

# Rotarians against Child Slavery

(A Newsletter for the proposed Rotarian Action Group – See website [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org))

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A mother welcoming her daughter who she had not seen for 2 years after being trafficked from Jharkhand in June 2009



*“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace”*  
(Kofi Annan)

Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

*“If we are going to stop slavery, we must first convince the world that human rights need even more protection than property rights”*  
(Kevin Bales)



## Missing children get help from Indian Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of India has this month passed landmark directions for the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) for every complaint of missing children in the country.

In expressing its dissatisfaction over the lukewarm response from all state governments on the issue of missing children, the Court has just summoned the Chief Secretaries of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Arunachal Pradesh, to appear in person on 5th Feb. 2013, to explain their inactions on this issue.

Accepting the arguments of respected advocates that each day hundreds of children are going missing with little or no effort by law enforcement agencies to try and recover the missing children, the Court has

directed immediate registration of FIRs by all States. The Court has also accepted recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission to set up Special Juvenile Police Units at every police station across the country with a dedicated Child Welfare Officer/Special Juvenile Police Officer to act swiftly in all cases of children in need of protection.

According to data from the National Criminal Records Bureau, approx. 100,000 children go missing each year, with over 30,000 of that number remaining untraced. However, less than 10,000 cases are ever registered.

A spokesperson from Bachpan Bachao Andolan (a children's rights organization) has stated *“The Government accepts that 7*

*children go missing every hour. In the absence of a clear definition of a ‘missing child’ coupled up with apathy, lackadaisical approach and no respect for children especially those belonging to the poorer sections of society, these directions of the Supreme Court will be a shot in the arm for our efforts against organised crime of trafficking involving these missing children. Many times the complaints from parents, especially those of adolescent girls, result in insensitive and lewd remarks from the police that the girl may have eloped”*

**Editor's Note:** The Supreme Court is to be applauded on this initiative. Let us hope that the States will sharpen up their act over this issue and that the Court continues to bring pressure to bear on any recalcitrant state authorities.

## Delays over Indian Child Labour Bill

As previously reported in this Newsletter, the Union Cabinet of India had taken a gigantic leap for Indian children when it approved the Child & Adolescent Labour (Prohibition) Act on 28th August 2012.

The Act, if approved by Parliament, will put a blanket ban on employing anybody below 18 years of age in a

hazardous occupation. It will also become a cognizable offence, punishable with a maximum three years imprisonment, for employing a child under the age of 14 years in any kind of occupation.

Sadly because the Indian Parliament (as opposed to the Government) has been delaying on this issue, members were

asked to sign a petition which hopefully will persuade the Indian Parliament to expedite the passing of this Act.

At the time of writing, there is a total of 518,000 signatures on the proposed petition.



## Editorial

Like Janus, the Roman God with two faces, I too find myself this month looking two ways at once.




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*“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing” (Edmund Burke)*

Looking backwards at what Action Group members have achieved since the Group’s formation at the RI Convention in Birmingham in 2009..... and looking forwards in anticipation of the help we can give to support the work of those grass root organizations which are fighting with minimal funds to eradicate slavery from the face of the globe.

On the achievement front we now have over 700 rotary members in 47 countries who have joined the Group either at recent RI Conventions or by an email request or via our website. As far as completed projects are concerned these are highlighted as a separate attachment.

The help we can give in the future to the various anti-slavery organizations can definitely be enhanced if our Action Group were to obtain the approval of the RI Board as a fully-fledged Rotarian Action Group. The Board will be meeting between 24-28 January to discuss our submission which does have the full support of the RI RAG Committee. Thus we are keeping everything crossed for an affirmative decision from the Board.

As I sit and write this editorial, the world outside is

becoming whiter and whiter and deeper as East Anglia experiences its first real snowfall of the winter. The scene reminds me of the story of the “owl and the snowflakes” which Rtn Harry Payne recently posted on Facebook. Because the story is so germane for Rotary, I have reproduced it in this Newsletter on page 6.

I am indebted to a member Hilary King (RC of Norwich) who has brought my attention to a statement (as part of an award entry form) which I thought I would share with you. The award is RIBI’s “Young Citizen’s Award” which was launched to celebrate and showcase some of the exceptional achievements of young people living in Great Britain and Ireland. The statement is worth reproducing because it relates, inter alia, to the responsibilities of Rotarians in relation to the rights of all vulnerable children.

RIBI’s statement reads *“Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has adopted this statement of policy in working with children, the vulnerable and those with disability. The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability take priority. It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly,*

*persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their Rotarian duties”.*

In her email letter Hilary ends by posing the question *“Isn’t this what we want as far as slavery is concerned?”*

I have had several emails from members asking for details of opportunities to participate in anti-slavery projects. These can be found in previous Newsletters which can be accessed on our website, which is [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org)

However, I am pleased to highlight, for the first time, the work of an anti-slavery organization in Nepal which is called Shakti Samuha, whose headquarters are based in Kathmandu. The origin, work and wishlist of the NGO is outlined on pages 3 and 4.

Finally for those of you living in the UK, I would urge you to attend the Peace through Freedom Conference which is being organized by District 1270 at Hull University on 20<sup>th</sup> April. The Conference has attracted many eminent speakers who will be examining the impact on peace and conflict by modern day slavery and human trafficking. Further details of the Conference are included on page 7. There is also relevant article on the subject by Hilary King on pages 6 and 7.



## “Shakti Samuha”, Kathmandu, Nepal

by Pooja Mahato, Project Coordinator

“Shakti Samuha” - Our name is the Nepali term for “Group of Power”. It expresses what we demonstrate and implement in various programs to fight human trafficking and to advocate women’s rights. According to the Trafficking in Person’s (TIP) Report 2007 Shakti Samuha is the world’s first organization established and run by survivors of human trafficking.

In 1996 hundreds of girls were rescued from slavery in Indian brothels. Among these were 148 Nepalese girls. These survivors were then locked away in remand homes in India, where conditions were as bad – if not worse – than in a prison. The Nepalese Government was reluctant to repatriate their girls claiming that they would bring HIV into the country. In the absence of Government support, several NGOs took the lead and succeeded in returning the girls to Nepal and providing them with a program of rehabilitation.

After months of training in their basic human rights, the survivors began to realize that they themselves were not to blame for their captivity. Consequently they began

to claim their rights and eventually to unify in a NGO which was first registered in 2000 as “Shakti Samuha” Today, under the vision of empowering trafficking survivors to lead a dignified life in society, we are reaching survivors and girls on high risk of trafficking in ten districts in urban and rural areas of Nepal.

As an NGO working against human trafficking we connect four main components to address effectively the broad field of human trafficking with focus on sexual exploitation. Protection, Prevention, Capacity Building and Advocacy are the four themes under which we implement and develop continuously our programs.

Protection covers the three stages from repatriation to reintegration of trafficking survivors. We work in cooperation with Indian organizations to repatriate survivors who have been trafficked to India. In our shelter homes we provide orientation, psychosocial counseling, health and school support as well as life skills and vocational training in connection with

job placements. With this concept we ensure an entire case management to rehabilitate survivors. Finally we conduct home assessments and risk assessments and provide counseling for families and communities to build a basis for reintegration.

The Prevention component includes researches e.g. baseline studies, awareness programs through media mobilization, interaction events and street drama performances.

Furthermore we implement the principle of empowerment by forming different self-organized groups such as survivor and adolescence groups at grassroot and community level.

Our outreach worker as well as our Resource Centre strengthens the prevention work by reaching girls and women working in the entertainment sector. They face high risks to be trafficked due to difficult economic situations and unsecure working places. Human rights education and skill development training limit their vulnerability.

(Continued on next page)



*Above: Hilary Clinton, US Secretary of State, awarding Charimaya Tamang (a trafficking survivor and a founder of Shakti Samuha) with the 2011 Hero Acting to End Modern Slavery Award. Charimaya’s story is told on page 5 of this Newsletter.*

*Below: Service receivers (survivors) receiving tailoring training.*





## Shakti Samuha (Continued)

Under Capacity Building and conceptual clarity on we maintain leadership human trafficking for staff development and members, members and women's participation. service users.

Our board members and most of Shakti Samuha's staff members are trafficking survivors themselves. With this concept we have established a system of equality, economic empowerment and education access. In addition we organize training in journalism, human rights

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 or  
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### Editor's Note

*In order to provide Action Group members with an opportunity to participate in the work of Shakti Samuha, I have asked Pooja to let me have a wishlist for their organization's needs. This is provided below.*

Within our Advocacy work we file cases, we lobby with demand papers to governmental authorities as well as e.g. for health and citizenship rights.

For further information on our work please visit our website:  
<http://www.shaktisamuha.org.np>

*Service receivers(survivors) in Shakti Sumaha's handicraft shop*



## Wish List of Shakti Sumaha, Nepal

### a) White wash 12 rooms of the Shelter: (59,700 Nepalese Rupees or \$680)

Shakti Samuha has been running a safe home for the rehabilitation and reintegration of the trafficking survivors and the girls subjected to the sexual abuse from 2004. As the colours of the rooms are fading and it is necessary to provide clean environment, we need to white wash the rooms.

### b) Camera: (52,800 Nepalese Rupees or \$600)

We need a camera to keep the records of our work and activities of the shelter as well as for the documentation of the service receivers.

### c) Carpet: (124,800 Nepalese Rupees or \$1,420)

The Carpet will be placed in the rooms of the shelters for the residents of the shelter to provide warm and cosy environment.

### d) Stationery for Non formal classes for a year: (90,000 Nepalese Rupees or \$1,030)

There is provision of providing Non formal education inside the shelters for new service receivers and service receivers, who don't go to school. For them, the tationery is needed for 2013.

### e) A desktop computer: (36,000 Nepalese Rupees or \$410)

### f) A Laptop Computer:: (78,000 Nepalese Rupees or \$890)

The laptop will be used by the Reintegration team to record their work and for the documentation and to keep the records of the service receivers confidential. The Reintegration team has to work in the field so we are requesting Laptop.

### g) Scooter (360,000 Nepalese Rupees or \$4,100)

Some service receivers go to school in the early morning; some residents go to training in our shelters. To file the legal case and for the court summon, the protection of the service receivers and staffs are always concerns. For that, sometimes, we hire private vehicle, which is not possible for many cases. Sometimes, the service receivers become sick and need to take hospital immediately. So it is always difficult to find the vehicle to take the service receivers. For the protection issue, our shelters are inside the main road so it takes time to get access to local transportation. We are running Handicraft workshop. For the raw materials, it is necessary to use taxi to bring them to the workshop. The transportation is high cost and also difficult to get vehicle .It will be better and supportive if we will have a vehicle for the shelters.

*Editors Note: Shakti Samuha realise that whilst they desperately need a vehicle, the cost of running such a vehicle (car) would be too prohibitive for them. So they have intimated that a scooter or scooters would be the next best alternative.*



## Charimaya Tamang's story

Charimaya Tamang was born into a poor family made poorer by the death of her father. She was 16 when she was trafficked into India.

She spent 22 months enslaved in a brothel before the Indian government rescued her and more than 200 other Nepali women in 1996.

Upon her return to Nepal, Charimaya faced social stigma and was outcast from her own community. But she courageously

filed a case against her traffickers, becoming the first person to file a trafficking case with the district police. In 1997, the District Court – in a landmark decision – convicted and sentenced eight offenders involved in her case

In 2000, Charimaya and fifteen other survivors established Shakti Sumaha, as an anti-trafficking NGO. She received a national honor for her work in 2007 and is currently one of two

trafficking survivors serving as members of the government-led National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, which was founded in 2009. In that role, Charimaya raised the importance of including survivors in each district-level working group. There are now five trafficking survivors serving as members of district level committees in the country.

*Editors Note: Charimaya. What a truly amazing lady. Our motto "Service above Self" readily comes to mind.*

## Working together on Behalf of Children

(by Rtn Carol Metzker, RC of West Chester Downtown, District 7450)

Fine artist, Monique Kendikian-Sarkessian, read a magazine article about the book *Facing the Monster: How One Person Can Help Fight Child Slavery* by Carol Metzker, a member of the Rotary Club of West Chester Downtown (PA, USA).

She contacted Carol and asked how she might help combat child slavery. After learning about several Rotary projects addressing human trafficking and slavery, Monique donated

a beautiful oil painting to be auctioned at District 7450's annual conference.

Upper Main Line Rotarian Chad Rosenberg became the proud owner of the painting, "Fox Fire Water Lily," with a bid of \$1000 US. The money, with additional funds from the Great Valley Rotary Club, has gone to the Akha Children's Rescue Centre in Thailand, for children rescued from slavery and others who are at risk for victimization.

Along with a message of thanks for the donations, co-founders David and Asa Stevenson sent a photo (see right below) of a father and two daughters reunited at the Akha Centre after a decade of separation.



*Above: Rotarians Chad Rosenberg and Carol Metzker display the oil painting by Monique Kendikian-Sarkessian, auctioned to raise funds for children rescued from or at risk of slavery in Northern Thailand.*



## The owl and the snowflakes

(by Harry Payne, RC of Burnham on Crouch, District 1240)

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*“Small actions can lead to big things. One person jumping up and down won't cause a tidal wave. But if everyone jumps together, the effect is impossible to ignore.”*

(Steve Chalke)

Back in the early 80's as a 'new' Rotarian I heard a story that has stuck with me. It was told by an American Rotarian at the RIBI Conference about the campaign that was about to get underway to eradicate Polio. I feel sure the same story can be told in the fight against child slavery. It went like this:

*“It was a bitterly cold winter night and a wise old owl sat on the bough of a tree, its feathers fluffed up against the cold. It began to snow, slowly at first. The flakes were excited and chattering among themselves as they fell. One landed next to the owl and it said timidly, 'I would move along if I were you, we are going to snap this branch'. The owl looked down his beak and said, 'I don't think so, I have sat here every night since I was a chick, It would take more*

*than the likes of you to bring this bough down'. 'Please yourself' the flake managed to get out before he was covered by another then another. It was particularly cold and the snowfall particularly heavy, and prolonged. The old owl kept ruffling his feathers to avoid being covered. As dawn began to break the owl looked around from his perch, to see a transformed vista, everywhere was covered in more snow than he had ever seen before. And it was still snowing, those large wet sticky flakes that cling where they land. The branch was sagging under the weight of the snow too. Then one particular flake caught his eye, the owl watched as it slowly descended till it was approaching the far end of the branch. 'I am the one' it*

*called out as it landed, at the same moment the branch let out a tremendous crack as it snapped under the cumulative weight and tumbled to the ground. The wise old owl took flight thinking...”well who would have thought that a snowflake could do that ?*

Well of course one snowflake hadn't, it was the efforts of many of them. Like Rotarians and Polio, when we started there were those who said 'eradicate polio'? I don't think so. But here we are, this close. So too with slavery. Singly, obviously we cannot do it, but collectively.....who knows what can be achieved.

Let's give it a go !

## Child Slavery and World Peace – Is there a connection ?

(By Hilary King, Rotary Club of Norwich, District 1080)

The First Rotary Global Peace Forum, held in Berlin at the beginning of December 2012, ended with a reading of a **Declaration of Peace Without Borders**: *“All human beings have the right to live in a state of peace, free from violence, persecution, inequality, and suffering. As leaders and friends of the Rotary movement, united in service, we publicly declare our commitment to creating a more peaceful world.”*

As long as human beings misuse any power they may have, be given or seize, over other human beings, there will never be peace. Slavery is just such a misuse of power. If you think about it, there is little difference between a man or a woman standing over another pointing a gun at his head (the stereotype picture of violence) and a man or a woman seizing a child, forcing him/her to work under duress with no escape or using his/her body to satisfy a lust for violence and power in rape.



## Child Slavery and World Peace – Is there a connection ? (Con't)

But WHY do men and women resort to such violence over children? A simple answer could be “greed”. But there must be so much more to it than that. **Fear** – of the unknown, of difference, of inability to cope in the face of a future full of uncertainty, deprivation and scarcity – this is surely one of the biggest driving forces behind man’s inhumanity to man. Enable a slave owner to live at peace without this fear, and he will no longer feel the need to enslave another.

The PeaceJam curriculum and initiative ([www.peacejam.org](http://www.peacejam.org)), inspiring young people to think about their world, to understand that there are non-violent ways of responding to conflict, and to work with experienced Nobel Peace Laureates from all over the world to carry out “a Billion Simple Acts of Peace” is contributing, drop by drop, to ridding the world of the conditions whereby men and women feel the need to be violent and to gain power over others. Every act for peace, great or small, must have a knock-on effect, rather like the domino effect, and will ultimately lead to the ridding of the world of scourges such as child slavery.

Editors Note: *If you want to learn more about how modern day slavery and trafficking impacts upon peace and conflict, come along to the “Peace Through Freedom” Forum organized by District 1270 in April (See poster details below)*

### Spring Peace Forum “Peace Through Service” Rotary International District 1270

## “PEACE THROUGH FREEDOM” in association with WISE

The Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation  
(Patron Archbishop Emeritus and Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu)

**We will look at the impact of modern day slavery and  
human trafficking on peace and conflict**

All are welcome at

**THE LINDSEY SUITE, THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL  
COTTINGHAM ROAD, HULL, HU6 7RX**

SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2013 9.30 - 4.30

Registration £28.00 to include coffee on arrival, mid-morning  
coffee and a buffet lunch.

Students, Rotoractors, Interactors, youth exchange students and RYLA participants are welcome at the sponsored rate of £15 on a first-come first- served basis – see Information Sheet and Registration Form for details

For an application form or further information contact David Black

☎ 01507 440028 ✉ [beafriend@btinternet.com](mailto:beafriend@btinternet.com)



**PLEASE PASS ON THIS NEWSLETTER AND ALSO ENCOURAGE FELLOW ROTARIANS TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN ON AS A MEMBER. THE WEBSITE IS [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org) . The webmaster is Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange, England.**

Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund  
District 1080, England  
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