Responding to the call to speak for the most vulnerable in society, in Cartagena city (Colombia), the Sisters of the Good Shepherd participated last July 2013 in a social mobilization against sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and sex tourism of children and adolescents in this city.

Cartagena, Colombia, a tourist town, is noted for its historical places full of memorable events and natural beauty that enchants the tourists within the country and the greater world. However in contrast, we see the other face of Cartagena, reflecting the proliferation of prostitution and sexual abuse.

This demonstration was organized by the city hall, the Foundation Plan and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare and was supported by such institutions as: the Committee interagency Advisory for the prevention of the Sexual violence of Dadis; the Corporación Turismo Cartagena de Indias; Archdiocese of Cartagena; metropolitan police; Fundación Tierra Hombres; Protect Foundation; Fundación Renacer; Office of the first lady of Cartagena Governorate of Bolivar; Secretary of the Interior of the district and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, as well as other organizations.

The goal of this public demonstration was advocate for women and many children to prevent them being victimized, and for society, as a whole, to stop its complicity – through silence and indifference with these abuses that affect the integrity and rights of many people.

Also participated in this social mobilization children and adolescents helped by Funsarep, and the collective child "Abriendo Caminos", in partnership with the national campaign: "Violence against women doesn't make you a champion".

Under this slogan, a fair was organized providing information and awareness about the issue of violence against women and we were able to recruit some men who wore shirts bearing the slogan “love does not hurt”. This fair occurred on 16 August, organized by Corea network - Calama Hospital, and included the participation of officials such as: Sub Mayor Pascual Calderon of District No. 3 as well as doctor Chávez, who is very committed and sensitive to the issue of domestic violence, and who supported us by issuing full medical certificates to be presented in the legal processes of domestic violence, according to the law 1674. Also involved to this activity were the institutions that compose the Network of Domestic Violence in the city of El Alto, the Bolivian police with the demonstration of canine skills, and local educational units who shared their skills through dance and poetry. (Source: Bulletin Encuentro of September 2013-Bolivia/Chile)
For 8 years we have been on the Diocesan Human Mobility Commission. Our main task was to raise the consciousness of the Palenque region to the need for a group of lay people committed to the care of migrants. For two years, we had been engaged in this work, occasionally providing food, water or making visits to the region.

The diocese began study of this matter. Two years later a group was formed consisting of a religious woman and some lay people whose focus was the humane care of the migrant. We obtained a small house where we distribute food and last September, we added a dining room with the assistance of the Sisters of Charity of San Vincent of Paul.

We joined the Committee already formed in Palenque through training given to a group of lay people to assist the families of migrants. We formed a Committee composed of 4 people who help with humanitarian aid. Presently, two are preparing a campaign to prevent the trafficking of women and girls. When possible, we share accommodations, and food with the migrants who are passing through, as well as food, water and home-made serum with aspirin to those who are on route hoping to reach Palenque. Some times, we have transported many of them despite the risk we take in doing so.

We are not focused on defending cases. Distance and time as well as personal resources are limiting factors. We know the high degree of danger existing in the region, and we recognize the efforts of committed laity and existing networks.

The Sisters in León Guanajuato conduct a bazaar and share some of their profits with us, part of this money is allocated to the training of laity and the preparation of serum.

We have a small income for the defense of case. Presently, we are defending two child victims of trafficking who are receiving support in the search for legal advice.

As Good Shepherd, we participate in these activities and assist migrants. We listen to them and guide them in their goal to reach the northern border. They continue their journey and we do not know if any of them, whom we helped have fallen victims to organized crime.

Perhaps many have died, others have reached their destination or immigration has stopped them. We do not know. The only thing that we do know with certainty, is that their way of the cross is long and painful, and that our contribution is small yet highly significant at that time. It shines like a light in darkness. We are a sign of solidarity and hope in their journey through the Southern Mexican border.

New GS Ministry emphasizes Advocacy

By Sr. Clare Nolan, Training Facilitator GSJPO

Social analysis, including research and extensive interviewing, has laid the foundation for GS services in the Kolwezi mining area, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Right from the start, this has led to shaping the local mission and activities. The very definition of the work is twofold: “centered on service provision and advocacy.”

Our Congregational directives, over the past several decades, have guided us. In July 2013 the first fruits of the Good Shepherd DR Congo commitment were realized with the submission of a CEDAW report, using UN human rights structures and the support of GS JP Office in Geneva.

While the report describes the various direct service activities that are geared to ending gender discrimination and violence against women and girls, it focuses more importantly on the social and legislative structures that perpetuate violence and discrimination. The absence of land rights for women, the functions of dowry payments serving to buy and sell daughters, economic dependence forcing women to tolerate and avoid reporting domestic spousal violence are some major issues raised. Strong recommendations were made relevant to the government’s responsibility to ensure human rights and amend legislation that is discriminatory. Congratulations to this new ministry for an integrated model of mission delivery.
Getting my little 10-year-old sister, Kacey Moloche ready for the United Nations to attend the Day of the Girl Speak Out was an amazing experience from beginning to end. The Speak Out gave these girls the opportunity to share with governments and UN agencies how they are creating change in their communities and to discuss how the international community can support girls’ efforts. These girls are simply amazing role models.

As soon as we got to the United Nations gates, we were asked by one of the event coordinators to translate the Girl Speak Out from English to Spanish. Not only was this Kacey’s first time at the United Nations but it was also the first time for both of us to be in a translating booth. We were filled with excitement at being able to participate behind the scenes at the Speak Out, but also very nervous as we wanted to do a good job. Kacey was thrilled to be the only girl up in the translating booths and prepared well for her task. Before we went up to the booth we met the girl activists who were very nice and of course very outgoing. As the event was starting, the United Nations ECOSOC Chamber was filling up with different girls, as we watched from above. Kacey’s face lit up with excitement on seeing how many girls want to make a change. While we were translating the event into Spanish a few times we found ourselves speaking with the same tone as the girl activists and even found ourselves emotional at times as we came to understand the passion, the accomplishments and the challenges that these young activists have faced.

Throughout the event Kacey constantly asked, “How could I be one of them next year?” At the end of the event we rushed downstairs to speak with the girl panelists and the UN officials. We got a chance to speak with the Peruvian Ambassador and he encouraged Kacey to be one of the girl panelists next year. Kacey was delighted to hear him say that and was proud to be a part of this movement. We finally caught up with GSJPO Main Representative to the UN, Winifred Doherty and she said to Kacey,” Maybe next year we’ll see you up there.” As soon as we left the UN, Kacey started thinking of ways to be the next girl activist, which proves that this event, along with the International Day of the Girl serves to motivate and encourage girls to make a difference. These girls are our future and with their guidance our future looks bright.

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**Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda**

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education – have been a milestone in global and national development efforts. The framework has helped to galvanize development efforts and guide global and national development priorities. While three of the eight goals have been achieved prior to the final deadline of 2015 progress has been uneven within and across countries. Thus further efforts and a strong global partnership for development are needed to accelerate progress and reach the goals by 2015. Read more: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml
A parent may have the right to convert to another religion. However, it does not give him or her the right to convert the underage child without the consent of the other spouse, as this is against international convention.

High Court judge Lee Swee Seng in saying this cited the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw).

Lee said Article 18 of the CRC state parties (nations) shall ensure that both parents have common responsibilities in the upbringing and development of their children.

In his judgment, Lee also found that since the children did not recite the dua kalimah syahadah (the affirmation of faith) their conversion is deemed null and void.

The judge said this in his written judgment in his landmark decision on the M Indira Gandhi case on July 25 where the court declared the three children's conversion to Islam as null and void and unconstitutional.

A copy of the 79-page written judgment is available in loyarburok.com

Lee also cited Article 30 of the CRC which states that ethnic, religions or language minorities should not be denied the right in the community to enjoy their culture or profess any religion or the use of their own language.

The judge also cited Article 16(1) and 5 of Cedaw in which Malaysia is also a signatory, stating that signatories are to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters related to marriage and family relations and both parents should have the rights and responsibilities in the upbringing their children.

He further cited the case of pregnant teacher, Noorfadila Ahmad Salikin, in which the Shah Alam High Court made headlines two years ago, saying that since Malaysia has signed Cedaw, the country has the legal obligation to put into effect the rights set out for women here.

The judge also noted that Cedaw is not merely a declaration, but has the force of law that binds member states including Malaysia.

Hence, making the decision, he said, the court had to interpret Articles 5, 8 and 12 of the Federal constitution according to the international norms.

“Where there are two possible interpretations of the word ‘parent’ under Article 12(4) the interpretation that best promotes our commitment to international norms and enhances basic human rights and dignity is to be preferred,” he said, in rejecting an earlier Federal Court decision in the R Subashini case.

Tolerance and respect in religion

In the Indira Gandhi case her two daughters and son had allegedly been converted to Islam by the father following the certificates issued by the Perak religious authorities.

The youngest daughter, Prasana Diksa, was taken by the father K Pathmanathan @ Muhammad Riduan Abdullah when she was 11 months old, and Indira has not seen her daughter since, despite an earlier court order asking the father to return her.

In overturning the conversion of the children, Lee reminded that this is not a victory but a continuing struggle for all citizens to find equilibrium in a country with diverse ethnicities, pursuing peace in a less than homogenous society and giving space to one another where religious sensitivities are concerned.

He urged the people to be tolerant and to respect their neighbours in pursuit of truth and reality.

“Let god be god and let him work sovereignly in the lives of our children. Let our children be our children, and the adults they soon will become in the fullness of time.

“Let them take responsibility for their actions in seeking and finding him, though as poets say, he is not far from each one of us.

“Love, peace and harmony should reign supreme in our hearts and in our homes knowing that our differences need not divide us and that in seeking the divine, we must also seek to understand our neighbours better, confident of the fact that there is no compulsion in religion.

“Whatever faith we belong, we shall always have the highest regard for one another and desire the greatest good,” he said in ending the judgment.

And while Indira Gandhi's lawyer M Kulasegaran has urged the authorities not to appeal the verdict, Pathmanathan's lawyer has already indicated they will file one.
In 1905, Cathedral High School was founded by the Sisters of Charity to educate young women of all faiths and cultures. During that time in history, young women were not given the opportunity of such learning which would open up doors and enrich them as a human person.

On October 11, 2013, the girls of Cathedral High School in Manhattan celebrated the Day of the Girl. Sr. Eileen RGS spoke to the seniors and juniors in their classes about the International Day of the Girl and showed the Video by Jason Silva on the power of educating girls. It starts with the quote of Herman Melville “We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.”, and develops the theme that if you educate a girl, you transform a village.

The classes continued with an open discussion on the topic of educating girls and their dignity and right to be recognized as a human person and not as an object. In the main lobby, balloons and the “Day of the Girl” posters were displayed showing pictures of women and girls who made a difference in society.

This is the second year Cathedral has celebrated “The Day of the Girl”. Last year, Sr. Yolanda Sanchez RGS, from the GSJPO gave a talk to Cathedral students on the importance of educating girls. We want to thank Sr. Winifred and Sr. Yolanda for keeping us informed on issues which affect us and society. Because of such information, the girls of Cathedral High School have the opportunity to become better members of society.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is a position that was established 20 years ago, in 1993. Part of the celebration is an announcement of “20 Achievements in 20 Years” that cites recent achievements in human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) dates to 1947, but the office of the High Commissioner guides HRs into the dynamic relevance of issues in our day.

Here are a few achievements of the past 20 years that have special meaning to our mission and ministries:

- Explicit international legal protections have expanded to cover, among others, children and women.
- Victims of trafficking are entitled to the full range of human rights’ protections and are no longer seen to be criminals.
- Women’s rights are acknowledged as fundamental human rights. Discrimination and acts of violence against women are central in human rights discussion.
- There is an international framework that recognizes the challenges for migrants and their families; it guarantees rights for migrants, including undocumented migrants.
- Issues of indigenous peoples and minorities are increasingly being identified and addressed.
- Governments recognize the important role of civil society (NGOs) in promotion and protection, identifying problems, proposing solutions, advocating for standards in public policy, giving voice to the powerless, building worldwide awareness, and helping to build sustainable change for the good of grassroots communities.

You can find all twenty here: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/OHCHR20/Pages/20AnniversaryOHCHR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/OHCHR20/Pages/20AnniversaryOHCHR.aspx)
Editor's Note:

“Embrace the World” can be published, thanks to each of your contributions with articles, stories and other news concerning justice peace issues in the world-wide Good Shepherd Congregation. We continue to count on you for the next editions of the journal. Share with us your activities, news and events in your Units and countries. I take the opportunity to say thanks to all who were helping with translations and proof reading and especially to those who sent articles for this edition of October 2013.

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

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Presse release: Malala wins International Children’s Peace Price 2013-


“We commit ourselves to work zealously with women and children, especially those who are trafficked, forced to migrate or oppressed by abject poverty”

http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp-en