



Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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Pope Francis greeting RAG Coordinator for Italy, Laura Dryjanska



Kevin Bales in action at the 1080 District Conference in Norwich



Bales at the RAG against Child Slavery stand.

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

"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)



RAG Coordinator invited to attend Vatican Conference on Human Trafficking

How can the international community achieve greater collaboration in combating the crime of human trafficking in which millions of people are enslaved?

That was the main aim of a workshop on *Human Trafficking* which took place at the Vatican on 2nd and 3rd November. The two-day event was organized by the Pontifical Academies of Science and of Social Sciences,

following a wish expressed by Pope Francis.

Our RAG Coordinator for Italy, **Laura Dryjanska** (RC of Roma Centenario) and RAG member **Roberto Giua** (Rotary E Club Rom@it) were invited as Observers at the Conference.

Laura's report is included on the next page of this Newsletter.

Of particular interest in her report is the reference to a recommendation from one of the Presenters at the Conference, for the implementation of a "compulsory birth registration system that uses DNA for identification purposes".

This suggestion coincides with a plea from Professor Kevin Bales for Rotarians to act upon. (see below)

Rotarians asked to press for compulsory birth registrations

Rotary District 1080, England, was honoured to have Professor Kevin Bales, arguably the foremost authority on slavery, speak at its Conference in Norwich last month on the subject of "Child Slavery".

One especially interesting aspect of his presentation related to birth registrations, which in some countries is selective. According to Bales, in times of conflict, natural disasters or a breakdown in the rule of law resulting in chaos, it can be difficult or impossible to reunite non-registered children with their parents. The separated children become vulnerable to exploitation and to enslavement. Rotarians can help here by using their clout to urge their respective local authorities/regions/governments to introduce a system of compulsory registration for all births irrespective of caste, tribe or ethnic origin.



Reflections on the Vatican Working Group on Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery

by Laura Dryjanska, RAG Co-ordinator for Italy



"Human Trafficking is a despicable activity, a disgrace for our societies"

(Pope Francis)

On November 2-3, 2013 I was honoured to represent the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery as an Observer during the Working Group on *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*, organized by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences at the Vatican City.

The Holy See has demonstrated openness and hospitality by listing us in the official booklet of the event and giving us permission to distribute our leaflets

Two very intense days were filled with a variety of presentations that covered such areas as legal and policy response by the United Nations and the European Union, insights from Catholic medical doctors with particular focus on Asia, Latin America and Africa, as well as sociological, economic, educational, anthropological, political, legal and genetic approaches.

As emphasized by Professor Carulli Fumagalli, for the first time in the history of the Pontifical Academy of Science, its gates were opened not only to the academic community, but also to religious orders, organizations and associations that do the ground work. It created an enormous opportunity for the exchange of ideas, practical recommendations as well as

networking. The Working Group was organized by His Excellency Msgr. Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, following a wish expressed by Pope Francis who personally met the participants.

In line with Mark Little's letter to Pope Francis, the speakers discussed the differences and links between human trafficking and various forms of modern slavery, including the particular situation of children.

Professor Suarez-Orozco has spoken about the situation of minors who are victims of human trafficking, stressing the physical and psychological consequences for individuals. It was also made clear that child slavery does not necessarily include trafficking and may occur within households.

Throughout these two days, numerous participants repeatedly stressed the necessity of putting the victim in the center of attention of all stakeholders involved in support, policy making and other positive actions.

The Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery may find especially interesting and challenging the recommendation to implement compulsory birth registration system that uses DNA for identification purposes. According to Professor Lorente (see photo on the left) a DNA database may be a means of both prevention of child exploitation and detection of such modern form of child

slavery as illegal adoption. Guatemala is the first country that in cooperation with DNA-PROKIDS has successfully implemented this new technology as illustrated by Dr Cabrera. Prof Lorente is open to continue the dialogue with the RAG against Child Slavery initiated with our member Roberto Giua.

As a result of the presentations and suggestions of participants, the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences are currently drafting the joint statement that will reflect the practical focus of the Working Group and a call to action.

International organizations have been mentioned among the key actors involved and called to include a specific goal to end human trafficking and all forms of slavery on their agenda. I have also spoken on behalf of the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery emphasizing our efforts in raising awareness, in line with the preliminary recommendations concerning the civil society.

I believe that participation in this Working Group has been a great opportunity to position ourselves in the complex puzzle of multiple organizations working towards related goals. It has also allowed for a deeper understanding of the global context of child slavery, looking into various aspects of the problem through different eyes.



Left to right: Rotarians Roberto Giua and, Laura Dryjanska with Professor Jose Antonio Lorente (Universidad de Granada)



The delegates with Pope Francis after the Vatican Conference.



Editorial

Since Kevin Bales's rally call to Rotarians to campaign for compulsory birth registrations, I have come across some startling facts about the extent of the global problem of unregistered births. According to UNICEF, in 2003, some 48 million births went unregistered which represented 36 per cent of all estimated births worldwide that year. South Asia had the largest number of unregistered children at more than 23 million, which was 63 per cent of all births in the region and accounted for 47 per cent of all unregistered births worldwide. In sub-Saharan Africa, 55 per cent of children under five have not been registered. In the Middle East and North Africa, 16 per cent of the children were not registered at birth, whilst in East Asia and the Pacific, 19 per cent of births were unregistered.

I now realize the import of Kevin's message. Birth registration is essential because it is the permanent and official record of a child's existence and is fundamental to the realization of children's rights and practical needs. Securing children's rights to a nationality will allow them to get a passport, open a bank account, obtain credit, vote and find employment. It helps to ensure access to basic services, including immunization, health care and school enrolment at the right age.

Birth registration is also essential in protection efforts, including: preventing child labour by enforcing minimum-employment-age laws; ensuring that children in conflict with the law are not treated (legally and practically) as adults; shielding them from underage military service or conscription; and reducing trafficking as well as helping children separated as a result of conflicts and natural disasters to be repatriated and reunited with family.

The issue of slavery is often discussed, written about, debated, received with incredulity, sadness or revulsion and then its toxic deposits disappear from our memory banks. Sometimes its evil consequences are depicted in photographs and its barbaric images may be slightly longer lasting. It is only when we are confronted with the raw experience of it, the hell of it, the outrage of it, the brutality, the injustice and the indignity that we might be propelled to demand its eradication with the same level of energy we are expending to eliminate polio.

I am told that Steve McQueen's latest film "12 years a Slave", which was given a limited release in the United States on 18 October 2013, supplies all of the above ingredients, the shocks and experiences in shattering doses. The film is scheduled for general release in January 2014 and is a must for those who wish to go some way to appreciating the full extent of the physical and psychological traumas endured by those who are continuously exploited and enslaved to feed the greed of others.

As Bradley Miles, CEO of Polaris Project, suggests in his article on page 4, the movie is a good opportunity for us to start a meaningful conversation about how prevalent slavery is today.

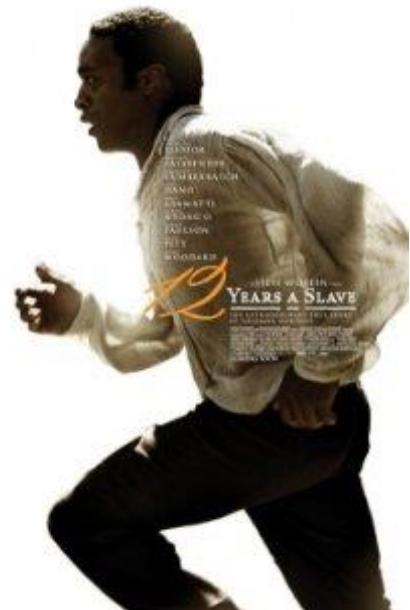
There is a price when we look the other way

(by Harry Payne –Rotary Club of Burnham on Crouch, District 1240, England)

Have the changes in society changed our perception and acceptance of Child Slavery ?

You could possibly be tempted to say "yes", because the whole environment has changed. So too is our acceptance of change. Pressure throughout society presents itself as a much larger problem now because patience levels appear to have dropped. We live in a 'give me' era. We want commodities, we want titillation, we want more of everything, we want it now so why can't we have it?

Many of us have a surplus of income over need, and the desire to use it. As we are entitled to do. Often the cost rarely comes into the equation, I do not mean monetary cost here. No one is saying it wrong to dispose of your own income when and how you want. But in making demands, there will always be someone to feed that demand. What perhaps is wrong, is the way some of those demands are being met. In the 21st century why are there slaves? Child slaves at that! Sadly many are used to provide produce and goods for stores. Stores, the like of which the slaves will never see? Carpets, rugs, clothing, chocolate, confection, agriculture, electronic goods, coffee, tea, rice, fireworks, tyres, motor components etc etc. In all of these and more you will find exploited labour, where workers are paid a pittance. But what we are talking about is concerned with Slaved Children. They are not paid at all, they are the trafficked components of commerce, they are bought and sold, owned or disposed of, abused and exploited. There should not be any acceptance of child slavery in the 21st century. Unless we protest it, it will continue.



We still need to end SLAVERY

by Bradley Miles – CEO Polaris Project

The extraordinary new film "12 Years a Slave" immerses us in the reality of historical slavery at a deep level of complexity and nuance. The film is an opportunity to honor all who were held in chattel slavery, treated like property, and subjected to levels of violence, torture, and control that no human should ever endure.

"It is time for us to absorb that slavery has been with us every day since the late 1800s"

The movie, directed by Steve McQueen, is also an opportunity to start a meaningful conversation about how prevalent slavery is today.

Most of us believe that slavery in America disappeared over a century ago. In the narrative we've learned, the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Thirteenth Amendment ended this horrific chapter in our nation's history. But this narrative is simply wrong.

Slavery may no longer be legal or accepted. Slavery may no longer be as brutal, as visible, or as blatant. But it's time for us to fully absorb that slavery has been with us every day since the late 1800s.

Solomon Northup, whose autobiography the film is based on, was a free man living with his family in Saratoga, New York, during the 1840s. He was deceived, coerced, drugged, kidnapped, and sold into slavery. His money and documents were taken. He was given a new name, and his true identity was suppressed. He was physically and psychologically tortured, enduring abuse for years and threatened with death if he tried to escape.

The parallels to slavery today are striking. The control mechanisms used by Solomon's recruiters and captors are the same tactics and stories we hear about daily from the people who reach out to us for help on the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline, which [Polaris Project](#) operates.

The International Labor Organization estimates [nearly 21 million people around the world are victims of modern slavery](#). That's 21 million people living in circumstances similar to those that drove Solomon Northup to despair.

Modern slavery is the man who was promised a job on a farm to earn enough money to pay for his parents' medical care, then forced to work long hours, intimidated with violence, and made to live in deplorable conditions in a cramped room with his co-workers.

It's the man working in a restaurant who was assaulted by his manager and threatened should he ever try to leave. Modern slavery is the 15-year-old girl who was romanced and recruited by a pimp, then raped, beaten, and sold online into the commercial sex trade. It's the woman from South America held against her will in a house in the suburbs, paid only a fraction of the wages she was promised, and compelled to work as a domestic servant. These are only a glimpse into types of cases Polaris Project learns about every day -- cases right here in the United States.

Human trafficking is a low-risk crime with high profits. The U.N. estimated it to be a \$32 billion a year industry in 2005, and many in the anti-trafficking field believe that number is outdated and too low.

As ubiquitous and overwhelming as the global scale of modern slavery feels, we can't shy away from the enormity of the challenge to address it. One way to respond is to offer a lifeline: to provide that one moment that helps someone get out of slavery.



We still need to end SLAVERY (Cont'd)

by Bradley Miles – CEO, Polaris Project

For the millions of men, women, and children being trafficked, that moment of opportunity doesn't need to take 12 years to arrive like it did for Solomon. With global telecommunications technologies, political will, and anti-slavery resources, help can be one phone call or one text away.

All of us can help create that moment of opportunity: Learn about modern slavery and recognize its signs. Share the national hotline number and post fliers in places where vulnerable populations might see it.

Report tips and relevant information about suspected slavery in your community by calling [Polaris Project](#). Urge your elected leaders to pass stronger anti-slavery laws that crack down on traffickers and protect survivors. Support efforts nationally or in your community that are building a movement against modern slavery.

We have a duty to learn from Solomon's story and the horrors of historical slavery, to never let it happen again, and to mobilize for the 21 million victims of human trafficking still trapped in slavery. The opportunity to truly eradicate slavery is before us. Now let's rise to the challenge and seize it.

To reach Polaris Project, call 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733)

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