

Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

(This RAG is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International)

Website www.racsrag.org

11 May 2014

Issue No 47



To contact RAG Board Members or Co-ordinators, please see email addresses on page 5 of this Newsletter



RAG booth at the Lisbon Convention 2013

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

“We are the doers of our communities, the leaders, the ones who are most involved, who see the problems and have the means to find the solutions. We are a worldwide network of inspired individuals who translate their passions into relevant social causes to change lives in communities”

Kalyan Banerjee (RI President 2011/12)



2nd RAG Meeting....at the RI Convention

One of the benefits of being an approved Rotarian Action Group is the provision by Rotary International of a room at the RI Convention to hold an annual meeting of the Action Group...and there is **NO** charge.

At this year's Convention, we have the Marine Room at the Sydney Olympic

Park reserved for our second annual meeting of the RAG. Please note that the meeting will be held on 4th June 2014 and will start at 12.00 noon till 1.30pm.

If you are going to the Convention please do try to attend this meeting, especially if you miss the Breakout Session. In

addition to the usual presentation of RAG officers' reports, you will be given the opportunity to suggest ways to improve our RAG's evolution, to listen to presentations on proposed and existing anti-slavery projects and to take away project suggestions and ways to help in the fight against Child Slavery

RAG booth in the House of Friendship

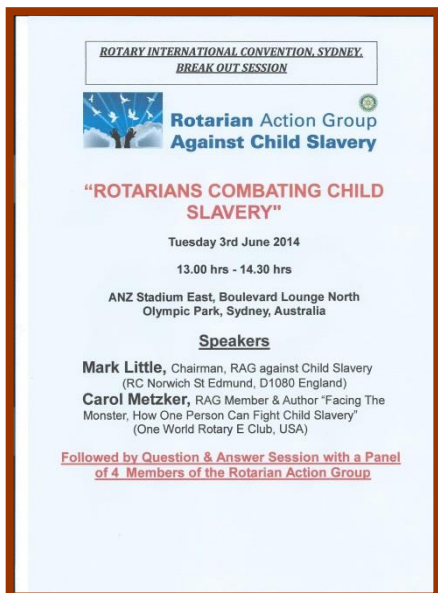
Please note that our RACSRAAG booth will be number 117 in the House of Friendship. The booth opening times will be as follows:-

<u>Date</u>	<u>Exhibit Hours</u>
Sat 31 May	09.00 – 18.00 (Grand Opening 09.00 – 0915)
Sun 1 June	09.00 – 17.00
Mon 2 June	09.00 – 17.00
Tue 3 June	09.00 – 17.00
Wed 4 June	09.00 – 16.00

As we have to staff the booth at all times during the core hours of the Convention (12.00 – 17.00), please let Mark Little know if you are willing to help on the booth. His email address is mark.little@btinternet.com.



Change in RACSRAG Breakout Session Venue



Please note that the venue for the 1st RACSRAG Breakout Session has been changed from the Allphones Arena, Water-view Room to the ANZ Stadium East, Boulevard Lounge North.

As previously indicated the Session will start at 1.00pm and finish at 2.30pm on Tuesday 3 June. If you are not travelling to Sydney encourage those coll-

eagues of yours who are going to the Convention, to attend this important Breakout Session.

The aims of the session are to raise awareness that children are being used and exploited as slaves on a global scale and to encourage more Rotarians to take positive action against this evil practice.

Delegates attending will

learn about the extent of child exploitation, its root causes, how human trafficking and modern slavery affects us all, how Rotarians are already taking action and how we can work together with anti-slavery organizations to protect children from slavery and its consequences.

“Whatever you may do may be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it” (Mahatma Gandhi)



FIGHTING THE BUSINESS OF SLAVERY

RACSRAG links up with the Mekong Club

One of the stated objectives of RACSRAG is to join forces with anti-slavery organizations in order to support their work of protecting children from slavery and its consequences. Consequently the RACSRAG Board is always on the lookout for Partners which it feels its members can work with in order to help prevent children from being ensnared into slavery and to rehabilitate the survivors of slavery.

The Mekong Club is such an organization but with a difference. It is the first organization in the world to bring together the skills and resources of the business community with the aim of channeling them into projects that directly disrupt the slave trade.

RACSRAG aims to support the work of the Mekong Club by working in partnership with that organization. The Club’s main focus is in the Mekong region of Asia, where it is estimated that 9 million people suffer in slavery today. These men, women and children are exploited by others for economic gain, against their will, deprived of all human rights and subjected to unimaginable suffering

If you click on the Youtube link below you will hear a little more about the work of the Mekong Club and its proposed partnership with RACSRAG. The speaker presenting the film is Matt Friedman, who is one of the co-founders of the Mekong Club and a former UN Project Manager. [VIEW THIS SHORT VIDEO](#)

NB: For more information about the Mekong Club see Page 5



Map of the greater Mekong Sub-Region



About Matt Friedman

Matt Friedman is an international human trafficking expert with more than 25 years of experience as an activist, program designer, evaluator, and manager. He is currently the Chief Technical Advisor for The Mekong Club, an organization of Hong Kong-based private sector business people who have joined forces to fight human trafficking in Asia, which he also co-founded.

From 2006 to 2012, Friedman was the Regional Project Manager of the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) in Thailand, an inter-agency coordinating body which links the United Nations system with governments and civil society groups in China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Prior to this (1991-2006), Friedman worked for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Thailand, Bangladesh and Nepal. During this period, he designed and managed both country and regional human trafficking programs, helped to establish a counter- trafficking regional training center, and participated in resource mobilization and production of two award-winning international films about sex trafficking in Nepal and India.

Friedman is also a technical advisor to numerous governments working to stop slavery. He is frequently cited in the news media on issues related to human trafficking and slavery in Southeast Asia (TVB, CNN, BBC, NYT, IHT, etc) and invited to speak at major conferences around the world. He is the author of nine books, on subjects ranging from human trafficking to the ancient art of Bangladesh metal casting.



Matt Friedman about to be introduced by James Johnson (RC of Bellingham Bay, D5050, USA) as a speaker on "Slavery in the 21st Century" during RI Convention in Bangkok 2012

Editorial

The abduction of 276 schools girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram has gripped the world's attention, yet mass kidnappings (and murders) by the same group have taken place on a regular basis in the country but have gone largely unnoticed by the outside world since Boko Haram began its brutal campaign 5 years ago.

The latest abductions might also have been ignored but for two very different social media campaigns. The first was the twitter-based support group sparked by public anger at the Nigerian Government's perceived slow response to the event, which gained an international following under the hashtag bringbackourgirls. But it was the second – the threat to sell the girls into slavery – which has galvanized world powers into pledging to get them back.

If only the same level of attention could be directed to the recovery of the millions of children who are in slavery all over the world, forced to work, under threat of violence and for no pay. Collective global action changed things in South Africa over 30 years ago and social media was almost non-existent then. Yet anti-apartheid groups around the world kept up the pressure that hastened its downfall.

Dear readers, the more we can increase the intelligence and decibel level of the global conversation deploring the evils of slavery, the more likely we are able to reach the ears and hearts of the stakeholders and decision makers, ie lawmakers, politicians, judges, police, as well as the slave masters, traffickers and men on the street buying the girls.

If we Rotarians can achieve the impossible by almost obliterating polio from the face of the globe, we can surely make a significant contribution to the eradication of slavery.



Clockwise from top left: Michelle Obama, Cara Delevingne, Malala Yousafzai and Alicia Keys call for the girls to be returned

Clockwise from top left: Michelle Obama, Cara Delevingne, Malala Yousafzai and Alicia Keys call for the girls to be returned.





“Education increases opportunities and arms people with knowledge, which makes them harder for traffickers to exploit” (Steve Chalk – “Stop the Traffik”



New Project: Schools4Freedom

(By Carol Metzker, Member of RACSRAG and One World Rotary e-Club)

What if you could teach children to read, provide them with food, and free an enslaved village... all in one project? Actually, you can, because that's how creating sustainable freedom works.

It all starts with a school. When freedom workers go carefully into enslaved villages in India and talk about a better life for children through education, parents listen. Although defying slaveholders' wishes can be risky, parents muster hope and courage to send their children to school and to learn for themselves about their rights. Adults acquire new vocational skills and they begin to self-organize. Over a three-year process, villagers gain the strength and ability to take back their freedom. An old destructive cycle is broken; new generations can thrive.

Please join us in this project!

Schools4Freedom educate child slaves and free an entire village in India from slavery...for good.

Total Three-Year Cost: US\$ 35,992.00

What It Buys:

- Sustainable freedom for 100-300 villagers.
- Permanent roof for school (to keep intense sun and rain off children so they can study. The type of roof or pavilion—or structure with thatching or latticework for walls—varies in different villages.).
- 2 teachers.
- Hot lunches for children.
- Solar streetlight.
- Educational supplies.
- Vocational training and education about rights for adults.
- Documentation and video.

The Action Group's partner in this project is Voices4Freedom, an organization whose founders have a stellar track record in anti-slavery work and whose partners on the ground have helped with RACSRAG projects at Punarnawa Ashram and Bal Vikas Ashram. The school's exact location in Uttar Pradesh will be determined and the project can start when the money is raised. Although the money is disbursed over three years, the project will not begin until all funds are raised because a village cannot be “abandoned” for lack of funds or commitment once the process has started.

To donate or to learn more about this project, please contact Carol Metzker at echmetzker@aol.com, or Mark Little at Mark.Little@btinternet.com.



The Mekong Club

The Mekong Club represents a not-for-profit organization based in Hong Kong made up of highly committed business professionals (senior executives from businesses such as Edelman, Pitney Bowes, Western Union, Ernst & Young and Winston & Strawn) whose goal is to uncover and stop the business of human slavery. The Mekong Club is the first organization of its kind in Asia to bring together the immense skills and resources of the business community, channeling them into targeted efforts that will directly disrupt the human slavery trade.

The Mekong Club is fighting slavery 'business-to-business' to disable its economic and structural viability. We do this through general awareness, targeted trainings for business on how to ensure slave-free supply chains, and through the use of innovative technology to identify slavery and shut it down. Our approach is to partner with experienced anti-slavery field-experts who have the understanding, networks and resources to deliver measurable change. Our geographical focus is Asia (including Hong Kong), where it is estimated there are 11.7 million victims. A core value of our work is using voluntary support available among private sector partners.

RACSRAG Board

Chairman: Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund (D1080), England. mark@racsrag.org
 Vice Chairman: Mark Doyle, RC of Pretoria West (9400), South Africa. mpdoyle@mweb.co.za
 Vice Chairman: Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange (D1260), England. stephen@racsrag.org
 Secretary: Harry Payne, RC of Burnham on Crouch (D1240), England. harry@racsrag.org
 Treasurer and Webmaster: Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange (D1260), England. stephen@racsrag.org
 Board Member: Bob Christie, RC of Dalkeith (D1020), Scotland. bob@racsrag.org

Board Member: Dave McCleary, RC of Roswell (D6900), USA dmcleary@fms-inc.us
 Board Member: Dorothy Pulsford-Harris, RC of Swaffham (D1080), England. dorothy@racsrag.org.
 Board Member: Girish Mittal, RC of Mumbai Boravali East (D3140), India girish@racsrag.org

RACSRAG Coordinators

Americas: Dave McCleary (For contact details see above)
 Africa: Mark Doyle, RC of Pretoria West (D9400), South Africa. mpdoyle@mweb.co.za
 Oceania and parts of SE Asia: David Black, RC of Dunedin Central (D9980), New Zealand dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz
 India: Girish Mittal (For contact details see above)
 Italy: Laura Dryjanska, RC of Roma Centenario (D2080), Italy. Laura.dry@windowslive.com

RAG Board Member, Dave McCleary meets RI President Elect, Gary Huang earlier this year

