

Activities report

Talitha Kum International Coordination Committee



Rome, 19th-23th June 2017

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The meeting took place at the UISG Headquarters in Rome, Piazza di Ponte Sant'Angelo, 28.

Participants:

Committee Members: Sr. Gabriella Bottani (coordinator), Sr. Claudette Bastien (Canada), Sr. Ann Osterreich (USA), Sr. Carmela Gibaja (Latin America), Sr. Imelda Poole (Europe), Sr. Patricia Ebegebulem (Africa), Sr. Maria Adeline Abamo (Asia), Sr. Noelene Simmons (Oceania).

UISG: Sr. Florence de la Villeon (Migrants Network)

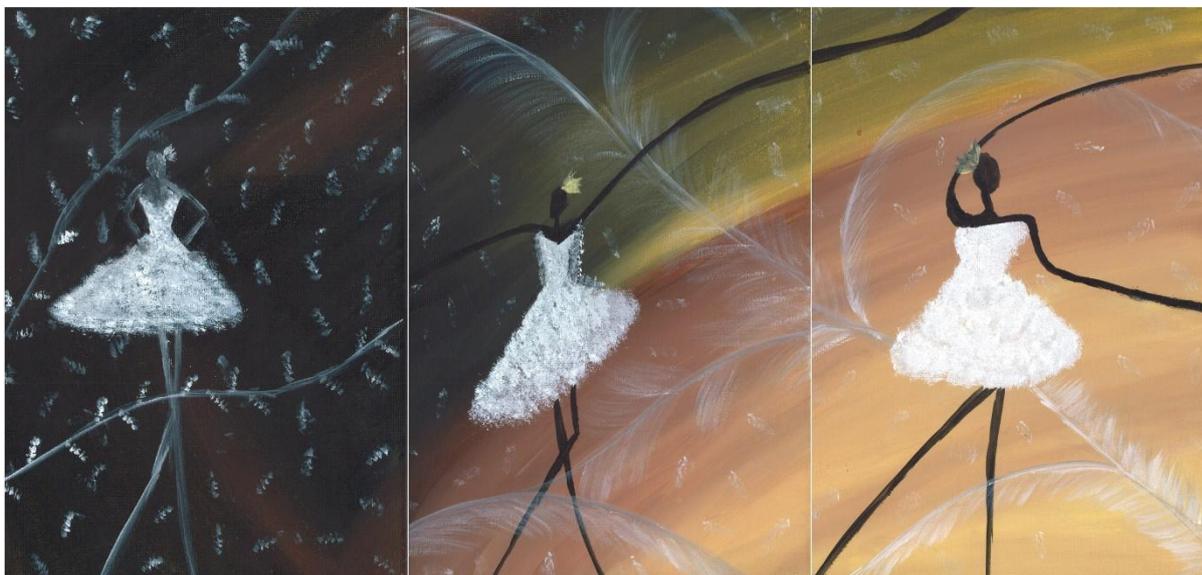
Facilitator: Sr. Patricia Murray (UISG)

Intern: Maria Kunath

June 19th

Spirituality of the day - the Gospel according to Mark: **"He took her by the hand and said to her, Talitha Kum - Arise"** (Mk 5:41)

"The Dancer" (triptych painted by an adolescent survivor of trafficking in persons)



The first day began with a recollection on the trajectory of Talitha Kum within the wider framework of the UISG. Sr. Patricia Murray, after a short introduction about the common journey of Talitha Kum and the UISG, introduced the UISG Strategic Plan. She emphasized that Talitha Kum is one of the most important projects of the UISG. Then she described the upcoming activities of the UISG, specifically the Delegates Assembly that will take place in Manila in November 2017. Sr. Maria Adeline Abamo, will represent Talitha Kum.

At the end of the day, Sr. Gabriella shared the strategic action plan for 2016-2019. The current plan concludes on the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum. It is a very important date to celebrate!

The Committee evaluated the strategic action plan of Talitha Kum at the end of the presentation.

They identified positive aspects: In a short time, Talitha Kum was transformed from a training program to a strong global network. The Communication/Sharing and Networking within the TK Networks and with other organizations, such as the continental connections, the global strategic action plan, the support of the UISG, the person of the coordinator, have been greatly improved. TK is recognized as a representative of religious life, with its training and creation of new networks and leadership formation, the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, the use of new technologies to promote communication (i.e. videoconferences), the TK Newsletter and the Newsletter of the Networks, and the conversations about funding.

They also discussed aspects that needed improvement, such as fund raising, the clarification of the identity of TK, continental connectedness and networking, defining the role of the continental representatives, growing the network, improving communications, highlighting the role of multiple languages, and the need to clarify the partnership with CARITAS / COATNET.

Continuing the theme of the day, Sr. Patricia began a working group session to collect ideas for the followings activities: the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Trafficking in Persons and the 2019 celebration of Talitha Kum's ten year anniversary.

June 20

Spirituality of the day - the Gospel according to Matthew: **“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”** (*Matthew 5:43-48*)

The second day of the committee began with the reports of the continental representatives. Each one presented the situation of their local networks, how they are organized in the region, and they discussed common activities and challenges.

At the end of the session, the Committee identified the following aspects that Talitha Kum needed to implement:

A common presentation/voice of Talitha Kum to be shared with all the networks, an annual report for TK, better use of the internet in growing the networks, an increased number of shelters, improved work to end the demand, an increased focus on trafficking and migration, especially regarding the explosion of trafficking on the internet, common policies and guidelines (i.e. child safe-guard protections), the improvement of worldwide online counselling with mother tongue specialists, better management of dangerous circumstances, where sisters working in this field could be threatened, a greater involvement of survivors in the network, a series of guidelines for handling confidential data and information, an improvement in the common campaign, an increase in sharing good practice, such as the Easter Eggs Campaign, greater collaboration with the health care system, and training of the second generation of leaders.

The afternoon was dedicated to working on the definition of the role and composition of the International Coordination Committee of Talitha Kum. At the end of the day, the participants shared their suggestions. Their ideas will be presented to the UISG executive board.

Then the participants defined the international role of Talitha Kum. They understand the role of TK as a machine leading the worldwide network from the front. They recognize that TK Rome is an official part of the UISG. The participants ask TK / UISG to send an official letter to networks, in order to confirm their membership of TK.

In conclusion, **Judge Maria Grazie Giammarinaro** - Special Reporter at the United Nations for Trafficking of Persons- was invited to meet the group.

The meeting introduced the special rapporteur to the Talitha Kum Networks. The meeting was a starting point for improved communication and collaboration between Talitha Kum Networks and the Special Reporter at the UN, in order to support her work.

June 21

Spirituality of the day - the Gospel according to Matthew: **“Your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you”** (*Matthew 6:1-6 16.18*)

The third day was dedicated to meeting some partners of Talitha Kum at Palazzo San Callisto (Vatican State). The group met:

- Francesca Donà, person in charge of the section for Trafficking in Persons in the Migrants and Refugees Section of the new Dicastery of Integral Human Development
- Martina Liebsch - Policy and Advocacy Director at Caritas Internationalis and Olga Zhyvytsya – COATNET / Caritas
- Martha Rodriguez Diaz – Section Women or the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life)

These were very important points of collaboration that improved the partnerships.

The day concluded with a focus group led by Fr. Peter Lah about the data base and data collection for Talitha Kum. These works aimed to collect more information about the reality of each specific network, in order to become adequate tools for the improvement of TK.

June 22

Spirituality of the day - the Gospel according to Matthew: **“Your Father knows what you need before you ask him”** (*Matthew 6:7-15*)

The day was dedicated to improving the communication and networking at the regional/continental and global levels, within TK and with other organizations. Patrizia Morgante, the director of the communication office of the UISG, helped with this section.

The main challenges identified by the group are:

- Lack of resources: internet, financial, human, in this case we have to find a better way. The tools help us but they cannot be substitutes for our creativity.
- Privacy: we decided who may share what. The key word is Setting /the Configuration of our profile.
- We must train journalists to offer new perspectives about how to speak of our issues (press relationships are needed, although we must set some important points to define our criteria)
- We need a “crises communication,” that faithfully represents the unmet suffering of those ensnared by human trafficking.
- We are all one body– An advocacy campaign that coordinates and strengthens worldwide representation to better accompany the efforts of prayer.
- All the Networks members were invited to display the brand and logo of Talitha Kum in their communications tools.
- To improve the TK website, we need to publish articles focused on a country, the work of the local network, and the situation of trafficking in persons in that country.

Finally, the group decided:

- To better organize the mailing list of Talitha Kum and to create focus groups, like the TK International Committee,
- To have two different Newsletters, one for Network coordinators and members, and an informational one for a wider group of recipients

The day concluded at a reception with H.E. Emma Madigan, Ambassador of Ireland to the Holy See and H.E. Melissa Hitchmann, Ambassador of Australia to the Holy See. The meeting allowed the Coordination Committee to better understand how to work with the Embassies to the Holy See. The Ambassadors could directly listen to the work done by the Talitha Kum networks in many different contexts.

June 23

Spirituality of the day - the Gospel according to Matthew: **“Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart”** (*Matthew 11:25-30*)

The last day of the Committee Meeting was inspired by the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Heart of Jesus teaches us important attitudes. We need to implement these within the service to which we are called.

Sr. Patricia Murray, recalling the journey of the past week, introduced the final section with two questions: “What would you like to say to the UISG Executive Board?” and “What would you like to suggest for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of TK in 2019?”

The committee requested that the UISG Executive Board continue to support and strengthen TK, to help TK to become better connected with other partner organizations; to raise funds for the anti-trafficking activities and for support for the network’s structure, and to celebrate the tenth Anniversary of Talitha Kum

During the morning, Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, Ph. D. of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation led a focus group to better understand the work accomplished. She presented the following questions:

Talitha Kum will be ten years old in 2019. How can we share the dream of organizing a Talitha Kum Assembly in 2019, bringing together representatives from all of the (approximately) 85 countries connected with Talitha Kum worldwide?

Sr. Pat invited the sisters to speak about an APP, an App to identify the supply chain
How would we develop an app with the all the contact numbers of TK?

Sr. Jane thanked the sisters for the work done and added the words of Mr. Conrad Hilton: “Sisters are the best because they can go anywhere, they identify needs and issues before others”.

The focus group helped the group clarify some important elements in order to improve the fund raising abilities. Sr. Jane asked:

- 1) Why do you think that sisters are uniquely positioned to address human trafficking issues?
- 2) Look at the locality. What are the biggest challenges of the anti-trafficking activities, are they addressed to the people or to the network?

- 3) How do you think that the Hilton Foundation can help the SCENARIOS to address the challenges?
- 4) What are the Common needs and the major outcomes to be reached in anti-trafficking?

The final section collected suggestions for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Talitha Kum in 2019.

The Committee suggested holding a TK assembly with participants from all the countries, to support the celebration with prayers, to involve the survivors, to write the story of Talitha Kum, to honour some of the sisters who started the Talitha Kum Projects, to produce audio-visual materials in several languages, to organize a celebrative event at the UISG Plenary in 2019, to write a human rights declaration/statement as a symbolic act to foster the commitment of religious women against trafficking in persons.

Timeframe of the celebration: from February to September 2019;

The International Coordination Committee Meeting concluded with the evaluation. In conclusion Sr. Gabriella thanked all the committee for their important support given to the growing of the worldwide networking and collaboration, and the strengthening of the membership of Talitha Kum.