

Originally a project of SI Bangalore, who were aware that food security is lacking in India, where millions of families live below the poverty line, the [Fistful of Grains Project](#) has been adopted as a national project and aims to tackle shortage of food as well as educating children regarding the value of sharing food with the underprivileged. The project supports SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

The project collaborates with schools to inculcate amongst children, the value of sharing food with the needy through collection of food grains which are then donated to organisations conducting meal programmes.

SI Calcutta collaborated with two reputed schools in the city, which permitted members to address the children regarding the plight of poor families who often go without food. The children were then encouraged to collect a fistful of rice for a period of 5-7 days. The grain collected was then distributed to various organisations/orphanages that run meal programmes for the underprivileged. Around 150kg of rice was collected and distributed to three NGOs which had been earlier identified.



Awareness was created amongst schoolchildren regarding poverty and lack of food faced by millions of people in India. Secondly, food grains were collected for the underprivileged through the concept of sharing one's good fortune with others.

This project is easy to implement and does not require much fundraising, being dependent on small individual contributions from large groups. It is viewed favourably by school management as it teaches children the spirit of sharing.

Food security is such an essential part of life and this project involves people at all levels, showing that by working together we can make a difference.

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director

The world's best investment: Girls' Education

Our Soroptimist strapline is: *Educate Empower and Enable women and girls to reach their full potential*. Girls' education brings high returns, not just for income and economic growth but in other crucial areas as well - including improving children's and women's survival rates and health, reducing population growth, protecting children's rights and delaying child marriage, empowering women in the home and workplace and improving climate change adaptation.

On 12th July Malala Yousafzai will celebrate her 20th birthday. During her short life she has become a powerful advocate for girls' education. From the age of 11, when the Taliban shot her for going to school, she has received numerous awards, including receiving the [Nobel Prize for Peace](#) (jointly with Kailash Satyarthi) and, in April this year, was made a [UN Messenger of Peace](#) (the highest honour given to a citizen by the UN). Malala was the youngest ever recipient for both awards.



At the UN ceremony, Malala called on young people to believe in themselves and become change-makers in their communities, "If you want to see your future bright, you have to start working now, not wait for anyone else." On a recent visit to Canada (where she was awarded Honorary Canadian Citizenship) she said, "Free, safe, quality education is the right of every girl."

On 14th July, the British human rights charity, [Karma Nirvana](#), will be marking the third anniversary of their [Day of Memory](#), which was set up to remember those who lost their lives to 'honour' killings. Where some families choose to forget and feel shame, they remember and celebrate victims' lives.

To mark the occasion, at the Civic Hall in Leeds, [Jasvinder Sanghera CBE](#), founder, author and activist, will be joined by several survivors and will be sharing their stories of 'honour' abuse in Britain.

No one knows exactly how many victims of 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage there are in the UK. 'Honour'killing is usually hidden from view, victims maybe too young, too scared or too ashamed to talk about what they are going through.



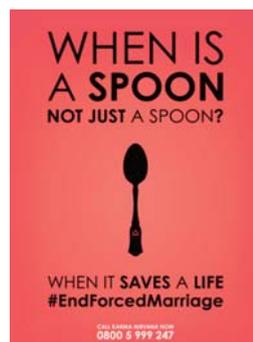
The tiny spoon badges

Because it is illegal in the UK, many families take their young female relatives abroad to be married against their will. Some years ago, Karma Nirvana offered the advice that one way to call the attention of the airport authorities to the situation was for girls to hide metal spoons in their underwear. This would trigger the metal detectors and the girls would then have a brief opportunity to speak to someone and tell them they were being forced into a marriage ceremony abroad.

Nicky Town, from Karma Nirvana, came up with the idea and makes the tiny spoon badges (see above), and the UK club, [SI Bilston & District](#), took up the idea and has been selling the badges - the proceeds of which goes to Karma Nirvana's vital work to help and support those suffering or at risk of forced marriage and 'honour' violence.

At the Federation's Malta conference a DVD, [The Story of the Spoon](#), was shown.

Jan Hemlin - Acting - APD Education



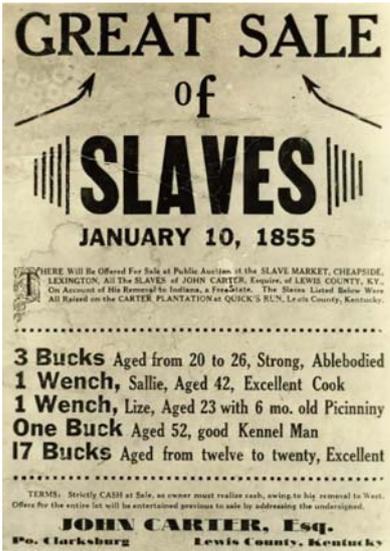
More in slavery now than at the height of the slave-trade

In the December PAM, I commented on the Abolition of Slavery. Now I am asking our clubs to revisit what they do about trafficking, which is marked on 30th July, and we will all have the opportunity to listen to the latest facts about trafficking during our [conference in Cardiff](#) in October this year. We know that trafficking exists in every country and that we need to involve everyone.

Everyone can do something.

The Home Office estimates that there are between 10,000 and 13,000 victims of forced labour in the UK. [William Wilberforce](#) said, "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know." He was part of the group that ensured that freedom was granted to all slaves in the British Empire, following the [Slavery Abolition Act](#).

Unfortunately, the situation is worse today. Statistics tell us 20.9 billion people worldwide, including two million children, are enslaved in some form or other. The average age for girls sold into prostitution rings is 12-14 years old.



Poster, from 1855, advertising a sale of slaves

The trafficking of humans has surpassed the smuggling of weapons to become the second largest criminal enterprise on earth.

Human trafficking has overtaken even drugs trafficking in terms of scale. It is a global issue and the consequences for its victims are dire.



Many of our clubs support the [Purple Teardrop Campaign](#) whose motto is 'Stop the Trafficking, Stop the Tears, and Free Them from their Tormented Years'. The prime objective of the Purple Teardrop Campaign is to promote human rights and its focus is the infringement of human rights suffered by the victims of people trafficking. Many of our clubs support the Purple Teardrop Campaign with activities ranging from collecting bras to raising awareness about the use of mobile phones in sex trafficking. SI Sheffield partnered with the Campaign's Victim Support Programme as part of their on-going support of The Snowdrop Project a Sheffield-based charity that exists to empower survivors of human trafficking to live lives that are no longer defined by their past. The charity provides long-term, community support to empower survivors of human trafficking and they recognise that recovery from human trafficking is a long-term process.



Therefore, while the [Modern Slavery Act](#) in 2015 was ground-breaking, it only scratches the surface of one of the most serious human rights abuses of our century. The former Home Secretary, Theresa May, decided to make this a defining aspect of her work – and she is now the UK's Prime Minister, who is about to take Britain out of the European Union. It is essential that better protection for victims of slavery and human trafficking must be part of the Brexit agenda. EU law has enabled some enslaved people to claim back pay at minimum wage levels; in a deregulated post-Brexit world, they are unlikely to have that chance. Soroptimists in the UK need to lobby Brexit ministers to find out what (if any) new protection on slaves will be needed after Britain has left the EU.

[Rayner Rees - APD Economic Empowerment](#)

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