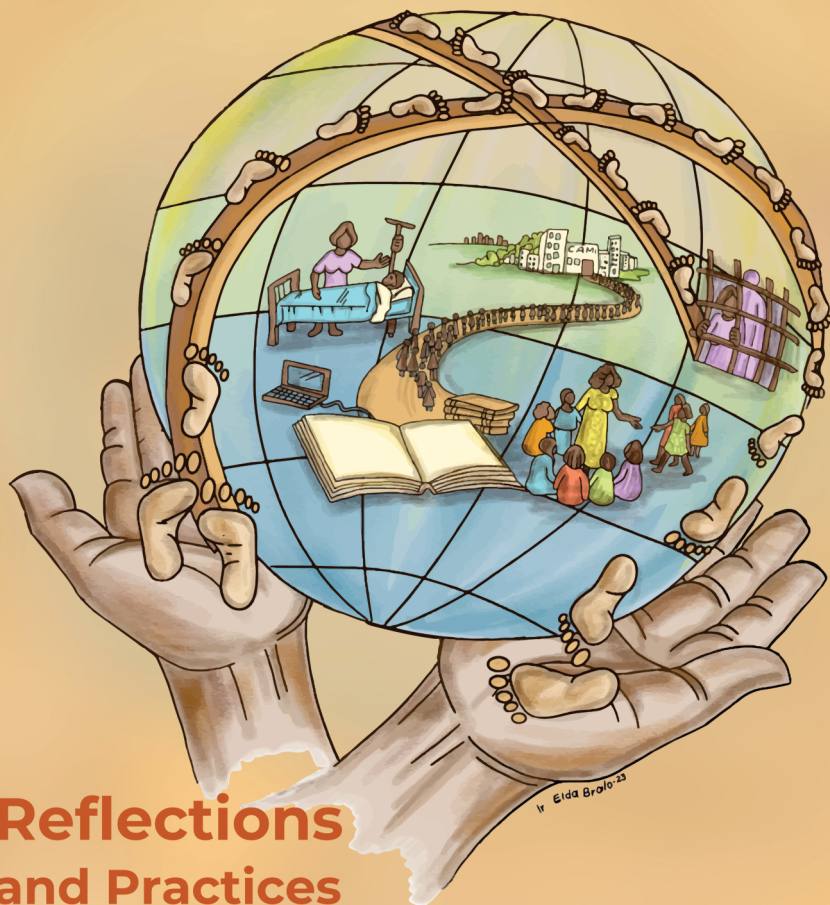


Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees



Reflections and Practices of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters

Carmem Lussi
Editor

Pastoral care for migrants and refugees

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Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters

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Pastoral care for migrants and refugees

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Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters

V Congregational Seminar of the Pastoral
Care for Migrants and Refugees
Bogotá, from March 5 to 8, 2024



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Lumilitas
SCALABRINIANE

BRASÍLIA
2025

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4 Program of the Fifth Congregational Seminar on Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees
Bogotá, from March 5 to 8, 2024

PRESENTATION

Dear Sisters,

Dear ladies and gentlemen who honor us with taking part at this important event of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians

It is great to be here together! Especially to you, my sisters, I say: how good it is to be together! It is so good to be together as a Scalabrinian family. We are grateful to God, and it is a source of joyful hope in our journey to meet for an intensive time of living together and exchanging ideas in this place, in the heart of the Latin American Church. Thank you for this opportunity and for being here. The joyful atmosphere of the meeting is a leaven of vitality and missionary spirit, and all of this is a blessing for the Mission and for the life that we are called to welcome, promote, protect and integrate wherever the Lord leads us. At the same time, it is an honor and a responsibility to count on all of you in this commitment.

As missionary Scalabrinian Sisters, as we live our vocation and mission, as we give ourselves in evangelical and missionary service to migrants and refugees, we have learned – for quite some time, in fact – that the sharing of life, in faith and in the Scalabrinian charism, is not simply a principle; it is part of that lifestyle through which we become migrants with migrants and, existentially, missionaries by living, celebrating and witnessing to life and faith.

Configuring our way of building fraternal and sororal relationships in the communities and contexts in which we work in the service of life, with dignity, without discrimination or exclusion, happens through exchange, listening, dialog, co-responsibility, commitment and reciprocity. This event is part of that kind of process which forms and motivates us, which is why it also makes us proud and challenges us and, because of its relevance, encourages us to continue calling other people to the Scalabrinian mission and to resume our journey strengthened and replenished with hope and wisdom.

This is the dynamism that moves along the pathways of migration and of the people and human groups who leave in search of refuge for

themselves and their loved ones, not without struggles, pains, sufferings, dreams, measureless efforts... and which we adopt as a vocation.

Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, because of the charism that identifies us and because of the *Ruah* of God, who leads human destinies and guides them, as we learned from Scalabrini, leading us to live and serve so that no one, among migrants and refugees, will doubt the love with which the Father loves them and the love to which they are called. We live this same vocation in as many different ways and nuances as there are personal and community stories, in the local churches that have welcomed us and in the mission itineraries where we work. This same Mission also has the diversity of the plurality of gifts of the Spirit in the cultures and trajectories, communities, experiences and intercultural challenges that human mobility brings about. Along the way, it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to welcome people again and again, in a humble availability to itinerancy, at the service of communion between diversities.

This is an unparalleled richness that we bring here because we recognize, with gratitude and responsibility, that the Scalabrinian missionary life that we received with our vocation can only be multiplied by giving ourselves in service and exchange. That is why we are here, to share what we have, what we bring and who we are; and also to walk together, to welcome, to reflect and to learn, in search of ways of communion and solidarity, listening, thinking, praying, smiling and dreaming, holding hands and joining with those who have something to share.

This Congregational Seminar for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees is the fifth edition of this type of event.

The first Congregational Seminar was held in 1995, celebrating the centenary of the foundation of the Congregation, with the theme: The woman's face of the Scalabrinian charism.

The second was held in 2000, with the theme: Prophetism and the apostolic-missionary identity of the Scalabrinian Sister.

The third seminar, in 2005, had the theme: The Expression of a Charism in the Service of Migrants.

And the fourth Congregational Seminar was held in 2011, also in Brazil, like the others, and dealt with the theme: Responding to the Charism with Dynamism and Prophecy.

In the six-year period 2013-2019, regional meetings were held in view of the internal reorganization of the Congregation.

And here we are starting the main stage of the 5th Seminar, which began about a year ago with a participatory process, in circular movements that involved all the Sisters and their respective communities in two stages.

Following this, all the Sisters were invited to take part in 2 events, in the 4 languages of the Congregation, all held virtually, in 7 different regions, in which meetings were organized to share and deepen their understanding of the migratory reality in the contexts in which we operate and, secondly, to share and analyze the responses that, as a Congregation, we are giving in the 26 countries where we are present.

The whole process of participative involvement and preparation has converged on this moment, from which we will set off to continue thinking about of our action and articulating the best strategies for our work with migrants and refugees, according to the protagonists in mobility, the partnerships and the ecclesial and socio-political context in which we are inserted.

The event's theme, *On the Road with Migrants and Refugees with Audacity and Hope*, based on the motto *Pilgrims of Hope*, provides us with a unique opportunity to experience the MSCS of the Charism, as this is also the structuring axis of the entire program. The dialogical, interactive and dynamic methodology aims to achieve the main objective of this Seminar: to deepen the exchange, reflection, analysis and implications of the MSCS missionary action strategies, starting from the concrete action that the Congregation carries out in the current context.

I would like to wish everyone a joyful Seminar, and may we leave the Seminar enriched in motivation and competence to contribute to the formulation and implementation of responses to the challenges of human mobility today! We entrust this event to our founder, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, may his intercession grant us the joy and hope of walking together towards the new Jerusalem, which is a symphony of faces and peoples, towards the Kingdom of justice, fraternity and peace!

Sr. Neusa de Fatima Mariano, General Superior

Bogotá, March 5th, 2024.

FIRST PART

ANALYSIS OF THE MIGRATION SITUATION AND THE RESPONSES OF THE SCALABRINIAN MISSIONARY SISTERS TODAY

THE REALITY IN WHICH THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ST. CHARLES, SCALABRINIANS - MSCS OPERATES

1 REPORT ON THE REALITY OF MIGRATION IN BRAZIL

*Wellington da Silva de Barros**

An overview of migration profiles

According to the Scalabrinian missions, the predominant migratory movement in Brazil is international, with the presence of numerous families, children and elderly people. A significant presence of single mothers, heads of families and children. Pregnant women who come to Brazil to give birth to their babies. Also a significant presence of children and adolescents, as well as young migrants. The nationalities change periodically, but some of them prevail. Still on the international routes, there is also transit migration, i.e. migrants using Brazil as a route to other destinations or dreaming of other countries on the American continent, especially the United States and Canada.

Domestic migration remains incipient, mainly because of the different processes in Brazil currently compared to the past. The present is characterized by the absence of “dominant trajectories” and has become more fluid and revolving, generating different hubs in addition to the predominant ones of past decades, such as from the Northeast to the Southeast, especially to São Paulo. However, internal migration also includes people seeking employment opportunities in seasonal, precarious or informal jobs.

* Doctor in Religious Sciences and Pastoral Theology of Human Mobility. Professor of Theology in São Paulo (ITESP) and collaborator of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters.

Migrations between Latin American countries are not new either. While Argentina has been the recipient of Paraguayan, Bolivian, Peruvian and Chilean migrants for years, and was for a time the country on the continent that welcomed the largest number of Latin American migrants, since the 1980s Brazil has become one of the main destinations, especially for migrants from border countries, such as the increase since 2017 of Venezuelans, including indigenous people from the Warao ethnic group. In addition to the strong Venezuelan presence, there are also Bolivians, Colombians and Peruvians.

Regarding the presence of migrants from other countries, we also see that international African migration in the South-South context is a phenomenon that has led to the intensification of the African presence in Brazil in different states where the Scalabrinian Sisters work. Migration has become increasingly intense, not only between countries of the South and North, but also between those of the South. This is the case of the growing presence of African migrants in Brazil, as well as Latin Americans who migrate or request refuge in the country. As an example, we can include in this dynamic Haitian migration, also present in the Scalabrinian missions, from the same continent and, to a much lesser extent, migrants from the Dominican Republic and Cuba. As for African migrants, the most common nationalities are: Angola, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Arabs from the Middle East arrived in Brazil in the 19th century, but their presence increased in the decades of the current century, mainly due to the outbreak of conflicts or wars in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, etc.

As for the recognition of refugee status in Brazil among the above-mentioned nationalities, the Scalabrinian missions accompany the country's dynamics through the presence of Venezuelans, Syrians, Congolese and Cubans. As opposed to international legislation, Brazil's legislation recognizes the serious and widespread violation of human rights in some countries such as Iraq, Syria and Venezuela. This makes it easier to recognize the situation of refugees, so that applications for refuge can be accepted. This has also led to an increase in the number of refugees recognized in Brazil, such as Venezuelans.

Gender profiles of the migrants present in the Scalabrinian missions change due to various factors and are revealed with relative imprecision in the information provided in the preparatory stage. In addition to the obvious presence of men and families, we can say that the "feminization of migration", i.e. the increased participation of women in migration, marks its presence in the missions. The "feminization of migration" poses challenges and hopes, such as gender discrimination, labour exploitation and various abuses.

In recent decades, the change in the gender profile through the presence of women can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as job opportunities, education, family reunification, conflict avoidance or adverse conditions in their countries of origin. And it reveals that migration also involves family strategies in which men and women (families) are included, contributing to the rearrangement of family and gender relations

Dramatic issues/needs/challenges faced by people and groups on the move as major calls to mission

The migrants in Brazil face a series of challenges that can change depending on various factors, such as the reason for migration, legal status, region of destination and socio-economic conditions. Below are some general challenges, as the information does not allow us to specify the challenges by nationality:

- **Language barriers:** communication can be an initial challenge.
- **Socio-economic integration:** it can be difficult to integrate into the job market and local society, due to cultural differences and other factors.
- **Discrimination and prejudices:** discrimination or prejudice based on ethnic origin, nationality or migration profile.
- **Legal issues:** lack of access to public services, difficulty in revalidating diplomas.
- **Access to Health and Education Services:** access to basic services, such as health and education, due to language barriers, lack of documentation or unfamiliarity with the local systems.
- **Social vulnerability:** situations of vulnerability due to traumatic experiences in their countries of origin or the current political and economic difficulties in Brazil.
- **Housing:** housing-related challenges, living in precarious conditions due to financial limitations or abusive rent charges caused by their migratory profile.

Contributions that these flows and these individuals bring to the context and the potential that this mobility represents for those who migrate and for the societies involved in these processes.

The information from the preparatory stage indirectly reveals that the migrants bring various aspects, such as:

- **Cultural Diversity:** enriching societies with new perspectives, traditions, cuisines and customs.
- **Economic Development:** growing the economy by taking up positions in labor shortage sectors, paying taxes and consuming goods and services.
- **Innovative and Enterprising:** skills and knowledge specific to migrants, promoting innovation and contributing to entrepreneurship in destination countries.
- **Remittances:** sending remittances to their families in the countries of origin, which can have a positive impact on the economic development of these regions.
- **Educational and Cultural Dialogue:** promoting cultural and educational exchange, building mutual understanding and strengthening ties between different communities and nations.
- **Labor Market:** entry into the working environment as a form of autonomy, but also as an important tool for social integration.
- **Social services:** migrants' taxes and fees help to finance public services such as health and education in the destination countries.

The position of society/politicians/media on the issue

Brazil has also experienced the hardening of hostile attitudes towards migration in the name of a so-called national security policy with the atmosphere of a theocracy. The desire for security has led many countries, including Brazil, to adopt policies of enmity towards migrants from certain countries, making them even more unwelcome to a considerable portion of the Brazilian population. This state of social fear has been amplified by the pandemic.

The Brazilian diplomacy further emphasised selectivity (desirable and undesirable), with a wide opening and facilitation for migrants from certain countries to the detriment of the poorest, most vulnerable or those belonging to countries not ideologically aligned with the government of the moment. Some decisions did not consider, for example, the reciprocal treatment and collaboration historically followed by Brazil. The application of this principle is a way of revealing that the countries involved are seeking co-operation and respect for international law and human rights. In the case of Brazil, however, it revealed disregard. Following other countries such as the US, the Brazilian government withdrew from the UN Global Compact for Safe Migration, and migration was seen as a space where the country exercises its sovereignty in a restrictive and even violent way. The

implementation of national security and selectivity policies has resulted in the constant suspicion of undesirable migrants in Brazil. Other specific forms to enter Brazil followed a similar flow to previous periods, such as the Mercosur Residence Agreement and the humanitarian visa for Haitians.

With the arrival of a new government, the attempt is currently being made to build bridges and destroy walls that were previously built. Brazil has once again taken up these achievements, such as returning to the Global Compact. From a humanitarian point of view, Brazil is following the expected trend of promoting welcoming policies with humanitarian visas and promoting a favourable stance towards taking in refugees, whether due to conflict, political or religious persecution or natural disasters.

How the church interprets the mobility living in its contexts

Church interprets migration in the light of social justice and human rights. It emphasises the commandment to love and welcome and seeks to show solidarity with migrants and offer practical and spiritual support. The church sees migrants as valuable members of the community and seeks to provide pastoral care, considering the diverse needs, both spiritual and emotional, associated with migration. Some local churches or congregations also get involved in structural changes to migration policies, seeking to influence government decisions in line with their values and principles (advocacy). The diversity of approaches and interpretations reflects the diversity of faith communities that seek answers to the challenges of contemporary migration from their own context.

2 CONTEXT OF THE REALITY OF MIGRATION IN THE HISPANIC COUNTRIES OF SOUTH AMERICA: BOLIVIA, PARAGUAY, ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA AND ECUADOR

*Sr. Juliana Rodrigues, mscs**

Migration profiles

The increase of migratory movements of very vulnerable people in the Americas has been clearly visible in recent years. Different nationalities are the protagonists of these large movements.

The principal nationalities are: Venezuelan (with the highest percentage), the second is Haitian, followed by Bolivian, Argentinian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, Colombian (mainly victims of armed conflict), Asian (Vietnam and the Philippines) as a transit population, Brazilian (in this case for studying and commerce in Paraguay and Argentina) and, with a lower percentage, Cuban, Dominican and Nicaraguan nationalities.

The Andean corridor has people moving through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru towards Chile and people moving in the opposite direction, including returning to Venezuela or other countries of origin or continuing their way to the United States and/or Mexico.

Challenges, tragedies and needs

Factors driving this increase include the economic crises in Latin America and the persistent economic effects of the pandemic, political changes, food insecurity, political instability and violence in some countries of origin, as well as vulnerabilities related to environmental degradation and disasters.

Besides the existing border barriers that migrants have to cross, there are other factors that are considered challenges in the process of human

* Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary. Social Worker. Currently she develops her mission as coordinator of Project Management in the Scalabrinian Sisters Mission, in Ecuador.

mobility and which, at the same time, generate the needs and dramas to be faced:

- The closure of borders and the increase of migration through irregular roads (known as trochas or unsafe roads).
- The insecurity experienced during the journey (where most migrants are forced to walk to collect them).
- The increase of smuggling routes and trafficking in human beings (especially women and minors).
- Difficulties in accessing the regularization process (“paperwork” in the country they are in).
- The lack of access to fundamental rights: health, education, food and decent housing.
- Increasing discrimination, xenophobia and invisibility.
- Difficulties in accessing opportunities for formal employment.
- A barrier for integration into a new context, namely a barrier of language (in Paraguay’s case, due to the Guaraní language, or for those who are not from a Spanish-speaking region).
- Vulnerable to their rights and different types of abuse (labor, sexual, trafficking and others).

The contribution made by these flows and people to the realities in question

Building the future with migrants and refugees means also recognizing and valuing the contribution that each of them can make to the building process. I like to see this approach to the phenomenon of migration in the prophetic vision of Isaiah, in which foreigners are not seen as invaders and destroyers, but as voluntary workers who rebuild the walls of the New Jerusalem”.... that “their work, their capacity for sacrifice, their youth and their enthusiasm enrich the communities that welcome them – Pope Francis.

Recognizing migrants and refugees as political actors capable of self-determination; as people with rights, with voice, with criteria, with life and livelihood projects based on a culture of work that generates activity in the local economy; people with great potential, ready to manifest themselves when given the opportunity.

Migrants and refugees are also important players in networks, coordinators of actions that generate opportunities for cultural and spiritual growth, where through them we can learn more about the world and the beauty of its diversity.

How society, government authorities and the media position themselves regarding the issue of migration and asylum seekers

On one hand, there is lack of visibility for migration and refugee issues, as well as xenophobia and discrimination on the part of the host society and governments, often caused by the messages transmitted by the media.

In times of economic crisis and violence, or in the midst of the various problems affecting society, migrants and refugees are recognized as guilty, marginalized, in short, they are seen as scapegoats for the problems that already exist in the countries of destination.

Some progress is being made in opening up the integration process, with governments generating intervention plans based on four axes: socio-economic inclusion, assistance, protection and access to services. Regularization plans are being implemented, especially for the Venezuelan population, although they are aware that this is a very slow process and that, due to the delay, migrants end up being fined and their identity and process of self-sustainability are not recognized.

Governments and the media portray migrants in their most fragile situation as criminals, street people, causing insecurity, taking jobs away from the local community and illegally using public spaces. Migrants and refugees are not recognized as people who are deprived of other possibilities, of better opportunities or even deprived of their rights.

In view of the situation, we are confronted with the arbitrariness of current policies, which promote a culture of equalitarianism and discrimination, making civil society feel legitimized and supported to adopt an attitude of rejection towards the migrant and refugee population.

The analysis is biased and, instead of trying to stay within the complexity, recognizing the structural problems of the countries, it builds a discourse based on a “black or white” perspective, where the nuances of complexity are not accepted and, therefore, a solution is sought that is easy to understand and manage, which in this case is to look for a culprit, the migrants and refugees.

How the Church (institution, ecclesiastical leaders and local communities) interprets the human mobility experienced in its territories

The church addresses the situation of migrants and refugees as a transformative theological place that questions the church’s identity in its socio-pastoral positioning.

The composition of today's migratory context also imposes the need for an ecumenical vision of this phenomenon and inter-religious dialogue, which generates strictly pastoral demands, i.e. the Church is called to promote actions that are open to new perspectives to guarantee communion with the host community and, at the same time, with the ecclesiastical hierarchies.

The pastoral and legislative configuration of missionary priests and their coordinators, diocesan priests, religious men and women, lay people and ecclesial movements - which apostolic commitment is seen and considered in the line of a pastoral care of communion, forming support networks to respond to the reality of migrants and refugees, above all keeping faith, hope and values alive - is specified and underlined, here we highlight the importance of the action of RED CLAMOR Latin America and the Caribbean.

There is a concern on the part of the Church towards migrants and refugees, here we refer to the centrality of the person and the defense of rights, the ecclesial and missionary dimension of people in human mobility, at the same time the valorization of minorities, and the importance within and outside the Church of dialogue, and finally the specific contribution that emigration can make to universal peace.

As a Church too, the need for "inculturation", the vision of the Church understood as communion, mission and People of God, the importance of a specific pastoral care for migrants and refugees, the importance of action that considers a culture of welcome and solidarity towards people in human mobility, and the importance of thinking about specific actions to respond both in the case of Catholic migrants, of Latin or Oriental ritual, and those who belong to other Churches and Communities.

Finally, as a Church, we are called to live a strong integration of pastoral structures and the integration of migrants and refugees in full respect of their diversity and their spiritual and cultural heritage. This integration is an essential condition so that the pastoral care of and with migrants and refugees can be a meaningful expression of the universal Church, a fraternal and peaceful encounter, a home for all, a school of accepted and shared communion, of reconciliation asked for and granted, of mutual and fraternal welcoming and solidarity, as well as of authentic human and Christian promotion.

3 THE REALITY OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA

*Sr. Carla Frey Bamberg, mscs**

Report of the First Seminar – Africa Region – based on the contributions of the African communities¹

As for the groups/categories of people migrating in the countries where the sisters operate on the continent of Africa, it can be said that migration in South Africa is mixed, as South Africa is the destination for many countries in Africa. People flee wars, others are economic migrants, there are LGBTQ refugees and albinos fleeing persecution, victims of human trafficking, especially women and children. Finally, there is internal migration, mainly from rural areas to the big cities.

Mozambique is a place of transit and final destination for people moving from different parts of the world. We can divide them into three main groups: migrants who use Mozambique as a corridor to reach South Africa; migrants who migrate to Mozambique to take up residence; and migrants who arrive in Mozambique to seek asylum protection. Recent years have seen an increase in internal migration, mainly from the northern provinces of the country, and young people and children from the southern provinces of Mozambique, who arrive in Ressano Garcia to cross the border into South Africa.

Angola has a large number of refugees and asylum seekers; Angolan returnees who have fled the country and taken refuge abroad; internal migration, mainly from the south to the center of the country; foreign migrants (groups of investors, traders, businessmen, religious people, missionaries); trafficking of human beings, mainly children and women, most of whom are traded from the interior of the country to the capital

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¹ Comunidad Kamogelo – Johannesburgo, Sudáfrica; Comunidad Jesús Refugiado – Ressano García, Mozambique; Comunidad María Mamana Wa Vafambi – Maputo, Mozambique; Comunidad Yezu Wavutuka – Luanda, Angola; y Comunidad Madre de la Esperanza – Uije, Angola.

Luanda and border areas. There are also a significant number of young people looking to leave the country to go to Europe and America to study and improve their living conditions.

Many challenges are faced by these individuals. In all three countries, the biggest challenge is obtaining the necessary documentation, or refugee status.

In South Africa, some people have been living on asylum visas for more than fifteen years without their applications being finalized. Xenophobia is very strong. Foreigners face problems related to racism, violence and in many cases death. In addition, there are difficulties related to the lack of livelihood opportunities and family reunification. Apartheid continues among black people in South Africa and other African countries, commonly known as “Negrophobia”. Nowadays, there is mass emigration of young (white) South Africans to other countries on other continents. Finally, there exists an institutional crisis that encompasses all structures: government, civil society, family, church, etc.

In Mozambique, access to work is very difficult, and there is a lot of labor abuse/exploitation and human rights violations. Language is one of the barriers that hinders the integration of immigrants and access to various opportunities, especially for refugees. Access to land for housing or other activities, opening bank accounts and acquiring property are other barriers that limit integration. Internal migration has favored the rapid and disorderly growth of urban centers, the formation of urban suburbs, with precarious living conditions, social and economic, become easy targets for trafficking in persons, organs and smuggling of migrants to South Africa, children and adolescents living on the streets, as street vendors, especially in Maputo.

In Angola, one of the biggest challenges is the lack of documentation and, consequently, unemployment. Certain returnees or one of their foreign partners may be arrested and sent back to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The vast majority live in poverty, working to survive on farms or doing odd jobs. There is a lack of opportunities to become part of the working world. There is also deprivation of rights (lack of employment, studies, education, health); they suffer prejudice, xenophobia; problems integrating into the local culture: different languages, customs, traditions, religions; becoming vulnerable to trafficking in human beings.

In different places, initiatives are taking place in society and in the Church to help migrants and refugees in their needs

In South Africa, where xenophobia is widespread, church-related institutions and NGOs are the only institutions that provide assistance

and humanitarian services to migrants. These institutions work from the perspective of migrant and refugee empowerment, human promotion and training to acquire skills in establishing small businesses and becoming economically sustainable. The Catholic Church encourages all dioceses and parishes to have prepared leaders in the Migration Pastoral service and organizes leadership training courses for parishes and dioceses in the Southern Africa region.

In Mozambique, there is a presence of foreign citizens offering their expertise in hospitals, as doctors and nurses; in education; in construction; in the creation of industries; in the import and distribution of large quantities of food products. Chinese citizens are involved in major public works where they provide labor and funding to the government. African communities build stores in their neighborhoods to sell food, car parts, pharmacies, schools, nurseries, etc.

In ecclesiastical terms, the Church has always been concerned with the integral welcome of all people, a commitment that became evident in the post-war period (1992), when the Episcopal Commission for Migrants, Refugees and Displaced Persons, CEMIRDE, was founded. Together with other organizations, it had the mission of welcoming those returning to the country, as well as welcoming other migrants who arrived in Mozambique seeking asylum.

A lot of migrants actively participate in different pastoral ministries, contribute to the formation of pastoral agents, and are teachers in educational institutions teaching French and English.

In Angola, the highlights are: the Migrant and Refugee Protection Network, made up of 14 civil and religious organizations; the work of the Pastoral of Migrations (CEPAMI) which is present in the various pastoral ministries of the Church and, annually, at the Catholic University, promotes the Migrant and Refugee Market, where 23 communities of migrants and refugees participate with all their cultural diversities; dissemination in the media of the contribution of migrants to Angolan society, throughout the year and especially on the commemorative dates of Migrant and Refugee Day; migrants and refugees with academic and professional training contribute to the country's development in various areas.

In its work with migrants and refugees, the Church maintains partnerships with other institutions: State and Provincial Office of Justice and Human Rights; Provincial Office of Education; Office of Family, Women and Social Action; Provincial Office of Agriculture.

Most migrants and refugees in different countries are treated indifferently and with hostility, but there are also initiatives for welcoming, accepting and integrating them into society

In South Africa, the presence of immigrants is viewed with great hostility by the government and South African society. Foreigners are subjected to verbal and physical abuse. There are outbreaks of violence, xenophobia, where many of their businesses are burned down and looted, and many are killed. The government does everything it can to make their lives as difficult as possible, both in applying for asylum seekers and in renewing documents in South African migration. Another aspect is the lack of access to health and education. Non-nationals are often denied healthcare in public facilities, as well as access to schools for their children. The media contributes by publishing xenophobic content and almost never reports about foreigners and refugees.

In Mozambique, immigrants live together with other people in society. There are no neighborhoods reserved for foreigners, so many Mozambicans, in urban areas and on the outskirts, know and live with foreigners/refugees. In general, there are positive signs of peaceful coexistence, where relations are based on dialogue and solidarity, facilitating the social, ecclesial and cultural integration of migrants. In the issuing of documents to foreigners/refugees, the public administration specializes in better serving these people.

The press sometimes has negative narratives about migrants, seeing them as human and drug traffickers, people linked to illegal mining, traders in counterfeit or low-quality products.

In Angola, the government does not fulfill its duties to benefit migrants (right to documentation and means of subsistence). The government tries to combat irregular immigration and arrests are made. Uíje borders Congo and the Congolese are not generally liked by the population. As far as we can see, the other nationalities are not being discriminated against.

There is indifference towards the poor in general, and returnees fall into this category. Human rights of national workers are violated. And economic migrants, who exploit the country, devastating nature for their own benefit.

On certain occasions the press values the presence of migrants in society, but in other situations it emphasizes the negative side of migrants and refugees, criminalizing them.

4 THE REALITY OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN EUROPE

*Sr. Eléia Scariot, mscs**

Introduction

According to the XXXII Migration Report 2023 released by Caritas Italian and Fondazione Migrantes, there are about 23.7 million citizens of non-EU countries (5.3 percent) in the European Union. The war in Ukraine has also opened a new front of forced migration in Europe, raising the total number of refugees and displaced persons (40 percent of whom are minors) to 108.4 million. Ukraine has contributed to a total of 108.4 million refugees and displaced persons in Europe. As of May 2023, 8.3 million Ukrainians had taken refuge in Europe, of whom more than 5 million received temporary protection. In Europe, Ukrainian refugees are supported by a decentralized reception network.

Italy

Currently, migrants arriving in Italy are mainly from the countries of Morocco, Tunisia, Albania, China and Ukraine, which are the countries of origin of most non-EU migrants. Other sending countries are Asia and Africa (Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Gambia, Cameroon, Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Syria), from where the large number of migrants come through landings.

However, many migrants do not intend to stay in Italy, but try to arrive in Northern Europe, where the percentage of the foreign population is higher. On average, migrants are younger than Italians and most are minors. Most notable are the so-called second-generation minors-born in Italy or arrived through family reunification-who face perennial conditions of displacement and often very different conditions and statuses.

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The principal migration profiles that exist in the context in which we operate in Italy are very diverse. There are caring people, a category of women and partly also men who live with the families in which they work. Another category are seasonal migrants, particularly street sellers, such as Africans and Bengalis, who sell bags, bracelets and water on Italian beaches. Another category that we follow, especially in Southern Italy are the second-generation youth, belonging to ethnic communities from Sri Lanka, the Philippines and India, children of migrants or university students; we accompany them regarding the religious-liturgical aspect, sacramental, evangelization, catechesis and listening.

Switzerland

The presence of migrants in Switzerland exceeds two million distributed in Italian, French and German-speaking Switzerland. The demographic distribution varies greatly among regions, we have French Switzerland with the highest percentage of foreigners, in sharp contrast to the situation in central Switzerland. The recent activation of the protective status has brought more than 40,000 people from Ukraine seeking refuge. In addition to Ukrainians, many asylum seekers come from Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Far East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.

Belgium

Belgium attracts migrants from all over the world but has significant disparities. Some with documents receive state support, those without, even those with a university education, often end up without support and working in lower-skilled occupations, and thousands live without residence permits.

The country, with 199 nationalities, reflects a Cosmopolitan Society. The Belgian church welcomes 26 ethnic communities and provides pastoral care through religious men/women. This diversity helps mold Belgium's complex social network.

Spain

As a crossroad of different migratory flows, Spain experiences a complex dynamic with immigration from Africa, emigration and transit to Northern Europe, and various migration routes. Airports are a less visible but widely used route, especially for Latin Americans who arrive as "tourists" before becoming undocumented.

Statistics indicate that 17 percent of the total population is of immigrant origin, whose main nationalities are Colombians, Venezuelans, Romanians, and others; lack of employment opportunities prevents prolonged stay for newcomers by falling into irregular status.

France

We are present in France in Marseille, a European, port city facing the Mediterranean Sea with a strong presence of migrant people. This includes unaccompanied minors, single women with children, asylum seekers, undocumented; the majority come from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Afghanistan is the first nationality, then comes Bangladesh, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Turkey and DRC. On diocesan level, we have well-established communities of Catholics such as African, Armenian, Ukrainian, Polish, Lebanese, Iraqi, Syrian Greek-Melkite, Albanian, Filipino, Vietnamese, the Spanish-speaking Latinos; followed by the Orthodox communities: Greeks, Romanians, Eritreans and Ethiopians, Apostolic Armenians. In contrast, the situation in which we operate in the Diocese of Paris shows a balanced presence of male and female migrants. In percentage terms, 56 percent of women and 44 percent of men are global migrants. Most migrants are Afghans and sub-Saharan Africans and are young.

Increasing dramas/needs/challenges faced by individuals and groups in migration, which are main reminders of MSCS mission

Our mission as Scalabrinian missionaries there is to do all we can so that when they arrive in the host country where we are present, they find a welcome that makes a difference and gives them a life of dignity, courage and hope, feeling that God has not abandoned them during this arduous and difficult journey.

In the local context in which we operate, the main challenges that all migrants and we MSCS Sisters must face together are in summary the problem of documentation, lack of housing, lack of employment, and lack of knowledge of the local language. Looking, specifically the challenges we face are:

- Reception and Housing: Finding safe and affordable housing can be a challenge for migrants, especially those who have just arrived. They often find themselves in overcrowded situations or in temporary housing.
- Language and Culture: Linguistic barrier is a significant challenge to integration. Learning the language of the host country is essential for communication and access to services and opportunities.

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- **Employment and livelihood:** Finding a job can be difficult for migrants because of discrimination or differences in training or qualification requirements. Some may be forced into poorly paid, undeclared or unskilled jobs.
 - **Inclusion in society:** Integrating into local community can take time and effort. Discrimination and prejudice can make the integration process difficult.
 - **School integration and right to study:** Immigrant minors in the territory are subject to compulsory schooling; one challenge is their integration, considering the linguistic point of view (at home they speak the language of origin and their parents do not possess the language of the host country to be the direct interlocutors with educational agencies). Another challenge is the recognition of educational qualifications and their professional qualifications and experiences understood as acquired skills. The school world we feel needs a network between family, school and church agents.
 - **Access to health and educational services:** Accessibility to health and educational services can be difficult for migrants, especially for those who do not have regular documentation legally.
 - **Refugee and International Protection:** Some migrants may be asylum seekers or refugees, and obtaining international protection is often a long and complex process.
 - **Personal security:** Some migrants may be vulnerable to situations of exploitation or violence. Personal safety may be a concern, especially for women and unaccompanied minors.
 - **Statutory documentation:** Obtaining regular documentation to work and access services is complicated by bureaucracy, especially for those who are in an irregular situation and lack basic knowledge of the host country's language and culture.
 - **Psychological distress and migration:** Every migratory journey, considering the separation, departure, journey, arrival and the unknown that the migrant faces, creates anxiety situations and produces the disruption of established balances, shock. Many migrants may experience social isolation due to the distance from their homeland and difficulties in integrating into the new community.
 - **Climatic Change and Security:** Weather and climate risk can pose a threat to migrants, especially those traveling in precarious vessels. The challenge we face today is climate-related migration, environmental degradation, and natural disasters.

However, it is important to note that many organizations, institutions and voluntary groups are working to address these challenges and provide support to migrants. The challenges, however, remain significant and require a comprehensive approach, considering the totality of the person, responding to the different levels of the person, and bringing together the material and spiritual aspects. Collaboration with other agencies allows the challenges to be addressed effectively.

In the daily lives of migrant minors, we see conflicting situations both with their parents, who are generally more attached to the cultural values of their homeland, but also with the host society, where they are seen as foreigners, even when, because they were born in Italy or arrived in early childhood, they are not.

Another challenge concerns the integration of second generations, an issue that proves crucial both for understanding the timing of current migration processes and for accommodating the transformations affecting receiving societies, since the integration of second generations is a real challenge for social cohesion.

From this perspective, it is central to work on the soft skills of migrating individuals and us mscs sisters, migrants by vocation, resilience, individual charisms and the strength of the Scalabrinian apostolate.

The contributions that these flows and individuals bring to the realities involved and the potential that this mobility represents for those who migrate and for the societies involved in these flows

Human mobility represents a great contribution and important potential for the societies involved especially at the church level. Many parishes community's welcome migrants as active members, allowing them to participate in liturgical life, catechesis and other church activities. Multiethnic prayer groups can be formed in churches, where migrants and locals come together to pray and share their spiritual experiences. Church institutions often organize cultural events and celebrations that highlight the cultural diversity of migrants, such as multi-ethnic masses or festivals.

Some migrants are actively involved in specific ministries or social work within the church, contributing to solidarity and helping the most vulnerable. Sometimes they stand out not only for their generous helpfulness, but also for their gratitude to the locals in response to the good they have received.

One aspect that deserves to be emphasized is the religiosity that these communities openly manifest, deeply living worship to God the

Trinity, Our Lady and the Saints. Another aspect worth highlighting is the correspondence, participation and response of a massive presence of families with children, youth and preadolescents and adolescents to the life of the Church; they attend and prepare for the sacraments, Confession, Communion and Confirmation.

In society, immigrants often contribute to the local economy through their labor and business enterprise. Their enterprising ventures can be valued and supported. Many countries offer migrants the opportunity to participate in political life by voting or running for political office. This promotes the role of migrants in society. The percentage of young second-generation migrants who wish to participate in political life is very small. Cultural events and festivals organized by migrants provide an opportunity to enhance and share their culture with local society.

Local media can cover migrants' initiatives, highlighting success stories, cultural projects, and positive contributions to the community.

In addition, schools and educational institutions can engage migrants as mentors or speakers to share their experiences and cultures with students.

Appreciation of migrants is important in enhancing diversity, inclusion and intercultural understanding in the Church and society. This recognition and appreciation can contribute to a richer and more inclusive society and a Church that is the fruit of the power of Pentecost.

How does society/politicians/media... position themselves critically on the issue, in your Region?

Because of a media and political narrative that tends to focus almost exclusively on the critical aspects of migration, which do exist, migration in Europe is not well received by the entire society, including the Christian community. Widespread are forms of prejudice, discrimination, racism, but also attitudes of paternalism and utilitarianism. There is no lack, of course, of those who are committed - individually or in associationism - to welcome, protect, promote and integrate.

The presence of migrants even though it arouses controversy to this day is largely an asset to the host country. There are some jobs that are categorized for them although they are criticized. The government for its part tries to mediate, to further the cause and defense of people by receding some laws for example the labor law.

People are often more inclined to notice the conditions of poverty, need, criminality, and diversity of migrant people, while underestimating the potential, talents, and riches, including spiritual ones, that they bring.

Current governments are hostile toward the reception and protection of migrant people, mainly funding control and security policies and instead hindering those that promote social inclusion and integration. There is therefore a preference for making deals with neighboring countries (e.g., Tunisia and Libya) to block departures, funding the Libyan coast guard or Frontex instead of investing in the reception of these people. One of the biggest challenges also relates to the mystifying narrative that governments in recent years have made about migration, presenting it as an “emergency” and not a structural phenomenon.

Informing and educating properly about the migration issue can be one of the most important policy tools since migration management also depends on how migrants are perceived in society. Instead, the press and the government in recent years have triggered misinformation and intolerance on the part of natives toward migrants.

In terms of the media, we can say that we find a press committed to making migration visible, especially regarding the arrival of migrants on boats. This reality is a typical example of how the reception of migrants is tolerated in Europe but not comprehensively addressed.

However, there is also a corporate press that is either subtly or explicitly xenophobic and magnifies reality in an oppressive way, exploiting already racist expressions to treat migrants as criminals or as people who come to live at the expense of the state. The rulers call for fair sharing with all European countries, many times the figures are inflated. So much government effort is still lacking so that people are received in a dignified manner.

The narrative about migration that is made by major news outlets is often purely “emergency,” migrants are, in fact, described as numbers invading our coasts and not as people with a baggage of life behind them.

A part of civil society, fortunately, is instead, sensitive to the causes of migrants’ suffering, promoting humanitarian actions. In fact, much of the initiatives to support migrants are supported from below by associations, parishes, clergy, and many volunteers who put themselves at the service of those who are excluded by the government.

For the Church, Migrants are a sign of God speaking to the Church. The thinking of the churches where we are present about human mobility and the phenomenon of migration finds its foundation in the Word of God. In addition, local churches also look at the migration phenomenon as an “ethical issue” in the search for a new international economic and ethical order and for a more equitable redistribution of the earth’s goods. Papal documents speak of migration from multiple perspectives always recognizing it as a sign of the times.

5 MIGRATION REALITY IN THE US AND CANADA

*Sr. Maria Arlina Barral, mscs**

The United States and Canada are in the top ten countries of destinations for immigrants, whether refugees, asylum seekers, or undocumented migrants. These two countries attract the mentioned people on the move due to their economic and social opportunities. These socioeconomic opportunities may include better job pay, some social benefits, education, political and religious freedom, and perhaps the illusion of a “better quality life” in the US or Canada.

According to the World Migration Report 2020 of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United States has 50.6 million migrants which is 15.3% of its population, including the 11.4 million unauthorized immigrants. Canada, on the other hand, has 8.05 million or 21.3% of its population are immigrants.

In the U.S., even though it offers various immigration pathways, including family-sponsored, employment-based, and humanitarian categories, the system often faces long processing times. As a result, the system itself pushes the immigrant flow to illegal immigration. For citizens of countries with historically low rates of immigration to the US, the Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery is available for them. Moreover, programs like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) provide temporary relief to certain groups of immigrants facing unique challenges. The U.S. also has its H-1B visa program for skilled workers, although immigration policies can vary depending on changes in administration.

On the other hand, in Canada, for example, it has Canada’s Express Entry system which allows skilled workers to apply for permanent residency

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based on their education, work experience, language proficiency, and other factors.

The immigration policies in both countries can change based on political, economic, and social factors. Leadership changes can result in shifts in immigration regulations, visa categories, and enforcement priorities.

The table below will show us the differences in how the US and Canada treat refugees and asylum seekers:

	US	Canada
Refugees	In the US, refugees are individuals who have been selected and vetted by the U.S. government while they are still outside the country. They undergo thorough background checks and interviews to ensure that they meet the criteria for refugee status. Once admitted, refugees are eligible for various forms of assistance and support to help them integrate into American society.	In Canada, refugees can be sponsored by the Canadian government or by private individuals, organizations, or community groups. The government identifies and selects refugees from abroad, and these individuals go through medical and security checks before being resettled in Canada. This process is often referred to as “government-assisted refugees.”
Asylum Seekers	Asylum seekers are individuals who are already in the US or at its borders and apply for asylum due to a well-founded fear of persecution in their home countries. They must prove that they meet the definition of a refugee as outlined in the United Nations Refugee Convention. Asylum seekers go through a legal process that includes interviews with asylum officers or immigration judges.	Individuals already in Canada or at its borders can seek asylum if they fear persecution in their home countries. Canada’s asylum system allows individuals to make a claim at a port of entry, at an immigration office, or even if they have entered the country irregularly.

Asylum Process	Asylum seekers must apply for asylum within one year of arriving in the US, with some exceptions for changed circumstances or extraordinary circumstances. The process involves interviews, background checks, and a legal evaluation of their claim. Asylum seekers are often subject to detention during the process, although some may be released on parole or bond.	Asylum seekers in Canada are subject to a rigorous process that includes security and medical checks, as well as interviews with immigration officials. Those who meet the criteria for refugee status are granted asylum, while others may be subject to deportation proceedings.
Safe Third Country Agreement	Canada and the US have a Safe Third Country Agreement that requires most asylum seekers to make their claims in the first safe country they arrive in. This agreement has implications for individuals attempting to claim asylum at the U.S.-Canada border.	
Detention Policies	Asylum seekers are detained, paroled or release on its own recognizance	Detention is used as a last resort.
Processing Times	Asylum processing times can vary between the two countries. Delays in processing can lead to challenges for asylum seekers who are waiting for their claims to be evaluated.	

Recent Arrivals in Illinois and New York

Since last August 2022, the state of Texas and the Republican-led states of Arizona and Florida have been bussing asylum seekers to democratic states such as Illinois and New York. It seems that this tactic is to put pressure on the democratic politicians and the Biden administration to enact tougher border measures to deter illegal crossings which in a way will also affect the asylum seekers.

In New York, more than 110,000 migrants have arrived in the city and the still arriving to date. The state of New York received and served approximately 60,000 people in their temporary shelters.

The State of Illinois is a sanctuary state for undocumented and recent arrivals immigrants. Since last August 31, 2022, the State of Texas has bused asylum seekers through private charter buses to Chicago at regular intervals. This reality continues as of this day, where Texas officials dispatched buses with hundreds of migrants to Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York City. Not to mention, the ones arriving at O'Hare Airport. Even though most of the asylum seekers are from Venezuela, there are also individuals and families from Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

The City of Chicago has also seen an increase in asylum seekers arriving through other modes of transportation, often without resources. Community

or faith-based organizations and local governments at the border purchase airline or bus tickets to other cities like Chicago without any coordination. The City of Chicago has received approximately over 14,000 men, women, and children and has opened 22 respite and temporary shelters. The City of Chicago in partnership with different organizations provides access to shelter, food, and medical care to everyone regardless of immigration status. Once they are in Illinois and they have the intention to apply for asylum or they are victims of trafficking, torture, and other serious crimes, they can be eligible for medical, food, and cash assistance.

In both states, the rising cost of providing shelter and humanitarian services has been an issue among the local authorities, residents, and community-based organizations.

Refugees in Canada

In the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada, the specific office that attends to the refugees is the ORAT (Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto). ORAT has developed a close working relationship with several Christian communities, including Eastern Rite Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches, whose members have been deeply affected by the global refugee crisis. They work with their leaders to assist their members in sponsoring family members who need refugee resettlement. With the growing number of people for refugee resettlement, ORAT is looking to expand the list of church communities to be partner with (September 2023, Newsletter, Issue No. 5).

ORAT has a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) that works with cosponsors and parish/religious/community organizations to sponsor refugees for resettlement to Canada. A cosponsor can be either a friend or a relative who is willing and able to secure the full financial liability needed to assist a refugee during their first year of arrival to Canada. Cosponsors also commit to welcoming and journeying with the refugees, assisting them with their integration into Canada.

Part of the services of ORAT are as follows:

- Train, equip, and guide those who wish to sponsor a refugee: providing information sessions to guide stakeholders across the various aspects of resettlement, and assess sponsorship applications before their submission to Immigration Canada;
- Engage and guide members of Catholic parishes, religious orders, and community groups who wish to play an active role in the resettlement of refugees;

- Oversee the settlement of refugees who have been sponsored, ensuring that proper care and support are being provided to them;
- Conduct mission trips to identify refugees who have no hope of being resettled; and
- Advocate for the strengthening of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. (website: archtoronto.org)

MSCS pastoral response: Our Lady of Fatima Province pastoral response

The Province of Our Lady of Fatima has its missionary presence in three archdioceses, namely, the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada; the Archdiocese of Chicago, US and the Archdiocese of New Roschelle, US. And, one presence at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Secretariat of the Asian, and the Pacific Islanders.

- Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)
- Case Management for Recent Arrivals at the Scalabrini Immigrant and Refugee Services (SIRS)
- Catechesis in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (OLMC) & at the Archdiocese of New Roschelle, New York
- Hospital Chaplaincy at Ascencion Alexian Brothers
- USCCB-Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

Main strategies of our action in the context where we are present, manifesting the experience of the charism and the missionary mandate we have received:

1 Shelter, Assistance, and Protection in Emergency and Vulnerability

- Our missionary presence in the US by being involved in direct service with newcomer immigrants or recent arrivals.
- We do direct case management for the recent arrivals asylum seekers that includes: care in situations of risk, providing urgent needs, listening and orientation, and social assistance services.

2 Promotion and Integration

- As a professional support, we resolve the language barrier with newcomer immigrants. Most of our sisters are trilingual and bilingual. We contribute with communication skills with a non-judgemental approach in welcoming and integrating new immigrants into our community.

- We contribute our expertise and best practices in administering shelters for migrants and refugees.

3 Animation and Pastoral Coordination with Migrants and Refugees

- Promoting cultural solidarity and sensibility between the local receiving community and the newcomer immigrants.
- Pastoral accompaniment with the immigrants and their families at the parish, hospital, and community-based organization in the local church/community to which we belong. Pastoral accompaniment includes humanitarian assistance, sociocultural orientation, emotional and spiritual guidance, networking, and referrals to different organizations where immigrants can avail social benefits and resources.

Training and Awareness

- We continue to prepare sisters professionally aligned with the demands of the mission with the migrants and refugees. For example, to have sisters who can become immigrant para-legal or lawyers, or specialize in lobbying and advocacy pro-migrants.
- Part of a team in providing training to regional and national groups related to resources developed by the USCCB, its committees, and its work groups; Being a resource and advocate to the USCCB committees and offices on issues relating to cultural diversity and people with special pastoral needs.

Advocacy and Networking

- We reconnect with the different organizations that have lobbying and advocacy events/proposals in favor of the migrants and refugees. To call and support the bills of the alderman, and senators in favor of humane migratory policies and laws.
- At the USCCB level, advocating for and coordinating the efforts of the permanent subcommittees to address cultural diversity in the Church; Collaborating intentionally and systematically with all USCCB committees and offices on issues and initiatives that impact cultural diversity in the Church and people with special pastoral needs.

6 THE REALITY OF MIGRATION IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGION

*Sr. Idalina Bordignon, mscs**

Countries that constitute Central America and have had the presence of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters (Costa Rica and Honduras) and Mexico, for more than 50 years, live the experience of having their relatives and friends emigrate and, in turn, host countries, as well as the Caribbean (Dominican Republic). The most frequent factors of this emigration are related to the systematic violation of human rights expressed in poverty, insecurity, corruption and impunity.

Violence perpetrated by drug traffickers, the gangs and organized crime, combined with the inconsequential development of mega-projects related to mining, energy generation, monoculture and tourism, have forced thousands of people to leave their place of origin and seek safety and a better life in other countries, mainly the United States, Canada and Spain.

Developments, especially in the last ten years, are that the countries of expulsion have ceased to be countries of origin and have become countries of transit, destination and return. Central American countries, together with Mexico and the United States, make up one of the largest and most dangerous migratory corridors in the world.

The migratory flows are increasingly mixed. Mixed because of the reasons that force migration, mixed because of the different nationalities, gender and ages, mixed because of the different needs for care, in addition to the increase in migration with the presence of women and children.

Unaccompanied adults and minors, men and women, mothers or fathers with their children, entire families; people in need of international protection, victims of forced displacement due to violence or natural disasters or refugees; people from the LGTBI community, victims of gender

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violence, deportees, returnees with physical or mental disabilities, and sadly, many of them turn to the street as their point of reference, embark on the migratory route.

Forced migration caused by different factors is the result of a system of totalitarian governments, often militaristic, with a tendency towards new forms of dictatorships, which “administer” for the good of the few and are indifferent to the needs of most of the population. Governments involved and characterized by corruption and impunity, which generates different forms of violence and criminal networks.

Political unwillingness to elaborate and develop strategies to guarantee human rights, fight poverty, social and economic injustices has been the main obstacle that prevents equity and dignity from becoming a reality.

For migrants, insecurity, fear and uncertainty are part of the same path, since not only their country of origin represents risks, but all migratory routes are marked by the different forms of violence and abuses experienced by those who take them in.

Challenges faced by migrants and the richness of exchange

A lack of human rights guarantees generates a wide range of situations: hunger, forced and underpaid labor, physical illnesses and mental health problems (stress, anxiety, depression, frustration), non-access to the public health and education system, excessive bureaucracy and high fees for regularization or naturalization, insecurity (assaults, robberies, kidnappings and murders), xenophobia, discrimination, preconceptions and invisibility. This range of stereotypes suffered by people in mobility fails to be combated by churches, governments and different sectors of society. Migration is still a serious social problem and not an opportunity for social development.

Given the fact that most of the people crossing the Central American and Mexican region are in transit, that is, they are not settled and only want to arrive as soon as possible at the border with the United States, there is not enough time to learn about the skills and talents of these people, and these countries do not have appropriate containment policies in place.

However, the situation is quite different with deportees or returnees, since what they learned in the country of migration is something they soon start to work in the country of return. Many times, the returnees learned trades or how to operate machines and equipment that few people in the country of return know, therefore, job opportunities increase.

Migrants’ religious and cultural contributions are one of the most evident contributions offered by the migrant population. Many churches are empowered in their community life by the participation of migrants and

their different ways of praising God. Likewise, the sharing of their culture promotes knowledge and favors respect and integration. Another important dimension of migration is gastronomy. It is encouraging to see that the small typical food businesses of the different countries always have many customers and even native people. This is evidence that it is possible to be open, to get to know and welcome those who are different.

In the region of Central America, Mexico and the United States, in the last three years we have seen how people from Russia, Ukraine and Venezuela, living for some years in these countries, have organized themselves to receive and accompany their compatriots.

Fear of the unknown and rejection of the different makes many people believe and want to make people believe that migrants are very dangerous, they are criminals who should be away from everyone.

The criminalization of migrants is encouraged by some media that speak against them. But there are also media that seek to present the difficult realities that migrants have to go through.

Strength of organized groups and collectives

Collectives organized by migrants have been fundamental in fostering solidarity and fraternity, but also in defending the human rights of migrants.

The presence of migrant children and adolescents in educational centers has given students, teachers and parents the opportunity to get to know and welcome people from other cultures. In many cases, the fact of not speaking the language of the receiving country has generated the opportunity for people from the educational center to learn the language of the migrants.

Unfortunately, the countries that historically were the origin of migrants, now apply anti-immigrant policies and practices and are closed to any possibility of reception and integration.

Even with almost 30 years trying to organize the Pastoral of Human Mobility in the region, it is still a challenge, but a great strength. It continues to believe that organized groups gain strength, are protagonists of their own history, and can generate political incidence in the implementation of laws that favor the migrant population.

7 MIGRATION EXPERIENCE IN ASIA

Sr. Noemi E. Digo, mscs[†]

Preliminaries

Migration has always been a part of the Asian way of life. The mingling of races and cultures in the Asiatic region can be gleaned from the history of this mobile people. They bask in sea travels for exploration and barter trade, cross land bridges connecting the archipelagic terrain to settle down, build communities or move on. To this day, there is a continuum to this mobility streak of Asians, albeit in a more sophisticated and more complex manner than their predecessors.

Migratory groups and individuals of Asian origin continue their relentless entry into and out of various countries, bringing with them an all-encompassing reality of diverse cultures, religious beliefs, traditional practices and its globalizing aftermath. Recent research show Asians traveling north to south, east to west in various continents and even within the countries of this vast territory of 650M people (ASEAN, 2019). The innovative, cutting-edged technology, vastly improved worldwide transport system and social communications, highly industrialized labor markets and networks of educational and employment possibilities, not to mention the push factor of many a government program and political agenda, are contributing to this exodus of workers, professionals, mega business investors and travel bugs.

Embarking on this reality report on migration from the Asian perspective was facilitated by the same technology that posit online meetings, connecting communities, Sisters, formands in a brave attempt to ferret out observations, actual experiences, and encounters with the migratory reality of Asia where the Delegation has its presence. The meetings were carried out from August to November 2023 in two phases following the initial guidelines received.

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The Asian face of migration

In the five countries where MSCS has its presence under the Delegation in Asia, (Philippines, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan), people on the move can be categorized either as internal or external migrants. The movement of people from the rural areas to the urban metropolises within the country are common in all the nations mentioned above; young people especially students aspiring for higher education or looking for job opportunities with nary an allowance for their meals or dormitories; small time entrepreneurs seeking to invest in business ventures in the city many times ill prepared for sleek city capitalists; adventurous waifs escaping the joblessness in their hometowns, in hazardous working conditions in factories, warehouses, restaurants or bars; droves of internally displaced individuals or families in makeshift houses living precariously in unsanitary conditions, facing relocation problems or resettlement in government lands with barely any provision for jobs or income generating options for the family; the tribal minorities, some of whom have been bereft of their ancestral lands, or victims of natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes) who descend to the cities to beg or ply their trade or sell their crafts, many of whom become street dwellers or even trafficked victims.

Contract labor migration either through land based or sea-based overseas deployment, marks the largest migration flow in Asia. From the beginning, Asian seafarers, fish workers plied the international waters in cruise ships or large oil tankers or fishing vessels, or even the galleon trade from Manila to Acapulco. This type of work keeps them away from their families for months on end, while them, the seafaring migrants, strain to live normal lives in the high seas. In the seventies, massive deployment of land based male construction workers, fieldmen and oil drillers from Asia to the Middle East began and has not abated. The remittances from the Gulf countries kept many economies afloat, at the cost of family separations and religious/cultural persecutions. To date, the feminine face of Asian nurses, health care workers, beauticians, dressmakers, hotel workers, domestic helpers, expatriates, and office workers mark the scenery of these oil rich countries. The feminization of migration in this region of the world, brought out familial problems of spouses and children being left behind and the women's perilous entry into a male dominated world which sometimes disabuse them of their trust. One can also consider religious missionaries who are sent to the countries in Asia from Europe, the Americas and the Carribeans for missionary work. They too are migrants who have to contend with language, culture, church and government regulations, and contentious visa requirements.

Migration challenges and tragedies as call to mission

Current migration flows bring to fore myriads of challenges that need answers. The unabated movement of people, not to mention the unrelenting exchange of goods and services in an increasingly globalized world, are contributing factors to these situations. While the Church's Social Teaching, expresses itself through "integral human development, social solidarity, justice and the common good", the globalized world on the other hand focuses on "more accumulation of wealth and control over resources" and consider "human beings as mere producers and consumer of goods", notwithstanding their dignity as persons formed in the image and likeness of God. In this manner, the Church pursues ways and means to lessen the negative impact of globalization in the life of migrants and refugees whose number continues to increase, as United Nations estimates, "one in every 35 persons are in migration".

The decision to migrate begins first and foremost, in the mind of the migrant. It congeals into a deliberative move, through the push and pull factors surrounding him, fed by the societal prodding, family expectations, stakeholders who profit from the move, and the innate desire to explore the unknown for self-realization. In the Asian migration context, migrants from the well heeled to the poorly shod share the same challenges of integration and reintegration in varying degrees. An Indonesian Muslim migrant will find it easier to assimilate the religious practices and cultural dispositions in a Muslim country while a Filipino Christian believer would struggle to keep his faith alive and his personal demeanor towards the local practices. An added concern, is the unabated problem of undocumented migrants entering restricted territories, clandestinely crossing borders causing harm to their persons and their governments bailing them out of prison or left unaided. One adventurous sister in her youth crossed the forested boundary between Timor Leste and Malaysia out of curiosity, managing to get in and out without mishap after a close encounter with a border guard. The illegal recruitment in the countryside and in rural villages are prevalent, victimizing poor families with financial proposals allegedly to alleviate their living conditions and enticing young people with non-existent jobs in the city or foreign places, actually a front for prostitution or child labor. One case was a mother asking the Parish Priest to change the date of birth of a young daughter to qualify her as an 18-year-old, the Pastor was adept enough to question the young girl, who was being wooed by an elderly foreigner offering to build a beautiful pink house for the family to live in and bring them abroad. The same tenor of promises echoes in the ears of desperate migrants being herded as domestic helpers in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Kuwait. Some are lucky with their employers, others are

abused or even killed. One case is a domestic worker who was thrashed out of the house by her male employer due to spousal misunderstanding, and brought to the airport still in her domestic helper garb with only a plane ticket in her hand. She was declined boarding because she was thought to be a runaway. Her compatriots saw her and assisted her to change clothes. In the plane, a kindly couple took pity on her and assisted her all the way to her home in the province. Another case is an alleged suicide victim, a Filipino domestic helper in Kuwait. The father requested the Diocese to facilitate the return of the victim's body as early as possible. Through linkage with government agencies and pressure on government offices, within a month this young hapless mother of a three-year-old child was given a decent Catholic burial by her loved ones.

The government and the society's response to the phenomena of migration is in some part ambivalent, including that of the social media of communications. Creation of government agencies catering to the needs of migrants and families are not lacking though, sometimes their functions overlap. Through the years, particularly in the Philippines, leaders had shown awareness of the negative implications of migrant deployment and had sought to remedy them through restructuring of agencies to enhance services and assistance even in international level, signing Memorandum of Agreements with countries where Filipino migrants congregate and adopting UN resolutions to protect the migrants, expatriates, immigrants, and their families. There are times though when the response is galvanized only by social media hype or when non-government agencies for migrants create much racket and international furor.

8 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATIONS

*Sr. Carmen Elisa Bando**

Presentation outline

- Layout of the presentation
- Create a map of the world in groups with the major challenges that plague humanity today (magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue, pencils and/or colored markers) Real migrants and media coverage (10 minutes)
- Presentation to the plenary – Dialogue (5 minutes)
- In the same groups: Define the following words: Conjuncture, crossroads, challenge, possibility (5 minutes).
- Dialogue (5 minutes)
- Exchange the maps and next to each landmark or problem, write down What can we offer as consecrated women? What can we offer from the particularity of our charism? (5 minutes)
- My contribution (15 minutes)
- Discussion - Final dialogue on what you have written next to the maps (10-15 minutes)

Highlights, issues that plague our humanity today

Hunger – Wars and tensions in many parts of our world (war and/or economic) – Climate Change - Population Aging – Artificial Intelligence.

Let's look at our world today, you have named some concrete situations. Some are consequences of others, everything is interrelated. I will quickly pass on some maps and graphs that complement what you said, without being exhaustive.

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- Some data: people without citizenship in the country in which they live are about 184 million worldwide, including 37 million refugees, I am not sure if the nearly 6 million Palestinian refugees are included.
- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a beautiful speech that hides between its lines migration policies that unprotect and deny people their basic rights and in practice we only observe measures that externalize borders.
- The list of general elections in 2024 includes countries on all continents. More than half of the world's population will vote this year. And many of them are major powers or countries that play a decisive role in different spheres.
- A resurgence of ultra-right leaders and a national-populist discourse is being observed around the world.
- The Artificial Intelligence has come to settle in our midst. Do we know it? Are we aware of the challenges of its presence and its use, especially in the hands of the powerful? Would we be willing to invest to know it and be able to use it for the benefit of the most unprotected?

You have proven that migrants face these obstacles (This is a brief summary of your contributions): Language, Socioeconomic Integration, Housing. Legal issues: mainly DOCUMENTATION, Access to Health and Education Services. Discrimination and Prejudice, Vulnerability - precariousness.

While I do not want to go into details that you already know and have reflected on, I want to recall the feminine face of human migration, childhood and adolescence. The role of the elderly, who often take the place of the parents. All this has a very strong impact on the dynamics of family relationships and, logically, influences the construction of the social fabric and the future of the human family.

Defining some concepts

The invitation you sent me mentioned that I would be participating in the Panel "Current analysis of international migrations". So, if you allow me, I would like to "play" with some concepts and their definitions, since they may help us to better understand the situation.

Context

1. A joint or movable interlocking of one bone with another. articulation, play, joint.
2. Favorable opportunity for something. – opportunity, occasion, season, moment.
3. Combination of factors and circumstances that occur at a given moment. – circumstance, situation, tessitura, conditions, state, landscape.

Crossroads

1. Place where two or more streets or roads intersect; crossing, junction, intersection, confluence, point of intersection, crossroads, pica
2. Opportunity taken to harm someone, an ambush, threat.
3. Difficult situation in which one does not know which course of action to follow, dilemma, predicament, embarrassment.

Challenge

1. The action and effect of defying. Challenge, provocation, incitement, bet.
2. Rivalry, competition. duel, dispute, contest, combat, confrontation, competition, fight.
3. Verbal letter or message in which the kings of Aragon stated their reason or motive for challenging a rich man or knight.

Possibility

1. Aptitude, potency or occasion for something to be or exist: probability, viability, contingency, eventuality, virtuality, verisimilitude.
2. Expectation, risk.
3. [opportune circumstance] occasion, opportunity, chance.
4. Aptitude or faculty to do or not to do something. Faculty, aptitude, chance
5. Means available, own property.
6. Resources, means, goods, possible, fortune, income, wealth.

My proposal is that at the end of our dialogue we decide which one we will choose. The fact is that the path we must follow depends on how we look at it...

The geopolitics of migration? Or another alternative...?

When I began my search to respond to your invitation, several ideas were going around in my head, but above all the certainty that I am not the one who must give answers, but that the key is to provide elements, ways for you to look for those answers. Besides, in the UISG we have the mission of being prophets of communion, of weaving networks, of creating spaces so that the visible sign of inter-congregational is shown to the world, to this world that is so divided and individualistic.

Therefore, allow me to offer some ideas and suggestions born from these years of work and from the richness that so many sisters, so many lay people and above all so many asylum seekers, refugees and migrants have given me. God put in me this passion for accompanying human mobility and all of them nourished and formed it.

The reality of our world is characterized today by immediacy, everything must be now and that is how fast everything is forgotten. I think it was Milan Kundera in his book "Slowness" who pointed out that the degree of speed is directly proportional to the degree of forgetfulness... Haste condemns us to forget.

Approximately 10 days ago in a Conference of CONFER in Spain, where we spoke about the crisis of Slow Development: Those crises that are characterized by gradual and persistent processes that impact negatively on various aspects of society. These crises include mass migrations, climate change, the invisibilization of women, institutional abuses (power, conscience, sexual) etc. The guest sociologist, to give us a graphic image, described them as the clothes dryer that spins at full speed, but always stays in the same place. In our society there is constant growth, progressive acceleration and constant innovation. But inequality and injustice persist.

At the heart of all this is a concept of the human being that is deviant, despotic, that is centered only on himself, that forgets about Creation, that in a certain way divinizes technology. For 40 years we have been living through neo-liberal globalization. The market has become the new god. Governments became managers of large national and transnational corporations. Land and resources had to be used for their own benefit. We were all called upon to consume. We were all turned into commodities. Migrations, climate change, global organized crime, widespread violence, artificial intelligence ... Well, this is part of our world.

I just want to give you some ideas to start the journey, because this process, given our reality, must be constant: stop, see, listen, hear, reflect, pray, share, decide, pray again, act. And again, to start the cycle anew. If we want to respond, if we want to be faithful to the call that God has made to us, this path must be constant, and we must follow it together.

Since my background is in education, I am a teacher in Educational Sciences, I studied in a public university, with a marked leftist orientation. I got used to dialogue with many and diverse currents of thought. There is an important point to build our response: Dialogue with all the actors, whatever their orientation. Read as many sources as possible and always check the information. Common sense must be our ally.

Women have gifts that can help build Peace, let us always seek to include everyone in the search for solutions and if they are not found, then let us learn to live patiently with uncertainty until we find the answers.

In this training I was taught to be dynamic, the learning process is a two-way street and you have to be creative. That is why the map of the world, the panorama that reality presents us with today, was going round and round in my head, then the subject of Geopolitics came up, I thought that perhaps I would have to enter the world of the Geopolitics of migrations. But in Janete's words when inviting me and in the written invitation sent to me, there was a veiled suggestion to take a bold leap, to go beyond. And this can only be done from a critical point of view.

Therefore, I could not just repeat data that can be found after a click, I had to generate another type of search. And I began to wonder if there was not some Geopolitics of social love, or of Hope. As you express it in your motto: Pilgrims of Hope. Because HOPE is the only viable prophecy that we can and must offer to the man of today.

And while searching I came across a document from Professor Juan Luis Hernández Avendaño, Mexican. Professor of Sociology, Political Scientist. Worked in different universities in Mexico, Latin America and Spain, currently Rector of the Universidad Ibero Torreón.

Precisely entitled "Geopolitics of Hope", a document from which I would like to share with you some ideas:

- It does not seem easy to encourage hope in the midst of collective despair, it does not seem easy to organize a praxis sustained in the hope of a world or a common home with greater well-being for all, but fortunately the God of Jesus walks with us, the one who hears the cries of his people, and from this spiritual well our conviction that it is necessary to build a Geopolitics of Hope for a broken, unsupportive and morally blind world is nourished.

- In this sense, I propose and encourage five fields in which a Geopolitics of Hope could be developed: 1, epistemology; 2, praxis; 3, spirituality; 4, ethics and 5, geopolitics itself. Let us look at the characteristics of each field.

1. The Epistemology of Hope: seeing, analyzing and interpreting the reality with a prophetic perspective. How and why do we analyze the reality?

The Prophetic Analysis of Reality. It is nothing else than to recover praxis of the prophets in Israel. On the one hand, to be incisive and courageous in denouncing the “common evil”, the intolerable injustices, the abuse of the most vulnerable, the banality of evil; but also, and perhaps with greater force, to announce the good news of our time, to discover the passage of God in our present history, to identify the pedagogies of hope, the actors and subjects that inspire us in our journey, the resistance of individuals and peoples, the lives blinded by power but recovered in the struggles that continue. Here I allow myself a comment: I would add that part of the mission of being a prophet is to summon the people to liturgies welcoming the human mystery that help them to place themselves in front of the sacred, making the human being return to the center of his own existence.

With the aim of raising hope for a new heaven and a new earth, a new humanity. Thus, the analysis of reality must give light to our journey in the XXI century, a century that already showed us the pandemic of Covid-19, will be of uncertainty, but also of new cracks and junctures to continue influencing; to encourage our efforts of articulation and networking, to inspire options and alternatives, to see clearly the core of structural injustice to hit it, to face it and break it.

It should not skip on denouncing injustices, but it must be careful not to overestimate their invincibility. Furthermore, such an analysis must not underestimate the good news that surrounds us, nor underestimate the transformative capacities of the poor and the vulnerable. An analysis of this kind accompanies the critical and proactive look of those who do not lament the times in which they live, but rather are grateful for the opportunity to test our convictions and beliefs.

1. Suggests looking at the signs of the times from three epistemological positions:

- a) Reality is a condition of possibility, it is a social construction that admits sustainability, changes and transformations.

- b) Injustices of our circumstances.
- c) The good news of our time. The analysis and systematization of practices that transform reality in the key to a dignified life, which gives hope that even today the kingdom of God is being built without fullness, but with glimpses of humanity.

Such a method encourages us to illuminate hope, not only to believe in it, but to document it, to give evidence, to systematize it, to see it with our own eyes. This method also calls us to be emphatic in analyzing structural injustices, but equally solid in recognizing the transformations of the reality of our time. This epistemology of hope must recognize the “pedagogy of evil” and also the “pedagogy of hope” (Freire, 2009).

Such epistemology forges from the bottom up and emanates from a real reality (Ellacuría) to be transfigured into a true world for those who bet on new worlds and welcoming homes.

2. The praxis of hope: A praxis of hope would be concretized in resistance and in the audacity of action that transforms reality. To oppose the common evil, to be a sign of opposition to injustice. To resist is a sign of hope in the transformation of reality. To resist. Fundamental intimacies of liquid modernity

“Who said that all is lost, I come to offer my heart”. The Praxis of Hope is woven on a slow fire, on the margins of history, on the periphery of society, in the invisible, in the disruptors, in the creative, in those who are sustained by a strong, solid interiority, which the representatives of injustice cannot see. Another personal comment: Is this not the place of Consecrated Life, prophesying in the silence of this presence that brings the person back to the center?

The civil society, the organized people, those from below, will always be there, questioning power, hegemonies (capitalism, racism, patriarchy), weaving alternatives, from the small, from the insignificant, from the good word, from the testimony, from the solidarity delivery.

The key to a society with greater well-being depends on the growth of civil society or organized communities and it is there where we must focus our formative, practical and hopeful efforts, it is there where our Praxis of Hope must aim to widen and strengthen the antithesis to hegemonic power.

3. Spirituality of Hope: It is the hour of hope”, thus greeted the document of Medellin in 1968. The journey of the last 50 years of the Latin American church cannot be understood without this spirit, without that faith converted into works of personal and social liberation, without that faith that derived in the intersection faith-justice.

Medellin brought with it an old yearning, raised by John XXIII when he convoked the Second Vatican Council and recalled again in 1968: “the separation between faith and life must end”. And one of the central and concrete aspects of this Spirituality of Hope is discernment.

The discernment to discover God’s will in our reality becomes a hopeful necessity. In our community processes, training in discernment is essential and prepares us for the decisions and positions that we will later have to take in the public arena.

The Spirituality of Hope has its primary source in the spirituality of the human incarnation. A Spirituality of Hope is sustained by a lifestyle that welcomes, heals, defends, loves and forgives.

4. Ethics of Hope: The models of savage societies have existed throughout history.

And the most interesting aspect is that precisely in the most dehumanizing and cruel peaks of the darkest times, ethical leaderships arose that challenged and defied like Jesus, Luther King, Monsignor Romero, Rosa Parks, Malala, Norma Laferte (Mon Laferte), ethical leaderships to create, build, unveil, scrutinize, warn, defend, inspire, mobilize.

Each of these ethical leaders lived in societies closed by strong hegemonies, that is, dominant ideas that seem immovable (slavery, capitalism, patriarchy, racism, dictatorships, violence) and yet they decided to challenge that status quo as builders of peace, dialogue, active resistance, disruptive art, courageous voice in the midst of weapons; the most dazzling thing about ethical leadership is that they emerge just when they are most needed, when the adventure of the human being seems to go definitely to the cliff of history.

The Ethics of Hope that puts its praxis in the way of proceeding with care. Care, today more visible due to the damages of Covid-19, crosses three dimensions: the establishment of an economy of care, the recovery of citizenship as care for the common home, and the appeal to ethical questions in the main processes that surround us, such as migration, land ownership, consumption, technology, human rights, politics, social economy, etc.

Thinking globally and acting locally makes it possible for us to take charge of reality.

Caring for what is precious to us, caring for life, caring for the identity that makes us strong, caring for the sacredness we inherited from our ancestors, caring for those who need us. This ethic of care can be a source of hope, resistance, inspiration and consolation.

5. Geo-politics of Hope: “Geo” alludes to the land. The word politics comes from the Greek “polis” which meant “city” or “community”. And that was politics, that was doing politics, taking care of the welfare of cities.

Yes, we are invited to the audacity of the possible/impossible. And that audacity is the audacity of an ethical, civic and political leadership that prophetically confronts hopelessness, the “common evil” and the demoralizing and immobilizing pedagogies of consciences and actions.

Construir una Geopolítica de la Esperanza. Implica la formación de la mentalidad: Lo que siempre ha movido al mundo han sido las ideas, ellas son las que movilizan, inspiran, agitan, vinculan o articulan. Queremos movilizar un tipo de educación, pero no cualquier tipo de educación, sino una educación que tenga como primera asignatura los problemas de la realidad. Aprender desde, con y para la realidad.

This ethical, civic and political leadership cannot be blind and mute in the face of injustice, but rather, it must be from below, from the local regions, from the hope of the weak, acquiring the prophetic force that patiently but profoundly transforms the territories we inhabit. It must hope.

Identify who is doing this work (global and local at the same time). The Geopolitics of Hope is built and woven in the territory with the politics of presence. To be present, present to convoking, to do together, to resist, to create projects, to form and form us, to encourage us in the joy of having a hopeful faith.

In the simple life, on the marginalized fringes of history, on the human periphery, a small flame, a spark of hope, a word of encouragement, a shared joy, a mobilizing courage, a daring bravery is sponsored. There, in the small, the beginning of the end of empires, dynasties, kings, dictators, cliques, chieftains, patriarchies, racism and slave models that seem to have always been there, that never seem to go away, but many of these forms have gone, many of them are still with us; Therefore, the fire that molds a more just and fraternal society arises in the halo of those who have harbored within themselves a proposal, a project, an agenda, a word or an action to detonate outwardly a Geopolitics of Hope.

This proposal that Juan Luis makes to us is general, but at the same time very specific. In it there are elements that we can make our own to analyze the reality of our service, to validate and defend life, to influence the moment in which we live and nourish it with hope. Doing so with the elements that allow us to enter into a dialogue as equals with this society so marked by the market and the lust for power, while placing the human person at the center and doing so from our feminine being.

A song comes to my memory:

*You must turn on a light, however small it may be,
even if you have the night in your eyes and your soul is in ruins.
One knows that peace always follows war,
and that it's good to speak your truth, even if no one believes it...
... if you want that together we become a bonfire,
it is necessary that you light your light, however small it may be.*

We owe it to humanity to contribute our grain of sand, to kindle the light of our hope.

Because the one who sustains our hope is the God of History, whose human face is Jesus, brother and migrant, like us.

And now we have to decide the title of this panel: is the reality of human mobility today a juncture, a crossroads, a challenge or a possibility?

SECOND PART
MACRO STRATEGIES
OF THE MISSIONARY
ACTION OF THE
SCALABRINIAN SISTERS

RESPONSES OF THE MSCS CONGREGATION TO THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN MOBILITY

1 RESPONSES FROM THE CONGREGATION IN BRAZIL

*Sr. Idalina Pellegrini, mscs**

*Sr. Claudete Lodi Rissini, mscs***

Activities and programmes by strategic area

Welcoming: this is one of the action's main activities. The verb acolher takes on various conjugations in different forms of action: from spaces that promote the stay of stateless people, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with their personal and family needs, to spaces that promote listening and guidance. In this sense, the combinations reveal that the various actions are carried out in some way in favour of welcoming. Comprehensive reception takes place without detracting from the identity of the people or families assisted and seeks to promote autonomy and protagonism through various livelihood programmes, which advocate that people achieve self-sufficiency. The actions are not for, but with the migrants and refugees. In this sense, the welcome is accompanied by the desired self-sufficiency or autonomy, which is also present in all forms of promotion, such as: vocational courses, psychosocial care, listening and guidance, promotion, etc.

- **Integral development:** involves actions that address not just one aspect or dimension, such as those related to the economy, but also social, cultural, religious, recreational and emotional aspects.

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**Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary, she graduated in Social Work at PUCRS. Member of the Enlarged Council of the Province Maria Mae dos Migrantes - Socio-Pastoral Service; Coordinator of Social Projects of the Educational and Charitable Association São Carlos - Porto Alegre RS; Social Worker of the schools of the Educational and Charitable Association São Carlos; Member of the Permanent Forum of Human Mobility of Rio Grande do Sul; Member of the Committee of Attention to Migrants, Refugees, Stateless and Victims of Human Trafficking and of the Network Un Grito por la Vida (A Cry for Life).

Thus, actions include seeking guarantees of access to educational opportunities, health services, emotional support and social integration in the host communities.

- **Interaction with the host society:** the activities carried out also involve the involvement of local society, communities and churches. The dynamics of integration can only be successful if the migrants, people and institutions of the host country are considered and engaged. This necessary relationship, directly or indirectly, is present in the activities, especially those related to training, teaching the local language, education, training and awareness-raising, etc.
- **Psychosocial support:** mental health during migration is a complex issue. Migrants often face emotional challenges due to integration, family separation and cultural changes. Psychosocial support and awareness-raising about mental health issues are essential to promote migrants' well-being. It also highlights actions, whether face-to-face or virtual, that aim to promote mental health.
- **Impact:** Advocacy actions involve defending the rights and interests of migrants. Activities and programmes within this scope include promoting fair policies, combating discrimination and guaranteeing access to essential services. They also seek to influence policies to create more inclusive environments and protect the human rights of migrants and refugees. They involve promoting changes in policies, practices or perceptions and are aimed at improvements in various areas, such as human rights, the environment, social justice and health. Thus, the actions aim to influence decisions and create a positive impact on the host society.
- **Networks:** It's not news that migrants and refugees also rely on social networks for information, comprehensive support, job opportunities, etc. Therefore, actions are not only taken internally or in isolation, but together with governments, organisations, committees, universities and agencies that often address migration issues and thus collaborate and network to provide comprehensive assistance, promote rights and address the challenges that migrants face. Networking can strengthen the capacity to deal with the complex aspects of migration, promoting integration and effective support.
- **Celebrations and leisure:** **Celebrations** and leisure activities play an important role in promoting balance and well-being. Celebrations

provide moments of joy, social connection and reflection, while leisure activities offer opportunities for relaxation and pleasure. Both are essential elements of a balanced life, contributing to happiness and quality of life. Celebrations help preserve cultural identity and strengthen community ties for migrants and refugees. The events experienced generally include festivals, religious ceremonies or celebrations that reflect the traditions and customs of their origins. As well as providing a sense of belonging, celebrations also offer an opportunity to share and promote cultural diversity, stimulating understanding and appreciation between the different groups in the host society. Leisure time can also play an important role in the integration of immigrants into new environments. Participating in leisure activities helps create social connections, facilitates cultural integration and offers opportunities to meet local people. In addition, leisure provides a break from the pressures of migration, contributing to emotional well-being and reducing the stress associated with the transition to migration.

Differential elements of strategic action developed by the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters

Differential elements	Description
Knowledge of reality	Consider reality critically and intelligently before acting.
Transforming reality	Personal and institutional commitment to transforming different realities according to the values of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus.
Listen	Careful and active attention to understanding the complexities and challenges of everyday life. Ability to listen to experiences for actions that seek to promote significant change.
Unconditional respect for otherness	Activities developed with and for migrants and refugees, including their voices and experiences, overcoming colonialist or dominant positions.
Education for interculturality	Actions aimed at promoting harmonious coexistence between people from different backgrounds. Recognising differences in order to build bridges of dialogue and cooperation. Through educational

	environments that celebrate diversity and prepare students for active and ethical participation.
Action planning, management and evaluation	Planning aims to set directions and goals by analysing the internal and external environment, identifying opportunities and threats, defining strengths and weaknesses and formulating strategies to achieve objectives.
Gratuity	Actions and services that transcend economic transactions, promoting more supportive relationships.
Female protagonism	Action and valorisation of women's presence in order to promote gender equality and value women's skills and perspectives in different contexts.

What are the priorities for women and children in vulnerable situations and the role of migrants/refugees as the subjects of their journeys?

In the dynamics of migration, women and children are among the most vulnerable groups, as they suffer various forms of abuse and violence. In the case of women, the feminisation of migration challenges the units to develop actions aimed at offering them more dignified and inclusive living conditions. Many women migrate with their families, which means that units and services have to pay more attention to them. These challenges are taken into account by the units and services where women and children are present.

Perspectives

In the sisters' sharing, elements of what they hope to improve and expand in the work carried out by the Congregation in the region emerged in the form of perspectives/desires or plans.

- Training sisters through postgraduate courses;
- Having more laypeople and collaborators;
- Strengthening networking;
- Wider knowledge of migration policies;
- Entering and qualifying information in the Paroikos system;
- Deepening the General Guidelines for the Apostolate;
- Adaptation of some spaces (physical structure);
- Staff qualification (continuous training);
- Improve learning in other languages;
- Expansion of services;

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- Raising awareness to combat xenophobia;
 - Communication that supports a positive vision of migration;
 - Increase the number of volunteers.

2 MSCS RESPONSE TO MIGRATION REALITIES IN ARGENTINA, PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA, ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA

*Sr. Juliana Rodrigues, mscs**

Main macro strategies adopted

In its missionary work as a Congregation present in the 5 countries, it has developed a wide diversity of responses to the challenges presented by migrants and refugees, in a way that the sisters exercise missionary creativity to keep the Charism alive.

This diversity of action, based on context, approach and competence, helps to better articulate the practice and expression of the Congregation in the different countries, while at the same time evaluating our presence and seeking to implement projects and programs that can respond to the needs of people in the context of human mobility.

The Scalabrinian presentation in the five Hispanic countries of South America is based on the four verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integral, which go hand in hand with the strategic axes of the MSCS missionary action.

1. Shelter, assistance and protection in emergency and vulnerable situations

- Five reception centers (1 in Bolivia, 2 in Colombia and 2 in Ecuador), where temporary housing is provided.
- Emergency humanitarian assistance through the delivery of food, personal hygiene items, rental support, humanitarian transportation and medical care.
- Community dining room for people in transit.
- Psychosocial and legal assistance and support.

* Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary. Social Worker. Currently she develops her mission as coordinator of Project Management in the Scalabrinian Sisters Mission, in Ecuador.

- Occupational spaces for listening and orientation.
- Assistance for the reestablishment of family group ties.

2. Promotion and Integration

- Community and sustainable livelihoods process.
- Training and technical education.
- Guidance for insertion into the formal labor market.
- Support for entrepreneurship initiatives.

3. Promotion and coordination of pastoral work with migrants and refugees.

- Evangelization and catechesis.
- Vocational counseling to young people in their life project.
- Work in coordination of the Pastoral of Human Mobility in the Episcopal Conference.
- Diocesan coordination of the migration pastoral service.
- Living ecumenical celebrations based on the proposal of human and spiritual formation.
- Celebration of cultural integration based on different cultures and religions.

4. Priority attention to women and children

- Women's support group.
- Training and accompaniment for women's leadership.
- Protection for women and children to prevent violence.
- Integration projects for children and youth from access to the education system, resilience activities and training.

5. Training and awareness

- Formation of new agents of the migration ministry.
- The accompaniment and strengthening of the Scalabrinian Group of Laity.
- Formation to the diocesan church for the sensitization of Bishops and priests regarding the migratory context.

6. Lobbying, Advocacy and Networking

- Promotion of public policies through dialogue with government authorities and decision makers.
- Accompanying social actors to generate processes of reflection, collective construction and joint action.
- Construction of Public Policies at national and local level to guarantee access to rights: education, health, housing and regularization.
- Participation in collective spaces and dialogues that promote alliances that generate channels of dialogue and influence in the main decision-making areas.
- Preparation of reports, positions and proposals that promote integration at the community level.
- Participation in networks and/or working groups such as: Red Clamor; Red de Lucha Contra Trata y Tráfico de personas; GTRM - Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes; Comisión de la Verdad; Red de Movimiento de niñas, niños y adolescentes; Redeprod - Red de Protección y Derechos.

The elements that differentiate the strategic action developed by the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in their respective context:

1. Promotion and integration - sustainable community livelihoods process and support for enterprise initiatives.
2. Priority attention to women and children - training for women's empowerment and leadership; resilience activities and ongoing formation for children, adolescents and youth from the Scalabrinian charism as the Scalabrinian Youth Movement.
3. Strengthening of protagonism and leadership - strengthening from the social and solidarity economy that allows the expression and exercise of the migrant and refugee collective, from the strategy of exchange, strengthening of collective initiatives and proposal of visibility.

The priorities for women and children in situations of vulnerability and the role of migrants/refugees as subjects of their trajectories

Special attention and care for women, adolescents, boys and girls that make up the flow of migrants and refugees is a fundamental contribution

based on the capacity to attend and respond to the needs of this priority group, recognizing the risks and threats they face, while at the same time recognizing the opportunities and potential that they do not have access to.

Since then, actions have been developed to promote protection, promotion, performance and integration, with the proposal of guaranteeing the right to life and the recognition of dignity.

- Psychosocial support groups for women based on empathic listening.
- Empowerment of women through a training process with the proposal of “women who transform communities”.
- Protection mechanisms from legal attention to guarantee access to rights (health and education, decent housing and regularization), also for violence prevention.
- Promotion of safe migration, from information on alternative routes to reduce risks in the process.
- Development of life skills training.
- Occupational and recreational space for children, adolescents and youth with resilience activities and continuous training.
- Work for the construction of a support network for women.

What is expected to be improved and expanded in the work carried out by the Congregation in the region in the form of perspectives/desires or plans

While migrants and refugees in the world continue with their dynamism and constantly changing needs, as sisters who are on this journey, we seek to adopt new practices to continue responding with fidelity to the Scalabrinian charism, starting from the new times, within our possibilities and with concrete actions.

We see that it is necessary from the dynamics of the migratory context in the 5 countries of the Hispanic region of South America to think about:

1. To expand the actions with migrants and refugees, from a proposal of extension of the missionary work in Argentina and Bolivia.
2. Strengthen our missions from the articulated work with lay people and volunteers.
3. Prioritize human resources from the presence of sisters, and economic resources in favor of the mission.
4. Extension of the presence of the Congregation in border realities such as Peru and Chile.

5. Create a Scalabrinian Network to guarantee a safe route for migrants who transit between these 5 countries.

3 RESPONSES FROM MSCS SISTERS IN AFRICA

*Sr. Carla Frey Bamberg, mscs**

Following the canonization of St. John Baptist Scalabrini, Father of the Migrants, and the spreading of his life, work and charism, the vision of the local church has been strengthened and the creation of a new parish dedicated to him has been encouraged in Johannesburg, South Africa.

For all of us sisters, St. John Baptist Scalabrini is a model who inspires us to defend migrants and to influence political and social issues. In all our services we try to be faithful to the charism we have received, promoting communion in diversity in the Church where we work. These services involve all migrants/refugees and the host community.

The main strategies of the MSCS Sisters' action on the African continent are diverse and respond to the local needs where they operate

In the countries where the sisters work, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola, they coordinate the Pastoral Care of Migration in the three episcopal conferences, in the archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa, in the diocese of Uije, Angola, as well as the national Caritas in South Africa and diocesan Caritas in Uije, Angola.

The Bienvenu Shelter and the Mother Assunta Training Center in Johannesburg, South Africa and the Scalabrini Center in Ressano Garcia, Mozambique are under the direction of the sisters.

There is a commitment to raise awareness in the local Church to welcome and take on the Pastoral Care of Migration in dioceses, parishes and communities, as well as the integration of the Pastoral Care of Migration with other Social Pastoral Care. Networking and partnerships with other organizations, including public institutions, with operational choices that

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also respond to the basic needs of migrants and refugees, in view of their integration into the local community: health, documentation, education, housing, temporary shelter, professionalization, pastoral care, etc.

The assistance given to migrants follows the principle of greater vulnerability, prioritizing special attention to women and children. There is constant attention to borders, internal migration, refugee centers and internally displaced people. There is a relationship of proximity, welcome, listening, compassion, empathy and selfless love with the different people or groups experiencing situations of mobility.

There are constant visits and accompaniment in detention centers for migrants and foreigners in an irregular situation; home visits to families or those responsible for the education of migrant children and other groups in vulnerable situations.

In the various local churches, as well as through the Bishops' Conferences, there is an effort to train teams of lay people, leaders who collaborate with the Pastoral Care of Migrants and who contribute to the formation of awareness and empowerment of migrants. In various ecclesial spheres, the sisters are much in demand for leadership training.

The coordination of the pastoral care of migrants in the dioceses gives them access to all the parishes, as well as the media and public bodies. This makes it easier to raise awareness about the situation of people on the move and the urgency of meeting their basic needs.

In all their activities, they try to encourage the protagonism of migrants, refugees, displaced persons, returnees, women, children and victims of human trafficking. As much as possible, religious, social, educational and cultural activities are promoted with these groups and with the mission's collaborators. Through all these activities, the Scalabrinian mission makes itself known in communities, centers, social networks, NGOs, etc.

There is also a great deal of involvement by the sisters in vocational accompaniment for young people in general and in the formation of future Scalabrinian missionaries.

As much as possible, the Congregation is responding to the demands of people on the move in the contexts in which they live, always in defense of the life and dignity of people on the move. In the various coordinating roles that the sisters exercise, they try to implement the resolutions established by the bishops for the Pastoral Care of Migration in the dioceses and parishes. They are committed to preparing and distributing material and holding formation and training courses for agents of the Pastoral Care of Migrants at national, diocesan and parish level. They provide support and

accompaniment to dioceses and parishes that wish to create or organize a Migration Ministry.

Specific humanitarian aid programs are in place for migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations, as well as an educational and protection program for migrant and refugee children. In emergency assistance, they offer food, school supplies, shelter, agricultural inputs, transportation, health, accommodation and hygiene. There is nutritional support for children in vulnerable situations (at the Refugee Center in Nampula and the Scalabrini Center in Ressano Garcia), tutoring and residential care for refugee women and their children at the Bienvenu Shelter in Johannesburg. These women are also offered group and individual therapy sessions to help them overcome their traumas and difficulties.

In addition to English and Portuguese courses for the integration of migrants into local communities, vocational courses are offered to empower migrant and refugee women. There are courses in IT, hair cutting, dressmaking, handicrafts, accounting and business management. At the end of the courses, toolkits are distributed so that they can start small businesses.

There is also training for migrants, refugees and displaced people in small business management and help to finance activities that generate income to support their families, with a view to their inclusion and autonomy.

In Angola, the community of repatriates was created to promote solidarity, human promotion and economic and financial development, helping people to organize themselves for self-sustainability and to support each other in their own community. These actions include micro-credit, adult literacy, the creation of cooperatives, teaching the Portuguese language, sewing courses, natural medicine, help in acquiring personal and/or community documentation.

In all countries, advocacy actions are aimed at defending the rights and protection of migrants and refugees, as well as providing legal assistance to obtain various documents. There is a network of focal points for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and human body parts in all of Mozambique's provinces, in partnership with government and civil institutions.

They also network with various religious and civil partners and carry out campaigns in the communities, promoting safe migration, sharing information material, training in schools and other strategic locations where there is more traffic.

Projects and activities respect the local culture of the migrants, as well as the preparation and organization of celebrations that encourage integration and encounter: World Day of Migration and Refugees, Patron Saint's Day, Women's Day and Christmas for Children.

There are many contributions from the Congregation to the challenges facing the Church and society:

The dedication of several sisters to coordinating the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Caritas at diocesan level and in the Episcopal Conferences.

Dialogue with the Church on the importance of the Pastoral Care of Migrants where it does not exist, exerting a positive influence in the life of the Church and civil society, in relation to the lives of migrants and refugees, their challenges, their struggles and contributions to society.

From a formative point of view, awareness is created of the need for greater organization to grow and advance as a Church and as a civil society, to remedy the critical social situations of the most vulnerable people.

Carrying out and publishing scientific studies and television reports on human and organ trafficking and the prevention of irregular migration.

The Congregation is present in organizations that have an impact on local work (VIVAT, the Scalabrinian Foundation and CSEM).

Fundraising for the initiatives carried out in our mission and the sustainability and search for donors to respond to the mission's projects.

The services provided by the Bienvenu Shelter and the Mother Assunta Training Center in Johannesburg offer reception services, temporary residence and vocational training for women, and are a point of reference in Johannesburg and the surrounding area.

The training of Pastoral Migration workers with its own methodology, in all countries, in line with current needs and times in the context of migration.

Constantly seeking professional updating and formation for the sisters and their teams to respond to the demands of the mission.

Collaboration and partnership between the sisters working in different countries and border regions to respond to the emerging challenges of the mission.

Openness and willingness to respond to the needs and requests of the diocese and of migrants and the needy in religious, social and formative aspects.

We can expand and qualify our work as religious Scalabrinian women through various actions, such as:

- Constructing the strategic apostolic plan for the African continent.

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- Dialogue with local Church authorities on the importance of the specificity of our charism and taking on work in accordance with the Congregation's mission.
 - Strengthening the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility in all dioceses, parishes and communities, creating conditions and mechanisms for self-sustainability, prioritizing welcome, valuing the culture, pastoral and professional experiences of those who arrive in the host community.
 - To ensure that pastoral work is carried out together with other organizations that work with people on the move. To expand partnerships and networking in the promotion of public policies in defense of migrants and refugees, creating an impact on society in general with our social and pastoral work.
 - Promote and carry out scientific studies on migratory dynamics in the country and provide the Bishops' Conferences with information on the challenges and problems faced by people on the move, to provide responses tailored to each context.
 - Continuing to invest in the apostolic-missionary formation of the sisters, to better respond to the demands of the mission.
 - Raising financial resources for the sustainability of the mission in the Africa Region (a person in charge of common projects).
 - Spreading the documents of the Church's Social Doctrine on migration issues.
 - We also need a greater number of sisters working in the communities, to reinforce the mission and enable periods of formation and updating for the sisters who are in these missions.
 - Ensuring that regional meetings are held in person, with all the sisters present, with time for sharing, reflection and evaluation to qualify our missionary action.
 - Investing in and accompanying the new vocations that emerge in Africa, so as to be able to expand the Congregation's presence in the future.

4 MAIN MACRO STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY MSCS SISTERS IN EUROPE

*Sr. Leticia Gutierrez Valderrama, mscs**

Macrostrategy 1: Shelter and assistance in “emergencies”

- Shelter, assistance and protection in “emergencies” such as knowing how to communicate in the language of the immigrants and intervene in situations of vulnerability in the “first” emergency of reception in the centers where we work.
- Assistance in situations of risk and urgent need of hospital medicines, clothes for pregnant women, personal hygiene, food, hygiene material, tickets for local transport.
- Visits to migrant and refugee families at home, detention centers (prisons), workplace, hospital, migrant and children’s schools.

Macrostrategy 2: Development and integration

- Assistance and financial help for documentation, follow-up at the town hall, for lawyers to resolve the residence permit procedures.
- Celebration with immigrants in ethnic communities.
- Courses for caregivers, bar and restaurant assistants, among others, with the objective of integrating them and helping them to obtain a fair salary avoiding exploitation.
- Listening, referral and personalized accompaniment.
- Integration of immigrants into the labor market.

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Macrostrategy 3: Evangelization and strategic coordination

- Catechesis, catechumenate, youth group. Liturgical preparation, liturgical celebrations for families, in intercultural parishes, reflection on the Gospel, listening and welcoming.
- Participation in meetings of the various pastoral organizations of the Church.
- Animation and pastoral coordination among migrants and refugees through evangelization and formation.

Macro-strategy 4: Give priority to migrant women and children.

- Weekly meetings with migrant women and children.
- Collaboration with social services with special attention to children and women to help them obtain their rights in the host country.

Macro-strategy 5: Empowerment of migrants and refugees

- Constant commitment to promoting the integration and protection of migrants' rights.
- Participatory approach, seeking to include the migrant in decision making; encouraging all forms of learning, keeping migrants' esteem high; listening to migrants' stories and experiences.
- Training and awareness-raising on the role of migrant and refugee "leaders" so that they have a point of reference.

Macrostrategy 6: Training and awareness-raising

- Formation and awareness-raising on the theme of migration in the ecclesial and socio-cultural context and through communication in the social media.
- Assistance to ecclesial and civil organizations dealing with migration issues.
- Raising awareness in the Church and society about the presence of migrants as an enrichment for the country of arrival.
- Promotion of interculturality in the Church and society that fosters dignity without discrimination.

Macrostrategy 7: Advocacy and Networking

- Comprehensive approach to migration and strive to consider both the opportunities it presents and the challenges it poses.

- Presence that fosters collaboration in the form of partnership between different actors; We work closely with other agencies to foster interaction in collaboration with key institutions.
- Collaborating affectionately with volunteers and networking with various volunteer and family associations
- Networks ad intra ecclesial and ad extra, with local, national or intercontinental civil organizations. Promoting the building of social networks through advocacy: raising awareness of migrants for their integration and inclusion in the socio-cultural and religious life of the city and the church, participation in the VIVAT network, raising awareness through the publication of opinion articles on migrants in the church.

Components that characterize the strategic work carried out by the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in Europe

Among the elements that characterize our work strategy, the emphasis is on welcoming and listening to the migrants who entrust themselves to us and on human and spiritual accompaniment, helping them to live their faith. We are a bridge between the local Church and people on the move. We are also a bridge to support them in documentation, language learning and employment, offering and promoting professional training and a clear and objective information about the system and the organization of the society in which they are. We promote their integration through language courses and school support for children.

Within the context in which we work, we are at the side of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seeking families, accompanying them in their various needs for listening, assistance, guidance and administrative processing. At the same time, we help them to understand their legal rights and duties and to face the challenges of their migratory situation. We help them regain their self-confidence and restore their dignity at a holistic level and help them feel valued.

We live and share our religious consecration and faith with migrants and refugees, offering them spiritual support and contributing to their emotional and psychological well-being through prayer, reflection and faith sharing. We help migrants keep their faith and spiritual life alive through evangelization, catechesis, listening, festivals and celebrations, as spiritual education reflects our desire to foster a deep connection to the Catholic faith in multicultural contexts. We are migrants with migrants, because migration helps us to understand life as it is, to grow as persons, to recognize feelings, encounters with the different and to look at the essence of being human.

We, the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, distinguish ourselves by our strategic work through our humanitarian and pastoral approach with migrants and refugees. Our particularity lies within our dedication to holistic care, encompassing social, cultural and spiritual aspects, thus helping to build welcoming and supportive communities in the local churches and to sensitize the society where we are present.

Focus on women and children in vulnerable situations and the role of migrants/refugees as protagonists of their story

In Europe, we pay special attention to vulnerable migrant and refugee women and children through specific programs in the places where we are present and in our reception centers, offering them psychological support and educational services. We work to ensure a safe and inclusive environment, thus helping to address the specific risks that women and children may face during the migration process.

We are migrants with migrants, working both at the ecclesial level and in associations and state bodies, thus contributing to unity and fraternity, actively participating in the local Church in the realization of a meaningful synodal journey. Active participation in the pastoral council of local parishes and involvement in diocesan projects and activities aimed at migrants represent our constant commitment to integration and cooperation with the local Church.

We pay special attention to Ukrainian women with children since the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine. In addition, we work to raise awareness and protect migrants, for example, through work in academia, involvement in the life of ethnic communities, participation in the network of associations or institutions dealing with migrants, and through targeted social communication campaigns.

Personalized support to migrants of various nationalities who come to our communities and centers to learn the language of the host country.

Witnessing the proclamation of the Gospel (interdenominational aspect with a team composed of sisters and lay people in various languages) and our life, Scalabrinian spirituality, our itinerancy and open heartedness. To raise awareness of the reality of migration and to train pastoral communities, especially those in charge. To adopt a triple approach to integration: learning the language, access to formation and welcome.

Elements that emerged from the Sisters' sharing of what they hope to improve and expand in the work of the Congregation in the region, in the form of perspectives/desires or plans

As Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, we hope to enhance and expand our mission to migrants and refugees in Europe by focusing our efforts in several key areas through the expansion of reception and social inclusion services, the implementation of targeted educational programs, the development of community support networks and the promotion of more inclusive policies at the local and national levels. The goal is to continue to respond effectively to the changing needs of those in vulnerable situations, thereby helping to promote safer and more dignified migration.

In Europe, we have perspectives, desires and plans to improve support for refugee women with children by developing counseling programs, improving children's access to education, creating supportive communities and advocating for the rights of refugee women. We want to intensify our collaboration with local organizations and authorities to ensure a supportive and inclusive environment that meets the needs of women and their children in refugee situations.

We want to improve our assistance and services to migrants and refugees and draw attention to the real dimension of migration and its contribution to the construction of an inclusive and universal society.

We hope to reactivate our Center of Studies (CEDOMIS) at the Motherhouse in Piacenza to promote, produce and disseminate scientific and interdisciplinary knowledge on international and local migrations from a perspective of respect and promotion of human dignity and the protagonism of migrants and refugees (See www.csem.org.br), thus making our contribution to the construction of a more just and fraternal world.

5 PASTORAL RESPONSE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA PROVINCE IN THE US AND CANADA

*Sr. Maria Arlina Barral, mscs**

The Province of Our Lady of Fatima has its missionary presence in three archdioceses, namely, the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada; the Archdiocese of Chicago, US and the Archdiocese of New Roschelle, US. And, one presence at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Secretariat of the Asian, and the Pacific Islanders.

- Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)
- Case Management for Recent Arrivals at the Scalabrini Immigrant and Refugee Services (SIRS)
- Catechesis in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (OLMC) & at the Archdiocese of New Roschelle, New York
- Hospital Chaplaincy at Ascencion Alexian Brothers
- USCCB-Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

Main strategies of our action in the context where we are present, manifesting the experience of the charism and the missionary mandate we have received:

1. Shelter, Assistance, and Protection in Emergency and Vulnerability

- Our missionary presence in the US by being involved in direct service with newcomer immigrants or recent arrivals.
- We do direct case management for the recent arrivals asylum seekers that includes: care in situations of risk, providing urgent needs, listening and orientation, and social assistance services.

* Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, missionary in the United States of America as Senior Benefits Specialist for the Southern Border Arrivals Project at Scalabrini Immigrant and Refugee Services, Inc. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the Univ. of Santo Tomas and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the Univ. of the Philippines. She also has a specialization in Migration Psychology.

2. Promotion and Integration

- As a professional support, we resolve the language barrier with newcomer immigrants. Most of our sisters are trilingual and bilingual. We contribute with communication skills with a non-judgemental approach in welcoming and integrating new immigrants into our community.
- We contribute our expertise and best practices in administering shelters for migrants and refugees.

3. Animation and Pastoral Coordination with Migrants and Refugees

- Promoting cultural solidarity and sensibility between the local receiving community and the newcomer immigrants.
- Pastoral accompaniment with the immigrants and their families at the parish, hospital, and community-based organization in the local church/community to which we belong. Pastoral accompaniment includes humanitarian assistance, sociocultural orientation, emotional and spiritual guidance, networking, and referrals to different organizations where immigrants can avail social benefits and resources.

4. Training and Awareness

- We continue to prepare sisters professionally aligned with the demands of the mission with the migrants and refugees. For example, to have sisters who can become immigrant para-legal or lawyers, or specialize in lobbying and advocacy pro-migrants.
- Part of a team in providing training to regional and national groups related to resources developed by the USCCB, its committees, and its work groups; Being a resource and advocate to the USCCB committees and offices on issues relating to cultural diversity and people with special pastoral needs;

5. Advocacy and Networking

- We reconnect with the different organizations that have lobbying and advocacy events/proposals in favor of the migrants and refugees. To call and support the bills of the alderman, and senators in favor of humane migratory policies and laws.
- At the USCCB level, advocating for and coordinating the efforts of the permanent subcommittees to address cultural diversity in the Church; Collaborating intentionally and systematically with

all USCCB committees and offices on issues and initiatives that impact cultural diversity in the Church and people with special pastoral needs.

6 RESPONSES FROM THE MSCS CONGREGATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*Sr. Idalina Bordignon, mscs**
*Sr. Lidia Mara Silva de Souza, mscs***

The following was identified in relation to the MSCS Macro Strategies Missionary Action in the region made up of the countries of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean:

Shelter, assistance and protection in emergency and vulnerable situations.

All missions in the countries of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean are implementing this strategy and are seeking to improve their coordination mechanisms to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of people in mobility. It is the main strategy for all missions.

Promotion and integration

All the missions offer contributions for the socio-labor insertion, including professional training, but, in some missions, as the main profile is of migrants in transit, a strategy to improve this area of labor insertion has not yet been achieved.

* Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, graduated in Social Work and Law. She is currently the director of the Centre of Attention to the Returned Migrant in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

**Brazilian, religious of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Scalabrinian, she has a degree in Philosophy from the Pontifical Catholic University of Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. Master in Migrations: policies and resources for social cohesion, from the LUMSA University, Faculty of Social Sciences of the formation of Rome - Italy; Specialisation in Spiritual Theology, at the Pontifical Teresianum Institute, Rome - Italy. She currently works in the General Direction of Scalabrinian Mission with Migrants and Refugees - SMR, Mexico; she is a collaborator in the Diploma in Pastoral Migratory Ministry in Mexico and Central America; she is a congregational delegate for the CLAMOR Network - Latin American and Caribbean Network of Migration, Displacement, Refuge and Trafficking of Persons.

In all the missions, at different levels, there is coordination with the Pastoral of Human Mobility or spaces of Consecrated Life at the service of people in mobility. The sisters of the missions of this region agree that it is necessary to strengthen coordination with the different pastoral areas and, equally, with the spaces of action of the Consecrated Life.

Priority attention to women and children

In all the missions, attention is provided to women and children, but only in Tijuana this attention is a priority, as a shelter. In some presences the women are accompanied with the methodology offered by Catholic Relief Services with the Women's Support Group.

Empowerment of migrant/refugee leadership and protagonism

We seek to train migrants to be the protagonists of their own history, but we also recognize all the organizational processes that they promote.

In a special way, in some missions, with the close accompaniment and technical assistance of the sisters and collaborators, committees of returned migrants with disabilities, committees of relatives of migrants who disappeared along the migratory route, groups of returned migrants for productive projects, among others, were organized.

Advocacy and networks

The missionary organizations seek to develop advocacy processes from the networks to which they belong (Church and civil society) and through inter-institutional coordination.

7 RESPONSES FROM MSCS SISTERS IN ASIA

*Sr. Noemi E. Digo, mscs**

Introduction

In the various ministries where the Scalabrinian Sisters in Asia are involved, be it in the Dioceses, the Parishes or in linkage with government, non-government agencies, religious institutions or groups, cases such as mentioned above has become a common occurrence. As inheritors of the charismatic gift of St. John Baptist Scalabrini, the MSCS has been called upon to assume apostolic involvement and ministries catering to the needs of migrants and their families and involving the lay people in this dynamic work.

Surveys and mapping out activities through BECS, to identify the migrants and assist the poor parishioners, are part of the continuing program in the dioceses. The focal points are Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECS), comprising of registered families living within a particular boundary covered by a parish who gather at certain day of the week praying, sharing the Word of God or celebrating Masses, as a self-sustaining, self-nourishing and self-governing community of believers.

Internal migrants including the returnees among them are organized for spiritual support, livelihood programs, case referrals and counselling assistance they can avail from government agencies and church programs. Individual encounters and house visits for spiritual sustenance, or a listening ear for those who are heavily burdened, are also a work at hand. Forming leaders among parish migrants' coordinators and the young Sisters in formation, through orientation seminars and formation modules are pursued with vigor to equip them with deeper knowledge of migrant issues and appropriate disposition towards the people they serve.

* Filipino Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, Bachelor of Arts in Commerce, Philosophy and Theology. She is currently the Diocesan Coordinator of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Diocese of Tagum, Davao del Norte, Philippines. Text prepared in collaboration with Elizabeth V. Pederal, Asia Delegate Superior; Marcedita P. Saboga-a, Councilor, Responsible for Apostolate and Ma. Teresa V. Mercado, Councilor, Responsible for Formation.

Continuing awareness raising and networking on the divergent issues of migration, including human trafficking are on the works, as well as face to face or online participation at various fora, academic lecture series, meetings, and gatherings on migration themes. Personal accompaniment of Filipino international students in Taiwan are bearing much fruit in the lives of these young people and their families. The growing pains, separation from families left behind, academic difficulties, spiritual and moral companioning are just but a few of the assistance our sister offers for these young adults under her care. In this way, they can hold on to an assured future in terms of academic excellence and job placement, not to forget the financial amelioration of the family left behind, through the aid of a church based micro finance institution. It has also become a training ground for the values of hospitality and welcome for the MSCS formands, mostly are migrants too from Indonesia, who extend assistance and their presence to these scholars prior to their flight abroad. The possibility of forming a lay scalabrinian group from among the parents of these students are on the planning board, as well.

Convergent elements of communal/regional discussions

The communal meetings conducted by the Delegation among the six communities in five countries, demonstrated one important thing – Scalabrinians are living out to the full their charismatic identity. From the important work of lending their ears to sad stories from local migrants or returnees to sheltering migrants according to their possibility, to forming lay leaders through awareness raising or basic orientations on migration, the Scalabrinian Sisters together with those in formation, are fully involved in the work for migrants, some more than others. The need for a more formal training or preparations among the sisters and the usual financial constraints hamper or deter expected progress to expand the work at hand. Some have the assistance of the Dioceses, though still limited in human resources and fundings, others in formation houses have to confront the limitations of able bodies prepared for the work. Some lay collaborators are willing partners but not as full-time workers in the vineyard of migration due to familial constraints. For the meantime, we pursue the work with great hope of fully ministering to migrants, especially the women, the children and those most vulnerable to abuse, violation of their dignity and their human rights.

Conclusion

The two-fold mission of the church, that of “defender of nations and ethnic minorities (protecting their fundamental rights) and that of “evangelizing people” (integrating all cultures into Catholicism), touches on the very issue of migration. With the multi-faceted cultural richness from majority or minority groups of migrants vying for space and venues of expressions in particular churches, the local churches must be able to create unity and solidarity by acknowledging and recognizing this cultural giftedness, putting them at the service of the local community. Letting migrants experience unity at a higher level, more universal, more catholic, means allowing them to have “an authentic experience of church”. In this sense, communion and solidarity, unity and oneness of purpose can be achieved once the migrants begin to attain the awareness of being a “synodal church” wherever they are.

8 ANALYSIS OF THE CONGREGATION'S STRATEGIC ACTION

*Renata Dubini**

I would like to begin my intervention by congratulating the sisters for their work and for the analysis of their respective countries considering challenges and opportunities. The charism of St. John Baptist Scalabrini accompanies all your actions, promoting communion in diversity in the different Churches where each of you and your sisters serve. The strategic axes of the work that you presented to us revolve around the 5 verbs that characterize the work of humanitarian operators: PROTECT, RESPOND, INCLUDE, EMPOWER and RESOLVE. I particularly want to highlight the work you are doing in favor of women and children, thus recognizing the feminization of human mobility and the networking that is taking place in the different countries in order to respond to the demands for protection and solutions with a view to the integration of the population into the local community. I understand that the different associations are seriously interested in expanding the existing networks in the different countries.

The current historical moment is extremely challenging, marked by divisions between states, conflicts, violence, social inequality, and the effects of climate change. These all contribute to the increase in displacement in multiple directions. Recently, the United Nations has launched an inter-agency cooperation framework focused on solutions and respect for the human rights of people in contexts of human mobility.

The complexity of human mobility in today's reality raises the need for a comprehensive approach along the route. This comprehensive or "route-based" approach - as it is now called - calls for the need to address human mobility through interventions in countries of origin, transit, destination and, eventually, return. This approach is composed of six interconnected

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elements whose success depends on the simultaneous efforts of various stakeholders, including states, international and development agencies, civil society, faith-based organizations, and communities, among others.

Multiple regional processes and platforms aimed at addressing human mobility can help to advance this approach:

1. Strengthening asylum systems and alternative protection mechanisms, such as temporary protection regimes or humanitarian visas that offer rapid responses ensuring access to legal stay, documentation and opportunities for inclusion. However, to achieve this goal, it is crucial that they are combined with sufficient investment in the receiving communities.

Improving the capacity of governments to receive and process asylum claims is critical to this outcome. This could be achieved through targeted investments in country-of-origin information sharing platforms, digitization of asylum and case management systems, increased access to legal assistance, and decentralization of asylum procedures to border areas. In addition, there is a need to implement differentiated case processing modalities that can make decision making faster and more efficient.

Simultaneously, it is important to promote temporary protection mechanisms or protection-sensitive legal stay mechanisms for populations on the move on a large scale. These mechanisms should complement, and not replace, the right to seek and receive asylum, within the range of international protection measures available.

2. Investing in integration and inclusion. Legal stay arrangements, documentation, access to basic health, education and livelihood services help ensure that people can live a dignified life in host communities, and that they can contribute to their communities' development. Despite progress in some regions, many challenges remain to be addressed. National education and health services, as well as labor markets, are overstretched and require greater investment to meet the needs of host communities and mobile populations. In addition, the conditions for inclusion in host communities are affected by factors such as economic, political or security crises.

Meanwhile, problems such as racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance need to be addressed proactively and in conjunction with host communities and other key stakeholders.

International and regional financial institutions and multilateral banks' investment in countries receiving people in need of protection has been crucial in developing infrastructure and services that promote safe environments and opportunities for the integration and inclusion of displaced people.

Private sector has also played a key role, not only through philanthropic contributions, but also through its expertise and resources to support the integration of people on the move through initiatives that promote their training and incorporation into the world of work. In this sense, it is necessary to promote a longer-term solutions perspective in the responses to mixed movements, taking advantage of the tools and approach of development actors and the contributions of the private sector towards the socioeconomic inclusion, labor and welfare of host communities.

3. By expanding resettlement and other complementary safe admission pathways for refugees and migrants, such as visas for education, employment and family reunification, as well as private sponsorship by communities, universities or employers.

Legal admission channels to third countries could help reduce secondary movements and dangerous journeys of refugees and migrants and represent a mechanism for sharing responsibilities among states.

The expansion of other safe pathways, including education, work and family reunification, could, in part, reduce the impact of mixed movements on border management and pressure on asylum systems.

Resettlement continues to play a central role as a protection and solutions tool for the most vulnerable cases who are unable to reach a response in their host communities. The relaxation of the requirements and selection criteria in resettlement cases, the simplification and speeding up of the processes, would contribute to its expansion as an alternative to unsafe and irregular travel.

4. Systems of protection respectful of the principle of non-refoulement and protection-sensitive return mechanisms. Ensuring the principle of non-refoulement must remain a priority. Efforts to identify and refer persons in need of protection to asylum procedures need to be strengthened in the context of mixed movements. The return of persons determined not to need international protection has

become a key component of the debate related to the interface between asylum and migration and is increasingly seen as an integral part of the migration policies and strategies of destination countries.

5. Asylum procedures are the primary mechanism for ensuring that people are not returned to situations where they face risk of persecution or other irreparable harm. However, some persons in the return process may not have had access to asylum procedures or, if they have had access, new risks may have arisen, including those in the country of origin. It is therefore important that return processes include safeguards to ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement.

Regarding the return of persons not in need of international protection, voluntary return should be promoted by improving support for reception and reintegration programs in the countries of origin to ensure the safety, rights and dignity of returnees. It would also be desirable to promote economic incentive models for receiving countries as part of readmission agreements.

6. Expanding humanitarian assistance and combating disinformation. The risks en route for people on the move are manifold and include assaults, robbery, murder, gender-based violence, family separation, forced recruitment, trafficking, disease and other challenges. Inaccurate information or intentional misinformation, including by traffickers ('coyotes'), contributes to facilitating high-risk movements. In key areas such as borders, migration crossings and stations, and large cities, services are often overwhelmed, leaving people on the move alone, struggling to meet their basic needs. This situation also generates an anti-refugee-migrant sentiment. All actors who are providing vital humanitarian assistance, legal advice and psychosocial support would need more resources to meet the immediate needs of people on the move, and greater coordination of their efforts to combat misinformation and ensure the provision of reliable information along the route.
7. As noted at the beginning of this intervention, the increase in human mobility across continents is due to complex and overlapping factors that have persisted and intensified in recent years (conflict, violence by criminal groups, gender-based violence, persecution

by state agents, climate change, lack of opportunities, poverty, opportunities in other countries, and other elements). Countries of origin must address these factors by strengthening governance, access to services, conflict prevention and resolution, and community protection networks and mechanisms. At the same time, transit and destination countries must take into account the persistence of the root causes of population movements and adopt policies and practices related to protection and return accordingly. A critical element in this regard is the collection of data on displacement and communities of origin and host communities to improve policy decision-making and target development actions.

How can the sisters support this approach? Recommendations

1. Promote a protection focus in the narrative of mixed movements - Although States tend to refer to all people in mobility as ‘migrants’ because this generates less responsibility for them, it is crucial to support efforts to collect and analyze data that show that many of these people are victims of persecution, violence, mistreatment and discrimination, which significantly impacts their lives and freedom. In the Americas, two very relevant studies have been carried out to collect testimonies that have made it possible to echo the protection dimension present in mixed movements in the region. The first study (*Pies para que te tengo*) focused on the human reality of Venezuelan migrants, while the second (*Dejarlo todo atrás*) focused on the experiences, trajectories and challenges of people crossing the route through the northern Central American countries. Both studies were developed with the active participation of the Clamor Network. The participation of associations in monitoring protection trends and challenges and in joint needs assessment is also a very relevant action to ensure evidence-based protection responses and programs tailored to the needs and realities of people in human mobility.
2. Advocacy to prevent setbacks in asylum matters, counteract legislation that tends to restrict or limit the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and those in need of protection. In several countries, legislation or changes in existing legislation aimed at limiting access to asylum or reducing the framework of protection and rights that benefit refugees are being promoted. For example, in Costa Rica, restrictions on access to work for asylum seekers and limitations for refugees have been introduced. In Chile, a rule was recently adopted establishing a new admissibility procedure that

limits access to asylum for persons who have transited through a safe third country. Faith-based organizations have played a key role in many countries in promoting regulatory frameworks for the protection of refugees and migrants. In the current context of xenophobic discourse and in the face of attempts to reform these laws and restrict rights, it is important that organizations take up their voice in defending the rights of people on the move.

3. Monitoring the use of humanitarian assistance - In a context marked by the increase in mixed and irregular movements and the widespread action of criminal networks linked to the smuggling of migrants, it is key to ensure that the services offered by humanitarian agencies and organizations are not instrumentalized by these criminal networks. Establishing clear criteria and monitoring mechanisms for the provision of assistance, including shelter, transportation and monetary interventions, is essential to ensure that such services are not instrumentalized by networks that enrich themselves by promoting irregular mobility in various regions of the world. Ensuring that assistance reaches the most vulnerable in a transparent manner is now a priority.
4. Fighting against disinformation. Trafficking networks have increased their presence in several countries and are using new methods of communication to promote irregular mobility and offer their services. People in mobility report difficulties in accessing reliable information. It is therefore crucial to establish or join regional platforms that connect various information tools that associations can join (e.g. in Central and South America there are several platforms such as El Jaguar, El Tucan, Movilidad segura, various 'chat boxes' and other points of assistance and guidance). It would be beneficial to map all sister infrastructures along the route and in the communities they serve. Assistance and orientation points could be established using existing channels of the associations and UNHCR, with the purpose of producing audiovisual material that can be shared and presented to individuals receiving services in these spaces.
5. Advocacy to improve opportunities for inclusion, particularly aimed at influencing the social policies of governments with restrictive political tendencies, which are closing labor opportunities.

Supporting inter-agency efforts to promote inclusion through access to documentation or access to basic rights and services such as health, education, social security or employment is another key area for intervention by faith-based organizations. Efforts to involve the private sector in supporting the response to refugees and migrants, especially through labor inclusion, are also key.

There are very successful stories of local integration programs benefiting refugees. In Mexico and Brazil, more than 30,000 and 100,000 people, respectively, were able to access and benefit from internal relocation programs aimed at favoring their local integration. The Local Integration Program (Mexico) and Operation Welcome (Brazil) are an example of how national and municipal governments, the business/private sector and civil society can come together to work towards integration.

It is also important to highlight the positive impact of incorporating new technologies into case management. The digitization of national asylum systems has shown a favorable impact on efforts aimed at inclusion, improving case management, favoring decision making times and the quality and access to personal documentation for asylum seekers and refugees.

9 DEMOCRATISING THE REUNION AND PROMOTING THE PROTAGONISM

*Hermel Mendoza Cedeño**

*"It is not enough to be indignant and denounce.
It is necessary to make room for audacity".*

*"We need a spiritual revolution
and wisdom to be happier with less"
José Arregui, vasco theologian*

*"Franciscano de corazón y sin papeles,
que alimenta la mística de la resistencia activa".*

As an introduction

Advocacy is a heritage that the Congregation of the Scalabrinian Sisters can well co-claim because its founder, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini, practiced it with unusual diligence for the end of the 19th century, even though he combined it with various welfare actions to "help" the migrants back in Piacenza, Italy.

Historically and forever, these two approaches have continued to mark the life of the "service" of the Scalabrinian Mission, although not necessarily as counterweights. An example of this are the actions that have been developed, at least in the last decades by the Scalabrinian Mission; where a marked assistance has been gaining ground as immediate responses; and, which are clearly revealed when rereading and comparing many of the proposals shared in this seminar; And, on the other hand, we find the guidelines that the same Congregation has recently approved, although their content was not transversalized during the development of

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the aforementioned seminar, in spite of the emphatic focus of the guidelines in what corresponds to promote and foster in the demanders of rights (the migrants), their role as actors exercising the exercise and enforceability of their rights.

To illustrate this dichotomy and to build bridges between these two positions that are marking the daily life of the Congregation in the 27 countries where it operates, the following metaphor of two characters is worthwhile:

One,... The writer/painter of landscapes that astonished watches the displacement by the bed of the river, of many bodies of people; and, the second one, a sportswoman who is practicing swimming and realizes the situation and acts with prestige during repeated times extracting the bodies of the river and vivifies them until saving their lives. In the middle of this action that has no signs of stopping, the sportswoman abandons this "saving action" and decides to investigate the causes of who, what and why so many people are thrown into the torrential river

Then the question arises: From where are we acting, from the effects or from the causes?

Although this is a work where welfare actions prevail or with a touch of them, of charitable forms quite common in the churches, although not only in them because it is also fashionable in the different expressions of cooperation for development and in the state instances, that although they could have some reason to practice them to alleviate the vicissitudes of the sectors subjected to deep impoverishment such as migrants for example, they should not necessarily be those welfare actions, nor permanent, nor starting point; or, on the contrary, they could be abandoned and go down the path taken by the sportsman of the parable, who decides to go to the sportsman of the parable, who decides to go to the sportsman of the parable; or, on the contrary, they could be abandoned and follow the path taken by the sportsman in the parable, who decides to go to discover the causes and promote the articulated action of the corresponding actors.

The reflection surely challenges us because the event held in March 2024 in Bogota, with the attendance of more than fifty representatives of the Congregation from all continents, was to share and project our actions for at least the next decade. In this framework and from the commitment and honesty, today more than ever, we are dedicated to permanently read the reality to act on the basis of the approaches clearly established in the "General Guidelines of the Apostolic Mission" of the Congregation.

I take this opportunity to reiterate my greetings to each and every one of the participants and I am delighted to meet again with many of those present with whom we have made our way, moving along with social processes, self-criticizing our practices and also that of grassroots comrades who stomp day by day their socio-political work.

In this context, I would like to present my modest contingent with great affection and from three points of view:

1. The General Guidelines as the umbrella-focuses on which they are based,
2. The systematized practice in seven areas of action in several countries.
3. Perspectives and possible lines of action.

Guidelines

I start my intervention from the general guidelines of the Apostolic Mission of the Scalabrinian Sisters, since these constitute the imperative umbrella that marks, guides and defines the path to follow in our actions. I highlight at least three key axes of the guidelines that must be implemented in any process that the Mission undertakes with the migrants, who are actors on the way to become actors for the enforceability of rights: approaches, methodologies and systematizing the practice.

1. Approaches

- a) **Provide stakeholders to exercise advocacy for the defense and enforceability of their rights** (advocacy is remarked 67 times in the guidelines).

The approach emphasizes the importance of promoting the active participation of migrants and other stakeholders in the defense and enforcement of their rights. It stresses that this process should be based on: – Organizations with democratic and participatory practices, seeking inclusive communities. – Information management through the systematization of practices and realities. – Ability to elaborate proposals based on daily experiences. – Horizontal and transparent negotiating practices. – Ability to mobilize and demand rights.

- b) **Horizontal and supportive accompaniment (walking together, not behind, not ahead).** It emphasizes the importance of an accompaniment that is characterized by horizontality and

solidarity. The accompaniment process should help to understand the path, needs, feelings, attitudes, capacities, possibilities, obstacles and challenges.

- c) **Theologizing our practice.** It emphasizes the need to integrate theological reflection and action into the practice of the Congregation, especially in relation to the poorest and the invisible. It underlines the option for the poor in mobility, against poverty and in favor of their liberation.

2. Methodological processes

- a) Build from the inside and from below (Starting from everyday life): This methodological process implies starting construction from the everyday realities of the people involved, starting from their closest context and from their own experiences. The importance of involving communities in creating solutions and making decisions that affect their lives is emphasized.
- b) Reading of the reality, acting in it and reading and acting again (learning and unlearning to learn with them and from them): This methodological process implies starting the construction from the daily realities of the people involved, starting from their closest context and from their own experiences. The importance of involving communities in the creation of solutions and in making decisions that affect their lives is emphasized.

3. Systematization

The Guidelines of the Congregation determine implicitly that systematization is a process of collective knowledge production and a product of our actions. Therefore, it must be:

- **A Continuous Process:** Systematization must be a process that is carried out in a constant and ongoing manner, allowing for the continuous updating and improvement of practices and approaches.
- **An integrated global process:** It should encompass all dimensions of our actions and experiences, integrating both the positive aspects and the challenges encountered along the way.
- **A participatory exercise:** The participation of all stakeholders in the systematization process, including affected communities and external partners, should be encouraged.

- **A Planning Tool:** Systematization should serve as a basis for future strategic planning, helping to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for growth.
- **A continuous monitoring and evaluation tool:** It allows us to evaluate the effects and impacts of our actions and to verify whether we are achieving our objectives, as well as to identify possible adjustments along the way.
- **A tool for moving forward:** Systematization should provide lessons learned and best practices that will drive progress and improvement in our future interventions.

What we say about what we say,
Is always more than we know
About what we say.
Criticism presupposes

Concrete practice

A brief look at seven compendiums of experiences developed in the territory where the MSCS congregation operates.

A practice of self-criticism will always aim to be transformative, towards a new common sense, an emancipatory common sense and familiarity with life.

In this context, it is essential to highlight the dedication and commitment of each member of the Scalabrinian Mission (SCM) in the development of actions in the various territories, as could be seen through the written summaries shared and the presentations during the seminar.

A first quasi-conclusive approximation reveals that the Congregation (MSCS) interacts on a regular basis with about 66,000 people each year, dedicating an average of between 80 and 200 hours to everyone. It is important to note that most of these people are women, and at least a third of them are children, adolescents and young people.

This close “interrelationship” places us in a privileged position to move towards processes of advocacy and deconstruction to forge a new man and woman, as well as a new church.

A clear example of this “captivity” is seen in the students of the educational subsystem managed by MSCS, many of whom spend several years in these educational centers. However, the impact achieved, the contribution from a pedagogical point of view, and the degree of involvement of all the actors of the educational community during and after their passage through these centers about the promotion and exercise

of rights, both in their daily environment and at the community level, have not been adequately documented.

In this sense, it is crucial to systematize these practices to understand their contributions and scope. Are these reflections and the production of knowledge by members of the educational communities being taken advantage of? It is necessary to nurture and share these reflections to further strengthen our commitment to the promotion of the rights and integral development of the people we accompany.

A second approach, derived from the information provided and my close acquaintance with the Scalabrinian Mission (MSCS), reveals that most of the actions are developed from an activist conception marked by welfare practices. This approach would indicate a disagreement with the central approach outlined in the guidelines, which emphasizes the importance of empowering migrants and promoting their participation as actors in the defense and enforceability of their rights. This aspect has been highlighted in the guidelines on as many as 67 occasions.

Perhaps this discrepancy is due in part to the approach to the questions used to collect the information, or perhaps it is due to the inherent limitations of working in collaboration with different entities, such as Dioceses, Archdioceses and others, where approaches may vary.

Addressing this discrepancy and working toward greater consistency between the practices implemented and the principles set forth in the guidelines is crucial. This could involve reviewing and adjusting the approaches and methodologies used in MSCS actions to ensure that they are aligned with the objective of promoting the empowerment and active participation of migrants in the defense of their rights.

Livelihoods, considered as part of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) system, is not yet conceived as an alternative and alternative to the system of accumulation. It seems that the Scalabrinian Mission (SCM) and its collaborators do not recognize or do not evidence the integral approach of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE), which is based on ways of producing, distributing and consuming based on solidarity relations and mutual cooperation. This approach seeks to promote the strengthening of the organization and economic distribution circuits, generate awareness, will and feelings, as well as foster solidarity and the achievement of shared objectives. In addition, it emphasizes human work as a central value, solidarity-based collaboration and practices of active democracy and self-management as modes of social relations, leaving aside money and profit as the main motivations.

In this sense, spaces are opened to multiply the experiences and “good practices” developed within and outside the Scalabrinian Mission on this topic. It is essential that the MSC and its collaborators recognize and promote this integral approach to the SSE in their actions related to livelihoods, thus seeking to contribute to the construction of a more just, supportive and sustainable economic model.

In the area of advocacy, the growing construction of barriers, both material and immaterial, followed by increasingly restrictive legislation, public policies and discourse, forces us to rethink our advocacy strategy. The old strategy promoted and adopted by international cooperation, local NGOs and certain areas of the churches, which has not produced positive results for the population in mobility or for other social processes, requires us to modify our approach and move towards a full and democratic participation of rights claimants as authentic protagonists. This also implies the need to modify the internal policies of local grassroots organizations; and, from the NGOs and their activists, to clarify the accompaniment approach and cede their historical control/leadership in this field to the social actors.

Let's build from everyday life,
Power, recovering the territory.
Anonymous, not so anonymous

Analysis, perspectives and possible lines of action

Resignifying hospitality implies transforming it into a privileged theological place, a divine manifestation where new ways of conceiving life, cultural mediation and the promotion of permanent dialogue are developed. Priority is given to a pedagogy of questioning over answering, encouraging listening, learning and de-learning.

To develop methodologies for the right to otherness, to promote the otherness of each person and of the community that leads to respect for the diversity of each person and community. This implies fostering a practice of macro-ecumenism, where they become actors to act in favor of the rights of people in human mobility from a perspective of otherness.

Promote a permanent training process, aimed at the team, providing them with tools to find effective paths that lead to empowerment. This implies a militant commitment with the neighbor, unbureaucratizing and disengaging to address the needs in a more effective way.

To deepen the use of technological and communicational mechanisms, taking advantage of the representation in various multilateral organizations to position, pressure, denounce and continuously announce the various expressions of restriction of rights that affect people in human mobility around the world.

Active accompaniment is also crucial, which implies being present in massive demonstrations such as those in the United States, the caravans in Central America and other expressions in different parts of the world, where there is evidence of peaceful and widespread civil resistance in defense of the rights of people in human mobility. These experiences are congruent with our approach of acting with authenticity and commitment. In short, we seek to redefine the concept of embodiment, putting into practice the values and principles that we defend.

Resignifying the relationship with cooperation is crucial in the current context. This is a propitious opportunity to orient actions, preferably in alliances, towards the fulfillment of the objectives established in the guidelines, understanding that these guidelines are the instrument of the Congregation's policy. It is important to focus on content and approaches as processes rather than individual projects.

To achieve this, it is necessary to actively participate in cooperation harmonization meetings and in the different spaces and working groups on migration. In these spaces, agendas, objectives, strategies and priorities are shared in such a way that efforts, resources, technical and financial assistance are pooled to achieve the objectives set. This can help optimize resources that often fail to achieve real impacts due to the dispersion and duplication of efforts. In this regard, the recently created Foundation of the Congregation could play a key role.

Finally, it is fundamental that each member of the congregation, as part of the pilgrim church, assumes the role of a supportive companion, acting as a leaven in society. Through a silent but persistent presence, we seek to build with migrants, in their daily lives and struggles, spaces of articulation that make them actors who demand their rights for a dignified life and a sustainable future for our planet.

NOTHING ABOUT MIGRANTS, WITHOUT MIGRANTS.

10 ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION OF THE MSCS CONGREGATION

*Sr. Luiza Dal Moro, mscs**

Some Considerations

In its centennial missionary trajectory, throughout time and in the diversity of ecclesial and social spaces, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Scalabrinians has contributed with a wide range of responses to the most diverse demands of human mobility. The set of elements shared in panel 3 “Responses of the Congregation to the challenges of Human Mobility”, resulting from the contributions given by more than 200 sisters and collaborators during the preparatory phase of the V Seminar, is an expression of the creative fecundity of the Scalabrinian Charism.

The diversity of the profiles and of the migratory contexts (origin, destination, trajectory, precipitating factors, etc.) is evident, as well as the singularity of the history, of the culture of the local Churches and of the social-political spaces where the MSCS Congregation is present and concretizes its apostolic action. Diversity and uniqueness, in turn, are intertwined with the identity, competencies and skills of each of the actors involved in the mission. This set of elements and factors were as tools that favored the development of action strategies in the world of human mobility, which according to the recent book published on the General Guidelines of the MSCS Apostolic Mission are identified as “Macro Strategies of MSCS Missionary Action”.

The Macro Strategies of Action, which represent specific and specialized approaches to MSCS missionary activity, are very clearly perceived in the various reports. The projects and programs that concretize the apostolic actions at the base of our insertion converge and are included in the Macro

¹ A Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary Sister, she has a degree in Philosophy and Clinical Psychology and is a specialist in Institutional Analysis. She is currently the Provincial Superior of the Province of Our Lady of Fatima, responsible for the missions in North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Strategies chosen and systematized as a frame of reference. In this way we also visualize the physical and symbolic structures and activities that are carried out together, in the attention to the different categories of people and groups in a situation of mobility in the “spaces and time” where the MSCS Congregation is present.

The stories presented today, as well as many others that were not “translated into words”, are like the Epiphany of the macro strategies that are structured in different strategic axes for planning and practice, valuing the diversity of the context, the approach and the competences. It should be noted that deliberately and according to the charism, choosing the approach (chapter/general/provincial/delegation definitions) and investing in the structuring of the praxis has added qualification and visibility in the MSCS missionary service.

The macro strategies and their respective strategic axes delineated in the text of the Guidelines (General Guidelines of the MSCS Apostolic Mission) become visible in all the narratives, to the extent that they give visibility to the whole of the operationalization of the mission and its intellectual activity. In this context, from the reports, from other hearings and from personal perceptions, I would like to highlight as relevant points of the whole of the MSCS apostolic activity:

1. Shelter, assistance and protection in emergency and vulnerable situations.

Assistance in situations of risk and urgent need; residential/institutional reception; listening and guidance; social assistance services as a way to offer tools for solutions to the emergency needs, they present.

It is worth highlighting the commitment in the implementation of initiatives aimed at providing answers to the challenges faced by people in a situation of mobility in their migratory journeys, projects and initiatives that prioritize the reception, listening, protection and guidance to those who find themselves in a situation of vulnerability. Significant progress has been made in the attention to people who suffer rights violations and consequently live in situations of vulnerability.

2. Priority attention to women and children.

This attention includes protection through sheltering, which is protected by listening and orientation, residential sheltering, multidisciplinary support that, among other aspects, promotes access to education, physical/mental/emotional health and basic social services, legal assistance. It is worth highlighting in this priority the initiatives that promote and sustain the

empowerment of women, through professional/labor training that affects the capacity for economic and financial sustainability, and actions to recover/develop and strengthen self-esteem, as a feeling and experience of value and personal capacity. As/where we are in the attention to unaccompanied children, as well as prevention measures against smuggling and trafficking of people/women and children for purposes of sexual exploitation and trade of organs.

3. Animation and Coordination of Pastoral Care with migrants and refugees.

Strategy “focused on the specifically pastoral dimension includes all MSCS action in the context of proclamation, faith accompaniment and Christian formation and ecclesial experience, as well as the different services developed in the Local Churches, Episcopal Conferences and ecclesial organizations that advise, encourage, sensitize, coordinate and empower ecclesial actors on the phenomena and challenges of the different categories of people and mobility groups”¹.

The performance of institutional coordination functions shields an effective collaboration and articulation with the ecclesial leadership and structures at different levels, optimizing efforts for the effective creation of networks and alliances, focusing on bilateral and multilateral levels.

In this way, they also enhance the results of the actions by coordinating with civil society, national and international public agencies, both in countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants and refugees.

4. Advocacy and Networking

There is evidence of significant progress in networking initiatives and participation in service networks, but it is a great challenge to contribute to the definition of public policies favorable to the legal and social protection of people in mobility, in political processes and in inclusive social attitudes (strengthening the rights of migrants). In spite of the path already taken, this is a challenge for our apostolic action and we are called to advance in this. Advocacy seems to me to be a neuralgic point to pay attention to and at the same time it is an opportunity.

5. Formation and sensitization

In addition to working directly with migrants and refugees, as well as with other categories of persons and groups in situations of mobility,

¹ General Guidelines of the Apostolic Mission of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters. CSEM, Brasília 2023.

we should also be committed in terms of formation and sensitization, contributing to the Church and to society in general for a more just and realistic vision of migration and refuge. Training and awareness-raising are key factors in “eliminating all forms of criminalization of migration and promoting evidence-based public discourse to challenge preconceived ideas about migration and refuge”. (mention of the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration) (Criminalization/politicization of migration as a political banner in recent elections in several countries. Advancement of anti-migration parties and politicians.

I would like to mention here more particularly the work of schools and hospitals with MSCS management as protagonists in training and awareness for the promotion of the life and dignity of migrants and refugees, to raise awareness against xenophobia and promote constructive intercultural coexistence.

6. Promotion and Integration

It is presented as a driving force in the support and accompaniment of people in a situation of mobility and their families, by shielding services and opportunities to consolidate processes of autonomy and inclusion.

In concrete terms, it is visualized by the numerous activities, programs, projects and initiatives of support and services to life and existential, migratory and professional projects that help to face the challenges related to the (re)construction of life for themselves and their families. The stories were particularly rich in this regard. How many actions and resources, especially skills and supports, that support migrants and refugees in processes of socio-cultural integration in local realities that are new to them. There is a diversity of activities that seek to create and/or strengthen ways to consolidate new life projects after migratory experiences, focusing on the possibility of consolidating the capacity for autonomy through education/training and labor insertion, including vocational training, as well as actions that enable or promote employment and income.

7. Strengthening the protagonism and leadership of migrants/refugees

The protagonism of migrants and refugees is an option present in the mission since the first steps of the MSCS Congregation. It is like a driving force in the heart of St. Jeanne Baptiste Scalabrini. It is an option and a priority that values their existence, their capacity, their potential to act as a non-negotiable actor in the transformation of the processes and contexts they are part of.

Through the various modalities of advice to initiatives of autonomy and integration, the MSCS are at the service of the life and success of migratory, family or professional projects of migrants and refugees, favoring the empowerment of women and men who are protagonists of their own history, even in the face of migration forced by factors adverse to their will (climatic changes, violence / organized crime, etc.). "The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, attentive and interacting with the most different migratory and ecclesial, socio-cultural or political realities where they live and act, over the years have been shaping their organizational culture with the diversity that determines the plurality and complexity of human mobility"².

The attention to the creative fidelity to the Charism has resulted in choices that contribute to the construction and consolidation of characteristic features of their apostolic action, expression of their identity.

In the interlining of the report "Responses of the Congregation to the challenges of the Migratory Movements", for beyond the strategies of action already mentioned, it is possible to perceive paradigmatic, axiological and methodological elements that are and are at the base, in the "breath" and in the dynamics of the Apostolic Action of the MSCS. Among them I highlight: Being a presence of Hope and nurturing hope; Sharing the journey, accompanying migrants and refugees in their searches and struggles (Lk 24, 13ff - mystical Jesus and the Disciples of Emmaus); welcoming and creating dialogical space as a condition of possibility to provoke flexibility and potential transformation of personal and institutional structures (ecclesial, political, social, etc.); valuing otherness as a condition of possibility to provoke flexibility and potential transformation of personal and institutional structures (ecclesial, political, social, etc.); valuing otherness as a condition of possibility to provoke flexibility and potential transformation of personal and institutional structures (ecclesial, political, social, etc.).); valuing otherness - sap to promote interculturality; caring for life, protecting/defending in the condition of vulnerability, integrating and promoting. "Motivated by the desire to live the consecration in an ecological and synodal perspective, with the certainty that the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of those who meet Jesus (Joyful 1), we are challenged to revitalize the spiritual fertility and missionary nature of the Congregation (...). Pope Francis invites us to be realistic, without losing joy and audacity, since challenges exist to be overcome (The Joy of the Gospel, 109)"³.

² Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians. Rome, 06.01.2020. Final Document XIV General Chapter.

³ General Guidelines of the Apostolic Mission of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters. Brasília: CSEM, 2023.

THIRD PART

BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES OF THE SCALABRINIAN SCALABRINIAN MISSIONARY SISTERS

1 WELCOMING AND PROTECTION OF LIFE SCALABRINIAN MISSION PARI – SÃO PAULO/BRAZIL: WELCOMING, PROMOTION AND PROTAGONISM

*Sr. Shirley Anibale Guerra, mscs**

The Shelter for Immigrants and Refugees - Mission Scalabriniana Pari was established on October 27, 2015, in the Pari neighborhood of São Paulo, in partnership with the Municipality of São Paulo, through the SMADS - Municipal Secretariat of Assistance and Social Development.

The Shelter is directed to immigrants and refugees in a situation of social vulnerability and in need of temporary accommodation, receiving care and reception by a team of professionals trained to serve them according to their specific needs. It has a team of professionals made up of: 1 manager, 1 administrative, 1 psychologist, 4 social workers, 26 socio-educational counselors, 16 cleaning staff and 12 kitchen staff. Its goal is to welcome more than 200 immigrants in 24 hours, including 28 children, 70 women and 120 men.

The Scalabrinian Mission Pari organizes activities for immigrants and refugees and is supported by various associations, as well as spontaneous donations of materials from individuals and companies. Its objective is to welcome immigrants of various nationalities, offering immigration regularization, promoting access to rights, social, cultural and economic inclusion, as well as the promotion of autonomy, effective citizenship, professional training and integration into the formal labor market, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

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Introduction

On a daily basis, the Scalabrinian Mission is committed to the good practice of hospitality, considering that caring for life means protecting vulnerability and supporting with solidarity, as well as recognizing and protecting the right to come and go, as well as the right not to have to migrate, both in its choices and in the defense and promotion of life, trying to give, together with the associations, answers to the challenges of immigrants and refugees, with guidance, services and assistance that welcome, protect, promote and integrate, particularly in support of those who need it the most.

A participatory methodology is adopted by the service that allows the active participation of users, with referral and accompaniment to the local network according to the identified needs: psychotherapy, treatment of users, abuse or dependence on alcohol and other drugs, as well as other treatments in health, labor market, income, education, etc.

Professionals conduct a personalized interview with the incoming migrants, who are treated with dignity and share with them the life story, their documentation is regularized and they are legally recognized, recovering their citizenship according to their status as migrant or refugee.

We provide a qualified and humane reception, and during the period of stay, needs are observed, language courses are promoted with the aim of training, tours are conducted to access social services inside or outside the territory, according each case. There is always a systemic follow-up, with coordination to ensure the monitoring of users, with technical support for frequent care, including material support, such as diapers, hygiene materials, food, clothing, transportation and others. This underlines the importance of collaborative and coordinated work between SUAS - Sistema Único de Assistência Social, the Justice System and SUS - Sistema Único de Saúde.

Special Protection Service Center for the Reception of Immigrants II - Scalabrinian Mission, created in October 2015 in cooperation with SMADS and the Municipal Secretariat for Human Rights and Citizenship (SMDH), has a fundamental role in the current context of immigration, which through its hosting and reception activities has responded to the needs and demands presented by immigrants in the city of São Paulo. It is worth noting that since the creation of the service until 2020 ... (update), about 3,450 immigrants from about 85 countries have been assisted. A relevant fact to take into account when it comes to continuing with the agreement and maintaining the service is that most of the immigrants assisted (85%) have managed to join the labor market and have acquired economic autonomy.

The importance of leaders adopting measures to promote quality of life, creating mechanisms for intellectual development actions, as well as technical support within the particularities of the service, is emphasized to the collaborators. We understand that caring for life means protecting in vulnerability and supporting with solidarity, as well as recognizing and protecting the right to come and go, as well as the right not to migrate, in their choices, as well as defending and promoting life, working to provide, together with the associations, answers to the challenges of migrants and refugees, with guidance, services and assistance that welcome, protect, promote and integrate, especially in favor of those who need it most.

Context

The last census of the homeless population in the city of São Paulo was conducted in October 2019. According to the presented data, at that time there were 24,344 homeless people, of which 11,693 were sheltered and 12,651 were in public places or on the street. One of the first aspects sought to investigate to detail the profile of the homeless population in the city of São Paulo. The questions related to this topic aimed to identify first the nationality and then the place of birth of these people. In the case of São Paulo, the very first thing we found in relation to nationality was that the absolute majority of the homeless population were Brazilian, representing 96.7%, and that only 3.4% of the city's homeless population was composed of immigrants.

When we investigate the country of origin of the immigrants among the composition of the homeless population in São Paulo, what we find is that more than a third of them, 38.8%, come from a single country, Venezuela. This presence may be related to the economic and political instability experienced by that country in recent years.

The second country with the highest percentage of homeless people in São Paulo is South Africa, with 9%, and in third place are Angola, Argentina and Portugal, with 6.0% each. The sum of immigrants from Latin American countries is 56.8%, and 25% from Africa. These people entered the country mainly through the states of Roraima (34.3%), which borders Venezuela, and São Paulo (29.9%), which has the country's largest international airport.

Regarding Brazil, the cumulative total of immigrants is 1.1 million and that of Brazilians in the world (emigrants) is 1.9 million. According to data disclosed by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) in the 6th edition of the report "Refugee in Numbers", at the end of 2020 there were 57,099 refugees recognized by Brazil.

In 2020, 75.5% of the applications evaluated by CONARE were registered in the Federation Units (UF) that make up the northern region of Brazil. The state of Roraima concentrated the largest volume of refugee applications evaluated by CONARE (60%), followed by Amazonas (10%) and São Paulo (9%).

It is within this increasingly challenging context of human mobility that the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians has been developing its mission for 126 years, carrying out the evangelical and missionary service of accompanying people in a situation of mobility and social vulnerability.

In various contexts of our country and our city, the Scalabrinian Sisters seek to provide hospitality and develop other services that respond to the needs and demands presented by people on the move, with the aim of ensuring their reception, protection, promotion and integration (Pope Francis). It was then, specifically in the neighborhood of Pari, in São Paulo, that the Scalabrinian Sisters, together with the Municipality of São Paulo, through the Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance and Development (SMADS), subscribed an agreement of reception service to develop actions directed to the immigrant and refugee public, responding to an existing and urgent demand, thus fulfilling the desire of the congregation to have a specific mission, thus showing the Scalabrinian feminine face in the city of São Paulo.

Numerous people of different nationalities have been served in these nine years of foundation, among them some countries such as: Afghanistan, Morocco, Venezuela, Tunisia, Hungary, Congo, Ecuador, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Ecuador, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Mozambique, Iran, Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia, Mali, South Korea, Nigeria, Cuba, Lebanon, Egypt, Argentina, Peru, Malaysia, Palestine, Yemen, Netherlands, United States, Pakistan, South Africa, Syria, Republic of Congo, Jordan, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Sudan, Angolans.

Description of the good practice

We are motivated by the motivation to live our commitment within the Christian perspective and the Scalabrinian charism, with the certainty that the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of those who are in need of support, given that there are challenges to overcome.

The focus of the Scalabrinian mission Pari, SP, is the care of life, with emphasis on the protection and solidary support to the most vulnerable. This mission goes beyond simply recognizing the right to migrate or choose not to migrate; it is dedicated to the defense and promotion of life. Through

strategic partnering, the mission aims to provide effective responses to the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees, providing guidance, services and assistance that not only receive, but also protect, promote and integrate, with special attention to those most in need.

Such is the goal of the Scalabrinian Mission Pari, which hosts and guarantees integral protection to immigrants and refugees in conditions of vulnerability, contributing to their social and cultural integration.

Institutional activities to maintain good relations among the “different” include discussion circles with individual and group assistance, moments of recreation, integration and coexistence, general guidance on work, hygiene and organization, with the dissemination of courses and related events; moments of conviviality, strengthening of relationships, recreational games, music and sharing of typical food, incentives and referrals for professional training courses, diversified dynamics and incentives to participate in courses and continuous training offered by partners such as SMADS - Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance and Development, CREAS Center - Reference Center for Specialized Social Assistance Pop, Red Cross, Mesa Brasil, São José Institute, among others. Facilitate access to the network of services and social benefits and other public policies.

The city of São Paulo is currently a model for Brazil and many countries around the world in hosting immigrants, refugees and vulnerable people, adopting the system of reception centers, according to Carlos Bezerra, secretary of the Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance and Development.

To reinforce coordination, we hold meetings with teams from partner institutions, such as the Brazilian Desk, the Red Cross and churches of different denominations, among others. There is also training and qualification of the teams, carried out in monthly meetings, and institutional visits to service centers, focused on assistance to immigrants and refugees.

Service adopts a participatory methodology that allows the active collaboration of the users, with referrals and follow-up to the local network according to the identified demands: psychotherapy, treatment of users, abuse or dependence on alcohol and other drugs, as well as other treatments in health, labor market, income, education, etc.

The results of these activities include support for the reception of the family, the understanding of its dynamics of functioning, values and culture and awareness of its importance in the context, promoting the protagonism and autonomy of immigrants and refugees.

The importance of the role of immigrants and refugees in the mission is emphasized. This approach, in line with the Founder’s vision, gives

priority to the empowerment and autonomy of these people. Valuing their capabilities and their potential for influence, the Scalabrinian mission encourages them to take an active role in transforming the environments and contexts in which they find themselves. In this way, they not only contribute to, but can also determine their own trajectories and lives.

Within this context, we have been able to refer people to companies in different areas to enter formal employment, and others are incorporated into informal work, following the skills they already have or even acquiring new ones. In order to better serve the immigrants and refugees received at the Mission, we also carry out actions with the objective of helping to restore and preserve integrity, autonomy and protagonism; favoring group, community, social and cultural coexistence, the development of affective relationships, solidarity, mutual respect, training for participation, autonomy and social protagonism; stimulating the development of potentialities for new life projects, providing citizenship training and learning experiences to achieve autonomy and social protagonism; encouraging the development of potentialities for new life projects, providing citizenship training and learning experiences to achieve autonomy and social protagonism.

The role of immigrants and refugees in the mission is emphasized. This approach, in line with the Founder's vision, gives priority to the empowerment and autonomy of these people. Valuing their capabilities and their potential for influence, the Scalabrinian mission encourages them to take an active role in transforming the environments and contexts in which they find themselves. In this way, migrants not only contribute to, but can also determine their own trajectories and lives. Through this welcome, migrants have the support to rebuild their own identity, to recognize themselves as persons, to insert themselves in their new reality starting from their history and their protagonism, defending and making human rights a reality in the migratory phenomenon.

A large number of the migrants and refugees have advanced training in the following areas: biomedical technology, law, civil engineering, agricultural engineering, chemical engineering, biochemistry, mechanical engineering, mechanics, locksmithing, pedagogy, mathematics teacher, salesperson, nurse, construction worker, electrician, painter, economics, statistics, computer science, cook, nutritionist, hotelier, hairdresser, tourism, accounting, nursing technician, modeling, secretarial technician, cook, nurse, among others.

In this context, we have been able to refer people to companies in various areas to enter formal employment, and others move on to informal work, continuing the skills they already have or even acquiring new ones.

Courses and continuous training are also offered to workers in partnership with public and private institutions. This training takes place both inside and outside the workplace, carrying out activities and dynamics to ensure the quality of life in the workplace and also for their process of economic autonomy and quality of life in this space.

The Scalabrinian Mission is recognized for its work in favor of the immigrant and refugee population, both in the local church, civil society and public authorities.

Perspectives

Through our daily work, the greatest impact we have is to contribute, through our actions, to the protagonism of immigrants, influencing their personal and material growth in order to empower the being, independent of their origin, but a transformation that turns them into a human being fulfilled in what they aspire to and, what is more, the teaching that remains is the pleasure of having the opportunity to share learning, as well as to learn from different cultures, leaving a legacy of lessons learned.

Therefore, it is hoped that all immigrants welcomed in the institution will achieve financial autonomy, social integration, insertion in the labor market, independent housing and, above all, the development of their social protagonism through the attention, listening, welcome and accompaniment they receive in the service.

Concluding remarks

Together with all those who help to build and live the charism in the world of migration, we want to share our experiences.

On this scenario, we seek to be a reference in the promotion of life, always working to guarantee the rights of migrants, with networking, good practices of leadership, management and sustainability. The MSCS Sisters, together with their collaborators, migrants and refugees, assume the scope that the charism provides by optimizing welcoming actions, promoting the role of immigrants through public policies, strengthening partnerships, defending human rights and access to justice.

With their availability, assistance, sensitization, their human, sensitive and loving way of being for the cause and for those who have dedicated and dedicate their lives to making their presence felt, the sisters have come to make the words of Pope Francis a reality: "in welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees."

We would like to thank the many people who have contributed throughout these years to live the charism, to strengthen and make the

welcoming service a reality, who have been part of it and who have marked it with their presence and dedication of their lives: the collaborators, the formants, the laity, the agents, the volunteers, the benefactors, the migrants, the refugees, the immigrants, the donors, in short, all those who have collaborated and collaborate so that we can welcome those who have come to fulfill their dreams in search of better living conditions.

2 WELCOMING AND PROTECTION OF LIFE

MADRE ASSUNTA INSTITUTE OF TIJUANA – MEXICO:

THE WELCOME THAT FAVORS THE ENCOUNTER AND THE WELL-BEING OF THOSE WHO ARRIVE

*Sr. Albertina Maria Pauletti, mscs**

The Institute Madre Asunta is a non-profit Civil Association A.C. serving migrant and refugee women, in vulnerable situations, alone or with children.

It is located at 2305 Galileo Street - Colonia Empleado Postal – CP 22416 - Tijuana - Baja California - Mexico and is directly linked to the Scalabrinian Foundation of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters based in Rome.

The Institute carries out advocacy actions, networks in the territory and, as its main expression of missionary activity, has a shelter with the capacity to welcome at the same time up to 90 people among women, with or without children, who are passing through and fleeing from serious situations or who are returning from a failed migration project due to deportation and have no family networks that can receive them. Most of the women hosted arrive with very difficult and delicate situations: victims of violence, poverty or family disintegration, among many other reasons.

Introduction

The Institute Madre Asunta is an initiative of the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Scalabrinian Sisters, MSCS who, always alert to the reality, detected the beginning of a significant number of deportation of women from the United States in the early years of their presence in Tijuana and was born as a pastoral response to the identified

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challenge. The process in response began with the creation of the civil institution and the construction of a building to later, on April 4, 1994, to welcome the first deported migrant women, celebrating this year 2024 its 30th anniversary of service with the comprehensive care of approximately 39,500 people.

Currently it has an interdisciplinary professional team made up of 13 people linked to the institution. Among them 4 religious sisters with different responsibilities and with a special focus on spirituality, 1 social worker and university interns, 2 psychologists for children, 1 psychologist for adults, 1 accountant, 1 receptionist, 2 maintenance assistants, 1 cook, and local and international volunteers. It works in a network with related national and international institutions that complement the professional services, particularly in the health and legal areas, aiming to provide comprehensive care to the population assisted.

Background

Tijuana is in the state of Baja California, in the north of Mexico. It borders with an extension of 41 linear kilometers with the County of San Diego, California of the United States of America. It is considered one of the busiest borders in the world, with an average of 25 million crossings per year, and a population of approximately 1,611,439 (men 804,124 and women 807,315).

The city of Tijuana has emerged as a key point in the complex migratory reality affecting the region. This border city has become an epicenter of migratory dynamics that reflect both the hope and the challenge it faces. On the one hand, the city has experienced a significant increase in the arrival of migrants seeking political asylum and economic opportunities. This steady flow of people has created a diverse demographic dynamic, with communities of different nationalities converging in the region. As these people seek new opportunities, they also face considerable obstacles, from discrimination to difficulties in accessing basic services. The tensions and challenges associated of waiting at the border to apply for political asylum are palpable in daily life, with families notoriously stressful as they wait approximately 4 months for their appointment to cross and begin the asylum process that can last for years. Approval of applications can reach a maximum of 35%.

The constantly changing immigration policies in both Mexico and the United States directly influence the experience of migrants in Tijuana. It is recognized that the distribution of asylum application appointments is not being equitable for all nationalities, since it is detected that, out of every 100

people who manage to obtain an appointment to enter the United States, only one of them is for Mexicans. Priority is given to Cubans, Venezuelans and Haitians, putting Mexicans who are fleeing their places of origin at a disadvantage due to the harassment, threats and forced recruitment attempts at the hands of groups that the government cannot or will not control.

International and local organizations, the team of the Madre Asunta Institute (IMA) and private and corporate volunteers play a decisive role in providing humanitarian support, legal assistance, psychological and medical care, and in some cases highly specialized care. However, despite these efforts, they are unable to fully cover the needs and vulnerabilities of each case.

In conclusion, the reality of migration in Tijuana reflects the complexity of contemporary migratory movements. In its streets and communities, stories of hope, challenge and resilience are interwoven, forming a human tapestry that underscores the need to address migration issues from a global and compassionate perspective.

Description

IMA is known for its mission of “announcing the joy of the Gospel and to share this joy of the announcement by hosting, protecting, promoting and integrating the migrant and refugee population, cohabitants of the common home, strengthening their capacities and possibilities”. Adopts as its vision: To be an Institution recognized in providing comprehensive care to migrant and refugee women, alone or with children, in vulnerable situations due to the reality of migration.

IMA prioritizes the “hospitality as a process” by employing the entire professional team, material and financial resources in favor of the welfare of the hosted migrant/refugee population.

Once they knock on the door or are channeled by other institutions, they are briefly interviewed. If they respond to the preset institutional profile: single women or women with children under 10 years of age and female children of all ages, migrants or refugees in vulnerable situations, who have just arrived in Tijuana from different states of Mexico or other countries, they are accepted to the Institute.

Once their admission is approved, they are interviewed by the Social Worker who informs them that they are not required to pay for their stay, informs them of the institutional regulations, guarantees them a safe stay for 15 days and after being evaluated and accompanied, it can be extended up to 4 months at the most. They are also asked to collaborate in the tidiness and cleanliness of the house. Subsequently, they are assigned the

place where they will keep their belongings, receive the cleaning material, clothes and bed they need. In the first community moment, usually the first meeting in the dining room, they are introduced to the host population, which welcomes them singing in chorus. It is always very emotional and from that moment on a space of trust is generated and the children are integrated into the recreational activities.

Over the following days they are interviewed by professionals in the field of physical and mental health. Once their situation is taken into account, they are treated according to their different needs.

The housekeepers are responsible for helping them with the various domestic tasks, ensuring their integration and efficient performance of the tasks assigned to them on a daily basis. Many of the women need closer support because they come from rural environments and are determined to integrate into urban environments in the United States. Some are able to support others who need more help to understand how to live outside the family unit and to facilitate the atmosphere of coexistence.

The women are guided and at the same time asked to observe the institutional rules, which arise from the demands and from experience, and thus facilitate harmonious relationships, especially among themselves, keeping in mind that they all bring, in one way or another, violent situations.

Reality is very painful when it comes to broken human relationships, domestic abuse and, almost always, the violence experienced at the hands of criminal gangs. IMA seeks to offer them comprehensive care: food, accommodation, hygiene, clothing, psychological care, health care, spiritual strengthening, socio-educational activities, social care and guidance, and training, among others.

The migrant and refugee population we host is taught that it has a God-given mission to fulfill in humanity, and it is necessary to accompany them to discover it during the time they remain in the institution.

Among the great lessons we can name a few:

- The people we help are not vulnerable people, but rather people living in vulnerable situations, made worse by migration or refuge.
- They may be poor in economic terms but rich in life experiences and they also have potential, not fully explored or known by themselves.
- Each person is unique and should be treated as such. They do not become the same because they fall into the category of migrants or refugees.
- There are many expressions by which they are treated with a common denominator such as, for example: Haitians, Hondurans,

indigenous people, etc., but each person has the right and the opportunity to be themselves, to know their potential, and above all, to receive recognition and respect for who they are and the story they are living.

- To understand what it means to leave everything behind and set off, with little more than the desire to escape or overcome the violence in which they live, in search of something better, and to feel empathy, you must put yourself in their shoes.
- The person physically distances herself from her reality, but she keeps it present in the new geographical space and in her life in a very particular way, since the great majority of the women provide emotional and economic sustainability to the family that remains in the place of origin or that has already emigrated previously.

In addition to basic needs, migrants in vulnerable situations need to feel “welcomed, protected, promoted and progressively integrated”, this being the primary role of the institution when they arrive and, in a way, when they share part of their journey along the way. Ensuring they feel treated with dignity makes all the difference, as it avoids treating them as poor, ignorant, vulnerable and different because of their customs. To achieve this, the whole team receives training and constant monitoring so that the service is never contaminated by cultural prejudices or other forms of resistance. It is about making them see themselves as people with dignity and with the ability to achieve their desired dream insofar as it depends on themselves.

Women are welcomed and accompanied as they revisit their stories. This dynamic increases their resilience, especially in the case of women who migrate alone with young children. Social workers and psychologists accompany them in the existential and migratory processes they are experiencing or wish to experience. Many discover themselves as women and not just as mothers. The sisters, in addition to their responsibilities, offer spiritual support, helping them to strengthen their closeness to God and, in many cases, to reinterpret the role of God in their lives and the mission that God has entrusted to them, mainly as women and mothers.

Being close to God in the hostel really helped me calm all those storms in my mind, I also felt the need to learn more about the vocation of the Mothers because I would like to help people as they do, every prayer, every song touches my heart and gives me the strength to continue being strong and never give up, I know I have a life ahead of me but I definitely know what I want to do in that future (Vanessa, 20 years old).

Sustainability

IMA is funded by donations from individuals in Mexico and the United States, many of them from people who gratefully acknowledge the services they received during their immigration process in Mexico. The largest income comes from projects developed, presented and funded by international institutions, various private institutions and related international organizations. It receives governmental funds very rarely.

Institutional sustainability is aimed at providing a comprehensive response to the people sheltered in the institution and to migrant families integrated into the local community in vulnerable situations, with guidance, advice and support with food supplies, blankets in cold weather, household goods and other items. Individuals and families who do not cross into the United States and remain in Tijuana continue to belong to the IMA in a way and their integration is facilitated, as long as they overcome their initial difficulties, mainly related to housing, work, food and education. Many return as friends, volunteers and others are taken on as workers in the house. A significant number of those who cross into the United States continue to communicate and report on how they are doing. Others send small donations and many others, once they have achieved their regular residence, return with great nostalgia, no matter how many years they have been waiting. In October 2023, one lady returned and said that one of her goals was to return to IMA when she achieved her residence to revisit the home that had taken her in when she needed it most. That had taken her 27 years of waiting!

Perspectives

The Madre Asunta Institute, despite not having the physical space to extend the building, continues to look for ways to increase and optimize the professional team and services to better respond to the different demands that arise due to the great change in the profile of the population. The migratory policies of the United States, organized crime and gangs in the countries of origin are the entities that most affect the constant changes in migratory movements.

It is necessary to constantly expand and innovate intervention strategies by networking with related institutions and increasing resources. The plan is to expand and redefine the different levels of social, governmental and ecclesiastical influence, especially in the religious congregations that work with migrants in their schools in Tijuana, community and training centres, catechesis and health. By working as a network, it is possible for the work to receive more resources, to strengthen sustainability in the medium and

long term and to favor the development of accompanying strategies to prevent old or new vulnerabilities from destroying the steps conquered in assistance and welcome. In a network there are more possibilities of working towards a culture of encounter that brings together forces, ideas, resources, people and social and cultural links for a life with more dignity and for a shared future for everyone, in which migrant children, teenagers and women are also part.

It has been proven throughout 30 years of service that the most important thing is to provide precise and appropriate responses to each moment, to provide a healthy space for people who arrive full of suffering mixed with sometimes unattainable dreams, where they can regain strength, heal wounds, recover and train themselves by making use of the different services offered.

Conclusion

Migration is dramatic, as is well known. Above all, it is a factor in the integration of peoples and economic growth. It brings about important changes, enriches itself and other cultures and stimulates changes in human coexistence, among many other elements. Human movements weaken physical, cultural, economic, political and geographical “borders”, even if governments try to reinforce them.

Thirty years of dedication by the MSCS Sisters, professionals, collaborators, volunteers and donors, among others, were instruments of God in the lives of more than 39,500 people. By being accompanied and empowered in many ways, the vast majority of women manage to feel, first and foremost, entitled to be graceful people, with special attention that made them feel capable, responsible and protagonists of their own story. They manage to discover meaning in their suffering, recognize the strength of their resilience and continue to pursue the dream of having a better quality of life and move away from the reasons that made them leave their own lives up to that point.

Thanks to the mothers who gave me a space in their home and from whom I learned many beautiful things, thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me into your home with my son and thank you for giving me your time (Anonymous).

Those who have supported this mission over the last 30 years have received the most awards, because day by day they grow as people and as professionals, finding a valuable meaning to their profession. For volunteers and donors, it is recognizing the grace of sharing their time and their goods. For the Scalabrinian missionary sisters it is strengthening their consecrated

life and there is no heavy burden when it comes to recognizing, loving and serving God in the migrant or refugee person in a situation of vulnerability.

Personally, I can testify that I got to know the IMA when I visited the mission and I had always wanted to join, as I felt I could contribute to it, if one day I was asked to. God has been good to me and has granted me the grace of taking over the leadership in March 2020, right at the start of the pandemic. Living with and for migrants made me and continues to make me an MSCS, grateful to have understood what it means to be a Scalabrinian and I hope that in one way or another all MSCS will allow themselves to be formed and trained by migrants, instruments of God in our history and congregational mission.

Thank you, Sisters, for your work with us. It is the first time I have dealt with Sisters and I always thought that they might be grumpy, but you surprised me with your love. I am leaving delighted with you, thank you for loving us because that is what you do, love us without knowing us, you gave us food and shelter, thank you because I thought I had no alternative in my case. Thank you with all my heart, God bless you (Diana).

Thank you and blessings!

3 WELCOMING AND PROTECTION OF LIFE

PROJECT LEGAME: COMMUNION IN DIVERSITY, CARING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

*Sr. Odila Roman Ros, mscs**

Through the Associação Educadora São Carlos (AESC), the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians, provides care and promotes humanist and Christian values through its health and education establishments in Rio Grande do Sul.

Among the hundreds of healthcare initiatives that reach people at different levels of vulnerability and fragility, we have chosen to present the Mental Health Telecare Service, LEGAME, the result of 14 years of consolidated experience in this type of care.

Introduction

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which turned social distancing and isolation into vital resources, while healthcare professionals working on the front line of patient care dealt with feelings such as fear, anxiety, grief and stress, the AESC took the initiative of organizing a remote service capable of dealing with these circumstances.

LEGAME was the name of the initiative, a name that reflects the basis of mental health work: guaranteeing the continuity of the social bond in crisis situations, the experience of connection with others, and the opening of a window to the outside world, another place in the world, a word of Italian origin that brings to mind: connection, relationship, bond, alliance, tie, link, union.

Gradually, the scope of LEGAME expanded from being an exclusive service for healthcare personnel to include all people linked to the AESC, including family members, workers in educational and social responsibility projects, students and their parents.

* A Brazilian Scalabrinian Missionary and nurse, she has an MBA in health management from Unisinos, is Vice-President of Mãe de Deus Hospital and is a member of the Board of Directors of the São Carlos Educational Association.

Finally, in 2021, it was identified that migrants and refugees received at the Migrant Care Center initially experienced the same dynamics of fear, anxiety, pain and stress in the context of mobility, especially forced displacement, which made them eligible for the benefits of LEGAME care.

After learning about the mechanisms for the creation, implementation and expansion of the Mental Health Telecare Service, LEGAME, we were able to access other missionary presences in the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians, both in Rio Grande do Sul and in other Brazilian states and some countries, where the Province of Mary Mother of Migrants is active.

The state of Rio Grande do Sul is a place of significant migrant movements, mainly due to forced displacement. In the 19th and 20th centuries, when the Congregation settled in Caxias, there was an intense influx of Italian, German, Polish and Japanese immigrants. Currently, people arrive from Latin America, especially Venezuela and Haiti, the Middle East and Africa, especially Angola and Senegal.

AESC, as a civil organization linked to the third sector, complements the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS), meeting the needs of the public authorities in addressing people's vulnerabilities and demands, providing services that are universally available and enabling access and inclusion.

Background

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians has become a benchmark in the care of people in vulnerable situations and at personal and social risk, including barriers and violations of access to rights,

AESC complements the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) with services in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in six municipalities, reaching more than two million people, as well as the LEGAME Service, which is entirely organized remotely.

Services are provided by a multi-professional and interdisciplinary team made up of professionals from a wide range of fields, from medicine to management and maintenance services. Including the 35 international immigrants working in the teams, particularly those from Latin America.

The mental health services are in areas of psychoactive substance use in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. These areas are characterized by drug dealing, domestic violence, prostitution, precarious work and homelessness.

Other services that make up the structure of the Santa Ana Hospital are in a context of accumulated demand and waiting lists, such as the difficulty

of access to specialized care for children with intellectual and hearing disabilities, inpatient chemical detoxification, and long-term palliative care and humanized end-of-life care.

The LEGAME Mental Health Telecare Service, meanwhile, is based on the premise of hospitality and humanism, expressed through person-centered care, with an inter-humanitarian approach, in an institutional environment that promotes affection, dignity, outcomes and safety.

Its creation was based on the realisation that its employees needed a place where they could be listened to and receive support. The service began with psychological and psychiatric care for employees working in institutions maintained through the AESC, which in addition to the CAPS included the Mãe de Deus and Santa Ana hospitals in Porto Alegre, the Santa Luzia and Nossa Senhora dos Navegantes hospitals on the coast, and the three schools in the Serra and Southern Region.

The service was immediately well received and was also extended to the families of employees. From September 2021, it began to serve immigrants registered at the Migrant Support Center (CAM) in Caxias do Sul, a social responsibility service closely linked to the charisma of the Congregation. As a group weakened by the pandemic, these people have found in LEGAME a space for sensitive listening, to talk about emotional suffering, in therapeutic conditions of care.

Currently, LEGAME is one of the few structures created during the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to offer people, whether they are staff members, family members, students or immigrants, remote mental health care, prioritizing cases of acute emotional distress.

Description of best practice

LEGAME's Mental Health Telecare Service is a significant option for a mental health service based on the importance of the therapeutic bond as a care process.

The relationship is an essential element in establishing a trusting and secure environment in which the person feels welcomed, able to express his or her suffering and to build resources for protection, resilience and therapeutic management.

The therapeutic bond is a dynamic and evolving process that is built up over time, influenced by factors such as the personality of the person, the therapist and the relationship between the two, as well as culture in the face of emotional suffering, the course of life and the adversities experienced.

At LEGAME, the link is built on psychological listening, an approach centred on the person that allows the therapist to understand the singularity of the person and establish a relationship of empathy and acceptance through the connection between people.

In this way, LEGAME aims to offer care through psychological and psychiatric support to staff, family members and immigrants, building bonds of acceptance and listening.

LEGAME's psychological intervention methodology is based on psychological support using clinical psychology references. Each service is provided considering the person as a unique individual, with their own life story and psychological structure. In this way, the relationship that everyone will produce with the symptom is specific to their subjectivity, and the search for an improvement in well-being will be accompanied by an understanding of these aspects.

In addition to psychological support, LEGAME also offers psychiatric care. Depending on the symptoms' severity and the psychologist's recommendation, the person may be referred for a psychiatric evaluation, which will continue for as long as necessary.

A multidisciplinary team of qualified professionals committed to the well-being of patients runs LEGAME, an innovative service that offers a space to welcome and listen to people experiencing mental health difficulties.

Given that the connection is the basis of care, it is important that people accessing LEGAME are connected to a Congregation establishment or service, which allows for a better adjustment of the unique therapeutic plan, the management of contingencies and the organization of access to the resources of the local Health Network, where care will continue for life.

Access to LEGAME is via telephone and social networks (WhatsApp®), as soon as the need is identified by a person linked to the AESC, or when a situation of emotional suffering is identified in a migrant or refugee linked to the missionary works and presences of the Congregation.

Services are provided by video call or telephone, and psychological and psychiatric services are available in Portuguese, Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), Spanish, English and French.

The service is staffed as follows:

SERVICE COMPOSITION: 1 service manager; and 1 production engineer;

TEAM COMPOSITION: 1 clinical psychologist and supervisor; 3 clinical psychologists who speak Spanish, English and French, as well as Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS); 2 psychiatrists; and 1 assistant - administrative assistant.

Included in the program is an initial consultation and risk assessment with a psychologist, and follow-up consultations between one and twelve for the therapeutic management of emotional stress, distributed between the psychologist and the psychiatrist according to the needs of each person.

Services are provided by video call or telephone, and psychological and psychiatric services are available in Portuguese, Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), Spanish, English and French.

The service is staffed by the following personnel:

Finally, as part of the service expansion process and assessment of the conditions for implementation in each location, the following activities are carried out:

- a) Evaluation of the dynamics of the work or missionary presence, especially in relation to the continuity of relationships and links.
- b) Presentation of LEGAME's resources and functionalities.
- c) Presentation of the therapeutic limits of the telecare modality and the mental health team.
- d) Evaluation and mapping of the local health network, as a mechanism for linking with the territory and monitoring care.
- e) Systematization of the selection of people eligible for the service and sharing of access channels.
- f) Initiation of care actions.
- g) Continuous evaluation of the characteristics of access, the profile of people's suffering, the demands for therapeutic improvement and learning.

Since LEGAME was set up, 5,627 people have been attended to by psychologists and psychiatrists, including staff, family members and immigrants. Specifically for the group of immigrants and refugees, 437 people have been attended to.

The good practices presented here express the presence of the charism and values of the Congregation in healthcare, open to welcome, displacement, solidarity, hope and communion in diversity, from which professionals represent the materiality of the presence of the Church among people.

Perspectives

Providing a secure refuge for those facing emotional distress, including in the context of migration and forced displacement, LEGAME's services have the following perspectives:

1. Expanding access by promoting mental health care extended to new communities where the Congregation's missionary presence is bound to people with mental health care needs.
2. Quality and innovation to adapt to emerging technologies and new care practices, so that the service is continuously improving, with a focus on therapeutic approaches that place humanism and interpersonal relationships at the center of the organization.
3. Sustainability of the activity, which is currently financed entirely by the resources generated by the activities of the AESC, in such a way as to achieve the financial viability and efficient management of LEGAME, with the opportunity to expand and reach a wider audience.
4. Commitment and social impact, with the strengthening of community participation, the articulation with local Public Policies and the generation of a positive impact on communities and society, stimulating supportive relationships of support and exchange.

This guidance makes it possible to plan consolidation, reinforcement and strategic partnership actions for the next two years (2024-2025), organized as follows:

- a) Expand the capillarity of the service, organizing care in areas with low availability of professionals, lack of mental health services or remote areas.
- b) Guarantee the continuity of the offer and the links built between 2021 and 2023.
- c) Improve the technological platform, with updated resources to virtualize presence and interactions, including appointment scheduling, care delivery and service management.
- d) Increase the dissemination of LEGAME to the community at large, through awareness campaigns and social marketing actions.
- e) Conduct research and studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the service, test interventions and opportunities for improvement.
- f) Establish alliances with public and private institutions to expand the support network and offer comprehensive care to individuals.
- g) Continue the link with mental health care networks, focusing on the integration of LEGAME into the health services network.

- h) In the same vein, the projection for the next five years (2024-2030) is to expand throughout the country, with the full incorporation of emerging technologies, in actions organized in this way:
- i) Implement LEGAME in other Brazilian states where the Congregation has a missionary presence, or in places where opportunities to reach migrants and refugees are identified.
- j) Maintain the ongoing training of LEGAME professionals, including networking, qualification in therapeutic approaches and testing of assistance tools.
- k) Develop digital applications and platforms to facilitate access to the service and offer new therapeutic tools, including simultaneous translation and the recognition of emotional and behavioral risks.
- l) Use artificial intelligence to improve detection, personalize therapeutic monitoring, and map emotional and behavioral risks.

Finally, in the long term, and with the success of the above actions, over the next 10 years (2024-2035) there will be a constant dynamic of internationalization, combined with research and development actions, structured as follows:

- a) To expand LEGAME to other countries where the Congregation has a missionary presence, or where there is an opportunity to extend the innovative model of care to the international community, especially migrants and refugees.
- b) To adapt the service to different cultures, taking into account the specificities of each country, in order to offer adequate care, especially in the local-regional understanding of emotional suffering.
- c) To promote international collaboration by sharing knowledge and experiences with other institutions working in mental health, as well as with international humanitarian aid and human rights organizations, and in relations with the Church.
- d) To adapt LEGAME's instruments for action in situations of extreme humanitarian crises, such as conflicts, wars, pandemics and natural disasters.
- e) To consolidate LEGAME as a center of reference in mental health research, carrying out innovative studies on telecare and its applications in human groups.
- f) To disseminate scientific knowledge through the publication of articles, books and other materials on LEGAME.

- g) To train new professionals by offering courses and training in telecare in mental health.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Good Practice of the Mental Health Telecare Service, LEGAME, demonstrates the expression of congregational values in the care provided in addition to the Unified Health System (SUS), in mental health work and, above all, in the involvement and commitment of the professionals who make up the teams to providing welcoming, humanized and Christian care.

Caring is more than an act, it is an attitude towards others (BOFF, 2008)¹, and we realize that welcoming people in emotional distress is a moment of attention, zeal and care for the human figure, in such a way that therapeutic listening is presented as an attitude of occupation, concern, accountability and affective involvement with humanity.

Consequently, the conviction arises that the way to experience values and charisma is to adopt an attitude based on caring for others, in the materiality of communion in diversity, respect for singularity, the sacredness of the existence of the other, reciprocity and complementarity, in actions that attend to human needs, promote therapeutic resolution and connect with people in the way they are living.

¹ BOFF, Leonardo. The search for a planetary ethos. *Theological Perspective*, v. 40, n. 111, p. 165-165, 2008.

WELCOMING AND PROTECTION OF LIFE

COMMENTS

*Jaime Ruiz de Santiago**

The practices of the groups that have been presented revolve around 4 strategic axes:

- a) Assistance in situations of risk and vulnerability
- b) Residential care
- c) Support and guidance
- d) Social service

A first important observation is that the groups attended present very diverse characteristics, which is accentuated in those services that are offered at border areas (especially in the case of Tijuana) where many people with the most diverse needs converge. This largely determines the services that can be provided (Tijuana currently has a border population in a critical situation). A second group - that of Rio Grande do Sul - indicates that it provides its services remotely and these are only psychological and/or psychiatric assistance.

Despite the diversity of the groups attended, there is a need for special attention to women who are alone or with young children, who are in a vulnerable situation.

Note that, and this is very important in the case of Tijuana, the legal situation of the people being attended is usually very varied. For example, there are people who are economic migrants, or people who wish to apply for recognition as refugees (in Mexico) in order to ensure that they are not returned to their country of origin, or people who have been returned to Mexico so that from this country they can seek to apply for refugee status (in the United States), or people who are in Mexico because they have

* He is a Mexican, lawyer, philosopher and theologian. He studied in Mexico, France, Spain, Italy, the United States, Holland and Costa Rica. He is currently a professor and researcher in the Academic Department of General Studies at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM).

been returned from the United States after being denied refugee status in that country, or who find themselves in similar situations. There is also the situation of those migrants who, while not meeting the characteristics of refugees, cannot be returned to their country of origin due to conditions there that put their life or freedom at risk: they are granted a peculiar legal status called “complementary protection”.

This diversity of legal situations must be well understood to comprehend the needs that people present and that we seek to satisfy. That implies that, in the support centers, there are people with a good legal training and/or that they have collaborators with such training.

All of this is not only true in the case of Tijuana (which is located at a border crossing) but also for shelters in general. This helps us understand what the Scalabrinian mission of St. Paul-Pari says when it says that “the context [in which it carries out its work] is increasingly complex.”

The Pari-San Pablo mission itself highlights that one of its objectives is to welcome migrants “offering migratory regularization, promoting access to rights [thus facilitating] the social, cultural and economic inclusion” of such migrants. This highlights the need for those offering these services to have adequate legal training.

An aspect that stands out in the different groups is the fact that the work carried out in the premises of the Scalabrinian sisters is done by creating a collaborative network with government institutions, different NGOs and volunteer groups. This collaborative network is essential to carry out the work and achieve the desired objectives. This collaborative network allows efforts to be organized, duplication to be avoided and more sustainable results to be guaranteed.

Similarly, the work presented by the group from Rio Grande do Sul has special characteristics, as it is a telecare service for mental health, provided remotely and fundamentally offering psychological and psychiatric care to vulnerable people.

This service, which is also carried out through a network of collaborators, has innovative characteristics, and rightly aspires to expand to other countries, adapting to different cultures and promoting international collaboration. The service provided by LEGAME could easily become a reference center for research in mental health, carrying out innovative studies on telecare and its applications to human groups.

A final note I would like to make, is the fact that the different groups are sensitive that migrants and refugees are always considered to be subjects of the coming of the Kingdom that is realized in history and never objects.

5 WELCOMING AND PROTECTION OF LIFE

COMMENTS

*Sr. Rosita Milesi, mscs**

This panel gave us the opportunity to present two good practices:

- “LEGAME mental health telecare service”, developed by the Associação Educadora São Carlos (AESC)/Hospital Mãe de Deus, located in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul; the presentation was made by Sister Odila Roman Ross.
- “Welcoming and promoting the participation of immigrants and refugees in the city of São Paulo”, a practice presented by the Scalabrinian Mission, Pari, São Paulo; the presentation was made by Sister Shirley Anibale Guerra.
- Hosting that favors the interaction and well-being of those who arrive, presented by the Madre Assunta Institute of Tijuana, Mexico, by Sister Albertina Pauletti.

A valuable reflection on hospitality was given by Jaime Santiago, a commentator in Panel 5 of the 5th Congregational Seminar. It should be noted that there is no single standard of hospitality. Specialists add that this hospitality can be tourist, migratory, nosocomial, geriatric, child-related, among other specificities. Santiago’s reflection gives us the focus: migrant hospitality.

This inspiring introduction to hospitality takes as its starting point the General Orientations for the Apostolic Mission of our Congregation and, as aspects of analysis, the first macro strategy in which the practices presented in this panel are mainly situated: welcoming, assisting and protecting migrants and refugees in emergency and highly vulnerable situations.

¹ Missionary of St. Charles (Scalabrinian), Brazilian, lawyer. She has a Master’s Degree in Migration from the Comillas Pontifical University (Spain), is the founder and current director of the Institute of Migration and Human Rights (IMDH), a member of the Board of Directors of the Scalabrinian Foundation and an observer member of the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) of Brazil. A member of the CLAMOR Brazil Network.

Specifically, the macro strategy proposes four axes:

- Support in situations of risk and vulnerability
- Hosting in institutions
- Offering a listening ear and guidance
- Social assistance services

This presentation of good practices highlights elements that enrich our reflection and point to the fourth macro strategy - “Priority attention to women and children”, of fundamental importance in the mission of the congregation. Let’s look at some of the element

Axis 1: Assistance in situations of risk and vulnerability

- “Taking care of life” with an emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable.
- Accommodation for women and children, especially single mothers.
- Co-management of the home, with the participation of residents in its management, valuing their skills, experiences and talents.
- The LEGAME mental health project, an innovative service implemented by the Mãe de Deus Hospital and coordinated by a multidisciplinary team.

Axis 2: Institutional reception

The institutional reception is a specific aspect that is necessary in certain circumstances and moments. It should not be permanent because the migrant or refugee must be supported in rebuilding his or her life as the subject of his or her own story, with conditions of autonomy and full citizenship. That is why it is important that institutional care is temporary or transitory, during which they are offered opportunities to access lasting solutions and the public policies of the country in which they find themselves.

In the world of migration, the care and reception of people is not something static and definitive. It is time to offer conditions and opportunities for refugees and migrants to strengthen themselves and prepare to integrate into local society.

Axis 3: Support and guidance

Empathetic hearing of migrants and refugees is a fundamental aspect of the mission of the Scalabrinian Sisters, that is to say, a vital attitude for humanized care. It should be noted that this is a significant challenge because there are often many people seeking guidance and help, and due to endless demands and technical prioritization of work, we end up doing what is immediate and urgent. Active, calm and human listening can easily cease to happen. The space for a humanized welcome ends up suffocated by bureaucratic urgencies.

Axis 4: Social assistance services

Here I would like to comment on two aspects:

- It should be made clear that providing social assistance services in the initial reception is not social assistance. It is the effective provision of social services, which are necessary and essential at a crucial, difficult and needy time in the lives of migrants and refugees, particularly women and children who, in general, suffer deeply from the hardships of the migratory journey.
- A second point is that these services should not be prolonged indefinitely, because it is necessary to guide and support people towards their inclusion in public policies and workplaces, so that they can develop in the local context and feel that they are living as citizens on an equal footing with nationals. It sounds utopian. But that is what it is: what is our utopia when working with immigrants and refugees?

Signs of good practice

Participatory methodology is a fundamental point, highlighted by the two practices presented – Madre de Dios Hospital and Scalabrinian Mission – which focus on direct care for migrants and refugees. This aspect is a significant part of the “protagonism of migrants and refugees” perspective, reminding us of that protagonism is vital if we want this population to achieve autonomy, with the conditions to integrate and establish themselves in decent living conditions. This is also emphasized in the general guidelines of the apostolic mission of the MSCS Sisters.

Coordination with other institutions and other community forces is clearly revealed in the texts of the practices presented. It is confirmed that the more we consolidate support networks, whether financial support, voluntary collaborations or involvement of the local community, and the more we act in favour of the cause of migrants and refugees, the more and

better we will be doing structurally sound pastoral work, with the possibility of continuity, which will advance and be maintained over time.

Presenting good practices in this seminar is also an opportunity to highlight some points of the macro strategies of the General Guidelines for the Apostolic Mission that require our specific attention:

The guidelines as a whole, and in particular macro strategy number 1: reception, assistance and protection in situations of emergency and vulnerability, contemplate and recommend attention to macro strategy number IV: priority attention to women and children. In addition to being a fundamental aspect of the Constitutions of the Congregation, it is one of the most sensitive points that touches our soul and heart in pastoral practice. To see a mother who has been through a migratory journey of suffering, exploitation, deprivation, often a traumatized mother... and this often happens in migratory movements. Female mobility is increasing in current migratory flows, and we are increasingly seeing mothers who are solely responsible for the care and maintenance of their children and the upkeep of the home.

And when we talk about refugee and migrant children, I would like to mention two facts collected in the IMDH's centers of action: In 2022, 36% of the total of 11,018 people served were children and adolescents. And in the Casa Bom Samaritano shelter, a joint project of the IMDH, AVSI Brasil and CNBB, 279 of the 672 people sheltered were children.

Finally, with appreciation and great gratitude for the work of the two congregational works presented on this panel and others who shared their encouraging pastoral practice with us, it is worth highlighting: the guidelines, the reality, the Gospel, the founders and co-founders of the MSCS Congregation, Pope Francis, in short, wherever we look for motivation and light to guide our mission, we will always find a point of encouragement and inspiration to illuminate and nourish our journey, alongside migrants and refugees and - let me emphasize - women and children are the central axis of our mission. "The priority is neither exclusive nor excluding, but rather a warning that the protection of life and the recognition of dignity are indispensable and effective for women, children and adolescents as well," the Guidelines state (p. 63).

6 EMPOWERMENT, INTEGRATION AND PROTAGONISM

RETURNED MIGRANTS WITH DISABILITY IN HONDURAS: INTEGRATION AND LEADERSHIP

*Sr. Ligia Ruiz Gamba, mscs**

The Human Mobility Ministry (HMM) of the Honduran Episcopal Conference since its inception in 1991 and later in the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa has been entrusted to the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians (MSCS) which legally in the country is called the Scalabrinian Sisters Association (SSA). Training, Psychosocial Care and Mental Health, Organization, Advocacy for the guarantee of human rights, Business Development, Legal Advice, Coordination with other bodies and, of course, Direct Care and Accompaniment for People on the Move are the strategies of action ratified in the current Strategic Plan (PMH AHS Honduras Strategic Plan, 2020 – 2026).

Reflecting on this socio-pastoral experience, which encompasses both the awakening of society and government bodies to the plight of returned migrants with disabilities (RMDs) and their self-organization in the exercise of gradually developing their leadership, is a good stop along the way because this year marks 15 years of work. There has been close collaboration between the Center for the Care of Returned Migrants (CAMR) and the San José Migrant House in Ocotepeque, on the border with Guatemala, as these are points of return to the country and of reunion between migrants. Professionals in the areas of social administration, physical health, mental health and, more recently, also in the Livelihoods Program (entrepreneurship, income generation) have been companions and guarantors, although in very limited numbers.

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Building Pathways to Reintegration¹, a recent publication by the Scalabrinian Center for Migration Studies (CSEM) and AHS/PMH, from which I extract the profile and the main risk factors faced by MDMRs on the migratory route.

Introduction

1. Identity of migrants with disabilities in all dioceses with the aim of organizing them.
2. Training in human development to promote the quality of life of migrant men and women with disabilities through comprehensive training and support.
3. Establish coordination links with different institutions and public and private organizations interested in the subject through cooperation agreements.
4. Promote the management of innovative productive projects to improve the living conditions of migrants with disabilities, leading to the empowerment of their capacities and skills.
5. Inform the Honduran population of the work carried out with the MRD by different means (air, land) through the promotion and dissemination of the project in the various media (written, oral, television), with the aim of raising awareness and obtaining their solidarity.

The **Promotion and Integration of migrants**, as well as the **Strengthening of the protagonism and leadership of migrants** (macro-strategies 2 and 5 Scalabrinian Mission) frame the process that has been consolidated.

Context

Once known as the agricultural granary of Central America, Honduras, a country of origin and transit for migrants, has yet to resolve the historical structural issues that have had a disproportionate impact on certain communities and sectors, which in turn have caused the expulsion of their own people.

In the Center for Attention to Returned Migrants (CAMR La Lima/SPS), in a database – a consultancy between Avina and AHS/PMH for an inter-institutional program of labor reintegration – at the end of the year 2022, migrants indicated the following reasons for emigrating: violence (53%),

¹ BOTEGA, Tuila. Pastoral de movilidad humana y migrantes retornados con discapacidad: Construyendo caminos para la reintegración. Brasília: CSEM; Tegucigalpa: FLACSO, 2022.

lack of employment (26%), lack of education (13%) and lack of healthcare (9%). In that year, 35,476 migrants deported from the US and Mexico were treated, all of them adults and an average of 35% women. During 2023, a total of 26,769² migrants, 14 of whom had a physical disability, were treated.

The profile of returned persons with disabilities accompanied by AHS/PMH in terms of physical health is 93% men and 7% women. Also, 7% are over 50 years old and 43% are between 30 and 39 years old. Of the people receiving mental health care, 42% are between 20 and 29 years old. More than half are single. They are predominantly from rural areas of the departments of Francisco Morazán, Cortés, Yoro and Comayagua. 45% have completed primary education, both men and women, and 28% have not completed primary education. Illiteracy stands at 9%. In conclusion, they coincide with the same characteristics outlined in the Central American region: men, young, of peasant origin, with a low level of education. They have a high rate of unemployment, and many work in temporary jobs with low qualifications and low pay, reinforcing the weight of poverty and the lack of opportunities that were the same things that had driven them to flee.

The migratory route often constitutes a risk factor for acquiring a disability because people must face situations such as getting on or off a moving train, hiding from the authorities and also from crime due to being in an irregular situation, being the victims of vehicle collisions or other violent acts.

The types of injury/illness suffered by returned migrants treated between 2010 and 2020: upper or lower limb amputation, either partial or total (87%), injury to the upper and lower central nervous system (5%), vertebral injury (1%), upper or lower limb fracture (5%) and others (2%).

The Law for the Prevention, Care and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons was passed by the Honduran National Congress on December 21, 2022, and promulgated in the Official Gazette "La Gaceta" on March 20, 2023. It is still in the regulation and budget allocation stage.

Summary of the experience

Since then, information has been gathered from MRC in an initial diagnosis with 19 cases published in the Institutional Bulletin *El Peregrino* (second semester 2008). This is the starting point. At the first meeting with them (Tegucigalpa, February 7, 2009), the results were shared and it was agreed to form a Commission to provide support and solidarity to people

² In terms of mental health care, 567 migrants (159 women, 408 men, 6 from the LGBTIQ+ community and 14 with some form of physical disability) were treated last year.

living with disabilities, with a board of directors and a plan of action with the 5 objectives mentioned above (May 8, 2009)³.

The National Commission for Returned Migrants with Disabilities (CONAMIREDIS) in Honduras, a dream embodied in this medium-term vision:

CONAMIREDIS is the means that favors the family and social reintegration of returned migrants with disabilities as a result of an accident on the migratory route, so that they themselves are protagonists of their own development, by discovering their new physical and intellectual capacities, inspiring security, valorization, solidarity and defense of their rights through the laws that protect them.

Those involved at the beginning were people who were pastoral outreach workers, particularly the national and archdiocesan coordinator of PMH (Scalabrinian sisters), Radio Católica with whom PMH of the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa shared physical space, the Cristo del Picacho Foundation and PMH workers from various parishes, as well as some parish priests. And of course, the returned migrants with disabilities and representatives of the organization of relatives of disappeared migrants, which was the Red Asociación (Association Network) existing at that time and which in recent years intends to reorganize itself into the Unión Nacional de Comités de Familiares de Migrantes Desaparecidos de Honduras (National Union of Committees of Relatives of Disappeared Migrants of Honduras, UNCOMIDEH). It was agreed that this organization would produce information material, manage resources and always be with the migrants.

Key advances, results and learnings

Recounting the experience in a timeline reveals the answer to the following questions: How did the returned migrants with disabilities perceive that the Commission was supporting them? At what point did the migrants become the main effective protagonists of the emerging Organization?

Regular meetings with agendas and memory aids have been key. The National Meetings (2014, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2022), the Representative Assemblies (2022 and 2023). The services generated and reported in press releases, on the web and on radio and television media in interviews and

³ Design of the work plan for follow-up: Objective of the group / Day, place and time of meetings / Persons responsible within the group / Name of advisors from PMH and the Network of Migrant Families (COMIFAH Network).

other programs that are constantly requested. Of greater relevance is the participation in advocacy spaces.

Our constant prayer of trust in God is corroborated in the agenda items and archived reports.

Inter-institutionality has guaranteed the process and recognition mainly at the national level as well as in the region and internationally⁴.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021), humanitarian aid in the form of home visits and food deliveries has been prevalent throughout the country. Within this framework, special attention has been given to the caregivers of people with disabilities, who are mostly women, mothers or wives. The 1st Meeting of Migrant Women and Caregivers was held, signifying progress in personal and collective empowerment through the methodology of Women's Self-Support Groups (GAM) with the participation of some 120 women made up of them and together with returned women with disabilities (an experience already validated in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and other countries, including Honduras).

Income generation has been given fresh impetus, and even under the effects of the pandemic (2021 and 2022 onwards) combining virtual and face-to-face modalities, with more than a hundred enterprises implemented by MRD. Mental health is fundamental to the success of any project in a person's life and AHS/PMH has given priority to guaranteeing this component since mid-2018. Without mental health, there can be no physical health. Without mental health, interpersonal, family and social relationships are neglected⁵. Returned persons with disabilities who have received care for their physical and mental health, including their caregivers, recognize that they enjoy a better quality of life.

It is perceived that CONAMIREDIS is cohesive (see documents from the V Encuentro (2022) and the III Asamblea Representativa November 2003), reorganized with a General Directorate, with a committed Board of Directors⁶ and Service Commissions made up of Migrants and the constant

⁴ The US and Italian Episcopal Conferences, Fundación Vida Nueva, Foro Nacional para las Migraciones (FONAMIH), Centro de Atención al Migrante (CAMR), Cordaid, Cruz Roja Internacional (CICR), Cruz Roja Honduras (CRH), Médicos del Mundo (MdM), Teletón, Hospital San Felipe, Pan para el Mundo, the Honduran Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Honduran Migrant Solidarity Fund (FOSMIH), the Central American Women's Fund (FCAM), Catholic Relief Service (CRS), the Tegucigalpa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIT), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the

⁵ The Importance of Mental Health in the Success of Entrepreneurship. Practical Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and their Families, AHS / PMH, 2003-2004.

⁶ Since the formation of the CONAMIREDIS board of directors, two of its members now make health monitoring visits to other MRDs. Expanded participation in the planning and execution of the plan and management of resources and actions.

advice of PMH / AHS; a strategic plan and statutes in the process of obtaining legal status. CONAMIREDIS' current objective is to coordinate support services to provide a comprehensive response to the migrant population and their families, influencing Honduran state institutions and national and international cooperation organizations at the local, national and regional levels to achieve socio-economic and labor inclusion, empowering the migrant population to guarantee their human rights.

CONAMIREDIS assists cases at a national level in the 18 departments of Honduras; it has a database of more than 400 cases (80% of the people live in rural areas, with at least 5% women, in vulnerable areas and as heads of households). They are accompanied with physical rehabilitation with prostheses, surgeries, and medications. They are beginning to reap some of their own resources managed by this collective.

These MRDs find their space and their self-support in CONAMIREDIS. They gradually overcome the stages of pain and find the strength to resume their life projects. They testify that they find a new opportunity in their life within themselves, among themselves and in their redoubled trust in God.

Outlook

On this learning journey, exercising the Good Samaritan, we have moved forward: looks, approaches, formulas and measures that help heal physical and mental wounds, being with them and with their families. Not losing sight of them but motivating them to participate in the collective process, walking together with others who, when they meet, identify with each other and achieve a level of human dignity.

Returning to some of the ideals that have been pending since 2009 and beyond: a rehabilitation center, accommodation and a place of their own for meetings, the opportunity for accessible loans, a shop for national consumption, and above all, the implementation of public policies where people do not feel excluded. The Honduran Migrant Solidarity Fund - FOSOMIH (2008) and the one that followed it, FOSMIH (in accordance with the Law for the Protection of Honduran Migrants and their Families, Legislative Decree 266-2013; and its Regulations Agreement No.OOI-DGACPM-2015) have taken very little or almost nothing into account. This outstanding debt must be honored with a current law!

Three lines of action that we as Scalabrinians must emphasize are: 1) the continuation of the Women's Self-Help Groups (GAM) in line with the Congregation's priority; 2) Mental health care and support, which is closely linked to the first and also an integral part of the livelihoods program, and 3), maintaining membership in the capacity of ongoing advice but always

with a view to the process of autonomy of CONAMIREDIS, which is the strength of the collective.

Final considerations

When the suffering of an individual is shared and reciprocated, it becomes a response to collective suffering. CONAMIREDIS, a state of being today as an individual but more from a family and collective perspective, overcoming with new capacities and dignity.

The search for other opportunities is everyone's business. The MRD, although temporarily blocked by circumstances, are an example of resilience, of putting their heart not only into things seen as success and quick success but also of the fact that life is the most important thing and that the new physical situation opens other possibilities: valuing the family, undertaking in the country with positive attitudes.

"Carry on, join in, life goes on" are the current slogans, just as the first 19 identified migrants stated in 2007. Before the final full stop, I illustrate with what they mean to me clues that move us to continue giving comprehensive responses to requests that returned migrants with disabilities made in 2010.

7 EMPOWERMENT, INTEGRATION AND PROTAGONISM

LIVELIHOODS FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN CONDITIONS OF MOBILITY AND RECEPTION

*Sr. Leda Aparecida dos Reis, mscs**

Means of livelihood play a crucial role in the economic empowerment of migrant and host communities. In the current context, where human mobility is a constant fact of life, fostering the social and solidarity economy becomes a fundamental approach to strengthening financial stability and social integration.

Among the main best practices of livelihoods that we have supported are self-help groups (SHGs), microenterprises, collective entrepreneurship and organizational strengthening, which are essential for the economic fabric of these communities.

Migrants face significant challenges when settling in new places. The lack of support networks, language barriers, legal and cultural limitations, among other obstacles, can make it difficult for them to access the conventional labor market. In this sense, promoting livelihoods stands out as an inclusive and sustainable alternative.

Within the context of developing countries such as Angola, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic, these practices emerge as fundamental pillars for strengthening the social fabric based on brotherhood and equality. Both contexts present a diverse and dynamic

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scenario in which these practices not only seek mechanisms for financial stability and empowerment of the participants but also social agency in the host communities through the appropriation of horizontal and equitable work methodologies.

Support from the Scalabrinian Sisters for these initiatives facilitates access to funding, training and support, promotes the economic growth of these projects and the identification of others as brothers and sisters, participating in and supporting life projects and resilience efforts.

Introduction

Best practices in livelihood generation promote accompaniment, equitable participation and solidarity, building new partnerships between people on the move. By joining forces and resources through participatory methodologies, active participation, which is key to the promotion of human rights, is strengthened. This facilitates balanced development with horizontal and equitable distribution, promoting small businesses, artisanal production and family farming.

This approach not only strengthens individual economic initiatives, but also fosters solidarity and collaboration between diverse communities, breaking down barriers and stigmas. In the long term, the aim is to establish a solid network of means of This approach not only strengthens individual economic initiatives, but also fosters solidarity and collaboration between diverse communities, breaking down barriers and stigmas. In the long term, the aim is to establish a solid network of livelihoods led by people in human mobility, focused on economic self-sufficiency, local job creation and the promotion of an inclusive and sustainable economy, contributing to the harmonious and collaborative growth of Latin American societies.

Specific objectives:

1. Establish comprehensive training programs that include training in business skills, financial management and cultural adaptation, to strengthen the entrepreneurial capacities of communities made up of people in situations of mobility.
2. Foment strategic alliances with strategic partners, financial institutions and governmental and non-governmental institutions for the promotion and defense of human rights, to facilitate access to microcredits, technical resources and legal advice, thus promoting the creation and consolidation of sustainable enterprises among migrant communities.

3. Promote coordination processes with participatory methodologies that encourage the role of communities in human mobility in their areas of local participation and with host communities.

The context

Migration in our countries is shaped by a combination of socio-economic, political and environmental factors. In the Latin American countries of Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic, migration, both internal and to other continents, is common due to the search for job opportunities, political conflicts, natural disasters and economic instability in some countries. Angola, meanwhile, has experienced both internal and external migratory flows due to decades of civil conflict and, more recently, due to its economic growth, attracting foreign workers to sectors such as mining and construction.

Developing livelihoods based on the social and solidarity economy is fundamental to addressing the challenges faced by migrants in both contexts. This approach offers an inclusive platform that allows migrants to participate in the local economy, create their own enterprises and cooperatives, and contribute to community development.

The Scalabrinian Sisters, with their focus on assisting and accompanying migrants in conditions of human mobility and refuge, are in a strategic position to lead livelihood generation processes in Angola, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic due to their experience and commitment to the protection and well-being of the travelers.

From each of their places of intervention, the participation of the Scalabrinian Sisters gives them a deep understanding of the needs and challenges faced by migrants in situations of mobility and refuge, which gives them the ability to design more specific strategies and programs that are adapted to local realities based on the congregation's guidelines. Their work has been key to humanitarian assistance through accompaniment, guidance, training and support for the socioeconomic integration of these migrants and the defense of their human rights.

By promoting collaboration and equitable participation, the social and solidarity economy generates alternatives to traditional employment and to the barriers to accessing financial resources that migrants often face.

Description of the good practice

Livelihoods program is developed through three lines of action:

1. Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

2. Support for entrepreneurial initiatives
3. Organizational Strengthening

This livelihood process for people in human mobility involves a series of strategies that intertwine in the form of horizontal community networks that promote socio-economic integration and links with host communities, thus creating a symbiosis that allows for the equitable growth of practices such as community development of local agriculture, the creation of micro-enterprises or ventures, the generation of self-saving and loan groups and organizational strengthening.

These forms of economic organization promote collaboration, equity and sustainability as a process, providing development opportunities to vulnerable groups.

Presentation of the good practice

Self-help saving and loan groups – SHLGs

SHLGs are an associative model where individuals come together voluntarily to achieve common economic, social and cultural objectives. These can cover various sectors, from agriculture and production to services and consumption. In the context of human mobility, they allow people in a mobile situation to join together to strengthen their resources, share skills and generate income collectively, fostering solidarity and integration.

At the same time, SGAs represent alternatives to the financial system that are framed in close and supportive spaces, which allows for the creation of relationships of trust, solidarity and acceptance through accompaniment, which not only has an impact on social, cultural and political appropriation but also on permanent and transversal training that aims at integral transformation and allows better promotion and defense of human rights in an everyday context.

Backing for entrepreneurship initiatives

These are small companies or individual initiatives that start up with limited resources and focus on satisfying local needs. They can range from small family businesses, associations and community initiatives, such as agricultural and craft enterprises, to the provision of services, the rearing of animals for trade, handicrafts, food, etc.

For people on the move, micro-enterprises represent an opportunity to use their skills and knowledge, generating income autonomously and

contributing to local economic development through processes of active involvement included in participatory methodologies.

Organizational strengthening of savings groups and the social and solidary economy

The process aims to enable Savings and Popular Savings Groups (GAAP) to play a key role in the construction of the Social and Solidary Economy in their communities. Initially, they focus on self-saving and then move towards the implementation of experiences that improve both material and non-material conditions in their communities, extending to the regional and national level.

The members of the GAAPs and the community actors take ownership of the social, cultural and political focus of the process, backed up by permanent and transversal training. Community actors are encouraged to be actors in the design and implementation of Social and Solidarity Economy experiences to positively transform their environments.

The interrelationship between the actors is promoted, consolidating economic and socio-pedagogical exchanges through cooperative networks, and territorial lines of action are designed to demand that public institutions fulfill their role in the construction of social, material and cultural conditions. This process, based on Organizational Strengthening, is an alternative path that generates new economic forms based on solidarity, reciprocity and the common good, with the aim of improving daily life, understood as the dynamic interrelation of diverse people who build relationships, discourses on different aspects, learning and a space for the construction of meanings that must be favorably transformed by the intervening actors as an exercise in political agency, which implies a permanent reading of reality, design and monitoring.

Organizational Strengthening (OS) is a multi-stage process:

- a) Savings Groups and Popular Savings Groups (SGG) with predetermined characteristics are identified.
- b) Training and pedagogical transfer with people selected by the SGG, broadening the focus through training meetings on daily life, political participation and the Social and Solidarity Economy. These individuals then transfer their knowledge to their peers to expand the focus quantitatively and qualitatively.
- c) Readings of reality, design and implementation of Social and Solidarity Economy experiences, with a mapping of community contexts. Two interrelated and interdependent components: the economic one, based on Social and Solidarity Economy criteria,

i.e. alterative and alternative; and the pedagogical or social one, where aspects of everyday life are reflected upon for their improvement or transformation.

- d) Local, provincial and national meetings for economic and socio-pedagogical exchanges, energizing the Social and Solidarity Economy at the local and national levels.

Lessons learned:

- Ongoing cross-disciplinary training
- Creative capacity of the actors to design experiences.
- Insertion of people of other nationalities into community life.
- Generation of relationships between territorial experiences.

Future prospects

Implementing livelihoods based on the social and solidarity economy has provided valuable lessons and triggered significant changes. These approaches have been shown to promote collaboration and inclusion, strengthening the economic autonomy of migrant and host communities. Key lessons learned include the importance of ongoing business training, access to fair financial resources and technical support to ensure the long-term viability of these initiatives.

Changes brought about by the creation of livelihoods in this model include greater social cohesion, diversification of income sources and strengthening of the local economy. In the medium term, it is crucial to consolidate and expand these efforts. Greater collaboration between governments, organizations and civil society is required to guarantee inclusive policies that support these economic practices. In addition, support networks must be strengthened and financial education promoted to ensure the sustainability of the enterprises.

Recommendations for the medium term include the promotion of strategic alliances between financial entities and cooperatives, the implementation of continuous training programs and the development of legal frameworks that facilitate and protect these forms of inclusive economy. The approach, being a holistic conception, must be continuously strengthened, considering the specific needs of migrants and the active participation of both mobile and host communities to promote equitable and sustainable development, in accordance with the care of our common home.

Closing remarks

Livelihoods promote the fair and equitable inclusion of communities in situations of human mobility by empowering the walkers and strengthening their agency in social processes of change.

For Angola, agricultural community development involves various actors, mostly poor farmers, including repatriated Angolan women and men of all ages who have been presented with new challenges, techniques and methodologies for working together as a community, awakening the group's leadership role in the pursuit of socio-economic and cultural growth based on self-sufficiency for a secure life, which has resulted in possibilities for expanding the project, positive changes in living conditions, reduction of hunger, improvement of the quality and quantity of production and safe processes for strengthening human relations.

Within Brazil, the GAAPs have allowed for the development of models for the accompaniment and promotion of productive micro-enterprises that allow people in mobility to satisfy needs such as housing, basic services, education, health and work, substantially improving their living conditions, autonomy and confidence in the face of challenges such as the flexibilization of laws to guarantee access to rights.

Organizational strengthening processes in Ecuador have allowed the creation of close spaces of support, relationships of trust, solidarity and acceptance, while generating alternatives to the financial system through institutional accompaniment. This strengthens the agency of its participants, the models of social, cultural and political appropriation through permanent and transversal training.

Honduras has developed theoretical and practical training models around business plans based on seed capital and institutional support through participatory methodologies of active involvement. The role of the church has been fundamental, participating in and supporting life projects and resilience efforts.

For the Dominican Republic, livelihoods have been developed with a focus on local development and actions aimed at improving the family economy in participatory environments to promote the human, social and economic development of the most vulnerable families and communities. The result has been an improvement in food security, local empowerment and care for the environment.

Every one of these processes is strengthened by the creation of international support networks promoted by the Scalabrinian Sisters through programs that are specific to each context, but which provide mutual feedback to take advantage of the lessons learned from each experience

that is shared by replicating good practices and improving the processes in their weakest points.

8 EMPOWERMENT, INTEGRATION AND PROTAGONISM

PASTORAL AND TRAINING CENTER (CEPCA) (2022 - 2023)

*Sr. Valdete Wilemann, mscs**

Considering the national and local reality of the city of Bogotá, the Pastoral and Training Center (CEPCA) was founded in 2000. This training center has offered a wide range of courses aimed at job training. In the beginning, the main focus was on the victims of the internal armed conflict, who, due to social and political conditions, were forced to leave their territories.

Along its trajectory, CEPCA has offered courses ranging from fast food, bakery and pastry making, to barbering, hair styling, cutting, tailoring and pattern making, accounting, human resources and office automation. More recently, in response to changing labor dynamics and current service profiles, training processes have been implemented in the areas of entrepreneurship and employability.

Remarkably, since its inception, CEPCA has had integral areas of human-Christian accompaniment and training, through the Scalabrinian Sisters. These not only promote technical knowledge in various areas, but also base their action from a pastoral perspective.

It is located in the Camilo Torres neighborhood of the Kennedy district in the city of Bogotá. The team of collaborators that make up this center includes key professionals such as psychosocial professionals (social work and/or psychology), teachers who are experts in the training of the aforementioned courses, and general service assistants in charge of cleaning, maintenance and cooking.

* She is a Brazilian Scalabrinia missionary with 39 years of religious life, with experience of migration on mission with migrants and returnees in Colombia, Ecuador and Honduras. She is currently executive secretary of the Fundación Atención al Migrante of the Archdiocese of Bogotá.

CEPCA is involved in international cooperation projects, which continually reinforce the centre's mission through the intervention processes carried out there.

Introduction

Today, Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, stands out as one of the main host cities for human mobility, both internal and external. According to the latest figures presented by Migración Colombia up to October 2022, the city is home to 428,416 migrants and refugees with the intention of staying, representing approximately 20% of the total population that has entered the country. In addition, the socioeconomic connection with the municipality of Soacha, where around 26,689 migrants reside, contributes to the complexity of the situation. It should be noted that 89,187 Venezuelan migrants and refugees are registered in the Sisben, which is equivalent to 20.8% of the population, mostly located in groups A and B of extreme and moderate poverty.

In this context, since the arrival of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (MSCS) in Bogotá in the 1990s, they have been a beacon of hope. The MSCS have visualized the processes of accompaniment and care for the most needy as a service imbued with love and mercy, following the Gospel of Mt. 25-35: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in." This approach not only defines its mission as one of immediate assistance, but also seeks to strengthen the individual, family and community capacities of those who seek support from the Migrant Care Foundation (FAMIG) and, specifically, from the Pastoral and Training Center (CEPCA).

The MSCS have based their charisma and wisdom on the management of strategies for the training of the most vulnerable population, offering opportunities for the development of knowledge and work skills, and dignifying lives through their selfless dedication to those most in need. They provide spaces for spiritual support and human-Christian formation, not only as a superficial service, but as a deep commitment to the integral transformation of people.

Currently, considering the aforementioned local realities, the MSCS project their mission in the CEPCA from a modern perspective adapted to population dynamics. Each course developed and each person attended to in the CEPCA is conceived as an opportunity for a promising future. The MSCS not only seek to impart operational knowledge, but also base their actions on the importance of the use of new technologies as a central axis for the development of training.

As well as responding to a current need in the labor market, this approach is also seen as an area in which MSCSs can promote evangelization processes aimed at different age groups, including children and teenagers. It also promotes the mental, emotional and spiritual health of adults and the elderly who, for various reasons, have not had access to adequate digital literacy. This context is revealed as fundamental for carrying out authentic and meaningful human-Christian accompaniment in the digital age.

General context

To understand the impact and relevance of CEPCA in the city of Bogotá, it is crucial to understand the context in which it operates. Responding to the complex social and political conditions of the time and maintaining contemporary care strategies according to the needs of the capital city, CEPCA has evolved in its mission to support the victims of the internal armed conflict who were forced to leave their territories and has managed to structure integration methodologies where welcoming actions are promoted for any person in a situation of human mobility.

Initially focused on offering basic job training, CEPCA has undergone a significant evolution in its educational offerings. From traditional courses such as baking and pastry making to more contemporary areas such as entrepreneurship and employability, the center has adapted to changing labor dynamics and the needs of the current market. This multifaceted approach highlights CEPCA's ability to not only provide technical skills, but also to prepare students for the complexities of the modern world of work.

Particularly distinctive about CEPCA is its holistic approach, which goes beyond mere technical training. Guided by the MSCS, the centre offers human-Christian accompaniment and training, providing deep spiritual support. This component is essential to CEPCA's mission of not only providing practical skills, but also promoting the integral transformation of individuals.

Located in the Camilo Torres neighborhood of the Kennedy district in Bogotá, CEPCA operates in an environment where the presence of migrants and refugees is significant. Bogotá, being an important reception center for human mobility, faces unique challenges in terms of integration and support for this diverse population. It is important to highlight that, in Bogotá, 54% of the migrant population is self-employed in informal conditions (productive units) or does not have a formal employment contract as a means of subsistence (DANE, 2022). This fact not only highlights social

problems but also contributes to the increase of inequalities and affects the dignity of everyone.

Considering the above, the importance of providing continuous training in economic inclusion processes and protection to the beneficiary communities has been emphasized. This translates into the development of skills to boost both personal and family income. In addition, this initiative contributes significantly to the promotion of gender equality. It is worth noting that, although women are the ones who most actively seek education and training, paradoxically, they are the ones who find the least access to employment and formal entrepreneurship.

Presentation of the good practice

Taking into account the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, during 2022 and 2023 CEPCA has recognized the urgent need to promote training processes that go beyond traditional courses. There is a perceived urgency to strengthen factors that protect mental health, especially from a human-Christian perspective.

In this scenario, the MSCS have played a fundamental role by providing continuous support to those who trained in various technical areas. This has resulted in a notable decrease in the dropout rate compared to the graduation rate of students. Beyond this achievement, strategies have been implemented to follow up with graduates, seeking their integration through plans, programs and projects that promote the economic stability of families or facilitate their labor insertion, thus contributing to the dignity of these people.

During 2022 and 2023, a significant milestone was reached when more than 120 people were certified and graduated from various courses. Notably, 80% of these achievements were made by women aged between 18 and 39, who, in turn, assume the crucial responsibility of caring for one or more children. This achievement is notable not only for the magnitude of the certification, but also for the relevance of its impact on a specific segment of the population. The concentration on women of productive age, facing the responsibilities of family care, highlights the importance of overcoming the limited opportunities for education and training to which they have historically been subject. These limitations are not only linked to structural conditions, such as the lack of access to educational resources, but also to social and community pressures that impose on these women the difficult task of balancing student and domestic roles, with working days that often extend to double or triple shifts.

Focusing on women who play multifaceted roles emphasized the need to address not only structural barriers, but also the social and community challenges that impact their access to training. Overcoming these barriers involved a deeper recognition of the complexities faced by these women, as well as the implementation of strategies that holistically address the conditions that limit their full participation in educational opportunities.

Training processes were closely linked to job placement initiatives and support for entrepreneurship. During the aforementioned period, CEPCA, through the MSCS, managed to impact 35 people through formal contracts and supported more than 50 business units with inputs for entrepreneurship. These successes were possible thanks to the direct support of the Global Solidarity Fund through the Inter-congregational Project, as well as the support of the Office for Population, Refugees and Migrants of the United States Embassy and through the Foundation for Migrant Assistance, with the outstanding participation of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo being crucial to its implementation.

Within the local context, the importance of experience is manifested in various aspects. Firstly, a deep understanding of community dynamics and specific realities allowed for the design of strategies and programs that were effective for local needs. This contextual knowledge facilitated the identification of appropriate solutions and the adaptation of approaches according to the particularities of the community. In addition, local experience helped to establish relationships of trust with the beneficiaries, facilitating communication and commitment to the development programs. Likewise, experience in the local context favored the construction of strategic alliances with key actors, such as local authorities, community organizations and leaders, thus strengthening collaboration for the successful implementation of sustainable development initiatives.

Outlook

- The strategies implemented by CEPCA revealed fundamental lessons and generated significant changes. The adaptability to address contemporary demands, such as mental health and pastoral care with a human-Christian approach, stands out as a key lesson.
- The concentration on young women, the comprehensive support of the MSCS and the expansion of courses that foster job placement and entrepreneurship point to a progressive vision.
- To achieve this, it is essential to strengthen digital integration, expand partnerships and maintain a focus on the diverse needs of people in the context of human mobility.

- Bearing in mind that the labor market today bases training processes on reputation, it is essential to continue with the strategic management of these actors, always with an eye on the people who most need the MSCS and the services of the CEPCA, even though there are direct alliances with the Monserrate University Foundation (a higher education institution that belongs to the Archdiocese of Bogotá).

Throughout 2022-2023, greater integration processes between local communities and migrants were achieved, thereby reducing the xenophobia that is latent in the city of Bogotá.

To conclude

Ultimately, the experience of the Scalabrinian Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo in Bogotá has not only represented an effective model for addressing human mobility, but also highlights the very essence of the charism of mercy and love for people in the context of human mobility.

Rather than merely imparting technical skills, the CEPCA's success is enriched by a holistic approach that encompasses mental health and the empowerment of women. By recognizing and addressing the individual, family and community complexities of those affected by human mobility, the CEPCA has established itself as a beacon of hope and a transformative agent in society.

Training and capacity building in line with the dynamics of the labor market is and will continue to be essential, but also based on the experiences, needs and passions of the beneficiaries, since it is for them that the Pastoral and Training Center, the Scalabrinian Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo serve, assist and work.

9 EMPOWERMENT, INTEGRATION AND PROTAGONISM FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

COMMENTS

*Sr. Valdiza Carvalho, mscs**

Following the presentation of each of the three texts about the excellent missionary experiences of the Scalabrinian Sisters, what can I say? First, congratulations. Our Final Document of the XIV General Chapter states that: “care for creation transforms our relationship with migrants and refugees, committing us to greater responsibility in all areas of action in the pastoral care of migrants, and also to intensifying our influence on public policies, networking and partnerships in favor of all people on the move”. I believe that this sharing shows us concretely the horizon of our mission as a Congregation. I would like to share some highlights that I think are important:

Regarding the panel, when talking about the advancement of migrants, the most appropriate term would be “recognition of the migrant as a subject of rights”, because the actions shared by the sisters are all in that direction and also the word integration, despite having been used by Pope Francis in 2018, is being widely used by other organizations that see migration as a business, figures, and who do not have a vision of the inclusion of migrants and refugees. Inclusion is a movement of openness on the part of both those who arrive and those who welcome them. It implies collegiality, interculturality, opening up space for the other to enter and have a sense of belonging to the group and the community. As Vicente Junqueira Moragas, from the NUICS Center for Inclusion, Accessibility and Sustainability, says, integration is simply the insertion into society of people who can adapt to

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it. While inclusion proposes to recognize and value diversity, the second requires a transformation of diversity so that the person can be included.

1. The diversity of actions with internal migrants, displaced persons, deportees and international migrants, all of them in the process of inclusion in each reality of these 3 countries: I believe that the protagonism is really the doors that we open together with the migrants and refugees, whether in our organizations, as agents of the Pastoral Care of Human Mobility, in subsistence and training centers, among others.
2. The priority attention to women and children, as one of the strategies that our Congregation has adopted and which has been reinforced in our last general chapters, in these texts these practices are well emphasized in the experiences. In view of this, we must ask ourselves if it is necessary to delve a little deeper into the feminine face of the Scalabrinian charism. As we have done in the past. Let's do more research on the feminization of migration, which places women at the forefront of the migration process. Maybe we'll write more about it, maybe we'll come back to it a little more. I really liked what Roberto Marinucci said about the women who write articles for REMHU.
3. When our practices are directly supported by governments, among other organizations, I think we have to keep our antennae up so as not to fall into the same trap of contributing to migration as a business that brings absurd profits to governments, and we are there, receiving the crumbs, but unable to denounce the injustices committed against migrants.
4. The three experiences in this panel highlight the practices of mental health, psychological care and accompaniment for migrant families, because we know that situations of violence, xenophobia, denial of rights, whether in transit or in the place of reception, are hard for so many families, especially women, adolescents and children. I believe that this is a great step forward for our mission as Scalabrinian Sisters, because we have been carrying out these practices for a long time, but they were not emphasized much, perhaps because of the urgencies. We were always more concerned with the economic subsistence of migrants, but in our documents these actions are clearly highlighted, as stated in the same document of the XIV General Chapter: "to promote, together with the public authorities, universities, civil society and the local church, the integral health of migrants and refugees".

5. All three experiences place great emphasis on networking, which has been the focus of CELAM and CLAR in recent times. Networks are strengthened by initiatives that come together to assist and accompany migrants. The numerous associations between migrants, various organizations that promote actions, local churches, governments, private companies and many others.

Acknowledgements: My gratitude to the sisters who organized this seminar and who have given me this opportunity to be here sharing with you... what a joy it has been for me to read your texts. I have realized that they are very different experiences from the ones I had in Brazil, because my greatest experience has always been with migratory regularization, linguistic-cultural inclusion and language teaching, and these experiences have shown me that this part is well consolidated, among other things because the majority of migrants in these countries have the same language, which makes things much easier. Another joy is sharing with Professor Joseph Handerson, whom I have known for many years, since 2013 in Manaus and in various places in Brazil. For me, he is an example of dedication to the study of migration in academia, from Amapá and now in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Thank you very much!!!

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10 DEVELOPMENT, INTEGRATION AND PROTAGONISM

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROTAGONISM, AUTONOMY AND ECONOMY OF MIGRANTS

*Handerson Joseph**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Scalabrinian Sisters for the opportunity to participate in the 5th Congregational Seminar on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees – MSCS, held in Bogotá From March 5-8, 2024. Thanks to the invitation to be a panelist in Panel 6, “Promotion, Integration and Protagonism,” I had the privilege of reading and listening to the Sisters present the practices they have developed with migrants and people in refugee situations in various countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, as well as Africa, whose experience illuminated many of the issues I have been working on (See Joseph, 2016, 2021), especially the problematization of the focus only on the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees, to emphasize the potential, autonomy, protagonism and struggles of migrants, characterizing the “interpenetration of subjection and subjectivation”, in the words of Sandro Mezzadra¹.

These paradigm and focus shifts allow for new perspectives on the experiences and trajectories of migrants and provoke a new theoretical and methodological turn, playing a crucial role in the understanding of contemporary migratory dynamics, decisive in the formulation of new migratory policies capable of forging other forms of migratory governance and pastoral care of human mobility. Furthermore, the practical projects presented by the Sisters inspired me to think about the possibility of working on new Outreach Projects at the University, reaffirming the socio-political

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¹ Mezzadra, Sandro. 2015. Multiplicação das fronteiras e práticas de mobilidade. REMHU, v. 33, n. 44, p. 11-30

and humanizing role of education for the lives of migrants beyond national borders.

There were three presentations, the first by Sr. Ligia Ruiz Gamba on "Returning Migrants with Disabilities in Honduras: Integration and Leadership", the second by Sr. Leda dos Reis co-authored on 'Livelihoods for the empowerment of the social and solidarity economy in migrant communities in conditions of mobility and reception' in Angola, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Brazil, and the third by Sr. Valdete Wilemann on the 'Pastoral and Training Center (CEPCA)' in Colombia².

Based on the work presented by Sister Ligia Ruiz, it is possible to outline five dimensions of the socio-pastoral experience developed in Honduras: serving, empowering, organizing, integrating and undertaking. The work is articulated with Disabled Returned Migrants (DRM), taking seriously their self-organization through their autonomy and leadership. Both the Center for the Care of Returned Migrants (CAMR) and the San José Migrant House in the city of Ocotepeque, on the border with Guatemala, play a fundamental role in promoting the quality of life of returned migrants with disabilities, especially regarding new life opportunities.

Rather than focusing solely on returned migrants, this study focuses on those who have suffered drastic situations (accidents) on their journeys and migratory routes - mainly between Mexico and the United States - that have caused them a disability, especially physical. The experiences of these people are doubly frustrating, as they have not been able to achieve their dreams of entering and staying in the United States, and they have been violently impacted along the way, transforming their lives emotionally and physically.

While on the one hand this experience can provoke feelings of shame and humiliation upon their return, which can lead to their moral and social death, mainly due to the difficulty of their family, social and labor integration, on the other hand, they organize themselves individually and collectively to undertake new life projects that allow for their family and social reintegration. In this sense, the initial feelings of being the object of violence, frustration and shame are transformed, through solidarity, into vital forces for reintegrating into the society in which they live, being protagonists of their change of course, mobilizing new physical and intellectual capacities, inspiring security, appreciation, solidarity and defense of their rights through the laws that protect them.

² See the three texts discussed by the author in this same volume.

The experiences of returned migrants with disabilities show how the decision to emigrate in search of a better life abroad can also result in the physical and mental destruction of one's own life. In this sense, the emigrant's dream often becomes a spectacle of physical and emotional violence. However, it is also important to emphasize that relationships of solidarity, aid and humanitarianism make it possible to establish a link between mental, psychological and physical health and moral economy, in the words of Didier Fassin. There is a constitutive relationship between attention to physical and mental health and moral and social well-being, which are articulated through the areas of the administrative partner, physical and mental health, as well as entrepreneurship and the management of innovative productive projects that contribute to improving the living conditions of returned migrants with disabilities.

Five dimensions are also emphasized by the sisters Leda Aparecida dos Reis (Ecuador), María Eugenia Vázquez (Dominican Republic), Edi Eidt – Uige (Angola), Joana Silva (Brazil) and Ligia Ruiz Gamba (Honduras): fostering, strengthening, empowering, integrating and undertaking. In the practices developed in countries such as Angola, Honduras, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Brazil, the social and solidarity economy is crucial to reinforce the financial stability and social integration of migrants. These solidarity-based practices have been made possible thanks to the relationships of trust and solidarity established through the Livelihoods Program and the Self-Help Groups (SHGs), such as micro-enterprises, collective entrepreneurship and organizational strengthening. SHGs refer to an associative model through which people voluntarily unite to achieve common economic, social and cultural goals and objectives.

Through these associations, migrants are able to maximize their human and economic resources, putting their skills at the service of their communities. These experiences of the migrant economy have a dual aspect: while they contribute to the social and community integration of migrants, they also integrate them into the process of migrant entrepreneurship, reinforcing the bonds of transnational solidarity. Here the categories of frustration, shame and humiliation give way to feelings of pride and achievement, characterizing the success of the journey.

Participatory methodologies are being developed to promote (self-) sustainable systems, economic autonomy, local and (trans)national job creation and the (self-)management of livelihoods among migrants, as well as a horizontal and equitable distribution that promotes small businesses, artisanal production and family farming.

Some training programs and courses are being promoted to develop the entrepreneurial capacities and access to finance of migrants, strengthening

individual and collective economic initiatives through solidarity networks between different migrant communities, between them and public and private institutions, including civil society and the Catholic Church, characterizing strategic alliances in favor of migrant communities.

Based on these experiences of autonomy and solidarity, migrant communities forge new alternative forms characterized by the migrant economy at the local, regional, (trans)national and cross-border levels. These economic practices also contribute to the integration of migrants in their places of residence, as well as to the reintegration of returnees with disabilities, as we have already seen in the Honduran case. Micro-enterprises arise from the specific needs of migrants as forms of (self-)management to generate employment, and as a way of using knowledge based on the autonomy of migrants and on an alternative and inclusive economic perspective.

Drawing on her socio-pastoral experience in Bogotá, Colombia, Sister Valdete Willeman highlights five dimensions: training, promotion, strengthening, integration and management. Focusing on the Pastoral and Training Center (CEPCA) and the Migrant Care Foundation (FAMIG), she addresses a set of training courses promoted for the job training of people in situations of mobility, mainly in the areas of food, bakery, barbering, accounting, human resources, entrepreneurship and employability, as well as mental health care from a human-Christian perspective with a focus on young women.

Family care and educational training become key to providing women with the tools to face social and community challenges, fostering integration and strengthening the bonds of sisterhood, brotherhood and empathy. Information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as social and institutional networks, have played a fundamental role in the design of strategies to meet local needs and the implementation of sustainable initiatives that consider the particularities of communities.

Based on the logic of (self-)support, (self-)organization, (self-)management, autonomy, equitable participation and solidarity, the three texts presented, in an attempt at systematization, address the individual, family, collective and community dimensions, contributing to the development of new capacities with human and social dignity, promoting the (re)integration of migrants, as well as strengthening leadership, leadership, protagonism and the migrant economy as an inclusive and (self) sustainable alternative.

To conclude, I would like to share some words that I wrote in February 2020, which express some of my feelings and perceptions about the border,

especially between the United States and Mexico. They were written during my trip to California, when I crossed the border to visit the city of Tijuana, a place that migrants long to reach in order to enter the United States.

This was a dream come true, an historic, exciting, shocking dream, perhaps also one of the dreams of many of the world's migrants.

I crossed the US-Mexico border by land, passing through San Diego to get to Tijuana. In fact, I fulfilled my dream in reverse, because I went from North to South.

Upon reaching one of the largest walls that divide North from South, I began to feel a pain in my chest, a deep sadness, it was the inexplicable.

Throughout my life I have crossed many borders: geographical, cultural, linguistic, ethnic-racial, religious, professional and others, but I had never felt so affected by a border, never felt so bewitched by a border.

- The border between the pride of being able to cross it and the pain and frustration of not being able to cross it
- The border between success and failure
- The border of the dream, of the imaginary and of the lived world
- The frontier of obstacles, of war
- The frontier of (dis)agreement with the other
- The frontier of disagreement with the other, of pity for the other
- The frontier of (com)passion towards the other
- The frontier where the emigrant's flesh is the cheapest on the market
- The frontier of the Platonic cave, where light is for the few
- The border where many are determined, adventurous, but few are invited, few are welcome
- The most guarded border in the world, where emigrants find themselves in the panopticon
- What is the point of saying that the border does not exist if few manage to cross it?
- What is the point of saying that we are modern if not even homo sapiens built these walls and fences?
- What is the point of praying for the dead if not even the souls of the living are saved at/by the border?
- Perhaps never in the history of humanity have there been so many deaths in the name of the border or so many struggles over borders

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- Perhaps never in the history of humanity have there been so many deaths at the borders, so much degradation of the other by the other at the border
 - We live in borderline times, of the dehumanization of the human.
 - What is the point of the border if the border takes the meaning out of the lives of migrants, takes away their right to migrate, to move, to be in the world and for the world?
 - If I could, instead of talking about borders, I would talk about something else
 - Never again to remember the lives lost, tortured at the borders
 - Never again to remember that in Tijuana I left behind people who simply want to cross the border but can't and may die without ever doing so
 - Never again to remember that in Tijuana I met people who gave their lives so that others could reach the border
 - Never again to remember that the border is also a place of zoning, where people are both alive and dead at the same time.

11 PASTORAL CARE AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION

PASTORAL CARE AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION.

AN EXPERIENCE OF NATIONAL COORDINATION OF THE PASTORAL CARE OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN ANGOLA AND SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE: TRAINING OF PASTORAL LEADERS FOR MIGRANTS AND PUBLIC OFFICERS

Sr. Carla Luisa Frey Bamberg, msc^{s}*

Introduction

Migrant and itinerant ministry is one of the prophetic services of the Catholic Church in Angola and extends to all the dioceses in the country. Many agents dedicate themselves to migrant ministry free of charge, welcoming and accompanying migrants, seeking to form a new awareness in society on this issue. It is essential that communities are open to welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees. However, it is also necessary to guarantee the right not to emigrate, as Pope Francis says in his message for the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees: "A joint effort of every country and the international community is needed to guarantee everyone the right not to have to emigrate, that is, the possibility of living in peace and dignity in one's own land".

CEPAMI, the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in Angola and São Tomé, has been in existence for 14 years and was founded on October 31, 2006, by the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé (CEAST), with the aim of organizing and energizing the various pastoral services for migrants and itinerant people. It works in communities through specific sectors of the pastoral

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care of refugees, namely the Apostleship of the Sea, the Pastoral Care of Civil Aviation, the Pastoral Care of Roads and the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Refugee Communities. In addition to offering more specific pastoral care, this Commission is also responsible for implementing actions to welcome and reintegrate the thousands of returnees who have returned to Angola from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Namibia into local communities and society. It also deals with refugees, asylum seekers, foreign migrants of different nationalities and internally displaced persons.

Context

Angola shares borders with the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zambia and Namibia. Administratively, it is divided into 18 provinces, 164 municipalities and 518 communes. The population reached 33 million in 2022¹.

Immigrants make up a significant part of the resident workforce in Angola: approximately 2% were immigrants in 2019² and 56,359 (0.2% of the population) are refugees and asylum seekers, scattered throughout the country. Angola also has 525,000 returnees, who represented 2% of its population in 2016³. The voluntary and organized repatriation program, approved in 2010 by the Angolan Executive and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ended in 2016 with 525,000 returnees. However, more than 60,000 citizens chose to remain in the host countries: 20,000 remained in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the same number in Zambia and the other 20,000 between South Africa and Namibia. Angola currently has 6,700 internally displaced persons who have left their land due to environmental problems, especially drought in the south of the country (IDMC, 2020). This phenomenon has affected the provinces of Namib, Cunene, Cuando Cubango and Huila. Meanwhile, we also have records of more than 20,000 internally displaced persons (Individual Development Plan) (Soares, 2015) displaced from their habitat, often due to the use of firearms. In fact, since the war, demolitions have been a constant “.⁴

¹ Angolan National Institute of Statistics. (<https://www.ine.gov.ao/inicio/estatisticas>).

² UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs – <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/>

³ UNHCR data presented at the Conference on World Refugee Day on 20.06.2023.

⁴ Fr. Avelino Chico, sj. Africa Regional Coordinator for the Migrants and Refugees Department at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development - May 18, 2020. *National training for Migración Pastoral Works*

In addition to not knowing how to communicate confidently, they feel discriminated against, excluded and a large number abandoned (with their children) by their husbands. They live on the margins of society, without

possibilities or opportunities for a dignified life. Victims of the violation of their human rights, most of the time illiterate, they suffer from low self-esteem which increases the rates of suicide and domestic violence. They spend their lives begging, “zungar” (selling) in the city streets, trying to earn something. On the other hand, in many cases immigrants tend to depend on organizations that help them solve some of their problems and needs. A large number of children and young people are left on the street without access to education and, therefore, are victims of all kinds of violence, of human trafficking, which feeds marginalization, drugs and even increases the statistics of street children, the infant mortality rate and HIV/AIDS carriers.

Angola’s high level of migration has also led people to engage in illicit practices such as human trafficking. This phenomenon mainly affects women and children and involves serious forms of exploitation, fraud, coercion and violence^[1].

Trafficking victims are especially vulnerable to situations of labor exploitation due to their inability to speak the local language and their irregular status in the country. The integration of migrants into society is a complex process that requires deep coordination between the different actors involved: the migrants themselves, the government, other governmental and non-governmental institutions, and local communities. It also requires an effort of adaptation and reciprocal adjustment between these populations and the receiving society itself. In the case of Angola, refugees and immigrants face numerous obstacles, especially in relation to their legal situation and the difficulties they face in entering the labor market, which are the issues that most limit the integration process.

There are thousands of migrants living in a situation of extreme vulnerability, without valid documentation, forgotten by the Angolan government and administrative authorities. From 2015 to 10.08.20, 110 cases of possible human trafficking were registered in Angola, with 220 victims, and of these, 27 cases have been tried. Many other cases are being investigated. According to information from the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Dr. Ana Celeste Cândido Januário, on 10.08.2020.

Refugees have been in Angola for more than 20 years and they don’t even have a document, they don’t speak the language well and they are

illiterate. Others, although they have higher education and professional qualifications and can practice a profession, cannot work because they do not have authorization or documents. Women (as already mentioned) are the main victims, but also young people, who go hungry without access to public health services, education and formal work. The precarious situation often forces women into prostitution to get some money with which to buy food. This reality prevents them from better integrating into Angolan society.

Description of the good practice

On a national level, CEPAMI's mission is to raise awareness of the importance of welcoming migrants and refugees on Angolan soil, making it a space for openness to differences and growth in the exchange of cultures. The strategies we have adopted to carry out our mission with migrants and refugees through CEAST are as follows:

Training of Migration Ministry Leaders. This has been the perfect time to introduce those responsible for the archdioceses to the different topics and methodologies of the pastoral care of migrants to better respond to the challenges of the mission. These training sessions cover topics such as: the organization and structure of CEPAMI; the specific sectors of CEPAMI; methodology: networking and partnerships; people in situations of mobility; the magisterium of the Church and the pastoral care of human mobility - pontifical documents; the freedom to choose between emigrating or staying; the spirituality and biblical foundations of the pastoral care of human mobility: Old and New Testaments; laws for the protection of human rights in the migratory context of Angola; human trafficking; guidelines for a diocesan/national secretariat for the pastoral care of human mobility/ planning/evaluation and the guidelines on intercultural migration pastoral care; migratory reality in Angola (migrants and refugees, contemporary migration); church social service and the leadership profile of the animator of migration pastoral care.

We work with a very diverse audience in the archdioceses/dioceses: priests, high-level religious and, above all, lay people committed to the cause of migrants and refugees.

Training for the leaders of migrant and refugee communities. These training sessions took place mainly in Luanda, with the participation of the leader of each nationality of migrants and refugees. The training provided in these meetings has a human character, the main objective of which is to offer people a light of hope. In this way, we organize debates with the leaders of the migrants and refugees on relevant topics linked to the context

of their experiences, with the help of professionals in the fields of health, law (lawyers), psychology (professional guidance), among others. It is through these meetings that activities such as the Migrant and Refugee Fair and the Migrant and Refugee Pilgrimage to Muxima are promoted, among others, as we have a variety of nationalities and religious beliefs. In these spaces, we take the opportunity to talk about the positive aspects of migration and the needs they experience, drawing the attention of the competent authorities so that they can attend to them with care and protection. After all, a better society can also be built with migrants. We also warn of the dangers of human trafficking to which they may be subjected, especially children and women when they are exposed on the streets for the street sale of products or even when they engage in prostitution.

We focus on training for women refugees, covering topics such as disease prevention, gender issues, leadership, domestic violence, conflict management, human trafficking, female empowerment, entrepreneurship and income generation on a monthly basis. Special attention is also paid to children who are outside the education system due to their parents' (migrants' or refugees') lack of documentation and the lack of economic conditions to support them. However, remedial classes have been set up, allowing many of them to come into contact with a school system. For the training courses, people specialized in the subject are used, and for the courses, the refugees themselves, who already work in the sewing and beauty salon sectors. As they speak the same language, it makes learning easier for them.

We hold celebrations for Migrant and Refugee Day, which include Eucharistic celebrations, art fairs with dances and typical foods from each culture represented, and moments of conviviality to share the different experiences of the journey as migrants. Special attention is paid to the communication of the main activities, as they are always publicized in favor of people in a situation of mobility, without forgetting the country's authorities, who have a great influence on the integration process of migrants and refugees.

To carry out the work, we have international funders and also embassies based in Angola which, sensitized to the reality in which these people live, end up showing solidarity and helping these people to get out of this situation and have a better life.

An important partner in the implementation of the work and in the support of the projects is the Angolan Network for the Protection of Migrants and Refugees, which was created by CEPAMI in 2016. In order to better interact with the authorities, decision-making bodies and the like, CEPAMI continues to work with various organizations that deal with migrants and

refugees, namely: Caritas Angola, Justice and Peace, Catholic University of Angola, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR, International Organization for Migration - IOM, Radio Eclésia, Omunga Organization, Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, Jesuit Refugee Service - JRS, Society of the Divine Word, Salesians of Don Bosco, International Volunteers for Development. This means that there is a real defense of immigrants and refugees.

Perspectives

Our aim is to continue working on behalf of people in situations of mobility, providing adequate pastoral care for migrants and refugees. We also want to guarantee a series of human training courses for the well-being of migrant and refugee communities. We consider it essential to continue networking so that together we can reflect on the situations that afflict our beneficiaries and, if possible, put pressure on policy makers. Ultimately, the goal is to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees.

It is essential to create the conditions that will allow immigrants and refugees to obtain assistance for their families with a minimum of dignity, access to the labor market and active participation in social life.

Nowadays it is increasingly clear that mechanisms must be created so that people in situations of mobility are not in a position of total dependency, but rather programs that raise their self-esteem, improve their health and professionalize them, helping them to advance towards their personal fulfillment. With the help of CEAST and, above all, with the external help of funders sensitive to the vulnerable situation of migrants and refugees, we can promote far-reaching pastoral care with a high impact and visibility.

Conclusion

Having completed CEPAMI's 17-year mission, we realise that there is still a lot of work to be done. Being involved in this pastoral care for migrants and refugees challenges us and sets us on our way... in search of innovative and creative solutions to promote a dignified life for migrants.

Our work is highly visible in the Angolan Church and appreciated by the civil authorities. We are in close communication with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

In short, we will continue to develop actions in favor of people on the move, ensuring that their dignity is valued in the midst of so many difficulties. It is for migrants and refugees that we exist, so our mission is and always will be to provide tools so that migrants and refugees can walk on their own, towards their own fulfillment and that of those around them.

12 PASTORAL CARE AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION

TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY ON MIGRATION AT A DIOCESAN LEVEL – PERSONNEL TRAINING AND COORDINATION IN TIMES OF TRANSITION

*Sr. Milva Caro, mscs**

Community-based migration ministry in the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, located in southern Germany, comprises more than 100 first-, second- and third-generation Catholic immigrant communities. For them, the diocese has hired more than 70 pastoral workers among professional lay people and clergy. A year ago I was appointed coordinator of this staff, which is one of the two axes of the diocesan structure of coordination of this pastoral work: the “Personnel” department, where I work, which deals with all the pastoral staff working in the diocese, almost 1,500 workers, and the “Pastoral” department, which deals with the diocesan pastoral line guides, with whom I work in close contact.

I belong to the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Scalabrinians, who for almost 50 years have been working at the service of migrants in this diocese, especially in the Catholic communities of Italian migrants, in the pastoral, social and human service, working at the same time as a bridge with the German community and society. Myself, I am the fruit of this Scalabrinian feminine work. Growing up in an Italian-German environment, at the age of 18 I started to attend more actively the German parish, where I was also part of the pastoral council. Later, while attending the Italian community, I took on the animation of the youth group and participated in the choir of the Italian community. The Scalabrinian Sisters

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always supported and encouraged me in this communitarian path of double belonging.

The decision of the Scalabrinian Sisters to remain at the service of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, after having had to close 3 communities in Germany over the years, is due to the missionary mandate of the founder St. John Baptist Scalabrini to “keep the faith and the homeland alive for the emigrants in foreign lands”; and also to the appreciation of the diocese for the missionary work of the Sisters. The diocese has always appreciated and supported the presence of Scalabrinian religious life in non-German speaking communities.

Their journey was and is always with the local Church and at the service of the local Church, doing what they were called to do: missionary service with the migrants.

Introduction

In this mission, as Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, we intend to be part of the diocesan structure and journey, an objective that is also reflected in my work, which is organized in such a way that I spend half of my time coordinating the management of diocesan personnel for migrant communities and the other half of the time I am serving directly in an Italian Catholic community as a pastoral agent.

The pastoral care of migrants has been updated in our diocese for the past year. This is the third time since the beginning of the diocesan migration ministry that this step has been taken, which aims to overcome the long history of the local church by adopting the model of ethnic pastoral care. Currently, the objective of the migration pastoral is to reorganize the pastoral of Catholic Christians of other mother tongues with a collaborative and intercultural approach, accompanying migrant communities to integrate and articulate with the local church, in the territorial parishes. Therefore, the objective today in the diocesan coordination of personnel at the service of the faithful of another cultural and linguistic origin is to continue with the new practice adopted and the strategies chosen, according to the new document issued by the diocesan leadership: “Auf dem Weg zu einem immer größeren wir” Leit und Richtlinien zur Interkulturellen Pastoral in der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart - ‘Towards an ever greater us’ Intercultural Pastoral in the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart (Orientations and Guidelines).

Specifically, the aim is to disseminate the new guidelines in the diocese, to pastoral agents and to local and foreign communities, and to orient and support the staff in strategies for implementing the new model.

In this effort, it is fundamental to encourage and give continuity to the teamwork practiced in the diocese.

There are at least 3 goals that, as a Scalabrinian, I personally propose to myself and to the diocese, that is to say, to my colleagues and pastoral agents, to be highlighted:

- a) First, to make the personnel aware that the service of pastoral care of migrants that they carry out allows the local Church to exercise a pluralistic pastoral care, which interacts, to consolidate itself interculturally. Therefore, it is an itinerary that favors the construction of the one Christian family with and in its diversity. A Universal Church, that is, a Catholic Church.
- b) Second, the second objective is to give strength to one of the primary strategies of the diocese: **WORKING TOGETHER**, working with the pastoral team. Hence, direct and frequent collaboration between clergy and local pastoral workers becomes vital for the continuity of the mother tongue communities.
- c) Third, to maintain a strong focus on the pastoral care of migrants and the needs of migrants of different generations and to help the local church to look towards an ever new church, which is being built with, not without, migrants.

Background

In terms of territory, the diocese, which is almost identical to the Land (region) of Baden-Württemberg, has about 5 million inhabitants, of whom about 1.7 million are Catholics. The region is one of the largest industrial centers in Germany and one of the most important in Europe. It therefore attracts migrants from all over the world and from many different religions.

The largest Catholic migrants are Italians, followed by Croatians, Portuguese, Poles and then smaller communities such as Spaniards, Slovenes, Hungarians, Ukrainians, Chaldeans, to name but a few.

My work starts by joining a structure that is already established and practiced and in the process of implementation. Thus, I bring my training received over the years (theological, religious and intercultural), the experience of various missionary activities in different migratory contexts and my status as a second generation migrant, although I have never really emigrated, if not by vocation.

Overview of the good practice

The main responsibility is to take care of the pastoral agents and priests who assist the Christian immigrant communities, in various areas. On the one hand, I ensure the support of the diocese in their very practical administrative needs such as residence permits, transfers, retirements, vacations, vacation replacements or sickness. On the other hand, much broader and more complex, is the responsibility of accompanying and coordinating the human resources that serve more than dozens of groups and communities: the management of conflicts and problems of various kinds; the semi-regular and regular contact with them through telephone calls, visits to parishes and personal meetings; the organization and holding of meetings, at least three times a year, by language with various communities, the Italian, the Croatian, the mixed, the so-called “rest of Israel”, where information about the diocese is exchanged and current issues are discussed, diocesan meetings and other various activities are prepared.

Such meetings of the same language communities are prepared by two diocesan leaders, namely my colleague and myself, together with a team chosen from among them. My colleague and I are always present at the meetings and help with coordination, but the organizational responsibility lies with the team, precisely to encourage and foster co-responsibility. Once a year, a two-and-a-half-day conference is organized to which all pastoral workers are invited. About three-quarters of the employees attend. Each time, a topical or special topic of interest is discussed. It is an annual conference organized in collaboration with the diocesan formation department and some pastoral workers. German priests who have mother tongue communities in their territory are also always invited to the meeting. These are some of the main activities for and directly addressed to the collaborators involved in the pastoral care of migrants in the diocese.

Another important responsibility for the performance of our work is the articulation with the persons, designated for each of the main ethnic-linguistic communities in Germany, who are called National Delegates. Regular contact with them allows the exchange of ideas and pastoral strategies and the long and medium-term planning for the recruitment of priests and the future of the communities with another mother tongue in Germany. It allows the exchange of the national path and the comparison of the path taken by other dioceses in Germany. Migrant pastoral care is not the same throughout Germany. Although the responsibility for recruiting priests and maintaining the communities remains with the diocese, the close and frequent contact with the national delegate is of great help for the pastoral accompaniment of the individual communities in the diocese.

A further very broad and demanding field of work is the close collaboration with my colleagues in the department, in the ordinary administrative work; which, at the moment, is concretely in the restructuring of the department. In this restructuring, the sector "Foreign Communities" must become more and more an "equal" part with the other sectors of personnel hired in the diocese, as far as administration is concerned. This work has no immediate visibility in the territory or at the pastoral level, but it strongly determines an administrative strategy and operational lines with the personnel, which in turn has an impact on the quality of work, the well-being of the workers and overall job satisfaction. The demands of labor and union regulations in the diocese are very high and must be met with great care.

Publication of the Guidelines and Orientations for Intercultural Ministry was conceived with a strategic and targeted dissemination throughout the diocese. With my arrival, the active dissemination phase began, and we are currently in the final phase. Within one year of its publication, 4 meetings were held in 4 regions of the diocese to which all pastoral agents of foreign communities, deans, priests responsible for German communities, representatives of German and foreign pastoral councils were invited. With a team of 6 people, two from the diocesan leadership, my colleague and myself, a colleague from the formation department, two pastoral advisors (Croatian and German) and a priest (Polish), we worked out a program for presenting the document. The letter of invitation to this half-day training was signed by the auxiliary bishop to underline the importance of this activity. It is a sign that the intercultural pastoral in the diocese no longer wants to be a parallel pastoral. The strategy aims at an "ever greater us".

The preliminary scientific study, which led to the drafting of the document, highlighted not only the great need to maintain the non-German mother tongue communities, but also the great desire of the lay migrants to organize themselves among themselves to be an active, responsible and involved part of the migration pastoral in the diocese. On the part of the German laity this is very much present and organized on both the diocesan and national level. In response to this request, the diocese organized 4 regional meetings called "Forums", to which only lay migrants from the local Christian communities were invited. Four editions of the Forum have already been held, in the 4 zones of the diocese. At the moment, on-line meetings are being held in the different zones to prepare for the next meetings. Next April the big diocesan meeting will take place in which the lay representatives of each zone will participate and will be able to present the results of the previous meetings to the diocesan leadership, as the auxiliary bishop responsible for pastoral orientations and the head of

the personnel department, i.e. my boss, will be present. On our part, from the diocesan coordination of the migratory pastoral, we are supporting and accompanying this path for the intercultural strength that it promotes and represents.

The directives strongly emphasize the diocese's own strategy called the "Rottenburger Model". A model of pastoral action and management based on partnership, teamwork and shared responsibility and accountability. This model should be presented, reflected upon and learned by the priests, as well as by the members of the pastoral council.

Throughout our diocesan coordination work, there is a lot of reflection, evaluation and re-planning, including long-term strategies, for example: what criteria should new priests hired for migration ministry meet? What language level is needed? How do we deal with the diocesan abuse prevention regulations for foreign priests who want to come and do not have all the documentation? Do we leave the community without a priest, or can they come anyway? How can a community continue without a priest, or how can it be closed down? Another important aspect of planning for the future is to have up-to-date numbers and flows of migrants in the diocese. The statistics department of the diocese helps us a lot in this and provides us with updated data.

Expected results for this year are:

- Increasingly effective and productive pastoral teams, ensuring continuity of both local communities and those of other mother tongues.
- Plurality of communities and spiritual centers with a diversity of responses to the different spiritual needs of Christians.
- Increasing mutual respect and appreciation for the variety of Christian life.
- Restructuring of the diocesan structure, including our sector, responding to the signs of the times that the diocese is experiencing with the sharp decrease in pastoral agents and economic resources.
- Giving continuity to the unique and foundational missionary mandate of evangelization (Mk 16:15-20).

Finally, but not least, there is my direct work in an Italian Catholic community. In liturgical and catechetical responsibility, in formal and informal meetings with old and new Italian emigrants, in the promotion of traditional cultural and religious activities. Here at the grassroots one

can concretely feel the importance of these communities, they guarantee a personal identity for one's own migratory history.

Perspectives

Diocese, now a vacant see, is living a very special and unique historical moment. The main challenges are: the great demographic change, the staggering shortage of pastoral workers and priests, the economic burden of real estate, the very high personnel costs, in the face of ever-decreasing income. It is, in short, the dream of a "Church" that no longer exists.

Throughout the diocese and in all sectors, the big question is: What do we want the Church of tomorrow to be like? Study groups, reflections, proposals and strategies are characterizing the work, both pastoral and administrative, of these times in order to present to the new bishop concrete proposals of a church that wants to remain faithful to its missionary mandate.

The greatest challenge in my field is: How to bring the non-German speaking communities to a level of equality in rights and duties, while maintaining diversity?

Conclusion

Containing almost 400,000 non-German Catholics, the local church is experiencing an epochal change. The recent document, the two diocesan agents (my colleague and I), the ongoing formation, the financial investment and the attention in so many areas confirm that migrants have their place in the church and are a fundamental and integral part of the local church, with its spirituality and its needs.

Universal Church is realized in the local Church, in pastoral unity, between small or large neighboring parishes, where Germans, Croatians and Poles, etc., are at home. For the diocesan leadership, the reality of non-German Catholics is well known, but sometimes there is a lack of recognition at the grassroots level, which would allow a meeting on the same wave frequency (*Augenhöhe*); too many divergences and differences of views are still there. The foreigner is an entity and remains a foreigner, even if in the church the foreigner does not exist, as St. Paul tells us. There are still misunderstandings, not linguistic ones, in particular about values, traditions and in the area of rights and duties. The key to eliminating barriers is open, fraternal, frank and respectful dialogue and mutual appreciation.

Various activities and strategies presented are, in my opinion, the right way to build a new church of people. Because of the mourning, of which there is so much talk in the diocese, because of the many losses (priests, churches, young people, it used to be like this, etc.) we sometimes lose

sight of the fact that something new is being born. The path towards an ever greater “We” depends on the individual who wants to walk together. If the individual wants to walk, work, decide alone, the “We” will not be built. The “Rottenburger Model” is “walking together”. A “walking together” that does not mean that I am in charge of everyone and receive help from those who do what I say, but a “walking together” that shares responsibility, decisions and burdens. The only requirement of this model is willingness. Where this model works, and much depends on the collaborators and priests, the foreign community has the strength and structure to continue, where this does not happen the foreign community runs the risk of dying out. The new guidelines offer strategy and direction. It is a reminder to all, especially to us MSCS Sisters. In this missionary reality, we are not protagonists, nor do we want to be, but we humbly stand alongside a church with a history, a present, and we walk together with migrants, with our charism enhanced, towards an intercultural future for all.

13 PASTORAL CARE AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION

INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE IN THE DIOCESES OF MESSINA AND SYRACUSE, ITALY

*Sr. Vijaya Stella John Joseph, mscs**

An intercultural pastoral initiative in the dioceses of Messina and Syracuse, it is committed to fostering inclusiveness and support for migrants, refugees and international students. The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters have been working together with the local community, volunteers and lay people for 5 years in Messina and 10 years in Syracuse. This initiative addresses the phenomenon of migration in a unique way in each diocese.

Messina: Assistance to consolidated ethnic communities and university students. In Messina, the focus is on supporting established ethnic communities, active for the past three years. The COVID-19 pandemic affected two of those 5 years. The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters offer personalized services to promote integration, social assistance and harmonious coexistence. In addition, they offer services to international university students, contributing to assistance, psychological support and social integration.

Syracuse: assistance to refugees. In the diocese of Syracuse, active for 10 years, the initiative is dedicated to the reception and integration of refugees arriving across the Mediterranean Sea. In both dioceses, the initiative responds to practical needs and adapts to the unique nuances of each context, embodying a cross-cultural pastoral commitment in the region.

* An Indian Scalabrinian Missionary, with academic formation in psychology and cognitive sciences, she is currently working in the diocese of Messina, Italy, as Provincial Councilor for the Apostolate. She is currently carrying out her mission in the diocese of Messina, Italy, as Provincial Councilor for the Apostolate.

Introduction

Intercultural pastoral initiative in the Dioceses of Messina and Syracuse, Italy, is configured as an implementation strategy of the MSCS (Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters), outlining four fundamental macro-strategies.

The first macro-strategy, focused on Reception and Emergency, aims to provide immediate and specific support to people in situations of migratory vulnerability. In the context of Syracuse, we are committed to go directly to the first reception facilities to offer our services. Our intervention aims to guarantee essential support to those in situations of migratory vulnerability, thus contributing to the well-being of the local community.

Within the context of Messina, we focus our efforts on providing assistance to university students from all over the world during the reception phase and in the search for accommodation. In addition, we provide support upon arrival with document management and other related services. These actions are designed to facilitate the integration process and enhance the experience of those who choose Messina as a place to study and live, thus contributing to the well-being of the local community.

The second macro-strategy, focused on Promotion and Integration, is committed to building cultural bridges and promoting harmonious integration in the host communities. In this context, we offer Italian language courses and educational assistance dedicated to Sri Lankan children, paying particular attention to the priority given to immigrant women and children.

The third macro-strategy, dedicated to Evangelization and Strategic Coordination, underlines the importance of spreading the values of solidarity and understanding among the different communities involved. We accompany Sri Lankan women and children, offering support during the evangelization and coordination process, with special attention to catechism preparation and to celebrations, feasts and cultural traditions. In addition, we actively collaborate with the Sri Lankan and Filipino communities in Messina to celebrate and preserve their unique cultures.

The fourth macro-strategy, focused on prioritizing migrant women and children, is committed to responding specifically to the unique needs of these vulnerable categories.

To summarize, these macro-strategies outline a comprehensive and organic framework for addressing the migration phenomenon, with defined objectives and a medium- to long-term vision that reflects the ongoing commitment of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in the region.

Background

Italy's southern Mediterranean coast of Sicily plays a key role as a point of arrival for thousands of migrants passing through the Mediterranean Sea in search of a better future.

Challenges of migration include dangerous journeys in boats overcrowded with people fleeing conflict and persecution. Italy has the role of a transit country, however, Sicily stands out as a destination for many ethnic communities. The coexistence of different cultures adds a unique element to the island, making it a place of cultural convergence.

Europe has been challenged by migration in recent years. Syracuse, a coastal province in eastern Sicily facing the Mediterranean, has experienced a marked increase in human mobility, serving as a transit point at ports where thousands of migrants arrive temporarily housed in "reception centers" who are clearly in need of support.

Within the Sicilian dioceses of Syracuse and Messina, the Scalabrinian Sisters play a fundamental role in the response to migration. Despite the geographical proximity, the two dioceses have different migration dynamics. The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters address these challenges in a differentiated manner, adapting their services to the specificities of each diocese.

Considering the specific context of the children involved, it is essential to adopt an approach sensitive to their unique needs. Young migrants, mainly from Sri Lanka, face challenges during the integration process. Our context analysis focuses on aspects such as access to education, participation in new social and cultural environments, and the need for language support. To ensure adequate support, we propose the implementation of specific programs that include school support, focused Italian language courses and cultural activities, thus creating an inclusive environment conducive to the growth and development of migrant children.

About migrant women, our analysis focuses on the unique challenges they face during the adaptation process. Women from Sri Lanka often face complex family, cultural and social responsibilities. Access to health services, support in administrative matters and the promotion of employment opportunities are crucial aspects. Therefore, we propose targeted initiatives, such as Italian language courses tailored to women's needs, mentoring programs, specific counseling services and accompaniment with active listening for women. The aim is to create a supportive context that responds to the specific challenges of migrant women and fosters their autonomy and inclusion in the local community. In particular, we offer support and listening to women to help them understand and cope with the challenges of integrating their teenage children into European culture and society.

Overview of the good practice

Cross-cultural ministry in Syracuse: In the context of Syracuse, welcoming on the part of the sisters has been more than a duty; it has been a vocation rooted in our charism, shaped over the years through experiences and formations. The Mater Dei house (a diocesan center) has become a haven not only physically, but also emotionally, embodying the founding idea of the mission: to treat every individual, regardless of religion, language or origin, as a human being with the right to be welcomed, looked in the eye and supported.

It has developed the mission through multiple activities, including listening points, social services including accompaniment for documents and health care, housing search and help with cultural integration. A special focus has been placed on children and adolescents, where engagement has been crucial to facilitate their insertion in local schools.

Promoting autonomy has been highlighted with the creation of the tailoring shop 'FREDERIK', a significant practice that has not only offered job opportunities, but has also contributed to socio-labor integration, changing Mr. Frederik's residence permit and regularizing his family's situation.

A heartwarming aspect of the mission has been the care in prison, where listening and pastoral care have freed migrants to tell their stories and embark on a positive path. Participation in festive celebrations has underscored the joy of the migrants in feeling welcomed, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The analysis reflects the essence of a mission that, while facing the challenges of integration, has demonstrated a constant commitment to respect for human dignity and to the promotion of welcome as a fundamental value, reflecting the charism of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in Syracuse.

Intercultural Pastoral Care in Messina: The intercultural pastoral experience of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in Messina has been dedicated to the assistance and integration of children, adolescents of the Sri Lankan community and young migrants, mainly from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Ethiopia and Iran, who have arrived for university studies. The main objective has been to address the initial challenges, focusing on the difficulty in finding accommodation and the language-cultural barrier, frequent exposure to hardship and risks of exploitation.

Progress has been made in the mission by offering temporary housing to young women in an obviously traumatic state, ensuring a safe and legally supported entry. In the initial phase, improvisation was necessary

to respond to emergencies; in the last two years, the mission has facilitated the search for housing for a group of girls, simultaneously offering spiritual and psychological support.

Stakeholders have been the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters, young migrants, the local community and volunteers. The active participation of retired teachers has contributed to the development of the after-school program, involving children and adolescents between the ages of 9 and 16.

Methodology has adopted a flexible approach, adapting to the specific emergencies and challenges of young migrants. The offer of temporary accommodation has been combined with spiritual and psychological support, helping to mitigate the impact of the language-cultural barrier. The after-school program has involved volunteer teachers to address school difficulties, promoting an environment of challenge, enthusiasm and personal growth.

Besides the activities mentioned above, the mission in Messina has actively involved young people from the Sri Lankan community and the Filipino community in a process of catechesis in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. This intensive course, with weekly meetings, has represented a significant commitment to the assistance and formation of young migrants. Collaboration with chaplains from the ethnic communities and the participation of volunteer teachers have contributed to making this experience a valuable moment of spiritual growth and cultural integration for the participants, emphasizing the personalized and flexible approach of the mission. The Confirmation celebration has highlighted the success of this process, underlining the importance of integration through religious education and the promotion of Christian values in the local community. The mission has contributed positively to the well-being of the young migrants, school support and spiritual and psychological support. This program has addressed academic difficulties and facilitated a cultural exchange that has enriched both the young migrants and the local community.

The Messina mission experience is vitally important in the local context. In addressing the specific challenges of young migrants, the mission has demonstrated the importance of a personalized and flexible approach. The promotion of integration through education, social and spiritual support has contributed to creating an environment where diversity is considered an enrichment. The mission not only responds to immediate needs, but is committed to being an advocate for effective social and economic inclusion, recognizing the importance of sharing, transmitting and being enriched by cultural diversity.

Lessons learned

In considering the experiences in Syracuse and Messina, the profound lessons learned and significant changes generated through the implementation of the proposed strategies clearly emerge. One of the key lessons has been the recognition of the importance of a personalized and targeted approach to the diverse needs of migrants, especially women, children and university students. The adoption of listening programs, tailored language courses and specific services has proven to favor more effective integration, while respecting the diversity of the communities involved.

Welcoming and integration-focused strategies have led to tangible changes in the lives of migrants and in the perception of the local community. The creation of safe spaces, such as Casa Mater Dei in Syracuse, has offered not only physical shelter, but also a place for meeting and cultural exchange. The promotion of autonomy, as evidenced through the 'FREDERIK' tailoring shop, has demonstrated that economic empowerment contributes significantly to social and labor integration.

Nevertheless, it has become clear that integration does not depend only on local strategies, but also on collaboration with institutions and the surrounding environment. Bureaucratic difficulties in the integration process, especially with regard to access to legal services and job opportunities, require continuous engagement at the local and national level.

As reflections go, the success of such strategies requires constant monitoring and adaptation to changing migration dynamics. Flexibility to respond to emerging needs and adopt new approaches is crucial to maintain a positive impact in the medium term.

Recommendations for the medium term include strengthening collaborative networks with local institutions, organizations and other religious congregations. In addition, it is essential to implement awareness-raising and training programs for the local community to counteract stereotypes and promote a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by migrants. Lessons learned indicate the need for a holistic approach, including social, cultural and bureaucratic dimensions, to foster effective integration. With continued commitment and adaptation, it is hoped that the strategies outlined will continue to shape an inclusive and supportive future for Syracuse and Messina.

Conclusions

The path towards the integration and reception of migrants in Syracuse and Messina has involved ten years of unceasing commitment

and continuous learning. The outlined strategies, centered on listening, focusing on specific needs and promoting autonomy, have brought about significant changes that go beyond the material aspect. The experience gained through the implementation of these approaches has consolidated the importance of considering not only the immediate challenges, but also the broader context in which integration takes place.

It can certainly be affirmed that welcome is more than a formal act; it is a warm embrace that is extended to all, without distinction of origin, language or creed. The Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters in Syracuse and Messina have embodied this principle, transforming challenges into opportunities and demonstrating that inclusion is an evolving process. The lessons learned concern not only the need to respond to the immediate needs of migrants, but also the need to cultivate a more aware and caring community.

Looking at the road we have traveled, we reflect on the future. The road ahead will require a continued commitment to promoting understanding and overcoming bureaucratic barriers. Creating closer ties with local institutions, continuing education of the local community and adapting strategies to new migration dynamics will be essential to maintain the positive momentum.

Conclusively, the road traveled so far is the starting point for a broader vision of welcome and integration. The Scalabrinian Sisters, with their dedication, have contributed to shaping a brighter future, where humanity, diversity and solidarity are foundations of a welcoming society. The hope is that this light will continue to radiate in the hearts of Syracuse, Messina and beyond, inspiring concrete and sustained action for a future where all can live in dignity and harmony.

14 PASTORAL CARE AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION COMMENTS

*Sr. Marlene Wildner, mscs**

The presentations of good practices refer to the work of the sisters within the framework of the Macro Strategy number 3 of the General Guidelines for the Apostolic Mission of the MSCS Sisters on the Animation and Coordination of Pastoral Work with Migrants and Refugees, which is subdivided into three specific areas: evangelization and catechesis; institutional strategic coordination; and itinerant service.

I will therefore make a few comments on what has been presented in order to prepare us for the reflection and discussion that will follow, starting with Sister Carla's presentation on the Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Itinerant People in Angola and São Tomé - CEPAMI.

And here I would like to start by giving a preamble about the MSCS presence in Angola and specifically CEPAMI, which I consider important to understand the meaning and current scope of this service in the Church of Angola.

CEPAMI is the result of a detailed effort to build institutional relations (mainly with the Bishops), with the aim to open the eyes of the local Church to the migrants and refugees present in a society (Church) fragmented by a 40-year civil war. At the time of these meetings, which took place between 2004 and 2006, there were 3 million internally displaced people and half a million returnees, in addition to the migrants/refugees who had always been present among Angolans, even during the war. The Church had not yet turned its attention to the pastoral needs of this population.

So the commission was built in slow, gradual steps, with a broad vision for the future of a society that was rising from the ashes and where the Church, through the Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Refugees,

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could be a tool for the integration of communities with such diverse backgrounds, capable of using their faith to be a sign of hope and the reconstruction of a devastated society.

This is what the Scalabrinian Sisters have done since 2004. In fact, CEPAMI is the creation of the MSCS Sisters, which the Bishops of Angola and São Tomé approved with the founding charter issued in 2006.

From the beginning, the Scalabrinian presence in Angola sought to be a strategic action that sought to respond to the challenge of how to reach and structure an MSCS action that would reach many, would be broad, comprehensive and could multiply through the formation of leaders and the structuring of pastoral work, considering the reduced presence of Sisters.

CEPAMI's current results show that the strategic intention at the beginning was relevant and has produced results. We were able to structure an action that, through leadership training, multiplied actions in such a way as to make attention to migrants and refugees an organic, well-structured and comprehensive action, which today has recognition and visibility in the Local Church.

It becomes very clear throughout the explanation that CEPAMI's actions seek to make it possible for communities to be open to welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees. However, it seems to me that in some cases CEPAMI, as a national body (a Commission of the Episcopal Conference), implements actions that should perhaps be the responsibility of the diocesan and parish commissions and are only supported by CEPAMI, such as courses and training for women.

I can't fail to highlight the Angolan Network for the Protection of Migrants and Refugees, which I believe is an important advocacy body for migrants and refugees, especially in the face of public bodies and government authorities. The network is a good example of how CEPAMI works.

Finally, one aspect that deserves attention is the sustainability of the Commission, which as we have heard, still depends a lot on international aid, which is an element that not only for Angola, but for many of our missionary presences, continues to be a challenge. The local church puts the sustainability of the mission in our hands and, for our part, we need to invest a lot of our time, concerns and efforts in seeking international financial support.

Germany – Diocese of Rottenburg/Stuttgart

Differently from the previous presentation, the German Church has significant human and financial resources for pastoral service, including pastoral work with migrants, and already has a capillary structured pastoral work with migrants. In my opinion, the difference in financial condition and human resources is not an irrelevant element, as it allows the people in charge to focus their time and energies exclusively on serving people. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case for local churches in regions/countries like Angola. I think it's important to reflect on the real impact of such situations in the ecclesial/pastoral sphere, as it affects our strategies for action, since we need to invest in overcoming these differences which also affect us as a Congregation.

Another significant element that I would like to highlight in this case is that we have been present among migrants/refugees in the German Church for 50 years, and most of this time has been spent in direct service to migrants, especially Italian migrants. The expansion of our service to different nationalities, together with local communities, in an intercultural perspective, is a positive and strategic development for a greater scope and qualification of our presence.

For the first time in the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, the local Church is entrusting a woman and Scalabrinian Sister with the diocesan coordination of pastoral care for migrants. This coordination function is a multiplier action, which reaches out to the most diverse cultures and allows us to develop within the whole local church an action capable of moving from the ethnic to the intercultural, in accordance with the project that the local church proposes and that we MSCS have the specialized potential to contribute.

In this context of reflection, it was not clear during the presentation how much our presence at this level of coordination and formation is able to expand the tent of welcome for people and groups of new migrations in that country. Specific attention to the needs of different generations of migrants is a constant in that diocese, and we ask ourselves how much we can add between services at the coordination level and direct attention, and for which nationalities.

I've already mentioned it, but I want to reinforce that in this case, the process of intercultural action is a cross-cutting theme and strategy that our work as Scalabrinian Missionaries always considers and promotes, because it is part of that protagonism that we use to value and promote among migrants and refugees themselves. In the case of Germany, it is already an adopted pastoral model. In this sense, it is worth highlighting

the importance of the annual conferences of pastoral agents and leaders of the ethnic communities we serve, as well as the ongoing coordination and communication with the national delegates of the main ethnic communities for the exchange of ideas, the definition of pastoral strategies and the planning of actions, even in the long term.

And Sister Milva touches on a topic that we sometimes forget in our decisions, but which seems to me essential for the qualification of our pastoral action with migrants as Scalabrinians, which is the appropriate profile in relation to the type of function, she says “I am a migrant, with intercultural experience, theological and religious formation”. Essential qualities for the position she holds. In the same line, there is also a study underway in the diocese on the profile of priests to be hired to serve migrant communities.

And I’d like to end here by re-stating the challenge that Sr. Milva poses and that we could also take up for our reflection: How can we help communities that don’t speak the local language, in this case German, to a level of equality in rights and duties while maintaining their diversity? Furthermore, what can we learn from this practice for other realities where we are coordinating at local, diocesan or national level?

Dioceses of Messina and Siracusa in Italy

We have moved from national coordination in Angola and diocesan coordination in Germany to a capillary service in intercultural communities in southern Italy. It is worth noting that the MSCS Sisters develop an integrated service in local communities, with the support of volunteers and laypeople committed to the cause; there is a focus on personalized services aimed at the diverse needs of migrants and, according to the specific situation of each diocese, aimed at facilitating and supporting the process of integrating migrants into society and the local church, fostering harmonious coexistence. This service also extends to international students, including socio-cultural and spiritual accompaniment, as well as support for medium and long-term life projects.

I think it’s important to emphasize that the Sisters pay specific attention to adapting their actions to the practical needs of the migrants and the context that surrounds them, as part of their commitment to build an intercultural pastoral approach, a model that has been adopted for years in that diocese. I believe that this is an interesting aspect to look at in greater detail in our reflection on the ecclesial styles and models that we actually adopt in our pastoral practices.

The Sisters place themselves in the ecclesial and social space with the aim of guaranteeing essential support for those who find themselves in vulnerable situations and, in this way, with their action, as part of the organic pastoral work of the local church, they are a warning sign to the Church about its responsibility to welcome and promote the dignity of the wounded human beings that the sea throws into the territory of these local churches, alive and dead, like a cry of inequality and injustice in the world, sometimes even in the Christian world. Through their work, they also show their ability to listen, interact and make specific contributions to the church that has welcomed them as missionaries to migrants.

Another element that I think is interesting to note is that in their service to international students, the Sisters seek not only to facilitate the process of integration, but also to improve and make positive the students' experience of migrating to this territory. This aspect of making the migration experience a positive one and not just facilitating survival seems significant to me. They point to building cultural bridges through integration between migrants and host communities and spreading values of solidarity and understanding between different people as a way forward. Welcoming in physical space is seen as an opportunity for encounter and cultural exchange. I wish our parishes, where there are migrants and refugees, had this kind of approach!

The presentation also highlights that within the set of actions, women and children are given specific attention according to their needs and the stories of incarcerated migrants are listened to. Our priority as a congregation, transversal to the work that the Sisters do in Messina!

Lastly, an intercultural pastoral ministry should be noted for its ability to sensitize and train the territorial community to welcome and live with the diversity that a territory is capable to hide.

Finally, some questions:

Regarding strategic coordination, we've been wondering for some time whether we can get out of the binary:

- a) or the bishops want us because they delegate everything to us, as is still the case in some instances;
- b) or put up with us for a while, but they don't recognize us as a competence, neither as a charisma, and even less as women who assume effective ecclesial leadership.

And if we add to this our shortcomings in the ability to maintain adequate human and professional profiles, what are our prospects for this kind of strategic action? These questions are urgent because, in fact, we have left several coordinations in dioceses and episcopal conferences and

we don't have a specific strategy for managing the current presences in this context.

We ask ourselves: how can intercultural pastoral work in parish and community contexts such as those in Sicily, and our broad socio-pastoral practice in caring for people in situations of socio-economic vulnerability, mutually enrich each other in processes of an integral approach to the human being we love and serve by vocation?

15 PASTORAL CARE OF HUMAN MOBILITY COMMENTS

*Israel Arévalo**

The fourth of the 20 topics in the Summary Report of the first session of the Synodal Assembly, entitled **The poor, protagonists of the Church's journey**, begins by stating: "The poor ask the Church for love. By love we mean respect, welcome, and recognition, without which providing food, money, or social services is a form of assistance that is certainly important but does not fully take into account the dignity of the person." At this Fifth Congregational Seminar on Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees, I appreciate and am grateful for the presentation of Scalabrinian Good Practices by Sisters Carla Frey, Milva Caro, and Vijaya Stella John, in relation to pastoral animation and strategic coordination. They shared their experiences of formation with us: In the National Coordination of Pastoral Care for Human Mobility in Angola with the formation of pastoral leaders for migrants and law enforcement officers. In the formation and coordination of personnel in times of transition, TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE FOR MIGRATION AT THE DIOCESAN LEVEL, in southern Germany, and intercultural pastoral care in the dioceses of Messina and Syracuse in Italy.

In describing the good practices of the CEPAMI Mission in Angola, I would highlight the objective of raising awareness of the importance of welcoming migrants and refugees on Angolan soil as a space for openness to differences and growth through cultural exchange. I would also highlight the strategies they have adopted to carry out their mission:

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- Training of Pastoral Workers for Migrants as an opportunity to introduce those responsible for the archdioceses to the different issues and methodologies of pastoral care for migrants to better respond to the challenges of the mission.
- The specificity of issues: organization and structure, methodology, networking and partnerships, people in situations of mobility, the Church's teaching and pastoral care for human mobility, pontifical documents, spirituality and biblical foundations, laws for the protection of human rights in the context of migration; human trafficking; guidelines for a diocesan/national secretariat for pastoral care for human mobility/planning/evaluation and guidelines on intercultural pastoral care for migrants; the migratory reality in Angola (migrants and refugees, contemporary migration); the social service of the Church and the leadership profile of the animator of pastoral care for migrants, provides authoritative guidance to all those present and constitutes a reference point for other Congregations of Religious Life, National Conferences of Religious and/or national commissions.
- The diversity of the people with whom they work in the dioceses and archdioceses: priests, religious, and, above all, lay people committed to the cause of migrants and refugees, shows us an interesting service in a synodal key.
- The human, empowering, leadership, and professional nature of the formation they provide is a prophetic, effective, ecumenical, and inclusive response to the signs of the times, and a sure sign of hope.
- The training of refugee women on topics such as disease prevention, gender issues, leadership, domestic violence, conflict management, human trafficking, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and income generation, among others, shows us the practical, timely, and promotional focus of their services.
- The celebrations of Migrant and Refugee Day, with art fairs featuring dances and traditional foods from each culture, and moments of fellowship to share different experiences as migrants, promote communication, personalized attention, and integration processes.
- The international financial support and links with embassies, which encourage sustainable and inter-institutional solidarity.

From the experience of **training and coordinating staff in times of transition in the** migrant ministry of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, presented by Sister Milva, I would highlight the existence of first-, second- and third-generation Catholic immigrant communities, which represent a long-standing, well-proven, professionalized and authoritative experience that has become a key pillar of the diocesan pastoral coordination structure.

Milva's vocational, charismatic, and pastoral experience Milva in pastoral, social, and human service, defined as a bridge to the community and German society, also explains the process of reconfiguration of the Scalabrinian Sisters, in accordance with the missionary mandate of St. John Baptist Scalabrini to "keep alive the faith and homeland of emigrants in foreign lands," and the diocese's appreciation for the missionary work of the Sisters. The response to the charism and affection of the communities makes a long missionary journey relevant and in a process of permanent updating of the pastoral care of migrants, condensed in the Orientations and Guidelines that have been discerned over a long period of time.

What's important is building a Christian family with and in all its diversity, which shows how the Congregation is part of the Church and how the Church is universal. I really like how you're WORKING TOGETHER and helping the local church look toward a church that's always new, built with migrants, not without them, as a sign of true synodality.

The decisive factor of the context, due to its industrial nature, which is highly attractive to migrants from all over the world and of very different religions, is a multicultural setting that tests a missionary in her human, community, theological, religious, and intercultural formation. It is a learning experience of the condition of migrant by vocation, and from that vocation and condition I encounter a formator of intercultural Christian communities and pastoral agents and priests who assist immigrant Christian communities in various fields.

It involves the responsibility of accompanying and coordinating the human resources that serve more than dozens of groups and communities: The management of conflicts and problems of various kinds; the organization and celebration of meetings, at least three times a year, by language with various communities, Italian, Croatian, mixed, the so-called "rest of Israel," where information about the diocese is exchanged and current issues are discussed, diocesan meetings are prepared, and other diverse activities are organized.

Great responsibility, urgent and pressing, and even uncertain, is the work of diocesan coordination of reflection, evaluation, and planning to determine the criteria that must be met by new priests hired for pastoral

care of migrants, their language skills, and the implementation of diocesan regulations for the prevention of abuse by foreign priests who want to come and do not have all the necessary documentation. The dilemma: should a community be left without a priest or should an undocumented priest be admitted?

A good practice of intercultural pastoral care in the dioceses of Messina and Syracuse, Italy, promotes integration between migrants, refugees, and international students with the Scalabrinian Sisters, the local community, volunteers, and lay people in the two dioceses of Messina and Syracuse, taking into account their specific characteristics: In Messina, assistance is provided to established ethnic communities and university students, with personalized services to promote integration, social assistance, and harmonious coexistence. In Syracuse, assistance is provided to refugees arriving via the Mediterranean Sea.

From the first macro-strategy, focused on Welcome and Emergency, I would like to highlight the focus of its intervention in situations of migratory vulnerability, contributing to the well-being of the local community.

From the second macro-strategy, focused on Promotion and Integration, its commitment to building cultural bridges and promoting harmonious integration in host communities is noteworthy.

From the third macro-strategy, dedicated to Evangelization and Strategic Coordination, I would highlight the importance of spreading the values of solidarity and understanding among the different communities involved.

The fourth macro-strategy, focused on giving priority to migrant women and children, responds specifically to the most vulnerable of our time.

In diverse contexts, we always find factors and situations that play a fundamental role in relation to the conditions of the place of departure, as well as the places of transit and arrival, in the search for a better future, overcoming dangerous journeys, overcrowded boats or trains, and fleeing conflict and persecution. In this way, new places of cultural convergence and new multi-ethnic communities are established. The migration of recent years represents a challenge for all continents, for all countries, and at every level of human community organization.

Regarding the presentation of the third good practice, I would highlight the flexible approach of the methodology, adapted to the specific emergencies and challenges faced by young migrants, offering, in addition to temporary accommodation, spiritual and psychological support, helping to mitigate the impact of the linguistic-cultural barrier, and involving

volunteer teachers to address school difficulties, promoting an environment of challenges, enthusiasm, and personal growth, making the experience of the mission in Messina vitally important in the local context. Thus, this mission not only responds to immediate needs, but is committed to being an advocate for effective social and economic inclusion, recognizing the importance of sharing, transmitting, and being enriched by cultural diversity.

The perspectives presented have warned us that, in all corners of the globe, the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People is one of the prophetic services of the Catholic Church today. The voluntary and gratuitous service with which our sisters and brothers in situations of mobility are cared for in many places is noteworthy. The actions of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating have fostered creativity, specificity, and effectiveness in the pastoral care of Human Mobility.

The global reality is challenging borders, demographic statistics, government policies, forms of socialization, cultural traditions, family cohesion, and ways of solving daily problems such as food, employment, health, education, transportation, and housing. Immigrant women are the most vulnerable.

Considering the economic income that is increasingly lower, we are witnessing a very special and unique historical moment due to the great demographic changes, the astonishing shortage of pastoral agents and priests, the economic burden of real estate, and the extremely high personnel costs. We are migrating from a concept and even a dream of a "Church" that no longer exists, to another that we do not yet know how to define and concretize. I echo the question: What do we want the Church of tomorrow to be like? What do we want Religious Life to be like tomorrow? What do we want the nations of tomorrow to be like? How can we integrate what is emerging, how can we bring diversity together?

Among the lessons learned, it is clear that integration does not depend only on local strategies, but also on collaboration with institutions and the surrounding environment.

There is always much to be done... We must always keep moving forward... in search of innovative and creative solutions for a dignified life for migrants. A key to removing barriers is open, fraternal, frank, and respectful dialogue and mutual appreciation. The path toward integration and welcoming migrants has involved many years of unceasing commitment and continuous learning.

Welcoming is more than a formal act; it is a warm embrace extended to everyone, regardless of origin, language, or creed.

Compassion at geographical and existential borders

Sr. María de los Dolores Palencia Gómez, hsjl

How do you respond to God for the compassion that keeps you alive every day?

How do you learn compassion daily?

How is compassion changing your life?

What convictions has your experience of compassion led you to?

What is your experience of encountering the suffering Jesus Christ in migrants?

How can we build bridges by promoting welcome and integration through the charismatic families of our Congregations and ecclesial movements?

How can we trigger processes of vocational promotion among young migrants?

How can we channel the promotion and production of the wisdom and intelligence generated by the experience of migration?

16 AWARENESS, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL FRATERNITY – MSCS POLITICAL ADVOCATING FOR THE DEFENSE AND PROMOTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

*Adriano Pistorello**

Introduction

The MSCS advocacy strategy is focused on transforming the reality of immigrants and refugees in Brazil, with an emphasis on guaranteeing and securing fundamental rights. This ranges from ensuring birth registration for immigrant children to guaranteeing access to justice, especially for those who cannot afford translation costs, for example. It also includes promoting national networks of host cities and establishing specific public policies for the migrant and refugee population.

Furthermore, strategic actions include guaranteeing labor rights and clarifying migration rights, for example. In this context, the strategy to promote the active social participation of immigrants and refugees and the significant contribution of civil society in the formulation of the National Policy for the Migrant Population is fundamental.

Policy advocacy, an integral part of this strategy, is a simple but powerful process that can be carried out at both the local and regional levels. It focuses on the intention to guarantee and secure rights by transforming realities. Short-term actions, focused on clarification and training, complement medium- and long-term initiatives, such as active participation in the second COMIGRAR-National Conference on Migration and ongoing work to consolidate national policies.

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Along with the legal stuff, the MSCS strategy also highlights the importance of community involvement and raising awareness. By promoting social inclusion and community cohesion, they want to help immigrants fit in better and make people more aware of their issues. This is super important for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The strategy also involves partnerships with other organizations and government agencies to expand its reach and effectiveness. Through strategic alliances, the MSCS Sisters will influence public policy at various levels, reinforcing their mission to guarantee the rights and improve the quality of life of migrants and refugees.

A medium and long term, our work includes actively participating in COMIGRAR pre-conferences, as well as contributing to the development of the National Policy for the Migrant Population (PNPM), as established in Brazil's new Migration Law, Law 13445 of 2017. These actions are essential to ensure that the needs and rights of migrants are represented and respected in all areas of decision-making.

Finally, the strategy is dynamic and adaptable, responding to changes in the political and social landscape. This allows for a proactive and effective approach to defending the rights of migrants, ensuring that their needs and challenges are adequately addressed and resolved.

Background

This work is part of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters' efforts to help Brazilian kids of immigrants who can't get their birth certificates. In a lot of cases, their parents' papers have expired because the registration offices closed, which means they lose their constitutional right to citizenship, either because they don't know about it or because of discrimination. The need to work with local civil registries has become evident, especially given the increase in the number of denials in several municipalities.

It was necessary to intervene with the external control of extrajudicial registrations, as exemplified by the Court of Justice of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. This approach has become a model for other states, such as Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro.

The effectiveness of this good practice lies in the prevention of statelessness and the guarantee of the constitutional right to Brazilian nationality. This context required the organization of public hearings and the creation of working groups to review the Rules for Consolidating the Public Registry, with a view to including criteria that guarantee constitutional rights.

A further example is participation in seminars on public policy development for the migrant population, which was a fundamental pillar. In these seminars, the congregation actively participated in the Social Participation Working Group, presenting proposals and criteria to ensure the effective inclusion of immigrants and refugees, as well as representatives of civil society organizations. This initiative allowed for a more holistic and representative approach, taking into account the diverse experiences and needs of the migrant population.

The MSCS contribution to this scenario was essential in shaping the guidelines for a more inclusive and equitable public policy. Its suggestions are aimed at ensuring that the voices of migrants and refugees are heard and taken into account in policy decisions. In addition, the congregation emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government and civil society organizations, promoting a synergy that directly benefits the migrant and refugee population and strengthens the social fabric and community cohesion.

During the event “National Network of Welcoming Cities: Building Territories of Citizenship,” the MSCS Congregation played a key role. Its participation involved active engagement in seminars and working groups, where it contributed significantly to the formulation of strategies and public policies aimed at migrants and refugees. The congregation focused on promoting inclusion and guaranteeing the rights of these populations, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between different sectors and levels of government to create welcoming and inclusive environments.

Furthermore, the MSCS Sisters’ action influenced the definition of guidelines for the social participation of migrants and refugees, ensuring that their voices and needs were heard and addressed. The congregation worked to ensure that the public policies developed reflected a commitment to justice and equality, highlighting the need for synergy between civil society organizations and governments. This holistic approach has helped lay a solid foundation for the national policy on the reception of migrants and refugees.

The work focused on defending the rights of migrants and refugees illustrates that there is no single model or fixed rule for social interventions. This multifaceted approach allows action to be taken in various instances whenever violations or curtailments of rights are detected. Flexibility to adapt to different contexts and situations is key to ensuring that the specific needs of these populations are met, giving a voice to individuals who are often marginalized and discriminated against.

The context in which the MSCS Congregation operates in Brazil on this issue, whether in access to the city or the broader question of Brazilian nationality rights, highlights the importance of the ongoing struggle for human rights. Respecting the precepts of the Brazilian Constitution, the congregation strives to ensure that, except for the right to vote, immigrants enjoy all the rights recognized to native citizens. This commitment reinforces the pursuit of a more just and egalitarian society, in which the dignity of all is respected and valued.

Overview

Effective advocacy for the rights and public policies of migrants and refugees is an essential and transformative approach to the challenges these populations face. It not only remedies past rights violations but also works proactively to prevent future injustices. It involves a series of strategic actions and interdisciplinary collaborations aimed at influencing policy, promoting awareness, and ensuring a better quality of life for migrants and refugees. The methodology, actors involved, actions carried out, and results obtained are detailed below, illustrating the importance of this practice in the local and broader context.

1. **Identify demands:** Observe and identify violations of migrants' and refugees' rights, such as denial of birth registration or restriction of access to public services.
2. **Detailed analysis:** Collect detailed information on each case, including the legal and social context, and identify the parties involved and the applicable legal mechanisms.
3. **Mobilize resources:** Form coalitions with advocacy groups, NGOs, and government entities, and mobilize the necessary financial, human, and information resources.
4. **Agenda setting:** Plan strategic actions, such as meetings, public and private hearings, and awareness campaigns.
5. **Direct action:** Carry out activities such as lobbying decision-makers, participating in hearings, media campaigns, and litigation, when necessary.
6. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitor the results of actions, evaluate effectiveness, and make necessary adjustments.
7. **Education and awareness-raising:** Promote workshops, seminars, and other educational activities on migrants' rights and the fight against xenophobia.

8. **Feedback and adaptation:** Gather feedback from stakeholders and adapt strategies to meet emerging needs and changes in the legal and social landscape.
9. **Active research into new demands:** Proactively investigate emerging demands among the migrant population, such as the need for cultural mediators.
10. **Community integration:** Collaborate with local communities, neighborhood associations, professional bodies, and city councils to understand and address specific needs.
11. **Development of strategic partnerships:** Establish collaborations with other organizations and entities to expand the scope of actions.
12. **Training and empowerment of the migrant community:** Encourage the active participation of migrants in the defense of their rights.
13. **Effective communication:** Use multiple platforms to convey information, raise awareness about migration issues, and mobilize support.
14. **Advocacy in decision-making spaces:** Actively participate in municipal and state councils and other decision-making spaces to raise demands and cases of rights violations.
15. **Fight for human rights:** Ensure that, except for the right to vote, migrants enjoy all the rights that the Brazilian Constitution recognizes for native citizens.

It is a comprehensive and practical approach to advocacy for migrants and refugees that can be replicated by any individual or organization in different contexts and regions.

To include all actors involved in advocacy for migrants and refugees, considering the initial context, we must broaden the approach to encompass a wide range of participants. This includes:

1. **Government agencies:** Collaboration with ministries, government entities, and public agencies to identify and address the needs of the migrant population.
2. **Legislative branch:** Interaction with judges, magistrates, and other judicial authorities to address cases of rights violations and seek legal resolutions.
3. **Legislative:** Interaction with federal and state representatives, advisors, and other legislators to influence the creation or modification of laws.

4. **Executive:** Working with mayors and municipal secretaries to implement local public policies.
5. **Civil society organizations:** Partnering with NGOs, advocacy groups, unions, and community associations to expand the reach and effectiveness of actions.
6. **Migrant and refugee communities:** Active inclusion of migrants and refugees themselves in the advocacy process, ensuring that their voices are heard.
7. **Academic and research institutions:** Collaborate to develop research and data to support advocacy actions.
8. **Media and communication platforms:** Strategically use the media to raise awareness and mobilize public support.
9. **International and regional entities:** Collaborate with international and regional organizations working to defend the rights of migrants and refugees.

With this interdisciplinary and collaborative approach, we make sure that the rights of migrants and refugees are defended and promoted in a holistic and effective way that can be adapted to different contexts and regions.

Looking ahead

Conclusions and lessons learned from the strategy to defend migrants and refugees reveal several levels of impact. First, the interdisciplinary approach adopted underscores the importance of collaboration between different sectors, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the migrant community itself. This cooperation makes it possible not only to respond to rights violations but also to work proactively to prevent future challenges.

Second, the strategy emphasizes the need to maintain continuous monitoring of the conditions of migrants and refugees, adapting to changing social and legal circumstances. This includes continuing to monitor public policies and administrative practices that may affect these populations. In addition, ongoing education and awareness-raising among society at large are essential to promote greater understanding and acceptance of immigrants and refugees.

Thirdly, it is crucial that advocacy actions are sustainable and have a long-term focus. This means creating and maintaining lasting strategic

partnerships, as well as developing the capacities of immigrant communities so that they can effectively defend their own rights.

Finally, it is recommended that advocacy actions be expanded so that they are not limited to legal and administrative issues but also include the fight against xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. This holistic and inclusive approach is vital to ensure that all aspects of the rights and well-being of migrants and refugees are adequately addressed and protected.

Conclusion

The importance of defending the rights of migrants and refugees cannot be underestimated. It is an open and accessible process, in which individual and collective actions converge to combat violations and abuses. This approach democratizes the struggle for justice, allowing anyone, regardless of their origin, to contribute to dismantling barriers and discriminatory concepts.

The essence of advocacy lies in its simplicity and its power to include. It does not require complex planning or abundant resources; the driving force is the desire to create a more just world without borders. Every effort, no matter how small, contributes significantly to building more inclusive and respectful communities.

Effective advocacy transcends traditional bureaucratic barriers and provides a platform for marginalized voices to be heard. Through it, it is possible to challenge existing norms, influence public policy, and promote positive social change. It is a call to action for all who seek a world where the dignity and rights of all are respected and valued.

In short, political advocacy is a catalyst for social change, a powerful tool in the hands of those who question the status quo. It encourages active participation in building a more equitable society, emphasizing that we all have a vital role to play in fighting injustice and promoting harmonious and inclusive coexistence.

17 AWARENESS, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

CREATION, PROMOTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

*Sr. Marcedita Placio Saboga-a, mscs**

This theme was chosen to highlight the important role that network partners and collaborators play in providing strong support for the project's success, as well as the transformative power of education in the lives of individuals and larger society.

Six years after its inception, the Itinerant Scalabrini Project (ISP)-Taiwan has shown impressive cooperation between the initial leadership team of the MSCS Asia Delegation and Minghsin University of Science and Technology (MUST). This cooperation took root in Hsinchu, Taiwan, in the early summer of June 28-30, 2018 with the three MSCS representatives – Sr. Maruja S. Padre Juan, MSCS, Sr. Melanie D. Illana, MSCS, and Sr. Roschelle T. Isada, MSCS facilitated by University Dean of International Office and Cross-Strait Affairs, Dr. Hsin-Te Liao. This venture underscores the power of cross-cultural and cross-sector partnerships in addressing global migration, education, and industry development challenges.

The Itinerant Scalabrini Project-Taiwan serves as a bridge for underprivileged Filipino students who graduated from senior high school with an excellent academic performance in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) or ABM (Accountancy, Business, Management) tracks. It is intended for students who demonstrated remarkable academic

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achievement, maintaining an average of 85 or higher throughout their 11th and 12th-grade years. Most students originated from diverse religious backgrounds (Catholics, Christians, & Islam) in various dioceses and other churches in the Philippines. At the moment, 80% of our program's participants come from the Diocese of Tagum in Mindanao Island.

The program executive coordinator of the ISP-Taiwan is Sr. Marcedita Placio Saboga-a. Her extensive pastoral role and mission experience abroad (in the US, Mexico and Italy) enhanced her ability to interact effectively with people from various cultural backgrounds. Having also earned two master's degrees, one in accounting from DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, US in 2016, and the other in business administration from MingHsin University of Science and Technology in Hsinchu, Taiwan in 2022, equipped her with broad knowledge and well-grounded foundation in the project's financial and management aspects. It also deepened her understanding of business operations and provided insight into the educational systems in Taiwan and in the Philippines, directly relevant to the Itinerant Scalabrini Project.

Introduction

Launched in Taiwan on March 25, 2019, The Itinerant Scalabrini Project (ISP) is a forward-looking project, empowering the Filipino youth, particularly those with exceptional academic prowess but lacks sufficient funds to pursue higher education in technological fields overseas. Its education plan consists of a study and work scheme guided by the vision-mission of the MSCS and implemented by MUST. The host university is where the students take the 4-year academic program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and Management (BSIEM) is approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Taiwan in connection to the country's president's project, the New South Bound Policy. MUST's proximity to major and important technological hubs, confers distinct advantages to our students for their practical training field as they do their internship work with compensation.

The ISP's objectives are: to find robust support networks of partnerships and collaborators; to ensure sustainability; to create opportunities; to expand mission; to cater to the diverse needs of the international students; to stabilize Scalabrinian presence; to introduce Scalabrinian Spirituality; to form "Young Professionals for Scalabrini Networks", and to promote religious vocation among the foreign migrant workers, international students and alumni of the program.

Analysis of the context

The migration scene in Taiwan has been characterized by range of options. Due to population aging and low birth rates, Taiwan government offers sundry migration pathways catering to diverse categories of migrants whether through professional skills, study, investment, entrepreneurship, marriage or family relationships. These proactive measures aim to attract international talent and mitigate the impacts of demographic vicissitudes.

In response to the corollary above, the New South Bound Policy was introduced by former Taiwan president Tsai Ing-Wen as strategic initiatives to foster and strengthen relations with neighboring countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand by promoting trade collaboration, cultural and educational exchanges, resource sharing, and socio-economic connectivity. The Academe-Industry Collaboration Program for International students of the New South Bound Policy was implemented and provided international students better educational options, language opportunities, generous financial aids and scholarships, career enhancements, cultural integration and familiarity, and supportive bilateral policies. All these contributing factors made Taiwan a favorable destination for foreign students seeking overseas education. This gave an opening door for MSCS and MUST partnership in connection to the international educational outreach program, as well as, fulfilling Itinerant Scalabrini Project's mission of service and support to the migrants.

ISP-Taiwan exemplifies collaborative networks effectiveness in providing international education and support for students. Its establishment and development brought significant benefits not only to the Filipino students and their respective families but also to network of partners and collaborators, educational institutions, local industries, churches and broader society.

Moreover, it strength lies in its ability to establish and foster strong networks among various stakeholders, including educational institutions, embassies, local parishes, dioceses, religious institutions, non-government organizations, and industrial companies. This expansive network enables the MSCS to broaden their outreach, ensuring more comprehensive support for migrants – foreign students and families.

Thus, the advocacy efforts played a crucial role in improving the foreign students' educational experiences in Taiwan. Our ISP-Taiwan bring forth benefits to educational institutions such as Minghsin University of Science and Technology (MUST) by creating a nurturing and inclusive environment for their international student population. Our engagement with networks of partners and collaborators like Spes Pauperum Foundation, Inc. (SPFI), St.

Elizabeth Community Development Project (SECDEP), Inc., SEDP-Simbag sa Pag-Asenso, Inc., among others, enrich each vision-mission by bringing diverse perspectives and experiences into their respective entities, fostering a strong supportive ecosystem.

Description of the Good Practice and Methodology Used

The International Education Advocacy collaboration between the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo-Scalabrinians (MSCS) and MingHsin University of Science and Technology (MUST) presents an innovative and strategic initiative aimed at fostering educational opportunities for Filipino students in Taiwan. This mission centered collaboration marks a significant endeavor for the Itinerant Scalabrini Project, facilitating the movement of Filipino students to pursue the higher education overseas.

In a university context for networking, the good practice is can be defined as a method that has been a product of learning experience of ISP-Taiwan which produce favorable results and make positive impact to the lives of the recipients of the program. Here, as follows the good practice of ISP-Taiwan.

- a) ***Establish Good Rapport, Meaningful Connections and Well-Nurtured Relationship.*** Relationship matters and the very heart of networking. Building solid relationship either by personal and professional manner can add significant value in life's journey. To reconnect with previous employment firm, former colleagues, and friends who have similar mindsets, share same interests and goals; to connect with purpose driven individuals and organizations; and to develop a habit of reaching out and regular catch-ups such as sending direct messages, emails, and phone calls are vital in appreciating bonds, deepening ties and maintaining genuine relationships that can often lead to new collaborations and opportunities within the field of interests.
- b) ***Create Collaborative Networks and Expand Connections.*** To effectively promote the Itinerant Scalabrini Project-Taiwan, it is essential to cultivate collaboration with local religious institutions in the Philippines. The courtesy visits with the Archbishops, bishops, priests and other religious institutions in various dioceses, parishes and religious entities were done in order to gather support and promote awareness of the opportunities available for the youth through the study and work program in Taiwan. With this network of partners and collaborators who have microfinance

- services, significantly contributed to make overseas education more accessible to students from diverse economic backgrounds and alleviate the financial strain often faced by the foreign students.
- c) ***Utilize the Power of Social Network and Media.*** For promotional marketing in a digital era, the Itinerant Scalabrini Project –Taiwan continues to utilize the social media platforms and create a FB page for the program to attract a range of applicants and reach a wider audience. These digital efforts were significantly relevant especially during the pandemic time and have seen favorable outcomes in the applicant interest and promotion of the study and work program.
 - d) ***Assist in Student Screening and Selection process.*** The screening and selection process is one of the pivotal roles of the program. Working closely with MUST from the screening of the students' academic performance on their 11th and 12th grades, to designing the qualifying entrance exam criteria and participating in the final selection of candidates for the special class program every semester have been overwhelming yet fulfilling works.
 - e) ***Give Guidance in the Preparation and Processing of Students Documents.*** This is one of the essential services that the ISP Taiwan has provided to ensure that the students meet all the necessary requirements in their student visa application.
 - f) ***Impart Values and Holistic Formations and Delegate Tasks.*** While waiting for their student visa release and staying in one accommodation place, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo-Scalabrinian is providing values and holistic formations and delegating some tasks as part of the Itinerant Scalabrini Project –Taiwan program. These activities help the students and the Scalabrinian Sisters involved in their integration, personal development, psycho-social well-being, mental health and spiritual growth.
 - g) ***Provide Pre-Departure Orientation.*** This activity can better equip the students for their educational journey abroad. This program covers practical travel tips; airport and immigration procedure; general profile of the destination country; health, safety, and adjustment techniques; cultural sensitivity; government programs and services; assimilation and useful advices for living in the host country.
 - h) ***Coordinate and Implement the Academe-Industry Collaboration Program.*** The Itinerant Scalabrini Project's central figure is to

coordinate, oversee and implement the joint study and work program with MUST and the partnering industrial companies in Hsinchu, Taiwan. This includes monitoring the students' academic progress and company visits to see the students' integration at the workplace where they do part time work, summer job, winter job and internship work.

- i) ***Attend the diverse needs, overall development and well-being of the students.*** Attending the different students' needs such as physical, psycho-social, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions for their overall development and well-being means being available to support, counsel, and intervene when necessary for their holistic growth and development.
- j) ***Maintain Students Family Connections for Shared Co-Responsibility.*** Creating a communication system to help maintain students' family connections is essential. This is about building partnership and collaboration with parents and family members, boosting significant interactions, close monitoring, and guidance, profoundly aiding the student's well-being and the success of the program.
- k) ***Communicate Program Progress to the Stakeholders.*** Continuous communication on the progress and milestone of the Itinerant Scalabrini Project -Taiwan with stakeholders in the Philippines and in Taiwan is vital, and that, it cultivates trust and transparency with the networks of partners and collaborators.
- l) ***Mission/Apostolate Guidance, Consultancy and Mentorship.*** One significant factor that a neophyte missionary needs is to have a good mentor in mission/apostolate. Constant communication, consultation, guidance and wisdom imparted by the mentor provides encouragement and confidence. Also, it builds trust, increase knowledge and skills, and enhance self-discovery.

Perspective and Conclusion

The collaboration initiated by the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo-Scalabrinians (MSCS) with MingHsin University of Science and Technology (MUST), Spes Pauperum Foundation, Inc. (SPFI) and other networks of partners offer valuable resources for international partnership, fostering sustainable growth and promoting mutual prosperity. It enhances cross-cultural competencies, strengthens the bonds between nations, opens the door to industry collaboration, develops a skilled workforce and fuels economic growth through higher levels of innovation. It also emphasizes

the power of community-driven, globally-minded educational initiatives that can lead to sustainable development, enrich lives and achieve a more prosperous future for all stakeholders involved.

Partnerships often result in synergistic effects and synodality where pooling resources, knowledge, and networks can lead to enhanced outcome. The cooperation fosters a conducive environment for the MSCS to further their goals in a more effective manner, leveraging the strengths of each network of partners within this collaboration.

With the continual support among MUST, SPFI, SECDEP, SEDP-Simbag sa Pag-asenso and other networks of collaborators in church-based microfinance organizations, the MSCS can carry out its deeply rooted mission in service to the migrants, itinerants, and marginalized people on the move with greater resources and an international reach.

All things considered, the Itinerant Scalabrini Project-Taiwan is a noteworthy illustration of fruitful collaboration in migration support and for the advocacy of international education. Its all-encompassing approach to helping migrants, improving the educational experience of international students, supporting local industries, and fostering both local and international community development exemplifies the project's far-reaching impact creating a positive domino effect. To realize its full potential, through continued efforts in networking and advocacy, the Itinerant Scalabrini Project should undoubtedly continue to produce positive waves of change across a variety of societal sectors in Taiwan and in the Philippines.

18 AWARENESS, NETWORKING, AND ADVOCACY

SCALABRINIAN EDUCATION IDENTITY

*Sr. Sandra Maria Pinheiro, mscs**
*Tiago Ubinski***

Red ESI is made up of thirteen schools located in Brazil, in the states of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Sul, serving an average of 8,500 students in primary and secondary education, aged 1 to 17, as well as their families, employees, collaborators, and the entire school community in the surrounding area. Its evangelizing practice in living the charism and missionary mandate of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters permeates the curriculum and educational routine through different programs, strategies, active methodologies, and the development of skills and competencies, working above all to raise awareness among those involved about the reality of migration and refuge in Brazil and around the world.

Based on Sacred Scripture, the rich history of Scalabrinian spirituality, and the documents that govern Brazilian education, the “Pedagogical Political Project” (PPP) and the “Scalabrinian School Pastoral Guidelines” (DPES) organize and guide the educational and pastoral work of the ESI Network. In this report, we will present some of the pastoral pedagogical projects that involve students, teachers, staff, and families on the theme of migration and refuge. All of them are coordinated by the School Pastoral teams of each center, in collaboration with the administration, pedagogical coordination, and teaching staff.

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** Lay, married, and father of two daughters. Bachelor’s degree in philosophy and Sociology, with a postgraduate degree in People Management, Marketing, and School Supervision, Inspection, and Guidance. He has been working in the field of education for 19 years and has been a teacher and School Pastoral Coordinator at ESI Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora School in Cascavel, Paraná, Brazil, for 11 years.

The following projects are particularly noteworthy: Project 1: “Identity Collection - Values for Life!”; Project 2: Migrant Week: “A Migrant in My Home”; Project 3: “Cultural Contest: Writing, Music, Poetry, and Drawing”; Project 4: “Scalabrinian Youth Movement” – JUVESC.

Introduction

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians sees Christian education as a way to fulfill its mission through the 13 schools that make up the Scalabrinian Integrated Educational Network (Red ESI). The goal is to help people grow in a balanced way in all aspects of life, so they can respond freely and consciously as children of God to the Father’s plan for them and for the world, where they are inserted into family life and society (cf. NC 131).

The Scalabrinian Schools are centers that generate culture and, in their pedagogical dynamics, are characterized by being a privileged space for evangelization. To this end, they adopt the pedagogy of Jesus Christ and the philosophy of the Gospel principles, the guidelines of the Catholic Church and of the Congregation (cf. NC 132), seeking to produce knowledge that promotes the life and dignity of people, especially the poorest and most needy, with attitudes of welcome, itinerancy, respect for differences, and solidarity as pillars for the construction of universal citizenship.

“It should be emphasized that the main objective of Scalabrinian education is to evangelize the school community by awakening it to the knowledge and following of Jesus Christ the Pilgrim through the educational process, in light of the Gospel’s preferential option for migrants and refugees, in order to seek social transformation and the building of the Kingdom of God.” To make students aware of the reality of migration and sensitize them to make a contribution in favor of migrants and feel co-responsible for this mission.

For this reason, the Scalabrinian school curriculum is rich in elements that seek to guide students toward solidarity and love, in relation to God, themselves, their brothers and sisters, and nature. Its pastoral pedagogical approach favors the integral formation of the human being and their integration into the sociocultural context, enabling them to live fraternal relationships and be builders of a more just and caring society.

Background

Since its foundation on October 25, 1895, by St. John Baptist Scalabrini, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo - Scalabrinians has played a prominent role in evangelical, missionary,

and pastoral service to migrants and refugees. In its vast field of activity, the educational mission has always been present, beginning with young people from Italian colonies, as well as orphans and abandoned children, with the aim of developing their intellectual and spiritual growth. As a specific dimension of the mission, Scalabrinian education aims to combine academic and scientific knowledge with Christian values, especially humanization and awareness of the phenomenon of migration and its consequences (RED ESI, 2018).

Throughout the history of the Congregation, in accordance with local needs, different schools have emerged as mission fronts in different Brazilian cities, especially where different groups of immigrants have settled. Since then, education has come to occupy an increasingly important place in the Scalabrinian mission in Brazil. Starting in 1996, the schools were organized as the “Integrated Network of Scalabrinian Education” (Rede ESI).

In 2018, the Network reformulated its Pedagogical Political Project, reaffirming its educational identity and establishing the values of welcome, itinerancy, respect for differences, communion in diversity, solidarity, hope, and ecological awareness as pillars of all the pedagogical work carried out by educators with students, always with a view to their commitment to migrants and refugees. That same year, the “Guidelines for Scalabrinian School Pastoral Care” were also drawn up, with the aim of improving the work of pastoral evangelization in its theoretical and practical aspects.

Through education, religious and lay people experience the charism that points to Christ’s gaze on migrants, refugees, and all those who participate with their lives in human mobility. The Network thinks about, shares, discusses, and evaluates strategies to guide pastoral practice. Schools have people who lead evangelization, but it is applied and lived by the whole team, permeating the educational activities in the schools. They aim at the integral formation of human beings who are aware of the sociocultural reality in which they find themselves, for the transformation and construction of a more harmonious, just, and fraternal world, so that all may have life and have it in abundance (Jn 10:10).

But how is this put into practice?

The Guidelines for Scalabrinian School Ministry contain the main strategies for evangelization within school units. They organize the actions that are implemented with the aim of evangelizing and living the charism. They promote a theoretical foundation directly linked to the figure of Christ and his life project and to the identity and spirituality of the Scalabrinian mission. They guide practice, the collection of results, and ongoing evaluation.

They are divided into three programs: proclamation, service in solidarity, and moments of dialogue and celebration. Each program focuses on major projects that are carried out through activities linked to the context of each unit and shared on the Network in meetings for discussion and evaluation among all those directly involved in their implementation.

In this way, Scalabrinian pastoral education, with its Christian orientation and Catholic character, is based on the principles of Christian humanism, the Scalabrinian charism, and the contributions of science and technology. It is in line with current legislation in Brazil, committed to the integral formation of a reflective human being, where everyone can value, recognize, and respect people of different faiths, cultures, and ethnicities through intercultural and inclusive education.

Below are some of the projects worked on in the school units as a way of raising awareness of the charism of service to migrants and refugees.

Good practice description

• Project 1: IDENTITY COLLECTION - VALUES FOR LIFE!

Students aged 4 to 10 and their families participate in this project. The project has been running since 2015 in the 13 schools of the ESI Network throughout the school year, under the guidance of educators, the Pedagogical Coordination and the School Pastoral Care team.

Its aim is to help spread the mission and charism of the Congregation based on Scalabrinian Christian values, promoting excellence in education through awareness of the commitment to migrants and refugees, the evangelical experience of values, and the commitment to the promotion of human rights, universal citizenship, and respect for migrants and refugees.

The content of the Identity Collection is organized into seven volumes, based on the following values: welcome, solidarity, respect for differences, and itinerancy. The proposal is articulated by the Founder and Co-Founders and by a group of children called the Good Group: Luca (Italian); Kito (Mozambican), Ajala (Indian), Yani (Australian), and Cauã (Brazilian), who represent Scalabrinian history and values, as well as the culture of different countries.

Each volume is divided into chapters that are worked on weekly, at a specific time during the school day, and is based on engaging and playful activities, with short texts, stories, dynamics, individual and collaborative activities following a sequential itinerary that begins in Early Childhood Education (ages 4 and 5) and continues through Primary Education (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grades). It is organized through a progressive continuity, appropriate to the time frame of each grade. It delves into the values,

relationships, and attitudes we are called to have toward our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

The material includes a “Guide for the Family,” which works on the Scalabrinian values explained throughout the collection, enabling the family to better understand and accompany the process of bringing the contents of the student’s book to life. The collection also includes the “Educator’s Manual,” to guide the classroom teacher’s work in developing the project, presenting proposals and providing different resources and strategies. The units include puppets of the Founder, the Co-Founders, and the “group of good,” as well as drawings, puppets, totems, and other materials.

As a practical result, the participation and commitment of the students, the experience of values in the classroom routine with teachers and classmates, and the development of socio-emotional skills and Scalabrinian Christian values are visible.

As long-term results, it is hoped that students and families will experience in their lives the mission and values derived from the Scalabrinian charism, sensitive to the issue of migration and refuge in an ecclesial and sociocultural context, promoting healthy relationships and respect for people of different faiths, cultures, and ethnicities, and favoring intercultural education. In addition to forming leaders who can positively influence and transform our society, developing scientifically, technologically, humanly, spiritually, socially, and culturally from the perspective of an integral education with responsibility and “political love” (*Fratelli Tutti*, n. 176-197) that impels us to build the Kingdom of God in society in general.

• **Project 2: MIGRANT WEEK: “A MIGRANT IN MY HOME.”**

This project takes place between June and September of the school year with primary school students, with the participation of families, the Pedagogical Coordination, and the School Pastoral Coordination.

Based on “Migrant Week,” celebrated annually by the Church in Brazil and organized by the Pastoral Service for Migrants (SPM), a sector of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), various activities are carried out with the aim of sensitizing students on how to welcome migrants, recognizing and respecting their cultural diversity, promoting attitudes of solidarity, welcome, respect, and dialogue with people of different cultures, religions, or nationalities.

To begin developing this project, each class receives a pair of puppets representing migrants from a specific country where the Scalabrini presence is present. From there, they begin to research the history, culture, and physical, political, and social aspects of that country. Meanwhile, they

record their research in a “logbook” that accompanies the pairs of migrant puppets in the class. Each student is invited to take the puppets home and share the information they have researched with their family, as well as gathering new information about migration in that country and recording it in the logbook.

Throughout the project, students are also invited to learn about the cultural diversity of Brazilian society, relating aspects of their individual identity, that of their classmates, and that of the people they know to the cultural heritage of their families’ countries of origin. They research migratory movements, their causes, and their consequences in the reality of their families and their city.

To do this, students use different research methods and tools, such as talking about their families’ origins, interviews, library research, books, newspapers, photos, registration documents, illustrations, videos, informative texts, and others. They create a “migration family tree” of their own family to realize that we are all migrants. They collaborate with speakers who talk about historical and current issues related to migration. Many migrants are invited to come and talk to students about their migration history, the difficulties they faced, and their cultural contribution to Brazilian society.

The culmination of the project is the sharing of everything the students have researched, discussed, and produced. Each class organizes an exhibition with information about their country, flag, cuisine, clothing, and customs, as well as presenting their own family’s migration history. The entire school community is invited to visit the exhibition, which takes place within the school. As a concrete gesture, the school organizes a food drive for migrant families in the city.

• Project 3: CULTURAL CONCOURSE: WRITING, MUSIC, POETRY, AND DRAWING

The Cultural Concourse for Essay, Music, Poetry, and Drawing aims to provide students with a deeper understanding and reflection on the charism and mission of service to migrants and refugees in Brazil and around the world, in a critical, dynamic, and creative way. It is aimed at all primary and secondary school students in the schools that make up the ESI Network and takes place during the school year at a time determined by the organization.

Initially, a meeting is held with the principals, teachers, and instructors of the 13 centers in the ESI Network to organize and publicize the project. Each unit then begins to work on the theme—always related to migration—organizing the students’ research and production as follows: drawing for

1st and 2nd grades, poetry for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, music for 6th to 9th grades, and writing for the three years of secondary school.

The students are guided by their teachers during their productions. After the presentation, a jury from each school selects the three best works in each category. Following the local award ceremony, the winning entries are sent to the ESI Network Central Committee and the Jury Committee in text, audio, podcast, and video clip formats. Each production is evaluated on its originality, creativity, critical thinking, relevance and consistency with the theme, consistency of information, and connection to Scalabrinian charism and spirituality.

The Evaluation Committee announces the results of the three best schools in the ESI Network in each category. All participating students receive a certificate of participation in recognition of their work. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded to the winners of the top three places in each category.

At the end of the project, a live event is held to present the top places in each category of the schools and a speech is given on the theme of the year, the reality of migration. The ESI Network prepares the dissemination and publication of the texts, audio files, and video clips of the essays, songs, poems, and drawings in a special book, which is given to each family. The results are also made available on the websites and social media pages of the schools and the ESI Network.

• **Project 4: “SCALABRINIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT” – JUVESC**

This project began in 2022 and runs throughout the school year, with fortnightly meetings held after school for primary and secondary school students, involving not only the students but also their families, the Pedagogical Coordination and the School Pastoral Coordination.

Its objective is to provide adolescents and young people with opportunities for encounter, reflection, and the expansion of their knowledge of Christian and Scalabrinian principles and values, with an emphasis on the development of self-knowledge, respect for differences, and the construction of universal citizenship. It also aims to train participatory and proactive leaders to contribute to the construction of a more just and caring society, emphasizing the importance of fraternal and respectful relationships between different cultures, creeds, and ethnic groups. The approach includes identifying the phenomenon of migration and the difficulties faced by migrants and refugees, seeking responses of support and solidarity, and promoting concrete social actions in favor of these vulnerable populations.

Currently, the JUVESC Movement has an average of 280 students in different units, in a growing and strong networked movement, deepening the Scalabrinian mission and spirituality. At the end of 2023, the first online meeting was held between all the groups to exchange experiences and share the mission. The expectation is that by 2024 all units of the ESI Network will have an active JUVESC group and that the proposed itinerary for meetings articulated by the School Pastoral team will be enriched, subsidized, and implemented in a unified manner by all groups.

Perspectives

In the first instance, one might think that the daily reality of the ESI Network schools is very far removed from people experiencing human mobility, since most of the families, students, and staff they serve did not arrive here as refugees or migrants. However, it is essential that wherever someone arrives, they find welcoming conditions and a dignified life. That is where the students, families, and staff who have experienced and been impacted by Scalabrinian education will be.

It can be said that the projects presented here are means of promoting an education of excellence, based on Scalabrinian Christian values, and contribute to the integral formation of each individual with the aim of preparing society to know how to behave, with the loving gaze of Christ, in the face of the challenges of our time.

Among the lessons and contributions of the projects developed by Scalabrinian education in the face of the medium- and long-term challenges of migration, we can mention the formation of a more welcoming and supportive society that embraces differences and has the capacity to reach out beyond itself. This will only be possible if its citizens and leaders are mature in their relationships, responsible for the vigilant care of our common home, possess a political love that transforms the realities of injustice into places of communion, and can recognize themselves as “migrants among migrants,” sensitive and aware of the values of the Gospel.

Conclusion

Therefore, the important role that the ESI Network and its 13 educational units play in the Scalabrinian mission is reaffirmed. If, on the one hand, they are important centers for raising financial resources that help finance the missionary presence of the MSC Sisters on other fronts, on the other hand, through education, they make the dissemination of the charism a reality in order to solidify the values of the Kingdom in society.

As Paulo Freire says, “education transforms people and people transform the world.”

Therefore, it can be said that the projects presented here respond to the sixth macro-strategy of the ‘General Guidelines of the Scalabrinian Mission,’ which deals with FORMATION AND AWARENESS, which states: “In carrying out their mission, the MSCS Sisters, in addition to their direct work with migrants and refugees, as well as with other categories of people and groups in situations of mobility, also rely on skills and actions that strategically concretize their missionary mandate through the formation, adherence, and involvement of many people and organizations in the cause of human mobility, in the Church and in society.”

Experience and projects also seek to recognize and identify the charism and mission of the Congregation based on the stories of the Founder and Co-Founders, using active methodologies developed by the School Ministry, with the aim of consolidating the Catholic and missionary identity of the Institution.

A world marked by divisions, selfishness, and exclusion, where migrants and refugees are often criminalized and stigmatized, the Scalabrinian educational presence contributes significantly to reversing this reality. It begins by raising awareness among educators and students so that they spread the values of welcome, solidarity, respect for differences, interculturality, and Christian visibility of the migratory phenomenon in defense of human rights in all areas of society.

19 AWARENESS, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY COMMENTS

*Sr. Leticia Gutierrez Valderrama, mscs**

I have read with great attention the three practices that have been presented, I am convinced that human mobility, in all its categories “migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking, international students, displaced persons, etc.,” can be a fundamental premise for the construction of the humanity that we want to be in this century and in the generations to come.

Once again, we corroborate our vision and the evangelical commitment to see the human being, in a holistic way, today, with the three good practices we confirm that our being at the side, together with migrants and refugees is not only a speech, but an action and a policy of our Scalabrinian missionary.

Entering the educational world, be it private education (through the ESI network) or the world of foreign students (through the PSI) is to enter into other spaces that open the horizon for the understanding that the reality of migration and human mobility is immersed in many events of daily life and there we are called to listen to the appeals that realities challenge us.

The educational system that you are developing through the ESI-Network is very important to open to the values of welcoming, itinerancy, respect/right to difference, communion in diversity, solidarity, hope and ecological awareness. As I said at the beginning, these are fundamental values that human mobility has been teaching us and making us aware that it is there where humanity can be delineated, in this evolutionary era in which it is our turn to be and to be.

* Scalabrinian Missionary, Mexican, she holds a degree in International Commerce from the University of Guadalajara-Mexico and in Social Philosophy, specializing in Human Mobility, Urbaniana University, Rome-Italy, as well as a master's degree in international Migration, Pontifical University of Comillas, Madrid, Spain. She acts as Diocesan Delegate of Migration, Diocese of Sigüenza-Guadalajara Spain from 2018-2024.

Hopefully “inchalla say the Muslims”, that these principles were not only taught in private education, but such also as the one developed by our private schools. I think of the opportunity that the advocacy we are doing has and I go ahead in the horizon and imagine that this could be a public policy of the State, that this could be the curricular program offered by any educational system “thinking of Brazil or any other country”. that at times forget the history of reconstruction due to internal or international migration. It would be a contribution to humanity that the Scalabrinian Sisters offer for the construction of this new humanity that we are becoming. This would allow us to have a more macro incidence, to reprivatize the humanizing look that we are already offering, because that look and awareness would be a humanizing praxis.

Currently, humanity and the global educational system are interested in the qualification and professionalization of students, in competitiveness, but in these values of openness to diversity, coexistence and social cohesion, it is difficult. Look at Europe, even though it is a rich continent, very rich in cultural diversity, within schools, although more work is done to assimilate the educational system that each country offers, in terms of social cohesion and coexistence there is still a lot to work on, because school bullying continues to be a problem. From the experience I highlight the presence of the sisters in the networking for the selection of students with very high academic performance, thank you for being there, humanizing these other spaces.

As I have been thinking if within the accompaniment and closeness that we have with foreign students, we have opened ourselves to the projection of the student once they have finished the specialization they are studying in Taiwan, that is, if they make the option to stay and look for job offers, do we accompany them, in the whole issue of documentation, regularization, integration, social cohesion?

If we do not address this reality, perhaps it would be a window of opportunity to listen to the clamor that students abroad have once they finish their studies and begin to make decisions for the development of their professional life.

Although skilled migration policies have great advantages, due to the professionalization of students, they still have many gaps and prejudices “because it is also considered a migration of privilege”. As for the gaps, students have a whole complexity at the time of finishing their professional training, especially when their professional qualification will not have fields of development in the country of origin, which forces them to choose to stay in the country where they are professionalizing. Without a secure job offer, international students run the risk of remaining in an irregular

situation like the rest of the population and living in precarious conditions or covering underemployment that lead to frustration, therefore, the field that is opening up to intervene with international students, little by little leads us to a broader knowledge of the joys, hopes and clamors that this sector of human mobility requires.

This means that entering the field of foreign students, in addition to all the human, close and sororal work that we do, requires from our part an accompaniment before, during and after the academic professionalization.

Concerning the work of Advocacy in the transformation of the reality of migrants and refugees that Adriano has presented, I find very interesting the work that is being done around the political lobby, before, during and after, many congratulations, I think that sometimes we are late in the advocacy of migration policies, this participation seems very interesting, especially because it has very well identified the basic needs and at other times more complex that require a change of State policy for the dignity of the migrant and refugee.

This area should be more in communion with the Foundation, as well as with the other advocacy areas of the different Provinces, so that changes could be proposed at the international level, because we are supported by the praxis, the theory and also the reading that migrations are nowadays part of the founding principles of the civilization of the 21st century.

Conclusions

- Continue to be women politicians and immersed in politics.
- Continue to be immersed and explore the world of foreign students, a field still unknown and undervalued because it is considered a selective migration.
- Sharing the principles of welcoming, the right to diversity, hospitality, communion, to be made public, to be a contribution to humanity at a global level.
- Incidence must be done before, during and after the personal and group migratory projects in the migratory routes where we are present. It is a short, medium- and long-term task in a permanent way. If we want to be there, where migration policies are debated, discussed and decided.

20 AWARENESS, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

COMMENTS

*Jorge Durand**

After several days of listening to the presentations on the work of the Scalabrinian Sisters in many countries and in different contexts, my comment will be of a more general nature. As an external commentator and dedicated to the social sciences, I have been able to confirm a quite wide and deep knowledge of the migratory theme, both for the personal experience of direct contact with migrants, as well as for the handling of concepts and categories of analysis of the migratory phenomenon.

In that sense, it has been possible to verify that the sisters, besides reflecting on pastoral work, also have relevant contributions in terms of research, systematization and publication on migration issues, complementary to pastoral issues, which dialogue directly with the academic environment.

Having worked as an academic, journalist and activist in the field of migration for more than 40 years, I have been able to confirm that the ideal method for working on the subject is "long-term participant observation". In that sense, the sisters who are on missions of direct contact with migrants, perfectly fulfill these methodological qualities, such as observation, in the sociological and anthropological sense of the term; with participation, because of their direct commitment to work with migrants and learn from life itself and, with the long duration, for the years and decades in which they have worked and have been able to observe, contemplate, analyze and participate in the changes that occur in this process as complex as migration

* Mexican, Anthropologist and full professor-researcher of the Department of Social Movements Studies (DESMOS) of the University of Guadalajara and co-director of the Mexican Migration Project (since 1987) and the Latin American Migration Project (since 1996). He is a member of the National System of Researchers (Level III), the Mexican Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, and the American Philosophical Society.

I want to refer to the sisters working in Central America, who detected the radical change of the migratory return and decided to systematize that experience of work and the migratory phenomenon itself.

Although I am aware that it is difficult to find time, in the daily struggle of pastoral work with migrants, to transfer the daily information observed in the work and contact with migrants, in a field diary, in-depth interviews, life stories and even the formulation of policies or public policy recommendations, I believe that the sisters can and should systematize their experience and information and enter into academic debate.

While in some cases this possibility has been given, I believe that the sisters can and should systematize their experience and information and enter the academic debate. The REMHU journal effort should incorporate the field work and academic systematization of the sisters, who have that ability, concern and adequate training should contribute to the academic environment from their own frontier.

For example, in conversations with the mothers, they told me that they had cared for the same migrant, first in a house in Brazil, then the same person in Mexico and some time later in Italy. This is part of a migratory circuit, not only transnational, but of global dimension, which could well be the subject of a good academic article that only the sisters can document and analyze.

Many of these "loose data" are lost in everyday conversations and are very relevant for the understanding of the phenomenon, it is necessary to detect the changes that are taking place in the different migratory contexts and thus be able to better understand what is happening and what can be done.

Assistance work is very important, but in the team or in the region or province there should be specialized or trained personnel, to be able to work together with those who are in direct action. Just as there is a reflection on the pastoral with specialized personnel, there must be a reflection on the daily action and the social phenomenon to be able to give adequate responses and then socialize to other groups with their conclusions.

It is not a matter of providing data to a specialist to publish, it is a teamwork and reflection and if a publication is published there should be credit for all those who participated.

FORTH PART

**REASONS FOR THE STRATEGIC
CHOICES OF THE MISSION
OF THE MSCS SISTERS**

REASONS FOR THE MSCS MISSION STRATEGY CHOICES

I. MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVES OF THE SCALABRINIAN FAMILY

1 SCALABRINIAN LAY MISSIONARIES

*Isaias Pablo Klin Carlotto**

Recent history

The LMS Movement, “Own Work” of the MSCS Congregation (MLMS Statute - Conclusion), has its official beginning registered from the 1st International Meeting in Fatima, Portugal, where the name, organization, profile and spirituality of the Movement were defined. However, since 1993, tests of what would culminate there were already being carried out in the heart of the Congregation.

Today, after 26 years, 5 International Meetings and 7 General Assemblies, the Movement is structured in 11 groups (countries), 31 nuclei, with 334 LMS, 115 of which are effective (with the promise).

The groups, formed by their respective nuclei, in their contexts and realities, through their members, seek ways to carry out their mission - evangelical service to migrants and refugees - within their possibilities and according to the local configuration of human mobility.

In a historical moment where migration has become pressing; for various reasons, but mainly the search for refuge, very notorious due to wars and natural disasters, has caused this phenomenon to reach extraordinary peaks. The Church, through Pope Francis, has continuously manifested itself to call attention and indicate the way to alleviate the suffering of this immense population forced to move in order to safeguard their lives.

* Brazilian, he holds a degree in Philosophy, with qualifications in Psychology, Sociology, and Philosophy, specializing in Methodology and a postgraduate degree in Human Rights, Ethics, and Education. He is a retired professor and General Coordinator of the LMS Movement.

From this perspective, those of us in the LMS Movement also seek to respond in the most effective way possible, relying on the human resources at our disposal, joining forces to “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” these countless brothers and sisters in mobility.

Mission perspectives that we bring from our nuclei/groups are the following:

Training

Training itineraries that consider what is established in the Training Manual (three stages - initial training) and that are integrated with the Statute. Seek to promote guidelines for continuing formation. Maintain unity in the formation processes.

The existence of the training material alone does not guarantee that the training will be carried out. The act of handing out, or even reading or talking about topics, is not efficient. Let us think of a methodology, a pedagogy through which the significant and specific principles of the Scalabrinian charism are internalized and appropriated.

Scalabrinian Spirituality

The Scalabrinian Charism has a very rich spirituality. Ways of highlighting it are sought. The songs, prayers, symbols, celebrations, pilgrimages, possible readings in this context (biographies) should help the individual to develop his being, adjusted to the proposed Scalabrinian way.

Possibly in this field we can organize paths that can go beyond prayers, novenas and circumstantial triduums on commemorative dates. Let us think of retreats, trips that integrate the Scalabrinian family.

Vocational promotion

The diversity of the world that is presented in our reality, it remains valid that the best vocational promotion is always the personal and community witness. Our actions and how we carry them out; to the extent that we commit ourselves and dedicate ourselves to it, it will awaken in others the interest to embrace the same cause.

In what way could our presence become a differential factor that possesses a vocational attraction? In the professional work environment, in the communities, in the works, in the events in which we are present, with the people we meet, in the numerous meetings that are promoted today, we must keep in mind the vocational dimension.

A vocational discernment

Vocational discernment is a personal and non-transferable path. The proposal is to ensure that the person is included in a process that contemplates stages in the personal, community, ecclesial and geo-social dimensions.

Awakening the vocation, providing conditions for the call of God to be established in the mind and heart of the person, is done with the commitment to accompany the steps taken by the person.

The role of the formator is important as a mentor and not only as a transmitter of information.

Mission and diversity

We are in a process of transition from a time when we were more focused on the internal actions of our communities and parishes: catechesis, ministries, pastoral and ecclesial movements, towards more specific actions and raised by the Scalabrinian charism. It is time to understand and adjust the perception and notion of mission.

Considering this aspect, we must be aware that we have many Scalabrinians, of advanced age or even in realities that do not have the presence of the migratory theme. Doubts always arise that, if I am not in the mission, am I still a Scalabrinian?

Scalabrinian Identity

What defines being Scalabrinian? Would it be possible to review what defines us as Scalabrinians? To be truly missionary, we need to be sure of ourselves as a being in the world, a Christian, a Scalabrinian.

The SML profile was determined in the first international meeting that took place in Fatima in the year of Scalabrini's Beatification. It is necessary to rescue it and resize it, updating the perspectives.

Being church – testimony in action

Being church means being at the service of those who suffer most. Migrants and refugees experience the intensity of the challenges faced by those who seek to fulfill their human potential. The world is their homeland.

Nuclei and groups are challenged to take specific and effective action in relation to the cause of migration. Or support it in some way.

Communication

At times when technologies are favorable, we must enhance our actions with a more efficient internal communication and a timelier inter-organizational communication.

Giving feedback on what is received; transmitting what is received to those of us who are articulators; monitoring, retaking, demanding from the leaders that dynamic that speeds up the processes.

Social networks

Participation, groups and involvement in social networks have multiplied. Almost all of us have profiles, pages, channels... but little interaction. We have not yet discovered the engagement potential we can generate from ourselves.

There are few likes on our posts, almost no comments, almost no interactivity, visualizations are perhaps what saves us and the reach is immeasurable given the number of people on our profiles. Artificial Intelligence is not yet at the service of what we are fighting for. Only greater involvement will begin to change this scenario.

Today we have the example of the Province of Mary, Mother of Migrants with its own channel. With a very great potential for content that is little explored in terms of viewing and sharing.

It is not enough just to own it. It is necessary to be a leaven, a seed....

Leadership preparation

Expecting and identifying leaders is a challenge. What a blessing when people with the skills and competencies necessary for the dynamics of centers and groups appear. We have to wake up to prepare leaders. We have an expiration date. Renewing people in the services is very important and healthy for the process. How to encourage leadership? How to awaken in the members the desire to assume leadership?

One way is the performance of the leaders currently in office. Seek a personal and community path so as not to fall into the trap of wanting to own the position. Wanting to perpetuate oneself in this or that activity. To follow the Statute that provides leadership time.

Dialogue and Ecumenism

Migrants and refugees come from different cultures, traditions, customs and religions. It is because of their human dignity that they are welcome. It is necessary to have knowledge of other churches and religions.

A universe is to be welcomed in the experiences of people. The other, the different must be something that comes to enrich us.

However, we need to be convinced of who we are and also knowledgeable about what we profess, to be able to share, to commune and to provoke growth.

Migratory context

To understand the causes and consequences of migration. The necessary advances and struggles to be promoted in the different realities.

The Seminars, meetings, conferences, online or face-to-face, promote the possibility of a greater understanding of the processes that migrants and refugees go through.

Getting it down on paper, qualifying it, collecting information, data, generating information is a necessity nowadays. Contextualized reports, collection of testimonies. Give a voice to those who suffer the most. Sharing initiatives.

These initiatives should be open to leaders from other segments who can join efforts to generate legislation, opportunities in the labor, housing, education and insertion in the local culture.

Oversee parliamentary committees (human rights, human mobility, education, etc.).

Mission: Volunteering, activism and militancy

Discerning the role of the Scalabrinian Charism in the migratory context. It is not a land/territory (human frontier) ours alone. Are our actions activism, militancy or mission? Even if it is volunteering, a more organic commitment is necessary, to avoid using migrants as an instrument to tell the world that we are doing something.

Networking

Each action undertaken in its uniqueness should be understood as a complement to what is being done as a Scalabrinian family in building the Kingdom of God.

The charism is our point of unity and from it we can establish unity and/or complementarity of actions in favor of migrants and refugees.

Assume representation in events and transfer the proposals made in public to other segments of the Movement.

Testimony of life

In the first place, individual protagonism must be seen and understood as a testimony of life. Mission is a field of activity for people capable of being at the service of others in their needs.

The call of God that we receive in baptism requires a constant YES that demands a re-dimensioning at every stage of existence. Discernment that is born of prayer, that is established in formation and finds its evidence in action.

Living in community, or identifying ourselves as groups, nuclei, and there we experience the values and virtues of the Scalabrinian charism, but we cannot forget that everything begins with personal adherence to the charism.

Therefore, this requires an attitude of personal search for formation, the cultivation of prayer and the intensity of actions.

Be the protagonist of his growth process. Because self-realization is always a personal achievement. Holiness is born from the human desire to seek perfection, embracing imperfections to transform them.

Purposes:

- The groups and nuclei will assume action as their own means to “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” migrants and refugees.
- We dream of extending our missionary action by seeking to dialogue with the ESI NETWORK - Integrated Scalabrinian Education – Scalabrinian Schools (Brazil), where we have 4 active Groups, to work together with the School Pastoral, with the objective of involving the parents of the students in actions directed to migrants, in addition to what is currently done in terms of campaigns and/or talks on clothing and food collection (for example: possibility for parent entrepreneurs to offer vacant positions to migrants and refugees; possibility of holding a fair where migrants and refugees can bring items that they themselves produce for their livelihood and/or typical objects from their countries of origin, providing them with extra income).
- □ Identify and be close to social, public and academic organizations that, through related activities, address issues of human vulnerability (children, elderly, women, cultural issues).
- □ We suggest support from the Congregation, through CSEM (or other) for LMS to have access to the training material with a

login and password that allows the evaluation of the individual formation process of each LMS, in the Movement.

- Movement, as “Own Work” of the MSCS Congregation and due to the limitations of following the General Council (distances, language, etc...) depends immensely on the support, encouragement and guidance of the Sister Assistants of Groups and Centers. We feel that it is necessary to raise awareness about the role of the Sister Assistant and that the Movement exists because it was and is the DESIRE of the CONGREGATION, and, therefore, it should also be assumed as a vocational project, spread and encouraged in the various works of the Congregation. How to promote MLMS in these places (hospitals, schools, etc.).
- Plan strategies of proximity to the Scalabrinian family, of sharing, of communion to strengthen the bonds that put us at the service and give visibility to the Scalabrinian Charism.
- Monitoring publications about our actions, maintaining interactivity with liking, commenting, sharing.

Conclusion

To bring hope to others and fight for conditions of human fulfillment in a context of recognition of the dignity of all beings, it is necessary that we are prepared to act in a unity that makes us more efficient and effective in the proposals we undertake.

A personal adherence to this call established through baptism allows nuclei, groups, communities to be strengthened and generate identification, commitment and loyalty.

The Scalabrinian Charism has great potential in the Church and in the world. This potential is evident in what we do in different contexts and is seen in the constant increase of this human frontier experienced by migrants and refugees.

The examples and testimonies of life, faith and mission of Scalabrini, Assunta and Fr. Joseph Marchetti are the sources of inspiration that bring us closer to Jesus Christ Pilgrim through migrants and refugees.

2 SCALABRINIAN SECULAR MISSIONARIES

*Luisa Deponti**

The history of the Secular Institute of the Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries began 56 years after the death of St. J.B. Scalabrini: in 1961, in Solothurn (Switzerland) with Adelia Firetti, a young teacher from Piacenza (Italy), who came to Switzerland at the invitation of the Scalabrinian Missionaries to teach the children of immigrants. In this migratory context, she discovered her vocation of total consecration to God in a secular way of life, migrating with the migrants. She was joined by other young missionaries, and the community received its first approval in 1967 by the Bishop of Basel. In 1990, the Congregation for Consecrated Life in Rome approved our Constitutions and established our community as a Secular Institute of diocesan right.

We are the third Institute of Consecrated Life in the Scalabrinian Family and we are inspired by St. J.B. Scalabrini and his prophetic vision of migration.

Currently, we are present in several cities in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, and Vietnam. One missionary is learning about the situation of migrants in Morocco. We come from eight different countries and live in small communities of missionaries of different nationalities to bear witness to communion among diversities in the context of migration.

How did we choose these mission fields?

By listening to migrants and their stories, to local churches, to the Scalabrinian Family, to the members of our Institute, listening to the Holy Spirit in all these voices, especially trying to be creatively faithful to our specific charism.

* Scalabrinian Secular Missionary, Citizen of Italy. She studied for a bachelor's degree in German and English Language and Literature and a master's degree in international Migration. Since 2018, she has continued to work in the formation of migrants and young people at the Scalabrini International Missionary Center in Mexico City, also in collaboration with the Migrant Houses. Since 2022, she has been the coordinator of the "International Students" section of the Episcopal Dimension of Pastoral Care for Human Mobility of the Mexican Episcopal Conference.

Below, I will summarize some aspects that are particularly relevant to our mission.

A preferential option for the poorest migrants and refugees

In Article 7 of our stranger, constitutions we read: “Our spirituality is inspired by Bishop J. B. Scalabrini, Father and Apostle of migrants, and reaches its fullness in the welcome of Jesus crucified, our indivisible Companion, recognized especially in the poorest and most uprooted migrants: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35), and “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40).

Sharing life with migrants and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the signs of the times, following Scalabrini’s example, in our 63-year history we have sought to serve the poorest and “least” among migrants, whose faces have changed over the decades:

- At the beginning: workers from southern Europe in Switzerland and Germany
- Then in Brazil with internal migrants and refugees fleeing dictatorships in Latin America, and now collaborating with Peace Mission among migrants and refugees from various continents (Venezuelans, Haitians, Afghans, Africans, etc.)
- in Germany with Turkish Muslim migrants and then with Christians from Arab countries fleeing religious persecution and with international students from developing countries.
- in Switzerland among refugees and Catholic communities of different languages.
- in Italy with irregular migrants and refugees from various parts of the world; in 2013, a few months after Pope Francis’ visit to the island of Lampedusa, we opened a community in Agrigento (Sicily), collaborating with the diocese to which this island belongs, a symbol of the tragedy of the Central Mediterranean, a cemetery for migrants.
- In Mexico, first with migrants detained at the Mexico City Migration Station and now with migrants in transit, housed in migrant shelters, and with refugee students.
- In Vietnam: with internal migrants and their families.
- In Morocco: with foreign students (Catholics during a Muslim society) and migrants in transit, victims of the walls that separate Africa from Europe.

Reaching out to the migrants who suffer most, we have realized that migration is not an isolated phenomenon: their wounds speak to us of the wounds of humanity. “There is no global refugee crisis, but rather a world in crisis that produces refugee movements,” wrote the prominent German migration historian Klaus Bade (MiGazin, 2015), when thousands of Syrian refugees set out, often on foot, to reach Europe. Earlier, Scalabrinian missionary Father Giovanni Battista Sacchetti (1918-1992), a sociologist, had used the effective metaphor of a “magnifying glass” to describe migration as a phenomenon that highlights the challenges and problems that already exist in societies and concern everyone, not just migrants. Forced migration is a symptom of injustice, inequality, lack of democracy, human rights violations, conflict, violence... It is humanity that is sick and in crisis and with it, our planet.

That is why we must intervene at a deeper level, and throughout our history we have learned that one of the fundamental responses to the challenges of migration is to prioritize awareness-raising and training for people: migrants and the local population.

Focusing on raising awareness and training people

In fact, it is necessary to look at migration that helps everyone understand it in a more objective and profound way and to promote personal and community decisions, effective and long-term political, economic, social, and cultural interventions in favor of the person and the common good. As Pope Francis wrote: “It is not just about migrants: it is about our humanity... It is not just about migrants: it is about not excluding anyone... It is not just about migrants: it is about the whole person, about all people” (Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2019).

This view of migration that we are trying to deepen goes beyond the problems: it is the legacy that St. John Baptist Scalabrini has passed on to us. Scalabrini started from the awareness that emigration is often a consequence of injustice and causes serious suffering. For this reason, he intervened at various levels—social, political, and religious—on behalf of migrants. But he saw that the path of migration hides something new, a seed of the future. In this movement, a space can be opened in which people and peoples meet and discover that they belong to the one family of humanity. The goal is a fraternal humanity, without walls and forced migrations.

The Holy Spirit is at work, but people are needed who are willing to open themselves to this universal fraternity. In fact, it seems that the more migration grows, the more walls and rejection increase. What is needed,

then, is a path of conversion and openness, accompanied by awareness and formation.

Therefore, our special concern is to foster a culture of encounter and solidarity between migrants and natives in the Church and in society, also valuing the richness of the life and faith experience of each group involved in human mobility.

For this reason, in addition to carrying out direct interventions in favor of migrants, we have also opened some of the houses where we live to serve as International Formation Centers to promote encounters between migrants and the local population, particularly young people. The International Centers do not propose a discourse on “migration,” but rather an encounter with migrants and are spaces for coexistence among diversities based on faith and the universal love of God.

In this Scalabrinian perspective, migrants cannot be considered only as objects of social or pastoral assistance. They are active subjects and, if trained, they collaborate in the realization of a new and creative coexistence in the Church and in society.

Ministry among migrants based on the person and their relationships

The Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries are recognized as a Secular Institute within the Church: we profess the three evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience through a stable bond, by virtue of which we dedicate our lives to following Christ in the secular dimension, that is, as lay people in the world, bearing witness from within society and remaining in constant dialogue with it.

Our charism is not expressed in stable works of our own or in a special way of life that is outwardly distinct from others. The charism acts through the person and their relationships from within the ordinary situations and events of life.

Wherever we live, we share the life common to all, also through a profession in different environments and contexts: among us there are teachers, nurses, doctors, educators, pastoral assistants, artists, lawyers, sociologists, theologians, etc.

On our missionary journey, we have allowed ourselves to be guided step by step by Scalabrini’s universal heart, by the passionate centrality of Jesus Christ in his life, by his spirituality of incarnation, which leads us to find meaning in the experience of migration. The Word became flesh so that his Life would be as close to us as possible. Through the Incarnation,

Jesus took on our entire human life, liberating it and filling it with the resurrection. In this light, secular spirituality is defined as a style of presence.

Outlooks that we can aspire to as a Scalabrinian Family

During the preparation for the canonization of St. J.B. Scalabrini, as the Scalabrinian Family we have identified four themes that continue to accompany us in this time after the canonization and become perspectives that we can dream together. These perspectives focus on four aspects that draw attention to the relevance of St. J.B. Scalabrini's message and personality, which we can continue to deepen and carry out in our mission with migrants:

Commotion

In the life of St. J.B. Scalabrini, many decisions originated from an encounter. Faced with the drama of people forced to leave their country in search of a more dignified life, he did not remain indifferent but was moved by the pain of others. It is an invitation to continue fighting against a "culture of indifference," which can grow in us, in the Church, and in society, and to allow ourselves to be challenged by the cry of the poorest among migrants.

Action

J. B. Scalabrini's emotion is not a sterile feeling: it generates in him a tireless action that leads him to intervene in multiple contexts, becoming "all things to all people." Scalabrini began by analyzing the vicissitudes of migrants, documenting, studying, and raising awareness. He called on bishops, priests, laypeople, the Holy See, the government, and all people of good will to collaborate, because "charity... knows no parties." The Scalabrinian Family is called to continue raising awareness and involving ecclesial, governmental, and social actors so that all can contribute to solving the causes of forced migration and to an increasingly humane management of migratory movements.

Transmission of the faith

Following Scalabrini's apostolate and his primarily pastoral concern for migrants, and in harmony with the teachings of Pope Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium*) on the synodal path of the Church reaching out, we cannot forget that our main task is evangelization, which is carried out through the human promotion of migrants, but also by proclaiming the Gospel to them and receiving and valuing their witness of faith in order to live together in

universal communion, a gift of the Holy Spirit, in a Pentecost that continues throughout history. In this way, we can make a fundamental contribution to the path of universal fraternity for all humanity.

A prophetic vision of migration

God's plan for humanity passes through the events of history, giving them meaning and a new direction. Looking at reality through the eyes of faith, Scalabrini glimpses this possibility: even the reality of migration, with all the upheavals it entails, can become a space of encounter between God's action and man's response. Through migration, which unites different peoples, we can learn to recognize that we all belong to the one human family. As the Scalabrinian Family, we have the mission to proclaim this prophetic vision to the Church and society, seeking to understand and live it more deeply each day.

3 CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. CHARLES SCALABRINIANS

*Fr. Leonir Chiarello, cs**

In the first place, on behalf of the General Administration and all my fellow Scalabrinian confreres, I would like to thank Sister Neusa for inviting me to participate in this important congregational seminar.

In her invitation letter, Sister Neusa suggested that I present the contribution of the Scalabrinian Missionaries to the missionary perspectives of the Scalabrinian family. I will present our contribution from the perspective of revitalizing our charism and renewing our mission in harmony with the synodal process of the Church, in communion and participation in the mission of the Church.

In light of this, in our missionary project, defined in the last general chapter, we have established a path of reflection on our identity and charism, as well as a path of missionary action and initial and ongoing formation. Inspired by the encounter of the risen Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, the first three years of our itinerary of reflection among ourselves, with migrants and refugees, and with ecclesial and social organizations were guided by three themes: encounter, dialogue, and proclamation. In the fourth year, in dialogue among the three Institutes, we came together as a family in organizing the Scalabrinian Year, which culminated in the organization and celebration of the canonization of our Founder. I consider the organization and celebration of the canonization to be one of the most significant moments of our communion and participation in our charism with the Church's mission to migrants and refugees. In the canonical visits following the canonization, I was able to see how the canonization of Scalabrini, bishop, founder, and inspirer, revitalized the Church's awareness of its co-responsibility in pastoral care for migrants in an integral and coordinated manner among ecclesial organizations, civil

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society organizations, and government agencies. The theme of the fifth year of the reflection itinerary was Scalabrinian spirituality, which culminated in the Congress of Spirituality, in which we participated as representatives.

With this itinerary of reflection, we wanted to remember (bring to heart) the sources of our missionary action, which is our vocation, God's call, through our founder Scalabrini, to commune and participate in the mission of the Church with our charism and our specific spirituality. Encouraged by St. Paul's invitation to Timothy – "I remind you to revitalize the charism of God that is in you" (2 Tim 1:6) we embarked on a process of returning to the sources and revitalizing our charism and spirituality, which is leading us to a renewal of our mission with migrants, refugees, and seafarers and to a revitalization of the formation process, including vocational animation.

The process of returning to the charism (God's gift to the Church) and spirituality of Bishop Scalabrini, which we have inherited as Institutes, has led us to rediscover his pioneering role in defining and implementing a multifaceted and comprehensive pastoral response, including awareness-raising and advocacy actions in the societies of origin (Italy's first migration law) and destination (visit to Roosevelt); promoting a sociological reading of migration; comprehensive accompaniment programs for migrants, including an active presence and religious and social services in places of origin, at the time of migrants' embarkation on ships, accompaniment during the ocean crossing with chaplains on board, welcoming migrants at ports of disembarkation; integration into new societies through various initiatives, including the opening of churches, schools, hospitals, orphanages, cooperatives, and many other works that the three institutes promote today; ecclesial coordination at the level of the local Churches of origin (Italy) and destination of migrants, through frequent communications and visits to the bishops of the United States, Brazil, and Argentina, and at the level of the Holy See, by proposing to the Pope and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith the creation of a Pontifical Commission for the coordination of pastoral care for migrants worldwide and the foundation of the Missionaries of St. Charles; the promotion of a theological vision.

This reading of migration from a providential perspective reveals Scalabrini's clear-sighted vision of a future of communion among peoples and pastoral care without ethnic or geographical boundaries, which implies co-responsibility and ordinary collaboration between the local Churches of origin, transit, destination, and return of migrants and refugees, as well as the responsibility of the universal Church in developing an organic plan for pastoral response to the phenomenon of modern migration.

By inviting his priests to "leave the sacristy" to serve the different social and pastoral needs of people, including migrants, Scalabrini was

a precursor of the “Church going forth” proposed by Pope Francis and, at the same time, involving not only the different instances of the Church, lay people, priests, bishops, and the Pope in pastoral care for migrants, but also the different instances of civil society, government, and people of good will to work together, Scalabrini is also a precursor of a “synodal” way of engaging with people on the move.

This comprehensive pastoral perspective, articulated among ecclesial, social, and governmental actors, which we have inherited from our holy founder, is what we are invited to revitalize in the missionary perspectives of our Scalabrinian family, from a synodal perspective, in communion and participation in the Church’s mission with migrants and refugees.

Based on the methodology that has guided the universal Church in the synodal process on synodality, in three moments of discernment, convergences, issues to be addressed, and proposals, we can identify the following convergences, challenges, and possible joint responses in the pastoral perspectives of our Scalabrinian family.

1 Points of convergence between the three institutes of the Scalabrinian family

Considering the seven macro-strategies of the missionary action of the Missionaries of St. Charles Scalabrini – 1) welcome, assistance, and protection; 2) promotion and integration; 3) pastoral animation and coordination; 4) priority attention to women and children; 5) strengthening the protagonism and leadership of migrants and refugees; 6) formation and awareness-raising; 7) advocacy/defense and networking – the presence of Secular Missionaries as professionals in different environments and contexts of the multi-ethnic societies of our time to transform from within, and the four areas and four services of pastoral presence contemplated in the Missionary Project of the Scalabrinian Missionaries – 4 areas (with migrants, refugees, and seafarers) parishes and chaplaincies (182), migrant houses and centers (54), seafarer centers (13), and ecclesial organizations (Holy See, 12 national and 36 diocesan) and other social works (18 nursing homes in Australia and the United States, 15 schools, 3 orphanages, 3 medical clinics), and four services, research (network of 7 study centers), formation (SIMI and ITESP), communication (6 communication centers and 6 radio stations) and advocacy (local, national, regional and international, coordinated by SIMN), there is a great convergence and complementarity in our pastoral work with migrants and refugees.

We can highlight the following as some of the main points of convergence between the three institutes of the Scalabrinian family:

1. We share the vocation, charism, and spirituality that inspire and animate our missionary action with migrants and refugees in communion and participation with the local Churches, with the bodies of the Episcopal Conferences at the national and regional levels and with their support networks, such as the CLAMOR Network represented here, and with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development of the Holy See.
2. We share a path of ongoing reflection through *Traditio*, in which the three institutes of the Scalabrinian family participate.
3. We accompany migrants and refugees in their life projects from a holistic perspective, including programs and activities for reception, assistance, protection in emergencies and situations of vulnerability, promotion, and integration (corresponding to macro-strategies 1 and 2 of the Scalabrinians, the presence of the Secular Missionaries in professional services, and the presence of the Scalabrinians in the Houses and Centers for Migrants and Seafarers), in collaboration with each other and in coordination with ecclesial organizations, civil society organizations, government agencies, and international organizations.
4. We share a commitment to pastoral animation and coordination with migrant and refugee communities in the celebration of faith, evangelization, catechesis, and strategic institutional coordination in diocesan and national ecclesial bodies, corresponding to macro-strategy 3 of the Scalabrinian Sisters and the pastoral presence of the Scalabrinian Missionaries in parishes and ecclesial bodies.
5. We share a commitment to strengthening the role and leadership of migrants and refugees, in line with the Scalabrinians' macro-strategy 5 and one of the cross-cutting themes of the missionary project of the Scalabrinians and the Scalabrinian Secular Missionaries.
6. We promote training and awareness programs, such as those you have shared with us over the last few days, which correspond to your macro-strategy 6, and the training programs we promote, also with your collaboration, through the Scalabrini International Migration Institute (SIMI) and the Theological Institute of São Paulo (ITESP) and awareness programs through our Network of Communication Centers and Scalabrinian Radio Network.
7. Among the training and awareness programs, we would also highlight the formal education programs in primary and secondary schools of the Scalabrinian School Network in Brazil and the

- Scalabrinian Missionary Schools in Colombia (7), Haiti (3), and Argentina (5).
8. We are also committed to specific programs that support women, children, and vulnerable groups of migrants and refugees: undocumented migrants, displaced persons, deportees, detainees, and victims of migrant smuggling and human trafficking.
 9. We promote research on the phenomenon of migration from an interdisciplinary and proactive perspective for systemic changes in migration governance, through CESEM and the Network of Scalabrinian Migration Study Centers.
 10. We share a commitment to active (not just passive) advocacy for the definition of public policies and programs from a perspective of defending rights, access to justice, and citizen participation at the local and national (Brazil) and international levels, working in networks with migrant and refugee organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, government agencies, and international organizations, in line with macro strategy 7 and its strategic axes of the Scalabrinians and the advocacy and networking work of the SIMN.
 11. Lay groups that organize themselves in different ways and act in different missionary areas share our charism and mission.

2 Questions and challenges to be addressed

1. We've seen a big jump in migration over the last few decades, especially forced migration and refugees, and at the same time, people are getting more indifferent and negative about the tough situation migrants, refugees, sailors, and their families and communities are facing. This situation reveals short-, medium-, and long-term challenges: in the short term, the need to save the lives of people attempting to cross seas and borders during the migration process and to protect them from new forms of slavery, as Pope Francis urges us to do; in the medium term, to counter negative narratives about migrants and refugees and restrictive migration policies; in the long term, expanding our programs to contribute to the eradication or at least mitigation of the endemic causes of migration, such as economic disparities, resource plundering, extreme poverty, inhumane living conditions, crime, corruption, and lack of access to rights, in addition to circumstantial causes, including wars, natural disasters, dictatorships, and the climate crisis.

2. Restrictive migration policies, the lack of legal and safe channels for migration, and the resulting irregularity and vulnerability that migrants and refugees are forced to face.
3. Corruption, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and the involvement of organized crime in the management of migration flows (uncivil society), which require greater coordination between civil society actors, including migrant and church organizations and communities, and government and international actors to prevent these crimes, protect their victims, and denounce and arrest their perpetrators.
4. The protection of those who protect (the case of Nuevo Laredo and death threats for taking clear political positions)
5. In reference to ecclesial challenges, they highlight the need for greater coordination of pastoral care for migrants with the overall pastoral care of some dioceses and episcopal conferences, bearing in mind that pastoral care for migrants is an integral part of the ordinary pastoral care of local churches and not a pastoral activity to be delegated to certain religious institutes, internal divisions and tensions between different Church bodies, and failure to take into account the leading role of immigrants as pastoral agents.
6. Religious accompaniment of people who have been living in refugee camps for years – Cabriniana Province in Addis Ababa.
7. Some migration emergencies in which we are called to intervene.
8. The scarcity of economic resources to ensure the sustainability of migration pastoral programs and activities.
9. The decline in vocations in some regions of the world and the need for ongoing formation of the members of our institutes.
10. Among the three institutes, the great synodal challenge is to move from a huge set of individual actions to greater joint actions.

To address these challenges, especially the last one, synodal collaboration, we can consider the following proposals for pastoral collaboration.

3 Joint responses

In response to these challenges, especially the last one, of synodal collaboration and based on our own pastoral strategies and plans, we can consider the following joint responses to the challenges of pastoral care for migrants and refugees:

1. We will continue to share our Scalabrinian charism and spirituality so that it may inspire and encourage our missionary work with migrants and refugees and our communion and participation with local Churches, with the bodies of the Episcopal Conferences at the national and regional levels, and with their support networks.
2. We will continue to promote the common elements of our spirituality through the *Traditio*.
3. Strengthen our collaboration in providing comprehensive support to migrants and refugees in the short term, saving lives and protecting as many lives as possible, and contributing to counteracting the culture of waste and the globalization of indifference denounced by Pope Francis since his first trip to Lampedusa; in the medium term, combine in the first person singular and first person plural the four verbs proposed by Pope Francis to accompany migrants and refugees: welcome, protect, promote, and integrate; 3) in the long term, to act on the endemic and cyclical causes of forced migration, participating with local social and political actors in the processes of defining and implementing policies and programs for development, employment, access to health care, education, housing, and social security, denouncing the predators of natural resources and corruption, and other programs that guarantee people the right not to migrate.
4. Define joint responses to requests for intervention in migration emergencies with itinerant groups and rapid response missionary groups.
5. Promote coordinated programs of specific care for women, children, and vulnerable groups of migrants and refugees: irregular migrants, displaced persons, deportees, detainees, family members who remain in the country of origin, and victims of human trafficking.
6. Encourage communion and participation in pastoral care for migrants in the pastoral plans of local churches and episcopal conferences, bearing in mind that pastoral care for migrants is an integral part of the ordinary pastoral care of local churches.
7. Accompany migrant, refugee, and seafarer communities so that they can celebrate their faith and participate in the life and mission of the Church.
8. Exchange information and studies on the phenomenon of migration, pastoral care for migrants, and public policies on

migration promoted by CSEM and the Network of Migration Study Centers.

9. Jointly promote awareness campaigns among the Church, civil society, and political actors on the phenomenon of migration and public policies on migration.
10. Expand our collaboration in promoting training programs for pastoral agents of human mobility.
11. Facilitate the active participation of people on the move as pastoral agents of communion and intercultural coexistence between migrant communities and local communities.
12. Promote opportunities for collaboration among lay groups that share our charism and mission.
13. Collaborate in the definition and implementation of advocacy programs so that governments assume responsibility for defining and implementing public policies and programs that recognize and protect the rights of migrants, refugees, displaced persons, seafarers, and people on the move.
14. Participate in networking opportunities with organized Church groups, such as the CLAMOR Network, and other networks of civil society organizations and governments that are committed to migrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking.
15. Resume collaborative initiatives in the areas of vocational animation and initial and ongoing formation, such as EISAL and CESCAL.

Reiterating our gratitude for the invitation, we hope that, recognizing our commonalities, our challenges, and our joint responses, we can participate in the characteristic features of the synodal Church, where we are all disciples and missionaries, invited to forge bonds and build networks to collaborate in building the Kingdom of God together with migrants and refugees.

Thank you very much.

4 MISSIONARY SISTERS OF SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO, SCALABRINIANS

*Sr. Janete Ferreira, mscs**

Introduction

The mission of the Scalabrinian family among migrants and refugees in the early third decade of the 21st century is extremely challenging. Despite the undeniable progress made in previous years on a global level, the resurgence of armed conflicts, the increase in climate events, the specter of future pandemics, the ever-present food insecurity, and above all, the rise of xenophobia are creating obstacles and setbacks in the solidarity efforts of civil society and the pastoral community. Recent legislative changes in France and Italy exemplify setbacks in the solidarity efforts of civil society and pastoral care.

The criminalization of migration intensifies mistrust towards solidarity and humanitarian aid, as demonstrated by the persecution of NGOs in the Mediterranean, as well as the targeting of leaders in France, Italy, Mexico, and other countries. Advancing the cause of migrants and refugees requires a widespread commitment to peace, human rights, and democracy to overcome this reactionary framework.

Furthermore, there are challenges related to changes in the migratory situation. In addition to traditional migrations, such as changes in residence, which were characteristic of movements in the late 19th century, there is now a more intense and constant mobility motivated by the continuous search for new opportunities or, simply put, induced by the barriers encountered along the way. This constant movement compels people on the move to constantly reformulate their migration plans, living in a state of almost constant transit. From this perspective, solidarity action, rather

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than presenting pre-established solutions from the past, must be in service to the projects of people on the move, strengthening their agency, their organizations, and their demands.

A journey through the rich labyrinths of the biblical itinerary, accompanied by the memory of the life, work, and writings of Scalabrini, allows us to realize how the Scalabrinian institutes intertwine and complement each other. Priests, sisters, lay missionaries, and the lay movement come together, separate, and reunite on this common ground set by the Founder's charism. The network contracts and expands according to socio-pastoral action.

To respond in an organized manner to the situation in which migrants and refugees live, the Congregation of the sisters MSCS has undertaken a process of interaction, study, sharing, and discernment, carried out over more than two years, with the collaboration of hundreds of Sisters MSCS. This involved participation in seminars and mappings conducted on the Congregation's work in serving migrants and refugees, to develop the General Guidelines for the Congregational Apostolic Mission.

This document serves as a guiding tool, seeking to motivate, qualify, and strengthen our practice and way of being as consecrated women, Scalabrinian missionaries, as an institution, and as people of faith and action who become migrants with migrants. It emphasizes accompaniment, service, solidarity, and care for life, and abundant life.

The Guidelines are an impetus for discernment, planning, execution, and evaluation to be processes of assessing experience as a laboratory of human, spiritual, and professional experiences that teach and forge knowledge and goals. When embraced, systematized, and integrated into our being and actions, they strengthen our work with migrants and refugees in various areas of life and contexts of operation.

Below, I share with you the Seven Macro Strategies that guide the services provided by the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters.

1 The perspective of welcome and protection

We live in years when migration is present in all countries and, we can say, in all communities. I believe that few can say they live far from people on the move. In this scenario, we never tire of saying that migration is a richness, a positive contribution, a cultural wealth, among other positive expressions that inspire our sensibilities. However, in practice, we increasingly experience rejection, discrimination, xenophobia, restrictive measures, and deportations. There are conferences, meetings, debates,

pacts, documents, declarations, and often it seems that all these voices are crying out in the desert, awaiting welcoming responses.

Migrations have become political and economic issues, less focused on the human and humanitarian aspects. Meanwhile, there are thousands and thousands of people fleeing hunger, wars, persecutions, dictatorships, and violence. As Scalabrinians, we must reflect, decide, and act together in a welcoming and inclusive manner. We cannot continue to be spectators or respond in isolation. It is in these emergency or non-emergency situations that we must open our hearts, homes, creative capacity, and institutions to WELCOME. Let us be certain that where there is a true sense of brotherhood and sisterhood, there is also a sincere experience of welcome.

It is also worth noting that this is not a passive welcome where we can support people with our own resources or with financial resources, offer them a place to sleep, and then sleep peacefully ourselves, like a wealthy person who gives alms and then continues with their life as usual, thinking they have done their “good deeds.” No. Our welcome should analyze reality, denounce injustice, greed, exploitation, and be proactive, standing out for its attention and care, with an approach that seeks and provokes transformative and inclusive responses for migrants and refugees.

2 The perspective of promotion and integration

The promotion and integration of migrants and refugees are inherently connected and complementary. From the perspective of promotion, we start with an understanding of what “integral human development” means. It is not new or surprising that integral development refers to the growth and progress of an individual in all areas of life, including the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Integral human development involves ensuring that migrants and refugees are treated with dignity and respect, providing them with access to the necessary opportunities to rebuild their lives in a new country. It is essential that they receive equal treatment, on par with nationals, in terms of access to benefits, including assistance for people with disabilities, regardless of their immigration status. However, this is an ongoing process that requires a constant search for balance and harmony in all dimensions, seeking the well-being and full realization of each individual.

From the perspective of integration, we understand that it is necessary to consider the economic dimension in addition to welcome and promotion. I would like to refer to recommendations from Pope Francis when he says that it is necessary to ensure the recognition and development of the capacities of migrants and refugees, guaranteeing access to education,

training courses, validation of academic degrees, socio-occupational integration in communities, ensuring freedom of movement and choice of place of residence, providing tools for them to feel like actors in the reconstruction of their lives and not mere spectators or beneficiaries of our offers and opportunities that we are often proud to have provided.

Our role is to be creators and defenders of the conditions and initiatives that facilitate the path and establish spaces for migrants and refugees to overcome the challenges associated with rebuilding their lives and envision a horizon of dignity for their future. It is about implementing actions that value, above all, the abilities, richness, and talents of these individuals, which must be fully recognized and integrated into the receiving society.

A perspective that we cannot consider secondary or simply as a lesser value is cultural integration. The cultural integration of migrants and refugees should not be underestimated, as it represents an opportunity to enrich both the host community and the migrants themselves. This interaction strengthens the community, promoting greater participation and enrichment for all its members.

3 Animation and coordination of pastoral care with migrants/refugees

“Scalabrinian missionariness is characterized as a specific and specialized pastoral care, dialogical and communicational, organically integrated into the ordinary pastoral care of the local Church.”

This perspective in our apostolic mission guidelines is “centered on the specifically pastoral dimension, which includes all MSCS actions in the different services developed in the local Churches, Episcopal Conferences, and ecclesial organizations that advise, animate, raise awareness, coordinate, and empower ecclesial actors on the phenomena and challenges of different categories of mobile individuals and groups.”

Pastoral service to people on the move must be conceived in an integral manner as it concerns all phases of the migration journey: departure, transit, arrival, and return. The purpose is to manifest the loving care and saving power of the Trinitarian God towards the human person and all creation.

4 A prioritized focus on women, children, and situations of greater vulnerability

“A prioritized focus on women, girls, and children in general provides a fundamental element in the ability to address and respond to the specific demands or challenges faced by these individuals. This involves initiatives of specialized attention through the recognition of the risks and threats they

face, as well as the opportunities and potentialities to which they do not have access.”

I highlight our attention to the protection of migrants and refugees, with a special focus on safeguarding women, children, the elderly, the sick, and the LGBTQIA+ population, recognized as particularly vulnerable in migratory contexts. This approach reflects an unequivocal commitment to promoting inclusion and a sensitive understanding of the diverse needs of these groups within the migrant population.

While there are different ways to support the migrant population, all efforts should be anchored in the same charism, and I emphasize the enriching collaboration among different institutes. In addition to individual work, the convergence of efforts towards common positions reinforces unity as a religious family dedicated to serving migrants and refugees, emphasizing that, despite different paths, the interconnection between institutes is vital to maintain a strong network of support and assistance to migrants and refugees in search of welcome and solidarity.

5 The perspective of strengthening the protagonism and leadership of migrants and refugees

We often hear from social actors, even those most sensitive to the cause of migrants and refugees, comments that emphasize many situations of vulnerability affecting the mobile population. We may not realize it, but the insistence on highlighting the problems and difficulties experienced by this population ends up fueling a prejudiced and stereotyped view that migrants and refugees are dependent, incapable, “poor,” passive and docile victims, when they are not considered responsible for having taken the path of migration instead of facing difficulties in their own land.

Objectively, we are not exaggerating when we say that the courage to leave, even in the midst of all the uncertainties and difficulties that can be foreseen or imagined, strongly nurtures the hope of better days for the migrant who departs. They aspire to be the protagonist of their life, their story, capable of overcoming anything that may hinder them in their quest for a better life and conditions for themselves and their families. They reject the idea or condition of being a failure or someone incapable of succeeding. Instead, they are individuals capable of leading the path to reconstruct their lives, even if they are rising from the ashes.

From this perspective, what we want to emphasize is that this should not be our ideal scenario or our motivation for the mission in the world. On the contrary, our perspective is to recognize the leading role of migrants and refugees and to develop conditions, provide opportunities, and advocate

for public policies that foster the development of their talents, capabilities, courage, and audacity. This population, far from being dependent, has the ability to reinvent themselves, to reassemble even in an adverse and critical society. They are not dependents, but rather teachers who challenge us to provide coherent socio-pastoral responses that promote their creative and transformative potential.

6 Training and Awareness

In our mandate, we also carry out actions through training, participation, and involvement of many individuals and organizations in the cause of human mobility, within the Church and in society. These activities, programs, and projects often involve partnerships with migrant and refugee organizations, civil society organizations, and governmental organizations that have the potential or opportunity to make a difference in the lives and trajectories of migrants or refugees, as well as in the building of more humane, intercultural, and humanizing interpersonal relationships for everyone.

Through training and awareness, migrants and those seeking refuge are valued, strengthened in their lives and future projects, and their agency is preserved and promoted. Schools and hospitals under MSCS management play a leading role in internal and external training and awareness efforts for the promotion of dignified lives for migrants and refugees, as well as intercultural coexistence in the contexts where they operate.

7 The Importance of Networking and Advocacy

From a Scalabrinian perspective, advocacy in the cause of migration and refuge involves combating human trafficking and exploitation of individuals who, for various reasons or as victims of injustices and human abuses, are forced to migrate in search of safety and protection in foreign lands.

This action is characterized by its cross-cutting nature, encompassing different approaches to addressing the challenges from the various perspectives that the Scalabrinian mission aims to respond to. It is an action that, in collaboration with other organizations and influential forces in society, seeks to contribute to the processes of formulating public policies and aims at defining strategies and priorities at the micro and macrostructural levels, both in society, governments, and within the ecclesiastical context.

It is worth highlighting here the importance of influencing different spaces of policy formulation and decision-making, in the sense that while we defend the right to migrate, we also recognize that the right not to

migrate is equally important and should be proportionally upheld as a good and a right that the State is responsible for guaranteeing. It is not an exaggeration to say that, from the Scalabrinian perspective, our mission does not allow us to disregard the role of advocacy, especially in the current world where proposals and attitudes contrary to the protection of human beings, dehumanizing attitudes, and human rights violations are increasing.

Acting in collaboration and networking, together with migrants and refugees themselves, is, in a way, a more promising strategy to optimize and respond to the mission of influencing governments to adopt public policies that are favorable to the legal and social protection of people in mobility, their integration, and the recognition of their potential as an opportunity for humanity.

8 A Transversal Axis - Vocational Animation

We are in the process of building a missionary vocational culture within the Congregation and the Church, embracing vocational animation as a way of life. Thus, vocational animation becomes a vital process, based on the dynamism it generates and arouses in communities. Therefore, “without a vocational consciousness,” the Congregation “will not have the missionary vigor it needs.”

The proposal is to “encourage and intensify the presence of Scalabrinian sisters among young people, as well as to awaken vocations in all areas of the mission.” Placing ourselves in service to life, by vocation, accompanying young people to build and solidify their life projects, focusing on essential dimensions:

- Engagement with young people and open communities to welcome them
- Participation of laypeople, migrants, and refugees
- Maximizing opportunities for encounter through social networks
- Organizing as a Scalabrinian family for vocational animation

9 In conclusion - Dreaming as a Scalabrinian Family

I would like to emphasize that all perspectives of the Scalabrinian Mission should always be open to the challenges of the present, such as current migrations caused by ecological disasters, wars, etc.

Different paths, different contributions, different services, different gifts, but within the same charism. Therefore, in addition to the specific work of each Institute, we carry out a set of common positions where

efforts converge, integrate, and complement each other. Both should never overlook the fact that we are part of the same religious family, a family established in memory of Scalabrini, Mother Assunta, José Marchetti, and dedicated to working with migrants and refugees.

On the other hand, while it is true that our paths lead us in different directions, it is also true that there are points of convergence, places where we can exchange different experiences. Meetings, seminars, pilgrimages, shared activities, and many other initiatives help us stay connected. The same charism that leads us to respond in different directions is what calls us to encounter, reconnect, and exchange knowledge and experiences. In one way or another, we form a broad network that requires connecting cables to meet the needs of migrants and refugees. However, the question always arises: How can we concretize joint mission initiatives with migrants and refugees? What should we do to go beyond our institutional responses?

II. BUILDING A MSCS VOLUNTEER POLICY

1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MSCS TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONGREGATIONAL POLICIES ON INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

*Igor Borges Cunha**
*Tuila Botega***

Introduction

This text aims to present the main contributions of the study on international volunteering being conducted by the Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios - CSEM for the process of reflection and policymaking within the Congregation on the subject.

We begin with a brief contextualization and systematization of the research efforts undertaken from 2020 to the present and how this has provided important elements for analysis and learning from current practices and accumulated experiences. This serves as the starting point for proposing common actions within the congregation in the field of international volunteering.

The second section of the text discusses how volunteers can be an important asset for the MSCS missions and also their potential to be multipliers of values, charisma, and the promotion of the rights of migrants/refugees even after their volunteering experiences.

In a global context of development and opportunity inequalities, the potential for enhancing South-South collaboration in the volunteer program within the International Volunteer Program of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – Scalabrinians, referred to in

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the study by its initials in Portuguese PVIS, is highlighted in the third part of the text.

The reading concludes with a synthesis of the elements from the study that can contribute to and support the construction of the volunteer policies of the MSCS Congregation, along with our final considerations.

Volunteering: an ongoing study

The topic of international volunteering was incorporated into the program of the Scalabrinian Centre for Migration Studies - CSEM in 2020. At this initial moment, in response to a request from the General Animation of the Apostolate of the General Government, a virtual consultation was conducted from July 1 to August 31, 2020, with 24 MSCS units with the objective of gathering information about existing experiences with national and international volunteering, the profile of the missions and volunteers, and the demands and future expectations on the subject, highlighting some elements such as: the number of volunteers they planned to request at that time, the profile of the activities they performed, the required qualifications, the working hours, and other issues.

Units located in Brazil (5), Mexico (2), Ecuador, and Paraguay participated in the mapping; in the Dominican Republic, Italy (3), Costa Rica, France, South Africa, and Argentina; and in Mozambique and Honduras. All the institutions/missions/projects were structures owned by the Congregation that carried out direct activities with the migrant and refugee population. The survey mentioned some partnerships with volunteer institutions, such as: FOCSIV (Federazione degli Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario) and AGAPE (Italy); Peace Corps; KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency); Weltwärts and Weltkirche - Diocese of Stuttgart/Rottenburg (Germany) (CSEM, 2020).

This initial collection of information and experiences from the missions about volunteering provided important elements for the beginning of the construction of a congregational policy on the topic, among which the following stand out:

1. The importance that volunteers assume as human resources in the MSCS.
2. The heterogeneity of profiles of the MSCS missions/institutions/projects; and, consequently, a variety of institutional demands and work practices related to volunteers.
3. A predominance of practices centred on the personal and institutional capitals of the MSCS missions regarding the selection and management of work with volunteers.

As a result of the elements, it was possible to infer the importance and the need to establish common congregational standards on volunteering that are sensitive to the needs and diversity of the volunteers, as well as the institutions and places where they are located. These and other elements reinforced the need for the Congregation to consider this area of work and think about strategies to implement a broader international volunteering project. This is the current challenge to which the Congregation wants to respond: to establish and implement common congregational parameters for working with volunteers.

In 2023, continuing with the process of advising the General Government and deepening the reflection, a new round of data and experience collection on volunteering was carried out. This time, a series of qualitative interviews were conducted with institutions/missions/projects, some of which had partnerships with other volunteer institutions and others that were already enrolled in the pilot project with the Scalabrinian Foundation. The objective was to gather elements of the current practice: selection criteria, welcoming of volunteers, and other important aspects of the work, as well as to understand the history of each mission and the elements that could support the construction of this congregational volunteering policy.

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted during the months of July and August 2023, with MSCS institutions experienced in working with national and international volunteers from the following countries: Brazil (2), Dominican Republic, Mexico (2), Honduras, South Africa, Mozambique, Bolivia, and Angola. Additionally, meetings were held with stakeholders and interveners in the study. Representatives from the Scalabrinian Foundation, the General Government of the MSCS Congregation, and Weltkirche were also included in the meetings with stakeholders and interveners in the study.

The data collection stages carried out in 2020 and 2023 aimed to gather elements, reflections, and data from concrete experiences, identifying replicable best practices and significant challenges that must be considered for congregational reflection and the process of building and decision-making on the subject. This included drawing attention to the specificity of certain contexts and realities in which the missions are inserted and how this can influence and should be considered when formulating a broader policy.

In the following sections, the main reflections and theoretical and practical contributions of the study will be presented with the aim of contributing to the reflection on congregational volunteer policies.

The value of volunteering: significant contributions to the MSCS mission

It is widely accepted that the term “voluntary action” identifies a particular type of social action and is often characterized by its gratuitousness, meaning without an employment relationship and without financial reward in the form of a salary, only with allowances for housing expenses, meal supplies, transportation, and health insurance. In fact, these types of contributions are often considered good practices, as they make volunteer opportunities more accessible and inclusive.

However, the aim of voluntary action is indeed to produce exclusive benefits for individuals clearly distinct from those who perform the action, setting itself up as a service or distribution of goods for others, with the purpose of promoting the common good. It should benefit directly or indirectly people outside the family or household, although the volunteer typically also benefits from the experience. In many cultures, a volunteer is often described as someone who works for the welfare of the community (CHINMAN and WANDERSMAN, 1999).¹

The study emphasizes that these concepts of volunteering and humanitarian assistance must be reflected upon to consider the volunteer as a human being who is not only dedicating themselves integrally and freely but is also immersed in a culture and customs very different from their own. Processes should be attentive to the different perspectives, aspirations, and participation of each volunteer in their specific contexts. Considering this scope of unpaid labour activity that seeks to generate positive impacts in local communities, the issue of social and humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees becomes intertwined. On one hand, volunteers are involved and motivated in some way to act in this area, and on the other hand, the MSCS missions and projects benefit from this contribution of human resources, not to mention the wealth of exchange that this experience can provide for both parties and the people served. Moreover, international volunteers can adhere to the values and charisma of the MSCS Congregation.

It is important to understand that volunteers contribute significantly to the projects developed in the MSCS missions. The emphasis is on the diversity that each volunteer brings, offering unique and diverse perspectives that add and contribute to meeting the specific needs identified by each institution. In various interviews with MSCS institutions, the ability

¹ CHINMAN, M. J., & WANDERSMAN, A. (1999). The Benefits and Costs of Volunteering in Community Organizations: Review and Practical Implications. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 28(1), 46–64.

of volunteers to provide an alternative and innovative approach to the activities carried out is highlighted.

International volunteering is a valuable source of diverse ideas and perspectives, enriching the work of the Scalabrinian Sisters. Collaboration with foreign volunteers is not limited only to practical tasks; many of them, through their own initiatives, play a fundamental role in strengthening actions, contributing to institutional strengthening.

This exchange of knowledge also extends to the ability to offer training opportunities for local employees, promoting continuous professional development.

An example of the formation of strategic partnerships occurred at the MSCS institution in the Dominican Republic, ASCALA. The collaboration between volunteers and a local university resulted in raising awareness among future doctors about migration issues and the prevention of health problems in communities. This highlights how volunteering can be enhanced through strategic collaborations, from an open space to ideas that have the potential to concretely impact the lives of migrants and refugees innovatively.

Another crucial aspect highlighted in the study is understanding volunteers as agents who not only contribute but also learn, immersed in a different culture and facing different challenges. This process not only raises awareness about the social issues faced by the MSCS institutions and the migration cause but also takes these discussions to other places, especially their places of origin, after the volunteering experience.

After their travel experiences, volunteers have the potential to remain involved in the Scalabrinian charisma. This continuity of participation is valuable as it goes beyond the proposed service period, establishing lasting connections and contributing to the construction of an operational and committed lay movement.

The importance of fostering and promoting the commitment of volunteers after their experiences end is highlighted as a relevant strategy. Encouraging volunteers to share their experiences in their local communities aligns with the objectives of the Congregation to amplify the voice in favor of migrants and refugees. Once they return, volunteers can engage in activities related to the issues they worked on, contributing to increased awareness and political actions in their own countries and communities. This commitment can yield lasting fruits, mobilizing committed and sensitive people to the causes in favor of migrant rights.

The ongoing dedication of these volunteers is an asset for the Scalabrinian Sisters, enriching their activities and enabling them to continue

offering socio-pastoral and humanitarian assistance to those most in need. Support for them to remain involved in political actions, workshops, and sustainability-related activities is highlighted to mobilize these committed agents for future collaborations.

Moreover, this type of contribution after the international experience promotes the continuous personal and professional development of volunteers, stimulating reflection on their experiences, the challenges faced, and the learnings acquired. This can be done through participation in local projects in support of the migrant cause, writing reports for publications, giving presentations and group discussions to raise awareness locally, sharing the actions of the mission they were involved in with the media or other organizations aligned with the cause, or through other creative ways to replicate the awareness they gained from their practical experiences.

The valorisation of the work from and for the Global South

The theme of valorising South-South collaboration in the PVIS is an important element to highlight. This valorisation represents a significant opportunity to promote empowerment and awareness of the cause of migrants and refugees to professional actors from the Global South.

This would not only diversify participation in the PVIS but also contribute to the equity and inclusion of historically marginalized and neglected countries in terms of training opportunities, professionalization, and leadership of their people. By involving volunteers from the Global South in humanitarian, social, and pastoral initiatives of the Congregation, the PVIS becomes a truly global collaboration space, where different perspectives, experiences, and skills can be shared and valued.

An example of a successful experience in valorising volunteers from the South is that of the João Batista Scalabrini Centre, which participates in a project that involves the exchange of young Mozambicans to work as volunteers in Germany, and young Germans to work as volunteers in Mozambique. This experience demystifies the narrative that only countries of the Global North (considered developed) are the providers of volunteers for the South. On the contrary, it offers opportunities for the Mozambican beneficiaries of the Scalabrini Centre to have an international volunteering experience.

South-South collaboration strengthens not only the PVIS but also the communities served by the institutions of the Congregation. By bringing a variety of knowledge and experiences to the program, volunteers from the Global South enrich practices and approaches, promoting a more holistic understanding of the issues faced by migrant and refugee populations.

Furthermore, this collaboration strengthens ties between nations of the Global South, promoting cultural exchange, the sharing of good practices, and solidarity among countries in similar situations. By fostering and facilitating the participation of volunteers from all continents, the PVIS becomes a truly inclusive and transformative platform, where true global cooperation is celebrated and valued as an essential means to achieve the Program's objectives.

Considering this, it is important to reflect on ways in which the International Volunteer Program of the Scalabrinian Sisters can incorporate this reflection when defining international volunteering policies.

Subsidies for the construction of a congregational volunteer program

Establishing an international volunteer program or policy is a complex endeavour with various challenges, which may involve institutional aspects, management, and integration of human resources, issues related to adapting to local culture and context, personal safety, legal aspects, and discrimination, depending on the legislation of each country; and logistical aspects related to housing, independence, and personal space.

The study shows that the sisters recognize the complexity and challenges involved, but a positive vision of the international volunteer program prevails. There is a commitment and dedication to working together to overcome these challenges, ensuring that international volunteering is an enriching experience for both volunteers and receiving institutions, and effectively contributes to the Scalabrinian mission worldwide.

Below are the main recommendations on the subject, based on the data collected in the ongoing study:

- a) The study highlights the importance of clearly defining the nature of volunteering, aligning expectations from the beginning of the process. The sisters recognize that the expectations of international volunteers can vary and include elements related to cultural experience and life in another country. There is a concern to establish a transparent selection process, with objective information and agreements, increasingly differentiating from practices based on personal networks.
- b) It is understood that there is potential, from a strategic point of view in the management of international volunteering, in the possibility of unifying documents related to international volunteering processes, such as a code of conduct and admission documents. This would allow volunteers to recognize a common set of

guidelines applicable to all missions of the Congregation. This uniformity would simplify the training and transition of volunteers between different missions, maintaining a consistent standard of responsibility and commitment throughout their volunteering.

- c) It is important, to facilitate the admission and adaptation process of volunteers, to clearly define the profile of each role for future volunteers, as well as the nature of each institution, whether it be social, pastoral, or both. Likewise, if the institution offers pastoral, social, and/or humanitarian services. This will ensure compatibility between the expectations and needs of the institutions.
- d) In institutions with a pastoral or socio-pastoral profile, it is suggested to strengthen dialogue and mystic practices to facilitate the integration of volunteers into activities with religious elements, while the inclusion of moments of spirituality is considered essential to strengthen bonds among everyone (volunteers, collaborators, and beneficiaries). Inclusive practices emerge as fundamental strategies to harmonize religious diversity, valuing the contribution of international volunteers in the missions of the Scalabrinian Sisters.
- e) The importance of welcoming international volunteers in their various forms from the initial moments is also highlighted, as this positively influences their experience and motivation. From airport reception to welcome meetings, effective integration is vital to establish a pleasant work environment. Institutional management plays an essential role in supporting volunteers' adaptation to local conditions, considering cultural differences. A flexible approach could ensure a positive experience. Constant monitoring and open communication also contribute to the success of the volunteer program
- f) The study shows that the development and management of volunteer projects are fundamental aspects of the PVIS. The complexity varies, highlighting the need for a well-structured and planned process, considering key data such as the location of the project, accommodation, transportation, and resource management, to make the project development process easier for each institution.
- g) The debate about volunteer housing emphasizes the importance of establishing clear boundaries for healthy relationships, especially when sharing space with the sisters. The study suggests incorporating reflections on housing into the training of PVIS

institutions. Housing conditions have a significant impact on the mental health and autonomy of volunteers, especially those with different religious habits. It is crucial to provide logistics that allow for independence, defined leisure times, and housing outside of the workplace

8. With an effective impact assessment, not only during the volunteering period but also taking advantage of the moment when they return to their home countries, the Volunteer Program will also benefit by identifying areas that need improvement and areas that were very successful, adapting and improving practices as necessary. By adopting these guidelines, the International Volunteer Program of the Scalabrinian Sisters can become a powerful source of positive impact for all involved: volunteers and their home communities, the communities directly served during the volunteering period, and equally, the Congregation of the Scalabrinian Sisters.

Final Considerations

The study on volunteering is carried out simultaneously with the implementation process of the Pilot Project/PVIS and the reflection and formulation of congregational policies on the subject. This represents a unique opportunity to gather data and experiences while volunteers and missions are involved in the process. This has great potential as it allows policy formulation and decision-making processes to be based on ongoing positive practices and experiences, as well as consideration of the specific challenges faced. It is a constructive process in which each involved party – the CSEM, the MSCS missions and projects, the volunteers, and the General Government– articulate and mutually strengthen their performance.

In the construction of congregational volunteering policies, it is important to consider the views and analyses of local realities, to learn from current practices and accumulated experience to avoid what Rose Jaji (2022) highlights for the African context but which applies to several other realities of the Global South, which is the production of knowledge devoid of local perspectives, so that cultures are interpreted outside their own frames of reference and worldviews, especially in light of anthropology's involvement with colonialism (JAJI, 2022).

Furthermore, it is vital to establish equitable partnerships with local organizations and actors that have an approach in volunteer actions in the regions of the Global South. This implies recognizing and valuing the perspectives and worldviews of local communities, as well as fostering the

active participation of members of these communities in defining research agendas, program design, and results evaluation. Furthermore, it is essential to establish equitable partnerships with local organizations and community leaders to ensure that interventions are culturally sensitive, contextually relevant, and empowering for migrant populations.

2 VOLUNTEERING AS A POLITICAL CHOICE IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

*Gaia Mormina**

Introduction

Volunteering is defined as “the voluntary and unpaid provision of one’s own work and resources for the benefit of people who are in serious need and have an urgent and absolute need for help and assistance, whether to deal with occasional emergencies or as an ongoing service.” Volunteering began as a spontaneous and altruistic gesture aimed at helping others without any personal benefit, an act of charity and generosity that has an ancient history, common to different cultures and eras. In Jewish culture, “*tzedakah*” (charity, used today with different meanings) is a moral norm, one of the three norms capable of saving the soul by annulling a “heavenly decree.” One of the five pillars of Islamic culture, on the other hand, is “*zakat*” (almsgiving), which consists of giving a portion of what one has for the common good, which translates into an ethical duty.

Pope Francis said during an audience on August 21, 2019: “If you want to know if you are a good Christian, you must pray, reconcile yourself, but the sign that your heart has been converted is when conversion reaches your pockets. That’s where you see if someone helps the poorest. When conversion reaches that point, you can be sure it’s a true conversion, but if it remains in words, it’s not a good conversion. The Eucharistic life, prayers, the preaching of the Apostles, and the experience of communion make believers a multitude of people who have one heart and one soul, and who do not consider what they possess as their own but share everything in common to help each other be generous and not stingy.”

In my opinion, this passage is very interesting because, starting from a concept of economic, material charity, the Holy Father takes the reflection to another concept: responsible altruism.

* Graduate in European and non-European languages and cultures, with a master’s degree in economics and Cooperative Business Management. She is the secretary general of the Scalabrinian Foundation, responsible for international cooperation and volunteer projects, which operates in 10 countries around the world in support of 13 organizations of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters.

Generous and conscious humanity makes the Christian community grow, understood here as “*koinonia*,” a multitude of people who have one heart and one soul. I believe it is a universally shared concept, regardless of individual belief.

In the aftermath of World War II, thanks in part to experiences such as the Red Cross and, more commonly, the commitment of civil society to post-war reconstruction, the concept of volunteering has shifted from philanthropy to caring for others, from charity to civic engagement. Today, in some democratic countries, volunteering is in fact an alternative to compulsory military service.

Another historical definition, although in my current opinion, states: “Volunteering is the voluntary provision of work, free or semi-free, carried out with the aim of acquiring the necessary practical experience to perform a professional activity or job, and the corresponding qualification.”

The volunteer experiences organized by the Scalabrinian Foundation (2022/2024) do not differ from this, but rather bring these three key definitions to life:

- Volunteering as a free and altruistic act of helping others.
- Volunteering as a concrete gesture of community growth.
- Volunteering as an enriching experience on a personal and professional level.

The Praxis

The General Chapter of the Congregation has decided to organize volunteering as a permanent and scheduled activity. At the Scalabrinian Foundation, over two years of work, we have initiated three different volunteer experiences: Solidarity volunteering: a direct experience in the field in which people aged 18 and over dedicate 2 to 4 hours of their time each week to helping migrants and refugees, promoting inclusion. The activities carried out include education, humanitarian protection, and local cooperation.

Curricular volunteering: a program carried out in collaboration with some universities that allows students to complete 50 to 100 hours of volunteering in exchange for educational recognition that allows them to advance in their studies. Employment sectors include communication, design, and psychological listening.

Universal Civil Service (SCU): a program run by Italy’s Department of Youth Policies that involves a period of volunteer work in Italy or abroad lasting 10 to 12 months. Young people aged 18 to 28 work five hours

a day and receive financial compensation from the Italian government. If they are abroad, they also receive accommodation and food. Employment sectors include education, legal guidance, communication, research, and humanitarian protection.

Approximately thirty volunteers are accepted each year, more than double the number selected. Each program has a different duration and monitoring tools.

The election

Determining how motivated a person is in just a few interviews is not easy. At the Foundation, candidates are sent to two interviews, the first dedicated to getting to know each other and assessing their motivation to help others, and the second designed to assess their suitability for the project.

Why do people choose to do volunteer work in a depersonalized society? During the interviews, when asked “why have you decided to do volunteer work?”, a recurring answer is “I want to do something for others,” perhaps followed by a personal explanation about their own past. Altruism among candidates is evident, although this answer often provokes sincere doubt in the mind of the person on the other side of the chair: “How?”

The altruistic desire to help in vulnerable contexts is a good starting point, but being willing to help others is not an impulse, but rather a thoughtful exercise that involves different sensitivities, reflections, skills, experiences, and objectives. Those who work with migrants and refugees know this very well. Therefore, if we remember the words of Pope Francis, being altruistic is easy, but being responsible when being altruistic is another matter. Doing something for others is sacred, but it is the way we do it that sets us apart. Furthermore, the Christian “becoming neighbor” does not mean either annihilating oneself in the name of the other or oppressing the other with our love, but rather empathizing, listening, understanding, and helping according to the needs of the other at that moment, even if you disagree.

It is impossible to determine precisely how much a young volunteer is aware of this at the beginning of their experience.

Volunteers are selected based on different criteria, depending on the experiences and needs of the projects. However, a positive assessment of the volunteers’ motivation to help others is essential for a successful selection. Our goal is to select people who are willing to commit themselves and who, when faced with difficulties, seek to balance their personal motivation with the challenges they will face alongside the migrants and the project team. A

young person whose motivation for solidarity (that desire to be a neighbor) is genuine and sincere will have:

- The ability to understand projects in their entirety: if a volunteer is highly motivated, every activity they carry out in the project will be useful for understanding the sisters' method of intervention.
- Openness to new opportunities for growth and learning: a motivated volunteer is more willing to learn about and experience different activities, enriching their professional and cultural background.
- A motivated volunteer can reduce prejudices and engage in dialogue with the complexity of the world, further valuing their social role in serving the most vulnerable.
- The ability to mediate in conflict situations: if a motivated volunteer does not feel comfortable with the experience, they can still express any difficulties and, above all, find even more positive solutions.

The commitment

Volunteer projects carried out in the volunteer's country of origin can be experienced with greater flexibility and serenity. If a volunteer is unable or unwilling to continue their service, they can do so and return to the comfort zone they came from, reconsider after a while, choose to commit to another activity, or propose themselves at a different point in their journey, and they will still be welcome.

The Foundation's commitment to volunteers sent abroad is different, as the Universal Civil Service (SCU) experience involves several actors: institutions, proposing NGOs, the Foundation, the MSCS Congregation, participating organizations abroad, embassies, suppliers, and professionals, each with different governance policies, rules, and restrictions. In this case, the ability to mediate between the different actors is fundamental to the success of the experience, as is the motivation of the young people selected.

When a volunteer says that volunteering abroad is "all-encompassing," they are not only referring to living in another culture, but also to the responsibility that the volunteer program abroad requires in terms of networking, training, planning, and organizing activities. As a strategy to reduce potential conflicts, we have found that participation is useful in developing the responsibility. Participation alleviates impatience about departure due to visas, regulations, and the development deadlines of the different projects (both in Italy and abroad) and allows us to work together

toward a common goal: living a community experience. The work prior to departure has its own pace, but the real “departure” occurs on site.

Following the verification interviews (monthly meetings with young people, lay people, and religious), the following expectations emerged:

Volunteers

- **Travel:** the desire to discover different places and cultures is recurrent, although not always compatible with the territories in which we operate.
- **Gain direct experience with migrants:** some of the volunteers employed have never participated in an immersive activity serving migrants and refugees and choose the Foundation precisely for the purpose of gaining this experience.
- **Gaining gender-related experience:** 90% of applicants are women, and the vast majority express an interest in working to defend women’s rights.
- **Being employed in the professional sector in which they are experts:** although not all of them have consolidated professional experience (many are recent graduates), young people want to enrich their professional experience.
- **To grow:** young people hope that the experience of separation will enrich their personal growth.

Team

Find qualified people: young people who, motivated by altruism, can help projects and activities grow by putting their knowledge and experience at the service of others.

Find people who are aware of the cultural and religious context in which they will be working: young people who know how to respect the rules of a particular sociocultural context, often critical, and of the community environment in which they operate.

Find people who are available: young people whose availability is not rigid, who do not have restrictive dietary preferences, and who already have experience living with others (for abroad).

Difficulties

Although all volunteers report positive experiences of being welcomed by the team, during the interviews some difficulties also emerged that are important to mention in order to enrich the present reflection: Discrepancy

between the project and the activities carried out: the young people report carrying out activities that are not entirely in line with what they read or agreed to.

Discrepancy between professional experience and the service provided: the young people consider that they could be more useful if they were employed in activities in line with their curriculum vitae.

The professional experience didn't match the service provided: the young people felt they could be more useful if they were employed in activities that matched their CVs.

Difficulties in relating to the communities in the area where the project is being carried out: some report feeling isolated from the sociocultural life of the city due to the distance of some locations from urban centers, or due to a strong cultural machismo that limits them in their social life, or due to the level of crime in the area.

Logistical difficulties: travel, cohabitation, food.

Need for distance: young people express the need to "disconnect" from the community experience and return to their own routine, which varies from person to person and is necessary to process the experience at their own pace (and habits?).

Reflection It is common for me to interact with volunteers from around the world, and when I do, I sense that behind every minor challenge there is something more. I have also had the pleasure of meeting, growing, and working with volunteers who, like me, began their journey with uncertainty and now lead NGOs or international programs.

I have concluded that individual and relationship challenges are a stimulus for growth both for the volunteer and for the team that welcomes them, because it builds the Koinonia mentioned above. and I have concluded that individual and relational difficulties are a stimulus for growth both for the volunteer and for the team that welcomes them, because it builds the Koinonia in a completely new way. Young people express opinions and ideas that are often interesting and can also improve intervention strategies, and this can sometimes destabilize the local team.

The overlap between the project and professional experiences is an excellent starting point for reflecting on the expectations of volunteers and the enthusiastic desire for growth that they bring with them. A desire that sometimes cannot wait, that wants to act, that wants, as I say, to "go into fifth gear," but which, if properly guided, benefits everyone.

If priority is given to professionalizing the experience—I am looking for professional volunteers, I am looking for a volunteer who is an expert in their profession—I wonder how much space is left for the Good Samaritan's

“neighbor.” A space where altruism also allows us to discover other skills whose altruistic potential is unknown, a space where it is also possible to improve interventions, making them more current or simply more creative.

Offering a decisive response to the needs of coexistence, such as food or the availability of socialization spaces according to the expectations (customs?) of everyone sometimes even to speed up adaptation times can become a missed opportunity for community growth.

It is a fundamental part of our mission to support human rights and to encourage people to act. I therefore wonder to what extent the need to “disconnect”—as reported by volunteers abroad—that is, to limit personal space and time, is an enriching and useful choice for understanding the experience of people on the move, or rather a way of escaping a situation that is sometimes difficult to understand because it is unjust. While respecting each person’s time and space, it is necessary to accompany young people in leaving their comfort zone to get to know others, precisely where the rights of their neighbors are denied. This activates the responsible altruism that makes communities united and stronger.

Internal reflection is still ongoing. The Scalabrinian Foundation has set up a volunteer program to improve interventions and stimulate reflection on the issue. The richness of diversity is a constant challenge for the Scalabrinian family, which we have accepted to face, and which presents itself in ever-changing contexts, even in areas that are far removed from direct intervention in favor of people on the move, such as volunteering.

3 EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

*Cristopher Montenegro**

Greetings, everyone. It is a real honor to be here and share with you my experience as an International Volunteer. Before I begin, it is important to highlight the importance of volunteering and how each of us can contribute significantly to society. As the saying goes, “unity is strength,” and with that in mind, I decided to immerse myself completely in the world of volunteering.

I was born in Quito and spent part of my childhood in Italy due to family matters, which gave me a unique perspective on the world and the importance of serving others.

The commitment I made to volunteering grew stronger during my years in Quito, where I was deeply involved in my school’s youth ministry and other community projects. Every experience, from simple tasks like washing dishes to bringing Christmas to children in remote areas, was a life lesson. I especially remember a dark night during a mission at Holy Week, when after getting lost, the generosity of a stranger offered us shelter in his home, reminding me of the importance of keeping faith in difficult times.

What really attracted me to volunteering was the deep satisfaction I felt after helping someone. I learned that true wealth does not lie in material things, but in smiles and shared joy. And those values of love, empathy, and respect are what guide me in this noble endeavor.

My first international volunteering experience was in 2015 in Mérida, Venezuela, with a European Union project. I worked for five weeks with children from a marginalized neighborhood in a vacation school project. At first, I had many doubts about what my experience would be like, but in the end, it was an experience that enriched me greatly and allowed me to learn about a new reality.

* Born in Quito (Ecuador), he lives in Italy but is currently in São Paulo for a year of international volunteer work in Brazil. He has a degree in Political Science.

I want to emphasize the importance of following our principles and being proactive in our actions, even if it means going against the grain. We all have the power to positively influence the lives of others.

Now, as I reflect on my current experience in International Volunteering, I would like to share how this new stage has impacted my life. From October 2023 to the present day, I have carried out a series of activities as part of the project I am involved in with the Universal Civil Service. I began by participating in a training course on Blessed Mother Assunta Marchetti, which allowed me to learn more about her history and mission.

After receiving specific training, I began to actively collaborate with the “Proyecto Convivir” (Living Together Project) at Casa Madre Assunta Marchetti, which provides support to 86 children in the community through healthy meals and cultural activities. We also strive to organize educational activities for the children, recognizing their value for their learning and growth.

In my day-to-day work, I spend time working with children, teaching them languages, and collaborating closely with other volunteers and local workers to ensure their well-being and the success of the Volunteer Program.

A typical day begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m., when the children return home. The day is divided into two groups: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The children arrive at 8:00 a.m., have their morning coffee, and then we go to the chapel to give thanks to the Lord and pray for a good day.

The activities at the Casa are diverse. The children participate in music, art therapy, crafts, mosaic, and other workshops. They also receive Italian lessons, and we are about to introduce Spanish courses for a small group of interested children.

After the activities, it is time for lunch, where the children can eat healthily with a variety of food options, designed in conjunction with a nutritionist to provide them with a balanced diet.

To finish with the morning group, their parents arrive at noon to take them to school. In the afternoon, the children leave school and participate in the same activities. When they arrive, they have lunch and, before going home, they have their afternoon coffee.

Five months have now passed, and I feel that I have learned a great deal. I am quite satisfied with all the work I have done so far, and I believe that I will remember this year of international volunteering with great fondness.

The community that has been created at Casa Madre Assunta is unique; I have met many people, and, above all, I have learned the names of each of the 86 children who live in the house.

I have grown very fond of them, and they have taught me many things. When the time comes to end my year of International Volunteering, I know I will miss everyone in this beautiful house.

I would like to share a quote from Mother Assunta Marchetti: "Without sacrifice, you cannot do good to your neighbor." This phrase sums up the essence of volunteering: it means giving your all for the well-being of others.

I believe that an international volunteer must possess skills such as flexibility, intercultural communication, and resilience, as working in a foreign context can present unique and unforeseen challenges. Adapting to the context and respecting the local culture are fundamental to the success of the project.

When I face difficult moments, I seek support from my network of volunteers and local workers.

In addition, I practice self-reflection and mindfulness to find solutions and maintain a positive attitude.

In conclusion, international volunteering is an enriching experience that allows us to grow as individuals and contribute positively to the world around us. I invite you to embrace this challenge with all your heart and continue working together to make the world a better place. Thank you very much!

III BUILDING A MSCS MODEL OF ITINERANT SERVICE

1 ITINERANT SERVICE REFLECTIONS ON SOME RECENT EXPERIENCES

*Roberto Marinucci**

The aim of this brief presentation is to offer some reflections on the Itinerant Service developed by the Scalabrinian Sisters in recent years. Although I have very little time, I must first highlight some methodological aspects.

1. While working at CSEM, I was informed about the Itinerant Service, which has been in existence for some time. However, I only became familiar with it when the director of CSEM asked me to help her systematize the experience. The current director asked me to continue this work, together with Carmem Lussi. We have decided to divide our work into two parts: I will work more on the historical systematization, in the sense of recording what has already been done, while Carmem will work on this and in dialogue with the Sisters, including the elements that have emerged from this round table, to develop a set of suggestions for continuing this initiative.
2. It is also important to note that my reflection focuses on three SI experiences: in Mexico (2019), on the northern and southern borders; in Italy, Ventimiglia (2019), on the border with France; and in Mozambique, in the diocese of Pemba – Cabo Delgado (2021/2022). I learned that there were also other experiences, so to speak, ‘minor’ (not inferior). But the focus is on these three experiences. At least for now.

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3. Thirdly, the information on which I base my reflections comes from the material we received at CSEM. There are about 35 text files, some of which are repeated translations. The experience for which there is the most material is that of Mexico. Together with Sister Marlene Wildner, director of CSEM, we have decided to contact some of the sisters who participated in these experiences in order to obtain more information and be able to produce a more organic and complete report. But for now, my reflections are based solely on the material we received about these three experiences.
4. Finally, I would like to emphasize that my role in this presentation is not to “evaluate” or ‘judge’ the SI, nor to “narrate” the history of these experiences, but rather to raise some issues for reflection.
5. As I am not sure whether all participants at the event are familiar with the essential characteristics of the SI, I would like to begin by presenting the PURPOSE/MISSION of the SI, its GENERAL and SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

The SI is presented as a SERVICE (in its name) and a PRESENCE, related to the adjective EVANGELICAL; the context is EMERGENCY or SITUATION OF VULNERABILITY; the target audience is MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES, with priority given to WOMEN AND CHILDREN; with regard to activities with migrants, it is worth highlighting some expressions used, such as ‘alleviating suffering’, ‘defending rights’ (ensuring respect for dignity), ‘maintaining faith’ (promoting spiritual accompaniment), ‘protecting life’ (meeting basic needs), promoting ‘a better future’. In addition to the sisters’ direct work with migrants, there are also activities at the systemic or structural level, such as ‘bringing about processes of transformation in the reception and protection of the lives of migrants and refugees’ or ‘identifying institutions’ that can be involved in the short, medium, and long term in serving the target audience.

6. After this lengthy introduction, I would first like to draw attention to an aspect that was perhaps not made very explicit in the SI Regulations, but which is strongly emphasized in the sisters’ reports: in general, the participating sisters say they felt deeply transformed by the experience. There is even talk of ‘personal conversion’. In other words, one of the main ‘results’ of the SI is the human and spiritual enrichment of the sisters. In this case, I would dare to quote the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, according to whom every educator is at the same time an educated person, and every

educated person is at the same time an educator. Similarly, every evangelizer is also evangelized, and every evangelized person is an evangelizer. In this sense, the SI can be interpreted not only as a “service” of the congregation to migrants, but also, if I may say so, as a service of migrants to the Scalabrinian Sisters. In other words, the value of the experience also lies in the congregation’s willingness to “get closer” and allow itself to be ‘transformed’ and “evangelized” by migrants.

In this sense, it is important to emphasize that the SI is not only an “approach” to an emergency—which is already a concrete and symbolic act of overcoming walls and barriers and building bridges, in the logic of Pope Francis’ “culture of encounter.” In the SI, the “approach” takes place in a context of “itinerancy,” which means ‘temporariness’ and “precariousness” on the part of the sisters: leaving their usual residence, a new climate, a new home, new food, a new language, new companions, etc. By experiencing itinerancy, the sisters end up sharing, at least in part, some of the precariousness and vulnerability that migrants experience daily in a much more intense and permanent way. It is the union between “closeness” and “itinerancy” that makes the experience so rich, not only for the personal conversion of the sisters, but also for the service they offer. As one sister says: “Being in this SI is an opportunity to grow in my vocation as a Scalabrinian missionary; the meaning of my calling and the charism of the founder is a gift to the Church.”

7. Now, about the service offered to migrants, I would like to highlight four aspects: the moment, the emergency, the partnerships, and the activities carried out.

When it comes to TIME, the sisters’ accounts differ. Some say that the time is sufficient, while others say that it could be longer (“3 months is too short”). It seems clear to me that the effectiveness of a service action—even considering the specificity of each type of service—requires knowledge of the language (or languages), culture (or cultures), and social and migratory context, a type of knowledge that can only be partially acquired from a distance, without immersion in the territory. What I mean is that all service, to be effective, requires a process of “inculturation” or adaptation, which is difficult when the period of presence is very short. It is no coincidence that one of the main difficulties identified is the ‘language barrier’. But, to further complicate the issue, another factor must be considered. One sister write: “If it is more than three months, [for] the mission it is too short, but for us sisters it is enough.” I try to interpret this statement: the SI involves an intense emotional experience of closeness and immersion in an emergency,

which is associated with a state of itinerancy, of provisionality, as we have seen. All of this inevitably generates physical and emotional “exhaustion,” which must be considered when determining the duration (time) of the Service.

The question of time is also related to another issue: when does the commitment to the YES begin and when does it end? Before the experience, there must be a period of formation and preparation (this is in the Regulations). After the preparation comes the experience. However, the time after the experience is also very important. Biblically speaking, it is the time of the Sabbath in creation. It is the time that should be used to rework the experience, to share it (“make it visible,” say the Rules) within and outside the congregation, and even to “identify institutions” (say the Rules), solidarity organizations, or funders that could get involved, which would allow the action to “continue” beyond the period of the experiences. As I said before, effective service to migrants, in such a short time and with all the difficulties of adaptation, is inevitably limited. However, this service can be much more effective after the experience. I mentioned earlier that SI generates a “human and spiritual conversion” on the part of the sisters. But it also allows for an effective and extremely valuable “knowledge” of the human and migratory reality of the place in question. In their testimonies, several sisters almost ‘diagnose’ the situation. The challenge is: how to exploit this deep ‘knowledge’ of these emergencies?

8. THE EMERGENCY. The Regulations and the sisters’ accounts highlight the emergency and vulnerability of the people encountered. The three SI experiences we are reflecting on involved immersion in different types of emergency: Ventimiglia, in Italy, is a transit point for people mainly from Africa and the Middle East who do not want to stay in Italy; a reality only analogous to that of Mexico, the northern and southern borders, with the presence, here too, of many migrants in transit, even in ‘caravans’, but from various continents, who reside temporarily in shelters and, above all, are always subjected to radical forms of violence and abuse; finally, in Mozambique, they came into contact with a resettlement of internally displaced persons, mainly children and women, victims of conflict, who are trying to rebuild their lives in total precariousness and, above all, provisionality. What I mean is that there are different types of emergencies, and not only because there are different types of migrants. In fact, an emergency can arise due to a) the large number of people in vulnerable situations (migration emergency), but also b) the limited capacity of reception

structures to cope with a situation (in this case, the emergency is in the reception system). In other words, there may be places with many people in vulnerable situations but with solid reception and protection structures, and other places where, despite the smaller number of vulnerable people, due to the absence or

Given the precarious nature of reception facilities, vulnerability is much greater. There are emergency situations that receive little publicity and are little known, which the SI could make visible, according to its own guidelines: 'give visibility' to emergencies. In summary: how are emergency situations chosen? Could an area of trafficking or people in emergency situations be considered an emergency, even in contexts with little trafficking?

9. The question of COLLABORATIONS. The decision to send sisters to a specific emergency also depends on the establishment of partnerships with institutions or organizations already present there. In the specific case of Mexico and Ventimiglia, the sisters found a significant number of formal and informal, governmental and non-governmental organizations involved. These included the Catholic Church and the Pastoral Care of Migrants, with their potential and limitations. In Mozambique, in addition to the Catholic Church and other international organizations, there was dialogue and collaboration with community leaders, sometimes even with some initial difficulties. In any case, this collaboration with other organizations is undoubtedly essential, especially for logistical reasons. However, it is a collaboration that also brings challenges, especially when partners, although committed to the promotion of human rights, do not necessarily carry out the type of service that the sisters usually do. What I mean is that there may be a diversity of priorities between the sisters and the partner institutions that can generate some friction or even a feeling of frustration on the part of the sisters. On the other hand, I found one sister's comment interesting: "the needs of the context come first, not just our goals as a congregation." Personally, I agree. But here we return to the question of temporality: only with time can we identify the real and priority needs of the context. Furthermore, what space is there for activities more specifically related to the Scalabrinian charism when the presence takes place within the activities of a partner who already has its own priorities? An example of this is the importance given to religious care in the SI's Objective and Mission ("maintaining the faith" and "spiritual

accompaniment"). This may clash, among other things, with the "non-denominational" nature of partner organizations or even other local groups.

Furthermore, when creating an alliance with another organization, we must always ask ourselves: what can the congregation really offer its partners? Which associations should be given priority, international organizations or local groups and communities? What is the relationship with pastoral organizations and dioceses of the Catholic Church?

10. Finally, one last observation about the ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT in the SI. The question is: what service are we actually going to offer in an emergency? In other words, how can we 'defend rights' or 'alleviate suffering' in concrete terms? We have already mentioned that there are services that can and should be offered after the experience (raising awareness, reporting violations, identifying institutions that could be involved in some kind of work, identifying project funders, volunteers, etc.). But what kind of service should be offered during the sisters' presence? I am aware that the answer can only be contextual, i.e., related to the characteristics of each case. As we have already said, the three experiences are very different. Mozambique, for example, is where the sisters were with a more 'stable' target audience and had more autonomy to determine an agenda for action, including activities such as self-sufficiency projects, microcredit, literacy, hygiene, documentation, specific activities with children and women, etc. On the other hand, in Ventimiglia (Italy), the sisters were faced with a large and solid network of institutions and associations, both formal and informal, working on the ground, with much less autonomy in determining an agenda, as well as the difficulty of dealing with people on the move. As I understand it, in this case the sisters often had to adapt to the activities of their partners.

In any case, in general terms, it seems to me that there are two focal points:

- to strengthen the reception and protection activities carried out *in situ*, offering and sharing personal skills and congregational competencies (in this case, this involves action with solidarity groups, especially pastoral ones);
- to be a presence of solidarity with the migrants encountered during the experience. In this case, there are various problems, such as

language, culture, religion, etc. But there is a certain unanimity among the sisters in emphasizing the theme of “presence” or “closeness,” which is expressed above all in “empathic and supportive listening,” considered a privileged means of strengthening self-esteem and alleviating some of the suffering of migrants.

In this regard, a final challenge is how to EVALUATE THE RESULTS of a SI in places of presence. Has it been worth it? Have we managed to change anything? Can we establish objective parameters, evaluation criteria? This is a challenge to reflect on, always bearing in mind that there is no way to quantify in numbers what a smile, a hug or a tender look have meant to people in situations of extreme vulnerability.

2 ITINERANT SERVICE

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

*Sr. Nyzelle Juliana Dondé, mscs**

Recalling my experience during the Itinerant Service (February to March 2019), I feel very moved to have participated so intensely and with the hope of “being” a Scalabrinian Missionary.

I will try to transcribe and share with each one of you three aspects of my experience: revisiting the initial history, how it all began; the presence of God in responding to the personal and Congregational call; and finally, as a conclusion, I will present some critical points.

1 Revisiting the beginnings of the Itinerant Service (SI-MSCS)

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Scalabrinians, after years of dreaming of realizing an initiative that had, throughout history, several attempts at some point, such as the flying team, the Mediterranean project... and finally the Itinerant Service. These initiatives had the same objective: to be present with and for migrants and refugees in emergency situations.

This action is a service, an evangelical response to the constant and diverse challenges of the migratory realities that have existed since the dawn of humanity. The issue of migration is increasingly affected by various causes and consequences that increase human rights violations and the hardening of migration policies, where migrants are increasingly exposed to endless risks.

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The Itinerant Service wants to be a sign of God's loving listening, who does not abandon strangers and takes action on their behalf, as they are God's favorites.

The first experiences took place almost simultaneously with the large migratory flows in different places. The northern region of Brazil with the arrival of Venezuelans, northern and southern Mexico in the year following the great caravan (2018) of Central Americans who set out on the route to the United States, northern Italy, and most recently Mozambique, Africa. The main activity was in favor of life, supporting the dignity of many migrant brothers and sisters.

In February 2019, we went to Ciudad Juárez, in northern Mexico, on the border with El Paso, Texas, near the Rio Grande, a scene of so many deaths as people tried to cross into the United States. Juárez was considered the most dangerous city in the world in 2012 and is one of the busiest borders in Mexico. We lived for three months in the Casa del Migrante, founded by the Scalabrinian Missionaries and coordinated by the Diocese of Ciudad Juárez.

We lived daily with a group of mostly young people. There were a few older adults. They were men, women—some pregnant—boys, girls, and teenagers who had fled violence in their countries accompanied, mostly from Central America. I heard truly disturbing stories about the reasons that forced them to leave their homes, victims of violence, abandoning everything they had built, due to various types of threats, in some cases the loss of a family member. In addition, along the way, they suffered all kinds of violations, physical and psychological abuse, theft, kidnapping, and mistreatment by immigration authorities, police, and coyotes, who demanded nearly \$10,000 to cross the border, without any guarantees.

During the months we were there, the Migrant House received approximately 400 migrants. At other times, it reached a thousand people, considering that this city had 12 other shelters, in very precarious conditions to receive migrants.

This was in a political, socio-economic, and cultural context under the Donald Trump administration, which in one way or another affected the Mesoamerican countries. His anti-immigration positions criminalize, reject, and disregard the much-needed participation of migrants in US geopolitics.

The other three months of the SI experience were spent in Tapachula, in southern Mexico, on the border with Guatemala.

As is common on borders, migrants were and continue to be victims of discrimination by local authorities. In Tapachula's central park, we saw countless times how the police destroyed documents and safe-conduct

passes confirming that migrants were passing through and registered with the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR). They rejected them, insulted them constantly, and grabbed them by force to put them in official cars, mainly at night, to detain and deport them.

We had the experience of the Inter-Congregational Community with the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Guadalupe. During the day, we lived with the migrants at the Belén Diocesan Shelter, coordinated by the Diocese of Tapachula. We organized meetings with other civil society organizations that work with migrants, with the Fray Matías Rights Center, with the Comboni missionary sisters, other shelters, and international organizations.

Today, I can see that God was bringing me closer to the people with whom, in the not-too-distant future, I would share my life and walk together. After living in Mexico, Honduras was my destination, officially transferred on December 12, 2019, at the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. So, when we arrived from the pilgrimage from the Albergue Casa Mambré to the Casa de la Morenita with the migrants, I felt confirmed in my vocation.

2 The vocational call for a congregational project

After almost 20 years of consecrated life in the Scalabrinian Congregation, I longed to live out a motto that is often repeated among us Scalabrinians: “to be migrants with migrants.” For years I was involved in the formation of young people, both in their initial awakening and in their initial formation in the congregation, and I ardently desired to launch myself more radically into the field of migration and, like the prophet, “to see the affliction, to hear the cry, for I have known their anguish, and I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex 3:7-8).

We had a considerable amount of time to prepare, with training, courses, and face-to-face and virtual meetings. These helped us to learn about different aspects of migration, the context, and the sacred land where we were setting foot. They were intense days of learning.

With free will and convinced that it would be a unique opportunity to embody the radical nature of the Scalabrinian charism, following itineraries, carrying out our mission with a focus on more integrated action in the care of the faith and the defense of the rights of migrants and refugees (cf. Final Document of the XIII General Chapter, page 5). At the same time, it was a ratification that “consecrated life, a gift of the Spirit to the Church for the world, expresses our belonging to God and requires total self-giving in the service of the Kingdom, in fidelity to the Scalabrinian charism” (NC n.15).

This Constitutional Norm of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Scalabrini intrinsically expresses the desire to give

oneself and live fully a personal and communal adherence to the vocation and to help bring the congregational project to fruition.

It is to live the mysticism of the journey, where many faces are contemplated: sad, desperate, tired of suffering, insecure, distrustful... Men and women with a deep desire to realize the dream of "being on the other side."

In these same faces, a deep faith that moves mountains is manifested, and this was one of the aspects that touched me deeply during the months I shared with the migrants, convinced that faith brings them to their destination and well accompanied. Mystical is the one who does not stop walking. Migrants teach the mysticism of pilgrimage every day.

With them, those who consecrate their lives to live the charism of service, we learn to journey, seeking to live with openness and deep attention to the experience of migrants, to set out on the road with humility, praying the reality we experience.

Being part of sharing the crosses of these sons and daughters of God makes perceptible the tangled cry of a deep desire for a dignified life, for a better and safer future. The longing for life beats in every human heart. It is this migrant who reveals the face of Christ and the assurance that we do not walk alone and that often the fragility of migrants meets our own weaknesses. Moreover, when we look with the eyes of God, we can feel His loving hand guiding their stories and ours.

The experience of the Itinerant Service allows us to understand that God is an accomplice in the deepest desire to live the Scalabrinian charism intensely today. With this, we perceive its relevance, in line with the proposal of a pilgrim Church, which renews its gaze and action in favor of people with urgent needs.

The Itinerant Service is an expression of the common action of the entire Congregation, challenged to live provisionally in the changing, dynamic, and complex reality of today's migratory contexts. I was able to experience a new way of being "migrant with migrants." It is a response to a migratory reality that challenges us and "a specific desire of the Congregation" that aims to ensure a concrete MSCS presence in emergencies alongside migrants and refugees.

It was an exercise in flexibility and adaptability, assured "on the basis of the apostolic demands" of today and appropriate to itinerant pastoral activity (cf. Proposal for the internal reorganization of the Congregation).

God has revealed himself to me in a very loving way during this rich experience, and I feel confirmed in the words of the Saint of Migrants, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, when in a letter to Monsignor F. Satolli on

September 14, 1893, he wrote: “to found a house for itinerant missionaries, who would have no other commitment than to go to all places where there are Italian colonies,” and today to all the trenches where migrants from all over the world pass through, to be a sign of blessing (G. Battistela, *O Santo dos Migrantes* Joao Bautista Scalabrini, pg. 246).

3 Critical interpretation

It is extremely important to highlight that the objectives set for these six months were achieved, although the subjective aspects of the experience should be emphasized. It was a laboratory and catalyst for what would come later, in Honduras.

At the beginning, certain types of tensions or contradictions were identified that marked the experience and were recorded as learning indicators at different levels. On a personal level, it was a challenge: the ability to live temporarily, the spirit of itinerancy and adaptation to different situations and cultures; the willingness to face any situation with wisdom and discernment in an environment of insecurity... This is essential: a willingness to live with uncertainty and full confidence that God is weaving my story. So, today, I identify with the cause. It is necessary to offer adequate and qualified preparation.

At the organizational level: certainty that it was a first experience, and therefore the creation of a pragmatic guidance tool would have been effective for the development of the work. Defining the length of time that the Itinerant Service will remain in a given migration emergency without knowing the context is risky and compromises the credibility of the implementation of the IS, involving factors of inculturation, coordination processes, and follow-up of the pastoral guidelines of the local Church. It is essential to set up a coordination team for the entire planning, monitoring, and support process. It is important to think about and structure sustainability during the implementation period and in the long term to ensure the management of activities. Consider that, first and foremost, there are the needs of migrants within their context, and not just the objectives of the Congregation. It is necessary to provide systematic opportunities for planning and sharing experiences within the team. In addition, a consistent and dynamic plan for the Itinerant Service must be consolidated to establish an effective presence in emergency situations, giving true value to a service in favor of migrants and refugees.

And finally...

The mission of the SI-MSCS was a call to act as missionaries “from the very beginning”: women of the frontiers, ready to leave, giving of themselves to take up the cause of these brothers and sisters. The silent presence and attentive listening to the life stories of migrants were remarkable during the six months of activity. This was undoubtedly a stimulus for personal and congregational conversion.

In emergencies, resources are needed. In addition to the personal willingness of each sister, it is important to anticipate and allocate financial resources to support and thus help save lives as much as possible. Migrants are hungry, they need clothes and medicine, and that cannot wait. To do good, goods are needed. Psychosocial care requires the availability of educational and training materials to work with migrant women and children in emergency situations.

Just as migrants make a long pilgrimage to reach their “destination,” so too must the Itinerant Service make its way. This is the beginning of a long process, and little by little we will understand how to do it, without forgetting that the dynamics of migration are constantly changing. It is still too early to say what our identity is, how we differ from other organizations working with migrants, or what contribution the Scalabrinian Congregation’s Itinerant Service will make. Little by little, our way of working and what will be our specific role in the SI is taking shape.

I am very grateful to God and to the Congregation for the opportunity to fulfill this mission, experiencing the Scalabrinian values of welcome, itinerancy, and communion with diverse challenges. St. Scalabrini, Blessed Assunta, and José Marchetti were our constant intercessors. May they continue to confirm with boldness and prophecy this service so eagerly awaited by the sisters, migrants, and refugees.

3 INTERCONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARY COMMUNITY CIM – HAITI

*Sr. María del Carmen Santoyo González**

The location of the community and members of the CIM-Haiti

This is the Intercongregational Missionary Community in Haiti. The CIM is in Anse-a-Pitres, a border town in the extreme southeast on the Caribbean coast, bordering Pedernales in the Dominican Republic and about 140 kilometers from the capital, Port-au-Prince. Etymologically, Anse-a-Pitres means “beautiful view of the sea from a land of cacti.” Anse-a-Pitres is one of Haiti’s four border crossings and is considered the poorest and most neglected in the country.

The CIM is currently made up of the following sisters: Clemencia Rodríguez Hidalgo, Ecuadorian Spanish, Mercedarian Missionary from Barcelona; Luigina Coccia, Italian, Comboni Missionary; and María del Carmen Santoyo González, Mexican, Catholic Teacher of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Brief history of the CIM in Haiti

CIM has been in Haiti since 2010, thanks to the initiative of CER which, in the wake of the earthquake that devastated Haiti and shocked the world, sought to respond to GOD’S CALL-in situations of extreme poverty and injustice. Throughout these 13 years, aware that it is the Spirit who guides our missionary journey, 10 congregations and 18 sisters have participated in this experience. Until 2013, we worked in coordination with the SJR in Port-au-Prince, accompanying the camps that were formed with people who lost everything in the earthquake. Starting this year, we moved to Kwadeboukè to work with the SJM on the border of Fonds Parisyen-Jimaní. Since August 2021, we have been in Anse-a-Pitre, on the southern border of Haiti, seeking to respond to the suffering of Haitians deported from the DR and to the great challenges that this reality presents to us.

* Mexican religious sister, Catholic teacher of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Member of the inter-congregational missionary Community in Haiti.

The contribution I make as a Catholic teacher of the Sacred Heart

Let me begin with a question: IS IT POSSIBLE FOR DIFFERENT CONGREGATIONS AND DIFFERENT CHARISMAS TO FORM A COMMUNITY?

From my experience in inter-congregational mission work in Haiti, I believe it is possible because we are called, summoned, and invited by Jesus of Nazareth to serve our poorest brothers and sisters in order to continue building his Kingdom in diversity, bearing witness to hope.

It has been a gift and a great sign of the presence of the Spirit who inspires, moves, and recreates us to bring about a new style of religious life.

It is a great treasure to share our charisms as gifts, our very lives with their hopes, dreams, achievements, and difficulties. Being of different nationalities and cultures, rather than being an obstacle, becomes a possibility for living a process of walking together.

The community has also been a space for respecting and accepting our differences, striving not to lose our identity and living in freedom.

The Word of God, based on faith, is the center of our being and our actions. We try to live it every day in the concrete realities of this people. It is what animates and impels us to be a small light of hope.

Having a community project makes us walk toward the same horizon, without losing sight of the ideal of this inter-congregational mission.

We live and choose a common economy, and, within our means, we share with some people in need.

Living inter-congregationality is a GIFT OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE CHURCH.

Kontribution von Schwester Clemencia Rodriguez Hidalgo – Mercedarian Missionary aus Barcelona

Over the past 13 years, the experience of inter-congregational life has helped me to revitalize my passion for following Jesus in greater simplicity and poverty, and through a simple approach to the suffering and the expectations and hopes of the Haitian people. It has also helped me to understand their fears and uncertainties, since we live in a country where violence, insecurity, and the absence of a government that protects the integrity of its citizens reign.

I have felt sent by a liberating God who “sees and hears the pain of his people” and who awaits my response, limited and small though it may be, but which can be useful in finding paths to liberation and being

a channel of his mercy. In this way, we can continue to build a project of humanity, his Kingdom, through the small and prophetic gestures that bring the Gospel of Jesus to life.

I am convinced that the guiding criterion in an inter-congregational community is to try to live always guided by the Gospel of Jesus and enriched by the diversity of charisms. We are seekers of God walking close to the poor, His favorites. Real closeness to the poor has not left us indifferent.

Living an inter-congregational experience is a way of LIGHTENING STRUCTURES. There is no interest in maintaining the works of each Congregation at all costs, but rather in enabling consecrated life to be prophetically close to the poorest in order to contribute to transforming reality.

The inter-congregational experience has helped me understand that this new style of consecrated life is driven and sustained by the Spirit who will always seek unity in diversity and that, despite belonging to different religious families, what unites and enriches us is the search in community for a Gospel response, small and simple, but one that builds the project of humanity, walking alongside a simple and poor people such as the Haitian people.

Contribution from Sister Luigina Coccia – Comboni Missionary

So, I'm Sister Luigina, a Comboni missionary from Italy. As a missionary, I've lived in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Italy, and I just got to Haiti two months ago. After a few years of living in Rome to serve my congregation, I felt the desire to return to live on the existential peripheries of our time, in direct contact with those human realities left on the margins of history, where the suffering of entire peoples is forgotten by the rest of the world. Haiti is one of these realities.

I also chose Haiti because of the opportunity it offered me to have an experience in an inter-congregational community, which I have always considered a prophetic initiative. In fact, I believe that this experience can shed new light on religious life, which is undergoing great changes and seeking new styles. I have just arrived, so I can only share a few first impressions. The word that resonated most during this first period was undoubtedly BORDER. We live 10 minutes from the border with the Dominican Republic, which is implementing increasingly restrictive immigration policies towards Haitians who are accustomed to living, working, and belonging to these two countries.

Being here, I understand better that, despite the immigration policies defined by the countries, people who live near a border feel they belong to both worlds and organize their lives between these two realities: languages, cultures, and currencies continually intermingle, and above all, the relationships that arise between the people of the two countries create a mutual sense of belonging and give life to a new people. It seems that life grows beyond political borders. And when current restrictions prevent us from moving and living between these two worlds, each of the two realities loses an important part of itself and feels that its right to life is being usurped. Being here, we feel, more than in other places, the need to humanize borders, to allow life to flow, to make them a function of life that is nourished by encounters and not by divisions.

The border is also an image that speaks of the inter-congregational experience I am beginning to live creating inter-congregational communities requires crossing borders, going beyond one's own congregational limits to create a new experience of consecrated missionary life. When we enter inter-congregational communities, each of us arrives with well-defined limits: from our own charism, from belonging to a style of mission and community specific to each congregation.

Creating belonging to an inter-congregational community requires learning to cross the borders of one's own congregational experience to enter a new land and create something new together. We do not cancel out the particularities and limits of our charismatic and congregational identities, but we learn to go beyond them to create new experiences of communion within religious life and within the Church.

At a time when we live in a geographical reality characterized by borders that tend to close and become rigid, our inter-congregational community can be a small light that helps us overcome our fears of living without borders, without the need to assert our own "nationalisms," so that we can rejoice in a universal fraternity.

IV. ADVOCACY FOR THE DEFENSE AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1 STRATEGIES TO PROTECT TRANSIT MIGRANTS LESSONS FROM THE DARIÉN GAP

Andreas E. Feldmann*

Happy International Women's Day!

It's a great honor for me to be here. I've long admired the inspiring and dedicated work of the Scalabrini Order, which has been tirelessly assisting migrants, refugees, and people on the move for many decades. It's genuinely inspiring and uplifting to hear about the testimonies and the unique emphasis of your work. In this regard, I was particularly struck by discussions on spirituality yesterday. Spirituality adds a vital dimension to the Scalabrini Order's work, which is crucial for addressing the complex dynamics of migration. I will highlight this aspect in my presentation.

I have been requested to talk about advocacy strategies. In so doing, I will concentrate on the challenges migrants face while in transit, reflecting on a recent field trip to the Darién Gap as part of an ongoing investigation I conducted for the *Estado de la Nación*, an influential Costa Rican think tank, last December. I will divide my presentation into two parts. First, I will provide a general overview of protection, centering my analysis on the difficulties and challenges regarding protecting people in transit. Second, I will briefly lay out some tentative, potential strategies to advocate on their behalf.

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As you probably know, the Darién and the route through the border between Colombia and Panama have become the epicenter of migration in the Americas in the last two years. Last year, Panamanian authorities reported that more than half a million people crossed the Darién Gap. While this movement has been historical, we have seen a sharp increase since lifting movement restrictions following the end of the Covid 19 Pandemic. As Jorge Durand, present here, has underlined in his seminal work (Durand 2019; 2022), this phenomenon arises because of the integration of migratory systems in the Americas (see also Feldmann, Bada, and Schutze 2019; Feldmann et al. 2022). Historically, migratory systems in the Americas (south American, Central American, and Caribbean, and North American) functioned in silos without much connection, each one with a relatively independent logic (Massey 2022; Feldmann, Bada, and Durand 2021). However, we have seen how these three migratory systems have intertwined in recent years. Against the backdrop of mounting problems in socioeconomic, political, and environmental challenges forcing people to leave their communities, migration systems have quickly become integrated and transformed Central America into a connector of sorts where hundreds of thousands of people from the region and beyond (extracontinental) move to reach the United States (Álvarez Velasco and Cielo 2023; Herrera 2023).

This situation is evident when looking at the nationalities of people who crisscross the region and traverse Central America: last year, the majority were Venezuelans, followed by Haitians. A noticeable issue is the increase in the number of Ecuadorians moving. As you probably have heard, Ecuador is experiencing a severe security crisis that will soon be reflected in the numbers. Since January, a more significant number of Argentines have started to cross through Panama, too. In what constitutes a trend going back at least two decades, but one that seems on the rise too, it is possible to see an increase of extra-regional migrants who arrive in South America and Nicaragua and begin their journey north. In this respect, there has been a noticeable increase in Chinese migration through the Darién, a scheme we understand very little about. Mexican migration also seems to be on the rise (Feldmann, Sturino, 2024; Gandini, 2022).

During my recent fieldwork, I could see with my own eyes the manifold and significant challenges regarding the protection of people in transit. I am sure many of you know this by heart, given your long-standing presence in the field. Of course, one central element in understanding this dynamic is **vulnerability**: transit migrants face significant threats that put their lives and well-being in a significant more perilous situation. They are prone to being abused, attacked, and taken advantage of, often with -unfortunately-

deathly consequences. Testimonies underscored many of these problems, particularly of women and minors.

In what constitutes a severe development, incidents after an altercation led to the partial destruction of the Migrant Reception Station, San Vicente, on the outskirts of Metetí, where the Panamanian government, with the help of humanitarian organizations (UN, MSF, Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Panamanian Red Cross, among others) offered shelter and assistance to people on the move. In circumstances that are not clear now, a confrontation has led to the shutdown of the center and forced to accommodate all migrants into *Lajas Blancas*, another reception center. However, one with lesser levels of infrastructure is now operating beyond its capacity. In addition, I am afraid that the incident may negatively impact the authorities' predisposition and stance toward migrants and lead to a more restrictive approach. Yesterday, *Doctors Without Borders*, for example, announced that their mandate had not been renewed in Panama, indicating the closure of the humanitarian space.

As I was relating, the vulnerability of people in transit is particularly intense and arguably worse than that of people in receiving countries intending to settle. Several factors account for this. First, people who go from one place to another fall into a liminal state, moving from one place to the next in a transient condition that worsens their predicament. They often have been on the road for months -even years- going from one country to another. The transient nature of their condition generates disincentives for governments that seem reluctant to spend resources to protect and assist a population they know has no intention to stay in their territories. But perhaps worse, often it is migrants themselves who show no interest in accessing the few existing protection mechanisms as their main goal is to advance toward their preferred destination as quickly as possible. Humanitarian workers and human rights defenders I recently interviewed related to me that migrants who are victims of violence, including sexual violence, rarely file complaints to the authorities, not only because they are unfamiliar with them but more importantly because they do not want anything to hold them back or to delay them in their transit.

Second, this population too often confronts indifference and even hostility on the part of communities in receiving societies. This contributes to increasing their vulnerability and sense of isolation. Communities in receiving societies, especially pauperized ones in great need of resources and often deprived of services, resent the help governments may provide to migrants. In addition, they usually see the arrival of large numbers of migrants as an economic opportunity in that they can offer them services (shelter, food, guidance). Unfortunately, some people often take advantage

of them by scamming, deceiving, or offering services at exorbitant prices, knowing that people are desperate. This was discussed yesterday and constitutes a major challenge while designing incidence mechanisms.

Third, vulnerability arises from high levels of disinformation circulating on social media that foment a distorted view of the dangers along the route, including migration controls, procedures, and conditions in transit and receiving countries. One element that struck me was how these views and the overall influence of popular culture instilled in migrants and refugees a blind hope in the 'American Dream.' Many related how their lot would improve once they made it to the US, where services are easy to get, good jobs are available, and access to consumer goods would be open. In the days that I was in Panama interviewing migrants, this dynamic, and I hope you will excuse me for the religious metaphor, people expressed with a quasi-religious conviction how their life would change once they made it to the United States, and that all the hurdles and problems along the way were simply tests God had put in their ways. Of course, such strong conviction contrasts with reality on the ground as hundreds of thousands of recently arrived migrants are having tremendous difficulties surviving economically, let alone integrating into American society.

Fourth, the presence of criminal organizations in transit areas further complicates protection efforts. These groups often control or exploit migrant routes, making it challenging to ensure their safety. They usually operate with impunity and in connivance with authorities in what researchers coin as criminal governance (the regulation of social order, including informal or illegal economies through the establishment of formal and informal institutions that replace, complement, or compete with the state and distribute public goods (e.g., social services, justice, and security (Mantilla and Feldmann 2021) (Lessing, 2021; Feldmann, Luna, 2023).

Addressing these and many other challenges (climate change) and devising an effective advocacy strategy requires a multifaceted approach. Work in this area is particularly difficult given the hardening of public opinion towards migration and the emergence of opportunist politicians who are peddling an anti-immigrant discourse to rip electoral benefits (De Haas, Castles, Miller, 2020).

In my closing remarks I offer some tentative strategies that may help enhance the protection of people on the move. First and foremost, efforts should focus on improving conditions in migrants' countries of origin. What we know is that most people do not desire to migrate. If conditions existed to develop a dignified life for themselves and their families, they would much rather stay in their communities and countries. This entails tackling many thorny structural societal problems head-on and working alongside

governments and civil society to improve subpar levels of governance. Of course, this is monumental work, but we can do much better and should demand much more from those in public office.

Secondly, it is imperative to strengthen reporting procedures that facilitate the investigation and sanctioning of alleged offenses. These mechanisms should ideally be streamlined in creative ways that do not require migrants to spend long periods and thus would not hinder their journey. Information should be disseminated through public campaigns, alerting people about lingering dangers and explaining in accessible language the mechanisms people can use to report alleged crimes. Reinforcing consular protection work is another essential element. Governments are interested in curbing criminal activities impacting migrants and thus have an incentive to advance in this area.

Third, civil society organizations should play a more significant role in aiding and protecting migrants. While they cannot and should not replace states, the reality is that in the current context, governments are stretched thin, need more resources, and lack the *know how* to do the job rightly. Civil society may help relieve the burden on overstretched government resources and offer badly needed support to this population. While civil society is correct in demanding state action and denouncing abuses or negligence, at the same time, it must be clever to calibrate its criticism in ways that are constructive and offer solutions. Collaboration with governments seems critical for any effective protection strategies. We can foster greater cooperation and support by demonstrating that civil society efforts complement rather than oppose government initiatives. Put differently, balancing advocacy and constructive dialogue is essential to ensure that protection efforts remain effective.

Fourth, protection strategies must consider how to deal with criminal governance schemes seriously. We know for a fact that many of the spaces where migrants transit is either governed by organized crime or, even worse, they are governed in a kind of connivance between authorities and criminal groups. This means that any protection strategy necessarily must go through an agreement, through dialogue, with these shadowy structures that have a completely different set of incentives (Feldmann and Luna 2023) than the conventional ones we use in the case of states. In other words, we must be careful not to stigmatize these groups and establish a dialogue because this is the best way to protect people.

Finally, I underscore the importance of spirituality, which plays a significant role in understanding migration and orienting both migrants and policymakers in their decisions. By emphasizing values beyond material aspirations, such as family and community, we can encourage more

meaningful and sustainable migration practices and policies informed by a more humane and empathetic understanding of this critical phenomenon.

In closing, while we face monumental challenges in migration, there is room for improvement in how all relevant actors handle this social phenomenon. I commend the Scalabrini Order for its unwavering dedication to supporting migrants and refugees. Your work is invaluable, and I urge you to continue your efforts steadfastly. Thank you for the opportunity to share these insights.

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2 IMPACT RELATED TO MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

*Helena Olea**

We are deeply honored by this invitation and thank you for allowing us to be here with you, sharing with people whom we have had the opportunity to meet and interact with in various settings. I would like to share with you some of the advocacy work that I do, thinking also about how you can do this from your unique and invaluable position, from your unique moral authority.

The Alliance of Americas is a network of organizations of Latin American and Caribbean migrants living in the United States. We try to do advocacy work from the perspective of migrants. We present what we want to contribute from our experience, solutions and ideas on migration policies, the creation of conditions of equity, and our relationship with the planet. I have prepared this presentation, which has five elements.

Contexts and narratives

This is the context. In my opinion, the most important challenge we face at this moment is anti-immigrant narratives, the demonization of migration, the perception that people who are seeking safety and dignity are a threat along the migration route and at their destination, which requires a national security approach that must be stopped, using terms such as invasion, which is not just a term referring to numbers, but has a different connotation. Migrants are perceived as a threat. That is why we have an additional challenge, which is to work on counter-narratives.

Every day, we are showing with examples and facts that migration is not a threat, that it contributes to society, that migrants make societies better, richer, and more diverse. And I think that is central. The second thing is to illustrate the conditions and factors that force people to leave.

* She is Colombian and has been a migrant for almost 25 years. She is a lawyer with a master's degree in human rights, working at the university and in civil society for internally displaced persons, migrants, and refugees.

We must insist that migration is not an adventure, but a survival strategy. It is not about tourist trips; it is not an adventurous spirit that drives people to leave. There are factors that are pushing them, and I think that is central and gets lost in the narratives about migration.

Addressing xenophobia is also critical, that we understand it and that we are working on it all the time. This aversion to foreigners is critical. Of course, there is also the issue of racism. Not all migrants are perceived in the same way; we are not all treated equally. And in the Americas, we experience this. And sometimes we must use those examples that confirm racism as an opportunity to say, if it was possible here, why can't it be done differently? If it was possible to welcome them, if it was possible to find a door for Ukrainians, why can't that door be opened for other people? Is it the color of their skin? Is it the conditions of poverty they come from?

Of course, the economic crisis, which is getting worse in Latin America and other parts of the world, is at the heart of why people are migrating, as is the impact of the climate crisis on housing and opportunities to make a living and not die because of a sudden event.

Understanding and communicating these situations is essential. Situations of violence, and I use violence in the plural, not only by traditional armed actors, not only by the state, not only organized crime, but we also know that many women are fleeing violence within their homes, violence at the hands of their partners, and that is also another factor. Let's talk about and understand the complex web of violence that impacts people's lives in the places they leave, in the places they pass through, and at their destination.

It is necessary to insist on all these elements, both the factors that push people to migrate and those that they experience along the migration route, which are part of the great challenges. Understanding them and emphasizing them to try to describe what migration means is central.

Location from which the incident is reported

Their direct experience with migrants. There are advocating based on what they read in documents, on what they hear. You know intimately and personally the pain and suffering of migration, but also the hope and dreams that drive people to migrate. These elements are important. So is the itinerancy of your own missions. Many of you have already left your country of origin, you have already migrated. You also know what it means to experience the pain of family separation. You also know firsthand the challenges of integrating into another society, of understanding another culture.

These are very valuable elements that make your voice deeply important. In addition, of course, and this is where I began this presentation, there is your moral authority. You have moral authority because you dedicate your lives to pastoral work, this work that you are doing, which is your personal mission. It is a personal commitment that you have made. And I believe that these elements empower you in a unique way to speak, to speak with all actors, to say and identify what solutions and changes can be made. It is not the same to speak from what I have read or what someone else has told me.

They can always begin an advocacy effort with a personal story, not a story they were told, but a story they saw firsthand, a person they accompanied in that painful moment, as they themselves have spoken about before. That is a very powerful element, and they are not doing it because they have any interest other than the dignity and well-being of migrants. There is no other agenda here. That is what makes your voice so powerful and necessary for migrants. And, of course, you are doing it out of solidarity and sisterhood, which I believe are two fundamental elements that are key to keep in mind.

Space

Where can advocacy be done? In multiple spaces. At the local, state, departmental, federal, and national levels, and of course at the regional and global levels. With public and private actors, with community and social leaders.

The first space where you are working is in negotiations with the authorities. What can be done better? How can you humanize that person, show them what you are seeing, and try to change those attitudes?

The private sector is another key actor. We must understand the importance of economic power in constructing narratives, maintaining narratives, but also in helping us change the context. It's not just the economic support they can effectively give to your work that is important. We also must ask them to donate, of course, because those resources are needed. But it's also about acting, asking themselves if they can hire migrants to work. From their position of economic power, how can they make small gestures of inclusion that can be truly transformative? Both in terms of welcoming those who are in transit, but also in terms of integration.

Community and social leaders are also key actors who need to be influenced. We must bring them over to our side. Some are already on our side, and we must keep them there, others are not. And we must try to work with social leaders, union leaders, and trade leaders so that they are with

us, so that they give us a hand and so that we can sometimes make joint gestures. So that, for example, when a crime is committed, it is not only migrant organizations that raise their voices, but that they also raise their voices, that they also express their rejection, that they also express their support for us.

It is also important to make a gesture of security by holding an event and having key people go to the house and say, "We are here with the sisters because we recognize their work, because we value their work, we want to recognize them." Of course, the other level is before the national or federal authorities. And here we must be ambitious.

There is no reason not to be. What changes do we want to see in legislation? What changes do we need to see in policies? What can a government do with just political will? Not everything has to go through the difficult Congress. Many things can be resolved with the will of the executive branch. And there we have to find out who the decision-makers are and how to get proposals to them. Let's not just come with a problem, but with an idea of how to solve it.

Finally, there is a space in which we all operate today: social media. It is a space that you know and use, the question is how we can reach key actors. It is essential to identify which networks we share on and which networks we influence. Twitter or X are not the same as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok. They are different audiences, different populations from different generations, and we must reach them all. We need to learn more about digital communication and specialize to cover different platforms and different audiences, not just showing what they do, but helping with their stories and also with their proposals. That virtual space is very important. That is where communication is moving. It is as important today as speaking on television or radio.

We are increasingly getting our information from this blessed device. So, I invite you to think about it and understand it as an advocacy strategy. It is also a tool for financing, but it is an advocacy strategy. There are other spaces; you can influence not only at the local and national levels, but also at the international level. I focused on the Americas because most of you are working in that space.

There are things to do at the OAS level and particularly within the inter-American human rights system. Today, there is a lot of networking. You can be part of a hearing with other civil society organizations where you can, in three minutes—but three very valuable minutes—which are also broadcast on YouTube, talking about social media, tell what you have seen and propose the changes that are needed.

There is also advocacy before the United Nations. There are key spaces to make your presence felt. I would like to list the formal human rights spaces and other parallel spaces that have been created because of the New York resolution on migration and refuge. Some are related to the Global Compact on Migration and others to the Global Compact on Refugees. These are spaces where United Nations agencies are working. They are spaces where you can participate, where you can contribute to trying to identify what is happening at the local level, how the compacts are being implemented, and where you can try to establish other dialogues, dialogues that are key with state and local actors and United Nations agencies.

There are also other spaces such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which took place in January in Geneva and will take place next year in Colombia. So that is a very accessible space that I would like to invite you to put on your agenda.

Strategies

Defining the objective is essential. What are you trying to achieve? Who? Who has the power to bring about that change? And, as I said, it doesn't always have to be through legislation. You must be clear about the change you are proposing. Sometimes it is not a change in the state, but in other actors. Explain what you are proposing, why you are proposing it, and appeal to the impact that the change you are proposing will have. It is not enough to denounce. You have to propose. Given this problem, this is what needs to be done, and this is the solution we want to promote.

It is essential to develop talking points. Unity and consistency in the message are essential. You must be very clear in your message and disciplined in your message. That is also very important. What? Why?

And, of course, you also must reflect on how that message is being received. This is an exercise in trial and error. Sometimes we do well, other times we do well. And it is key to keep in mind that we are not here to please ourselves, but to be effective, to change perspectives and mindsets so that they are transformed into actions. Sometimes, we would really like to say something to one authority or another, to one person or another. But what we need is to achieve the goal. So that is key.

It is necessary to persist, persist, and persist. Finally, it is essential to identify allies. There are civil society organizations that are key allies, where we can share information. There are existing spaces that you can join. These are key places to learn about advocacy, to see what others are doing, and to see how we can invite them to join us.

It must be clear that this is a path to change. Change will not happen overnight. We must take intermediate steps. This means making progress little by little. There are symbolic acts that are key. We must look for these significant advances. But we will also have setbacks. Unfortunately, this is not just a path where we are always moving forward. It is also necessary to review the strategy. What happened to us? What worked this time and how? Why did we lose this one? Review and continue, persist. We have no other choice.

But we also must review our achievements from time to time, which are becoming fewer. We need them to keep our spirits up. I sincerely believe that your persistence, your faith, and your sense of humanity are the forces that enable us to move forward and continue the advocacy work that I believe has so much, so much to do.

3 NETWORKING

THE CLAMOR NETWORK EXPERIENCE

*Elvy Monzant**

Good morning, everyone

The time has come to share with you about the Clamor Network. Before delving into advocacy issues, I thought it would be good to share what the Clamor Network is and the path we have been following, because I know that many of you, especially those who do not live in Latin America, know very little or nothing about the Clamor Network, and that is why I am going to share it with you.²

In 2016, in Honduras, we held the Latin American Congress on Human Mobility, convened by CELAM, the Latin American Episcopal Council. I was serving the Latin American Church as director of the Social Pastoral for Latin America, which included the pastoral care of human mobility. We had had an experience here at CELAM with Sister Ligia Ruiz, who had been working very hard for recognition of the dynamism of the pastoral care of human mobility on the continent. At this congress, we noted several things: first, that migration was becoming increasingly complex and difficult, that it was multifactorial, and that it was taking place in increasingly vulnerable contexts. Therefore, for the Church, migration as a whole was one of the great challenges. Secondly, we noted that there was a lot of action on the part of the Church, that the Church in Latin America had a lot of work to do on the issue of migrants, but what concerned us was the third observation, which was that we were disorganized and did not even know each other. We had different church ministries that were unable to coordinate, that worked in parallel, that duplicated efforts, that did not have a space to meet, to accompany each other. So, at a table having lunch, Sister Rosita Milesi, Father Leonir Chiarello, Father Mauricio García of the Jesuits, Sister Roselei Bertoldo of the network *Un Grito por la Vida* (A Cry for Life), and

* Executive Secretary of Red CLAMOR, a Latin American and Caribbean ecclesial network addressing migration, displacement, refuge, and human trafficking. He is also Pastoral director of CARITAS Venezuela. (Transcript from the audio of the presentation given at the V MSCS Seminar, without revision by the author).

myself. While we were eating, the idea came up: why don't we promote a network... why, as a result of this meeting, don't we just publish a book, as has always been done with all the meetings, but also launch ourselves into building a network that allows us to connect with the different realities in which we work in the Catholic Church with migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking, internally displaced persons, and climate refugees?

The first impression was that the network would not be for all the realities of the pastoral care of human mobility, but specifically for the reality of forced mobility. From then on, the priest, Sister Rosita, and I began to call and contact people, one by one, to sell the idea to the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the bishops, everyone. About five or six months later, in May 2017, we made the decision! We were motivated by a conviction that is at the heart of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, based on the spirituality of communion—when the Lord Jesus asks us all to be one so that the world may believe—and popular wisdom also says that together we are stronger, that unity is strength. Without a doubt, unity is the fruit of the spirit; where the Holy Spirit dwells, there is communion. We want to be an expression of unity. The word synodality was not yet in use, but we want to be a concrete expression of synodality in the world of migration. Therefore, based on this desire, which is also that of Pope Francis, we want to move from being many. We as individuals, even we, are going to build this “we” increasingly every day: this is what we decided with these organizations to form the Red Clamor, and thus it was born as a network, written to the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM).

The pastoral work of Catholic Church organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean that welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants, displaced persons, refugees, and victims of human trafficking. This is article number 1, the identity document and statute approved by the Clamor Network assembly, ratified by the CELAM bishops and ratified by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. We are a network that brings together organizations; all the organizations of the Church in Latin America that work in this field, which was founded in the Dominican Republic in 2017. There are several organizations, but that was the day we raised our hands and approved the creation of the Network. From that day on, we began this journey of the Clamor Network.

In Latin America, the episcopal conferences have two ways of encouraging work with migrants: on the one hand, the conferences have created departments or sections for the pastoral care of human mobility and have entrusted them with the task of encouraging the Church's work with migrants. Thus, the Clamor Network includes the departments of pastoral care for human mobility of the episcopal conferences of Mexico, Guatemala,

Costa Rica, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, and Argentina, the vast majority of which are entrusted to the Scalabrinian family. The bishops have created their departments and sections for human mobility as episcopal conferences, and all of these belong to the Clamor Network. On the other hand, the bishops have asked Caritas to encourage work with migrants, and thus the national Caritas organizations responsible for migration in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, and the Antilles participate in the Clamor Network. In these cases, it is Caritas that the bishops have entrusted with the task of encouraging the migration issue at the national level.

Today, we have representation from 19 of the 22 episcopal conferences in Latin America in the Clamor Network. In addition, there are religious congregations: one of our intuitions from the beginning was that we should not limit ourselves to episcopal bodies but rather go to those who are really on the front lines, who are serving migrants, who are in communities that are fundamentally made up of religious congregations. And one of these congregations is the Scalabrinian Sisters; the Scalabrinian Fathers, the Jesuit Network with Migrants, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Mercedarian Order, Redentora, the Salesians, the Adoratrices Sisters, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Juanita Sisters, which are almost all of those working on the issue of migration. There are also other organizations such as the Institute for Migration and Human Rights in Brazil, led by Sister Rosita, and there is SIMI in New York and the Scalabrinian Foundation of the Scalabrinian Sisters. These are organizations that have some work to do on the issue of migration.

We carried out a mapping exercise. The first thing we wanted to do in the Clamor Network was to tell our story, and we have a systematic map of 635 projects in five areas, 22 countries, and 345 cities in Latin America. If a migrant is in Peru but wants to go to Chile, our map can tell them what projects the Church has in Chile, their addresses, the services they provide, etc. This is on our website: there are 635 projects that the church has, which are linked to the Clamor Network. For us, without a doubt, the step that set us apart, the most important step, is that we began to create national Clamor Networks, because although Latin American coordination made sense, it made more sense for the pastoral agents who are responding to the migration issue to sit down in each of the countries. We currently have national Red Clamor networks in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, and Venezuela. In other words, we have Clamor Networks in 80% of Latin American countries, and

these networks coordinate 186 national organizations, making us one of the largest ecclesial networks in the world.

The Clamor Network currently coordinates a significant number of ecclesial organizations. The four verbs are our guiding principles: welcome, protect, promote, integrate, because we are participating in the advocacy processes that are taking place. We were chosen by the United Nations as representatives of civil society in the process of organizing and holding the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. We participated actively, we were in Geneva, and we organized two parallel events. We presented a document with proposals. We are also participating in the advocacy process in Quito led by Sister Rosita Milesi; we are participating in the comprehensive regional framework for protection and solutions, which is fundamental for the Central American states. And this year we are very committed to the issue of Cartagena + 40, the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration, and together with our invaluable advocacy team, we are participating to contribute to the reflection on the protection of people in need of international protection in the world of refugees. We are actively participating in all these spaces. UNHCR and IOM recognize us as their interlocutors when talking to civil society and faith-based organizations in Latin America.

All of this is what encourages us. What motivates us is the dream of being able to build a culture of encounter in the face of a culture of indifference, a culture of discarding people. This is the church we dream of in the Clamor Network, the church represented.

In Pope Francis' tender embrace of a migrant, all migrants feel cared for, welcomed, protected by the tenderness of the embrace of Mother Church, the tenderness of solidarity with the capacity to become protagonists and not just objects.

It is not through alms or welfare, but through migrants as companions on the journey, with whom we dream of a world where we can call God our Father, with the certainty that we live as brothers and sisters, a world where we tear down walls and build bridges of justice, peace, solidarity, bridges of love, bridges of brotherhood and sisterhood, which make us discover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and walk together towards the Kingdom. Thank you very much.

4 WORKING TOGETHER FOR LIFE, DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIVAT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

*Sr. Clarice Barp, mscs**

The VIVAT International is a non-governmental organization composed of 12 religious congregations working to promote human rights at the international and local levels. It has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This human rights council oversees two important mechanisms for the cyclical monitoring of human rights situations:

1. Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
2. Special Procedures.

The name VIVAT is derived from the Latin verb “VIVERE” and expresses the deep desire: “may each person live, may all people live, may all creation live”; that is, may everything that exists live.

The logo depicts three people embracing, welcoming, and supporting each other, while looking beyond their own circle toward a larger outside world that longs for unity and communion. The three olive trees emerging from the second letter of VIVAT represent the hope and transformation that the Organization envisions for the world.

The Congregations that founded VIVAT International in November 2000 were: *the* Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and the Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS).

VIVAT has taken on a dual mission: on the one hand, direct work with peoples and, on the other, their defense at the United Nations, due to its recognition in global advocacy. In addition to its advocacy work at the UN, it seeks to work with other agencies and NGOs.

* A Brazilian Scalabrinian missionary, social worker, and holder of a master’s degree in social work, welfare, and social intervention methodologies. Currently social action coordinator at Cáritas Diocesana Sigüenza Guadalajara, representative of the Congregation at Vivat España, and member of the Board of Directors of Confer Guadalajara, Spain.

VIVAT International addresses four areas of human rights with a particular focus on:

- 1. Poverty eradication:** seeks to improve the standard of living and human dignity of all impoverished people and address the multiple effects of poverty. Special emphasis is placed on **migration**.
- 2. Women: works** to eliminate violence against women, one of the most pervasive and brutal forms of discrimination they experience.
- 3. Sustainable Development:** believes in ecological sustainability, the protection of biodiversity, and the preservation of the planet's wealth for future generations; and,
- 4. Culture of Peace** promotes life, dignity, and human rights with a strong message of peace and nonviolence with every group and initiative.

Network VIVAT Spain

The members of Vivat Spain are nine religious congregations (Divine Word Missionaries, Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit, Spiritans, Adorers of the Blood, Missionaries of the Holy Family, Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, and Missionaries of the Holy Spirit).

The members of Vivat España are nine religious congregations (Missionaries of the Divine Word, Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit, Spiritan Missionaries, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Little Sisters of the Assumption, Religious of the Assumption, and Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters; two congregations are associate members: Dehonian Repairators and Comboni Missionaries).

The overall objective is to carry out joint actions to raise awareness, defend and denounce human rights violations against immigrants and refugees, which are specified as follows:¹

- Visits and accompaniment to Foreigners' Detention Centers (CIEs)² and collection of cases of violations and abuses of the rights of migrants interned in CIEs and former internees.
- Awareness-raising and advocacy through the Circles of Silence held monthly at the national level.

Goals: to prepare and present the 2025 UPR report (4th cycle, 49th session) on the closure of CIEs in Spain.

Context: For several years, Vivat España has prioritized the defense of migrants' rights and, in particular, has focused its action and awareness-

¹ CIEs are migrant detention centers, although the term "internment" is euphemistically used.

raising on denouncing the violation of migrants' rights in Foreigners' Detention Centers². Detention criminalizes and deprives migrants of their liberty in an arbitrary and abusive manner without carrying out a definitive expulsion. The state ends up releasing a very high percentage of detainees after 60 days of detention.

In 2021, there were 1,841 migrants detained, of whom 811 were deported; in 2022, of 2,280 migrants detained, 1,276 were deported and 1,072 were released, meaning that 44.62% fulfilled the purpose of detention. This demonstrates how futile it is to deprive immigrants of their liberty when their effective return is highly unlikely and there are no alternatives to detention⁴. In 2020, due to the pandemic, almost all CIEs closed and released all detainees, allowing them to continue with their migration plans in freedom, which shows that these centers are useless and cause abusive and unnecessary suffering to migrants.

It is important to highlight that the EPU is a human rights mechanism of the United Nations, and that the reports are submitted to the General Assembly, which is the highest organ of the United Nations. The EPU is a mechanism that allows the human rights situation of a country to be examined in a comprehensive and independent manner, and that the reports are submitted to the General Assembly, which is the highest organ of the United Nations. a series of testimonies that reveal the continuation of systemic violations. This evidence allows us to request the closure of the CIEs in Spain.

In this context, and close to the reality of the people who appeal to us, Vivat España presented the previous report at the 2020 UPR in section 35. Due to the continuation of the same violation, it has decided to continue working on raising awareness and collecting cases for this new report.

There is a lot of work to be done to present the report at the 2025 UPR. Vivat Spain is committed to training and in October 2022 organized a face-to-face training day on the United Nations mechanisms and instruments for the defense of human rights in the field of migration, including the UPR and oral statements, with the representative of Vivat in Geneva.

The UPR is the mechanism through which the Human Rights Council assesses the human rights situation in each member state, as well as an interactive dialogue based on information provided by UN agencies, civil society, and the recommendations of member states. A final document is then drafted, which includes recommendations to the state under review.

² There are seven CIEs in Spain: Madrid, Barcelona, Murcia, Valencia, Algeciras, Tenerife, and Las Palmas.

³ The figures are from the CIE 2022 report.

This is a mechanism that Vivat Spain has chosen to pressure the government to comply with its obligations and commitments and follow the recommendations given in the 2020 UPR. Therefore, it is a continuous monitoring work carried out in a network, beyond the religious congregations that make up Vivat, seeking partners and like-minded allies such as associations that work directly with affected migrants to collect testimonies.

Since 2021, testimonies have been collected, based on criteria for the protection of witnesses. The more cases that are collected, the more arguments there will be for the report. At this stage, advice is being provided by those responsible in New York and Geneva.

Another way in which Vivat Spain advocates and denounces at the local and state level is through the “Circle of Silence.” This is a nonviolent form of protest the violation of migrants’ rights. It is a gesture that takes place in public squares on a regular basis, “once a month.” It lasts about 10 to 15 minutes in silence to raise awareness and draw attention to those who are passing by. The denunciation is made with messages or usually with banners *“The Immigrant is a Citizen, No Human Being is Illegal, Labor Rights for All...”*, and testimonies, manifestos, or news reports denouncing a situation of violation are read.

All of this serves to highlight the precariousness and disadvantage of the migrant population, to open people’s eyes to the reality of migration, and to appeal to their conscience and solidarity with migrants. It also denounces laws that violate the most basic human rights.

Each of the Vivat members do this in their own localities, some by joining other organizations or platforms.

Our perspective is to continue raising awareness and training Vivat group members, expanding our network of partners and allies to lend credibility to the report and, most importantly, to present the 2025 UPR Report requesting the closure of the CIEs.

Based on the human right concerned in No. 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.” Unnecessary detention due to the impossibility of carrying out expulsion flagrantly violates the right to liberty and forces migrants to endure detention that they should not have to endure.

In short, Vivat España insists on the uselessness of the CIEs and proposes as an alternative to the preventive detention of irregular immigrants their temporary accommodation in open humanitarian reception facilities while their cases are being processed. The high cost of maintaining the CIEs could

be invested in reception and social and labor integration programs, which are so necessary for migrants.

The documentary basis for the UPR report is the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

APPENDICES

1 ECCLESIASTICAL ASPECT COMMENTS

*Elvy Monzant**

I was asked to be an observer. So, during those days, I let my heart guide me rather than my mind. I made a great effort to do so; I believe it was the best thing to do. I wrote down some of the things I saw, some of the words I heard, some of my reflections, and everything that happened. Then I put them in order and tried to find a biblical quote, especially from the Gospel, that I could use to support what came from my heart with the deep affection I have for the Scalabrinian Sisters.

It is the gaze of a man of faith who shares his journey with you. It is not the gaze of a technician, but of a brother who celebrates God's gift of having shared these days with you.

The first, where should I start? Well, the first text I want to share with you is one you know. Mary Magdalene, the angel appears to Mary Magdalene and asks her, "Woman, why are you crying?" And she replies, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put him." I think we all know that a Jewish woman only called God "Lord." And Mary Magdalene earned the privilege of being the first witness of the resurrection. A woman. It was not Peter on whom the church was built, the rock, the prince, the apostles. It was Mary Magdalene who was the first to announce the triumph of life over death. Mary Magdalene did not need to see the risen Lord to continue believing that he was the Lord. He was the spit, the failure, the crucified one. He was the teacher from Galilee, the one who remained their Lord.

For days, I saw in you, women of Alba. I saw it in you, and I have also seen it in these seven years of walking with many of you in the Clamor Network. I have seen women whose vocation was born from a profound encounter with the risen one, because that is the only way to understand

* Executive Secretary of Red CLAMOR, a Latin American and Caribbean ecclesial network addressing migration, displacement, refuge, and human trafficking. He is also Pastoral director of CARITAS Venezuela. (Transcript from the audio of the presentation given at the V MSCS Seminar, without revision by the author).

consecrated life today. If you are not women who have had a profound experience of encountering the risen Lord in your lives, you cannot be sowers of life. You cannot be givers of life.

I find that the Scalabrinian sisters have a distinctive mark. That is, there is a way of being a Scalabrinian. It is something that distinguishes you and that one can perceive. And it is a mark that came to you from Scalabrini, but it has also come to you from the migrants with whom you have lived. I can almost say that if I see a person on the street, I can say, "That is a Scalabrinian." Because there is a way of being a Scalabrinian, a way of living religious life as a Scalabrinian that makes them different. And I felt that strongly during these days. You are women of the dawn. You are witnesses to life that opposes so much culture of death, the culture of discarding, impoverishment, and violence that you face every day.

The second element I found is, of course, the text of "Because I was a stranger and you welcomed me." This connects me. I would love to be able to argue more... but I find that this congregation is very clear that he and the migrant are a theological place. It is not just a sociological place. I believe that this is the main way to be faithful to the founding charism: to discover Christ in the migrant, the migrant Christ. And that gives you a unique contribution to the Church, just like the Scalabrinian fathers.

If a congregation decides to abandon, for example, its area of education, nothing happens. Because there are thousands of congregations that run schools. But if the Scalabrinian Sisters ever stopped working with migrants, who in the Church would do so with the same passion, with the same acuity, with the same spirit that has been given to you, in a charism that was given to you to share with the Church? I see that you have a special focus on women.

Within the migrant population, you pay special attention to women, children, and people in extreme vulnerability. And I think that's great, because you are responding to the signs of the times. And you are restless, because you have not yet found... I think you are very clear about the issue of accompanying migrants, women, and children.

But I see you concerned about young people and vocational ministry. That is, how to be faithful to this charism, how to approach the issue of young people from your identity as who you are. Young people in parishes, young people in faith communities, and, of course, young migrants.

This is a challenge for the whole Church, but for a charism as specific as yours, it is a strong call. Because I ask myself, how can we interest a young woman today in consecrating herself, in becoming a religious to serve migrants? I don't see it as an easy task. For no congregation today is

the vocation easy, but for a charism as specific as yours, I believe that the issue of young people is a huge challenge, and I sense that you are still searching for ways to understand how to respond to this challenge.

A third text. Why not? Why not? Well, why did I choose this text? Because it is Jesus' encounter with the blind man. Jesus has before him a person who cannot see, who is blind. But he has the delicacy to respect the human being so much that he still asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He does not decide for him, not even the obvious, which is that a blind man will want to see. But he stops in front of this man who cannot see and says to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He does not decide for him. When the blind man says, "I want to see, sir," then the miracle is accomplished.

In this sense, just as for you, He and the migrant are a theological place, you too are understanding the migrant as a subject, not as a passive object receiving charitable action, but as a subject. And that is why nothing about migrants without migrants.

I think you also understand this very clearly. That it is not a question of working for migrants, but with migrants, walking a path of collective construction, of possibilities for life to flourish, for life to be full, for rights to be exercised. This whole path of participatory construction with migrants is also helping you to prioritize the accompaniment of the migrants' own organizations.

Next, Aymara, who is from a migrant organization, will speak. I have seen this in Honduras, and I have seen it in Brazil, and I have seen it in several countries where you accompany migrants, not in an isolated way, but by encouraging them to organize themselves into communities so that migrants can truly be subjects, protagonists of their own processes. I would love to talk more about this...

Well, the parable of the Good Samaritan. We all know what it is and how it ends when Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." And as it was the ecclesial gaze, I have seen in you what Pope Francis invites us to do in the Church, which is to be a Samaritan Church. In other words, I believe that you are the faces of that Samaritan church that the Lord wants to be his church, because you are women who care lovingly, and here I repeat, lovingly. You have highlighted the importance of love, of that love which is the only force capable of transforming, the only authentically revolutionary force is love, because God is love. Now, anyone who says they love God here and does not love their neighbor is a liar. So, I see you as women who lovingly care for those wounded along the way, in contrast to so many Pharisees in the Church today who continue to put the Sabbath above man. Much

pharisaism in the Church today is strengthening the ultra-right groups, the groups opposed to Pope Francis, those who believe that salvation is found in the temple and in rituals and neglect the sacred and authentic temple that is our brothers and sisters. And I believe that you are that Samaritan Church.

And I copied verbatim this expression that I find very challenging, that pastoral ministry is the space for expressing charisma in defense and care of life. You express your charisma in pastoral ministry. And pastoral ministry makes you Samaritans, caring for the wounded on the road, that Samaritan church to which the Lord invites us.

After the resurrection, Peter meets a paralyzed man who, because of his condition, had to beg for alms and lived on alms. If he had given him alms, perhaps that day the paralyzed man would have been able to buy food. But he would still have been paralyzed, he would still have been marginalized, he would still have been excluded. And Peter says to that paralytic, I have no gold, I have no silver, but in the name of Jesus I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus, get up and walk. And how do I see that text in you? You are, of course, missionaries. You are Scalabrini missionaries. Not just any religious life. You are missionaries. And therefore, that connects us to another important notion of Pope Francis' pontificate, which is the church that goes forth. You are evangelizers who encourage communities of faith and life, who, as a result of your encounter with Jesus the Migrant, walk with your own feet. When Peter told him about the gift, what was the gift? That the paralytic could walk with his own feet. And I think you also have that very clear. Therefore, there is a tension within you to overcome the welfare mentality, which is a great temptation in working with migrants.

Not to remain with a welfare mentality, because the situation is serious, because they are passing through, because today it is some, tomorrow it is others. And I believe that is why you are entering into the issue of livelihoods, of the solidarity economy, of psychosocial care. You are concerned about the training of pastoral agents, about issues of education and political advocacy. And you are very clear about Pope Francis' four verbs: welcome, protect, promote, and integrate.

Next text: There was a woman there who had been ill for 18 years because of a demon. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When she met Jesus, she was able to stand up straight. How do I see this in you, the Scalabrinian sisters? I see a prophetic church at the service of those who are bent over by this system, by the culture of discarding, indifference, and exclusion. I see religious women who are committed to defending the right not to be forced to migrate. Religious women who denounce the

structural causes of forced migration, that is, religious women who have a political vision. And I celebrate and appreciate that.

We applaud you, because not all congregations perceive this. You are like Samaritans caring for the wounded on the road, but you also have a political perspective, denouncing the structural causes of forced migration and understanding what Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*: that just as we defend the right to migrate, we must also defend the right not to be forced to migrate, so that everyone in their own country can have the conditions to live with dignity. You are also working to resolve the structural causes.

The text of the disciples of Emmaus, he approached and walked with them. Two important verbs for the life and mission of the Scalabrinian Sisters: to approach and to walk with. So how do I see it? How did I see it in this meeting? I saw a clear expression of the heart of the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium* and in Pope Francis' Ecclesiology, which is the notion of the Church as the people of God. That church that approaches and walks with those who walk toward the Kingdom. And you walk toward the kingdom starting from Milan station. That is the starting point, which I discovered, savored, how from Milan station to walk as the people of God toward the Kingdom, that people who are on pilgrimage toward the Kingdom.

Therefore, a congregation that recognizes that the *sensus fidei* resides in the people and not only in the hierarchy of the church. The *sensus fidei* that has been spoken of so much in the synod and which, therefore, is clear about the importance of listening today.

The text of John 17:21 is clear: that all may be one so that the world may believe. The other important notion is that of the Church, of the ecclesiology of Vatican II, which is the Church as a sacrament of communion. You yourselves are a synodal experience, because your whole being and all your actions are carried out in community. You are communities of life at the service of communities. I would like to highlight the theme of the Scalabrinian families, which you serve at various levels, from episcopal conferences to dioceses and parishes, especially by promoting the pastoral care of human mobility.

You work together with bishops, priests, and laypeople, and you are aware of the importance of networking and that this is not a set of actions, but rather actions taken together, as was said here in the text

Well, I look to the future because I am a man of faith, and even though I open my eyes and my senses to perceive the cry of the impoverished and excluded, of those who suffer from hunger, misery, and a system that kills, of those few who accumulate the capital that should be distributed

among all so that happiness may reach everyone, so that the possibility of a dignified life may reach everyone, those who are the cause of forced migration, those who prey on our common home and cause droughts or floods to displace entire communities from their homes, from their lands, those who kill through hunger, disease, and fear.

Although I hear these cries with my heart and with my ears, I am also a man of hope who believes that this is possible, that in Latin America and in the world, this text from Revelation is possible: Then I saw a new heaven, there is a new earth, and I heard a voice crying out from the throne, this is the walled city of God with men, he will dwell among them, he will wipe away the tears from their eyes, there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for all that has gone before has passed away. And because I believe that you are sowers of this hope, of this utopia, that the word of God begins with God creating and ends with God recreating, with God promising that death will be defeated and that there will be a new heaven and a new earth, I joyfully reaffirm that you are pilgrims of hope.

Thank you very much.

2 MIGRATION

COMMENTS

*Aimara Sanchez Martinez**

Having spaces that bring you closer to God is always a challenge when you are a migrant, when faith is shared, but it comes alive when it acquires the language, traditions, and needs of God's people. In my experience of living in mobility, changing countries for reasons of protection, and in the formation, I have had in the faith, there have been opportunities in my country of origin, Venezuela, to be close to spaces where the universality of the Church walking and making prophetic denunciation of injustices is present. However, this has not been possible in this new country that has welcomed me, Colombia, because although we share a language and many customs, the new is strange and the strange is stigmatized as responsible for the social ills that afflict these host countries.

That is why having the experience of participating in the Congregational Seminar of your Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees is a breath of fresh air. It allows us to discover and develop ideas in favor of people, based on respect for their human dignity, and to identify migrants as a theological place, recognizing in them the divine presence of our Lord. "Everything about us, without us" is not something that is felt within the congregation, where, due to the dynamics of religious life, each one of you is also a migrant, with different motivations, but Christ-centered in welcoming those who need it most.

I would like to highlight some things from the seminar that caught my attention and that allow us to identify key milestones in the process carried out during this week.

* Engineer Geologist Aimara Sánchez Mtz. Master's Degree in Geological Risk Management in Humanitarian Contexts. President of the Venezuelan Fraternity Foundation, communications coordinator for the Los Buenos Somos Más network. Delegate for the civil society organizations liaison committee with UN agencies. Venezuelan migrant, daughter of Colombian refugees. National Director of Youth Ministry in Venezuela, working on the Social Doctrine of the Church. Laudato Si animator.

First, I return to the idea of universality that was present in this seminar through the presence of sisters from the congregation from all corners of the earth, with different languages but with the same faith and the same charism. This is what begins to differentiate the action of the living Church from social organizations, NGOs, or international cooperation. The welcome you offer is open from the very moment you arrive, through your greetings, joy, and vitality, which each of you transmits with your presence and passion for the work you do.

This cultural diversity always enriches the spaces and allows no one to feel bad about being different. On the contrary, there is a sense of peace in knowing that no matter how different we may be, we are all welcome in the vineyard, and that we inevitably make this present in our workplaces by looking at migrants and refugees, displaced persons, as people who are known, recognized, and dignified through all the actions we carry out.

The spaces of mysticism, as well as the Eucharists, allowed the work to be not merely academic but to let us be guided by the Spirit, who in his infinite wisdom empowers the chosen ones. the awareness of that spirituality that becomes empathetic with the people who are the reason for their vocation brought to the space many of those who have passed through their lives and have had the privilege and blessing of being living Bibles for their lives. In the hallways, I listened attentively to the stories of all those who could tell me, from events where imagination falls short to the smiles of children. It broadened my heart and wrinkled it a little when reflection led me to think that we can always do more, not by our own strength but by Christ who lives in us.

It is important that the Church, which has been a migrant since its inception, and the congregation in the living out of its charism, not allow itself to be alienated by the world and its agendas, but rather know how to show the presence of Jesus and his message during societies. May we differentiate ourselves, not identifying or sympathizing with any ideology, but rather with our faith as our banner, even as we welcome and receive everyone regardless of their focus.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the experiences and the way they are recounted, the enormous scope they have, and although it may not be recognized, they do enormous good for humanity. It is necessary that stories be told, not to boast of achievements, but to motivate change in others, to help form lay people who have the same vocation, and that by sharing these good practices we can build a larger muscle dedicated to prioritizing those who, due to their living conditions, decided to move from their places of origin with the hope of finding opportunities, so that they do

not become afraid to return or of what may happen to them along the way, without knowing that there are helping hands to guide them.

It is also important that these stories be told with recognition of all the academic knowledge accumulated not only from studies but also from the practice of their vocation. Many expert voices on migration do not speak from Christian values, they do not speak of welcome or fraternity, and of course they do not speak of God. And it is ideal, the pleasant surprise I had as a lay person to hear that the Church has this wisdom, that the congregation makes it available in favor of its charism of welcoming migrants and refugees, and that it has *authoritas* to give voice to those who do not have one.

I also feel that the timing has been very precise, with a well-managed agenda, although I would say reduced, for all the reflections and needs of each of the topics discussed. Perhaps this is putting a straitjacket on the Spirit that renews us in the Church community that we are and whose action always depends on being faithful to the call. There is a lack of spaces for coordination between countries in the same region, to discuss specific issues and at the same time generate actions that show that the congregation is one and that wherever you are in the world, you will always find welcoming spaces and programs that enrich the journey of those on the move. So that the urgent does not take up the time of the important. There should be a unified response to emergencies caused by human mobility, to bring people together, so that people know where to seek help and not be victims of further abuse, and to promote human dignity.

The responses they have found come from their humility and are many, which allows for a bank of initiatives that can be replicated from one region to another, adapting them to their own reality. The invitation is not to fall in love with the solution and to live seeking solutions based on the needs of migrants and refugees and not on what we believe is right for their lives. To dignify to re-educate and integrate, all from the perspective of love for one's neighbor. Do not neglect the importance of instruments for regularization and validation of studies, as well as dignified job opportunities.

The perspective from which you view migration, refugees, and the needs of populations is unique because it is based on your joy, their tireless action, their principles and convictions, but above all from their faith, which without works is nothing, and which you sisters have turned each of your actions into a prayer. It is a vocation of life that is present and that needs to be shown to a world that is increasingly turbulent and often forgets what is truly important.

I conclude with enormous gratitude to the Congregation, to all those present and invited who, from their areas of faith in action, welcome, protect, and promote the integration of migrants and refugees. For many, this has meant a change in a life full of difficulties and realities that are beyond imagination. There is a need for protection from both the human and the divine, and this also includes organizations such as mine, *Fraternidad Venezolana*, led by migrants and refugees who, although few, work with little or no resources and are also reflected in this action of our Catholic Church, of your congregation.

If, as a Church, we are all evangelizers, this Scalabrinian charism must make use of technologies, networks, and resources such as artificial intelligence and podcasts that take the digital presence of Jesus in the real world one step further. literally becoming digital evangelizers, hopefully connecting in real time the regions that have something to show, not only to inspire those who want to do something but cannot find meaning in life and who could find it here in the Congregation as religious or lay people, and so that those who continue on their permanent pilgrimage may remember that they are not alone, that there are footprints in the sand.

You are Scalabrinian sisters, “administrators of pain” and managers of hope! Thank you.

With Mary it is easier to walk. We are ONE in Jesus.

3 INSTITUTIONAL CONFIGURATION ELEMENTS COMMENTS

*Anabela Belo**

First, thank you for the invitation and for your presentations, which showed the different levels of your work, i.e., its diversity, ranging from humanitarian/emergency aid, through education, physical and mental health care, justice, to advocacy work at both the local and national levels, with aspirations to also intervene at the international level.

I realized that there is an awareness of the diversity of cultures, religions, interests, and motivations, etc., that characterize the different immigrant groups, as well as a recognition of the need to build bridges and strengthen networking so that activities have a greater impact.

From the outside, I have observed and tried to understand your objectives, strategies, and ways of working. I am sure that there is much more to say on this complex subject, and I believe that some of my observations have already been discussed by you and considered in your planning.

But my role as an outside observer is to report on what I have understood from your presentations, so I will mention the three most important points:

Your work is very spiritual; it is motivated by faith, solidarity, empathy, and love for your fellow human beings...

Statements such as: "We work hard, we are there, and we see the pain..." etc. are very emotional and could mean that you do not feel that your work is sufficiently valued and appreciated.

What makes you feel that way? How is your resilience?

Do you have a safe space for yourselves? Roberto was very right to focus on this aspect this morning.

* Portuguese citizen living in Germany. I have worked at MISEREOR for 31 years, spending almost 15 years responsible for projects in Angola and Mozambique, including research projects. I have also worked on global projects, consultancies, and initiatives in the ecclesiastical sphere.

At the same time, you are feeling the changes that are taking place and are trying to adapt and find answers to new challenges, for example by strengthening your advocacy work. This shows that you are moving with the times.

I am going to talk about three points: migrants, inclusion, and advocacy.

Migrants: Migrants are often described as a homogeneous group in need of help. The traumatized migrant, the raped migrant... There has also been a lot of talk about what is being done for migrants but less has been said—at least in my perception—about the potential of migrants (or how they assess the priorities of different groups). This does not mean that this aspect is not considered, but if more attention is paid to it, it will be more present in the work, in the way we and it will reinforce the role of migrants, transforming them from beneficiaries into actors/agents of their own development—and also make it clear that “we do not decide for them, but with them,” as Hermel Mendoza said.

Suggestion: For example, training migrant leaders who are aware of their rights and where they can claim them (with support when necessary) could give them a more prominent role.

Inclusion: The inclusion of ‘strangers’ who receive help in a community that also has needs is a cause of many conflicts. I have not fully understood how you work on this aspect and how you initiate your joint activities. How are immigrants included in host communities? How do you analyze potential conflicts? How do you include residents in this process and how can they also benefit from it? (For example: there is a huge shortage of personnel in the labor market at various levels, and on the other hand there are many immigrants waiting to be introduced into the labor market; extremely bureaucratic systems and a lack of personnel to meet the demands are some of the factors that prevent good and rapid inclusion).

Suggestion: Collect data on good practices and examples of inclusion that benefit the community and the host country.

Conduct participatory action research involving immigrants and residents. Consider the number of immigrants in relation to the number of residents. Involve residents and local organizations in the inclusion process. Communities that are informed and involved in inclusion processes are not as receptive to the rhetoric of right-wing parties and will not vote for them. Their willingness and desire to get involved in defending immigrants’ rights is growing (e.g., demonstrations in Germany). Local actors therefore have a very important role to play in influencing and pressuring their governments to establish support systems for immigrants. However, the possibilities for inclusion vary from country to country, as each has its own support

system. At the same time, it is important and necessary to observe how the context may change, whether due to external or internal influences (various factors, such as the threat of war in Europe, for example, make it difficult to raise funds for migration and there is an intention to reduce the number of migrants in the country). These situations can reverse the progress already made, so it is always necessary to think about alternatives to be able to react quickly. The current discourse of right-wing parties, such as that of 're-migration', seriously jeopardizes the safety of immigrants.

Advocacy: Here we have to be clear: who am I addressing, who am I presenting myself to, who am I claiming my rights from? Different groups of people on the move have different rights. For some groups here today, the importance of collecting and systematizing data on good practices seems clear, as it is a fundamental tool for influencing local and/or national policies. Other groups do not attach as much importance to systematizing learning and focus most of their attention on humanitarian aid, as this is closer to their vocation and commitment. However, both aspects are important: first, migrants need 'emergency aid projects'; but without process-oriented work that can provide examples of success, it will be difficult to achieve changes in migration policies. In order to influence migration policies at any level, whether local, national or international, a good strategy and a good data systematization system are needed.

Suggestion: Collecting and systematizing good practices is key to demonstrating the positive effects of working with immigrants and thus influencing migration policies. This requires good monitoring and evaluation systems. A good example of the importance of well-coordinated work between the different groups involved is the result of the MST's work presented this morning.

Some points to consider:

- a) Developing a strategic plan could help to understand each person's role and thus define the objectives and strategies and activities needed to achieve them.
- b) Analyzing the context/analyzing the reality in which we find ourselves could help us understand the challenges and the level at which we have the capacity to intervene according to the instruments and capacities at our disposal, in order to then define the objectives and actions to be carried out accordingly (an analysis that should be carried out periodically, as the context today changes frequently).
- c) Once the objective is clear, a map can be drawn up including the various actors with whom we can interact, so that we can

make our demands heard at different levels: local, national, international (“think globally, act locally” as Sister Carmen Bando mentioned). To this end, it is necessary to systematize the work and periodically evaluate the progress made/changes achieved, because the situation/context in which we find ourselves changes very quickly.

- d) A periodic evaluation of the degree to which I have achieved my objectives helps me to know whether they are realistic, whether my activities are working, and allows me to adapt my actions to the new situation in a timely manner.
- e) It is essential to think about a strategy for disseminating good practices among different organizations, not only as a way of learning, but also to be able to experience the successes of the work.
- f) It is very important to adopt a discourse that counters the discourse of far-right parties, and this also involves identifying and describing the advantages of migration, alongside inclusion work, as I mentioned earlier.
- g) It would also be advisable to discuss a strategy for responding appropriately to the increasingly restrictive spaces imposed by governments—without thinking about the risks we run in countries with far-right and openly racist governments (there is now talk of “re-emigration” (“deportation” in Germany).

Finally, I would like to return to two points mentioned by Sister Marlene:

Distance: I also felt this distance between the groups, having in mind that everyone is working toward the same goal—and I asked myself: What do they know about each other? How do they coordinate their activities? How do they communicate and exchange experiences and lessons learned? Are they sure that everyone shares the same vision?

Sustainability: This is really a challenge. The far right argues that if we do a lot for migrants, i.e., if we respect migration law and recognize the rights of different migrant groups, more people will want to come. Someone here commented that what migrants receive are crumbs, but this encourages more people to emigrate. We need to be careful with this: the argument that helping immigrants encourages more people to emigrate is being adopted in Germany by the far right. So sustainability is not just a financial issue: it is a political issue that we can only address by presenting

positive experiences. European governments are increasingly adopting the rhetoric of right-wing parties and becoming more restrictive on immigration.

Financial resources for development aid are becoming increasingly scarce because the threat of war in Europe is growing and more present, so resources are needed for the military.

It is therefore important to:

- a) Make the work more political, change the discourse on migration.
- b) Give more visibility to the positive effects and scope of the work.
- d) Be more resilient and flexible, as the current situation is changing rapidly and frequently.

In a more schematic way, you may wish to reflect on the following points:

- a) There is a common vision of how the organization/institution is structured in relation to its mission (division of labor).
- b) How it perceives itself, what it aims to be and what it can learn from missionary activity and zeal, as well as from the profile of its members (introduction of practical examples and experiences of its members).
- c) Is my mission clear? Why do we exist (what are my priorities)? What do we do and for whom (who do I want to reach with my activities)? Provide humanitarian aid to immigrants in need? And/or contribute to the development of fair laws that protect migrants and their rights? What is my strategy and what skills do I have to carry it out? Do I have the necessary tools to achieve my objectives (knowledge, contacts)? Am I clear about what and who I need to include in my activities to achieve my objectives?
- d) And finally, I really enjoyed hearing about the experiences of the participants in Mozambique: South-South exchange was a topic I emphasized a lot!

Thank you, have a good rest and safe trip home!

4 PROGRAM OF THE FIFTH CONGREGATIONAL SEMINAR ON PASTORAL CARE FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

BOGOTÁ, FROM MARCH 5 TO 8, 2024

Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

2:00 p.m. Check-in

4:00 p.m. Registration

7:00 p.m. Dinner

9:00 p.m. Meeting with panel facilitators

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024 – ANALYSIS OF THE MIGRATION SITUATION AND THE RESPONSES OF THE SCALABRINIAN MISSIONARY SISTERS TODAY

7:00 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration - Province of Mary Mother of Migrants

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Registration

9:15 a.m. Communications

9:30 a.m. Mystical Reflection

10:00 a.m. Opening Remarks of the 5th MSCS Seminar – Sr. Neusa de Fatima Mariano

**10:20 a.m. PANEL 1: THE REALITY IN WHICH THE CONGREGATION
WORKS** – Presentation of the reports of the 7 Regional Meetings on the
theme

Facilitator: Sr. Carolina de França, MSCS

Speakers assigned by region

11:50 a.m. Refreshments

12:00 p.m. PANEL 2: ANALYSIS OF THE MIGRATION REALITY

Facilitator: Renata Dubini

Speaker: Sr. Carmem Elisa Bandeo UISG (Spain)

1:00 p.m. Lunch

2:20 p.m. Video 1

2:30 p.m. PANEL 3: THE CONGREGATION'S RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN MOBILITY – Presentation of reports from the seven regional meetings on the topic

Facilitator: Sr. Ana Paula Rocha, mscs

Speakers appointed by region

4:00 p.m. Refreshments

4:20 p.m. PANEL 4: ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION OF THE CONGREGATION

Facilitator: Sr. Carmem Elisa Bandeo

Observer: Renata Dubini (Italy)

Observer: Hermel Mendoza (Ecuador)

Observer: Sr. Luiza Dal Moro, mscs (Brazil/US)

6:00 p.m. Video 2

6:10 p.m. Book launch CSEM Publishing House

7:00 p.m. Dinner

WEDNESDAY – March 6, 2024 – MAIN STRATEGIES OF THE MSCS MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

7:00 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration – Province of St. Joseph

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:45 a.m. Communications

9:00 a.m. Mystique

9:30 a.m. Panel 5: WELCOMING AND PROTECTING LIFE

Facilitator: Sr. Marivane Chiesa, mscs

Good practices:

Sr. Shirley Anibale Guerra, MSCS (Brazil)

Sr. Albertina Pauletti, MSCS (Brazil/Mexico)

Sr. Odila Roman Ross, MSCS (Brazil)

Moderator: Sr. Rosita Milesi, MSCS (Brazil)

Moderator: Jaime Ruiz de Santiago (Mexico)

11:00 a.m. Refreshments

11:20 a.m. Panel 6: PROMOTION, INTEGRATION, AND LEADERSHIP

Facilitator: Sr. Claudete Lodi Rissini, MSCS (Brazil)

Best practices:

Sr. Ligia Ruiz, mscs (Colombia/Honduras)

Sr. Leda dos Reis, mscs (Ecuador)

Sr. Valdete Willeman, mscs (Colombia)

Moderator: Sr. Valdiza Carvalho, mscs (Brazil/Honduras)

Moderator: Handerson Joseph (Haiti/Brazil)

12:50 p.m. Group photo

1:00 p.m. Lunch

2:30 p.m. Video 3

2:40 p.m. Panel 7: PASTORAL ANIMATION AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION

Facilitator: Sr. Ana Silvia Zamin, mscs

Good practices:

Sr. Carla Frey Bamberg, mscs (Brazil/Angola)

Sr. Milva Caro, mscs (Italy/Germany)

Sr. Vijaya Stella John Joseph (India/Italy)

Moderator: Sr. Marlene Wildner, mscs (CSEM)

Moderator: Israel Arévalo (CLAR)

4:10 p.m. Refreshments

4:30 p.m. Panel 8: AWARENESS, NETWORKING, AND ADVOCACY

Facilitator: Sr. María Eugenia Vazquez, mscs

Best practices:

Adriano Pistorello (Brazil)

Sr. Marcedita P. Saboga-a, mscs (Philippines/Taiwan)

Thiago Ubinski (Brazil)

Moderator: Sr. Leticia G. Valdarrama (Mexico/Spain)

Moderator: Jorge Durand (Mexico)

6:00 p.m. Folk dance performance – Children from the San Antonio Foundation – Bogotá

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Mystical celebration

8:30 p.m. Cultural evening

THURSDAY - 07/03/2024 – REASONS FOR THE STRATEGIC CHOICES OF THE MSCS MISSION

7:00 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration - Asia Delegation

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:45 a.m. Communications

9:00 a.m. Mystical

9:30 a.m. Panel 9: MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVES OF THE SCALABRINIAN FAMILY

Facilitator: Sr. Elizangela Chaves Dias, MSCS

Scalabrinian Lay Missionary Movement: Pablo Karloto

Secular Missionary: Luiza Deponti

Scalabrinian Missionaries: Fr. Leonir Chiarello

Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters: Sr. Janete Ferreira

11:00 a.m. Refreshments

11:20 a.m. Panel 10: BUILDING AN MSCS VOLUNTEER POLICY

Facilitator: Ir Marlene E. Wildner, mscs

CSEM: Tuila Botega and Igor Cunha (Brazil)

Scalabrinian Foundation: Gaia Mormina (Italy)

Testimony: Brenda Ribeiro (Brazil/Mozambique)

Testimony: Christofer Montenegro (Ecuador/Italy)

12:50 Video 4

1:00 Lunch

2:00 Visit to MSCS Mission in Bogotá

7:00 Dinner

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024 - PERSPECTIVES FROM HOPE

7:00 Eucharistic Celebration - Province of Our Lady of Fatima

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:40 a.m. Video 5

9:00 a.m. Mystical moment

9:30 a.m. Panel 11: TOWARDS AN MSCS ITINERANT SERVICE MODEL

Facilitator: Sr. Juliana Rodrigues, mscs

CSEM: Roberto Marinucci (Italy/Brazil)

CSEM: Carmem Lussi (Brazil)

Inter-congregational experience: Sr. Carmelita CMI (Haiti)

Testimony: Sr. Nyzelle J. Dondé, mscs (Brazil/Dominican Republic)

11:00 a.m. Refreshments

11:20 a.m. Panel 12: ADVOCACY FOR THE DEFENSE AND PROMOTION OF RIGHTS

Facilitator: Sr. Luiza Dal Moro, mscs

Andreas Feldmann: Advocacy and the challenges of migration in transit (Chile/US) Helena Olea: Advocacy related to migration and refuge (Colombia/US)

Testimony: CLAMOR Network: Networking and advocacy – Elvy Monzant

Testimony: VIVAT Network – Sr. Clarice Barp, mscs (Brazil/Spain)

12:50 Video 6

1:00 Lunch

2:30 *Video 7*

2:40 Working groups:

PERSPECTIVES: What do we take away from this event? What perspectives and commitments does it suggest for our regional reality?

Facilitator: Sr. Clarice Barp, mscs

Group coordination and secretariat:

Group 1 – English: Sisters Marcedita P. Saboga-a and Elizabeth Pedernal

Group 2 – Italian: Sisters Eleia Scariot and Analita Candaten

Group 3 – Spanish: Sisters Juliana Rodrigues and Zenaide Ziliotto

Group 4 – Portuguese: Sisters Thiago Ubinski and Vicentina Roque dos Santos

Group 5 – Portuguese: Sisters Osani B. da Silva and Shirley Anibale Guerra

4:10 p.m. Refreshments

4:30 p.m. Video 8

4:40 p.m. Panel 8: CLOSING OF THE WORK

Facilitator: Sister Janete Ferreira, mscs

Results of the group work

Words from the observers:

Ecclesiological aspect - Elvy Monzant – CLAMOR Network

Migration aspect – Aimara Sánchez – Venezuelan Fraternity

Institutional aspect - Ana Bela – Former MISEREOR

Final evaluation

6:00 p.m. Mysticism and conclusion of the work

7:00 p.m. Dinner



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