



# PURPLE TEARDROP CAMPAIGN

stop the trafficking ~ stop the tears

## Summer newsletter 2016

*Welcome to our Summer 2016 newsletter. This issue covers some of the activities that we are undertaking to help in the recovery and rehabilitation of people rescued from slavery and sadly more stories of some of the victims.*

### My life as a trafficking victim

Shandra Woworuntu is an Indonesian graduate who worked for an international bank as an analyst and trader in the 1990's until she lost her job in the Asian financial crisis. She then started looking for a job overseas and successfully applied for a job in the hospitality industry in the USA. Her plan was to work there for six months, save as much money as possible and then return home.

However as soon as she arrived at JFK airport in New York, her passport and documents were taken away and she was driven to a brothel by an armed driver. Just a few hours after her arrival in the US, she was forced to have sex. She was taken, again by an armed man, to a photo studio to have photos taken and then to a lingerie shop. The traffickers told her she owed them 30,000 dollars and would pay off the debt 100 dollars at a time by serving men. She was taken over the following months to different brothels, apartment buildings, hotels and casinos on the East Coast, rarely two days in the same place. The traffickers made her take drugs at gunpoint and, she says, maybe it helped make it all bearable.

*"Twenty four hours a day, we girls would sit around, completely naked, waiting for customers to come in. The quiet times were when the traffickers themselves would rape us. I was numb, unable to cry, overwhelmed with sadness, anger and disappointment. I just went through the motions, doing what I was told and trying hard to survive. The gun, the knife and the baseball bat were fixtures in a shifting and unstable world for me."*

After several unsuccessful attempts, Shandra managed to escape but neither the police nor the Indonesian consulate would help her. Finally a good Samaritan reported her tale to the FBI, the brothel was raided and other girls rescued. Back in Indonesia, the traffickers went looking for her at her mother's house and she and Shandra's daughter had to go into hiding. So great was the danger to

her daughter that eventually the US government make it possible for her to join her mother in America. Whilst Shandra is now safe, the trauma has taken a great toll on her health, both physically and psychologically. She now campaigns on behalf of the victims of human trafficking to place them in roles where they can have a direct impact on policy. The Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act, she says, has achieved that and she now sits on an advisory council which had its first meeting in the White House.

Shandra reflects *"Looking back on my own experiences, I think all those casino and hotel workers must have known what was going on. The problem is that people see trafficked women as prostitutes and they see prostitutes not as victims but criminals. And in cities, people turn a blind eye to all sorts of criminality. Men caught in the act of paying for sex are nowadays sent to a one-day session called John School, which teaches them how to identify children in brothels and women being coerced into sex work. Good, but not enough. I think men who pay for sex with trafficked women or men should have their names put on a public list, just like they do for child abusers and sexual predators."*

### Comic book for children

Causevision is a not-for-profit organisation that produces material to educate under-informed communities on issues directly relevant to their people.

They have produced a series of comic books aimed at educating people who are susceptible to trafficking. The books are cultural and age appropriate and very effective as the visual format not only paints a vivid picture of the dangers but also caters to those with low reading levels.

The first book tells the story of 14 year old Mexican girl Evelina who fell victim to human trafficking, to raise awareness among young women in Mexico and their families.

There are now six books in ten languages in the series that are distributed in countries including Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Laos, Myanmar, Colombia and Ecuador.



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## Modern Slavery Act 2015 a year on

To mark the first anniversary of the Act, a review has found that there was a 40% rise in the number of victims referred for support and that 289 slavery offences were prosecuted in 2015.

The Modern Day Slavery Act was spearheaded by then Home Secretary Theresa May. Now Prime Minister, she has announced a £33.5 million boost in the battle against modern slavery. The prime minister announced that the money would be targeted at dealing with the routes of the people-trafficking trade in countries such as Nigeria, as she unveiled a new taskforce that is to coordinate the government response to slavery.

*"Last year I introduced the world-leading Modern Slavery Act to send the strongest possible signal that victims were not alone and that those responsible for this vile exploitation would face justice. We must do more and the historic £33.5million will allow us to go even further to support victims"* said Mrs May.

The government has asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to assess the police response to modern slavery. Theresa May added that the criminal justice system must ensure that perpetrators have nowhere left to hide.

*"I am pleased to see progress but we will not stop until slavery is consigned to the history books."*

## Labour exploitation in East Anglia

Senior figures in the Catholic Church in East Anglia are working with the local police force in a bid to tackle the problem of trafficking in the region, where vulnerable migrant communities within the agricultural industry across Fenland, West Norfolk and Lincolnshire are at risk of exploitation.

The traffickers exploit new arrivals, providing overcrowded housing and transport to work in the fields or food processing factories in exchange for a large proportion of the workers' wages and often their passports.

The Catholic charity, the Medaille Trust, which runs safe houses for rescued victims of trafficking, is preparing to open a new safe house in East Anglia, to help local police in sheltering people involved in agricultural exploitation.

*"The Church is in a unique position to combat modern slavery, with open doors to the vulnerable and with valuable connections, both locally and internationally. We cannot fight against this heinous crime without working in partnership and utilising such assets. Together with the Catholic Church we can get to the heart of the community and reach those most in need"*

says Kevin Hyland, the UK's first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

An article in The Guardian describes in detail the exploitation. The Fens, the bleak marshy flatlands of East Anglia, produce more than a third of the UK's vegetables. The constant replenishment of produce to the shops all over the country in response to orders as they come in, needs a surplus of workers who are willing and desperate enough to take, for example, 12 hours work one day and nothing the next. Only the vulnerable and the newly arrived are prepared to do so.

Gangmasters are licenced agents who supply workers to factories and farms. However traffickers are recruiting labour from the poorest rural areas of the former Soviet bloc and subcontracting them to the licenced gangmasters. Thus the traffickers control how and when their workers are used and how much of their wages they actually end up with. Currently they are recruiting Latvian, Lithuanian and ethnic Russian migrant workers who are desperate enough to endure the low pay and long hours. Lured by the promise of good work and often speaking no English, they are easy to exploit.

On arrival they are already in debt for their air fare. They are then put into very poor and overcrowded housing and charged rent which the traffickers take directly and illegally from their wages. They are ferried to where the work is and have to pay for this transport, often at far more than it costs. If there is not enough work then their debts increase which puts them in debt bondage to their traffickers.



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This can be especially bad for women who may then be given the choice of prostitution or selling organs to pay off their debt. Frequently their traffickers have other illegal operations and open up bank accounts in the names of unknowing migrants to launder money. The traffickers themselves are also from Eastern Europe and they rule their migrant communities with fear and violence.

To read the article in full, go to

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/11/gangsters-on-our-doorstep/>

## Child trafficking in Europe

The EU Commission has stated that trafficked children aged between 6 months and 10 years are being bought and sold for sums ranging from £3,000 to £5,000 although amounts up to £30,000 have been reported.

Organised crime groups choose to traffic children as they are easy to recruit and quick to replace. They can also control child victims relatively cheaply and discreetly.

Now add in this statistic. Of almost 96,000 unaccompanied children who claimed asylum in Europe last year, at least 10,000 have disappeared. Whilst some may have joined family members, the fear is that they have fallen easy prey to the trafficking gangs. 5,000 have disappeared in Italy and Sweden has 'lost' over 1,000. Europol's Chief of Staff has warned that a sophisticated pan-European criminal infrastructure is now targeting refugees.

### In brief

1. In the past year, 250 suspected traffickers have been arrested in joint operations supported by Europol, the EU police agency
2. Traffickers are increasingly exploiting legal migration routes by persuading non-EU nationals to apply for asylum or a residence permit
3. Italian authorities have reported a 300% year on year increase in the number of Nigerian trafficking victims arriving from Libya

## Poole Taxi Drivers trained to spot and report possible child sex exploitation and human trafficking

The report into child sex exploitation in Rotherham and cases in Derby, Oxford and other towns highlighted the role of the licensed trade as critical eyes and ears in the community. They were identified as being used for collecting children from outside schools, trafficking children between towns and as places where children were forced to perform sex acts. Ofsted's inspection of child sex exploitation noted that the better performing local authorities were making it clear that child sex exploitation is everybody's business. Awareness raising was being targeted at people working in hotels, hostels, taxi companies, licensed premises, restaurants and fast food outlets.

In Rochdale, all 1,600 licensed drivers have received mandatory training on child sex exploitation. A number of other taxi and private hire licensing authorities have introduced similar driver training or are planning to do so in the future.

In the wake of these reports, it was decided to run such training in Poole for taxi drivers, covering child sex exploitation and modern slavery as well as a range of other vulnerable people including the disabled and those with dementia.

This has now been put in place and the course is mandatory for taxi drivers in Poole. It includes the signs to look for and is very specific to what taxi drivers may encounter. The course also provides details on how to report information.

*"Taxi drivers are the eyes and ears in our town and as such may spot behaviour or patterns that need to be reported to the authorities."* Adds the Sexual Violence Prevention Officer *"Taxis could provide that missing jigsaw piece of information that the Police need to take action. We know that taxi drivers witness various incidents that may appear concerning, so by working together we can safeguard those most at risk in our community."*

All new taxi and private hire drivers will be required to successfully undertake the course before being licenced. All existing drivers will also receive the training, which will be repeated every three years.



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## Pre-loved bras help stop victims getting re-trafficked

Last year we launched a project to collect gently used bras to help rescued victims of sex trafficking in El Salvador, Mozambique and Kenya.

Once these victims have been rescued from their traffickers and are in their home countries, it is of vital importance that they can earn their own living. Otherwise there is a high risk that they will again fall prey to trafficking. Free the Girls is an American charity that is helping women and girls in Mozambique, Uganda and El Salvador to start and run their own businesses, become financially independent and consequently safe from being re-trafficked.

In those and many other less-developed countries, bras are seen as a status symbol and used bras sell for a good price. Each woman coming into this programme is given an initial supply of 'pre loved' bras plus training. Once they have sold the initial supply, they can use some of the money generated to buy more bras at less than market price, sell them and use some of the money for more stock, and so on. Thus they can build their own businesses and be financially self sufficient.

We are working with Free The Girls to send out quantities of gently used bras to further the wonderful work that they are doing.

Since we started this project, we have been absolutely overwhelmed by the numbers of bras that have been sent to us from all over England, Scotland and Wales. From those of you who have sent one or two, to those groups who have run large scale collections and sent us large boxes filled with bras, to those who have donated money towards the cost of shipping out the bras, an enormous and heartfelt thank you.

Because of your efforts and kindness, so far we have been able to set up around 26 women in their own business. This is not only keeping them safe from being trafficked again but is doing wonders for their self confidence and self esteem, which as you can imagine would have been almost non-existent after the horrors that they have gone through.

You have given them their lives back.

The project is continuing so please keep sending clean, gently used bras to

The Purple Teardrop Campaign

c/o Poole CVS

3 Beech House

28 - 30 Wimborne Road

Poole BH15 2BU

## Can we have 10 minutes of your time right now?

In just 10 minutes you can do 3 amazing things to help in the fight against trafficking

1. Sign our petition to ban 'sex for sale' ads

<http://www.purpleteardrop.org.uk/what-you-can-do/lobbying/>

2. Sort out any unwanted bras, to send to us

3. Ask all your email contacts to do the same

That 10 minutes of your time could stop a woman being sexually exploited against her will and help a rescued woman to start earning her own living, safe from being re-trafficked.

Thank you very much.

*We hope this newsletter has given you some insight into what people are currently doing to raise awareness of trafficking. If there is anything you are doing, then please tell us about it. We would love to hear from you.*

*We are so grateful for any fundraising or donations and you can rest assured that the money will be put to excellent use. Thank you so much for your support. You can contact us on [enquiries@purpleteardrop.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@purpleteardrop.org.uk).*