Participation in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Czech Republic in GENEVA

By Sr. Doris Saliba and Sr. Regina Hanko, JP contact of Austria/Switzerland/ Czech Republic

I would like to highlight the following issue of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing: Security of tenure is a human right. Before this meeting the Special Rapporteur had consultations regarding adequate housing in different countries. These consultations uncovered that forced eviction is the main problem (99.9% of the complaints). In some countries there is no infrastructure, so families especially women and children are suffering lack of shelter and education.

Sister Regina shares: “In this first experience at the UN in Geneva and presentation of the UPR report, I heard reports, requests and recommendations for the Czech Republic, Argentina and the Republic of Korea. This hearing gave me an insight into the human rights situation in the countries. I learned what to do in the future in order to create the legal basis, so that human rights standards will be implemented. The human rights abuses in some countries have made me very upset. I realized, however, how important this UPR is to enforce and implement more and more human rights around the world. There are countless people who live in poverty and suffer and who are not helped. May the efforts of the UPR contribute to alleviating poverty in the world”.

It was also an opportunity to spend time with the sisters in community. Sr. Hedwig took us around to have a look to Geneva and we also had a day out of the city.

We are very grateful for the time that Sr. Hedwig gave us during our visit. We encourage other Good Shepherd Sisters and collaborators to have this live-in experience.

Sr. Doris and Sr. Regina, JP contact of the Province of Austria/Switzerland/ Czech Republic, attended the Session of the UPR (to know more about UPR, go to the following link: [http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/uprmain.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/uprmain.aspx)) for the Czech Republic and the presentation of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.

Sr. Doris tells us: “It was a very good learning and experience to be present and listen to what steps had been taken in the past four years to meet human rights in different spheres, such as:

• Inclusive education for Roma children and Roma integration in Society as a whole
• Trafficking of human beings
• Discrimination
• Sterilization of women without their consent
• The Rights of the Child
• Equal opportunity for women

The report delivered by Mr. Vladimir Galuška, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, was acknowledged and challenged by ambassadors from different States, and recommendations were made by them. To read more: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Highlights22October2012am.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Highlights22October2012am.aspx)
When Cultural Practices Violate the Dignity of Children
A resource for GS people working with children
training information from Clare Nolan

A new report looks at the scope of harmful traditional, cultural and religious practices that violate children’s rights. It provides examples of measures taken to challenge and eliminate them. Recommendations for action by governments, NGOs, and other groups are provided in the final section.

The report is entitled Violating children’s rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition. It was prepared by the International NGO Council on Violence against Children as follow up and monitoring to the UN Secretary General’s Report on Violence against Children. Every GS person working with children should be familiar with this valuable information.

You can access the full report in English: http://www.crin.org/docs/InCo_Report_15Oct.pdf

More information on children’s rights accessible in Spanish, French and Arabic: http://www.crin.org/

CRINMAIL
Child Rights International Network

Red Internacional de los Derechos de los Niños

Réseau International des Droits de l’Enfant

Voir en ligne: http://www.crin.org/francais/index.asp

See online: http://www.crin.org/

Ver en línea: http://www.crin.org/espanol/index.asp
A long and narrow piece of land borders the North of Colombia, the south of Mexico, and is sandwiched between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

This is Central America. Crossed by borders which designate their territories are 6 countries: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and El Salvador. These lands contain many routes which allow contact and communication between diverse peoples but also borders which separate and isolate. What is life like in Central America?

Our people suffered impoverishment as a result of land grabbing and colonization. Issues of discrimination and social injustice continue to be widespread.

While tribal or cultural prejudices cause discrimination, robberies, kidnapping and death, are often the result of conflicts between criminal gangs due to financial interests or blood feuds.

A lot of migrants are prosecuted because they want to go to search a dream –sometimes only in their imagination- most of them travel undocumented and discover only maltreatment and death. Unscrupulous gangs use Central America as a transit route for drug trafficking.

A new level of violence is emerging with youth gangs, calling themselves “maras” who bring terror and anguish because of the terrible cruelty of their attacks.

Our people wants to live in peace, but this peace will not come while children are crying from hunger, or our mothers have to receive the corpses of their sons and daughters, and violence continues to be part of daily life in many homes.

We have to live the words of Jesus the Good Shepherd: *we are all brothers and we must love as he loves us and live as he lived.* O Lord helps us to live the solidarity, forgiveness and love that you came to teach us. Help us to be a presence of your mercy in the midst of these realities.

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**HUMAIN TRAFFICKING WORKSHOP**

*By Sr. Monica Scavuzzo, JP Contact of Argentina/Uruguay*

On October 2013, Good Shepherd sisters and lay associates participated in a 2 day human trafficking workshop. Other religious congregations were also invited to attend.

Mercedes Assorati, a legal advocate facilitated the workshop. She is a member of “The Other” an NGO that is in charge of Program Zero Slavery. She is well informed on the topic and is personally involved with victims of trafficking. She led the workshop in a very professional and dynamic way.

We started by clarifying the concept of human trafficking and its different manifestations. Then we watched some videos with testimonies of victims. We spoke about the State’s role and why trafficking is considered a violation of Human Rights; we heard also about the Palermo Protocol, National Laws and the project of seeking the modification of these. We looked at the NGO’s role and the rights of the victims. She taught us how to present a claim and to identify the victims.

*This interesting and illuminating workshop challenged us to use our charism, to search for new ways of involvement with the victims of this terrible scourge that is increasing day by day. We pray Jesus the Good Shepherd will guide us in our commitment.*
The ministry with the group of children HIMAE (Hijos de Madres Encarceladas – Child of Incarcerated Mothers) started after a call from Sr. Margaret Lynch during the JP meeting in Bogota 2011. This call was reinforced when a GS Sister of the Community in Cucuta (Colombia) had the opportunity to be in contact with women in prison. She heard their need for holistic support to be offered to their children, who were living in situations where they were at risk to falling victim to child prostitution, manipulation by drugs dealers etc.

It was not easy to take a risk and response to this need because it was something new. It would have been easier to continue doing what we were doing rather than looking to express the charism in a new way.

Slowly, but with faith and hope we took the first steps to start this new ministry with a small group of children, mostly girls. The only criterion to belong to this group is to have a mother in prison. Currently we accompany 14 girls and 5 boys whose sisters also belong to the group.

The aim is to accompany them and help them to go beyond of the trauma and conflict caused by the separation from their mothers. Three months ago we had a meeting of reflection on the Word of the God. We emphasized God’s mercy, caring for them as a father cares for his child, with love. We talk clearly about topics such the risk of prostitution and human trafficking. We do awareness raising and prevention work.

During meetings tutors, most of them grand-mothers are present. The program is awakening interest and volunteers are coming to help, some of whom provide food for 8 families each month. They also collaborate when we have some celebrations like the Day of the Girl, Christmas, etc. We hope to enhance the Benefactors Plan for each family and provide sponsorship for each child to cover their school expenses.

In December with our volunteer’s collaboration, we celebrated Christmas with children of the HIMAE program in our local community. The celebration helped the children forget their sorrows and enjoy Christmas with songs, gifts, food and recreation.

However in their faces shining of joy we could still see a deeper sadness because of the absence of their mothers. After two hours of gathering and sharing they went back home bringing a memory, storing it away to share their mother on the next prison visit.
This year there is much awareness about the upcoming Commission on the Status of Women and its theme “The Elimination of Forms of Violence against Women and Girls”. What form of you violence do you think of when you think of violence against women and girls? What form of violence is most prevalent in your community? You have been reflecting on this since July 2012 when the online discussion took place on the UN women website. Some of you contributed to that discussion through the GSJP Office. Sutisa Utalun, the Regional Representative in Asia Pacific attended the Expert Group Meeting on behalf of us all. Then we had our own survey of services. 51 Justice Peace contacts were sent a questionnaire – 27 responded from 24 countries.

The results are being printed as a booklet (coming soon) and posted on the website and my blog. It will be distributed during the Commission. Thank you to all who participated. Representatives from Taiwan, Ethiopia and New York are coming to present on a panel entitled ‘Stop Violence against Women and Children. Good Shepherd partners with shelters, counseling, education, skills training and economic justice projects helping victims become survivors.’ We pay tribute to Sr. Therese Thong (Taiwan) for all she did to make this event a reality. See how she inserted awareness of the Social Protection Floor! It is collaboration par excellence. Our statement (no 138) to the Commission echoes the results of the survey and has been published. See on the blog for the link.

The violence of human trafficking is high on our list of priorities. A number of committees prepared joint statements in which I collaborated. They are statements that are well worth reading … see how they compare with our position paper. The lead writer for the first is the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW). It is Statement No 104 and available in the 6 languages of the UN. Another by the NGO Committee to Stop trafficking in Persons is Statement No 14 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/documentation.htm Good Shepherd are co-sponsoring a panel event with CATW ‘Survivors Speak: Prostitution and Sex Trafficking.’ The panelists are coming from Breaking Free, Survivors Connect Network, SPACE International and Sex Trade 101.

Violence against girls – multiple, complete, culturally determined, hidden, e.g. female foeticide, infanticide, malnutrition and neglect, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage, honour killings commercial sexual exploitation, pornography, rape, physical, emotional and psychological abuse … so much needs to be done to build a culture of non-violence and zero tolerance for violence against girls. The Working Group on Girls is holding a girls’ tribunal during CSW 57. Read more about it on the Working Group on Girls website www.girlsrights.org

Many organizations are bringing girls so that they can participate in CSW 57. Michelle Bachelet, head of UN Women will address them during the teen orientation to be held on Sunday March 3, 2013. Do you ever dream of having some of the girls in your programmes participate? I do!
Tribute to Marie Guessou – with whom many of you were communicating over the past year

By Winifred Doherty

Marie Guessou, a Master’s programme student of St John’s University College interned at the GSUP Office for 2012. I wish to pay tribute to her and the quality of her work over the past year. She performed many essential tasks at the office – responding to emails, sending out Christmas mail and analyzing responses to questionnaires. Her analysis and compilation of the survey results ‘Ending Violence Against Girls and Women is an indicator of her accomplishments. Marie hopes to finish her Masters during this current year. She is presently visiting her family in Cameroon. Thank you Marie and we wish you every success as you complete your Masters. A new intern is beginning Kimberly Moloche, from Peru.

OTHER NEWS!

Hop On The Migrant Bus! - Malaysia
In conjunction with International Migrants Day 2012, St Ignatius Church (SIC) played host to migrants in the Petaling district on 8 and 9 Dec 2012. The event was jointly organised by the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) and Pusat Kebajikan Good Shepherd (PKGS). Read full article: Hop on the Migrant Bus! (Only in English)

Enlarge our tent : Clinic Saint Antoine – By Georgette Tannoury, Regional Designate- Lebanon
From the beginning, our mission in the suburbs of Beirut is a response to emergencies of people who call for help. Read full article: Enlarge our tent (Only in French)

Integrating justice and peace in the mission - By Centre AMAR - Peru

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