



UPDATES April 2011

News from Belo Horizonte

Members of UNANIMA International are sending letters of support to ask for justice for the evicted communities of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais in Brazil.

The following update comes from Maria José Meira, ccv, who is supporting the communities there.

We evaluated the way we supporting the occupation settlements of *H. Dorothy Stang, Camilo Torres* and *Dandara*. The general opinion was that the support of UNANIMA was important and was having an impact. I explained who we are and how we work. Someone in the meeting connected to the internet and opened UNANIMA's website to see the link to our campaign. They are very appreciative of our initiative and commitment and glad to see how this approach is having an effect on their fight. I am glad to see how our option for UNANIMA is becoming visible.

Youth campaign continues



Simon Peter Aziabah from Ghana sends this report regarding his follow-up to UNANIMA's STOP THE DEMAND youth workshop last May.

The campaign was with youth in Kandiga, Navrongo, Ghana. Objectives included to discourage the youth from human trafficking especially on the demand side, and to discuss the effects of human trafficking on the victims and society as a whole.

The youth were informed about what might be required of them if they were trafficked: hawking, bar or restaurant attendance, cleaning or washing of dishes in chop bars and worse of all prostitution. All of these have the potential to destroy their education and even their future and also might inflict great health hazards on them...

Although they are potential victims of human trafficking, they are also potential traffickers or demanders for trafficked victims, for traffickers and users were once just like them.

...They were also advised to avoid anything which could lead to the trafficking of women and children such as exploiting prostitutes or using under-aged children as waiters and waitresses...

[Click here to download Simon Peter's full report.](#)

Financing for Development

At the recent two-day meeting of the United Nations group concerned with Financing for Development, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Catherine

represented UNANIMA and delivered an oral intervention on the implementation of a financial transaction tax as an innovative source of financing for development.

[Click here to download her full intervention.](#)

World Water Day

At the UN there is a growing sense of urgency that water should be central to any discussion on energy or food. Two of the primary uses of water are agriculture and energy production. Water and energy policies often conflict with each other since the production of energy requires much water and the production of potable water requires much energy. It was recommended that the next Earth Summit (at Rio in June 2012) should create structures for urban water governance given the crucial linkages among water, energy, and food. Later that day, at an event on water and urbanization, we learned that with the predicted rise of the human population, the population of cities is expected to rise dramatically in developing countries, and up to 2/3 of the world's population will live in areas of inadequate water supplies exacerbating an already fierce competition for water for agriculture, industry, energy production, and domestic/sanitary uses.

Consult our Water program for educational and spiritual materials and advocacy actions.

Featuring the Sisters of Sion

The Sisters of Sion are an international Congregation in 22 countries around the world, both contemplative and apostolic. Whatever our ministries, we keep before the Church the awareness of God's faithful love for the Jewish people and the biblical requirement "to do justice, to love tenderly and walk humbly with your God" Micah - 6:8.

We set out "To Heal a Fractured World": by building bridges of understanding among Christians, Jews, Muslims and all faith traditions, by working for justice, peace and love among the peoples of the world, and by choosing life, including all creation in all that we do. In July 2010, our General Chapter focused particularly on these key directions: a call to name and stand beside both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in their suffering; a call to be women of dialogue; and a call to stewardship as we hear the urgent "groaning of creation".



We feature here Sion's response to UNANIMA'S goals for the eradication of poverty in Egypt, Tunisia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Philippines, Australia, Brazil, Romania and Canada.

In Tunisia midwifery services and a nursery program, ensure a critical option for unwed mothers who can get training and a job without losing their child.

In Nicaragua, the sisters work in a poor barrio to end discrimination against women and children through



many programmes educating mothers and babies, i.e., a food/nutrition programme, and a micro-financing loans programme....

The sisters in San Jose, Costa Rica (Notre Dame de Sion high school) try to combat discrimination against migrants and educate the people to make a place for the stranger in their midst and to develop awareness about the trafficking of women and children.

In Quezon Province and Manila (Philippines) the sisters support the rights of women and work to end discrimination of them through empowerment projects: self-employment via micro financing, education, housing, community development.

In the Philippines and Australia, the Sisters provide legal support and advocacy directly for those evicted from their land and in villages decimated by the mining companies. In Australia, Sion networks with ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) and other NGOs.



In the north east (of Brazil), in Santo Amaro, we support women and children by basic health education.

In Salvador, NDS has programs of education, music, and drama for children living in extreme poverty where prostitution and abuse is the norm. This program has been selected for an exchange with a similar project in Angola. A Sister of Sion (third from left below) is co-director of the project.

In Romania, NDS educates mothers and children in a kindergarten program and supports and educates Roma children.

In Winnipeg, (Canada) our sisters work with inner-city First Nations young people in alternative education, employment, recreation and community development programs, services and support. Especially hopeful is the strong collaboration with SEY-CO – Sexually Exploited Youth-Coalition Organization where local agencies develop programmes and support services for those seeking ways out of exploitation, poverty, abuse and discrimination.

In Saskatoon and Toronto, sisters are speaking out, fundraising and doing educational awareness along with various Diocesan and Civic organizations working to STOP THE DEMAND, and support care for the environment especially Water – Basic Right for All. They are advocating against mining companies and governments proposals of global nuclear waste storage sites on aboriginal lands.

[Click here](#) for the full report prepared by Sylvia Obrigewitch, NDS.