Welcome to # 32 of Embrace the World! In this edition you will find news concerning displaced people, development projects, human trafficking, natural disasters and the networking of GS across the globe. Let me know concerning your activities for inclusion in a future edition. Yolanda Sanchez, JP Communications Coordinator.

Solidarity with Victims of “Development - Displacement”

By Sr. Shamindani Fernando
Sri Lanka / Pakistan

On September 6, 2011, a large gathering of displaced groups of people from all over the country gathered in the city of Colombo, at Nagarodaya, to highlight their particular aspect of displacement which is due to the so-called “development” that is taking place in our country. They shared very vehemently the suffering they were facing, with families on the verge of being despoiled of their hope in life, at present and for the future. Some had already been forced to leave their homes, moving into the unknown. “The war is over, so they say, but for us it is constant war and deprivation, exploitation and uncertainty, suffering and agony.”

Those who had been displaced due to the war had their own particular experience of being deprived of their land. And so the story goes on... All this in the name of Mega-Development!!! The Tourist Industry has to be developed, the city has to be beautified, massive constructions and broad highways have to come up!! Therefore, slum-dwellers have to be evicted, the fisher-folk have to give up their areas of fishing to make room for the Tourist Industry, poor farmers are deprived of their cultivation.... all this is bringing untold suffering to the very poor and marginalized people in our country.

Among the large number of participants at this gathering of Solidarity, were several Civil Society Organizations, Human Rights’ Activists, Women’s Groups, Christian Priests, a few Buddhist Monks as well as four Religious Sisters, among who were two Good Shepherd Sisters. The Panel of Moderators included a Buddhist Monk, a Catholic Priest, a Good Shepherd Sister and a Human Rights’ Activist. A wealth of information was shared by the participants and a sense of Solidarity was experienced by everyone present.

After the Solidarity Meeting, a public and peaceful demonstration was held along Baseline road, at which the two Good Shepherd Sisters participated with all the others who had gathered in Solidarity. We truly felt we were privileged to be with the suffering poor in Good Shepherd Solidarity, as Weavers of Compassion and Reconciliation.

Workshop on Safe-Migration and Anti-trafficking in Sri Lanka

By Justice and Peace Committee

Labour migration is an important part in the economy of Sri Lanka, firstly, because it provides employment for nearly 1.5 million of its labor force, and secondly, because it brings
in foreign exchange to the country. A unique character of labor migration in Sri Lanka is that the majority of the migrants are women, but gradually large numbers of men are also migrating to particular countries.

Most of the women who migrate are unskilled domestic workers and come mainly from the rural areas of the country where they have not been exposed to other cultures or languages, not even to English, much less to Arabic which is the language of the Middle-Eastern countries where most of them seek employment. Moreover malpractices by recruitment agencies lead to exploitative and abusive situations for migrant workers. Most of these women who desire to migrate do not understand these difficulties. All they want is to earn money and to live a better quality of life. At home they would never be able to earn this kind money. However, many are the women who have to return to the country, having lost all their money to agents, having been abused and exploited by their employers. This is what led to the ‘Justice and Peace Committee’ of the Sri Lanka/Pakistan Province to initiate study sessions on the gravity of the problem, which affects the dignity of women migrant workers and impacts on the entire family.

The sessions we planned were for the sisters who are involved in this work. The resource persons were from the Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment and from the NGO sector, which deals with this issue at depth. The discussions centered on the help we can give to women who are planning to go abroad, as well as those who returned from abusive experiences of employment abroad. The situation of children, left behind with the family to look after them, is often difficult. Hence as much as working for safe-migration our task also centered on the family left behind.

The other danger is that unscrupulous recruitment agencies would recruit women who eventually are trafficked abroad for prostitution or other nefarious activities. Another serious problem facing Sri Lanka today is internal trafficking. Due to the terrorist war which ended two year ago, the women-headed-households (WHH) are many. Often recruitment agencies would bring young women from the war torn areas etc. to the urban areas to serve as domestic workers, and sell them to brothels and massage parlor where they are sexually exploited.

The Justice & Peace committee felt the urgent need to respond to this issue. Some awareness programs for the Sisters working in the more vulnerable areas, as well as making other Good Shepherd People aware of this problem at grass-root level was discussed and certain decisions as to how to approach it were taken. Realizing that this is a long-term process, the committee with the help of Good Shepherd People, hope to work with commitment in response to the 29th Congregational Chapter directives on Migration.

CSW 56th

Commission on the Status of Women
- NEW YORK -
February 29th – March 9th 2012
“The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges”

More information:
http://www.ngocsw.org/
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/56sess.htm#themes
Development of Rural Women

By Sr Lucy Kanjira - Kenya

KANGETA MICRO-FINANCE GROUP is a project that works for the development of rural women. Currently it has a total of 460 members. Based on the MDGs, the main goal of the group is to Reduce Poverty.

Aims of the Project:
- helping the group members to be financially independent
- Reduce (economic) dependency
- Help in capacity building and boost self confidence
- Challenge gender-based biases: Change attitudes towards women’s development

Challenges
- Natural calamities: Special focus on drought and its effects (hunger/famine, disease, malnutrition, loss of human and livestock lives, joblessness, depression…)
- Extreme poverty
- Illiteracy among women
- Women being the sole bread winners with very limited resources
- Enslaving cultural practices and believes.

Rationale
Empowering Rural women in this locality will improve their economic status and the community at large, reduce environmental destruction, create jobs for the women and later for their children, and reduce crime and overpopulation in urban centers.

Success Story
*Kangeta Micro Finance group* started with women living in situations of extreme poverty who could not afford to send their children to school. Some of their children attend school through sponsorship by Chalice-Canada. Since the sponsorship cannot cater for all the children, others remain without education.

The group is composed of mothers who are single for varied reasons such as: widowed, separated, divorced, abandoned, living with alcoholic men who never support the families…

The sponsorship program has empowered the group members so as to support the rest of the children. Because of the training, the women believe that they can build wealth from their little resources despite the challenges they face. During their monthly meetings they contribute to make savings. The group is further divided into smaller groups making 23 sub-groups of 17-23 people according to areas. All the small groups are registered with the social services, giving security and trust to the members that their resources are safe. The group is only active 5 months but is already realizing small goals. For instance, parents are interested in educating their children and they are confident that they can make it happen. Their activities include raising animals like goats, rabbits or chicken and selling vegetables, fruits and cereals.

One of the women, with disability earning her living as a shoemaker

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**Children empowered to complain about rights violations under new UN protocol**

By Hedwig Joehl – NGO Representative in Geneva

Children will be empowered to complain about violations of their human rights to an international body. The new Protocol (3) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child opens for signature in 2012 and
will enter into force upon ratification by 10 UN Member States.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties. It also monitors implementation of two optional protocols to the Convention, on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Committee exists since 1989. “Children will now be able to join the ranks of other rights-holders who are empowered to bring their complaints about human rights violations before an international body,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. “We see every day examples of a wide range of human rights violations against children – from discrimination to child trafficking to all forms of physical or mental violence. The Optional Protocol was transmitted by the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly last June. “The new Protocol takes into consideration the particular, special needs of children,” Committee Chairperson Jean Zermatten said. “In fulfilling its functions under the Protocol, the Committee will be guided by the principle of the best interests of the child and will bear in mind the rights and views of the child.” The 59th CRC session takes place 16 January – 3 February 2012 with Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Madagascar and Thailand.

Justice Peace issues in the Latin American Meeting on On-going Formation

By Monica Scavuzzo, Nelly Leon, Alicia Rojas

We started the day with Eucharist. We presented our efforts as communities and provinces in the service of the most fragile. We looked at the need for a greater experience of fraternity, acceptance of cultural diversity, service to migrants, awareness-raising on human trafficking, human rights policies and ensuring just salaries.

Sister Marta Iris Lopez began her presentation by introducing us to the theme of Justice and Peace and their relation to the structure of the United Nations. She read the letter of Winifred Doherty which was shared with the provincial leaders at the Real Meeting on July 2011 in Bogota, whose goal...
is to help us understand the vision of Justice and Peace in our consecrated life. "If you want peace, work for justice".
The Mission for Justice is a central principle of Sacred Scriptures and in the heart of the teaching of the Church.
A power point show us very clearly the structure of the United Nations, its objectives, our status as NGO and how it is important to bring our voice on behalf of our peoples. She presented to us the objectives of the International Office of Justice and Peace.
Marta Iris made us realize that the theme of Justice is something that concerns each of us. We need to understand the mechanisms of intervention, as well as some of the main conventions: the Convention related to the protection of the rights of women (CEDAW), Convention on the rights of the children, Convention on the rights of migrants etc.
In the afternoon Marta Iris introduces us to ECLAC, the social and political situation of our countries, and within them, of women. She presented a large graphic on the Mission of the Good Shepherd in Latin America. Finally, she opened a dialogue with questions about the topic.
We are highly motivated to continue to grow in knowledge of the UN mechanisms, our connection with them and the challenge of changing our attitude towards the practice of transformation of social structures.
We closed the day with a prayer, in which we are invited to highlight challenges to justice. ⚋

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**INTERNATIONAL DAYS**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 February</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 March</td>
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<td>22 April</td>
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<td>5 June</td>
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**Second march: "Paraguay free of Violence" in Itaugua**

By JP Commission

On November 25, 2011, the second march "Paraguay free of Violence" was held in Ñanduti, as part of the framework of the international day "No violence against women". It was organized by representatives of the Ministry Our Lady of Guadalupe of the GS sisters. The March was focused on the town of Itaugua, with a closing meeting at the Itauguá Municipality. It was attended by local, departmental and national authorities. The invitation to be part of this event was extended to all social organizations within the city and beyond.
The international day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in the Resolution 50/134 of December 17, 1999. The proposal to celebrate every year on 25 November was made by the Dominican Republic and had the support of 60 countries. The reason that led to the choice of this day was the assassination of three sisters on 25 November 1960 by order of the Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo.
Women’s rights activists are celebrating it since 1981.

**Reality**

One of four of the world’s women has been raped. Female genital mutilation is common in some cultures and many women throughout the world are victims of domestic violence. ⚋

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**News from the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

By Marta Iris Lopez Castillo, NGO Regional Designate - ECLAC

Latin America is a deeply unequal continent where half of the population lives in poverty. Poverty entails a violation of human rights on a large scale. Rights such as access to health, to establish a family and have stability, to
nutrition, to education, to work, to culture itself, to be heard and to participate are violated. Poverty is not an inevitable curse. It is the product of human policies and decisions. (Klitsberg Bernard 2002. Towards an economy with a human face.)

Good Shepherd sisters present in Latin America have served thousands of women and children who suffer the consequences of poverty through our projects and ministries. Gradually we have been doing analysis of our ministries towards leading us towards an understanding of social justice.

However we need to go further. Pope Benedict in the Inaugural speech at the 5th Conference in Aparecida: "Latin American and Caribbean peoples have the right to the full life of the children of God with more humane conditions: free from the threat of hunger and any form of violence… (we have) to build a culture of life".

The challenge is to continue to improve the quality of our apostolic service in the region. Through knowledge we can empower ourselves and empower others. The Regional Plan of the JP Office for Latin America aims to promote training for the sisters and our partners in the region so as to understand how we might be able to use the possibilities for dialogue and participation through the International JP Offices of the Congregation performs in New York, Geneva and Vienna. ✺

Donations were distributed through the parish. Through the Justice Peace Commission the Good Shepherd sisters and other congregations worked in the area accompanying the people, listening to the victims and helping with the distribution of donations. ✺

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**Solidarity in the midst of the Tragedy**

**By Sr. Fabiola Tapasco, JP contact-Colombo**

**Venezolana Unit**

“At 6:00 a.m., I left my home to go to work, when I heard a great noise, I ran out and saw the houses sinking, unable to do anything I started shouting".

This was the testimony of one of the habitants of the Cervantes neighborhood in Manizales City (Colombia).

The rain of the last months has seriously affected Colombia and has left many victims. The Attorney-General announced a preliminary investigation to find if officials have some responsibility for the tragedy in the Cervantes neighborhood, which left 48 people dead, 14 rescued alive and 145 people in 35 families affected. In addition to the pain of having lost families and friends several business owners were left without their source of work.

Many people who were out that night never got home and were left "without family, without Home, with nothing".

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Please distribute to all communities, programs, and Good Shepherd Friends in your Unit.

Thank you.