

Seeking the Mission



Rise Hosoi

Representative of Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassadors

“What is the mission that God has entrusted to me?”

As Christians, we have all asked ourselves this question at one time or another. Yet, the journey toward the answer is never easy. I, too, continue to walk that path, seeking to understand God’s will for my life.

From a young age, I admired Mother Teresa. I longed to be someone who reached out first to those who suffer, to comfort, to listen, and to love. That desire led me to become a nurse.

Along this journey, I encountered Talitha Kum. At first, to be honest, I thought, “Human trafficking is such a vast and complex issue, how could someone like me possibly make a difference?” I even believed that ending it was impossible. Yet, as I became more involved, something within me began to change.

Through my experience with Talitha Kum, I began to reflect more deeply on my vocation, on the unique mission that God may be calling me to. Inspired by the words of Mother Teresa’s prayer, “Use me, Lord,” I came to realize that perhaps my mission is to be the hands and feet of God, to help protect the life and beauty of the world He has created. Whether I am serving patients in the hospital or working as a Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador for a world free from human trafficking, I believe both are expressions of the same calling: to participate in God’s work of love.

I may not yet fully understand the whole of my mission, but I know this: using the gifts God has entrusted to me in the service of peace and justice is itself a profound joy and grace.

Still, there are moments when I feel powerless before the enormity of human trafficking. I sometimes ask myself, “Does what I’m doing really make a difference?” Since joining Talitha Kum, I have continued to search for the answer to the question, “How can we truly bring an end to human trafficking?” If I had already found the answer, perhaps I would have received a Nobel Peace Prize by now. Of course, I have not, but I have come to believe one thing with conviction: **awareness is the seed of hope.**

Our mission as Youth Ambassadors centers on awareness, on opening minds and hearts. To raise awareness is to help another person see, to kindle compassion, and to awaken conscience. Human trafficking is not a problem of things; it is a tragedy between human beings. Therefore, the path toward its end must begin with the conversion of hearts. If it were a technical problem, innovation might solve it. But because it is a matter of the human heart, it requires love, understanding, and the grace of God.

Of course, we cannot ignore the complex realities behind human trafficking, poverty, inequality, and cultural and religious factors. We must face these realities, walk with those who suffer, and seek justice together. Yet I believe with all my heart that when God’s love transforms even one heart, the world itself begins to change.

My own actions may be small, but I trust in the Lord who works great wonders through small things. And so, I continue to walk forward, with prayer, with hope, and with gratitude, trusting that God’s mission of love is unfolding through each step.



May we walk this path together, as companions in His mission of mercy and peace.

Featuring Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassadors

Meet Our New Youth Ambassador!: Chisa Nishimura



Becoming a Youth Ambassador with Talitha Kum Japan has deepened my awareness of how young people can stand together against human trafficking. My name is Chisa Nishimura, and I would like to share some of my reflections so far.



I am currently a university student studying international affairs. When I participated in the Youth Ambassador advocacy event in February 2025, I learned about the harsh reality of human trafficking in Japan for the first time.

At the same time, however, I also found hope. Through advocacy, we as young people can inspire change and take meaningful action.

As a Catholic, I have a strong desire to see each person through the eyes of Christ—to recognize the beauty and dignity of every human being with love. Being part of Talitha Kum Japan has deepened this calling. Through research and discussions with other members, I realized that our mission is not only to support those affected by trafficking but also to understand the backgrounds and circumstances of those involved. These often include poverty, domestic violence, environmental crises, and social or political instability. This perspective reminds me that addressing human trafficking requires compassion and understanding, as well as a commitment to healing relationships and restoring justice, rather than judgment.



I am also passionate about raising awareness in a way that helps people feel personally connected to the issue. From my university studies and volunteer experiences, I have seen that many people in Japan do not feel engaged in humanitarian issues abroad because they believe these problems have nothing to do with their daily lives. However, when we consider the prejudice and misunderstanding faced by those affected by trafficking, we can see how our indifference may also contribute to the problem.

on human dignity and solidarity along the way. In October, during the Month of the Rosary, we prayed the Rosary together. It was deeply moving to see faith, community, and action come together. These experiences remind me that small steps can bring hope and make a difference. I hope we can continue to raise our voices and take small steps that lead to meaningful change.



Meet Our New Youth Ambassador!: Valerie Vidian

Hello to everyone reading this article! I am Valerie, a new member of the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador (TKYA) in Japan. I joined earlier this year, 2025, and so far, it's been great. I've learned and experienced a lot of things, and I'm excited to share them with you!

My name is Valerie, and I'm an Indonesian. I pursued my Bachelor's studies in Indonesia and came to Japan in April 2024 to continue my degree in Sendai. I may be far from Tokyo, but the other members have been very welcoming that I feel connected with them, even though the screen of my laptop. I like to sing, but karaoke is quite expensive, so I usually sing when I take a shower! Please don't be scared to say hi if you meet me! I would love to meet you someday, dear readers of the TK Newsletter.



I didn't know much about Talitha Kum at first, but a friend introduced it to me as a youth organization striving to end human trafficking. It sounded like a serious, detail-oriented, dangerous, and busy organization, and I hesitated when my dear friend invited me to join. I was worried that I would be too busy to have a positive impact on myself, let alone others. After finding out that TKYA members are warm and motivated people, I decided to join TKYA Japan. I still don't know what kind of impact I can bring, but I learn from joining some events held by TKYA that every small good thing that we do to bring a positive impact towards others matters, no matter how small. Hence, looking forward to working with you!

As you might know, TKYA is a group of youth that mainly functions to spread awareness against human trafficking. My friends have been busy collaborating to hold classes at schools to inform children about the invisible horrors of human trafficking in the world and in Japan. There was also a Talitha Kum Asia networking meeting that was held last August. Through this meeting got the chance to build connections with a lot of other youth representatives, and later held a sharing meeting between TKYA Japan and TKYA India. We had a great time getting to know each other's organization, the things that we do, the type of human trafficking that is happening in our respective countries, and we also shared some ideas about the things we can do here on out as youths to prevent and stop human trafficking, one step at a time. Honestly, it was eye-opening and inspiring to exchange ideas and listen to everyone's point of view. It was a great learning experience, and I'm looking forward to participating more in the activities in the future.



Youth Ambassador's Report on the Talitha Kum Asia Conference in Jakarta

Mariel Rubio
Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassador



Journeying together as Talitha Kum Asia (TK Asia Conference Report)

Together with delegates from across Asia, we embarked on a beautiful and meaningful journey to Indonesia. The theme, “Compassion in Action,” touched our hearts deeply, reminding us to never leave our brothers and sisters behind. It was a call to strengthen our connections, walk with one another in love, and keep our hearts open to those who are suffering.

On the first day, we listened to the inspiring reports and updates from each Asian country network Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan. Each country shared their projects, challenges, and their ongoing fight against human trafficking. As we listened, one truth stood out: migration continues to be a common and pressing concern for all of us.

Sr. Abby then shared a powerful reflection connected to our theme, reminding us that “Compassion is not passive.” She encouraged us to live our faith actively, to be living witnesses of God’s love through action and service. Her message reminded us that even as new challenges arise from digital platforms and wars to the climate crisis, our call remains the same: to stay faithful, compassionate, and brave.

On the second day, we focused on how to empower survivors, a vital part of our mission. We learned the importance of using trauma-informed approaches, ensuring that every survivor feels seen, heard, and supported in their healing journey. It was truly a blessing to be surrounded by people who share the same passion and commitment. We were reminded once again how grateful we are to belong to the Talitha Kum network, a family united in faith, compassion, and hope.

The final day was filled with youthful energy and hope. We gathered with the Youth Ambassadors, as Indonesian youth joined young representatives from all over Asia under the theme “United Voice, Shared Actions.” They shared the realities of human trafficking in their own countries and worked together to design projects and solutions for the future. Seeing their passion and courage filled our hearts with joy and renewed hope.

As we concluded our time together, one message stayed with us, compassion must be lived every day. This journey reminded us that we are not just participants, but witnesses of love in action. We are called to keep showing up, to keep caring.



Talitha Kum Japan: New Steering Committee Members

Talitha Kum International, headquartered in Rome, was established in 2009 by the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). Today, it includes 841 religious institutes (91% women, 9% men) from 108 countries. Talitha Kum Japan welcomes both women's and men's religious to combat the issue of human trafficking together. We are pleased to introduce three sisters who recently joined our Steering Committee.



Sr. Michiko Miyawaki, F.M.A.

I joined the Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee this year. Talitha Kum Japan provides refuge and temporary shelter for people facing difficult circumstances—those who have lost their homes due to workplace injustice, those impacted by sudden hardships, and victims of human trafficking. We hope for a society where all, including migrants, may live, work, and find happiness in safety. Yet many are still forced into harsh and unfair situations. By offering shelter and support, we seek to live out Jesus' words:

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

(Matthew 11:28)



Sr. Yuko Mori, S.A.

Since 2023, I have been participating in Talitha Kum Japan through a network connecting about 70 women's religious congregations in Japan. At first, I did not fully understand why this movement is called *Talitha Kum* or how hidden and complex the issue of human trafficking is. But as I learned through the activities and online seminars, my own awareness has deepened. The more I learn about those who suffer from trafficking today, the more I hear the voice of Jesus saying, "**Talitha kum — rise.**" Let us rise together, hand in hand, with courage and hope.



Sr. Yukie Wakimura, F.M.A.

I have served as a steering committee member this year, mainly preparing newsletters. Previously, I was a recipient of information; now I am grateful to communicate and learn more deeply about the experiences and challenges of those working on the frontlines. Talitha Kum Japan, founded in 2017, continues to advocate for and protect the dignity of vulnerable people, especially women and young people. Even when challenges seem endless, I pray that we may continue forward with patience, unity, and hope. Even when the challenges seem endless, I hope to persevere with patience and hope, working together with all members and striving forward.

Motoko Yamagishi

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member



From August 27 to 30, the Talitha Kum Asia Network Conference was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. From Talitha Kum Japan, Ms. Mariel, representing the youth, and I participated. The overall theme of the conference was “*Compassion in Action: End Human Trafficking.*” More than 60 participants from 16 countries across Asia attended.

Reports from 16 Asian Countries

The conference opened with a ceremony and Mass, during which symbols from each country were offered for blessing. From Japan, we brought origami cranes as a symbol of peace.

Following the opening, there were six hours of country reports from South, Southeast, and East Asia. Asia is not only a migration destination but also a transit region for those heading to the Middle East and beyond. As a result, serious forms of human trafficking have emerged — including labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, child marriage and abuse, and fraudulent recruitment schemes that lead to exploitation. Behind these issues lie unsafe migration, poverty and inequality, conflict, and climate change. In recent years, online exploitation through digital platforms has also been increasing.

While the activities of Talitha Kum vary by country, they share common focus areas: awareness raising, victim support, advocacy, and network building. Situations in South and Southeast Asia are particularly severe, and because many religious communities in these regions operate with fragile financial foundations, the importance of mutual support across Asia and within the global network was strongly reaffirmed.

From Japan, we reported primarily on the labor exploitation faced by migrant workers, including technical intern trainees, and on the increasingly sophisticated online sexual exploitation of young women and children. We also shared that, despite insufficient governmental measures, NGOs and Talitha Kum Japan continue to carry out victim support and awareness-raising activities.

Talitha Kum’s Priority Issues

After the country reports, Sister Abby, the International Coordinator of Talitha Kum, delivered a keynote address. She noted that in Asia today, more sophisticated forms of trafficking and abuse are being carried out through digital platforms, and that people forced to flee due to war and climate change are facing new forms of exploitation. She also reported that Talitha Kum International reached 939,185 people in 2024 through prevention, networking, training, advocacy, capacity building, and victim support.



Building on this foundation, she presented three priority directions for 2025–2030:

1. Address the root causes of human trafficking and transform systems that create vulnerability.
2. Adopt a holistic, survivor-centered approach.
3. Broaden collaboration and partnerships.

The second day featured testimony and discussions with survivors, as well as reports on shelter work, empowerment programs for women and children, interreligious networking, and youth activities in Indonesia. Participants engaged in Q&A and group discussions to deepen their understanding.

Action Plans for Talitha Kum Asia and East Asia



On the third day, participants formulated regional action plans for East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, along with an overall strategy for Talitha Kum Asia.

Among the East Asian members (Korea, Taiwan, and Japan), there was a shared awareness that all three are host countries for migrants, making support for foreign victims a common priority. We emphasized the importance of shelters for victim protection and of youth-led awareness initiatives. We also discussed concrete steps to share information and build a youth network in preparation for World Youth Day in Korea two years from now.

For Talitha Kum Asia as a whole, the proposals were consolidated under the “Action Plan for Supporting and Empowering Survivors,” consisting of five key areas:

1. Formation (training for supporters and survivors, etc.)
2. Advocacy (including policy reform)
3. Networking
4. Youth Ambassadors
5. Communication

A working team was established to promote this plan. The conference concluded on the morning of the final day with a closing Mass, a meaningful conclusion to a fruitful gathering of Talitha Kum Asia.

Reflections

As a first-time participant, I was deeply moved by the opportunity to freely exchange experiences and insights with participants from many countries, even during breaks and meals. I was inspired by the strong faith of the sisters in Asia who continue their work under military regimes, in situations of overwhelming poverty, or under life-threatening conditions. I also found hope in the commitment and energy of the youth, and I was deeply touched by the warmth of all who took part. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone at Talitha Kum Japan for their support in making my participation possible.



Prayer Relay for the “World Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking” (February 8)



The Memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita, the “World Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking” (February 8), is approaching. On this occasion, *Talitha Kum International* will hold a “Prayer Relay,” connecting countries around the world through prayer. The theme and program for 2026 have not yet been announced, but we will share details as soon as they become available. We warmly invite you to join us.

Important Update: Bank Account for Donations to Talitha Kum Japan

We would like to inform you that the bank account for donations to Talitha Kum Japan will be changing. Talitha Kum Japan is seeking your generous support to sustain our ongoing efforts, including rescue operations for victims of human trafficking and awareness-building activities. Our work has always been, and will continue to be, made possible by your kindness and contributions.

Due to organizational restructuring at the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, the bank account used for donations to Talitha Kum Japan will be updated. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

The new account details will be provided in Talitha Kum Japan Newsletter No. 19, which will be released next year. A deposit slip will be included with that issue. In the meantime, we kindly ask that you hold your donations until the new account information is available.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support, and we ask that you stay engaged with our activities and continue supporting our mission in the future. Thank you for your understanding and commitment to our cause.

