

## **RENATE Training on *Migration and Human Trafficking*.**

**Venue: the Soeterbeek Conference Centre, Ravenstein, The Netherlands.**

**19-25 March 2017.**



Thirty RENATE members gathered at the Soeterbeek Conference Centre, a former convent which has been sympathetically revived as a modern and beautiful meeting space. RENATE Board member, Ivonne van de Kar, welcomed everyone and presented an introductory contextual overview of the Netherlands in relation to working in human trafficking prevention, exploitation and supports to migrants.

Although in 1814, the Netherlands signed an international agreement to stop the slave trade, slavery flourished in the Dutch Empire and helped support the Dutch economy for several decades more. In 1619 The Netherlands led the building of a large-scale slave trading business between Africa and Virginia and by 1650, had become the pre-eminent slave trading country in Europe. It was overtaken in this position by Britain, Spain and Portugal in the early 1700's.

Throughout its history, The Netherlands has sheltered many refugees including Protestants from Antwerp and Flanders, Portuguese and German Jews, French Protestants and English Dissenters. In the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Amsterdam's population was primarily comprised of immigrants and migrants, with the city comprising 50% first-generation immigrants and high percentages of second and third generation immigrants and migrants from the Dutch countryside. The Netherlands continued its tradition of collaboration, openness and tolerance of others throughout the centuries as it gradually ceded colonies and favoured economic alliances closer to home in Europe. Benelux is an example of one such alliance, with all three countries becoming founding members of the European Union and NATO.

Ivonne shared with us the news of the development of *Sisterwork*, ([www.zusterwerk.nl](http://www.zusterwerk.nl)) a new Dutch Religious Network against Human Trafficking, of which Ivonne is the founding member. The principal areas of emphasis are in awareness-raising, prevention work, activity through national & international networks, assistance and shelter to victims in the Netherlands, campaigning and lobbying for political support where possible and working on

Return and Repatriation projects. Ivonne emphasised the importance of networks –and, in particular, the worldwide Religious networks, in the work against Human Trafficking.



Theological underpinnings for the week were presented by Mr Gerard Moorman, a lay Theologian working with the Conference of Religious in the Netherlands. Gerard shared his reflections on the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si* and its relevance for those working to prevent Human Trafficking and exploitation.

Viewing *Laudato Si* as an encyclical of inter-connectedness, offering a broader, expansive world view in which to situate our work. Gerard emphasised our universal communion as one great big family, taking action at grassroots level, inspired by the vision of God from within the social justice perspective. Gerard concluded by saying that it is through promoting understanding of such inter-relatedness that we can begin to impact on the disaffection and culture of indifference to one another and to nature.

“You Religious do the kind of work that nobody else wants to do. You wipe the floor and try to turn off the tap.” This was one of the opening remarks made by Mrs. Geesje Werkman, spokesperson for the Churches in Action in the Netherlands ([www.freetobefreeing.org](http://www.freetobefreeing.org)), as she began her presentation and emphasised the human story behind the trafficked and smuggled persons, encountered in the Netherlands.

Geesje spoke about the “grey areas,” in reference to displaced persons and people on the move. Distinctions between Human Trafficking, Smuggling and Fraud were referenced and analysed.

The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day “*Be Bold for Change*,” came to mind, as Geesje posed the question “What are we doing in preventative actions in the first place?”



Geesje recounted the experiences of people smuggled from the Philippines to the Netherlands; of how they are trapped in their situations and unless they are able to prove they have been trafficked or smuggled, the authorities deem them to have been defrauded and return them to the Philippines, where, sadly, the whole cycle of trafficking recurs.

She recommends that, as faith-based organisations, we should help people apply for Safe Passage, and support the development of humanitarian corridors. In light of the increasing numbers crossing the Mediterranean and overland, there is an urgency to establish legal ways for people to travel to Europe. She referenced Galatians 5:1, as the foundation for the title of her organisation’s website [www.freetobefreeing.org](http://www.freetobefreeing.org) and invited us to access the resources and also to share our own resources and ideas, so as to enrich each other’s lives.

Mill Bijnen, coordinator of a shelter in Amsterdam which offers care for migrant victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, breathed life into Matthew 25:35 "I was a stranger and you gave me shelter" as she shared with us the operations of the shelter. Predicated upon a 'strength-based' approach, which sees the victims as survivors, capable of taking responsibility for themselves through assistance and support, Mill enlightened the meeting with her experience and knowledge. The dependency model is simply not countenanced, instead, the centre tries to empower each girl, from teaching life-skills such as how to be aware of her sense of dress through to cooking a meal.



A key element of its success is the positive relationship which the shelter enjoys with the police and judiciary. This, in turn, gives a positive example to the people who stay at the shelter, many of whom were fearful of the police in their own countries. In the Netherlands, the onus is on the police to look for the evidence, which makes a change from the norms in the countries from whence the trafficked persons come, where the victims have to prove they are indeed victims.

The importance of collective engagement internationally was emphasised. It seems that far too often, case-files lose their urgency when investigations have to cross several frontiers. And so, Mill called upon us as a network to begin to require our police forces to be proactive and follow through on investigating files on victims of human trafficking. Without this, traffickers are left unpunished and continue their criminality.

Some attending the training shared their frustrations with their own police systems. Most police forces are so under-resourced that they simply do not have the time or the energy or the funds to follow through with investigations.

During Mill's presentation, we ranged from Matthew 12:48 "Who is your brother? Who is your sister?" through to Matthew 25:35 "I was a stranger and you gave me shelter." We were inspired by her presentation, not only because of its content but primarily because of Mill herself! Her knowledgeable responses to all questions ensured we had a most enriching and informative session.

An important element of RENATE training is visitation and experiential learning.

It was fascinating to visit the aptly named "The Hidden Church," located in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century home of wealthy merchant Jan Hartman, hidden from view behind the façade of canal houses and private residences, on a back-street a few hundred metres from the houses of Parliament.

The *Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder* or the Museum of Our Lord in the Attic, has survived since 1663, when secret churches or 'schuilkerken,' arose as a result of a political and religious change



within the Low Countries. It was sobering to realise the extents to which people have gone in order to honour and maintain their faith observances. It also gave us hope for our own work, that persistence prevails and that regardless of the time and resources needed, we must continue the lengthy journey which must be embarked on to pursue the elimination of human trafficking and exploitation.

A step along that journey took us to the **STEK** (Voor Stade en Kerk, [www.stekdenhaag.nl](http://www.stekdenhaag.nl)) Centre in the Hague, a social and religious organisation built upon the following principles;



- Protecting people
- Connecting people from different nationalities, creeds and cultures.
- Inspiring people.
- Strengthening people by helping them return to a positive perspective on life.

At STEK, we learned from presentations by professionals who volunteer at the centre, e.g. social workers, therapists and lawyers. Of particular interest was the information on Asylum procedures in the Netherlands, as presented by a lawyer who volunteers with the Dutch Council for Refugees. The Netherlands admits people whose lives are deemed to be in danger if they were to return to their country of origin. We saw how challenging it is to implement when we were shown a film made specifically to illustrate the human dimension of working with those who aspire to a better life and yet face decision-making frameworks which ultimately decide their fate.

Input from the Amsterdam Coordination Point for Human Trafficking (ACM) highlighted the importance of making advice, assistance, safe shelter, information, psychological and legal support available to migrants and immigrants, many of whom may be victims of trafficking and exploitation. The strength of their work depends on an inter-agency approach, involving the police and judiciary so that as wide a network as possible is formed and criminals can be caught and prosecuted. This is initially challenging to victims, who do not have a tradition of trusting the police, but when they see the success of the collaboration, they are soon convinced.

It was timely that in four weeks before Easter, we were presented with Trijnte Koostra's presentation on the concept of **Safe Return- Safe Future; Methodology for Safe Return and Reintegration**. project coordinator. 09.00-10.30.



Trijnte reminded us that we are an Easter people- of hope and possibility. In order to realise our hopes and possibilities for our week, she emphasised the importance of establishing contacts and cooperation both here and back at home, which helps facilitate safe return. Trijnte was one of the founding members of La Strada, which seeks to set up such networks across a number of

countries, including Religious organisations, shelter organisations and lobbying organisations. The main target groups extend across victims of domestic violence, trafficking and other human -rights-based areas.



Working from the belief that 'knowledge is power,' the *Safe Return Project* aims to empower victims to actually face up to the fact that despite all they have been through, there is no place like home. As a policy, this is made known to the woman from the moment she enters a shelter. While they firstly try to stabilise her, they then look at her positives e.g. her strengths, before

helping her to recall the positive aspects of her home life, the familiarity of supportive family and friends she has left behind and the strengths she can rely on there, whereas, in a new country, she has nobody to rely upon and possibly has no language facility, thereby making her more vulnerable to exploitation which may reach extremes.

Trijnte's mantra is *'There is always the possibility for change,'* and this informs the planning and roadmap to help the victim realise the network at her home country may be stronger than she is willing to admit- gradually the girl decides to either return home with supported or to stay in undocumented in the Netherlands. They take pains to stress the fullest understanding of what the realities of what it means to be undocumented and by so doing, the person make an informed choice. "Shelters are not a prison, we help them make a decision and then we have to let them go."

Trijnte gave examples of her projects in Lagos and the mindsets that needed to be adjusted so that a culturally reverse-order of thinking prevailed, where now "The client is in charge!" Trinjte showed us a short film of her work with the Committee for the Support of Victims of Human Trafficking- COSUDOW- based in Lagos, Nigeria. COSUDOW offers counselling, personal and professional support & spiritual direction to the girls once they return to Nigeria. In the film, Sr. Patricia, a Nigerian Sister working with COSUDOW, repeatedly reminded viewers that "Nigeria is not as bad as it is portrayed.Home is the best- there is no place like home."

Keeping in mind what is in the best interests of the person, they try to help people arrive at their own, informed decision, a strength-based decision. In circulating copies of the "Safe Future Methodology," Trijnte invited our cooperation regarding early identification and protection and safe return and reintegration. We were also invited to contribute to their questionnaire and the expansion of the Social Map, which is part of the publication, making a small index of contacts. Trijnte elicited responses from the attendees who asked how realistic is this approach. From their experiences, girls simply do not want to return, especially since they endured so much to get to where they are in Europe.



She concluded her presentation by saying we have to accept

the fact that although the majority of migrants want to remain in the Netherlands, you have to believe you have done a good job when you help girls realise they actually want to return home.



Laura Carrier spoke to us about the **IOM and Assisted Voluntary Return Programme**. IOM has become a member of the UN within the past year and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. It is a neutral and non-political body, working with governments, migrant organisations, NGOs and others. It cannot go against the governmental laws and regulations of the countries in which it works.

With 166 member states, including the USA, which is one of the biggest donors to the IOM, the IOM is active in +150 countries worldwide, located in 480 sites and +8,000 staff working in a variety of IOM projects.

As the leading international organisation for migration, the IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, in addition to helping advance understanding of migration issues & encourage social and economic development through migration. Its primary aims are prevention and protection

70,000 trafficked persons have been assisted by the IOM since 1994. Admittedly, the definition of trafficking has become enlarged as a result of the increased movements of persons. The IOM try to give the option of safe return and reintegration, based on the belief that at home, at least you have a legal status and a network.

They approach trafficking in persons within the context of migration. Their approach is based on the following principles:

- Respect for human rights.
- The physical, mental and social well-being of the individual & his community.
- Sustainability through institutional capacity building, of governments & civil society.

Despite all the supports and awareness-raising efforts, the IOM sees the continually increasing numbers of victims of Human Trafficking victims. Of particular concern is the noted increase in trafficking of minors (<18) 262 in 2016 which represents 35% of the entire cohort of 753 recorded victims of Human Trafficking.

The SAFE RETURN/Voluntary Return Programme was set up by the Netherlands after the Darfur wars. It has been extended to encompass broader categories of people whom the IOM can assist e.g. labour migration & development. The programme works in all



operational stages e.g. pre-departure, transportation and post-arrival.

The group tries to design supports based on the needs of the person. They also offer a small amount of re-integration money, so the woman can get a new start on life once she returns to her mother country. At home, she has the advantages of familiarity with the language and her country's systems. But after all the interventions around repatriation, statistical data reveals that most of the girls eventually fall back into the migration circuit.

In response to the questions of Who cares for the carers? How does the IOM look after the psychological care of their counselling staff/social working staff? Most of the staff deal very well with their work and its demands, despite the stressed people they have to deal with, in a positive way.



Staying with the concept of Safe Return, Matje Mattheij- from the *Wereldwijd Foundation*, based in Limburg, presented on the 'Worldwide Tools Project,' an NGO with the specific purpose of helping migrants return to their home countries in a supported manner, having provided them with skills-based vocational training and shipping home equipment such as sewing machines, drills, kilns and cookers, in order that each person has the equipment necessary to start an enterprise which

can be self -sustaining. The Foundation won an award in 2015 for being the best Safe Return project in the Netherlands!

Matje's presentation offers a perspective on the question Pope Francis asks "Who is my brother? Who is my sister?" She gave expression to the proverb "It takes a village," as she shared about the small Foundation comprising 3 or 4 people which was one of the first organisations in the Netherlands, to assist refugees in acquiring languages and skills, so that they would not be idle. The Foundation offers Professional skills Training and Languages, and works from the empowerment model, working with the needs and desires of the refugees, who explain what skills they wish to secure in order to successfully return home and set up a business in order to make a good living, e.g. a sewing studio in Sri Lanka, a welding class in Burundi, a hairdressers in Uganda, a nail bar in Abuja and more. By means of the *WorldTools Motto Movie*, Matje demonstrated to us the value of the workshops where people get their skills. One example being Sabir, who wants to establish a rickshaw company once he returns home to Bangladesh. He comes twice weekly to *Wereld wild* & stays locally with a family who provides him with free accommodation and food.

Once Samir feels that he has learned enough, then he is free to return home. He will be equipped with machinery & equipment in order to develop his employment idea and all this equipment is shipped in a huge crate to his home.



Twenty years ago, the Foundation had one hundred students and more than a hundred volunteers, but now because of the changed political situation, the Foundation is not allowed to cater to migrants prior to their being approved for residency in The Netherlands. However, the NGO continues to offer these supports in much smaller numbers, an example being where one volunteer craftsman teaches a class of only one or two migrants. These classes can extend for up to a year or two, after which they conclude as there is then a danger of dependency and possibly being taken advantage of by the migrant. A fine line is drawn.



Each success story is unique, no person's story is the same. Out of simple beginnings, practical skills can emerge. Matje acknowledged that it takes a long time for refugees and migrants to adopt this programme, but eventually when they realise they have no choice to stay in the Netherlands (they

become aware that they will never be legalised), it is only then that they realise they had better avail of the opportunities on offer from *Wereld work*.

"Over the years, you develop a network. You cannot do it on your own". They rely on donations from many other professionals e.g. content for Maternity nurse's box, is filled by donations from Maternity nurses locally. Similarly with technical tools e.g. welding machines and associated equipment. They get second-hand computers free from companies and include these as part of the crates of equipment shipped overseas.

Because they work closely with IOM, the IOM helps with the shipping costs of equipment. They also work closely with the Refugee Council and with COA, and with VLOT (a voluntary group for undocumented people), who make referrals to *Wereld work*.

*Wereld Werk* also helps local people to share their gifts and talents. In assisting Refugees/asylum seekers, such a project is actually food for the soul of the volunteers themselves. They realise their voluntary contribution really makes a difference in the lives of others.

One of the most challenging components of the week's training, was the topic of the importance of **Forgiveness**, as presented by Theo Hendrickx. His presentation on a highly emotive topic evoked a wide range of responses, some examples below:

"Forgiveness is not confined to a religion or to the Religious alone."



"Forgiveness calls for dialogue and reflection."

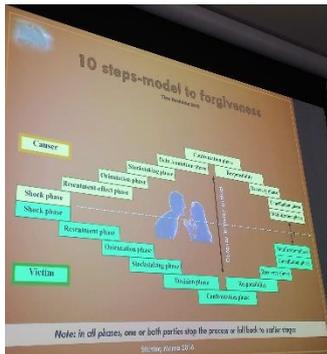
"It is difficult to forgive while you are still hurting."

"Everything can be forgiven but not everything can be forgotten."

"My revenge is forgiveness."

"Forgiveness may have different meanings to different people."

Having analysed his *Ten-Step model to Forgiveness* and ensuing group discussions, some of the responses to the question: “What are the consequences for a person who cannot forgive a painful or traumatic event?” are as follows;



1. Toxic.
2. Self-destruction.
3. An inability to love again.
4. Live in the past and not with a hope for the future.
5. Distortion of the present.

After the screening of a YouTube clip “The Power of Forgiveness- Gary Ridgway,” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2\\_OOaP763k&t=47s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2_OOaP763k&t=47s)) about the powerful impact of a father’s forgiveness of a murderer, we each shared our individual, personal dilemmas when faced with the following questions, How do you discuss forgiveness with a victim? What is difficult for you in such a discussion? How can your faith help you in this discussion?”

Everyone agreed that we would be leaving the week’s training with much to reflect upon, especially having regard for Theo’s workshop.

Franck Ploum joined us later in the week, to consider “Theological Reflection as preparation to *Right to Protect*.” Working for the Ecumenical Ekklesia Breda and also for the education Congregation of Brothers from Huijbergen, Franck covered the following four topics.

1. Pope Francis.
2. Liberation Theology.
3. Bible and Liberation.
4. Infertility.

Franck seamlessly wove the strands inter-linking each of the above, as he referenced the actions and choices made by Pope Francis as well as his letters and Encyclicals, to illustrate that Pope Francis works from a Liberation theology perspective.



Rooting Liberation Theologists in the Bible, beginning with Exodus, when God said to Moses “I send you . . .”, sending Moses to heal and liberate his own people from slavery, Franck drew parallels for us in our work as RENATE, where we are called to give a voice to the voiceless and make manifest God’s love and compassion.

Franck’s statement “We cannot see the value of the tree in itself,” was ringing in our ears for the remainder of our week. Society has become accustomed to only seeing the possible material value and gain from an object, even in the world of nature. He challenged us to understand the concept of systems of sin, sinful structures and ‘sin’ as being all that undermine people in life, rob them of their ability to participate in society and makes the poor poorer.



It was heartening to hear that all kinds of people are called for the purpose of humanity, not for selfish reasons alone and that freedom applies to all people on this earth. Franck encouraged us to consider freedom as being inseparable from responsibility for another human being.

Franck approached the fourth area, Infertility, with the proposal that all matriarchs are infertile in the Bible, with the exception of Mary, whose power is expressed in *The Magnificent*. The Gospel gives Mary a place in the history of liberation. Franck proposed that liberation comes from “soft” power e.g. kindness, mercy and compassion. By contrast, wars and traumatised people came as a result of male power, as seen in previous world wars, the massacres at Bosnia/Herzegovina and current wars in Syria and in some African nations.

He cautioned that mercy is not enough, as it does not change the *source* of the problem. There is also the need for the addition of Justice, with the ensuing stronger combination. In the fight for justice, you have to be merciful. We strive for a society of allies where all people live in harmony with each other.

Throughout his presentation, Franck shone a spotlight on the Living Word, challenged us to engage with the Gospel & asked us the profound question: “When I read the Gospel, what does it ask of me?” A connection must be made between Gospel and society, engagement with Society and encounter with God.

The following feedback was received, after group work and discussions;

The importance of understanding that what we do is not ‘work’ but our mission.

The importance of good formation from the outset, on understanding the meaning of love, compassion and kindness. Otherwise, the girls and men accept violence as a manifestation of love.

Call for social/ societal transformation that Human Trafficking and violence are not acceptable.

In light of Pope Francis’s reign, it is opportune to use the power and influence of the Church, to lobby against Human Trafficking.

Acknowledged there are church leaders who are vocal against Human Trafficking but there are also others who are not.

We cannot leave Pope Francis alone! We should not only pray for him but also go out and work for him.

Useful to share information at Parish level, through talks and presentations. Equally important to taking



opportunities to give talks and presentations in other public spaces, as not everyone attends church as their Religious witness anymore.

The value of attending RENATE meetings, in helping us form a strong and recognised network.

The value of forgiveness in the process of healing.

The importance of work towards social transformation, to be able to work against slavery and all human suffering and not see prostitution as normal.

The importance of acting on one's social responsibilities.

Keeping the dignity of the human person uppermost in our considerations.



Sr. Bibiana shared her concerns that in Nigeria, there is an increased circulation of the falsehood that Europe is a haven. She would like to set up a Training of Trainers programme, so trainers will go out to the wider community and speak about the harsh realities of life in Europe. Ideally, through such information and prevention programmes, young people will stay home and be creative, instead of falling into the hands of criminals who will exploit them.

RENATE members from Charita Slovakia referred to their video of *Two Little Girls* and its usefulness as an awareness-raising campaign. They suggested Bibiana contact the producers of that video, who might possibly adapt it for Nigerian purposes.

Sr. Valentyna shared a Centre for Society and Research in UKRAINE recently found that 70% of respondents to a questionnaire, expressed the desire to leave the UKRAINE in order to find a better life. Having once been a labour migrant herself, in order to earn an income to support her family, she understands very well the dilemma people face.

RENATE members from Malta shared their awareness-raising events in Malta.



The issue of trusting the Police cropped up as a concern in a number of countries. RENATE members in Romania spoke of the challenges when working with the Police in Romania and how to build trust with them. The Netherlands recounted similar experiences of mistrust amongst social workers with the Dutch police, but the possibility of change was exemplified when a police officer trained as a social worker and he himself then became a catalyst for change

amongst the police.

Imelda Poole referred to the Medaille Trust having organised cross-border meetings over the last two years, involving the police from the UK, Slovenia and Albania, which have

transformed the Albanian police's mindsets. Suggested Romanians and Slovaks be invited to this Medaille - Trust organised an event in the future.

The sympathetic police were acknowledged of course, but there is also the reality of police who are over-worked and do not prioritise assistance to human trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, there are police who culturally, do not feel it right to interfere in family violence, regardless of the possible outcome for all concerned.

Members shared concerns for the stark and sad inequality between what people earn in one country vs another and the role such inequality plays in the 'Push' factors.

Concern was also expressed for the mental instability of some women who have been trafficked and eventually return home where there's little or no psychological supports for their trauma.



**FRIDAY- Day 5- Right to Protect.** (Rian Erdeveen, Sr. Imelda Poole, President RENATE & Anne Kelleher, RENATE Communications Person).

Rian Erdeveen presented a range of complex and very human considerations to us, from the simplicity of registering a birth or a death or marriage or reporting an incidence of crime. Without papers, it's very difficult to approach the authorities to ask for protection. In the Netherlands, the law does not usually protect irregular migrants.

While all UN and EU laws are inclusive, irrespective of immigration status, people are vulnerable. She spoke of the duty on the part of citizens such as landlords and institutions who offer accommodation, healthcare, education to denounce irregular migrants to the authorities. Otherwise, funding to their institutions will be withheld.

In referring to the *Facilitation Directive 2002/90/EC (28<sup>th</sup> Nov.2002)*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:328:0017:0018:EN:PDF>

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536490/IPOL\\_STU\(2016\)5364\\_90\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536490/IPOL_STU(2016)5364_90_EN.pdf)



those present at the training were saddened and alarmed by the possible impact of the possible criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants. Although the idea behind the Directive is the prevention of smuggling, unauthorised entry, transit and residence, there are those who bring people cross-border due to humanitarian purposes, but they too are at risk, despite their humanitarian intentions. The directive obliges States to criminalise irregular entry and irregular stay. This directive will be enforced all the more now with the rise in the far-right movements who will pursue its implementation.



Counter-effects of these laws and directives is that formal service providers such as school governors and health care providers are reluctant to take in irregular migrants. This, in turn, creates less access to services than there are formal. In response, we have to find creative ways to ensure humanity and justice prevail for all humankind.

**Imelda Poole** followed Rian's presentation with an introduction based on her first years working in the area of human trafficking in the UK and the importance of observing openness and transparency as a means of protection against the risk of being accused of any impropriety. The law can be very vague and does not always protect trafficked victims.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was introduced by the UN at its World Summit in 2005, consequent to the wars in Bosnia- Herzegovina, as a global political commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/component/content/article/35-r2pcs-topics/398-general-assembly-r2p-excerpt-from-outcome-document>

Imelda spoke of the necessity to have policies and practices which ensure the protection of the organisation as well as the client. Imelda referred to the Albanian NGO Different and Equal as a source for best practice in terms of Right to Protect. Imelda also suggested that in devising a Code of Conduct for NGOs, the World association of NGOs (WANGO) might be helpful as a reference point as it has a very good document "Code of Conduct" for NGO's.

Imelda raised the consideration that issues of access must be considered for all members of society, but how do we live out our social obligations? Access to clean water, for instance? Citing an example from Albania, where, in remote areas, some families had to choose which child to send to school (a boy child or a girl child) because they could afford transport for only one. By relentless and lengthy lobbying for a bus, the community eventually achieved a means of access.

**Anne Kelleher**, RENATE Communications Person, presented a PowerPoint on how the RENATE network is delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was interesting to see that people within the Network are unaware of the extent to which they are playing such significant roles in the efforts to transform our world.

**Frank Noteboom**, from **FIER** in the Netherlands, shared about the Coalition to end child sex trafficking, comprising 11 projects.

Frank proposed that in seeking Systemic Change that's enduring, the Right to Protect starts with awareness and the importance of Public Awareness Raising Campaigns. He referred to a West African Trafficking in Human Beings campaign held for a month in the Netherlands, in response to increasing numbers of Nigerian girls being trafficked into Europe.

Amongst the themes which Frank referenced, were the following;

Detection.



Treatment.

Prevention of secondary victimisation.

Preventing re-victimisation.

Frank spoke in general about a proposed new strategy in the Netherlands for foreign children who are exploited- signed by 50 NGOs & lawyers and academics and has agreed to contribute to the RENATE Child Trafficking exercise when the research specific to the Netherlands gets under way.

**Theo Noten presented on ECPAT Netherlands.** [t.T.noten@defenceforchildren-ecpat.nl](mailto:T.noten@defenceforchildren-ecpat.nl)

The aim of ECPAT is to eliminate sexual exploitation of children (aged -18). Founded in Bangkok 1991 and now in 86 countries worldwide. He spoke about the multi-faceted approaches such as research, lobbying and advocacy, training and awareness, youth participation, assistance for victims, monitoring and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), optional protocols and regional Conventions, as well as international legislative frameworks such as those produced by the UN, UNHCR, EU. Examples of this are:

The UNHCR Framework for the Protection of the child.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

Optional Protocol to the CRC on the slavery of children, child prostitution & child pornography, 2000.

The Council of Europe Convention on Sexual abuse of Children, Sexual exploitation of Children 2007.

The EU Directive on Sexual abuse & Sexual exploitation of Children & Child Pornography 2011.

The National NKL Penal Code;

**PORTICUS**- 11 Projects underway amongst the whole coalition. Are in the process of building a coalition of networks to collectively address the issues of Human Trafficking and exploitation. ECPAT and Terre des Hommes are natural partners, as is RENATE also. He acknowledged it is an international Network. We were enthused to hear him say that Porticus will see if they can develop plans for the future so as to eliminate Human Trafficking in Europe and the rest of the world immediately afterwards!!

**General commentary.**

Imelda raised the question, about Internet Trafficking for labour. She referred to the previous RENATE training in Romania, which focused on traffickers using the Internet, exploiting those who are desperate to get work and do not appreciate the risks attached to using the Internet. Imelda quoted former President Obama who said in 2015 when addressing Congress, "We have to use the Technology against the Traffickers." Everything

we create and develop is “Open Source”, meaning it’s open and available to all, ideally for positive purposes.

Imelda believes communication via Social Media is a positive and we should be bold enough to share our information and collective wisdom, mindful all the while that Social Media is vulnerable to being mismanaged



And while Imelda acknowledged the internet is being abused and exploited for dark purposes, on a positive note, it is fair to say that younger generations are more cognisant of the dangers of the internet and need support and affirmation to be discerning in its use.

Drawing on the reality that Human Trafficking existed long before the internet, Imelda was insistent we go right back to the root causes and get stuck in at early intervention and empowerment, with the belief that knowledge is power.

Imelda acknowledged that protection of children can sometimes go overboard and confirmed that we need to be careful not to pamper them to the extent that we disempower them...For young people, there is no ‘off-line’ time, they are constantly online. 95% know when to stop and take a rest but the other 5% do not and consequently, are vulnerable.

Imelda concluded her presentation by reminding those present, of the importance of self-care in order to prevent burn-out. She stated “All children have the same rights when they are in a certain territory, regardless of what hostilities prevail or what the Law says. Be aware and know the arena you work in. Be alert to the question ‘Are we protected as we go about our work?’”

### **Conclusion.**

The Theology of responsibility prevailed as a vital consideration throughout the week’s training. But when does one start to write the Theology of Responsibility? A stark quotation from one trafficking survivor who escaped from a trafficking situation in Abuja, Nigeria, remains with all of us “Nobody panics about all these girls being trafficked to Europe but everyone panics about a burning house on fire....”



This question, together with existential considerations such as the meaning of life, the dignity of the human person and the belief that “there is always the possibility of change,” kept nudging at our consciences and collective consciousness, in a week packed with information and challenges.

The phrase “It takes a village” is one of the directly applicable messages from this week. In the case of RENATE, our network is indeed our ‘village,’ as we engage and work together to achieve our mission and goals and extend our capacities, professionally, professionally and spiritually.

It has been a week where we were continuously challenged to question our perceptions, of ourselves and of 'the other.' Sometimes, what we think the other needs may not, in fact, be life-giving in the long term. The proverb "*Give a man a fish & you feed him for the day. Teach a man to fish you feed him for life,*" comes to mind.

The training ended on a positive note that not everything in Africa is disastrous! There is value and dignity in shining a light on all that is positive in the countries of origin. We just need a fresh set of lenses through which to view that world.



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