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## BACKGROUND

The Annual Youth Exchange Report reflects exchange activity for the 2017-18 Rotary year.

Respondents were asked about the number of students hosted in their district, early returns, and exchange partner interactions. This includes data for both long- and short-term exchanges. Data from this report is shared with district and multidistrict leaders, media outlets, and anyone interested in the Youth Exchange program.

## SURVEY RESPONSES

Youth Exchange district and multidistrict chairs responded to the Annual Survey using Qualtrics, an online survey platform, in December 2018. They were asked to provide information about inbound exchanges for the 2017-18 Rotary year.

The Youth Exchange team received survey responses from **449** of **474** certified districts—a **95%** response rate. Please note that the data in this report is not reflective of the entirety of the Youth Exchange program; only districts that responded to the survey are represented here. Additionally, it is important to note that for various reasons, data from Germany and Korea is not included in this report.

The following table contains regional response rates for 2017-18, 2016-17, and 2015-16. Asia and Oceania had the highest increase in district response rates at 34% and 30%, respectively. Because RI no longer collects inbound student data, completion of the survey is a requirement for certification. As such, all regions saw a dramatic increase in reporting.

Geographic Area	District Response Rate		
	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Africa	100%	80%	87%
Asia	87%	53%	68%
Europe	89%	77%	85%
North America	100%	82%	79%
Oceania	100%	70%	75%
South America	100%	88%	75%

## TOTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

### Reported Number of Exchanges

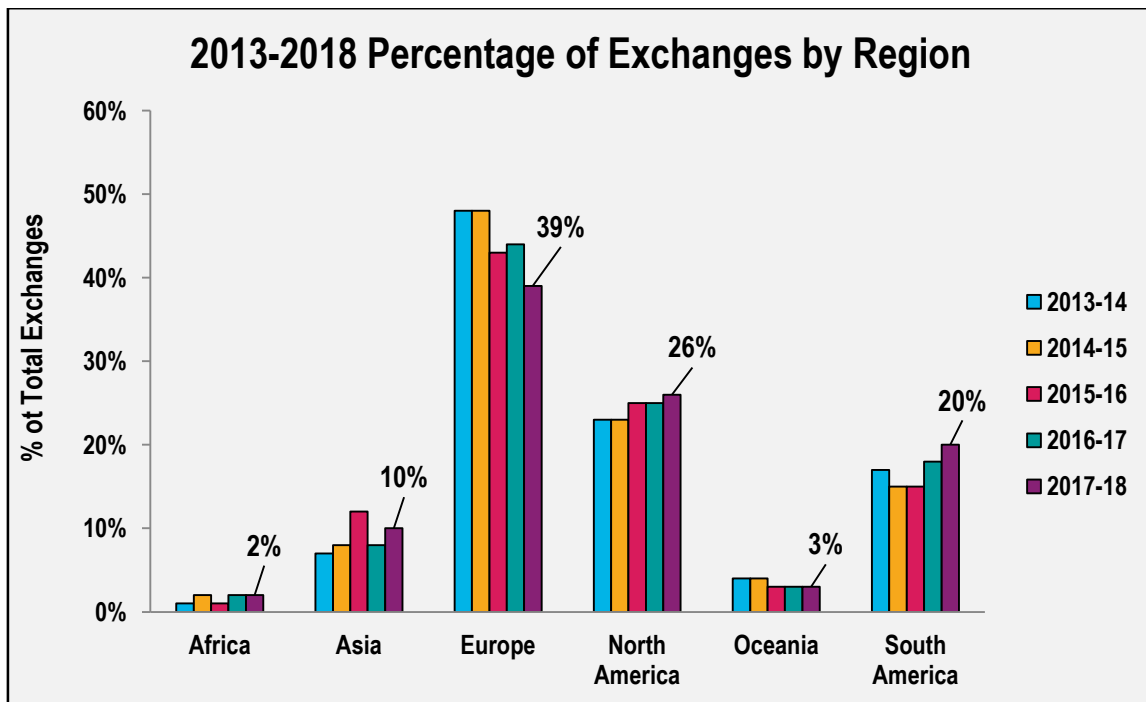
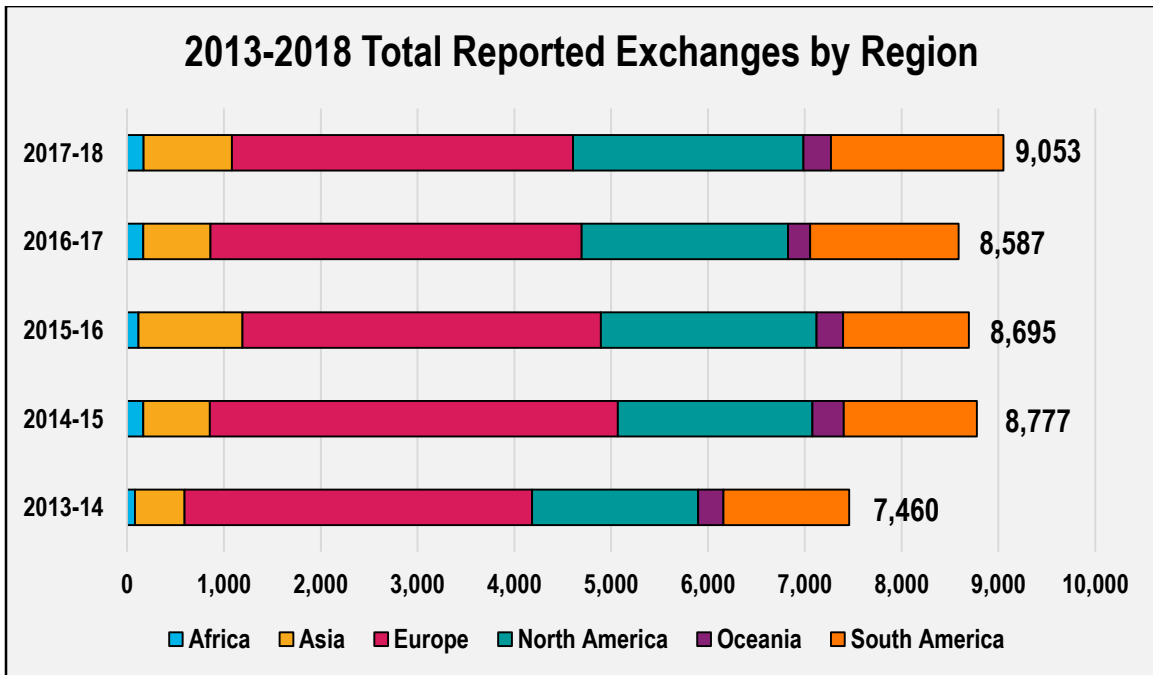
For 2017-18, districts reported a total of **9,053** exchanges. This is an increase of **466** exchanges from the 8,587 reported exchanges in 2016-17. As a reminder, 2017-18 data from Germany and Korea was not included and therefore is not reflected in the numbers below. Historically, these countries have reported a significant number of exchanges, together averaging 894 students per year for both long- and short-term exchanges over the last three years.

Type of Exchange	Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Total Exchanges Reported
Long-term	6,285	69%
Short-term	2,768	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,053</b>	<b>100%</b>

Exchanges in 2017-18 were similar in distribution to previous years. There was an increase in exchanges in most regions with the exception of Europe. Overall, Europe had the highest reported number of total exchanges followed by North America, then South America. Notably among all the regions, South America continues to show steady annual growth. From 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 there was a 18% increase in exchange activity in South America and from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 the program grew 16% in South America.

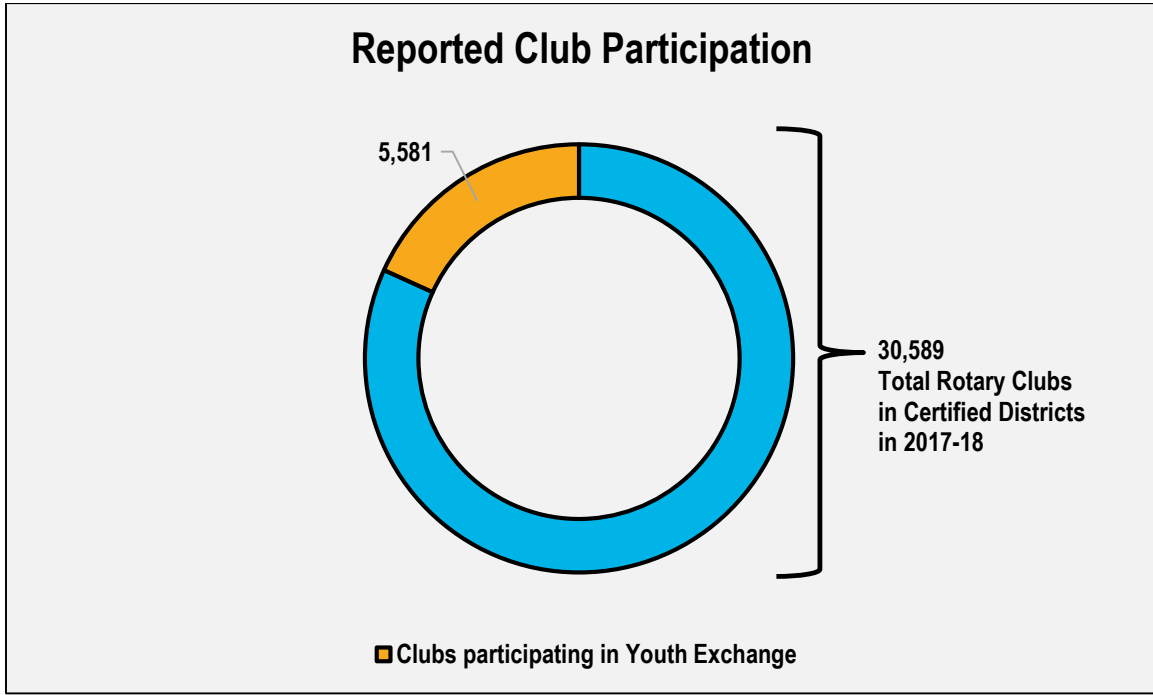
Geographic Area	Total Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Total Exchanges	Total Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Total Exchanges	Total Exchanges Reported	Percentage of Total Exchanges
	2017-18		2016-17		2015-16	
Africa	170	2%	168	2%	117	1%
Asia	912	10%	693	8%	1,074	12%
Europe	3,524	39%	3,835	44%	3,704	43%
North America	2,381	26%	2,132	25%	2,225	25%
Oceania	283	3%	226	3%	276	3%
South America	1,783	20%	1,534	18%	1,299	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,053</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,587</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,695</b>	<b>100%</b>

The next two charts show exchange activity since 2013. The first chart reflects the total number of exchanges reported by region, while the second reflects the percentage of reported exchanges by region.

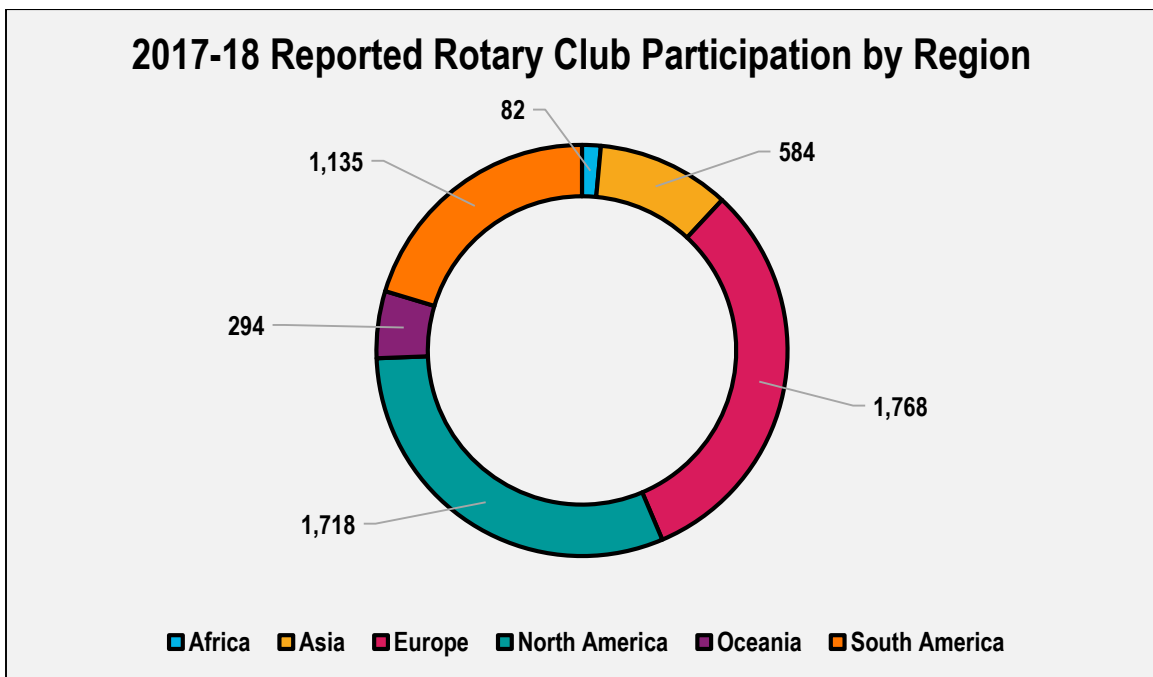


### Reported Club Participation

It was reported that the total number of Rotary clubs participating in Rotary Youth Exchange during the 2017-18 Rotary year was **5,581**. The total number of Rotary clubs in Youth Exchange certified districts worldwide during the 2017-18 Rotary year was **30,589**. Therefore, 18% of certified district clubs were reported to have participated in 2017-18.

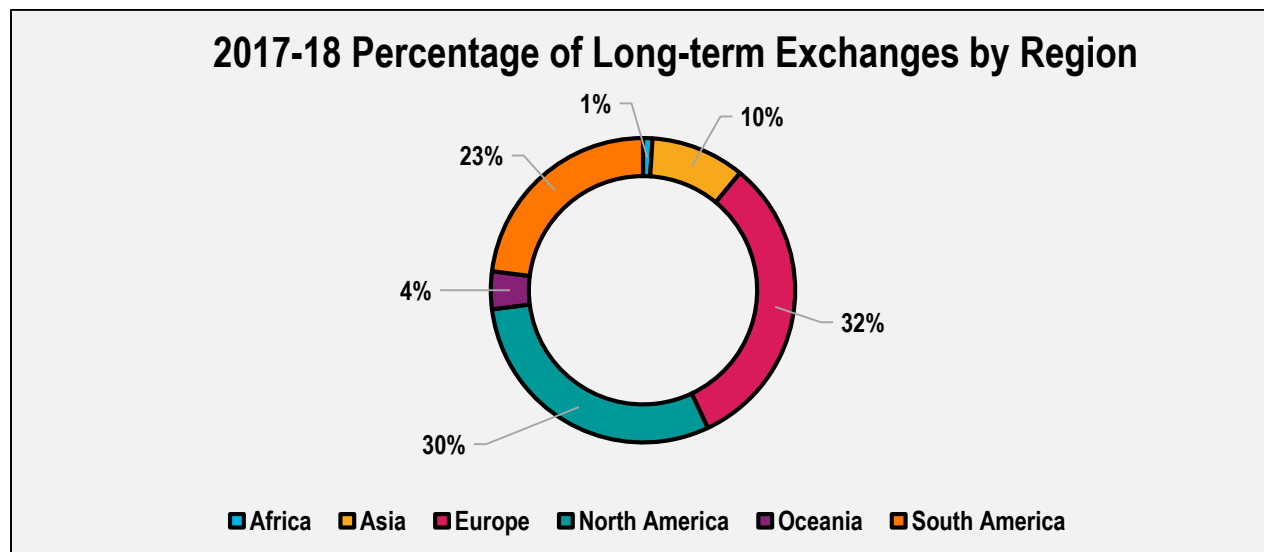


The following chart shows the total number of Rotary clubs by region that reported participating in Youth Exchange during the 2017-18 Rotary year.



## LONG-TERM EXCHANGES

400 districts hosted **6,285 long-term exchanges**, representing **69%** of all Youth Exchange activity. This is an increase of **302** reported long-term exchanges compared to the 2016-17 Rotary year. Europe hosted the majority of all long-term exchanges, followed closely by North America. The chart below displays the percentage of exchanges by region.



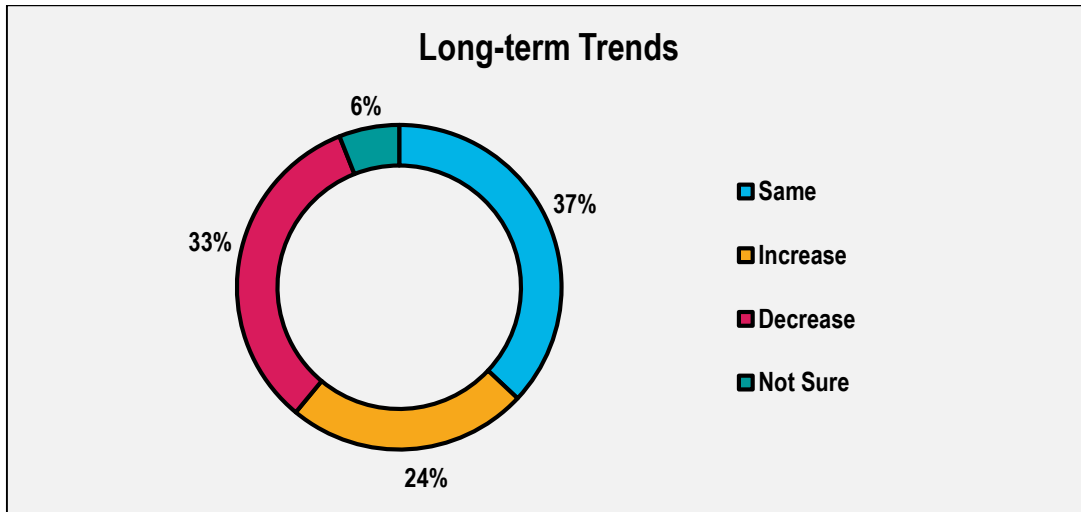
### Long-term Exchanges by Country

The following chart shows the number and percentage of long-term exchanges by country.

COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
United States	1,260	20%	Ecuador	76	1%
Brazil	844	13%	Poland	70	1%
France	543	9%	Chile	65	1%
Mexico	459	7%	Sweden	59	<1%
Italy	227	4%	Netherlands	52	<1%
Australia	226	4%	Paraguay	48	<1%
Argentina	224	4%	New Zealand	40	<1%
Belgium	214	3%	Bolivia	37	<1%
Taiwan	207	3%	Turkey	36	<1%
Denmark	191	3%	Korea	34	<1%
Japan	186	3%	Indonesia	28	<1%
Canada	168	3%	Norway	26	<1%
Finland	121	2%	South Africa	21	<1%
Spain	116	2%	Romania	14	<1%
Thailand	109	2%	Iceland	7	<1%
Austria	102	2%	Russia	7	<1%
Switzerland	95	2%	Lithuania	6	<1%
Czech Republic	94	2%	Philippines	6	<1%
India	91	1%	Zimbabwe	6	<1%
Colombia	86	1%	England	2	<1%
Peru	82	1%	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,285</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Long-term Exchange Trends and Challenges**

Districts were asked to compare the number of long-term exchanges in 2017-18 with previous years. The chart below shows the commonality of each metric.



Districts were asked why they believed the number of long-term exchanges increased or decreased in their district. The top three reasons cited for both increases and decreases in program participation are listed below. The data suggests that interest and participation from communities, especially students and Rotary clubs, are vital to the growth of Youth Exchange.

#### **Top 3 Reasons for an Increase in Long-term Exchanges**

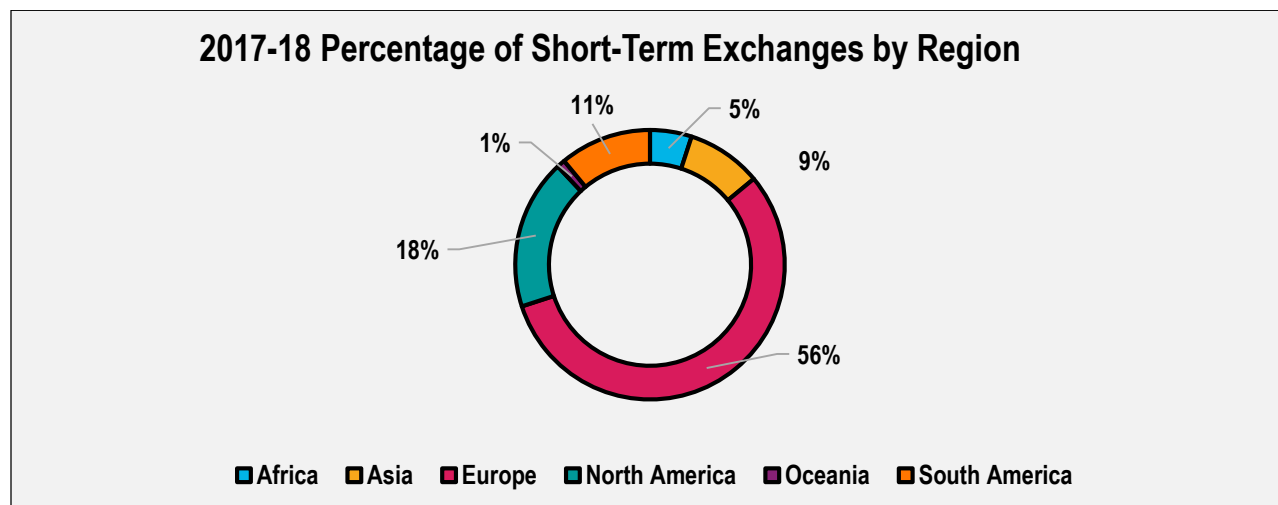
1. Increased participation from Rotary clubs
2. Increased interest from youth
3. Networking with additional districts

#### **Top 3 Reasons for a Decrease in Long-term Exchanges**

1. Lack of interest from Rotary clubs
2. Lack of interest from host families
3. Lack of interest from youth

## SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES

312 districts hosted **2,768 short-term exchanges**, representing **31%** of all Youth Exchange activity. This is an increase of **167** exchanges compared to the 2016-17 Rotary year. Europe hosted more than half of all short-term exchanges, followed by North America. The chart below displays the percentage of exchanges by region.



### Short-term Exchanges by Country

The chart below shows the breakdown of short-term exchanges by country.

COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	COUNTRY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
United States	370	13%	Israel	24	<1%
Italy	333	12%	Norway	24	<1%
France	189	7%	Russia	21	<1%
Brazil	181	7%	Bulgaria	18	<1%
Spain	174	6%	Portugal	17	<1%
Denmark	151	5%	Wales	17	<1%
South Africa	139	5%	Australia	16	<1%
Czech Republic	119	4%	Ecuador	15	<1%
Argentina	107	4%	Lithuania	11	<1%
Turkey	98	4%	Colombia	10	<1%
Belgium	96	4%	Scotland	10	<1%
Japan	82	3%	Thailand	7	<1%
Mexico	77	3%	Korea	4	<1%
Finland	73	3%	Paraguay	4	<1%
Taiwan	71	3%	Zimbabwe	4	<1%
India	62	2%	Iceland	3	<1%
Netherlands	50	2%	Peru	3	<1%
Canada	47	2%	Ireland	2	<1%
Austria	41	1%	Chile	1	<1%
England	36	1%	Indonesia	1	<1%
Sweden	32	1%	New Zealand	1	<1%
Switzerland	27	1%	<b>Total</b>	<b>2767</b>	<b>100%</b>

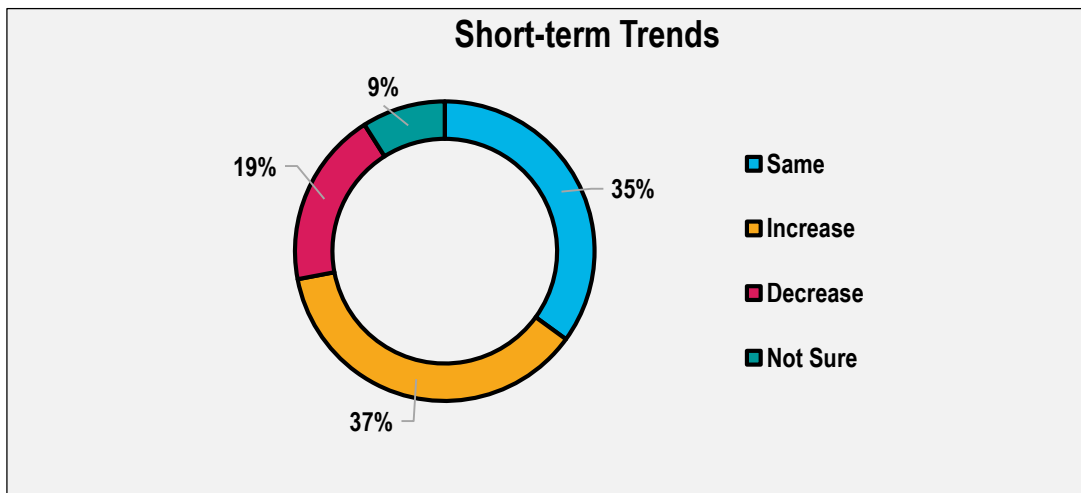
### Types of Short-term Exchanges

Respondents were asked which types of short-term exchanges their district hosted. Homestay exchanges comprised 48% of total reported short-term exchanges. Similar to the 2015-16 and 2016-17 Rotary years, homestays were the most common type of short-term exchanges, followed by camps.

Type of Short-term Exchange	Number of Districts
Homestay	277
Camp	103
Tour	52
Other	5

### Short-term Exchange Trends and Challenges

Districts were asked to compare the number of short-term exchanges in 2017-18 with previous years. The chart below shows the commonality of each metric.



Districts were asked why they believed the number of short-term exchanges increased or decreased in their district. The top three reasons cited for both increase and decrease in program participation are listed below. The data suggests that interest from youth and Rotary clubs is paramount to the success of short-term exchange programs. Furthermore, a strong relationship between partner districts appears important to growing short-term exchange programs.

#### Top 3 Reasons for an Increase in Short-term Exchanges

1. Increased interest from youth
2. Increased participation from Rotary clubs
3. Strengthening relationships with partner districts

#### Top 3 Reasons for a Decrease in Short-term Exchanges

1. Lack of interest from youth
2. Lack of interest from Rotary clubs
3. Lack of interest from partner districts



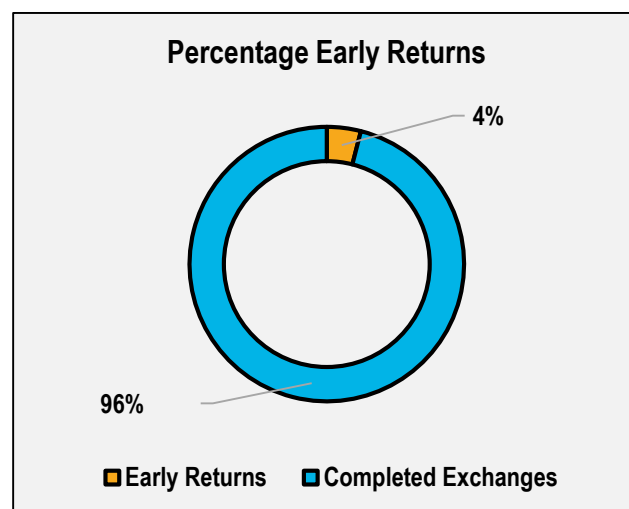
## EARLY RETURNS

Districts reported **337 early returns** in 2017-18, comprising **4%** of all reported exchanges. Less than 1% of early returns occurred during short-term exchanges.

### Causes for Early Returns

Respondents were asked to select the causes for each early return. As in 2016-17 and 2015-16, drug/alcohol use and homesickness were the most common causes for early returns. However, homesickness surpassed drug/alcohol use as the most common cause.

Early Return Causes	Number
Homesickness	87
Rule: drugs/alcohol	63
Poor attitude	46
Medical or mental health	44
Other	37
Rule: Other	17
Breach of law	10
Problems at school	10
Problems with host family	7
Rule: relationship	5
School requirements in home country	5
Problems with host club	4
Problems at school	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>



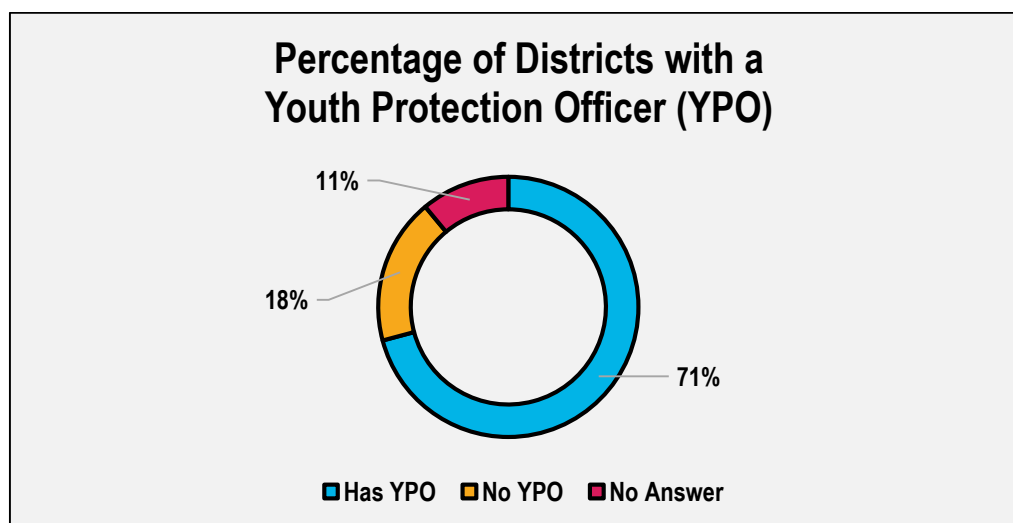
## EXCHANGE PARTNER INTERACTIONS

Respondents were asked about challenges they experienced with their partner districts. Of the 411 districts that responded to this question, 116 districts, or 28%, indicated they had challenges with their partners. 295 districts, or 72%, indicated they did not have any problems with exchange partners. Inadequate student support in the host community was the most common concern, cited by 29 districts. As in 2016-17 and 2015-16, inadequate student preparation and training, as well as quality of the student selection process, were also mentioned as common exchange partner problems.

Reported Problems with Exchange Partners	Number
Inadequate student support in host community	29
Inadequate student preparation and training	23
Problems with host families	22
Quality of student selection process	21
Problems placing inbound students (in host families or host clubs)	18
Insurance concerns	13
Other	11
Problems with host schools	9
Youth protection concerns	5
Problems with volunteer training	3
RI policy concerns	1

## YOUTH PROTECTION

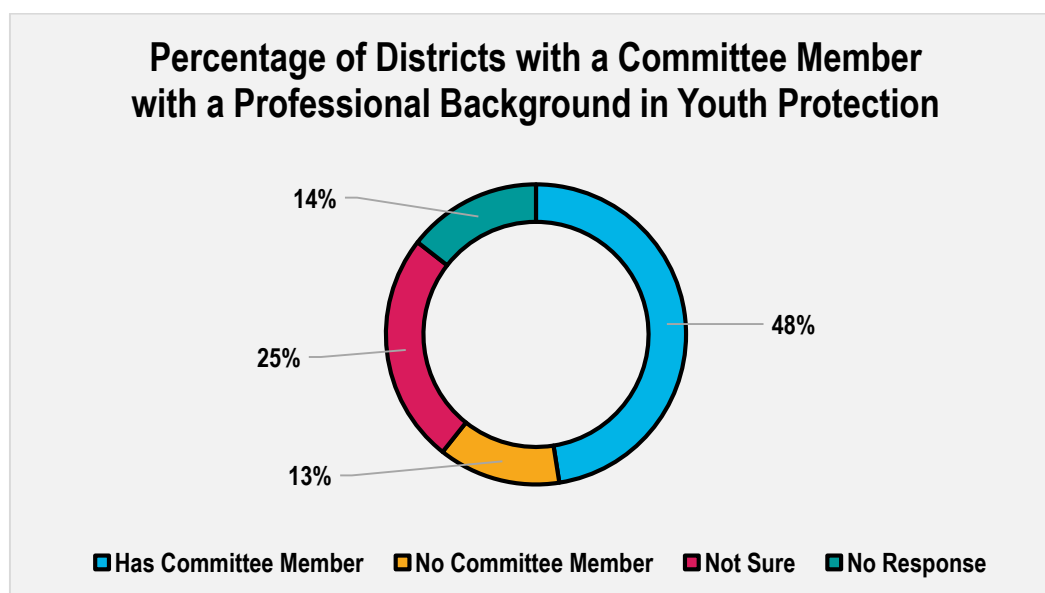
Districts were asked whether the district had an appointed Youth Protection Officer. **330 districts, or 71%, reported they had a Youth Protection Officer** at either the district or multidistrict level. 84 districts, or 18%, reported they did not have a Youth Protection Officer. The remaining 11% of survey respondents did not answer the question. The following chart illustrates the information presented above.



Districts were also asked if any of their Youth Exchange committee members had a professional background in youth protection. **221 districts, or 46% of survey respondents, reported that they have a committee member with a professional background in youth protection.**

**61 districts, or 13% of survey respondents, reported that they did not** have committee members with this type of professional experience.

**115 districts, or 24%, were unsure.** The remaining 17% of respondents did not answer the question. The following chart illustrates the information presented above.



## CONCLUSION

### **Increase in both long-term and short-term exchanges**

The 2017-18 survey data shows an increase in both long-term and short-term exchanges. It is important to note that the overall district response rate for the Annual Survey increased from 75% to 95%, despite reporting omissions from districts in Germany and Korea. Europe continues to represent the largest region for both long- and short-term exchanges.

### **Club participation**

The most reported reason for an increase in exchanges is increased participation from Rotary clubs. In 2017-18, 5,581 clubs were reported to have participated in Youth Exchange, which is 18% of the 30,589 Rotary clubs in Youth Exchange certified districts worldwide. More clubs participating in the program can help increase the number of host families and volunteers that can facilitate programming and events for current exchange students and alumni.

### **Reasons for increase or decrease in long-term exchange participation**

Districts that reported an increase in long-term program activity cited increased club participation as the most common cause for growth. However, districts that reported a decrease in long-term program activity cited decreased club interest as the most common cause. This suggests that club support is vital for sustaining a long-term exchange program.

### **Reasons for increase or decrease in short-term exchange participation**

Districts that reported an increase in short-term program activity cited an increase in student interest as the most common cause for growth. However, districts that reported a decrease in short-term program activity cited decreased interest from youth as the most common cause. As such, the size of the short-term exchange program is highly reliant on the interest from students.

### **Early returns**

There were 337 early returns reported in 2017-2018. In the last seven Rotary years, 97% of exchanges were fully completed. This year, the percentage of completed exchanges decreased to 96%. It is likely that this decrease is a result of more comprehensive reporting. As in previous years, drug/alcohol use and homesickness were listed as the most frequent causes of early returns. Many early returns are unavoidable and may be in the best interest of the student. However, strengthening the student selection process and providing adequate student preparation and support through the exchange may help decrease the number of early returns in the future.

### **Challenges with exchange partners**

106 districts reported challenges with their exchange partners. The most common concern was inadequate student support in the host country. Insufficient student preparation and the quality of the student selection process also remain common challenges between partner districts. Exchange partner agreements can be helpful in setting your expectations for partners, including the level of support expected for students during an exchange.

Additionally, host club counselors play an important role in supporting students as they serve as objective advocates on the students' behalf. It is equally important for sending clubs and districts to select an individual Rotarian that will serve as a resource for outbound students. This individual can help identify whether students are receiving adequate support by the host district and can address concerns early on in the exchange.

### **Youth Protection**

In a new question in the survey, 71% of respondents reported having a Youth Protection Officer. 46% of survey respondents reported at least one member of the Youth Exchange committee had a professional background in

youth protection. An appointed Youth Protection Officer can help foster safe operations across all youth programs and should be a resource on abuse, harassment, and other risks and crises. They should have professional experience in counseling, social work, law enforcement, or child development. Additionally, this individual is not required to be a Rotarian. Those districts in need of someone with specialized youth protection experience are encouraged to find individuals in the community who are equipped to fulfill this important role. All Rotarians, especially those working with Youth Exchange in their district, must be trained in Youth Protection and should refer to the [Rotary Youth Protection Guide](#) and [Protecting Youth Program Participants](#) online training course.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information above or otherwise, please contact the Rotary Youth Exchange team at [youthexchange@rotary.org](mailto:youthexchange@rotary.org).