

Talitha Kum Japan is a network group among Association of Major Superiors of Women Religious and Association of Major Religious Superiors in Japan in collaboration with J-CaRM (Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move) commissioned by CBCJ (Catholic Bishop Conference of Japan) to counteract trafficking in persons.

“Little Girl” Let us Rise Together!

~ H.E. Bishop Goro Michael Matsuura- J-CaRM Bishop In-Charge



H.E. Bishop Goro Matsuura
Nagoya Diocese

There are many forms of human trafficking. What is clear among these forms of slavery is that “human beings” are bought and sold like “commodities” without respecting their dignity. In the case of Japan, labor exploitation, deprivation of rights, and violence are common in many occupational jobs. But because presumably that it is a nature of employment, the general public is not aware of human trafficking, and the problem is more complex to identify.

We could see clearly the flow of human trafficking on a map of the world and the pattern of movement of people, from poor to rich areas, from devastated to safe places for survival migration. These people are all vulnerable and have no choice. They become targets of human trafficking.

In fact, Japan used to be poor, and women, especially from poor farming and fishing villages, were sold from the countryside to the cities and then overseas. They were called “Kara-Yuki-san” named for Japanese girls and women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Meiji era to the early Showa era) who were trafficked from poverty-stricken agricultural and fishing villages in Japan to destination countries like China, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and as far away as Russia and Africa. Some of them died in the land where they were sold, and their graves, which looked like stones, were placed quietly in the grass. How bitter and lonely they must have been.

The problem is that most Japanese people do not know about this fact. At that time, Japan was being criticized by the international community for abolishing the public prostitution system (1920) in order to join the ranks of modern nations. But the fact of Karayuki-san’s death was buried in the dark in an attempt to hide it as a “national disgrace”.

If we had learned this fact as a painful lesson, we would have had a deeper understanding of the migrant workers and refugees who now come to Japan to survive in this economically developed country.

“Talitha Kum (Stand up, little girl)”-Mark 5:41. I think Jesus’ call extends not only to Jairus’ daughter, but to all those “women and girls” who suffer, like the “Karayuki-san”, “I am with you, let us rise together. I’m with you”

It’s almost Christmas, for our sake Jesus came to us! Emmanuel, God is with us!



Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking, a Year After

Japan holds seminars every year to learn together about the reality of human trafficking and to make more people aware of it. In September last year, we held a series of three seminars on Trafficking in Persons and the Impact of the Covid-19. One year has passed and this year's theme was set with the aim of learning together how the pandemic has affected migrants and refugees over the past year and their current situation. This year, the seminar was held online on October 16. More than 350 people joined this seminar. I believe that this number shows that interest in human trafficking issues is gradually increasing.

Opening remarks by H.E. Bishop Michiaki Yamanouchi, Diocese of Saitama and Bishop in-charge of Talitha Kum Japan

He reminded us of the need for the Church to accept this pandemic as a great sign of the times, and that we must live together with care of all creation on this earth, and that the church in Japan is responding to this by reaching out to the marginalized people with Christ in them. In this seminar, we learned about these movements inside and outside the church, and the bishop asked us to make it a time of hope and grace to live together.

"The Impact of COVID-19 and the Efforts of Church in Japan by Ms. Motoko Yamagishi, Talitha Kum Committee Member

Ms. Motoko Yamagishi spoke about the efforts of the church in response to the needs of people throughout Japan during the pandemic. She gave her presentation by reporting on the reality of the exploitation of technical interns, international students, and refugees in Japan and the lack of a support system for those affected. She then explained in simple terms that the current situation was even more severe due to the impact of the pandemic. In this situation, the Catholic Church, through its network with other support groups, has been providing immediate food aid and financial assistance and has been working to provide accommodations to refugees who have returned home. They hold the "Vietnamese Technical Intern Hotline" for technical interns and international students. Since the pandemic began, more than ten HOTLINE consultations held so far. Many consultations such as those who want to change jobs due to non-payment of salaries, harassment, and violence. She ended with a powerful message that what is important for us as Christians is to overcome the pandemic, to expand trust and solidarity, and to continue to appeal for mutual aid and public assistance, both in society and in the Church, in order to pursue a world where all people can live together, without discrimination or division, and without excluding anyone.

Case Study Report 1 by Ms. Keiko Tokunoh from Sapporo Diocese

Ms. Tokunoh reported in helping those Vietnamese technical interns and ryugakusei, mostly from Tena church. She has received consultations in Vietnamese through SNS like Facebook since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic began. Sapporo diocese has been working together to support the victims, particularly with Vietnamese people. She added that they also supported them for Japanese translation, such as reminder letters from the government. They also helped them to receive the necessary support from the government. They delivered emergency supplies to technical trainees infected with the coronavirus and helped them with other quarantine protocols, etc. She gave concrete examples of her efforts to ensure those technical interns who were quarantined and to be able to receive legitimate support from the government, such as benefits. It was heartening to see how Ms. Tokunoh, together with the parishioners, worked tirelessly to provide support.

Case Report #2: From Sister Le Thi Lan Maria, Sisters of St. Vincentian de Paul, Saitama Diocese

Sister Maria Lang presented the support for Vietnamese people in Kawaguchi Church they have done with the help of the bishop, priests, religious and Vietnamese groups in Kawaguchi Church. They assisted the suffering people such as food aid, free health counseling for pregnant women, legal counseling, online counseling, shelter, and recently for mothers and infants. It's difficult to get involved in domestic violence since cases have increased. During the various problems, there was a new collaboration in which sisters and priests in Vietnam support victims of human trafficking who have returned to Vietnam. I felt hopeful and the work of the Holy Spirit in the expanding of the necessary support network. I also felt that many people were being saved by Sister Maria Lang's smile and listening attitude.

Case Report #3: Ms. Atsuko Viscardo, Osaka Synapis Social Activity Center

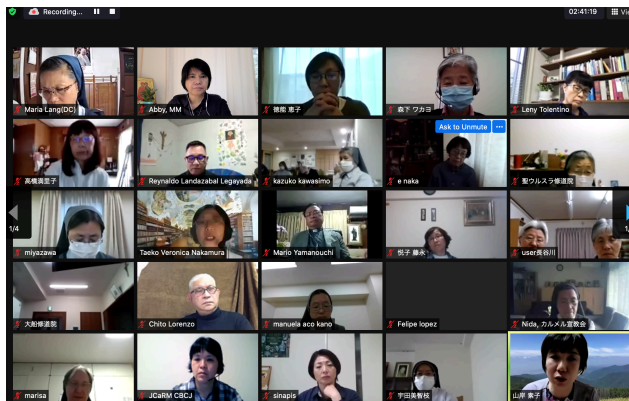
Ms. Atsuko Viscardo from Osaka Synapis shared some concrete suggestions on the case of African women. She said that women who are sexually exploited do not always say, "I am a victim of trafficking," so we need to be aware of this when we listen to their stories or when we prepare their petitions for refugee status. In addition, the importance of paying attention to dark-skinned women who have been sexually exploited and got pregnant or have children. She pointed out the negative side of asking sensitive questions such as, "How did that happen? What is most important is to help the mother and child to obtain a stable status of residence, and to "pay attention with the person in a calm manner, and not impose child-rearing in Japan. Ms. Viscardo concluded her presentation by encouraging continuing the network of Talitha Kum by broadening the networking support and carefully examining the cases. Mr. Viscardo, who always gives a powerful message, and is close to the people, encouraged us again.

Comment by Sister Abby Avelino, Talitha Kum Asia Coordinator, Maryknoll Sister

Sister Abby began by thanking all presenters and continued pointing out the important aspects of each report that the number of cases of exploitation and potential victims of trafficking has increased after a year. The COVID-19 pandemic shone a spotlight on the vulnerabilities and risks of people all over the world, but it also showed the importance of working together. She shared the realization like a ray of light in the darkness. I would like to emphasize the importance of holding such seminars and workshops, sharing information, and continuing anti-trafficking activities, especially for those who are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. We were encouraged to stay and continue our work in collaboration and networking. She also invited us to work together to materialize Talitha Kum's goal to "CARE for victims and survivors of human trafficking, healing their wounds, being a voice for the voiceless, and achieving justice.

Finally... In response to one of the questions, "What should we do to start providing concrete support to migrants and refugees? The presenters gave us concrete advice on the importance of building a bond with each individual, including stories of failure. I would like to continue to connect to everyone who participated in this seminar and start thinking of "What can I do? Thank you to everyone for your participation!

By Sister Wakayo Morishita, Chairperson of the Talitha Kum Steering Committee



- 日本各地のカトリック教会では、コロナの影響を受けて、困窮する外国人からの訴えに対して、「食料支援」や現金給付などの支援を実施。
- 各地の施設などを活用し、帰国困難になる外国人のためのシェルター支援の拡充。
- 日本カトリック難民移住移動者委員会（JCaRM）では、各地の状況を把握しながら、移民・難民に必要な状況の提供や、お見舞い金（現金給付）支援などを実施。

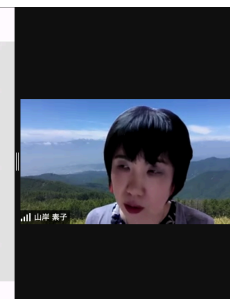


Photo: Participants of Online Seminar on October 16

Case Report of Migrant Women Vulnerable to Human Trafficking and Abuse

~ by Leny Tolentino - Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

Counseling and Providing Information about Women Rights

We received the cases of two Filipina pregnant women abandoned by their partners. They were confused and afraid of what to do and whom to trust after their partners left them.

These two migrant women both came to Japan as tourists at the onset of the pandemic. However, the pandemic has locked them down that prolonged their stay. Desperately to sustain their living, sometimes they worked at the snack bar (night work), where they met their partners (abusers). Both of them shared that they started dating and developed an intimate relationship with their partners. That led them to an unexpected pregnancy. Joy san (not real name) trusted the father of her child, who is also a Filipino, believing that he is single and found out later that he is not. He left and abandoned her. She had trusted another man, a Japanese

who promised to marry her and recognize her child as his. However, living with this Japanese man for two months, she found out he was abusive and controlling. She fled to her friend's house. She was undecided when she called whether to go back or not to her abusive partner.

Talitha Kum accompanied her for a while in seeing the positive and negative outcomes. In case she decides to go back to her Japanese partner. Second, the possibility to go to a shelter which she declined. Third, the possible public assistance she could avail as a pregnant migrant woman. She was grateful for this accompaniment and asked for more time whether she would go back or not to her partner. Talitha Kum respects the value of a person-centered approach.

Joan's (not real name) case, her partner was an unmarried man. They had planned to get married. However, after living with this man for seven months, the man changed his attitude towards her. This man became abusive; she suffered verbal and physical abuse. "Another woman is involved", she said. In addition, the man's parents were against their planned marriage. The man left her because she could not pay the house rent. She gave up the apartment, and now she lives with her Filipina friend.

Before her partner left her, he had signed the child recognition paper. Another support group was accompanying her, such as an immigration lawyer, a support group nearby that is in contact with the ward office. However, she has fears and doubts about their sincerity to help her. The immigration lawyer who assisted her residence permit quoted an amount of money she had to pay later. She felt the support group was pressuring her to look for the father and sometimes threatening her that the father would take away her child. She was confused and mentally distressed.

Emotional and psychological support was provided to her about her rights and her child as a child of Japanese. Cautious to fixers and guide her towards the next steps. Through this accompaniment, she became more confident to assert her rights. She has just extended her residence permit and is ready to move to a shelter provided by the ward office. She is also preparing for the birth of her child in December.

Talitha Kum continues to support migrant women in distress, particularly those vulnerable to human trafficking. We do what we can in whatever form of intervention, especially for women.

Talitha Kum International Update Report

By Abby Avelino, MM- Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee

The movement of activities and migration of peoples in the vast majority of Talitha Kum networks in Asia was quite challenging since the pandemic began. Many countries in Asia are greatly affected by the pandemic. Many people lost their jobs, hundreds of thousands of people died, many migrants abruptly returned to their home countries. More so now, because of the economic instability brought by the pandemic, many people are at risk and vulnerable for trafficking, especially women, children, and migrants. We do what we can for the interventions and accompanying of victims and survivors of trafficking, especially at this time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the regional level in Asia, we continued the prevention and training activities/seminars that have moved online since the start of the pandemic to ensure continued information sharing on anti-trafficking efforts such as the following:

- Talitha Kum networks in Asia hosted monthly webinars on human trafficking for the prevention, protection, capacity building, and strengthening networking and collaboration from October 2020 to September 2021. This project will resume in January 2022.
- Online training in seven countries in Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and Bangladesh, where we have newly-established Talitha Kum networks.
- We recently launched the TK Youth Ambassador Against Trafficking in Persons program. We encourage more young people to get involved, particularly in prevention. We have 25 youth and young adults who completed training to be ambassadors against trafficking in their respective countries.

- Recently, some networks in Asia started to do onsite seminars in villages, barangays, remote areas where many people have been affected by the pandemic particularly, in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc.

At the International level, formation and training for Talitha Kum networks are ongoing for strategic plan 2020-2025. In June-July, online training was provided for Asian countries, and this coming November-December, Talitha Kum networks in African countries will benefit from this online training. The Third Training Course for the Leaders of Talitha Kum will take place from March 2022 to March 2023. There is an ongoing application for this course for Talitha Kum members to respond to the service of leadership. The course will be given entirely online.

Another piece of information is that Talitha Kum's Call to Action advocacy position statement will be launched on November 25. This position statement is an attempt to reach out to global governance stakeholders; including in particular States, international organizations, non-state actors such as civil society organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, and all those that have a role to play in the tireless effort towards the eradication of human trafficking.

Talitha Kum International Coordination Committee (TKICC) will be meeting in Rome from November 22 to 26 for planning and evaluation for the entire global network. One of the agendas is the planning for the February 8 event-the International Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking. The theme for 2022 will focus on women and the economy.

Talitha Kum Youth Ambassadors Against Trafficking in Persons

By Abby Avelino, MM- Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee

Talitha Kum Asia recently launched TK Youth Ambassador Against Trafficking in Persons program. We continue to encourage more young people to get involved, particularly in prevention. We have 25 youth and young adults who completed training to be ambassadors against trafficking in their respective countries. The training was held online from September 5 to October 3 for six consecutive Sundays. The course was given by Talitha Kum International, led by Sr. Gabriella Bottani and Prof Stefano Volpicelli. The training was designed to give an overview of the concepts, background of trafficking and exploitation - the role of young people on the issue of human trafficking, awareness in the prevention of trafficking in persons, etc. At the end of the training, all participants presented their learning outcomes and action plans. They are trained to be ambassadors among children, youth, and young adults at the grassroots level.

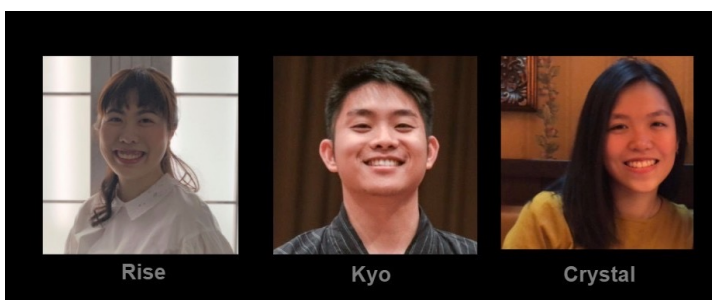
We hope that the TK Youth Ambassadors Against Human Trafficking Program will lead towards deepening and expanding young people's commitment to Talitha Kum's overall vision, goals with these objectives.

- To raise awareness about trafficking and prevention among young people.
- To encourage and involve young people to understand the issues of human trafficking
- To train, accompany and raise youth leaders and advocates who will create campaigns and launch initiatives among their peers in schools, workplaces, and communities; onsite and online.

Participants who joined from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Italy were from 19 to 35 years old. Among them were participants from Japan:

Kyouhei Kobayashi (Japanese-Filipino), Crystal Eillen, an Indonesian student of Waseda University, and Rise Hosoi (Japanese), a medical student originally from Tokyo, but now based in Hokkaido.

These youth ambassadors will work together with the TK network in their own countries on awareness-raising and advocating against trafficking and exploitation.



Saint Josephine Bakhita, "Our Universal Sister"

By Sr. Valeria Martinez, FdCC (Canossian Sister)

When St. John Paul II beatified Mother Bakhita, he gave the Church a new Saint and called her our "Universal Sister" a title for her new mission. Through sharing her personal story, she became a beacon of hope who accompanies all those who suffer, especially victims of injustice and oppression, and those whose human rights are not respected.

When she was about seven years old, Bakhita was kidnapped and taken away from her family and home. They treated her as an object to be used by others with no regard for her young age. Bakhita shared the sadness and suffering she experienced, but there was no trace of anger or hate in this story. That was why she was a bearer of light and hope for many suffering brothers and sisters.

What was the secret of Bakhita to overcome her sufferings? When she was taken from Africa to Italy, she received the gift of a crucifix and heard about Jesus Christ for the first time. When Bakhita learned the "Good News" that God gave his own life to save her, she realized she had found her real "Master". It was her first experience of being truly freed and being respected as a person. From then on, she was determined never to be separated from Jesus. As she progressed in her journey of faith, Bakhita came to understand that all that had happened to her in her life was a part of God's mysterious and providential plan. One day a young person asked Sister Bakhita then, this question: *"If you were to meet the slave traders, who kidnapped you, what would you do?"* Without a moment of hesitation, she answered: *"If I were to meet the slave traders who kidnapped me and treated me so unjustly and violently, I would kneel before them and kiss their hands. Why? Because if all those things had not happened to me, I would never have become who I am now, a Christian and a religious Sister".*

Bakhita broke out of the cycle of evil because of our "all-merciful God"; give her heart to God that freed her from all sufferings, and healed the wounds. For this reason, she was able to live a life-filled with gratitude and joy. How did she manage to reach such heights of holiness? It was certainly due to her intimate relationship with God. As she contemplated in prayer, the love of Crucified Jesus, she gladly forgave those who had caused her so much pain and prayed that they would find forgiveness and salvation.

Let us ask Saint Josephine Bakhita, "Our Universal Sister" to intercede for us all. As we strive to work to free all our sisters and brothers, who are suffering from any form of slavery, may we also bring them the healing and salvation of the love of Christ.



St. Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking

February 8 : Feast Day of Saint Bakhita and International Day Prayer Against Human Trafficking (IDPHT)

~ Talitha Kum Japan Secretariat Committee

Every year on February 8, Talitha Kum Japan invites us to join for prayer and action against human trafficking. Due to COVID-19, as we adapt to the new normal using online tools such as ZOOM. Video conferencing has become a venue for meetings and seminars that allows many people to participate anywhere. This time, we plan to hold an online prayer on February 8, 2022, (Tuesday). Details will be posted later on our website(J-CaRM).

TK International is also inviting us for a global participation online event on February 8.

Theme: The Power of Care: Women, Economy and Human Trafficking



We thank you for your generous financial support for Talitha Kum Japan. The donation will be used to provide support for victims of human trafficking for shelter expenses, emergency living expenses, legal casework, translation/interpretation expenses, newsletter, seminars, and workshops for the prevention of trafficking in persons.

Talitha Kum Japan (Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move (J-CaRM))

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