



UPDATE

April 2013

OUR SIDE EVENT AT CSW57



International politics got in the way; our two Kenyan women were denied a visa (or had one taken away, literally at the last minute). So, as Radoslaw Malinowski (the administrator of our project in Kenya) said, “a Polish male had to represent two Kenyan women.” But he did a fine job. And Maryknoll Sister Bibiana, who had

worked in other anti-trafficking projects in Africa, filled in. “Radek” made the most of his week at the UN, networking with other groups and making useful contacts. Pictured are Radek and S.Bibiana MM.



BOARD PLANNING PROCESS

With the help of facilitators Rosalie McDermott and Mary Anne O’Hara (pictured on the next page), the UNANIMA board discussed these and other points at its spring meeting in March:

- What kind of directory would be useful for UI members?
- What did the survey tell us? (this will be shared in the May *Update*)
- Quality of connection/communication among UI members
- Listening to new voices of people involved in UI’s mission, and developing relationships
- Design and content of an effective website
- How to enrich and be enriched by the Internship program
- The UI mission, and response to urgent issues

In addition to many practical suggestions and priorities in those areas for UI staff, the board decided to look at the UI mission through a new “lens”—NOT to change the mission or its component parts, but to reflect on it through a different perspective. After Rio+20, the UN has been preoccupied with the “post 2015



development agenda” (i.e. what happens to the Millennium Development Goals after 2015?). World attention has been focused on the creation of Sustainable Development Goals. UN member states are making commitments to maintain the integrity of the world and its resources, and talking about the issue of “sustainable consumption.” Conscious of these facts, and the vulnerability of migrants fleeing effects of climate change; the continued need of women and children to gain access to resources like

food and water; and the exemplary work of our Canadian UNANIMA “Sustainability Study Group,” the board crafted the response below. We will be examining this statement and its implications for us...

“The reality of climate change and its devastating effects heightens our need to reexamine its impact on the vulnerable. Our mission impels us to respond to Rio+20's call for sustainable development and engage the grassroots with the UN to work on the global crisis that threatens the quality of life for all.”

THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

...was a cry for **the end of all forms of violence against women and girls**. Founded on 21 June 1946, this Commission (about as old as the UN itself) is dedicated to ensuring women’s equality and promoting their rights. Yet after all these years

- there are still governments that refuse to acknowledge gross violations of women’s rights.
- 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime
- As many as **1 in 4 women** experience physical or sexual violence during pregnancy
- Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides married before the age of 18
- More than 100 million girls are “missing” due to prenatal sex selection
- Worldwide, up to 50% of sexual assaults involve girls **under the age of 16**
- Women and girls make up 80% of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked yearly, with 79% of those for sexual gratification
- 100 to 140 million girls and women in the world have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting
- Up to **7 in 10** women in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime

*Statistics from UN Women publication *A Promise is a Promise*.

At the two-week meeting, women from all over the world gave presentations celebrating marvelous examples of women empowering women to develop their potential and assume the place all too often denied them by males (in the name of culture and tradition). We heard encouraging stories of how NGOs reach out in support of women and girls. We saw that where women and men participate equally in decision making processes that enable and empower both sexes, giant steps in economic progress are made. There were panels of men, concerned with failure of governments to ratify and/or implement the human rights documents of the U.N. These men spoke of the necessity of working with youth to change the mind-set of men and boys that readily accepts the idea of male superiority and condones violence against women and girls.

All felt the urgency to produce a strong document. And, after an afternoon of tense waiting, with the stirring intervention of Michelle Bachelet, Head of UN Women, and a courageous stand by the female delegate from Egypt who openly opposed the formal stand of her government, the outcome document of CSW-57 was agreed upon by all states except Libya.

The document states among other things that “The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls. It recognizes their different forms and manifestations, and recognizes that domestic violence remains the most prevalent form that affects women of all social strata across the world. It also notes that women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination are exposed to increased risk of violence.” (To see the complete outcome document, go to the CSW57 website --click on “Agreed Conclusions”-- or www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm) Now the world, especially the women of the world, await its implementation by world governments.

–by Mariam Norick (RJM)

REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

“Following the proceedings of the sessions, hopping from one side event to another, and coming together and sharing views, ideas, learning and insights was indeed an undertaking! This year’s theme; *“Promoting Empowerment of People to Achieve the Goals of Social Development”* is at the heart of the Salvatorian Sisters’ mission, and I thought of all of them.

Growing up in the Philippines, I quickly learned that there is nothing natural or pre-ordained about poverty, be it material or non-material poverty. In my country politics often colludes with multinational businesses; landless farmers are among the hungriest; indigenous peoples--dispossessed of their mineral-rich ancestral territories by “development projects”--are forced to take on dirty, demeaning and dangerous jobs in the cities; abused women and children are stripped of their dignity and not given justice due to the weak laws of the country.

Empowering people, building their capacity, placing them at the starting point of every development effort, and creating an enabling environment will result in renewed trust and collaboration. They say that for the impoverished, the most important needs are opportunities, but how can we bridge the gap between the marginalized groups of people and the resourceful groups of society? Empowerment is the key. Most of all, governments need to develop policies that equip people with the good health, education, skills and social protection they need to participate effectively in development and obtain decent jobs.

I have a strong conviction that no security, peace, or development is possible as long as people remain slaves of material and non-material poverty and injustice. Empowerment of the people should be a passion for every human being on earth; it pays off. Spirituality is abundant and robust when we can pray as well as mobilize resources to empower the people.” --Eloisa Holdiem SDS

GHANA PROJECT



It's getting exciting—the number of countries that will be represented at the anti-trafficking workshop (April 25-26 in Tamale, Ghana) is increasing, and S. Cecilia Nya SHCJ --she's the one with the whole world in her hands--is busy helping participants with visas and transportation. Several communities have given extra support (see *March Update* and below) and there are others who have indicated they will. Michele has her shots and her African outfit ready for the event, and is anxious to meet UNANIMA members from many countries...

NOT TOO EARLY

To think about **Internships!** Since the decision to make an internship often involves planning ahead because of ministry decisions (and visa applications), we are accepting applications now for Fall 2013, and for both the Spring and Fall 2014 internship slots. Please see the new application date review guidelines (attached at the end of this *Update*). Are you tempted but hesitant? You don't have to be Super Woman to do this...ordinary people qualify! E-mail Michele at morek.michele@gmail.com or call 212 370 0075. Or we can Skype...

COMMUNITY NEWS

- **RJMs in Syria** write: As you well know, the situation in the country is extremely dangerous. There seems to be little hope of an end to the violence and there is great suffering on the part of ordinary families, many of whom are innocent victims of a conflict they do not want. There are two RJM houses in the country: one in Damascus and one in Aleppo. The

winter in Syria is the worst for over 20 years and the people are in desperate need of many basic things. Please pray for them since the sanctions imposed on Syria by most of the world have meant that no aid money can enter the country directly.

- The **MSC (Cabrini Sisters)** Stella Maris Province has an Action and Advocacy Coalition that focuses on immigration and trafficking. They had a training course in trafficking issues presented by Covenant House in New York City and participated in a lobbying event at the state capital. They are helping *Truckers Against Trafficking* circulate an anti-trafficking training video, by contacting trucking firms in areas they serve, requesting that they show the video and circulate pocket size cards with a hotline number to all their employees.
- Sister Stella Storch, who served on the UNANIMA Board for six years and is the Justice, Peace, Ecology Minister for the **Sisters of St. Agnes**, has announced that she will retire by June, 2013. Sister Stella has spread the message of trafficking throughout Wisconsin towns and church communities, all the way to the Bishop's office! She kept up an active Listserv / e-mail ministry on peace and justice issues, promoting letter writing and other legislative interventions.
- Thanks to the **Brigidines** and the African *and* European provinces of the **Holy Child** sisters, for a special contribution to the Ghana project!

NEW FACES AT THE BOARD



Seated second from the left, front row, is new board member Mary Jean Audette SUSC, who is replacing Denise O'Brien. On the far right, second row, is Annette Noele SP, who was serving as temporary replacement for Maria-Antonieta Trimpay (today we learned that the new member of the board and

leadership liaison for the Sisters of Providence will be Mary Kaye Nealen)! You have met all the rest in previous issues....you can tell by looking at those happy faces that they are a wonderful group.

OUT OF TIME

We'll tell you about the results of the Survey next time! You have had enough....Happy Spring, Happy Easter!