

“ I CAME SO THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY”

(Jn 10:10)



Sr. Ayumi Nagase F.M.A

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

Pope Francis, when he called for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, invited us in this following manner: “How many uncertain and painful situation there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich!Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes to see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied of their dignity” (Misericordiae Vultus, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy 15).

God, the Creator of all life, has shown us through Jesus a just world in which each person receives life, and in abundance, and lives with dignity. However, the current situation seems to be far from God's will. What do you think when you look at the world, Japan, and your own surroundings? Is it a fair world where human life is valued and people can live with dignity?

As long as there are threats to life, inequality and poverty, discrimination, conflict, climate change, human trafficking, and exploitation, all people will not be able to live with dignity. There are many people in Japan now who are being treated unfairly. One may hear about this tragic situation and yet may not be directly involved in it.

What we can do now is to be concerned, to know, to pray and to do something, even if it is a small action. Our actions that can lead to the elimination of exploitation and discrimination, and the implementation of measures against human trafficking.



(At the Talitha Kum Asia Regional Meeting in Thailand with Sr. Hirota)

Talitha Kum Online Seminar in Spring 2023
“Trafficking of Japanese-Filipino Children (JFC) and their Mothers”

Sr. Kazuko Hasegawa RSCJ
Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, from 14:00 to 16:00, our seminar was held on the above theme, attended by nearly 200 people, including those who watched the program as a group. This time, the participants heard about the issue of trafficking in persons involving JFC mothers and children, the current situation and cases, and challenges for the future.

At first, Bishop Michiaki Yamanouchi, Chairperson of J-CaRM, gave his greetings, saying, "A long time ago, when I was 30 years old, I met Filipino members in Rome for the first time and was very surprised to see many Filipinos in a church near Termini station. Around 1997, I heard from a Filipino priest about a frightening experience he had late one night in Japan when he rescued a young JFC mother and her child from danger and immediately put them on a plane back home. At that moment, I decided to fight for the JFC mothers and children and other foreign nationals. I hope for the realization of God's Kingdom," he said.

In the first half of the seminar, Ms. Rieko Ito, Executive Director of JFC Network, gave a presentation titled "JFC's Hardship and Trafficking in Persons," in which she explained its establishment, the problems it is facing, and introduced some cases of trafficking in persons.

First of all, JFC refers to J (Japanese), F (Filipino), and C (Children) people, and the number of JFC mothers and children who came to Japan in the 1980s and returned homeland without their children's nationality after completing their visa status is increasing every year. The "JFC Support Network" was established in Japan through the "JFC Lawyers' Group" launched by 60 lawyers in 1993 and the "JFC Citizens' Network" in 1994. And in the Philippines the "Surigaya House" was also established in 1998 in Manila, because 75% of JFC mothers and their children are living in the Philippines. Many of them seek to see their fathers, be recognized and supported by their fathers, acquire Japanese nationality, divorce, etc. The new Nationality Law was amended in 2009, making it easier for many JFC and their mothers living in the Philippines to obtain Japanese nationality or residency status, depending on their legal conditions.

The JFC Network is therefore active in three areas: "legal support", "livelihood and educational support", and "awareness-raising". The activities were temporarily restricted due to Covid-19, so conducted only through ZOOM, but unexpectedly, its activities have spread throughout the Philippines through the Internet.

Targets of human trafficking

However, various unscrupulous agents have set their eyes on this area. They lure JFC and their mothers by offering visas to Japan, acquisition of Japanese citizenship, employment, and accommodation, and consequently cheat them out of huge debts. The agency then claims that "you signed the contract" and "the procedures were done in the

Philippines, so the Japanese agencies just collect the money". Another case of a young man was also introduced. After finally acquiring Japanese citizenship and starting to work in Japan, he was being extorted from his salary for a total of 30,000 yen per month, or nearly 500,000 yen in debt under an unknown name. Since the establishment of Talitha Kum Japan in 2017, cases of trafficking in persons against JFC and their mothers have become a new problem.

Future Challenges

It is the right of the JFC to wish to migrate to Japan, no matter where they live, and it is an important opportunity for the JFC to come to Japan safely and work, partly because of their longing for the country of their Japanese fathers, and to establish themselves. However, a major challenge is how to ensure safe arrival at Japan. It is necessary to raise awareness of their rights and need for Japanese language education. It is also needed to seek the way to create a system that allows JFCs to come to Japan directly connected with the church. "Nationality Orientation" program also began in 2022.



In the second half of the seminar, Ms. Atsuko Viscardo (SINAPIS, The Social Activity Center of Central Christian Church in Osaka) spoke about "Activities within and out the Catholic Church for the Gifu Incident". The "Gifu Incident" (as seen in the video "Targeted JFC ") is an example of a new type of human trafficking that made the headlines. Five JFC mothers and their children fled to a nearby Catholic church in the middle of the night after being forced to work unexpected customer

service for long hours and live in poor accommodations. In this case, 60 more people were exploited by the same agencies using the same tactics. In order to rescue them, SINAPIS had them stay in several churches and congregation shelters from one place to another, arranged schools for their children and received welfare and other government assistance to help them become self-sufficient.

SINAPIS accepted Vietnamese refugees, Japanese of South American descent and other, and even turned the entire building of the Osaka Theological Seminary into a shelter facility. SINAPIS (1) collaborated with the Gifu Prefecture Women's Consultation Center in public support to protect victims of trafficking in persons, (2) participated in a training meeting of ASEAN countries (theme: trafficking in persons) in 2017, and (3) still collaborate with the Philippine Consulate and the Gifu Prefectural Police. Based on its long history of activities, a new form of the Catholic Church working together with the government was introduced. Then a question-and-answer session followed.

In closing, Sr. Filo Shizue Hirota (Chairperson of Talitha Kum Japan) thanked for the participation of many sisters. She also pointed out, "the issue of the JFC and their mothers is a serious human rights issue in which the JFC are being 'ignored and denied their existence by irresponsible men. In today's reports, we see the model of the Synod of the Church where the Catholic Church was a place to 'warmly welcome' them. I hope that we will continue to follow the example of the Samaritan, and ask for the grace and freedom to live our mission to 'see,' 'know,' 'approach,' 'bend down,' and 'be close to life' of the wounded". Then she concluded the seminar in prayer.

Review of Shelter List

Sr. Atsuko Kano, AASC

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

Looking back to the past, in 2017, we asked the Women's Religious Congregations to cooperate with us in making a shelter list by filling-in the questionnaire that we were going to send them. That is because several Congregations, like a Good Samaritan, have resources in providing shelter to foreigners who have lost their place to live. But this information is not shared among each other. So, the need to share information has arisen

As a result, we received responses from congregations and were able to quickly provide safe places for women who had lost their place to live and go. What Jesus said and actually did 2000 years ago is still a reality until this present time: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). Meanwhile, in the questionnaire, we did not describe it as a "shelter" but as "a place where people can stay overnight in an emergency". That was to avoid preconceived notions of the need for professional involvement and facilities.

Each congregation was wondering; "We have a spare room at the convent, but how can we make use of it?" Each of the convents was struggling with this question and seeking to start activities for the future. And in fact, the list was of great help when the Talitha Kum members were consulted to figure out which convent to ask. The list saved women's life and newly born children. The circle of support expanded, as people consulted with each other and asked if further support was possible. Six years have passed since then. Due to the spread of COVID-19, Talitha Kum's activities to find "emergency accommodation" seemed to have come to a stop. However, because of the pandemic, many problems arose and were hidden from the surface.



In the post COVID-19, we are beginning to update the shelter list. We checked and analyzed it together, many times, to improve it. A question also arises, "Why only foreigners? Because of their foreign nationality, they are in a vulnerable position for many of them are not eligible for public assistance in Japan. As a result, their voices are not heard. Talitha Kum Japan will listen to their cries and walk with them. And we dream of doing activities for empowerment during their stay at the shelter. The phrase, "A dream one dreams alone is only a dream, but a dream we dream together moves toward realization," come to my mind. We hope you will think of this in your communities as you complete filling-in the questionnaire.

Talitha Kum has started delivering lectures!

Motoko Yamagishi

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

What do you think of when you hear the term "trafficking in persons"?

Some of you may say: "I thought that trafficking in persons was something far away from me because children were bought and sold in some distant countries," or "I knew that the Technical Intern Training Program was a problem, but I never thought it had anything to do with trafficking in persons", or "I had heard that young people in Japan were being sexually abused, but I thought there was no chance that I would be a victim". However, the reality is that trafficking in persons is happening all around us. What is important for each of us is to be aware of the current situation, have an interest and get involved. Without the awareness and action of every one of us, human trafficking will never end.

Moreover, how much do you know about the immigrants, refugees, and people with foreign roots living in Japan? Japan is currently home to more than 4 million immigrants, refugees, and people with foreign roots, and has already become an immigrant society where diverse people live together. However, that fact that they encounter various human rights violations in their local communities, workplaces, homes, and educational institutions, and are discriminated against for being minorities, is not well known. In order to eliminate such human rights violations and discrimination, it is necessary to be aware of the current situation and take action.



Therefore, Talitha Kum Japan has started "delivering lectures". There are two courses: "Trafficking in Persons Course" and "Immigrant and Refugee Course".

The "Trafficking in Persons Course" will be delivered by the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador team. The course begins with the question, "What is trafficking in persons? Then students will learn about trafficking in persons, which is also happening in Japan, and think about what they can do. The course is designed for younger children, such as elementary and junior high school students, with various activities.

The "Immigrants and Refugees Course" is taught by experts from Talitha Kum Japan. Students will learn about the realities of immigrants and refugees living in Japan and consider what to do. This course is also in the format of learning through activities and group work and mainly caters to children of relatively older ages, such as junior high and high school students.

On April 28, 2023, at the Gathering of Principals, Chancellors, Superiors, and Bishops organized by the Committee for School Education, Talitha Kum explained the delivery of lectures and presented a model class. These lectures can be also used for seminars at parishes or monasteries and Catholic schools. If you are interested, don't hesitate to get in touch with us through the QR code below.



International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking (Feb.8,2023)
Feedbacks on the Prayer Marathon by Talitha Kum International
and Translated Booklet for Vesper



Prior to the prayer marathon viewing, we had an evening prayer using the booklet that was sent to us. We were able to pray with the elderly Sisters in quiet contemplation. May we continue to "walk with dignity"!

Salesian Sisters



We are all grateful for the opportunity to participate in the online prayer marathon and the gathering of countries around the world on February 8. By praying together, we were able to expand and deepen the prayer of our communities. Here are some pictures of the simultaneous participation in the prayer marathon by each respective district and community.

Congregation of Sisters of Bethany



In the picture book "Mihariban in the Wheat Field" written by Beth Ferri, the "scarecrow," who always stands alone in the wheat field, breaks a branch supporting his back to save a crow's chick that has fallen from the tree, and raises it. This book made me question what I can do to help victims of human trafficking and refugees.

The Missionary Sisters of Christ the King



No matter how many times we hear or read the Pope's exhortation to "get up and go out," for those of us who are dragged down by the various cares of daily life, we tend to end up saying, "Let's pray for that person," even if we are temporarily moved by it, because it is so far from us.

For me, as an old sister with several illnesses, I tend to give up and say, "There is nothing more I can do." However, when I received this booklet, I felt deeply in my heart the thoughts of those who were involved in its compilation, and hoped to pass this impression to others.

On the one hand, I know that the things I buy in stores that seem "very cheap", had been made probably at the expense of child labor and human trafficking. I want to get what I want as cheaply as possible. What should we do about this? As a congregation, we need to seriously deepen this point.

Congregation of Daughters of Mary Immaculate

Voice of the Youth A journey towards human dignity

Nayeli del Rocio Soto Ortiz (Nana)
Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassador



Participating in Talitha Kum Youth has been one of the main experiences that have shaped my new life in Japan.

I arrived in Japan in August 2021 and started working as an ALT teacher in Miyagi Prefecture, where I remained until March of the following year. During this time, I was fortunate to receive the warmth and protection of the Sendai Catholic Church and an organization called "Kokoro no Minato." I am profoundly grateful to the priests and missionaries I encountered during this period, as they played a crucial role in helping me establish Japan as my new home.

Through this community, I had the opportunity to connect with other young Catholics, among them some Vietnamese, who had come to Japan through a labor exchange program. Japan aims to equip these youths with valuable knowledge that they can apply upon returning to their home countries. However, the reality is that many of them face unjust conditions and exploitation.

Witnessing such profound injustice and human trafficking among individuals so close to me sparked a desire within me to contribute towards improving these circumstances.

For various reasons, I subsequently relocated to Tokyo in June 2022, where I was introduced to the members of Talitha Kum Youth Japan. The organization's ideals and their focus on promoting labor justice in Japan, particularly for foreigners, resonated deeply with me.

I started the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador training program, which provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with like-minded young people from around the world who share the feeling of making a positive change. This enriching experience filled me with hope for a better future.

Nevertheless, we face significant challenges as young participants in Japan, which stem from three primary factors:

1. Japan's Catholic population is relatively small, posing unique obstacles and limiting our support network.
2. Most of us are foreigners who have not yet attained fluency in the Japanese language, which can create communication barriers.
3. Japan's bureaucratic nature can occasionally impede our efforts to carry out certain activities, hindering our progress.



Despite these challenges, we are working together to overcome these obstacles. We are actively working on projects aimed at expanding our membership base and addressing these hurdles head-on.

Personally, being a Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassador has been a transformative experience. The kind support and guidance provided by the organization have given me the strength to navigate the challenges that young Catholics face in their daily lives, especially in a country like Japan. I am proud to work with Talitha Kum and I aspire to be a catalyst for change with their continued support.

We Have Created De-Plasticized Original Goods!

The front of this **paper file** features the new logo of Talitha Kum Japan and an illustration of St. Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of human trafficking. The back side is blank.



This **ballpoint pen** is made of LIMEX, a material derived from limestone, which is soft to hold and smooth to write because it is a UNI product. On its reverse side is engraved



with the symbol of Talitha Kum Japan logo, with words “人身取引に終止符を！”, which means “Stop Human Trafficking!”.

Paper files will be distributed for a donation of 50 yen for two, and ballpoint pens for a donation of 100 yen or more per pen. Please contact Talitha Kum Japan Secretariat if you would like to donate.

Online Prayer Gathering on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (July 30)



July 30 is the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons designated by the United Nations. On this day Talitha Kum Japan held an online prayer gathering. This year's program after praying the Japanese translation of the “2023 International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, Vesper” prepared by Talitha Kum International, we shared about the Vietnamese Mass at Kawaguchi Church in Saitama Diocese followed by the activities of the youth group "Maikoi" as well as the legal and medical consultations held afterwards.

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.

~Japan Post Bank money transfer form is available at the J-CaRM Secretariat office~
Postal # 00110-8-560351

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