



In all things to love and to serve

Irish Jesuit Missions Newsletter

Issue 19 – Winter 2016

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Vision

A just and humane world based on Gospel values and Ignatian Spirituality.

Mission

The Irish Jesuit Missions supports Jesuit works in the service of poor and marginalised people, particularly in Africa and Asia.

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Children at Kasisi Children's Home, Zambia

Jesus said: Let the little children come to me

Jesus said "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Mt.19:14)

In Zambia and Malawi, children face many challenges from a lack of schools, health facilities and playgrounds to food and housing.

Many children live in crowded homes with not less than five persons in a room of about four by five metres. Such a room serves as sleeping quarters, kitchen and living room. The environment is generally unsanitary and gives rise to outbreaks of disease which mostly affect the child.

The majority of government schools, both primary and secondary, are over-enrolled with no less than 60 pupils in a classroom. The learning environment is very crowded. Open Community Schools cater for those who can't find a place in ordinary schools. These are managed by volunteer teachers, most of them without any training. As a result the dropout rate is high.

Children in both Malawi and Zambia face other forms of abuse such as neglect, emotional stress and child labour arising from economic hardships. Malawi experienced a poor maize harvest last farming season. This led to children being



A Word from the Director

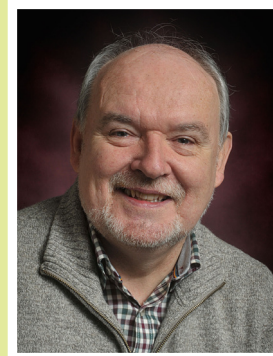
Christmas is a special time for children. They teach us wonder and joy as they open their Christmas gifts. Every year we are nourished by that same wonder and joy as we gather around the crib and gaze at the baby Jesus in the manger. God comes amongst us in the vulnerability, smallness and fragility of a child. We remember how Jesus fled with his parents into Egypt because of the threats of Herod.

Many children have fled with their parents into refugee camps this year because of violence, war and conflict and the Irish Jesuit Missions (IJM) has supported many children in refugee camps. The Jesuit Refugee Service is the outreach of the Jesuits bringing protection and hope to children living in dangerous situations, through education and social services.

The safety of children is a priority work of the Society of Jesus worldwide. Child safeguarding programmes and protocols are key to keeping our children secure and the IJM has focussed in the past year in helping all our partners in implementing child safeguarding procedures and keeping spaces of work as safe places for all. Perhaps one of the greatest instruments of protection for girls and boys, both now and in the future, is schools where children can learn and play and enjoy the wonder and joy of simply being children.

The stories in our Winter Newsletter are stories of our work for children, for their rights, safety and futures. We thank you for your support and remember you in our Masses and prayers during Christmas and the New Year. We also remember in a special way our companions in the Far East when they celebrate the Chinese New Year on January 28th, 2017.

Happy Christmas, New Year and Chinese New Year in the Far East.



forced to accompany adults travelling long distances in search of food and being employed in selling various goods.

With little to positively engage the children, we have seen growing numbers of 'street kids', both boys and girls. Alcohol and drug abuse are common. Sexual abuse is unavoidable in the streets, usually perpetrated by drunken adults and older children.

Girl children are particularly at risk since the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Zambia's largest hospital in Lusaka records no less than five new cases of child sexual abuse every day. Government health facilities are overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of patients coupled with an inconsistent supply of drugs.

Communities in both countries are poorly informed about child rights. Those who have access to information have difficulty in accepting that children do have rights. Most adults claim that promoting children's rights has led to indiscipline and that children's rights' campaigners have neglected to emphasise children's responsibilities. Children have been viewed as mere dependants whose welfare is not of great importance.

This view was made clear during our sensitisation workshops in our schools and parishes in Monze, Lusaka, Lilongwe and Kasungu recently. Awareness programs have been stepped up in all our institutions. Appropriate structures and policies are being more widely established.

Thanks to the generosity of the Irish Jesuit Missions in Dublin, the Child Protection Commission and the Development Office of the Zambia/Malawi Jesuit Province has launched a programme of awareness workshops and project level trainings in Child Safeguarding and Protection. Capacity building is also receiving attention with more advanced Training of Trainers in the field of child protection.

There is every need for greater outreach in order to ensure that communities are more familiar with child rights and that children may be better protected and enjoy the privileges which are the right of every person.

Dorothy Hambayi is assistant to the Child Protection Officer at the Jesuit Province of Zambia/Malawi, based in Lusaka and promoting the welfare and protection of children within the Province.





Participants at the Child Safeguarding workshop in Nairobi, Kenya 2016

Safe places for children: growing up in Kenya

Child protection is a term that I have come to get used to and understand fully only in my adulthood. To understand why, you would need a little exposure of my childhood. I grew up in Kisii, a small village in Western Kenya, the fifth born in a family of eight. I was in this context till I completed high school in the 1990's. My mother was our main mentor as my father worked away in the city and only came home at the end of the year. As a child, just like any other children we just did what we were told, did all the errands at home and at school as required by the parent/teacher and we loved it.

We were free to play with everyone in the village without any serious danger however we were never consulted neither our opinions sought on anything even if it were something as simple as which dress I would like for Christmas. Children were totally dependent on the adults/parents who knew what was best for them; children were there to be seen, and not to be heard. We got punished whenever we made mistakes, sometimes very severely including beatings, denial of basic rights both at school and at home. Child rights were unheard of and we did not feel that we had undergone any child abuse.

The first time I heard about child protection and child rights was in college. My parents and teachers acted primarily from their traditional and cultural overviews about children and adulthood and these do not put the child in position of engagement/participation. It may have been better for my parents to discuss and involve me in decision making processes, for my teachers to use alternative means of discipline rather than corporal punishment, and the list goes on.

Having been trained in child safeguarding, I see that it will take a whole attitude change towards children

to achieve a society which tolerates zero child abuse. The modern context in which children and adults find themselves is both a blessing and a curse to child protection.

Arguably there were remarkably less child abuse incidences then than there are today. With faster and more sophisticated communication options, more enlightened adults and children on child protection issues, clear legislation and even implementation of the laws, there should be really no 'excuse' for child abuse. Paradoxically, child abuse continues to expand in magnitude, sophistication and cruelty.

Child protection is not achievable just by having the right legislation, implementing it or even the wide dissemination of Child Safeguarding knowledge for both adults and children. I think it takes a deeper attitude change towards children and their capacities and the responsibilities of adults in determining a safe and secure environment for children at home, school and the society. Without this commitment at personal, family and institutional level, child abuse will continue to rise and get more complex.

At personal level I approach child protection from the dimension of my childhood experiences, their effects on me and, on the other hand the skills that I have gathered in my adult life on this issue. I use this background to interact with my son and other children with a view to give the best treatment and environment that I can for the children to thrive.

Lucy Monari is Programmes and designated Child Protection Officer for the Jesuit Eastern Africa Province based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Listening to children's stories from conflict zones

Children in the context of a refugee camp, an urban setting, or any other location around the world fall into a category of individuals who are extremely vulnerable. Simply looking at their status in the world will identify that. They are unable to make decisions on their own, and have to depend on others in order to survive.

All individuals need psychosocial support for their wellbeing. Some children might need additional psychosocial care to improve their quality of life if they have experienced trauma, have lived through a disaster, or are not receiving adequate support from a caregiver.

Going through these kinds of stressful events can stunt the proper psychological growth of a child, halting normal lifespan development. It is important to note that although some individuals may become stunted, others with higher resilience may not experience these events in the same way.

Children can be at risk of being hurt or exploited during traumatic and stressful events because of stress that adults are experiencing. They might also find it difficult to access services from agencies or individuals because of a lack of knowledge about services provided, simply not knowing their human rights, or even who/how to ask for assistance.

Empowerment through psychosocial programming is one way of working with children who have been affected by stressful events. Most interventions tend to be Western in their approach, and may not be suitable for all cultures. Culturally sensitive interventions should be utilised when possible.

“Every individual has their own set of specific needs, wants, and desires. It is easy as an adult to put all childcare together in the same way.”

Looking at the children's cultures and pulling from them allows the approaches to be ingrained into their normal patterns and habits, rather than being something outside their sphere of understanding. Asking for and incorporating feedback from children and individuals in specific programming is a simple way to further understand and work with cultural norms.



The JRS Safe Haven houses dozens of children in need of protection and guidance in Kakuma refugee camp. (Angela Wells/JRS)

Psychosocial health looks at the whole person, identifying the importance of a person's mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Psychosocial support (PSS) programs should be incorporated into larger systems when possible—utilising child protection principles—allowing for inclusive care and increasing a child's capacity to cope.

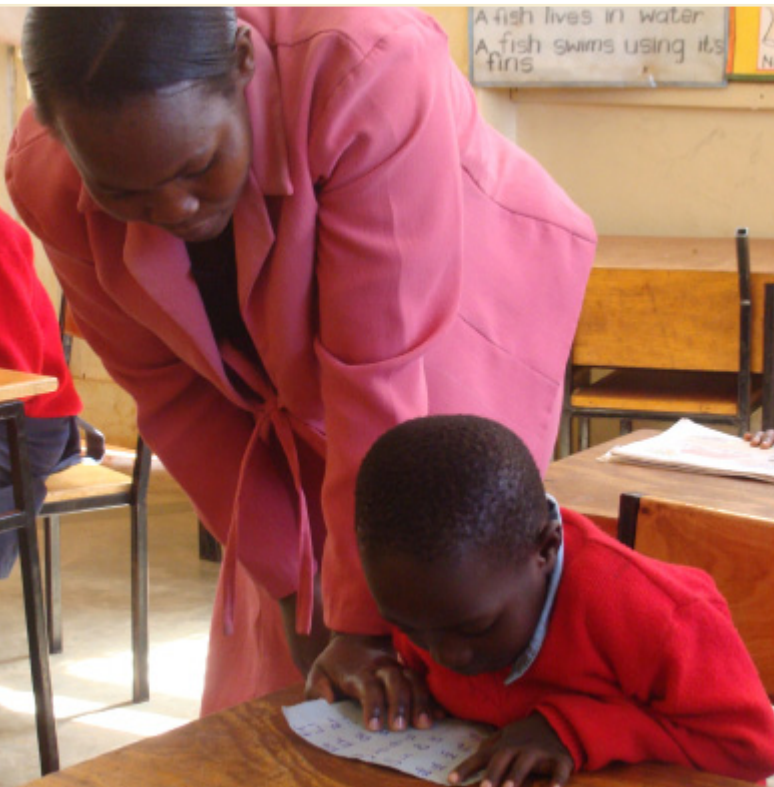
There are many opportunities to include PSS into work with vulnerable children. Knowing that not all children are impacted by stressful events in the same way, it is important to look at individualised care. Every individual has their own set of specific needs, wants, and desires. It is easy as an adult to put all childcare together in the same way.

Children's own mental, emotional, social, spiritual wellbeing and capacities should be looked at in order to identify the best way forward for their care.

Listen to them, and allow them to have their own voices.

Julie Krause is currently working with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya as Mental Health and Counseling Coordinator. The programme is supported by the Irish Jesuit Missions.

Children first: protection through education



Education programme in St Joseph the Worker Parish, Nairobi

The ongoing campaign in Kenya, and other parts of Africa, of educating both children and adults on forms and effects of child abuse and the need to establish concrete measures to protect children, has resulted in an increased number of people who understand, support and appreciate the importance of having in place policies and procedures to protect children. As will be discussed below, education empowers and creates awareness, the necessary conditions for durable social change and child safeguarding in Kenya.

Education empowers children against abuse. Through child focused learning, children are able to see their role in self-protection and protection of others. Child-centered education creates awareness among children and their parents' about child abuse. For instance, corporal punishment in Kenyan schools was accepted as a way of disciplining students in school and home setting.

However, thanks to the social activists who campaigned and assumed the role of educating parents, guardians, teachers and pupils that corporal punishment is an unacceptable practice—for it amounts to child abuse—it can cause trauma and health problems that are carried into adulthood.

As a tool of child protection, education empowers people and communities in building knowledge and confidence to challenge conservatively accepted cultural practices which lead to child abuse. For instance until a few years ago, female circumcision—sometimes referred to as female genital mutilation (FGM)—was a practice

accepted culturally among some Kenyan tribes e.g. Kisii, Kikuyu and Massai. It was believed that such a practice is central in preparing young girls to become reliable future wives. Nevertheless, the practice as it's known has adverse health and psychological effects and sometimes can cause death.

Through education, people from these traditional communities are gradually abandoning it. The education imparted to the public enabled the recipients to critically look at this cultural practice and confidently decided to bring a social change. Such a social change inspired by education led to protection of children against the abusive act of FGM. Besides, through education many traditional communities have come to appreciate the fact that keeping children safe requires the concerted efforts of a vigilant and informed society, confident in enforcing appropriate judgments and taking affirmative actions.

Education helps to bring awareness of children's rights and the importance of enforcing them. When such rights are well understood and enforced, the outcome is a safe environment for children. School/college education, workshops, seminars, etc. enable people to know, appreciate and uphold children's rights, for example, the Kenyan curriculum of primary education provides for the formation of Human Rights Clubs. During the weekly meetings, the pupils are introduced to various children's rights and how to report if they are infringed upon.

Education in a school setting makes it possible for children to be involved in classroom activities that are aligned with their stages of cognitive and emotional development. School education in Kenya has helped as a tool for protecting children by creating awareness of children's rights and promoting environments that build assurance, friendship, security and happiness, irrespective of children's family conditions.

In sum, education in Kenya has brought home the fact that protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Increasingly, people working in contact with children are becoming more aware of indicators of harm and procedures of reporting incidences of abuse.

The increased awareness has motivated the government to employ child-safeguarding staff in each district to ensure timely and effective intervention for children who may be at risk of significant abuse.

Fr Corbinian Kyara SJ is from Tanzania working in the Eastern Africa Province. He is currently serving as the Provincial's Director of Development and is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Mission News

● To Rome, for the General Congregation 36

The Irish Jesuit Province was represented at the General Congregation 36 in Rome by Fr Tom Layden SJ, the Provincial and Fr John K Guiney SJ, of the Irish Jesuit Missions and the Centre for Faith and Justice. The 215 international delegates elected a new Superior Fr Arturo Sosa SJ from Venezuela, the 31st Father General of the Society of Jesus.



● New Irish Provincial

At the Jesuit General Congregation, Father General announced the nomination of the new Irish Provincial Fr Leonard Moloney SJ. He joined the Society of Jesus on September 24, 1973 and was ordained on June 22, 1985. Until last year Fr Moloney was Headmaster of Clongowes Wood College, Co. Kildare in Ireland.

● Memorial Mass for Irish Missionaries

A large group of family and friends of late Irish Jesuit missionaries gathered for our annual Memorial Mass in Milltown Chapel on Sunday 6th November. Fr Gerry Clarke SJ, Parish Priest at St Francis Xavier's Church in Dublin, officiated. Also in attendance were Fr James Hurley SJ formerly of Hong Kong and Fr John Dooley SJ who served for many years in Zambia.

● Welcome to Krizan Vekic

Krizan Vekic is a secondary school teacher taking on the role of Justice Education Coordinator for the Jesuit Education Desk and supported by the Irish Jesuit Missions. The Justice Education programme incorporates four key areas of justice; Development Education, Environmental Justice, Migrants and Refugees, and Social Inequality. The programme seeks to embed justice across all areas of Jesuit school life.

● Annual Report 2015

The Irish Jesuit Missions Office annual report 2015 is available on the website at www.jesuitmissions.ie. With many items and stories of Jesuit works overseas, we hope the report makes interesting reading.



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