



C. Current Action Group Projects

Bakhita House – Trafficking Shelter in London

Bakhita House is a Shelter which opened in June 2015 to accommodate young women and girls who have been rescued from sex slavery. It is run and funded by Caritas Westminster.

The House offers practical help to the most vulnerable and traumatised victims of human trafficking, with priority given to those who because of their immigration status, are unable to get help elsewhere. Specifically, the Shelter provides safe accommodation for up to 12 women, access to healthcare, professional support tailored to individual needs, counselling, skills development and access to education and employment and legal help, including advice on repatriation to countries of origin if this is required.



In November 2015, a cheque for £2,400 was presented by the President of the Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund on behalf of Clubs in District 9500, South Australia as well as from Clubs in District 1080, 1130 and 1240.

At the time of writing, the Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, D1080, is arranging a concert at St John's Cathedral in Norwich on 30th April 2016 to raise further funds for the House.

Schools4Freedom – Freeing a village from debt bondage

The Schools4Freedom project has been masterminded by the [Voices4Freedom](#) Foundation but has been promoted by RACSRAG member, Carol Metzker from Pennsylvania, USA. Carol has successfully managed to raise sufficient funds from RACSRAG supporters and members and others to sustain a three-year project whose objective is to educate child slaves and in the process to free an entire village from generational debt bondage.

Generational debt bondage is a family affair enforced by deception on unsuspecting and trusting victims. When a poor family comes looking for work in say a quarry or brick kiln, the local boss or money lender is eager to help with an “advance” on wages to help the family settle in. The food they eat, the materials they use to build a temporary home, the tools they need to do their work, all of it is provided by the boss and added to that family's debt. Just when the family feels they have finally found some security, they are locked into hereditary slavery because of high interest charges or corrupt accounting. This debt bondage is illegal, but the illiterate workers don't know this, and the boss is keen to play on their sense of obligation, not alert them to the scam that's sucking them under and into further debt, which they can never hope to pay off.

Following previous successful attempts by other anti-slavery organizations (eg Sankalp) to free entire villages from debt bondage in India, Voices4Freedom estimated that they could adopt the same or a similar strategy to free families or groups of families from indebtedness to their slave masters. But in order to succeed the NGO needed to be sure that the necessary funding, would be available in advance to cover project costs estimated to cost \$36,000 over a three-year period.

Early in 2014, Carol Metzker decided to take up the challenge to raise the necessary funds of \$36,000 She achieved her fund target by the end of 2015 by writing several articles in the RACSRAG Newsletter about the proposed project, by pleading with supporters and members for funds and by making presentations on the scheme at every opportunity. Thanks to donations from 12 individual Rotarians, 13





Rotary Clubs, one Rotaract Club and other donors, the groundwork is now laid to achieve the task of freeing a village.

The village chosen to be freed is a hamlet outside of Varanasi, in the State of Uttar Pradesh. Of the 400 villagers, 132 are in debt bondage slavery working in the slaveholders' brick kilns, farm and construction projects. Other villagers are at risk of enslavement because of abject poverty, lack of knowledge of their rights as Indian citizens and illiteracy. Currently only two or three villagers can write their own name.

In the next few months, the funds made available by Rotarians and others will enable a basic school with a roof and supports to be built. The funds will provide 2 teachers, school supplies and furnishings, and hot lunches for students. A solar lamp will be installed to allow students to study at night and to reduce snakebites and violence. Over the next three years, students will receive an education, women and youth will learn vocational skills to generate income, and adults will learn that they have human rights. At the end of the process, the village will be organized to demand their own freedom and will have the strength and stability to sustain it.



As will be seen from the case study. The project was fully funded in late 2015. The project embracing a hamlet on the outskirts of Varanasi.

Provision of immediate & direct funding to Trafficking Shelters (Asha Nepal and Maiti Nepal) in Kathmandu to help with the consequences of April 2015 Earthquakes.



Buildings at Asha Nepal



Maiti Hospice wall



A Maiti Transit Home

Immediately after the first April 2015 Nepalese Earthquake, several clubs in Norwich combined to carry out collections in the streets of the city, garden centres and the local theatre to provide directly relief to Maiti Nepal as well as purchasing shelter tents.. One club provided direct relief to Asha Nepal. These collections were made at the suggestion of a RACSRAG member. Further funds are currently being collected by RACSRAG and Clubs in Australia to provide relief to Maiti Nepal in the intermediate and long term. A Global Grant project is being proposed.