projects are on track, and give the Rotarians time to rectify them if they are not before more funds are put toward it.

For instance, with the Dyslexia Project, it would be valuable to know what steps the three teachers took to implement the information from the seminar at the Dyslexia Institute of Indiana, and whether they were successful or not and why. This would give Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar the opportunity to assess where the Dyslexia Project can go in the future, or what support they need to give the teachers to implement the Orton Gillingham method in their schools. Moreover, the Clubs can use the findings from the evaluations to decide if they want to carry out a similar project later with a new partner in a new host country.

- Though it is the policy of Rotary not to go outside the Rotary community in search of assistance for a project, every Rotary Club does it. This being the case, it would be more beneficial to the project for non-Rotarian organizations to be fully utilized.

One important element of this partnership was a shared commitment from both sides to preserving and strengthening the partnership. Another key ingredient to success was the continued attention to a flow of money and resources from Indiana to Jamaica.

At a higher level, this study has identified several areas for improvement that resulted from local-to-local partnership patterns that developed between the Indianapolis and Savanna la Mar Clubs. Most of these potential problems were handled over the course of the fifteen years, and most will be navigated and negotiated in future Rotary partnerships. However, it is important to be conscious of the following risks:

- Compromise is vital, especially for establishing and preserving the partnership. If one partner cedes important interests and feels its counterpart is not compromising in kind, a sense of betrayal could result. Partners must talk openly and frequently.

- Shared Rotary philosophy and shared goals of serving community needs can form the foundation for a strong partnership. But if there is a hint of hypocrisy, if one of the partners insincerely touts these shared beliefs and values, the partnership is unlikely to survive—and the side feeling used and betrayed may be reluctant to form any partnerships in the future.

- Each partner serving as a “one-stop shop” for the other—being responsible for identifying, cultivating, and preserving non-Rotary coalition partners within its own country—streamlines some processes; but it also can unintentionally lead to valuable non-Rotary groups not being considered as part of the project.

- In Jamaica it was possible for Indianapolis Rotarians to work in Savanna la Mar without taking into account the work of the US government and other international donors. This will be harder in places such as Kenya. Indianapolis Rotarians should be open to possibilities of cooperation with agencies that deliver official US government assistance.
In choosing projects, the following strategic considerations could be useful.

- Identify contributions your organization — and only your organization — can make. Do not send Hoosiers to paint schools if people in Jamaica are able to do that job. In relation to this situation, expertise in dyslexia and dental services were not present, and if Indianapolis Rotary had not provided them, no one else would have.
- Unique contributions your organization can offer may rely on a few trained and highly skilled members. Hence, it is important to structure projects so that those without training can make important contributions and thus derive the benefits of service.
- Think big but take small steps. The deeper the relations of trust and the more experience partners get working with one another, the more they will be able to accomplish. Construct projects with the goal of building up trust and experience, working up to being able to cooperate in the future in ways that would be impossible at the beginning of the partnership.
- Be conscious of the program’s unintended consequences. Sometimes unexpected spill-over benefits from projects are most important and longest lasting.
- Be prepared to walk away from a partnership if necessary. Structure long-term projects so that they will have yielded real changes for the better even if they are unexpectedly terminated before their conclusion. Uncertainty permeates poor countries of the world. A five-year project yielding very large benefits in the final year and hardly any before that point is risky: political or economic disruptions that force a premature end to the relation could mean several years of wasted work.
- Leave behind self-sustaining initiatives. Train partners or others to continue doing the work even after the Americans have departed.
- According to Clarke, “With these relations, it is imperative that the partner outside of the project country allows locals to identify the project. Never dictate to them, otherwise you will waste funds.”
- He adds, “Within Savanna la Mar, we were able to find members personally interested in projects: Kenneth Banhan cared most about dyslexia, Douglas Arnold about School of Hope, and Jenepher Baugh about the Greenway. I cared most about Ferris School. More than assuring the projects’ success, this built up the esteem of each member since he/she was personally making a difference with the Club’s support.”

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ii All monetary amounts are in US Dollars


v Established in 1967 as the World Community Service Guide (WCSG) and will be referred to as such in this paper.


vii Numerous items have been donated to the Jamaicans, which they are, unfortunately, unable to use. Often these items are stored away in hopes that one day the necessary components to make operable are found, or the skill and technology they require will be gained. Of course, there some items that are outdated and will never be of use, but the Jamaicans have no way of disposing of them.

* At the time Indianapolis did share the fact that it desired a long-term partnership with the Jamaicans. The Jamaicans were surprised to learn, in 2006, during Sagamore Institute’s research for this project, that this had been the Americans intent. In 2000, Indianapolis formalized a five-year partnership with Savanna la Mar.

viii Awarded a Paul Harris Fellow in May 2006.