



Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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

“It is not easy to crush the human mind, but with enough brutality, time and indifference to suffering, it can be done. Around the world it is being done” (Kevin Bales)



Slave traders attack Trafficking Shelter



30 Filipino girls, destined for Syria, were rescued from Traffickers by Visayan Forum and the Philippines Police Department of Justice in 2013

Imagine being a survivor of human slavery, only to find yourself being abducted back into captivity by the very people who enslaved you in the first place.

This is what happened to 16 women and girls who were snatched from a safe house in the Philippines a few weeks ago.

As a result of a recent rescue operation in the southern Philippines, 27 women and girls were given protection at a safe house, called the Centre of Hope, which is run by the Visayan Forum Foundation.

This organization was established in 1991 to protect, liberate and empower marginalised migrants, especially women and

children and is widely regarded for its innovative solutions to ending modern day slavery.

A few days after the rescue, a group of traffickers tore down the gate of the Centre and took 16 of the survivors away with them before the police could intervene. Fortunately the rest of the residents of the safe house escaped from the attackers and have since been relocated to another safe house where they are recovering from their traumatic experience.

The Visayan Forum, which is partnered by “Walk Free”, is determined to ensure that this never happens again,

but in the short-term the Centre of Hope desperately needs repairs and resources to improve security.

RACSRAG understands that 100% of the funds raised will be used to repair what was damaged and to make improvements, such as building stronger gates, that will prevent such a thing from happening again.

[Will you help protect rescued women and girls, by making a donation today?](#)

Clicking on the above hyperlink will enable you to donate via **Walk Free’s** relevant website.



Manny Pacquiao, Filipino World Boxing Champion, visits Centre of Hope in 2013

Walk Free Movement and RACSRAG

Earlier this month preliminary talks were held in London between RACSRAG officers and the Walk Free Movement with a view to forming a working relationship between our two organizations. In the past few years, this Newsletter has encouraged its readers on a number of occasions to support several of Walk Free’s campaigns against those businesses and governments involved in the exploitation of people working in various industries. Recent examples of this initiative include the campaign against the use of children and adults working in the cotton fields of Uzbekistan and in the Thai seafood industry.

For the benefit of our new readers, Walk Free is an organization attempting to end contemporary slavery and human trafficking by mobilizing a global activist movement to affect change in those countries and industries which bear the greatest responsibility for slavery today.



RACSRAG meets Walk Free



Editorial

First of all my apologies for the delay in issuing this Newsletter. My excuse is that I was stranded, along with a small RACSRAG team of Rotarians at Kathmandu Airport when a Turkish plane crash landed on the airport runway and closed the airport for several days, which delayed our return home.

After that delay, with a family holiday and another lengthy Rotary trip away from home, the last few weeks has just been about catching-up time, with answering members' requests, making several child slavery presentations and attending previously arranged meetings.

As you will note from Kate Secker's article on the next page, the RACSRAG team first spent some time in India in February before going to Nepal in March to visit various Trafficking Shelters.

Apart from the satisfaction of participating in another NID, helping to build a reservoir in a village in Harana and meeting old and making new Rotary friends, the thrill of meeting up with a former child survivor of slavery, who I had not seen for 10 years, was a very special moment for me.

Basu Rai was a former resident of Mukti Ashram, a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre, near Delhi. I had last seen him in 2005, when I had been invited to the Ashram to open the new toilets, new wash rooms and new medical centre which my club and others had funded with the help of the Rotary Club of Delhi North West.

Basu is now 26 years of age and is an author. His book "From the Streets of

Kathmandu" tells the story of his survival on the streets of the Nepalese capital and his stay at Mukti Ashram. He now devotes his life to warning the public about the dangers from human traffickers via the medium of street acts. He tells me that in order to achieve this aim, he needs to form an NGO and obtain the approval of the relevant authorities.

I have always known that the Rotary Club of Delhi Megapolis is an especially caring club, but I was nevertheless ecstatic when the Club agreed to allow Basu to tell his story to the visiting and Delhi Rotarians. I was delighted that the Club agreed to advise and support Basu's objectives of creating an NGO. Thank you, members of the Rotary Club of Delhi Megapolis for offering help to Basu.

Our RACSRAG team's trip to Nepal was very rewarding, especially our visits to Asha Nepal and Maiti Nepal. My heartfelt thanks to Smriti Khadka, the Manager of Asha Nepal, who spent several days with the team showing us around Asha Nepal and Kathmandu and even introducing us to other NGOs, such as Shakti Samuha and Shakti Kendra. Smriti also introduced us to the staff of a newish NGO called Kumudini Nepal (see page 10 of the Newsletter).

My special thanks also goes to Bishwo Ram Khadka, Director of Maiti Nepal and Anuradha Koirala, the Founder of Maiti Nepal, for allowing the RACSRAG team to shelter at Maiti Nepal whilst we awaited an available flight back home, after the reopening of Kathmandu Airport. Also our thanks go to Flora Gurung,

the Headmistress, for showing us around her school. What a bonus it was for the team to stay those extra days at Maiti Nepal. More about Maiti Nepal in the next Newsletter.

On the first page of this Newsletter I refer to the possibility of RACSRAG working with Walk Free to combat slavery and human trafficking.

As I told the audience at the RIBI Conference in Belfast earlier this month, we have about 220 supporters in the UK, who receive this Newsletter. We would like some more supporters, but better still paid up members.

If and when the call comes to partner with Walk Free on anti-trafficking campaigns, please will you consider taking a more active role in the fight against the traffickers and the slave masters, if not abroad, at least in this country.

I also pointed out to the delegates in Belfast that according to Walk Free's Global Slavery Index, there are at least 8,000 people enslaved in the UK. The Home Office believes that the numbers enslaved in the UK is more likely to be between 10,000 and 13,000.

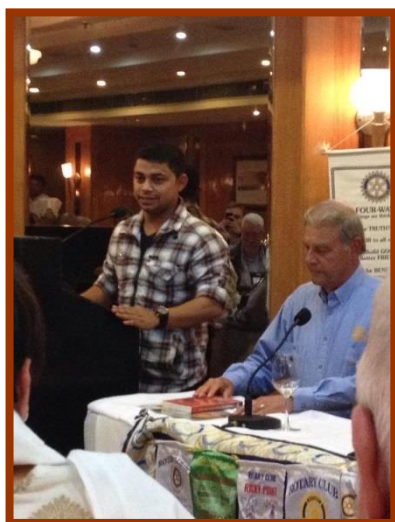
Incidentally if you want someone to come along to your club or District to talk about the issue of human trafficking and slavery, think about asking someone from Walk Free as an alternative to a member of RACSRAG.

Please note on page 5 of the Newsletter what Walk Free has already achieved at certain District Conferences in Australia.



"If we are neutral in situations of injustice, we have already chosen the side of the oppressor"

(Desmond Tutu)



Basu Rai speaking at the Rotary Club of Delhi Megapolis – Feb 2015



An active voice for the innocent child

by Kate Secker, President Elect, RC of Norwich St Edmund, District 1080, England

Dream Team – India..... On route to visit various Anti-Slavery Organizations in Nepal the “Little Team” from District 1080, England, joined the Rotary Dream Team of 2015 in Delhi, India to assist with polio immunisation and also to work on the foundations of a new reservoir in Haryana.

Polio immunisation.....Action Group members Mark Little, Heather Babb, and I together with Mark’s Grandson Kieran John, set off for India on 19th February. In Delhi we joined up with Rotarians from the USA, Canada and Germany to form the Dream Team lead by PDG Elias Thomas from Maine USA and Rtn Sanjiv Saran from the Rotary Club of Delhi Megapolis. On Sunday 22nd February we assisted Indian Rotarians and health workers on the national polio immunisation programme in a rural community in Pataudi, Mewat District. Some of the families had up to 14 children and the older children brought their younger siblings to have the two polio immunisation drops. The 26 Rotarians gave over 2,500 children the polio drops in a day that nationally immunised over 100 million children. It was an amazing experience to help with the immunisation programme and to know that Rotary International continues to assist India in remaining Polio free.



Reservoir – Ramnagar Village.....The next four days were spent working on the foundations of a new reservoir at Ramnagar Village, Gurgaon, Haryana. The funds for this project, estimated to cost \$45,000, result from a successful Global Grant application. All the Ramnagar villagers came to meet the Dream Team and there was music and dancing to escort the team from the coach down a dirt track to our campsite. There was no carrying equipment such as wheelbarrows on the reservoir site and so the Dream Team formed human chains to pass the bricks, sand and cement in bowls to the local tradesmen to prepare the footings. The reservoir was designated a place of worship and will be completed by July. A total of 3 villages with a population of 4,500 will benefit from the new source of clean drinking water.



Former child slave turned author.....In Delhi we met Basu Rai, a former child slave who had been rescued nearly two decades ago from the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal and rehabilitated at Mukti Ashram, a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre near Delhi. This is where RAG Chair, Mark Little, met Basu on several occasions between 2001-2005. Basu is now an author and his book “From the Streets of Kathmandu” tells of his various experiences surviving on the streets of the Nepalese capital. He was one of the youngest children to be involved in the “Global March against Child Slavery” at the age of nine. Basu is determined to dedicate his time to establish an NGO to raise awareness of the issues of modern slavery and sex trafficking. Basu is developing awareness programmes to deliver as street theatre in rural Indian towns and villages. Having lived on the streets, he knows the dangers and consequences of all forms of trafficking and the success of his NGO will depend on funding support from charities and Rotary. The Megapolis Rotary Club in Delhi are actively looking at ways to support Basu with his new NGO.



Kate, Basu and Heather meet in a Delhi Hotel in India – Feb 2015

A passive or active member of RACSRAG?.....I am a member of RACSRAG because I have been inspired by Mark Little who is Chair of the Action Group and has tirelessly campaigned on behalf of the trafficked children. In December 2014 he was invited by the Home office to see how our Action Group can help the various agencies to implement the new measures contained in the UK Modern Slavery Act. In March 2015 Mark was acknowledged by Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland as a “Champion of Change” for his dedicated action against child slavery. When Mark said he was going to visit various Trafficking Shelters in Nepal I did not hesitate to join “The Little Team”. My experience of visiting these Shelters, ie Asha Nepal, Shakti Samuha, Shakti Kendra and Maiti Nepal has been one that moves me from being an inactive member of RAGS to one who is determined to be more focused and proactive.



An active voice for the innocent child (cont'd)

by Kate Secker



“If we are going to stop slavery, we must first convince the world that human rights need even more protection than property rights”

(Kevin Bales)



Maiti Nepal staff checking vehicles for potential trafficked victims near Kathmandu with the help of police

How much is a child worth?.....The work undertaken by anti-slavery organizations is essential and only the lucky children to be rescued are supported and given the opportunity to have a childhood. On the RACSRAG web page is a clip showing an interview with a trafficker who admits that he would not hesitate to kill a child if that child tried to escape or became seriously ill. The trafficker admits to killing at least 400 children and disposing of the bodies in diverse graves. Maiti Nepal has its own legal department to prosecute traffickers but it can take 18 months for a case to reach the court. It is difficult to get a conviction as the child has to stand in the court room and be cross examined in front of the trafficker. However, the photo on the left, which I noticed on the wall of Maiti Nepal shows that the organization has achieved several successful convictions in the past.

Exponential profit for a trafficker.....Unfortunately, there are not sufficient deterrents across the world to prevent this lucrative inhuman business from incrementally growing. Once a trafficker has kidnapped a child they can sell that child over and over again. They need no investment and all transactions are profit based. The child is deprived of his or her childhood and lives in silent fear. There is ongoing heartbreak for an increasing number of families as they never know what has happened to their child because the reality is that very few children are reunited with their families.

The Nepalese Professionals.....The Mark Little team left Delhi on 28th February to fly to Kathmandu to visit Asha Nepal, Shakti Samuha, Shakti Kendra and Maiti Nepal. The children at Asha Nepal had been rehearsing a programme of cultural dances and songs in anticipation of our visit. Their performances were wonderful and they included comedy scripts spoken in perfect English. At Maiti Nepal, over 450 children did an impromptu dance routine to welcome our group. What was so special about the performances was the excitement and enjoyment of the children. The professional support the children have at each stage of their recovery is vital to their confidence and courage to face the future.

Women with Vision..... During my visits to the Nepalese Trafficking Shelters, I met some of the most inspirational women who spend their lives working to prevent child and sex trafficking. They are born leaders who have vision and produce amazing outcomes with limited resources. For example, Anuradha Koirala, the Founder of Maiti Nepal, started with a single room and has inspired the development of a Trafficking Shelter which provides holistic support for hundreds of children who have been trafficked and rescued from slavery. Maiti Nepal has permanent accommodation, transition centres, education and skill centres and a Hospice. Maiti Nepal has responded to the sophisticated ways that child traffickers have developed and has staff supported by the local police who stand on the main artery roads leaving Nepal to check every motor bike, car, truck, bus for children who are being trafficked with false papers. Once a child has left their country of origin it is extremely difficult for that the child to be rescued. India will repatriate children to Nepal but countries such as China do not have the same agreement.

A Rescued Child.....In the event a child is rescued they are initially taken to a transition centre to ensure there is immediate professional support. Our team noticed at Maiti Nepal those children who had recently been rescued and their body language was of a child lacking confidence and with no social interaction. The children are traumatised and need several months of care before they are able to be integrated into the centre structure. When they join the School the subjects are taught in English and there can be up to 46 children in a class. The children we spoke to, had a thirst for knowledge and education and the older children were empowered and full of hope and excited about the world they faced with the dreams of being successful professionals. The aim for the Ashrams is for the child to have sufficient skills to be able to find employment and a sustainable income. For the children who were rescued with serious illnesses they would be allowed to live their shortened lives in dignity in the hospice.

Support in the Community.....My reality check from my visit to the Nepalese Trafficking Shelters was the pressure they are under to maintain their existing services and to have sufficient resources to work on awareness and prevention. They also need to support the children when they return to the community to prevent the threats of drugs and prostitution if there is no regular income or a break down in relationships. The Ashrams have no Government safety net and are totally reliant on funding from charities. It would help if they could have income based business plans that secured their funding for the next 3 – 5 years.



Walk Free helps out at Australian District Conferences

Report by Gillian Booth, RACSRAG Coordinator for Western Australia

At the Rotary International District 9455 Conference recently held in March in Perth, Ms Jacqueline Joudo Larsen representing The Walk Free Foundation, gave an engrossing presentation entitled "Slavery: A 2020 Challenge for our World".

Contrary to popular belief, slavery did not stop with the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The very knowledgeable speaker advised that, in fact, there are more people now under the yoke (< 35 million) of modern day slavery than ever before. We learned that modern slavery is more than just poverty. It is the exploitation of poverty where one person removes the freedom of another. Modern day slavery takes many forms including human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, child soldiers, forced marriages and the like. Indeed, any situation where an individual lives in fear, suffers exploitation and has no way of escape is defined as modern day slavery.

Ms Larsen confirmed that modern day slavery is a global problem, existing in underdeveloped, developing and even developed countries such as Australia. Whereas in Australia there were a few thousand cases over the past decade, in its many incarnations slavery is particularly rife in Asia.

Walk Free Foundation works to identify the countries and industries where these practices are endemic and to identify and implement with partners, interventions that will have the greatest positive impact. Ms Larsen explained that Walk Free believes the path to ending modern day slavery involves building broad based public support for legislative, corporate and social policy change and enforcement.

This was a thought provoking presentation that sensitised the audience to a disturbing and growing reality that needs to be addressed

Report by Tony Stokes, RACSRAG Coordinator for Victoria, Australia

A keynote speaker at the Rotary District 9810 Conference on 13th -15th March 2015 was Fiona David, Executive Director of Global Research, Walk Free Foundation. District 9810 is centred on the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, and the Conference, held in the Victorian Regional City of Ballarat, was attended by approximately 500 Rotarians, partners and friends.

The Walk Free Foundation is an initiative of Hope for Children Organization Ltd, a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Perth, Western Australia headed by mining magnate Andrew Forrest. It is committed to ending all forms of modern slavery.

In her presentation, Fiona gave an overview of modern slavery in its many forms, backed up with some graphic images of modern day slaves, many of whom were children. She highlighted that one of the many consequences of child slavery was the denial of the basic right to an education, one of the 6 areas of Rotary focus.

Following the Conference, further discussions were held with Fiona regarding exploring areas of shared interest between Walk Free and Rotary, and the possibility of Walk Free collaborating with the Rotarian Action Group in supporting projects. These possibilities are currently being explored between RACSRAG representatives and a Walk Free Director based in London.

The Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery had an information stand in the House of Friendship at the Conference which attracted a high level of interest with many delegates wanting to know more about the Group

A further report from Down Under

Report by Teresa Evans, RACSRAG Coordinator for South Australia

Following from the International Rotary Convention in Sydney, each state in Australia nominated a representative to support this initiative. In South Australia (SA), a small and determined group formed, having their first meeting on 21 August 2014. They meet every other month in a nice pub just north of Adelaide, over a casual dinner on a Thursday evening.

Let's meet the current members of the group:

- Teresa Evans, RC Walkerville (Coordinator)
- Russell Green, ADG Group 5 and RC Walkerville (Treasurer)
- Val Kirk, RC Walkerville
- Dennis Underwood, RC Salisbury
- Francesca Costa, RC Regency Park
- Chad Horton, RC Adelaide EDGE

There has been interest shown from other Rotarians and some have come along to meetings and shown their support. You don't have to be a Rotarian to be in this group. We welcome anyone who shares our passion in wanting to end child slavery.

The group supports the RACSRAG's objectives in raising awareness of the issues around child slavery and fund raising to support RACSRAG's projects.

In the past six months, to raise awareness of child slavery the group:

- has been guest speakers at seven Rotary Clubs across both Districts in SA, and spoken at Kiwanis and Probus clubs. Word is getting out that these are great presentations and there are more scheduled in the future.
- are actively following the RACSRAG Facebook page, sharing the many informative posts.
- produced a tri-fold brochure to hand out at events to raise awareness and promote their group
- has designed and purchased two banners to display at events
- has information stands at the District 9500 and 9520 Conferences in Port Lincoln and Ballarat.

The group has raised just over \$8,000 by hosting a Rock Night (local rock band at RSL hall), Movie Sunday (12 Years a Slave), Music for Freedom Concert (local music students performance), garage sales and fairs (selling goods donated from the community) BBQ sausage sizzles, and selling chocolates. It's amazing how quickly it all adds up.

These fabulous achievements are testimony to what a small team can do a bit of passion and hint of commitment.

If you want to know more about what this group has done, or be part of its future plans, please contact Teresa Evans at teresa@racsrag.org

Projects requiring Funds

Kalimpong Project: by Robin Hamilton, RC of Dunbar, District 1020, Scotland

How did it start?....In 2012 at a church twinning meeting in Dunbar, Scotland two Rotarians met, one from Kalimpong, NE India (Dr Miku Foning) and the other from Dunbar Scotland (Robin Hamilton). Both are Past Presidents of their respective Rotary Clubs. Robin asked Miku the simple question “**is there any way we can help you**”. Three years later we have a Rotary Foundation Global Grant for Phase 1 of the project and are now starting to gather funds for Phase 2

What is the project about?.....The Kalimpong Project is an integrated approach to giving both vocational training (phase 1) to those vulnerable people in the community and to providing shelter (phase 2) for women and girls rescued from slavery. It is in NEt India near the border with Nepal & China

Phase 1 - Vocational Training Centre (VTC)

Funds have recently been obtained to complete the VTC building (started by NE India Churches). Phase 1 involves the installation of water supply, sanitation, security fencing and the provision of admin and training equipment, furnishings for the building and a vehicle. It will be used to train those vulnerable sections of the community (including trafficked women & children) identified by a needs assessment carried out by the Kalimpong Rotary Club, the Churches of NE India & local communities and their leaders. The training will include: *animal husbandry, horticulture, electrical wiring, tailoring, computers, masonry, plumbing, welding, bee keeping and handicrafts.*

The VTC has been funded by 13 Rotary Clubs (Scotland, England & Czech Republic)

3 Rotary Districts, 4 individual contributions and a Rotary Foundation Global Grant.

This all amounts to a total of **\$69,000**. The NE Indian churches and the Kalimpong Rotary Club will manage the project with help from local colleges, NGOs and community organisations. The RC of Dunbar is the lead international partner.

Work has already started on the VTC (see photos)

Phase 2 - Shelter

Phase 2 will provide involve the construction of a Shelter Home on top of the VTC thus creating an integrated building to enable those women and children rescued from trafficking to have a safe haven (top floor) and to use the training facilities provided in phase 1(bottom floor). This will enable them to retrain in a vocational skill and which will get them back to work in the community

Estimated costs for Phase 2

Shelter Home Building **\$72,000** (from Architects estimate)

Shelter Home furnishings/equipment **\$20, 000** (detailed estimate)

Some funds have already been committed by Rotary Clubs for Phase 2 but more is needed

The Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery has helped with support for Phase 1 and is now using its network of Rotarians to encourage others to support Phase 2. It is also hoped that Rotary Foundation will assist with grants for Phase 2

If your club is willing to help it would be great. Please contact either Mark Little, Chair of RACSRAG mark.little@btinternet.com or Robin Hamilton Dunbar Rotary Club robin.ham@virgin.net

School4Freedom Update: by Carol Metzker, One World Rotary e-Club

Thanks to you, our fundraising tally for a School4Freedom continues to increase. We're now up to the count of freeing 40 people—more than a third of the way to our goal of 100 villagers. Special thanks go to the Rotary Club of Marin Sunrise for its generous \$1,000 gift, the RC of Mumbai Boravali East for its pledge of \$500, the gift of a child's freedom from a member of the Vastervik Rotary Club and a group of Clubs in Australia that collaborated for fun and fundraising.

School4Freedom Update: by Carol Metzker, One World Rotary e-Club (Cont'd)

Why this Project is So Important ?

In the last RACSRAG newsletter, readers learned of pleas from Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and Basu Rai, a survivor of child slavery who stayed at Mukti Ashram in India. They asked for help to end child slavery in India and elsewhere. Like many other activists, survivors and abolitionists, Basu Rai asserted that education is key to solving modern slavery. In fact, in 2004 when Mark and I visited the Ashram and met Basu, a sign proclaimed: *"No more tools in tiny hands. Give them books. Give them toys."*

Rotarians and their clubs have an opportunity to respond to those pleas by joining in RACSRAG's School4Freedom project. Beginning by building a school and teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to children in an enslaved village in India, the three-year venture includes teaching villagers vocational skills for income and about human rights they have been denied in slavery. The process culminates with villagers self-organizing to demand their own freedom from slaveholders and having the ability to sustain that freedom for future generations

FAQs: Additional Information You Have Requested

Q. Who are Rotary's partners in this project ?

A. Voices4Freedom and MSEMVS

Since its founding in 2012, the non-profit Voices4Freedom (V4F) has completed three Schools4Freedom projects and have started two more. At their previous organization, the founders of V4F completed four S4F projects. The group in India that does the field work (which cannot be done by Westerners) is called MSEMVS. Over their many years, they have built 14 schools and eradicated slavery in 130 villages. MSEMVS' director, Bhanuja Sharan Lal, received the 2014 Global Anti-Slavery Trafficking In Person Hero Award from the U.S. State Department.

Q. What is the location of the village we will free ?

A. The village will be in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India.

The exact village will be chosen after our fundraising is completed.

V4F strategically chooses and works with villages in clusters. The closer they are to other villages that are free or working toward freedom, the stronger they will be as they support each other. The concepts of education, jobs and freedom become stronger when they are understood and practiced by many villages in an area.

V4F knows which villages are next to begin the process of freedom. When our funds are raised, we will help whichever village is next in line (in the queue).

Most Recent Donors

Rotary Club of Marin Sunrise, Arnfinn Soll, member of Västervik Rotary Club, and son John (10 years old)

Gift in honor of Chuck Garfinkle, member of the Rotary Club of West Chester and other small gifts from clubs in District 7450,

Rotary Clubs of Walkerville, Adelaide Edge, and Regency Park (D9500) and Glenelg Club (D9520), Australia

RC of Mumbai Boravali East, India

Will you provide funds to free a child? Please contact Mark Little, mark@racsrag.org, or Carol Metzker, echmetzker@aol.com.

Projects requiring Funds (Cont'd)

The Encuentro Project: by Valeria Galletti, RC of Roma Cassia, District 2080

The Encuentro Project was started in 2000 in the Puyo Pastaza Region of Ecuador, on the border of the Amazon rainforest, by the Spanish Bishop Rafael Cob García. It concerns children and adolescents at risk in this particular region of Ecuador. The socio-economic situation of the poorest representatives of the local population, consisting of almost 100% indigenous inhabitants, is of absolute precariousness and destitution. The children are the ones who face the highest risks.

To escape hunger and malnutrition, many villagers leave the forest and choose urban life in the city of Puyo, 4 hours from Quito, the capital of Ecuador. If children are fortunate, their parents manage to find a job, but it happens rarely. The transition from life in the forest to urban environment almost always ends in alcohol abuse and even the few lucky parents soon abandon their work. Children become the only means of survival for the household, frequently run by a single parent, because the other parent is in prison for violence, sexual abuse of children or drugs. The new partners do not give children better treatment. Already five-year olds can find a "job" more easily than adults, by selling ice cream, shining shoes, or even worse, working in factories or on construction sites, and especially in prostitution. Practically, it is their parents who sell them to criminal organizations from which they receive compensation, in any case very low. However, at times children themselves run away from abuse and family violence, ending up as victims of youth gangs that use them for prostitution or as drug couriers.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2003 more than 5,000 children were sexually exploited in Ecuador. The latest data of the ILO reports that in 2014, 8.8% of the population aged 5 to 17 fell victim of the exploitation forms listed in the above paragraph. In 2005, the US State Department expressed an adverse opinion on Ecuadorian legislation due to lack of policies and programs to prevent human trafficking. Starting in 2006, things have changed slightly because the Congress passed a law against child trafficking. Yet the situation still leaves much to be desired: for example there is no Ecuadorian law that defines the crime of paedophilia as a specific form of sexual violence against children; such crime falls under interfamilial sexual abuse or incest as aggravating the sexual offense for profit. In Ecuador, each year 20,000 cases of underage mothers are reported, equal to 6.5% of births in the country, which occur as a result of rapes in the family. In Quito, there are more than 1,000 children and / or adolescents living a situation of sexual exploitation, with an average of 7.3 children and / or adolescents present in 184 local sex trade facilities present in the Ecuadorian capital. Although Ecuadorian law prescribes the closure of brothels that use minors, when this occurs, after a very short time the facilities are reopened. Often children are also used in the production of paedo-pornographic materials. On a global scale, Ecuador is known as one of the first places in the world for the distribution of child pornography. According to the Central Bureau of Interpol in Ecuador, on a local scale this activity is the second most lucrative crime after drug trafficking.

In this difficult scenario the Encuentro Project aims at prevention of child trafficking, intervening in cases of abuse or exploitation by families. Encuentro Center, led by four Dominican sisters, a psychologist and rotating volunteers, is in charge of finding other accommodation for children at risk of exploitation. It hosts them at daytime, providing schooling and, for older children, professional training. The project receives no subsidy from the State. Although occasionally it gets some help from the City of Puyo, especially in the form of volunteer work, the funds predominantly come from donations from Spain, Germany and the United States. Overall, the financial aid is very limited and the biggest problem is feeding 151 children that attend the Encuentro Center. Until two years ago the State was financing 30% of the costs for food for 40% of children, then it suspended the aid for private structures. A group of Rotary Clubs in District 2080 has funded the creation of a garden that not only provides fruits and vegetables that complement the children's meals (consisting of a small breakfast, lunch and until some time ago a snack, lately suspended due to economic difficulties), but also trains future farmers in the production of organic food. The poor families that host children for the night for a modest fee are not in the condition to feed them, so most of them do not get to have dinner. Some income also comes from the activity of professional training workshops in the field of carpentry and mechanics, whose products are purchased by the Diocese of Puyo itself. The tailoring is at a loss. Participants in vocational programs are at least 16 years old and the activity is carried out after the end of the school cycle. Usually the boys who reached 18 years of age are working and leave the center with which they maintain a solid and close relationship. The PDG of Rotary District 2080, Luciano Di Martino, has traveled to Ecuador and visited the center. He was very impressed by the capabilities of the organization and has personally donated \$15,000 for the purchase of modern machinery.

In short, a good project that prevents child slavery is, unfortunately, always hovering between staying open and closing due to the economic situation. With the current crisis that determines numerous risks and uncertainty, especially concerning children's nutrition, providing three meals a day for 151 children is a strong and ineluctable commitment.

Projects requiring Funds (Cont'd)

Kumudini Nepal: by Pooja Mahato

In Nepal, forty-two percent of the population is under eighteen years of age and almost half of them comprise of girls. A majority of them live in rural areas. Due to gender discrimination and socio-economic structure, girls are curtailed of opportunities to blossom to their full potential. In absence of protection mechanism, girls are likely to face abuse, harassment, exploitation and neglect from an early age. With the objective of creating a protective environment for girl children (vulnerable and victims of abuse/exploitation), Kumudini, an NGO, has been established in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2014.

'Kumudini' (white night lotus) blossoms during the time of darkness personifying beauty and dignity. We believe that every girl child, particularly those subjected to abuse and exploitation should excel and live a fearless life with strength and dignity. The organization has been established by a pool of experts with an extensive experience of working with abused, exploited and trafficked children. It is a collective initiative of the group to complement each other's knowledge and skills to provide quality of care and protection to the victims subjected to abuse and exploitation and at the same time work with vulnerable groups on prevention.

The team consists of a trafficking survivor, psychosocial counsellor, case manager, child protection specialist, anti-trafficking specialist, medical professional and a finance administrator.

At present, Kumudini is running libraries in collaboration with other NGOs and government schools to help children, particularly girl children, access books for their overall development. It is expected that books enhances their knowledge, improve reading habits and help them have different perspectives in life.

Kumudini is implementing a project to support the care and protection of trafficking victims/survivors, victims of abuse and exploitation in close coordination with government and civil society in Nuwakot district.

Kumudini is planning to conduct life-skills training to children, subjected to sexual exploitation and who were at risk of exploitation and abuse. The life-skills training, based on a manual, developed by an expert with extensive experience of working with abused, exploited and trafficked children, will help girl children develop life-skills to live a life with self-reliance and confidence.

Similarly, Kumudini is planning to provide orientation on social issues to the children and teachers of government schools so that they can prevent themselves and others from trafficking and sexual abuse. We intend to reach schools in a trafficking prone district which are accessed by domestic child workers and children coming from marginalized and poor families.

Kumudini, still in its infancy, needs support to realize its objective and thus has a bucket of wish lists. It is committed to provide different orientations/training to the children from the government schools and shelter homes run by other NGOs. In order to conduct the aforementioned activities, Kumudini also needs administrative support.

Wish list of Kumudini for providing effective services:

		<u>Nepalese Rupees</u>	<u>Pound Sterling</u>
Laptop	- to conduct orientation/training	75,000	503
Projector	- do -	90,000	604
Stationery	- do -	20,000	134
Computer	for administrative work	40,000	268
Cameras (2)	to keep record of events/activities, and one to donate to the government school supported by Kumudini through the library project	65,000	436

NB: It is targeted that 60 children will attain life- skills training and 150 children will be oriented on child protection.



Students in a school library reading books donated by Kumudini



Meeting with villagers (trafficking prone region of Nuwakot) discussing social issues



After meeting with RACSRAG team

Projects requiring Funds (Cont'd)

Boundary Wall extensions at Punarnawa Ashram, Bihar, India: by Lori Fitzmaurice, Development Director, Free the Slaves

Amount requested: US \$8,325

Description and purpose of request: Complete the North & South wall extensions to provide additional security for residents of the Ashram

Background

The absence of a shelter for trafficked girls was acting as a barrier to aggressive law enforcement in Purnea, Bihar State, India. Free the Slaves (FTS) partners were told by police officials that they would raid more brothels to free trafficked young girls if there was a safe place to bring the girls. FTS surveyed the region and determined that there was no safe shelter for the girls in the area. This was the impetus for construction of the Punarnawa Ashram, a group home for girls and young women rescued from the red light districts around Purnea.

Punarnawa provides security, shelter, medical care and psychological support. The school on the campus provides formal education, rights education and vocational training. A small farm is worked by some residents and provides much of the food and energy needs of the Ashram. Residents return to their families only when it is determined that it is safe for them to do so and that they have completed their rights and vocational educations.

Current Project

As young women are liberated from commercial sex work, there was a heightened security concern that residents be safe from traffickers and others who could disrupt their safe reintegration into the community. In order to create a physical barrier to help progress, the Ashram staff have constructed, with Rotary funding, walls that will create a more secure location. This proposal seeks to finish that project by extending the height on the North and South Walls.

Funds raised will be used for the construction costs and administration of the project by MSEMVS staff with a small fraction for wire fees and associated costs with the transmittal of funds.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of this proposal. Questions or additional information requests are welcome.

Editors Note: Newsletter 48 reported on the successful completion of the wall extensions on the east and west sides of Punarnawa Ashram at a cost of US \$18,000. I have had sight of the budgeted costs of this project which show a total cost of 444,700 Indian Rupees. The cost of extending the north side is estimated at 404,700 INR, whilst the south side cost is estimated at 40,000 INR. Since Lori prepared her report in January the Dollar/Indian Rupee rate has changed reducing the US dollar requirement to a little over US\$ 7,000. However the reverse could happen of course.

Wish Lists submitted

Attached as an Annex to this Newsletter is a Wish List from **Asha Nepal**, one of the wonderful Trafficking Shelters visited last month by RACSRAG members. The next Newsletter will contain the Wish Lists of **Maiti Nepal**, another Shelter which is doing extraordinary work in preventing, and rescuing children from slavery and rehabilitating and reintegrating the survivors back into their own homes.

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NB There is vacancy for a Coordinator to cover Queensland.

ANNEXE

Wish List of Asha Nepal – April 2015

S.No	Name of material	Pieces NR	Cost NR	GBP at 145	US\$ at 95
1	Winter Blankets for foster -2 and SEE girls centre	18 x1500	27000	186.21	284.21
2	Carpet for rooms of Asha transitional home for children	4 Rooms	27000	186.21	284.21
3	Bath Towel	42 X 300	12600	86.90	132.63
4	Camera , digital, rechargeable, for case management and job coordination	1 X 17000	17000	117.24	178.95
5	Simple Mobile Phone: for social workers and job coordinator	3 X 10000	30000	206.90	315.79
6	Color printer , for producing, brochures, charts, training documents etc.	10000	35000	241.38	368.42
7	Mixer/ grinder, momo pots, rice cooker For the new SEE Girlscentre and the two foster home kitchens.	3 x 7,000	21,000	144.83	221.05
8	Hoovers for the office, SEE girls centre and the two foster homes	4 x 15000	60000	413.79	631.58
9	Sewing Machine for foster 1 and SEE girls centre	2 X 14000	28000	193.10	294.74
TOTAL			257600.00	1776.55	2711.58
10	Land for development. To create a new rehabilitation centre for up to 30 girls rescued from trafficking and agricultural training for those not able to return to education and wishing to take up seed loans for agricultural self employment to maintain self sufficiency. Keeping geese, goats, chickens, growing shitaki and local mushrooms etc.	2 acres at 5,600,000 per acre	11,200,000	72,258	117894.74

Note: Nos 6, 8 and 9 have just been covered.