



Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery Secretary Report Annual Meeting 2017

The Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery continues to be active in its endeavours. Action, of a different kind, was taken at the beginning of the current Rotary year, we felt the need for a name change for the group. After some lengthy consideration and debate, the decision was taken to apply to RI for us to be allowed to drop the word 'Child' from the group title

'Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery'. It seemed a simple enough request to us, our reasoning seemed logical and sound. We figured that as many of the NGO's we were working with were active with 'slavery' across all age groups, it would make sense for us to be on similar footing. Also, the predicament of many children we were/have been dealing with, had remained unchanged. Over the passage of time these individuals were growing into adults, many sadly still enslaved. We were clear in our thinking, we could not abandon our support for them, just because they were, no longer a child. We were/are not abandoning our work with children, rather just expanding our field of operation to encompass adults enslaved too. Rotary International needed to be convinced that with a name change, we were not abandoning the core activity that we were originally recognised for. This we did. That agreed, they needed assurance that we were capable of expanding our operation successfully. Once again we were able to prove this was the case. After some deliberations the change was approved and put into place.

The idea of an Action Group is to be a resource for Clubs and or Districts, we cannot work in isolation. We have the good fortune to have gathered around us, some very loyal and hardworking groups. We are really grateful for the groups and their supporters on the many projects they are involved in, and the support they have shown to the RAG. Much of the finer details of these activities can be followed in our Newsletter or on the website. That too (website) reflects the change of name. It can be found at www.ragas.online We have a Face Book page too, here you can find snippets of information and many links to anti-slavery NGO's and their varied activity. Our links through Twitter has not managed too well with the changeover however, you will find that individual among the Directors and Coordinators 'Tweet' on the subject regularly.

Although we, RAGAS, are prevented from fronting projects by the terms of our association with Rotary International, we are not prohibited in being associated with a number of projects. This has been the case from day one and we continue to do so. Some of this activity will no doubt appear in other reports, or appear in the RAG Newsletter. We make ourselves continually available for advice or information, our expertise is open to groups or Clubs wishing to undertake anti slavery projects.

There have been several successful Skype sessions though the course of the past year. The board structure in light of its global localities mean that members remain open to this line of communication, of course, once the difficulties of 'Time Difference' can be overcome. Interest or membership? We have an ever changing and growing database of interested Rotarians. These are folk who express a desire to know what RAGAS is about, or to see for themselves if Slavery really does still exist. Then there are a smaller group who have been prepared to act on their interest, and become Members of the Action Group. This of course involves a modest membership fee. Money collected in membership fees is the only money we can use for the administrative costs of the Action Group. We can and obviously do receive other donations, this money is used solely for the purpose that it was donated for. On occasions folk have kindly donated funds to augment our administrative costs, which are kept to the minimum.

By our terms of reference it is only signed up paid up Rotarian members, who are permitted to actively take part in the day to day administrative running of the Action Group. That is to be involved in Board membership elections or other business. Yes we would always welcome more members, but do acknowledge the work and involvement of our many supporters, many supporting their own Club or District anti-slavery work. If they have indicated an interest, all are linked by our Newsletter and the single minded desire to End Slavery across the world.

Secretary Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery Harry Payne April 2017