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**NEWSLETTER No. 67**  
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**DEAR READERS,**  
**WELCOME TO THE 67TH ONLINE ISSUE**  
**OF THE VIVAT NEWSLETTER!**

As we in the North have already entered summer season, may all of us have a good time to enjoy the sunshine. And for those in the South, may you have a pleasant winter season.

Our News Letter has come up with some issues. Three of them come from New York. The other seven come from different parts of the world.

One of the events taken place in New York was the 15th Session of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (May 9 - 20, 2016), in which VIVAT International participated and intervened. Two weeks later (May 30 - June 2, 2016), VIVAT Office took part in UNDPI/NGO Conference on Education for Global Citizenship in Gyeongju, South Korea, where our members in that country participated.

VIVAT Office in New York and Regional Office in Geneva expressed their concerns about the death of Sr. Veronika Rackova, SSsP and human rights violations in South Sudan by sending letters and making statement on this issue.

This issue also includes several stories from the ground: two stories from Indonesia on Sustainable Development Goals Seminar and Workshop and on Rescuing Migrant Workers; two stories from Cameroon about Reforestation and Water Conservation Program and about Human Trafficking. We will also find a story on Post-War Trauma Healing Activity in South Sudan and a Conference on Climate Change in Austria.

This issue ends with a story of Sr. Nathanael Lee's internship at VIVAT Office in New York.

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Defending the Rights..... p. 2	Indonesia: For A More..... p. 8
Education for Global..... p. 3	South Sudan: Trauma..... p. 9
South Korea: Making.... p. 4	Cameroon: Young People... p.10
Austria: Conference..... p. 5	Indonesia: Good Samaritans...p. 11
South Sudan: War..... p. 6	My Participation..... p.12
Cameroon: No Water..... p. 7	

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## DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### VIVAT International, Franciscans International and Passionists International's Oral Statement at UNPFII 15

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016, during the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Vivat International, Franciscans International and Passionists International made an intervention by delivering a joint oral statement to express their concern about human rights violations of the indigenous peoples and of the human rights activists and defenders in some countries such as Honduras, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Philippines by State actors and corporations in the forms of land-grabbing for mega-projects such as dams, mining and palm oil plantations. “Our concern is about human rights violations of the indigenous peoples in Honduras, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, whose rights are not respected, protected or fulfilled in the development process,” the statement says.

The violations of human rights of activists, environmentalists and human rights defenders are also of concern, mentioning the death of Berta Caceres in Honduras and the systematic violence and intimidation including arrests, beatings, torture and killings of Papuans in Indonesia by security forces.

“These are only some of the examples of the continuing violations of indigenous peoples’ right both by national and transnational corporations and governments and of how indigenous peoples’ life really matters. Without fair policies and social justice, there will never be peace and true social development”, the statement further says.

Referring to the United Nations Declaration on the rights of the Indigenous Peoples which affirms that “Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territo-



ries” (article 10) and that “Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired” (article 26), the three organizations recommended to the Member States in which these violations have occurred and in which these indigenous communities exist: to protect and respect the rights of the indigenous peoples of their countries to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired; protect and

respect the rights of activists, and the defenders of indigenous peoples’ rights, especially their rights to freedom of expression and participation in the development process; review all

policies and concessions regarding mining operations and palm oil plantation expansion that exclude indigenous peoples from their lands and violate their rights to the lands, territories and resources; order a release of all the West Papuan

activists who were arrested by Indonesian security forces on May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 in several cities and towns during a peaceful demonstration to demand freedom, justice, dignity and an end to security forces violence; and develop comprehensive investigations on the violations of human rights and abuses against indigenous peoples and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

*By Robert Minsel, SVD*

## EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

### A Note from the 66<sup>th</sup> UN DPI/NGO Conference, Gyeongju, South Korea

**F**rom May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, I was participating in the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Department of Public Information and Non-Governmental Organizations (UN DPI/NGO) Conference in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea. Organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and the Government of South Korea, this conference came under the theme: “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together.” Approximately 2500 participants from around the world were at the conference, including UN agencies, some Member States, students, educators, NGOs, and 12 of VIVAT members in South Korea.

At the opening session, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, delivered a speech emphasizing the importance of Education as a driving force for Sustainable Development. He also called all Member States and civil society/NGOs for collaboration in implementing and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 4 on Quality Education for all.

This conference ended with an Action Plan, in which education was seen as “a human right, essential to well-being and dignity, and is key to achieving Agenda 2030.” It also affirms that “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms....; promote understanding, tolerance and friendship...; advance the cause of global citizenship which promotes integrated development of the whole person emotionally, ethically, intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually; imbued with an understanding of our roles, rights, and responsibilities for the common good in service to humanity and the advancement of a culture of

peace, non-violence, freedom, justice, and equality; inculcates a sense of care for the earth, reverence for the independent kinship of all life, and stewardship of all ecological systems for future generations; strengthens the societal relationships among individuals, institutions, communities, states, humanity, and the planet; and...nurtures a sense of solidarity and empathy in order to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure human rights, and foster prosperous and fulfilling lives for all.”

In this Action Plan, the participants committed themselves, among others, to: “An education that teaches conflict resolution, a deep appreciation for diversity, ethical reasoning, gender equality, human rights and responsibilities, interdependence, multilingual and multicultural competence, social justice, sustainable development, and values....; Utilize the pillars of formal education, informal education and training, and advocacy and public information as means to reduce inequalities that impede the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, most particularly Goal 4; Strengthen diverse civil-society-led coalitions around the world that contribute to the development of education for global citizenship; Work with the UNESCO Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education, the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) and United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) for the next 12 months...; ...Work at the local level, engaging parents and community leaders, to formulate plans to incorporate education for global citizenship in educational systems; strengthen intergenerational partnerships in all aspects of our work...”



It also urged Member States and the United Nations to: “... allocate a greater percentage of public revenues to education, particularly through the reduction of global military expenditures...;

promote the right to access information...; explore ways and means by which education for global citizenship can be integrated into curricula and the agenda for education; and...promote experiential learning, interdisciplinary studies, online learning, and intercultural exchanges to prepare students and educators to become global citizens.”

At the end of the first day of the conference, VIVAT members took an opportunity to share with each other about their work at international and grass-roots levels. Representing VIVAT International Office in New York, I shared about VIVAT International’s advocacy work in New York. Meanwhile members shared about their advocacy and educational work with migrant workers and the marginalized. At the end, there emerged a sense of urgency among VIVAT members in South Korea to organize regular meetings and develop networking in order to make the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4, more effective in their various ministries. There rose also an expectation that one day South Korea could organize a VIVAT workshop and have a VIVAT national branch to make its effort more effective in implementing SDGs, especially education for global citizenship (Goal 4) at national and grass-roots levels.

*By Robert Minsel, SVD*

## South Korea: Making the World One Family through Education

### Reflection on Our Participation at the 66th UN DPI/NGO Conference

We attended the UN DPI/NGO conference with Fr. Jun, SVD, from May 31~June 1, 2016 in Gyeongju, Gyeongsang North Province, Republic of Korea. The theme of the conference was “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together”. We were so grateful to our Congregation (SSpS) that we could participate in the international conference.

As was focused on Education for Global Citizenship in the conference, education is considered as the most important way to build a peaceful, just and environmentally sustainable future in the mutually inter-connected world. During the conference “Providing good education and promoting opportunity of on-going education” the 4<sup>th</sup> goal of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was discussed in order to find ways to provide good education for everyone equally.

There were 7 sessions and 4 workshops during the conference. Each workshop provided 11 or 12 small groups with a different topic so that participants could freely attend whatever they wanted to attend and discuss.

We recognized how many NGOs have been wonderfully working in the world, how many corporations have been doing good using their funds to restore for the poor and the marginalized the opportunity for education, to realize SDGs and to protect the environment. We clearly saw their positive sides and deeply felt their passionate zeal from the

people, especially from young people trying to protect and preserve the planet. It was a really awakening experience. We now hope that the small live coal



can become a great fire. Not to mention we are sure of one of the live coals with which we are so pleased.

There is one thing that we were so proud of and have to mention is *Saemaul Undong*. Known as the New Community (Village) Movement, a political initiative was launched on April 22, 1970 by South Korean president Park Chung-hee, to modernize the rural South Korean economy with the spirit of unity, cooperation and self-governance. The “We-can-do-it” spirit of *Saemaul Undong* had a great result in upgrading the standard of living.

This *Saemaul Undong* was introduced as a model of education and economic development by UN DPI. At the moment,

*Saemaul Undong* has been introduced to 49 countries in the world and has been giving great effect on education for the poor and has been upgrading quality as their lives.

Another thing that we were so proud of as members of SSpS is that VIVAT International, the common ministry of SVD, SSpS and other Member Congregations, helped register Sisters of other congregation of non-VIVAT members to attend the Conference.

The conference pronounced Gyeongju Action Plan to realize SDGs Agenda 2030. The plan is composed of 10 provisions to raise results, 13 agreements about what we have to do, and 14 points that urge International Union Member countries to implement.

What we strongly felt during this conference is a ‘Hope’ because there are a lot of live coals that are burning in the world to protect and preserve lives and the environment God created. Our Planet has a hope.

*Sr. Serva, SSpS &  
Sr. Clara Maria, SSpS  
VIVAT International Korea*

## Austria: Conference on Climate Change

### REPORT FROM JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMISSION OF AUSTRIAN PROVINCE

As part of the preparations for the Climate Conference (COP 21)

Two Parishes organized Symposiums with the Topic of the Encycli-

resource persons conducting workshops and presenting various exhibi-



in Paris, France, the Region of Vorarlber in Austria organized a one day seminar on climate change which involved many organizations and NGOs, such as Vorarberg's Initiative for the Working group Renewable Energy, The Alps Union, Doctors Union, Natural Protection and Environment Union, Fair Trade and others. In fact, apart from the Church, there were about 50 other organizations who supported this initiative.



cal "Laudato Si" so as to make environmental issues and private ways of living responsibly as regards to the climate change and environmental issues.

As climax the whole Region organized a big conference in the famous Regional House in Bregenz, the regional capital, with some famous

tions.

As Parish Priest and Justice and Peace Coordinator of the Austrian Province, Fr. Christian Stranz participated actively in this project and took the responsibility of organizing people who took care of the children as their parents participated in the conference. About 350 pupils, students and others showed interest in this activity.

*Fr. Christian Stranz, SVD  
JPIC Coordinator of SVD Austrian Province  
and VIVAT International Austria*

## South Sudan: War: A Threat to Humanity

### VIVAT INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERN ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN AND THE DEATH OF SISTER VERONIKA THERESIA RACKOVA, SSPS

On May 23 and 24, 2016, VIVAT International Executive Team, Helen Saldanha and Robert Mirsel, wrote two letters each to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in Geneva, and to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Sudan in regards to the killings of thousands of civilians and some human rights activists and defenders in South Sudan. Following these two letters, Andrzej Owca, CSSp, VIVAT International Representative in Geneva delivered an oral statement at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 calling for the attention of this body to the current situation in South Sudan in regards to the violations of human rights of civilians in general and of the human rights activists/defenders.

Both letters and statement express VIVAT International concerns partly on the death of Sister Veronika Theresia Rackova and the shooting of Rev. Placide Majambo: "We are gravely concerned by the threats, harassments, violence, and attacks faced by human rights defenders, reflected, among others, in the **shooting of Sister Veronika Theresia Rackova**, Director at St. Bakhita Dispensary in Yei, on May 16, 2016.... Her death is an irreparable loss especially for the people she served in Yei. A social worker and human rights defender sacrificed herself in her service to life—a very basic human right—of her fellow human beings as a global citizen. .... In fact, Sr. Veronika was not the only one. Prior to this, precisely, on September 11, 2015, **Rev. Placide Majambo**, Assistant Parish Priest in Mapuordit, was shot on his back by three armed men while visiting the people in Rumbek. Fr. Placide was seriously injured ("South Sudan: The Voice of God's People..." VIVAT Newsletter, 65th Ed., Oct. – Dec. Ed., 2015, p. 9).

Recognizing the immediate need to put an end to and take concrete steps to prevent threats, harassments, violence, and attacks by State and non-State actors against all those engaged in the promo-



tion and protection of human rights and referring to the United Nations Declarations on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, the letters and statement urge the UNHRC to call for a special meeting at the United Nations to take concrete action to end violence and killings of civilians and human rights defenders in South Sudan immediately; to make the State accountable to initiate proper enquiry into the acts of violence and killings in the courts of law according to standards of the international law; and to set up a Commission to conduct an investigation on human rights violations and abuses committed in relations to the shootings of Fr. Placide Majambo and Sr. Veronika Rackova and other human rights defenders in South Sudan. The letters and statement also urge the Government of South Sudan to publicly acknowledge the legitimate role of human rights defenders and the importance of their work as an essential component of ensuring their protection; to take timely and effective action to prevent and protect against attacks

on and threats to persons engaged in promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms and their relatives. Finally, the letters and statement urge the Government of South Sudan to investigate complaints and allegations regarding threats or human



rights violations perpetrated against human rights defenders or their relatives and to initiate proceedings against the perpetrators so as to ensure that impunity for such acts is eliminated; and to fully

support the role of human rights defenders in situations of armed conflict and provide them with the protection due to all civilians in such situations.

As we all know, South Sudan is now in a very deteriorating situation due to the civil war. Tens of thousands of civilians died and their properties were destroyed and their houses were burned, which led to the massive displacement. International intervention has not been effective enough to bring to an end this conflict and civil war. Meanwhile violations of human rights continue to occur and those who were and are responsible for these violations have not yet been brought to justice. VIVAT International along with the United Nations and other NGOs continue to raise its voice on behalf of the civilians and human rights activists and defenders, praying that one day there will peace and justice in the country.

*By Robert Mirsel, SVD*

# Cameroon: No Water, No Life!

## A REPORT ON WATER CONSERVATION AND REFORESTATION IN NDU SUB-DIVISION, CAMEROON

**T**his environmental project began in 2011. The main reason that it was un-



dertaken was to save the underground water resources being destroyed by eucalyptus trees in Ndu sub-division, Cameroon. For nearly twenty years the local authorities were worried as they became aware that water was getting scarcer every year especially in Dry Season. They believed that the main cause of the problem was the abundance of eucalyptus trees. Feasibility studies were done in Ndu in February 1995 and again in November 2000 which confirmed without any doubt that the main cause of scarcity of water was the huge volume of water being consumed by the thousands of eucalyptus trees in Ndu and the surrounding villages. It was noted that each mature eucalyptus tree absorbs at least 80 litres of water per day. The studies stated that these trees were wrongly planted by farmers who were not aware of the damage they would do. They also warned that unless action was taken, Ndu sub-division would be in crisis by 2015 due to water scarcity.

Although warnings were given each year very little action was taken because the problem had become so serious that it seemed impossible to solve. It was realized that action could only be taken step by step and the first step was taken in Ndu when the District Officer challenged Mary O’ Shea and a local NGO to do something about the problem of exotic eucalyptus trees in the local water catchment area. These trees have a value when

grown on hillsides where they can prevent erosion and are used for medicinal purposes , building planks, firewood and electric poles but they cause serious environmental damage when planted in water catchments, farmland and near houses. When the project began, a community approach was used and since the people knew the problem and how to solve it, they participated. The backing of the Government through the local authorities meant that any risk involved could be managed. Great awareness was raised of the dangers of eucalyptus and the value of indigenous trees and Water Management Committees were trained for each village. The senior classes in most of the primary schools in the sub-division were given environmental education. Many of the primary school children convinced their parents to eradicate the eucalyptus trees in the water catchments and farmland and they were happy to be awarded

prizes for their effort.

Between 2011 and 2015 more than 100,000 eucalyptus trees were felled and so far 42,000 Indigenous Trees have been planted in the seventeen villages in Ndu sub-division. The main Indigenous tree which was planted was *Prunus Africanus*. It is a valuable tree as the bark is used for manufacturing malaria medicine and it is also being used to produce paracetamol. In carrying out the project one of the main difficulties encountered was the destruction of the seedlings by stray animals, so much time and energy went into fencing.



The water table has increased by more than 30%. As a result the Ministry of Water and Energy of Cameroon and China signed a joint project to erect pumping stations in two villages using solar energy to pump water to these villages and their surroundings. This project is due to be completed very soon. Since water is a basic need (Millennium Development Goal No. 7 and Sustainable Development Goal No. 6) thousands of people who are marginalized are benefiting from this project.

*By Sr. Mary O’Shea, MSHR  
VIVAT International, Cameroon*

## Indonesia: For a More Sustainable Society and Planet

### SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP ON SDGs IN UNWIRA KUPANG AND LEDUG

**W**idya Mandira Catholic University (UNWIRA) Kupang and VIVAT International Indonesia held a two day seminar and workshop on sustainable development goals (SDGs) on June 17 and 18, 2016 in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia. It was co-sponsored by International Forum of NGOs on Indonesian Development (INFID) and two other government institutions—the National Development Planning Ministry (BAPPENAS) and the Special Advisory Office of the Indonesian Presidency (Kantor Staf Khusus Presiden Republik Indonesia). According to Sugeng Bahagijo, the INFID Executive Director, this seminar was the first undertaken by Non-Governmental Organizations, especially by higher education institutions in Indonesia to socialize SDGs.

The first day of the seminar (June 17) was attended by around 300 participants, representing 10 higher education institutions in Kupang, government officials, Civil Society, religious leaders, mass media, and students organizations. There were 7 speakers in two session panel sharing their knowledge, thoughts and experiences on SDGs and on how this global development agenda could be integrated into development planning at national, regional and local levels, research planning by higher education institutions, and into the activities of the Non-Governmental Organizations. The speakers in the first session were the representatives of BAPPENAS, the IV Deputy of President's Advisory Committee, INFID Director, and Alissa Wahid, a special SDGs ambassador for Indonesia and a daughter of the fourth President of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid.

In the second session three panelists presented their views and planning to implement SDGs in NTT Province. Those were Yulius Yasinto, SVD, President of Widya Mandira University, II



Deputy of Development Planning Body of NTT Province, and Sarah Lery Mboeik, an NGO activist in NTT. At the end of every session participants were given the chance for questions and comments, in which they were able to identify some key issues needed in the context of the province such as poverty eradication, good governance, water and sanitation, prevention of trafficking in persons, promotion of higher standard of health and education services.

The workshop on the second day (June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016) was attended by 30 participants which included chairs/vice-chairs of some higher education institutions, civil society organizations, SVD and SSsP JPIC coordinators, religious organizations, and student unions. Moderated by INFID the workshop focused on efforts to forming a forum for the promotion and implementation of SDGs in NTT Province context. At the

end of the workshop the participants came to an agreement to form an SDGs Forum for NTT and recommended that The Widya Mandira University be the secretariat for SDGs research, promotion and implementation in NTT Province. More than 10 VIVAT members (SVD and SSsP) participated as committee members, panelists as well as participants in the seminar and workshop. For VIVAT Indonesia, collaboration with Widya Mandira University was a breakthrough and a new stage in its development process during this last 5 years as a national branch. VIVAT International continues to focus on advocacy work with 4 main pillars: sustainable development, poverty eradication, empowerment of women and children, and environmental protection.

Prior to this workshop, there had been



another workshop on SDGs at Ledug, East Java Province, Indonesia, organized by VIVAT International Indonesia, in which all JPIC Coordinators of 4 VIVAT International Indonesia member Congregations participated.

*By Yulius Yasinto, SVD,  
President of Widya Mandira University in  
Kupang & VIVAT member  
(translated by Robert Minsel, SVD)*

## South Sudan: Trauma Healing Workshop

at Juba and Maban, 7th - 17th March, 2016

**S**outh Sudan is a very fragile country where more than **2.3 million people** have been forced to flee their homes, due to a brutal war.

Based on the traumatic experiences of the priests and religious working there I was invited by the Religious Superiors' Association of South Sudan (RSASS), sponsored by the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) to conduct a Trauma Heal-



ing Workshop, 7<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016. It was held in two places: Juba and Maban.

The first workshop was attended by 37 participants representing different congregations in the country.

Our opening hymn for the Mass was “Christ, come quickly...” The psalm was from Wisdom 9: 1 – 11, the reading was from Peter 1: 11. The phrase “Unload all your worries unto Him” was highlighted. Each participant was asked to write anything that he or she needed to be unloaded and put in a centre-piece on the floor of the room.

After that, the topic for the day was introduced and explained thus: what is stress and trauma, how they occur, how they are identified, how we plan for future trauma.

The hymn for the Morning Prayer the next day was “Lord Make me a means of your peace.” The psalm was “Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord.”

We had a burial ritual for all the people that had been violently killed in the country. This provoked a lot of tears in the participants. Because of the change in mood, I decided to introduce the following topics: safety and stabilization exercises, mindfulness exercise, imagination exercises, breathing exercise, working with families that were affected by the same event and life after trauma. These brought us to the end of the second day.

The last two days' theme was, “Lay your hands gently upon us.” These two days were dedicated to body work using David Bercili's method of healing the body after trauma and hand reflexology healing points. I introduced the acupuncture points, which release pain, tension and congestion in the upper back, shoulders, neck and head. We engaged in hand and drum massage, emotional freedom technique, immune system boost, self-care, polarity head and throat moves, parasympathetic session etc.

The workshop at Maban was organized by the Jesuit Priests who are working with refugees close to Ethiopian border. The methodology was the same. There were 40 participants, comprising refugees from the Upper Nile, Nipper and the Blue Nile.



The positive evaluations of the two workshops gave me a lot of courage, energy and optimism. I was deeply touched by a gift of a woven cross made in South Sudanese local material given to me by a Muslim woman who attended the workshop as a token of her appreciation of the workshop.

Each participant received a certificate, handouts and a mandate to train another two persons by the end of June 2016. A committee was set up to monitor the training. I have been affected greatly since the workshop. As a professional, I have tried to work on my feelings. I am more than ever appreciative of the fact that I have food to eat, have clean water to drink, have shelter and have fresh breeze and enjoy a relative peaceful atmosphere in my mission land.

Although peace seems farfetched, with the help of those great missionaries of our days planting seeds of forgiveness, mercy, justice and reconciliation in S. Sudan, I am optimistic that God in his time will make peace flourish once more on that land and the people will join hands to build a brighter country that they desire for their future.

*By Sr. Okechi Njoku, MSHR  
VIVAT International South Sudan*

# Cameroon: Young People & Modern Slavery

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN KUMBO REGION

Human trafficking that is also referred to as the modern form of slavery is a phenomenon that has affected many African countries especially where human beings have been turned into commodities for sale. The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary have been into this ministry in Cameroon since 2009, precisely in Kumbo region North West region of Cameroon. The area is hilly and is an area of primary evangelization. There are no factories, the roads are very poor; the inhabitants are small scale farmers. The people are generally poor in this rural set up. The chances of employment for young people are very limited thus enhancing rural urban exodus that leads to so much exploitation and abuse.

The anti-trafficking thrust in particular is in line with the MSHR commitment to women, considering that the victims of trafficking are usually young women. We began this ministry following listening surveys and careful monitoring of the work in various schools, community gatherings and health centres. According to UN report, Cameroon is a country of origin, transit and destination for people subjected to trafficking, specifically forced labour, and country of origin for women and youths in forced labour. Socio, cultural and economic factors facilitate this ill especially when the rural parents hand over their children to seemingly benevolent middlemen and relatives who may promise a monetary compensation, education or a better life in the city or within the same community.

During the long school holidays that lasts from the end of May to early September, young people are recruited into the private huge tea estates, in the North West, East and South West regions of the country into rubber and palm plantations where they are taken to work as casual laborers and after many years they disappear or return sick and traumatized.

Other social activities that enhance movement and to a higher degree of exploitation include:

- Cry dies- Death celebrations where the aunts come and want to carry the young girls to cities and give them to other people as domestic workers while

the aunts negotiate and take the pay. Some are taken with the promise of going to secondary school but they are turned into sales girls and boys on the pretext of settling them after a year or so and living with the employer. Later they are used, dumped and thrown out. The extended family concern is also used as a mechanism while the young vulnerable people are abused and used.

- Adverts- Middle East countries, Kuwait, Dubai, Qatar, and Lebanon advertise through local media. The network is highly technical and well-coordinated as it ranges from family network at grass-root level to international.
- The girls going to the Middle East countries are given the forms at the point of departure at the airport, while informed that they are going to be nurses or teachers; they realize the forms bear the title of 'job for slaves' or domestic workers when it is already too late.

The movement of these young people is highly organized, they travel by road. Use of motorbikes is very fast and well calculated and effective as they can pass in the farms, within villages and in the bush to avoid police control and check points. They also travel by sea and by air. Their movement at the point of departure is highly guarded and controlled.

Those who have been rescued testify that the rate of exploitation is very high as they receive very poor remunerations with poor working conditions and are sexually harassed and exploited: documents seized from them; beaten brutally; denied communication; sold like objects; and accused of stealing and sentenced in order not to settle them.



The following has been our **mosaic** of interventions:

### STRATEGIES OF PREVENTION:

- Sensitization in the school, churches, social gatherings, working with the traditional rulers who are the community opinion leaders and formation of anti-trafficking committees in the communities.
- Encouraging various women group associations to become ambassadors against trafficking through education
- Peaceful demonstrations
- Use of media such as local radio and posters on what trafficking is all about, the dangers and consequences
- Advocating for child protection policies in various institutions and within village communities
- There is more emphasis on behavior change and HIV AIDS as this region is also highly affected by this phenomenon.

### **-ASSISTANCE OF VICTIMS:**

This is a huge challenge as it is a real basic need at the moment. Meanwhile through the collaboration and network with other religious women in Kumbo:

- Some victims are undergoing counseling through the help of some religious women
- Some have been placed back into their former schools.
- Others have been placed into livelihood skills training centres.

*By Sr. Okechi Njoku, MSHR  
VIVAT International South Sudan*

## Indonesia: Good Samaritans

### VIVAT International Indonesia Rescued 276 Palm Oil Workers in West Kalimantan

**A**nother sad story from Indonesia. Paul Rahmat, Executive Director of VIVAT International Indonesia (known as VIVAT Indonesia) reported that 276 migrant workers from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province, Indonesia, were having been abandoned and neglected by a Palm Oil Company that had employed them since September 2015. According to the report, they were living in temporary tents and barracks in Badak Street, Palangkaraya, the capital of Central Kalimantan Province, on the island of Borneo. All of these workers originally came from Belu Regency of Timor Island. They lived in miserable conditions; and their children had no access to schools.

The local communities and religious institutions have taken initiatives to help them. For example, the FLOBAMORA Fellowship—a group of migrants from East Nusa Tenggara Province, along with the local community provided short term support of food and clothing by the locals, in spite of their situation of poverty. The Catholic Church of Palangkaraya Diocese and Department of Labor Force of Central Borneo Province have also taken several steps to rescue these people from their dehumanizing conditions; however, the workers themselves preferred staying in such a situation hoping that PT. Agro Lestari Santoso, the palm oil company operating in Central Borneo which once employed them, would give them a total amount of Rp. 11 billion as a compensation. 142 workers have already have approached Mr. Kardiansa, a local lawyer and former chairman of Labor Union in the Province for justice and legal assistance.

On April 17, 2016, some of the VIVAT members, including SVD and SSps Provincial and Regional leaders and JPIC Coordinators, visited the camp and had a very constructive dialogue with the workers. As a follow-up, VIVAT took some concrete steps: first, they invited FLOBAMORA Fellowship to work on rescuing the workers and their families. Women and children were taken out of the camp/barrack and were provided temporarily sheltered in FLOBAMORA families before sending back to their places of origin in West Timor.



**Migrant workers and their poor temporary barracks.**



**Catholic Church (religious, and lay persons) of Palangkaraya Diocese organize and deliver temporary humanitarian assistance to the workers and their families.**

VIVAT Indonesia, in collaboration with Department of Labor Force of Central Borneo and the Government of East Nusa Tenggara Province facilitated the process of sending back the migrant workers and continues to work with the government to find new jobs in the province, especially for male workers. Finally, VIVAT plans to develop an investigation in the case.

On May 17, 2016, Paul Rahmat wrote, “Our humanitarian mission in Palangkaraya (*West Borneo*) to rescue the palm oil plantation workers is almost done. Some 94 out of 201 people are willing to go back to Timor; the rest will remain and will be supported by Department of Labor Force of Central Borneo to get new jobs in some companies in the province through a legal process. Some of them already received compensation from the company and signed new contracts with PT BUMN and PT BLH.”

Paul Rahmat further wrote that on 25 May 2016, would be the last day for the workers to leave Borneo. After a period of time of mediation, the palm oil company had given some amount of money to each family for transportation: Rp. 1,232,000.00/adult and Rp. 700,000.00/child. Each worker also received Rp. 1,500,000.00 as payment of their delayed wages. This amount is of course far below their expectation. Twelve of them did not receive any compensation because they had abandoned their workplace since September 15, 2015. Therefore, they received a small amount of money from other sources/funding agencies to help support their daily life until they reach home or find new jobs.

At the end, Paul Rahmat wrote, “Humanitarian mission starting from Jalan Badak Palangkaraya



**The workers were evacuated into Church building in Palangkaraya**

three months ago is almost done. The migrant workers now can go home and meet their family members and relatives, while the others can find new jobs.... Thank you to everyone for his/her contribution and support in one way or another to help rescue the lives of our brothers and sisters of migrant workers from East Nusa Tenggara Province.”

*Paul Rahmat, SVD, VIVAT Indonesia  
(Translated by Robert Minsel, SVD)*

## MY PARTICIPATION AT UNPFII 15

I am Sister Nathanael Lee, a member of the Little Servants of the Holy Family which the French missionary priest Pierre Singer, MEP founded the congregation in Seoul, Korea in 1943. We started with only two women, but now have over 450 Sisters serving in seven countries. Since the Incarnation is our spirituality, we are tremendously committed to the marginalized, abandoned and the poor. Education, health, elderly care, social welfare, ecological farm and social justice are most of our apostolates. My diocesan congregation was the first one to open a Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation office last year at the Generalate in Seoul, Korea. I was appointed the JPIC coordinator since then.



My leadership team sent me to USA to intern with the US Province of Missionary of Oblates Mary Immaculate JPIC office for two years. As part of my internship program through VIVAT International, which the OMI are a member, I was given the eye-opening experience of participating in the United Nations event. As a local diocesan women religious, it is rare to be informed about the activities of the United Nations, much less be present. To be frank, we not only lacked any idea of what happens at the UN, but also were unaware of any connections between the UN and religious. In our mindset, our mission should spread the Joy of Gospel and the Kingdom of God through our down-to-earth devotions. While this is true, we also need to take into account the complexities of the contemporary society and the current state of our planet. This new stewardship is neither easy nor simple to grasp.

Discussions at the UN, in which both governments and NGOs participated, raised questions in my own mind. How do I bring the international agendas for the most neglected in this world into my home community?

How do I raise voices for those who are in desperate need? These questions spurred me to refocus on the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues, which I attended from May 9 to 20, at the UN Headquarters, New York. The UNPFII 15 theme was “*Indigenous Peoples: Conflicts, Peace and Resolution.*” The issues of indigenous peoples and the whole mechanism of the United Nations, were both totally new to me. I was not aware that there are “issues” and “rights” for the indigenous peoples. These people who struggle with evacuation, exploitation, massacre, and discrimination all experience violated human dignity. Observing entire sessions across those ten days with them, including side-events, I learned that things must be heard, done and changed.

According to the OMIUSAJPIC resource, more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide should have the rights of health, education, human rights, economic and social development, environment and culture. These are the six mandated areas which should be implemented according to the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As you could realize any particular agenda they bring to the UN reflects the issues they encounter in daily life as well as humanitarian needs they experience. Hence, I witnessed that the international level of discussion may eventually link to local

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 06, 2016**  
VIVAT Board Meeting in Rome

**July 10 - 15, 2016**  
VIVAT International Workshop  
Leuven, Belgium

**July 11 - 20, 2016**  
UN High Level Political Forum  
New York City

**August 8 - 14, 2016**  
World Social Forum  
Montreal, Canada

**September 25 - 27, 2016**  
UN General Assembly  
New York City, 2016

grassroots level and vice versa. Furthermore, the applying of Catholic Social Teaching through the United Nations for Peace and Common Good, can actually work. This is why we Catholic religious organizations collaborate and achieve together. “*We Achieve Together*” is the catch phrase of this forum.

This general reflection from my first participation at the UNPFII 15 shows forth the various layers of approach I would love to learn during my internship. I deeply appreciate the VIVAT International and OMI JPIC team for their mission and for giving me the privilege of participating in this event.

*By Sr. Nathanael Lee,  
Coordinator of LSHF-JPIC and intern  
of OMI JPIC, USA*