

Networking in Rome

While in Rome for the General Chapter of the Marist Sisters, Noelene Simmons sm, NSW ACRATH Project Officer, had a wonderful opportunity to meet with some key people who are working against human trafficking. This is her report.

Firstly I met with the newly appointed director of Talitha Kum, Sr. Gabriella Bottani SMC, and with Sr Marie Lemert SSCC who is part of the Talitha Kum staff. Talitha Kum is the International Network of consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons. Srs Gabriella, Marie and I discussed the process that is currently being undertaken to review the work of Talitha Kum so that it can move forward as an International Network supporting the work of so many religious and laity who are working to address human trafficking, and to restore hope and dignity for those who have been trafficked.

I am grateful to John McCarthy, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, who arranged a meeting with Sr Eugenia Bonetti, and also with Archbishop Moxon and Antonia Stamalija from the Global Freedom Network. Sr Eugenia Bonetti, President of Slaves No More, spoke to me of the Assisted Repatriation Programme for Nigerian Women who have been trafficked into Italy. She also mentioned the regular Saturday afternoon visits by women religious to the Centre for Identification and Expulsion. Here they try to be a comforting presence for the women who are in the Centre because they have no legal documentation. It has been taken from them by their traffickers. If they renounce their traffickers the women can be released and are then housed in convents-come-shelters, while they begin a programme of social reintegration.



(L-R) Noelene Simmons sm, John McCarthy and Eugenia Bonetti mc



Archbishop Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative on the Global Freedom Network and Antonia Stampalija, CEO of the Global Freedom Network both very keen to hear about the work of ACRATH in Australia. They explained that the Global Freedom Network is a multi-faith anti-slavery organisation committed to working in collaboration with other organisations and people of good will.

(L-R) Noelene Simmons sm, Antonia Stampalija and Archbishop Moxon

My final meeting was with Sr Carmen Zammut, President of UISG (Union of International Superiors General). I shared with her that religious in Australia had been inspired by the strong commitment to anti-trafficking work in the 2001 and 2004 UISG Assembly statements. Carmen told me of an education project in Kenya, where young girls are informed about human trafficking and given cards with a phone number they can use, if they are in danger. Those who phone are given support and when they are ready, there is mediation with the girls and their families. This is a preventative measure, so that the need for girls to report their families to the authorities is avoided.

I am very grateful to all who took the time to meet with me. It was a truly enriching experience and has deepened my commitment to work against human trafficking.

Noelene Simmons sm

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Right:
 Logos for 3 forms of certification of ethical sourcing of raw materials (chocolate, coffee, tea etc)



Easter Campaign Report

Six years go, Fairtrade and 'slavery-free' chocolate was almost unheard of, however this year's Slavery-free Easter Chocolate Campaign has proved that people are much more aware of the issue. According to Stop the Traffik, global chocolate manufacturers are increasingly feeling under pressure to comply with ethical standards, due to the demands for certified chocolate in Australia.

This year the campaign had various successes including:

- The weekly Easter notices that were distributed each week prior to Easter were displayed in a number of school newsletters, parish and church bulletins and newsletters across Australia (Approx. 35+ bulletins, newsletters etc...that we are aware of) as well as a number of websites with considerable reach (see visual report on page 3). The ACRATH Easter chocolate message was also discovered in Mx News, the Tablet and Kairos, who spread the message about buying certified Easter eggs.
- In South Australia, Meredith Evans and a group of students urged their local supermarkets to increase their certified Easter chocolate stock for Easter 2016. They managed to visit 18+ supermarkets in the Adelaide region, as well as Kmart and Target. In the next few weeks, Meredith and Samita Rai plan to target Foodland (independently owned South Australian supermarket). Meredith said that the supermarket did not stock any certified Easter eggs. The South Australian group are also planning to start visiting chocolate dessert cafes in Adelaide such as Bracegirdles, Chocolat, San Churros, and Chocolate Tree.
- In the ACT, Genny Ryan gave 19 presentations to schools and parishes. She received very positive responses. At one particular school Genny spoke to year four, five and six students. She heard a few days later from parents that their children had come home and said "we can't eat the Easter eggs we have bought, because they are not Fairtrade. We have to take them back to the shop and change them."
- In Middle Brighton, Victoria, a Sister emailed the ACRATH Office and explained that the "local Woolworths sold out of Fairtrade eggs and Easter chocolate by Easter Saturday. The floor manager couldn't believe they all sold out so early!"
- In QLD, Janine Bliss spoke to a number of schools and community groups in Gladstone, McKay, Bundaberg and Rockhampton who promoted the campaign within their school communities.

This is just a small snapshot of the successes we had this year, particularly at raising awareness of the issue with the wider community, within schools and with retailers.

Right now, it is crucial that we keep the pressure on supermarkets, as they will make their Easter 2016 orders before the end of June! So please talk with your local supermarket manager and keep spreading the word about slavery-free chocolate and remember to always look for the Fairtrade, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance logos when you're shopping.

Indeed, there is still a long way to go and sometimes it may feel like our voices aren't being heard (because Coles and Woolworths still don't have enough slavery-free chocolate on the shelves). However we can all collectively make a difference and I think this campaign does show at least how far we have come since ACRATH started campaigning on this issue.

Madelaine Curnow

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From ACRATH Victoria

The picture to the left shows a presentation in the foyer of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne reminding people about Fairtrade Chocolate. It was put there by Kathryn Bowden who is the Resource writer for Religious Education and Theology and very interested in ACRATH.

Pope Francis has urged the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences to continue the work of eradicating human trafficking which "constitutes a regression of humanity."

18 April 2015



Sparrow Bowden is holding an award given by the Principal of her school because of her Social Activism. Sparrow who is in Grade 1 has been handwriting Easter cards for her friends and teachers telling them about the Slave-trade involved in making Chocolate. She suggested to them that they should buy Fair Trade Easter Eggs. This is a big effort for a Grade 1 student, who learnt about it from her teacher mother.

From ACRATH Western Australia

On Thursday 30 April Lucy van Kessel spoke to the 'Young Pressies' group of students at Iona Presentation College.

The students (45) and teachers were particularly interested in issues to do with forced marriage and its occurrence in Australia.

They were also keen to learn more about fair trade clothing and how to help others.



A donation was made to ACRATH from work done in promoting Fairtrade Easter eggs.



From ACRATH South Australia

The photo is of Anne Tormey rsm, Mrs Kathy Sampson, from UNESCO South Australia, and Mary Mercer rsj.

Mrs Sampson presented ACRATH with the \$4,000 cheque raised by UNESCO South Australia at the Adelaide film afternoon held recently in aid of ACRATH.

Easter Campaign visual report



Current Issues for ACRATH Advocacy

In late June ACRATH will be represented in Canberra at a National Roundtable on Human Trafficking & Slavery. We have been working on a number of advocacy issues and will promote them at the Roundtable. We are asking for 'more just' visas for people trafficked into Australia. We have been collaborating with other NGOs to explore how people are initially offered support when there is a suspicion they have been trafficked. We are also promoting a national scheme for compensation.

In early June ACRATH will also be represented at a National Roundtable Working Group on Supply Chains. We have been campaigning for over 6 years to ensure that the cocoa for our chocolate has a slavery-free supply chain. We have had considerable success with this. We are turning our minds to ensuring supply that chains for all goods vulnerable to human trafficking are slavery-free, especially clothing, seafood, pavers, and of course, chocolate. Any ideas? Email me eo@acrath.org.au

Forced Marriage Project

ACRATH has been funded by the Attorney General's Department (AGD) to work with some pilot schools to trial some teaching materials on forced marriage. The pilot schools will be in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. If you know of anyone willing to pilot our short unit of work, ask them to contact our Forced Marriage Project worker, Elizabeth Payne by email lizzieap.ep@gmail.com

Liz has thrown herself energetically into the task of engaging schools and has created a unit of study called 'Marriage and Choices'. Because ACRATH is new to this work and because of the cultural sensitivities, we would really appreciate it that ACRATH members await some training from Liz, before speaking out on forced marriage in presentations etc.

Some ACRATH regional group members have attended the recent round of AGD workshops on forced marriage. This is great for our organisation as we build confidence and competence in working in this space.

Introducing Elizabeth Payne (Liz)

Liz was appointed to the position of Forced Marriage Project Worker at the start of April, 2015.

She comes to the role with a background in education - both primary and secondary teaching in the Catholic and Government sectors in Victoria, as a Curriculum Consultant and as a school principal.

Liz retired from full-time employment in schools in 2013 and has enjoyed more time at home in Trentham, Victoria, where she has lived with her husband Greg for nearly thirty years.



Liz Payne

We acknowledge the funds received under a grant from the Australian Government. ACRATH also needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead.

Contact Christine at the National Office.

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