

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.

We Support One Another

~ Reflection by Sr. Atsuko Kano, AASC - Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member



Sr. Atsuko Kano,
Sisters Adorers Handmaids of
the Blessed Sacrament and of
Charity

We are surrounded with new challenges every day by the “unprecedented phenomenon” caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain hopeful that the situation will be solved soon, but we recognized the reality of uncertainty remains until the vaccine has developed and used. I believe that prayer can hold us together to overcome this crisis, as Pope Francis said, “*Open our hearts to hope, ...loving, praying, and caring for others, ...each of us in need of comforting each other.*”

History repeats itself, in the 19th century, hundreds of thousands of people died of cholera pandemic. I believe we are experiencing this era at this time. But what struck me is that we live now in the technological era or the New Media Age. This movement can bring us together to overcome the difficulty in our lives. We have learned from the young generation to become more united and to strengthen the bonding through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, etc. We may not know each other, but togetherness, we may be connected by supporting one another.

Although we are many, we are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another (Romans 12:5), as I reflected on this scripture, I believe that in the Eucharist, we are ONE in communion with Christ and with one another. Jesus understands the pains, sorrows, suffering, and in every aspect of our lives. Jesus invites us every day to show God’s love, especially to those who need it most.

At this time of pandemic and when the situation of the economy collapsed, the hard-hit women and children are most vulnerable. They likely become an easy target for online sexual exploitation, victimized by domestic violence, discriminated, harassed, and victims of trafficking.

Let us share our love, hope, and support for all those who are suffering and struggling in living situations, especially to those most vulnerable women and children. May we continue our efforts to end human trafficking. As we live by supporting one another in prayers, we can work together to the transformation of our world and truly bring Good News to those who need it most.

Impact of the New Coronavirus on the Victims of Trafficking : Situation of Vietnamese Technical Interns and International Students (Ryugakusei)

~ Ms. Motoko Yamagishi - Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan

The spread of the new coronavirus affects many people's lives in Japan, particularly to the most severely impacted vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking.

The situation of migrant workers under the technical intern training program and international students in Japanese society has drastically worsened. Many migrant workers and single mothers have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them have been suffering from labor exploitation, harassment, unfair treatment from their employers, and so on. These people could barely make ends meet, so much more now at this time of COVID-19 pandemic. Some are not eligible to avail of the cash aid from the government. We have been closely monitoring their situation as they are vulnerable to human trafficking.

"A Cup of Rice with Love Project":

SOS to Vietnamese Technical Interns and International Students

A project entitled "A Cup of Rice with Love Project" was started during the peak of the pandemic by the group of Vietnamese priests and sisters as an immediate response to the need of Vietnamese people living in Japan. We heard their voices; "I can't get my salary," "I can't buy rice," "No food", etc.

The Vietnamese community and churches across the country started collecting the donation of rice, noodles, canned goods, face masks, etc., for this project. They distributed food to technical interns, international students, and single mothers across the country. A total of 5,515 people benefited from this project, from the end of March until mid of June 2020.



Photos:
Volunteers with Sr.
Maria (Le Thi)
Lang (sitting),
Talitha Kum Japan
member, during
the preparation
for food
distribution at
Kawaguchi Church
in Saitama
Diocese

Hotline Support

J-CaRM with the collaboration of the Foreign Technical Intern Training Rights Network group organized the emergency hotline by phone and SNS in the Vietnamese language on June 9 and July 4. The hotline group responded to many Vietnamese migrant workers who were severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We recorded 44 consultations in June and 54 in July. We learned that many technical interns have lost their jobs, and not only are they unable to get a salary, but they are also probably to be dismissed, and the company itself is likely to go bankrupt. According to Father Nya, a Vietnamese priest, most of the consultations came from technical intern trainees, and a lot of them were living in difficult situations due to COVID-19.

Some intake claims are as follows: Technical intern trainees' contracts were abruptly terminated by employers due to COVID-19; Verbal abuse and violence at construction work; they were forced to do heavy work or dangerous work; discrimination because Japanese language limitation; power harassment; they didn't get an allowance for leave of absence when returning to the workplace after the state of emergency was lifted; not enough money to sustain their living and to pay their debts back home; not able to avail the cash aid from the government; forced to return their home country; forced termination of the contract (trainees); no

part-time jobs for international students, etc. Most of these claims are unjust treatments of the employers, and technical interns are likely not fully informed about their rights. We will continue to provide consultation through hotline support to ease the situation of technical intern trainees/international students who are vulnerable to exploitation. In the future, we are looking to set up a system with the labor unions and lawyers to resolve some labor issues.

The Catholic church also helped those people in need by providing food and financial assistance, providing shelter for foreigners who could not go back to their country because of the travel restrictions, etc.

Talitha Kum Japan will continue our efforts to support the victims of trafficking who are affected by the new coronavirus with the collaboration of local NGOs/NPOs, churches, and other faith-based groups.



PHOTOS: ONLINE CONSULTATION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK GROUP

Talitha Kum Leadership Training Course Report

~ Sr. Abby Avelino, MM - Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan

It was a privilege for me to be selected for a scholarship for the Second Training Course for Leaders of Talitha Kum. The training course was organized by *Talitha Kum UISG with the collaboration of the Pontifical Antonianum University of Rome, and the Tangaza University College of Nairobi, Kenya*. We are 36 participants from 22 countries of African, Asian, Latin American, and European continents. The course started last March (at the peak of COVID-19) and will run until February 2021.

The one-year training course is comprised of ongoing online classes and two residential programs. The first residential course in Nairobi was canceled due to the COVID-19. The organizers are hopeful to finish up the course by the face-to-face residential program in Rome.

We are required to participate actively in online classes, and discussions; do all readings and assignments; submit all reports; and create project proposals.

I've been participating in the online classes at night (Japan time). I find the course very enriching and I am certainly learning a lot, not only from our professors but also from my colleagues who are working in the field of anti-human trafficking. So far, I have learned to identify, understand, and apply techniques and strategies related to integral human development as they impact human trafficking. I have also learned to understand and become familiar with specific human rights, mechanisms, and protective policies as they relate to the challenges of human trafficking. We also learn the theoretical aspects of emotions and resiliency as we accompany the most vulnerable ones, especially as they are now affected by the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic. This new reality forces us to reshape and reimagine our roles. This course also guides us in spiritual and emotional care intervention.

In addition, this course allows me to learn about strategic actions in networking and develop skills of project management in collaboration within a local network and international network. So far, all participants are enjoying the course and we are getting to know and appreciate each other. No one is left behind. We need to empower one another as leaders to end this heinous crime of human trafficking.



Photo: Courtesy of Talitha Kum Rome

Talitha Kum Asia network coordinator's virtual meeting with Sr. Gabriella Bottani, Talitha Kum International Coordinator (1st from left)

Because of the pandemic restrictions, I have more time to focus on online classes, and I have been using technology and social media like never before for online interactions in meetings and counseling, etc.

Sometimes the internet connection is a challenge for many of my classmates from developing countries, and surprisingly for me also here in Tokyo.

Talitha Kum International Update Report

Talitha Kum Asia regional and country coordinators have been holding virtual meetings recently, to strengthen and to improve networking as part of the TK priorities for 2020-2025.

Some countries in Asia are still in lockdown situations that prevent them from pursuing all planned in-person TK activities this year. Many networks canceled seminars on the prevention of human trafficking because of the spread of coronavirus. We learned that many migrant workers are struggling after losing their jobs due to coronavirus. We also learned that the cases of online sexual exploitation are increasing, particularly in the Philippines and South Korea.

The Talitha Kum Asia conference scheduled for June 10-16 this year in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, was canceled due to travel restrictions and the alarming situations of Asian countries caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. However, we are still in the process of dialoguing to determine the best way to pursue the Talitha Kum Asia conference. We plan to redirect the conference into integrated online leadership formation and online seminars for a year starting October 2020. We hope to meet in-person in Thailand if and when possible.

As we are more dependent on technology these days, particularly at this time of the pandemic, most of Talitha Kum networks are doing online meetings, phone and online counseling, webinar, and even online prayer. We realize the challenges of technology in developing countries such as Timor Leste, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. Talitha Kum Asia plans to support the upgrading of technology of some networks.

The group agreed to holding online meetings by sub-regions and continental networks quarterly. The purpose is to encourage more countries to establish Talitha Kum and to improve networking among sub-regions. East Asia sub-region is comprised of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Many religious and other faith-based communities participated in the Talitha Kum campaign on social media, to #end human trafficking for the UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on July 30. In Japan, we had the very first online prayer for the VoT and survivors and in ending human trafficking.

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, the International Coordinator, graciously accepted our invitation to be one of the speakers of the 3-series seminars in September 2020. ~ Sr. Abby Avelino, MM - Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan



Inter-Religious seminar in Thailand, a collaborative effort against human trafficking.



July 30 Talitha Kum # end human trafficking Campaign: "I'm against human trafficking because..."/

"I support all the efforts against human trafficking because..."

World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking

~ Talitha Kum Japan Secretariat Committee

On February 8, the feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita and the "World Day of Prayer, Reflection, and Action Against Human Trafficking," we joined in prayers in solidarity with all Catholics all over the world. Some religious congregations held a recollection day, engaged in awareness-raising events, study group sharing, fasting in solidarity with the victims of human trafficking, watched the story of St. Bakhita on YouTube, and also held the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Various religious congregations in Japan joined in prayer to campaign against trafficking in persons. Prayer cards were distributed nationwide by Talitha Kum Japan.

Among the congregations were the Salesian Sisters, Congregation of Saint Joseph (Bethany Sisters), etc.



Above photos: Congregation of Saint Joseph Sisters (Bethany Sisters) and Salesian Sisters (left).

July 30: Online Prayer for the "UN World Day against Trafficking in Persons"

~ Talitha Kum Japan Secretariat Committee

July 30th is the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons set by the United Nations. Pope Francis calls us every year to learn about the reality of human trafficking and pray for the victims and survivors. This year, due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Talitha Kum Japan, a network group against trafficking in persons, organized and conducted the online prayer for the very first time.



On the day, more than 50 terminals were connected online with an estimated of more than 150 people who participated in this online prayer. It gave us hope when we brought us together to pray for the victims of human trafficking and to end human trafficking. We hope to continue this opportunity in solidarity with many people and share our intentions in supporting all the efforts against human trafficking.

We have received some affirmative feedback like this;

"Hello! I appreciated the online prayer yesterday. It was my first time participating in online prayer remotely. It was a very moving moment, and I felt connected despite the prayers in different languages. It was a good experience in solidarity with many people praying together."

We look forward to your continuing support and cooperation.



Upcoming Event

Free Online Seminars
September 11, 18 & 25, 2020

Friday from 14:00 ~ 16:00

Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking

Please SCAN QR CODE for registration.



Talitha Kum Japan

Presents

3-SERIES WEBINAR 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking
~Global/Local Situation and Spiritual Resilience~

September 11, 18, 25 Friday 14:00 ~ 16:00 (JPT)

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| September 11, 2020 14:00 - 16:00 Presentation in Japanese | Covid-19: Migrant's Vulnerability to Human Trafficking Introduction: Bishop Mario Michak Yamanouchi, S.D.B. Speakers: Ms. Motoko Yamagishi and Sr. Maria Lang Moderator: Sr. Junko Shioya, A.C.I. |
| September 18, 2020 14:00 - 16:00 (JPT) Japanese - English Translation Available | Global Situation: Impact of the Covid-19 on Human Trafficking Introduction: Bishop Michael Gero Matsuura Speaker: Sr. Gabriella Bonanni, S.M.C. Moderator: Sr. Abby Avellino, M.M. |
| September 25, 2020 14:00 - 16:00 Presentation in Japanese | Covid-19: Hopes and Challenges to the Church Now and Ahead Introduction: Bishop Mario Michak Yamanouchi, S.D.B. Speakers: Sr. Teruko Ito, M.M. Moderator: Sr. Manuela Kato, A.A.S.C. |



Zoom ID will be sent to all registered participants via e-mail.
Register Online: <https://forms.gle/5v8dC8TArndd8d7>
Contact Information: 03-5632-4441 / jcarma@cbcj.catholic.jp or japan@talithakum.info

SON: T-45

タリタム 人身取引に終止符を！
TALITHA KUM
END 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 TIP.

~Japan Post Bank money transfer form is available at the J-CaRM Secretariat office~