

Final Report on Resolution #2 regarding the overall review of Zonta International

[Translate this report](#) with Zonta International's Translation Tools.

Background of Resolution #2

The process of the overall review of Zonta International started in the Centennial Biennium 2018–2020 when clubs adopted “Resolution #2.” This resolution asked the 2020-2022 Zonta International Board to undertake a study and make recommendations to ensure the organization is fit for the future and able to meet the challenges of the next century. [A report about this research](#) (June 2022) was presented to the voting body of the 2022 Convention in Hamburg, Germany; this was accompanied by a presentation, workshop and [a webinar](#).

The 2022 Convention body voted to finish the overall review in the 2022–2024 Biennium.

The 2022 Convention body also adopted the 2022-2024 Biennial Goals that contain many aspects that were identified in 2020-2022: drafting and adopting a strategic plan, addressing the Zonta Spirit, establishing club creators, focusing advocacy and service on three key topics and raising Zonta’s visibility.

A [new webpage](#) where all materials in context with Resolution #2 can be found on the website.

This report connects to the June 2022 report and finalizes the overall review.

Strategic Planning

One of the main findings of the study was the need to prepare a Strategic Plan for Zonta International. The 2022 report also identified areas where further work would be required such as programs, fundraising and operations.

In the process of Resolution #2 for the 2022-2024 Biennium, it was also noted to continue reviewing possibilities to simplify the frameworks for membership, governance and operations.

In the first quarter of the 2022-2024 Biennium, the International Board concentrated on studies in the fields of awards and scholarships, international service projects and fundraising. It was recognized that the continued review requires involvement and support of the membership so all aspects of Zonta can be considered, and potential changes can be presented at the 2024 Zonta International Convention in Brisbane, Australia.

The member survey, which was carried out in October and November 2022, has been published on the website and was presented to membership in an international webinar on 16 February 2023. All materials are available at <https://www.zonta.org/StrategicPlan>.

This report concludes the study work on Resolution #2. The Zonta International Board has approved this report and the Strategic Plan of Zonta International “Zonta, Gender Equity, and a Vision for 2023 & Beyond – Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies 2023 – 2030” at its April 2023 meeting. The work continues with the implementation of the Strategic Plan and related business plan.

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Working Structure and Terms of Reference

The Zonta International Board formed the Working Group for steering the process in the 2022-2024 Biennium.

The Working Group consisted of the Executive Committee of Zonta International: President Ute Scholz, President-Elect Salla Tuominen, Vice President Fernanda Gallo-Freschi and Treasurer/Secretary Souella Cumming.

The lead for Resolution #2 was President-Elect Salla Tuominen, while Treasurer/Secretary Souella Cumming concentrated on leading the work for the Strategic Plan. The work for Resolution #2, especially the remaining topics of fundraising, awards & scholarships and international service projects, and the work for strategic planning were conducted in parallel.

The Working Group created the Terms of Reference, which defined what was being looked at and the approach to the work. The work was broken down into stages, with an outline of which activity would occur in each stage and the approximate timeframe that work would happen.

Workstreams

Three workstreams were established with Board members:

Fundraising

Souella Cumming (chair), Monika Geise, Teresa Lin and Brittany Vaughan

Awards & Scholarships

Fernanda Gallo-Freschi (chair), Anne-Marie French Cudjoe, Brittany Vaughan and Sandy Venn-Brown

International Service Projects

Salla Tuominen (chair), Annika Bränström, Reneé Coppock and Teresa Lin

The entire process was assisted by external consultant, Association Laboratory Inc., as well as Executive Director Allison Summers and Assistant Executive Director Megan Radavich from Zonta Headquarters.

Scope of Work

As noted above, the Terms of Reference set out a phased approach to the remaining three workstreams (Awards & Scholarships, International Service Projects and Fundraising) as follows:

Stage 1: Planning, Key activities:

- Developing and confirming scope of the study.
- Identifying key stakeholders and mechanisms for engaging with (to obtain input from), or keeping stakeholders advised of, review activity/progress.

Stage 2: Information Gathering, Key activities of the three workstreams:

- Reviewing of relevant documentation (internal and external).
- Engaging with identified stakeholders via a variety of mechanisms, including survey (to individuals or targeted groups), 'Zoom' meetings (with individuals or targeted groups), interviews (with individuals or targeted groups), and focus groups/workshops as deemed best and most efficient by each workstream.

Stage 3: Analysis, Key activities:

- Analysis by each workstream of information gathered and preparing a 'position paper' for consolidation by the Working Group.
- A process for engagement will be implemented to ensure that the member voice is heard/acknowledged through the study.
- Overall analysis completed and consolidated into findings and recommendations.
- Discussion at the Zonta International Board on the findings and recommendations and how they would fit into the Strategic Plan.

Stage 4: Reporting, Key activity:

- Summary report prepared by the Working Group based on the documentation received from the workstreams.

The following areas were excluded from the scope of work:

- Mission and objects – The Resolution #2 study did not seek to change Zonta's 'why' but focused on understanding how the approach to strategy supports the delivery of the mission and objectives.
 - The International Board, after careful analysis of the work done under Resolution #2 including the Strategic Plan, decided to slightly change the mission of Zonta International to be aligned with the current terminology to be "a leading global organization of individuals building a better world for women and girls."
- Headquarters structure/staffing – The study considered the role of Zonta International Headquarters as it supports the international service projects and educational programs, as well as fundraising, but did not extend to the structure of the Headquarters and staffing.
- Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women legal structure, and financial and investment arrangements.

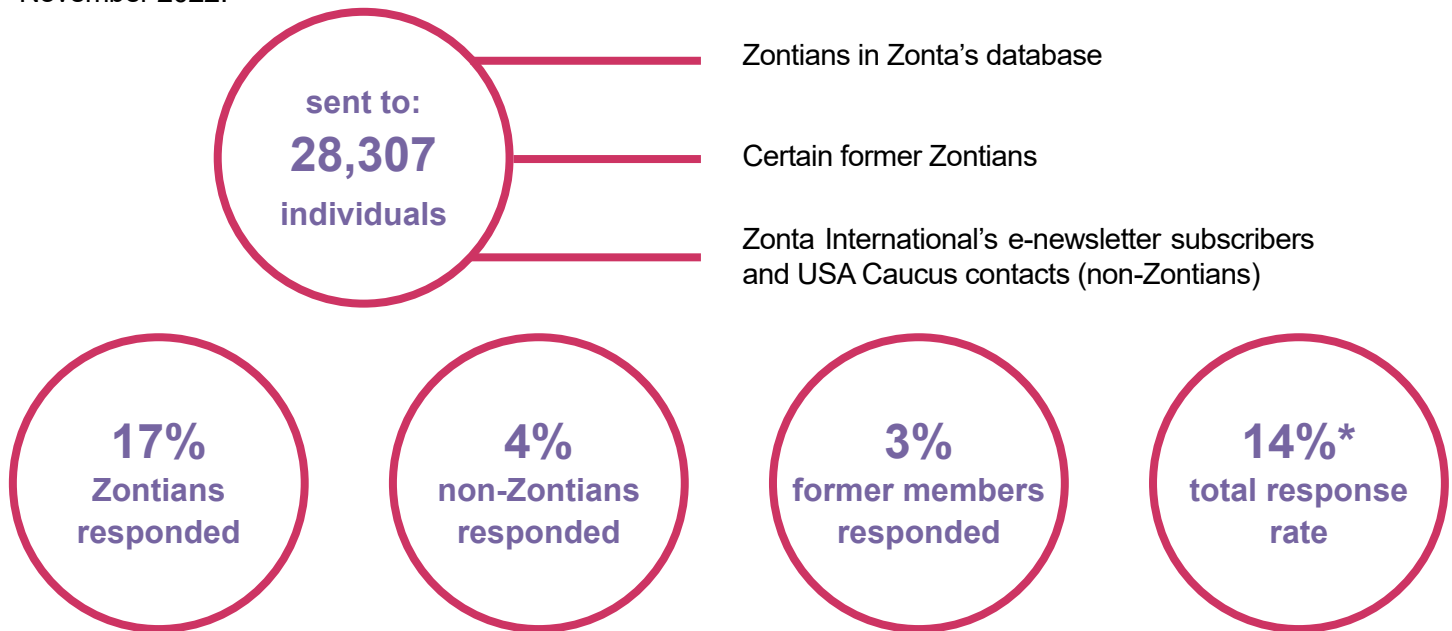
Discovery

PESTLE Analysis

The results of the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) analysis conducted in the 2020-2022 Biennium under Resolution #2 work was utilized. Please see the [final report of Resolution #2 from 2020–2022](#) for the PESTLE results.

Member Survey

Zonta International sent out, through its external consultant Association Laboratory, a survey link to 28,304 individuals to prioritize the findings from the previous biennium. The survey was sent to all Zontians in Zonta's database, certain former Zontians and non-Zontians who were subscribers of Zonta International's e-newsletter and USA Caucus contacts. Translations of the survey were available. The data was collected between 31 October 2022 and 27 November 2022.



*Based on the information received from Association Laboratory, an average response rate for corresponding surveys in the NGO sector is between 15-30%.

The survey covered:

- Environmental scan covering the issues that will be impacting women and girls in the next three years, and what Zonta should prioritize to work on in its strategic plan.
- Zonta International and clubs in order to understand how respondents viewed Zonta International in relation to the clubs to allow Zonta International to focus its strategic plan to the areas where the relationship might need the most support and understand where Zontians put time and energy to participate.
- Club leaders' (club presidents or board members) opinions on how they view Zonta International, its awards and scholarship programs, international service projects, fundraising and advocacy efforts.

The results of the survey are available in detail at <https://www.zonta.org/StrategicPlan>.

Focus Groups

Workstreams arranged focus group sessions with various member groups such as governors, some past governors, foundation ambassadors, some international committee chairs and/or members and other leadership position holders, award alumnae and Zonta International Headquarters staff.

Document Review

Each workstream reviewed relevant key activities of Zonta International and/or Zonta Foundation for Women, various data points including, among other things, statistics from the organization, the results from the member survey, the feedback received during the various focus groups, email survey to past international presidents and a literature review of best practices in its workstream area. In addition, workstreams looked at other similar organizations to understand what those groups are doing differently or similarly and what Zonta International can learn from those differences.

Findings and Recommendations

Below the findings and possible solutions identified by all the workstreams are summarized.

Awards & Scholarships Workstream

The scope of this workstream was to review how Zonta International's scholarships and awards are structured and function.

Findings

- Many clubs have their own scholarships and awards for vulnerable populations or specific areas of study; they were not included as a subject of this study.
- 85% of respondents to the member survey believe that ZI's awards are relevant and 75% are actively engaged in the award programs.
- All awards, being merit-based and submitted in English, tend to favor young women of privilege.
- Not all awardees want to engage with Zonta International and its mission.
- Zonta International may encourage awardees to engage with Zonta in the best way they feel comfortable.

Amelia Earhart Fellowship (“AE”)

- It is considered “cool” by awardees.
 - It is one of few awards in the field offered by women, for women and the award is tied to a pioneer and legend.
 - Could/how can Zonta International make all the awards this “cool”?
- The AE fellows define it as a strong bond (women who share the same background and struggles) and desire to give back to younger generations and to Zonta.
 - Is this desire used strategically?
- Fellows want more direction regarding expectations as an awardee (presentations, school visits, Zonta events, when to wear their “wings”, etc.).
- No critical changes are necessary to AE; opportunities presented by AE could be kept in mind for the future.

Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship (“JMK”)

- JMK scholarships are not well patronized globally. Only 14.8% of clubs participate in the JMK Scholarship program.
- There is a limited interest from alumnae in engaging with Zonta International.
- There are more interesting scholarships in the same field as JMK.
- There are better ways to support young entrepreneurs, such as coaching, mentoring, etc.
- As quoted by one JMK Awardee: “In some countries, ANY scholarship is desirable because too many girls cannot access college.”
- There may, however, be pushback on revamping JMK.

Young Women in Public Affairs Award (“YWPA”)

- Current statistics suggest Zonta International needs to focus energies on encouraging young women to take leadership responsibilities (a cornerstone of 2022-2024 Biennial Goals). In the past 25 years, globally the number of women being elected to positions of power has increased to 25%. While this is an improvement, less than 5% of the heads of state around the world are women. In business, around 50% of middle management positions in the top performing companies are women, but CEOs are less than 7% female.
- The award is well participated in. Between 20 and 25% of Zonta clubs participate in YWPA.
- The award favors more privileged individuals in several countries and regions (academic achievement, ability to participate in volunteerism, family/school knowledge of civic participation, etc.).
- Volunteerism/community service is a major barrier to participation, as it is not a requirement or an expectation of schools in many countries.
- Age eligibility and award timing is geographically problematic for many clubs.
- “Public affairs” is difficult to translate in many languages.

Women in STEM Scholarship (“WIT/STEM”)

- First award cycle
 - The scope of WIT was not well understood.
 - Some districts struggled to find applicants. Only 11.8% of Zonta clubs participated in the first pilot cycle.
- Second award cycle
 - WIT was conducted at international level. 228 applications were received.
 - The winners came/studied in a few countries only.
 - The scope of the WIT award was too narrow.
- We will see the results of the third pilot cycle, broadened to STEM subjects, with evaluation mandated to the districts.
- The data from the governors’ reports in September 2022 showed that close to 52% of districts have appointed a STEM award coordinator and are moving to establish an awards process.

Possible Solutions

YWPA

- Define exactly what Zonta International wants to achieve with YWPA.
- Redefine/consider merits to set a minimum threshold below which YWPA is not assigned.
- Application process to be streamlined for all parties and inclusivity to be increased.
 - Applications could be allowed in other languages than English.
 - Definition of women and girls to be considered broadly.
- Engage awardees in the Zonta Awardees Connect on international level.

JMK

- Allow more flexibility to districts.
- A grant program like the centennial grants could be an alternative option.
- Clubs and districts could be encouraged to ensure that JMK is recognized more broadly in order to increase visibility
- Consider engaging winners with one-year supporting membership at no cost with an opt-out option.

International Service Projects

The aim of this workstream was to examine aspects of Zonta International's service projects and to ensure their relevance. Local service and any funding related matters were excluded from the scope of the work.

Since 1923, there have been altogether 116 international service projects (of which some have been repeated/continued more than one biennium i.e. are the same projects but have been calculated below as separate projects).

- 48 of these projects have been under ZISVAW (Zonta International Strategies to end Violence Against Women Fund) and 68 under International Service Fund.
- Since 2000, the themes of the international service projects included:
 - Violence against women (incl. prevention of child marriage and prevention of female genital mutilation)
 - Anti-trafficking
 - Health related projects: reducing HIV/AIDS, reducing obstetric fistula, preventing neonatal tetanus and generally improving health of women
 - Improving technical and entrepreneurial skills of women
 - Education-related projects: generally education, women's learning centers and gender-responsive schools
 - Resilience and empowerment of women generally
 - Safe cities
 - Climate change.
- Zonta International's partner organizations in international service projects have been as follows:
 - UN related: UN, UN Foundation, UNICEF and UNICEF USA, UNFPA, UNIFEM/UN Women, UNESCO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), UN Trust Fund, UN Relief and Works Agency and UN World Refugee Year
 - Other organizations (excluding Zonta clubs which between 2000-2004 cooperated in relation to ZISVAW projects): Afghan Institute of World Learning, CARE International, DEPDC – Development and Education Program for Daughters and Communities and STAR Network of World Learning
- Since 2000, there have been altogether 88 projects (of which some have been repeated/continued more than one biennium i.e. are the same projects but have been calculated here as separate projects) of which 10 projects have been executed in cooperation with other organizations than UN agencies.

Findings

- Service is an integrated part of the mission of Zonta International.
- Through international service projects Zonta International seeks longer term implications and impacts. This means Zonta International is not a humanitarian aid organization responding to immediate needs resulting from humanitarian crises or natural catastrophes.
- Zontians seem to like the idea of international service projects, but an average Zontian may not be very familiar with the international service projects on a biennial basis.
- There may be too many international service projects or project "themes".
 - It may be difficult to learn and understand the projects and their causes.
 - Focus may be lost when having many projects or various themes.

- International service projects and/or their themes may change too often.
 - It may be difficult to learn and understand the projects and their causes.
 - It may be better to seek continuity, see more results and even finish a project
- Theme of the project, even if very important, may also be very abstract.
 - It may be difficult to understand.
 - It may be difficult to include measurable results.
 - It may be difficult to communicate, especially across languages.
- Many Zontians may be more interested in the local service projects.
 - Local projects are closer to many Zontians' hearts and therefore valued; they also may be more practical and easy to understand, making the results more identifiable.
 - Many Zontians do not understand why they should collect money for the international projects when there is a local need.
 - In some parts of the world, the members seem to want "hands on" service projects.
- Many Zontians may not understand how international service projects are funded.
 - There seems to be lack of information on the budgeting process as well as understanding the funding of the international service projects, various funds (International Service Fund, Rose Fund, educational programs etc.) and timing for fundraising vs. funding.
- The foundation ambassadors are deemed important.
 - But they may often focus their communication on donations and funding, not necessarily to the substance and results of the international service projects.
- Zontians may not understand the process of choosing the international service projects.
 - Many seem to have interest in somehow being able to participate in choosing cooperating organizations or service project areas.
 - The in-depth process to choose service projects to be proposed to the convention, including e.g. due diligence process of the cooperating organizations, has not been communicated and therefore not understood.
 - Based on the analysis, Zontians were not able to clearly define a successful international service project.
- Zontians do not feel they are involved in the selection process for the international service projects.
 - Even though the practice has been to have a vote on the international service projects at convention, many Zontians may feel they cannot have an impact on the selection because the decision is already taken by the Zonta International Board.
- Communications
 - There is a lot of information on the international service projects on Zonta International's website, but do Zontians make use of it?
 - Are Zontians interested enough to take a look at all the available information?
 - Zontians seem to like "storytelling" which could be increased.
 - Example: a picture and/or a video on a Madagascar girl describing how her life has changed because of the international service project Let Us Learn Madagascar.
 - Should the approach to the Zonta International website be turned more towards outsider's view?
 - Would an outsider to Zonta (or an average Zontian who has no deep knowledge of Zonta International's processes) get an overview of what Zonta International does in relation to the international service projects by reviewing the available information?
 - Language may still be an issue for communications.

Possible Solutions

- Service to be continued and included in the mission of Zonta International.
 - International service projects to look for longer-term implications.
 - Not to tweak Zonta International towards a crisis funding or humanitarian aid organization.
- Service and advocacy should be aligned within Zonta International so that both support each other and Zontians can better understand the international service projects and their goals.
- In order to differentiate Zonta International from other service/human rights organizations, the recommended focus areas for the international service projects to be (not necessarily all at the same biennium):
 - Violence against women (including child marriage).
 - Education.
 - Women at work and in decision-making.
 - Climate change (human rights approach).
- In order to be more effective on chosen service projects, have more attention from partners and gain more attention from Zontians, the number and/or themes of international service projects should be decreased on biennial basis.
- A signature project which does not change often could be chosen.
 - At the Yokohama Convention 2018, ending child marriage was noted to be such and it has continued ever since; however, the amount of funding has not differed significantly from the other projects and it has not been communicated as a signature project after the 2018-2020 Biennium
- Consider making a strategic choice and communicate that on the international level the cooperation with regard to the service projects is mainly done with the UN agencies.
- Consider making changes to the process for choosing the international service projects to be proposed to the convention so that the members can feel more involved.
 - E.g. by asking feedback mid-biennium or giving mid-biennium information on the initial plans or otherwise.
- Prepare and communicate characteristic features for a successful international service project so that Zontians can understand the basics behind the international service projects.
- Emphasize making Zontians proud of achievements and impacts of the international service projects – focus on communications and marketing instead of reporting.
- Other than strategic solutions i.e. practical improvements which could be done (and do not need a strategic plan to be implemented):
 - Streamline the available information and communication.
 - The information must talk to one's heart – more storytelling type of communications are needed.
 - The process for selecting and funding of the service projects to be described on the website, included in the introductory material for new Zontians, to be described in *The Zontian* magazine when the new projects are introduced, etc.

Fundraising Workstream

Donations to the Zonta Foundation for Women have been declining over recent years and current revenue streams lack diversity. This is affecting Zonta International's ability to deliver international service projects and educational programs. During the 2020-2022 Biennium, 82% of clubs (100% of districts) donated \$4.3m representing 81% of total contributions. 21% of Zontians made individual contributions.

Findings

- Overall conclusion: Zonta International/the Zonta Foundation for Women has the ability to be more ambitious in its fundraising goals.
- On the external environment
 - Attitudes to philanthropy are changing.
 - COVID has impacted in-person fundraising events.
 - Global corporations tend to donate through local countries where they wish to expand their business presence.
 - Clubs could benefit from this.
 - Greater percentage of donations is allocated to fundraising activities.
 - Key features of successful Not-for-Profit (NFP) organizations include¹:
 - Defined fundraising strategy and priorities.
 - Proactive stewardship of donors (engaging and thanking).
 - Diversified revenue streams.
 - Digitalization (tools to make it easy to donate and to administer).
 - Investment in staff with specialist fundraising/development experience.
- On the benchmark organizations²
 - Many NFP organizations use paid staff with fundraising expertise and relationship networks to fundraise.
 - Some NFP organizations have adopted a global/regional strategy (with global head offices/regional support centers).
 - Funds are raised for specific projects, and funding is generally secured prior to project launch.
 - Some specific projects are sponsored directly by corporations or individual donors.
 - Greater visibility of how much of the donations is allocated to project administration.
 - Most organizations allocate a higher percentage of funds raised (up to 20%) into fundraising resources/activities.
- Zonta's main focus for fundraising is on Zontians and clubs.
- Club contributions to the Zonta Foundation for Women have been declining over the past five biennia.
- Not all clubs donate to Zonta International service projects and educational programs.
- Not all clubs follow the 1/3 recommended donation to the Foundation.

¹ Extracted from Institute of Directors (New Zealand) Webinar on Fundraising Essentials for Not-for-Profit boards ([Not for profit governance series: Fundraising essentials for board members | IoD NZ](#)), and Dan Pallotta TED Talk www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong

² Benchmark organizations – World Vision; YMCA; Lions Club

- Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women has no visibility of total funds raised at club/district level.
- Not all districts set biennial targets for donations to the Zonta Foundation for Women or set goals that aim for a percentage increase over previous biennium.
- Contributions from individual members have increased despite a decrease in overall member numbers.
- Individual donations to the Zonta Foundation for Women from outside the USA are [mostly] not tax deductible.
- Club donations to the Zonta Foundation for Women through local Zonta charitable entities are tax deductible in most countries (this is not well understood by many Zontians).
- Campaigns/competitions, like Every Member Every November, can be very successful but are highly vulnerable to changes in Zonta's priorities from biennium to biennium.
- Clubs do not always feel a strong connection and/or obligation to donate to Zonta's international projects or programs.
 - They value/prioritize donations to local club projects.
- Zonta's volunteer foundation ambassadors are mostly effective, but often change every two years which affects continuity and effectiveness.
 - In some districts, the area directors are more actively involved in raising awareness of Zonta International/the Zonta Foundation for Women programs.
- Some foundation ambassadors are less effective in engaging clubs/Zontians in Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women programs due to regional/country/cultural/generational attitudes and approaches to fundraising and donor recognition.
- Current approach to fundraising is essentially 'one size fits all' which doesn't adequately address regional/country/cultural/generational differences.
- Many Zontians are not fully aware of the different international service projects or educational programs supported by Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women, resulting in the majority of funds being donated to the Rose Fund, rather than the International Service Fund or the educational funds.
- International service project descriptions are very detailed, and fact orientated, rather than focusing on the 'cause,' the outcome, or appealing to donors on an emotional level.
 - More stories with tangible/measurable information (please also see the findings of the International Service Projects workstream above).
- Currently 100% of donations are allocated to service projects or educational programs.
 - The costs associated with running the Zonta Foundation for Women are funded by investment income.
 - This is a recent change – in the past Zonta International made a grant to the Zonta Foundation for Women to cover costs.
 - In the 2020–2022 Biennium, these costs amounted to approximately 8%.
 - Many other charities allocate up to 20% of donations to support fundraising activities such as staff, resources, etc.

Possible Solutions

- To be more ambitious in its fundraising goals, Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women needs to enhance existing fundraising activities, diversify fundraising channels and invest in resources to deliver fundraising development/growth.
- Maintain current fundraising momentum.
 - Ensure continuity/consistency of successful campaigns such as e.g. Every Member Every November, Rose Day, etc. from one biennium to the next.
 - Work with districts and clubs to set fundraising goals/targets.
 - Communicate/educate clubs about expectation of 1/3 of club fundraising activity to be sent to the Zonta Foundation for Women (with the balance (2/3) retained at district and club level).
- Enhance donor care.
 - Engage/cultivate existing individual donor relationships.
 - Proactively engage with clubs and individuals who have not yet donated.
 - Support districts that are successful in raising money.
 - Assess donor recognition methods to ensure relevance globally/regionally/culturally/generationally.
- Improve awareness of Zonta's causes.
 - Promote knowledge of projects (project descriptions) and educational awards.
 - Provide information that appeals to donor emotions and connects them more strongly with the cause.
 - Review processes to identify/select programs to ensure they align with Zonta's mission and connect globally/regionally/locally.
- Deliver more
 - Focused campaigns, which reflect regional/cultural/generational preferences for giving.

Afterword

This report concludes the work for Resolution #2. The findings and solutions of the workstreams are incorporated in the work for preparing the Strategic Plan and will be considered when drafting the 2024-2026 Biennial Goals.

The work on the strategy will continue even after implementing the Strategic Plan. This will be an ongoing process to ensure that Zonta International will continue as a strong and sustainable organization.

The Strategic Plan “Zonta, Gender Equity, and a Vision for 2023 & Beyond – Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies 2023 – 2030” will be posted here when it is finalized: <https://www.zonta.org/StrategicPlan>.

A Special Thank you!

The Zonta International Board thanks all Zontians who participated in the entire process of Resolution #2, especially in the member surveys and any other feedback.

Thanks to the international committee chairs and members, governors and past governors, foundation ambassadors, past international presidents, award alumnae and Headquarters’ staff that made themselves available to each of the workstreams. This input was key to forming the recommendations. The insights from the various perspectives were very valuable.

Only together can we build the Zonta International organization for tomorrow!