

Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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Website www.racsrag.org

3 August 2013

Issue No 41



Chairman

Mark Little, Norwich St Edmund
(D1080) England

mark@racsrag.org

Vice-Chairman

Bob Christie, Dalkeith,
(D1020) Scotland

bob@racsrag.org

Secretary

Harry Payne, Burnham on Crouch
(D1240) England

harry@racsrag.org

Treasurer and Webmaster

Stephen Sypula, Stevenage Grange,
(D1260) England

stephen@racsrag.org

Member of the Board

Dick Eisenach, Phoenix 100
(D5490) USA

dick@racsrag.org

Member of the Board

Girish Mittal, Mumbai Boravali
East, (D3140) India

girish@racsrag.org

Regional Coordinators

Americas

Dick Eisenach

(For contact details see above)

Africa

Mark Doyle, Pretoria West
(D9400) South Africa

mpdoyle@mweb.co.za

Zambia

Arnfinn Solli, Livingstone
(D9210) Zambia

arnfinn@microlink.zm

Oceania and parts SE Asia

David Black, Dunedin Central
(D9980) New Zealand

dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz

Indian Sub Continent

Girish Mittal

(For contact details see above)

Italy

Laura Dryjanska, Roma Centenario
(D2080) Italy

laura.dry@windowslive.com

RAG Website:

www.racsrag.org

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

“Ending slavery won’t end crime, but it will
mean things will be stolen, not lives”
(Kevin Bales)



US \$100,000 – Raised by RAG members

Small actions in support of basic human rights, can often lead to real progress and even greater progress can be achieved when individuals combine to take small actions collectively.

A scrutiny of our Action Group’s records reveal that as at the end of July 2013, our members have raised just over \$100,000 since October 2009 to participate in 40 specific projects in Ghana, Niger, India, Thailand and the USA.

October 2009 is significant

because it was the date when two clubs, Norwich St Edmund, (D1080, England) and West Chester Downtown, (D7450, USA) kick-started our unofficial Action Group’s activities by purchasing, with the help of a DSG grant, a much needed scooter for Bal Vikas Ashram - a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre, near Allahabad, India.

This project was immediately followed by a successful Matching Grant project with the acquisition of a vehicle to rescue, inter alia, children from

slavery in Uttar Pradesh, India.

For this second project, the two pioneering clubs were joined by other clubs ie Exton Frazer (D7450), Swaffham, Sudbury Talbot (D 1080), Reims St Remi, France (D1750), Mainz 50° Nord, Germany, (D1860) and Pratapgarh, India (D3120)

And so the number of participating clubs began to expand and continues to expand.

A complete list of the clubs involved in the recorded projects is listed on page 6

Other Projects in the Pipeline

The above sum of US \$100,000 has already been spent. It does not include funds already promised or in hand by clubs or the Action Group for projects which are being currently planned, such as those at Punarnawa Ashram, India, Rescue Mission for Children, Northern Thailand, Shakti Samuha, Nepal and Kalimpong, North East India.

The latter which is being masterminded by the RC of Dunbar, Scotland, is discussed in more detail on page 5 of this Newsletter. Here, \$22,000 is promised by District 1020, whilst 12 clubs in Scotland, England and the Czech Republic are also committing funds to this prospective Global Grant Project.



Shakti Samuha

At the start of this year, this Newsletter featured an article by the Project Coordinator for Shakti Samuha, an organization established and run by survivors of human trafficking in Nepal.

The Action Group has just learnt that Shakti has just been announced as one of the awardees of Asia's most prestigious prizes this year, ie the Ramon

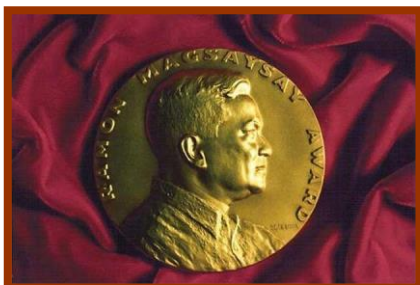
Magsaysay Award.

The prize which is often considered as Asia's Nobel Prize was established in 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, based in New York with the concurrence of the Philippine Government.

According to the President of the Award Foundation, the recognition is given to

those organizations which are collectively advancing causes to improve lives and transform societies across Asia.

We know that a couple of clubs will soon be embarking on some of the projects included on Shakti Samuha's Wish List which was published in Newsletter No 35.



At the RI Assembly in 2014, an experienced RAG member will, for the first time, have an opportunity to explain the role of RAGs to the Incoming District Governors



A Fillip for RAGs

Hitherto the subject of "Rotarian Action Groups" (RAGs) has not featured as part of the training of Incoming DGs. This will change in 2014 when the issue will be on the agenda of the next RI Assembly in San Diego.

From our initial letters to/contacts with the District Governors of 2012/13 and the Incoming DGs for 2013/14, it has been apparent that most appeared to be ignorant of

the existence and role of our Rotarian Action Group or indeed of any other Rotarian Action Group. This is because the subject of RAGs has never been discussed at the annual RI Assembly.

As a result of pressure from a number of sources, RIPE Gary Huang has agreed that RAGs will be featured at the next Assembly. Marion Bunch (RFFA) will speak on behalf of all RAGs and

will emphasise how RAGs can, inter alia, assist in increasing membership which is Gary's primary focus for his Presidential term. We are confident that Marion will do a great promotion job for RAGs.

We have also just heard that RAGs have been approved for an exhibit table at the 2014 RI Assembly. This is an opportunity to showcase our own RAG with a leaflet or two.

The Rotary International Convention in Lisbon

Just over a month ago several members of the Action Group were working hard to promote our RAG in the House of Friendship at the Convention.

Tiring as the work, it was also rewarding, meeting old friends and making new ones, engaging in

deep and meaningful discussions with some of the booth's visitors and (during a slack period) visiting other project stands. In between there was always the chance to take off and listen to some of the inspiring speakers in the main venue.

One of our members who

spent many hours embedded in the RAG booth was our Treasurer, Stephen Sypula. (see photo left when he was still fresh !!!).

Attached as an addendum to this Newsletter is Stephen's thoughtful reflections on his RI experience in Lisbon.



Editorial

When we formed our unofficial Action Group in 2009, we were conscious of the fact that if we were to succeed in getting the approval of the Board of Rotary International we would need to keep in mind at all times the Board's view of a RAG's essential duty. This is to "provide assistance and support to Rotary Clubs and Districts in planning and implementing service projects in their respective areas of experience"

On that basis the second objective included in our Action Plan submission in Nov 2012 proposed that the Group would "take action by encouraging Rotarians to support, promote and work with anti-slavery bodies in developing programmes,

campaigns and projects that will help to make child slavery history"

Bearing in mind the unofficial status of the Group for most of the period (2009-2013), the level of activity and financial input highlighted earlier, is a remarkable achievement for this RAG and its supporters.

It does indeed underline the principle that when individuals combine to take action collectively they can be a force for good in this world.

Today there are millions of child slaves waiting to be freed. The organizations which liberate the slaves know how to set slaves free and they know how to help slaves achieve

rehabilitation and reintegration back into their own homes. What they struggle to do is to mobilize funds that will help extend their work further.

This is where our RAG can make a huge impact in the struggle to end this crime against humanity. The impact can be achieved by positively encouraging our members to support the efforts of small and large anti-slavery/human trafficking organizations

Editors Note: *The photos on the right show children in an English Parish Church making presents which were later taken by a Rotarian and presented to the boys of Bai Vikas Asham – a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre in India.*



Education Projects for New Beginnings

(by Carol Metzker – One World Rotary e-Club)

Girls (see photo on the right) at Punarnawa Ashram—a Rehabilitation Center in India for survivors of sex slavery—learn to use a new computer donated by the Rotary Club of West Chester Downtown.

Education and vocational skills help girls break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy (which may result in enslavement) and this helps to build a positive future.

This project was just one of several that provide support for survivors of human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial sexual exploitation, and that was made possible by the event "Dress for a Good Cause".

The fifth annual fundraiser was hosted by the West Chester Downtown Club in April 2013. Funds were also raised for educational purposes—diploma equivalency exams, tutors

and textbooks for Dawn's Place, a residence for female survivors in Pennsylvania, USA.

Editor's Note:

Carol was formerly a member of the Rotary Club of West Chester Downtown and author of "Facing the Monster – How one Person can Fight Child Slavery".



Volunteer opportunities in Nepal

by Peter Bashford, Founder Asha Nepal

Volunteers John and Jean with some of the Asha Children



Asha is a human rights organisation working for the social and economic empowerment of women and children affected by sex trafficking in Nepal.

We have a number of projects in Kathmandu run by a small group of local staff and partner organisations. All UK staff work on a voluntary basis.

Asha has a long history of welcoming volunteers to its Nepal projects, from GAP year students to doctors, therapists and accountants.

As a small organisation with a busy staff team that need to be highly reactive as situations demand, , volunteers are thrown in at the deep-end and are very much seen as being there to help.

Doctors and nurses are always welcome, especially GP's, gynaecologists and E.N.T. specialists. So to are art and dance therapists. Teachers are

very welcome during school holidays and to give extra tuition after school during term time.

At the moment we also need a fair bit of painting and decorating done, but this would also need the volunteers to cover the cost of materials as our budgets have been severely tested this year. We still have a shortfall for the year to catch up on.

We also need a carpenter or two, especially with skills around windows. Most of our windows and mosquito screens don't close properly!

We also need help with our craft workshop, someone with marketing and product development skills to look at how we can adapt products to suit an international market and to identify overseas markets that can handle small runs of products. As sales grow we can then train more and more girls and increase output etc.

The projects are not far from downtown Kathmandu (Thamel) and the national heritage area of Boudanath, both around twenty minutes to half an hour away and with a wide range of accommodation, cafes etc.

Nearer to hand, just five minutes walk away from the children's home is the Volunteer Centre where basic accommodation can be found in a friendly environment where you can interact with volunteers of all ages from around the world.

A bed (shared accommodation) can be had for £13.00 (US\$20.00) a night including meals. The house is comfortable and has hot showers and wifi connection. For further details please contact peter@asha-nepal.org.



To volunteer is to contribute your goodness and works to humanity unselfishly, without seeking any reward

Editors Note: Asha Nepal is a UK-registered charity working for the rights of women and girls in Nepal. Asha is the Nepali word for hope. Hundreds of thousands of women and children in Nepal suffer daily from extreme human rights abuses – sex trafficking, sexual and physical abuse, child labour, and discrimination due to gender, caste and HIV/Aids. Asha is fighting for women's social status to be raised, to help victims break free from this vicious, violent circle



Kalimpong Project – North East India

(by Robin Hamilton, Rotary Club of Dunbar, Scotland)

In Newsletter No 34 (Nov 2012), there was an article on Kalimpong Shelter Home explaining the background to the construction of a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) and a Shelter Home (SH) in Kalimpong. The latter is a town in East Bengal, NE India bordering China in the north, Nepal in the west, Bhutan in the east and Bangladesh in the South.

The VTC will be used to train those in need (within the community) in new vocational skills and is partly complete. So far this has been funded by NE India Churches. The SH is to be built on the first floor for the survivors of trafficking. These residents will also use the VTC facilities to be trained in new skills before going back into the community. Together the project will be comprise of a Multi-Purpose Skills Development Centre which has been successful in other countries.

Since the last article, there have been a number of developments which have resulted in funding changes within the project.

In discussions with Rotary International, District 1020 (Scotland), Kalimpong Rotary Club, District 3240 (India) and NE India Churches, it has been agreed the best way forward is to put the funding effort into completing the first phase, ie the VTC and getting it functional. District 1020 has agreed to committing \$22k to this stage. RI have stated that a matching Global Grant would cover most if not all outstanding items to get the VTC functional. RI have also commented that the scheme appears to be "*a wonderful and worthy project*"

12 Rotary clubs in three countries, plus the Indian Club (Kalimpong) and District have also committed to help in the project. So funding for the VTC is not far of completion.

All partners envisage the VTC and SH as being an integrated project (Multi-Purpose Skill Centre) being carried out in 2 phases. In other words, for the project to be fully operational, it needs the ground floor first phase VTC to be functional before the second phase SH can be carried out

The outstanding work to get the VTC operational is \$73,804. This is made up as follows:-

	\$
Complete security fencing, water supply, drainage and wiring	25,752
Furnishings (eg tables, chairs, furniture etc)	12,701
Equipment (computers, printers, fax etc)	7,895
Vehicle (for use in transporting guests, staff etc)	14,035
Training Equipment (eg courses on wiring, handicraft, welding, animal husbandry etc)	13,421

- NB a) Staff costs will be funded by NE Churches India/Indian government
b) Training in vocational skills will be available for those in the community and for resident survivors

A PLEA FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE

We are urgently in need of support for either the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) or the Shelter Home (SH). To complete the SH will cost \$72,000 as explained in previous article. Any funds put to the VTC allows funds already secured to be used for SH. Please help us with funding in this very worthwhile project

Clubs which have participated in specific completed Action Group Projects (2009-2013)

England: Norwich St Edmund, Ipswich, Norwich, Diss & District, Littleport, North Walsham, Swaffham & District, Harleston & District, Wiveliscombe & District, South Holland, Peterborough Orton, Stevenage Grange.

USA: West Chester Downtown, Great Valley (formerly Exton Frazer), Kennett Square, Frankford North East, Longwood, Cedar Rapids, Honolulu, Washington DC, Annapolis

India: Mumbai Boravali East, Pratapgarh

Czech Republic: Hluboka nad Vitovou

France: Reims St Remi

Germany: Mainz 50° Nord

Nigeria: Ibadan Akabo

New Zealand: Mangere, Dunedin Central

Australia: Walkerville, Munno Para, Endeavour Hills, Swan Hill

Canada: Pentican

Notes:

- a) The above clubs have participated in specific projects, initiated by the Action Group. The projects have been completed at a total cost of just over US\$100,000.
- b) Included in the total sum are donations made by individual Rotarians. Rather than publishing their names, their gifts have been included as a contribution from their club.
- c) Also included are donations from non-Rotary organizations and individuals. These donations come from the Guy Gundaker Foundation, Sutton Methodist Church, the Catholic Cathedral of Norwich and the Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Poringland.
- d) There are several clubs which have recently started to work on anti-human trafficking issues. If it is possible to quantify the sums raised and spent on completed projects, it would be useful for those sums/clubs to be acknowledged and added to the RAG existing and costed record of activities.
- e) Funds are also being held by the RAG's Treasurer on behalf of future anticipated projects. The Treasurer has asked that the names of these clubs be recorded. Contributions from the Rotary Clubs of Stevenage Grange, Swaffham & District, Croydon South and Littleport (1 clubs in the UK).

NB It is highly possible that our records are incomplete. If your club has been accidentally excluded from the above list, please let one of the Action Group officers know so that your club's name will be included on the next listing.

Polaris Project and the Trafficking Hotline

Our RAG's Coordinator, Dick Eisenach (Phoenix, Arizona) who is covering the Americas, has been successfully liaising with a number of large anti-human trafficking organizations. As a result of one of his discussions with Polaris Project, our RAG has been asked by that organization's Executive Director and CEO, Bradley Miles, to help him in his task of extending Polaris's National Hotline (888-373-7888) internationally.

This initiative is being helped by Google's generosity. Earlier this year this Newsletter reported that Google's non-profit arm had announced that three organizations would each be receiving \$3 million in grants. All of these organizations are focused on setting up human trafficking helplines to help identify potential victims and provide them with support, no matter where in the world.

The three organizations - Polaris Project, Liberty Asia and La Strada International – have now started to work together to form a "Global Human Trafficking Hotline"

The hope is that for these organizations they can collect data from all local helpline services to be able to view patterns and triangulate the hotspots in the world that are most egregious.

It is envisaged that our RAG's help will be achieved in two ways:

First, to assist in advertising the Hotline's availability to those who need it.

Second, to help in expanding the reach of the global Hotline by interfacing it with other lesser hotlines around the globe so as to form a seamless transmission network worldwide.

Watch this space !

Facebook and Marmite

by Harry Payne, RAG Secretary

In these days of 'easier' communication it is somehow surprising that 'information' does not always find its intended destination. Part of our (RAG) remit calls on us to Create an Awareness and share the 'bad' news about Child Slavery as widely as we can. Therefore our Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery, relies upon as many people as possible being aware of the problem of Child Slavery, and passing that information on.

To that end we use word of mouth, somewhat limiting. Then we have our regular Newsletter, a copy of which is mailed to all our Rotarian supporters, including the full members of the Rotarian Action Group. This we encourage our readers to share and pass on to friends. Another method of communication is our Website. This is open to all, and carries useful information and downloads etc.

Moving on, for the last six months or so we have had a Facebook Page. This carries relevant postings, comments and links. It is updated almost on a daily basis. This, like the website is open, to Rotarian and non Rotarian alike. After all Child Slavery is not solely a Rotary problem. It is one that affects, dare we say humanity, on a global basis.

Facebook, I guess is like Marmite. You either like it, or loathe it. For the likers, this is for you, the loathers will have left us a while back. Facebook does aid communication and spreads whatever it is you are posting. We aim to make these responsible and informative postings. So for those of you who are using Facebook I encourage you to take a look at our page. You can find it at Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery. No mistakes there, it is who we are. I will say, it is a Page. That is, it is not an open or closed Group. I am told the Page format is better for our type of application and usage than a Group. You are able and encouraged to comment on Postings, you can if you wish make postings yourself. Just be aware they will appear as a 'Page' posting and may not look quite as you expected. There is a facility where you can tick "Liked", and you will then receive notice of postings. In doing that, it will help to spread the news of our Anti-Child Slavery work further afield. So why not give our Facebook page a try, and please, tick the Like area.

Communication – Rotarian Action Group Style

by Harry Payne, RAG Secretary

Here is reality, 27 million slaves world wide, with just over 9 million of them children. Here we are, as the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery, having to step carefully who in Rotary circles we may contact to spread this news. I have to say, and rightly so ! Here is why. There are roughly 1.25 million Rotarians. I hesitate to think how many projects, good causes and appeals on the move within Rotary at any one time. But if it was open season using the contact details database of Rotary International, could you imagine the carnage? However it will not happen. Rotary International has a policy that, if observed, will keep us all sane and stop our mail inbox going into overload.

With our recognition as a Rotarian Action Group by Rotary International in January, there came a whole lot of instructions on how to use our privileged position responsibly. There is a procedure we must follow to contact any Rotary Club regarding the promotion of our Anti-Child Slavery activities. We must first write to the relevant District Governor seeking his/her permission to contact the Clubs in his/her District. The DG list is provided, password protected, by RI. If the Governor should say NO! then that is it for the year, no contact with clubs, unless there is a change of mind.

If on the other hand we get an affirmative reply, a copy of the reply is lodged with Rotary International. In return we get a list of the Club Presidents' contact details for that particular District. The permission lasts for a Rotary Year and then the permission process starts again, with the new District Governor.

Having written to the Governors we get quite an assortment of responses. Some Governors decide all contacts with Clubs will pass through them, if they decide the information relevant. Others like all Club Mailing to go through their District Secretary. Others have chosen to give a flat 'no contact may be made'. Then there are those who choose not to reply at all.

Okay it makes communication a little more difficult but not impossible. Importantly it ensures the Club President does not become overburdened with appeals, requests and projects to follow, the kind of thing in itself that can have a negative effect.

Where Rotarians have stated an interest in our activities (including those who have signed up as supporters) we intend to maintain regular contact, offering an open invitation to become paid up members of the RAG when the time is ripe.

Mark Little
RC of Norwich St Edmund
District 1080, England
3 August 2013

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