



**2020-21 Annual Report  
of the  
WASH Rotary Action Group's Operations Team  
Presented by: Brian Hall (Chair)**

**June 12, 2021**

## **Introduction and Background:**

The WASH Rotary Action Group Operations Team serves under the oversight of the WASH Rotary Action Group's Board of Directors, and is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day activities of the group.

From our earliest days our mission has been simple and is implicit in everything we do:

***Providing human, technical and financial support to Rotary clubs and districts seeking to help communities to gain sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene.***

In the following pages we present some information on the structure and activities of the Operations Team. Also included are brief reports from each of our team members. Before embarking on that, I'd like to give a quick overview of where we are at – and what our plans are for the future.

The last year has challenged the WASH Rotary Action Group (WASH-rag) in some ways, but in others, very interesting new opportunities have emerged. Like almost every organization on the planet we have become adept at managing "Zoom" meetings. Being a very global organization, timing is sometimes a challenge. "Turn your sound on" or "mute yourself" are heard frequently.

Our World Water Summits are a classic example. From a face-to-face event linked with RI's Annual Convention, we have moved to an online event. While we are looking forward to seeing you all again in 2022, it has to be said that the WWS13 - virtual event - was far more economical. We have learned important lessons and are evaluating the possibility of hybrid events in the future.

During the last year RI asked us to add "hygiene" to our mandate. This had always been implicit in our approach, but has now been enshrined in our name, forcing us to put "WASRAG" to rest. Much of the work involved in promoting our new persona has been done by Lisa Talley, our marketing guru. Working with the new templates developed by Mangan Holcomb last year, Lisa is rapidly building momentum for the group.

Another RI requirement was that a member of the Cadre (Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers) should be represented in all Rotary Action Groups. Fortunately, a number of WASH-rag members are already represented in the Cadre, and we were delighted that Wade Nomura,



who represents WASH in the Cadre, agreed to join our team. Furthermore, Wade has taken on a leadership role in identifying potential partnerships for WASH-rag.

Yet another RI stipulation was that all Rotary Action Groups should have a “Harassment Policy”. Our team developed the appropriate wording and the subsequent bylaw was approved by our Board in late 2020. Hopefully it will never be needed!

The inevitable pause in our activities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, was an excellent opportunity to tidy up our bylaws and standard procedures. For example, some important clarification has taken place of the relationship between WASH-rag (which enjoys 501c4 status in the USA), and The WASRAG Foundation (our 501c3).

## Organizational Structure

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The Operations Team meets its mandate through a series of Team Chairs. During the last year our team has consisted of:

**Operations Team Chair (Brian Hall):** During the year former Chair, **Nicholas Mancus**, stepped down for work and family reasons. Vice Chair Brian assumed the Chair’s role and will continue through this coming year. Brian is also the team’s technical expert, managing our webinar software and all things technical.

**Professional Services (Chair – Ron Denham):** provides technical grant review support to clubs and districts through our Professional Support Team of WASH experts, and recommends financial support to approved Global Grants.

**Ambassador/Membership Program (Chair – Peter Staermose):** implements our very successful WASH Rotary Action Group Ambassador program and membership growth campaigns.

**Membership Satisfaction (Chair – Chris Etienne):** focuses on making the WASH Rotary Action Group membership experience fun and enjoyable; implementing our WASH related club and district competitions, and organizing special events – typically held in conjunction with the Rotary International Convention.

**Meetings and Learning (Chair – Julia Phelps):** orchestrates our annual World Water Summit, webinars and very successful learning events.

**Fundraising Team (Chair – Mary Beth Growney Selene):** maintains existing relationships with our Summit and webinar sponsors and actively seeks new sponsors.

**Marketing and Communications (Chair – Lisa Talley):** a very welcome newcomer to the team, Lisa has taken over this role from Brian Hall. It includes producing the WASH Rotary Action Group's communications, including our monthly newsletter, building our social media accounts, marketing, etc. In short everything involved with getting the word out about the group's activities.

**Cadre – Wade Nomura:** another newcomer to the team, Wade represents the Cadre on the Operations Team.

**Administration – Anna Shepherd:** manages much of the administrative infrastructure of the group, maintains the contact database and provides accurate and detailed minutes of the group's activities.

**Finance - Treasurer Mike Colasurdo:** maintains and manages WASH-rag's finances, assuring legal compliance with tax authorities and Rotary requirements, in all matters related to finance.

Everything we do is only possible with the incredible support we get from the many members who serve on sub-teams. They include:

- **WASH professionals** who help Rotary clubs and districts present outstanding WASH Global Grant proposals to The Rotary Foundation, and who answer technical questions posed by Rotarians via our "Ask an Expert" forum.
- **Ambassadors** who represent the WASH Rotary Action Group in their Rotary District or country, and who promote numerous activities on the ground to raise awareness of The Rotary Foundation's WASH Area of Focus to Rotary clubs in their parts of the world.
- **Membership Satisfaction Sub-Team Members** who help us make the WASH Rotary Action Group enjoyable and fun. They enable us to focus on the most interesting, innovative WASH projects through a variety of competitions and other activities.
- **Newsletter editors** who work so diligently to provide interesting content and encourage our readership to share their WASH stories.
- **Website and Project Site administrators** who spend countless hours ensuring that the moving parts of our website work properly and are kept up-to-date.

- **World Water Summit Team** – working a year in advance to promote our annual World Water Summit. The quality of the content and the calibre of our speakers has made our summits a globally recognized event – thanks to an incredibly dedicated team.

## Structure

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In 2020 the Operations Team consisted of nine sitting members and an Executive Secretary. Team members are appointed for a three-year term and may, if they wish, elect to remain for one further three-year term. Membership, confirmed by the Board, is currently as follows:

Through the Rotary year 2020-21

- Chris Etienne (completes term June 30, 2021)
- Mary Beth Growney Selene (completes term June 30, 2021)
- Ginny Ryan (retired in June 2020)

Through the Rotary year 2021-22

- Ron Denham
- Mike Colasurdo

Through the Rotary Year 2022-23

- Brian Hall
- Julia Phelps

Through the Rotary Year 2023-24

- Wade Nomura
- Peter Staermose
- Lisa Talley

## The Team:

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Before reporting on the team's progress in more detail, we'd like to update you on some of the team members. There have been a few significant changes.

- Peter Staermose has taken over the Team Lead for the Ambassador & Membership Team and is implementing interesting new steps.

- Another exciting development in WASH-rag's evolution is the addition of a Rotaractor to the team. The exact role has yet to be defined, but we look forward to the refreshing perspectives and ideas that this new person will bring.
- One position on the team – Marketing & Communications - was vacant for a long time. Finding the right person was a challenge, and Brian Hall, our Technology Lead, filled the role well – but was definitely stretched. We are delighted that Lisa Talley has now taken on the M&C role permanently. Particularly relevant is her strong background in social media.
- As many of you will know by now, our newsletter editors – Ian Rumbles and Terri Black – have retired. We are actively seeking a replacement(s). The Job Description can be found on our website. If you have the right skills – or know someone who does – please let us know.
- Leaving the team at the end of June 2021 are two members who have had a major impact on our progress.
  - Fundraising Team led by Mary Beth Growney Selene, who finishes her six-year term on the Operations Team on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Also completing her six-year term on the Operations Team is Chris Etienne. Chris's Membership Satisfaction role required her to wear many hats. We are delighted that Chris will continue to contribute to the WASH Rotary Action Group as a member of the Board.

## Team Reports

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### **Membership/Ambassador Program – Peter Stærmose**

Stepping into Ginny Ryan’s shoes was a tall order- but Peter was the ideal candidate. He worked with Ginny in the Spring of 2020 to evaluate the Ambassadors’ performance for the previous year – and was himself Ambassador of the Year for 2020.

In past years we have had a fairly rigorous evaluation process for the performance of our Ambassadors. This has been postponed until 2022 to give the sub-team a chance to review the parameters and set guidelines.

In the meantime, Peter is reaching out to our 71+ Ambassadors in a variety of ways. Their role is critical to our success, and one of Peter’s first steps was to host a webinar – targeting just the Ambassadors. Held in April 2021, it focussed on advocacy and communications, and featured PRIP Ian Riseley and Global Water 2020’s John Oldfield – himself a passionate advocate for WASH. An impressive 65% of the Ambassadors attended.

Peter plans to follow up with other “Ambassador only” events to help them communicate the role of the WASH Rotary Action Group throughout their own Districts and the broader Rotary world. A useful tool in this area is the establishment of their own Facebook page.

Peter’s other hat is “Membership”. Our face-to-face Summits, hosted during the RI Convention, and our booth at the House of Friendship have generated a considerable number of memberships in the past. The Covid-19 pandemic has restricted our growth in this area, but we are holding strong at 1500 members. Peter is working with our Marketing & Communications Team Leader, Lisa Talley, on an aggressive social media strategy to build our membership.

**In closing – Peter is delighted to announce that Ambassador Jesus Martelo, of Spain’s District 2202, has been appointed our Ambassador of the Year for 2020-21**

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### **Membership Satisfaction – Chris Etienne**

Chris's term on the Operations Team ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. "Membership Satisfaction" covers many areas, and during her six-year term Chris's focus of activities has included an interesting and eclectic mix

- **People of WASH Photography and Video Competition:** The competition was launched in 2020 and has proved to be highly successful. Our goal was to build a library of good photos and videos showcasing WASH projects. As an incentive, cash prizes are being awarded in amateur and professional categories. The deadline for entries was April 30<sup>th</sup> and Competition Chair Ian Rumbles was delighted to report that over 100 photographs and an interesting selection of videos have been submitted. Chris's Judging Committee met in May, and the results will be announced in today's meeting.
- **BREW (Beers Rotarians Enjoy Worldwide) and the WASH Rotary Action Group Partnership:** BREW continues to be a strong advocate and supporter of the WASH Rotary Action Group. As with Rotarians globally, BREW members love a party and WASH Rotary Action Group members are always invited to these events. In the last year global virtual events have included Oktoberfest, St. Patrick's Day and a get-together during the virtual Honolulu Convention. We are looking forward to seeing BREW members at the WASH Rotary Action Group's Annual General Meeting.
- **Breakout Sessions for the Virtual 2021 Convention:** Chris co-ordinated with WASH Rotary Action Group members to propose two WASH breakout sessions in 2021.
- **Annual General Meeting – 2021:** Organizing AGMs in a variety of countries presents its own logistical challenges. Chris has managed the process efficiently for several years – and has ensured that we've always had a good supply of muffins – unfortunately not a possibility in this year's virtual event.
- **Coordinating awards:** for WASH Rotary Action Group members in several areas, including WASH Members of the Year.
- **Special Joint Committee:** Chris chaired this committee to evaluate relationships between WASH-rag and the Rotarian Safe Water & Sanitation Foundation. New by-laws have been formulated and voted into place by the Board.



- **Zone Institute and PETS Events:** Coordinated WASH-rag's attendance at virtual Zone Institutes and PETS Events.
  - **Rotary Action Group Collaboration Committee:** representing WASH-rag to identify areas of mutual opportunity with other action groups, including Environmental Sustainability, Peace, and Community Economic Development.
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### **Fundraising – Mary Beth Growney Selene**

Mary Beth also leaves the Operations Team on June 30<sup>th</sup>. She will be missed, but fortunately will continue to play a significant part in the WASH Rotary Action Group's activities as a member of the Board.

In her role as Operations Team lead for Fundraising, Mary Beth's primary goal has been to develop sponsorships for the group's World Water Summits. In 2020, and now in 2021, the virtual format has hampered our fundraising efforts, but it's notable that we still managed to raise (\$21,000) in 2020 and have commitments for \$15,000 for WWS13 in 2021.

We continue to be truly grateful for the significant and ongoing support of the Wallace Genetic Foundation. Our partnership with WGF goes back for a number of years and is based on the enduring relationship between WGF Foundation Chair David Douglas, and WASH Rotary Action Group Chair Emeritus Ron Denham.

### **CADRE – Wade Nomura**

A new RI guideline in 2020 stipulated that all Rotarian Action Groups should add a Cadre member to their teams. The WASH Rotary Action Group's Board recommended that joining the Operations Team would be the most effective place for this new role.

We are delighted that Wade Nomura, The Rotary Foundation Technical Coordinator for WASH, agreed to join our team as "TRF Cadre Liaison". In this capacity he will be able to facilitate sharing of the two groups' resources: WASH-rag's technical and scientific expertise to perform global WASH projects; and the TRF Cadre's in-depth knowledge of Global Grant processes and requirements. We anticipate this will result in a more efficient grant/project process and larger, more effective projects/programs.

As the current TRF Technical Coordinator for WASH, Wade can ensure that all Cadre members of the WASH Area of Focus are updated regularly on the Group's webinars, newsletters and other activities. In turn WASH Rotary Action Group members will have a heightened awareness of the TRF Cadre – and those with the requisite professional expertise will be encouraged to join it.

RI's strategy of including a TRF Cadre member in each Rotary Action Group will have another significant benefit. Wade will reach out to his Cadre counterparts in other Rotary Action Groups and explore opportunities for collaboration between them. This could be of considerable benefit to many of the groups.

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### **Professional Resources – Ron Denham**

In the last year we have seen an explosion in demand for help from our Professional Resources Team, fielding 80+ requests and/or enquiries, of which about 15 were requests for assistance in preparing Global Grant applications.

Demand for this support is growing rapidly for a couple of reasons. One is that The Rotary Foundation has become increasingly rigorous—for example calling for explicit details on the funding of on-going operations and maintenance, and careful documentation of robust monitoring and valuation processes. Another reason lies in the offer of \$2000 from the WASH Rotary Action Group whenever a club seeks our assistance or advice (generously funded by the BREW Fellowship).

We are extremely fortunate that Lynda Hammond, with loads of experience on Global Grants and a passion for WASH, gives so unstintingly of her time and experience to keep us on track.

Also invaluable is the support of Keith Helferich who monitors and runs quality control on the “Projects” section of our website. Keith liaises with the Newsletter Editor to feature a significant project each month.

The Professional Resources team comprises some 30 individuals, each of whom is highly qualified in one or more of 20 aspects of WASH, including both “hardware” such as water supply, hydrogeology, sand dams, sanitation and waste management and “software” including behavior change, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, menstrual hygiene management and preparation of Global Grants.

Our WASH experts also cover sectors of special interest such as WASH in Schools and WASH in Health Care Facilities. And, they are domiciled in many countries, including Malawi, Brazil, Nepal, India, Nigeria, Laos, Ghana, Niger, Sudan, Kenya, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, thus providing the deep understanding of local and cultural issues which is so important in adapting any solution to the needs of a particular community.

Global Grants benefitting from our advice have included:

- WASH in Schools in Tanzania
- Community water system in Bandung, Indonesia.

- WASH systems for indigenous people in The Philippines.
- Treadle pump application to irrigation in Kenya.
- WASH in Schools in Guatemala.
- Implementing a water system in a hospital in Nigeria.
- Installing toilet blocks in Timor Leste.

Other requests provide unusual interest and challenge such as:

- Please help us to find a local (host) partner club.
- We need an international partner club to help us raise funds.
- We need help with a river clean-up.
- We'd like to do a WASH project: how do we go about it?
- We want to promote handwashing-where can we get posters in Spanish?
- What metrics are appropriate for a WASH project?
- The East Cape is in drought: how can we provide water to the people?
- We seek advice on solid waste management.

Ongoing discussions among the group to define future needs and challenges have identified a number of fields which, heretofore, have not been explicitly recognized (such as water resource management, re-charging, re-cycling and re-use and application of solar systems).

These changes are putting increasing demand on the team. To respond we have made some internal changes, sharing responsibilities among more people. And, we are continually looking for Rotarians, and others, who are willing to commit their time and talent to helping their fellow Rotarians everywhere address the emerging crisis: how to ensure people everywhere have access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene.

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### **World Water Summits and Webinars – Julia Phelps**

Encouraged by the positive feedback from our very successful virtual World Water Summit (WWS12), in 2020 we started planning a series of webinars for the Fall. Survey results indicated Rotarians wanted to learn more about WASH, and how to write effective, successful global grants to the Rotary Foundation. Three sessions were designed on **The Nuts and Bolts of Global Grants**, built on a modified WASH in Schools grant. Offerings included:

- Webinar #1 (Oct. 2020): Introduction to Global Grants and Conducting a Community Assessment (650 Registrants).
- Webinar #2 (November 2020): Sustainability and Life Cycle Costs of Global Grants (550 Registrants).

- Webinar #3 (January 2021): Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of Global Grants (450 Registrants).

Actual attendance for the webinars was approximately 40% of total registrations.

Anticipating that the global pandemic would force RI's Board of Directors to make the 2021 International Convention a virtual event, planning began on a virtual WWS13 that would focus on WASH in Healthcare Facilities (WinHCF). This is an emerging area for RI grants, and Rotarians need the most up-to-date thinking and ideas for grant applications. Following our 2020 template, WWS13 will be offered twice, first on Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 7:00 pm (Eastern Time) and again on Friday, June 4, 2021 at 11:00 am (Eastern Time), ensuring WWS13 can be seen live around the world.

WWS13 featured two outstanding speakers. Emory University's Joanne McGriff gave the "big picture" of WinHCF. John Oldfield of Global Water 2020 then focused on the absolute necessity for community involvement. The program continued with examples of Rotarian involvement in WinHCF, including:

- Members of the Rotary Club of Niagara on the Lake sharing lessons learned from transitioning their initial district grant to a larger, global grant.
- The Rotary Club of Naperville sharing their experiences working with Sister Florence and the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi. This latter group started a clinic to treat HIV/AIDS patients and survivors. With the Naperville club's assistance, a borehole well was installed and a filtration system and a garden were created

An integral part of WWS13 was promotion of the WASH-rag's services, including membership benefits, membership opportunities for service and an outline of the respective roles of WASH Ambassadors and Professional Resources Group members.

We have organized an ambitious schedule of webinars for the Fall of 2021, including:

1. Thursday, August 5th and Friday, August 6th: WASH in HCF – Women's Empowerment (Leadership) / Gender Issues (privacy). The new Menstrual Hygiene Rotary Action Group will collaborate with us on this important topic.
2. Thursday, September 9th and Friday, September 10th: WASH in HCF – Tools to do the work / Assessments / Determining Success of your project.

3. Thursday, October 14th and Friday, October 15th: WASH in HCF – Bringing about change – making it happen. Possible Resources (funding) / Partnerships / Advocacy will be discussed.

The committee members have devoted an incredible number of hours in the planning and presentation of virtual WWS13 and the follow-up webinars. Supporting Chair Julia Phelps' guidance, team members include:

- IT Support: Brian Hall
- Social Media: Lisa Talley
- Program: Ron Denham, Nancy Gilbert, Lynda Hammond, Monica Louie, Patricia Merryweather, Carolyn Meub, Wade Nomura, and Neil Van Dine.
- Sponsorships: Mary Beth Growney-Selene.

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#### **Lisa Talley – Marketing & Communications**

As the newest member of the Operations Team, Lisa is always seeking suggestions and feedback. Changes to our newsletter templates and a great new color palette are the basis of some great innovations that Lisa is bringing to the group. WASH RAG's virtual booth in the Taipei Virtual House of Friendship is just one example of her creativity.

Our newsletter is evolving in great new directions. We are now generating a French edition and Portuguese and Spanish will, hopefully, be next. An increased focus on diversity and inclusion through translation of print, social media, conferences and webinars will expand out range of offerings in the coming year.

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