

Symposium at the Vatican

“Real Love Chases Away Fear, Greed, and Slavery: Young Leaders Must Pave the Way”

Mary Ward Loreto (MWL) attended the Symposium named “Real Love Chases Away Fear, Greed and Slavery: Young Leaders Must Pave the Way”, held in the Vatican and led by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, from the 7th to the 8th of November, 2015. The MWL Women Assistant Manager, Irena Kraja, attended this symposium as an observer.



The aim of this event was to evaluate best practices in combating modern slavery; to create a global network of young people throughout the world, and to create a handbook on human trafficking and slavery.

Young people are considered as the main actors in combating Modern Slavery, now considered as a global emergency. They have been invited to commit themselves to eradicating these new forms of slavery.

Evaluate best practices to combat modern slavery

More than 70 participants from all over the world shared their experiences on the work achieved in the prevention of all kinds of human trafficking, the rehabilitation of victims who have survived human trafficking, and the sad realities of vulnerability related to modern slavery. Sister Eugenia Bonetti explained that the most vulnerable are young people who do not have opportunities for education or for employment opportunities in the future. This target group can be victims of false promises for a better future. We should work very hard on prevention!

According to Vanessa Berhe, human trafficking and exploitation is strongly related to migration issues. Lack of migration policies which support people in seeking better opportunities in other EU countries forces many refugees to take dangerous routes to Europe. It was agreed that we are facing the worst humanitarian crisis in modern times. Philipp Geitzhauz (Institute of Theology and Politics, Germany) related this crisis to the strict rules of asylum, stating that asylum is a human right. Refugees who do not gain the state’s support, feel constricted to find illegal jobs which are not well paid, and in these conditions they are unable to protect their own human rights. This makes it difficult for the most of the refugees to live and work in Germany.

Ixchel Yglesias Gonzales Baez, and Oscar Montiel, who are social and cultural anthropologists, explained that human trafficking must be seen also from a cultural perspective. The increased number of women exploited in the sex trade, apart from the economic profit, is related to the development of a slavery system which aims to show physical or psychological male dominance towards women, removing their autonomy through false promises of a better future and posing a real threat to their lives.

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According to these arguments, and the work-experience shared, the prevention of human trafficking consists of providing opportunities for education and employment, human development activities, raising awareness, and influencing the policies on migration issues, through advocacy.

Strong and brave women who have survived human trafficking, shared their stories, highlighting the ways in which they were recruited, their particular struggles and the pain which they experienced. They are a model of hope and faith to us all.

Create a global network of young people fighting slavery throughout the world



The network established during the symposium on 2014, has been strengthened this year and new participants joined it. Communications will be kept through emailing, a closed group on Facebook, Google group account, updates of NGO-s work through their official websites, and the official website www.endslavery.va.

Create a handbook on human trafficking and slavery

A very important section of this symposium was the work in groups to create a handbook on human trafficking and slavery as a guideline which contains: a) What you need to know about human trafficking and modern slavery, b) How to know if you are at risk, c) What can we do to eradicate it? To produce the final handbook, the groups will continue to work online through a Google group account.

Lobby for Albania

The MWL representative lobbied for a greater understanding of the human trafficking situation in Albania, since it is a big issue. Albania is an origin country for many victims smuggled to the EU countries, and the human trafficking situation is related to migration policies and cultural issues. MWL has been asked to send updates about the situation in Albania and the work underway there to combat modern slavery.

Contacts established

All the participants are in continued communication through a Google group account and the Facebook group.

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