

Rotarian Action Group against Slavery

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“Modern slavery is a barbaric crime, which destroys the lives of vulnerable exploited people across the globe. It is shocking that this kind of exploitation still exists in today’s society – and the international community needs to step up to address it”

(Priti Patel – UK International Development Secretary)



DFID’s Extra Funds to end Modern Slavery



Priti Patel – 1st Dec 2016

At a Freedom Fund event in London on 1st December, Priti Patel, the UK International Development Secretary, announced a new approach by the Department for International Development (DFID) to increase and expand DFID’s work on ending modern slavery and child labour, which will complement the

international work of other parts of government.

The new support will double the UK’s investment to £8 million in a special protection fund set up to keep women and girl refugees in the Mediterranean region safe from trafficking and exploitation.

The fund will be used to better identify, protect and refer vulnerable female migrants and refugees, by providing shelters as a safe alternative to dangerous camp environments and strengthening national counter-trafficking mechanisms in Greece and the Balkans

Slavery in the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is an organization of 52 countries with a population of 2.2 billion. This represents a third of the world’s population. The Global Slavery Index estimates that 55% of those currently enslaved reside within those 52 countries. So far, the Commonwealth has not made a formal commitment to end modern slavery.

On 2 December (International Day for the Abolition of Slavery), Walk Free and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (an international NGO) announced their intention to persuade the leaders of the Commonwealth to include “slavery” as a priority agenda item when they next meet in 2018.

To achieve their objective, Walk Free is calling for strong public support for its initiative. To provide that support click on the link below.

[Show your support for the Commonwealth tackling modern slavery and sign our petition.](#)

THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS



Rotaractors' visit to Thailand & Cambodia



RAGAS Coordinator David Black (RC of Dunedin Central, New Zealand) and a team of Rotaractors from England and New Zealand have just returned home after completing a three week working trip to Thailand and Cambodia.

In Thailand they spent 10 days at the Rescue Mission for Children Centre (a Trafficking Shelter for Children) at Mai Suai where, amongst other things, they transplanted banana trees, planted 800 guava trees to complete an orchard which will provide income for the Centre, carried out electrical and general maintenance work

as well as landscaping around the Centre.

After a brief spell of 4 days in Bangkok where they attended a joint meeting of the RC of Bangkok and other clubs, the team then spent 5 days in Cambodia where they had meetings with several NGOs such as Nvader, Hagar, APEL, the Cambodian Child Helpline and the Cambodian Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights which included a visit to the latter's Shelter in Phnom Penh.

Also included on the itinerary were meetings with the Directors of the United Nations Action for

Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons, in both Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

According to leader David Black, "We had such an eventful three weeks and I am so immensely proud of our young Rotaract volunteer team. They took on so much physical, intellectual and emotional workloads that I am amazed they functioned as well as they did"

Editor's Note: A more detailed account of this hands on working trip, will be included in the next edition of this Newsletter.

Above: The Rotaract team at the Centre

Below: Enjoying the company of the children at the Centre

Editorial

Walk Free's initiative to persuade the Commonwealth to discuss the issue of modern slavery at its next meeting is to be applauded. Why? Because a) the Commonwealth has never made a formal statement of commitment to end modern slavery and b) slavery is endemic in some of its member nations.

On the first point, it could be argued that there is no need for the Commonwealth to make a formal statement against modern slavery because the issue of "human rights" is already included as one of the core beliefs of the Commonwealth Charter.

However, the phrase "human rights" is invariably the subject of considerable philosophical debate. It could include a wide variety of rights such as the right to a fair trial, prohibition of genocide, free speech, protection against enslavement, a right to education, etc.

Because slavery is so prevalent in some of the Commonwealth countries, it is even more important to ensure that the crime is prioritized as a separate issue, instead of being part of a generic heading of "human rights". The Global Slavery Index gives us the amazing statistic that 50% of the

total number of slaves worldwide reside in just four of the Commonwealth's member nations ie India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

If the Commonwealth did manage to agree a formal statement of commitment to end modern slavery, this would have a massive impact on reducing slavery across the world. Perhaps the Commonwealth could consider a step further and call on the United Nations to play a more meaningful role in eradicating slavery.

I understand that in recent times, the UN



Editorial (cont'd)

Security Council has only addressed the issue of slavery once. This was in 2005 when it passed a Resolution condemning the forced recruitment and exploitation of child soldiers.

Fighting Modern Day Slavery in Ethiopia

by Dr George Belitsos, RC of Ames, District 6000, USA

The Rotary Club of Ames, the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking, and Iowa State University Student Network Against Human Trafficking joined forces to sponsor a lecture on Fighting Modern Day Child Slavery in Ethiopia. The program took place at the Iowa State University Memorial Union and was attended by over 300.

Yonas Tesfay, Founder and Director of Hope for Children in Ethiopia was introduced at the November 7th Rotary Club meeting and spoke. Two days later, Yonas lectured at ISU and shared his experiences dealing with the complex issue of modern child slavery and explained how his organization is finding solutions through social entrepreneurship and sustainable practices. Hope for Children in Ethiopia is a community-based organization which works side-by-side with community members to provide holistic care and support for children.

Much of the private funding for Hope for Children comes from right here in Central Iowa. The agency has served over 3,000 rescued children over its 8 year history. The children range in age from 7 to 17. The male children were involved primarily in labor trafficking and the female children were both sex and labor trafficked. The rescued children are provided safe housing, food, counseling and trade school education. The children have missed years of school so great efforts are made to help them catch up.

The trades taught include hairdressing, cooking, computer technology, and textiles. The weaving business is a large part of the job training program and the children make scarfs which are sold here in Iowa by Beza Threads. The volunteer fundraising organization has already sold 8,500 scarfs here in Iowa.

When you buy a scarf from Beza Threads, 100% of your dollars go directly to funding slave rescue and prevention programs provided by their partner organization, Hope for Children in Ethiopia. Click [here](#) to browse and order from their hand-woven scarf collection.

If you would like to become a long-term donor towards the organization, Beza Threads offers two child sponsorship programs. To educate and protect young children from slavery, become a Beza Protector for as little as \$5 a month. If you would like to rescue young women from forced prostitution, give as little as \$5 a month to become a Beza Rescuer. Click [here](#) to sign up and learn more about these sponsorship programs. Through their fundraising and scarf sales, Beza Threads has rescued more than 100 children from slavery. Join their movement to help more children live in freedom!

If you would like to host a program or additional information on this topic, please contact Elizabeth Carman. [515-370-5736](tel:515-370-5736), or visit www.bezathreads.org



George Belitsos and Yonas Tesfay at the HQ of Hope for Children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Survivors of labour trafficking and participants in the Hope for Children rehabilitation program.



Commitment: No longer falling between the cracks

by Carol Metzker, One World Rotary e-Club

“It is up to each and every one of us to raise our voice against crimes that deprive countless victims of their liberty, dignity and human rights”

(Ban Ki-moon)



If Rotarians had known Emma (not her real name) when she was 14 years old, perhaps her life would have taken a different path. With one parent dead and another out of the picture, she fell between the cracks of society. Without family, caring neighbors or a faith-based community and, somehow, in a living situation unknown by her school or government social workers, Emma lived by herself in Pennsylvania, U.S. While attending a party with a friend, she was forced at weapon-point to choose which man she would work for. By the time she was 15, she had lived in an abandoned building, known hunger and been trafficked for sex. Emma was recovered by law enforcement officers. She has been receiving help from social service workers. She has a clean, safe place to live and a job. Through therapy, she is beginning to understand that the situation was not her fault. We met when I delivered items she needed.

Rotarians in South Eastern PA are helping survivors like Emma with all sorts of needs as they recover and work toward self-sufficiency.

But what if Rotarians had been there before she fell between the cracks?

At the Rotary Zone Institute 25/26 in Santa Barbara, California, on Nov. 13, 2016, Rotarians bolstered their commitment to keeping vulnerable people from falling between the cracks of our communities and falling prey to human traffickers—modern slaveholders. Past District Governors and other Rotarians from seven U.S. states (California, Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Washington, Oregon and Hawai'i) and British Columbia, Canada, participated in a Red Sand Project. They spread bright red organic sand between cracks of a sidewalk at Zone Institute after attending a conference session about human trafficking, modern slavery and what Rotarians are doing to combat the issue.

The result was beautiful artistically and philosophically. And it may just be another small step toward creating justice.

Combating Human Trafficking in Greater Sacramento, California

(A submission by the Rotary Clubs of Greater Sacramento Area, D5180, USA)

District 5180 needs your help in the development of two projects using the global grant process to fund what is believed to be the largest needs in combating trafficking in the Greater Sacramento, California, USA area. Our **vision** is to develop two Rotary International global grants of \$500,000 USD each in 2016-2017, to fight human trafficking in Sacramento. To fund these projects we will need \$200,000 USD in cash and DDF from Rotarians, Rotary Clubs, districts, corporations, and interested parties from inside the United States, \$100,000 from international Rotary Districts in preferably DDF, and a global grant of \$200,000 USD.

In working with leaders in the field of human trafficking, we have determined that there are two main **needs** in our region (that seem to be global as well). The **first** is a holistic education program that creates and disseminates education and awareness information to children, healthcare workers, law enforcement, educators, and the public at large to prevent human trafficking. The **second** is the establishment of an Assessment Centre to act as a



Combating Human Trafficking in Greater Sacramento (Con'td)

safe, compassionate, physical site where a full needs assessment can be performed for each rescued victim, followed by a referral to the appropriate local non-profit partners, government agencies, and healthcare workers.

The first grant is what we are **asking for help in funding today**. It addresses the educational needs regarding human trafficking. This grant will be submitted as soon as funding is secured, in hopes of rolling out the services starting in the 2017-18 school year. The **project scope** for the Rotary District 5180 **educational grant** will consist of (a) a sex trafficking education program rolled out to teachers, administrators, and students in 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades; (b) a 3-month human trafficking public awareness campaign; and (c) a mobile application for law enforcement, healthcare workers, and government agencies that details the human trafficking services available in a specific county. We have partnered with leaders in each of these areas in order to bring these services to District 5180. 3 Strands Global has created a grade-level appropriate curriculum to help educators and students identify and prevent instances of human trafficking. The Grace Network (TGN) has developed the Grace City mobile resource app allowing first responders immediate access to services for exploited and high-risk individuals. In June 2015, TGN was invited to The White House to deliver a keynote to 300 national leaders on how to mobilize communities to effectively address human trafficking. The Ugly Truth is a public awareness campaign that has been launched in Chicago and San Diego to shine a light on the facts about human trafficking and to change the community's attitudes and response to this crime.

There are many **benefits** to Rotary Clubs and Districts that help with our educational global grant: (a) they will help to prevent human trafficking and provide services to victims (both U.S. and foreign born) in the Sacramento region, (b) the grant information, methodology, and components of the education programs will be shared with them so they may replicate these best practices in their region, and (c) the relationship with District 5180 sets the foundation for a reciprocal grant where we can help them with trafficking in their area. We believe this will be one of the largest human trafficking projects, and one of the largest RI global grants, in the World over the next year. We want you to be a part of this extraordinary project!

You can help by donating your cash or DDF. Please go to www.matchinggrants.org, click on global grants, and then on G-1239 to learn more and become part of this out of the box project. For more information, contact Dr. Brian K. Gladden at bkgladden@gmail.com, or Mr. Bob Deering at bobdeering5180@gmail.com.

Networks of Hope against the Spider Webs of Slavery

by Laura Dryjanska, RC Roma Centenario, D2080, Italy (RAGAS Coordinator for Italy)

One of the reasons why slavery is so difficult to combat has to do with the inter-relatedness of different types of social injustice. If we think of traffickers of human beings, their efficiency has to do with the ability to spin a sort of a spider web of luring a potential victim into an illusion of glamour and wealth, then keeping her in bondage through loans, violence, cultural isolation, drugs, as well as threats to her family back home.

In order for such situation to exist, some kind of a criminal networking has to occur: paperwork, money for travel, guns or drugs, contacts with the organized crime in at least two countries – it all requires an ability to cooperate and communicate. Likewise, in case of child slavery for pornography and sexual abuse, the predators have the means and ability to

Networks of Hope against the Spider Webs of Slavery (Cont'd)

connect with “clients” from the entire globe, using the deep web and a handful of technological tools available today. Seems like a hopeless scenario.

Fortunately, besides the immense amount of evil webs of slavery, there are some networks of hope, active since many years in preventing and fighting this crime. Among them, Talitha Kum stands out as an international network of Consecrated Life against trafficking in persons. Working as a network facilitates collaboration and the interchange of information between consecrated men and women in 70 countries.

Founded in 2009, Talitha Kum arose from the shared desire to coordinate and strengthen the already existing activities against trafficking undertaken by consecrated persons throughout the world. The headquarters of the organization happens to be in Rome, at the International Union of Superiors General (UISG).

The network is coordinated by Sr. Gabriella Bottani who was born and grew up in a suburb of Milan, Italy, a member of the “Comboni Missionary Sisters”. She has been living in communities with women of several cultures, nationalities and social background, sharing the passion for human dignity, justice, peace and freedom, in Italy, Germany and in Brazil.



Sr Gabriella speaking at the RC of Roma Centenaria, Italy



President Laura (2nd right) with Sr Gabriella and Sarah Bennetch

Involved for many years in first-hand experience of fighting modern slavery and raising awareness about it even among children, she had agreed to speak at the meeting of the Rotary Club Roma Centenario of Rome, just a few days before the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Her eye-opening talk was an occasion not only to share knowledge about the problem, but also to network among those who fight slavery.

In the Rotarian non-religious and non-political spirit, Sarah Bennetch, the founding member of the Italian national Alliance against Trafficking, "Radiant Treasures", also participated in the event. Sometimes, the “service upon self” can be simply an invitation. An invitation to get to know each other, share best practices and know-how – simply put, to connect existing networks of hope to fight the spider webs of slavery.

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NB There are vacancies for Coordinators to cover Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania

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