

July 2018



Half way through the year already, so much that has been done and so much still to do.

July sees the Day of Action for [Meru](#) so please support this - it really is a fantastic project.



August can be a month to hold outdoor events, or dare I say it even have a break and recharge our batteries for the run up to the [International Day of Peace](#) and other UN days that we celebrate.

I shall finish by saying several of us will be at the [National Memorial Arboretum](#) on Saturday 22nd September at 11am until about 2pm and if anyone wants to join me for a very informal get together they will be very welcome.

To quote Janet Garnon-Williams, "Bring a picnic, enjoy the company, meet friends and make new friends, in the peace and evolving beauty of the National Memorial Arboretum.

Learn about the development of the National Memorial Arboretum, enjoy a quiet stroll, visit sites in the Arboretum you have wanted to see and never had time. There will be shelter so don't worry about the weather."



Barbara Dixon
Programme Director



FOCUS ON INDIA & BANGLADESH

Nisha Ghosh - APD Conflict Resolution

Bangladesh was a surprize package SI Dhaka, the older of the two clubs in Bangladesh, have committed founder members who are still holding the fort with projects to change the lives of women and girls. The members take

their mentoring role seriously for the projects. The education project at Magh Bazar has been on for more than two decades. I'm given to understand how the government, post liberation, enlisted the services of the NGOs to manage primary education. Hence their support to the national need has led to their meaningful project. The Soroptimists have funded the teachers' salaries and provided educational material to the children. The parents, all from extremely deprived backgrounds, are eager to educate their children and feel indebted to the Soroptimists' visits. Girls who have passed out earlier, now in high school, revisited to meet me; their empowerment through education was palpable.

Nijere Shikhi, started by a British missionary, John Hastings, who focused keenly on education. The school is supported his family, local donors and Soroptimists and also SI Bournemouth, the Friendship Link Club. 'Beautiful Mind' is a beautiful effort to bring autistic and other special children within the fold of mainstream society. The Chairman is a Soroptimist who channels the club's support to the school. Over 200 special needs children are taught by well trained teachers. Here too the Dhaka Club funds the teachers and some of the needy children.

SI Dhanmondi, a young club, where busy professional working members commitment to educating the future of Bangladesh is uppermost. They partner with Sustainable Future, an NGO setup for pre-school and primary education. Material support and mentoring is what the educated members of Dhanmondi club do best. A stitching class for women and girls, provides a skill to girls who can then find employment in Bangladesh's flourishing garment industry. While serving the national need this covers the targets of SDG 4 of skill development. Girls can also train for the beauty parlour course. Similarly, vocational training in computing helps the students to aspire to jobs that were unknown to their poor parents.

Dhanmondi members made it special for mothers of the students of the primary schools on International Women's Day by giving them a nutrition health, and hygiene awareness presentation. At the Literacy Centre the Club members marked the Day of the Girl Child, and World Environment Day while planting trees in the main park.

Several Clubs in India continue their push to empowerment through long standing projects and newer ventures. Under SDG-1 & 4, 5, the little challenges to empower rural and urban women are addressed. **SI Pune Metro East's** sanitary napkin production unit does just that which provides free-of-cost sanitary wear to needy young girls. **SI Chennai** continue their award-winning project 'City Shandy', now an annual feature in the city. Recently more than 90 women's group marketed their wares at this event. The visibility and the empowerment they experience is matchless. Meanwhile **SI Kodikanal** moves on with their community-based project 'AHEAD' thus economically empower women below the poverty.



SI Dhaka: Girls that passed out earlier already empowered with education



SI Dhanmondi: Empowering with skills



SI Pune Metro East: Rural women making low cost sanitary wear



SI Chennai City Shandy: Economic empowerment for small scale business women



AHEAD Si Kodaikanal's empowerment project

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Slavery/human trafficking have not gone away despite efforts to abolish them. Its history predates written records and has [existed in most civilisations](#) from the Neolithic until our own. The efforts of people such as [William Wilberforce](#), culminating in the [Slave Trade Act in 1807](#), has been thought to be the beginning of the end of slavery. This is not so, with many forms being prevalent today, including across the UK.

Modern slavery and human trafficking is a complex crime that takes a number of different forms often across international boundaries. It is difficult to identify, complex to investigate and complex to prosecute. The Global Slavery Index estimates that 45 million people are being exploited. Last year the [National Crime Agency](#) reported that they estimated the number of people in the UK being exploited may be over 100,000. Modern slavery is the second most profitable crime to drugs crime. The fight against modern slavery and human trafficking can only be achieved by working collaboratively.

Potential victims can agree to have their information recorded by the National Referral mechanism – in 2013 the total was 1,746 but in 2017 it had risen to 5,145.

The most common countries of origin for the UK are Albania (699), Vietnam (519) and the UK (internal - 326). The majority of adults were trafficked for forced labour with sexual exploitation being a close second in 2017 ([1,326 cf 1,185](#)).

For 'minors' forced labour was about twice as common as sexual exploitation ([1,026 cf 559](#)). The UKPAC, together with other organisations, have lobbied for this mechanism to be improved. The Home Office announced changes which were welcomed by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) and other frontline organisations in [October 2017](#). They are intended to improve the way in which victims are identified and supported.

Our survey on behalf of the Modern Slavery Training Delivery Group was supported by 71% of clubs in the UK. There were 9,317 responses. Over 60% denied knowledge of the issues with over 40% thinking it does not occur in their locality. Neither of these views are based on fact with the crime occurring across the whole of the UK.

Additionally people did not feel confident of spotting victims and, if they did, how to report their suspicions. Less than 20% knew of the modern slavery [helpline](#). The lack of awareness of slavery and human trafficking, demonstrated across all sectors of the population, and ignorance of the various ways to report and get help is disappointing given the work put in by Soroptimists, NGOs, governmental departments and all forms of the media. This needs to be addressed urgently. Yet more advocacy for us to do.



Monument to the Slave Trade - Tanzania

Days of interest in July

7th World Chocolate Day **30th** International Friendship Day **30th** World Day Against Trafficking in Persons