

SND - NGO UNITED NATIONS Update

JUNE, 2014

Girls Respond with their experience of the MDGs



In the last newsletter, you may remember that there was a list of questions asking about the experience of girls regarding fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. We received a very thought provoking response from Manju, Sindhu, and Poonan with the assistance of Dr. Pooja Kandula at Nari Gunjan (Danapur), the school begun and directed by Sr. Mary Sudha of the Patna province. This response, together with other submissions, was given as testimony at a UN Commission on the Status of Women meeting sponsored by Canada and Turkey. The information sent to us by the girls in many countries was gathered and presented by the Girl Advocates of the

Working Group on Girls. Girls from Nari Gunjan are very articulate on the ways in which village girls are excluded from education, health care and nutrition. Descriptions of effective education at the school, overcoming discrimination due to caste and the pressure to marry early, made a deep impression on the audience. One of the ministers from Canada is also a pediatrician and she was very vocal in support of the passion evidenced by the Girl Advocates as they shared what had been sent to them.

Our girls from Nari Gunjan in Danapur shared further about the work that they do when they go back to the village for holiday: teaching their younger siblings to read and write, teaching numeracy to their parents, sharing what they learn about HIV/AIDS and malaria and how to prevent it, and the need for nutritious food and clean water. They worried about the needless deaths due to girls giving birth at an early age and envisioned a crèche for those mothers and babies who survived so that the young mothers could learn to care for healthy children.



Governments Re-evaluate Laws which Increase the Incidence of Human Trafficking

Prostitution was legalized in the Netherlands in the year 2000. It has been allowed in Amsterdam since the 1600s. There are about 8,000 women in prostitution in the city. Young women are especially vulnerable because they are often groomed by pimps who force them into selling their bodies when they are 18. Amsterdam's mayor is taking stock of the laws legalizing prostitution which were supposed to alleviate human trafficking of women. Instead of lessening abuse of women, legalizing of prostitution has increased it. Saying that "the situation is so grave that we have to act", the mayor maintains that the first priority is to keep young women from being pushed into prostitution and the second is to help those who wish to leave prostitution. Dutch officials are now studying the "Nordic Model" - a set of laws that penalizes the *demand* for commercial sex while decriminalizing individuals who are prostituted. This model is based on an approach first adopted in Sweden in 1999, followed later by Norway and Iceland. The Nordic Model has two main goals: curb the demand for commercial sex that fuels sex trafficking and promote equality between men and women. The European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee has approved a report that recommends the adoption of the 'Nordic Model' of anti-prostitution laws. The UK, South Korea, Ireland, Denmark, Latvia, and France have taken first steps toward the Nordic Model.



“Renewing My Prophetic Vocation” Namur, Belgium

April 30th to May 6th marked the beginning of a new chapter of collaboration among Notre Dame “cousins” related to St. Julie. Invited by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, their country JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) leaders were joined by congregational JPIC coordinators of the, Amersfoort, and Coesfeld branches, along with UN representatives Jean Stoner and Mary Jo Toll. Motivated by input from SND de Namur congregational leader Teresita Weind, Donald Dorr, M.A.D.D., and Isabel Mary Smyth, SNDdeN, participants seriously explored international, regional, and local means of networking in order to strengthen possibilities of people-centered development and to counter violence which is destructive of human rights and growth. Additional very special experiences were a visit to St. Julie’s birthplace in Cuvilly and time spent in the new heritage center at Namur.



65TH ANNUAL UN DPI/NGO CONFERENCE

(UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, 27-29 AUGUST 2014)



The invitation is out! Using the title “2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda” and carrying the theme of *The role of civil society in the post-2015 development agenda*, the Department of Information is setting the stage for a transition to a “bold new generation of people-centered and planet-sensitive development.” Constituencies will be working on the issues of climate change, sustainable development effectiveness, environment, economic justice, human rights, and gender equality. It is a rare opportunity for NGOs

to strengthen existing networking and good practices, and create new ones as they move toward achieving a “new social contract that reflects a strong and radical movement of hope and transformation”. It will be yet another opportunity for civil society to contribute its vast diversity in support of the post-2015 negotiations. The Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and the School Sisters of Notre Dame are making application to sponsor a workshop on quality education entitled, “*Four Zeros Add up to Positives for Education*”, the four being: zero exclusion, zero discrimination against girls, zero child labor, and zero child marriage. We will again reflect the responses from Nari Gunjan.



Sweden hosted this year’s GFMD with sessions from May 9-16. This included participation in the grass roots event *Peoples’ Global Action* and the launching of the *Migration and Development Civil Society Network (MADE)*. MADE is an effort to link NGOs regionally from countries of origin to the *diaspora* in the country of destination and to create new initiatives that promote personal development and respect for human rights and labor rights, as well as migrant participation in policy considerations for good governance. The Civil Society Days, the Common Space (joint meetings between NGOs and states), and the Government Days focused on: ethical recruitment and employment practices, empowering migrants in crisis in transit and at borders, protecting and empowering children in the context of migration, and migration’s place in the coming *Sustainable Development Goals*. More information about these issues will be shared as efforts are made to create and replicate good practices.

Use this link for the recent report produced by youth migrants: <http://tinyurl.com/pe4d4gx>

A reminder about the link to our UN SNDs blog: www.sndatun.wordpress.com

UN SNDs facebook page: <http://tinyurl.com/3ccygc3>

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