

## **Secretary report to Board of Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery till end of March 2014**

**Database** We maintain a RAG Database on 'RAG Membership'. There are about 880 Rotarians on there, this includes those signed indicating an interest prior to our RI recognition in 2013. It was pleasing to see a substantial increase of interested Rotarians following our presence at the Lisbon Convention. We do have among our membership a number of people who have expressed the desire to be involved, beyond that of 'just standing up to be counted'. There are or have been projects regularly highlighted in our Newsletter where you can make use of this willingness in a number of ways, apart from the declaration and referral it is difficult to establish if this goes any further yet.

Following the last Convention we had some exciting developments via contacts made at our Booth in Lisbon. These will no doubt be reported further by one of our co-ordinators.

**Communicating** As secretary one of my initial actions was to write to DG's, then subsequently DGE's, seeking their permission to contact Clubs in their Districts. This is a Rotary International requirement, understandably they are quite strong on it being adhered to. They hold the Club contact details and without sight of the DG's express permission, they will not release this contact data. My initial perception had been we would be flooded with approvals. I have to say overall I was quite disappointed in respect to the (lack of) responses. From the replies I have had this past year from Districts Governors I have been asked to contact, it would seem they have taken almost a unilateral decision to monitor all letters, before taking the decision whether to involve their Clubs at all. That is Governors deciding whether or not to forward details. Subsequently, all communication to go via Governors! We have also had several more replying No! still others not bothering to reply at all. I took the decision, in future I will write to Governors only if specifically asked to. Having said that, I can understand the need to control the amount of unsolicited mailings being sent to Clubs. I did mention last year it would seem a different approach is called for, although as yet we have not established quite what. Even with its shortcomings, I urge you all to observe this RI preferred route of communication. i.e. initially through secretary. We cannot begin to contact Clubs independently. If there is an infringement and a complaint reaches RI, there could be serious repercussions for our Action Group.

**Social Media** We have a facebook page which is updated most days with slave related postings. We still need to build up on the 'Page Likes' but numbers are growing slowly. It is good to report some of our material has been used for presentations both inside and outside of our Board of Directors. We have established links with other NGO's too, this does in effect, help enormously with our 'creating a greater awareness of Child Slavery', as well as providing information sources, for reporting.

**Working for a common cause** Through our links we have established contact with and have gone on to use the services of Prof Kevin Bales of 'Free The Slaves' at seminars. The writer was present as an invited guest at a meeting when MP Frank Field was discussing the proposed UK Government Bill on Modern Day Slavery. There have been a number of speaking engagements covered in the UK where Child Slavery has been the subject. This too is certainly enabling us to 'create a greater awareness of Child Slavery' across a wider front.

**Difficulty of The Subject** As time passes it is becoming apparent, although people are sympathetic, we are have difficulty convincing them Anti Child Slavery is a cause worth combatting and to become involved in, possibly for a variety of reasons. **One**, we are taking a stand against a criminal activity. **Two**, a lot of people honestly cannot believe Slavery exists today. Slavery is often perceived as abolished, or as that in the time of Wilberforce. **Three**, it remains for many, something that is happening somewhere else in the world.

**Changes on the Board** During the year there have been a couple of changes to the personnel on the Board of Directors. Two Directors, Carol Metzker and Dick Eisenach, also a co-ordinator, had to step back from their roles. One other co-ordinator Arnfinn Solli will not be continuing for health reasons. We would like to place on record our thanks and gratitude for the work these three Rotarians have put in

during the formation and first year of our now recognised Rotarian Action Group. A Director and co-ordinator role for Africa, was filled by Mark Doyle of District 9400. Dave McCleary has stepped in as co-ordinator for the Americas. In addition early in the Rotary Year a further post of co-ordinator was established in Italy, where Laura Dryjanska stepped in. In restructuring the Board to move forward there was a slight tweek in establishing the posts of **two** Vice Chairmen with areas of specialisation. Mark Doyle will be Vice Chairman covering Marketing and Development, whilst Stephen Sypula will be the other Vice Chairman covering Operations. For the time being he also continues as Treasurer. The complete Board structure going forward is therefore

#### **Administrative Officers**

Mark Little Chairman

Mark Doyle Vice Chair - Marketing and Development

Stephen Sypula Vice Chair - Operations

Harry Payne Secretary

Stephen Sypula Treasurer

Board Members are all the above plus :-

Bob Christie

Dorothy Pulsford-Harris (Area of expertise Legal)

Girish Mittal (Coordinator India)

Dave McCleary (Coordinator the Americas)

Plus we have David Black as Coordinator for Australasia

Laura Dryjanska as Coordinator for Italy

**Use Of Two Logos** We have had our 'freeing the doves' Logo since recognition by Rotary International last year. A short while ago another design was offered to us. This simpler design gives us opportunity for useage on applications that our original logo did not, in addition it carries the Rotary Logo. For the time being therefore you may see both in use where thought best. Both have our name spelt out in full so confusion should not occur.

*These points were taken from our communications notes from last year and are worth noting.*

**Communicating with others** With requests from other organizations to promote their group or activities:

We should Link to their sites or provide references to their material only if

(1) the material relates to Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery's goals, and

(2) the group itself is not controversial.

Generally, our group's email distribution should be used only for our newsletter and or very important announcements—not to forward other individuals' or group's correspondence.

In dealing with media requests, the Chairman of the Board, Directors for Marketing and Operations are the only **official** spokespeople who may officially communicate on behalf of the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery. The legal director should be consulted, informed and notified of any developments.

**Working within Rotary International** Prior to Recognition by Rotary International we presented to RI a Draft Constitution for the Action Group, this document was approved and became the operational blueprint for our subsequent 'official' formation. It is still our mainstay guideline today.

Once we were officially recognized as a Rotarian Action Group we became subject to adherence to a further working document the **Rotary Code Of Policies** in particular the section referring to all RAG's The Code of Policies changes frequently but basically sets this out..... A Rotarian Action Group shall be an association of Rotarians who have as their purpose the advancement of the Object of Rotary by providing assistance and support to Rotary clubs, districts, and multidistricts in planning and implementing large-scale, community development and humanitarian service projects.

Harry Payne Secretary Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery

31<sup>st</sup> March 2014