

# **MIGRANT MINISTRY** REPORT IN AFRICA **DURING THE** PANDEMIC CRISIS



**GOOD PRACTICES**  
**MARCH - DECEMBER 2020**



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# INTRODUCTION

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This report was commissioned by the Migrants & Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and compiled by the Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa (SIHMA). In recent years the Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa (SIHMA) has compiled two other Ministry Reports commissioned by the Migrants & Refugees Section looking at the different Roman Catholic Ministries across the African continent and the incredible work they are doing with respect to people on the move. The two reports were the *Migrant Ministry in Africa - Report 2017* and the *Migrant Ministry in Africa - Report 2019*. Both of which included consideration and expression of good practices by several Roman Catholic institutions or organisations in the reporting period. SIHMA is a non-profit organisation and research centre that was established in South Africa by the Missionaries of St. Charles/Scalabrinians, a Congregation of the Catholic Church devoted to the care of migrants, refugees, and seafarers. With its wide network of stakeholders, SIHMA can monitor major aspects of the migratory phenomenon and plays a key role in mediation between academic research and the work of civil society in this field.

This third report focuses on 40 good practices implemented in 2020 during the pandemic through the lens of Pope Francis's four verbs for migration: welcome, promote, protect, and integrate. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dire need for many vulnerable communities including many people on the move has been exacerbated. Many have been ill and/or lives have been lost. Economies have collapsed, and many organisations have had to reduce their operations or close altogether.

While migrants in many cases have been hit hardest by the pandemic, some migrants and refugees have shown remarkable resilience and initiative, allowing them to rise above adversity and excel despite the challenges. Likewise, many Catholic institutions and organisations have taken the pandemic in stride, adapted, and found ways to refocus their activities and projects to welcome, protect, promote and integrate people on the move in the context of the pandemic. SIHMA has had the privilege of reflecting on and compiling 40 good practices espoused

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by Catholic agencies assisting or working with people on the move during the pandemic. Of the 40 practices that were identified, 10 practices relate to each of Pope Francis' four verbs in response to migration: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.

To prepare this report, SIHMA, in collaboration with the Migrants and Refugees Section, wrote to over 160 different contacts from countries across the African continent - contacting people in 51 countries, namely: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Comoros, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Morocco, Niger, Namibia, Nigeria, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Western Sahara, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Following this, SIHMA received material on good practices during the pandemic from 25 of these countries, namely: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

Material was received from the Catholic community in Africa, including but not limited to Episcopal Commissions, dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, and migrant groups. In responding to the pandemic, Catholic institutions and organisations have been continually on the frontline of alleviating its consequences, providing essential services and assistance. In addition to the narratives on good practices in this report, there is a picture included from each good practice identified and in 25 instances further material in the form of an interview with the director or project manager coordinating the organisation that is performing the good practice. These interviews provide a brief description of the work with people on the move, the inspiration and vision for the work, the challenges faced because of the pandemic and the successes in response, the recent changes in the phenomenon of migration, and the future goal and vision for the project and activities.

This report does have some limitations. It is based on data collected and or supplied by other organisations, and the accuracy could not be independently verified by the Migrants and Refugees Section or

SIHMA. The amount and detail of the data received varied and hence in some cases the good practices material was reduced and summarised to ensure a reasonably equal opportunity for elaboration on each good practice. Another limitation is that in working with people on the move there may be organisations where the same refugees and migrants are accessing multiple services from sometimes the same and sometimes different providers. This may result in double counting and affects data validity because it means that the total number of individuals being assisted can be over-reported.

Despite these limitations or potential limitations, this report builds on the two reports before it, complementing and adding to the project started by the Vatican Migrants and Refugees Section aimed at coherently collecting, analysing, and presenting data on the work of and services rendered by the Catholic Church to migrants and refugees on the African continent. The report provides a clear and vivid picture of the inspirational and extensive Catholic Migrant Ministry in Africa, the development of good practices, and insight into how we welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants and refugees in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

His Holiness, Pope Francis in his message for the 107th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2021, said: "Salvation history... has a 'we' in its beginning and a 'we' at its end, and at its centre the mystery of Christ, who died and rose so 'that they may all be one' (Jn 17:21). The present time, however, shows that this 'we' willed by God is broken and fragmented, wounded and disfigured... evident in moments of great crisis, as is the case with the current pandemic... The highest price is being paid by those who most easily become viewed as others: foreigners, migrants, the marginalized, those living on the existential peripheries... The truth however is that we are all in the same boat and called to work together so that there will be no more walls that separate us, no longer others, but only a single 'we', encompassing all of humanity." Through the good practices reflected in this report, we see how Catholic communities and organisations from across the continent are working towards an ever wider "we" that is welcoming, promoting, protecting, and drives integration.

## INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis repeatedly shows his deep compassion for all migrants calling for the full embrace of people on the move: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate migrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking. In Africa, the Church's role as defender of migrants and refugees is more important than ever, both in the context of the pandemic and as many of those on the move continue to be subjected to abuse, exploitation, and violence.

The Catholic community actively provides pastoral care, social services, education, and advocacy for migrants and refugees in need. The work that Catholic agencies (dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, and NGOs) conduct throughout the African continent gives thousands of refugees and migrants hope, promotes their safety, and restores their dignity. This report aims to contribute to the public debate on contemporary migration by providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on the activities of Catholic organisations and agencies to welcome, protect, integrate, and promote self-reliance amongst refugees and migrants in Africa. It does this by highlighting good practices espoused and helps strengthen dialogue and collaboration between Catholic institutions on the continent. The report is detailed but not exhaustive and represents a fairly broad expression of the good practices implemented by Catholic organisations to assist and work with people on the move in Africa.

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# WELCOME

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## 1. BOTSWANA, DIOCESE OF FRANCISTOWN - CENTRE FOR IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS IN FRANCISTOWN AND DUKWI REFUGEE CAMP, DUKWI VILLAGE

**PROJECT NAME:** 2020 Activities - Migrants and Refugees

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Francistown and Dukwi Village, Botswana

**ORGANISATION:** Diocese of Francistown

**PERIOD:** 2020

The Catholic Diocese of Francistown is engaged in two centres that deal with migrants and refugees.

The first one is the centre for irregular immigrants in Francistown. Due to the pressure of people coming into the country without documentation, the government made the decision to build a centre to accommodate migrants for screening purposes. Initially, most of the migrants were economic refugees from Zimbabwe, but the country also experienced getting refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Families who are on the move have been kept in this informal prison with prison officers looking after them.

The second centre is the Dukwi Refugee Camp in Dukwi Village. While the first centre is a place to hold those waiting to be repatriated to their countries of origin, the second offers residence to those given a refugee status. The diocese operates under the theme: "People on the move are still with us." The diocese tries to reach and assist migrants on spiritual, moral and material levels. They are the face of the Catholic Church in this regard, and they give the Church's response to the challenges our society faces today. They are in the periphery trying to touch lives, real human lives, and guard against any xenophobic attacks on migrants.

## WELCOME

The year 2020 was a big challenge to the ministry, as the country tried to restrict movements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This greatly affected people's ability to visit the centres. However, they were not discouraged and continued to assist migrants - though not physically but through government officials. The pandemic had devastating effects. Precautions like imposed curfews and lockdowns left many unemployed, especially entrepreneurs with small- and medium-sized businesses. There were examples of unfair distribution of food parcels to the needy and no distribution of food parcels to poor non-citizens and irregular immigrants.

Lockdowns and curfews affected the ordinary citizens who survive by selling airtime or vegetables on the streets, and even though the government promised food parcels for these sectors, the majority of people were left without food. Caritas Francistown, in conjunction with non-governmental organisations, thus organised the distribution of food parcels to the needy and toiletries for non-citizens, and housed migrants at centres for irregular immigrants and at the Dukwi Refugee camp.

There is a religious sister who works at the centre with women and children to teach them basic life skills, like making beads with wastepaper. The children are taught how to read and write and are also provided with toys, as they spend many days without anything to do. The life skills are meant to empower the women to earn their own living when they leave the centre and have a **positive impact** on their future. Many of them are asylum-seekers and refugees waiting to be relocated to third countries. The Church sees to their basic needs, in particular toiletries and sanitary pads. At times the Church also assists in repatriating those who want to go back to their home country but cannot afford it, by collecting money from donors to pay for a bus ticket or flight.

### **These are the main points/observations for 2020 stressed by pastoral agents of migration in the Diocese of Francistown:**

- 1 Any movement of people across borders challenges the host countries, as the arrivals bring with them their own culture and traditions. New cultures and traditions can sometimes be in conflict with the host country's own culture and traditions. However, this leads to a cross-fertilization of culture and faith. Migration can therefore help religious and social cohesion but also put a strain on the resources of the host country.

- 2 We need to apply the Catholic Social Teaching principles of the sacredness of life, human dignity, the common good and option for the poor in our efforts to find new strategies to assist migrants and refugees. Seeing each other as created in the image of God helps to respect the rights of others, whether they are "regularly" or "irregularly" in the country. Are we our brother's keepers?
- 3 There can be a defensive behaviour from both governments and NGO's in dealing with the issues of refugees and migrants when they say things like "the refugees are to conform to the local law", or rather that "they do not comply with laws and regulations".
- 4 Refugees and migrants are to be seen with the eyes of humanitarianism. Most of them come from desperate situations, like in Zimbabwe, and need our sympathy and support.
- 5 Fear of the other generates wrong solutions like xenophobia, the closing of borders, or the refusal of boats to get to the shore in some Asian countries. We need to work with migrants' countries of origin to limit the "push factors" by promoting good governance and democracy in affected countries.
- 6 One practical way we can contribute to the creation of a friendly environment for uprooted people is the creation of Peace Clubs in our parishes and small Christian communities.
- 7 How can we promote compassion in our communities? We can make an effort to identify with migrants. No one is safe until we are all safe.

In conclusion, Uprooted and Vulnerable People (UVP) deserve better. Many are fleeing from persecution, war and poverty and are looking for peace and a new home. If they are not being welcomed and instead are chased away, they become double victims of the situation in which they find themselves.

As ministers to these brothers and sisters, we are to show compassion and understanding to their plight and help them to resettle or integrate in society. The services we provide help to restore their dignity. Let us continue to find new and creative ways to serve people. That's our mandate as the diocese.

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**FR. MOSALAGAE ANTHONY NGWENYA**

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DIRECTOR, DIOCESE OF FRANCISTOWN

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

My name is Fr Mosalagae Anthony Ngwenya, parish priest of St James parish and financial administrator of the Diocese. I work with people on the move as a director. I volunteered in conjunction with my former bishop, to see to it that people on the move are cared for. My inspiration came from the fact that I was once a migrant in other countries and the treatment and care I received taught me how to care for migrants and refugees in my own country. Through the principles of the sacredness of life, human dignity, the common good and option for the poor. I started in 2017 as a coordinator.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The pandemic greatly affected my work in the sense that it restricted movements in centres. We had to work through government officials, and spiritual support we offered through prayers and Mass had to stop. But we made sure that basic necessities would reach the people we serve. The pandemic greatly affected our ministry.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Migrants continued to receive their support except that some measures were beyond us like curfews and lockdown. But migrants, especially those in detention centres, continued to receive support.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Most countries closed their borders, including our country. There was a minimum of movement.

**- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?**

As I said before, any movement of people across borders challenges the host countries as the arrivals bring with them their own culture and traditions. These in turn challenge and conflict with those of the host countries. Refugees and migrants are to be seen with the eyes of humanitarianism. Welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants will lead to a cross-fertilization of culture and faith. All [people] benefit if given the benefit of doubt. Migration therefore helps religious and social cohesion.

**- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?**

The plans are to reinforce the ministry and for each parish to have a role. We work towards having a very strong diocesan structure after the installation of the bishop in support of migrants and refugees.

**- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?**

The ministry is alive. It only needs to be aligned to international bodies after proper structures are put forward and sanctioned by the diocesan bishop. There is hope in our ministry.

## 2. EGYPT, SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO - THE WORK OF SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO WITH AND FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN EGYPT

(ALSO PROMOTE, INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** The work of Salesians of Don Bosco with and for refugees and migrants in Egypt

**ORGANISATION:** Salesians of Don Bosco

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Egypt

**PERIOD:** 2020

The following is a description of the initiatives led and implemented by the Salesians of Don Bosco with migrants and refugees in Egypt, to improve their living conditions as a vulnerable and marginalized segment in the country. This was done mainly through educational and economic empowerment manifested in literacy programmes, after school support, skills development and entrepreneurial support in order to secure livelihoods.

The Salesians run 3 centres in Egypt through which they offer their services: (1) The Salesian Technical School in Cairo, established in 1926; (2) The Don Bosco Alexandria Institute-DBAI is an educational institution established in 1924 located in the heart of the city of Alexandria; (3) The Don Bosco Salesian Church in Zaitoun, established in 1988, is a centre providing spaces of exchange between Sudanese and Egyptian youth through recreational and educational activities. On a yearly basis, the centre welcomes around 200 Sudanese and 220 Egyptian youth who benefit from psychological counselling and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

**The Planning and Development Office (PDO)** of Don Bosco in the Middle East is headquartered in Bethlehem. In response to the need of a country office in Egypt, a local antenna was opened accordingly in January 2018. The PDO Middle East operates in all countries within the Middle East Province including Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. The PDO is engaged in strengthening the educational offering of Don Bosco institutes, enhancing opportunities in Don Bosco youth centres and providing livelihood and social support to refugees and migrants.

During **2020**, the Salesians executed **three separate** projects in Egypt which targeted **refugees and migrants**:

**A. 'The Sunrise Project for Cairo's Urban Refugees and Local Hosts'** took place from 1 August 2019 to **31 July 2020**. It was **entirely** financed by the US Dept. of State and implemented by **Salesian Missions**, noting that it has been running on an annual basis since **2014**. Moreover, the PDO of the Salesians Middle East Province was the project's coordinator.

Since the beginning of the 2019 financial year, the Sunrise Project team aimed to outperform previous years. After a successful outreach and registration period, 689 beneficiaries were enrolled in the project (**85% refugees**, 53% females). This included 629 who were registered for TVET courses and 60 for the microenterprise unit. Collectively, their households represent 1,332 indirect beneficiaries. However, the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the project's implementation and the achievement of target indicators. In mid-March 2020, the national government instituted a country-wide curfew and closed schools through the end of the project extension period in September.

The shutdown affected all aspects of the project, from the health and safety of holding livelihood training to the labour and market environments for finding employment and starting up micro-enterprises. As a result of the lockdowns, Sunrise staff swiftly transitioned to adapting project activities for online delivery, adjusting assistance, and heavily emphasizing health and safety precautions. The project timeline was also extended through September to allow more time for small group training activities and the coordination and distribution of much-needed cash assistance.

**Objective 1:** Increase sustainable livelihood opportunities for 1,200 **Sub-Saharan African refugees** and vulnerable Egyptians over the age of 16 through 3 months of market-linked technical vocational education and training.

The participants were 48% male, 52% female, 17% Egyptian and **83% refugee**. The provided courses included AutoCAD, Mechanics, sewing, oxygen welding, air conditioning, basic electricity, nursing and hairdressing. This brought the cumulative total of beneficiaries to 299 successful graduates.

**Objective 2:** To empower **600 participating TVET trainees** for successful employment outcomes by providing market access, entrepreneurship workshops, and valuable linkages to facilitate their transition to formal and informal job markets. Participants were 54% male, 46% female, 20% Egyptian and **80% refugee**.

## WELCOME

The economic empowerment and entrepreneurship training, along with the life skills and mental health training were adapted for online learning. Furthermore, topics on employability help enhance the job readiness of TVET graduates through learning CV writing, preparing for interviews and selecting a profession in the market. As an incentive for completing the livelihood training, toolkits were distributed to 195 of the highest performing trainees, 95 more than originally planned.

As for the seed grant micro-enterprise component of the project, 60 beneficiaries between the ages of 24 to 52 received \$650 in seed funding to start their small businesses. Nearly 2/3 were female and nearly 2/3 were refugees. 3/5 of entrepreneurs are their household's breadwinners. Collectively, the family members of the micro-entrepreneurs represent 305 indirect beneficiaries.

A little over half of the projects were home-based. Moreover, 75% of the entrepreneurs were able to keep working and have adapted their business during the pandemic. Finally, net profits for the micro-enterprises ranged between £100-2000 EGP, with an average of £500 EGP and nearly 1/3 of the small business owners have been able to start building up savings.

**Objective 3:** To improve the quality of life of 1,200 beneficiaries through coordinated health, nutrition, and wellness activities. The distribution of food vouchers and other allowances were delayed from the third quarter due to the pandemic. However, food and other assistance were modified to better meet their acute needs during the pandemic. Based on the number of training sessions attended, beneficiaries received grocery food vouchers of \$25. Additionally, 399 beneficiaries also received an extra \$118 in cash assistance to cover needs for housing, food, and hygiene. A total of 298 sanitisation kits containing PPE and hand sanitizers were distributed. The life skills component was re-designed to respond more fully to beneficiaries' needs. 149 beneficiaries attended life skills training in the fourth quarter, and cumulatively 437 beneficiaries attended life skills training. In this course, beneficiaries learned important life skills including self-awareness and communication. Also, a mental health component was added to promote positive stress reduction, healthy coping techniques, and anti-bullying practices.

The Sunrise Project has proved to encompass an array of good practices. The positive impact it had was manifested through 299 Sub-Saharan refu-

gees and vulnerable Egyptians that have acquired vocational training and successfully graduated from their respective courses; psychological support to refugees; hygiene and self-care support; and nutrition and medical support, which all had an instant and potentially long-term impact.

**B.** The following activities taking place in Alexandria and Cairo were financed by **Misiones Salesianas** in the framework of a comprehensive project and coordinated by the Planning and Development Office of the Salesians Middle East Province throughout 2020.

(1) Educational material (booklets, books, stationery) & school materials & clothes and shoes for poor kids: As COVID-19 has hit our beneficiaries, rendering them even more vulnerable, in order to lift off some of their financial pressure, 100 kids were supported with educational materials and stationery in addition to clothes and shoes to cover different needs. (2) Sports materials: Sports materials were purchased in order to improve the sports facilities and commence sporting activities at full capacity once the pandemic is over. (3) Financial help for medical assistance: **115 refugees** and 35 Egyptians were assisted through coverage of medicine costs, especially after the pandemic as they can't afford their medicines. Most of them are suffering from chronic diseases. (4) Food and snacks (Emergency from May): Since **May 2020**, **121 refugee** and 187 Egyptian families were helped to overcome the economic situation as most of those families lost their source of income. (5) Confronto Egypt **2020**: The confronto event is meant to be the communication bridge between the Salesians and the youth to deliver the Salesians' message and their principles. In **February 2020**, at Wadi El Natron in Egypt, the confronto was held for 3 days between 6-8 Feb. The event, which came under the slogan "Honest citizens and good Christians", was organised by the Salesians of the Middle East with the participation of 89 youths, both nationals and **refugees**, coming from different Salesian Houses in the Middle East and Italy. (6) Support: Psychological support in facing life's challenges and after-school support (Arabic Teacher & Mothers Literacy teacher) were provided, but due to COVID-19 those activities stopped in March and April 2020 respectively.

**C.** The project titled "**Educational Support to vulnerable Egyptian and Sudanese students**" was **supported by different Salesian NGOs and charities**, and was coordinated by the Planning and Development Office of the Salesians Middle East Province. The project took place in Don Bosco schools and institutes in Cairo and Alexandria.

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The Salesians intended to provide meaningful support to students by reducing the economic impact of education-related costs on their households, which are also considered indirect beneficiaries. The average beneficiary family size is estimated to be four members. Therefore, this support will serve around 700 indirect beneficiaries during the 2020/21 school year. In general, 4,624 indirect beneficiaries' quality of life improved through the strengthening of their children's skills and improving placement and employment opportunities, in response to a rapidly developing technological work environment. Although this particular project's beneficiaries were predominantly vulnerable Egyptians, **170 Sudanese students** between 8-18 years old attending the Don Bosco Centre in Zaitoun received financial assistance through scholarships to continue their enrolment in their respective private and public schools.

Projects "B" and "C" have had a positive impact on the lives of direct and indirect beneficiaries evident as scholarships have lifted a substantial degree of financial pressure that's levied on the economically vulnerable households whose qualifying members have been the scholarships' recipients. Financial strain was lifted with a mid- and long-term effect of preventing drop-outs and facilitating a path towards graduation. The activities undertaken are all replicable in other similar contexts.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

**ANGELO LAUDANI**

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PROJECT DIRECTOR (SALESIAN FATHERS IN EGYPT)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

In the institutes, we offer two kinds of pastoral assistance: pastoral assistance to the students at the school and for the Christian children who come to the Oratory at the weekend. A set of socio-pastoral activities are carried out every year with kids and youth by strengthening the aspect of evangelization. We organise spiritual activities, like Holy Mass, prayers, guidance, and religious education. During the summer, generally school camps are held by creating mixed school camps between

South Sudanese people and Egyptians, involving them in genuine competition to create integrative and collaborative dynamics. The inspiration is Don Bosco's charism, where Salesians are following the example of Don Bosco, called to the mission of caring for the youth by welcoming and educating them, as well as living in a friendly and joyful environment.

The presence of the Salesians in Egypt dates back to 1896. For the past almost 100 years Salesians have been caring for the youth who come to the Don Bosco Institutes in Cairo and Alexandria. The institutes, from the day of their foundation, have cared for immigrants. Initially they were Italian Immigrants, but now they come from a mixture of countries.

Several of the projects are implemented to support the Don Bosco Institutes in Egypt in providing high quality education and livelihood support to people of concern and vulnerable Egyptians. Within the projects, I am covering the position of project coordinator officer with the duty of ensuring that all the projects are running smoothly, on-time and within the resources available. I also design and plan the projects, monitor achievements, coordinate meetings and oversee members of the project team.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The operations have been severely affected in several aspects: (1) Any physical activity like TVET has been hindered and hardly implemented remotely as most components of the technical and vocational courses included a practical learning portion which required the presence of the trainees. (2) Several challenges were found in the constraints faced during our implementation phase, such as educating learners remotely (especially vulnerable groups), the training curricula not being adopted for online teaching and the difficulty of planning with a clear long-term vision because of the level of uncertainty of the pandemic. The adoption of new measures brought about a slowing down of the planned project activities stretching the timeline. Therefore, the project methodologies have been reviewed and the timeline changed, the target decreased in order to be reached to be able to serve those in remote environments. Financial resources have also been reallocated to be adopted to the contingency. (3) Due to the pandemic, all the implemented operations needed more financial resources and manpower to be able to fulfil the activities online or remotely, which expanded our financial demand. The need to be equipped with more appropriate technology devices

for working remotely - due to the lack of the necessary equipment and software to harmonize the coordination and to cover the existing gaps - has been essential to facing the shortage of useful and relevant devices. (4) With regard to the vulnerable groups, the challenges can be divided into major and minor ones. Major challenges include losing jobs and not being able to pay rent, get adequate food, access sanitation items, get vaccinated or protect themselves. Minor challenges include losing hope to continue in scholarship or not being able to focus during online sessions. They even asked to take the food vouchers as money to be able to spend them for housing purposes.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Despite the contingency, all the target groups of the projects have been reached to have online life skills and mental health sessions. They also received food vouchers and hygiene items through other vendors we cooperated with, and the seed fund owners have been able to show their products online through a page.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The UNHCR unfortunately stopped their operations for 6 months, except for emergency responses - where a lot of pending cases have not received reviewed cards due to the operational workload that rendered timely delivery of reports unworkable. Therefore, almost 8,000 cases have been waiting for renewal. In the last quarter, the operations started to function again quickly allowing for the renewal of a good number of cards.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The suggestion would be to be convinced of the mission of Christ by creating a good relationship with the Lord Jesus as well as having a generous heart that welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates our migrants and all the persons in need.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The future project will focus on improving the living standards and inclusiveness of 'people of concern' and vulnerable Egyptians by giving a contribution to the expansion of their socio-economic opportunities through better education and protection interventions. This will be done by continuing to offer Technical and Vocational Education Training, career guidance and soft skills training, entrepreneurship skills, psychological counselling, healthcare and basic necessities. High attention will still be given to train animators and catechists to create a more welcoming and integrated environment at the Oratory between Egyptians and refugees by involving them in interreligious and intercultural dialogue and sports.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

That the Church will be able to be faithful to the evangelical values and mission even when the odds are against it.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: Promoting and Welcoming to a lesser extent.**

### 3. GABON, ARC-EN-CIEL CENTRE - RECEPTION AND SUPPORT FOR MINORS, VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

(ALSO PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Reception and support for minors, victims of trafficking and all forms of violence

**ORGANISATION:** Arc-en-Ciel Centre, Carmelite Sisters

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Gabon

**PERIOD:** 2020



Childhood is a sensitive theme everywhere. Every child needs adult nurturing, guidance and protection. However, if the absence of any of these three factors is felt by the child, this period can be frustrating, devastating and full of fears. And, rejections and deficiencies can have emotional and behavioural consequences. This is the target group of the association under the initiative of the Carmelite Sisters of Charity Vedruna, who carry out actions in favour of children in difficulty on four continents including Africa.

Their mission is to work for the **protection** of children in Gabon through concrete actions; to raise awareness among thousands of people and train those involved in child protection; to help improve the status and future prospects of minors at risk or victims of violence; and to set up educational support and manual activities.

The main actions of the project of Arc-en-Ciel included **reception and support** for minors who are victims of trafficking and all forms of violence, living on the streets or in conflict with the law. The minors benefit from a reception and care service with or without accommodation in our reception facilities, supervised by a professional and multidisciplinary team. Complementary to the reception service there is the work to **promote** the social, family, educational and/or professional **(re)integration**. The actions fall within the legal framework of the international conventions ratified by the Gabonese State and the national standards relating to children's rights.

As mentioned above, the project's main activities were: receiving, taking care of, accompanying and rehabilitating (inserting) the most vulnerable young girls, particularly victims of trafficking, maltreatment and/or abuse, from the age of 7-18 years old, with a reception/housing capacity of 30 people. During the year 2020, the house received and sheltered 27 internally trafficked girls and 3 externally trafficked girls. In addition, a young girl victim of trafficking was supported and accompanied for the delivery of her child due in March. The children have been monitored by specialised educators, social workers, psychologists and accompanied by a fair-minded person. In the centre, the children were also involved in different activities such as sewing, literacy, leisure activities, sport and many other activities, supported by a team of 30 professionals and 16 volunteers.

The project noted good progress in the sewing training and patchwork activity led by volunteers, as well as school activities such as craft activities. There was good team cohesion and a strengthening of the bond between the child-carers/agents and the children. They started to confide more in the team, proving that they now trust the staff.

On the other hand, the pandemic particularly affected the activities, which explained a certain decrease this year. Firstly, the children felt isolation because of the confinement. The outings were limited especially as no 'pass' was given to manage the emergencies at the centre during the total confinement. Secondly, the pandemic caused a slowing down, even a suspension, of activities. In particular, trafficked girls have not been able to travel because of border closures. Some of them have been in the centre for two years. Finally, despite the increase in capacity, the organisation was understaffed due to the mass arrival of trafficked girls and women. At this time, the project had to face the sudden departure of the reassigned state agents who have not been replaced until December.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### SR. JULIENNE

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PROJECT COORDINATOR (CARMELITE SISTERS IN GABON)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

My work in the pastoral care of displaced people in Gabon is a work of prevention and protection of victims of violence and trafficking. I give hope to these children in order for them to one day see their families again and to be autonomous. I do this with motivation and love. I also advocate with local and international authorities to defend their rights. This work was inspired by a meeting of nuns in Gabon (URGA), with the aim to help these minors. It was also inspired by our founder, Joaquina de Vedruna. I always thought of myself being at the service of people in difficulty. I started working on this project in 2007 and I am the Coordinator of the Arc-en-ciel Centre.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our activities increasingly slowed down. We therefore had to adapt and organise the work on a rotational basis, and the caregivers/agents had to put in place a new operating schedule. As for the vulnerable group of people we served, they faced several challenges during the pandemic. First of all, the biggest challenge was to get the group applying and respecting the COVID-19 preventive measures and to make them understand to stay within the structure and not have contact with people coming from outside. Getting them to support each other and overcome worries and stress was very important for the cohesion of the group of people we followed on a daily basis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Among the successes was that the migrants in the centre had to convey awareness messages about COVID-19 through a song. Another suc-

cess was that the permanent psychological follow-up enabled some migrants to overcome their stress caused by staying for weeks without any contact with the outside world, which was leading to stress and frustration. In addition, the group of migrants learned to support each other during the period of total confinement.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Regarding the changes in the phenomenon of migration in our country during the period of COVID-19, we can say that there was not a big change. We noticed that the phenomenon was increasing more and more in spite of the sensitisation campaigns on the restrictions and the arrest of the migrants' boats on the country's coasts. Our organisation, which works to protect vulnerable children, has reacted by welcoming children who are victims of irregular immigration with the aim of ensuring that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is respected, accompanied by the need for social programmes.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The advice we would give to people who wish to contribute to the realisation of Pope Francis' four verbs is that it is important that each person learn to empathise with the pain of the other and to uphold the fundamental rights of human beings.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Regarding the projects and interventions planned for future work, there are more training workshops on migration and we will advertise the phenomenon through mass awareness campaigns. We hope soon to be able to build the "Arc-en-ciel Village" on the land that has been offered to us in Akanda. This will be an opportunity for the children to blossom in a more open environment conducive to their development and to become aware of their place in society while being inspired by Gabonese and human values. In addition, the field will be an opportunity to increase the children's skills, especially in agriculture, through training and income-generating activities. These activities will allow the children to develop financial autonomy, in an entrepreneurial learning process.

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***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

On this point, we have a wish that we want to share: to succeed one day in eradicating the phenomenon of irregular immigration and this will only be possible by putting an end to social inequalities.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verb: protect.**

## 4. MOZAMBIQUE, SCALABRINIAN SISTERS - WELCOMING YOUNG MIGRANTS ON THE MOVE

(ALSO PROTECT, PROMOTE AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Welcoming young migrants on the move and repatriated Mozambicans from South Africa

**ORGANISATION:** John Baptist Scalabrini Centre, Scalabrinian Sisters

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Ressano Garcia, Mozambique



In 2019, the Scalabrinian Sisters celebrated 25 years of missionary presence in Ressano Garcia, a border region between Mozambique and South Africa. With the goal of promoting human life, the missionaries work within the fields of education, health and social-pastoral care through the John Baptist Scalabrini Centre and the Casa de Acolhida Maria Mãe dos Migrantes<sup>1</sup>. The Sisters are currently working with **young migrants and children and Mozambican nationals repatriated from South Africa**. Their work combines immediate assistance and long-term actions through humanitarian aid with basic needs such as food, clothing and transport, while encouraging access to full education. In addition to basic education, the mission in Ressano Garcia offers professional careers to young migrants through vocational workshops, and promotes socialisation and recreational, cultural and leisure activities.

The main goal of the project in Ressano Garcia, Moamba district, was to raise awareness in the community about social problems affecting the rights of children and adolescents, in order to respond to the challenges of the migratory reality, to raise attention to child abuse and labour exploitation and to provide assistance, advice, documentation, guidance and referral to children and adolescents on the move. The objectives of

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/centroscalabrini/>

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the project increased with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, including awareness raising campaigns in the community about symptoms, forms of contamination and prevention measures to reduce the spread of the virus, as well as distribution of hygiene and prevention material.

Among the key partners and stakeholders that helped and supported the project were Mozal, Khandlelo, Á.G.A.P.E, MISEREOR and Pfuka Lixile Association. The Administrative Office in Ressano Garcia (Moamba District and Maputo Province) is located on the border with South Africa. Some of the problems in this area are the irregular transit of people, child street vendors are common, as well as the sale and consumption of drugs. Many people live from informal trade, mainly women buying goods in South Africa and reselling them in Mozambique. There are also adolescents who are victims of informal child labour in the border corridor, prostitution and sexual abuse. On the other hand, adults abuse alcoholic beverages, creating conflicts and problems in family relationships and increasing domestic violence.

In this reality, we also had to handle the world pandemic of COVID-19 and the dissemination of tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS. Moreover, rubbish contributes significantly to the emergency and worsening of diseases such as malaria, cholera and diarrhoea, which are sometimes fatal and directly or indirectly affecting the entire population in Ressano Garcia and its surroundings. These diseases are the main cause of abandonment and orphanhood of minors. In this area, migrant teenagers are also victims of human trafficking, as well as being vulnerable to the new disease of Coronavirus, due to lack of protective material such as masks, alcohol-gel, soap and often lack of water for hand washing in their workplace.

In addition to that, the health service is precarious, as is the water that still does not reach the supply points. Where the water does reach, it is with great deficiency and with constant power cuts. Another challenge experienced in Ressano Garcia was the negative impact of the border's closure on the informal trade, which is the basis of the economy in this area. Many families were experiencing malnutrition and vulnerability to diseases, as well as an increase of the number of thefts, prostitution and other mechanisms of survival.

In the light of these problems and challenges, the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, in partnership with Save the Children, organised various **awareness raising campaigns**, reaching 140 families, 244 ado-

lescents, and 161 adults. In these interventions, hygiene and protection materials were distributed: 2,500 face masks, soap, alcohol gel units for young street vendors and schools in the area. Some of these campaigns were in partnership with Khandlelo and Pfuka-Lixile Association. Part of the project also included **vocational courses** such as: IT, handcraft, cutting and sewing, haircut, English and ice-cream making lessons for migrant adolescents. Among these, IT and English courses were run in an **innovative** way through the **WhatsApp platform**. This initiative involved the recording of Informatics and English lessons and the creation of a study group on WhatsApp for a total of 23 adolescents and young people, who were accompanied with distance learning. A social psychological change was seen in the migrant children and adolescents, mostly in those who benefitted from the professional courses, because of the different vision they received in learning knowledge for a promising future.

Among other activities, there were face-to-face home visits and counselling on COVID-19 prevention measures, interaction with the local government on COVID-19 protection strategies, the provision of the prevention material itself (masks, soap-bingo and alcohol-gel) and the supervision of remote learning for young migrants. Part of the counselling intervention was also aiming to support the return of migrant adolescents to their homelands. The Sisters engaged in constant visits to the host families and employers of migrant children in the neighbourhoods, as well as joined visits with the local head of social welfare.

There were various challenges and cross-cutting issues that appeared during the activities developed by the project during the COVID-19 period. Some of the most important projects were: the change of residence of children and adolescents visited by the activists in the neighbourhoods due to lack of understanding between the foster family and the adolescent, where they have resorted to independent businesses; insufficient access to information regarding COVID-19 protection; lack of work due to the closed borders; insufficient food supplies in the families and lack of support from government and other NGOs; and the lack of compliance with the rules defined by the State of Emergency.

Working together in the fight against COVID-19 in Ressano Garcia was one of the solutions to face the pandemic, as well as the awareness raising and the dissemination of information regarding the reality of the virus in the local community through integration of neighbourhood leaders. Home visits with dialogue and guidance for adolescents and families, as well as in the talks, helped also to address protection from COVID-19.

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**SR. CARLA LUÍSA FREY BAMBERG, MSCS**

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PROJECT COORDINATOR (SCALABRINIAN MISSIONARIES  
IN RESSANO GARCIA, MOZAMBIQUE)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I am Sr. Carla Frey, Scalabrinian missionary. I started working on this project in March 2017. The work of the John the Baptist Scalabrini Centre is welcoming young migrants on the move and repatriated Mozambicans from South Africa. The inspiration and vision I have in the mission is to feel and understand the needs of the migrants and learn cultural richness from them.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The main challenges we faced during the pandemic were the increase of living costs and the value of food, the lack of work, the hunger, and the lack of means for the prevention of COVID-19. Even though we had funding for some projects in the prevention of COVID-19 with hygiene materials, food was lacking. There were many early pregnancies, because many girls prostituted themselves to get some money to help their families after the schools closed.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

We continue to assist children on the move in the distribution of material for the prevention of COVID-19. After 7 months, the Scalabrini Centre reopened its professional training activities with the approval of the Ministry of Health and Education. Thus, the school tutoring classes, computer and English classes and the carpentry workshop continued with the participation of 150 young migrants.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

In the intervention with repatriated migrants, we had to stop because the migrants coming from South Africa were arriving most of the time sick and COVID-positive, so the government became responsible for the reception of these migrants.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

To carry out the mission or the work with love and self-giving, without expecting anything in return, seeing in each migrant the face of Jesus in our lives, and let this encounter make us more human.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The projects are to continue the work with unaccompanied migrant children, innovate an intervention with migrant women, a very vulnerable group forgotten by civil organisations, and to look for more professional training.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

We only love what we know, and we give our life for a great cause. The hope is that there will be more people committed to the cause of migrants, especially those most in need.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.**

## 5. NIGERIA, TERTIARY SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS (TSSF) - HEALTH, EDUCATION, FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO CAMEROONIAN REFUGEES

(ALSO PROTECT AND PROMOTE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Health, education, food distribution to Cameroonian refugees

**ORGANISATION:** Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis (TSSF)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Nigeria

**PERIOD:** 2020

The crisis in the South West and North West Regions in Cameroon, locally termed the 'Anglophone crisis', started in 2016 and escalated as an armed conflict by 2017 between government forces and pro-independence activists. The crisis has been characterized by lots of violence with disparaging consequences: burning of villages and schools, burning of offices, health centres and hospitals, abduction and killing of civilians. It is estimated that 200 villages have been completely razed and more than 1,200 people killed between 2017 and 2018. This escalating violence has caused many people to flee their homes, villages and towns to other communities and nearby countries. The most vulnerable were elderly people, women and children. They survived under very deplorable conditions; many children were malnourished and many exposed to malaria and diarrhoea. Pregnant women did not have access to health facilities for pre-natal clinics. Nigeria has registered over 60,000 refugees with more than 75% living within host communities, mostly in the semi-urban and rural areas as well as border communities. They find themselves in precarious situations and face many challenges.

The Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis at the General Chapter of 2019, attentive to the needs of our times, opened to the will of God and faithful to the spirituality of our Foundress, Venerable Maria Hueber, identified the plight of refugees, migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, and those who are trafficked and decided to extend the scope of their pastoral ministry to these groups. In this way, the Congregation gave concrete responses to the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, to listen to "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor", as well as to his 2018 message on the 51st World day of Peace on "migrants and refugees: men and

women in search of peace". The Tertiary Sisters have been rendering services to the refugees in the Dioceses of Ogoja, Calabar and Jalingo, border dioceses with the two Anglophone Regions of Cameroon.

The activities carried out included health, education, distribution of food and other items and empowerment through mini self-reliant projects like agriculture, sewing, food and nutrition, repairs of bicycles etc. The Bishop of Jalingo appreciated the work and understood the decision to respond in a concrete way to this newly discerned mission and invited the congregation officially to the diocese.

Between January and July 2020, numerous activities took place in the various communities. A **healthcare intervention** was held in the communities of Sabongida, Yokuber, Sunkuri, Bissaula, Mberogo, Toso, Shibung, Birama, Kashibinla, Takum, Banasaki, Bariki, offering health talks, medical consultation and drug dispensation, and more than 2,200 refugees benefited from these services. The communities of Takum, Bariki, and Bali were assisted with **non-food and food distributions**: mosquito nets and attire (clothes and shoes), as well as relief kits (mats, blankets, etc) and food packages **for newly arrived refugees and those in special/urgent needs**. During the month of May, the communities of Ikyogen and Benue also received **food and nutrition**, supplying food for 209 refugees. In some of these communities mentioned above, a **livelihood programme was also put in place**, providing financial support to promote small businesses. More than 250 refugee households have benefited from this service. Furthermore, 5 refugees have benefited from the **Economic Empowerment** Programme, which provided rental agricultural farmland to enable refugees engaged in crop cultivation. Finally, **psychosocial support** was also offered with spiritual counselling, home visiting, and preparing Catholic refugees for sacraments. In order to reach out to rural communities, the **healthcare programme was run** in the communities of Sarkaka, Warkaka, Nyuyaji and Mbar, supplying drugs with a *Mobile Mini-Medical Dispensary Unit* (MDU) that served more than 1,500 refugees, as well as the **livelihood** programme to provide financial support to promote small businesses.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has made the situation worse, and some of the challenges faced during the project were the mobility and socialisation restrictions. Most of the villages hosting refugees in Nigeria are border villages and this was requiring long distance travelling on very challenging roads in order to reach the target groups. In the rainy season it

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was almost impossible to take the roads and the villages were far apart, which made it necessary to have a stronger vehicle. Besides that, there was a problem dealing with some road controls whose interest was not to ensure the safety of road users but to extort money from them: a lot of bribery and corruption. In order to reach some villages, it was also necessary to sail on locally made canoes for an hour.

Telephone communication was another big obstacle to the smooth execution of planned activities because most of the villages did not have mobile telephone networks. These villages had to be visited ahead of schedules in order to communicate the programme and gather beneficiaries. Moreover, as the crisis in Cameroon was continuing, each day more and more refugees were coming in. Another challenge was that we came across many cases of teenage pregnancies and orphaned children during the outreach programme.

To ensure that refugees continue to live a dignified life, the Tertiary Sisters adopted strategies and good working relationships with the host communities. Some of the encounters with community leaders yielded immediate results that would in a long run help refugees to sustain their lives and be self-reliant. This was the way adopted to realise the vision statement of **welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating**.

Some of the landmark sustainable results included the **creation of strong relationships with:**

- Nigerian immigration officials: by personal encounters, the plight of the refugees was presented to them and they promised to safeguard the rights of the refugees in their various communities, and they encouraged referring the refugees to the offices for proper documentation.
- The hosting communities: meetings were made to offer pieces of land for refugees to cultivate crops or gardens to be able to sustain their lives.
- Church leaders: it was possible to locate various church denominations and refugees were encouraged to be active members.
- Local and community health personnel: a link was identified and created between the refugees and the health facilities in the villages.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**SR. MARY NYUYEM**


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TEAM LEADER AND PROJECT MANAGER (TSSF IN NIGERIA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

The Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis assist Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria with basic foodstuffs, medical services, relief material and counselling services. We were inspired by the charism and the spirituality of our founder, St Francis, and our Mother Beginner, Maria Hueber, to take care of the poor and the vulnerable of the society and our vision is to welcome, protect, promote and make them sustainable in our own little way we can. We started working with the refugees in Nigeria from 2018 but I personally started in 2019 till present and I am the project's manager.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

We were seriously affected by the pandemic because some of our donors were no longer viable enough to continue with their financial support. During the worst of the crises, movement was restricted, which became very difficult for us, and the aspects of social distancing made matters worse for us to come in contact with the refugees. Most of the vulnerable suffered from hunger and severe sicknesses.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

We have empowered some of the refugees with working tools as well as financial support, brought some back to life through medical assistance and feeding, psychological healing and have restored hope to so many of them.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The refugee situation is too poor because the host has its own internal challenges such as fighting against terrorism, secession activists, economic crisis etc. We were focused on food distribution, medication, economic empowerment of the refugees through capacity building and material support as well as financial education and support programmes.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

They should promote UNHCR's policy on 'Global Compact for Refugees' as it's the best strategy to welcome, protect, promote and integrate refugees into the host community toward self-reliance from government dependence.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Our plan is to directly or indirectly (financial, economically, vocational) empower at least 1,000 Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria by the end of 2025. In the future, with the necessary financial assistance, we would like to continue the following initiatives: the **economic empowerment** (with cash and tool-based intervention), the **agricultural activities** (the land is very fertile and could help sustain them), and the **education of children** (this is one of our dreams to offer educational facilities for hundreds of children). In addition to reaching and serving more people, we would like to improve the means of transport in order to access those communities which are inaccessible by car, and the urgent need of a stronger car is necessary. Finally, we have the plan to train skilled volunteers in order to become team members.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

There is a need for a strong, cordial relationship between the host community and refugees as well as management of refugees and including government sectors, UNHCR and her partners, etc.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and promote.**

## 6. SENEGAL, CARITAS DAKAR - POINT D'ACCUEIL POUR RÉFUGIÉS ET IMMIGRÉS (P.A.R.I.)

(ALSO PROTECT, PROMOTE AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Point d'Accueil pour Réfugiés et Immigrés (P.A.R.I.)

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas Dakar

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Dakar, Senegal

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020

Like all countries in the world, Senegal has also experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. The project's target group (refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants), which is very vulnerable, has been very much affected by this pandemic. Thus, Caritas, through Point d'Accueil pour Réfugiés et Immigrés - P.A.R.I. (Welcome Point for Refugees and Immigrants), had to organise several good practices and interventions for migrant families.

First of all, we supported the national awareness raising campaigns. Thanks to the State of Senegal through the Service National de l'Education et de l'Information pour la Santé - S.N.E.I.P.S. (Education and Information National Service for Health), P.A.R.I. was able to distribute flyers and posters to migrants/refugees/asylum-seekers to raise awareness about the pandemic. The same posters and flyers were available at the P.A.R.I. for visitors. P.A.R.I., through Caritas Senegal, received a significant batch of anti-COVID material and kits to protect the staff.

Secondly, P.A.R.I. organised the distribution of hygiene kits to migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeker families in the proximity. These hygiene kits were composed of hydro-alcoholic gel, soaps, bleach, gloves, protective masks, and detergents.

Because of the state of emergency and the curfew imposed by the administrative authorities, many migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers were unable to generate incomes and it negatively affected their households. Many could no longer exercise their trades in the informal sector (small businesses of various products, sale of second-hand clothes, etc.). These small income-generating activities, funded by P.A.R.I. through donors, had enabled many families to survive. In addition, P.A.R.I. organised campaigns to distribute food kits with basic foodstuffs:

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rice, sugar, milk, pasta, oil, etc. and, on the other hand, the distribution of enriched infant flour for children in order to prevent malnourishment during lockdown and the pandemic.

P.A.R.I. also received many requests from migrants for rental payments. Due to the decline, or even absence, of incomes in some households, some families have accumulated unpaid rent arrears. Thanks to mediation with landlords or real estate companies, P.A.R.I. was able to settle some cases and granted families financial envelopes for the payment of a few monthly rent instalments. However, this was not possible in other cases where the arrears had exceeded 3 months. In those situations, P.A.R.I. invited migrants to find a different solution by moving.

During the period from March to December 2020, migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers approached P.A.R.I. with requests, which included health care. Some of them requested medical assistance, such as consultations, medical examinations, and the purchase of medicines. With the anti-COVID health protocol put in place by P.A.R.I., some requests were redirected to more equipped health structures in order to detect possible suspected cases of coronavirus diseases. P.A.R.I.'s intervention also contributed to the reinforcement of the protection policy for migrants through the distribution of hygiene kits, antiseptic products, bleach, and other hygiene items.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, P.A.R.I. continued to support migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers through the Migrant Education-Formation-Sensitisation Programme, (*programme Education-Formation-Sensibilisation des migrants* - PEDFORSE). This was reflected in providing scholarships to children and students: students were granted aid to pay their rentals (1 to 2 monthly payments), financial envelopes were given to migrant students for the purchase of internet connection kits in order to be able to continue their online education, as well as transport grants to students for administrative procedures.

In conclusion, Caritas Senegal, through P.A.R.I. organised several interventions from March to December 2020 that enabled it to support more than 200 families of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers from various countries and therefore more than 600 refugees and migrants, including children. These good practices have been achieved thanks to the international support and financial and technical donors, and internally with the collaboration of the National Caritas Secretariat, who showed active solidarity and support during the pandemic period.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

## ALOISE SARR

PROJECT COORDINATOR (P.A.R.I IN SENEGAL)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

After 6 years as diocesan vice-president, the Diocese of Dakar was thinking about finding a solution to the problem of refugees and immigrants by creating P.A.R.I., and I was selected for this job. At the beginning, my job was to welcome migrants, to listen and to create an individual file for each case, to reflect with them on small projects (tout-petits projets - T.P.P) for financing which were our privileged instrument to make them aware of their need of self-care.

Many of them during the interviews were talking about housing because they were homeless, others showed scars on certain parts of their bodies and needed care, others had administrative problems, etc. In our initial objectives, we had to go to the places of deprivation of liberty with the chaplaincy to visit the migrants, give them moral support and see how to support them in their reintegration if not expelled from the country. As it was difficult for a permanent staff member to do all this amount of work alone, we started to recruit volunteers and trainees, and I became their supervisor and now I am the P.A.R.I. coordinator.

Our inspiration and vision came from the fractious conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and other conflicts in the sub region. Refugees were numerous in Dakar, not to mention immigrants from Guinea, Mali and many other neighbouring countries. Senegal has always been a hospitable country (Téranga). Migrants landing in Dakar were knocking on the nearest parish's doors. In order to discern the vulnerable cases and coordinate the work, the parish priests and nuns of the communities decided to set up a reception point for refugees and immigrants called **Point d'Accueil pour Réfugiés et Immigrés (P.A.R.I)**. We started working on this project in 1992, and in March 1995 the P.A.R.I. officially started its activities.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

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COVID-19 has affected our work at the P.A.R.I. because with the barrier measures enacted by the Church and State authorities, in particular the physical distancing, there was mistrust from our visitors, especially from the new cases. The refugees and migrants who were active in the informal sector have seen their activities reduced for most of them and others had to stop. We have seen the closure of restaurants and markets at certain times due to the state of health emergency and the curfew. Refugees and migrants were coming to us with summonses to evict them from their houses, and others could not return to their countries of origin because of closed borders. This led to staff being called in to help them. With the support of Caritas Senegal, protective equipment was received to protect the staff and also the refugees. The State asked to raise awareness through flyers and posters, and we were able to organise campaigns for the distribution of food kits, hygiene kits, payment of rent and distribution of flyers by visiting the homes of migrant families, while raising awareness. We were able to promote and live the slogan of His Holiness Pope Francis: "Live close to the refugees and migrants".

### ***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The P.A.R.I. was able to prevent the eventual eviction of several refugees and migrants from their homes. With the support of the Senegalese government and the National Secretariat of Caritas Senegal, we have contributed to the sensitisation of refugees and migrants on the pandemic. We supported them in the areas of food, health, hygiene and finances and provided them with psychosocial support, advice and referrals to our health structures.

### ***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Senegal is a land of welcome (Téranga), of asylum, of transit and of departure, which means that many African nationals live here in peace. At the P.A.R.I., we receive refugees, asylum-seekers, immigrants, displaced persons, without distinction. What struck us was that despite the fact that the press reports every week focused on attempts to make clandestine journeys by pirogue, most of them are young people. There are also pregnant women or women with babies, which shows the helplessness of young people and the difficult economic situation in several African countries. There has been no impact on our functioning, but as we are members of several platforms of reflection and action, we al-

ways carry the voice of the Church that advocates the right to travel, the right to welcome the foreigner, to ensure his/her protection and to integrate him/her so that s/he feels well in his/her host country.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The advice is to consider the foreigner as a human being and fellow man, created in the image of God and to imagine "if I was in his/her place" what would I have wished for in a country that was foreign to me? I would have liked to be well received, to have good protection (physical and moral), to be promoted and integrated in the host country in order to blossom. For us at the P.A.R.I., every person welcomed is considered as Christ who comes to visit us. We put a lot of emphasis on welcoming the refugees and migrants, we listen to them attentively and they participate in finding together the solution to the difficulties they raise us. In short: "every person is a sacred story".

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

For the future, we expect to continue the reception by improving it through capacity building sessions but also religiously by meditating on the biblical texts relating to "the stranger in the Bible". Listening to and protecting refugees seeking asylum, displaced migrants and others through exchanges with legal actors, continuing to support them with food, care, participating in their education and training, financing them in income-generating activities, and continuing the dialogue with the State and private authorities for their integration.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

We need to be more supportive of migrants because they bring a richness to our culture and economy. Integrating them into our small Christian community, our parishes would push us to better understand and live the Gospel: "Whoever welcomes a stranger, welcomes Jesus Christ".

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect, promote and integrate.**

## 7. SOUTH AFRICA, ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN AND SPIRITAN FATHERS - REFUGEE PASTORAL CARE

**PROJECT NAME:** Catholic Archdiocese of Durban Refugee Pastoral Care

**ORGANISATION:** Archdiocese of Durban in collaboration with the Spiritan Fathers

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** South Africa

The Catholic Archdiocese of Durban Refugee Pastoral Care is a project of the archdiocese run by the Spiritans (Congregation of the Holy Spirit) and is responsible for handling all matters affecting all foreign nationals in the area of the archdiocese and beyond. The project was started in 1999 and gained momentum in 2002 when it was allocated a full-time chaplain. The project has since then seen over 25,000 refugees coming through its doors. The pastoral role is fulfilled with our refugee brothers and sisters receiving **counselling**. All services provided are offered indiscriminately.

The project has always been under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Durban and it is one of the projects of the Archdiocese until today. It was first administered by the Jesuits and later the archdiocese approached the Spiritans for assistance in running the ministry. The project is based at the Cathedral, the central point for the large population of refugees living in Durban.

Our mission is to offer **pastoral and social services to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants with a view to restore their lost dignity, faith and hope, by involving them in healing workshops and social cohesion programmes and also to ensure justice** prevails in all matters affecting them.

Since South Africa has been plagued with xenophobic crises three times, starting in 2008, people had to seek refuge in churches and police stations. The reintegration programme has been quite outstanding. All victims were assisted to go back to their communities and some to new places. They were all given reintegration packs and good neighbours were rewarded. The Archdiocese of Durban was the only church/organisation in the greater Durban area that opened its doors to victims. Over the years, the Spiritan Fathers in Durban have been welcoming mi-

grants, running healing workshops and offering trauma counselling. The Spiritans managed to promote self-reliance among the refugee and migrant communities through education and skills training.

In order to complement the pastoral work, a number of other services have been implemented: temporary shelter to new arrivals was offered and the provision of meals, at least once a day, in the shelter; families of refugees and asylum-seekers have been assisted with payment of school fees for their children in primary and secondary schools and with a fees subsidy for kindergarten children. Two school uniforms per year were also provided to the students in the programme. The activities also included caring for the sick refugees and migrants through the provision of basic medicines and for orphaned refugee children through their foster parents. Aiming for a better integration, IsiZulu (local language) and English has been taught to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants and healing workshops, with both migrants and locals, have been run. These workshops tried to help and give individuals opportunities to talk about what they have gone through and also to help both locals and migrants understand each other's culture and problems and to fight xenophobia. Through the healing Touch of Christ Workshops, many suicides were prevented and many people that went through the workshops transformed their lives and started to realise who they were and what they were capable of. Dignity was restored and faith revived.

Finally, advocacy was offered for refugees and migrants' rights, together with assistance for asylum-seekers to understand processes at the Department of Home Affairs in order to regularise their stay in the country. In this matter, a strong partnership with the Department of Home Affairs was built in order to collaborate and have a cross referral of clients.

The year 2020 saw us refocusing our efforts. Much of the energy was directed at the **provision of food parcels** to the desperate. We managed to reach out to over 1,000 households and rolled out more than 10,000 parcels, thanks to the donations of foundations, organisations, the Church, and individuals. A lot of lives were touched through this. The project was based in the Denis Hurley Centre and during this year we continued our ordinary activities. Meanwhile, we are exploring the possibility to further expand our funding base. A move has been taken to cater to migrants and refugees in the other deaneries further away from the cathedral which is central to the archdiocese.

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The PARTNERS that collaborate with the Spiritan Fathers and the archdiocese are: the Department of Home Affairs and of Social Development; the South African Police Services, the Metro Police, the Municipality, the Refugee Social Services and the Lawyers for Human Rights; ProBono lawyers, the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Refugee Women, the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in Southern Africa (CoRMSA) and the Red Cross.

The major challenge is finances, especially for accommodation, skills training and the general operations of the organisation. The project was entirely dependent on donor funding and many indicated their inability to continue funding. The refugee population is constantly growing and the demand for services is growing at the same pace, hence the need to expand the funding base. With the hard economic conditions compounded by their involvement in low paying jobs, the life of refugees is getting harder, hence an increase in the need for intervention. The rights issues always take centre stage as they are always violated. Finally, xenophobia seems to be there to stay and interventions are highly needed to ensure safety and co-existence between locals and foreign nationals.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

#### MAKUSHA HUPENYA PROJECT COORDINATOR

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(CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

The Catholic Archdiocese of Durban Refugee Pastoral Care was established in response to the influx of refugees into the archdiocese, leading to the establishment of a commission in place to look at issues affecting refugees and migrants. A full-time chaplain was appointed to address refugees and migrants. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit ensures the priests to cover this position. The archdiocese also provided some temporary services to assist reuniting newcomers with their families. Often, people on the move's first port of call will be the Church - any parish which will call the Refugee Pastoral Care team. The team will come and

help assist with various groups including assisting migrant women and unaccompanied minors. Refugee Pastoral Care also assists with the provision of school uniforms and school fees in the form of a subsidy to assist refugees. We pay a blanket amount in relation to what we receive as a grant. We additionally have established a sewing project that helps create employment and then twice a year we distribute school uniforms. Refugee Pastoral Care also teaches English which is essential to learn for new arrivals as it is crucial for integration through learning the language. While the English certificate is not accredited, it is recognized by many institutions like the University of KwaZulu Natal, for example. Additionally, we had Revive Healing workshops from 2003 until 2014 and plan to start them again, with funding from 2022. These workshops were life-changing and gave an opportunity to those who didn't have it before to tell their story. It is a life-saving activity. Refugee Pastoral Care works in partnership with like-minded organisations. Also, with the pandemic and lockdowns, Refugee Pastoral Care provided and distributed food parcels in partnership with the IOM, mobilizing local practitioners and partners.

Our inspiration for the food parcel distribution was that in the hard lockdown all industries were locked down and many refugees were relying on staying in the streets, living from hand to mouth, where the mouth still had no hand to feed it. If we sit and cede to lockdown what will happen to those on the streets including those relying on work as a safeguard? If you go out and look for food the risk is too high and initially many did not understand how the virus worked. Refugee Pastoral Care would go out and do door-to-door delivery starting with clients we knew well who were vulnerable and also sent messages out via community groups about food parcel distribution. Many refugees and asylum-seekers were not in formal employment and thus the lockdown delivered a double blow to those without job security, unlike those formally employed receiving monthly salary. My role was to mobilize the preparation and distribution of food parcels.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

COVID-19 has affected our work in a number of ways including limiting interaction, reducing contact and only allowing people to come into office in very limited circumstances, primarily relying on telephone consultations. This is not how the Church should be. One cannot really counsel someone over the phone. COVID-19 also drained resources. One of

the positive impacts was that for the roll out of food parcel distribution, we managed to establish many partnerships and go beyond where we reached in the most serious previous crisis periods. COVID-19 also affected extension of refugee documentation which was halted with some people not understanding extensions and leaving many seeking extensions at high risk. Workload increased with a long list of those seeking assistance. Additionally, it seems that the pandemic created an opportunity for employers, who had a xenophobic attitude towards foreigners, to use the pandemic as an excuse to make foreign employees redundant. Informal traders were marginalized by the pandemic with some being removed by concurrent xenophobic removals of informal traders accompanied by looting and violence. There was also an element of discrimination from the public sector in food parcel distribution with the introduction of a South African ID requirement which was not supposed to be imposed during a crisis. COVID-19 caused job losses and evictions, while departure from the country of some parents meant some children had to drop out of school. Transport even to nearby places became a nightmare.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

We saw better partnerships and collaboration in the food parcel distribution initiative, as discussed above. Additionally, regarding the challenge of removal of foreign informal/street traders, Refugee Pastoral Care partnered with and looked for assistance from the mayor's office in the form of a social cohesion conference, but despite repeated efforts the conference was not brought to fruition with repeated cancellations and postponements.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes? How did your organisation respond to these changes?***

A number of changes happened in the migration sector. Normally refugees would go to Mozambique to buy second-hand clothes to sell but this became difficult especially with expired documentation and no access to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for renewal. The government response was to wait for DHA to open. Also, since the lockdown there was a reduction in refugees coming in. Closure of borders in part was responsible, hence reduced new arrivals. Also, not so many refugees travelled internally from elsewhere in the country whereas before often many travelled from Musina to Durban. The police were more friendly and receptive during the pandemic.

These changes contributed to reduced workload in some areas and relief to finances as more new arrivals led to higher expenses. Thus, this freed up finances to increase the amount we could offer for the school fees subsidy.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The advice I would give is that welcoming first depends on the perception of a person. If one acts rationally, in the proper way, one sees all in God's creation as created in God's image. So, you are then able to welcome everyone without judgement on who they are. When welcoming, before doing anything, offer the person a cup of coffee or water, put them at ease and allow them to feel welcome before getting into issues of protection. Additionally, it is advisable to belong to a network and share responsibility. That is to say, if one can offer a meal, another can offer shelter. Protection goes beyond making sure a person is not attacked but rather includes the very basics to have a roof over one's head and food in one's stomach. Promotion of rights is most important. We must also remind those whose rights are promoted that they also have responsibilities and are responsible for regularising their stay to help avoid rights violations and bribery and harassment. Integration is most readily achieved through learning a local language. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". Individuals should take the initiative, teaching others.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We plan to re-introduce the Revive Healing Workshops, talked about above, from 2022. Refugee Pastoral Care does not work in isolation. It works with like-minded organisations and plans to, with partners, go into the community for dialogues. We are also looking at a project with new funders to promote assistance of migrants and refugees discriminated against because of their sexual orientation.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

In conclusion, I think one of the things I wish to mention is that this outbreak of the pandemic has provided a number of lessons to us as a movement. Look at what happened with restrictions leading to no one on the streets selling: the capacity to earn was compromised. The virus attacked anyone. It did not discriminate. Those with or without money faced the same fate. We should reflect on our humanity and how we involve and relate to others that are different.

## 8. SOUTH AFRICA, SCALABRINIAN SISTERS - BIENVENU SHELTER FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

**PROJECT NAME:** Bienvenu Shelter for Refugee Women and their Children

**ORGANISATION:** Scalabrinian Sisters

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Johannesburg, South Africa

**PERIOD:** January to December 2020



In 2001, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians), initiated the project of Bienvenu Shelter<sup>2</sup> as a result of their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the human dignity and human rights of migrants, refugees, internally displaced people, seafarers, itinerants, and people on the move. The missionary focus is to be migrants with the migrants and to be in mission with people on the move along with a special priority for the poorest and most vulnerable.

The Shelter aims to provide for the needs of migrants by offering them accommodation, nutritious meals, clothes, access to health facilities including psychological care, education for the children, legal assistance, guidance and support, and other needs as and when they arise.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the entire context of the project. The first cases of COVID-19 were reported in South Africa in February 2020 and

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<sup>2</sup> [www.bienvenushelter.org](http://www.bienvenushelter.org)

the entire country was placed on full lockdown on 27 March 2020. The full lockdown was strictly enforced until 1 May, when it was slightly eased. However, the country remains under some degree of lockdown. The effects of the full lockdown were devastating. The entire small business sector, upon which all of our clients and beneficiaries depend for their income and survival, was practically wiped out. It is reliably estimated that unemployment in the country is now close to 50%. The vast majority of the population have been thrown into abject poverty. Government offices (including the Ministry of Home Affairs) either remain closed or are offering limited services. The government has been offering extremely limited forms of COVID-19 relief, including a monthly income grant of Euro 3, and food parcels. However, foreign nationals do not qualify for any form of government assistance and are completely reliant on the services the Church can offer them. COVID-19 has had profound effects on society as a whole, and also on the implementation of this project:

- The near total collapse of the economy has resulted in abject poverty amongst women who were previously able to provide for themselves and their children. Consequently, there has been a great increase in demand for all our services.
- Due to lockdown regulations, our Creche and Skills Training Centre had to be closed for extended periods of time, until restrictions were eased.
- Bienvenu Shelter had to raise substantial amounts of funding to be able to provide food, sanitary packs and other necessities for migrant and refugee women during lockdown.

During this reporting period, **emergency accommodation** in a safe and secure environment was provided to 152 destitute refugee women from 13 different nationalities (Burundian, DRC Congolese, Ethiopian, Lesotho, Malawian, Mozambican, South African, South Sudanese, Swazi, Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Rwandan, Cameroonian) and their children, with meals, for an average period of 3 months. Children of the mothers accommodated in the Shelter below the age of three were enrolled in the Baby Room, and children between the ages of 3 and 6 were admitted to the Creche. All children who were in the Creche the previous year and who had reached the age of 6 were enrolled for Grade 1 in public schools and school children were provided with homework assistance. The shelter residents were provided with access **to medical care and counselling**, and all women in the Shelter underwent skills training at the Shelter's

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skills training centre, in dressmaking, hairdressing, beautician's training or baking. Women who successfully passed their **skills training** courses were given business start-up kits (a total of 65 business start-up kits were issued). Due to the pandemic, the workshop areas were adapted to ensure social distancing was adhered to, thus the number of women being trained was reduced to at least half of what we would normally accommodate. In line with this, the class timeframe was extended to ensure all received skills training in their chosen field. During the reporting period, a total of 199 women graduated from the various skills training courses offered at our Mother Assunta Skills Training Centre.

The Shelter also offered English language classes for 60 women. A volunteer English teacher dedicated her time twice a week to teaching mothers basic English at the Shelter. Once the mothers have shown a keen interest and have learned the basics, they are then referred to English classes at Pastoral Care for Refugees, in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, where they have the opportunity to learn the English language in more detail with 3-month courses.

Bienvenu Shelter has been fortunate to have the support of the Focolare Community which has dedicated its time to support our children after school with their homework which we have seen to be a great need. The children have been fully interactive with this activity and look forward to sharing this time together. Some of the children have also participated in activities of another NPO, which allowed them to meet other children in the area, receiving additional learning support in after-school groups. This has been a fruitful experience, **connecting children from all ages, nationalities and backgrounds, socialising together and sharing experiences**. On the other hand, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lovely Bears Crèche was closed in March 2020. It enrolled 44 children between 3-6 years old, from 7 nationalities for 3 months (January – March).

During the Pandemic, all children (from 0-5 years of age) from the House were cared for in the Baby Room during the year: 57 children from 10 nationalities (Zimbabwean 17, DRC 16, South African 7, Swazi 6, Burundian 2, Malawian 4, Ugandan 2, Lesotho 1, Cameroon 2).

Despite COVID-19 lockdowns, which resulted in delays in implementation, all objectives were achieved, all targets were reached, and all key activities planned were implemented: the provision of safe and secure accommodation, the Baby Room, the Crèche, education support,

skills training and livelihoods, advocacy and human rights workshops, access to health care, access to legal support, and community outreach to former residents.

With regard to the positive impacts, Bienvenu Shelter continues to maintain excellent cooperation with the target group. This can be seen in the way most former residents of the Shelter continue to maintain contact with the Shelter once they have moved out, and in the way they continue to avail themselves of the services of the Shelter through the Shelter's community outreach programme (the Creche, Baby Room, Skills Training Courses) once they have moved out. All of those who completed skills training courses are being visited for monitoring purposes monthly, to ensure that their newly acquired skills are being used to generate income for themselves. This has been a valuable way of maintaining contact with them. An additional positive effect was the promotion of social cohesion between refugees/asylum-seekers, and local South Africans. Local South Africans in the area around the Shelter are now becoming more involved in the work of the Shelter - either by giving donations in kind, or by availing themselves of the various services offered by the Shelter.

Some of the major challenges the Shelter experienced:

- The retrenchment of staff members: under Government Directives the creche was closed, so it was necessary to take unfortunate measures in the retrenchment of the principal, while the creche teacher had the skills to be placed in another vacant position.
- There was the need for 2 new positions at the Training Centre: 1 for security and 1 for an administrator for the Training Centre, due to the increased needs of assessments of students and capturing all data and report writing.
- From the **legal side**, at the start of the pandemic, Home Affairs offices remained closed, and a new (on-line) system was put in place for women to renew their documents, especially the asylum-seekers.

A project of this nature, providing services to a disempowered, transient target population, can by its nature not become self-supporting and further funding is required for its continuity. The most positive effect has been the **integration of former Shelter residents into the local community**. While at the Shelter, they underwent a process of emotional

and psychological healing, acquired skills as a result of which they are able to provide for themselves and their children. This is sustainable. Progress made in the lives of each beneficiary cannot be reversed. The project has made a critical contribution to the goal formulated in the project contract: the self-reliance of migrant women and their children has been achieved through **skills training and livelihoods support**. **Integration and social cohesion** have also been achieved. Overall, this thought drove the project: that every person is created in the image of God, everybody is inherently equal, and every person can reconstruct their lives and live with dignity, no matter what background they come from or how broken they are.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**SR. MARIVANE CHIESA, MSCS**

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DIRECTOR (SCALABRINIAN SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I, Sister Marivane Chiesa mscs, have, for the past four years, been the Director of Bienvenu Shelter. The Shelter celebrated 20 years, in March 2021, of caring for migrants and refugee women and their children. We provide safe and secure accommodation to women and their children, welcoming, caring and empowering. We work very closely with the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees Department of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg. In collaboration and working hand-in-hand, we try to keep alive the faith, spirit and hope of Migrants, especially women.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

We had to make many changes in line with government directives and ensure that we had a COVID-19 policy in place. Staff and residents received regular training on COVID-19 which was ongoing according to the level adjustments. We had to make changes in the house to adhere to social distancing, therefore our numbers had to be reduced. Screening of all staff

and residents and close monitoring was ongoing. An isolation room as well as a sick room were allocated within the shelter. Residents and ex-residents had even more additional stresses which led to them becoming mentally unwell and it was a challenge to access psychological and psychiatric services. Ex-residents were unable to earn an income due to lockdown periods and therefore they were unable to pay for daily needs.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

In adhering to the government directives, the number of clients in the house had to decrease due to social distancing. Clients in the house were safe but we also had to ensure and prioritise ex-residents now living in the community. Through the outreach programme, we were able to alleviate some of the daily stresses by assisting them in paying rent/accommodation and providing food assistance. Regular emotional support was also given which gave a sense of stability and hope which was felt by the clients. In collaboration with the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees Department of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, we were able to assist 18,008 direct beneficiaries and 72,974 indirect beneficiaries from March–December 2020 with food vouchers, food parcels, veggies, educational support, sanitisers/toiletries and medical assistance in accessing medical services.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

We did find that many people from DRC were invited and supported to go back home and many did so. We also found that new referrals for accommodation during this time were largely South African women suffering domestic abuse and also many women with mental-ill health. We were able to assist in other ways by providing them with advice, referring them to the appropriate services and on many occasions supporting them with food.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

We ensure each individual's dignity is maintained throughout, from the moment they are welcomed into the organisation. We ensure the safety and security is upheld at all times and that their rights are heard, and

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they receive the services required and advocacy on their behalf with regards to equal rights in accessing legal, health, schooling, training and work opportunities. We ensure women and their children are fully integrated into the country and encourage them to celebrate their own faith, values and their heritage. We welcome mothers from all over South Africa from different backgrounds and we all join together in sharing different experiences.

### ***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We continue to support our residents through weekly therapy, group support sessions and pastoral care groups. We also share and unite together having Mass on a regular basis within the Shelter. The Scalabrinian Sisters and the Team are all there to welcome, care for and empower the most vulnerable mothers and their children as well as volunteers and a dedicated staff team.

### ***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Thank you for the opportunity of sharing our mission. We look forward to hearing from you again and best wishes for good cooperation with regard to a successful realisation of our mission in serving the most vulnerable migrants and refugees in South Africa.

## 9. SOUTH AFRICA (LIMPOPO), DIOCESE OF TZANEEN, SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS - MUSINA CATHOLIC SHELTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

(ALSO PROTECT AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Catholic Shelter for Women and Children (Musina)

**ORGANISATION:** Diocese of Tzaneen, Sisters of the Holy Cross

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Limpopo, South Africa

**PERIOD:** 2020

In 2007, the Diocese of Tzaneen opened the Catholic Shelter for Women and Children at Beitbridge border between Zimbabwe and South Africa, as a response to the influx of migrants and refugees from Zimbabwe due to the political and economic instability and insecurity in the country at that time. The old Catholic church in Nancefield, Musina, was made available as a place of safety and refuge for vulnerable women. The Shelter was opened by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, in the Diocese of Tzaneen. At that time, it was not foreseen that this would be an on-going situation even from other African countries. From the beginning this was meant to be a short-term response to an emergency situation. However, the women continued to arrive. The shelter welcomes up to 125 women and 30 children each time.

The main objectives of the Shelter are:

- 1 to provide a temporary place of Refuge and Shelter for Migrant and Refugee women and their minor children;
- 2 to help to restore human dignity to these women;
- 3 to enable the women to plan for their lives;
- 4 to be referred to resources in the community and to access trauma counselling, if needed.

Apart from accommodation, the Shelter provides the following to residents:

- a meal every evening (pregnant women and children, or sick persons receive three meals per day);
- clothing and hygiene products are frequently given to residents;

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- basic necessities for young, pregnant girls who have nothing prepared for the birth of their baby;
- ablution facilities and electricity;
- counselling, which is probably the greatest need at the Shelter.

The majority of the women come from Zimbabwe and are considered as economic migrants. They come to try to get jobs to support their children back home because of poverty and hunger, and many are HIV positive. Many of them come through the river and are robbed of their possessions or even raped on the journey by the *maguma-guma*: local criminals who operate on both sides of the border. This dangerous travel route causes secondary traumatising for many of these women who are leaving home for an unknown land and an unknown future. The restrictions the government put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic made it even more difficult for them to earn their livelihood as they used to have an income from the informal sector and/or selling in the streets of Musina. The women at the Shelter are supposed to stay for no longer than 3 months, but when it is time for them to leave, they are not yet ready due to the economic situation in South Africa. This can be a challenge as the staff at the Shelter often cannot force them to leave due to the terrible circumstances they would have to go back to in their country of origin.

Caritas Kurisanani and Caritas South Africa, with other private donors, were able to assist the women and children during the COVID-19 lockdown. The solidarity of many people assisting the Shelter made it possible to include many people who were residing in different parishes under the same Diocese of Tzaneen, where the Shelter is situated. The women and children were all migrants and refugees that arrived just before the lockdown started. They came from Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Burundi etc. In the townships of Musina, such as Nancefield and Harper, the care workers and volunteers came across a number of migrant families living in very poor conditions and who benefited greatly from the **assistance** provided by the shelter. Blankets and food parcels were given to the **migrants and undocumented people in the area**, including South Africans that were undocumented and were also struggling during this pandemic.

All in all, Musina Women's Shelter and Caritas Tzaneen bought and **delivered 344 units of food items, 234 units of hygiene and sanitation and 259 units of winter clothes and blankets**. All these were distribut-

ed to the Women's Shelter and identified parishes and villages. Some goods were bought for the shelter for the upkeep and use of the ladies and children who live there. They also managed to assist a neighbouring men's shelter which is the counterpart of the women's shelter in also assisting the migrants, refugees and undocumented that were struggling during the lockdown. All the beneficiaries were grateful and delighted because this was a great assistance during their time of great need.

His Lordship, Bishop João Rodrigues of Tzaneen expressed his gratitude for the funding and applauded Caritas South Africa who kept an open communication with the Caritas Kurisanani, the local Diocesan Office in Tzaneen and with the Catholic Women Shelter of Musina. He said that it was good that the funding was channelled through the already existing structures in the Diocese.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

## 10. UGANDA, SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO REFUGEE SERVICES - REBUILDING LIVES AT PALABEK REFUGEE CAMP (ALSO PROTECT AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Rebuilding lives

**ORGANISATION:** Salesians of Don Bosco Refugee Services

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Palabek Refugee Camp, Uganda

**PERIOD:** 2020

The presence of refugees is a moral, social, geo-political reality in the world of today. It is also a pastoral issue in the Church.

At this present time in the world, a significant number of human beings are at the mercy of host countries and of particular communities for their much-needed basic necessities for survival. But at the same time, hosting refugees remains a big challenge for everyone, both the wealthier and the underdeveloped nations, including Uganda.

Uganda is one of the leading countries in hosting refugees. It not only **welcomes** neighbours who are in war and conflict, it also opens its doors to people from distant countries. There could be political reasons for welcoming refugees, but the credit goes to ordinary citizens who are welcoming and adapting themselves to hundreds and thousands of neighbours who are refugees in dire need for survival. Amidst the controversy surrounding the number of refugees in Uganda, we can reliably say that they are a little over 1,000,000, who are sheltered in the border districts of the country.

According to the UNHCR Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal, as of 30 November 2021, there are currently 1,563,604 refugees sheltered in Uganda. Of the total number of refugees currently in Uganda, 145,400 are staying in Palabek, Lamwo District and 953,630 are from South Sudan. There are several other settlements in Mid-Western and South-Western districts housing refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. It is believed that there are about 10,000 urban refugees in Kampala, besides numerous others in other urban centres in Uganda. The gazetted places of refugees are called **settlements** rather than camps because people are allowed to live there for

many years and if they wish to live there in perpetuity, they are free to do so. The refugees will never be asked to leave, unless by voluntary repatriation. It is not an exaggeration to say that no other country in the world has this magnanimous hospitality. But it is also important to pay attention to the challenges of the integration of these settlers with the natives. Salesians began their pastoral and educational services with the refugees very informally in June 2017 when Palabek refugee camp was just opened. Refugees were pouring in from South Sudan almost every day, empty handed. Young women were holding only little babies as their only belonging. Unaccompanied children were frantically looking for their parents. Amidst this, Salesians began their ministry with the motto: Rebuilding Lives. It was all about rebuilding people's dignity, families, education, livelihood and their faith in God, which was shattered.

In the Palabek Settlement, several agencies are involved in providing food, education and other needs of livelihood. Salesians of Don Bosco are offering the much-needed psychosocial support, life-skills for youth through Vocational Training and pastoral care for thousands of Christians. Salesians are also running four nursery schools for over 1,000 little children who have not been taken care of by anyone. Our newly constructed Vocational/Technical Training Centre offers not only life-skills but the hope of living better lives, finding a career and organizing a peaceful life in the near future. Currently, there are 6 Salesian confreres who literally share the challenging living conditions of refugees. The psychosocial project, training programmes and peace education for catechists, youth leaders and animators are a regular feature, and not forgetting the daily oratory in several corners of the settlement keeping youth happy and engaged. Conversations with refugees reveal that conflicts and wars in their countries are due to intolerance among tribes, lack of leaders in communities and civil societies and a lack of civic sense and skills for life. On the contrary, here in the Salesian establishments, however humble they are, we bring together young people who belong to several tribes and societies who forget all their differences and enjoy each other's company and become brothers and sisters. In the area of sustainable livelihood, Salesians of Don Bosco Refugees Project in Palabek Refugee Settlement in Lamwo, northern Uganda, began its agricultural programme with the aim to strengthen and train the refugee families and the local population so that they can improve their food security, earn their own income and thus lead a self-determined and healthy life independent of food support from external sources like the World Food Programme (WFP).

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Refugee camps or settlements in Africa are overwhelmed by children who often form over 80% of the refugee population. Given these statistics, Palabek Refugee Settlement houses at least 25,000 children who are below the age of 13. They are often underfed, suffer malnutrition, and lack basic security and protection. During COVID-19 lockdown, their schools, though they were much improvised, are now closed. Having no entertainment and opportunity to meet friends, they are pushed to stress which they could not articulate. Knowing their plight, Salesians began to reach out to them through youth-friendly and educative activities, but still keeping COVID-19 guidelines to protect their health. Salesians reached out to over 400 children and young people on a daily basis. Some of the activities were even geared to income generation and putting up structures for future use. Young people planted grass in playfields, planted hundreds of trees, prepared kitchen gardens, recorded songs and videos for Coronavirus awareness, took part in road drives on coronavirus education, revised their lessons, took part in indoor games, drawing and painting, exchanged library books, and visited some friends who were sick and in particular lockdown situations. Don Bosco pioneered face mask production and was very innovative not only in the Palabek Settlement, but in the whole of northern Uganda and the nation. A group of 20 girls successfully produced at least 10,000 face masks of different shapes and sizes. We continue to produce more and distribute them free of charge.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

#### FR. LAZAR ARASU

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DIRECTOR (SALESIANS - PALABEK REFUGEE SERVICES  
IN UGANDA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

Pastoral work has been the foundation of the Salesian presence in Palabek Refugee Settlement, situated in Lamwo district in the northern end of Uganda. It is truly making alive the saying of Jesus, "They are like

sheep without a shepherd..." Refugees from South Sudan began arriving by the thousands from April 2017. They were left without any spiritual and psychosocial support for over two months, until 18 June 2017 the Salesian presence began taking root with a Holy Eucharist celebrated by myself, Fr. Lazar Arasu, in a very casual manner. Perhaps this Mass is a significant Eucharistic celebration in my priestly ministry. The following words of an elderly woman leader moved me to live with them. She said, "Father, we don't know your name, we don't know what you do, we don't know where you come from, but you came to see us, please don't abandon us, come every week to pray with us". After these heartfelt words, she wept. Seeing her tears made several others cry. This made me come every week and eventually I resigned from everything I was doing, and I came to live with them. The call of Pope Francis to reach out to the migrants and the special emphasis given by the Salesian Society stand as my inspiration and encouragement to get engaged in refugee ministry. Despite many challenges, this ministry is urgent and meaningful. It is serving the most downtrodden, neglected and poorest of the poor.

The blessings of that single Mass celebrated with a group of about 100 people, who were mostly young, became the foundation of a huge pastoral work with several thousands of people who are hungry for spiritual nourishment packaged together with a consolidated psychosocial accompaniment.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

We could not discharge our duties effectively as we had to respect COVID-19 restriction guidelines as provided by the State. With the closure of schools and recreational facilities, refugees, having no entertainment and opportunity to meet friends, are pushed to stress which they could not articulate. During this COVID-19 epidemic we have witnessed a surge in teenage pregnancies, defilements, child marriages, and induced abortions. In reality, this is gender-based violence (GBV) committed against girl children. Failures in getting basic needs make the girl child more vulnerable than their male counterparts. Lack of crucial needs such as sanitary pads, inner garments, and hygiene materials push them to make decisions against their personal values, sexual ideals and their study and plan for the future. Unscrupulous men with loose morality and boys in their mischievous behaviour take advantage

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of girls' vulnerability, make them fall into teenage pregnancy, early marriage and others push them into complications of reproductive health. Here in the refugee situation, there are instances where two or three teenage girls are living together and one falls into teenage pregnancy; one teenage youth defiles three girls and they all find themselves pregnant; a married man with wife and children lures a girl with much needed material things and "marries" her; teenage mothers who are no longer in relationship with the fathers of their children easily 'fall in love' with much older men for care and support.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

# PROTECT

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## 11. ANGOLA, CEPAMI - PREVENTION OF COVID-19 IN THE PROVINCES OF LUANDA AND UIGE

**PROJECT NAME:** Prevention of COVID-19 in the Provinces of Luanda and Uige

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Uige and Luanda Provinces (Angola)

**ORGANISATION:** CEPAMI

**PERIOD:** June - September 2020



The Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (CEPAMI) is an organism of the Bishops Conference of Angola and São Tomé (CEAST). Its mission is to sensitise civil society and the Church by helping people on the move to feel welcome, integrated and protagonists of a new society, without prejudice, racism, xenophobia and accepting cultural diversity with patience.

According to the WHO, Angola has a very young population with a high annual population growth rate. Despite the improvements seen in the last 5 years, WHO highlights that currently about 36% of the population lives below the poverty line and with difficulty in accessing basic pub-

lic services (water, sanitation, energy, health, education and housing<sup>3</sup>). Data from the Ministry of Health shows an epidemiological picture of Angola characterised by transmissible and parasitic diseases, especially the great endemic diseases, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as neglected tropical diseases.

With the confirmation of the first cases of COVID in Angola in March 2020, the country entered a state of emergency to prevent community transmission and the collapse of its health system. As a result, the situation of the population worsened at all levels, since mobility was carried out in exceptional situations. In the neighbourhoods, people were deprived of water, energy and sanitation. The health centres in the neighbourhoods and in the provinces were without any material available for tests, prevention, hygiene materials, etc. The streets were covered with mud, drainage ditches were clogged, and rubbish was strewn everywhere. When it rained a lot, the water invaded the streets and houses, causing nuisance and damage. Flooding was frequent and caused a lot of damage. The majority of foreign migrants and internally displaced persons live in these neighbourhoods, and a large number of them are refugees from more than 15 nationalities, who make their living from street vending, small businesses and some canteens. They face difficulties at all levels such as lack of documentation, food, health, housing, and employment, and for their survival they depend on charity, street vending or prostitution.

The street vendors who depended on their small daily sales for survival could not work during the pandemic. On the other hand, the majority of the poor people in the informal settlements roamed freely without any preventive health care. And they said: "How can anyone stay at home with nothing to eat? We have responsibilities towards our families. We have to go out and get food (...) it is better to die of this disease or of a gunshot than to die of hunger" (G.L.). "The state of emergency will not be respected as long as people depend on the street to feed their families", said R.M.

The city of Uije, which is also the capital of the same province, hosts thousands of repatriates and a large number of foreigners, especially from the neighbouring country of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The people live from the informal economy, which often does not present adequate hygienic conditions. Informal markets are mainly exercised by women

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3 ESTRATÉGIA DE COOPERAÇÃO DA OMS 2015 - 2019 – ANGOLA, <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2017-06/ccs-angola-2015-2019-p.pdf>

and young people without qualifications. The lack of employment is almost total, even for those who have completed higher education. Many internal migrant families or returnees do not have the financial conditions to start an economic activity to support the family. They also lack the training necessary for their social integration and for the management of an economic activity that would guarantee their subsistence.

In addition, many adults who came from the interior of the province, as well as many repatriated couples, did not have personal documentation, which prevented them from starting any economic activity and their children from attending school. In both cases, there was the need for civil registration. The repatriated children increased the numbers of deaths, hunger, child exploitation, sexual abuse, witchcraft and other situations, because they are poor and often orphans. In many cases, these children are deprived of their fundamental rights, such as access to school, health, to have decent housing and adequate food.

The project was conceived in actions aiming at **strengthening health, raising awareness and preventing COVID-19** and even more of the tropical diseases that kill many more people in Angola. With this reality of the pandemic, CEPAMI was challenged to work on the prevention of these more vulnerable families in some of the poorer neighbourhoods, both in Luanda and Uije. With the subsidies received, it was possible to help with nutritional food for children in need, with biosecurity materials and other necessary equipment, sanitary and hygiene materials. The team also prepared some nurses to visit families and help them in disease prevention, as well as training and awareness-raising campaigns for thousands of people.

The main activities carried out during the project involved: the delivery of anti-flu drugs, antimalarial drugs, materials for patient care, hygiene, biosecurity materials and food supplies for children in hospitals and health centres (**11,279 people received some medicine**); the offer of 72 lectures on preventive health issues, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, the topics were: prevention, signs and symptoms, conflict management, tropical diseases, non-violent communication, malnutrition, tuberculosis, nutrition and the use of multi-mixtures (**4,575 people attended the training courses**); elaboration of informative and awareness-raising subsidies for the families assisted; consultations in neighbourhoods where access to health centres and hospitals was scarce (**16,590 people received some medical attention and some tests**).

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During the project, vaccination of 2,027 people was conducted against tetanus, convulsion cough, acute flaccid paralysis, diarrhoea, otitis, tonsillitis and pneumonia, and 6,739 food kits were distributed to the most vulnerable families. Some clothing bundles were purchased to benefit 4 families in order to start their businesses.

As **prevention against COVID-19**, the project included the production and distribution of 5,850 masks, the delivery of hygiene materials, like soap, bleach and alcohol gel, to the people assisted in the centres (500 families benefited in all), as well as the purchase and delivery of 300 thermometers and some analgesic medicines for the families assisted in the centres.

The project contributed to the payment of 3 doctors, 9 nurses and 3 health agents who visited some families and provided accompaniment to 10 elderly people who were bedridden in their homes and offered food supplies, medication and necessary care.

Another activity was the **realisation of 5 radio and TV programmes**, in Uije, Luanda and Viana. In order to create awareness in society about the global pandemic, CEPAMI included in the project the production of a **radio ad and interviews, trainings**, with the aim of informing people about the ways to prevent the new Coronavirus and other contagious diseases. People hearing the "wake-up calls", have evaluated a little more their way of living, their health care and some improvements have already happened. The idea was that in good health people could continue to live their lives with greater dignity and more willingness to work.

This project helped the different health centres by offering assistance in the purchase of various biosecurity materials, both for the local health services and in direct assistance to needy families. It also helped many malnourished and sick children to recover their health. The nutritional supplies were essential to provide a better and an adequate development to malnourished children. With these actions, CEPAMI tried to make people aware of the need to keep environments clean in order to also keep families healthy. The programme's main goals were to develop activities of distribution of sanitary and hygiene materials in order to ensure the prevention of the virus for refugees, repatriated children and their families and also to train health technicians in order to be better prepared to accompany the most vulnerable families in some neighbourhoods.

The programme conducted has benefited approximately 25,000 families, who were directly and indirectly assisted. It had a **positive impact** in the communities because it contributed to improving the prevention of diseases, helped with the diagnosis and treatment for children and adults, be they migrant, refugee or repatriated children as well as their families, and at the same time the activities conducted contributed to informing communities and the society about the pandemic of COVID-19 and its consequences. This project was important and had an **impact** on the society: welfare was improved in the immediate and also in the medium term.

The project was conceived and organised with the collaboration of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters and was directed by CEPAMI. In order to reach as many people as possible, the work was divided into three different areas and was a collaboration with other congregations of missionaries, who worked in 10 different neighbourhoods, cities and health centres in the Uije Province, in a health centre and in a school in one of the neighbourhoods of Luanda and in 3 villages and in a health clinic in the capital Luanda.

During the project implementation, the staff of the health centres was very committed to **collaborate** and serve people and provide appropriate assistance and medication. As for post-implementation, the health centres, more aware of their needs, have taken some initiatives to seek with the government the means for medication and biosafety to serve the needy populations. This project could be **replicable** in any district of Angola and at any time of the year, not only to treat COVID, but in the prevention and assistance of other tropical diseases, due to the evident precariousness with regard to health services.

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**SR. NEIDE LAMPERTI,**

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (CEPAMI, IN ANGOLA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I arrived in Angola in November 2011, sent by the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians, to take on the work of Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants of Angola and São Tomé - CEPAMI. I was nominated by the Bishops' Conference - CEAST to manage a socio-pastoral service to the people in situations of mobility, as well as to promote the transformation of the Christian communities into places of reception of migrants, be they refugees, repatriated, internally displaced or international migrants, and to strengthen the spirit of itinerancy for the people and the Church.

During all this time, we have implemented assistance, emergency, formative and socio-pastoral projects, in order to give a more dignified and human service to those who have been forced to migrate. One of our priorities is to train leaders to provide assistance in the parishes and missions, in order to promote workshops, seminars, intensive training weeks for leaders with specific themes and methodologies. We organise conferences in dioceses and universities on the reality of migration, the problem of human trafficking, human rights with a focus on the rights of migrants and refugees, asylum law, migration law, national and international migration. The target audience is always Church leaders, pastoral agents of migration, the Migration and Foreigners Service, border, national, provincial and traffic police, migrants, refugees, students, civil servants and the community in general.

For migrants, refugees and displaced persons, various formative, educational, assistance and professional projects are implemented, such as income generation, human, social and religious formation, advocacy, Portuguese language teaching, literacy, micro-credit programmes, family agriculture, training of community leaders, preventive health is-

sues, conflict management, among others. These are activities aimed at alleviating the pressing needs of the population in a state of mobility.

**- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?**

The pandemic made us change the dynamics of acting in the face of our mission. We have learned to slow down, to think and organise life better and even our migration pastoral care. The migration agents have become demotivated in their work, due to the lack of face-to-face meetings and the impossibility of carrying out activities. The biggest challenges for refugees were the lack of documentation, employment, food, access to public health. Before the pandemic, the situation was already difficult. Now, it has only worsened, and they are suffering a lot.

From the pandemic, we can draw some lessons and improve the way we live. Together with migrants and refugees, we can live with more resilience, solidarity, togetherness, faith and hope, appreciation of life and creativity. Crisis situations invite us to reinvent ourselves, to rethink our relationships with people who are close to us and with nature. It is necessary to be creative in order to deal with difficulties and adapt to life, pastoral work and helping people.

**- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?**

Even amidst so many restrictions, we managed to hold *The Week of the Migrant*, *The Month of the Refugee*, training sessions for leaders, meetings and training sessions with the leaders of the migrant and refugee communities, and online and face-to-face conferences. We conducted over 1300 IOM interviews for the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme. We offered a soapbox course for various groups, including the Muslim community and two training courses for the Migration Pastoral agents.

We have developed the COVID-19 prevention project to assist migrants, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons from Luanda and Uíge with activities such as: preventive talks, delivery of medicines, medical consultations and exams, vaccination, delivery of more than 700 food kits, delivery of clothes, making masks, radio programmes,

visits, celebrations and distribution of information and awareness-raising material. In this project, we have reached more than 20,000 people.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

During the pandemic period, there were no significant migratory movements because the borders and airports were closed. However, during the 10 years that I have been responsible for promoting the work of CEPAMI, there have been many arrivals and departures of foreigners. The Church has distinguished itself with a solidarity campaign at the national and international level and sisters and volunteers have helped with medical care, basic needs, and religious services. The Diocese of Lunda Norte appointed a priest to be the chaplain of the refugee reception centre in Lóvua. In 2019, voluntary and spontaneous repatriation took place and 14,724 refugees returned to DRC. The Church of Lunda Norte accompanied the repatriation process, making sure that everything happened without major problems.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

If migration is a right, it is also a right to remain in the country that receives migrants, with a dignified documentation assured. For this reason, those who wish to experience the 4 verbs of Pope Francis need to be aware that migrants and refugees need land and a welcoming heart; they need someone to take care of them so that they do not fall prey to false promises and become victims of trafficking; they need people who value their potential and help them to develop their own abilities; they need to feel at home, despite the change of language, culture, nation, continent. They need to experience the culture of encounter, which does not accentuate differences, but welcomes them and transforms them into a gift and reciprocity.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We are planning to continue the human and professional training for internally displaced women in the provinces of Luanda, Uige and Bengo. There is the plan to train public order agents and social leaders, especially in the border provinces, to provide more humane and dignified

assistance to migrants and refugees and prevent trafficking in human beings, to continue working with the Network for Migrant and Refugee Protection, strengthening joint actions in defence of the most vulnerable.

In the long term, we are already thinking about a project to build a Centre for Migrants and Refugees. It will be a reference space that will offer Portuguese language classes, literacy classes, human, social and religious formation meetings, assistance in health, legal and technical professional training, assistance in obtaining documents and jobs, among others. There will be a small space to receive migrants and refugees, for short periods of time, some cases of victims of human trafficking and other situations of extreme vulnerability.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

As part of the Scalabrinian Congregation that celebrated 125 years of service and dedication to the migrants and refugees, and as a member of the Angolan Catholic Church, inserted in a reality of much migration, I feel challenged and called to assume a responsible and prophetic presence among migrants, refugees and returnees. To walk with them in solidarity and hospitality and to hope that with good practices of integration we will build a more fraternal and supportive world, a universal citizenship that, while respecting cultural and national identities, will forge a more united, peaceful and welcoming human family. The experience of being a migrant with the migrants, encountering the other, the different, looking at the essence of being human enriches and strengthens us as persons and as communities.

## 12. CAMEROON, JRS - AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPANIMENT WITHIN REMOTE COMMUNITIES DURING LOCKDOWN

**PROJECT NAME:** Awareness-raising activities and accompaniment within remote communities during lockdown

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Eastern region of Cameroon

**PERIOD:** 2020



Most of the Jesuit Refugee Service's (JRS) operations in Cameroon were significantly pulled back at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. JRS has therefore had to **adapt** to the situation and include COVID-19 in their response, both in terms of protecting staff and beneficiaries, and in terms of restrictions set by the government to reduce the spread of the virus. JRS therefore organised **COVID-19 awareness-raising campaigns** in 7 villages in Batouri and Bertoua, eastern Cameroon, in **collaboration** with the Cameroonian Ministry of Health. Targeting parents, children, youth, elderly and humanitarian partners in the field, JRS informed about the pandemic (origin, mode of transmission and symptoms) and the protective measures. Since JRS teams could not access the field due to lockdown measures, they trained and coordinated through WhatsApp with preschool teachers, community leaders and focal points living in the communities to organise the several prevention campaigns. As a result, more than 500 home visits were carried out by those collaborators. Soaps and masks were distributed during these visits to the targeted

families and JRS posters in local languages were displayed among the villages and preschools.

In addition, radio emissions in partnership with community radios were organised to reach out to the villagers and raise awareness. The same shows were replayed in the streets of Timangolo, Gbiti, Boubar and Kette by the Focal Points trained by JRS. According to the person in charge of the radio in Batouri and Kette, the shows were listened to by more than 10,000 people.

JRS campaigns during the pandemic also focused on psychosocial support and GBV prevention, in order to prepare the community to counter the deadly virus but also child, gender and domestic abuses during the pandemic. Training was carried out in all 7 villages, followed by home-visits carried out by the Focal Points to more than 200 people. Their visits were accompanied by the distribution of hygienic materials to fight the virus and the installation of mobile washing points in the streets of these villages.

Anxious to support the Cameroonian Government in the fight against the pandemic, JRS recruited a tailor to provide practical workshops on the confection of washable face masks in the district of Ketté. It was a joint venture with the local organisation (FTH) which is a local partner of JRS in the prevention of gender-based violence. The **participants** were composed mostly of the members of this association in Timangolo. The workshops were organised from 1 July to 2 July 2020, in the localities of Timangolo, Gbiti, Boubara and Ketté in the commune of Ketté, with the aim to train 40 people in the production of washable face masks. Around 1,000 face masks were produced and distributed to the populations.

In the future, one of the main **challenges** will be to get the children back in school. Some children ended up helping at their family's business or working in the field to make ends meet. It can therefore be challenging to convince them to come back to school and to convince their parents that they will do everything they can to keep them safe.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Cameroon and CAR: Adapting accompaniment to COVID-19 times - JRS USA

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**MIDANNGA KOUDEMA**

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PROJECT MANAGER (JRS BATOURI, EASTERN CAMEROON)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I'm project director at JRS Batouri, eastern Cameroon. It's a project for the social and economic integration of Central African refugees and the host population. The project is funded by the government of the United States of America. I joined the team in 2019 to serve the people in need. The poverty in this part of the world is measured by those who have food and those who do not. People have been suffering for years and the contribution of the humanitarian actors has without doubt reduced this suffering. JRS in particular has made a great contribution in terms of women's empowerment. My inspiration, without any second thought, is the formation I received during my years with the Jesuits in the past.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The main challenges the people faced during the pandemic were the closure of the activities and the slowdown in income-generating activities. In addition, the price of basic commodities increased, and the poor had to survive with what they could afford.

One of the missions of JRS is to accompany the people in need very closely. During the pandemic, we could not accompany them physically and very closely as we used to do. Though we did accompany and serve them in distance, the team was initially not prepared for that and we could not accompany the people in need as efficiently as we did in the past.

Lastly, the JRS office sometimes had to stay closed to contain further spread of the virus. It was therefore difficult to take care of the team and serve the people in need at the same time.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

If anything can be considered a success, it is definitely the overcoming of the fear by the community. Through various interventions, JRS informed the people that we efficiently could fight and stop the spread of the virus by taking preventive measures. JRS distributed hygiene materials like soaps, detergents, toilet paper, buckets and mobile washing basins in the streets.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

During the elections in the Central African Republic, and whenever there was a confrontation between the rebels and the security forces on the borders, there was some movement of Central Africans passing the border to Cameroon. JRS was part of the evaluation team organised and mobilised by UNHCR, and this helped us to better prepare for a future intervention strategy.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

People leave their countries and states, not because they are looking for some luxuries but simply to survive and to have a life with dignity. Pictures of refugees falling from aeroplanes clearly tell us what the priorities of refugee brothers and sisters are, between life and dignity and between freedom and confinement. Never give up in your mission of welcoming and integrating migrants.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The actual project, which has lasted for 3 years, contributes more towards the empowerment of women, community leadership and socio-economic integration of refugees and host populations. We further wish to support the children in preschool who have been beneficiaries of the JRS programme for 3 years. The community is still not autonomous enough to continue these programmes in the absence of JRS.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

There have been misconceptions about migrants and forcefully displaced persons for a long time. Let us strive together to deconstruct these perceptions and live a meaningful present, thus making the world a better, more colourful and welcoming place for those who will come after us.

### 13. MAURITANIA, CARITAS NOUADHIBOU - RECEPTION, ACCOMPANIMENT, SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

(ALSO WELCOME, PROMOTE AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Reception, accompaniment, support and emergency assistance to migrants, refugees and vulnerable persons

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas Nouadhibou, Diocese of Nouakchott and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Mauritania

**PERIOD:** 20 April to 31 December 2020

The year 2020 was marked by an unprecedented health and social crisis, which had a negative and harsh impact on the lives of the population, causing fear, instability and the death of several thousand people. Since Mauritania recorded its first case of COVID-19, the situation of the migrant population has deteriorated inexorably. Already vulnerable before the outbreak of the virus, migrants and refugees experienced new forms of suffering, discrimination and more injustices in Mauritania, putting their rights, security and health at risk. The COVID-19 health crisis had a negative impact on the professional activities of the migrants and refugees working in various trades, including teaching, catering, trade, hairdressing/manicuring and pedicuring, and the processing of fish products, drying and salting of fish in the artisanal port of Nouadhibou.

These young migrants faced many problems related to health, mobility, lack of food, poor living conditions and sanitation, housing, and lack of money for medical care. Furthermore, living in overcrowded places in Nouadhibou, they could not comply with the rules of social distancing and were more exposed to the risk of infection. Towards the end of 2020, a large number (more than 3,100) of young migrants (men and women with children and minors) from sub-Saharan Africa were intercepted and arrested in the desert or at sea in Nouadhibou while trying to reach Europe in an irregular manner by crossing West Africa, via the Atlantic Ocean to the Canary Islands or by land (Nouadhibou-Dakhla border in the Western Sahara).

As part of its commitment to migrants, refugees and vulnerable people, Caritas Nouadhibou has set up a **social protection mechanism** for vulnerable migrants, refugees and Mauritians since the beginning of the health crisis (22 March 2020), in order to defend their rights, to provide them with emergency and essential food, hygiene and sanitary aid, and to prevent the spread of the coronavirus within and beyond their respective communities. This social protection project was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Diocese of Nouakchott and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, in order to **provide emergency assistance** to migrants and refugees weakened by the health and economic crisis due to COVID-19 in Nouadhibou.

The aim of the activities was to **strengthen the capacities** of migrants, refugees and vulnerable persons, in order to improve access to rights and **promote social integration**.

Therefore, awareness and prevention campaigns against COVID-19 were organised in the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou, in the civil prison, in the centre for the disabled people, and in the most remote areas of the city of Nouadhibou, in order to prevent the spread of the virus and raise the awareness of migrants, refugees and vulnerable Mauritians to respect health rules. This pandemic had a negative impact on the project activities, causing many difficulties in carrying out the activities as planned.

The main activities run during the project were:

- Awareness raising and prevention against COVID-19
- **Welcoming, listening and accompanying migrants during the health crisis** (1,432 people of 21 different nationalities)
- **Distribution of food kits (692 migrant and refugee families)**
- **Distribution of hygienic kits and protective masks**
- Consultation and purchase of medicines (783 migrants and refugees have benefited from emergency health and hygiene care at the Catholic Mission's health point in Nouadhibou.)
- Emergency consultation and hospitalisation (19 seriously ill migrants and refugees)
- Support for migrant initiatives: received 45 requests for support and assistance for migrants' initiatives during this period of COVID-19 and financed 10 IGAs (income-generating activities).
- Schooling of children of vulnerable migrants in Nouadhibou: the parish Caritas, with the financial support of CCFD Terre Solidaire,

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has been able to contribute to the cost of schooling for some children in nursery and primary schools and has organised tutoring courses in August and September 2020 on the premises of the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou (22 children benefited from the refresher courses and scholarships).

### Additional interventions:

- Despite the mobility restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants are still forced to undertake dangerous journeys. Caritas Nouadhibou, therefore, proposed to act to **raise awareness, sensitise young people and fight against irregular immigration**, and to crack down on smugglers and traffickers. At the same time, Caritas Nouadhibou advocates for effective protection and services for people in asylum and transit countries. This will strengthen the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees and their inclusion in the host communities, so that they do not feel the despair that might drive them to risk their lives at sea or in the desert on these desperate journeys.
- **Emergency assistance and support for migrants detained in Nouadhibou civil prison:** The parish Caritas regularly visited the prisoners, in order to accompany them and provide them with drinking water, food, sanitary and hygienic emergency aid. Caritas Nouadhibou, with the help of CCFD, also participated in the purchase of medicines for some migrant and Mauritanian prisoners and, thanks to the intervention of a lawyer, contributed to the release of 6 migrants, all from sub-Saharan Africa.

### Some of the difficulties encountered:

- A large number of migrants were blocked in Nouadhibou because of the COVID-19 pandemic and their documents have expired due to lack of funds. They could neither advance to Morocco because the land border is still closed, nor return to their respective countries of origin.
- The violence against women and lack of specialised support for vulnerable people, such as children and trauma victims, also remained problematic.
- Restrictive asylum procedures in border or transit areas and delays

in registering complaints in Noumea were also a problem.

- The smuggling of irregular immigrants to Morocco or the Canary Islands remained a profitable business in the port.
- Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, some women have lost their jobs and have turned to prostitution. It is therefore necessary to support them by providing them with emergency assistance in order to abandon prostitution and integrate with dignity into society by undertaking an income-generating activity.

In the last 7 months of the year 2020 (June–December), Caritas Nouadhibou satisfactorily achieved its objectives despite the health crisis. The activities of Caritas Nouadhibou met the real needs of many migrants, refugees and vulnerable people in the city of Nouadhibou. They provided real opportunities for migrants to **improve their living** conditions. They also created links and social cohesion between the migrants and the Mauritians who participated. Mauritanian authorities invited Caritas to continue the work to improve access to rights and promote the integration and **social cohesion** of migrants and vulnerable people into Mauritanian society. In addition to the above, awareness raising on the dangers, risks and consequences of irregular immigration and human trafficking encouraged migrants to stay in Nouadhibou, find jobs and integrate into Mauritanian society or, when possible, to return to their country of origin.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### FR. PACHEL FLORIAN MBABE

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PROJECT COORDINATOR (NOUADHIBOU PARISH  
CARITAS IN MAURITANIA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

After a detailed needs analysis, and after Mauritania adopted a "National Strategy for a better management of migration" in 2010, with the support of the European Union, the first project of accompaniment of migrant people was launched by the parish Caritas in 2011. The aim was to

improve the living conditions of migrants and refugees, to implement all the social and charitable action of the Church of Mauritania, to lend an attentive ear to all the vulnerable cases that presented themselves, to provide support and comfort, to respond to requests for subsistence, to raise awareness against irregular immigration and to provide essential food, hygiene and sanitary emergency aid to migrants and refugees.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

With the restrictions and containment measures to reduce the spread of the virus, we were forced to stop our activities and close our offices for a month. Also, the migrant inter-community football tournament, which is one of our main activities, an activity that brings migrants together, did not take place in 2020 because gatherings were strongly discouraged. Furthermore, as regards the schooling of migrant and refugee children, the schools were closed for months. When the schools reopened in September 2020, we were able to take charge of the schooling of 82 children.

Migrants and refugees were experiencing stressful, anxious moments, overcrowding in the camps, irregular immigration from Africa to Europe, unemployment due to the containment and the cessation of several economic and social activities. Many were forced to come to the Nouadhibou Parish Caritas to seek essential aid. Given the increasing number of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees (men, women and children) knocking on our doors, with the agreement of the prefect and the mayor of the city of Nouadhibou, we took all the necessary precautions and measures to open our offices and contribute to alleviating the suffering of our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Approximately 5,655 migrants, refugees and vulnerable Mauritians have benefited from the support, accompaniment and emergency assistance (food, hygiene, sanitation, support and school scholarships for children, micro-credit for vulnerable women) of Caritas Nouadhibou.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

A survey on irregular immigration carried out in mid-2020 in the two cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou indicated that more than 2,800 irregular sub-Saharan migrants were arrested at the artisanal port of Nouadhibou while trying to reach Europe in an irregular manner. They were leaving Africa for economic reasons, lack of faith in the future, family pressures, and the political crises of early 2020. On 11 April 2020, a boat from Mauritania to the Canary Islands capsized: 14 people died, and 19 people were evacuated to the base hospital in Nouadhibou in serious condition. More than 747 people died on the so-called "Atlantic route" to the Canary Islands in 2020. In addition, the closure of the country's land borders, educational institutions, artisanal and mining ports, and psychosocial centres further exposed migrants to unemployment, hard and forced labour, and other forms of exploitation, with an increased risk of sexual violence against women and underage girls.

Faced with this situation, the parish Caritas of Nouadhibou obtained financial and material support from people of goodwill to set up a project of reception, listening, accompaniment and social and health protection, in order to urgently help migrant and refugee men, women and young girls seriously affected by the health crisis of COVID-19.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

We must encourage all these people to continue to welcome, protect, and alleviate the suffering of each other, to provide essential aid and protection to those who come to our reception centres and who have lost their jobs. Promoting a good integration of the most disadvantaged and acting to give migrants and refugees back their dignity is a necessity, as is educating migrants and refugees about the risks and consequences of irregular immigration, telling them, for example, that life is more expensive and precious than the search for an uncertain future and that Europe is not always the best solution to our problems. This is our daily work. The joy of welcoming, protecting and promoting the social integration of migrants and refugees is our duty. The more difficult it is, the more we must love for the happiness of the most disadvantaged.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Caritas has set up a social and health protection mechanism for migrants and refugees. We plan to implement all the social and educational action of the Church of Mauritania, to continue giving support and comfort, sensitisation and prevention against irregular immigration. We want to support women to start income-generating activities and to offer opportunities to illiterate women to be able to write and speak French.

We would like to continue promoting the integration of migrants and refugees in Nouadhibou, through vocational training at the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou (language courses, computer and office courses, accounting and management courses, cooking and pastry courses). Finally, we will help migrants to find a job and support themselves or contribute to their voluntary return to the country of origin.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

The parish Caritas of Nouadhibou is like a service station on the side of the road, in order to contribute to giving joy, hope and to ensure daily permanence in a place of welcome, listening and protection, which is no small task, to smile and welcome the other person at any time of the day, to receive them with all their distress, all the weight of their journey, with respect for the human person, without passing any judgment. Our task is rather to be the tool that will allow them to get back on their feet, to regain their dignity, to take charge of their lives and to give them the courage to reconnect with themselves and to have a good vision for their future.

We appeal to all people of goodwill to pay more attention to the migrant populations affected by the social and health crisis of COVID-19.

"May the Lord give us sight to rediscover what it means to be members of the human family". (Pope Francis)

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome, promote and integrate.**

## 14. MOZAMBIQUE, CEMIRDE AND MISSIONARY SISTERS OF SAINT CHARLES BORROMEIO - ASSISTING AND ACCOMPANYING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(ALSO WELCOME AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Assisting and accompanying victims of human trafficking

**ORGANISATION:** CEMIRDE, Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Mozambique

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020

The Episcopal Commission for Migrants, Refugees and Displaced Persons (Comissão Episcopal para Migrantes, Refugiados e Deslocados), CEMIRDE, is one of the organisms of the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique and is part of the 5 Social Commissions of the Social Department. Since its creation in 1992, CEMIRDE's general coordination has always been the responsibility of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians). Its specific mission is to work in favour of the most vulnerable, especially migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and victims of human trafficking. Most of its activities are carried out at the level of all the dioceses and provinces of Mozambique, in each one of them counting on a Commission for the Pastoral Care for Human Mobility already established and in the process of being strengthened.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 in Mozambique, several initiatives were promoted by different organisations, including national and international ones, in order to sensitise the communities on the prevention of the disease. With this aim, CEMIRDE promoted **training** sessions on the **prevention of the virus** in all dioceses in some districts **for community and religious leaders**. CEMIRDE believes in the importance of involving the leaders in door-to-door campaigns in order to facilitate access to communities. In some dioceses, this activity has relied on the assistance of health personnel to train the leaders.

Another activity run was the training of women from the asylum seeking and refugee communities. Mozambique in recent years has been marked by occurrences of various types of gender-based violence that has often been silenced by fear associated with ignorance of

Mozambican legislation. Gender-based violence has been reported by asylum-seekers and refugee women and generally they have not had legal referral. As a way to help these communities, CEMIRDE promoted two **training sessions** with asylum-seekers and refugee women in Maputo on **gender-based violence**. These training sessions, in addition to providing legal subsidies on women's rights, also provided opportunities to share situations that were hidden by silence and fear.

In addition to these training sessions, and in continuity with the work started in 2015, the Commission did four **surveys on the topic of trafficking in persons, organs and human body parts**: one in the southern region (2015), another in the north (2018), a third one in the centre (2020/2021) and a comparative study based on the first three (2021). These surveys are guiding instruments for the activities **to prevent and combat trafficking** in Mozambique. For the purpose of awareness raising, the Commission relies on focus groups set up in secondary schools and parishes in at least three districts in each diocese/province. These are groups made up of students (in schools) and community leaders (in parishes) who, after prior preparation on these topics, have the mission of disseminating information in schools and communities. With the outbreak of the pandemic, several activities that were planned in the area of awareness raising were compromised. However, the sharing of information through **digital platforms** (WhatsApp groups, Facebook, etc), as well as the use of **community radios**, enabled the focus groups to remain consistent and the dissemination of information in the communities to continue.

Through the **awareness-raising campaigns on preventing and combating trafficking in persons, organs and human body parts** in Mozambique and with the multi-sectoral coordination that CEMIRDE has developed, it was possible to identify some victims of this terrible crime. In order to offer **assistance and accompaniment** to the victims, CEMIRDE intervened providing psychological and material support (according to the situations of each one) and, in some cases, **promoting small businesses** for self-sustainability.

The trained community and religious leaders, together with the pastoral agents, had the mission to carry out door-to-door awareness campaigns in the most remote communities of each district. To better disseminate information and reach all people, informative material, such as posters, was prepared in Portuguese and later translated into the most widely spoken local languages of each region. Due to this being a critical period

for many Mozambican families, small kits containing prevention material and food were also distributed during this intervention. In this matter, CEMIRDE trained a group of 20 young Mozambicans and refugees in Maputo province on issues related to COVID-19 prevention and its impact on refugee communities. They were responsible for visiting commercial establishments and other points of higher concentration of refugees to disseminate the information, while giving visibility to the service of free assistance that CEMIRDE offers to migrants and refugees in its offices.

Since 2014, CEMIRDE has implemented **free legal assistance activities** for different foreigners and with a focus on asylum-seekers and refugees in Mozambique. These activities took place in Maputo and in Nampula at the Maratane Refugee Camp (the only centre hosting more than 10,000 asylum-seekers and refugees in Mozambique). With its lawyers, CERAMIDE has accompanied in their trials several cases of refugees and asylum-seekers in conflict with the law (labour, civil, crime, family reunification, etc.). Another component of the project was assisting in the naturalisation process. Refugees who met the requirements requested by law were contacting CEMIRDE to process their naturalisation processes, although this was a major challenge, since these processes are often left for a long time without being properly forwarded by the responsible organisations.

At the end, part of the project was the **humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced victims of terrorism in Cabo Delgado**. The province of Cabo Delgado has been the scene of constant armed attacks. These attacks have been happening since the year 2017 but intensified during 2020. As a consequence, many people from the northern districts of Cabo Delgado province moved within the province and in the surrounding provinces in search of safer places to survive. Sister Marinês Biasibetti and her team visited the province in order to find out more about the situation of the IDPs in the city of Pemba, as well as to contribute to the process of welcoming the numerous people who arrived by sea in deplorable situations in terms of health, hygiene and food. In this process, it was also important to be present offering spiritual and psychological accompaniment to the IDPs. In addition to the material and human losses, the psychological exhaustion and the trauma as consequences of what was experienced during the attacks were visible in the migrants.

Another activity to be highlighted was the accompaniment and support offered by the Diocesan Commission for Human Mobility of Nampula in the resettlement camp in Corrane district, which intervened with the

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provision of foodstuffs and the participation in the installation of tents for the displaced persons.

The activities carried out by CEMIRDE over the pandemic period had a **positive impact** on the lives of their beneficiaries. With the sensitisation, it was possible to raise people's awareness to the need to prevent trafficking in people, organs and human body parts and to disseminate all the recommendations for prevention against COVID-19. The training of women from the RAR's communities proved to be important as it allowed the participants to know more about their rights. It was also possible to accompany some cases of refugee women. Moreover, with the legal assistance, it was possible to address some problems to the right justice institution. Finally, the assistance to internally displaced persons in Cabo Delgado supported people materially, psychologically and spiritually and the intervention of assisting victims of human trafficking greatly contributed to family reintegration and overcoming the traumas caused by the traffickers.

The awareness-raising activities in the communities are gradually becoming **sustainable** and are continuing in all the dioceses even without the direct intervention of the CEMIRDE's General Secretariat. Other interventions, by their nature, are concrete responses to one-off situations and their durability is therefore estimated by the time of the response to be given. All the activities promoted by CEMIRDE always relied on the **participation** of the beneficiaries for the best provision of services. This work was guaranteed by monitoring and evaluating activities in the communities where CEMIRDE listened to the needs and possible solutions. CEMIRDE relied on the **collaboration** of various State institutions, especially those linked to the administration of justice. In almost all the activities, CEMIRDE has sought to involve State organisations linked to the matter.

CEMIRDE's main objective was to **disseminate** activities and that information could be **multiplied** to various people at community level.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**SR MARINÊS BIASIBETTI**

GENERAL SECRETARY (CEMIRDE IN MOZAMBIQUE)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

My mission as Missionary Sister of Saint Charles Borromeo, at the Episcopal Commission for Migrants, Refugees and Displaced Persons (CEMIRDE), began in the year 2014 as General Secretary of the Commission. The organisation started its pastoral activities with people on the move in 1992 by participating in reception and reintegration actions in response to the "great return" of Mozambicans who had taken refuge in neighbouring countries during the 16 years civil war. During this period, Mozambique went from expelling to welcoming refugees arriving from other countries, fleeing from war and mass genocide, especially from Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Somalia and Ethiopia. Mozambique thus offered assistance in the refugee camp in Maputo Province and, since 2001, in the refugee reception centre in Nampula Province. Attentive to the contexts of migration and to the local Church, CEMIRDE began its work accompanying the Mozambican miners in South Africa. In 2012, it intensified the organisation of the pastoral care for human mobility in the dioceses and parishes and is currently working in 7 areas of intervention to better welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants, refugees, displaced persons and victims of human trafficking into Mozambican society.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

CEMIRDE is in a phase of structuring and strengthening the diocesan and parish commissions for the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility through periodic training for diocesan coordinators and agents. The restrictions imposed in the context of the States of Emergency and Public Calamity made it difficult to hold periodic training sessions within the planned time frame and to expand to other parishes as planned. Actions aimed at greater and better integration of people on the move in dioceses, parishes and communities were also limited and face-to-face meet-

ings for awareness raising, formation and celebration were hampered. Another challenge was also the lack of funds to support the internally displaced persons in Cabo Delgado who live in extreme poverty in the reception and resettlement centres. Moreover, another difficulty was the worsening of gender-based violence in families of refugee communities. Therefore, the work of prevention, assistance, guidance, defence of the rights and human promotion of refugee women has been strengthened. Regarding labour, the imposed measures of reducing working hours had negative impacts on many refugees and migrants living from the informal market, resulting in increasing insecurity, unemployment and violence. Being undocumented, some refugees were easy victims of exploitation and abuse from the local authorities.

The economic situation led millions of Mozambicans and foreigners to extreme poverty, with much of the responsibility falling on women, as many are heads of families and in search of survival, they were susceptible to deception, early marriage, pregnancy and trafficking or different forms of exploitation.

The formal education system has shown enormous gaps in the support given to children. The crisis encouraged exploitation of child labour and many of the children and adolescents were migrants from the southern provinces of Mozambique. Furthermore, many Mozambicans returning from South Africa, with no employment prospects, generated further suffering and degradation of quality of life, involuntary repatriation, corruption, and deportation.

### ***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Despite many restrictions, it was possible to mediate the processing of approximately 50 documents for asylum-seekers and refugees. More than 100 cases of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers were followed up for legal assistance. Short courses on the Portuguese language and on the rights and duties of migrants and refugees were offered. Meetings for sharing, evaluating and replenishing activities took place via digital platforms. A national seminar attended by all diocesan coordinators of the pastoral care of human mobility was held. Training of 20 young people was organised among refugees and Mozambicans on topics related to the prevention of COVID, on gender-based violence, and on the rights and duties of migrants. They were responsible for disseminating information in neighbourhoods and points of higher

concentration of migrants and refugees in the provinces of Maputo and Nampula. Radio programmes, recordings and the publication of audio services on human trafficking, rights and duties of migrants were also achieved as well as the assistance and integration of a group of victims of human trafficking, organs and body parts. During this period, it was also possible to finalise the field research on trafficking in central Mozambique (Sofala, Zambézia, Tete and Manica provinces) as well as to make a public presentation of the report.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The first impact of COVID-19 was the reduction in the number of foreign immigrants entering and applying for asylum. We also saw an increase in requests for legal and social assistance from refugees and asylum-seekers and asylum-seekers requesting information to leave the country. There was an increased migration flow by irregular routes at the Ressano Garcia border between Mozambique and South Africa. Mozambican miners who lost their jobs in South Africa returned to their home areas in Mozambique with no prospect of employment and there was an increase in the number of child and adolescent street vendors on the streets of Maputo (exploitation of child labour). Therefore, CEMIRDE launched awareness campaigns on prevention of COVID-19, including protection of labour rights in time of pandemic, combating gender-based violence and assistance in conflict resolution arising from exploitation and contract terminations.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

To those who serve people on the move, it is of great importance to look at migrants as children of the same Father, and God, therefore as brothers and sisters, to try to know their history, culture, experience, dreams and challenges, to make an effort aimed at creating conditions so that they feel welcomed, loved and integrated in society in a perspective that they come to the country to add and not to divide or take opportunities from nationals. Migration is a right for all.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We plan to continue to provide human, spiritual, psychosocial and legal assistance to people on the move, promoting actions aimed at their reception and integration, with special attention to the displaced persons from Cabo Delgado. We plan to provide training subsidies and create conditions so that the diocesan commissions are strengthened and fulfil their role of accompanying and caring for those who migrate out of necessity with love. Finally, another plan is to intensify work to prevent and combat trafficking in persons in schools, communities and with displaced victims of the war in Cabo Delgado.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

CEMIRDE believes that if funding is available, it is extremely important to carry out studies on migration in Mozambique, as this will allow to better understand its contours and challenges, and in this way to design better strategies for the support of people on the move.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome and integrate.**

## 15. NIGER (NIAMEY), CARITAS DÉVELOPPEMENT NIGER (CADEV) - PROJECT FOR THE ASSISTANCE AND ACCOMPANIMENT OF MIGRANTS (PRAAMI)

**PROJECT NAME:** Project for the Assistance and Accompaniment of Migrants (PrAAMI)

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas – Développement Niger (Cadev)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Agadez, Arlit and Niamey, Niger

**PERIOD:** 2020



Since its creation in 2005, Cadev Niger has excelled in its work to improve people's living conditions and to organise welfare and empowerment resources. Its work programme is based on four pillars to develop its general objective which encompasses the management of livelihoods for refugees, the improvement of access to drinking water, the improvement of the nutritional situation, and the promotion of the economic empowerment of urban women.

The security situation remains volatile mainly in the tri-border area (Burkina Faso - Mali - Niger). From January to December 2020, Niger recorded 1,095 security incidents, 318 of which were linked to attacks by non-state armed groups (GANE), in addition to inter-community conflicts and cases of criminality. In the border strip with Burkina Faso, the incidents are mainly characterised by a series of kidnappings, assassinations, and threats against certain villages, followed by inter- and intra-community conflicts. In the northern border strip with Mali, on the other hand, GANE incursions, kidnappings and inter-community conflicts are the most well-known incidents. The regions of Tillabéri and

Diffa continue to be the scene of attacks by GANE against civilians and the Defence and Security Forces (FDS), impacting the smooth running of humanitarian activities.

In the Tillabéri region, which is of specific concern to the programme, security is still uncertain along the Malian border adjacent to this region. Indeed, the operations of non-state armed groups (GANE) have continued to create psychosis among the population, who have sometimes been forced to evacuate their native places of residence. This has episodically increased the waves of mass displacement of populations towards the relatively safer interior of the country. According to the regional directorate for humanitarian action and the relevant state services, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Tillabéri region are scattered in the departments of Téra, Torodi, Tillabéri, Ouallam, Banibangou, Filingué and Ayorou. To ensure livelihoods for host populations, refugees and IDPs through CFW, food assistance and farming development, a comprehensive beneficiary identification mission was conducted. This practice, which has effectively borne fruit in this sense, can be the subject of a good practice to be developed and capitalised on for future interventions, being an example of **sustainability and replicability**.

For efficiency purposes and above all for better internal coordination, CADEV Niger, in conjunction with CRS Niger - Catholic Relief Services, is implementing a project to assist IDPs in Ayorou. As part of the process of identifying beneficiaries, CADEV Niger has deemed it useful to coordinate efforts by first **supporting** the Regional Directorate of the Civil State (DREC) in Tillabéri to have an up-to-date database of IDPs in Ayorou.

With a total of 249,852 refugees and more than 3,000 asylum-seekers according to UNHCR data<sup>5</sup>, Niger faces great challenges in responding to the protection and assistance needs of these people and Cadev, following the verbs of **welcome, protect, promote and integrate**, has structured its work around these objectives through the Project for the Assistance and Accompaniment of Migrants (PrAAMi).

Although the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic and its first case in Niger in March 2020 posed an added difficulty due to border closure measures, the closure of public places and limitations on free movement, Cadev managed to adapt to the new context effectively, making its inter-

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<sup>5</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/ner>

vention more flexible and adapting its methodology. Thanks to the collaboration of the ghetto leaders who inform the PrAAMi project agents on a daily basis, the registration of new arrivals continued. It should be noted that since 2 April 2020, the project agents have maintained contact with the migrants in the various ghettos through the mediation of the leaders of each ghetto while respecting the prevention measures of COVID-19. The reinforcement of the project team made it possible to cover the Arlit area with the recruitment and assignment of a new agent.

Migrants are still attempting the crossing despite the pandemic also in the destination countries. Of the 255 migrants that the PrAAMi project identified from March to April 2020 in the ghettos of Agadez, 28 left for Libya in order to reach Europe. Out of 328 identified in Arlit, 48 left for Algeria with the aim of returning to Europe. In April, 256 migrants were found at the border with Libya after having been abandoned by smugglers. They were taken in charge by the authorities in collaboration with IOM. They were confined to the municipal stadium of Agadez. The group included migrants of 9 nationalities, the majority from Nigeria (104), Ghana (53) and Burkina Faso (34). 67 of these migrants joined the intervention ghettos of the PrAAMi project in Agadez after their confinement.

Although no cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the ghettos supported by the project, the risk is high with the arrival of large numbers of new migrants who are moved into the ghetto without prior quarantine. This is why, in spite of the health emergency, the PrAAMi project's actions in favour of migrants are continuing in close collaboration with the ghetto leaders, but also with other structures working in the field of migration.

During the period from March to December 2020, the following activities were carried out by the cells in Agadez, Arlit and Niamey:

- ***The distribution of dry rations to migrants in the ghettos and cash transfer to migrants in Niamey:*** Like all the populations of Niger, the barrier measures taken to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic have unfortunately had an impact on the daily lives of migrants. Indeed, their living conditions have deteriorated further with the confinement and suspension of economic activities, particularly in the informal sector. To enable them to have access to at least one meal a day, dry rations have been made available to them. To protect them and the project's agents, the rations, which were planned for 3 months, were granted in one go. In total, 583 mi-

grants in 8 ghettos in Agadez and 6 in Arlit benefited from three rations consisting of food, rice, oil, salt and canned tomatoes.

- **The distribution of COVID-19 prevention kits and items:** To create the conditions for the implementation of the barrier measures decreed by the Government and to protect migrants against COVID-19, 45 hand-washing devices were installed in the ghettos and places where migrants are present (parishes, listening centres, prisons, Territory Surveillance Directorate, Integrated Health Centre) with boxes of hydro-alcoholic gels and boxes of soap. In addition, to alleviate the difficulty of supplying water to migrants in the ghettos, the project has taken the necessary steps to ensure that they do not run out of water in order to offer migrants the opportunity to wash their hands regularly.
- **Distribution of drinking water in the ghettos:** To alleviate the difficulty of supplying water to migrants in the ghettos, the project has taken the necessary steps by subcontracting with water carriers in the city of Agadez to provide migrants in the ghettos with drinking water. As the ghettos are on the outskirts of the city, the lack of water is notable. Thus, the migrants not only had water for washing themselves and their clothes, but they also had water in the hand-washing facilities to give the migrants the opportunity to wash their hands regularly.
- **Provision of mobile phones:** Because of COVID, it was difficult for migrants to do any kind of small job that would allow them to meet their needs, including checking on their families. The project therefore made a mobile phone available to the ghettos so that they could call their relatives. The use of these mobile phones was done according to procedures that were respected by the migrants.
- **Distribution of blankets and clothes:** Still in the spirit of providing assistance to migrants, blankets and clothes were distributed to 376 migrants, including men, women and children. This aid is particularly useful for migrants who have been turned away; they arrive without a change of clothes because they were unable to take their travel bags, having been apprehended on the street in Algeria, or because they were robbed by bandits or even their smugglers during the crossing.

Some of the difficulties that the Cadev has faced along this project are:

- **The volatile security situation** contributes to reducing access and exacerbating the vulnerabilities of the populations in the affected areas, who are often forced to leave their production and living areas.

- **The difficulty of access to drinking water for IDPs** in the Ayorou site after the 3 months of the RRM (Rapid Response) remains a major challenge for humanitarian actors in addition to the increased risk of exposure of the population to protection problems, water-borne diseases, epidemics (particularly COVID-19) and food insecurity.
- **The issue of land** remains a major challenge for IDPs and refugees, specifically the 7,000 IDPs of Ayorou who risked eviction at the end of December 2020, if a moratorium on extension was not reached with the landlord.

Despite these difficulties, Cadev is passionate to work to reach as many beneficiaries as possible and to improve their living conditions in Niger contexts.

## 16. SOUTH AFRICA, CARITAS SOUTH AFRICA - RESPONSE TO ASSIST THE POOR AND THE VULNERABLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(ALSO PROMOTE AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Response to assist the poor and the vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas South Africa, Archdiocesan and Diocesan Caritas, SACBC Migrants and Refugees Office

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** South Africa

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020

The economic collapse caused by COVID-19 continues to affect all the poor communities especially the migrants, refugees and undocumented people. According to government statistics of October 2020, more than 3,000,000 people in South Africa have lost their jobs. Most of the poor communities, the migrants, refugees and undocumented people generate income from the informal economy, which shut down completely during lockdown. The "foreign nationals" and undocumented people have been excluded from social assistance by the South African government, which was only intended for South African citizens, and continue to rely on the Church's support for food relief, clothes, sanitary products, etc. The payment of the rent and food was a real challenge. The children and the women were the most affected.

Pope Francis, during the **Urbi et Orbi address** on the 12 April 2020 said, "The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people". In the middle of a pandemic, the Pope reminded everyone that while trying to find ways to combat this pandemic, people should be aware that it is not the only crisis we are facing. Pope Francis invited the Church to be active in the ministry, to be a caring Church. Indeed, the Church in southern Africa through the services of Caritas and the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees demonstrated its care among the less fortunate and affected during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Caritas South Africa, the Archdiocesan and Diocesan Caritas and the Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees Offices coordinated the **response to assist the poor and vulnerable during the COVID-19 pan-**

**demic.** At the end of March 2020, when the President of the Republic of South Africa announced the lockdown, the National Office of Caritas South Africa sent a quick survey to all dioceses to have information about the most vulnerable and needy. After hearing of the reality from all over the country, Caritas South Africa applied for an Emergency Grant which was approved and implemented in 6 archdioceses and dioceses for 3 months serving a total of 8,172 families and 12,485 indirectly. 29 nationalities from the African continent were assisted.

South Africa has 72 designated ports of entry. During the lockdown, the movement of people was limited, the smaller borders remained closed. Only people who obtained special permits from the Home Affairs Ministry were allowed to cross for emergencies and for repatriation. This negatively impacted the lives of migrants from the neighbouring countries because many of them depended on the support from their loved ones in South Africa and some of them resorted to irregular crossing (which put their lives in danger). South Africa erected a fence to prevent people crossing to and from Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, it was a wasted expenditure because it was vandalized. However, people continued to cross in an irregular manner both from Lesotho across the Caledon River as well as from Mozambique and Eswatini.

Among some difficulties experienced: during the beginning of strict lockdown, a new anti-foreigner group had emerged called "#PutSouthAfricansFirst". It started in April 2020 and sparked a lot of discussion in the media. Judging by the quality of its promotional material, the group appeared to be well funded. It was tapping into the current national concern about gender-based violence to promote its aims.

In addition, there was great concern about the Gauteng Township Economic Development Bill, which was by then under discussion. The bill sought to prohibit migrants and asylum-seekers from conducting businesses in Gauteng's townships. Many migrants and refugees, especially Somalis and Ethiopians, earned their living from running small businesses in Gauteng's townships. This bill would deprive them of earning their livelihoods and would also negatively impact township residents who rely on the shops run by the non-South African nationals in townships for their provisions.

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Caritas South Africa has been engaging with all the diocesan Caritas structures to determine the challenges of diocesan Caritas due to the COVID-19 pan-

demic. Most South African nationals were able to access food parcels and social grants from the South African government. However, it was agreed that migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and undocumented people were the most vulnerable and disadvantaged as a result of the current situation. The result of the consultation with diocesan Caritas organizations and 6 archdioceses and dioceses (7 organisations working directly with Migrants and Refugees Programmes) identified where the migrants, refugees, displaced persons and undocumented populations were the most indigent and vulnerable during this pandemic period. The approved fund assisted Caritas South Africa, Caritas Durban, Caritas Aliwal North, Caritas Port Elizabeth, Bienvenu Shelter for Refugee Women and their children - Archdiocese of Johannesburg, Catholic Shelter for Women in Musina – Diocese of Tzaneen, Caritas Rustenburg and Pastoral Care for Migrants & Refugees – Archdiocese of Johannesburg. These 7 organisations were the sub-grant partners for the implementation of the "Emergency project of Caritas South Africa COVID-19 Response". Caritas SA assisted each partner closely, with the aim of providing a better understanding of the overall project and the requirements needed during the implementation of this project and the monitoring and evaluation needed for the reports.

The National Office of Caritas South Africa organised various **virtual meetings** for the implementation of the project with all the coordinators. Archbishops/bishops, priests and coordinators worked together as a team. There was a positive spirit among all and the willingness to serve. The beneficiaries were happy and shed tears of joy to receive aid that answered their basic needs. The volunteers could not conduct home visits as per the initial plan, so the distribution sites that were sanitised, fumigated and complied with the health regulations were used as the meeting spots.

The Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) continued to operate through the **Counter Trafficking in Persons office**, which opened again on the 1 May 2020, immediately after the country moved from Level 5 to Level 4. It carried out its work of providing **support for women survivors of human trafficking**. Most were particularly severely affected by COVID-19, as a result of which they had lost their livelihoods. So, for instance, one young Zimbabwean woman who was saved from trafficking and who was pregnant as a result of being raped, was provided with rent to pay for a room, as well as groceries and clothing.

At the end of the lockdown, sewing machines, laptops, projectors and material for making clothes were sent to Malawi, **to equip four centres for women in Mzuzu Diocese**. They had already generated small incomes from the sewing, enabling them to mitigate the worst poverty caused by COVID-19, and were making face masks and selling them in their communities.

### **Some short testimonials of the beneficiaries:**

*"My name is NK, a father of 9 children. With a big family like mine, it is not easy to have enough financial resources when you are an asylum-seeker in South Africa. I am unemployed, but sometimes I have piece jobs here and there. Due to COVID-19, days were tough for me. It was painful for me as a father to see my children crying of hunger. Through Facebook, I knew that Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg was assisting vulnerable migrants and refugees. I took the opportunity to call the office and I was assisted with a food voucher that helped me to put the food on the table for my family. May God bless the Pastoral Care and its sponsors for supporting me and my family with food".*

Mrs M - from **Zimbabwe**: *"As a student from Baking, it has been very tough for me, as before COVID-19 I was able to make scones and fat cakes to sell every day. This money gave me enough to pay rent and feed myself and three children. When we hit lockdown, I was crying, as now how could I survive. When I received my food parcel, it was such a happy day for me. My prayers had been answered. I decided that with the items of flour and sugar, I would be able to use them to bake again and then sell. This gave me hope as I could then provide, with my small money, food for my children. Thank you".*

Mrs C - from **Angola**: *"I was praying every day for a miracle, just for me to feed my 6 children. They were going to bed hungry and all I could do was give them hot water with sugar. This virus has taken everything away from me and my family. When I received the phone call to come and collect vouchers, my prayers were answered. I went straight to the shop and was able to get the food I needed. That evening I knew that as a family we could all eat together again as we were blessed. My children would not go to bed hungry which made me feel proud as a mother".*

Ms M&M from **Ethiopia**: *"I came to South Africa with my husband. We have two children. We have no job and stay with friends. We currently struggle*

## PROTECT

*with feeding our family and as a foreign national it is very difficult to get a job. The Church is the only hope we have at the moment. The Church is helping us with food parcels like Jesus looking after the people of God. Our family is very thankful. God bless the Catholic Church".*

Mr M K from **Mozambique**: *"The reason I came to South Africa was to look for a job. The challenges I experienced were that I could not move freely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. If I cannot get a piece job I cannot have money to buy food for my family. I am so happy that the Catholic Church gave me food parcels, health packs and vouchers to buy winter clothes for my children. At least my family will have a nice meal for a change. Thank you very much Catholic Church. We always feel at home when we come here to the Church".*

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: promote and integrate.**

## 17. SOUTH AFRICA (GAUTENG), JRS - PASTORAL CARE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE

(ALSO INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Pastoral Care Service to Refugees and Asylum-seekers in Gauteng Province

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Gauteng, South Africa

**PERIOD:** 2020

The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic agency founded in 1980 by Fr Pedro Arrupe, SJ. Jesuit Refugee Service's mission is to accompany, serve and advocate for refugees and asylum-seekers as well as forcibly displaced people. In South Africa, JRS is operating in the Gauteng Province and is taking care of the needs of the urban refugees, providing services in education, healthcare, livelihoods, advocacy and pastoral care.

JRS South Africa has formed strong **relationships and collaborations** with different local organisations in many projects and activities. JRS is an operational partner of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and it also works in partnership with the following organisations: Anova Health Institute (facilitates workshops on men's health and offers voluntary counselling and testing services); Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (assists JRS with testing kits and facilitates HIV workshops); Future Families for social assistance in Pretoria; and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) assists with legal documentation issues. JRS collaborates with the City of Johannesburg Migrant Help Desk, and with the Somali Community Board. JRS receives referrals from clinics (Yeoville, Mayfair, Bez Valley, and Rosettenville) and churches (KCF Christian Church, the Cathedral, St Francis Catholic Church, and AFM Church) for terminally-ill asylum-seekers, refugees, or locals in need of care. The congregation also works with My Lilies of Hope and the Bienvenu Shelter to provide HIV testing and monitoring of vitals. Gift of Africa (GOA) donates food parcels, blankets, clothes to vulnerable communities. JRS also collaborates with Sungardens Hospice in Mamelodi which gives them referrals of sick patients residing in Mamelodi. They also collaborate with various government departments, namely the Department of

Social Development, Department of Home Affairs, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, and the Department of Health.

The **Pastoral Care project** was designed to accompany the refugees and asylum-seekers in their daily struggles as well as providing support to JRS programmes. This was done to **improve psychosocial and spiritual well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers** as well as its staff members. It was achieved through pastoral counselling, creation of prayer opportunities, reflection and spiritual direction. The project also included assistance to the sick, elderly and disadvantaged clients in order to ensure they have access to the services they need and also to help those arranging funerals so that the deceased could be buried with dignity. Among the activities of the Pastoral Care project there was also the provision of material support like food parcels, donation of clothes, blankets, hygiene materials, rental assistance with minimum financial support. The central focus of the pastoral care was to identify those experiencing difficult personal, social, and psychological issues and to then offer **support, counselling and practical solutions**. Most of the clients under pastoral care were sick, elderly or simply in desperate need of help and support. These individuals had their own personal struggles and were usually traumatized, living with the constant challenge of paying rent, food, medication and were marginalized by society. For JRS pastoral care, the main responsibilities were to **accompany, advocate and serve** these individuals in accordance with JRS' ethos.

A total of 600 patients were **provided with food and rental assistance and contributions towards transport costs and hospital consultation fees**, achieving 100% progress toward the target. It provided **individual and family counselling** to 43% of caregivers and supported 100% of caregivers with food vouchers, providing much-needed relief to households who have suffered job losses due to the pandemic. Two additional support groups for caregivers were set up in Johannesburg and Pretoria, with the aim of providing a supportive platform to strengthen the caregivers' coping skills and social support systems.

The COVID-19 situation has caused big **challenges** for the project, in particular home visits to refugees and migrants became difficult to continue with all the restrictions in place and moreover the loss of income. Many of the people visited had lost their jobs and this had become one of their major challenges to face during the pandemic.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**FR. PATRICK MPHEPO**


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CP PASTORAL CARE OFFICER (JRS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

JRS South Africa is one of four country projects operating under the auspices of JRS Southern Africa Regional Office, and is a registered non-profit organisation in South Africa, August 1999 (006-739 NPO). The overall goal of the Urban Refugees Project is **to ensure the sustainable integration of refugees and asylum-seekers into the South African community in Gauteng province**, specifically in Johannesburg and Pretoria, in order to improve their lives through serving, accompanying and advocating.

JRS has been responding to refugees, asylum-seekers and host community needs through the provision of health, education and livelihood services. Pastoral care is an integral part of the JRS mission which aims to address the holistic care of human displacement and improve the life of migrants and refugees.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

COVID-19 has affected so many lives and disrupted our way of life. Many people have lost jobs especially in companies and industries dealing with crowds, eg. restaurants and transport. The migrants and refugees, who are mostly the last in the society, are the worst affected. This has really impacted our work as we have a large number of clients unable to handle it. Every day, we are busy looking for food parcels to help the most affected. Some take days to eat a proper meal.

**- *What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The success we are proud of is that we have managed to get food and other material stuff for our people. Over 1,000 migrants and refugees have received food and other material stuff during the pandemic. Over 300 people have received pastoral counselling and advice.

**- *Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Yes. There are still some changes for now here in South Africa. Border closures, on and off, and Immigration here not issuing new asylum documents has slowed down migration. We have only managed to help those with documents already to renew them. This we have done through our advocacy office.

**- *What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

My advice to them is: These are vulnerable people who have left their homeland through no fault of their own. We believe that we are all created in the image of God and as pilgrim people, holding each other's hand is very vital. They should be assisted in the best possible way and by doing so, we will be fulfilling the Scripture passage, "*I was a stranger and you welcomed me*". Matthew 25:43.

**- *What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The project aims to continue meeting the spiritual and psychological needs of beneficiaries so that they realise a sense of well-being, to also bridge the gap between refugees, asylum-seekers and the community to promote **integration** by advocating for refugee rights. South Africa's Refugees Act of 1998 provides for extensive **protection of refugee** rights and makes generous allowances for freedom of movement, access to health and education services, some social protection, and the right to work. However, enduring bureaucratic obstacles in the asylum application and the refugee status determination processes leaves thousands of asylum-seekers without proper documentation – some waiting up to 10 or 12 years for a final decision – while individuals who have legitimate refugee claims are routinely rejected in their refugee status determina-

tion interviews. The lack of proper documentation results in many asylum-seekers and refugees being unable to exercise their rights to basic services, such as health care and social assistance, the placement of unaccompanied minors, access to education, or finding employment. Furthermore, the eruption of the coronavirus has had a devastating impact on the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers whose livelihoods in the informal sector have been disrupted. Unlike South Africans and other refugees who benefited from COVID-19 aid programmes such as grants and food parcels, asylum-seekers and other refugees remain vulnerable. Many cannot provide for themselves and their families at large which has been overwhelming, causing fear and anxiety, having a negative impact on the health and mental conditions of JRS beneficiaries. This has posed an increasing need for pastoral care services and some of the activities require a working budget specifically dedicated to pastoral care services, especially the provision of food parcels.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Doing pastoral care with these beneficiaries is a challenging task. It requires transparency and accountability and creation of mutual trust between the organisation and the beneficiaries. We are continuously looking for funding for the pastoral care of our beneficiaries.

**This good practice can be categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

## 18. TANZANIA, JRS - RADIO BROADCASTING COVID AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS AND CHILD PROTECTION AND SGBV ONLINE TRAINING

(ALSO WELCOME AND PROMOTE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Radio broadcasting awareness campaigns and child protection and SGBV online training

**ORGANISATION:** JRS

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Nyarugusu, Nduta, and Mtendeli camps, Tanzania



In 2015, more than 428,000 people were forced to enter Tanzania from the neighbouring country of Burundi after a violent post-electoral climate. Tanzania hosts 286,100 refugees and asylum-seekers, who have fled from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo due to political instability and conflict. 85% live in the three main refugee camps: Nyarugusu, Nduta, and Mtendeli, in the border region of Kigoma.

To respond to the multiple needs of refugees and their host communities, JRS started implementing activities in 2016 in the Mtendeli refugee camp, which hosts more than 26,400 people. And from January 2020, JRS started to be present also in Nyarugusu and Nduta refugee camps in the north-west of Tanzania<sup>6</sup>. Here, JRS distributed school stationery and offered teacher training, as well as psychosocial support through therapy groups, home visits, and recreational activities.

<sup>6</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/country/tanzania/>

To counter the pandemic in Tanzania, JRS was **supporting forced displaced communities in rural areas** which had a lack of sanitary products or access to information sources. As part of the COVID-19 prevention activities, JRS distributed about 100 hand-wash installations and 350 bar soaps at Nduta and Mtendeli camps, targeting 20 primary and secondary schools, as well as public areas such as hospitals, markets, child-friendly spaces, and worship centres in both camps.

Following the Tanzanian Government's announcement, the education centres in refugee camps opened their doors again in late June 2020, after being closed due to the COVID-19 deterring measures. **Radio broadcasting** has been a crucial channel during the conducted **awareness campaigns**. JRS produced one-minute radio COVID-19 prevention adverts and a bi-monthly educative radio programme on the pandemic on Radio Kwizera, a non-profit community radio. With this partnership, JRS offered one hour of information regarding the spreading and prevention of the disease. In addition to indications for the caregiving of COVID-19 patients, JRS also offered psychosocial support to reduce fear within the community and to prevent the discrimination and stigmatisation towards those who had contracted the disease and COVID-19 survivors. Posters and banners were used to raise awareness to COVID-19 preventative methods, as well as more innovative methods such as installing a public announcement system in the Nduta camp and attaching speakers to a car to announce the latest, government-approved pandemic updates throughout the area.

JRS Tanzania was also the first organisation to introduce an online **training system with smartphones and tablets** at Mtendeli refugee camp during COVID-19. 76 refugee teachers were trained in Child Protection and SGBV at the end of November 2020. Teachers have an important role to play in child protection and JRS' online training aimed to reinforce their skills to detect and assist child victims of violence, from detecting and reporting potential cases of child abuse, to developing a multi-disciplinary teamwork to continue supporting and monitoring the detected cases.

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**BY JUSTINA MARWA**

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PROJECT DIRECTOR (JRS IN TANZANIA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

My work in the pastoral care of people on the move is to create an environment which will help and support individuals, staff, people of concern and refugees in dealing with their personal problems. Normally this is achieved through the counselling, training and education we usually provide. The inspiration and vision for the work have been adopted from JRS' vision and mission to accompany, serve and advocate, among others.

I started to work on this project in March 2018. I am the responsible person for all activities in the project. I oversee the overall planning, organising and implementing, staff, monitoring and evaluating activities of the project. My role is to make sure that each sector achieves its defined goals and objectives in accordance with the overall work plan of JRS programmes approved by the country director.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The COVID-19 pandemic affected our work very much. There was a delay in starting the project implementations as the adaptation of activities to COVID was required. The major challenge was restrictions from the government, which affected our activities in a way that we were not able to meet and execute our duties physically as gatherings were not allowed. As the majority of our work is engaging larger groups of people - for example in conducting training, sports groups, counselling and leisure activities - it was a challenge to implement the mentioned activities. There was fear among employees and our beneficiaries/people we serve, so we were forced to reduce daily engagement.

Apart from the above, we also had the challenge of financing the fight against COVID at a project level, although our country office tried to sup-

port the project. Another challenge was the shortage of masks around the region in which we worked, but we tried to get the WASH facilities materials to prevent our staff from contracting COVID-19.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The success we had in working with people of concern during the pandemic was to be able to implement the activities, adapting them to the COVID-19 situation, for example conducting teacher training on child protection and SGBV training online by using tablets/smartphones. Furthermore, the project succeeded in supporting people by providing WASH facilities to prevent them from contracting COVID-19.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The challenge was the fear of daily engagement restriction. The organisation responded to the challenges by following all the directions and adjusted accordingly to the situation.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

I think it is important to keep praying and advocating in order to achieve the four targeted verbs for migrants and refugees.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

In the future, we would like to support children with special needs and to engage the host community with our activities.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome and promote.**

## 19. UGANDA, CARITAS KAMPALA - EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR URBAN REFUGEES TO THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC OF COVID-19 IN THE KAMPALA AND WAKISO DISTRICTS OF CENTRAL UGANDA

**PROJECT NAME:** Emergency Response for Urban Refugees to the Global Pandemic of COVID-19

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas, Justice and Peace Department - Archdiocese of Kampala (Caritas Kampala)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Central Uganda

**PERIOD:** June - August 2020

Uganda registered the first COVID-19 case on 21 March 2020. Most cases were being reported in the Kampala and Wakiso districts, where many urban refugees reside. On 18 March 2020, the government of Uganda imposed a nationwide lockdown in an attempt to mitigate the spread of the virus. At that time, a total of 1,423,377 refugees were registered in Uganda. Of the above totals, 80,989 were registered as urban refugees in Kampala comprising over 40,000 households. As the global community was tirelessly fighting to contain the spread of COVID-19, the survival of the urban refugees living in Kampala was a cause for concern. During the lockdown in 2020, people were urged to stay at home, avoid mass gatherings, practise social distancing and the use of public and private passenger vehicles was banned. These measures severely impacted the livelihoods of urban refugees and host communities in the country. Most of Uganda's urban residents including the urban refugees survive on a hand-to-mouth basis. They live off their ability to trek to town centres every day to earn a living. A slight disruption in this routine means people will go hungry at home. The government rolled out a food relief programme for the most vulnerable within the communities, especially for Kampala and Wakiso Districts, but it was not enough even for the targeted groups. Additionally, the incomprehension and indifference by the host communities to the urban refugees' predicament during this crisis demonstrated their unique legal, social and economic vulnerability which threatened their basic human rights. The living conditions among urban refugees are of a poor standard, with inadequate access to soap and clean water, crowded housing and shared bathrooms. Such

a population is disproportionately vulnerable to the virus and unable to practice 'social distancing' and 'self-isolation'. Furthermore, most of the urban refugees were employed within the informal sector, mainly street vending, which was halted during the lockdown. As a result, most urban refugees were forced to survive using their business capital resources which further catapulted their problems due to lack of financial resources to support their livelihoods. In the first few months of the outbreak, governments around the world collectively focused on managing the spread of the disease, relying in many cases on stringent transmission control measures without placing a high weight on the present and future economic costs of these measures.

Refugees were deeply affected by the social and economic impact of measures the governments took to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Many faced stoppages or delays to daily labour and other livelihood activities they and their families depended on. Their food security and socio-economic status suffered with disruptions to their sources of income since most are employed in the informal sector. In turn, many were not able to afford the sustenance of their livelihoods. Some urban refugees could not easily comprehend the details of the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the government due to language difficulties. In addition, urban refugees have a high dependence on public services particularly for health and education. Limited access to quality and affordable health services had devastating impacts in the case of an illness in the family. Due to limited savings and the absence of adequate safety nets, the poor were forced to rely on coping strategies with potential long-lasting negative effects such as the sale of productive and household assets.

The Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Uganda with partner organisations initiated a response aimed at mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown for all the refugees in Uganda. In this regard, Caritas Kampala designed interventions to assist urban refugees within Kampala and Wakiso districts. Caritas, Justice and Peace Department - Archdiocese of Kampala (Caritas Kampala) is the social development arm of the Catholic Church, mandated for the promotion of socio-economic development, human rights, justice, peace and good governance. Caritas Kampala implements activities in 70 functioning Catholic parishes of the Archdiocese of Kampala. It addresses the challenge of society's inability to effectively respond to the socio-economic, political, cultural, environmental, human rights and developmental aspects of good governance. It builds on the resource-

## PROTECT

fulness of communities, families and individuals by empowering them to address the demands for human dignity, justice and peace and works for a dignified society promoting fundamental human rights.

The "Emergency Response for Urban Refugees to the Global Pandemic of COVID-19 in Kampala and Wakiso Districts of Central Uganda Project" was implemented by the Caritas Justice and Peace Commission, Archdiocese of Kampala from June to August 2020, with financial support from the Diocese of Rottenburg, Germany. The Caritas Justice and Peace Department, through its Justice and Peace Office, sought to respond to the plight of urban refugees within the Archdiocese of Kampala, to reduce the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Uganda, and support from the Diocese of Rottenburg, Caritas Kampala **provided financial and food assistance support** for 3 months during the project implementation to **105 urban refugee and host community households** in the Kampala and Wakiso Districts. These initiatives enabled urban refugee community members to overcome some of the livelihood challenges during the COVID-19 lockdown measures. The overall goal of the proposed intervention was, **"Enhancement of Urban Refugee Livelihoods in Kampala Archdiocese and Basic Rights protected during the COVID-19 pandemic through the establishment of an Emergency Fund."**

The specific objectives were:

- To provide emergency livelihood support to complement the basic household needs of 105 urban refugees, asylum-seekers and host community members.
- To create awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic among urban refugees and the local communities.

The distribution **of food, non-food items** and cash transfers for emergency livelihood support was conducted from June to August 2020. Each of the 105 households received maize flour, cooking oil, cleaning supplies and mobile cash transfers for the 3 months. In addition, health assistance towards procuring medicinal drugs for patients within the selected households was provided. The distribution exercise was coordinated by a team of 7 project personnel who ensured timely and

effective service delivery of the emergency livelihood support following prescribed guidelines from the Government of Uganda during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three of the team members were urban refugee community members. **Health assistance** towards procuring drugs for patients within the selected households was provided for urban refugee community members.

**Radio spot messages** about COVID-19 transmission and precautions against contracting it were run on 2 Catholic-based radio stations: (1) Radio Sapientia with coverage in the Central Region of Uganda which comprises the project area, and (2) Radio Maria which has nationwide coverage. Additionally, **SMS messages** were sent out to 30,000 urban refugees. The SMS messages were designed to deliver vital information about the COVID-19 epidemic in various languages.

One of the main challenges was the number of urban refugees: 80,506 on 31 August 2020. While UNHCR Uganda was seeking potential partners and other collaborators to address the effects of COVID-19 among refugees and asylum-seekers, the assistance was not forthcoming. The emergency livelihood support from Caritas Kampala towards 95 households was small compared to the total of the registered urban refugees. In the months of April - July, several urban refugees faced eviction from their rented houses, as a result of failure to meet their rent obligations. Consequently, some sought refuge in or near church premises, especially Pentecostal churches, and others lived with friends which was very inconvenient. Even though several partners joined the effort to provide emergency **livelihood assistance**, many urban refugee community members could not be assisted due to the limited funding.

Many of the urban refugee lactating mothers did not have adequate breast milk for their babies for proper growth. This is due to the stress, depression and poverty they were experiencing. In addition, many women and young girls requested menstrual kits as they found it a big challenge during their monthly periods and yet they were not earning any money to cater for their periods. This was unplanned for emergency livelihood support. Within several urban refugee families, the husband and wife have separated due to domestic violence which has heightened during the COVID-19 crisis. Husbands have abandoned their families and wives too have forsaken their homes. The Project team found out that most of the disagreements are stemming from the difficult situation families are facing due to loss of livelihoods during this COVID-19 crisis.

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Among the lessons learnt, faced with the daunting task of survival during this crisis, some of the urban refugee community members started to share the little they had with their fellow refugees to enable them to survive. They shared food items and families were hosting other families who were evicted from their homes. This was a sign of solidarity.

Most of the urban refugee community members were not privy to employment opportunities in the formal sector and have therefore resorted to informal sector opportunities with many of them being self-employed. Unfortunately, the informal sector was unstable and riddled with many obstacles. Due to the lockdown and lack of savings, urban refugees consumed their capital resources in order to survive and thereby disrupting their livelihood strategies.

The Diocese of Rottenburg continued to support the COVID-19 emergency livelihood support initiatives of Caritas Kampala for the period December 2020 to May 2021.

## 20. ZAMBIA, ZCCB, CARITAS ZAMBIA - PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON THE MOVE (CYOM) IN MANTAPALA REFUGEE CAMP

**PROJECT NAME:** Protection and participation of Children and Youth On the Move (CYOM) in Mantapala refugee camp

**ORGANISATION:** ZCCB, Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, Caritas Zambia

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Mantapala refugee camp, Zambia

**PERIOD:** 2020

In 2017, more than 685,000 Congolese refugees sought international protection in neighbouring countries, including Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, as well as in countries in Southern Africa and beyond. In 2018, the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) deteriorated, spreading to previously unaffected areas. Since 30 August 2017, Zambia has received refugees fleeing conflict in the Pweto and Moba areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), who were first settled temporarily in the Chiengi district.

By September 2017 the number of arrivals had exceeded 1,000 people, and once the Kenani transit centre in Nchelenge district was opened all refugees were relocated to it. As the number of refugees increased to over 6,000, Kenani could no longer accommodate new arrivals. Mantapala refugee camp, which is approximately 36 kilometers south-east of Nchelenge and spanning 8,000 hectares, was opened in early 2018. All refugees residing at Kenani were then relocated to the new settlement at Mantapala. Ever since the 2018 elections in DRC, arrivals have reduced to a steady trickle of refugees seeking international protection or family reunification.

It is evident that current trends have shown that children and youth are becoming part of large-scale population movements both within and between countries, because of political crises and natural disasters. As such, **Caritas Zambia** has in the past 3 years been implementing interventions aimed at **supporting the welfare of Children and Youth On the Move**, with support from Terre des Hommes (TDH). The main objective

is to contribute towards enhancing the **protection and participation in Children and Youth On the Move (CYOM)** in Mantapala refugee camp in Zambia. The main purpose of the interventions implemented so far includes: **strengthening the capacities of CYOM to demand for their rights and enhancing their well-being, and also enhancing the livelihoods of refugees to have sustainable and durable solutions towards attaining sustainable livelihoods aimed at enhancing their well-being.**

In a quest to **strengthen the protection of children and enhance their access to participation in advocating for their protection**, Caritas Zambia has further established three child-led groups within Mantapala refugee camp. These groups have been trained in different aspects of children's rights and other child protection issues. This includes understanding the available referral services that support children protection within the camp, to strengthen their capacities to be able to defend and demand for their rights, and to support interventions aimed at strengthening their well-being. Furthermore, the established child-led groups have been able to further open up about and bring out issues that the children in the camp face, which includes but is not limited to:

- High levels of school dropout due to the different education curriculum (the Education curriculum in DRC and Zambia).
- Limited number of teachers in the school within the camp to effectively address issues of teacher-pupil ratios and effectively deliver quality educational contents.
- High levels of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) among children and young people in the refugee camp, which were not being reported as these are mostly regarded/ treated as part of their norm and traditions and never brought out in the open. The children further shared that most perpetrators are usually parents and caregivers who are never reported to the law enforcers.
- Children and youth also expressed misgivings of how they still live in fear of foster parents among other challenges.
- Moreover, in a quest to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic, Caritas Zambia supported Mantapala refugees, youth, children and families with COVID-19 interventions which included hygiene services to safeguard their psychological, social and economic livelihoods amidst the pandemic. The main objective of this intervention was to contribute to improved well-being and full realisation of **rights of children and youth in the camp, especially the right to good health and access to information**. Caritas has also further contrib-

uted to overall psychosocial and physical well-being of refugees' children and youth within a child- and youth-friendly environment, free from violence, abuse and neglect in the refugee resettlement.

In order to achieve Pope Francis' four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants, the Project Director of Caritas Zambia, Mr Eugene Kabilika, advised the people seeking to assist for this goal as follows: *"For countries that receive itinerant people, they need to work with their government and the local leaders to put in place policies and legal framework that support work meant to protect, promote, welcome and integrate these people in the host communities. This way the help will always be the same regardless of the people appointed to pastor these people".*

# PROMOTE

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## 21. BURUNDI, JRS - TRAINING OF 25 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE MUSASA REFUGEE CAMP TO SET UP A SOAP MANUFACTURING UNIT

**PROJECT NAME:** Training of 25 young people from the Musasa refugee camp to set up a soap manufacturing unit

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Ngozi province, Burundi

**PERIOD:** 2020

To reinforce the **preventive** measures to fight COVID-19 and **empower** youth in refugee camps in Burundi, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) started a training and soap production project in 2020 in Musasa camp, Ngozi province.

JRS identified 25 young refugees, 9 of them women, who had completed their schooling to support them creating a collective income-generating activity (IGA) to make soaps, therefore strengthening access to hygiene products within the local community. The targeted young refugees received theoretical and practical training, a start-up kit and a microcredit. Through this **participative approach**, JRS is making it possible for the beneficiaries to create a **positive long-term effect** on their lives.

The resulting soap cooperative is called *Reveil* and has enabled the establishment of a regular distribution of soap in the refugee camp but also in the local community.

## TESTIMONY

*"Before the implementation of the soap factory project in our camp, all the members of the association were unemployed, the only thing we were able to do was roam the camp because we had no occupation. The JRS project met the needs of refugees in Musasa camp, who spent almost 4 months without the distribution of soap. The project also came to respond to prevention against COVID-19 without forgetting the empowerment of refugees. We changed our mindset, we currently have an entrepreneurial spirit." Richard Maoneo, Secretary of Reveil soap-making cooperative.*

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**FRANÇOIS XAVIER NSABABANDI**

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PROJECT DIRECTOR (JRS IN BURUNDI)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

Our work in the pastoral care of people on the move is to assist refugees and returnees to access their fundamental rights, namely the education of children, the protection of their rights, their empowerment, and the psychosocial support of people in emotional distress. I started this work in 2018 and my role is to coordinate all activities and to follow up on the mission to assist, serve and defend the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees. In addition to this, I evaluate the needs of the beneficiaries in order to respond in an efficient and participatory way, and to develop projects that consider the reality.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world has not spared our work. Planned activities had to be adapted to the pandemic. Mass activities have been interrupted or cancelled. Field work has been reduced. The follow-up activities are now done in a virtual way and there is no face-

to-face. The beneficiaries have also not received the necessary support, which has resulted in disinterest in pursuing empowerment activities. There are school dropouts in the belief that there will be a blank year. Awareness sessions have been reduced. The national exams were disrupted especially since the curriculum followed is Congolese, and the Congo stopped classes for several months.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Despite the pandemic, the success has been the collaboration with all partners, both at the donor level and at the implementation level. Another success is the team that I coordinate who have worked hard every day without much time to relax. Thirdly, our close collaboration with the beneficiary population, as well as the support from the national office at all levels have been a success. All the activities have been carried out and we see the impact of the actions.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

There have been changes in the phenomenon of migration in Burundi during this period due to the fact that the borders have been closed. People cannot cross over to neighbouring countries as before to seek refuge in Burundi. The repatriation process has also been impacted by the pandemic and few returnees are coming. The reintegration process has therefore also been affected because the number of those resettled has been greatly reduced. As a response to this change, JRS Burundi established a contingency plan and joined other organisations and partners to collaboratively prepare the overall contingency plan. Additionally, the organisation has adopted the field activities considering the reality of the moment, and it has also joined the government in respecting the barrier measures legislated by the latter.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The advice I could give to people who would like to contribute to the realisation of these four verbs is to be able to realise them all in their entirety by following the advice given to prevent and fight COVID-19 for the well-being of the beneficiaries.

**- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?**

Future projects planned in this area are projects that support the mission of JRS mixed with interventions for the prevention and fight against COVID-19.

**- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?**

I would like to share with you a wish that in any intervention initiative the place of prevention against COVID-19 is preponderant and that the interventions do not stop because of this pandemic but rather efforts are redoubled for more actions that would limit the vulnerability of the beneficiaries.

## 22. CAMEROON, TSSF, TERTIARY SISTERS OF SAINT FRANCIS - HEALTH RELIEF AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN

**PROJECT NAME:** Health relief and rehabilitation programme for 7,050 displaced children and pregnant women

**ORGANISATION:** Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis (TSSF)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** North West Region, Cameroon

**PERIOD:** 2020



This project was implemented within the context of the Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis' (TSSF) humanitarian assistance to victims of the ongoing armed conflict in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon.

The ongoing conflict in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon involves two armed groups: the regular state army on the one side and the local armed groups on the other side, all defending their respective interests. To effectively implement this project, the TSSF needed to negotiate with both parties to guarantee the security of the staff, beneficiaries and relief material. The negotiations were successful because of the Sisters' neutral position. Their standpoint significantly contributed to the successful implementation of this project despite the prevalence of violence and confrontations. The project interventions included:

- Sensitisation, consultation, diagnosis and treatment of common ailments
- Provision of food items and other consumables to displaced children and those with disabilities

- Provision of delivery packs to pregnant women
- Treatment of emergency cases and rehabilitation

These activities were implemented by the 3 TSSF hospitals: Shisong General Hospital, Njinikom General Hospital and Ntasen Hospital, all in the North West Region of Cameroon.

The project objectives were successfully attained reaching **7,099 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** in the respective localities. With the outbreak of COVID-19, the hospitals had to integrate new activities into the project to inform the target population on preventive measures against the pandemic. However, these activities did not cause a significant change in the project set-up as they aligned with the project's general objective of improving the well-being of internally displaced women and children. The strong points in the project's development and management were various. The project was very successful because of the various implementing hospitals' proximity to the target groups. Though the hospitals had witnessed military invasion and attacks in the past, women and children still found them safer for shelter as their homes had been burnt and villages invaded by soldiers. Secondly, the relationship sustained between the TSSF and local authorities, village heads and community leaders greatly facilitated the implementation of this project with assistance and translations. Thirdly, the Tertiary Sisters, known as servants of God and for the humanity they have built over the years, earned favour from the soldiers from both camps and helped to get the attention of the beneficiaries.

Some of the project activities had a short-term **sustainability** plan while others had a longer term.

In the short term, the well-being of the beneficiaries has been sustained through the provision of basic food items, medications and other consumables like soap/detergents, blankets, mats and delivery packs. The long-term sustainability of this project was achieved through project interventions like **rehabilitation, vocational training, sensitisation and education on the prevention of common ailments and the importance of antenatal clinics**. They believe that the knowledge they pass to the beneficiaries will boost their health, and social and economic potential, as they strive to improve their own well-being. These interventions will be sustained in the following ways:

## PROMOTE

- 1 Children undergoing **vocational training** in the various centres upon graduation will become self-reliant. As they carry out economic activities, they will be able to assist their families and eventually rebuild their communities which are now in ruins.
- 2 The knowledge passed to the beneficiaries on the prevention of common ailments will continue to disseminate amongst the IDPs and even host community members. Thus, the spread of common ailments like malaria, typhoid etc. will be controlled. The same applies to the knowledge on the prevention of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 The pregnant **women who were empowered** on the importance of prenatal clinics were charged with the responsibility of diffusing the knowledge to other internally displaced women and those in their host communities. The education given to pregnant women on the importance of good nutrition and post-birth childcare was conducted by seasoned midwives.
- 4 During food distribution exercises, children, guardians and parents were encouraged to ask for small portions of land in the host communities and grow vegetables and other seasonal crops. This was also to ensure food sustainability. To further strengthen this, they approached local authorities like chiefs and village heads and pleaded with them to support IDPs with farming plots and seeds. This has so far yielded fruits in some communities. In Ntasen, we talked with the village head, and he later offered a piece of land to some IDPs to farm on.

Regarding the effectiveness of the project, quantitatively, the project reached out to 7,099 IDPs. Out of this total, 667 were pregnant women, 5,812 were children (*and their families*), 459 were emergency cases and 161 were rehabilitation cases. Qualitatively, the planned results were achieved per the respective interventions carried out as follows:

- The **education** given to the internally displaced women and children on the prevention of common ailments was very effective. The staff deployed by the various hospitals to the field carried out interactive sessions with the beneficiaries as they drilled them on practical tips for the prevention of malaria, typhoid and other common diseases associated with their living conditions. Also, the talks on the prevention of coronavirus added more value and efficacy to this intervention as the need for this activity came in the middle of our project.
- The **effectiveness** of the interventions towards pregnant women was evaluated from the number of women who later registered for

antenatal clinics and the number of babies born in the various hospitals. Many women who had not been attending prenatal clinics complained of lack of information, time and finances. The various hospital staff assigned to this activity devoted a lot of time to instruct these women on the importance of antenatal clinics. They also offered them assistance material (delivery packs) and opportunities for free consultations and clinical services. This gesture pulled many internally displaced women towards the hospitals.

- For the intervention on the treatment of emergency cases, the involved hospitals saw this as a big relief as the burden of treatment had been on them. As the cases were mostly gunshots and accident wounds resulting from the crisis, the victims could not pay their bills and transferred the burden to the hospitals. Through this project intervention, the hospitals were able to subsidise the bills or cover the whole amount depending on the type of case brought in.
- Lastly, the children orphaned by the crisis, and those with disabilities closely linked to the crisis were rehabilitated. This was an effective measure to curb child delinquency and to give hope to children living with disabilities. Thus, the risks that undermined their vulnerable conditions were greatly minimised through this intervention.

The **weaknesses** in the project's development and management were the frequent clashes between the military and the local armed groups, which slowed down some of the activities. The local armed groups often called for lockdowns as a form of civil disobedience, and this also slowed down the project activities. Another weak point was the unexpected outbreak of the pandemic. The coronavirus affected the project implementation plan as most activities had to be suspended or limited. For example, for sensitisation and distribution of food and other relief materials, the plan was to gather all the beneficiaries together per location. To respect the COVID-preventing rules, the team had to work with smaller groups, and this cost more resources than envisaged.

The **participation** and **satisfaction** of the beneficiaries during the course of this project was evaluated on the spot and at the end of the project, and the feedback was generally good. From conception to finish the beneficiaries were involved and participating in all project activities, and through this holistic approach, we guaranteed the beneficiaries' satisfaction. During the sensitisation activities, the beneficiaries were very active and involved in creating discussions and the same happened

## PROMOTE

during the educational talks with pregnant women. As to rehabilitation and vocational training of unaccompanied minors, the beneficiaries had the option of choosing the centre they preferred. High level expression of satisfaction was very evident during the distribution of food items and other consumables, many of these beneficiaries had gone for days without food and showed extreme gratitude. The involvement of the beneficiaries during the project development and management had a positive effect on the implementation of this project. Being children and women, part of a vulnerable group, and living in conflict were all factors that contributed to a worse situation. Having them as main targets for support improved the well-being of internally displaced pregnant women and kids. With the collaboration of various hospitals and their staff, the project objectives were attained, and the risks associated with these people's living conditions have been significantly minimised.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

#### SR. HEDWIG VINYO

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PROJECT COORDINATOR (TSSF DEVELOPMENT OFFICE - CAMEROON)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

The TSSF have for the past 4 years been very concerned about the people moving for security reasons, to seek safety in other communities or countries. Due to the Anglophone crisis, over 1,000,000 people have fled the comfort of their homes to seek refuge in other communities and close to 100,000 are currently seeking refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. Through the TSSF Development Office, we have been playing an active role in pastoral care to improve the well-being of these IDPs and refugees alike. Food and non-food supplies have been brought to refugees in Nigeria and to the IDPs in Cameroon. The TSSF has also been focusing on the health aspect of the displaced persons. With the mobile medical team, we carried out screening for common ailments and the dispensation of drugs. Serious cases of wounds and infections have been referred to specialized hospitals within and outside of Cameroon.

Both in Nigeria and Cameroon, we have been working hard to integrate affected persons in their host communities and countries. In Nigeria, we held advocacy meetings with the immigration authorities, and this facilitated their integration in host communities. In Cameroon, we met with traditional rulers and landlords in communities hosting thousands of IDPs and implored them to comfort and host the displaced Anglophone victims hoping that sometime soon the people will be able to return back to their own communities once the war will be over. We also work with street children. It has been a very traumatising experience bringing together orphaned children or children affected by this ongoing crisis. Since 2017, we rehabilitated over 500 child victims of the ongoing crisis, who had to stray from their villages. St Francis Home for Skills Training (SAFRAHOST) Njavnyuy-Kumbo as well St Joseph Children and Adult Home Bafut (SAJOCAM) have been our two main rehabilitation centres, both for the adolescents and the elderly.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

It was a difficult situation for us to implement as this pandemic came in as an emergency and was not budgeted for in our action plan towards refugee missions. Thus, we had to put our pastoral mission on hold and re-strategize to properly apply these measures for our own safety and for the refugees and IDPs. Luckily, while pleading for a change of project activities, some of our funders gave room for us to use the funds to fight COVID-19. We empowered our staff through capacity-building activities and dispatched them into refugee and IDPs communities for sensitisation. It was a difficult exercise because the refugees and IDPs with their vulnerable conditions had to be restrained from socialising. However, we managed with the community leaders to regulate social interactions and applied a control measure that was necessary to combat the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, some IDPs and refugees tested positive, but through medical intervention from our mobile team, they recovered from the virus.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Our major success has been that most of our donors approved diverting funding means for some long-term impact projects to control and contain the COVID-19 emergency. Also, thanks to our mobile medical and sensitisation campaign team, we have so far not registered any deaths

from COVID-19 in our camps and host communities. Suspected and confirmed cases are rushed to the hospitals and nearby clinics for proper medical attention. As preventive measures, we have ensured that hand washing tanks with water regularly refilled and soap are placed at strategic points in communities. We have also carried out a lot of awareness measures to ensure that everyone stays protected to protect others and their communities at large.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The major concern of immigrants especially in Cameroon has been the issue of international passports. It has in the past years been a challenging task for people who want to migrate irrespective of the reasons because of this. Thanks to the concern, Cameroon Ministries have made the processes of producing passports easy and hasty. This has indeed favoured migrants. Also, in their host communities, they can register and obtain international passports. On our part we appreciated the efforts of the government of Cameroon and called on them to not only facilitate the process of having passports but to make sure Cameroon is peaceful.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

We strongly support and encourage people in host countries, whatever the situation, to be welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating with migrants. The situation in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon for example is too precarious for anyone to want to stay there. People are being killed on a daily basis, houses are burnt, men and women harassed and tortured and every citizen feels so insecure. Therefore, it is normal for everyone to migrate to safer communities or regions. Many of them have their plights and can only be comforted if we as human beings exercise the 4 verbs of Pope Francis.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Based on what we have been witnessing in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, we want to dedicate more of our time and services to people on the move, especially those who are being forced to leave their homes and countries for security reasons. As mentioned

above, we have witnessed a lot and lived with victims of the ongoing crisis whose hopes and desires to live again have only been restored because of our presence in their communities. Thus, we want to continue to assist these vulnerable persons with more community-based interventions. In line with our strategic focus for the coming years, we highlight here below some main issues in the sector of people on the move:

- Amplify assistance to refugees in Nigeria and Central African Republic (CAR).
- Support and rehabilitate internally displaced persons in Cameroon.
- Advocate for policy reforms and the application of laws that defend the interests of refugees and internally displaced persons.
- Request for financial assistance from international organisations to achieve the above.

The list is not limited to the above as we are willing and ready to do whatever is possible to improve the well-being of refugees and internally displaced persons.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Over 4 million people, with the majority being women and children, are currently suffering the consequences of the ongoing crisis in Cameroon. Also, with the worsening humanitarian crisis in Central African Republic, the people in need have increased from 2.6 million in 2020 to 2.8 million in 2021<sup>7</sup>. Many are growing more vulnerable as the violence persists and humanitarian assistance remains inadequate. We wish to use this medium solicit for your support to enable us to continue to bring relief assistance to these victims. We also pray you to use your good offices and advocate in any way possible for peace to return to Cameroon and the Central African Republic. May the Almighty bless you!

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<sup>7</sup> Source - OCHA

## 23. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, JRS - ON-AIR CLASSES THROUGH L'ÉCOLE À LA RADIO IN BAMBARI

(ALSO PROTECT AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJET NAME:** JRS Bambari Project: On-Air classes through l'École à la Radio in Bambari

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) CAR

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Bambari, Central African Republic

**PERIOD:** June to December 2020

For almost 6 years, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has been renewing its commitment and working in the Ouaka prefecture. JRS has been providing quite varied responses and contributions to a Central African humanitarian crisis that affects different aspects of human life and which, indeed, requires support in different sectors such as education, protection, psychosocial support, health, food security, strengthening social cohesion, socio-economic recovery. This support is provided to forced displaced persons, returnees and vulnerable persons in host communities. Activities are carried out by a project manager supported by the activity coordinators who work closely with monitoring officers who, in turn, work continuously with those served.

The Central African education system, weakened for decades, continues to suffer the consequences of the military-political crisis that has lasted since 2013. The resurgence of conflicts and the multiplication of violence directly affect almost all prefectures, resulting in the destruction and/or loss of school and teaching materials, as well as the destruction and/or deterioration of school infrastructure. This limits the access of children and adolescents (aged 3 - 18) to educational and personal development opportunities. Problems of access and quality of education, coupled with the precarious socio-economic situation and frequent population displacement, are the major cause of school drop-out at the primary level (drop-out rate of 51%) and low completion rates at the Basic 2 and general secondary level (11% and 6% respectively - with very low participation of girls, almost 3%), even though children aged 13-18 make up about 20% of the country's total population.

With its partners in Bambari, JRS RCA is trying to answer as much as possible to the different needs in a context as difficult as it is complex, also marked by the COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, JRS focused on child protection and education with the support of partners such as UNICEF, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Jesuiten Weltweit. In March 2020, schools in the Central African Republic closed due to COVID-19 prevention measures. Before the pandemic, access to quality education was already a challenge for many children in Bambari, affected by forced displacement, conflict, or recruitment by armed groups. The great innovation of their education project in 2020 was to have adapted to the context of COVID-19 and to have designed lessons broadcast on the radio for preschool and primary school students. In **collaboration** with Lego ti la Ouaka community radio, JRS produced **radio lessons for preschool and primary school students** from June to December 2020. The lessons were broadcasted on weekdays from 4.30 to 5.00 p.m. and listened to by communities 50 kilometers around Bambari. 7 teachers, with a group of 10 students each, recorded the different lessons with the aim to offer **learning support, awareness raising about COVID-19 and psychosocial accompaniment** in the area where JRS operates with **internally displaced persons** and local communities.

JRS distributed over 265 radios within the served communities and selected community leaders and parents as Listening Focal Points to help JRS teams monitor the **impact and effectiveness** of the programme. The **involvement** of the community and the number of children benefiting from l'École à la Radio was higher than expected. Over 13,000 children listened to the programme regularly. The fact that the lessons were recorded by students themselves made the lessons easier and more engaging.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### VICTOR SETIBO

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PROJECT MANAGER (JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE IN CAR)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

Through our various activities, we work with forcibly displaced people and host communities in the areas of education, protection, psychosocial support, socio-economic integration and social cohesion (peacebuilding). Armed conflicts in the Central African Republic, such as in Bambari, have sometimes been instrumentalised by certain combatants who identify themselves as belonging to one or another religious denomination (Christian or Muslim). Our work remains informed and motivated by the three elements that characterise the universal mission of JRS: accompany, serve and defend refugees and displaced people. These three elements remain the common thread in our daily work. We are inspired by the principle that we not only serve displaced people, but we work for and with them. The people served participate in the mission and should be major actors in their psychological and socio-economic well-being.

I have been working with JRS in Bambari for two years as a project manager. My role is to identify the problems and humanitarian needs in the area where I work, express them to the programme manager and contribute to the design of projects in order to adequately address these needs. Once the projects are accepted and funded, my role is to plan the activities to be carried out, organise the teams in the field and supervise them for a better implementation.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

Our activities with vulnerable people are carried out through a proximity approach and direct contact with these people. Depending on the case, we meet with the people we serve individually or in groups. The COVID-19 breakout initially put an abrupt end to this direct contact. For several weeks, we stopped our activities. It was not allowed for more than 15 people to gather. Schools were closed by the government's decision. The biggest challenge was to see how to adapt our activities to the new context and to the new situation. Above all, it was necessary to ensure the protection of each other in strict respect of social distancing measures. This was not so obvious in our underprivileged environments where strict social distancing is almost impossible to observe. Vulnerable populations had to face the economic crisis caused by the reduction of commercial exchange between supply centres and local markets with a direct consequence being the increase in price of es-

sential products. In addition, with the closure of schools, we observed a considerable increase in child protection incidents. Many children (especially girls) have been exposed to all kinds of abuse (physical and psychological aggression, rape, early pregnancy and early marriage).

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The success of our work during this pandemic time is the fact that, with the help of the whole team, we managed to implement a radio broadcasting school programme for preschool and primary school children. About 13,000 children benefited from the programme during the school closure and were regularly informed about the right attitudes to adopt to protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19. In addition, through radio programmes, communities had access to awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19, child protection and the importance of sending girls to school.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Due to the instability that characterises the Bambari area and as a result of armed conflicts, forced displacements of populations inside the country are quite frequent.

Depending on the projects financed and the resources available, our organisation has put itself at the service of these displaced and vulnerable people by distributing hygiene kits including pieces of soap to ensure permanent hand washing and to fight against the spread of COVID-19. Radios were also distributed to vulnerable and isolated people to allow their children to follow the "school on the radio" programme during the time when schools were closed.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

To anyone who would seek to assist in achieving Pope Francis' verbs, I would say that in the effort to build a more just and fraternal world, no contribution would be too much. The commitment and involvement of all is highly desired. We have the duty and the responsibility to protect human life, which is sacred, and the duty and the responsibility

## PROMOTE

to ensure its development and blossoming because the world will be better off if special attention is given to those who are most in need of help and solidarity, like migrants. Welcoming them, treating them with dignity and empowering them would contribute to a better and more self-reconciled world.

### ***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Providing quality education to the children of displaced people and host communities remains our priority. This will necessarily involve the construction and/or rehabilitation of schools, as well as the training of teachers in this area strongly suffering from a great shortage of trained and qualified teachers.

We would also strengthen the resilience of displaced people through training and monitoring of income-generating activities as well as psychosocial care. This last aspect is taken into account in all our activities as it helps strengthen their resilience.

In our intervention zone, there is also a big lack of vocational training centres for young people. We are doing our best with the help of our partners to make such a centre functional to ensure the socio-economic reintegration of out-of-school girls and children formerly associated with armed forces and groups.

### ***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Our greatest wish is to see peace reign in a sustainable way in the Central African Republic so that reconstruction and reconciliation efforts are not jeopardised overnight by another upsurge of violence that will only cause more victims among the most vulnerable people. Ownership of our projects by the people we serve will be a good starting point for real empowerment.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

## 24. CHAD, JRS - ADAPTING REMOTE CLASSES AND ACCOMPANIMENT TO REFUGEE CAMPS WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

**PROJECT NAME:** Adapting remote classes and accompaniment to refugee camps with limited resources

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Chad

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Eastern Chad

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020



Eastern Chad is home to more than 300,000 refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan who fled their homes beginning in 2003. Thousands of refugees have been living dispersed among thirteen camps in eastern Chad for over a decade. Children and young people continue to struggle to gain access to a quality education. With regional instability and conflict, the Government of Chad has even fewer resources and capacity to respond to the needs of refugees. In a protracted situation like that of Chad, where refugees have little hope of returning home or being resettled to a third country, **opportunities to integrate and contribute to the local community are essential.**<sup>8</sup>

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is leading the education sector in Chad with the largest number of beneficiaries. Its expertise is recognised within the sector, where it serves as a co-facilitator of the Education Cluster. Together with UNHCR and BPRM, JRS implements a wide array

<sup>8</sup> [https://jrs.net/en/country/chad/?gclid=CjwKCAjw-sqKBhJEiwAVaQ9a-UP6y4BZcX-wQq6zbFb4xlC5JJA3GoQnCNfaYG6TjL72YRuJNH73EBoC5iYQAvD\\_BwE](https://jrs.net/en/country/chad/?gclid=CjwKCAjw-sqKBhJEiwAVaQ9a-UP6y4BZcX-wQq6zbFb4xlC5JJA3GoQnCNfaYG6TjL72YRuJNH73EBoC5iYQAvD_BwE)

of educative projects, from preschool and nurseries in high schools to primary and secondary education, including classroom construction.

When schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, JRS accompanied refugee students, their parents, and teachers to find innovative ways to guarantee they could continue pursuing their education despite the limited resources. The main targets were secondary students writing for the BEF (lower secondary) and BAC (higher secondary) final exams living in the thirteen Sudanese refugee camps where JRS operates in eastern Chad.

Their academic engagement was at risk of great delay as many refugees lacked a TV or radio to be able to follow the telematic classes offered by the national government. Others did not have smartphones to follow WhatsApp classes. **In coordination with UNHCR**, JRS accompanied teachers during COVID-19 awareness-raising campaigns among the community, the creation of WhatsApp group classes (mixing students with smartphones and those without them), home-classes and the distribution of handbooks. This accompaniment ensured students could write the final exams as well as continue feeling accompanied and assisted despite the school closure.

As JRS monitors the evolving situation, potential plans for the future are being put in place for when schools reopen. These include intensifying the courses to allow students to catch up and arranging for each class to include no more than 10 students. Alternatively, students may study from home in groups of three or four and will be monitored by teachers willing to go from home to home to check what the students are doing and try to go through old materials with them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Chad: teachers driving awareness around COVID-19 within refugee communities - JRS

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### NELSON SONE

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PROJECT MANAGER (JRS IN IRIBA, EASTERN CHAD)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

The journey JRS Iriba has embarked on is that of faith in the company of refugees and migrants. Education and child protection are the main activities I carry out on a daily basis to offer personal, flexible, **efficient and effective** service to Sudanese people who are uprooted from their country and family and have found refuge in Chad. Since JRS' style of service is human and spiritual (pastoral and educational), **seeking the long-term good of the refugee**, while not neglecting needs that are immediate or urgent, I contribute to this day-to-day by providing space for dialogue, listening and the exchange of good techniques or methods that can best help the mission and bring back hope between the refugees and JRS as an organisation. We offer them training throughout the school year, in order to reinforce their capacity in education and child protection. Another form of pastoral care carried out here at JRS Iriba is putting in place workshops between refugees themselves and the local authorities in charge of education and child protection. The circle of dialogue is put in place in workshops on issues such as listening, information and communication, forgiveness and healing (psychosocial support), sharing of JRS' values and discerning what is appropriate for the community as we journey with them in these difficult moments.

The inspiration for the work is to restore hope to refugees who have fled from conflicts, helping them to know that despite their current situation, holding on to their dreams is one of the motivational factors that can keep them moving and fighting for a just and peaceful society.

I started working on this project in October 2019 as project manager. I help the team to implement weekly activities in the field; I prepare weekly, monthly and quarterly reports; I coach the team, and I represent JRS in meetings or workshops organised by other partners or donors.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? The COVID-19 pandemic has both positive and negative impact. What were the main challenges you experienced and? what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

Positively, the pandemic permitted me to exploit other forms of communication such as WhatsApp, Teams and Zoom that were less used before the pandemic, since meetings and visits to camps were done physically. It equally permitted us to reinforce hygiene in school premises and develop distance learning as well as child protection strategies without necessarily being in touch physically with them. Negatively, it slowed down most of the activities on a daily basis since one could not as easily get into the camp as before the pandemic. Some of our teachers were infected and this created panic in the school environment to the point that students refused to come to class. Though schools were not locked down as last year 2019/2020, we could not cover the number of hours expected per week. More resources were needed in terms of benches as students could no longer sit two on a bench.

The main challenge I faced was the reduction of staff from the office. Adapting to this reduction was not easy since it was the first time I had to learn to work with colleagues from home. This slowed down the work as we faced technological problems (lack of internet, blackouts). Other challenges were that some of our staff were diagnosed with COVID-19, psychological support was not easy since we were unable to get in touch with them, and vaccines were not available yet.

The fact that they could not see us physically every day in the camp was a great challenge to them. Monitoring and evaluation of vulnerable students and children got little or no support during the first weeks of the pandemic. The main strategy used during this period, though with a lot of difficulties, were cell phones. The network was often not reliable, and we could go some days without monitoring activities. This made the refugees feel abandoned and even more vulnerable. But as time went on and with sensibilisation strategies put in place, the refugee community was able to understand JRS.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The first success I had working with them during this period was to maintain JRS' values: accompany, serve and advocate for refugee causes at all times. Moreover, I succeeded in developing new strategies in working

with them and that has today reinforced my managerial skills in terms of crisis management and leadership skills. Another success I had working with them during this period was that of restoring hope and teaching them to be calm and follow government instructions to curb the pandemic.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Yes, the refugees travelled a lot during this moment despite the lockdown imposed by the Government of Chad to reduce the spread of the pandemic, especially in the refugee camps where vulnerability is high. Most of them abandoned their activities such as teaching even before the government closed down the schools. JRS multiplied sensibilisation strategies such as posting flyers, sending the measures that the government and World Health Organization (WHO) put in place via WhatsApp and phone calls. Radio and television stations were equally used to help refugees stay in the camp without panicking.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The first advice is to see them as God's creatures (regardless of race, language, religion, etc) and to know that they are in a situation that they never wanted. They are simply victims. The second piece of advice would be to always try to restore hope in them without judging them. Lastly, commit them in your daily prayers. I believe they need it as never before.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We hope to assist them with more training on the importance of education, social co-habitation and reconciliation, and equally provide them with long-lasting solutions in line with the humanitarian nexus based on humanitarian, peaceful and sustainable development in all the activities that will be implemented in the future.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Much has been done, and much is still to be done. So, my only wish is that we need to redouble our efforts to see how their hope and trust in humankind are rekindled, regardless of the financial and human resource difficulties we come across.

## 25. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, JRS - EDUCATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ACCOMPANIMENT CONTINUE DESPITE THE CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

**PROJECT NAME:** Education and psychosocial accompaniment continue despite the closure of schools

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) DRC

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Sake, Mugunga, Goma, Minova (DRC)

**PERIOD:** April - December 2020

Two decades of conflict and instability have left the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with a weakened infrastructure and poor social services. Armed groups continue to roam eastern DRC, fuelled by issues of identity, poverty, land conflict, and corrupt governance. Currently, there are more than 537,000 refugees and more than 2.8 million newly internally displaced people (IDPs) since 2018 in the country, living in a mix of official and unofficial camps, as well as with host families<sup>10</sup>

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) DRC supports the national primary and secondary education of the North and South Kivu provinces by assisting with school fees, teacher training, and raising awareness about the importance of education. JRS also provides formal and informal education for IDPs in camps surrounding Goma, Masisi and Mweso. In addition to educational services, JRS DRC offers livelihood training, emergency aid, and extracurricular activities such as sports, films, and traditional dance to help children from both host and camp communities interact peacefully and find common ground. Due to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), JRS has also implemented new projects to support survivors with income-generating activities, focused psychological support, and community training.

The psychosocial programmes provided by JRS aim to strengthen community and family support through emphasis placed on building hope, restoring human dignity, and strengthening social cohesion. JRS staff provides safe spaces and activities for vulnerable groups, case management services, individual and group counselling, and training

<sup>10</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/country/democratic-republic-of-congo/>

and supervision of non-specialists recruited from the communities we serve. Much of JRS' mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is integrated into all JRS programmes.<sup>11</sup>

JRS' **COVID-19 response targeted over 17,000 forcibly internally displaced and vulnerable people** living in the areas of Sake and Mugunga (in the outskirts of Goma), in the refugee camps in Minova (South Kivu) and in the city of Goma. When schools in the country closed in April 2020 to counter the pandemic outbreak, students in Sake and Mugunga risked to drop out of school or lose the entire academic year. With the closure of schools, communities in the area were prevented from accessing JRS accompaniment and monitoring services, too.

JRS is committed to ensuring that children who are forced to flee their homes and communities are not deprived of their right to education and their path to a hopeful and productive future. Education provides stability and a sense of normalcy; it engenders hope while preparing refugees to meet future challenges.<sup>12</sup>

With the skills and knowledge provided by education, refugees find it easier to **integrate** into new communities. In regions devastated by war and endemic violence, a skilled, educated population is vital for the reconstruction and **long-term development** of both host countries and countries of origin. This became a greater **challenge** due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within their education in emergency response, JRS recruited and trained several focal points from among the teachers to organise reinforcement classes for groups of 15-20 children from Grade 1 to 5, as well as the candidates for the TENAFEP primary school national final test: 35 children at Mugunga, and 34 in Sake. Hopefully, this can have a positive long-term effect on the children who have the opportunity to continue their schooling.

The students were informed on COVID-19 and the prevention measures at the beginning of each class. In addition, school handbooks were distributed to the teachers, as well as school kits to over 1,290 students. Despite the **challenges** during the closure of schools, children and teachers were greatly motivated and followed the national academic programme.

<sup>11</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/programme/psychosocial-support/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/programme/education/>

## PROMOTE

Aware of the community reticence towards the COVID-19 prevention measures, JRS trained on awareness raising to over 100 focal points and community leaders. They also **collaborated** with a local NGO to broadcast awareness-raising radio programmes. 700 sanitary kits were distributed at Mubimbi IDP camp in Minova – where JRS already offered education and psychosocial assistance.

## 26. GHANA (KUMASI), SAFE-CHILD ADVOCACY (SCA) - REHABILITATING CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT RISK OF BEING ON THE STREET THROUGH SPONSORSHIP IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

(ALSO PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Safe-Child Advocacy Project

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Kumasi, Ghana

**ORGANISATION:** Safe-Child Advocacy

**PERIOD:** 2020



Safe-Child Advocacy (SCA) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation established by the Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi in 2005 to address the situation of children living on the streets. The project is managed by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul, and the organisation focuses **on rehabilitating children in street situations and supporting children at risk of being on the street through sponsorship in formal education and skills training towards future economic independence**. SCA's target groups are young migrants (boys and girls) in street situations, young boys and girls from poor families at risk of ending up in street situations, victims of human trafficking, migrant families in street situations, and destitute and displaced persons.

## PROMOTE

According to the US Peace Corps (2013), there are over 20,000 vulnerable children on the streets of Kumasi who suffer abuses of all forms and infringements of rights on a daily basis. These children are from very poor family backgrounds, including rural and remote communities in Northern Ghana. Northern Ghana being a patrilineal society does not value capacity building of young girls because they believe a girl's worth is in getting married and bearing children. As a result, most of the children found in street situations within Kumasi are young girls from Northern Ghana. These girls are mostly given away in early marriages to men old enough to be their fathers and grandfathers. Some girls, in their effort to flee from such marriages, migrate to Kumasi to work. Upon reaching Kumasi, their inexperience and vulnerability exposes them to abuses and exploitations of all kinds, including non-availability of shelter or other basic needs of life. Amidst the abuses they suffer, they carry loads for traders, wash dishes for food vendors, engage in commercial sex work, etc. Girls who live on the street often get pregnant due to exploitative relationships or sexual abuses and give birth to second-generation street children whom they raise on the street. Interactions with children who come to our centre has shown that this problem has multifaceted causes including poverty, culture, peer pressure, and parental irresponsibility.

SCA provides various rehabilitation services to children who live on the streets of Kumasi in 3 centres; the Drop-in Centre which serves as the administrative office and a meeting point with children in street situations, the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) which provides training in dressmaking and hairdressing for girls formerly on the streets, and Day-care Centre for babies born and raised on the streets by their young street mothers.

Activities and services provided for children on the streets include interaction on the streets, street corner education, counselling at the Drop-in Centre, reintegration into families and communities, sponsorship for formal basic and secondary education, sponsorship for skills training, advocacy, informal education or value talk, literacy classes, vocational training at the residential VTC, day-care services for babies born on the streets, and follow-up visits to families and schools where sponsored children are enrolled. Additionally, a breast cancer screening and awareness programme is available for women in street situations. These services have the possibility of making a **positive long-term impact** on the lives of the beneficiaries.

The 3-week lockdown (restriction on movement) in Kumasi due to COVID-19 prevented girls in street situations from going about their dai-

ly activities to earn a living. Additionally, they were living in very poor conditions with overcrowded rooms where they could not adhere to social distancing as a measure to curb the spread of the virus, thereby increasing their risk of contracting the virus. This caused SCA to initiate the COVID-19 emergency relief programme to help vulnerable young girls, boys, and families in street situations (mostly migrants) to cope with the pandemic and its associated social issues, and hopefully reduce their vulnerabilities in this period of crisis.

Several organisations supported SCA's COVID-19 emergency relief programme. They were able to provide hot meals, dry food items, blankets and mats, some reusable face masks, and other personal protective equipment (PPE) to cover basic needs as an effort to reduce the anxiety of children in street situations and improve their living conditions. Girls at the VTC **participated** in the COVID-19 emergency relief programme by producing reusable face masks and cooking hot meals for sharing. The VTC provided literacy classes, sex education, house-keeping training, catering, and training in social skills, etc. for the girls during the period.

With assistance from the African Development Organization for Migration (AFDOM), the programme also focused on encouraging children to leave the street through street corner education and value talk sessions since leaving the street was the best option to stay safe. Covering basic needs through their COVID-19 emergency relief programme will have an immediate positive impact on the lives of their beneficiaries, but it can indirectly lead to a **positive longer-term impact** for more individuals as SCA is able to reach more children in street situations through this activity.

Advocacy was an integral part of the organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. SCA alone cannot meet the needs of the huge population of the over 20,000 street-connected children and the numerous other vulnerable persons that needed assistance in the Kumasi metropolis and its surrounding neighbourhoods. SCA as an advocate called on the Government, corporate bodies, civil society, and all well-meaning individuals to rise up to support those who are most at risk during this critical time. They sent out a press release to the government through the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection to consider children in street situations as a priority in the government relief package. In collaboration with Adamfo Ghana, SCA's partner organisation, they made a video clip using photos of children on the street

## PROMOTE

in their regular situations to appeal to the President of Ghana to consider a shelter for street children to help them stay safe during the lockdown.

SCA has always appreciated and believed in **collaboration** with the other stakeholders. The organisation's COVID-19 response found immense strength in collaboration from different angles, partner organisations, individuals, and government institutions. Funding was extremely essential for procurement of relief items, and SCA was amazed by the responses they received from different angles donating to support the response programme.

Despite the continuous challenge of not being able to help and support everyone in need, SCA's work has had a positive impact on many individuals. More than 12,200 vulnerable persons have been reached through their COVID-19 emergency relief programme, almost 6,000 persons have been reached through street corner education and value talk, and 60 children have left the street and been reintegrated back into their families. SCA believes that if the support received from individuals and institutions continues, it will be possible to change the situation of many vulnerable children in Ghana.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

**SR. OLIVIA UMOH, DC**

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PROJECT DIRECTOR (DAUGHTER OF CHARITY OF ST.  
VINCENT DE PAUL, IN ARCHDIOCESE OF KUMASI GHANA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

Over the last few years, the organisation has broadened its scope to serving children, youth, women, and families in street and other vulnerable situations including human trafficking, domestic violence, child marriage, homelessness, migrants, etc. Services we carry out include rehabilitation, family reintegration, support in skills training, sponsorship in formal education from basic to tertiary.

We also engage in community education, awareness creation, mediation, advocacy and support prosecution where necessary. Details of our activities can be found in our 2020 Annual Report<sup>13</sup>.

You are also welcome to get more information about our interventions from our website<sup>14</sup> and social media<sup>15</sup> handles.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The pandemic affected our work in that we could not carry out planned activities such as follow-up of our children in schools and in their families. But, we had new challenges that needed emergency response which we rose to. Many migrant children, youths, women and homeless persons on the streets needed safe spaces, food, personal protective equipment etc. Thus, we set up an emergency response which benefited thousands of needy persons. Our COVID-19 emergency responses included transporting internal migrant children and women (who were later supported to reintegrate with their families and to engage in various economic enterprises of their choices) back to their places of origin. We also provided food, sleeping materials and personal protective equipment to those who had no safe homes to return to or could not bear returning to unsafe homes. More information can be found on the links to phase 1, 2 and 3 of our COVID-19 response reports<sup>16</sup>.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Working with migrants during the pandemic had new dimensions. We were sadly confronted with many distressed young women trafficked into Ghana from neighbouring African countries, namely Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Togo. These girls faced extremely distressing conditions. Beginning from traumatic travelling experiences through illegal routes,

<sup>13</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ATUQYtgDf70la6opJZ5Vhc7NY4YOouqJ/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>14</sup> [www.safechildadvocacy.org](http://www.safechildadvocacy.org)

<sup>15</sup> [facebook.com/SafechildAdvocacy](https://facebook.com/SafechildAdvocacy); [Twitter.com/SafechildAdv](https://twitter.com/SafechildAdv); [linkedin.com/Safechildadvocacy](https://linkedin.com/Safechildadvocacy);

<sup>16</sup> I. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I5ECAj3aqwsXKpMwUv5dE2lB6TOlgmMi/view?usp=sharing>

II. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i6Lg3ROPwzJwHF\\_4EelG-qH3zGalQOH8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i6Lg3ROPwzJwHF_4EelG-qH3zGalQOH8/view?usp=sharing)

III. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zHq\\_JKVK3waR4Rn4l-sOO4oda1nQ7T3G/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zHq_JKVK3waR4Rn4l-sOO4oda1nQ7T3G/view?usp=sharing)

to being forced into prostitution without any means of escape, particularly during the lockdown period, as well as hunger and other inhuman treatments. Thankfully, after the lockdown, some of them were able to escape from their traffickers and sought safety from our centres and others escaped to the police, while others were rescued by the police through information from well-meaning people.

We had an impressive collaboration with the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service. We rescued over 22 young women from the ages of 13 to 23 between January 2021 and June 2021 and assisted all to return to their countries of origin. We collaborated with other members of the Talitha Kum network in their countries of origin for onward rehabilitation of these survivors.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

I would say that there have been changes in the sense that people migrating of their own free will seem to have reduced due to travel restrictions placed on international travel. Nonetheless, as far as internal migration is concerned, it has actually increased enormously due to the increased poverty and hardship caused by loss of employment and the shutdown of many employing businesses, including the road transport companies. Many children and women continue to migrate from very poor remote communities in Ghana to the major cities of Accra and Kumasi in search of livelihood.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

Our advice is that we open our hearts, arms and homes to embrace migrants, victims of human trafficking and persons who are homeless. They are our brothers and sisters, and they need our love. We also advise that everyone speak up against inhuman treatments and conditions that render people vulnerable to unsafe migration, homelessness and human trafficking. We promote the Pope's vision of a "wider we".

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

We are constantly working to strengthen collaboration and networking among groups, institutions and organisations of different faiths and orienta-

tions but with a common concern for the common good of the human family. Furthermore, we are planning to build a shelter where we can accommodate victims of human trafficking, irregular migration, domestic violence and others in vulnerable situations until they are ready for reintegration.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

What can we say? Except that the challenge is enormous. But we are encouraged at the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the many inspirations and summons shared to give us directions. The efforts of the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican is laudable and motivating to us at the grassroots. We would appreciate any financial and material support that can empower us to respond more to victims' and survivors' needs.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verb: protect.**

## 27. MOROCCO (TANGIER), DIOCESAN DELEGATION FOR MIGRATION (DDM) - SOCIAL, HEALTH AND INTEGRATIVE INTERVENTION WITH MIGRANTS IN TANGIER

(ALSO PROTECT AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Social, health and integrative intervention with migrants in Tangier

**ORGANISATION:** Diocesan Delegation for Migration (DDM)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Tanger, Morocco

**PERIOD:** 2020

The effects that the pandemic is having around the world are very similar and it is certainly conditioned by the context of each reality before the pandemic. But it affects disproportionately the most vulnerable populations, including immigrants. This is something that the Diocesan Delegation for Migration (DDM) addresses through the objective of establishing its social action in favour of the migrant population. In its delegation in Tangier, which occupies both the eastern zone (Nador - Alhoceimas) and the western zone (Tangier - Tetouan), a team of 61 people composed of workers, religious and volunteers works to respond to the needs arising from the vulnerabilities of this migrant population and to promote respect for their rights as persons.

The Diocesan Delegation of Migration (= DDM) is a body of the Church of Tangier for the exercise of its social and charitable action in favour of the migrant population. It was created by the Archbishop Emeritus of Tangier, Don Santiago Agrelo, in 2011 to answer the reality of migration. The group at the DDM Morocco works under the papal precepts of welcome, protection, promotion and integration of migrants in transit and through the implementation of different projects and workshops that seek to respond to the needs of a segment of the population that finds itself in a highly vulnerable situation due to economic conditions, legal difficulties or lack of social integration.

From this Delegation, the approach is carried out through 6 areas of intervention and four areas of awareness raising. In this way, and with the collaboration of other institutions, such as Manos Unidas, Cáritas,

Entreculturas, etc., a **collaborative** and **participative approach** is sought, which not only generates a greater capacity for attention in quantitative terms, but also helps to personalise the methods of charitable and social assistance thanks to the synergies with other organisations.

In the area of social and humanitarian intervention, the main objective is to improve the living conditions and access to fundamental rights of immigrants. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, new difficulties have arisen to cover basic needs, greater difficulties to cover food needs, to pay the rent, to pay the expenses derived from the schooling of minors and even to access aid associations due to the closure of many institutions in person. During the 2020 period, the DDM was responsible for providing services to a total of 4,087 people in this area, meeting their housing, economic, health and social needs. Dividing its team into two balanced and organised groups to promote and coordinate the projects corresponding to the needs of each area, they are present in the two zones, covering four locations in person. This is a detail of great importance that underlines the effectiveness of the organisation and coordination that this type of assistance can generate in seeking to respond to the increase of people with special protection needs such as refugees and asylum-seekers registered in 2020 in Morocco. The UNHCR recorded a growth that was almost double that of previous years and which challenged social actors to meet the specific needs of these migrant groups<sup>17</sup>.

With the already difficult reality of migrants in Morocco, the arrival of the pandemic has been a new setback for people who had informal jobs and whose loss of these jobs led them to situations of extreme poverty, with very negative effects on their emotional state. The work of the DDM has faced this situation by supporting the protection of the most vulnerable through awareness-raising actions taken to avoid the increase of xenophobia in the difficult contexts that arise, the reinforcement of solidarity networks, and the promotion of joint actions to respond to the challenge of the virus and the aid and protection of migrants.

In the area of health intervention, the DDM has set the objective of strengthening the monitoring of the health and general well-being of migrants in order to avoid vulnerability and exclusion regardless of their stage of life. Health treatments that in normal contexts do not require

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17 <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/10331?y=2020#year>

special attention, such as the treatment of wounds and burns, can be an added difficulty for migrants due to difficulties in accessing health services or the lack of a care network. A total of 3,735 users<sup>18</sup> were able to benefit from this care, which the DDM provided with a global approach, that is to say, taking into account the integral intervention of the person. The actions carried out included the treatment of physical health, psychosocial care, personal and domestic hygiene services, and the reduction of stress and anxiety levels through a Shiatsu workshop<sup>19</sup>.

Likewise, the integrative intervention of migrants was supported by different branches such as: educational intervention with 187 beneficiary users, socio-labour intervention, and intervention with women with 1,071 beneficiary users, among other projects. All these focused on the reduction of future vulnerabilities, the development of personal capacities, the increase of autonomy and resilience, and the personal accompaniment of these actions to reinforce the work carried out by the beneficiaries.

The pandemic has become an all-encompassing social fact, affecting the entire world population and many dimensions of our existence, from the health aspect to the economic, social, political and family aspects. Nothing has been left immune. Existing processes of exclusion have accelerated, and many individuals, groups and families have entered the poverty spiral for the first time.

Values such as welcoming, interculturalism and teamwork have made it possible to continue to carry out most of the proposed projects in 2020. The adaptation of tasks by team members has been key to continuing the work of assisting and empowering migrants, without forgetting the institutions whose synergies have served as a bridge to generate an even greater network of services. So, every action and project has been developed and enriched in order to promote the dignity and the human rights of migrants. Despite the difficulties of this year 2020, collaborative flexibility and **innovation** have undoubtedly had an impact on the effectiveness of the DDM and the **positive impact** this has had on the thousands of beneficiaries served.

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<sup>18</sup> Total data for the DDM intervention areas (eastern and western zone).

<sup>19</sup> This specific action was interrupted with the arrival of COVID-19.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### INMA GALA

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DIOCESAN DELEGATE FOR MIGRATIONS (DDM IN MOROCCO)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

The work in the pastoral care of people on the move in Morocco focuses above all more on social work, given that Morocco is a Muslim country:

- At the pastoral level, it makes explicit the work carried out with Catholic immigrants in the parishes.
- Animation in liturgical celebrations with a migrant dimension.
- Awareness-raising actions.
- Social Action actions.

The inspiration and vision of this work is based on the objective of welcoming, caring for and integrating migrants in the territory of the diocese. Our goals are:

- To form the conscience of the diocesan community in order to share goods and fulfil the duties of justice in accordance with the guidelines of the ecclesiastical magisterium and, in general, with the social doctrine of the Church.
- To promote and coordinate initiatives, both its own and those of other entities with similar objectives, and to cooperate with national, provincial and local administrative bodies, and with other social action entities of other religious denominations.
- To work for the respect of the rights of migrants and their dignity and to be a living memory of the demands of justice and the Gospel in relation to migrants in the Church and in society. When we in the Church of Tangier thought, a few years ago, of creating the Diocesan Delegation for Migration, I imagined it as a meeting place, a well where these people, tired from their journey, could come to drink and rest. I wanted to emphasise, above all, the idea of the migrant's encounter with the Church, with families... and the passage of Jesus and the Samaritan woman came to mind.

I started working on this project from its inception in 2011 and since then I have been on the Diocesan Delegate for Migration.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The DDM has not been immune to the pandemic, it has created in the intervention teams a great deal of uncertainty, reflection, readjustments in activities and great creativity in intervention in order to alleviate the consequences to the project recipients and to address new needs that have been appearing.

**At the level of the team:**

- In order not to leave immigrants without attention because the centres were closed, we opted for a work of management and coordination from home, and a work where a small team in each area moved to the homes of immigrants.
- There has been coordination with other social and state entities for the intervention.
- Contact has been maintained with immigrants through visits to their homes, by WhatsApp, or by Zoom.

**At the level of immigrants:**

- Faced with the need to be accompanied, greater links have been created between the people who live closest to them.
- Mutual help between them. Some immigrants have spent the time of isolation (quarantine) in the homes of other compatriots.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

- 1 Being able to attend to the immigrants, even though the premises were closed, thanks to the great involvement and responsibility of the whole intervention and management team.
- 2 The immigrants have been kept informed of everything that was happening in the country and outside it thanks to the help of many immigrants in translating the texts that the government has been passing on.

- 3 Good coordination in the distribution of humanitarian aid with other entities.
- 4 The strengthening of the team.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

Closure of borders and greater protection in border areas and, consequently, a change in the migratory route to the Canary Islands and longer waiting times in the forests and on the outskirts of cities to find an opportunity to cross. Given this situation, the DDM has had difficulty in attending to the migrants in the forest areas but has sought strategic points to attend to the most basic needs.

- Confinement and many homeless people who could not be confined and could not beg on the streets. The DDM has tried to take in as many migrants as possible in their places of residence, always taking care of the established sanitary measures as well as in the search for rooms or flats to rent so that the immigrants could be in confinement.
- Closure of establishments and closure of the DDM. In order not to lose contact with the immigrants a WhatsApp number was made available for them to contact, where they were attended 24/7.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The first thing I would say to you is GO FORWARD!!!! You are not alone in this mission. There are many of us working along these lines. Do it with other entities. These are verbs that UNITE people and entities of many religions.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

- At the DDM we continue working with these four verbs very present and now joining the slogan of "AN EVER GREATER WE".
- We have been told to work in the psychosocial area as a transversal axis in every intervention, in order to be able to attend to immigrants as a whole.
- The need to work in a NETWORK and with others.

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- The need to make a believing reading of reality.
- To create safe spaces within Church entities.
- To work on SENSITIVITY in order not to harm immigrants and to guarantee promotion and integration.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Yes, I think it is necessary to make religious life and priests more and more aware of these four verbs. Difficulties often arise within the Church.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

## 28. NIGER (NIAMEY), MIGRANTS PASTORAL SERVICE - SOCIAL, HEALTH AND SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE WITH MIGRANTS IN NIAMEY

(ALSO WELCOME, PROTECT, AND INTEGRATE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Social, health and spiritual assistance for migrants in Niamey.

**ORGANISATION:** Migrants Pastoral Service

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Niamey, Niger

**PERIOD:** 2020

Niger's position in Africa places it at the crossroads of several West and Central African migration routes. Largely a transit country, which until relatively recently did not need to establish migration as a key focus of its policies and legislative measures, it has seen how detrimental political changes in bordering countries have modified the patterns of human mobility in its region and generated new profiles of incoming people. These patterns are different in each region of the country and respond to different interests and resource bases due to the costs of movement even within the same country. The circumstances surrounding this context lead one to consider Niger as an important transit country for other African regions, mostly Guinea and Senegal, which account for almost half of the registered migrants according to IOM data<sup>20</sup>.

In Niamey, the capital of Niger, the Migrants Pastoral Service has been operating for more than 10 years now and is currently working not only with foreign migrants, but also with migrants returning to Niger who require assistance. The activities carried out in addition to reception also include assistance in settling in the country and accompanying them in the process of adaptation once they decide to stay in Niamey.

Among the actions carried out in the assistance and accompaniment work, four areas stand out in which the Migrants Pastoral Service divides its attention and promotes action.

<sup>20</sup> <https://niger.iom.int/es/node/83832>

## PROMOTE

On the one hand, it offers **medical assistance** for migrants and sometimes refugee. It tries to attend twice a week to beneficiaries in need of medical assistance. The medical care consists not only of a check-up, but also of follow-up care and help with medication. More than 300 people have been assisted by this service.

The second action has to do with **awareness-raising**. The OMD (Migrants in Difficulties Observatory) was founded with the emphasis on the importance of making civil society aware of the conditions of migrants' lives and the difficulties they face. This platform, with the help of other institutions, has the task of organising meetings and television talk shows, for example, to raise awareness of Migrants and Refugees Day.

A third column also focuses on the **visibility of migrants** and their personal stories. By collecting their stories, publications are prepared and sent to local newspapers, television stations, different websites, etc., to any means of communication that can echo the reality of these migrants who want to share their stories.

Finally, a fourth pillar of the Migrants Pastoral Service's activity consists in the **assistance and spiritual accompaniment** of migrants. To support these people in their spiritual growth, they are accompanied in the internal journeys that each of them undergoes, whether in accompanying them in situations of grief or in assisting them at funerals. Spiritual meetings and retreats are also organised to alleviate the emotional burden they have been exposed to due to the hard conditions of their migration.

With all these actions, the intention is to provide a protection and promotion service to support the settlement project of the migrants and returnees. The aim is to achieve a better **integration** in the Niger context under the precepts of compassion and mercy of the rest of the civil society as a **collaborative** part in the inclusion of this population segment.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**FR. MAURO ARMANINO, SMA**


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HEAD OF SPM (PASTORAL SERVICE FOR MIGRANTS,  
DIOCESE OF NIAMEY IN NIGER)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration and vision for this work? When did you start working on this project and what is your role?***

I have been coordinating the Pastoral Service of Migrants that we started in Niamey, Niger, on behalf of the diocese, since 2011. We see migrants as 'a sign of the times' that challenges the Church and society. In this vision we consider ourselves as 'migrants', because to live is to migrate and to migrate is to live! For us, migrants are not VICTIMS but people who have chosen, more or less freely and consciously, to migrate. The basis of our commitment to migration could be summarised as follows. Free to stay, free to go. These two rights must be respected by political decision-makers and associations or entities that work with migrants.

***- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work? What were the main challenges you faced and what are the main challenges the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

First of all, it must be stressed that our country almost did not suffer from the disease itself but from the policies surrounding the epidemic, especially concerning the closure of the borders with the surrounding countries, the cost of living, the curfew, the reduction of IOM flights to bring migrants back home and especially the manipulation of the disease to swindle money at the borders and at the numerous police or customs "roadblocks"... Of course, there was less sensitivity to the problems of the migrants because COVID took over the whole scene! The vulnerable, as always: pregnant women, women with children, the sick and those turned away, especially from Algeria, have disappeared from the radar!

***- What successes have you recorded in your work with migrants during the pandemic?***

First of all, it must be emphasised that our service has always worked, apart from a 3-week closure which was never complete. Through the collaboration with the local Caritas (CADEV), we were able to help a number of migrants with meals and especially medical assistance. But

the most important service was that of presence at a time when everyone was focused on the political management of the disease!

***- Have there been any changes in the migration phenomenon in your country of action during this period? And how has your organisation responded to these changes?***

The changes have been remarkable because, at the very beginning of the service, in 2011, the word "migrant" was almost unknown here...we spoke rather of "EXODANTS" or "AVENTURIERS", figures well known in the Sahel! Indeed, migration has existed here for centuries and in recent decades it has intensified, especially towards the Maghreb and Libya. Then, under the impetus of European policies of externalisation of borders, the "exodus" was transformed into "migrants", then into "clandestine", then into "irregular/illegal" and finally into "criminals"! Especially after the Valletta Europe-Africa meeting of 2015 and the law of the same year of the Nigerian government to fight against the trafficking of migrants (2015-36), the repression manifested itself with a blockade of human mobility..., the systematic theft of the migrants' money and their "free" destination to the IOM, the International Organisation for Migration, for a return to the country of origin! Our Service has continued to accompany migrants in their difficulties and persecutions and has also denounced, together with civil society organisations, these abuses of power!

***- What advice would you give to people who want to contribute to the realisation of Pope Francis' four verbs of welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants?***

The only verb we would like to add so that the previous ones are really put into practice is to apply the verb LISTEN! We believe that this is the basis for the other 4 verbs mentioned. Indeed, only the possibility offered to the other to express his or her life, his or her feelings and his or her expectations, will facilitate the implementation of the other passages... otherwise we run the risk of "colonising" the migrant with OUR projects on him or her!

***- What projects and interventions are planned for future work in this area?***

Listening to the personal and often dramatic stories of migrants is what characterises us, while at the same time providing human and medical support. In reality, to speak of migrants here is to speak of the INVISIBLE, for the poor are so until often dramatic events make them appear (too late), for example in the shipwrecks in the Mediterranean! With this we

try to help those who are thinking of settling for a while, to help with work with micro-projects and, occasionally, through collaboration with the Caritas of the United States (CRS), with food vouchers. Sometimes we also help migrant prisoners who have no one to assist them.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish you would like to share with us?***

We would like migrant services not to forget the political dimension of migration, through further engagement with civil society and institutions. This is to avoid becoming "ambulances of the system"!

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.**

## 29. NIGERIA, JRS - ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMME (ALP) FOR FORCIBLY INTERNALLY DISPLACED CHILDREN

(ALSO PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Pastoral accompaniment for Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) for forcibly internally displaced children

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Borno, and Adamawa states, in north-eastern Nigeria

**PERIOD:** 2020

The prominence of the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram has caused significant disruption to the access and quality of education in northern Nigeria. In Adamawa and Borno, Nigeria's most north-easterly state, nearly half of all children who have completed primary education cannot read or complete a sentence.

During the insurgency in northeast Nigeria, many schools were destroyed. This led to the overcrowding in schools and increased teacher-pupil ratio. Teacher shortages impacted the quality of education provided. The challenge was further complicated or made worse by large class sizes, inequitable distribution of teachers across schools, low and irregular salaries, and poorly trained teachers further impacted teaching quality. Teachers were also ill equipped to support children who may have psychological distress and schools often lack teaching and learning materials, including textbooks.

To try and address these problems, JRS has been implementing the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) for forcibly internally displaced children in the area. This project took place in 5 local government areas (LGAs) across 2 States (Borno, and Adamawa states) in north-eastern Nigeria.

The aim of the project was to speed up the return of out-of-school children affected by insurgency to formal education. Teachers were trained in ALP to reinforce the low teaching capacity, as well as to offer them new income-generating opportunities.

The ALP countered the negative impact of the closure of schools during the lockdown period. JRS also took advantage of the school closures to conduct training for over 1,200 primary school teachers on child protection. Accompaniment during the programme was offered by Fr. Chikere Ugwuanyi, SJ. He worked as an education consultant volunteer, providing support and pastoral presence to the ALP and Livelihood programmes in 5 Local Government Areas in Adamawa and Borno states. Since the COVID-19 lockdown, Fr Chikere has visited the field four times, spending about 4 days on the first three trips and 10 days on the last one.

JRS has been collaborating with relevant government agencies such as the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the Ministry of Education and UN agencies in Adamawa and Borno States. JRS identified Michika and Madagali LGAs in Adamawa as two of the 7 LGAs most affected by the insurgency. Although Askira/Uba, Hawul and Biu LGAs were not the most affected LGAs in Borno State, the presence of other non-governmental agencies in those locations was minimal, coupled with the increased influx of displaced persons from other parts of Borno State. JRS worked with the Education Secretaries to identify communities with little or no NGO presence to ensure maximum impact of interventions. Throughout the project, JRS Nigeria worked with the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) to provide custom-made **teacher training to educators**, who in turn used their newly acquired skills in the classroom to **improve the educational quality of the public school system**<sup>21</sup>.

In addition, these teachers were employed to implement an Accelerated Learning After School programme which targeted both in- and out-of-school children. The accelerated learning programme (ALP) also served as a catch-up programme to children who may have missed schooling or were currently unable to satisfactorily perform academically at their current grade level.

This programme was conducted three days a week for 2.5 hours per day. The schedule included both academic and socio-recreational activities to encourage a holistic approach to **child development, with a focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills**. The after-school programme enabled school children to improve their grade level performance and enhance the livelihood outcomes of older out-of-school

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<sup>21</sup> Nigeria: JRS trains teachers affected by Boko Haram <https://jrs.net/en/news/nigeria-jrs-trains-teachers-affected-by-boko-haram/>

## PROMOTE

children by equipping them with the skills needed to either successfully attend school or enhance their employability and/or ability to sustainably start their own business in the future.

JRS implemented the following activities to **support internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host community members** to ease the burden caused by the insurgency and other crises, and to position them for a better future.

The activities included:

- Distribution of school supplies and uniforms.
- Conducting awareness-raising on the importance of schools delivering non-formal learning opportunities through the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP).
- Recruiting and training volunteer tutors for the ALP.
- Distributing teaching materials and conducting teacher training.
- Providing entrepreneurship skills training for income generation.
- Providing seed investment for a viable business.
- Conducting protection training and distributing hygiene kits.
- Distributing hand wash stations and hand wash liquids to schools, including the national youth service corps (NYSC) camp in Yola, Adamawa state.

A total of 283 candidates were screened for the role of volunteer teacher across the 5 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The top 20 from each LGA were selected, amounting to a total of 100 (54 males, 46 females) volunteer teachers (20 teachers per LGA). This exercise was conducted in collaboration with the 5 LGEAs (Local Government Education Authority) representatives of the target implementation areas. All 100 volunteers were assessed on the following criteria: fluency in English and Hausa, letter writing, math test, and oral interviews. The minimum educational qualification was the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), ability to work with children, and a good knowledge of community dynamics. A number of 4,000 children (1,826 males, 2,174 females) between the ages of 5 and 17, from target communities, participated in the **After School Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)**. The children were assessed and placed in different classes based on their performance in the assessment. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) tool was used to test the beneficiaries on literacy and numeracy.

Some of the challenges during the pandemic, as told by Fr. Chikere Ugwuanyi, SJ, JRS Nigeria Education Consultant volunteer:

*"During the COVID lockdown, everyone was isolated, and it was dangerous for those already uprooted from familiar spaces like IDPs and those rendered IDPs because of where the lockdown caught up with them. During the initial times, there were no sanitizers or face masks to buy, even if one had the resources. During my first trip (into the field), which was immediately after the complete lockdown of the country was lifted, we visited the Ministry of Health in Yola, Adamawa State, to provide them with materials to enable the washing of hands, disinfectants and COVID-19 prevention equipment. JRS was the first non-government organisation to return to support those in need. The work of JRS in this part of the world involves lots of human contact. Be it the ALP, the livelihood, etc: they require human contact. Thus, providing equipment that will enable JRS to return to human contact is strategically important to continue the work. For me, this was a high strategic thinking and planning".*

## INTERVIEW WITH:

### CHARLES UKWU

PROJECT DIRECTOR EDUCATION COORDINATOR (JRS IN NIGERIA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

My name is Charles Ukwu and I work with JRS Nigeria. Our office in Adamawa State serves internally displaced people in Adamawa and Borno States. These are mostly people displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency which began in 2009, living in camps, settlements and within host communities. JRS has been providing **education, protection and livelihood services to the displaced people** in this location since 2019. In 2020, just after the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria was relaxed, JRS Nigeria conducted training for 17 teachers on numeracy and literacy. These teachers were supported to facilitate step-down trainings reaching a further 100 volunteer teachers. All these trained teachers and volunteer teachers were involved in our accelerated learning project.

I feel inspired when I get positive feedback from the people we serve. It gives me extra energy and drives me to work harder to ease their pain.

I personally joined JRS in November 2018 as a field officer. Last year, I became the project director overseeing projects in Adamawa and Borno States. I was also doubling as the education coordinator for JRS Nigeria.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

During the lockdown as a result of the COVID-19, access to communities was impossible due to movement restrictions. As a result, we lost about 3 months of the project. After the lockdown, we had to re-strategise to reach our targets within the initially agreed timeframe. It was more challenging because of the restrictions on social gathering placed by the government. During the lockdown, schools, markets and churches were closed and this prevented the IDPs and host communities from engaging in any form of income-generating activities or learning. After the first 3 months of lockdown, organisations rendering essential services were given movement permits and that enabled JRS to provide some relief services.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Additionally, as a result of the pandemic, almost every household and community staggered from the health, livelihood and society impact of the COVID-19 virus. JRS provided packages including personal hygiene and essentials delivered directly to IDP camps and homes of vulnerable community members with the help of our field staff.

JRS Nigeria Border Monitors and the protection team embarked on COVID-19 awareness sensitisation within the border communities. This contributed significantly to the fight to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the communities.

JRS Nigeria took advantage of the closure of schools to organise training for teachers who were engaged in our Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) reaching 4,000 children. Our ALP provided opportunities for children to continue learning and for the teachers and volunteers to earn some money during the period schools were closed<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Nigeria: The importance of teachers' well-being <https://jrs.net/en/story/nigeria-the-importance-of-teachers-well-being/>

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

During this period, all borders were closed, and free movement was restricted. Some persons were held up in different cities or communities as they did not have enough time to travel back to their places of residence due to the short lockdown notice. After the first 3 months where there was a complete lockdown, organisations rendering essential services (including JRS) were allowed to move and continue service provision.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

Every assistance you render to migrants counts!

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Hopefully JRS Nigeria will continue to receive support from donors to continue providing health, protection, and livelihood services for displaced people. We recently got approval to continue our ALP for another year.

**This good practice can be categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: promote and protect.**

### 30. SOUTH AFRICA, THREE2SIX - EDUCATION PROJECT FOR REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

**PROJECT NAME:** Education project for refugee and migrant children

**ORGANISATION:** Three2Six

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** South Africa

**PERIOD:** 2020



The Three2Six refugee education's project, which was founded in 2008, is a bridging education project for refugee and migrant children who are unable to access state schooling in South Africa for various reasons (e.g., documentation, lack of financial means, xenophobia, language barriers). It is run on three campuses in Johannesburg - Sacred Heart College, Observatory Girls' Primary School and Holy Family College - and currently accommodates 240 learners who are between 6 and 16 years old, from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The project's learners are among the most vulnerable children. They live in conditions of great poverty and exclusion in the suburbs of Yeoville, Bertrams, Hillbow, Berea, Observatory, Bezhuidenhout Valley, Bellevue and Lorentzville. These are inner city suburbs which experienced significant urban decay, and some have been sites of xenophobic violence in recent years.

The mission of Three2Six is to provide access to quality bridging education, to support its learners to integrate into a public school. To achieve this, the project operates for 3 hours per day, 5 days a week, teaching mathematics, English and life skills, utilizing the official South African

CAPS curriculum, and working to build the children's resilience to prepare them to transition into state schools. The project uses the classrooms and facilities of existing schools. It provides the children with a daily meal, safe transport to and from school where necessary, textbooks, stationery and uniforms. The learners also have access to the project libraries from which they borrow books every week to improve their reading skills and their command of English. Twice a year, a holiday programme is organised for the children to have exposure to activities that cannot be covered during the rest of the year given the limited time and constrained curriculum, e.g., drama, music, dance, art, craft, outings. The project receives international volunteers as well as local volunteers, including Three2Six alumni, to help run the activities.

Three2Six employs **refugee teachers and helps them obtain South African accredited teaching qualifications to ensure quality of education, to empower them and to ensure their self-reliance after they have left the project.** The teachers are also provided with training to improve their skills and ability to positively impact on the social and emotional learning of the children, and to improve their own social and emotional status and to become more resilient. To fulfil its core goal, once existing students find a place at a South African school, the project helps them with their registration fees. It also offers them a monthly alumni programme, which keeps them connected with the project and helps them with their transition to mainstream schools. It is run by the Marist Youth movement with the help of Three2Six volunteers. The programme provides them with homework support, sports, a meal and informal role models through engagement with the volunteers who run the programme. The project supports its families by offering informative workshops to them (e.g., on documentation related issues) and by sending bags of non-perishable food items home every fortnight. Other initiatives such as English classes are organised to support them where possible.

Three2Six also carries out advocacy activities to **help tackle xenophobia and to promote refugee education**, and refugee children's rights more generally. It has developed a resource for teachers called "Talking and thinking about refugees"<sup>23</sup> that can be accessed online.

In March 2020, when South Africa went into its first lockdown to slow the spread of COVID-19, the project had to close its campuses until fur-

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<sup>23</sup> <https://three2six.co.za/talking-and-thinking-about-refugees/>

ther notice. This meant that our teaching staff had to move to online teaching which proved to be a challenge as our families have limited access to technology at home. The Three2Six teachers adapted rapidly to the new situation and to the challenges it brought by interacting with the children and **teaching them through WhatsApp**. A few weeks into the first lockdown, the children's learning materials and stationery were distributed to their parents which helped our teachers guide the children through their work. Data was provided to the teachers to be able to keep teaching. It was also used to make regular contact with each family. This gave them a space to talk about their fears and concerns and allowed the teachers to make sure the children did not feel alone. In addition to teaching through WhatsApp, for a few weeks the project broadcasted a **weekly lesson on a Catholic radio station**, Radio Veritas, which helped the project to stay connected with its learners.

Despite these interventions, teaching time was lost and had to be caught up when the project was able to resume teaching on its campuses. The three campuses reopened in mid-June. From then, the project had to make use of accelerated teaching strategies such as Saturday school, after-hours teaching and teaching camps for the older children. During the August term holidays, one of the campuses took this opportunity to hold a 3-day **holiday programme** which helped the children reconnect with their friends and teachers. This programme included physical activities, art, music along with isiZulu classes to support the children's integration in the country, and science classes. Another campus had four days of intense classes to make up for some of the teaching time that was lost during lockdown and the third campus reduced the duration of its school holidays so they could start again with their catch-up programme. Two older groups went on camps towards the end of the year. This allowed the children to connect with one another and to acquire new teamwork skills. The outdoor experience was a first for many of the children who have mainly grown up in high-density areas.

Before the return to school, the Three2Six teachers were **trained by Doctors Without Borders on how to minimise the risk of being infected by COVID-19**. Thermometers, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hand sanitizers were purchased for the project to use once it reopened its campuses. To ensure compliance with the COVID-19 regulations, the project introduced a staggered timetable to space children and ensure better social distance, both on transport and at school. Health screenings were also introduced and took place before the start of each session.

Other strict guidelines were implemented daily (e.g., the wearing of masks by all, hand sanitizing, regular and thorough handwashing). Classrooms were regularly sanitized in terms of the regulations. When the children returned to the campuses, they adapted very well to the “new normal”.

In addition to learning support, when on-site learning resumed in June, the project engaged the services of the Johannesburg Parent and Child Counselling Centre (JPCCC) to offer **psychosocial support for the children during these difficult pandemic times**. Three2Six later engaged 6 psychologists on a part-time basis, to keep offering this support to the children in need. As indicated previously, the Three2Six learners are marginalised children from poor communities, and that is why the project has always offered a food programme. However, when the project's campuses were closed for several weeks due to lockdown, it meant that the children were no longer receiving their daily meal at the project. With the COVID crisis and the successive lockdowns, many of the Three2Six parents and guardians had no access to income and needed urgent support. The food relief organised by the government had not reached these excluded communities. In this context, the project organised several **food campaigns** throughout the year. The first few rounds of **food support took the form of e-vouchers** that the beneficiaries could use at large food retailers. When regulations allowed, the project moved to the distribution of food parcels which were organised on the various campuses and reached all families. These food distributions were also the opportunity for the project to hand out hygiene items and Personal Protective Equipment to its beneficiaries. When the lockdown regulations were eased off, some of the parents and guardians of the Three2Six children were able to progressively start earning an income again. However, the parents who were engaged in informal trading as street vendors continued to face difficulties as they did not necessarily have the means to buy stock to start their operations again. Therefore, food support was offered to the project's beneficiaries until the end of 2020.

This relief aid provided to the project's beneficiaries was made possible by the generous support received from the project's regular funders, individuals and from various organisations in the local community and beyond.

#### **Some of the impacts of this project:**

- R1 965 944,5 funds raised and donated for the project's COVID operations.

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- 225 children, twelve refugee teachers, and their families were provided with food parcels (1,659 parcels of a value of around R829 500) and food vouchers (value R298 750) during difficult economic times.
- 225 children benefited from psychosocial support activities (camps for older children and psychosocial support for all).
- Hand sanitizers, soaps and masks helped mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the three school campuses, and at home for the project's beneficiaries. 1,975 litres of medical-grade hand sanitizers were distributed to families and teachers, 1,125 masks to children and 450 to families, as well as 1,125 soaps to the families.
- 225 children were able to complete their schooling in one academic year despite the disruptions caused by the COVID crisis. R185 925 were spent on overtime for teachers and R2000 worth of data were provided to teachers during the months of lockdown to teach remotely and to check in on the families. 225 workbook packs were also distributed for children during lockdown.

In conclusion, the changes in strategy enabled Three2Six to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the operations of the project. The children were able to complete a full school academic year through the catch-up activities mentioned above. Because of the impact of the regulations in the public system (with around 18% of pupils not having returned to school), it was decided to keep all learners in the project for an additional year while progressing them to the next grade, as placement into public schools is likely to be easier in 2021.

# INTEGRATE

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## 31. REPUBLIC OF CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE), CEMIR-INTERNATIONAL - SOCIO- PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION PROJECT FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SEX FOR SURVIVAL IN THE BRAZZAVILLE URBAN MILIEU

(ALSO PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Socio-professional integration project for refugee women and girls within the context of sex for survival in the Brazzaville urban milieu

**ORGANISATION:** Commission d'Entraide pour les Migrants et Réfugiés International (CEMIR-International)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Brazzaville, Congo

**PERIOD:** 2020

Prostitution is considered the oldest profession in the world and has no limits or borders. Sex workers are found in several parts of the city of Brazzaville in specific places and areas, and it should be noted that some prostitution sites are staffed solely by refugee women. The reasons that drive these women and girls to engage in this activity are essentially related to poverty, burdens, idleness and the lack of work opportunities, which is sometimes caused by illiteracy or lack of diplomas. These girls and women practice this profession as a real palliative. They live in very difficult conditions and are exposed to multiple forms of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. This project aims to provide an alternative source of income to vulnerable women and girls who were involve in sex as a means of survival in Brazzaville. It will define and implement a socio-economic reintegration project for 33 new beneficiaries (28 refugees and 5 from the host country) and monitor the socio-economic integration of 90 participants from the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 cohorts. At the end of the project, all of them will be fairly self-sufficient and will

no longer have to resort to prostitution as a means of survival. Since the Safe from the Start project began in 2016, 110 women have been supported. During that time, 5 beneficiaries have died of illness, others have opted for voluntary repatriation or left Brazzaville.

Through a holistic approach, the project aims to enable women and girls engaged in sex activities as a means of survival to reintegrate into the workforce by providing tailored counselling and progressive support through vocational training and assistance in starting an economic activity, without having to worry about rent and childcare costs. In addition to vocational training, focus group sessions sensitise the women to the issues of sexual and gender-based violence and business management. The synergy created among the women is reinforced by peer-to-peer sessions where women from different cohorts (from 2016 to 2019) share their experiences and encourage each other.

In order to avoid absenteeism during their vocational training, and to enable them to support themselves, the project provides a food kit (CBI) and the payment of a transportation allowance for the beneficiaries during the 5 months of vocational training. They will also receive a placement kit at the beginning of the training. The young children will be accommodated in the nursery of the CEMIR-International given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the nurseries of the districts being closed under the seal of the measures enacted by the government. A child educator with experience in SGBV will ensure the follow-up and will be supported by two child educators' assistants.

The project will contribute to the cost of rent for the beneficiaries during their professional training. Therefore, the project has set aside a reserve to help finance the rent for the 33 beneficiaries.

In order to reinforce the sustainability of the socio-professional integration project, the beneficiaries will receive 3 months' support for the rental costs of the premises for their economic activity as well as support for the rental costs for their accommodation at the start of their income-generating activities (2 months).

Within the framework of the implementation of the project of socio-professional integration of refugee women and girls in a situation of survival prostitution in the urban area of Brazzaville, the following activities have been implemented:

- 1 The follow-up of 90 women from 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.
- 2 The definition and implementation of a socio-economic reintegration project for 33 women from 2020 and the realisation of 20 identification walks.
- 3 The selection panel of 33 women beneficiaries for this year, including 28 refugee women, distributed as follows: 23 Central African women, 3 from the DRC, 2 Rwandan women and 5 women from the host population. After the identification of training needs and placement in training, the beneficiaries opted for the following training courses: catering (17 women), hairdressing (5 women), sewing (6 women), butchery (5 women). The lucky beneficiaries were placed in the training workshops after the CEMIR signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Handicraft Agency in charge of the orientation in the choice of the trainers affiliated to their structure and in charge of the final evaluation of the beneficiaries in training but also of the delivery of the certificates of end of training. During their training, the women benefited from regular follow-up in their learning workshops by the social workers. In order not to interrupt their training, they received the following support: (a) payment for their transportation to and from training, and for dropping off and picking up their children at the crèche (for those with young children), (b) payment for transportation to focus groups and literacy classes, (c) the granting of a food kit, (c) payment of rent and school support for the children of the beneficiaries in order to avoid the phenomenon of street children. In addition to this support, activities related to capacity building and the smooth running of their training have taken place.
- 4 The organisation of meetings for experience sharing through 20 focus group discussions where they were sensitised on the issues of HIV/AIDS, STIs, contraception, clandestine abortions, hygiene and gender-based violence. The focus groups were conducted by various structures, including: TSF (HIV/AIDS, STIs and clandestine abortions), UAFPA (risky practices, condom negotiation) and individuals (IGA management). The realisation of 40 sessions of literacy courses were planned to help them understand the jargon related to their training and to learn how to manage their IGA as the majority of the women are almost illiterate. An evaluation at the end of all the courses took place and showed a good evolution in the lessons learned.
- 5 The identification and the placement of children. After the selection of the women, an interview and a survey took place at the women's homes to identify 19 children whose age varies from 0 - 5 years old to be placed in the crèche, in order to allow the mothers

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to participate in the training with peace of mind. However, it should be emphasised that the crèche has been fitted out to make the space pleasant and to provide all the inputs needed for it to function properly, the identification of the children of the beneficiaries in school age for a registration in school, etc. During these interviews, the social workers took the opportunity to collect information on the children of the beneficiaries who are of school age, as the project has planned to take charge of their registration and to provide them with cash in order to avoid the phenomenon of street children. To this end, 32 children were registered and received cash for the purchase of school supplies.

These activities are all planned for the success of this project, which aims at empowering these women.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and integrate.**

## 32. GAMBIA (BANJUL), CARITAS GAMBIA (CADO) - CARE OF MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE FACING THE PANDEMIC CRISIS OF COVID-19

**PROJECT NAME:** Care of migrants and people on the move facing the pandemic crisis of COVID-19

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Banjul (Gambia)

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas Gambia (CaDO)

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020



Caritas Gambia also known as the Catholic Development Office (CaDO) is the development wing of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul, Gambia. Caritas was established in 2001 and charged with the responsibility of coordinating economic, socio-pastoral and relief activities that aim at attaining a more humane and just society, irrespective of creed, colour, race or ideology. Their vision is to eliminate poverty in all its forms among the people in Gambia.

Operations of Caritas Gambia include water and sanitation, malaria prevention and control, HIV/AIDS care and support, primary health care, agriculture/horticulture, fisheries, emergency and relief, social cohesion and peace building, migration, income-generating projects with parishes and rural communities through the parish priests and parish pastoral councils. Through these projects, Caritas tries to maximize community

capacity building by encouraging local initiatives, supporting and assisting in planning, implementing, and effective management of available resources, thus improving the living standards of beneficiaries, mostly women and children. This **participative approach** can have a **sustainable** and **longer-term positive impact** on the individuals involved.

On 17 March 2020, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of The Gambia reported the presence of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country. The situation, in terms of patterns of contamination, was worrying given the density of living conditions of many Gambian families. In Gambia, like other affected African countries, lack of awareness, limited capacity, weak human resources, weak health systems, uncontrolled migration, lack of social cohesion and the unknown aspects of the transmission of this virus were more likely to contribute to the spread of the epidemic. Illiteracy, traditions and falsehoods remained the forces that contributed to the rapid spread of the disease.

Lockdown periods were not permanent or total - hospitals, banks, and supermarkets remained open but strictly adhered to COVID-19 measures. However, even with measures in place and some form of adherence by the general public, COVID-19 continued to undermine the economy and livelihoods, reduce gross domestic production, threaten food security, limit employment opportunities and livelihoods, and negatively impact children's learning opportunities and therefore impact the defence of their rights.

Caritas Gambia has played a leading role in consultations with the bishop of Banjul, college of consultors and the medical advisor to the diocese to discuss the COVID-19 situation. The Bishop of Banjul fully endorsed government and WHO guidelines to develop Church-specific guidelines, advising congregations on COVID-19 risk mitigation measures, while temporarily banning most religious practices likely to expose people to the disease. A task force headed by Caritas continued to mobilize support locally and internationally for food supplies for vulnerable families, as well as medical and emergency supplies which were distributed through parishes countrywide.

The specific Caritas Gambia response includes: distributing IEC and BCC on COVID-19 to the various parishes and communities, as well as hand sanitizers and face masks; social media platforms are being used to raise awareness and exchange information to all staff across

the country; providing hand-washing stations with sanitisers for each Caritas sub-office and 10 lower and upper basic schools; providing rural parishes with an infrared thermometer and bicycles; participating in fumigation of all Catholic churches; and training and supporting health workers and volunteers as well as funding COVID-19 response activities. Caritas' response to the pandemic has had a **positive impact** on the lives of many people by informing them about the virus and providing them with protective equipment. This has helped reduce the risk of attracting the virus and potentially saved the lives of many people. Other programme activities which have a direct bearing on the country's stability will be ongoing and will be reviewed as the situation evolves. These include livelihoods, peace and reconciliation, reintegration of returnees, migrants and refugees, social cohesion, justice and peace and capacity-building interventions. Caritas Gambia has also managed to keep regional projects on protection and reintegration of irregular (Mediterranean) migrants and the reintegration of migrants from Europe going through the pandemic:

**APIMA:** Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in Africa (APIMA) is a 3-year project which started in 2018 with the aim of improving the situation for irregular migrants in Gambia before departure, in transit and after return through protection-based, migrant-centred approaches. Long-term economic opportunities are increasingly scarce in Gambia, driving young people to consider greener pastures elsewhere. Through APIMA activities, Caritas Gambia in partnership with CRS Gambia, looked at migration holistically and addressed factors that compelled young people to leave home. The project's activities include attitudes and behaviour assessments, resilient roots and life (soft) skills training, drama skit, community conversations (sensitisation) and SBCC radio messages, life and employability skills training (LES), and opportunity fairs. These activities have provided youths with skills to navigate life's opportunities and challenges as well as gain and retain employment. APIMA has had a **positive impact** on many individuals and has proven to be an **effective** project, as the following will show:

APIMA trained 265 young people in LES in Gambia, and in their mid-term evaluation, 64% of LES participants agreed that the training helped them improve their job searches or their current employment. In cooperation with many other organisations, LES participants were then able to take part in opportunity fairs where they got the chance to test their new skills and interact with potential employers. 255 young people par-

ticipated in this event. Furthermore, to promote resilience among returnees as well as address the well-being of discouraged youth in communities, APIMA held trauma awareness sessions called *Rising from Resilient Roots*. These sessions helped 413 participants to acknowledge past negative experiences and reframe their mindsets as they reintegrate or pursue alternatives to migration.

Because families and community members can strongly influence young people to leave home, APIMA's Community Conversations are a powerful tool to prompt reflection on migration's effect on young people. Since 2019, APIMA hosted 21 conversations with 529 participants. Returned migrants shared their stories and encouraged parents, family members, and young people to consider local opportunities for success rather than risking resources and safety by choosing to leave home. Moreover, CRS and Caritas Gambia facilitated 5 radio call-in shows and panel discussions featuring testimonials from returned migrants and local youth entrepreneurs. These activities contributed to 82.6% of the project's past participants (in all 5 APIMA countries) reporting a change to their original migration plan based on information received during a project activity.

The success of APIMA is due in part to the **collaborative** relationship that CRS and Caritas Gambia have formed with other organisations working with youth and returned migrants. APIMA has provided more than 370 referrals to vocational training and social services. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) often refers migrants to APIMA upon their return. This referral system allows migrants to access services beyond what each individual organisation is able to offer. The project's referral system and partnerships formed a strong foundation for continued support for migrants and young people. Continuing to nurture those partnerships will be a critical factor for success. The project has also proven to be easily **replicated** as it has already been put into practice in 5 countries.

**ERRIN:** Another project is the Caritas Belgium (ERRIN) Project, which is a consortium of fifteen European partner countries that have networked to facilitate the return and reintegration of migrants who cannot, or no longer wish to remain in Europe. Caritas Belgium has contracted Caritas Gambia as service provider to assist returnees with the first steps of their reintegration in Gambia. The organisation provides counselling and referral in order to facilitate their process of return and sustainable reintegration with the objective of building up their lives independently

through tailor-made reintegration assistance. It was difficult in the beginning to get the individual (migrant) to understand the different stages of the reintegration process, but it has so far been a success with cooperation from the returnees and their families who are supporting them to settle down with various private businesses.

In addition to their reintegration packages, ERRIN provided €200 for each migrant as COVID-19 support that was paid to them directly in cash. This top-up is used to compensate for the increased living expenses (e.g., rent, food, hygiene products etc.) caused by COVID-19 only.

### 33. GHANA, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS), CARITAS GHANA AND THE TECHIMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE - APIMA PROJECT, ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN WEST AFRICA

**PROJECT NAME:** APIMA (Action for the Protection and Integration of Returned Migrants in West Africa)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Bono East Region of Ghana

**ORGANISATION:** Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Ghana and the Techiman Catholic Diocese

**PERIOD:** 2020

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in partnership with Caritas Ghana and the Techiman Catholic Diocese have been implementing a migration project under the framework of Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in West Africa (APIMA) in the Bono East Region of Ghana. The APIMA project is being implemented through a strong accompaniment approach and partnership with CARITAS Ghana with a focus on engaging community members on the issues of irregular migration, **empowering youth with life and employability skills, integration and trauma awareness and providing vocational skills** to both returned and potential migrants. The specific project areas are Techiman Township with 6 surrounding communities as well as Nkoranza town and its 6 surrounding communities. These two municipalities were chosen because data shows that, in Ghana, they have the highest numbers of young people who travel the most, using irregular or unapproved routes. CARITAS Ghana through its church partners in Techiman Catholic Diocese therefore works to ensure that West African migrants live and move with increased agency, dignity, and safety. The project seeks to strengthen the bonds between migrants and the communities they live in or return to.

In order to **welcome, protect, promote and integrate** migrants, the project aims to achieve this and its core objectives through a number of activities targeting migrants, potential migrants, parents and families, traditional and religious leaders, government officials and the society as a whole. They are therefore using an integrated approach to reach their goals. The ***Rising from Resilient Roots (RRR)*** was one of the most **effec-**

**tive** activities designed for the returned migrants to give them psychosocial support and trauma management. Most of the migrants returned with absolutely nothing. As a result, their families reject them or do not place any value on them. They were traumatised and are therefore in need of psychological support to keep their minds stable, feel welcomed, protected and well-integrated into their families and the society. In the workshop training, all the participants were taken through various stages in “tree of life” programmes. These sessions were designed to manage trauma that makes migrants feel unwelcome, unsafe and rejected in society. They participate by drawing a tree which represents their own lives in the form of the joy, support, challenges, wishes, hopes, talents, skills, good times and difficult times in their lives etc. They will then share their trees with others, highlighting the significant changes that occurred in their lives. Some of them openly confessed that after returning to Ghana without any property, they felt unsafe, unwelcome and rejected and, as a result, they resorted to bad behaviours which made their lives more miserable. The sharing of these trees gives them the opportunity to reflect on their past and current situations, thus giving them the opportunity to refrain from the bad practices and to identify the good things in themselves. After the activity, the participants felt better and relieved.

**Community asset building** was also one of the most effective tools that was used to showcase the skills and talents of returnees to the world. The idea behind this was to showcase and promote the carpentry, masonry and painting skills of these young people to the public for engagement. In line with this, a public asset like a school building that needed renovation was identified, and work in the form of plastering, painting, replacing rotten wooden frames or doors and windows, was given to returned migrants. The project provided all the necessary materials, tools and equipment for the migrants to use for the renovation works to be completed. The media coverage was well arranged and carried out to give them more exposure both locally and nationally. The **community was very involved and collaborative**, and the public could get to know the skills of the returned migrants and started to engage them so that they could earn incomes and make their stay in Ghana more comfortable. Some people in the community were either not aware or did not trust that something good could come from the returnees in the form of masonry, carpentry and painting. However, the skilled returnees were well promoted and exposed to get jobs which resulted in income to feed and take good care of their families.

**Government meetings** were another activity, which targeted both state and non-state actors and other stakeholders in migration. Participants at the government meeting were representatives of the Ghana immigration service, social welfare and community development, CHRAJ, NADMO, National Youth Authority, Youth Employment Authority, NCCE, religious leaders, traditional council among others. These are the key people who can help **“protect and integrate”** the migrants in the various communities. It was therefore important to properly engage them in order to achieve this collaboratively. The meeting addressed human rights abuses of irregular migrants, human rights and obligations of the state towards migrants and the role of uniformed officials in protecting the rights of migrants in Ghana. The stakeholders in the meetings reassured of their commitment to **protect the rights of migrants** and to also let those who abuse the rights of the migrants face the full rigor of the law. These meetings reminded the government of its responsibility towards the protection of migrants.

The **community discussions** were employed as a tool by the APIMA project to shift the mindset of both returnees and potential migrants from travelling outside Ghana through unapproved routes. It sensitised the community members to **welcome, accept and integrate** returnees into the communities even if they could not remit from their destination journeys. The APIMA team travelled to the communities to meet with the target groups who were made up of young males and females, parents, chiefs, religious and opinion leaders of the communities. The discussions focused on reducing pressure and push factors for young people to travel outside the country through irregular means without taking into consideration the risk involved. Special interest was on the pressure that parents, friends and other relations bring on the young people to embark on these risky journeys. The discussions further highlighted to the participants measures to reduce irregular migration by explaining the risk associated with it. Another place of interest was for the parents, family and friends to **welcome, accept and well integrate** those who have already returned to the communities so that they could feel loved, safe and **protected** at home. To make the activity more **participatory**, an opportunity was given to the participants to make contributions to the activity. Some suggested that in order to reduce the incidence of irregular migration, job opportunities should be created for the teeming youth. Furthermore, some returned migrants shared their bitter experiences with the rest of the participants as learning for those desiring to travel using irregular means. The participants were very excited to see that the team went to

their communities to have such valuable discussions with them, and they agreed to welcome, accept and integrate migrants into the communities and will also reduce pressure mounted on the young ones to migrate. In conclusion, the community discussions were well welcomed and appreciated by the participants as they strengthened the bond between and among the communities, their youth and the returned migrants, which was one of the objectives of the project.

The **Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC)** was one of the strategies used to disseminate information on the risk involved in irregular migration aimed at achieving transformational behavioural change. The project had a drama troupe that was dramatising the whole journey of migration through irregular routes, followed by discussions with the audience. In the discussions, almost all the female participants indicated strongly that they would not allow any of their family members to travel through irregular routes considering the high level of risk associated with it. Some of the male participants also stated that they would not venture into such irregular journeys and added that returned migrants do not disclose to them in full the risk they undergo before they got to their destination. Both groups considered the drama as an 'eye opener', and they committed to disseminating the information about the risks associated with irregular migration to the rest of the potential migrants.

The **Life and Employability Skills Training (LES)** was one of the activities in the APIMA project that was used to give employable skills. It was a 9-day intensive training which gave equal opportunities of learning to both potential and returned migrants, as well as to any other participant. Some of the topics treated included: 7 values for success; roles and responsibilities; gender roles in a youth's life; exploring values and skills; belief about oneself; setting goals and making plans; listening and speaking effectively; teamwork; leadership; problem solving and conflict resolution; customer care; career planning; how to find jobs; community mapping; appropriate workplace behaviour and attitudes, etc. The training was **participatory**, the participants were given the opportunity to take part in the training by either facilitating a group or actively taking part in the discussions and group work assigned to them. These activities showed some immediate outcomes: participants who were not vocal and were shy prior to the training were able to speak out during group work and other plenary sessions, and some participants acknowledged that working in teams had taught them to tolerate the ideas of others and taught them team building skills. After interacting

with the communities, they realised that most of the young people did not have other skills except farming. That was one of the reasons why many resorted to irregular migration in order to seek greener pastures. Considering this, the project had enrolled over 400 youth in various **vocational skills training** that helped reduce the desire of travelling. The vocational training included: driving, fashion and design, beauty therapy, plumbing, tilling, metal works, woodwork, electrical work etc. Awareness raising through radio has reached out to over 200,000 people whilst the rest of the activities put together have reached out to over 2,000 people. There has been a lot of feedback from the communities, indicating that irregular migration is reducing at a high rate at the project operational areas. The people also informed that due to the project's interventions in the communities, returned migrants now feel **welcome, protected** and well-**integrated** into their communities. Community members were pleased with the project and wanted to extend its duration and scope to reach other communities in the region who equally have high numbers of returned migrants.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

**MR. SAMUEL NAKOJA**

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PROJECT OFFICER

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I started working on the migration project in March 2020 and my role was project officer. Inspiration and vision for the work was the positive impact the project will have in the lives of the people. What inspired me was seeing smiles and joy on the faces of the people I worked with, especially the youth.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the implementation plan of the project. The number of participants for each activity was reduced to ensure that the safety protocols were adhered to. Due to that, the frequency of activities was also increased to be able to cover the target beneficiaries for the period. This also increased the workload of the project implementing team. The project also incurred additional cost in the provision of PPEs for both staff and the APIMA Project beneficiaries during the pandemic.

The vulnerable groups we worked with had limited access to resources, even farm inputs during the pandemic. Prices of commodities also shot up due to shortages. This negatively affected the vulnerable groups in feeding their families. The collapse of the informal sector economy, as a result of the adverse impacts of COVID-19, also affected the project plans to reintegrate returned and potential irregular migrants through self-employment in the informal sector.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The project contributed to positively shaping the perceptions of the youth in the Bono-East Region to take advantage of local opportunities and discouraged them from embarking on irregular migration. Other successes: (1) youth are now empowered to stay in their communities to work. This was achieved through the Life and Employability Skills training and the vocational skills training services. (2) Returned migrants have been successfully reintegrated using the project's *Resilient Roots* strategies. (3) The youth have been educated on where to access the right travel documents and the various travel options. (4) The project's advocacy work resulted in the establishment of an Immigration Office at Nkoranza which reduced the menace of fake passports in the area.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

The major changes that occurred in migration was that the people in the project area understood the risk associated with irregular migration. As a result, there was a reduction in the number of youths who embarked on the journey. More young persons preferred staying and working in their communities than resorting to irregular migration. Due to our community education in the various communities, the returned

migrants could be welcomed into the communities to stay safe and happy without being ridiculed, especially those who came back with absolutely nothing. Based on these changes, the organisation intensified its community education programmes and increased social behavioural change communication programmes to reach a wider audience.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

The verbs: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating of migrants are so important in addressing migration as an integral human development issue. The approach provides a bridge in the provision of social services and advocating on behalf of migrants. When migrants are welcomed and protected, it gives them joy and the feeling of being part of a whole community which gives them the peace of mind to begin life. In this sense, they believe all is not lost. They can still make it in life since they have a family and friends who show them love and give them the needed support. When their rights are promoted and integrated into the family and their communities, they get the encouragement and zeal to enter the local businesses and works that will earn them income to survive on and to take care of their families. Understanding this discussion is advice to people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis' four verbs. It will save the lives of many and also bring peace and joy to individuals and families as a whole.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Projects and interventions planned for future work in this area seek funding to widen the scope of work in the project implementation area to reach more people. We believe this will make a big impact as the project implementation area is identified as a hotspot for irregular migration in the whole country. Unfortunately, the current funding stream has ended without any immediate alternative in hand. This is generating disappointment and exasperation among the youth.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

The hopes and wishes are to increase programming geared towards increasing works in migration to cover many more communities and districts in the Bono East Region of Ghana and, by extension, other regions in the country.

## 34. KENYA, JRS KENYA – ATTENDING TO REFUGEES AND IDPS AND MIKONO REFUGEE HANDCRAFT SHOP

(ALSO WELCOME AND PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Attending Refugees, IDPs and Mikono Refugee Handcraft Shop

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Kenya

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Kakuma Refugee Camp, the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement and Nairobi, Kenya

**PERIOD:** 2020



The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation founded by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Pedro Arrupe S.J., in 1980 with the mandate to **accompany, serve and advocate for the cause of refugees and other forcibly displaced people**. In Kenya, under our national director, Angelo Pittaluga, JRS is attending to the needs of refugees, IDPs, and any other forcibly displaced persons, both in the Kakuma Refugee Camp and the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in north-western Kenya, and in the urban area of Nairobi, where refugees lack access to some of the basic services offered in the camps.

As many countries in the Global South, Kenya suffered greatly from the socio-economic effects of the COVID pandemic: schools were closed for months, businesses and other economic activities were completely jeopardized, and for a long period of time emergency relief activities

and mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) were suspended. In this context, JRS Kenya adapted its “Good Practices”:

In the Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, JRS Kenya, under the project director, Fr. Lasantha De Abrew, S.J., offers inclusive **education and care for children with disabilities, tertiary education in the Pathfinder Programme, protection for victims of violence, and pastoral care**. Among the programmes there is **The Pathfinder Programme** under which JRS offered Post-Secondary Teacher Training Programmes in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE), and Primary Teacher Education Preparation (PTEP) for refugees and the host community. These post-secondary programmes seek to develop teachers’ instructional capacity and help them create inclusive environments where children, especially children with disabilities, can develop their full potential. JRS likewise offers a Community Business Development (CBD) **livelihood programme and training in digital literacy supported** by career guidance and counselling. Pathfinder programmes place participants at the centre of the major decisions affecting their education and lives, supporting choice at every step.

The **positive impact** of this project was that, after a thorough feasibility study, JRS’s Pathfinder Programme was inaugurated in January 2020. It addressed the critical need for Post-Secondary Teacher Training Programmes in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE), and Primary Teacher Education Preparation (PTEP). The Pathfinder programme likewise supported a successful CBD livelihood programme and training in digital literacy.

The Pathfinder Programme was supported by JRS International Office and served as a pilot programme for similar initiatives. About **innovation**, the Pathfinder Programme was initiated as a novel attempt to provide livelihood and skills training in light of prevailing needs and opportunities in Kakuma. Offering inclusive joint educational programmes, moreover, managed to address the tensions between refugee and host communities. JRS’ efforts at **social reconciliation and cohesion** were supported by the collaboration with Oxford University’s Refugee Study Centre. Each of the four initiatives were fulfilling the expected goals and outcomes in accordance with government certification requirements and regulations. As originally intended, the Pathfinder Programme has proven to be an exemplary means of responding to the long-standing needs of host and refugee communities.

**Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities:** JRS operated 5 inclusive education facilities, offering children with disabilities in Kakuma and the Turkana host community regular and specialized education, psychosocial services and auxiliary services, while providing their parents with support, counselling and training. JRS conducted community outreach to identify children with disabilities, and offered rehabilitation services, psychosocial support, and non-formal education to homebound children with disabilities. Children with cognitive and developmental disabilities are among the most vulnerable refugees, suffering not only from limited access to necessary resources but from stigmatization and discrimination in their communities. The **positive impact** of the project was that JRS was serving 756 children with a variety of services enabling them to participate as valued members of their communities while supporting their parents and caregivers. In the Ignatian tradition, JRS is dedicated to serving the most vulnerable, i.e., those whose needs are not being addressed or addressed fully. Accompanying, serving, and advocating for children with disabilities have thus been a hallmark of JRS' mission from the onset and continue to be a primary focus of the mission.

During the recent strategic planning, JRS has drawn upon expert guidance to support inclusive education, i.e., incorporating children with disabilities into "mainstream" education as far as possible. The curriculum and facilities have been adapted accordingly and tailored to the specific needs of each child. JRS inclusive education provided an indispensable resource for realising the rights of every child to education, inclusion, and care. In the absence of such specialised programmes, children with disabilities would continue to be marginalised and excluded. There has been a **participative approach** from parents, often single mothers and other caregivers, who were integral to the programme and appropriate support, training, and care are offered on a regular basis. Outreach to members of the refugee communities and **strategic collaboration** with other NGOs remains critical to the success of our programmes, e.g., on-going collaboration with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) who administer camp schools. The practices undertaken by JRS provided an **effective** and **sustainable** model for responding to the critical needs of vulnerable children.

In **Nairobi**, JRS also offered **innovative** programmes in emergency relief and MHPPS for urban refugees, livelihood and urban farming programmes, and scholarships for refugees. JRS Kenya manages a shop for arts and crafts made by refugees to enhance their creativity and allow them to make a living. Spurred by the pandemic and the urgent need

to adapt to the new context, the **Refugee Handcraft shop, Mikono**<sup>24</sup>, went online and started to sell its products in the US and some countries in Europe. This was perhaps the programme in Nairobi with the greatest positive impact on its beneficiaries during the time of COVID. Going online for purchases in Europe and the US led to an exponential increase in profits and, by extension, the income of our beneficiaries. As with the other livelihood activities, the Mikono Shop was designed for **sustainability** and **long-term** efficacy. In fact, this was one of the oldest programmes and has become the main source of income for many artisans in Nairobi for 30 years now. The shop by itself was already a unique and **effective project**. However, the fact of going online and opening to the international market has led to an exponential expansion of capacities and impact. This was the first project of this kind within JRS and its **efficiency** and **innovative nature** have stimulated other countries to be interested in similar projects. The incredible increase in sales and therefore the income of the suppliers of the shop demonstrates the efficacy of the evolution of the shop. There is a **participative approach** with different providers that meet every year to adapt and better define the strategy and design of the project. The shop also collaborates with other multiple organisations, both humanitarian and private, for the efficiency of the shop. Mikono's success can definitely be replicated in multiple countries and contexts. A template has been settled for other countries interested in such projects.

**Emergency relief and MHPSS for refugees:** One distinctive approach of JRS Kenya is the so called "open door policy": beneficiaries can come to JRS premises every day and be supported with psychosocial support means and practices. Having to close our doors for health and security reasons in time of confinement arose the need to reach community leaders and other important figures in the communities to inform about the closure. However, various phone lines were kept open to be accessible in case of need, and on two different occasions some food and non-food items were distributed for the most vulnerable. Both emotionally and in means, the support given by JRS had a clear positive impact on our beneficiaries. Being present, listening to them in such anxious times, and giving some material support, when possible, has been a strong relief for the refugees we serve. The goal of this programme was for short-term impact, to respond to immediate needs and emergencies. The sustainable version of the Emergency Relief Programme was

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24 <https://mikono.jrs.global/>

the Livelihoods Programme. However, the psychological accompaniment was a sustainable practice with mid and long-term impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of our beneficiaries. This programme has proved the importance of rapid response in front of big emergencies, such as lack of food, need of medical support, or incapacity to pay rent, for example. The programme was adapted to the needs of every individual in every moment and the service was granted when the need had been raised by the individuals. JRS worked with other organisations such as UNHCR who referred individual and complicated cases. This project is being replicated on a continuous basis.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

**FR. LASANTHA DE ABREW, SJ**

PROJECT DIRECTOR (JRS KAKUMA PROJECT IN KENYA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

JRS had the pastoral component for many years as it began its works in Kakuma Refugee Camp in 1993. After a break, the pastoral department resumed its service in 2019. Accompaniment is the hallmark of all our pastoral works. On Sundays, Fr. Bill and I celebrate masses in the camp. There are 11 sub-stations. We work with the Don Bosco Fathers as they are the official parish priests appointed by the Bishop of Lodwar. There we meet PoCs in various capacities. During the week, we accompany our own JRS beneficiaries in their loneliness, anguish, sickness and difficulties. Visiting the sick in the hospitals and at homes, giving time to meet with persons with difficulties, responding to the needs of students in need especially children with disabilities, visiting groups of people discriminated against for their sexual orientation, connecting with Missionaries De Foucauld Sisters (MSD) who are highly involved in the camp with their requests are some of the activities. We help the host community through the Parish of Good Shepherd when needs arise. We become animators of reconciliation in collaboration with our staff as the tensions grow in the communities.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

COVID-19 affected us in the beginning as the churches were closed for Sunday worship but we continued our visits observing all COVID protocols. Many agencies left the camp, but we made our presence felt in this moment of the pandemic. The refugee community was not afraid generally. There was a lack of opportunity for livelihood and children missed education, leaving them without supervision. There was a remarkable increase of SGBV cases, domestic violence and teen pregnancies. There was an impact on the mental health conditions especially on the elderly population.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

Our success was not leaving the people but being with them in their pain. Educating them on the COVID prevention protocol, the importance of vaccination, and home-based education. Spiritually helping them to see the reality of the pandemic and listening to their stories of resilience and their strong faith in God.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

For a few months the borders were closed so there were no new entries. As the borders reopened, we visited the reception centre to see and listen to them. JRS continued its work in the department of inclusive education through home-based schooling, supplying nutrition and NFIs, food items and counselling. Also, we managed two protection shelters for young girls, women, children and boys very well, observing all COVID protocols. As one or two were affected, we collaborated with health-based organisations and UNHCR for their treatment and well-being.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

Welcome is the stepping stone. We welcome our own brother and sister who are refugees now. We need to be aware of our own cultural, religious, social and other prejudices towards these suffering ones. Then we embrace the mindset of inclusiveness as these have become refu-

gees as a result of violent exclusiveness. This attitude leads to compassion. Compassion leads us to protect them as human beings and more strongly in and through our faith traditions as our own. Then, promotion of their rights and their just dues emerges. That is the base for integrating them as our own.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Continuing our works of JRS in the departments of protection, inclusive education, post-secondary education, and pastoral and psychosocial aspects which cover all these departments. Awareness of the new needs arising in the refugee and host communities and responding to them creatively and innovatively. Strengthening our personal accompaniment of our beneficiaries and members of the staff (national and refugee).

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Total trust in God. Our God has a special concern for the widow, orphan and the refugee as ANAWIM. We too have that greater commitment as JRS. If it is God's passion for these loved ones, surely, He will provide. How and when, even if we do not know, but we are sure why He provides. Then we do our best (human effort) to do our part. God is not only with us but very actively labouring with us.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome, protect and integrate.**

### 35. MALAWI, JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE (JRS) - EDUCATION, PSYCHOSOCIAL AND PASTORAL CARE OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES AT DZALEKA REFUGEE CAMP

(ALSO PROMOTE AND PROTECT)

**PROJECT NAME:** Education, psychosocial and pastoral care of asylum-seekers and refugees at Dzaleka Refugee Camp

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi

**PERIOD:** 2020

The intolerable spiking of the refugee crisis stands out as one of the main facts and highlights of our time. For innumerable reasons, but mainly because of conflicts, persecutions, violence, violations of human rights, natural disasters, more people continue to be on the move and displaced in their own motherland or outside the boundaries of their countries.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) documents at glance that "at least 82.4 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them are nearly 26.4 million refugees, around half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also millions of stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and lack access to basic rights such as education, health care, employment and freedom of movement"<sup>25</sup>.

Inspired by the generous love and example of Jesus Christ, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has as its mission to accompany, serve, and advocate for the cause of refugees and other forcibly displaced people, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future. Facing the challenge of the refugee crisis, JRS started projects in Malawi in 1998. Located first at Luwani Refugee Camp close to the border with Mozambique near the bordertown Mwanza and in 2002 at Dzaleka Refugee Camp, aiming at meeting the challenge of caring for those in Malawi. From the religious side, Dzaleka Refugee Camp is home to several churches, 95 in total, most of whom are Pentecostal, almost all founded or chaired by self-called pastors, evangelists or prophets from DRC. With the immense and congested population of the Camp, the Catholic Church serves the faith-

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

ful with 3 different small Christian communities: St. Mary, St. Stephen (both managed by the nearby Dowa Parish) and St. Ignatius of Loyola which is organised under JRS supervision and functions like a quasi-parish. At St. Ignatius Catholic Community, masses in Small Christian Communities (SCC) can gather for prayer up to 50 people and Sunday masses are attended by a total average of 2,000 Catholics every Sunday. As of May 2021, UNHCR registered 52,258 refugees and asylum-seekers in Malawi's Dzaleka Refugee Camp, more than half of whom fled from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with the remaining population originating from Burundi, Rwanda and others from the East and Horn of the African continent. Most of the refugees in Malawi live in the heavily congested Dzaleka Refugee Camp which has 15,997 households located near the capital Lilongwe and was set up in 1994 to accommodate just between 10,000 and 12,000 people. While many of these refugees have been in the country for decades, the situation is not static. Congolese and Burundians continue to arrive at an average of 470 individuals per month.<sup>26</sup> Policy denies refugees many of the rights that they deserve as human beings, which affects their livelihood and well-being. Indeed, while maintaining open borders for people seeking safety, the Government of Malawi has historically taken a restrictive approach to managing refugee situations by making several reservations to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Its domestic legal framework reflects these reservations and consequently refugees face restrictions on their freedom of movement through the encampment policy, experience limited access to social services and are restricted from employment.<sup>27</sup>

To ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees at Dzaleka Refugee Camp may become resilient, may heal, learn, and determine their own future, JRS organised several activities under several projects. These projects are **education, psychosocial and pastoral care**. Education (formal and informal) with nursery, preschool, primary and secondary school, post-secondary and tertiary on the formal side and livelihoods on the informal one. Besides, the education project gives gifted students the opportunity to benefit from **scholarships for studies at local universities** and schools of higher learning through two programmes/schemes. Through a **digital training programme** under education beneficiaries also acquire and develop digital skills to bridge the computer divide but foremost to enhance their opportunities to earn an income with online

<sup>26</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/mwi>

<sup>27</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/mwi>

jobs. With the psychosocial project, beneficiaries are helped to enjoy psychosocial well-being. It is scientifically known that the resulting traumas of violence-driven displacement, personal and communal, have long-term effects. This means that providing for the immediate **protection** needs of refugees must be accompanied by support for **personal healing and communal reconciliation**. To this healing and reconciliation contributes the pastoral care project, organised to develop Christian leadership and allow beneficiaries to take sacraments as is the praxis in the Catholic Church. With all these projects, JRS, through implementing its mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, offers an integrated approach to service, encompassing the healing brought by accompaniment, the hope nurtured by education, and the dignity given by work.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has increased inequalities around the world, and the hardest hit by these inequalities are displaced people: access to income-generating activities becoming more difficult, the decrease in the provision of services from the international community, etc. Together with Comoros, São Tomé and Príncipe, Lesotho and South Sudan, Malawi is one of the few African countries that were officially last to report coronavirus cases in March 2020. As cases of COVID-19 increased in Malawi, JRS responded by developing and implementing a contingency plan to face the issue, involving all projects executed at Dzaleka Camp, in collaboration with other stakeholders and implementing partners. The Catholic Church through the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) quickly took the matter seriously, issuing guidelines to observe in order to regulate and adapt the praxis of the Church to the new situation, hence preventing the pandemic from spreading. The efforts of the project at pastoral care were then put on a **participative** (dialogic) and a **sustainable** approach adapted to the beneficiaries in order to harvest a **positive impact** through the provision of **assistance, training and awareness raising**. The first response of JRS through the pastoral care project was precisely under a cognitive aspect to promote awareness in the community about the virus and so induce the proper behaviour for facing it. This consisted of destroying conspiracy and wrong theories about the pandemic aimed at generating fear, nonchalance, negligence and even ignorance about it; explaining ECM-issued guidelines to help the faithful to understand them and put them into practice. The expected ultimate outcome of the efforts was the promotion of adequate behaviour that stops the spread of the disease and saves lives. On a more practical side, promoting awareness about the vi-

rus was thought of to lead and indeed lead to behaviours that integrated with confidence the reality of the pandemic while continuing normal Christian life, receiving all sacraments.

During the pandemic crisis from March to December 2020, homilies were instrumental to induce a behaviour that would care for others and so protect lives of fellow Camp inhabitants. Together with promoting **protection** of lives by preaching, the Pastoral Care **project helped to make face masks** to the same purpose which were distributed for free to those in need in the Community but could not afford buying them. Actions are a better way for convincing in favour of a value. So was the distribution of face masks: deepening the awareness that the pandemic is here and learning to live with it. One of the guidelines to curb the spreading of COVID-19 was keeping social distance. But social distancing can be destructive of social cooperation in that it disrupts the flux of interactions between people in the society. In the procedural concept to face the pandemic crisis, JRS Malawi insisted on the right way to understand social distancing: not avoiding others but as a good means to show fraternal concern as it should be in a believing community complying with the desire to come together as a welcoming and supportive community. Pastoral care was not a work of wonderful achievements, though they may exist, but a ministry of presence, of **solidarity** and compassion. This truth has guided the concept of **accompaniment** of asylum-seekers and refugees at Dzaleka Refugee Camp, particularly during this pandemic time. The positive impact of this presence can be measured today through the resilience and faithfulness of the beneficiaries in the Community, the hope for a better future because God is at work. One of the congregants shared once this: *"Father, I have no one in this Camp, no relative, no one who cares for me; I hold because God is there for me, the Only one. And your presence and care are for me a sign of this God and a testimony to his compassionate love, as I journey with him".*

**INTERVIEW WITH:**

**FR. DIEUDONNÉ KAPITA MAMPASI, SJ**

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PROJECT COORDINATOR (JRS IN MALAWI)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

As a contracted pastoral care coordinator with the *Jesuit Refugee Service* (JRS) in Malawi, my main responsibility was to develop a strong Christian, i.e. Catholic leadership through the development of good functioning Small Living Christian Communities (we have 8 of them at Dzaleka Refugee Camp), administration of sacraments, psychospiritual accompaniment, building of the main Christian Community Committees, organizing an environment and setting up structures permitting a normal Christian life as it is possible within a parish setting.

The project was rooted in the vision of JRS to contribute to the reality of "a world where refugees and other forcibly displaced people attain protection, opportunity and participation". As a Jesuit priest, after having lectured in Philosophy of Science, I felt inspired to join in the mission of JRS "to accompany, serve and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future". I started working with JRS in Malta in September 2013 to help produce and implement a humane and Christian approach to welcoming and serving migrants arriving from Africa on their way to Europe. I was then involved in accompanying the migrants through pastoral care. When from October 2015 I was moved to North-Kivu in East DRC, this accompaniment evolved into accompanying Internally Displaced People (IDPs) through tertiary education essentially in the territory of Masisi, which I am now combining here in Malawi since January 2020 with pastoral care.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has affected our work in many ways, the worst being the disruption of the provision of services. The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), following the decision of the government

of Malawi to restrict gatherings and reduce the number of attendants, issued in March 2020 guidelines in line with those from the State, so suspending liturgical celebrations and gatherings, restricting activities such as weddings and burials for some time. As a consequence, we had to minimise our interventions, though we could continue being present in the community. Through this situation, the main challenges were to find out how to keep Christian faith and hope alive through genuine practices, to be creative about celebrations and about how to continue accompanying our beneficiaries who were so hard hit by the global pandemic. During the difficult moments, access to services provided by other Implementing Partners (IPs) was reduced as well as possibilities for work.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The most important success was that migrants remained with a more positive disposition towards life and became more personal in assuming their faith, moving from the idea of the Church as out there to the idea of a Church in here at home and kept alive by me. The conviction that the Church provides healing through prayer was also clear in the sharing with me as pastor.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period? And how did your organisation respond to these changes?***

According to UNHCR data, Congolese and Burundians continue to arrive at an average of 470 individuals per month<sup>28</sup>. Additional migrants join the Camp when the Malawian government decided a provisory new encampment policy, ordering all migrants to join the Camp regardless of their status. Through the pastoral care project, we continued to reach out to the newcomers, visiting and offering them the opportunity to join the existing small living Christian communities and involving them in all our celebrations, like the Day of the Patron Saint, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Inclusion is the key concept!

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

My advice is that this is very difficult but rewarding work, worth being engaged in it. It is so instrumental to self-resilience that our Pope rightly in-

<sup>28</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/mwi>

sists on welcoming the most vulnerable among our brothers and sisters, protecting their rights and lives, promoting their dignity and helping them for a successful experience of integration where they are accepted.

People living in a highly congested environment such as Camps or Camp-like ones, without citizenship or enjoying any basic rights such as economic and social, easily experience great helplessness, despair, feeling of psychological and existential insecurity. They need not only humanitarian, but also and even foremost psychological and spiritual support.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

Most of the migrants we serve come from East DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. Since migrants tend to reproduce in the host countries the very causes that led to their migrating out of their respective countries, reconciliation is a major issue within our community as well as inclusivity. Our plans are to invest massively in those two so as to build a community in which everybody feels being and is recognised, has full participation in the life of the community and overcomes the negative impact of cultural assumptions and inner wounds created by the events and ordeals our beneficiaries have gone through.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Pastoral care work is instrumental in helping migrants to heal and enjoy psychospiritual well-being. Yet for these obviously vulnerable brothers and sisters, financial means to meet their basic needs are scarce and finding funds to organise the pastoral care is extremely difficult.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and promote.**

### 36. MOROCCO, CARITAS IN MOROCCO - PROJECT “SELA” STRENGTHENING OF THE TERRITORIAL NETWORK TO SUPPORT THE MOST VULNERABLE MIGRANTS IN MOROCCO

(ALSO PROTECT AND WELCOME)

**PROJECT NAME:** Project “SELA” Strengthening of the territorial network to support the most vulnerable migrants in Morocco

**ORGANISATION:** Caritas in Morocco

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Fez, Laayoune, Meknes, Oujda, Rabat, Tangier, Dakhla, Morocco.

**PERIOD:** 2020

Internationally, the first semester of 2020 was marked by the health crisis due to the spread of COVID-19. Morocco is no exception. It is not surprising that the confinement linked to COVID-19 has had the most impact on the situation of migrants in Morocco and has contributed to their precariousness: loss of employment and lack of financial resources to guarantee a response to basic needs. Moroccan authorities implemented strict measures in connection with the health situation from the appearance of the first cases. Morocco has even been cited on several occasions among the countries which have acted quickly in the fight against the spread of the virus: as from 12-19 March 2020, the government suspended flights and maritime links with Spain, closure of schools and universities, all flights grounded, suspension of cafes, restaurants, hammams and mosques, closed call for voluntary isolation, announcement of the state of health emergency and confinement. These measures put the country under severe socio-economic pressure. Many people find themselves precarious or threatened by the situation, both those working in formal jobs and those in precarious jobs in the informal sector. The majority of migrants do not have a residence permit and work in the informal sector and/or are dependent on begging. They are therefore doubly impacted: without income and excluded from the compensation programmes that the Moroccan government has put in place. These are measures to compensate people made redundant as well as workers in the informal sector who no longer have an income. From 16 March 2020 and the start of confinement in Morocco, the Caritas reception centres, spread over the territory, had to close their doors in order to comply with the measures put in place by the State. Caritas centres and partners

have been able to be so responsive in adapting to the context thanks to the flexibility granted by its financial partners (SĒLA) and to the support of an additional emergency fund, carried by Caritas Germany. To ensure that the most vulnerable have some level of protection, Caritas together with its affiliates had to review their programmes in order to be on the ground with the most vulnerable people providing them with essential and most needed support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the lives of so many people around the world and despite its effect, there is very little relevant information about the virus. Caritas promoted **awareness-raising** campaigns in Morocco as soon as the first cases of COVID-19 appeared in Morocco: the centres and parishes organised awareness-raising workshops on the virus and on the safety actions to be adopted. These workshops were able to take place within the structures before confinement and then by phone, WhatsApp groups or individually at the places of life during weekly distributions.

Caritas has provided direct aid in response to human needs to a total of 7,322 people within the framework of the SELA programme in the first half of 2020. 5,254 beneficiaries, or 72%, received this aid from partners in the border areas. Aid items included food aid, vouchers, money, hygiene kits, and clothing. Food aid represents by far the most important category: among people receiving humanitarian aid, 58% received this type of aid. On some sites, food aid also includes the distribution of meals either managed directly, as for the AMO, or as in Fez in the form of "tickets" in partnership with small catering for migrant women set up through a programme of support for income generation. A total of 13,239 meals were distributed by AMO and 6,040 meal vouchers were distributed by SF.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed additional challenges both in terms of increased risk of infection and death experienced by refugees and migrants and has highlighted existing inequities in access to and utilization of health services. In the medical domain, 31% of people received by the centres received medical aids. This rate is 38% when zoomed in on the border areas. The sites where more people have benefited from medical aids are P. Dakhla, TAM and SEH. This increase is particularly significant at the TAM, which granted medical treatment to almost as many people during the first semester as during the whole of 2019, given the large number of people who requested it.

Being evicted during this pandemic increases one's vulnerability not only to contract the virus but also exposes one to other forms of illnesses. With regard to people being assisted with housing, 12% of the people received were assisted for their housing. The minor project of Rabat and the AMM also manage apartments where minors are accommodated for whom the need for protection is greater. During the months of confinement, many more people were helped by MENA-Rabat, TAM, AMM and SF, to compensate for the risk of losing their housing due to the drastic reduction in their financial resources.

In the areas of mediation and integration, at least 588 people were thus supported within the framework of the mediation, including more than 282 in border areas. A large majority of these actions are linked to access to common law services, in particular medical care, administrative requests (mainly civil status, consular cards, etc.) and to the courts. Regarding support for economic **integration** pathways, 145 people were able to benefit from financial aid in this direction and support from integration structures, mainly through the MENA-Rabat project, the TAM and the AMMs which each year support groups of young people and women in their professional training. Also, the MENA - Rabat, AMM and AMO teams have set up programmes enabling young people to return to school (formal or non-formal), to enrol in vocational training for one or two years (at Entraide Nationale or an association), or to join a vocational training course. Thanks to its collaboration with the CAM's integration pole, a service that has set up several partnerships with private and public actors, the MENA - Rabat project has accompanied 83% of the registered youth. These programmes facilitate the migrant integration process.

In their drive to assist as many migrants as possible, the SELA Programme makes referrals to other organisations. In 2020, 683 people were referred to public services/international organisations/CSO including: 340 people-oriented public services (hospitals, health centres, civil, court, etc.) and para-public (Mutual aid, Red Crescent, etc.), 119 people referred to international organisations (High Commission for Refugees - UNHCR, International Organization for Migration - IOM, Embassies, etc.), 60 people referred to civil society organisations operating in the field of migration (Orient Occident Foundation - FOO, International Mutual Assistance Committee - CEI, Hijra Clinic ...) and/or health (Pan-African Organization for the Fight against AIDS - OPALS, Moroccan Association for Family Planning - AMPF ...).

## INTEGRATE

Collaborative work is also done between the SELA programme with other actors in the area of child **protection**, for example identification and reception of the most vulnerable minors, permanent contact with certain Embassies for the issuance of identity documents (consular card, certificate of nationality, passport). In terms of reception and accompaniment, the Rabat site accompanied the most minors in the first half of 2020, with a 78% share of the total of the three sites. Indeed, the Rabat team has 13 members, 4 dedicated to welcoming, listening to and protecting minors. The percentage of 66% of the minors registered in vocational training is consistent with most of the age group received, which is over 16 years old. These young people follow training courses in various disciplines: catering, mechanics, aluminium carpentry, hair-dressing, etc. In Rabat, the unit works in collaboration with public and associative actors in terms of informing the justice system of cases of children under 6 years old in difficult situations. This has allowed the placement of 3 children under 6 years old in child protection centres. The same has been done for international organisations and country representations in Morocco. In this context, from January to mid-March, at least 26 minors were assisted by the MENA cell in Rabat and AMM to obtain identity documents (consular card, passport), to apply for asylum with the UNHCR and/or to integrate the IOM voluntary return programme. In Oujda, AMO has also implemented similar actions.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: protect and welcome.**

### 37. RWANDA, (KIGALI), JESUIT URUMURI CENTRE - SOCIAL INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT

(ALSO PROMOTE AND WELCOME)

**PROJECT NAME:** Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Project

**ORGANISATION:** Jesuit Urumuri Centre

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Kigali, Rwanda

**PERIOD:** 2020

The Jesuit Urumuri Centre is a Catholic faith-based institution that strives to foster social consciousness in relation to keeping in tension Christian faith, cultural values and human experience. This is done through works of research, advocacy and publication, formation on Christian values and principles, and social empowerment for the youth and the vulnerable population.

In the recent past, the number of urban refugees in Rwandan cities has been on the rise. According to UNHCR-Rwanda's monthly population statistics, the total population of refugees in Rwanda at the end of March 2019 stood at 148,323 individuals (both male and female): 146,475 refugees and 1,848 asylum-seekers. The nationalities of the urban refugees were as follows: 8 Angolans, 70,570 Burundians, 5 Tchadians, 75,212 DR Congolese (inclusive of asylum-seekers), 9 Eritreans, 3 Ethiopians, 1 Haitian, 9 Somalians, 10 South Sudanese, 3 Tanzanians and 2 Ugandans. The Congolese make up 51.3% of the entire refugee population, Burundians are at 48.3%, Angolans 0.0054%, Chadians 0.0034%, Eritreans 0.0061%, Ethiopians 0.0020%, Haitians 0.0007%, Somalis 0.0061%, South Sudanese 0.0068%, Tanzanians 0.0020% and Ugandans 0.0014%. During the same period, Kigali alone was host to 12,001 urban refugees (including asylum-seekers) which represented 8.2% of the total refugees in Rwanda. This number has increased not only the population of the City of Kigali but also the number of people in need of social services. It created a scenario by which the majority of people are chasing fewer job opportunities which results in a huge unemployment rate among the Rwandans and the teeming number of refugees.

In such conditions, refugees face even greater social challenges in relation to having decent livelihoods. Prior to the 1994 genocide against

the Tutsi, Rwanda was among the most rural countries in the world, but the conflict precipitated rapid urbanisation, with many Rwandan returnees choosing not to return to their rural homes but to settle in cities. Rwanda's urban population has thus been increasing from 963,023 in 1999 to over 1,753,721 persons in 2012 showing a growth rate of over 80% in 13 years. This conglomeration of the population from different parts of the country, and the world, in Rwandan cities has resulted in rapid mutations in people's mores and customs as well as diverse social challenges of urban life. Given the hardships encountered by urban nationals, it gets even much harder for refugees in Kigali to earn a decent living in an environment where employment opportunities are so scarce.

It was therefore against this background that in 2020 the Jesuit Urumuri Centre thought it paramount to launch a **social and entrepreneurship programme** seeking to **empower both young adult nationals and youth refugees** in an effort to help them cushion the severity of unemployment and chronic poverty scenarios. The social **innovation** and entrepreneurship project sought to provide a direct and immediate response to the unemployment crisis of the vulnerable youth in Kigali regardless of their origins and historical background. This was in response to one of the universal apostolic preferences of the Jesuits which mandates us "to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice". The Rwandan context offers an enabling environment for innovative responses and approaches for refugees based on the country's national systems and structures. As a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), Rwanda not only allows refugees the fundamental right to work, but also the liberty to move freely within the country, establish business and create jobs. This rare privilege in Rwanda is a plausible opportunity that allowed the Jesuit Urumuri Centre to confidently **integrate** urban youth refugees in the innovation and entrepreneurship programme. The Catholic faith tradition has always challenged JRS to be attentive to the needs of our fellow neighbours. The message of Pope Francis for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees reiterates this core teaching by inviting "to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate migrants and refugees"<sup>29</sup> in the host communities so as to guarantee respect for human dignity and fundamental rights.

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<sup>29</sup> Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/pa-pa-francesco\\_20170815\\_world-migrants-day-2018.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/pa-pa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html) (14 January 2018).

For the start, 40 youth have been selected to undergo 6 months training in social innovation and entrepreneurship. The beneficiaries have gone through 6 modules which included (1) self-discovery, (2) self-realisation, innovation development and prototyping, (3) marketing and promotion, (4) operations, financing and financial management, and lastly but not least (5) strategic planning and sustainability. The youth that have successfully completed the programme have been awarded certificates of completion. Every one of the programme's graduates has a full-fledged project design ready for implementation. Most of their projects were in the areas of agribusiness and animal husbandry, while some others were in the fashion industry, handcraft production industry, and service supply. 17 of the most promising young entrepreneurs, among whom there were 9 urban refugees, have been retained by the Jesuit Urumuri Centre to undergo a 3-month incubation programme. During this time, the Centre will enable the young entrepreneurs to get relative maturity through the support of experienced mentors who will advise them on tactical business approaches, and on the way acquire legitimate documentation that will allow their nascent enterprises to get business licenses to work in the country.

## INTERVIEW WITH:

**FR. PATRICE NDAYISENGA, SJ**

PROJECT DIRECTOR (JESUIT URUMURI CENTRE (JUC) IN RWANDA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

At the Jesuit Urumuri Centre, we started to work with urban refugees in 2019. We decided to work with this category of refugees because we realised that urban refugees have their own struggles that not many well-wishers may be attentive to; simply because oftentimes people of goodwill put much focus on refugees in camps assuming that those in cities are well off. Moreover, since 2019 the Universal Society of Jesus has embarked on a 10-year journey of Universal Apostolic Preferences among which there is a preference to accompany the marginalised, the

poor and refugees. Being an initiative of the Jesuit Fathers, Jesuit Urumuri Centre felt the call to accompany urban refugees as a right thing to do in line with the Jesuit apostolic response to modern-day challenges.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The pandemic has put our activities on a standstill for so long due to intermittent lockdowns posed by the government. During the lockdowns, the majority of our beneficiaries lost their jobs and others who had ventured in entrepreneurship, before the outbreak, got stuck in their attempts to keep going with their nascent enterprises.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

The Jesuit Urumuri Centre has been able to supply food stuff to keep them going and in the aftermath of the first wave of COVID-19 outbreak, the Centre organised training for a few of them to enable them to invest in incoming-generating activities.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

Migrants are our brothers and sisters; they deserve our attention, and their concern should be ours. My experience with the work of the Jesuit Urumuri Centre has taught me that as we celebrate the great strides globalisation has brought us in terms of rediscovering our oneness and interconnectedness, this should not be limited to businesses and the celebration of successes but instead our interconnectedness should also be lived through our solidarity in times of calamities and crises such as refugee situations.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The Jesuit Urumuri Centre will continue to support the vulnerable in the midst of our society including the urban refugees focusing particularly on the young adults who struggle to figure out their future in the midst of the fast-moving city life.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

Thanks for the opportunity to share our experience with the world.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome and promote.**

### 38. SOUTH AFRICA, MALETSWAI MINISTERS FRATERNAL OF ALIWAL AND THE CARITAS OFFICE - ASSISTANCE TO STATELESS AND UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN

**PROJECT NAME:** Assistance to stateless and undocumented children

**ORGANISATION:** Maletswai Ministers Fraternal of Aliwal and the Caritas office

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** South Africa

**PERIOD:** 2020

The long journey to belong to South Africa started from 2015 to 2021, where the Ministers Fraternal of Aliwal and the Caritas office of the Roman Catholic Church have been on the journey to assist 77 stateless children, refugees and migrants to be able to belong to South Africa. These children were expelled from the local schools and were told to provide the school with birth certificates, which they did not have. With regard to assisting the children, the Ministers Fraternal of Aliwal and the Caritas office collaborated with the Department of Education and all the principals of the different schools and the Department of Home Affairs, as well as the Department of Social Development, the Legal Aids office in Aliwal North, the Children's law court from Pretoria and the Lawyers for Human Rights. This matter had to be addressed by the Court of Law for the Department of Education and Home Affairs to act upon the enrolment of the 77 children to normal education after 5 years without formal education. Only now the Caritas office can report that about 20 out of 77 children have been able to obtain their birth certificates. Most of the children have a South African father and a Sotho mother. And due to the irregular status of the mother, the children and mothers were to undergo paternity testing, in which all the efforts of this process were made possible by the aid of Home Affairs, Aliwal Legal Aid and contributions by the Caritas office.

The Caritas office has also been able to assist and motivate 10 families who are 100% Basotho to go back to their Kingdom of Lesotho. However, now at the end of this human rights project, that aimed at making these children belong, the Caritas office still counts 30 children whose parents are not willing to return to Lesotho, their homeland and remain undocumented. It has not been easy for all the above role players to obtain the

necessary supporting documents to make these children belong and there are several challenges facing these families. There is a lot of fear among them and lack of collaboration with the different departments and a number of these undocumented foreign families prefer to remain in South Africa, than to return to their homeland.

Some of the very positive impacts of this project were that Caritas office was able to be the voice of the voiceless: these children and their parents within the communities, and to link them with the Department of Home Affairs, Education and Social Development. The Maletswai Ministries Fraternal and the Caritas offices have been able to offer guidance, aid and support to these children, serving them with respect and defending their human dignity, the most important human values. The Caritas office welcomed the kids and their families in the offices without any form of judgement, they were accepted as friends and as part of the bigger family of Aliwal North and this was what the communities of the Diocese were encouraged to do. Not seeing them as competitors to the few resources that we have but instil in them the sense of **belonging**.

For this project to be **sustainable**, more workshops in the community would be necessary so people can have better knowledge and understanding of the stateless people and migrants. In order to reach that goal, more tools and resources, staff members and funding are needed. These children are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

The Caritas office with the assistance of Bishop Joseph Mary Kizito has managed to give out food parcels to stateless children. These children have not been able to receive our government's citizen privileges such as child support grants, as they are not in possession of IDs or birth certificates. The Caritas office has made a commitment to make sure that these children for the last 5 years could have food parcels and school uniforms. All the different donations from different people have been welcomed and have brought a huge change and positive impact to these children. The situation of not having any source of food makes it very difficult for them to attend school regularly and the current COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more challenging.

There were numerous **challenges** that the Caritas office faced in assisting these families: irregular immigrants are mainly in the towns surrounding the Kingdom of Lesotho, people from Lesotho can easily walk from one side of the border of the Kingdom to South Africa. There is a nega-

tive impact on some services, like health and education. These services have not been able to respond to all the requests they receive from both migrants and the host community. This has led to a lot of negative attitudes from the South African population, who experience that their needs are not being met. The irregular immigrants have also raised unemployment in Sterkspruit and in Aliwal North. Both the host community and the migrants are facing the same problems. Other challenges are that the people that the Ministers Fraternal and the Caritas office help are constantly on the move, moving from one town to another and are at times unreachable, sometimes they also have to pay bribes at the border posts. In addition, there is a lot of ignorance about the human rights and dignity of these children, who are exploited and abused. The goal of this project was to **legally integrate these children into the local community** without shortcuts, by making sure that all of the refugees and migrants were registered. The aim has been achieved and now these children are able to attend schools, and to belong to a country, a homeland. Every human being needs to belong, no one needs to grow up without documents (ID and Birth Certificates) or to grow up in an underground world. We should not separate people from each other.

### INTERVIEW WITH:

#### REFILOE MOTHABENG

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PROJECT MANAGER AND COORDINATOR (CARITAS OF ALI WAL NORTH DIOCESE IN SOUTH AFRICA)

***- Can you tell us about your work in the pastoral care of people on the move in your country of action? What was the inspiration for and vision for the work? When did you start to work on this project and what is your role?***

I am Refiloe Mothabeng and I am the coordinator of the project since 2017. We are mainly working with stateless people, our diocese is situated next to the borders of Lesotho, and migrants easily cross the river to come to South Africa. These stateless people arrive in South Africa without any form of documentation, or mothers arrive with invalid passports expired a long time ago, some don't have passports or identity documents. These mothers come to South Africa to seek a better living, get pregnant and give birth to children who don't have documents because of the irregular

situation of their mother. The parents and children don't have any source of income, as the mothers are sometimes domestic workers.

Their situation has inspired Caritas Aliwal North when the right to basic needs and education was denied to these children and they were chased away from schools because of their lack of birth certificates. Another inspiration was the way the community was looking at them. We had to find ways to integrate migrants into the communities and instil the spirit of humanity within the community members.

***- How has the pandemic caused by COVID-19 affected your work? What were the main challenges you experienced and what main challenges have the vulnerable group of people you serve faced during the pandemic?***

The pandemic has affected the work because it was no longer easy to move around and check up on the stateless as we usually were doing. Most of them didn't have cellphones and it made it difficult to locate them. Our monthly meetings with them were interrupted as we had to adhere to the COVID-19 regulations. These people didn't get any type or grant from the government and the pandemic made them more vulnerable as some lost the small domestic jobs they had. The office asked for donations to be able to give them food parcels for survival.

***- What successes have you had in working with migrants during the pandemic?***

During the pandemic, 22 children received their birth certificate from the Department of Home Affairs and this was a big success. Moreover, we managed to celebrate the World Day of Refugees with migrants in the office, and children were handed out school shoes as a form of motivation.

***- Were there any changes in the phenomenon of migration in your country of action during this period?***

One major change we experienced in this period was the number of people from Lesotho coming to the office to ask for assistance besides the ones we had in our database.

***- What advice would you give people seeking to assist in achieving Pope Francis's four verbs of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants?***

One needs to have the spirit of humanity and be able to put themselves in other people's shoes and try to understand their situations, without judging.

## INTEGRATE

Be perseverant, as these situations can drain one and sometimes affect your well-being. And finally have love for humans and be willing to go the extra mile.

***- What are the projects and interventions planned for future work in this area?***

The office has planned to assist the Lesotho mothers to go back to Lesotho and make valid passports for the sake of the children. We also aim to have awareness campaigns in the communities as there are still some South Africans who find it difficult to accept the Lesotho people in their communities.

***- Is there anything else relevant or a hope or wish that you would like to share with us?***

We need prayers, in our Diocesan Communities we don't have a lot of migrants and refugees, but the office intends to locate them and add them to our database.

### 39. SOUTH AFRICA (CAPE TOWN), SCALABRINI CENTRE OF CAPE TOWN - ENGLISH SCHOOL, EMPLOYMENT ACCESS, WOMEN'S PLATFORM, AND ADVOCACY, WELFARE AND UNITE PROGRAMMES, FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

(ALSO WELCOME, PROTECT AND PROMOTE)

**PROJECT NAME:** English School, Employment Access, Women's Platform, and Advocacy, Welfare and Unite programmes, for refugees and asylum-seekers

**ORGANISATION:** Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (SCCT)

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Cape Town, South Africa

**PERIOD:** March - December 2020

The Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (SCCT/Scalabrini Centre) is a registered non-profit organisation that perceives migration as an opportunity and is committed to **alleviating poverty and promoting development** in the Western Cape while fostering **integration** between migrants, refugees, and South Africans. The Missionaries of St Charles (Scalabrinians) have been providing pastoral and welfare services in Cape Town to displaced communities since 1994. In providing assistance, the SCCT advocates respect for human rights and utilises a holistic approach that considers all basic needs including advocacy, development, and welfare services. The SCCT offers 6 programmes: Advocacy, Employment Access, Welfare, Unite, Women's Platform, and an English School. All the activities of these programmes had to be adapted during the lockdown implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **English School** adapted by offering **online classes** as well as classes via **WhatsApp**.

The **Employment Access Programme** (EAP) offered courses to its clients through **online platforms**. It also continued to assist people to write CVs and resumes, through an online form. In addition, as the lockdown in South Africa has eased, the EAP has been working hard to find job placements for people – particularly those who may have lost their jobs during the lockdown. In addition, together with the **Women's Platform**,

the EAP offered **livelihood assistance** in the form of **small business grants** to clients during the lockdown.

The **Unite Programme** operates in high schools around Cape Town. During the lockdown the Unite team adapted their programming to be online and has been **mentoring and offering their programme to learners online** during the lockdown but has begun to offer in-person programming with the easing of the lockdown. This programme is particularly important from a long-term advocacy perspective, in terms of building resilience, integration, and countering xenophobia.

The Women's Platform, which has a personal development course as well as a livelihoods element, partnered with the Employment Access Programme to offer small livelihood grants during the pandemic. In addition, it continued its personal development course via online platforms. It also **assisted women with small businesses**, particularly in relation to crafts – and much of this work was focused on making material, re-usable face masks. They donated some of these, and also made others available for sale, which assisted with income generation for clients.

The **Welfare Programme** was inundated with requests during the lockdown. It more than doubled the amount of assistance it provided to clients and also distributed food parcels. The assistance provided by this programme was a lifeline for many families and individuals.

The **Advocacy Programme** engaged in high-level advocacy, strategic litigation, and one-on-one advice to clients during the pandemic. This included making representations to the Department of Home Affairs in order to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees were given blanket extensions on their documentation while the lockdown was in effect (and the refugee reception offices closed). SCCT also successfully litigated against the Department of Social Development about **ensuring that asylum-seekers and special permit holders would get access to a special "social relief of distress" grant** offered by the SA government. In addition, a constitutional challenge has been launched in respect of the Refugees Amendment Act and has been successful in the first part of that litigation. SCCT worked together with partners to ensure that **foreign-owned shops were allowed to operate during the nationwide lockdown**, and it provided input into policy documents in order to further the rights and freedoms of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants. The Advocacy Programme has also offered day-to-day **paralegal ad-**

**vice and assistance service via WhatsApp and telephone**, so that clients could call in with questions. The team made representations to the Department of Labour in order to ensure that asylum-seekers would be able to access temporary unemployment benefits. Throughout all these interventions, they have sought to ensure that they offer effective communication of issues through pamphlets and information – particularly information about COVID, making it available in multiple languages.

During the lockdown it also **strengthened the work regarding unaccompanied or separated children**, as well as **children on the move**. This resulted in obtaining permanent residence for 12 children or young persons who had been in the care system (or were still in the care system), and assisting with other matters such as family reunification, and voluntary return, where appropriate. In addition to this, SCCT contributed to issue briefs (here and here) on the impact of the lockdown and COVID on migration and policy as well as a COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment report by UN agencies and continued to make submissions on policy and legislative developments nationally and internationally.

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: welcome, protect and promote.**

#### 40. UGANDA, ADRAA AGRICULTURE COLLEGE (AAC), FRANCISCAN BROTHERS IN EAST AFRICA REGION - CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT OF FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS AMONG SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN WEST NILE

(ALSO PROMOTE)

**PROJECT NAME:** Contributing to sustainable improvement of food security and livelihoods among South Sudanese refugees and host communities in West Nile

**ORGANISATION:** Adraa Agriculture College (AAC), Franciscan Brothers in East Africa region

**AREA OF ACTION AND COUNTRY:** Uganda

**PERIOD:** 2020



Adraa Agriculture College (AAC) was founded in 2012 by the Franciscan Brothers in the East Africa region, in order to educate and train people from rural communities in Uganda, South Sudan and North-Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The college is a registered corporate body under the Trustees Incorporation Act of Uganda as a Business, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) institution by the Ministry of Education and Sports and is owned and managed by the Franciscan Brothers working in collaboration with the Catholic Diocese of Nebbi. The philosophy of the Adraa Agriculture College is underpinned

by the reality that every human being is a unique individual and each one has the right to an environment in which she/he can live with dignity. Based on the social teaching of the Catholic Church, AAC endeavours to serve all people irrespective of their religion or ethnicity by focusing on human potential, the natural resource base and the environment as the foundation of economic and social activity. The vision of the institution is a society where the marginalised are prioritised and the earth is cared for. The College offers practical-oriented training in *Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development (SARD)*, and it is located 30 kilometres north of Nebbi in Offaka subcounty, Madi-Okollo district, in the West Nile sub-region of northern Uganda. The aim of AAC is to enable rural communities to sustainably generate their livelihoods, to promote people's capacities and to make sustainable use of available resources. The commitment of the Franciscan Brothers is based on the conviction that the promotion of sustainable agriculture is the most appropriate development strategy for the reality of life of the rural population in northern Uganda, South Sudan and North-Eastern DRC. Conceptually, the Franciscans understand sustainable agriculture as a holistic process with economic, ecological, socio-cultural and political-institutional components.

The power struggle between South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and his deputy Riek Machar led to the outbreak of a civil war in South Sudan in December 2013. Since then, fighting has continued along ethnic lines between Dinka and Nuer. Thousands of people have already lost their lives and have been displaced. 2.24 million South Sudanese refugees are currently being hosted mainly in Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. There are currently 953,630 South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda (UNHCR Refugee Response Portal, 2022). The majority of refugees are women and children (82%). In Uganda, they currently live in fifteen so-called refugee settlements in the northern districts of the West Nile region, not far from the border. This high influx of refugees has left the majority (68%) of refugees and the host communities dependent on aid supplies. 42% of refugees have regular income, while only 3% have knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture. The host communities live largely from subsistence farming (75%) and suffer increasingly from the scarcity of rich land. Most of the target groups (44% of refugees and 51% of the host community) have only a primary school leaving certificate; 25% and 6% of them are illiterate. Unemployment in the region is high. Some of the refugees (24%) lease fields for farming. The majority of refugees (54%) in the settlements of Imvepi and Rhino have a land area of between 20 and 30 square meters, which they use to grow food. The low production of food

and the lack of opportunities to generate income elsewhere leads to an acute threat to the livelihoods of both refugees and host communities. In addition, the rainy seasons have been irregular in recent years, resulting in lower yields and an acute shortage of food.

In response to the above challenges, the AAC initiative targeted South Sudanese refugees and especially the most vulnerable groups (youths, women, female headed households, and the disabled) who constituted 2/3 of the direct beneficiaries drawn from Imvepi, Omugo, Bidibidi and Rhino camp refugee settlements. **The aim is to strengthen refugees and host communities in the West Nile sub-region** who are dependent on food aid and subsistence farming to achieve sustainable livelihoods. A total of 1,675 people from the host community and refugees from the settlements in the districts of Arua, Madi-Okollo, Terego and Yumbe, each representing a household, were selected as direct project beneficiaries. Thus, the project reaches approximately 13,400 indirect beneficiaries. The target group of the project consists of 70% Southern Sudanese refugees and 30% of the host community population. AAC trained them in sustainable agriculture, offered career guidance, distributed start-up kits to learners, provided on-site extension services, mobilized groups to form VSLAs and established 80 camp-based practical learning sites.

The project contributed greatly to the sustainable improvement of food security and livelihoods and promoted peaceful coexistence of South Sudanese refugees and their host communities in West Nile, Uganda. As a result of the project intervention, 39% reduction in dependence on food aid was realised among the refugee households as the households were empowered to produce their own food and sustain the families. Secondly, 70% of the refugee households have regular income generated from the different enterprises they were trained in and the project reached out to 2,082 indirect target households (10,410 individuals) who have learned sustainable farming methods with the support of the multipliers and are implementing them. The 2,082 indirect target households are learning these skills from the 80 camp-based learning sites. 78% of the target households have microenterprises and are self-employed and at the same time, 87% of the target households can provide for their families during emergencies. In times of emergencies, households are able to borrow money from VSLA groups formed, sell some of the food items they have grown and are able to do some casual work to help out during emergencies.

The presence of the community-based extension workers who are the alumni of the college continues to provide technical support to the wider farming communities within the settlements. They were equipped with diverse skills and knowledge for handling different enterprises within the community and skills of extension service provisions. These extension workers are the members of communities who entrusted them to lead and teach farmers in sustainable agriculture practices. Thus, this makes it much easier for the community members to trust them for accelerated uptake and ownership of technologies, practices and techniques. **Promotion of community dialogues on key resources shared by both the refugees and the host communities created a harmonious and peaceful coexistence between refugees and the host communities.** This has resulted in host communities offering additional land to refugees for cultivation, besides a conflict-free environment on use of shared resources, formation and strengthening the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) to diversify income sources for household financial sustainability, as well as increasing access to financial support for other investments. Creating several learning sites in the settlements is hoped to serve a greater number of people in accessing capacity and capability-building training and reducing cost of training on the beneficiaries substantially. The expertise of SARD among the South Sudanese will eventually transfer their skills and knowledge to South Sudan in the event of peaceful repatriation which will follow attainment of lasting peace in South Sudan.

AAC provided a unique approach in ensuring that the project contributed to **sustainable** livelihoods of the target beneficiaries. First and foremost, the practical training provided to the target beneficiaries equipped the learners with necessary skills and techniques in sustainable agriculture which helped them produce enough for the households. The training package included life skills and business skills to open the minds of the learners to think productively and do farming as a business. Secondly, the promotion of kitchen gardens, especially among the refugee households, is a unique practice in addressing food insecurity and nutritional malnutrition. The beneficiaries embrace this technology and find it an easy way of producing food for the household within a short period of time and on a small piece of land. The establishment of camp-based learning sites acts as demonstration units for good agricultural practices (GAP) for both crops and livestock farming systems where the rest of the community members come to learn sustainable farming techniques. These learning sites are also attached to VSLA groups who are also members of Sustainable Agriculture (Climate Smart Agriculture Groups). This provided

a complete package and a sense of belongingness among the communities. A wider and larger number of communities were reached with the skills of sustainable agriculture through this approach. The beneficiaries are improving their livelihoods through improved farming systems, technologies and practices. AAC also instituted a technical follow-up committee who regularly check in with the learners and offer mentorship and technical support to the alumni. By doing so, the College is able to unveil new innovations the alumni are using for crop and livestock production. Such innovations are very practical and cost-effective with safe impact on the physical environment and to human health.

AAC's intervention proved relevant in achieving the specific objectives of the project as the on-site learning period (6 weeks) is highly appreciated by all beneficiaries. The open, peaceful and secure atmosphere in AAC is appreciated as well as the quality of food and accommodation. Academically, AAC's model facilitates the participation of all people including students with no or limited literacy or English language skills. The instructions are 30% classroom based and 70% practical (hands-on teaching & learning), and translators are normally available among the learners themselves. At the end of the course, start-up kits are distributed to students, and this motivates them to work and practice the skills learned. They are responsible for the settlement-based learning sites. In each of the learning sites the attached extension worker formed a group of former students who are farming and saving at the same time. AAC's practical training is demand-driven and addresses the felt needs of the target beneficiaries. The approach considers the learners from the very basic level when determining the course outline of their interests which is very responsive to their felt needs or capacity gaps. This therefore makes the learning, teaching and understanding much appreciated and learner-centred. AAC's **collaborative approach** involves working closely with like-minded partners/agencies working within the project area. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and local governments of Uganda (Arua, Terego, Machara, Nebbi, Moyo, Zombo, Pakwach, Adjumani and Madi-Okollo district local governments) remained the key stakeholders in terms of creating a suitable environment for other humanitarian and development partners working in the refugee hosting zones. AAC continues working closely with other relevant partners, such as Caritas Arua, Malteser International, GIZ, BMZ, CRS, DCA, and Hummingbird Action for Peace and Development in the Project area in terms of complementarity and synergic impact in creating desired changes in lives of the people the project targets. Peaceful coexistence among the refugees and their host

communities is very crucial in realisation of the project desires/aspirations and anticipated outcomes/impacts. Therefore, AAC and HUMMINGBIRD INTERNATIONAL, in collaboration with OPM/RWCs–West Nile, made an effort in promoting community dialogues for social change and development. It's from these dialogues that leaders were/are held accountable to the people they serve. The communities are also getting to know the right channels of reporting issues that affect their lives to responsible parties in a timely manner through these meetings.

AAC's development approach of first offering on-site training for a period of 6 weeks and then provision of start-up capital and extension services is a unique approach to ensuring quick and sustainable impact in realising livelihoods among the refugee and households given their situation at hand. AAC's approach has the **potential for replication** in similar situations as it has proven to be the most sustainable approach in achieving sustainable livelihoods and happy households.

### TESTIMONIALS:

*(L.H.S - Mr. Emmanuel Lomoro in Jacket and his family with smiles on their faces after sale of tomatoes and cabbages)*

"My name is **Samuel Lomoro**, from the Tika zone in the Rhino camp refugee settlement. I never thought of coming for the training. I thought the local knowledge I had of growing food was enough for me, until I was given seeds to plant as a test from the selection team of Adraa Agriculture College. The team came back after two weeks to verify if I could qualify for the training and it happened that I was one of the best people whose seeds performed well, and I was taken for training in Adraa. We were taken through career guidance and chose vegetable production. We had field placement work experience with different enterprises, and this gave me diverse hands-on skills in the enterprise I chose. After the training period, I received a start-up kit to start our enterprises. During the first season, I got 700,000 shillings from the sale of tomatoes, onions and cabbages and this gave me courage to rent more land, and to buy my own seeds and tools. This money also helped me to provide the remaining needs of my household. Eleven members of the community got interested in learning and I taught them how to

grow and manage vegetable crops and supplied them with seedlings to establish their kitchen gardens. With the skills I have and the success of the first season crops, I expanded my vegetable fields to include tomatoes, cabbages, eggplant, onions and kales all in a sizable field. My second-year production in 2020 rose to 1,400,000 shillings and at the same time I integrated other enterprises like raising tree seedlings, poultry (local) and rabbits. I now have a total of 25 members of the community who are learning at my vegetable site, and this became one of the camp-based learning sites in my zone. We are members of the Tika vegetable group, we are farming and at the same time saving. I appreciate AAC for this wonderful opportunity they have given me and the partners who funded the project. I am proud to say that I'm now a changed person, both in the mindset I had and my family lacks nothing. I will continue to grow vegetables and at the same time pass on the skills to the rest of the community members even if we return to South Sudan in years to come".

"My name is **Lukaya Kennedy**, a refugee from Wanyange village, Rhino camp refugee settlement. I started this project way back in 2017 when I received 10 chickens from FAO. With the little knowledge I had in rearing the birds, I managed to raise all the 10 birds and sold them to buy pigs. I had a dream of rearing pigs, but I was lacking the knowledge and capital to start the business. I started from zero with only 2 pigs and no skill in pig farming and I was really struggling with it. My luck came in 2020 when a team of staff from Adraa came to Wanyange village to identify potential students to come for training. It was always my dream to attain training in pig farming and after I passed the interview set by the team, we were selected and transported to Adraa Agriculture College. I must say the setup of Adraa is very good, with a convenient environment to learn and very understanding facilitators. The first 2 weeks were general agriculture where we learned about soils and kitchen gardening, and we were later introduced to our enterprises of choice. We learned hands-on skills in pig farming, including: routine management, feed mixing, tail cutting, castration, pig health etc. With the knowledge I got from Adraa I came back and started practising these skills. My first take was to expand the pigsty. Next up was stocking the enterprise, and I started sourcing for improved breeds. As of today, I have 50 pigs in my farm (7 sows, 2 boars, fatteners, weaners and 26 piglets). In addition to pig farming, I have incorporated field crops. I grow maize, rice and soya beans, which I use to feed the pigs, and I also grow bananas and other fruits.

"With these skills in place, I have realised a great change in my family by working as a team. My children go to school, we have improved our diet, and my family is not lacking any of the basic needs for survival. Apart from the impact on my family, I am currently training community members in pig farming. In particular, I have 15 students who are being trained by me in all aspects of pig farming, and I receive daily visitors from farmers who come to ask for help in aspects of pig farming. My biggest challenge is that I still need to improve on the pigsty.

"I am so happy for this opportunity, and I am close to realising my dream of becoming the leading supplier of pigs in the region. I want to encourage my fellow refugees to embrace farming, and especially enterprises like pig farming are very important and can relieve you from being dependent on aid all the time".

**This good practice can be also categorized according to Pope Francis' verbs: promote and integrate.**

# CONCLUSION

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Despite many challenges and constraints, Catholic institutions and their affiliates provide vital humanitarian and developmental aid to migrants, refugees, displaced, and trafficked persons in Africa. It is, however, a difficult task to provide an exhaustive account reflecting the real magnitude of the work done by the Catholic Church in Africa during the pandemic. The thousands of Catholic organisations spread throughout the continent are involved in a multitude of projects ranging from education, livelihoods, psychosocial, emergency, advocacy, healthcare, and shelter. This report is a further attempt to collect, classify, and analyse available information on Catholic Migrant Ministry in Africa and to identify in particular good practices. The report reveals how cooperation and collaboration through the provision of social and pastoral services enhance the dignity of migrants and refugees and promotes their individual and collective well-being.



