



Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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Website www.racsrag.org

8 January 2016

Issue No 61

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



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (Dr Martin Luther King)



January 2016 – Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the USA

On 31st Dec 2015, the President of the United States, Barak, Obama issued a Proclamation. Snippets are reproduced below:

"One hundred and fifty years ago, our Nation codified the fundamental truth that slavery is an affront to human dignity. Still, the bitter fact remains that millions of men, women, and children around the globe, including here at home, are subject to modern-day slavery: the cruel, inhumane practice of human trafficking. This month, we rededicate ourselves to assisting victims of human

trafficking and to combating it in all its forms.....

All nations have a part to play in keeping our world safe for all people -- regardless of age, background, or belief. During National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, let us recognize the victims of trafficking, and let us resolve to build a future in which its perpetrators are brought to justice and no people are denied their inherent human rights of freedom and dignity.....

NOW, THEREFORE, I,

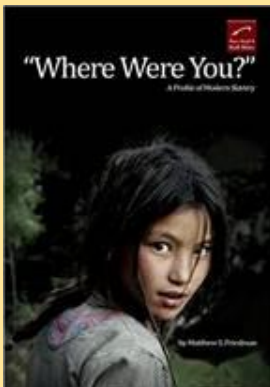
BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 2016 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, culminating in the annual celebration of National Freedom Day on February 1. I call upon businesses, national and community organizations, families, and all Americans to recognize the vital role we can play in ending all forms of slavery and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities".

Matt Friedman's 2016 tour of the USA

Last November RACSRAG reported that anti-slavery activists Matt Friedman and his wife Sylvia propose to carry out one hundred, 90 minute anti-human slavery talks across the USA over a period of 100 days starting on 1st April 2016.

Matt has asked RACSRAG's help to plan the tour and this is being done via RACSRAG Board member Dave McCleary. Dave reports that so far, he has been contacted by 15 US based Rotarians who have offered to help plan Matt's route and obtain venues for the talks. **If you have not already done so and want to help, please contact Dave whose email address is shown on page 5.**

Matt's latest e-book has also just come out (4 January). The new book entitled **"Where were you ?"** offers a message of hope. Further information about Matt's new publication is on page 5 of the Newsletter.



Editorial



Street children of Mongolia

“Human trafficking is a despicable activity, a disgrace for our societies”

(Pope Francis)



Many children live in underground sewers



Rtn Cliff Grieve with some of the Mongolian children who live in an unofficial shelter in Ulaabaatar

The birth of a new year has a special significance for people of all races, classes and creeds. As well as for merrymaking, it is a time for stocktaking, for sober reflection on that which has been achieved in the past and for conjecture on that which is yet to come in the future.

Sadly the future is becoming more uncertain because we are living in an era of unprecedented crises and troubles.

Conflict, terrorism, economic turmoil, disease and natural disasters are prevalent almost everywhere now. Record numbers of people are fleeing war, persecution and unusual climatic conditions and the international community is grappling with acute migration challenges in the Mediterranean, the Balkans, in the Andaman Sea, Latin America and Africa. For human traffickers and slave masters, these hardships represent business opportunities.

Millions of vulnerable women, men and children are being cruelly exploited — coerced into working in factories, fields, homes, quarries, restaurants and in the sex trade,, or compelled to beg on the streets, pushed into armed combat or forced marriages.. A significant number of these trafficked victims are children and many of these are being trafficked for their body

parts. This is what is now happening in Mongolia.

Earlier this autumn, UK RACSRAG member, Clifford Grieve (RC of Ashford, Kent) received information of a humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which is impacting, inter alia, on the lives of thousands of orphaned and abandoned children who are currently living in underground sewers and above ground doorways.

Reports indicate that a significant number of these children are now being trafficked, particularly by Chinese crime gangs, into domestic servitude, prostitution and forced labour on farms and factories. Many have also been shipped to China specifically to have their organs harvested for the children of rich Chinese families.

As an anti-slavery activist, Clifford was prompted to visit Mongolia last November to find out more about the situation and if necessary, to see if he could help in some way. With the help of a guide, driver and translator, he was able to discover more about the situation as a result of discussions with the Chief of Police, other police personnel, the Country Director of Save the Children, representatives of other NGOs and various social workers. He also visited one of the unofficial shelters which

looks after 12 children and has provided RACSRAG with a detailed report of his visit to Mongolia. Clifford's report is attached as an Annex to the Newsletter.

In short Clifford has resolved to a) personally sponsor the shelter which he visited, b) enlist further support for the shelter from the two Rotary Clubs based in Ulaabaatar, Mongolia and c) seek funds from other Rotary Clubs to improve the situation for the street children of the city.

Also included in this issue of the Newsletter is an article provided by our Coordinator in Rome, Italy, Laura Dryjanska. The article keeps us up-to-date with what is happening in the fight against human trafficking and slavery.in Italy (see page 3)

Finally, I am pleased to announce a major achievement for the Action Group. Thanks largely through the efforts of former Board member, Carol Metzker, we have managed to raise some \$36,000 from the membership and others to cover the expenses of a three year anti-slavery project in India which aims to free a whole village of bonded labourers from slavery. Carol's article is on page 4 of the Newsletter.



What else is new in Italy ?

(by Laura Dryjanska, RACSRAG Coordinator for Italy)

So, what else is new ?” – a friend of mine often uses this phrase when we chat. Our RAG’s newsletter is an excellent way to find out what is going on all around the world to fight child slavery. It is high time to give you some news from Italy. I want to share about our recent past, present and future activities.

First, let us take a look at a recent event. We often say that traffickers are so difficult to stop due to their ability to network. In order to fight modern slavery, we need to be in close touch with anti-trafficking organizations that operate on different levels and reach out to diverse publics. In this spirit, the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery in Italy has participated on November 25, 2015 in the Round Table organized by the Salvation Army Italy on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, Mr. McArthur, officially opened the event where the speakers from the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery Italy, ECPAT Italy, the Greenlight Project of The Salvation Army, Vite Trasformate (English: Transformed Lives) and other organizations talked about violence against women and its links with child slavery, among other topics. This event was just a starting point to facilitate networking and exchange of information among those of us who care for the victims of modern slavery and whose working language is Italian. For more info, see the dedicated website:

<http://www.tavolarotonda.esercitodellasalvezza.org/>

How about the present? You may remember our member Valeria Galletti who wrote about the Shadow Children Project, since 2008 aimed at assisting street children, very vulnerable potential and current victims of modern slave-owners around the world.

She has recently had a brilliant idea: why don’t we, Rotarians and Rotaractors, bring this issue to the attention of Ravi Ravindran, our current International President? By signing a petition that we prepared you can help us make this voice stronger :

No cost, just a raising awareness effort to point out that street children exist and are an easy prey for those who treat them as objects, using them in a number of horrible ways, from pedo-pornography, through prostitution, drug dealing, begging, working, fighting as child soldiers, to organ transplantations. This is happening in countries where Rotary clubs exist and operate. Maybe a phrase on this topic uttered by Ravi Ravindran can move the hearts of those who encounter street children in their cities? If, like us, you have a ray of hope in this direction, please sign the petition available in Italian, English and Spanish under the following link:

https://qtrial2015q4az1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9BLzGZPb2ohtqV7

In the near future, precisely on Saturday, March 19, 2016 we are going to hold the third Forum dedicated to the topic of street children and modern slavery. The LUMSA University of Rome, very close to the St. Peter’s Square, has granted us once again the prestigious location to discuss various forms of child slavery all over the world. We are thrilled to announce the participation of representatives of almost 30 Rotary Clubs from Italy, especially from the 2100 Rotary District thanks to the dynamic PDG Maria Rita Acciardi, now also a member of our RAG, as well as Past President Nicola Atteritano and current President Patrizia Carbone of the Rotary Club Florense, soon joining the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery. The speakers include Italian experts on child slavery, as well as the keynote presentation from our Chairman, Mark Little.

Would you like to join us for this special event ? Whether you want to just attend the forum on Saturday morning or spend a couple more days in the Eternal City, visiting its incredible sights and joining one of our Roman Rotary clubs for the evening meeting, do consider coming to Rome and contact us for additional details:

commissione.rotary@rotary.org

So, the above activities have been keeping us quite busy here in Italy. With much joy I am sharing our news with you, confident that Rotarians Against Child Slavery will continue to make a difference in this broken world.



International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women -



Laura with Australian Ambassador to the Holy See



Shouting from the rooftop...about... a rooftop and more

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

There is great news afoot ! Thanks to Rotarians, Rotary Clubs and Districts, and individuals from five countries, a landmark Rotary project that begins with a roof is set to start this month. With fundraising of \$36,000 complete, the Rotary School4Freedom moves into the project implementation phase.

With specialized expertise from Rotary's partners Voices4Freedom and MSEMVS in India, the project begins by creating a simple school in a village caught in debt bondage in Uttar Pradesh, India. Over the next three years, village children will receive an education, women will acquire vocations skills to bring in an income, and villagers will learn that they have a basic human right of being free. The process culminates with a village that will be strong enough to demand and sustain freedom from the slaveholder.

In the next few months, we will learn more about the village. We can expect specialized anti-slavery field workers to carefully plan and create the school, install a solar streetlamp for safety and studying at night, purchase school supplies and provide hot lunches for children. Over the next three years, we will receive regular reports from our partners.

This project is possible because of gifts from the following donors—thank you, each and every one:

One World Rotary e-Club, USA-based (with members worldwide) and individual members: Carol Metzker, Dick Strayer, Allan Pacela, Dave Wood and Diwan Singh
 Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England
 Rotary Club of Walkerville, South Australia, with gratitude to the legacy of Rtn. Val Kirk (D9500)
 Rotary Club of Adelaide Edge (D9500)
 Longwood Rotary Club, USA, and individual member Mike Korengel
 Rotary Club of Peterborough Orton, England and its former president, Geoff Knipe
 Kennett Square Rotary Club, USA
 Regency Park Clubs (D9500)
 Glenelg Rotary Club (D9520)
 Rotary Club of Stevenage Grange, England
 Lee Warren, Rtn. (Rtn., VA, US)
 Lana Rouff, individual (Rotarian, member of the Binghamton Rotary Club)
 In honor of Chuck Garfinkle, member of Rotary Club of West Chester
 Rotary Club of Marin Sunrise (CA, USA)
 Arnfinn Solli, member of Västervik Rotary Club, Sweden, and son John
 Rotary Club of Mumbai Boravali East
 Cerise James, individual
 Tojo Thatchenkery, individual
 Kennett Square Rotaract (D. 7450)
 District 7170 (NY, USA) matching grant
 Vasanth Prabhu, member of Central Chester County Rotary Club
 Individual Lauren Thurman
 Pat Timmons, Rotarian, Iowa, US
 Rotary Club of Diss and District (England)
 Karen DeWitt, member of Cortland Rotary Club, NY
 Cornelia and James Stockman
 Rotary District 7780, Maine, USA
 St. Leonards Rotary Club, England

The process of freedom begins.



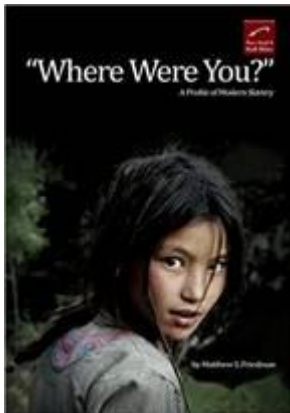
“One of the strongest chains that hold slaves in bondage is lack of knowledge”

(Kevin Bales)



Review of a new eBook by Matt Friedman

“Where were you ?” – A Profile of Modern Slaver”y



Matt Friedman, a former USAID and United Nations' expert, gives an up-to-date human trafficking overview about a largely ignored present-day evil. Friedman obtained in-depth first-hand knowledge by boots-on-the-ground work throughout nearly a dozen Asian countries over 25 years. He writes that human trafficking exists in nearly every nation on earth. Few people realize that the United States alone has tens of thousands of men, women and children in slavery-like conditions.

Friedman has interviewed hundreds of freed slaves throughout South and Southeast Asia, as well as imprisoned traffickers. The slave industry is a billion dollar business that continues to grow unchecked. Slaves work in brothels, fisheries, clothing and chocolate industries, as well as a myriad of other manufacturing jobs. Friedman also offers valuable advice and guidance related to his own deeply personal experiences working in the counter trafficking and development world. These insights offer valuable lessons for those thinking about entering this field. The book was written in detail by a public servant passionate about eradicating the world's indifference, and motivated by a desire to recruit other present-day abolitionists. Friedman's latest TEDX complements the message outlined in this book -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUR_yFYDtOo.

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

ANNEX

My Mongolian adventure in the land of the blue sky.

by Clifford Grieve, Retired Police Superintendent and Member of the RC of Ashford

I was first alerted to a developing humanitarian crisis in Mongolia by a Mongolian friend, Nyamaa, who lives in the UK. She in turn was alerted by her sister, Byamma, a teacher at the University of Ulaanbaatar (UB).

Briefly, Mongolia is a young democratic republic whose birth, following the country's break-up with the Soviet Union in 1990, was greeted with the loss of subsidies worth one third of its gross domestic product and the disruption of traditional trade relations. Mongolia's financial circumstances plummeted as did its employment figures.

The incidence of poverty, unemployment and abandoned and uncared for children, virtually non-existent before Mongolia's break-up with the Soviet Union, increased significantly.

Accompanying these changes were problems arising from global warming. A traditional Nomadic people, many herdsmen and their families were driven to the outskirts of the capital city, UB, as their herds died off from either the extreme heat in the summer scorching the grass on which their herds relied, or the presence of Dzud – this being extreme winter cold with temperatures plummeting to -30.

There being no room in the city these people created large shanty towns around its perimeter. These shanty towns house approximately 400,000 people living in crude structures made of whatever material can be scavenged from the cities rubbish tips, to the traditional round tents known as Gers. There is an absence of running water and sanitation, in communal facilities, is extremely basic primarily consisting of planks over deep pits.

The issue concerning children is that in the early 90s the number of street children rose to between 4,000 and 6,000. In the cold months these children were forced to open man-hole covers and seek warmth below ground in the cities sewers. These below ground structures contain hot water pipes that feed UB's apartments and factories.

The government and the NGOs' combined to fund appropriate shelter for these children and over a period of time the government provided four state funded children's shelters and the NGOs' provided a further 36 shelters.

This still left a significant number of children, some as young as four years old, without any care or protection. It is believed that following this year's hot summer that a Dzud is on its way. Indeed I was advised only yesterday (24/11/15) by a member of the Rotary Club of UB that temperatures have now sunk to -28 and the Mongolian winter is at an early stage. The significance of this is that nomadic people have already started to move to the shanty towns of UB and it is expected that this winter many thousands will do so. The country is financially unable to provide any assistance and the numbers will greatly add to the social problems already experienced by those living on the outskirts of UB.

This problem is here and now and, whilst NGO's such as Save the Children, are alert to the problem and responding as best they can to the developing crisis, the world's attention is elsewhere. This is not new as a moment's thought will confirm that Mongolia has never been a country in the public light and has therefore had to deal with its own problems without the support of the world community.

Put simply Mongolia's street children are largely unseen, unknown and forgotten.

After being alerted to the situation I spent two days researching Mongolia (a country I knew of but had never paid any attention to) and spoke to representatives of various NGO's based in Mongolia.

The situation concerned me and I determined to visit the country to see for myself how severe the problem was and what, if anything, I could do to assist those children in need of care and support.

I was assisted in this by Nyamaa and her sister Byamaa. They provided me with a translator and driver for the duration of my visit.¹

I stayed in a luxurious four star hotel in the city of UB and spent seven days getting to know the country and being embarrassed by the luxury I was experiencing and the extreme poverty I was seeing. I visited a number of Gers' where I was received with hospitality and courtesy. I found the people to be proud and dignified as might be expected of the descendants of Ghengis Khan.

They did not ask me for anything and were grateful for the little I could do by way of donations of food and warm bedding. I did not meet any street children as I was strongly advised by the police not to go into the sewers which was where at this time of the year they spend most of their time. Can you imagine the filth and stench together with the ever presence of rats and cockroaches? This is the everyday experience of possibly hundreds of street children who have yet to find any care and support and it is predicted their numbers will be swollen as poor people migrate from the Mongolian Steppes to the shanty towns around UB.

I did however, visit an unofficial street childrens shelter. I was taken to this by Byamaa and two of her friends. These children live one step up from the streets on which they had lived. They have shelter from the elements and have an unpaid adult carer.

The shelter I visited was a wooden shack with one room measuring about 12' by 18'. Heating and cooking was on a coal burner. Internal lighting was provided by a generator. There were four badly stained mattresses and a small quantity of blankets and non-descript covers. The food in their store cupboard consisted of 7.5 kgs of rice, a small bag of flour and some cooking oil. There was no bread, meat, eggs, fruit or any of the other staple goods that we in the West take for granted. I asked the carer what she was going to give the children for their evening meal. She replied, "rice". I asked her what she provided the day before and she gave the same answer. It would seem that she relies entirely on hand outs and begging. There is no State provided safety net to ensure children receive adequate nutritious food.

Water was collected by two of the young boys from a local stream. The primitive toilet was about 45 yards from the shelter and was shared by others. At night time there is no external

¹ Between the 4th and 11th November 2015

lighting and it is pitch black. One can only imagine the circumstances and potential danger of children using the toilet in the dark in temperatures that at this time of year sink to below -20 at night. Child abuse and sexual molestation is also a feature of the life of a street child, many of whom survive by pickpocketing, begging and selling their bodies.

I gave the carer the money I had on me. More importantly I resolved to sponsor this shelter. There are 12 children ranging from 1 year to 15 years. Two of these children had been forced into marriage, had a baby each and fled, with their babies, from severe domestic violence. They are now in hiding in the shelter and help with the younger children.

Street children are particularly vulnerable to the stories of hope offering shelter, education and a glowing new future falsely concocted by human traffickers. Many of the street children of Mongolia have been taken by traffickers, particularly by Chinese crime gangs, and are then sold on into forced marriages, domestic servitude, coerced prostitution and general laboring on farms or in factories. At its worse some have been used in China for organ harvesting providing their own healthy organs to the children of rich Chinese families. It matters not to the traffickers whether the child dies – they are merely a commodity to be used in a way to maximize profit.

The police confirmed to me the truth of these situations but stated that they were active in combating the traffickers and that the situation is less serious now than it had been in the past. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the presence of traffickers and the risks they continue to pose to street children

I am a proud man and as a former detective superintendent and someone who has been active in the field of human trafficking and modern day slavery, have encountered mankind at its best and at its worst and managed to do so with the traditional British stiff upper lip, but I confess I was moved to tears on more than one occasion by what I saw and what I heard.

The question you will undoubtedly be asking is “where are the parents?” There is no one answer to this. Some of the children are simply abandoned by worn out parents living in poverty. Others have run away to escape parental violence. Domestic violence amongst the poor is rife. Corporal punishment is permitted by Mongolian law. Many men and women seek solace in drinking cheap Vodka and alcoholism and resultant domestic violence and abuse of children is common. Some of the children are orphans. Although a register is kept by the unpaid carer of what is known of each child, in some cases nothing is known – they are just found on the streets of UB and some do not even know how old they are. This is Dickensian but it is happening now.

I had a meeting with the Chief of Police for UB and the country director for Mongolia of Save the Children (Japan). I also met social workers belonging to a completely underfunded fledgling organisation. I am aware there is little officialdom can do. The move from Soviet communism to a market economy is in its infancy and the country has insufficient funds to deal with its social needs. It is therefore left to the generosity of others and this is limited given the poverty experienced by all living in the shanty towns.

So what is it I am intending to do?

Firstly, in adopting the shelter I intend sending money to an account managed by Byamaa and for her and her friends to take in nutritious and wholesome food as required. Initially I

will also ensure that each child has a top quality duvet to keep them warm through the cold winter nights. The age old problem of people in these situations is whether to heat or eat. I therefore want to ensure they have sufficient money to buy coal for their burner and fuel for their generator.

Byamma is researching for me the monthly cost of meeting all these needs. I will be active in seeking funds for any difference between what I will be paying monthly and the researched figure needed to help this small community. This, of course, is not a one-off process of simply providing funding. It is ongoing and needs sustaining. Whilst any gift is highly welcome, I will be encouraging people to make a monthly donation of £5 or £10, or more, if they wish to ensure these children eat not just today but for as long as is necessary before they are able to secure independent living.

Secondly, I met several members of two Rotary clubs based in UB and it is my hope that my own club, the Rotary club of Ashford, will join with me in supporting this shelter and engage in joint activity with projects identified by the UB clubs.

Thirdly, I have been asked by one of the colonels present at my meeting with the police, to provide them with details as to how the British police safeguard children, deal with children who have run away from home and deal with child offenders. I recognise the police in Mongolia have limited funds and I am not critical of what they seek to do. However, it maybe that we can provide some assistance to the way they operate in the interests of street children. It is a fact that whilst the British authorities sometimes fail individual children, the overwhelming majority of children live in family homes, and those for whom this is sadly not an option, are cared for in local authority homes. I believe we have a contribution we can make to policing methods and importantly to the way these impact on the street children of Mongolia.

I will now complete this briefing with a short quotation and appeal:

"There is no trust more sacred than the one 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 fear and want, and that they grow up in peace" (Kofi Annan).

Every penny donated will be used for the benefit of these children. There are no administrative costs. Every child is equally important wherever they live. We can make a difference to an identified number of children. Please help me to help them. Thankyou.

Cliff Grieve
RC of Ashford
District 1120
England
25th November 2015