

ROTARY CLUB TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING JAN/FEB 2026 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month in the US – a time for reflection, education, and action. Human trafficking is not a distant issue; it exists within our communities, often unseen and unspoken. As members of the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking, we are uniquely positioned to confront this reality with compassion, purpose, and resolve. Awareness is the first step toward change, and this month challenges us to deepen our understanding of trafficking, recognize vulnerability, and commit ourselves to protecting those at risk.



Rotary's strength lies in its ability to unite people to create lasting impact. Through collaboration, service, and advocacy, we move beyond addressing symptoms to transforming lives. Our club's mission places us at the forefront of prevention through opportunity, supporting survivors, strengthening communities, and investing in education and economic independence. From empowering women rebuilding their lives to equipping youth with sustainable livelihoods, each partnership we form and each initiative we support restores dignity, hope, and resilience.

As we begin the new year, I encourage every member to turn concern into action. Lasting change begins within us and extends outward into our communities and across the globe. By staying informed, engaged, and committed, we reaffirm Rotary's mission to serve humanity. Together, let us make January not only a month of awareness, but a catalyst for meaningful and enduring impact building pathways to safety, opportunity, and dignity for those most vulnerable.

Warmly,
Bassey Kooffreh
President, 2025–2026
Rotary Club to Ending Human Trafficking

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CHAB DAI COALITION: ENDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH

COLLECTIVE ACTION



Submitted by Jerry Nelson

Who We Are

Chab Dai, which means “joining hands” in Khmer, is a Cambodian-led, globally engaged non-profit working to end modern slavery, exploitation, and abuse. Our mission is to combat all forms of abuse by empowering communities, strengthening systems, and supporting justice and wellbeing for survivors.

Human trafficking in Cambodia and the region is rooted in inequality, poverty, unsafe migration, and economic vulnerability. No single organization can solve these challenges alone; real progress requires collaboration.

The Coalition Approach: Joining Hands

Launched in 2005 with 12 members, the Chab Dai Coalition now brings together over 50 organizations, government agencies, survivor leaders, faith groups, and private sector partners to strengthen Cambodia’s anti-trafficking response through shared learning, advocacy, and coordinated action.



How It Works in Practice

Coalition members exchange knowledge, coordinate services, and reduce duplication so survivors and vulnerable communities receive better support. Chab Dai refers cases to members based on expertise, providing direct support only in remote areas without service coverage.



Examples of Coalition initiatives include:

- Child & Youth Protection Working Groups giving young people a voice and raising awareness with local leaders
- Disability Inclusion efforts with OPDs to ensure anti-trafficking policies are accessible and inclusive
- Civil Compensation consultations with Cambodia’s NCCT and 48 CSOs to improve justice outcomes for survivors

Impact (2024–2025)

- 955 participants took part in Coalition capacity-building and learning events
- 19 women and girls trafficked to China for forced marriage were safely returned and supported through coordinated services
- 32 community leaders trained for border-area protection efforts
- Improved shelter monitoring across five provinces through collaboration with the Department of Victim Protection

These outcomes show that coordinated, multisector approaches lead to better prevention, protection, and survivor support.



Looking Ahead

As trafficking evolves, the Coalition is expanding its network, strengthening shared priorities, and adapting to new challenges including funding shifts and emerging exploitation trends.

Get Involved

Ending trafficking requires many hands. While Coalition membership is limited to Cambodian-registered organizations, we collaborate widely across the region and internationally.

To explore partnership opportunities, contact: **Kneath Heard**, Partnerships & Development Director – kneath.heard@chabdai.org



MyFreedomDay – March 11



Submitted by Veronica McDaniel

March 11 marks the 10th annual **#MyFreedomDay**, hosted by CNN International—a global day of action empowering students to take a stand against human trafficking. Schools around the world participate through learning events, campaigns, and youth-led initiatives.

Global Dialogues on Human Trafficking for Young People

Save the Date: Week of March 9, 2026

Street Grace and Generation Global are hosting online global dialogues for students ages 13–17 in recognition of #MyFreedomDay. These facilitated sessions create a thoughtful, international space for young people to:

- Explore the dignity and value of human life
- Reflect on challenging questions related to human trafficking
- Share perspectives with peers from around the world

Schools interested in participating:

Register as an educator at:

<https://adventure.generation.global/register>

Use event code: MYFREEDOMDAY.

Further details will be available after registration.

For questions, contact Robin Keshaw at robin.keshaw@ibo.org.

Resources for Schools & Youth Programs

- Student-led group starter [guide](#)
- Free 7-module online [training](#) supporting student leadership
- [Guide](#) to creating an ethical-consumption campaign
- [Podcast](#): We Are For Good — How a student-led movement sparked global change at Atlanta International School
- Instagram updates:
 - @streetgrace_studentinitiatives
 - @ais.aht (AISAHT at Atlanta International School)

Global Learning Community Discussion — Prevention Education and Human Trafficking

Submitted by Matthew Clarke

We are pleased to share an upcoming event from the Global Learning Community (GLC) that may be of interest to our members.

The Global Learning Community is hosting a series of discussions focused on the people who perpetrate human trafficking and modern slavery. The next session, taking place on Thursday, 5 February 2026, will focus on a crucial question:

Can prevention education reduce the vulnerability of people to becoming perpetrators?

Prevention education is an essential piece of the anti-trafficking puzzle, empowering communities with the knowledge and skills to recognize risk factors and choose safer pathways. This discussion is designed to bring together people from around the world to explore what effective prevention education looks like and how we can strengthen it globally.

To accommodate all interested parties in different time zones, there will be two live sessions:

Eastern Globe Call

Thursday, 5 Feb 2026

9:00 – 10:30 AM UK time

8:00 PM Sydney / 4:00 PM Jakarta / 12:00 AM

Nairobi

[Register here](#)

Western Globe Call

Thursday, 5 Feb 2026

9:00 – 10:30 PM UK time

5:00 PM Buenos Aires / 4:00 PM New York / 2:00 PM

Mexico City / 1:00 PM Los Angeles

[Register here](#)

This event is free and open to all, and we encourage members of RAGAS, RCEHT, and Rotary partners who are engaged in anti-trafficking efforts or prevention education to participate.

For background on the Global Learning Community and the broader series of discussions, please visit the GLC website:

<https://www.globallearningcommunity.org>

Let's continue to learn, connect, and strengthen our collective work against human trafficking and modern slavery.

In July 2023, the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking introduced its Economic Development Initiative (EDI) as a long-term strategy to prevent human trafficking by expanding opportunity and creating sustainable employment in vulnerable communities.

Since then, the work has been both challenging and promising. The early phase focused on building an expert volunteer team, identifying partners already serving high-risk populations, and testing models that could be replicated across regions. Progress has not been linear. Some approaches stalled, others gained traction, and several are now showing encouraging results.

Learning From Early Tests

Our first research partnerships revealed a key insight: to succeed, EDI must work through organizations already embedded with target populations, schools, community NGOs, or social agencies, not Rotary clubs alone. This shift took time, but has now opened pathways to stronger collaboration.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Mukangule Agricultural Enterprise — Zambia

Partner: Community Conservation and Economic Development (CCED)

Goal: Build food security and income pathways for displaced youth through agricultural training and sales.

Status: First harvest completed; EDI provided entrepreneurship training and Starlink connectivity. Nature has created hurdles, including flooding losses, but the model remains promising for future replication when partner capacity increases.

Submitted by Michael Podolny

MFCS District Grant — Accra, Ghana

Partners: Muslim Family Counseling Service (MFCS), Rotary Club of Accra Spintex, Theodora Africa, EDI

Goal: Train vulnerable women for virtual assistant employment through Theodora Ghana Virtual Assistants model.

Status: While not an EDI-generated project, it demonstrates how entrepreneurship, job creation, and social reintegration can align. The collaboration has also built a working partner network capable of future co-execution—an important milestone for the initiative.

Jerome Fleischer School — Lusaka, Zambia

Partners: Zambia Messianic Fellowship & Messianic Jewish Africa Support Foundation

Goal: Pair academic education with entrepreneurship training and business development to move graduates into real jobs and income.

Status: Implementation phase underway with a planned 90-student pilot in Q2 2026. This may become EDI's first scalable model: built on an existing educational institution with local mentorship capability, high student throughput, and volunteer business coaching.

WHAT COMES NEXT

The past year has clarified two critical factors for success:

1. **Partnership leverage** — initiatives must plug into institutions already working with vulnerable populations.
2. **Replicability** — scalable models must work without heavy reliance on donor capital or unique conditions.

If the Zambia education pilot achieves its outcomes, Rotary will have a template that uses entrepreneurship, not subsidy as a tool for prevention and economic dignity.

NOT IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD...OH YES IT IS!

As we all know, January is Human Trafficking Awareness month. Every January, 2myPlace holds a program at a different local high school, raising awareness of sex trafficking.

Our bi-line is: Education, Awareness, Prevention. **2myPlace.org** works with teens and young adults, sharing Life Skills, helping them navigate through their lives, listening to their needs, and answering their concerns.

January 20th, 2026, 2myPlace held a panel of experts at Wheeler High School in Marietta, GA. Over 150 people were in attendance: students, counselors, teachers, parents, Rotarians, Business owners, and educators.

Our panel included: a Lieutenant from Cobb County Police Crimes Against Children; Director of the GA Center for Child Advocacy; a Private Detective and Recovery Agent; and the ED of International Student Initiatives with Street Grace(np).

The name of the program was: "Not in my East Cobb Neighborhood...Oh Yes it is !" The Q & A part of the program elicited a wonderful conversation and proof that they "got the message". Questions like:



"So what can we do next? Where do we go to help spread the word and hopefully make us all aware of this horrendous crisis? How else can we keep our kids safe?"

I've included photos of our 2myPlace team with all of our speakers. The "promotional swag" of a whistle- for kids on campuses! Our signage at our table; we also invited other local non profits working towards the same goals; An Emergency Contact list of all national hotlines and local protective agencies was given to all who attended. Whatever phase you are involved with-Rescue, Recovery, Rehab...and we must all work together.



2myPlace is a clearinghouse for professional services for youth, and a resource organization that connects and supports young people in a multitude of ways.

Submitted by Cindee Sapoznik

JANUARY: HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

Each January, communities around the world observe Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness, educate, and strengthen collective action to end modern slavery. While trafficking remains a hidden crime, its scale is immense: an estimated 50 million people are living in situations of human trafficking or exploitation globally, according to the International Labour Organization. Victims include women, men, and children, with exploitation occurring in sectors ranging from commercial sex and forced marriage to agriculture, domestic work, construction, and online labor.

Rotary's Role in Addressing Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is deeply intertwined with poverty, migration, conflict, and weak social safety nets. No single government or organization can prevent it alone. Rotary International's commitment to community service, humanitarian leadership, and cross-sector collaboration makes it uniquely positioned to confront this challenge.

The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking works to unite Rotary members, survivor leaders, nonprofits, government agencies, and private sector partners to advance education, prevention, and economic development for vulnerable communities. This includes amplifying survivor voices, supporting anti-trafficking organizations, and promoting ethical systems and policies that reduce exploitation.

Prevention Starts with Awareness and Action

Human trafficking prevention begins long before a crime takes place. Early indicators include economic vulnerability, unsafe migration, lack of decent work, and limited access to education and legal protection. Strengthening communities, especially youth, women, and migrants, helps reduce risk and expand resilience.

During Human Trafficking Prevention Month, Rotary encourages members to:

- Learn the indicators of human trafficking and how to report concerns
- Support organizations providing survivor services, legal advocacy, and economic empowerment
- Host educational events that engage schools, businesses, and civic groups
- Advocate for stronger protections for vulnerable populations
- Explore cross-border and cross-club collaborations that extend impact

Moving Beyond Awareness to Sustainable Solutions

One of the most urgent lessons from the anti-trafficking field is that awareness alone is not enough. Sustainable prevention requires systems change and viable economic alternatives. Vulnerable communities need dignified work, fair compensation, pathways to entrepreneurship, and strong support networks. Without these, exploitation will continue to thrive.

Rotary's emphasis on economic development, training, and community resilience aligns directly with global prevention strategies. When people have real opportunity and agency over their livelihoods, they are far less likely to be coerced, deceived, or forced into exploitation. For this reason, Rotary's partnerships with vocational training programs, financial literacy initiatives, and dignified employment platforms are a critical and growing area of impact in the years ahead.

A Call to Collective Action

Human trafficking is a complex and evolving issue, spanning borders, industries, and digital spaces. But it is not inevitable. Prevention is possible when communities come together with shared purpose, survivor leadership, and strategic collaboration.

This January, the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking invites every member and partner to reflect, learn, and take action, because ending human trafficking is not the work of a few, but the responsibility of many.

By combining awareness with meaningful, community-based solutions, Rotary can help bring dignity, safety, and opportunity to those most at risk, and move us all closer to a world free from exploitation.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

Please complete [this form](#) to submit relevant information or news you would like to share with the club in the next month's release. The more we collaborate and connect with each other, the stronger our club is in creating effective change to achieve our Rotary mission.

Submitted by Mary Fiadese

AN RCEHT ENDORSEE: LIFT UP THE VULNERABLE

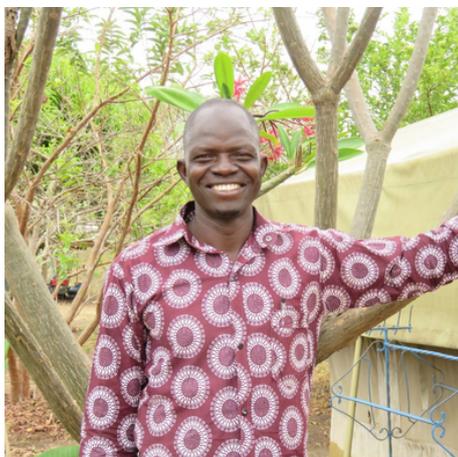
Submitted by Erin Maloney

On January 27, to prepare for its Valentine's Day-influenced **Month of LUV**, a virtual meeting for [Lift Up the Vulnerable](#), one of RCEHT's seven endorsees, was attended independently by four club members: Faron Barr, Dave Demers, Toni Lucas, and Erin Maloney.

With the meeting being led by LUV CEO Audrey Moore, who is also a member of RCEHT, that means that over 10% of the people attending this meeting were members of our own small Rotary club.



*Audrey Moore, CEO
(Lift Up the Vulnerable)*



*Peter Lomago, Director
(Hope for South Sudan)- LUV anti-
trafficking network partner in South Sudan*

Three speakers at the meeting gave insight to two often overlooked forms of human trafficking: child trafficking disguised as adoptions; and forced child marriages.



*James Lual Atak, Director
(New Life Ministry)- LUV anti-trafficking
network partner in South Sudan*



*Wellon Bridgers, US Director
(Mwana Villages)*

RCEHT is pleased to endorse LUV, whose motto is: **protecting one life at a time.**

Below are **topics** from the last Board meeting, held on December 4.

Let a board member know if you have any questions or comments!

- **Brainstorming:**
 - **Club meetings:** future speakers and action days
 - **Fundraising ideas**
- **Funding**
 - **Ghana:** district grant update
 - **Treasurer's report**

DONATE TO OUR FOUNDATION

Our primary focus this year is our Economic Development initiative where we are looking to provide seed funding to support entrepreneurs starting businesses as options to trafficking.

THE TOTAL FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR OUR PROJECTS ARE \$10,000.

If just 1/2 of our mailing list gave \$100, we would blow past our goal. So please consider a donation now!

LINK FOR DONATIONS:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=525MMAAWSPK54

VISIT RCEHT SOCIAL MEDIA
PAGES.



MEMBERSHIP TYPES

Our membership types are as follows:

1. **Active Members** are full voting members.
2. **Branch members** are full voting members. They are created when 8 or more members live geographically close and would like to organize local community efforts. They have their own organizational structure and leadership model.
3. **Organizational memberships** are all part of the same organization. There is one full paying primary representative. Subsequent members from that organization can join and pay less. All are full voting members. Organizations must be approved by the Board.
4. **Associate members** are members of another Rotary Club. All Associate members are considered full voting members, but they are not eligible to hold a club's board position.
5. **Honorary members** are not required to pay dues and have no voting rights. Honorary membership is used to recognize people who have distinguished themselves by meritorious service.

Join our Rotary network to end human trafficking

Traffickers are organized, so we need to be too. The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking (RCEHT), a 100% virtual club, is building our Rotary network via our Associate members, who are already members of community-based Rotary clubs. RCEHT hosts 2 meetings a month where Rotarians everywhere can join to share ideas, listen to speakers related to ending human trafficking, and network with others committed to this fight. Associate members are also invited to support our club's Economic Development Initiative where we are working to implement solutions in high risk areas via our local Branches.

If you would like to learn more, please join us at an upcoming meeting by E-mailing President@endHTrotaryclub.org or contact our membership chair at membership@endHTrotaryclub.org.



CALENDAR & UPCOMING EVENTS

2026-27 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our club is full of opportunities to serve. See below for a brief description of our many Board positions, committees and task forces.

Reach out to the RCEHT President via president@endhtrotaryclub.org with any questions or interest in helping! Good ideas don't get implemented without the hands to get the job done. Many thanks to those who are already stepping up to volunteer!

Welcome the 2026-2027 Board of Directors

President: Bassey Kooffreh

Immediate Past President: Lisa Podolny, Michelle Seets & Karen Walkowski

President Elect: **OPEN**

Secretary: Michelle Seets

Treasurer: Karen Walkowski

Membership: **OPEN** - Lisa Podolny acting

Programs and Projects: Erin Maloney

Foundation Chair: Lisa Podolny

Fundraising: Mary Fiadese

PR: **OPEN**

Director(s) at Large: Maria Julia Moreyra, Mark Zorko, & Toni Lucas

STANDING MEETINGS

The General Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month @ 7:00 AM CT (US / Canada). Visit our website for details.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SPEAKER

Michael Podolny

DATE

February 12, 2026 @7:00 AM CT

TOPIC

Economic Development update

Visit our [website](#) to learn more

Current Committee make up for next term

- Economic Development: Michael Podolny
- Branch: OPEN
- Speaker: Maria Julia Moreyra
- Sunshine: Toni Lucas
- Social: Anne Delain Clark

MEETING BASICS

We have social time 15 minutes before and after each Business Meeting.

We also have time allotted to share what you are up to regarding human trafficking.

You are welcome to invite others, just don't post the meeting link on social media and let President@endHTrotaryclub.org know who is coming so we know to let them enter the meeting space.