



Interact Ambassadors Program to Kenya and Mexico in partnership with Crutches 4 Africa and ALEM 2025 Facts Sheet



WHO: Two separate teams of up to six of our top high school age Interactors from our district will be selected to send to Kenya and to Central Mexico for one to two weeks during the summer of 2025.* These Arizona Interact representatives will be accompanied by adult Advisors, and they will be hosted by Interact, Rotaract and Rotary Clubs in Kenya and Central Mexico. Our Rotary district has developed longstanding relationships with trusted partners in each of these countries.

Applicants who desire to serve as one of these representatives must be an active member of an Interact club in Arizona, Needles, CA, or Laughlin, NV. The required application must be completed and submitted, together with two letters of recommendation, including one from an Advisor to their Interact club. You will select which team(s) you would like to be considered for. The Selection Committee will make a final determination of team assignments.

WHEN: It is expected that our Interact Ambassadors teams will be traveling on their service missions during the period between the middle of June and the second week of July. Exact travel dates and length of time in each country may vary, depending on the airline schedules, the pricing of the fares and our Rotarian hosts' schedules.

WHAT: The Interact Ambassadors program is integrally involved with our Interact District 5495's signature Crutches 4 Africa project for mobility device distribution in Kenya and also partners with ALEM (Autonomia Libertad de Movimiento) in Central Mexico to design and fabricate specialty wheelchairs and provide needed repair services.

In addition to our Interact clubs collecting used mobility devices to ship to these and other countries, funds are raised each year to help underwrite the cost of shipping the mobility equipment and to cover the cost of the airfare for the student members of the Ambassadors teams, the team's travel insurance and some of the in-country travel expenses.

The adult Advisors who apply and are selected to accompany the Interactors on these teams pay for their own airfare and \$1,000 toward the in-country travel expenses.

WHY: Our Interact district provides leadership training and experiences at the Club, District and International levels. Interactors and Advisors who are selected to serve as members of an Ambassadors team embark on a four-month online training program, plus a possible retreat, to prepare them for their Rotary service in a different country and culture. Through immersive cultural experiences, leadership training, project management, team building, public speaking sessions, research and presentation requirements, fundraiser planning, and impactful service initiatives, Ambassadors are equipped with the skills and experiences necessary to grow personally and professionally.

Part of their international service experience will include their assisting our partners in those countries with their ongoing distribution of mobility devices to those who have been crippled by polio or accidents. However, the teams will also observe and participate in a number of other service projects as well while they are in these countries. Home hosting by our Rotarian partners affords opportunities to more fully experience the culture than tourists to those countries would ever have.

However, our teams will also get to see the noteworthy sights and natural wonders these countries have to offer during the time they are there. In all circumstances, the safety, security and welfare of our teams have been uppermost considerations in our planning and arrangements. This will be our eighth team we have successfully sent to Kenya, and our fourth team to Central Mexico. The same rules apply to our Interact Ambassadors as to Rotary Youth Exchange ambassadors, including no drinking, driving or drugs.

HOW MUCH: While the airfare for the students, along with the travel insurance for the team, are covered from the funds raised for the project, there are still costs involved for the selected Interact representatives and their families. They bear the financial responsibility for obtaining the necessary passport & visa, required inoculations, luggage charges, and the desired amount of spending money. There are also in-country team travel costs, including transportation, meals, some lodging, and entrance fees for attractions that will be visited. A \$1,000* contribution toward these in-country team expenses is required, to be paid by each student and adult team member in 3 increments. The first non-refundable \$333 payment is due at the time the Ambassadors are selected, with the remaining payments to be made of \$333 paid by March 1st and \$334 paid by May 1st.

(Scholarships/Fundraising opportunities may be available, if needed.) If a team member cancels participation after the airline tickets have been purchased, the student and student's parents/legal guardians will be responsible for reimbursing the Interact District for the cost of the student's airfare, and half of the student's contribution for in-country expenses which have been prepaid.

APPLICATIONS for the Ambassador and Advisor positions must be submitted by December 31, 2024. The applications will be screened by our Selection Committee, and applicants will be contacted about scheduling an online interview with members of that committee. Our Interact Ambassadors team will be selected by January 31, 2025. Questions concerning the Interact Ambassadors program can be directed to Dr. Art Harrington, Rotary District Interact Chair, arthts@msn.com, (928) 245-0411.

* Please understand that the current climate around the world continues to change. At any time, District 5495 can choose to reschedule or cancel the program, due to varying circumstances. In that event, the \$1,000 contribution is fully refundable; however, students will not be reimbursed for inoculations or visa/passport expenses.