

**D6600 Pathways E-club**  
**Cultural Connections Program**

**Definition:** Alternative to in-person exchanges. This is a structured and safe exchange with specific goals and student outcomes.

**ALL Rotary International Youth Program Policies and Procedures also apply for Virtual Connections, including:**

- Volunteer training
- Application
- Background check
- Student training

**Initial Tasks for Launch:**

1. The committee must understand the rules of Cultural Connections within the RI/District confines
2. Establish job descriptions for YEO, Counselor, Trainer, Facilitator, etc.
3. Must define process of developing a exchange program including:
  - a. Shape our vision of a Cultural Connections
  - b. Acquire District approval for sponsoring a Cultural Connections
  - c. Create or acquire all necessary tools and documentation to support the vision
  - d. Program development

**Benefits:**

- Promotes diversity and inclusion – Eliminates the restrictions of cost, physical or mental challenges, travel restrictions, family obligations, etc.
- Allow students to develop global competencies and leadership skills
- Deepens past cross-cultural experiences and fuel curiosity for new ones
- May interest student in actual physical exchanges
- Allows Rotary Youth Exchange volunteers to stay active
- Keeps the program visible in the schools

**Potential obstacles:**

- Language (use of Translate programs can help)
- Indifference - Students and parents need to understand the time commitment
- Finding adult volunteers willing to participate

**Time Frame:**

- Each exchange to start the first full week of the second quarter
- Exchange to support bi-weekly meet-ups for 5 weeks
- Once application form is approved, students will have access through the club website

**Student Eligibility:**

- Ages 13 to 18 (target 13-15, middle school)
- Middle & High school student

**Technical Requirements:**

- Home computer with video capability (or iPad)
- Reasonable quality internet connections

**Application Process:**

- Students shall submit an application
- Included in the application are:  
Rules and Conditions of Exchange, which includes prohibited internet behaviors  
Student & Parent Acknowledgement of Rules and Conditions  
Consent to Use of Personal Data, Images and Recordings
- Students and parents are interviewed to ensure student/parent understand what a Cultural Connections is and for the Club to be satisfied with the exchange candidate
- Upon selection into the Cultural Connections Program, an exchange date will be identified for the student

**Orientation:** (to be done during the first meet-up facilitated by the program trainer)

- Discuss expectations, rules and introduce Rotary contacts
- Discuss exchange schedule, future programs, and activities. While district sponsors will plan some virtual activities and programs, the emphasis is to let the students lead for full engagement
- Discuss activities and programs that students want to lead and facilitate
- Discuss local service project participation

**Adult supervision:** (to be limited to allow students freedom to explore opinions and solutions related to assignments)

- The facilitator shall launch each meet-up with a student Q&A of assignments of previous meet-ups to ensure discussions represents the intended direction of the exchange.
- Each student shall write a short opinion report each week and submit to Counselor (purpose is to measure progress of student interaction and value of the program).
- Each student shall interact with a Rotarian in the execution and presentation of their selected service project.

### **Sample Program Itinerary:**

1. Meet-up #1 – week 1
  - a. General self-introduction of students & parents and program coordinators including trainer, facilitator, and counselors
    - i. Student - Name, age, school grade, parents and siblings
    - ii. Student - Why do you want to participate in a Cultural Connections?
    - iii. Parent – why are you supporting your student in this Cultural Connections?
    - iv. Student - What do you hope to gain from this experience?
    - v. Student - What is one project the Club is working on?
    - vi. Student - Explain briefly what Rotary’s focus is
  - b. Present overview of program
    - i. Goals & expectations
    - ii. Review rules of the exchange
    - iii. Discuss Student Protection policies
  - c. Present planned itinerary
    - i. Calendar
    - ii. Activities
    - iii. Service project
  - d. Assign activities
    - i. Create family story
    - ii. Create school story
2. Meet-up #2 – week 1
  - a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. Tell family and school stories
    - ii. Student discussion concerning stories
  - c. Open discussion on the topic of “most scary event in your life”
  - d. Assign activities
    - i. Using your PDA, create a video showing some points of interest in your town (due in 2 weeks)
3. Meet-up #3 – week 2
  - a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities

- i. Any issues in creating your video
    - c. Open discussion on the topic of “favorite subject in school and why”
    - d. Open discussion on topic of “the bully at school and what they do”
    - e. Are you having fun with this exchange and why?
    - f. Presentation by former exchange student
    - g. Assign activities
      - i. From the following list, which service project might you want to do. Think about it and be prepared to discuss your choice at next meet-up
        1. Contact local ROTARY Club to see what service project they are doing that you could participate in
        2. Organize a food, clothing, or book drive for a local non-profit organization
        3. Volunteer at a local food bank or pet shelter
        4. Host a fund-raising activity and donate the money
        5. Clean up a park or playground
        6. Plant trees or flowers
        7. Help with chores for elderly or disabled neighbor
4. Meet-up #4 – week 2
  - a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. What is your choice of service project and why
  - c. Open discussion on topic of “what 2 things has your PDA contributed to your life”
  - d. Open discussion on topic of “what contributes the most toward communications”
  - e. Open discussion on topic of “what is your plan in executing your service project”
  - f. Assign Activities
    - i. Fun Challenge - Identify a favorite dessert or sweet and with the help of a parent, make this dessert on-line showing us how. You have 20 minutes
5. Meet-up #5– week 3
  - a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. Status of video
    - ii. Status of service project
  - c. Open demonstration of dessert making challenge
  - d. Presentation by former exchange student, now a Rotarian
  - e. Assign Activities
    - i. Identify a talent you can demonstrate
    - ii. Prepare a presentation on your country including its general history, governmental structure, economic impact to local & foreign affairs
6. Meet-up #6 – week 3
  - a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. Status of service project
  - c. Video presentations – Town Tour
  - d. Presentation and discussion on your country’s history, government structure

- e. Discuss Rotary’s motto of “Service Above Self” and what you have done in the past 12 months that illustrates the concept of this motto
  - f. Assign Activities
    - i. NONE
7. Meet-up #7 – week 4
- a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. Status of service project
  - c. Let’s have fun with language
    - i. Review the story of Cinderella with and without slang
    - ii. Review differences in language
    - iii. Review the use of language tools to support general communications
    - iv. How might you deal with communication challenges
  - d. Assign Activities
    - i. Develop list of questions for a recent exchange student
8. Meet-up #8 – week 4
- a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. Status of service project
  - c. Open Q&A with ROTEX students
  - d. Assign Activities
    - i. Develop formal presentation on service project including
      - 1. Introduce your service project
      - 2. Why you chose this service project
      - 3. Strategy for implementation
      - 4. Highlights of the project
      - 5. Will you continue this project beyond this exchange and why
9. Meet-up #9 – week 5
- a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. NONE
  - c. Presentations on service projects
  - d. Assign Activities
    - i. NONE
10. Meet-up #10 – week 5
- a. Student Q&A
  - b. Review assigned activities
    - i. NONE
  - c. Decision on your experience of this Cultural Connections
    - i. What did you like about the exchange?
    - ii. What didn’t you like about the exchange?
  - d. Did you achieve your goal(s) participating in this exchange and why?
  - e. Graduation
    - i. Presentation of Certificate of Completion – Cultural Connections

- ii. Encourage participation in Long Term and/or Short Term Exchange Program exchanges
- iii. Continue developing relationship with exchange Brother/Sister
- iv. Establish an organization whereby former Cultural Connections students continue to meet and initiate other service projects

### **Electronic/Online Safety Considerations:**

In addition to ensuring compliance with Rotary International policy and applicable Youth Exchange certification requirements, it is the responsibility of those who administer virtual activities to understand local laws related to data privacy and internet use involving minors, and to see that volunteers and program participants abide by them.

Establish boundaries and expectations

Communication

- To ensure communication is appropriate and transparent between volunteers and youth participant(s), all communications (e.g., email, text message etc.) should include the student’s parents and the adult volunteer. This helps decrease the risk of misunderstandings or inappropriate interactions.
- Communication should be sent during the day only, understanding that a communication sent during the day in one time zone may arrive in another time zone during the night. **Ongoing communication occurring outside of the designated timeframe may serve as a warning that interactions between volunteers and participants should be monitored more closely.**
- Adults should not maintain private social media connections with a youth participant.

Sharing or Re-sharing participant content

- Photos or personal information about a youth participant should never be shared without the express permission and knowledge of their parent or legal guardian.
- Stories about and images of youth program participants should not be shared or posted until they have completed their program or activity, and only with the participant’s and their parents’ consent.
- Never tag a minor or share their username or handle online as this could threaten their safety by revealing their interests or locations they visit.

### **Suggestions for service projects:**

1. Contact local Rotary Club to check on service projects they may have
2. Organize a food, clothing or book drive for a local non-profit
3. Volunteer at a local food bank or pet shelter
4. Host a fund-raising activity and donate the money
5. Clean up a park or playground

6. Plant trees or flowers
7. Develop pollination areas for bees
8. Repair broken household items or perform yard work and other chores for elderly or disabled neighbors

The goal to increase knowledge of your community and local citizens, to provide your community with needed services as well as promoting Service Above Self.