

HUMAN TRAFFICKING / MODERN SLAVERY IS GOING ON IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? Denise Boyle fmdm

According to the Global Slavery Index (GSI) 2014, an estimated 35.8 million men, women and children are trapped in modern slavery. This is a highly profitable industry, realising over \$150bn a year in profit. UN report: <http://rt.com/news/160460-un-slavery>

Jasmine's Story: *It happened in a suburban neighbourhood, right under everyone's noses, to Jasmine, an 8-year-old girl. "For two years I was raped, tortured and smothered on a daily basis," Jasmine told us. "I would cry myself to sleep every night."*

What made Jasmine's story extra shocking was how it happened. She wasn't kidnapped by a stranger or abused by a relative. It took place after school each day at the hands of a neighbour, just a few doors down from her mother's house. And it wasn't just her; her younger sister, a male cousin and other children in her Pennsylvania neighbourhood were caught up in this child pornography ring.

"No one ever came looking for us because we never went missing," she said, describing how she went through great lengths to hide the abuse from her single mother. "From 3-6 every day I went and had sex with strangers, because that was my job." The trafficking ended when she was 10 because the neighbour suddenly moved away. Reference: <http://www.app.com/story/news/education/2015/04/19/human-trafficking-survivor-tells-gut-wrenching-story/26027453/>

Shocking, awful and surely a 'one-off'? Tragically 'no'! Pope Francis speaks out regularly about the horror of Human Trafficking (HT): *"It's not possible to remain indifferent before the knowledge that human beings are bought and sold like goods!"* (May 2014).

Determined to take action on MS, he met with leaders of major global religions to sign an agreement in March 2015, to work together as the 'Global Freedom Network' with the aim of eradicating modern slavery by 2020! www.vis.va

MIA RESPONSE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING / MODERN SLAVERY: The Mercy family working in 44 countries is raising awareness about the heinous crime of Modern Slavery (MS) especially of children. They work at many levels by:

1. Networking locally and nationally to assist victims of trafficking. Simultaneously they lobby and advocate for change in government legislation, to ensure victims will receive maximum support. This includes sufficient time for healing, plus language and skills training. In most countries 'survivors' are given the option to stay or to return home.

2. Participation in Campaigns to highlight the reality of HT/MS revealing its many brutal faces i.e. sexual exploitation; slave labour; organ removal; and pornography.

3. Challenging business practices: The Mercy Family in Australia with ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Human Trafficking) ran a successful campaign to slave-proof the supply line, for the cocoa used to make Cadbury's Easter eggs. They discovered that young boys of 8 in South America were kept out of school to pick the beans needed to make chocolate eggs. When thousands sent post-cards to protest and refused to

buy Cadbury products, the Managing Director met the campaigners! Now all Cadbury's chocolate in Australia is 'Fair-Trade'. And the young boys all go to school in the mornings!

4. Ending Child Prostitution in Hotels and the Travel Industry: This very effective initiative was started by Pat Zerega, of Mercy Investment Services in the US. Working in collaboration with senior management in hotels, airlines and trucking companies, they have raised awareness about the possibility of children being trafficked and abused. ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking) developed a 'Code' of practice for these different groups to sign. Obligations include training every staff member to recognise the 'signs' that may reveal a young person is in danger.

5. Exchanging information and sharing resources through MIA-Global Action justice groups. We 'meet' regularly via international video-link, to keep informed and up to date.

6. MIA Global Action at the United Nations in New York. Through Sr. Aine O'Connor we are kept informed about issues related to trafficking and new legislation emerging from the UN. Ms Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, UN Special Rapporteur on 'Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children' visits countries to see firsthand the situation and submits a report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the UN General Assembly in NY.
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking>

Q. 1. What could I do to raise awareness about Modern Slavery or HT?

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NB Be on the alert to a young person who appears to be alone, or is not part of the crowd.

Q.2. What signs could suggest a young person may need help?

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Q.3. Who should you go to, if you are concerned about a young person?

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Q.4. 'Grooming' is a means of luring young people via the internet to a date with a stranger or 'new friend'. How can you protect yourself and alert others to this danger?

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Valuable websites: www.mercyworld.org (Global Action); Mercy Investment Services: <http://www.mercyinvestmentservices.org>; Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT) Ireland: www.aptireland.org; ACRATH - Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking ... www.acrath.org.au; <https://lcwr.org/social-justice/abolishing-human-trafficking>

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Be ever ready to praise, to encourage, but slow to judge and still slower to condemn' Catherine McAuley