

Rotarian Action Group against Slavery

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Mining for cobalt in the DRC



Above: Working in a diamond mine,
Below: UK PM Theresa May with members of the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Thames.



“The world is a dangerous place, not because of people who do evil, but because of good people who look on and do nothing ”

(Albert Einstein)



Industry giants fail to tackle exploitation in DRC cobalt mines

According to a recent report by Amnesty International, major electronics and electric vehicle companies are still not doing enough to stop human rights abuses entering their cobalt supply chains.

This report is a follow up of a previous investigation published by Amnesty

International in 2016.

The new report, [Time to Recharge](#), ranks the policies and practices of 29 industrial giants (including Apple, Dell, Samsung Electronics, Lenovo, BMW, Microsoft, , Renault) on how much they have improved their cobalt sourcing practices since January 2016.

It finds that while a handful of companies have made progress, others are still failing to take even basic steps like investigating supply links in the DRC. The report states that Apple is the industry leader for responsible cobalt sourcing, whilst Microsoft, Lenovo and Renault have made the least progress.

Can the world end child labour by 2025 ?

At the November 2017 Conference on the Eradication of Child Labour in Buenos Aires, the International Labour Organization (ILO) issued a report [Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes](#) which called for stepped-up efforts to

“consign child labour to the dustbin of history”.

According to recent ILO estimates, there are 152 million children – 64 million girls and 88 million boys – in child labour globally.

The report says improving

legal protection, labour market governance, social protections, access to quality education and social dialogue between governments, the social partners and other stakeholders are critical aspects in battling child labour.

UK PM applauds Rotarians for combating modern slavery

UK Prime Minister Theresa May made a surprise visit to Maidenhead Town Hall just before Christmas where she and her husband Phillip, accepted honorary membership of the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Thames which is the Club of RAGAS Director, Judith Diment.

Mrs May said “It is a great honour. Rotary does a fantastic job locally and internationally.....I am particularly interested in the international work in modern slavery. I’ve done a lot here bringing in legislation, so the work Rotary is doing to support victims of slavery to help us eradicate it, is important”



Editorial

Amnesty International's recent report indicates that there are still large companies failing to take even the most basic steps to investigate whether or not their cobalt supplies from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are tainted with slavery.

Somehow these companies **must** be persuaded to live up to their basic human rights responsibilities because their failure to acknowledge what is going on in the DRC mines is merely exacerbating the suffering of those miners toiling to recover the precious metal.

More than half of the world's cobalt, which is an essential component of rechargeable batteries, is mined in the DRC and according to UNICEF there are at least 100,000 miners of which approximately 40,000 are children, many of whom receive little or no pay.

These miners work in wretched conditions that are extremely dangerous to their health - often with no safety equipment or protective clothing. They are exposed to a near invisible poison, cobalt dust, which can cause fatal hard metal lung disease. Work hours are long, and miners labour in tunnels that are not properly supported.

Rainfall can cause large areas of cobalt mines to suddenly collapse. At

least 80 miners died underground in the DRC between September 2014 and December 2015 alone, and the bodies of children and adults alike are often left buried in the rubble

So, why are the world's largest consumer brands willing to buy cobalt under such circumstances? A large part of the problem is a lack of traceability along the supply chain – and the involvement of unscrupulous third parties. A significant proportion of cobalt from the DRC is sold to Chinese traders and smelters, who are often more concerned with price than with ethics.

At present, there is no regulation directly covering the global cobalt market – let alone local practices in the DRC. For example, cobalt does not fall under existing conflict minerals rules in the USA, which cover gold, tantalum, tin and tungsten mined in DRC. Fortunately activists are now calling for cobalt to be added to the list of conflict minerals.

As Rotarians we could play a part in helping to alleviate the plight of the miners in the DRC by finding out which firms make batteries for smart phones, computers or tablets and asking them for a copy of their purchasing policy.

This should for example indicate whether or not a company conducts social and ethical audits of their

suppliers to highlight cases of unethical practices. The simple act of writing a letter of enquiry is a signal to the company that we do care about the sources of their products.

The ILO report on Child Labour, referred to on page one, arises as a result of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals which were adopted by the United Nations in September 2015.

In Target 8.7 of those Goals, members committed to *“take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”*

A brief review of the three goals which specifically refer to exploitation, forced labour, human trafficking and slavery, is included on pages 6 and 7 of the Newsletter.

Of the various measures recommended to alleviate child labour, Rotarians can make a contribution by helping in the provision of quality education and the construction of schools to stem the flow of school-aged children into child labour. This approach is one of the best defences against child labour or slavery.

(Continued over page)



Toiling for cobalt



“THIS IS WHAT WE DIE FOR”

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO POWER THE GLOBAL TRADE IN COBALT



Editorial (Contd)

We know that if there is a lack of education facilities in a community, the children 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 reduces the risk of young people from 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.

In the next couple of pages there are brief summaries of two anti-slavery project opportunities (one in Kent, UK and the other in California, USA) whose main objectives are raising local awareness of the evils of human trafficking and slavery. Raising awareness is so important. In his book "Where Were You", Matt Friedman maintains that *"if we don't know about a problem we can't care about it. If you don't care, you will not act. If you don't act, how can we expect our results to improve. Thus, the world's awareness MUST become a major priority. Everyone must hear the urgent message: slavery is alive and flourishing today"*.

The Californian project, masterminded by PDG Bob Deering (RC of East Sacramento, District 5180) and Brian Gladden (RC of Roseville) has already been approved for a Global Grant at a total project cost of \$340,000 (RF Grant \$213,000) and is the largest anti-trafficking and anti-slavery project so far, **unless you advise me otherwise.**

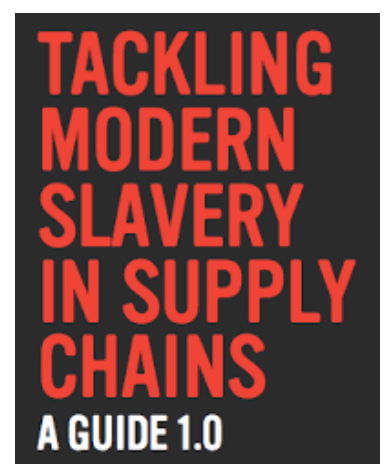
The Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill

Section 54 of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires commercial organisations carrying out business in the UK, with a turnover of at least £36 million, to prepare and publish a slavery and human trafficking statement for each and every financial year.

In spite of the level of detail required by Section 54, many organizations have not included the suggested information in their statements. As a consequence updated guidance was issued last October. Also other changes to Section 54 may soon occur which would go much further than the updated guidance.

A new Bill is currently making its way through Parliament – the Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill which is seeking to extend the reporting requirements in Section 54 and would make providing the information listed under Section 54 (5) **mandatory** rather than **voluntary**

The Bill proposes that if an organization has not taken steps to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its own supply chains or business, it must explain the reason for this. The Bill also propose that in addition to commercial organizations, public authorities will also be required to make modern slavery statements and that commercial organizations not complying with the obligation to publish a statement (if applicable) would not be allowed to tender for public authority contracts.



Global Grant to Combat Human Trafficking

by PDG Bob Deering, RC of East Sacramento, D5180, USA

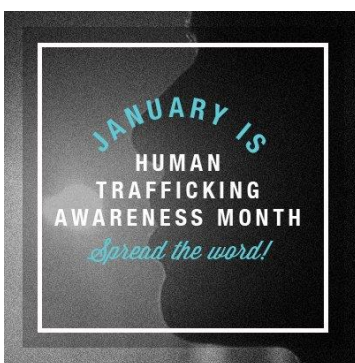


Rotary District 5180 and the clubs in that District, in the Central Valley of California, USA, has been working for two years towards developing a project to combat Human Trafficking at home. We have partnered with Districts 3870 in the Philippines, 4140 in Mexico, 4420 in Brazil, 9550 in Australia, and 4815 in Argentina, along with the Rotary Club of Chapala Sunrise in District 4140. Our goal was to develop a project that a) had an impact on the growing problem in our district and b) could be replicated in other Rotary districts with very little changes. In our communications with the many agencies fighting this problem, we found that the number one need that was not being addressed sufficiently was education, both to those who were most vulnerable and also to the general community population.

With this in mind, we have developed a global grant that will consist of (a) a sex trafficking education program rolled out to selected teachers, administrators, and students in 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades in District 5180, which has now been mandated by the California legislature (with minimal funding) and (b) a 3 month human trafficking public awareness campaign aimed at making our communities aware of these atrocities.



We have partnered with leaders in each of these areas in order to bring these services to District 5180. We have chosen 3Strands Global of El Dorado Hills, CA, USA who has partnered with two other non-profit organizations, Love Never Fails and the Frederick Douglas Family Initiatives, along with Cisco Systems to develop a comprehensive educational program which has been certified by the Attorney General's office of the State of California. We have also partnered with The Voices and Faces Project in Chicago, Illinois which has conducted outreach campaigns called "The Ugly Truth" to combat trafficking in Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, and Washington D.C. Statistical results show that this campaign has increased awareness in the problems that exist and allows the general public to know what and where to go when they see a problem that exists.



With the help of our partners and The Rotary Foundation, the grant totals \$213,000 USD. Through the generosity of the clubs in our District along with other organizations we have raised another \$127,000 USD to help educate more of our vulnerable students. We are not through as we believe every child in District 5180 needs to be exposed to this terrible problem and are actively soliciting additional contributions. An additional \$75 USD will educate another teacher in the classroom. One child that is subjected to trafficking is one too many!!



Mobilizing People to help end Modern Slavery

by Fiona Stevenson, RC of Tenterden, D1120, England

In the face of overwhelming slavery and human trafficking statistics, it can perhaps be difficult to know where to begin to help.

A few people in Canterbury have found a way of addressing modern-day slavery in Kent that I think could be replicated in many places – ideally suited to Rotary.

They first spent time meeting with various organisations, including the police, safe houses, and Stop the Traffik, before forming into a community group called “Stop the Traffik Kent”.

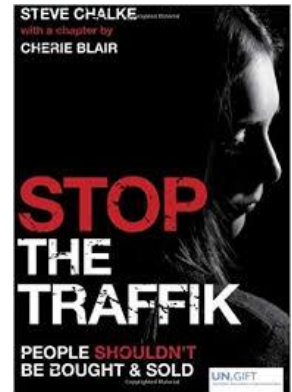
Dr Cheryl Mvula, the group’s leader says, *“We decided our focus should be raising awareness of modern slavery in our local community. Through research, we discovered the most prevalent types of exploitation in Kent. They are: fruit farms and agriculture, car washes, the sex industry, nail bars, Indian and Chinese takeaways and restaurants, the construction industry, and domestic servitude. We share this information with people to engage them in conversation about how they could help.”*

It’s the way that they do this that is so brilliantly simple. Every month they go into a busy shopping area with uniformed police officers, and dress up as if they are caught in those kinds of exploitation. Some members tape over their mouths to represent how victims of human trafficking are silenced and ignored. Others hold placards that demand to be seen, appealing to passers-by with a simple question: “Can you see me?” When people are intrigued about why they are carrying a bucket and a sponge (hand car washes), or a fruit basket (fruit pickers), they speak to them about modern slavery. They also give them a wallet-sized leaflet with instructions on how they can spot the signs.

“Stop the Traffik Kent” are now part of Kent and Essex Police Anti-Slavery Partnership Group which meets bi-monthly to share information and initiatives. It is hoped that the research and awareness-raising that members of the Partnership Group undertake will enable the police to carry out more rescues and achieve more convictions.

Rotarians could:

- Meet with their local police to arrange to dress up and take part in an awareness-raising event. (Rotarians in Kent should do this via Stop the Traffik Kent – they can be contacted via their Facebook page)
- Fund the production of leaflets to hand-out and posters to display - aimed both at potential victims and the general public (2 different messages)
- Take posters and deliver them to appropriate outlets and businesses to display. (Kent Police have produced some excellent posters encouraging people to be alert for signs eg at petrol stations, or car washes, or nail bars. Other police forces may have something similar for their areas.)
- Contact the local police anti-slavery partnership group to offer to assist with research into modern-day slavery and human trafficking in that area. (Rotarians in Kent could do this via Stop the Traffik Kent.)



UN's Sustainable Development Goals



In September 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) as a guide for International efforts against poverty for the 15 years to 2030. Due to the hard work of anti-trafficking advocacy groups, the SDGs specifically mention human trafficking and slavery in the targets of three of the goals, ie goals: 5, 8, and 16. This has given hope to all abolitionists that addressing this repugnant human rights crime will become a greater priority for countries and citizens around the world. The specifics of the three modern slavery related goals are outlined below.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Women and girls made up 70% of detected human trafficking victims between 2010-2012. They encompass the vast majority of detected victims for sex trafficking.

Target 5.2 specifically calls for countries to, “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.” This goal conceives human trafficking, exploitation and slavery as a form of gender discrimination and violence against women. Many of the other goals under this target are connected to modern slavery, including the elimination of harmful practices such as child marriage, the call to value unpaid care and domestic workers, and the creation and implementation of policies to promote gender equality at all levels of society. While women and girls do make up the majority of sex trafficking victims, this goal may divert funding to help boys and men as well.

“It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women ”

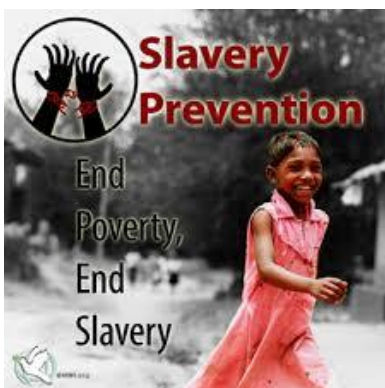
(Kofi Annan)

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth full and productive employment and decent work for all

According to the ILO, 21 million people are affected by forced labour, trafficking and slavery around the world today. Of those, 68% are exploited in the labour sector – in industries like agriculture, mining, construction, and domestic work.

Target 8.7 calls for nations to, “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.” This is arguably the most direct target focusing on the issue of human trafficking and slavery and has been celebrated by the anti-trafficking field.

The other targets under this goal are equally important in ending human trafficking and slavery since they have a particular focus on access to decent, stable work. In too many places, people are without work, and the jobs that are available to them do not offer an escape from poverty. Poverty is one of the root causes for slavery and human trafficking. Situations of desperation are created when families and parents struggle to put food on the table, access health care, or afford school fees to educate their children. Offers to travel abroad in the hopes of a better life become more tempting for parents and children alike. Many cases of human trafficking begin with an individual looking for decent work. It is argued that if nations truly invest in economic opportunities over the next 15 years, we would address one of the main vulnerabilities that place people at risk to trafficking in the first place.



UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Cont'd)

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Although basic laws to address human trafficking are in place in most countries, conviction rates remain extremely low, creating a high profit low risk industry.

The ILO estimates that human trafficking and forced labour create illicit profits of \$150 billion annually.

Target 16.2 calls for all nations to “**End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.**” Other targets, such as combatting organized crime, promoting the rule of law, and reducing all forms of violence are all connected to ending trafficking. In particular, one of the targets focuses on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration. When children lack a legal identity, they are often unable to access health care, education, and other social services. They also can't prove their age. Traffickers often exploit this vulnerability and force children who are too young to legally work into labor and force girls too young to wed into marriages. It's crucial that all children have access to a birth certificate.

We know that these goals cannot be achieved if we don't work together. Several efforts are already underway for organizations to lead the way in accomplishing these goals. For example, UNICEF helped to launch The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center in the United States has launched a Global Hotline Network to help more people escape situations of trafficking and access resources. More legislation is being passed to address trafficking, and more efforts are underway to collect stronger data on how many people are affected by this crime.

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