

This is an overview supported in this section of the Manual by a series of Guidance Sheets relevant to District Leaders' involvement in Youth Exchange. Also, throughout this summary reference is made to documents in other parts of the Manual where more detail can be found.

Youth Exchange is a programme unlike any other. It does not require that a club or district shall set out to 'do' Youth Exchange before those Rotarians become involved in the programme. Social media motivates and informs students randomly, as do people such as Rotary grandparents who understand the worth of the programme, and the Search engine on their computer will lead them to our website where they register their interest. So the process begins which leads districts to assist their young people in taking up an amazing opportunity for personal development.

The programme began following the 1914-18 War by Rotarians in Europe wanting to find a way for their children to engage with others around the world to foster peace and understanding and ultimately deter wars. Apart from satisfying one of the Rotary Areas of Focus, the aim is that students shall develop their characters: become more self reliant, independent and resilient, more self aware but willing to extend their boundaries, make international friendships, discover different cultures and possibly improve their language skills.

Evidence shows that whatever the programme students will benefit in all of these ways to a greater or lesser extent and that their experience as Youth Exchange students usually triggers their progress along a path which takes in other Rotary programmes until they become Rotarians themselves, such is the loyalty that they acquire at an early age.

The Programmes

Much of what follows applies to all programmes unless otherwise stated.

Rotary Youth Exchange has two Short Term programmes and the Long Term programme (LTEP). Overall around the Rotary world about 8000 exchanges take place each year (most of these are LTEP). It follows that internationally well in excess of 4000 Rotary clubs are participating in Rotary Youth Exchange through one programme or another.

Every outbound student who wishes to participate must be interviewed and accepted ('sponsored') by a Rotary club in order to go on the programme, whatever that might be. Without the participation of clubs in this decision no one could access this Rotary programme at all and the life enhancing experiences which so many now have would not be available.

Sponsorship in this context does not carry the implication of a large financial outlay on the part of the club. In fact STEP and Camps students (almost all of our outbound students in RIBI) pay their way entirely with only a small hospitality input from the clubs.

Students are selected on the criteria of being good ambassadors for their country and good ambassadors for Rotary.

The Long Term Programme (LTEP)

The LTEP is the 'flagship' programme in Youth Exchange. Many students exchange around the world on this truly life-changing programme but unfortunately in recent years relatively small numbers of students in UK & Ireland have put themselves forward.

Students spend a school year abroad. They attend the local school and live with two to three different host families. Our UK students generally go out after GCSE (aged 16+) although the official age range is 15 – 18½.

At present UK visa regulations prevent students from countries outside the European Union entering UK to study at state schools for longer than six months. However, students from non EEC countries who are holders of an EEC passport by virtue of their family connections may take part in the programme provided that the family member who gives them the status is alive and has resided in Europe over the previous three years. This means that with enough time to plan for it we can accept students from many parts of the world for long term exchange. Undoubtedly if a club supports an outbound applicant for LTEP it can expect to be hosting an inbound either in the same year or a year later.

It is worth pointing out that it is the inbound student, rather than the one whom the club chooses, who receives the year long attention and financial support from the club. The club probably only sees the benefit of this when their student returns home and members are usually delighted with the transformation that has taken place in that time. They can then reflect on the good that they have done for the inbound whom they have nurtured over the same period.

Short Term Programmes

These are:

Family to Family (STEP) - for 15 - 17+ year olds:

The Exchange involves a paired arrangement where both students spend an equal amount of time - usually around 3 weeks each - in each other's home together in turn. The Exchange may be split across two school holiday periods but typically takes place over one summer with the students travelling together on the same flight from one home to the other. Usually students choose to exchange into a country in the northern hemisphere because of the similarity of the school calendar.

International Rotary Camps & Tours (C&T) – for groups within the age range 15 - 25 year olds

Over eighty themed Camps take place across Europe and beyond each summer. Competition is keen to be the one or two students per Camp who are chosen to represent RIBI. There are currently relatively few Camps which are organised across Great Britain & Ireland but this is changing.

The Website

youthexchange.org.uk

The RIBI Youth Exchange website is central to the delivery of Youth Exchange in RIBI. Details of all programmes may be found there as well as the opportunity to register for an exchange or request more information. All students, however they become known to us, are directed to register at the website in order for Programme Coordinators to keep track of their progress and their contact details may then be used to form a database of alumni (ROTEX) which is available to Membership & Development.

The Youth Exchange Cycle

Significantly, the admin for a Youth Exchange placement takes place in the Rotary year before the student goes abroad. This means that the undertaking by the Club is made with the signatures of the CURRENT officers, not of those who will be in place when the exchange actually happens. In general the pattern is

July - December:	School/college/youth group visits. Potential exchanges identified
December - March:	Camps & Tours Invitations arrive with the RIBI Camps Coordinator and students bid for places.
December – March:	STEP students' placements are arranged.
End of March/April:	Orientation Day for Outbound Students
End June – end August:	Most STEP/ Camps take place between these times
Mid - end of September:	Feedback Day for returning outbound students.

Rotary Youth Exchange In RIBI

Youth Exchange students 'belong' to a Rotary Club regardless of whoever else assists the Club with the process.

The structures in place at District and RIBI level are to provide clubs with support and enable training and networking around the world for the exchange placements.

All Districts are members of the RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association which is placed apart from RIBI only to comply with the requirements of Rotary International Certification. Certification is a very important issue and is dealt with at length later.

The Association has a Constitution which defines the objectives, structure, conduct and powers of the members. Operational aspects are controlled and managed by an elected Management committee.

Districts are normally represented by the District Youth Exchange Officer (DYEO) but the Constitution allows for Rotarian (non voting) Membership to be available on application to ensure that no expertise is lost.

Support for the clubs comes from:

At RIBI level - Specialists/ Coordinators for LTE, STEP, and Outbound CT

At District level - the DYEO, possibly with a team.

The District Youth Exchange Officer

The District needs to appoint a District Youth Exchange Officer who is not responsible for any other Youth Service activity. The role is very complex and if it is to be sustainable it really needs a team of its own to deal with all the different aspects of the process.

(See *'The Role of the District YE Team'* for relevant programme) (See L3, S3, C(O)3)

The Club Youth Exchange Officer

The Club needs to appoint a Club Youth Exchange Officer (CYEO). This is often the member who is the Youth Service Chair but really should be a different person if possible because the deadlines for Youth Exchange and other youth activities are the same and make it difficult to fulfil both roles.

(See *'The Role of the Club YE Team'* for relevant programme) (See L4, S4, C(O)4)

Training programmes

These are delivered by the Association for DYEOs both for their own responsibilities and also to enable them to provide training for Clubs. These programme are specific and skills/task based and revolve around best practice gathered from across the world to deliver a universally set process within Certification and to the maximum benefit of the student.

The Exchange Process

The Exchange Sequence sections show how each exchange is administered and who should be responsible for each stage. In some cases this is an aspiration and the club may rely on assistance from District and RIBI but the intention is that in time the club will gradually reclaim the initiative.

(See 'Operational Overview' for particular programme..... L5, S5, C(O)5)

Finding The Outbound Students

Students apply of their own volition, maybe through personal contact but maybe purely randomly, to a local club, through the District website or increasingly more commonly through the RIBI website youthexchange.org.uk The District Youth Exchange Officer will then contact a club in the vicinity of the applicant's home to further the application.

Otherwise, applicants arise from presentations made by District and Clubs in the local schools /colleges/ youth groups etc. This includes Interact and Rotaract clubs

Regardless of how they 'appear', all students are directed to register their interest at the website. In doing so they pass through the hands of the DYEА Programme Coordinators whose role it is to ensure that the student is on the 'right ' programme, provide advice and support to DYEОs and operate a multidistrict administration system involving the application form and placement. This necessitates the Coordinators networking, initially face to face, with overseas colleagues to ensure suitable contacts. The accumulated applications form the basis for a database of ROTEX (our alumni) which is available to RIBI Membership & Development Committee.

School/Youth Group Presentations - mainly in Summer and Autumn

Clubs either initiate presentations or at least contribute to them by giving brief information to the audience as to what Rotary does. The presentation often gives them the opportunity to establish links with the school to further the participation in Youth Speaks, Young Chef and other Chef competitions as well as Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) and Interact clubs.

The District Youth Exchange Team provides clubs with the opportunity to be trained in giving presentations to schools.

Home Visits/Interviews

Students who apply for an exchange need to be followed up very quickly. Once the DYEО has informed the club it is vital to get a date into the diary to meet the student and parents at home without delay.

(See *OB3: Student Selection – All Programmes*)

All outbound students must be interviewed at home with their parents, a process which usually lasts up to an hour and a half. A 'panel' of two Rotarians, including at least one from the potential sponsor club (the Club Youth Exchange Officer, CYEO) deals with this, which is in part information giving but is mainly to establish whether or not the student is suitable for the exchange for which they have applied. The panel reported back to the club. It is particularly important that a favourable recommendation should be confirmed as quickly as possible and not delayed by pedantic process. Timing is usually very tight and the student can completely miss out on the opportunity of placement because the administration has not been given the chance to get going.

Students applying for paired exchanges need to be ready when students from abroad are there to be exchanged with – usually from January/ February.

International Rotary Camps & Tours are heavily oversubscribed. The RIBI Outbound Camps Coordinator begins to receive invitations from districts abroad from the end of December, peaking in about mid February. There is usually only one place per country and this is filled on a first come

first served basis so speed is extremely important if your student is to stand any chance of a place. Selection Interviews for the Long Term Exchange Programme are more rigorous and can include obtaining a school/ community reference and asking the applicant to write a letter of application.

When a Student is Accepted for an Exchange:

The DYEO assists the student to access the online application form and monitors its progress and ensures that the student keeps up to speed with its completion. The CYEO visits the family to witness their signatures and arranges for the President's signature.

The student is found an exchange placement by the relevant Programme Specialist on the DYEA committee, with the assistance of the DYEO if sufficiently experienced.

The student and parents then attend Orientation – a vital part of the preparation process for the exchange.

For all exchanges except Camps the district which receives your student (the Host district) will send you an inbound student in return.

The club needs to appoint a Counsellor for the inbound student of any age. How this person is selected and the role and function are set out in the Guidance Sheet for each programme.

(See IB2: Counsellor Selection– All Programmes)

(See The Role of the Counsellor... for a particular programme – L6, S6, C(I)6)

Certification For Youth Exchange

(See 'CP: Compliance & Procedure' Section)

Every district which participates in Youth Exchange must satisfy Rotary International every year that it has policies in place for Child Protection (the RIBI Protection Policy is accepted here) and Insurance against malicious litigation. The Conditions of Certification lay down rules for the manner of preparing students for exchanges for their ongoing care.

Disclosure & Barring Service Checks For Youth Exchange

One of the conditions of Certification is that for all inbound students any adult care giver in the household of the host family or the Counsellor's household (LTEP only) will need a current Enhanced DBS Certificate for Youth Exchange Hosting & Supervision/ Counselling & Supervision.

(See CP5: Screening Adults for Youth Exchange)

(See IB8: Dealing with the DBS Application Form)

Note - If you accept a student to go out on an International Rotary Camp & Tour there is no reciprocal inbound student so there is no DBS requirement and no need for a Counsellor or home hosting.

'Back Door' Exchanges

Any Club arranging a project in the name of Rotary involving a young person under 18 from a foreign country without their parents should know that this is regarded as a Youth Exchange and the DYEO needs to be made aware that it is happening so that the correct procedure is adhered to. This includes arrangements between contact clubs where members have known each other well for many years.

(See CL3: Club to Club Exchanges - Managing them within Certification)

Before and After the Exchange

The DYEO organises Orientation Day for all outbound exchange students to prepare them for going abroad in as wide an interpretation of the word as is possible.

This full day event usually takes place on a Saturday or Sunday before Easter. It is compulsory for students to attend all day and for their parents in the afternoon (this is one of the conditions which they sign to agree to do).

The District Youth Exchange team is responsible for delivering it, with the help of ROTEX, the former exchange students. CYEOs and other members of clubs involved are always invited to attend and the students are appreciative when they know that the club is supporting them there. Clubs are also welcomed at the Feedback meeting, held in September, which is when the returning students give presentations of their exchanges to each other and file their official reports to District.

Returning Long Term students and their parent also attend Orientation meetings, delivered by the District YE team.

Club involvement during their Inbound Long Term student's year.

The LTEP student is more often than not created an Honorary member for the Club for that Rotary year. The student attends meetings frequently and on a regular basis, including Business meetings, and take part in club projects (could even initiate one). S/he belongs to the whole club, not just to the CYEO who is in over all control, and between them the members ensure that the student gets to achieve what is on his/her wish list.

And then what?

Hopefully the club will retain contact with student and family. The membership dividend has already been touched on above. The students can also be very helpful as the 'internal agent' in a school where the clubs wants more contact.

You may find that your student applies next year for another exchange. This is usually accepted readily by the club.

You can also expect applications from siblings in due course.

ROTEX have already been mentioned. They help to promote the programme and can be called upon to speak at presentations to potential applicants for youth exchange. Clubs can also help them to keep in touch with Rotary so that when they are ready to commit themselves to joining Rotaract or Rotary the process is made as easy for them as possible.

Financial Matters

All Students on all programmes pay for their return fares, insurance and visa and inoculations where necessary. They also pay a non-returnable Administration fee (set at £25 in 2016) to the District's Youth Exchange Association as soon as they are placed. Many Rotary camps now have a fee, which is also entirely met by the student.

There is nothing to prevent clubs from assisting with any of this in a very deserving case but this is not usual or expected.

What it costs the Club - Short Term Exchange

In brief, it can cost as little as a few meals. It depends on the exchange and also on how the club chooses to use the opportunity of engaging with new young people and their parents who could well be interested in membership of Rotary if treated appropriately.

In addition most clubs send students away with a few club banners and sometimes a small amount of pocket money and gifts for the host club. One club sent their student out with toys for the orphanage where he was going to work on a vocational placement.

Outbound exchange students are usually invited to a club meeting – certainly with a parent if under 18 and optionally if older. There is a good opportunity to interest the parents in Rotary.

After the exchange clubs invite their student back as speaker, where they will give a presentation on their experience and say thank you to the club.

In paired exchanges both students involved are expected to give presentations to their host club. The CYEO arranges this for the inbound student.

What It Costs The Club - Long Term Exchange

Financing the Long Term student is a significant factor in a club's decision to support a Long Term student. However, this does not usually deter even small clubs from doing so when they weigh up the benefit to the applicant in front of them. This is because the money is not needed until the August of the next Rotary year - usually at least six months ahead - and even then in instalments over the year.

The club can expect to have to put aside up to £1800, which includes hospitality at Rotary club meetings.

(See IF1: Cost of Exchange programme to Districts, Clubs and Students)

Hosting Students On Youth Exchange

Host families need to be found for INBOUND students on the following programmes:

Long Term Exchange
Inbound Camps & Tours

Rotarians are not expected to host students, although many do and really enjoy the experience.

For Inbound Camps the onus is upon the host club to arrange accommodation for the students. This may be home hosting (students could be in pairs) or hostel/camping accommodation according to the location and theme of the Camp. Camps usually last around two weeks.

The Outbound LTEP students are asked to help to find host families for the Inbound exchange student. Some are able to offer their own homes but it is not obligatory and often the students wanting to go on exchange are not in the position to do so. That said, in countries where the programme is large the parents of outbound students often expect to have their empty bedroom used by possibly three different students throughout the exchange year, and the students get to experience three different host families, which is desirable for a cultural point of view.

In GB & Ireland it often can only work if the Outbound student's family hosts the inbound student for the full year. This is not ideal but at least the programme runs in a small way.

No Outbound students are accepted on to the Long Term Exchange Programme unless there is a clear plan for hosting the inbound.

(See IB3: Host Family Selection – All Programmes)