



MEMBERSHIP

AT SECOND PLENARY SESSION

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The Grand Ballroom, (12 F)
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Good morning. First of all, I would like to thank Convener RI Director Jackson for giving me the opportunity to share with you the membership status of Zones 4B, 6B and 7B and some of their issues.

Let us have a look at their membership history for the past 5 years. As you will notice, the membership of each zone has grown from about 16,000 something to 19,000 something from 1st July 2004 to 1st July 2008.

Percentage Increase in Membership

The growth in Zone 4B ranges from 3 to 4%, whereas the growth in Zone 6B has made a substantial jump from 3.7% to 15%. Zone 7B has also grown to 9.6% which is very close to our target of 10%.

The slow growth in Zone 4B is partly caused by the aging of the districts in this zone with average ages ranging from 50 to 60. Moreover, many people living in Hong Kong and Southern Taiwan have to travel frequently to Mainland China for the purpose of their work, and they find it difficult to attend the weekly club meetings.

Mongolia has only got 7 clubs now, and it has a big potential in forming many new clubs there. However, District 3450 has been very careful in allowing this to happen, since Mongolia is relatively new and inexperienced in Rotary.

The huge growth in Zone 6B in the 2007-2008 year is largely due to a 70% increase in Pakistan from 2,416

people to 4,123 people, which is mainly caused by the addition of 32 new clubs. The reason for such a big increase in Pakistan is that they would like to split their district into two.

When the effect of this is taken out, the growth for the rest of the districts in Zone 6B in that year became only 6%. Moreover, apart from District 3340, the growth in the other three districts in Thailand only ranges from 1.1% to 2.6% for that year.

This is not surprising because of the political instability in that country. As a result of this, a multi-district membership seminar had to be called off at the last minute. Worse still, the fact that many of our Rotarians in Thailand do not understand English also makes it difficult for them to make good use of the huge library of membership materials prepared by the RI.

Increase in Clubs

In 2007-2008, the number of new clubs in Zone 4B is only 20 and this averages out to be 2.5 per district which is barely above the 2 new clubs per district requirement. Whilst 5 of the districts have got 2 to 6 new clubs, the other three districts have got only one. These are District 3470, 3490 and 3510. But, do not worry, since all the governors in these three districts are very dynamic leaders and they have assured me that they should not have any problem in having 2 or more new clubs this year.

Zone 6B shows an increase of 50 new clubs for the

2007-2008 year. However, if we take away the 32 new clubs for Pakistan, the number of new clubs falls to only 18 with no new clubs in District 3310, 3330 and 3360, and only one new club for District 3350 in Bangkok.

Zone 7B show an increase of only 18 new clubs for 2007-2008, since its districts had focused on the reinstatement of terminated clubs instead. Moreover, as we shall see later, they achieved a significant increase in their membership through their existing clubs in that year.

Source of Membership Growth—New Clubs v Existing Clubs

Zone 4B has relied heavily on the new clubs to provide it with the new members, whereas the new members recruited by the existing clubs range from only 0.3 to 0.6 person per club. This trend will continue, since the high average age of the members has made it difficult for many of its existing clubs to recruit young members. However, knowing that young people like to work with young people, some districts such as District 3450 have now focused on forming new clubs with mostly young people.

In Zone 6B, for the first three years, most of the existing clubs in this zone have lost members. This is not surprising, since many of their clubs are small and they do not have the critical mass to retain their members. This is aggravated by the fact that many of the clubs put more emphasis on the Rotary Foundation than on membership. Luckily, this trend was reversed last year, when their governors became more aware of the importance of membership and thus had given more thoughts and done more programs on membership issues. Notwithstanding this, a substantial part of their membership growth for last year still came from new clubs.

As with Zone 6B, there are substantial membership losses in Zone 7B from the existing clubs in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. This trend was reversed significantly in 2007-2008 for several reasons.

Firstly, all the districts worked hard to achieve 10% increase in their membership. Secondly, five of their districts, namely, Districts 3780, 3790, 3810, 3830 and 3860 wanted to challenge District 3820 to be the largest district in the Philippines. Indeed, one of them even has a goal of reaching 3,000 members by 15th May 2009. Thirdly, many of the small clubs made an effort to remove their names from the 'Small club honor list' in their zone's monthly newsletters. Fourthly, District 3870 has desperately increased its members to 1,000 so that they do not have to be merged into District 3850. Well done, zone 7B.

Districts with the Highest Percentages in Membership Increase

In Zone 4B, District 3500 is the most active in membership growth with a 5 year plan to increase their membership from 2453 to 3000 in three years time. District 3450 has little increases in membership for



the first three years. Many of its clubs just do not believe in membership growth through the formation of new clubs. However, with its success in chartering clubs consisting of mainly young people in 2007-2008, it has changed the mind-set of its Rotarians and hopefully, with more young clubs, its membership growth can be closer to the 10% target this year.

Although District 3480 has got only got a 4% increase last year, it is determined to increase this rate by training their experienced past presidents to be potential chartered presidents by holding seminars where their new charter presidents and DG special representatives share their experiences.

In Zone 6B, there is a substantial increase of 70% in District 3270 in Pakistan. However, District 3280 in Bangladesh has also increased its number to 3488, hoping to follow Pakistan's example to give birth to another district shortly. It is also interesting to note that District 3300 which is used to slow increases has also come up with a 14% increase in 2007-2008.

Although the top 5 districts in Zone 7B all have slow increases for the first three years, they all achieved very high growth rates in 2007-2008, thanks to the hard work of their governors, their district teams and, of course, the great leadership of their RRIMC Dave.

Rotarian per Club Ratio

The Rotarian per club ratio for both Zones 6B and 7B is only 25. Since they must have some large clubs, this means that they have many clubs with less than 25 members. This is worrying, since if retention is not done well in these clubs, they can easily become small clubs.

Number of Small Clubs

After seeing that the Rotarian per Club ratio is only 25 for Zones 6B and 7B, it is not surprising to see that these two zones are still having many small clubs. I understand that these two zones are now working very hard to improve this situation.

Diversity

Because of the time constraint, I will only comment on the % of female to male Rotarians and the conversion of our alumni.

Male and Female Members

The percentage of female to male Rotarians ranges from an average of 18 in Zone 4B and 6B to 26% in the Philippines. This percentage is particularly low in the older districts where their many all-men clubs still find it to admit female members. In these districts, one way to increase the percentage of female Rotarians is to attract more female Rotarians to their younger clubs as

well as new clubs.

Conversion of Alumni

By alumni, I am referring to alumni from the Rotary Foundation, eg past ambassadorial scholars and GSE team members, as well those from the RI programs such as past Rotaractors, Interactors and Rylarians.

According to information available to the RI, the number of such conversions in this region is small. This is surprising, since the region has very strong Rotaractors.

District 3450 is trying to break this trend by chartering a new club this year with all members being past Rotaractors. This District has also been very active in involving scholar alumni in the new scholar selection and orientation process. Hopefully, this can result in the formation of some new clubs with all Rotary scholars soon.

Distribution of Membership Information

In this region, membership information is distributed to the districts and thereby to the clubs in many ways. Firstly, all the districts in the three zones have well-attended membership seminars.

Secondly, the frequent updating of the membership status by the RI has proved to be very useful to the regional membership team in monitoring the membership status of their districts.

Thirdly, membership releases from the RI such as the Membership Minutes are distributed to the districts for forwarding to the clubs. However, in Zone 4B and 6B, these releases which are written in English are not very useful for clubs with members who only know Chinese or Thai.

Fourthly, District 3310 in Singapore and Brunei has been running a highly successful yahoo group among their Rotarians from which important membership is given, and views on membership problems are exchanged.

Fifthly, Zone 7B has a monthly membership newsletter which is not only informational, but also motivational.

Motivation

Knowing the importance of motivating their clubs presidents, many governors in the region offer all sorts of incentives to the presidents who achieve their membership targets such as free round-trip tickets to foreign destinations and even to Birmingham for the Convention.

Other than all the attractive RI membership awards, RI President D.K. Lee's promise to call up those governors whose districts cannot come up with a 10% growth, and also his recent email to all district governors asking them for their cell phone numbers and details of their membership issues, are big morale boosters for the governors in the region in their membership drives. President DK, thanks very much for taking up this membership issue so personally with all our governors. I am sure that they will not let you down.

Pilot clubs

Clubs in the three zones also actively participate with pilot programs initiated by the RI, hoping to find an ideal Rotary club that attracts more members, for example, we have three eClubs—one in Hong Kong, one in Singapore and one in Taiwan.

We have also got 27 clubs which have participated in the Meeting Frequency Pilot Program--13 in Zone 4B, 7 in Zone 6B and 7 in Zone 7B.

Conclusion

Finally, whilst we will always keep in mind President DK's comments on membership yesterday, we have also constantly reminded the governors in our region of the following extract of the speech by PRIP Wilf Wilkinson in the 2007 International Assembly:--.

'The magic of Rotary is that Rotary allows ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

I know it's not always an easy thing to invite someone into Rotary. Too often, we hear no. And nobody likes to hear no. It's easy to get discouraged. But you have to expect those no's and know when to ask again—and when to move on to find a yes somewhere else.

That yes that you get, on the second or third or fourth try, is what Rotary needs from you most of all. It is the single most important thing you can do to ensure Rotary's second century. Without new members, nothing else matters. Because however good our work, however valuable and vital, without new members it will take only a few decades for Rotary to disappear'

The message is clear. Rotary will disappear, if we do not take the membership issue seriously now.

This year, the theme is 'Make Dream Real'. My fellow Rotarians, do you have the passion to 'Make Dream Real'? If so, let us all start to work seriously to bring in more new members, so that we have more vibrant and stronger clubs which can help us to 'make dream real'. Thank you.

