

ROTARY CLUB TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

JUL/AUG NEWSLETTER



RCEHT – TRULY A GLOBAL CLUB *Presented by; co-president Lisa Podolny*

I had the opportunity this month to go to the West African country of Ghana. Ghana is a country where multiple projects are taking place associated with our mission.

As you hear what is happening here, you will understand our club is serious about taking real action that will lead to the eradication of human slavery.

I had two objectives for this very short trip. I wanted to see first-hand what was happening at the Theodora Africa Project, and I wanted share in the kick-off of our Economic Development Initiative's Pilot Project with the Rotary Club of Tamale.



I wanted to see how the lessons learned at Theodora are influencing the plans for EDI. (Full disclosure, the head of these projects is my Father, and I've been a part of his thinking for years, even sitting on the Board of the non-profit which is a partner of Theodora Africa.) But, hearing things from afar is one thing. Experiencing them directly is another. Michael has talked about the transformational effect economic opportunity has on the attitudes of those either prone to or subject to human slavery. I was particularly interested in getting a hands-on feel for that.



During my four days, I met with Theodora program participants, women who've gone from sex work to gainful employment as virtual administrative assistants in the United States. I met with the Rotary members in Accra, and other significant volunteers who helped make the program happen. I met with the leadership of the Rotary Club of Tamale in the north of Ghana where we signed our preliminary Memorandum of Understanding and built out our initial implementation plan steps. And I met with villagers of a community identified by our RC Tamale colleagues as prone to trafficking where they would like to conduct the Pilot Project. Talk about seeing our club in action!

After such a trip, I could write so much more about the opportunities and challenges we at RCEHT are going to be facing taking on EDI but I'm in an airport getting ready to return to the United States. I will find a time on our speaker's schedule to give a much more in-depth report on my experiences. However, remember this. We Are A Club of Action. We Are Doing Things.

Forced Labor in Argentina: Advances and Challenges

On April 25, 2024, RCEHT Board member and lawyer María Julia Moreyra presented a speaker from Argentina -- Daniela Gasparini, a psychologist and specialist in anti-human trafficking. Ms. Gasparini gave an interesting talk in Spanish about the human trafficking situation in Argentina, while María Julia translated consecutively into English.

Ms. Gasparini is with the National Rescue and Support Program for People Damaged by the Crime of Trafficking (Programa Nacional de Rescate y Acompañamiento a las Personas Damnificadas por el Delito de Trata).



To complement her presentation, a 5-page article is available [here](#) (in English). It is entitled **Forced Labor in Argentina: Advances and Challenges**, and is available via the International Labor Organization. While the article mentions other kinds of trafficking, it focuses on labor trafficking.

In addition, a more detailed article is available [here](#) in Spanish.

written by; Erin Maloney

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INTO SCAM CENTERS

Human trafficking into scam centers in Southeast Asia is a growing concern that intersects organized crime, technology, and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals. Victims, often lured by promises of legitimate jobs, are coerced into working in fraudulent call centers in countries like Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and the Philippines. These centers engage in scams such as tech support fraud, phishing, and "pig butchering," exploiting the region's low operating costs and skilled workforce.

The trafficked individuals endure harsh conditions, long hours, and abuse, all while being forced to participate in scams that defraud people and businesses globally. The profits from these scams fuel the ongoing cycle of trafficking.

Combating this issue requires a collaborative approach involving governments, law enforcement, NGOs, and international bodies. Efforts must focus on dismantling criminal networks, supporting survivors, and raising awareness to prevent future victims. Technology can also play a crucial role in tracking and dismantling these operations.

The Mekong Club is actively addressing this issue by partnering with the banking community to raise awareness through white papers, webinars, eLearning videos, and an online prevention campaign

Here is a [link](#) to the YT playlist of human trafficking into scam centers prevention videos in different languages.

RCEHT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



The last quarter has been a meaningful period for the club's Economic Development Initiative (EDI). We are moving from theory to action. We are currently in the process of negotiating with three different organizations in Africa to initiate Pilot Projects.

These are:

- The Rotary Club of Tamale in Tamale, Ghana
- Communities for Conservation and Enterprise Development in Lusaka, Zambia
- Muslim Family Counseling Services in Kumasi, Ghana



Written by; Michael Podolny

The goal of our Pilot Projects is to test our economic development program assumptions so we can adjust our models to achieve optimum results. Below is a list of the primary work to be done in the Pilot Projects.

1. Curriculum Creation for Entrepreneurs and Mentors
2. Community Partner Development
3. Mentor Recruitment
4. Mentor Training
5. Entrepreneur Recruitment
6. Entrepreneur Training
7. Funding
8. Ongoing Entrepreneur Monitoring and Training
9. Results Testing
10. Project Management

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Many ask our club members, "But what do you actually do?" The Economic Development Initiative is proof positive of our club's commitment to more than talk but action, committed, long-term, results-focused action. We don't expect every club member to know in-depth what EDI does. However, we will be distributing a very short document you can keep in your purse or wallet (think of something like the four-way test) that will provide you with talking points to describe what we are doing and spread awareness of our project. If everyone simply spreads the word in a simple and natural fashion, those that should be connecting to us will.

On October 10, we will have another EDI Action Day. Colin Christensen will be presenting more detail on the specifics of our entrepreneur training.



BOARD UPDATES



RCEHT BOARD SUMMARY: MAY/JUN

The RCEHT Board meets on the first Thursday of every month. Below are the main topics from the last two meetings (May 2 and June 6).

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

- Approved 2024-25 Club Budget
- Approved to be co-sponsors on a Global Grant application
 - With two other Rotary Clubs
 - Edina, Minnesota, USA Edina Rotary Club- primary applicant
 - Cuenca, Ecuador - host club
 - Project partner: Protect Me Project (Cuenca, Ecuador): Parents, teachers, and students will learn to prevent sexual abuse of minors, pornography use, risky online behaviors and falling prey to grooming and recruitment
- Fundraising
 - Approved fundraising initiative
- Economic development
 - Approved framework and next step details

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.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Virginia lives in Seattle with her husband. She is an aspiring cocktail pianist. "I wish more people had nicer coming-of-age stories."



Virginia McKenzie

RCEHT inspired her to charter Rotary Club of the Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking. "I'd like to continue to learn from you, be inspired by you and maybe collaborate on future projects."

She is a recruiter, a connector, and attends the Rotary International Conventions. She also enjoys public speaking.

She has join the RCEHT as an associate member.

Jerry is an old member of RCEHT. He recently rejoined as an **Associate member**. He is the Thailand Coordinator for the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery and a member of the RAGAS board of directors.



Jerry Nelson

Retired Military and then Retired. Currently an active member of the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai Airport, D3360.

Coordination is his strength.

Want to support the cause based club idea, am considering trying to organize a Thailand Branch.

CLUB NEWS

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking Board added some details and priorities to our club's Strategic Plan. Our mission remains the same:

The mission of the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking, an international network of Rotarians, is to end the humanitarian crisis of human trafficking by working with others around the world.

We are prioritizing, in order:

1. Economic Development Initiatives (EDI) - These projects will give people options to trafficking. Michael and Colin are leading this effort. Join us at meetings that focus on this topic!
2. Advocacy - We will continue to support efforts that take action to keep people from being trafficked.
3. Education - As you know we have endorsed many non-profits that focus on educating students, parents, staff and communities.
4. Awareness - We will continue to raise awareness to help inspire others to take action in their communities.

We will accomplish much of this by working with organizations with proven track records at the local level. Our club acts locally through our Associate Members, who belong to community based Rotary clubs, as well as our Branches, which are created by full members of our club in high risk areas. We currently have branches in East and West Africa.

If you are interested in more details, please see our full [Strategic Plan](#), attend meetings that discuss these topics, look for past and future newsletter articles and reach out to a Board member. We can't do this alone. We need everyone to participate in some way to make this a success.

Virtual Rotarians Meet For Fellowship and Fun

Four members of our club were able to get together and, in some cases, meet in person for the first time. Erin, joined by her husband Jacques, Michelle, Karen, and Brenda stayed together at Turning Waters Bed and Breakfast in MN where we talked, laughed, enjoyed wonderful food and were spoiled by Brenda who owns the establishment. Cindee and Annette had planned to join us, but were unable to attend in person, so we connected with them via FaceTime making the night perfect.

If you are traveling consider looking up members of the club who live in the area. When you see each other send us a picture to share. Here is to making friends while doing good in the world!



CALL TO ACTION



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is responsible for welcoming and guiding new members as they join our mission to end human trafficking. This committee ensures that each member finds their place within the Rotary Club, helping them understand the benefits of their membership

category and how they can contribute to our collective goals.

Joining the Rotary Club dedicated to ending human trafficking means becoming part of a powerful force for change. At our bi-monthly meetings, members don't just connect and share ideas—they actively engage in initiatives that make a real impact in the fight against trafficking. Our global network allows you to collaborate with influential leaders worldwide, apply your professional skills to a critical cause, and gain inspiration, education, and connections with like-minded individuals committed to making a difference

We offer membership options including Individual, Organizational, Associate, and Honorary categories, each with specific dues and privileges. Interested in learning more or finding the right fit for you? Contact us at president@endhtr Rotary Club.org to explore how you can join this vital mission!

PR COMMITTEE

The PR Committee is primarily responsible for increasing the club's visibility as well as sharing information related to ending human trafficking. We use social media, newsletters, email and websites to carry our message. Meetings are task dependent and can range from weekly to quarterly. We are always look for new members as well as input. We could specifically use content that is publish ready in the form of articles and social media posts. Those with PR experience are especially needed. Contact president@endhtr Rotary Club.org to find out more!

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Programs and Projects Committee is chaired by Erin Maloney, with four other members: Cindee Sapoznik, Annette Mansfield, Justina Ansah, and Brenda Pearson.

The P&P committee makes recommendations to the RCEHT Board on whether or not to

- 1) endorse anti-human trafficking organizations; and
- 2) provide funding for anti-human trafficking projects.

We meet on the 3rd Thursday of most months at 7 AM Central time.

For more information, contact the chair Erin Maloney at:

maloneybilkent@gmail.com



HIGHLIGHTS

Karen Walkowski asked to serve as Assistant Governor for Rotary District 5950

Rotary District 5950 has almost 60 clubs in the district which is a lot of clubs for one District Governor to manage.

So, the DG has recruited several people to serve as Assistant Governors.



As AG, I serve as a liaison between the District Governor and club presidents to ensure effective communication, assist with questions, attempt to resolve issues, and encourage coordination between clubs.

Hopefully, we can even come up with really exciting joint projects! I am responsible for the 3 virtual clubs which include the Global Travelers club, the Networking Club to Empower Women, and of course, our own, Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking.

presented by Karen Walkowski

District 5950 Creates a District Coordinator to End Human Trafficking Chair

The leadership of District 5950 agreed last fall to formalize the informal work that has gone on within the district for several years in fighting human traffic and created a formal role within the leadership structure of the district. At the end of last year, the district leadership voted to create the position of "District Coordinator To End Human Trafficking".

This position shall be responsible to provide clubs with information resources and toolkits to engage their own clubs and communities and work with local organizations to end human trafficking in their own communities. This position really builds on the conceptual framework that our club has been advocating. The position is a 3-year term. Karen Walkowski was asked to serve as the first leader.

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CALENDAR & UPCOMING EVENTS

2024-25 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Many members work together to keep our club moving forward. Without their time and dedication things would simply not get done. Many thanks to our newly elected leadership team for stepping up and tackling the task needed for our club to thrive!

BOARD MEMBERS

- Co-Presidents - Lisa Podolny, Michelle Seets, Karen Walkowski
- Past President / Foundation Chair - Lisa Podolny
- Treasurer - Karen Walkowski
- Secretary - Mary Fiadese
- Director - María Julia Moreyra

Committee Chairs on the Board

- Programs & Projects - Erin Maloney
- Membership - Bassey Kooffreh
- Public Relations- Michelle Seets
- Fundraising - Karen Walkowski
- Economic Development - Michael Podolny

Committee Chairs not on the board

- Speaker - Maria Julia Moreyra
- Social - Anne DeLain
- Branch - Michael Podolny
- Sunshine - 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

Sharon Bloodworth

DATE

Aug 22, 2024 @ 7:00 AM CT (US / Canada)

Get ready to embark on an inspiring journey with our incoming Rotary District Governor! With her visionary leadership and unwavering commitment, she's set to unveil the future direction of Rotary and outline her priorities for the upcoming year.

For more information, check out the [website](#)

**VISIT RCEHT SOCIAL MEDIA
PAGES.**

