

THE MODERN SLAVE

A GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

Due to its underground nature, the extent of modern slavery is hard to measure. However, an estimated 48 million people are currently enslaved worldwide in bondage, varying from forced labour to sex trafficking.

While we tend to think of slavery as an historical issue, there are more slaves today than at any other point in human history.

Slavery is not only an international problem, but a local one: roughly 4300 people are thought to be enslaved in Australia and 800 in New Zealand, forced by criminals into work and prostitution.

In our globalised age, however, slaves do not have to live in our towns and cities for slavery participation to take place. A variety of products manufactured overseas are produced utilising slave labour. As a consequence, though they may be located many thousands of kilometres away, businesses and the public can be knowingly, or innocently, supporting slavery elsewhere.

WHAT IS SLAVERY?

“Modern slavery”, sometimes called “Human Trafficking”, is a broad term that encompasses a number of criminal practices. It takes many forms today, but at all times it is slavery at its core.



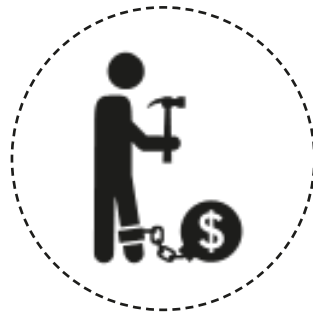
Forced Labour

Human beings are forced to work under the threat of violence and for no pay. These slaves are treated as property and exploited to create a product for commercial sale.



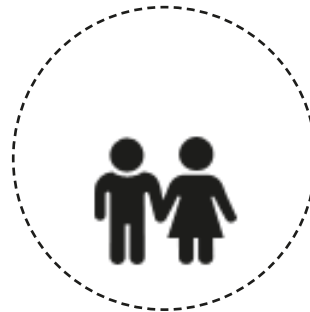
Domestic Servitude

Employees working in private homes are forced or coerced into serving and/or fraudulently convinced that they have no option to leave.



Bonded labour

Individuals who are compelled to work in order to repay a debt and unable to leave until the debt is repaid. It is the most common form of enslavement in the world.



Child labour and trafficking

Any enslavement – whether forced labour, domestic servitude, bonded labour or sex trafficking – of a child.



Sexual Slavery

Women, men or children who are forced into the commercial sex industry and held against their will by force, fraud or coercion.



Forced Marriage

Women and children who are forced to marry another without their consent or against their will.

Rotary International 2017 Atlanta Convention

A major session at the RI Convention was dedicated to Human Trafficking.

View videos of the Human Trafficking Panel Discussion and Rebecca Bender (see page 22) at <http://www.riconvention.org/en/atlanta/videos>

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SLAVERY CASES



01.

A Filipino housekeeper arrived in Canberra, promised a new job working for a foreign diplomat. However, her employer took her passport, prevented her from speaking to anyone or leaving the residence, and paid her \$300 a month for working from 6am to 10:30pm, six days a week. Even when she took the garbage out, she was accompanied to prevent possible escape.

02.

New Zealand recorded its first human trafficking conviction last year for a man who arranged for 16 Fijian workers to enter the country illegally. They departed their home town believing good work, accommodation and food awaited. One village celebrated a victim's departure with a large ceremony – he was the first villager to ever travel overseas. Each had raised hundreds of dollars from family and friends to pay the man and his accomplices, for what they were told were “administrative and filing fees”.

Upon arrival, the Fijians found themselves sleeping on the floor of the man's flat, granted lower pay than promised – and soon nothing at all. By not paying minimum entitlements or holiday pay, the convicted man made at least \$100,000 from the group's labour in his construction business and orchards he “rented” them to in the Bay of Plenty. He received a sentence of nine years and six months.

03.

Around 2000 slaves in Australia are trapped in the sex trade – often duped into travelling overseas in search of a better life. One Thai woman believed she was travelling Down Under to begin a hairdressing apprenticeship. Instead, her passport was taken away and she was pressed into sexual servitude to repay the “debt” incurred by her captors who funded her travel fees. What followed was a never-ending cycle of lengthy hours, large volumes of clients and no contact with the outside world.

04.

Three years ago, a 14-year-old Sydney girl was married in a cultural ceremony to a drug gang member who raped and beat her on a regular basis. She gave birth to a daughter, whom her husband then physically abused. Her family approved the union, with her father informing the girl she could only leave her husband “in a coffin”.

Federal police investigated 69 incidents of forced or underage marriage in the 2015-16 year in Australia. The National Children's and Youth Law Centre estimating around 250 incidences of this form of sexual slavery exist nationally at any one time.

Situations where men use “introduction agencies” to contact overseas women motivated to marry to escape desperate poverty are also rife. These “mail-order brides” routinely become domestic and sexual slaves, scared or ignorant of how to seek help.

THE REBECCA BENDER STORY: A SURVIVOR OF SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE US

As a teenager, Rebecca Bender was an honour roll student, a varsity athlete, she graduated a year early and was accepted into Oregon State University.

By 19, she was forced into human trafficking and became addicted to drugs.

Rebecca's ordinary, middle-class life changed the summer before she went to college; she fell pregnant. As a 17-year-old single mother, Rebecca became progressively socially isolated, with her peers living a very different life of study and parties. It left her feeling alone and unimportant as she struggled as a young mother to put herself through school.

She became the target of a man who told her he was a record producer, promising a family life for her and her daughter. Now, Rebecca believes he intentionally sought someone in her circumstances – but her teenage-self was smitten.

Six months after they met, he told her he wanted to marry her, but she would have to move with him to Las Vegas for his work. During those six months of dating, he groomed her gradually, expanding her boundaries with hypersexuality and pushing her in areas she never thought she'd venture.

The night they arrived in Vegas, he told her to dress up for a night touring the city. But, instead of a casino or a club, he drove her to a dead-end street. Inside

a building was an escort service. He explained he had spent a lot of money to get her there, and she needed to earn it back. He promised love and safety for her and her baby girl – all she would have to do is wear a bikini and dance in a room. When she voiced the fear that it sounded like prostitution, he hit her across the face.

Rebecca just wanted things to go back to the way they were. Even if she ran, where would she go? And she didn't know exactly where her daughter was.

Out of fear and hope that things would change, she did as she was ordered, having sex with strangers, with all the money going into her trafficker's pocket. He would be gentle and promise her safety; then beat her and apologise. The cycle repeated continuously, and she began to use drugs to cope. By 21, she was a full-blown cocaine addict.

"As a survivor of sex trafficking in America, I can't begin to tell you how often victims are misidentified," Rebecca said. "We are not in a third world country, so trafficking is going to look very different today in our modern, developed society. Misidentification and learning the signs are crucial to help victims get out of sexual exploitation.

"Because I was never handcuffed to a bed like the media portrays, I thought I must not be being trafficked. I didn't fit into the stereotypical

box all of us in our culture believes. I was unaware what a coercive tactic was when the man I thought was my boyfriend began his manipulation. Because of this misidentification, I never asked for help, law enforcement never noticed and my family and friends believed the same lies I regurgitated to them. Many points of interception could have taken place, but went un-noticed."

Angry at Rebecca for "using up all his money on drugs," her trafficker sent her to rehab.

It was there Rebecca found hope and salvation in God. However, she wasn't identified as a sex trafficking victim, only a drug addict.

As soon as she was released, she enthusiastically returned to her "owner". She believed that, if she took Jesus to him, things would get better.

They didn't.

It didn't take long for her to be sold between two more traffickers, the final being a notorious trafficker known for his use of extreme control and violence. She was beaten more than any other woman. While he kept a loving family façade to the public and Rebecca's daughter, now five or six years old, he would often threaten the child's wellbeing if Rebecca didn't comply.

She had several failed attempted escapes resulting in harm.

"Because I was never handcuffed to a bed like the media portrays, I thought I must not be being trafficked. I didn't fit into the stereotypical box all of us in our culture believes."



In total, she tried escaping four times. By then, her face had been broken in five places, she had been arrested seven times, and she had attempted suicide twice.

After a federal investigation ended the criminal organisation, it took months for them to prosecute her trafficker. Two victims went to prison, her trafficker awaited his plea deal and in the middle of the night, Rebecca grabbed her daughter and ran.

She had nothing – sleeping on family's couches and trying to start her life over was hard. Rebecca contacted an old regular client who helped her temporarily, allowing her to get involved with Eaves: The Poppy Project, an organisation in London that helped women like

her. Slowly, she found hope again.

But she knew living in London wasn't right. She moved home to America, once again with nothing, got a job, started night school and went back to church, finding herself welcomed like the Prodigal Son.

She got married, started a business and had another child. But, one day while in prayer, she heard: "How can you sit here and do nothing when you know what it's like to be more afraid to go home than to get in a car with a stranger?"

Rebecca began sharing her story and wrote her first book, *Roadmap to Redemption*. She met up with Linda Smith, founder of Shared Hope International, an organisation fighting sex

trafficking in the US and abroad. Soon, the Rebecca Bender Initiative was born.

The Initiative hosts a speaking team of sex trafficking survivors, including Rebecca, who have turned their experiences into a training program. To date, 23,800 FBI, law enforcement officers, homeland security officials and other service providers have been trained by the team.

Another component is ELEVATE, a 16-week intensive mentoring program helping survivors, both men and women, to get back on their feet. It helps with personal healing, business and leadership development, and a crash course in non-profit management for those who want to get into the social justice movement.

Today, Rebecca's daughter, Deshae Wise, is a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), and quite the athlete, having received a scholarship to the esteemed university. Deshae ended her high school career not only also on the honour roll for leadership and as the co-founder of her school's Youth Ending Slavery chapter, but was cemented as the second fastest female in Oregon's history. No doubt, she will go on to do great things at UC Berkeley.

More information and a wide variety of free educational resources, such as "40 coercive tactics sex traffickers employ", are available for distribution at www.rebeccabender.org

**This article is not for publication without prior approval from Rebecca Bender Initiative.*

“The Initiative hosts a speaking team of sex trafficking survivors, including Rebecca, who have turned their experiences into a training program. To date, 23,800 FBI, law enforcement officers, homeland security officials and other service providers have been trained by the team.”



Portrait of male Sweatshop worker from a slum in Dharavi, Mumbai. (Photo: Nicholas Adams – www.nicholas-adams.co.uk)

BUSINESSES: ARE THEY SUPPORTING OR PREVENTING SLAVERY?

Global supply chain transparency

The UK government introduced the Modern Slavery Act of 2015 to combat what Prime Minister Rt Hon Theresa May MP described as the “greatest human rights issue of our time”.

The Act focused on a number of areas to fight slavery at a governmental level, such as establishing greater enforcement, the establishment of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, greater protection for victims and global supply chain transparency.

Now, UK businesses with a turnover of 36 million pounds and over are required by law to prepare a slavery and human trafficking statement each financial year. This is to describe the steps the organisation has taken to ensure slavery is not taking place within its supply chains or their own operations. Smaller businesses are encouraged to opt in – however it is accepted not all businesses have the resources to undertake thorough due diligence of overseas manufacturing facilities.

In California, the Transparency in Supply Chains Act 2010 required businesses with revenue over \$100 million to similarly report on initiatives to eradicate slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains. Of the 2126 companies subject to the law in 2015, it was found only 14 per cent complied fully with requirements.

A report submitted by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to parliament in August 2017 recommended implementing similar Acts into Australian law, which is currently under review.

In 2016, the results of a two-year study into slavery in New Zealand, *Worker Exploitation in New Zealand: A Troubling Landscape*, was released, recommending many of the strategies put in place by the British Modern Slavery Act. Researcher Dr Christina Stringer interviewed over 100 people, with reports of excessive work without breaks (up to 18-hour shifts) and wages of as little as \$5 an hour or no pay at all. Employment legislation instituted in February this year will ban New Zealand employers found in breach of employment laws, such as not respecting minimum wage, from hiring migrants for up to two years.

Steps to becoming slavery free

- **Find out your “slavery footprint”**
It can be confronting to discover how many slaves are likely working for you through your product purchases. Items from chocolate, with cocoa harvested by slaves, to technology are made through unethical labour. Find out which problematic products you buy through undertaking a survey at Slavery Footprint <http://slaveryfootprint.org/>
- **Buy from companies with transparent supply chains**
Many guides exist online as to which brands are slavery free:
 - Ethical Clothing
Australia is an accreditation body that approves clothing and accessories brands with fully transparent and compliant supply chains. Visit ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au
 - The Tearfund Ethical Fashion Guide provides similar reporting on New Zealand brands – it can be found at www.tearfund.org.nz/ethicalfashionguide
 - Oxfam’s Naughty or Nice list spotlights retailers who do and don’t reveal where their products are manufactured. See www.oxfam.org.au
- **Reuse and recycle**
Rampant consumerism drives much of the drive for forced labour and poor conditions. By reusing and recycling, you can help reduce demand – and help the environment and your hip pocket too.

Konica Minolta Australia: Stepping up to end modern slavery in supply chains

By Dr David Cooke

Chair and managing director, Konica Minolta Business Solutions Australia

Five years ago, I never really thought much about slavery and, if I did, I was reflecting on history, not assessing contemporary society. A chance meeting with the founder of Project Futures, an organisation with the mission to raise funds to support victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia, changed all that.

While I started supporting Project Futures' work in a personal capacity, when I became chair and managing director of Konica Minolta Australia, I realised I had the platform and influence to do more. As a business, we have a strong corporate social responsibility foundation, but realised having a positive impact does not negate the potential negative impacts of our business. This includes human rights impacts in our business operations and supply chains.

Globally, Konica Minolta is a member of the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC), a network of tech companies that collaborate on environmental and social governance standards. Through the work of our ethical sourcing manager Laura McManus, we are working to cascade good global policies to our local value chain. The cornerstone of this work is our Ethical Sourcing Roadmap, supported by our Supplier Code of Conduct and Human Rights Position Statement. These documents are open source and available on our website for any company also wishing to commence their journey (www.konicaminolta.com.au/sustainability).

Overall, suppliers have embraced Konica Minolta's ethical sourcing program. Seeking more than a tick-box exercise, we are working with prioritised suppliers to help them better understand our expectations. This is not about pushing responsibility down the chain, but forging shared value supplier partnerships.

Realising there is limited awareness among Australian businesses on issues of modern slavery and ethical sourcing, Konica Minolta has been engaging in national dialogues on the issue. In June, we submitted evidence to and appeared before the Federal Government Inquiry on Establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia, voicing our support for corporate reporting requirements on due diligence efforts. We believe this is smart regulation that will create a level playing field and bring Australian businesses in-line with global expectations.

As business leaders, employees and consumers we all have a role to play in collectively mobilising to end modern slavery for the last time.



World Day Against Human Trafficking last year, where David was one of two business leaders on a multi-stakeholder panel hosted by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). (Photo: DFAT/Linda Roche)



The Mekong Club

The Mekong Club operates on the idea that truly sustainable eradication of modern slavery requires companies to make prevention an integral part of the way they do business – from hiring to measuring success.

It is the brainchild of Matt Friedman, who has worked for 25 years as an anti-slavery activist, program designer, evaluator and manager. For over a decade, Matt worked for the United States Agency for International Development in Thailand, Bangladesh and Nepal, designing and managing regional human trafficking programs and counter-trafficking training and resource mobilisation. He further acted as Regional Project Manager of the UN International Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in Thailand, coordinating the UN system with government and civil society groups throughout Asia.

However, despite their best efforts, NGOs and governments have been losing the fight against slavery, with the problem continuing to grow exponentially. Last year the world helped less than 1 per cent of the victims globally. With 70 per cent of forced labour flowing through the private sector, Matt recognised that businesses are in a prime position to stifle demand through operational choices.

To create change, The Mekong Club provides industry-specific tools to help businesses get or keep out of the business of slavery. This encompasses a digital risk assessment matrix to assess the level of forced labour risk associated with specific materials by region, training resource guides and more. The Mekong Club works with the business sector in a positive, supportive manner to offer a safe space to address this sensitive topic.

By reducing demand, progressively trafficking operations will lack a space to peddle slavery-produced goods and services.



Former slave fisherman Myint Naing and his mother, Khin Than, cry as they are reunited after 22 years at their village in Mon State, Myanmar. (Photo: Gemunu Amarasinghe/AP Images)

“Despite their best efforts, NGOs and governments have been losing the fight against slavery, with the problem continuing to grow exponentially. Last year the world helped just 0.2 per cent of victims globally.”

Proactively removing slavery from a business not only benefits victims, but businesses too, by removing the risk of legal and regulatory implications and adverse media exposure.

For more information on how your business can become slave-free, visit themekongclub.org or email info@themekongclub.org



Further viewing

Of the 45.8 million victims of slavery, the world helped just 66,000 last year – a mere 0.2 per cent. This three-minute film gives the unnerving statistics: <https://youtu.be/W-jYi-wCLf0>. Matt Friedman explains the depth of the situation in this TEDx: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUR_yFYDt0o

Walk Free

Andrew Forrest was drawn into the slavery cause accidentally, after his teenage daughter Grace volunteered at an orphanage in Nepal. She subsequently discovered the children she had been looking after had been groomed for sex work and trafficked through India into the Middle East.

Andrew set up a team to find out what had happened and travelled with his wife Nicola to meet some of the victims.

"The screams she let out when she saw an approaching male, and the horror and revulsion and the terror on her little face will be stuck with Nicola and I forever," Andrew said, recalling an encounter with a 12-year-old female victim.

When Andrew investigated his own company, Fortescue Metals Group, he was shocked to discover the number of incidences of slavery existing in the supply chain. He took immediate steps to remedy the situation and founded the Walk Free Foundation to combat slavery worldwide.

Andrew is pushing corporations to clean up their act. At an event chaired by Bill Clinton, attended by executives of major corporations, Andrew forced many to realise slavery existed in their operations, their culpability and the risk this held for their public image.

"The reality of people being kept in forced labour conditions and having their freedom removed is apparent in Australia and all over the region which feeds goods and services into Australia," he told the government committee investigating modern slavery this year.

Visit www.walkfreefoundation.org to find out about its various initiatives.

"The screams she let out when she saw an approaching male, and the horror and revulsion and the terror on her little face will be stuck with Nicola and I forever."



(Photo: Grace Forrest, Walk Free Foundation 2016)



(Photo: Grace Forrest, Walk Free Foundation 2016)

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTS TO BRING JUSTICE



Thorn

Actors Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher leveraged their celebrity status to create Thorn in 2009 – a technology-based human rights organisation that seeks to disrupt the role the Internet plays in child pornography and sexual slavery.

Through partnerships with technology program developers, leading Internet companies and law enforcement, Thorn spearheads a number of initiatives to assist victims and deter offenders. Ashton recently presented at the Rotary International Convention in Atlanta to thunderous applause.

Human trafficking intelligence provided by Thorn to police helps locate trafficking victims faster. More

than 150,000 escort ads are posted daily in the United State alone – with children being bought and sold online somewhere in the midst of that pile of data.

Thorn's web-based tool, Spotlight, helps law enforcement find the information they are looking for relevant to cases. A recent survey revealed Spotlight has been used in cases identifying 4545 adults, 1980 children and 2186 traffickers in 12 months. On average, five children per day are found thanks to the program.

Spotlight not only helps officers find victims efficiently, but also collaborate beyond jurisdictions – key to countering a trade where victims are frequently moved across

state lines.

Through funding and advisorship, Thorn supports other initiatives like Project Vic, a collaborative effort between FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and law enforcement around the world. The Project aims to create a central repository of children sexual abuse images to reduce the time it takes to analyse seized content and allow focus on new content and victims, rather than old material that has already been actioned.

Other programs involve new methods of allowing victims to ask for help via discreet and accessible

Actor and philanthropist Ashton Kutcher took the stage at the 2017 Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, US, to address human trafficking and modern-day slavery.



Global Eye

Global Eye gathers actionable criminal intelligence to fight transnational crimes ranging from the illegal wildlife trade to human trafficking. Their work takes place on the basis that law enforcement ranges from partially to completely dysfunctional in many regions in the world. Many lack the capacity, directive or resources to collect and exploit criminal intelligence.

Many organisations with specialist skills already address rescue, victim rehabilitation and awareness campaigns related to trafficking. However, there is relatively little focus on finding and taking apart networks that traffic people. Global Eye redresses this by targeting offenders worldwide.

“Unless these criminal networks are dismantled, as victims are rescued more will simply take their place,” Global Eye CEO Fiachra Kearney said. “We seek to understand Human Trafficking from a network perspective, uncovering data on who the perpetrators are, how they communicate, their logistics, finances and business and social linkages. Every illicit network is vulnerable, and our work seeks to uncover those vulnerabilities.”

The research team locate and decipher multiple layers of data pertaining to illicit setups, many of which have previously gone ignored. Some sources are millions of rows in size, and often in several languages.

Critically, Global Eye is not restricted to any one geographic area, but rather tracks networks across any jurisdiction worldwide.

“In today’s world, much of our business and lives takes place irrespective of borders. The same holds true for many trafficking operations. Even legal jurisdictions are increasingly extending globally – for example, if a trafficker anywhere in the world uses US dollars for an illicit transaction, or a US company like Facebook to advertise, buy or sell human beings, they are in violation of US law. As a result, they can be indicted in the US. Given the poor justice outcomes in many countries, we believe it is essential to layer these sorts of legal violations on traffickers,” Fiachra said.

Justice systems move slowly, however, so Global Eye additionally seeks other avenues available to make life difficult for traffickers. For example, they share data with the global banking system, to have them placed on lists pertaining to Know Your Customer regulations.

These regulations stipulate banks need to know where funds come from. They cannot accept the proceeds of crime, including those from human trafficking. Violation of these banking regulations can result in fines of millions or billions of dollars.

Recently, it has come to light that certain Australian banks have breached these regulations and, thus, Australian law, making it highly possible they have accepted cash deposits coming from the proceeds of human slavery.

“There is a great deal to do in this realm, even in developed nations to stop human trafficking. We must all take it very seriously and do whatever we can if we wish to put an end to the practice,” Fiachra said.

For more information, visit www.global-eye.co/ge

text codes and encouraging users to seek help through a targeted online deterrence messaging.

“Technology can be used to enable slavery, but it can also be used to disable slavery,” said Ashton. “The right to pursue happiness for so many is stripped away, it’s raped, it’s abused, it’s taken by force, fraud or coercion – it is sold for the momentary happiness of another. My other day job is that of a father of two, and a part of that job I take very seriously is my effort to defend their right to pursue happiness and to ensure a society and government that defends it as well.”

For more information, visit www.wearethorn.org

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery

Carol Metzker
RAGAS member

In 2004, Rotarian Mark Little led a small international group of Rotarians to a centre in India for children rescued from slavery. Few could grasp that the 60 small girls and boys they faced had been captives – enslaved for sex and labour. For some Rotarians, the visit was a wake-up call that slavery still exists in every country, although it is illegal worldwide.

The handful of Rotarians working together on projects after that trip became a Rotary International board-sanctioned Rotarian Action Group in 2013. Today, the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery (RAGAS) has a growing membership in 23 countries. Its work is twofold: to create awareness of the plight of 45.8 million slaves and solutions to the problem, and to take action through projects that will help end slavery.

In the past four years alone, RAGAS's projects have provided education, shelter, transportation, vocational training, water, food and more to victims and survivors in Ghana, India, Nepal, Thailand, the US, the UK and beyond. Its educational programs have inspired communities to join the fight and help prevent additional victims.

Schools4Freedom children enjoying some outdoor games with their teacher.



Partnering with top international anti-slavery/human trafficking organisations, RAGAS members continue to push the envelope of fighting modern slavery. Individually and together, today they battle different forms of slavery: organ harvesting in Egypt; debt bondage slavery and labour trafficking in India;

forced child marriage in Australia; sex trafficking in the US, England and Nepal; and cyber-sex-trafficking, with a prospective global grant project in the Philippines.

Join us in the work to end modern slavery. Visit www.ragas.online

RAGAS Coordinators – Australia & NZ

- **Victoria**
Tony Stokes
Rotary Club of Box Hill
Central (D9810)
stokes9@optusnet.com.au
- **Western Australia**
Gillian Booth-Yudleman
Rotary Club of Bay View
Claremont (D9455)
shreveportgb@hotmail.com
- **South Australia**
Teresa Evans
Rotary Club of Salisbury (D9500)
teresa1407@hotmail.com
- **Oceania and parts of South East Asia**
David Black
Rotary Club of Dunedin Central,
NZ, (D9980)
dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz



SA Awesome Foursome

Val Kirk, of the Rotary Club of Walkerville, SA, first heard about the crisis of modern slavery when attending the 2013 Rotary International Convention in Lisbon, Portugal. Upon returning home, Val spread around what she had heard – leading her daughter, Teresa Evans, and Dennis Underwood, of the Rotary Club of Salisbury, SA, and Russell Green, of the Rotary Club of Regency Park, SA, to join the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery.

The four South Australians travelled to the Sydney International Convention in 2014, where they met up with others moved by the same cause and helped man the Action Group information stand. Among their newfound friends were Mark Little from the UK, who founded the group in 2004, and Carol Metzker from the US.

Schools4Freedom

Not long after, Carol introduced the “Awesome Foursome” to the Schools4Freedom project, planned for Uttar Pradesh, Northern India. The project involved freeing an entire village from debt bondage, a form of slavery instigated when predatory loan sharks offer desperate villagers the chance to borrow money at an exorbitant interest rate. They and their children are then forced into unceasing work in a futile attempt to pay back an ever-increasing debt they will never escape.

The project required \$US36,000 to fund. Committed to raise a chunk of this, over an 18-month period Val, Teresa, Dennis and Russell organised film and quiz nights, barbecues and other fundraisers to raise \$US7000 (\$AU10,500). Numerous clubs in the UK and US contributed to make up the total amount required.

The Schools4Freedom project has been successfully running for the past 12 months, helping villagers to take control of their own destiny and stay free. The money has gone towards a variety of avenues, including hiring educators to establish a simple, open-air school, provide food and install solar lights.

More information and project status reports are available at <http://ragas.online/case-studies/schools4freedom-2/>

Sadly, Val passed away in 2015, missing out on seeing the



A male Schools4Freedom teacher working with 10-year-old Alok.

Schools4Freedom project get underway. In honour of Val, the group donated a further \$4000 they raised towards Bakhita House, which assists women rescued from the sex trade in the UK.

Teresa is now the state coordinator for the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, keeping the fight for the cause her mother was so passionate about going strong. Both Russell and

Teresa act as guest speakers at clubs throughout Australia, spreading awareness of the horrors of international and “homegrown” slavery.

For more information, phone Teresa on 0403 306 625 or email teresa@ragas.online, or Russell on 0417 672 559 or russgreen@bigpond.net.au

SCHOOLS4FREEDOM CASE STUDY
*Interview with Shamsher –
 A former debt bondage slave*

Can you tell us about the loan your family took that trapped you in debt-bondage slavery?

Three years ago I took Rs.10,000 (about \$155) debt from a brick kiln owner to repay the debt taken by my parents from the slave-holder in my village. After getting the Rs.10,000.00 we started work there and did hard work to repay the debt, but that never happened, because the brick kiln owner always used to say, "You have still the debt, I will not leave you until I squeeze the single last penny from you".

My wife and me were working 12-16 hours in a day with our two elder children. Whenever we tried to give up the work he beat us and we were caught every time and his henchmen took us many times from our village to the brick kiln.

During October 2016, when brick kiln work started, the slave-holder (brick kiln owner) came and said to us, "If you will not return the debt, I will beat you and make you cripple". After two or three days Schools4Freedom workers came to me and encouraged me to face the slave-owner, because debt bondage is illegal. After three or four attempts I got out of the debt bondage slavery.

What impact do you believe the school is having in the village? Is one of your children in the school?

Schools4Freedom has changed the entire environment in the community. There was no facility of education for our children near to our community and most of the children worked with their parents. But now those children do not go to work, they come to the S4F school every day and they would be totally freed from the debt bondage slavery. My two children go to S4F school. The community has become firm and confident now. We go to the government officials now whenever any issue arises. The S4F school is a favourite place for us.



Vice chair of the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery Dave McCleary, of the Rotary Club of Roswell, US, and founder and chair of The Path of Hope Foundation Rebecca Tolstoy, of the Rotary Club of Perth, WA, at the 2017 Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, where participants signed to **END HUMAN TRAFFICKING – THE POWER OF ONE.**

Perth and USA collaborate

What began as a program to help domestic violence victims in Perth, WA, will soon be tackling abuse internationally, thanks to a chance meeting in Atlanta this year between founder and chair of The Path of Hope Foundation Rebecca Tolstoy, of the Rotary Club of Perth, and vice-chair of the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery Dave McCleary, of the Rotary Club of Roswell, US.

The Path of Hope Foundation began through a partnership between the Rotary Club of Perth and The Salvation Army to break the cycle of domestic violence within the Perth community. Following their original pilot's success, the program has since expanded to Darwin and will shortly be established in Queensland.

"We are so proud and humbled by the Perth local communities, donors and volunteers rallying behind our pilot," Rebecca said. "In one refurbishment of an Outreach Centre and 12 Salvation Army refuge units for women and children, goods worth over \$80,000 were donated by Alan and Marisa Tribe (IKEA Perth) and 178 volunteers spent 1800 hours cleaning, assembling furniture and renovating. Together we're helping victims of domestic violence become survivors."

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs informs Path of Hope's programs to assist domestic violence victims. The "wrap-around" model breaks down what is identified as necessary to leading a healthy and happy life then works to put in place what is missing in each victim's world.

The first, most basic, step the Path of Hope program takes is attending to physiological needs, ensuring access to shelter, food and sleep through admission to appropriately equipped refuges. Creating a sense of safety is likewise fundamental, provided

THE PATH OF HOPE



through legal services, counselling and personal safety training.

Fostering self-esteem, which is often destroyed by abusers, is worked upon, with activities including Women2Women mentoring and CV writing towards gaining successful employment. Feel Good Days give victims the chance to have a makeover and see themselves in a new light during a dark point in their lives. The final stage of development – self-actualisation – is facilitated through transitioning participants into the community to realise their full potential.

Path of Hope works extensively to recruit volunteers, from legal professionals to hairdressers, to offer their services free of charge to victims. An annual gala ball, attracting sponsorship from Hancock Prospecting and Roy Hill, among other corporates, raises much-needed funds for victim services.

Thanks to Dave and Rebecca's meeting, the first international pilot



Adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

“Domestic violence victims are some of the most vulnerable people in our community, often struggling with homelessness, psychological fallout and low self-esteem. This makes them easy prey for traffickers to pick off,” Rebecca said. “We see enormous potential applying the Path of Hope model all over the world to boost victims’ recovery and resilience and help them create the safe and happy lives they deserve.”

in Virginia will soon be underway. The pair quickly realised their shared purpose, both having encountered the common interconnection of modern slavery and domestic violence through their work.

“While domestic violence and human trafficking are different forms of victimisation, there are similarities and points of intersects,” Dave said. “As advocates who serve diverse populations, the chances that you are already working with human trafficking victims is highly probable. Rotarians Against Slavery is very excited to partner with Path of Hope and Salvation Army to empower women and children for the life they deserve”.

In the following months, they have worked closely with hundreds of Rotary and community volunteers to build the USA program, using the Path of Hope model to help victims in Virginia, Florida, Georgia and Arizona. Programs in California and Oregon are

set to follow.

“We’re excited about the possibilities,” Rebecca said. “The same model is equally applicable to victims of domestic violence, and victims of human trafficking. The Path of Hope program can be applied to victims all over the world suffering various forms of abuse.”

Rebecca will be in the US during October to assist with the rollout of the program, as well as meet with Senators and other VIPs across America geared towards fighting the slavery epidemic. During this visit, she and Dave will sit on a World Safety panel, together with leaders in the field of family domestic violence and human trafficking. Dave and Rebecca will then travel to Geneva for the United Nations Rotary Day for meetings with UN delegates from across the globe.

For more information, visit www.pathofhope.org.au



Project Starfish

New Zealand Rotarian David Black, of the Rotary Club of Dunedin Central, is campaigning tirelessly to fight the \$US100 billion child sex trade industry that sees 2.2 million children abducted into prostitution each year. Through his organisation Project Starfish, David has dedicated thousands of hours to spreading awareness of the atrocities suffered by child slaves worldwide.

David became involved with the cause after his club began sponsoring a child cared for by the Rescue Mission for Children, located in Northern Thailand. The Mission focuses on saving youngsters at risk of trafficking from the Akha tribe, one of the most powerless groups worldwide, lacking state or citizenship.

David began corresponding with those operating the project to better understand the impact their donation had – a thoroughly eye-opening education. The Mission's co-founder, Asa, like her young charges, is part of the Akha tribe. Only a young woman, Asa has witnessed many horrible sights in her time – including friends dying of AIDS after being raped repeatedly in brothels after their abduction and

forced prostitution.

Asa has, on occasion, put her life on the line in her quest to save her people. Once a group of young Akha children were snatched by traffickers, destined for the sex industry. She followed them, dressed as a peasant, and in the middle of the night rescued the children and ferried them to safety.

“Today, more than 40 Akha children are fed, clothed, nurtured, taught life skills and sent to school by the Mission – returning to their families during holidays.”

Today, more than 40 Akha children are fed, clothed, nurtured, taught life skills and sent to school by the Mission – returning to their families during holidays. The Mission's infrastructure was built by Rotary clubs and church groups, and is overseen by an Australian-based board. It is reliant on sponsorship, with David working tirelessly to find new donors and fundraising sources.

“The more children who go into

Calling all Rotaract and Interact clubs

David is urging all Rotaract and Interact clubs to contact him and find out how they can make a real difference in the lives of child slaves. If you would like to get hands-on in project works directly benefitting the children in the care of these NGOs, email David on DBlack@MainlandPoultry.co.nz

the rescue centre and are educated, the more who will earn citizenship and be protected from being abducted into slavery. Children are a very valuable commodity, because, unlike drugs or arms, which can only be sold once, these kids can be sold for repeat business over and over again,” David said.

“What we've seen is an absolute spike in the demand for child sex slaves, because a lot of Western businesspeople are travelling to places like Myanmar, who have opened their borders to development in recent years.”



“The more children who go into the rescue centre and are educated, the more who will earn citizenship and be protected from being abducted into slavery. Children are a very valuable commodity, because, unlike drugs or arms, which can only be sold once, these kids can be sold for repeat business over and over again.”



organisations like Nvader, HAGAR and UN-ACT (United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons) in both Thailand and Cambodia.

The unfathomable numbers of children caught up in slavery can be overwhelming, with Project Starfish drawing inspiration from the parable that gave it its name to draw hope and purpose.

The story goes: In wake of a violent storm, a young man walks along a beach the next morning. He notices an elderly man reaching down periodically and casting his arm out towards the waves. As he approaches he enquires what he is doing.

“All of these starfish have been washed onto shore. I’m throwing them back in the ocean or they’ll die,” he answers.

The younger man looks at him, incredulously.

“But there are millions of them. You can’t possibly make a difference.”

In response, the elderly gentleman scoops up another starfish and throws it into the surf. “Well,” he says, “I sure made a difference to that one.”

“If you thought about the millions and millions of children affected, and the billions and billions of dollars spent on child prostitution all at once, you can just sit in a corner and rock,” David said. “But if you think of it as everyone can save one child – you can educate them, give them a future – that’s actually quite an achievement.”

David has sought out Rotaractors and Interactors to become involved in the Project Starfish cause, knowing he may not see child slavery end in his own lifetime. They have quickly become just as passionate and determined to make a difference to this gruelling humanitarian challenge.

Recently, nine Rotaractors from

Dunedin, Auckland and Norwich, UK, together with Next Rotary Generation members, joined David and a young Rotarian, work friend and long-time sponsor of children at the centre, in travelling to the Rescue Mission for Children to see for themselves the work Asa and her team are undertaking, as well as meet with

Australian ping pongers bring their A game

Last October, District 9800 governor Peter Frueh participated in Ping-Pong-A-Thon with a group of golfers from Riversdale Golf Club, Vic, raising \$10,500 of the \$300,000 national tally. Funds raised support projects aimed at tackling modern slavery and sexual exploitation in South East Asia. Participants watch a short educational documentary about the issues of slavery, and play table tennis for up to three hours, inviting family and friends to sponsor their efforts.

Ping-Pong-A-Thon founder Adrian Rowse ran the first event in 2011 after spending two years working in Thailand helping young people being exploited in the sex industry. He saw people being “used daily like products off a supermarket shelf, because their circumstances made them vulnerable to the greed of others”.

“When we support a young person to exit exploitative circumstances via alternative educational or vocational opportunities, it’s not just their life that is changed,” Adrian said. “Given the opportunity to escape from situations of slavery or exploitation, these young people often courageously go on to change the lives of their families and make their wider communities more resilient in the process.”

In October 2017, 3000 participants will engage in up to 100 Ping-Pong-A-Thon events across Australia, pushing the total funds raised since 2011 to well over \$1 million.

Find out how to host a Ping-Pong-A-Thon of your own or find an event near you at www.pingpongathon.com

Destiny Rescue

It is inconceivable today, that in a world where so many of us have more than we need, human trafficking and slavery still exists. While we consider what’s for dinner and what’s on TV this evening, let’s remember that right now there are as many as two million children around the world being forced to have sex with strangers. They are being treated like objects, possessions for pleasure, rather than being cared for and treated with basic human respect.

“They forced me to sleep with as many as 50 customers a day. I had to give [the pimp] all my money. If I did not [earn a set amount], they punished me by removing my clothes and beating me with a stick until I fainted, electrocuting me, cutting me.”

- *Words of a sex-trafficking survivor [Kolab]*

This truth is an uncomfortable one, that many don’t really want to think about. It’s easy to see it as not our responsibility, because it’s happening a world away.

At Destiny Rescue, our mission is to reach into this darkness and pull out the vulnerable and exploited, to offer them restoration and empowerment, a gift of freedom to make their future. Thankfully, we are finding more and more organisations, businesses and individuals, who agree and enable us to continue to grow this work.

The ultimate goal is, of course, to make ourselves redundant; to eliminate the supply and be part of a culture change that addresses demand. Every country is part of the human trafficking issue, including the sex tourists we see from our own country, travelling to South East Asia to exploit children for weeks at a time.

While we know eradicating trafficking and sexual slavery is possible, it is still a long way off. It will require years of education, changes to culture and to the law, including in this country, as well as abroad. Our fight, therefore, needs to be multifaceted, with a strategy for education and awareness, as well as continuing to prevent high-risk kids from falling into the hands of traffickers and rescuing those that have. Once the children are safe, that’s when their real journey begins; providing them all the means to recover physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, to then be equipped to embrace the educational and vocational opportunities we can offer so they can lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Not all children are rescued from the claws of traffickers and brothel owners. Our undercover rescue operators also keep an eye out for “high-risk” children by monitoring train stations and other public spaces; places that are also watched by traffickers.

Kids often run away from nightmare situations at home. In India, one girl was sent to live with her grandparents, because her stepfather disliked her. Her grandmother treated her as a domestic slave, they would not feed her, and she would be beaten when she “stole” food from them. As she grew older, her grandfather began raping

“Every country is part of the human trafficking issue, including the sex tourists we see from our own country, travelling to South East Asia to exploit children for weeks at a time.”



her daily. At about the age of 10, after her grandmother discovered she was also being raped by a cousin who had joined the household, their grandmother demanded she marry her cousin. After attempting suicide more than once, she ran away. She was found by one of our agents as she arrived at Delhi Station crying. He took her to a safe home, where she slept, undisturbed for the first time in many years.

It's now her dream to become a police inspector so she can put bad people in jail. We'll do all we can to make her dream come true.

We cannot fight this war alone and we are grateful for the support of fantastic organisations like Rotary. Our "Sunrise" Prevention Home in Huay Khom, Thailand, for instance, was funded and built in 2012 by members, friends and supporters of the Rotary Club of Cairns Sunrise, Qld, and Rotary District 9550.

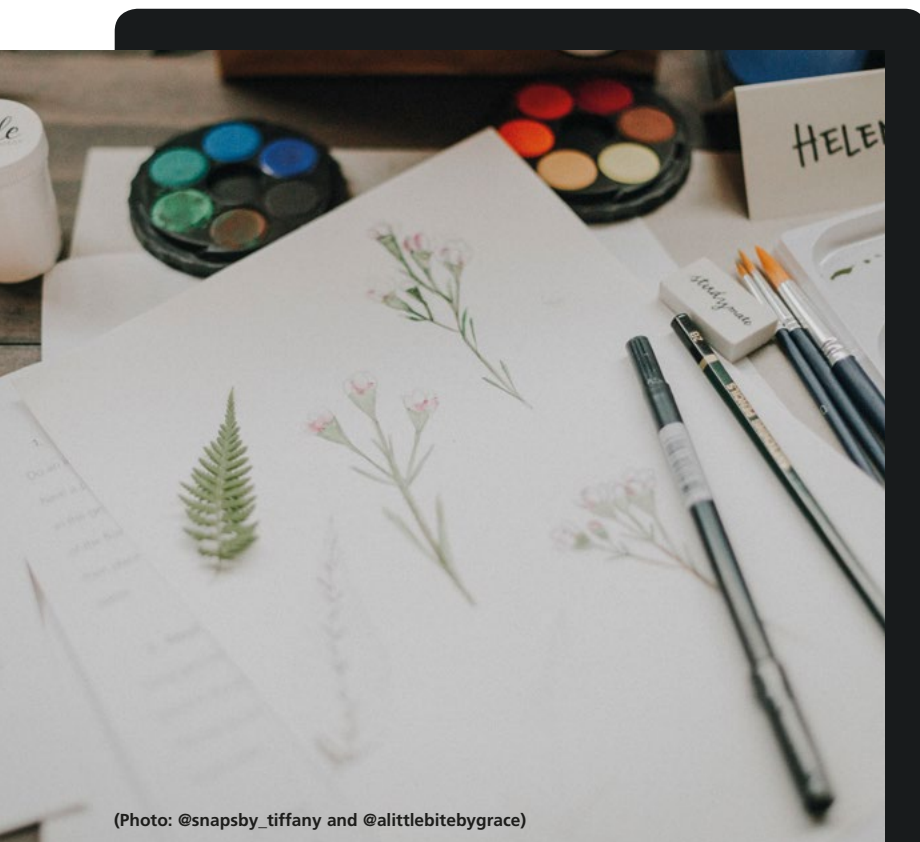
We have also received generous support from Rotary clubs in Gladstone and Bundaberg, Qld, Lower Blue Mountains and Chatswood International, NSW, and others. It is exciting to see this relationship continue to grow.

With our founder and president, Tony Kirwan, having the ambitious dream to rescue 100,000 children by 2020, we need as many people to join the cause as possible. Tony knows that his dream is ambitious, but he maintains we need to reach high and dream big for the sake of the children.

If any Rotary club would like to join in the fight for these children, they can help by:

- Inviting a speaker to come to a meeting;
- Host a jewellery party – the jewellery has been handcrafted by the Rescue & Prevention girls from around the world;
- Sponsoring a home;
- Funding a Rotary-specific project.

For more information, please contact Tim Howard on 0428 755 088 or email tim.howard@destinyrescue.org



(Photo: @snapsby_tiffany and @alittlebitebygrace)

Australian Rotarians Paint4Freedom

The Paint4Freedom team is seeking the assistance of Rotarians from across Australia, with the aim of running a community Paint4Freedom Art Competition in every Local Government/ Council zone across the country. At last count, that will make for 536 community competitions.

The competition timetable is designed to further promote discussion around the Federal Government's current inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act, as well as raise awareness and encourage consumers to ask how they can help ensure products sold here in Australia aren't made by workers forced or held against their will.

You can help by:

- Asking your district governor to have one of our team speak at their next president's meeting;
- Encouraging your local government council to host their local community Paint4Freedom Art Competition;
- Joining us to assist at your local community Paint4Freedom Art Competition;
- Arranging a local community talk about modern-day slavery and human trafficking;
- Running either a fundraising dinner or assisting to run the local community competition's presentation dinner.

Further details can be found at www.paint4freedom.org/rotary

Sydney Survivor School

Sally Irwin first discovered the horrors of human trafficking when her husband was posted as the Australian Defence Attaché in the Australian Embassy in Germany.

Due to being on a diplomatic passport, Sally was not permitted to work – and so threw herself into charity work trying to improve the lives of victims.

"I had access to very influential people, but I felt like it wasn't enough to just be supporting a good cause from afar," Sally said. "My involvement became hands-on and personal. These women had no voice, no choice and they'd given up. Their suffering in silence is what caught my heart. I knew I had to act."

Sally began to support and raise money for a grassroots café and soup kitchen where prostitutes went – often for only a few minutes at a time, under strict control by their "owners". Trying to escape poverty, many had travelled from countries like Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania after being offered jobs in offices and salons by agencies. They learnt the truth only after they arrived, with no money or support network to escape.

Other girls had fallen victim to "Loverboy Syndrome", wooed by a man who promised security, marriage and children. He would convince her to travel with him to Berlin, only for her to find out she was one of many victims of a fabrication. Subsequently, they were kept in squalid conditions and sold up to 60 times a day.

The women were beaten and broken until they lost the will to fight back and often forcibly supplied drugs until they were too addicted to even consider leaving.

"I'll always vividly remember this one woman; her husband was an alcoholic and sold her into slavery on the condition that he would get a percentage of what she earned. If and when she earned enough



well as opening avenues for me to work with other organisations.”

Based in Sydney, the Survivor School helps rebuild the lives of people subjected to modern day slavery, including sex trafficking, forced labour and marriage, debt bondage or organ harvesting within Australian borders. Some simply wish to improve their English, while others have ambitions to pursue a profession – one survivor is currently studying dentistry, a path inconceivable to her previously.

With the establishment of an adjoining café and event venue, The Freedom Hub runs on a revolutionary new business model that utilises a self-sustainable cycle to thrive and to grow. “Suppliers and corporate partners support the running of the café. We insist they have no slavery in the supply of products they provide us and ‘give back’ to the world in some way,” Sally said. “Absolutely

100 per cent of our profits support our Survivor School. The suppliers and corporate partners then provide employment opportunities for Survivor School graduates. By simply having a coffee or hosting an event, locals are leveraging their usual spending to make the world a better place.”

The Rotary clubs of Sydney and Darling Harbour, NSW, have been supportive since the early days of the school, providing clothing for survivors, some funding and opportunities to speak.

“The Rotary Club of Sydney Cove also invited me to speak recently and booked a breakfast at the Freedom Hub for next month. Rotary and the school will partner further in the future, we certainly hope!”

For more information on how to get involved, visit www.thefreedomhub.org

money, she would be allowed to go home and visit their children.” When Sally returned to Australia in 2012, she was appalled to discover human trafficking was taking place here, too.

“I was talking to a friend about what I’d seen in Berlin and she asked whether I knew about the Salvation Army Safehouse for trafficked women in Australia. I asked why we would even need a safehouse in the first place?”

Working with the Salvation Army led Sally to her current venture: The Freedom Hub Survivor School. “It was actually the Salvos that asked me if I wanted to set up the school. At the time, I was delivering a basic communication course to help survivors build confidence and gain employment; but the benefits of running a separate survivor school became obvious. I moved the school offsite and it became more confidential for the safehouse, as



(Photo: @snapsby_tiffany and @alittlebitebygrace)