

## **SPECIAL ISSUE: PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING – STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

*Human Trafficking affects every country. It is a global problem which requires a global response - there are many ways to respond. In this special issue of UN Update, members of our network share what is happening locally and globally. Our stories of awareness raising, advocacy, prayer and direct attention to victims are shared.*

### **Do They Speak about Human Trafficking in your Parish?**

During the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 60) an **Interfaith Group** gathered to reflect on the situation of our Faith Communities in regard to combating Human Trafficking. Members of Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities asked: What do our communities, parishes, synagogues, mosques do to prevent trafficking and what we as members of faith communities are doing. Do we speak about it in these spaces? What can we do to make this serious breach of the dignity of human beings a focus of discussion and action? Read about the experience and challenges we face [here](#).



### **The Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations**

Imelda Poole IBVM will address Human Trafficking at a session organized by the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations on Thursday 7 April 2016. In the note about the event we read that in a letter to the Santa Marta Group, Pope Francis wrote that "Today the 193 States that belong to the UN have a new moral imperative to combat human trafficking which is a real crime against humanity," The Santa Marta Group is "a collaboration of senior law enforcement chiefs from over 30 countries with senior representative of the Roman Catholic Church and civil society organizations, founded in 2014 by Pope Francis and named after his residence in the Vatican, in order to strengthen and coordinate the global response to human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery". Read more about the initiative in the [concept note](#) published by the Mission to the Holy See.



### **Human Trafficking and Forced Labor in the Global Supply Chain.**

Human trafficking has no boundaries and respects no laws. It exists in formal and informal labor markets of both lawful and illicit industries, affecting skilled and unskilled workers from a spectrum of educational backgrounds. As the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated in 2014, forced labor in the private economy reaps some \$150 billion in illicit profits each year. Long and complex supply chains that cross multiple borders and rely on an array of subcontractors impede traceability and make it challenging to verify that the goods and services bought and sold every day are untouched by modern-day slaves. **Anne Kelly IBVM** takes up this issue in "Cotton field to closet: buying ethically." She addresses the global cotton industry and offers actions we can take as consumers.



Anne McPhee ibvm, Anne Kelly ibvm, Yvonne Lamerand ibvm, Denise Desmarchelier ibvm, Jennifer Burn (Past Pupil of Loreto Normanhurst and Director of Anti-Slavery Australia) at the ACRATH Annual Conference 2015

[ACRATH, Australia](#) is one of the organizations promoting slavery-free chocolate at certain times of the year. Read their [press release](#). Eight Loreto sisters are active members of ACRATH, while many other sisters and colleagues support its campaigns, events and activities. They may help us do some research on slavery-free chocolate or other items in the food chains in our country!

At a recent UN Meeting the US Representative of a new initiative involving collaboration with specific corporations to ensure that all levels of their supply chains are free of human trafficking. It is important to recognize the many initiatives being taken to tackle the problem from many angles.



## Awareness Raising

**Kids in Spain** enthusiastically welcomed Imelda Poole IBVM and Ana Stakaj from Mary Ward Loreto, Albania. IBVM schools in Spain are working against human trafficking through the solidarity project presented by Mary Ward Foundation this year. The project addresses the reality of human trafficking in a comprehensive manner (sexual exploitation, labor, organ trafficking ...) and through material adapted to each school stage. Through **sessions with kids and older students, parents, former students and the general public**, Imelda and Ana contributed to the awareness raising of this reality in Albania and in Spain. Both countries are closely connected in an intricate web of human trafficking. Read more about this initiative [here](#).



*Awareness raising session in a Loreto school, Spain*



*Local authorities visit Gift Box in Slovakia*

**Gift Box.** Bodhana Bezakova **CJ Slovakia**, with Caritas Slovakia, has used the Gift Box to raise awareness in some 20 cities in Slovakia. The GIFT box is a unique way to raise awareness about human trafficking and gather knowledge on the issue. The large walk-in street sculptures invite you inside with promises and offers, but once inside you are presented with the different reality of trafficked women. The Gift Box Project involves many people. Volunteers go through a training process after which they train others. It is an impressive expression of participation, engagement and commitment. The gift box has been placed in the midst of a vulnerable community. Read about the Gift Box Global Journey [here](#). It includes our efforts as part of the Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons in New York and that of Mary Ward Center, Toronto.

Another awareness raising activity held in Slovakia was a Film festival on Human Trafficking. It included a program for students during the day and another for adults in the evenings. An ex-porn star spoke of her experience at an evening session for adults. She linked pornography with trafficking. The Gift Box was at the scene of the event.



**Conference on Human Trafficking.** Jean Okroi IBVM is part of the Illinois Women Religious preparatory committee for a Conference on Labor Trafficking to be held on 16 April, 2016. About 300 participants are expected. The Conference speakers will include a victim of labor trafficking, a lawyer who will do a social analysis, an activist who will address Human Rights and workers' rights and an attorney who will speak to the legal rights of people who are trafficked for labor purposes. The lived experience usually touches the human spirit and in this case that of a labor survivor is likely to do so. This young Mexican man now aged 30 was kidnapped at the age of 8. He was sexually exploited for years as well as working in a meat factory. As he is gay, he does not feel he can return to his country. Nobody would understand him and, as far as he knows, nobody tried to find him. Presently, he works at O'Hare airport looking for victims.

## Awareness Raising through Prayer. Awareness raising through Social Media

**Betty Whyte IBVM**, Kenya sent a beautiful [Stations of the Cross](#). The Passion of Jesus is reflected in the lives of specific victims of Human Trafficking. It is the story of suffering, a way of the cross that may someday lead to Resurrection, when the victims of human trafficking become survivors and are restored. Mary O'Mally MMM who wrote the reflections stresses the importance of prevention. Each victim, she says, is someone we did not reach in time with the message about the true nature of Human Trafficking and the long term and often disastrous effects it has on their lives". Betty works in close collaboration with other religious, like Mary and other Religious women who give hundreds of workshops.

**Monica Shanley IBVM**, South Africa, works actively to involve people, especially in raising awareness on Human Trafficking, in the Loreto schools in South Africa. She shares information with a contact person from their schools who can avail of it for educational purposes. A Facebook account run by a colleague, Sylvia, is proving helpful to get the message out, Monica, says. A number of people have expressed interest in the South African Prayer circle on Human Trafficking. Monica is willing to help anybody interested in having it in their country.

## ONLINE ADVOCACY

Campaign for the Eradication of Sex  
Tourism and Sexual Exploitation, during the  
2016 Olympic Games in Brazil



Letter to President of Brazil. Sign  
on [here](#).

**THANK YOU!**



## Direct Attention to Victims/Survivors

**Romania:** "A project for affordable housing for women in vulnerable situations has been approved in Romania", Adina Balan CJ writes. "Three apartments will be bought for this purpose. It is a huge success to have achieved this." Adina notes that people who are psychologically disturbed as result of trafficking form a group that requires attention but there are no services for them. However, there are signs of beginnings. The Romanian government is trying to convince Italy and Spain, the two European countries with most trafficked Romanians, not to send them back in that condition.

## Toronto Takes Important Step Forward to Combat Human Trafficking

Covenant House, Toronto, Canada's largest youth shelter has launched a \$10 Million Campaign to fund an anti-sex trafficking plan. Their campaign, named "Just like a Girl You Know" features a comprehensive, coordinated anti-sex trafficking plan, including more help for young girls most vulnerable to entrapment. The planning committee has partnered with 10 organizations outstanding in serving youth. These include trauma and addiction experts, police, hospitals and legal professionals. "Key supporters of the plan to be called the "Rogers Home " include the **Toronto Community Housing** which leased a large house for \$ 1 to the committee and the **City of Toronto** which is renovating the home and providing two of its beds as dedicated crisis beds (a first for this city!)", writes Maria Lantier IBVM. The Covenant House planning team has been careful to include a **PREVENTION and EARLY INTERVENTION** component. Concentrating on the next 5 years, this plan will encompass: multi-media awareness campaigns; school presentations to warn girls of just how traffickers can lure them; training for hotel staff to recognize trafficking behavior. [NOTE: On an annual basis there are 10,000 homeless youth in the city of Toronto". Maria Lanthier IBVM notes that leaders at Covenant House attended both of the IBVM, Canada anti-trafficking awareness conferences held in the near past.

## Training on Advocacy, Lobbying and Campaigning.

**RENATE** (Religious in Europe working against Trafficking and Exploitation) organized a training on Advocacy and Campaigning in Budapest in Hungary from the 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016. It was led by Ivonne Van de Kar from The Netherlands. Four from MWL attended the training. It was such a wonderful experience. We joined people from 19 countries united against modern slavery and committed to continue this untiring work. The initiative was made to find new ways for confronting the need to gain full respect for each human being especially for those who have been exploited or trafficked.

The training was also a sharing of best practices and a planning ahead for new initiatives to be taken in the field of anti-trafficking. The aim was to effect change by realizing campaigns which would hopefully bring about justice and highlight the issues relating to this modern day phenomena. A special thank you for all the organizers of this meaningful training and also for the Mater Salvatoris Congregation who hosted us by making us feel very much at home and who organised a wonderful day of exposure to the beauties of Budapest. We also visited a school for girls who were victims of child abuse or who had been convicted of crime. *Imelda Poole IBVM.*



**Thanks to IBVM and CJ Sisters and colleagues of our Network on Human Trafficking.**

*Ann Mc Gowan (Canada), Sabrina Edwards (India), Jean Okroi, (USA), Therese Yaw (Mauritius), Bodhana Bezakova (Slovakia), Elena Cerdeiras (Spain), Liz Byrne (Ireland), Anne Kelly (Australia), Adina Balan (Slovakia), Imelda Poole (Albania), Pilar Gonzalez Cano (Spain), Maria Lanthier (Canada), Monica Suchiang (India), Initha (India), Deepa Biswas (Peru), Monica Shanley (South Africa), Cecilia O'Dwyer (UGO Office, New York)*

**Learn+assess+pray+act+advocate**

**Cecilia O'Dwyer ibvm**

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