



Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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

"A community that allows slavery in its midst is sick to its core"

(Kevin Bales)



16 Multinationals linked to Child Labour



Children looking for cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

A report issued last month by Amnesty International and African Resources Watch, accuses 16 multinationals, including Apple and Microsoft, of buying lithium batteries which contain cobalt extracted through the use of child labour.

The [report](#) documents the hazardous conditions in which artisanal miners, including thousands of children, mine cobalt in the Democratic Republic

of the Congo. Children as young as seven were found working in life-threatening conditions.

Cobalt is a vital component of lithium-ion batteries that ends up in smartphones, cars and computers sold to millions across the world, by major brands including **Apple**, **Samsung**, **Microsoft**, and **Vodafone**. Of the 16 companies listed in the report using processed cobalt from "**Huayou**

Cobalt", one company admitted the connection while four others were unable to say for certain the source of the cobalt they used. Five denied sourcing the mineral from the firm, despite being listed as customers in company documents and two others said that they did not source cobalt from DRC. Six firms said that they were investigating the claims.

Rights campaigner faces prison in Thailand

Andy Hall is a British human rights campaigner with a special focus on the rights of migrant workers. Two years ago he undertook an investigation on behalf of Finnwatch into potential labour abuses at Natural Fruit, part of NatGroup, a Thai company that processes pineapples and supplies retailers around the world.

Instead of addressing the allegations published in Finnwatch's report, Natural Fruit decided to try and silence Andy with lawsuits. On 18th January 2016, Andy was indicted by a Bangkok court on charges of criminal defamation and computer crimes. The anticipated 12 day trial is due to start on 19th May 2016. If the charges are upheld by the Court, Andy could face 7 years in prison and \$10 million in legal damages for his investigations.

Have a look at this Youtube video [Walk Free Meets Andy Hall](#) . If would like to petition for the charges to be dropped click on the link [Walk Free Petition](#)



RACSRAG Breakout Session in Seoul, S Korea

For those of you who will be attending the RI Convention in Seoul next May/June, please make a note in your diary that there will be a Breakout Session entitled "Rotarians Combating Child Slavery and Human Trafficking" on Monday 30th May between 13.00 hrs and 14.30 hrs.

The aims of the session will be to raise awareness that children are being trafficked, used and exploited as slaves on a global basis 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 to recognize the signs of trafficking within our communities, how each of us has to become part of the solution to end trafficking, how Rotarians are already taking action and how we can work together with other anti-slavery organizations to protect children from slavery and its consequences.

At least one third of the session will be devoted to Questions and Answers. Panelists will be members of the Action Group who have initiated several successful anti-slavery projects and who have volunteered with victims of modern slavery.

Editorial

"The glamorous shop displays and marketing of state of the art technologies are a stark contrast to the children carrying bags of rocks and miners in narrow man made tunnels risking permanent lung damage" (Mark Dummett, Amnesty International)

It was an email from RACSRAG member Malcolm Baird (RC of Hampton, Victoria, Australia) which prompted me to publish a brief account of what has just been uncovered by Amnesty International in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Apparently the DRC produces half of the world's supply of cobalt which is used for batteries to power the world's electronic devices. Sadly like with so many other extractions worldwide, the work is carried out using exploited and slave labour in hand-dug mines, tens of metres underground, often with little tunnel support and poor ventilation. Have a look at the video in this link of [a cobalt mine in the DRC](#)

Congolese adults and children risk their lives in the mines extracting cobalt which is then sold to Chinese and South Korean battery manufacturers who supply major tech and car companies. It is reported that 80 artisanal miners died underground in southern Congo between September 2014 and December 2015.

According to UNICEF about 40,000 children work in mines in the DRC. These children work up to 12 hours a day and most of the work is done by hand using the most basic tools. According to Amnesty International, some children claimed that they spend 24 hours down in the tunnels.

It is ironical that the DRC's supply of metals such as tantalum, tin, tungsten and gold has been under scrutiny since 2011 when

laws in the United States required US listed companies to ensure that their supply chains were free from these so-called "conflict minerals". But for some reason the extraction of vast quantities of cobalt has, until now, received scant regulatory attention.

Let us hope that the Amnesty report will prompt the major western companies to take responsibility for the exploitation of all of the Congolese miners. These companies appear to care more about their shareholders and about being competitive than about the use of exploitative labour to increase their profits.

Turning our thoughts to Thailand and Andy Hall. If the case against him proceeds and Natural Fruit are successful, this



RACSRAG Breakout Session, RI Convention, Sydney 2014



Editorial (continued)

would be a grave miscarriage of justice. This process could set a dangerous precedent for other companies in Thailand which might take a similar approach when allegations are raised of modern slavery in their supply chains. **This threatens the work of anti-slavery campaigners but also workers in Thailand who might be too afraid to come forward and report abuse.**

Please join the call for justice. Use the Walk Free Petition (see bottom of page 1) to demand that Natural Fruit drop all charges against Andy Hall and take action to ensure there is no modern slavery or exploitation in their business activities.

I make a special plea to all of our RACSRAG members and supporters, especially to those of you who live in London, to attend, support or sponsor the Gala event which is being organized next month to raise funds for Maiti Nepal – a Trafficking Shelter in Kathmandu. This event is discussed in more detail in the article on the next page.

I have very fond memories of the time in which my small RACSRAG team from District 1080, England spent at Maiti Nepal last March. We had travelled to Nepal to visit several Trafficking Shelters, but the day before we were due to fly back to England, a Turkish plane crash landed on Kathmandu Airport Runway and closed the Airport for 6 days. As we couldn't find a hotel to accommodate our team whilst we waited for the Airport to open, we sought refuge at Maiti Nepal. As a result we spent 5 extra days being looked after by Maiti's staff, finding out more about the organization's work and their plans for the future and interacting with the children, most of whom were survivors of some form of slavery and human trafficking. We even experienced being covered with paint by the children during the annual Holi Festival.....which we especially enjoyed !

RACSRAG is keen to continue promoting and supporting the work of Shelters such as Maiti Nepal. Sadly I cannot be at the London Gala event as I will be in Italy that weekend, having been invited by RACSRAG Coordinator Laura Dryjanska to speak at a Conference at La Lumsa University, Rome. Brief details of that Conference are included on page 7 of the Newsletter.

Last month RACSRAG Secretary, Harry Payne and I had a meeting in London with Andy Sexton, Associate International Director of Oasis International and Ruth Dearnley, CEO of Stop the Traffik. The main objective of the meeting was to see how RACSRAG could work with these two organizations. On page 5, Ruth throws some light on how this co-operation can be achieved and at the same time provides us with a glimpse of how the development by Stop the Traffik, of a smart phone APP can revolutionize the collection of relevant data to thwart the activities of the human traffickers and slave masters within our local and international communities.

I have just ordered a new book from the pen of Professor Kevin Bales. It is called "Blood and Earth". According to Bill McKibben, author of "Earth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet", "*This is a remarkable book, demonstrating once more the deep links between the ongoing degradation of the planet and the ongoing degradation of its most vulnerable people. It's a bracing reminder that the mentality that allows throwaway people also allows a throwaway earth*" On pages 6 and 7, Kevin briefly explains his reasons for writing the book and there is link which provides an opportunity to read an excerpt of the book.



RACSRAG members Heather Babb and Kate Secker meet Anuradha Koirala, Founder of Maiti Nepal



Kieran John, Mark Little and Bishwo Ram Khadka, Director, Maiti Nepal, covered in paint - Holi Festival, 5 March 2015



London Gala Event in Aid of Maiti Nepal Fighting against Child Slavery

by Shan Maraj



Anuradha Koirala

“The world cannot turn a blind eye to children who are stolen, trafficked and subject to horrific abuse – we must not look the other way and remain silent whilst greedy traffickers profit from this appalling practice”

(Shan Maraj)



Maiti Hospice wall after the April 2015 earthquake



A Maiti Transit Homes turned to rubble by the April earthquake

Hot on the heels of the article in the January Newsletter about Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the USA, we again shine the spotlight on this subject in February, this time on the work of **MAITI NEPAL**, the not for profit organisation based in the Himalayan capital of Kathmandu, which works tirelessly to rescue children and young girls in Nepal who have been trafficked across the borders.

MAITI NEPAL was founded by Ms Anuradha Koirala and seeks to help young girls and women who have experienced domestic violence, been trafficked for sex and been victims of child labour and other forms of exploitation. A special focus of Maiti Nepal has always been on preventing sex trafficking, rescuing and rehabilitating survivors, advocating for justice in their cases and ensuring that their voices are heard in the criminal justice system, resulting in effective action being taken against their traffickers. In 2010 Ms Koirala was named ‘CNN Hero of the Year’ for her significant achievements in the war against the trafficking of children. She has dedicated her life to combating the trafficking and exploitation of women and children.

Anuradha herself will be in London as chief guest at a Gala Dinner event in aid of **MAITI NEPAL** on Sunday 20th March at the Crystal Club Ballroom in Wembley, London.

Since its inception MAITI NEPAL has rescued over 22,000 young girls and has led the way in its trail blazing work on border surveillance of the crossings between Nepal and India where the organization operates 12 intervention outposts. Young women from MAITI (trafficking survivors), in cooperation with police, watch for suspicious activity and intervene when they identify a potential trafficking situation. MAITI NEPAL rescues over 2,000 girls before they could be sold to brothels each year. The intervention outposts also serve as safe houses providing temporary shelter and ensuring safe passage back home for the girls and young women when appropriate. MAITI'S ultimate goal is to help the girls and women become economically independent and reintegrate them back into society

In order to continue its work and establish and maintain rehabilitation centres, prevention programmes, hospices and halfway houses, sustainable funding support is required in the longer term. It is hoped that the Gala event on 20th March will raise some of the much needed immediate funding for MAITI NEPAL to continue to save children from being trafficked. The event has been scheduled shortly after International Women’s Day in celebration of Ms Koirala’s vast achievements in working to save children from being trafficked, in the provision of a safe haven and in the promise of a better life for them.

An appeal to the members of the **ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY** to help raise vital funds for MAITI NEPAL is launched with this article. Your action will make a real difference and you can help by becoming a sponsor of the Gala event, providing raffle prizes or by attending the event yourself to hear Anuradha speak about the compelling work of MAITI NEPAL, it’s areas of need and 2016 strategy. You can also make a direct donation to MAITI NEPAL by cheque – every penny will go to MAITI NEPAL to continue to save children from traffickers. Please contact Shan Maraj (email: ssmaraj@hotmail.com or tel: **07891 646716**) for tickets or for information on how you can sponsor or donate.

Editor’s Note: *Shan Maraj is a Civil Servant working on government policy covering support for victims of crime in England & Wales. In a personal capacity, Shan is the lead organizer of this London gala event, For further details and costs of the event please see the flyer attached to the covering email.*



Shining a Light in Dark Places

by Ruth Dearnley, CEO, Stop the Traffik

Whenever I have a rare moment of time on my hands I love the challenge of emptying the box of a 1000 pieces and steadily building the jigsaw picture. It makes me pause and concentrates my mind. Every piece counts. So finally, when all the pieces are in place the true, complete picture can be clearly seen.

At the moment there are many great organisations such as the Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery along with STOP THE TRAFFIK, which are working to prevent the trafficking of people around the world. However at the moment no one can see enough of the picture for any of us to disrupt this fast growing global crime effectively. The traffickers are preventing us from seeing clearly in detail by removing pieces, hiding pieces and continually changing tactics, changing the picture altogether to stop the detailed picture of people trafficking emerging.

There are so many signs of good progress in our work. But we must also face the challenge that at the moment all of us who fight this crime are on the losing side. We can't stop what we can't see.

That is why STOP THE TRAFFIK is committed to develop a 'Centre for Intelligence Led Prevention.' We want to utilise the information that millions of people hold often unknowingly in their communities, within their organisations and more centrally in global business, enforcement, banking and government around the world. Imagine being able to gather as much as we can and share what we all begin to see.

The Centre for Intelligence Led Prevention uses the incredible potential that technology offers through the use of SMART phones to collect data. We are creating the 'STOP app' to provide a collection of real time data that is then analysed using analytical technology in order to begin to see what is happening on the ground. Only then can we begin to create intelligence led prevention resources to target the traffickers trade on the ground and empower those vulnerable to being trafficked and their communities.

This technology is being used in all sorts of ways across our world today to drive profit and influence consumers behaviour so why not use it to disrupt and prevent people trafficking.

Our work so far has shown we will only achieve any progress if we work together, which is why STOP THE TRAFFIK always seeks partnership and are working with IBM, Edelman in the development of the Centre. We are this year's seasonal appeal partner with the Financial Times. And we are working with many other third sector, legal, enforcement, technological, government organisations alongside thousands of people and their local communities to shine a light in dark places. We have always shared our resources and intend to share what we learn from our intelligence work with others so all of the amazing organisations and individuals working to rescue, protect, and prevent can be better at the pioneering work on the ground.

How could STOP THE TRAFFIK and the Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery work together ?

How about:

- Engagement across Rotary's global network to use the STOP app
- Funding the analytical and technology equipment in the Centre for Intelligence Led Prevention
- Funding the creation of targeted tools and resources for communities to empower people to take preventative action.

By collecting the pieces, building a better picture, together, we have an opportunity to shine a light in dark places and empower everyone to STOP THE TRAFFIK.

Thank you for all that the work that the members and supporters of the Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery are doing. We look forward to working together.

What we've learned from 6,000 Human Trafficking Cases in 2015

by Megan Fowler, Polaris

Every day, my colleagues answer about 100 calls on the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline. They respond to dozens of texts, emails, and tips through our online reporting form. It doesn't matter if it is 3:00 a.m. Or Christmas Day. Or during a blizzard. The hotline does not close.

Because someone needs to be there to help the young man who was just abandoned far away from home by his sales crew. Or the teenage girl who learned her friend is being forced to sell herself for sex online. Or the local police officer who got word of a trafficking situation outside of his jurisdiction and needs us to alert the anti-trafficking task force in that county.

We work closely with thousands of service providers around the country to connect survivors with the right local resources to get help and stay safe. But each of those calls also gives us crucial data -- data that we can analyze to gain a clearer picture into how and where traffickers operate. Only then can we know what it will take to stop them from harming more people.

Today, we released our [2015 Hotline Statistics](#) from the NHTRC hotline and Polaris's BeFree Textline, so that we can provide you with some of the top trends we are learning. Nearly 6,000 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2015. And 24% more survivors reached out for help this year compared to 2014. That means more and more people were able to get the help they needed to escape their traffickers and rebuild their lives.

These people were victims of a crime that [affects every state in this country](#). Over the past eight years, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and Polaris's BeFree Textline have learned of more than 25,000 cases of human trafficking across the United States. Almost [1,000 cases were reported in California](#) just in 2015. But cases were also reported last year in more rural states like [Maine or South Dakota](#). We simply can't write this crime off as something that happens "somewhere else."

Each of us has to become part of the solution to end trafficking. We need to learn how to [recognize the signs](#) of trafficking in our communities. We need to share this data with our friends and family. (It's easy -- share our posts on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!) We need to [urge Congress to take the fight against human trafficking to the next level](#).

And we need to understand the many manifestations of this crime. Only then, can we develop the right strategies to eradicate human trafficking and make freedom happen now.

Blood & Earth

by Professor Kevin Bales

For years I traveled the world meeting people in slavery trying to understand the depth and truth of their lives. What I saw, heard, and learned changed me, and led me deeper into the work of ending slavery, *but I was missing something important*. Where there are slaves, the environment is under assault, forests are being destroyed, endangered species are dying, and climate change is worsening – and all of this destruction is driven by profits from products we buy.

Children, especially, are suffering: in the fish camps of Bangladesh, in the mines of Eastern Congo feeding the electronics industry, in mercury-saturated gold pits in Ghana, and when brutally used and disposed of by criminals decimating the Amazon forest. And beside the

Blood & Earth (Cont'd)

by Professor Kevin Bales

children, endangered species are being wiped out, or pressed to fight back - **like the 'protected' Bengal tigers that prey on child slaves in fishing camps.**

After seven years of research and travel we now know that if **slavery were a country it would be the third largest producer of CO₂ in the world after China and the USA**, though its population is only the size of Canada's. The scale of this joint disaster has been too big to see, until now. Yet, it is precisely the role that slaves play in this ecological catastrophe that opens a new solution, one that unleashes the power of abolition to save and preserve the natural world.

Editor's Note: To read an excerpt in Scientific American click [HERE](#).
To order your copy click on [Blood and Earth](#)

Shadow Children Forum, Rome -19 March 2016

Delegates are invited to attend a Forum in Rome on 19th March 2016, organized by the Italian branch of the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery and dedicated to the topic of street children and modern slavery. At the Forum, several prominent Keynote Speakers will address different issues related to the situation of marginalized children and adolescents. Shadow Children are victims of illegal trade due to the lack of birth registration, among other causes such as poverty and lack of access to education and healthcare. The forms of slavery that affect them include child labour, child abuse, pornography, prostitution and exploitation in organized crime.



The venue is at the LUMSA University of Rome, which is very close to St Peter's Square. Representatives from almost 30 Rotary Clubs from Italy have registered to attend and the speakers include experts from NGOs, the Police, Journalism, the Church and from Rotary International.

Would you like to join us for this special event ? Whether you want to just attend the Forum on the Saturday morning or spend a couple more days in the Eternal City, visiting its incredible sights and joining one of our Roman Rotary Clubs for the evening meeting, do consider coming to Rome.

If you are interested in attending the Forum meeting (which is free of charge), please inform RACSRAG's Coordinator in Italy, Laura Dryjanska. Laura's email address is laura@racsrag.org

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RACSRAG Coordinators

North America Dave McCleary (For contact details see above)
 Cokkie Eakie, RC of Roswell (D6900), USA cokkie@endhtnow.com
 Chuck Fitzgerald, RC of Peoria (D5490), USA chuckfitzgerald@gmail.com
 Caleb LaPlante, RC of Greater Grants Pass, (D5110) caleblaplante@gmail.com

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

Philippines Ernesto Perez, RC Makati Central (D3830), Philippines evperezlaw@gmail.com

Australian States

Victoria Tony Stokes, RC of Box Hill (D9810) stokes9@optusnet.com.au
 Western Gillian Booth RC of Bay View Claremont (D9455) shreveportgb@hotmail.com
 NSW John Roberson, RC of Wagga Wagga, (D9700) johnroberson@bigpond.com
 Tasmania Chris Love, RC of Salamanca, (D9830) chrislove@internode.on.net
 South Teresa Evans, RC of Adelaide, EDGE, (D9500) teresa1407@hotmail.com

NB There is vacancy for a Coordinator to cover Queensland.

Disclaimer: The views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the RACSRAG Board