

Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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“There is no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children”

(Nelson Mandela)



Girls chopping fish in Indonesia

Good News...Indonesia to end child labour

Indonesia's Manpower Ministry has pledged to phase out all forms of child labour within seven years.

The Ministry says there are more than 1.7 million child labourers in the country, with a quarter working under hazardous conditions. The country's labour laws prohibit those

below 15 years of age and a US\$23 monthly stipend for a year. 1,600 enforcement has been volunteers will be tasked to help these children undergo a two month transition period before they start school. programmes for low-income families.

The Manpower Ministry plans to eradicate child labour by 2022, and this year it aims to pull out 16,000 children from their workplace. They will be enrolled in schools, given school supplies, a uniform

Editor's Note: 30 percent of Indonesia's population (220 million) is under the age of 15,

Good News...11 sentenced in UK for trafficking

Eleven people were sentenced (16 July) for trafficking sex workers from Hungary to Britain, in what the UK Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said was one of the largest sex trafficking cases prosecuted in London. At least 250 sex workers were trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and the case involved 50 brothels in London and Peterborough.

Bad News...8,000 children in Delhi factories

An NGO report reveals that there are over 8,000 children working in garment factories in different parts of Delhi, the capital of India. The report, titled “The Hidden Workforce” by Save the Children, was released last month by the Delhi Minister for Women and Child Development, Sandeep Kumar.

According to the report, over 8,000 children are engaged in the booming garment industry and up to 70% of them could be girls. The report was prepared after researching 14 garment industry hotspots across five districts of Delhi for this purpose. According to Save the Children CEO Thomas Chandy, “It was a difficult process as employers were reluctant to cooperate in the study”



Editorial



“There is no trust more sacred than the one that the world holds with children” (Kofi Annan)

It is useful from time to time to remind ourselves as to why an Action Group of Rotarians against Child Slavery was formed in 2009 by a small group of Rotarians, who believed and still do believe that *“there is no trust more sacred than the one that the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from want and fear and that they grow up in peace”* (Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General)

Yet the reality is that more children than ever before languish in slavery, forced to work, under threat of violence and for no pay.

In Africa, hundreds of thousands are still considered as chattel and slavery is accepted as an everyday social institution whilst on the Indian Sub-Continent millions languish in generational debt bondage. Across the globe, young girls, sold for sex and labour, are already the second most lucrative commodity for organized crime.

Slavery is contrary to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Article 4 states that *“no one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”*. Yet human trafficking, or to use the

correct term, the slave trade, is on the increase

All countries have ratified this Declaration and other human rights conventions, but many governments do not enforce them. It is left to anti-slavery organizations and activist lobby groups to remind, encourage and exhort governments, local authorities and individuals to honour their obligations to protect the human rights of their own citizens.

Whilst, Rotarians have been battling successfully on many fronts against killer diseases, low literacy levels, poverty, lack of water and non-existent sanitation, the struggle to protect the basic human rights of millions of enslaved children, has inexplicably never featured on Rotary International's radar, in spite of several attempts by members to focus the minds of our past RI leaders on this issue.

In the absence of such a lead, the establishment of the unofficial Action Group of Rotarians against Child Slavery was the only option available to those Rotarians who felt strongly that something should be done, at grass roots level to redress the balance, to support the work of the few anti-slavery organizations that do exist and to raise awareness about the plight of these vulnerable children to the public, to the Rotary movement at large and to

those who are the leaders of our great organization.

28 January 2013 was a red letter day for the Action Group. That was the date when the Board of Rotary International finally accepted that there was a global problem that needed to be addressed by Rotarians and lit a beacon of hope for all enslaved children by recognizing the Action Group as a fully fledged Rotarian Action Group, whose main objectives were stated as a) raising awareness that millions of children are held captive and forced to work for commercial gain, and b) encouraging Rotarians to participate in projects which help to protect children from slavery and its consequences

Two key obstacles stand in the way of these objectives: lack of resources and lack of awareness. In a world where most people find slavery anathema, awakening their awareness will undoubtedly unleash great power.

This is where our RACSRAG Coordinators come into the picture. With their added enthusiasm, passion and dedication to the cause, we have a greater chance to succeed in helping to end this obnoxious crime against humanity once and for all, just as we have nearly succeeded in ridding the world of polio.



Editorial (continued)

So it gives me great pleasure to welcome four new RACSRAG Coordinators to help with our work (see new appointments below).

When the Rotary world and the public at large come to know that there are 36 million slaves around the globe that their stolen labour and lives feed into our shops, our businesses and our homes, the urge to act will become irrepensible. As Kevin Bales so succinctly put it *“when that urge, that desire that all should be free, sweeps across our world, the end of slavery will be near. From that desire will flow the resources needed to get the job done and the liberators needed to help more and more slaves to walk free”*.

New RACSRAG Coordinators

Chuck Fitzgerald is a member of the Rotary Club of Peoria in Arizona, USA. In 2014/15 he was Governor of District 5490 and in that role he encouraged clubs to engage in awareness campaigns regarding ethics and the termination of sex trafficking. He currently serves as a member of Arizona’s Human Trafficking Council which is focused on eradicating sex trafficking by addressing victim services, public awareness/community, education, and other issues related to enforcement of the law.

Chuck is also the Director of the Governor’s Office of Faith and Community Partnerships for the State of Arizona. The mission of the Office is to develop, implement and refine strategies for encouraging, enabling and supporting the community in service to those who rely on Arizona’s safety net.



Cokkie Eaker is a member of the RC of Roswell in District 6900, Georgia, USA. Cokkie was born in the Netherlands, but moved to the USA when she was 19 years old. After residing in Los Angeles and Chicago, Cokkie moved to Atlanta in 2012.

When RACSRAG Board member, Dave McCleary (also a member of Roswell) invited a survivor of child sexual exploitation to speak to their club members, they both decided to do something about raising awareness to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Since then the two members formed the non-profit organization “EndHumanTraffickingNow” as a resource for civic groups, houses of worship and other organizations. Cookie is now the Executive Director for EndHTNow and looks forward to engaging people worldwide to end Human trafficking through her organization as well as through RACSRAG in her new role as one of its Coordinators.



Ernesto Perez is a member of the Rotary Club of Makati Central in the Philippines and was President in 2014/15. In 1980 he graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Degree in Business Administration and Accountancy and initially worked as a Financial Analyst before deciding to become a lawyer

In 1986 Ernesto graduated from Law School and worked as a Partner in a couple of firms before forming his own law firm in 2014 in Makati City. As a lawyer he has specialized in the fields of civil and criminal litigation, corporate, transportation, labour, taxation, banking, insurance, immigration and international relations. He has also lectured in credit transactions at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines College of Law for more than 5 years.



New RACSRAG Coordinators (Cont'd)



Caleb LaPlante is a member of the Rotary Club of Greater Grants Pass in District 5110, USA. He is currently the Outreach Coordinator for Abolish Child Trafficking (ACT) Southern Oregon. This is an organization working to bring attention to the growing crime of underage sex trafficking within the State of Oregon. ACT has been in existence since 2011 and is sponsored by Shared Hope International (Vancouver, WA) and the River Valley Community Church in Grants Pass, Oregon. The Group facilitates two chapters, whose primary objectives are awareness, prevention and legislative action

RACSRAG and the Mekong Club

RACSRAG supports the work of the Mekong Club which is an organization made up of Hong Kong based private sector business leaders who have joined forces to help fight slavery in Asia. Click on the link below to find out more about the Mekong Club and its links with RACSRAG.

[The Mekong Club \(in partnership with the Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery\)](#)

The co-founder and CEO of the Mekong Club is Matt Friedman. After encountering first-hand trafficked victims on the streets of Nepal as a public health officer, Matt Friedman dedicated the next 25 years to combating slavery and human trafficking.

Before forming the Mekong Club in 2012, Matt was the Regional Project Manager of the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in Thailand, an inter-agency coordinating body which links the United Nations system with governments and civil society groups in China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

[Matt Friedman's Latest TEDX Talk](#) has just been made available to RACSRAG. It is an inspirational presentation which tells the story of Gita, a young Nepalese girls who was trafficked into India and forced to work in a brothel. In her interview upon release, her anger is directed, not at her traffickers or slave masters, but at the people who were interviewing her. She asked the basic question "where are you when I needed you ? "

How many of us, who hear stories like Gita's, who begin to appreciate a victim's pain and torment and who resolve to help in the fight against injustice, never take the next step which is positive action. So often RACSRAG members are asked the question, what can I do to help ? The answer lies in this compelling and inspirational presentation by Matt Friedman.

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

(Desmond Tutu)



Sweet fund raiser for Schools4Freedom



Carol Metzker reports that on June 18, the new Kennett Square Rotaract Club (D. 7450, PA, USA) raised \$723 for Rotary's School4Freedom project with an ice cream event. Families, friends and community members bought ice cream cones. Owners of the Punk'd Pineapple ice cream shop donated the evening's profits to the project that will free villagers enslaved in debt bondage in India, starting by building a school

Urgent repairs to the walls at Punarnawa Ashram



RACSRAG needs members to help to fund half the cost of repairing sections of a perimeter wall of a Trafficking Shelter in northern India, damaged by a recent cyclone. The Trafficking Shelter is called Punarnawa Ashram and is in Bihar State. The Shelter, which has been visited by members of RACSRAG, rehabilitates girls rescued from sex slavery.

The walls surrounding the Ashram, with the addition of barbed wire, when originally constructed, were of sufficient height to deter slave masters from recovering their previous "investments" from the Ashram. However, when a new paved road was subsequently built in the developing village, the changes in the grading and the addition of materials, made the road 3 feet higher than previously. Thus it became potentially easier for a Trafficker to snatch a girl back after rescue in order to stop her testifying or to re-victimize her.

Consequently it was agreed that the wall should be raised by five feet along the east and west side of the Ashram at an estimated cost of \$18,000. Various Rotary Clubs combined to provide 85% of the required funding and the wall was completed in May 2014 under the supervision of our partners, [Free the Slaves](#) based in Washington DC and a grass roots anti-slavery organization called [M.S.E.M.V.S.](#) based near Varanasi, India.

Plans were subsequently made to made to extend the rest of the perimeter walls ie to the north and south of the Ashram at a further estimated cost \$8,325 (see page 11 of Newsletter 55)

Sadly these plans have had to be set aside for the moment because in April, a cyclone devastated a large part of the Ashram, including various sections of the wall. Damage to the

Repairs to the walls at Punarnawa Ashram (Cont'd)

Ashram's water tank, gas lamps and other areas are in hand, but there is a shortage of funds to repair the wall damage. In some parts there are gaps in the wall, which pose a security risk. In other cases there are cracks which are a structural risk. Reconstruction and improved construction is needed at the foundations, plinth and the upper wall,

The current estimate to repair the damage is \$27,000. Half of the required sum has already been pledged by a donor, so RACSRAG is urging members to come up with the other half as soon as possible so that work can commence on repairing the wall damage. If you wish to help please contact any officer of RACSRAG as soon as possible. Contact details are listed at the end of the Newsletter

A letter from Marleina Broadhurst in Egypt

Dear Readers and Fellow Humanitarians

This is the first year RACSRAG comes to Egypt and I am the first to chair this very humane cause. To say that I need help is to state the obvious but to mention that this nation does not want to know is probably closer to the truth.

I began by giving Rotary Clubs orientation sessions on RACSRAG.

It is rather difficult to explain to the wealthy and isolated here how dire the situation is in Egypt. You will read about my field visits and my proposed project of Roses without a Garden as I termed the children to preserve dignity and shy away from the many insulting labels and terms applied here in the Arab world



My second step was to canvass the city for proof and statistics of child slavery. I visited Ezbat el walde twice....this is a place at the back of wealthy affluent Maadi where even the USA Ambassador resides. In a hanger children are gathered where they live, used by a woman, sent out daily to beg, pick pockets and rented out to older beggars as a mean of getting more money from the public. The money is taken at the end of the day and the child is given a meagre meal under the pretext that probably they will eat elsewhere during the day. But the simple truth is SHE wants them gaunt. When the children turn 11-12 she confided that she sells them and if they have fair hair or coloured eyes they fetch a higher price.

Matareya Metro Station is where the 7-9 years old sleep under the benches in winter as well as in the Al Azhar area. These children are the main supply and target of hunters for body parts. Alone defenceless what chance do they have ?

A Letter from Marleina Broadhurst in Egypt (Cont'd)

Last but by no means least is Ezbet khair Allah. Not far from down town the whole area is so full of crime and poverty you would find it difficult to believe that 2km further along, the cornice apartments are priced at 8 million upwards. Here a very high rate of special needs children exist and they are simply left outdoors all day, never sent to schools and if they disappear then the parent feels relief. Often they are sold by their parents and blood testing for body parts is part of everyday life here.

The report is rather grim. A very high rate of child abuse through employment, begging, trafficking and body parts are evident and rather widely spread. The national statistics states 1.2 million. The truth is closer to 3 million and rising. Also there is a wide acceptance of babies sold to infertile women and often they are supplied by special order of gender and hair / eyes colouring.

I was assisted by fellow police officers social workers and contacts.

My initial action plan determined at the beginning of this year will be reviewed as I approach action in the year 2015-2016. But initially I have launched the following project which in time I hope will grow worldwide. The more we are present regularly in areas in which the children congregate, the less likely for a slaver to frequent or target the children. Let us together, hand in hand, protect these children from eminent danger and discourage the wealthy to buy children and their body parts. May God Bless and keep each and every one of them safe as we fight along the road of Action Against Child Slavery ... A most worthy cause indeed.

PROJECT - ROSES WITHOUT A GARDEN

We will simply set up jars in all participating clubs so that our Rotarian fellows can put their small change in to enable small projects that will involve Rotaractors in distributing hot soup, sandwiches, clean shirts and blankets to street children. We hope to treat the children with some humane dignity and to discourage the slavers.

I thank you for taking the time to read and peruse this letter and hope dear reader that you will take some action or pass it onto someone else who might.

Please accept my Best Regards

Prof Marleina Broadhurst
Life member of RACSRAG

Editor's Note: As a result of the recent RACSRAG election, Marleina Broadhurst will become a RACSRAG Board member in July 2016.

Carol Metzker at the Rotary e Club of Silicon Valley

A few weeks back our own Carol Metzker was invited to talk about Human trafficking and Modern Slavery at the Rotary e Club of Silicon Valley. Carol discussed her Book "Facing the Monster", her attendance at a recent Conference on Human trafficking, her experience of volunteering at a Trafficking Shelter in Pennsylvania, her participation in several anti-slavery projects and last but by no means least she gave a plug for RACSRAG. If you would like to see her presentation please click on the link below.

<http://www.siliconvalleyrotary.com/meeting-06-15-15/>

Scroll down until you see a video displaying the heading "International Philanthropy-Punarnawa ("New Beginnings")Ashram's Bio Gas System.

Editor's recommendation - A Film to Watch

Thanks to Childreach International, I had the privilege of seeing a film a few days ago which will only be on general release later this year in the States and in January next year in the UK. The film is called "SOLD" and is based on the novel by Patricia McCormack. The film, which is produced by Emma Thompson, Jane Charles and Katie Mustard, tells the story of a young girl called Lakshmi who travels from her village in Nepal, with an escort, to India in the expectation of a job. However, her escort takes her instead to a gritty brothel called "Happiness House" in Kolkata.



The film illustrates the brutality of child trafficking and the degradation suffered by the resident workers of Happiness House. It is a must see for those of you who wish to learn more about the suffering endured by those who have been trafficked for sexual purposes. To see a preview of the film click on the [Film Trailer](#)

5 statements included in Walk Free's Global Slavery Index

1. The number of people estimated to be living in some form of slavery is 35.8 million.
2. Of those living in modern slavery 61% are in 5 countries. The numbers estimated to be enslaved in these countries are:

India	14,285,700
China	3,241,400
Pakistan	2,058,200
Uzbekistan	1,201,400
Russia	1,049,700
3. The Governments that are taking the most action to end modern slavery are: Netherlands, Sweden, USA, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland, Norway, UK, Georgia and Austrla.
4. The Governments that are taking the least action to end modern slavery are North Korea, Iran, Syria, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Libya, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo and Iraq.
5. The Governments that should be doing more given their wealth are: Hong Kong, Kuwait, Brunei, Singapore and Qatar.

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NB There is vacancy for a Coordinator to cover Queensland.

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