



## My challenge to you

**P**ace does not happen by accident. It must be pursued deliberately, built strategically, and woven intentionally into everything we do. That is the challenge I am placing before the Rotary world this year.

Rotary recognized peacebuilding as one of our areas of focus. But I believe peace must be more than a category of work we set aside for certain projects. It must become a lens, one we choose to look through every time we plan, every time we serve, every time we ask what kind of impact we truly want to leave behind.

The Institute for Economics and Peace has identified eight Pillars of Positive Peace: well-functioning government, a sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, and low levels of corruption. These pillars describe the conditions that make lasting peace. And when I look at them carefully, I see enormous potential for Rotary. Not because our work automatically advances peace but because it can when we are deliberate about it.

That is the key word: deliberate.

A water project does not build peace on its own. But a water project designed with the Pillars of Positive Peace in mind — one that asks how equitable access to resources strengthens community trust — can begin to lay that foundation. A vocational training program does not guarantee reconciliation. But one that intentionally brings divided communities together around shared economic opportunity can start to build

it. The project does not change. The intention does.

In Colombia, Rotary's Pathways to Peace and Prosperity program shows us what this looks like in practice. Working in communities shaped by decades of armed conflict and displacement, the program combines economic empowerment with conflict resolution training and community-led reconciliation. Peace was not a hoped-for side effect. It was central to the design. That is the standard I am calling all of us to follow.

As you plan your next project, whatever the focus area, I want you to pause and ask one question: How does this create the conditions for peace? Consult the Pillars of Positive Peace. Find where your work connects. Then, make that connection intentional. Share what you discover with your club, your district, and your community. The more we talk about peace as a practice rather than a destination, the more naturally it will shape everything we do.

This is not about doing different work. It is about doing our work differently, with greater awareness, greater purpose, and a clearer vision of the world we are trying to build. Every Rotary project carries potential. Our task is to unlock it, not by chance but by choice.

**YINKA**

President, Rotary International