

How Can Rotarians Help to Alleviate Modern Slavery - via a Prevention Education Focus?

The extent and profile of modern slavery is well documented:

40.3mill across 167 countries.

<https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/highlights/>

The industries covered within mining, agriculture and manufacture - goods produced by Child and Forced Labor are also well documented. Fellow humans caught and exploited in this evil practice.

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/ListofGoods.pdf>

The Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery (RAGAS) has been operative since 2009 creating awareness and promoting some project actions.

Modern Slavery is quite often a hidden crime and can be known by several names, slavery, forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, sex trafficking, forced marriage and child exploitation. It represents the engineered greed of some over the vulnerability of others and is often hidden or the issue ignored by turning a blind eye to it. There are a number of very active, dedicated and skilled abolitionist NGO's, religious groups and humanitarians, across many countries supporting and promoting modern slavery awareness, advocacy to Govt, refuge and rehabilitation centres and in some instances rescue services. Excellent hands on very practical services that are aimed to help those trapped or vulnerable. Rotary Clubs and Rotarians support some of these valuable services in various communities and countries.

In 2015 the UK legislated the Modern Slavery Act. The objective being to encourage and motivate large Corporations to examine, to Know, report and correct human rights and modern slavery issues within supply chain, the steps from raw materials procurement, processing, manufacture and distribution. In many circumstances it is the drive for margins and profitability that has encouraged an endeavour to exploit supply chain purchasing power, while turning a blind eye to the ethical and humanitarian consequences. The legislation aim is to turn this approach around and respect human freedom. It has had some limited success so far, as some Corporations comply while others do not, without sanction.

The Modern Slavery – Human Trafficking subject has been on the Agenda at recent Rotary International Conventions in Seoul and Atlanta with Plenary session speakers, along with full auditoriums at RAGAS breakout sessions. Some Clubs in the US are holding public information, awareness and action meetings particularly focussed on human and sex trafficking. Some Clubs support NGO and humanitarian groups projects. The modern slavery subject is vast with a varying array of industries and issues across and within many communities and countries. There is no easy to do action list of solutions.

Could Rotarians Do More?

Yes, I think so, via promoting Modern Slavery Prevention Education, Globally.

- In the USA there has been the development of modern slavery school education programs for adolescents and the vulnerable – with an emphasis on human trafficking and a focus on sex trafficking.
- In California one group supported by a Rotary District 5180 project is called **PROTECT**, with a philosophy of: 'An educated child is a protected child.' <https://protectnow.org/protect-3/training-and-curriculum/>
The approach is aimed to prevent the crime before it starts. PROTECT Prevention Education engages students in the classroom and educates them on the signs and tactics of traffickers, reducing their vulnerabilities and preventing exploitation.
- Another NGO based in the US called "**Love 146**" also provides Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery prevention education services to schools and youth service groups. A video, curriculum and topics covered can be seen here - <https://love146.org/notanumber/>
- There may be more groups in the USA providing similar adolescent modern slavery education and prevention services

Other education and prevention activities include:

- **A21, Australian based**, Philosophy - “Education is essential to end human trafficking”
<https://www.a21.org/content/education/gn9vq0>
- **Anti-Slavery International UK**
 - <https://www.antislavery.org/reports-and-resources/education/>
 - <https://www.antislavery.org/take-action/schools/>
- **The University of Nottingham UK** – Slavery and Liberation MA/PGDip/PGCert
 - <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/politics-and-international-relations/slavery-and-liberation-ma.aspx>
 - <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/world/beacons/rights-lab/>
- **Kevin Bales - Resources For Teachers** <http://www.kevinbales.net/teaching-resources.html>

There are also other university courses and many NGO’s with valuable research information, awareness material and very practical field experience on modern slavery projects in many countries - ILO, US Aid, US DOL, The Freedom Fund, Walk Free, Freedom United, The Mekong Club and several others.

In the USA in recent years the emphasis appears to be forewarning of modern slavery and sex trafficking via education. In other parts of the world prevention education appears to be very limited and there is a need for a greater emphasis on both labour slavery and sex slavery education. It is the innocent child from poor and vulnerable backgrounds that are the most vulnerable to exploitation, to false job or remuneration promises by recruiting agents. Adolescents need some form of forewarning and immunization, against being caught / trapped into modern slavery. I’m not confident in waiting for politicians, governments and legislators, authorities, police – to wait for consensus democracy and then action on this issue. How long before the adults and authorities will understand and recognise the needs of Prevention and Forewarning Education for innocent adolescents?

Can Rotarians Assist by Promoting Modern Slavery Prevention Education ? “YES”.

Overall Concept - RAGAS / Rotarians with other NGO’s or US Aid to agree to the creation of a **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Education Resources Database for Teachers and Schools – with a Prevention Education Focus**. A Website(s), of Information and Education curriculum, materials and videos, survivor stories, available for use in Schools by Teachers and other Education institutions.

Overall Objective - **To create “awareness and prevention” among innocent adolescents, the youth and students of a vulnerable age, as a longer term preventative measure to alleviate and curtail future modern slavery victims in the current and next generations.**

- RAGAS / Rotarians as part of the Global Rotary Network along with NGO’s to jointly promote the existence, availability and use of the Education Resources Database for local Education projects throughout Rotary Districts and Clubs in specific countries as and when the local need, timing and resources are considered appropriate.

As I see it, there are 2 potential options to secure an Education Resources database, for its creation and maintenance

Option1

RAGAS encourages / arranges a lead University or NGO to hold a **Workshop of Modern Slavery and Online Education Experts** from across the Globe. Invite the major NGO’s with current education material.

Objective - **Create the “Best” Prevention Education focussed Resources Database for Teachers and Schools**. Start with the current awareness school education material available and create a framework, structure and curriculum and content.

Option2

RAGAS / Rotarians, **approach US Aid** to conduct a joint project, (with interested NGO’s support) for creation by US Aid of a Prevention Education focussed Resources Database. There is a Rotary International - US Aid Partnership Project precedence over several years for Water and Sanitation, “WASH” in several countries through schools.

<https://rotaryserviceblog.org/2016/03/31/collaborate-with-rotary-partners-to-further-your-water-and-sanitation-projects/>

A similar current US Dept of Labor Project - <https://www.winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Winrock-CLEAR-II-Handout.pdf>

Some education material can / will be country, industry and topic specific or unique, as appropriate for individual communities, industries and countries. Some education and slavery awareness material can be created at a base level, suitable for limited school class computer facilities, also via web-based apps and You Tube videos, for mobile phone accessibility. For example:

- Sex Trafficking including the industry risk and health issues, grooming and recruitment techniques, real life stories of survivors, examples and biographies. Relevant to many countries and a specific focus of the USA, so excellent education material available for all.
- Labour Slavery – specific industries and issues – recruitment agents, false promises and techniques, survivor experience, avoidance
- Child Slavery – major industries and recruiting techniques, false promises – real example stories
- Bonded Labour – industries, duped into
- Forced Marriage, issues

The initial **Stage 1** Education Resources Data Base material to be in English, with **Stage 2** for Countries focused on where there is a larger modern slavery issue, with NGO resources and Rotary Clubs and projects to support – eg. India - Hindu, Bangladesh - Bengali, Cambodia – Khmer.

Many Rotary Clubs support Basic Education and Literacy projects in developing countries and A Modern Slavery Prevention Education database and curriculum could be promoted as part of that process. Just over half the top 20 countries with a large number caught in Modern Slavery, Child and Labour slavery victims, have local Rotary Clubs and members. The strength of Rotary is its International membership around the globe with approx 1.2M Rotarians in 32,000 Clubs, plus 250,000 Rotaractors across 8000 Clubs, in over 200+ countries. A unique humanitarian network.

I'm confident that such a RAGAS / Rotarian Strategy could help alleviate areas of Modern slavery across many global regions. Any additional thoughts or suggestions, contributions or connections from Rotarians and NGO's from the US or UK to enhance / advance this proposed approach – for a RAGAS project, would be welcome.

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