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Letter from the Director



Louie Bacomo, Regional Director of JRS Asia Pacific

Let me join all our readers and supporters in wishing as well as working to ensure that 2019 will be a better year for forcibly displaced peoples. There is reason to hope so in 2019 with positive efforts from all over the world to "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate" refugees, migrants and all people on the move as Pope Francis exhorts us.

In this issue, we feature some of these positive efforts. Our Indonesia team accompanied survivors of the earthquake and tsunami in Central Sulawesi ensuring that their voices are heard and their plight not lost. The visit of Fr. Tony Moreno, JCAP President was an occasion for young urban refugees living in

Bangkok to promote their cause for education and livelihood opportunities. The reflection of Bro. Luong, a Jesuit who welcomed refugees from Asia, Africa, and Middle East as reception manager in our Thailand Office, sheds another light in understanding refugees and how their suffering and joy can impact our way of life. The inter-generational workshop attended by refugees in northern Thailand is an important perspective in understanding how communities define their home where they can find peace and security.

The conference organized by our Cambodian team on understanding the Global Compacts was also a platform of solidarity among groups and individuals in the region and beyond, to highlight how the global community, government and non-government agencies and the universal Church labor to ensure protection of refugees and migrants. The Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants offer a language of protection and integration among forcibly displaced populations and the communities receiving them. Finally, positive efforts on integration is palpably demonstrated in the peer support activities between urban refugees and youth from a military school in Bangkok. These engagements are bright signs that integration and co-existence can happen and these young people are showing us how.

The stories in this issue offer reasons to hope for a better world where everyone has a place to live in safety and dignity. We, in JRS, would like to express that your support and partnership is also a reason for us to hope for a better future.

Louie Bacomo, Regional Director

International: Urging Support for the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration



The righteous will answer the king, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Matthew 25, 37-40

Rome, 7 December 2018 - The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) calls on the member states of the United Nations to respond to this historic moment for refugees and migrants, and support the UN Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants that are both entering their final stages of adoption.

On 13 November this year the UN General Assembly's Third Committee passed the "Omnibus resolution" that included the UNHCR's annual report to the UNGA, which incorporated the Global Compact on Refugees. While 176 countries voted in favour of the resolution, the USA voted against it, three countries

abstained, and others expressed reservations on some aspects of the resolution. A number of countries have also withdrawn from the consultations leading up to the Migration Compact, and have signalled that they will not be party to it.

JRS regrets this trend. It is evident to all observers that migration is a truly global phenomenon, closely interconnected with situations of inequality in the world. Global migration brings global challenges, and requires global responses. The process that led to the Migration and Refugee Compacts was an unprecedented attempt to look for solutions in a globally-coordinated way. The texts before us are the result of two years of careful consultations. Abandoning the process at this stage would undermine the trust needed at the international level to address such complex issues.

Moreover, JRS notes that the compacts are non-binding instruments that in no way compromise national sovereignty or the rights of states to manage, and make legal distinction between, regular and irregular migration.

The Refugee Compact does not seek to replace the 1951 Refugee Convention, which has 145 contracting states, or the 1967 Protocol, which has been ratified by 146 states. The two compacts propose systems and platforms that allow for refugee movement and migration to be managed globally in ways that protect the safety, dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms of all people on the move, regardless of their status. Both compacts also recognise the need, often ignored in the past, for host countries and communities to be supported and protected.

At the heart of both compacts is the principle of solidarity: the responsibility for protecting refugees and vulnerable migrants has to be shared by everyone. For example, 80 per cent of all refugees live in just Jesuit Refugee Service, International Office Borgo Santo Spirito 4, 00193 Rome, Italy www.jrs.net eight countries, and the vast majority are hosted by the Global South. The financial burden and other costs can and should be shared and managed by all countries.

JRS acknowledges the concerns of countries that cite "national security" as a reason to exclude or penalise refugees. However, states must remember that security is not about securing borders, but about providing for the security of all people. Fundamental human rights must also always be taken into account when considering security mechanisms and policies.

JRS also calls on state and non-state actors to invest in medium- and long-term development approaches to the humanitarian needs of forcibly displaced persons. Economic and infrastructure growth in receiving countries contributes to national resilience and strengthens the capacity of states to deal with the needs of both host and refugee communities.

The mission of JRS is to accompany, serve, and advocate the cause of refugees. We call on the global community to accompany all vulnerable people on the move, to provide for their basic needs, and to cooperate in the privileged task of giving them hope, starting by unanimously approving both Global Compacts.

Rev. Thomas H. Smolich SJ

International Director

Jesuit Refugee Service

Asia Pacific: Meeting with Fr Tony Moreno SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific



A refugee student from the Urban Education Project, explaining Fr Tony how the QR code technology is helping student in sending messages to JRS staff (JRS)

Bangkok, 12 November 2018 – Last month, Louie Bacomo, Regional Director of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Asia Pacific, welcomed JCAP President Fr Antonio Moreno SJ for a short visit in Bangkok. Filipino Jesuit Priest, Fr Antonio Moreno SJ became in 2017, President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP). Before taking this position, he was the Provincial of the Philippines and President of the Jesuit University Ateneo de Zamboanga, in southern Philippines. Holder of a PhD in Development studies, he knows well the challenges of JRS' work. He took some time to visit our Urban Education Project, chat with our team in Thailand and answered some of our questions:

Fr Tony, what is the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific?

There are 6 Conferences around the world. The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific covers seven provinces, three regions and two missions. One main concern of the Conference is collaboration. Indeed, JCAP exists to promote not only a collaboration between the Jesuits and ministries within the Conference but also among the Conferences.

In JCAP, which is based in the Philippines, we work on different concerns such as interreligious dialogue with Buddhists and Muslims, youth, migration and environment, secondary and higher education, research, the Ignatian spirituality, etc...

What is the strategy of JCAP?

The apostolic plan focuses on 3 issues: restructuring of governance among the JCAP units; work on priority areas like migration/refugees, youth, interreligious dialogue and reconciliation with creation; and formation of Jesuits and mission partners. These issues are still very pressing and we will certainly consider them to be in our next plan as well.

Capacity building of Myanmar, Cambodia and East Timor is also very important to JCAP.

What are the possible points of collaboration between the missions of JCAP and JRSAP?

It is very important for Jesuit-led organizations to collaborate together to refine the mission of each organisation and avoid overlapping of works.

Jesuits are well settled in the region, even in some parts where JRS Asia Pacific is not there. Jesuits are on the ground and can report to JRSAP if there is an urgent need for refugees. They can be the ones alerting JRS of a dire situation and ask for a needs assessment in a particular area. JRSAP can conversely give information to JCAP since they are involved in refugee issues. JCAP would like to collaborate with JRSAP on certain issues especially concerning the Rohingya refugees and more generally on migration issues.

JRS already collaborates with the Jesuits in the region through a program of personnel exchange. Numerous JRS country offices in Asia Pacific actually employ Jesuits in their programs on the ground. Either scholastics or priests or brothers can get involved in JRS.

Moreover, JCAP and JRS Asia Pacific missions are intertwined on some issues such as migration. We want to contribute as much as we can on this. Migration is a big issue in our region, but not only in Asia Pacific. It's also a global issue that needs a global response. Xenophobia is on the rise everywhere, with right-wing governments coming more and more to power. Unfortunately, refugees will bear the price of the complexity of this issue.

From your point of view, what are the challenges of JCAP?

In Asia Pacific, we have to face multiple challenges. One of them would be the influence of China. China is getting more influential than ever in the region and in the world. We have to be aware of this power and its implications and see how we can engage the growing influence China.

In Asia Pacific, migration is also a big challenge. Migration can mean migrant workers, but also refugees or even trafficking. For example, the Philippines is one of the main exporters of human capital. A lot of migrant workers come from there and they need support in this endeavour. Refugees are also all over the region and we can't ignore one of the world's biggest exoduses that came from Myanmar to Bangladesh last year.

On the environment side, Asia Pacific is prone to all sorts of natural disasters. Lastly, we witnessed many earthquakes in Indonesia. In Sulawesi, an earthquake and a tsunami killed a lot of victims. JRS Indonesia is also working there to respond to that humanitarian crisis.

Another challenge is that only 7% of the population in Asia Pacific is Christian. There is need for interreligious dialogue. There is also a need to promote the vocations, and to inspire the younger generation. We want to prepare people and train the next generation of priests and brothers for leadership.

Finally, safeguarding children is also a serious issue in the Catholic Church. This issue does not only concern the US, South America or Europe. This issue can be found anywhere especially if safeguarding protocols are not implemented effectively. There is a need of a better protection system for children worldwide.

Indonesia: Accompanying Earthquake and Tsunami survivors in Central Sulawesi



Rikmawati and her grand son sitting in the tent while she recounts the disaster

“It all happened so fast, less than five minutes after the earthquake, the sea level was rising. I'm lucky my neighbor screamed, telling me to run quickly. I might have been dead otherwise”
Rikmawati

Yogyakarta, 2 November 2018 - Run as fast as possible away from the ocean. This was the only thing on her mind after she heard a neighbor screaming, “The water is rising ... water rising... the water is rising.” Repeating these words over and over again in her head she kept running tirelessly, barefoot, while holding her grandson and ignoring the pain in her feet rushing over stones. She decided to stop after she felt finally at a safe distance from the shore. “It all happened so fast, less than five minutes after the earthquake, the sea level was rising. I'm lucky my neighbor screamed, telling me to run quickly. I might have been dead otherwise,” reflects the lady of Bugis decent.

Rikmawati is one of around 200 survivors who are now staying in tents along the coastal road of Tanjung Karang beach, Donggala Regency, about 45 km from Palu city. The 7,4 Richter Scale earthquake was followed by a tsunami on 28 September 2018. The day has become an unforgettable terrifying experience for many. “There were big earthquakes in the past but not like that day. So many houses collapsed, and then the sea water level rose. I was so scared. My house was destroyed but Alhamdulillah my grandson and I survived,” continues Rikmawati.

It has been exactly a month now, Rikmawati and all residents of Tanjung Karang village, the majority of whom are Bugis people, now live in tents. Hot weather during the day, cold at night, and plenty of mosquitos make the displaced persons, especially elderly and children, vulnerable of getting ill. The insufficient sanitary conditions in camps lead to many displaced persons complaining

about diarrhea and skin irritations.

What support was provided so far?

The condition of the displaced people in Tanjung Karang, Donggala District, receives less attention, as it is far from the city, one of the many evacuation points. Media coverage and logistics are mostly targeted to more accessible displacement camps in town. But remote areas with difficult road access and far from the city are out of sight. Together with a team of volunteers from the network of Caritas Indonesia and the Commission of Social and Economic Development (PSE) of the Diocese of Manado at Santa Maria coordination post, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has joined efforts to reach these distant and isolated areas to serve those displaced with logistics, health care services, and psychosocial activities.

Between 11 and 30 October 2018, JRS provided psychosocial activities at 21 locations to 1145 children in Donggala, Palu and Sigi, as well as supporting PSE Diocese of Manado which provided medical support and health services. JRS continues to be engaged in supporting needs assessments in 7 locations for the upcoming response programs including shelter and livelihood by CRS and Dompot Kemanusiaan Media Group, as well as developing its own psychosocial response activities for schools in earthquake affected communities.

What happened?

On 28 September 2018, at 18:02pm local time, a shallow, large earthquake struck in the neck of the Minahasa Peninsula, Indonesia, with its epicenter located in the mountainous Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi. The magnitude 7.5 quake was located 77 km (48 mi) away from the provincial capital Palu and was felt as far away as East Kalimantan and Tawau, Malaysia.

Following the mainshock, a tsunami alert was issued for the nearby Makassar Strait. A localised tsunami struck Palu, sweeping shore-lying houses and buildings on its way. The combined effects of the earthquake and tsunami led to the deaths of at least 2,250 people, over 1300 persons disappeared, over 4600 were injured and 223.751 people are staying in displacement sites. This makes it the deadliest earthquake to strike the country since the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake, as well as the deadliest earthquake worldwide so far in 2018.

By Zainuddin, JRS Indonesia

If you would like to support our work in Central Sulawesi, please make a donation to:

Bank Name : OCBC NISP
Bank address : Jl. Kaliurang Km 5,2 Yogyakarta 55222, Indonesia
Acc Name : Yayasan Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia
Acc No : 231-8100-27285
Currency : USD or EUR
Bank Sort Code : NISPIDJA

Thailand: “Inter-generational Perspectives: Our land, our home, our future”



Participants painting the concept of “Our future” (JRS Thailand)

“We all deserve peace, a life without weapons or violence, and we must have access to an education that

Mae Hong Son, 4th December 2018 – The fresh smell of the paint, the colourful paintings hung on the walls, and the confidence of the participants. All of these elements were concentrated in one event, a workshop called “Inter-generational Perspectives: Our land, our home, our future”, that was held during the last week of May by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in the Karenni refugee camp of Ban Mae Nai Soi in Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

It has been 30 years since the Ban Mae Nai Soi camp first opened on the Thai-Myanmar border. In 2018, it is still home to more than 9300 persons. As talks of repatriation become more frequent, since the first voluntary repatriation in 2016, JRS has seen the need to increase its Peace and Reconciliation efforts in order to better equip the refugees for their future. The workshop intended to boost an inter-generational exchange in the camp with the belief that every member of the community has a role to play in the construction of a peaceful future for the Karenni.

For this workshop, JRS partnered with Juliana Bohorquez, a Colombian artist and activist, and her team to develop and facilitate the activities. The group of participants was really representative as it gathered individuals from all walks of life: student leaders, out of school youth and adults who support the JRS Pastoral and Accompaniment project. All in all, 29 participants

is focused on future and life instead of past and hate”.

between the ages of 14 and 53 came together to share, listen, create and empower.

During the four-day workshop, the discussions and activities focused on increasing awareness of social memory, re-defining the meaning of home and territory and encouraging self-reflection on

the meaning of participative leadership and the role of each individual in the construction of a peaceful future.

The workshop used art to encourage and channel very productive discussions. Throughout this process, the participants created collective paintings depicting their land and their future. Using earth clay and mixed media, participants reflected their vision of home and created a village that included them all. Finally, on the last day, participants worked together to develop a message to the world: “We all deserve peace, a life without weapons or violence, and we must have access to an education that is focused on future and life instead of past and hate”. Participants committed themselves to becoming agents of peace by sharing their experience and discussions among their peers.

After the workshop, the artwork has been displayed at various World Refugee events in the camp as well as in the Mae Hong Son municipality to disseminate the message of peace created by the refugees. Currently, the artwork is being displayed at the meeting hall of Camp Committee in Ban Mae Nai Soi camp.

The voluntary repatriation process started in 2016 in a joint effort of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Governments of Thailand and Myanmar. To this day, 164 refugees returned to Myanmar through this process.

Maria Jose Pinzon, English Subject Coordinator – JRS Mae Hong Son

Thailand: Refugees and Thais gather in support of refugee rights



Muay Thai show performed by students from the Thai Military School in Bangkok

Bangkok, 14 December 2018 – In a society where refugee issues are still widely unknown, refugee youth and Thai military students gathered in July to promote refugee rights through a peer support project in Bangkok.

A group of refugee youth from various countries gathered to watch Muay Thai boxing performed by Thai military students. The Thais wore traditional Muay Thai dress. Refugees wore the traditional clothing of their nations. After the boxing match, the refugees and Thais played basketball together. Refugees also did henna painting, something many Thais had not seen before.

The Urban Education Project (UEP) of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), provided this peer support activity in order to strengthen the relationship between the Thai and refugee youth communities in

Bangkok.

Peer support is an important part of the community activities that are organized by the UEP three times a year. Those who participate increase their awareness of the refugee situation in Bangkok as well as their knowledge of multiculturalism.

“I never knew who refugees were before,” said Aekarach Amvadee, a grade 12 Thai military student who was one of the Muay Thai performers. “Today I really met them for the very first time. I realized that they were normal kids like us. We were all around the same age and got along well with each other despite different languages and cultures.”

“I made new friends and learned a lot from them today,” he added. “Thais can be friends with refugees as we are all living as human beings together. There should not be any discrimination against refugees. I really had fun doing activities with my new refugee friends. I also improved my English skills. It would be good to have more activities like this in the future because it gives Thai people the opportunity to learn more about the lives of refugees.”

Through these activities, the UEP is tackling the bias caused by misinformation, xenophobia and lack of education about refugees. In addition to community activities, the UEP provides education to youth urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok through a 6-month course of Thai and English classes. This project specially targeted towards youth also offers vocational skill training in computers, sewing, and hairdressing. The 2018 cohort had 60 refugees from diverse countries.

If you want to support refugee education in Asia Pacific, please [donate here](#).

Prattana Tublom,
Caseworker with the Urban Refugee Project in Bangkok

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