

Rotarian Action Group against Slavery

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



“What good is our economic and political power, if we can't use it to free slaves. If we can't choose to stop slavery, how can we say we are free”

(Kevin Bales)



IJM rescues 24 boys from slavery in Ghana

In a recent operation by IJM and the Ghanaian authorities, 24 young boys were rescued from slavery working as fisher boys on Lake Volta.

In this region of Ghana, traffickers prey on poor families who are persuaded to send their children to work in deplorable conditions on rickety fishing boats. Parents are hoodwinked into believing that their children will attend school in exchange for a few hours of work. In reality, children work 14 hour

shifts with one meal a day. There is no education, no reprieve and no escape. The boys are expected to dive into a deep man-made lake, which was previously a valley filled with trees, to untangle any fishing nets caught in the tree tops. Drowning is a frequent occurrence in this activity.

An IJM spokesman stated “ In total, we rescued 24 boys from slavery that day; the youngest was just 7 years old. Three had malaria; several had injuries from work and

abuse. As we pulled them into our boats, the Ghanaian commander instructed his unit to arrest the suspected boat masters, 16 in all. These men can no longer harm other boys. The road to recovery and healing for these boys will be long. The journey to regain their childhood will be hard. Many will need care for years to come. But today, now free and safe, they can start this journey to a new future, with the support of IJM”.



The former flooded valley which is now Lake Volta



The moment the boys were rescued



Workers under guard mining for gold in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Human rights groups concerned about new US Executive Order

A draft executive order, composed earlier this month, by the new US administration proposes a two-year **suspension** of a portion of the Dodd-Frank financial reforms which currently requires US firms to carry out due diligence to ensure that the products they sell include no minerals (eg tantalum, gold, tin, tungsten) mined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or neighbouring countries where slavery is prevalent in the mines. The regulation, also known as the

Conflict Minerals Rule was widely applauded as a mainstay of attempts to cut the umbilical cord between big business and violent warlords who have spread unrest throughout the Congo and caused the deaths of more than five million people since the 1990s.

Human rights organization are deeply concerned about the suspension. Free the Slaves, the anti-slavery organization based in

Washington DC, state that their “work to end slavery in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is under threat”. Human Rights Watch believe that “the United States would also become a laggard on global efforts to halt the trade in conflict minerals if the rule was suspended”

See Editorial for further comment.



Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill



Baroness Young of Hornsey

The Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill is a private member's bill introduced on 23 May 2016 by Baroness Young of Hornsey in the UK's House of Lords.

The Bill, which has passed through the Lords, seeks to amend the Modern Slavery Act 2015 so that public bodies

would be required to include a yearly statement on slavery and human trafficking. Currently, the Act only requires commercial organizations to issue such a statement.

The Bill also seeks to amend the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 so that public contracting authorities would be prevented from using an

economic operator that has not produced a slavery and human trafficking statement.

The Bill is expected to have its second reading debate in the UK House of Commons on 24 March 2017.

See Editorial for further comment

New RAGAS Coordinator for Southern Africa

RAGAS is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Philip Frankel as RAGAS Coordinator for Southern Africa. Philip who is a member of the Rotary Club of Rosebank in Johannesburg, South Africa, is the former Head of the Department of Political Studies at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and is now a Policy and Development Consultant specializing in organizational transformation. He has worked extensively with local, regional and central government in South Africa, including the presidential office under Nelson Mandela and his successor.

Philip is the author of 14 books, including a recently published book entitled "Long Walk to Nowhere: Human trafficking in Post-Mandela South Africa". The book covers the three major modes of human trafficking—commercial sex trafficking, child trafficking, and labour trafficking. It also looks at the dynamics of trafficking with a perpetrator-focus, the complex issues of dominance, and the policy responses in light of South Africa's first comprehensive counter-trafficking legislation

For more information on the book, click on this link [Long Walk to Nowhere](#)

Walk Free changes its name

Walk Free, the anti-slavery organization whose work has been featured several times in this Newsletter, is re-launching itself under a new name: Freedom United. The newly named organization's mission to end modern slavery remains unchanged. This is based on the firm belief that freedom is a birth right, not a privilege. With the latest digital advocacy tools, a global partnership network of grass roots activists and a community of over 8 million supporters, the organization is the world's largest anti-slavery organization. The Rotarian Action Group against Slavery will continue to partner with the renamed organization.

Meanwhile Walk Free's original founders Andrew, Nicola and Grace Forrest will continue their work to end slavery under the [Walk Free Foundation](#) including publishing the Global Slavery Index, facilitating the Global Freedom Network and investing in the Freedom Fund. As [Freedom United](#) the organization will continue to work closely with the Walk Free Foundation.



**FREEDOM
UNITED**

**One voice against
modern slavery**



Editorial

The view of many human rights organizations is that Congolese war lords and unethical U.S. corporations will be the big winners if the U.S. Government goes ahead with its proposal to suspend the “conflict minerals” provision of the Dodd-Frank regulations.

The Dodd-Frank law was passed in 2010, and went into force in 2014 after a court challenge. It requires U.S listed companies to investigate their supply chains to see whether their products contain metals that could have been sold by armed groups involved in violence in the Congo and neighbouring countries.

Some analysts argue that the regulation has led to increased unemployment in the Congo, since a large number of small mines have been shut down as a result of declining demand from corporate buyers after the Dodd-Frank rule was introduced.

But human rights advocates are deeply concerned by the proposed US suspension. Amnesty International state that “*by requiring companies to be transparent about how they source minerals, it throws light on shameful and secretive business practices that allow companies to benefit from conflict and abuse. Suspending it would be a boon to irresponsible*

companies and the perpetrators of violence in countries like the Congo”

Another human rights group, “Global Witness”, believes that the proposal would be “*a gift to predatory armed groups seeking to profit from Congo’s minerals, as well as a gift to companies wanting to do business with the criminals and the corrupt.*”

A third group, Free the Slaves, an organization which RAGAS has partnered on several anti-slavery projects, maintains that “*Our work to end slavery in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is under threat*” and that “*Free the Slaves research teams have documented that slavery is widespread at Congo mines.*”

If you want to learn more about the US suspension proposal or wish to register your disapproval about the proposal then click on the Free the Slaves link [here](#).

I am very proud of the fact that the UK has been the first country to introduce the “transparency in supply chains” provision in its legislation to combat modern slavery. At present any UK commercial organization with an annual turnover in excess of £36 million, is obliged to prepare, each financial year, a slavery and human trafficking

statement which has to be signed off by the board of directors or partner(s) and published prominently on their website.

Sadly the new Private Member’s Bill which is currently going through the UK Parliament, does not tackle some of the shortcomings relating to the contents of the modern slavery statement, how it is published and how it is enforced, but it does propose that the legislation should be extended to public bodies and that firms which do not produce a slavery and human trafficking statement should not be allowed to tender for public authority contracts.

As a former civil and public servant, I have to say that I welcome the provisions of this Bill. As Baroness Young has reminded us, the insertion of public bodies into the Modern Slavery Act points to the potential of their combined purchasing power of £45 billion which must stimulate a real behavioral change from those operators in the commercial sector which are not on the high street and are thus not instantly recognizable. At the root of this clause is the question of how public bodies can use their purchasing power more effectively to root out enslavement and trafficking in their supply chains



Above: digging for gold through dirt and mud in Mongbwalu, NE Democratic Republic of the Congo

Below: A washer separates the tin ore.



Editorial (Continued)

It is usually those with the lowest levels of education who are the easiest for traffickers to deceive

This month we have two articles which highlight the importance of education as a preventative measure against human trafficking and slavery. The first article is about the provision of schools in Northern Ghana; the second article provides information about the construction of a school in the Lower Everest region of Nepal

We know that if there is a lack of education facilities in a community, the child-

ren end up spending time on the streets. As a result they are vulnerable and give open access to traffickers to exploit them into slavery. Schools, if effectively operated, provide children with opportunities to appreciate the possibilities and dangers of entrapment, empower them with the knowledge to understand the true nature of the crime of slavery and reduce the risk of young people falling prey to

potential traffickers.

Education is important because it is usually those with the lowest levels of education who are the easiest for traffickers to deceive. In India for example, over 95% of the children who are enslaved come from the lowest caste, the dalits, the untouchables who are generally illiterate. Because they are illiterate, they are easily manipulated and exploited into slavery

February: Important month for the fight against human trafficking

by Laura Dryjanska, RC of Roma Centenario & RAGAS Coordinator for Italy

As Rotarians, we strive to be non-political and non-religious. Setting aside politics for now, let's ponder religion for a moment. We cannot ignore the fact that the world around us tends to be strongly marked by it. Living in Rome, it probably strikes me much more than in other places across the globe, but during a recent trip to Israel I also felt how important religion was in shaping the world. Thinking back about this fascinating country, I wanted to thank the Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Haifa, Rotary District 2490, for giving me a chance to say a few words about the problem of modern slavery and about our Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery.

In Rome, the efforts of religious groups to fight human trafficking take place daily. They include not only action-oriented tasks, such as street outreach, but also prayer and raising awareness. I was touched by a message from Sister Gabriella Bottani about the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking in the liturgical memory of Saint Bakhita, celebrated on February 8, since it was established by Pope Francis in 2015 (click [here](#) for more information). Precisely on this day I was also invited to a conference organized by "Slaves No More" and "BEFREE" by Sister Eugenia Bonetti, for more than 20 years involved in the fight against human trafficking and author of two books, *Slaves* and *Breaking the Chains* (click [here](#) for more information).

Later during the month, on February 18, a full-day seminar on human trafficking was organized by "Slavery No More" and the "Radiant Treasures Alliance", based on the resources provide by the Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (click [here](#) for more information). It is thrilling to see how different groups work towards the same end: freedom from slavery and exploitation!



RAGAS Coordinator, Laura raising awareness of the work of the RAG at the Rotary Club of Haifa, Israel



Give a Child a Future

by Laura McCartan, Rosie May Foundation

Nepal is a country still recovering from the devastating 2015 earthquake, which killed more than 8,000 people. With a largely rural population, the country faces significant challenges to pull itself out of poverty. 74% of the population live on less than \$2 a day, 80% lack access to essential health care, and low levels of school enrolment mean that more than 45% of the population face unemployment.

It is unsurprising then, that parents find themselves vulnerable to traffickers who promise their children a better life, often offering to send them to the city to attend a better school. Unfortunately, this often ends with girls in brothels, and the boys on the streets in neighboring India, or further afield.

Founded in 2004 after the murder of 10-year-old Rosie May Storrie, the [Rosie May Foundation](#) (RMF) works to give other children the future she was so tragically denied. Working in both Sri Lanka and Nepal to protect vulnerable children, we aim to break the cycle of poverty, and provide a quality education. There is a very strong role for education in terms of preventing human trafficking; education gives an alternative future for children, with the promise of prospects and

support for their family, encompassing awareness about their own rights which stops them falling into the clutches of the waiting traffickers. While prosecution of traffickers remains abysmally weak in Nepal, the long term solution lies in prevention through education and support.

Since the earthquake, there has been a noticeable rise in trafficking out of Nepal, due largely to increased poverty and insecurity of families. RMF are building a school in the Lower Everest region, and providing accompanying child rights education for the community to ensure that both parents and children are not only aware of their rights, but also of the risks associated with trafficking. The school will be built following education authority guidelines to ensure that it is earthquake resilient, and we will be providing free school meals for at least two years, to encourage parents to send their children back to school, despite their fear.

An estimated 12,000 Nepalese children are trafficked into India each year, largely due to poverty and the lack of livelihoods available for parents. A free quality education, including at least one nutritious meal a day provided for children

is a significant incentive for parents to ensure their children stay with them.

We work hard at all projects to demonstrate the right to family life that every child should enjoy, meaning education for families to ensure that parents don't believe sending their child away for 'education' is the best option. RMF are also building a school kitchen, which, along with the main building, can act as a community space, and a base for human rights work. The facilities will be available to the entire community allowing the building to bring in an income through functions, a sustainable way to ensure long term community development.

RMF particularly focusses on empowering women and girls. These are most vulnerable to trafficking into the sex trade. Believing fully in prevention and empowerment through gender equality and embracing education as a means to achieve this, the work of the Rosie May Foundation of Nepal is growing to support children at risk of trafficking and to support them into a much brighter future.

Editor's Note: Please look at the Annex for the Rosie May Foundation's Wish List of items required.



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Tackling Slavery from the Roots

(by Lynne Symonds, Founder of the Wulugu Project)

“One of the best guards against slavery is education. Many people are enslaved through deception.....Against this deception a little education goes a long way”

(Kevin Bales)



Lynne Symonds in Ghana

“You have rescued so many girls from poverty, slavery and early marriages. You will always be the voice of so many silent voices and the strength of so many weak ones”

These were the inspiring words from the Chief of the Mamprusi tribe in Northern Ghana last summer. He was attending a celebration to mark 20 years since we first helped a village-school ‘Wulugu’ with books and safe hostel accommodation.

We are still a small charity, relying entirely on volunteers in both Ghana and the U.K., but we have now built and equipped over 60 schools at the

Primary, Junior High and Vocational level to give girls the opportunity to gain skills and support their families.

We have found that schooling opens eyes to choices, to careers, to self-esteem. Parents whose families have been resigned to poverty and hunger see their children on the road to changing this for themselves and for their communities. Our work with Chiefs, Imams, Community Leaders and Government Departments has made remarkable differences.

Not only has primary schooling for all, including girls, become the norm, but parents are now striving to ensure that the

next stage of schooling is sited near their homes so that girls can continue to examination level.

The practice of early marriages, selling daughters and enforced moves to Southern Ghana has almost disappeared. This is astonishing. The change has been brought about by the people themselves. We have simply worked with them to help them achieve their aims.

Calls for our help are never-ending, equipment, new schools, accommodation for teachers, safe hostels, small loans to help the establishment of enterprises based on the skills learnt at vocational schools

Here are some examples of current needs:-

Dual desks	£30
Build a classroom.(a whole school has 6 or 8)	£7,000
Repair a collapsed school.	£10,000-£16,000
Catering equipment (fridges/cookers/pans)	£40-£250
Computers (for schools with electricity)	£175
<i>For vocational schools--</i>	
Looms	£250
Hairdressing materials	£ 30-£80
Sewing machines	£80

Working with a local Rotary group, we can identify a specific need and an individual project which your contributions can support. To find out more, our web site is www.wulugu.co.uk , e-mail wuluguproject@gmail.com. or call ++ 44 (0)1603 810748. It is too easy to believe that we, as individuals, cannot help with the overwhelming problems of poverty and modern slavery. But with your support, it is truly possible to change lives.

Editors Note: Click on this link [Lynne Symonds](#) to find out more about Lynne as a Chief of three tribes in Ghana



Post Bag

Dear Editor

I have been a quiet observer of the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery for approximately a year or so now, only posting once or twice to the forum. What I find, especially as I read Mark's letter, is the same question or issue as a common thread among Rotarians (and non-Rotarian individuals, for that matter) -- "How can I help or make a difference in something so large as this?" This is truly an overwhelming and global issue.

I am a member of the Rotary Club of Hot Springs National Park in Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA, District 6170/Club #2553. We have a city population of approximately 35,000, with another 60,000 living outside the city limits in the county, so we are not a very large population, but this topic is an important one to our club. We did receive a District grant in 2015, where we partnered with the local Human Trafficking Taskforce of Garland County, Arkansas, to provide print materials, speaking opportunities and educational information to our community. Even though this is a global problem, many people feel they are too small to make a difference, HOWEVER, it all begins with one step. Many people also do not realize that this horrible situation exists in their own small towns, not just occurring in some foreign country on the other side of the world, and, yes, even in small town, USA.

I agree with Mark in his letter, and would strongly encourage everyone, regardless of the size of your club or community, to get involved, one way or another. Our Rotary club went out into the local community - at the local Farmer's Market, shopping malls, etc. - providing information to educate everyone of this terrible crime. We spoke to parents of children of all ages at local events, groups of teenagers hanging out in the malls, and many other community groups to bring about awareness and open their eyes that this really does occur right in their own backyard.

I know that I may never be able to travel or make the kind of difference globally that many others are able to do, but if I can help save one soul from this horrific situation, then I know that I am doing my job, and there will be one less victim. I applaud each of you for your willingness to serve and your dedication to such a worthy cause.

Thank you,

Michelle Ratcliff (2nd Vice President beginning, July 2017)
Rotary Club of Hot Springs National Park - #2553, Arkansas, USA

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Dear Mark

Namaskar from Kumudini ! We are so grateful for your (club's) kind support to renovate our Emergency Receiving Facility (ERF). The house we rented was in a debilitated condition as the former renters had stayed for more than a decade without maintenance. With your support we could make it presentable and hygienic. From the attached photos you can see the difference. Only after the renovation we could take our beneficiaries, who are girl children subjected to abuse and exploitation or at risk. We currently have eight of them living there. Attached is also the contract and receipt of payment of the contractor.

Please do get back to us if you have any queries.

Thank you so much!

Best regards,

Pooja Mahato
Chairperson
Kumudini

Editor's Note: Kumudini's new Emergency Shelter for Exploited Girls is in Nepal (see page 5 of Newsletter No 69)



Post Bag (continued)

Editor's Note: *The inspirational letter below from Incoming DG David Pope in District 1090, England, is really worth sharing with our readers. The film David is referring to is being shown in several cities in the UK and has just been screened in my own city of Norwich. Indeed all tickets were sold days before the event which left some of my friends frustrated because they were too late to apply for a ticket. You Rotarians in District 1090, don't make the same mistake. After Oxford (1st March) the film will be screened in Sheffield (7th March), Birmingham (15th March) and Belfast (TBA). Other cities which have hosted the film before Oxford are: Nottingham, Liverpool, Southampton, Aberdeen, Bristol, St Andrews and York. Click on this link <http://www.taughtnottrafficked.com/> to view film venue details.*

To: District 1090 Rotary Presidents-Elect, copied to District Team 17/18 and others

Dear President-elect and others,

Do you recall that our Rotary International Theme for next year is “Rotary: Making a Difference”? Do you recall that my ambition is to promote our Rotary International Area of Focus: Peace-building and Conflict Resolution in the Thames Valley, Oxfordshire and Berkshire?

I need your help.

Past District Governor Judith Diment and I would like to invite you, your friends, your colleagues, your Rotary and Rotaract Club members to an imminent showing of a powerful film called SOLD, a diatribe against Child Slavery and Sex Trafficking of girls, which has been called the greatest human rights issue of our time. The showing will be held in Corpus Christi College Auditorium, Oxford at 7pm on 1st March. Tickets cost just £5 (£2 if you are a student) and we would love to see you there. It's possible that Oxford West and Abingdon's MP Nicola Blackwood will also be in attendance as this subject is very close to her heart and she is working hard in Parliament to raise awareness against this global scourge.

Here is a trailer for the film: [SOLD](#).

Here are the details of how/where to book tickets: [SOLD tickets](#).

I appreciate that this is a harrowing and possibly distasteful subject, and for some it might be the kind of film they prefer to avoid. But I am serious about Making a Difference and raising awareness of this detestable blight on innocent young lives, and the more people who join me, the louder our voice will be and the greater the Difference we will make. As Russell Crowe once intoned in the blockbuster “Gladiator”:

“The deeds of our life echo in eternity”

Please do join me and our fellow Rotarians in Oxford on 1st March.

Thank you.

David

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

Annex**Rosie May Foundation – Wish List**

Kitchen Hall & Meal for 50 Students for 2 Years	Unit	Quantity	Rate	Total (NPR)	Total (USD)
Snacks for Students (50 students* Rs. 75 per students*576 days)	Students*Days	28,800	75	2,160,000.00	20,025.23
Cooking Utensils					
Plates		50	400	20,000	185.42
Mugs		50	300	15,000	139.06
Pots		8	3,750	30,000	278.13
Kitchen & Dining Hall Building				1300,000	12,052.22
Furniture					
Bench		15	1,500	22,500	208.60
Dining Table		15	2,500	37,500	347.66
Sub Total (B)					
Monitoring & Reporting of SAHAS (C)	Times*Persons*Days	96	2,500	240,000	2,225.03
Total				3825000	35,461.35