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People are NOT for sale

ACRATH ANNUAL REPORT 2020



OUR VISION

A world free of human trafficking

OUR PURPOSE

To eliminate modern slavery and human trafficking, and the harm they cause, in Australia, the Asia Pacific region and globally, in collaboration with others.

OUR VALUES

Dignity of each human being

Human rights

Women's rights

Justice

Collaboration

A YEAR LIKE NONE OTHER FOR ACRATH ...

COVID-19 AND TRAFFICKING INTERNATIONALLY

Twenty-twenty has been a most unusual year during which, globally, we have been dealt new challenges with COVID-19 and discovered anew the best of human nature when people rise in solidarity to support and care for others. Locally, this has been part of our ACRATH story too.

An informal survey conducted by Talitha Kum (TK) with grassroots TK groups like ACRATH around the world, identified some of the impacts of lockdowns and the subsequent serious vulnerabilities to human trafficking and enslavement because of the pandemic:

- extreme poverty caused by job loss, lockdown policies (border closure (among countries and internal restriction of movement) - especially for subsistence workers
- many undocumented migrants, women and men, lost their job as caregivers; loss of work for women and men in prostitution, in construction, restaurants, bars – all have exacerbated labor exploitation and economic inequalities
- school closures have left children – spending most of their time isolated at home and online - at risk of internet predators able to contact them via social media platforms.
- some landlords are pressuring renters (most especially women) who are unable to pay their monthly rent, because they are out of work, to trade sexual services in return for not being made homeless (debt bondage)
- an increase in use of pornography has led to child online sexual exploitation
- in some TK networks trafficked victims were abandoned on the streets and rendered homeless, are further victimized as they have no protections or identity papers or any means of survival, and due to the lockdown many could not be repatriated
- undocumented migrants exploited in prostitution, often belong to a stigmatized group, and do not have easy access to official social support: no place for the quarantine; no way to escape; no way to report to law enforcement; no food, no housing
- a consequence for trafficked persons is living in extreme poverty, being at high risk of infection and dealing with the further traumatising mental health impacts of increased isolation.

This grassroots knowledge was confirmed by a study undertaken by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

During the COVID-19 pandemic many countries presented a number of increased risks for Victims of Trafficking, including intensification of control, violence and isolation by their exploiters and less access to medical services, employment opportunities, access to psychological services and legal assistance ... Victims of Trafficking were sometimes left in limbo and unable to return to their countries of origin due to border closures, lack of documentation and resources for return; many, desperate to “repay” their growing debts to traffickers continue to be charged by their traffickers for rent and food during the pandemic, they are being forced to engage in high-risk activities, such as exploitative informal labor, prostitution or the production of pornography online and debt bondage became a force-multiplier for sourcing child labour for bondage and trafficking from desperate families in rural locations. (*GUIDANCE: Addressing Emerging Human Trafficking Trends and Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic*).

The salutary message of a survivor of human trafficking starkly reminds us that our work in addressing human trafficking and enslavement in a world with, or without COVID-19, is far from done:

"There is a person being exploited. Someone who did not want to be used, bought or sold. Someone who just needed food, rent, someone who just didn't have anyone else to turn to or another choice. Until we see that person as our friend, neighbor, sister, daughter, etc., it will never stop."



COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

"I am encouraged by the resilience of the trafficked people I work with; our Parish Against Trafficking in Humans (PATH) group aims to give hope and make a difference, even if it is just to one person."

- Margaret Ng rsj

ACRATH has maintained its strong connection with Talitha Kum, ably represented by Colleen Jackson rsc who is on the Executive. At the Talitha Kum Assembly in September 2019 decisions were made to internationally take a "big picture" view on human trafficking and of the need to address some of its key underlying drivers:

1. Neo-liberal economics focus:
One aspect of this is global reliance on a mobile unskilled workforce – ACRATH's response is to engage in advocacy and support for migrant workers from the Pacific and Timor Leste
2. Gender focus:
The aspect that ACRATH is focussing on is forced marriage prevention: support for girls and young women facing a forced marriage and advocacy for better support systems, particularly appropriate accommodation
3. Migration focus:
ACRATH is concerned about human trafficking vulnerabilities linked to climate change in the Pacific. Some awareness is being developed through personal contacts with people on temporary visas with contracts for seasonal work. It is hoped that future steps can be taken with the Conferences of Religious internationally to develop awareness and culturally appropriate education programs.

"We are committed to promoting individual and collective transformation processes ... (We deplore) the normalisation of exploitation, people no longer dream about better opportunities, they know only exploitation, and consider themselves goods, objects ... the justice systems make it increasingly difficult to achieve compensation for exploited people."

- Gabriella Bottani, cms Talitha Kum Coordinator

COVID-19 AND TRAFFICKING IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia the effects of COVID-19, though not of the same scale as in other places, have been reflected in the calls for support from ACRATH during 2020.

- Overseas workers and students on temporary visas have not had access to JobKeeper, JobSeeker and other Australian Government safety net measures, and this has led to increasing poverty and homelessness that places them in serious situations of exploitation. ACRATH has been an advocate with State and Federal governments for these cohorts of excluded groups. Members in our Companionship Program and those who support workers on the Seasonal Workers Program and Pacific Labour Scheme have been generous in maintaining connections through COVID-19 and have given moral and financial support from donations and some grant money to some of these women and men.
- Overseas workers in prostitution in Australia have been seriously impacted. ACRATH has worked with our partners at Project Respect to give direct financial support to meet housing and living costs.
- As the media has reported there has been an increase in the incidence of domestic violence. ACRATH has been particularly concerned about those subjected to forced marriage as COVID-19 has severely decreased the ability of women to access social support. Checking on the welfare of those known to ACRATH and brokering safe housing has been done.



ACTIVISM IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

Mali, a social worker from St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA), one of 8 advocates against human trafficking across SVHA, is exploring opportunities to create greater awareness among her colleagues around how people who have been trafficked might present at St Vincent's facilities. ACRATH and SVHA have been collaborating on this for a number of years.

- ACRATH's advocacy on supply chains of goods that come to Australia has continued. In particular, linked to our partnership with St Vincent's Health Australia, ACRATH has connected with rubber glove manufacturers in Malaysia. We are very concerned that 5000+ of those workers are now testing positive to COVID-19 because of bad practices in the factories and accommodation housing those workers from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal.

In the face of this pandemic which has exacerbated many of the causes and vulnerabilities of those who are trafficked and enslaved ACRATH's work has continued. Congratulations must be given to our members who have maintained supportive connections with women, men and children in these at-risk groups here at home.

CONNECTED INTERNATIONALLY

ACRATH's reach internationally has remained strong, more so with the ready use of technologies. It is now easier to connect with our networks and maintain a strong support and effective communication. Links being maintained include: UNANIMA International; Mary Ward International; Mercy International; International Presentation Association; Good Shepherd International; Franciscans International; Edmund Rice International; Dominicans International; the Vatican-based *Refugees and Migrants Section* of the Dicastery for the Promotion of *Integral Human Development*; COATNET; Caritas Internationalis; as well as the new Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, Chiara Porro; CHOGM 8.7 (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting targeting SDG Target 8.7); ECPAT Child ALERT in Aotearoa New Zealand; and various UN agencies. ACRATH has also held

meetings with the Australian Ambassadors for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking and for Gender Equality, and with Ambassadors and diplomatic staff from a number of Embassies in Australia.

CONNECTEDNESS WITHIN ACRATH

Connectedness has been a hallmark of the year. Regional groups have creatively adapted to zoom technology and continued to share information, offer support and take initiatives. The year has seen the refinement of existing working groups and the emergence of others to meet outreach and organisational objectives. The level of collaboration and cooperation are signs of a highly committed membership in working to achieve ACRATH's mission.

Our staff team of paid workers and volunteers has been more busy than before the pandemic, as COVID time projects, especially awareness raising and support for vulnerable people, were prioritised. One of the learnings has been that ACRATH has achieved even more, and has become more efficient and more effective as an organisation since entering the new work environment associated with the pandemic.

INSPIRATION FOR CONTINUING

ACRATH has been encouraged by the leadership of women and men in our Church today. This is a sign of hope that there is a passion to right the injustices of human trafficking, and that we do not act alone. As the theologian Angela Rinaldi says:

It is time to create and multiply generous forms of sorority...In our days, extensive networks have been created around human trafficking, immigration, child exploitation, begging, prostitution...we have the means, resources, and professionals to alleviate the pain of many people, to bear witness to Christ who has come to free all from slavery and humiliation.

Pope Francis reminds us in his latest encyclical,


That we are responsible for the fragility of others as we strive to build a common future. Solidarity finds concrete expression in service, which can take a variety of forms in an effort to care for others. And service in great part means "caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people" ... and always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, 'suffers' that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people. [Fratelli Tutti #8g]

Threaded through this report we draw upon the words of wisdom and the stories of others who share our passion for the mission of eliminating human trafficking and slavery at home here in Australia and globally.

Encounter calls for a profound openness to God's mission in the world. Our faith is "firstly an encounter with Jesus, and then we must do what Jesus does: encounter others." Living the mysticism of encounter calls for "the ability to hear, to listen to other people; the ability to seek ways and means" of building the Reign of God together.

Patricia Murray, ibvm, Imagining Leadership in a Global Community

At the National Conference 2020 these goals were affirmed and formed the foundation for our 2020 action.



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OUR GOALS 2020 – 2022

I have come that all may have life and have it to the full. John 10:10

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and servitude shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 4 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<p>OUR VISION</p> <p>A world free of human trafficking</p>	<p>OUR PURPOSE</p> <p>To eliminate modern slavery & human trafficking, and the harm they cause, in Australia, the Asia Pacific region and globally, in collaboration with others</p>	<p>OUR VALUES</p> <p>Dignity of each human being Human rights Women’s rights Justice Collaboration</p>
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GOAL 1

ELIMINATE HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & IN FORCED LABOUR

Work in relevant contexts: domestic servitude, agriculture, hospitals, in sexual exploitation
Educate about demand

GOAL 2

ELIMINATE FORCED MARRIAGE

Work with school communities
Work with culturally diverse communities
Collaborate for victim/survivor/family support
Educate marriage celebrants

HOW?

Raise awareness leading to action
Act regionally & nationally
Work for systemic change, locally & globally
Advocate with government
Collaborate with counter trafficking networks

GOAL 3

ENSURE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED ACCESS THEIR RIGHTS

Provide companionship
Ground strategic action in the stories of people who have been trafficked

GOAL 4

PROMOTE SLAVERY-FREE SUPPLY CHAINS

Collaborate with networks re chocolate, coffee, tea, cotton, clothing, seafood, electronics
Reduce demand for cheap goods, cheap services

GOAL 5

DEVELOP OUR SUSTAINABILITY TO ADDRESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Grow membership	Ensure robust finances	Present the story
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REPORTING ON ACRATH'S GOALS

Goal 1: Eliminate human trafficking in sexual exploitation & in forced labour

ACRATH has expanded its awareness raising resources. ACRATH has also supported victims of human trafficking; we have advocated, mostly in networks, for their rights.

- Education and training programs have been very well attended in 2020. Zoom technology has enabled national reach and higher attendance than at trainings in previous years. Topics covered were trafficking in general, forced marriage, Australian Modern Slavery Act; attendees were school personnel and front line workers.
- The Victorian Education group became a national group during the year and reviewed ACRATH's online Modern Slavery Resource Kit for Senior Secondary Schools; the group implemented a series of five on-line Professional Development sessions to secondary schools Australia wide. Ongoing support for the schools and staff has been made available. The kit is available from our ACRATH website.
- As noted earlier ACRATH has responded flexibly in this COVID-19 year to support the rights of people vulnerable to various kinds of exploitation:
 - women in sexual exploitation
 - women and their children on our Companionship program
 - overseas workers in regional Australia in agriculture
 - overseas students in Australia without a social safety net.
- In 2020 the media has been full of the conversation about the existence of slavery in Australia including the Black Lives Matter focus. ACRATH has conducted two zoom webinars picking up on this challenge: **"ACRATH - looking into Australia's past"** and

"ACRATH partnering to acknowledge Australian South Sea Islander National Recognition Day" and will re-visit this theme as the underpinning of the 2021 Conference which will be an on-line event: **Was there Slavery in Australia? Yes! And Still Is Now!**

- Resources have been uploaded to support ACRATH's ongoing training for health workers.



Jennifer Burn
@Jennifer_Burn

I'd like to support this 😊 ACRATH are remarkable and effective advocates. I met them in 2005 as we got ready for #CEDAW and have valued working with them ever since. In anti-trafficking work we rely on trusted friends and colleagues. The ACRATH partnership with SVHA is leading.

Justice&Peace Office @JP0Syd... · 01 Dec

St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) and ACRATH have worked together for several years to ensure human trafficking and modern day slavery can be identified and addressed within the health organisation's 32 sites. This...

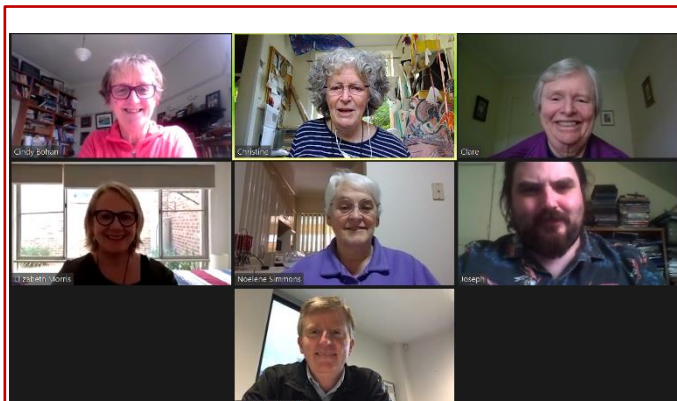
- We have worked with our law firm Allens for pro bono support for an Act of Grace application to the Federal Government by the 22 men from Vanuatu. In early Dec 2020 applications were submitted for 20 of the men.
- We have raised the issues of worker vulnerability at the Australian National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery The UN 16 days against gender-based violence 25 Nov – 10 Dec was a major focus for ACRATH in 2020 with national zoom webinars, stories of 16 women and their commitment, and a reflection sheet distributed.

Goal 1: Eliminate human trafficking in sexual exploitation & in forced labour Cont.

Long term relationships are key to advocacy. ACRATH has been working for many years with Members of Parliament and their advisers. During COVID-19 there was more than a willingness from Members of Parliament, their staff and departmental officers to meet with ACRATH and dialogue about modern slavery. It is a two way dialogue; we learn from each other.

ACRATH's advocacy asks, and the progress we have seen as of December 2020

- 1. An Act of Grace for 22 'egregiously exploited' Vanuatu workers**
ACRATH has submitted 20 Act of Grace applications to Government
- 2. Enabling trafficked people to more easily access the Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP)**
In collaborating with other organisations ACRATH is continuing to explore an additional pathway onto the support program
- 3. Funding for non-government organisations**
In the Oct 2020 federal budget a new funding system was announced with multi year funding embedded in the departmental budget; NGOs who had advocated for this were affirmed for their advocacy
- 4. A national registration scheme for labour hire companies**
Significant progress was made when, in the final sitting of Federal parliament, legislation for this was tabled
- 5. An increase in Australia's overseas development assistance**
No progress made yet but ACRATH will continue advocating for this.



- ACRATH Advocacy Team 2020



- Preparing for DFAT zoom meeting



- Meeting with Ambassador Lucienne Manton, Ambassador for People Smuggling and Modern Slavery

Goal 2: Eliminate forced marriage

ACRATH has worked to support girls and young women escaping a forced marriage; we have advocated on their rights, and we have worked in education to prevent forced marriages.

- Our forced marriage worker of 6 years, Liz Payne, retired in mid 2020. Liz has been a dynamic educator who pioneered work about forced marriage across Australia. Before she left Liz developed a forced marriage online training video, a new resource which Liz shared by zoom webinars with educators, youth workers, front line workers and vulnerable communities.
- Megan Bourke, a highly respected former CARITAS education team leader, began work with ACRATH in late 2020 in forced marriage and in healthcare focussed work.
- The ACRATH Research and Advocacy group has provided input to a Shadow Report from NGOs in Geneva concerning ACRATH advocacy issues including forced marriage.
- ACRATH has begun promotion of the WA pilot program providing safe, supportive accommodation in family violence refuges to people at risk of forced marriage.
- ACRATH advocated successfully for improvements to the federal government support program on behalf of one young woman we have been supporting. This led to an exciting change of departmental practice.

Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person that allows him or her to be treated as an object... Whether by coercion, or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end.

Pope Francis FT #24

CASE STUDY

*Lailani * is a 16 year old girl who was attending a Catholic high school in Melbourne where ACRATH conducted an awareness raising presentation. Her parents took her overseas for a holiday to their country of origin. When they arrived Lailani discovered preparations for her marriage were well under way. She didn't want the wedding to take place but felt she had no choice but to comply. Lailani's parents returned to Australia with her passport.*

Through Facebook, Lailani's school friends in Australia alerted her to the My Blue Sky website and the fact that forced marriage is a slavery-like practice and is illegal in Australia. Lailani was able to receive support through the My Blue Sky website. She was assisted to obtain new Australian travel documents and an airline ticket back to Australia. ACRATH arranged for her to be met at the airport.

Lailani did not return to live with her family. She expressed to her NGO caseworker that she wanted to reconnect with some family members and was given mediation assistance to do so. Lailani was able to continue working towards her dream of graduating from university.

ACRATH is committed to running education programmes for schools to ensure all young people, especially girls, know their legal rights not to be forced into marriage. ACRATH is also working to provide school leadership, teachers, welfare staff and parents with information regarding the current Australian legislation regarding forced marriage. ACRATH also advocated for more support for young women like Lailani returning home.

**Lailani is not her real name*

Goal 3: Ensure people who have been trafficked access their rights



As an ACRATH companion Maureen offers emotional, spiritual and practical support to women who have been trafficked. Since she began her voluntary work as a companion five years ago she has supported three women. At the moment she is a companion to Tina, a 39-year-old woman from Vietnam*. COVID-19 allowed the companions to witness and experience reverse roles, the companions received messages of care and caution imploring them to be safe. As a helper it is a very good experience to be a receiver.

- Tina is not her real name

We dream not only to improve our centers, our institutions, but we can dream to improve our interconnectivity and collaboration.

Thus the key of integral ecology proposed in the encyclical *Laudato Si* and in the (sorority and) fraternity proposed by *Fratelli Tutti* we will find ourselves more and more together in sharing paths of 'education on the move' for a better humanity.

Jolanda Kafka, msi, President UISG

ACRATH has supported over 30 women and their 35 children during COVID times. We

have improved our support for the ACRATH volunteers working in our Companionship program. We have reached out to stranded and vulnerable seasonal workers on temporary visas.

The Companionship program now has a solid underpinning:

- The companionship planning group has met regularly by zoom
- The companionship peer support group has met to enable some practice reflection, and to discuss urgent needs of those being accompanied. This also guides the wider ACRATH advocacy work. Advocacy for someone who was homeless led to longer term accommodation.
- There are now regular group supervision sessions for ACRATH companions who would like to access this.

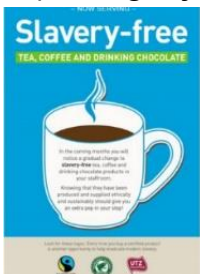
ACRATH members have been visiting seasonal workers on farms as far apart as southern Victoria and central Queensland. Seasonal workers were frequently trapped in Australia as their countries in the Pacific and Timor Leste closed their borders. ACRATH members have reached out to support a seasonal worker with severe health complications, a seasonal worker who was alone in COVID-19 quarantine for nine days, 42 workers from Vanuatu and Timor Leste whose accommodation burned and who lost everything.

ACRATH members have advocated for migrant worker rights, by meeting with workers, negotiating with government and employers, participating in network meetings and government advisory meetings, and by initiating and supporting local community groups so they can reach out to the newcomers.

Goal 4: Promote slavery-free supply chains

ACRATH has concentrated on supply chain campaigning and has responded to groups asking for support in implementing the Modern Slavery Act.

- ACRATH has developed and supported implementation of St Vincent's Health anti Trafficking Program, with particular focus during COVID times on rubber glove manufacturing in Malaysia and the extreme vulnerability of the migrant workers in Malaysian factories.
- The ACRATH education working group has negotiated an inaugural Rerum Novarum ACRATH award for a Victorian school with a project tackling human trafficking and supply chains. ACRATH is linked to many schools working to achieve slavery-free status.
- Catholic Education Melbourne, ACRATH and the Archbishop of Melbourne launched slavery-free staffrooms resources in March 2020; this initiative was further explored by Catholic Education in the rest of Victoria, in Tasmania and in WA. ACRATH acknowledged that while this does not involve a major spending adjustment, it reflects a culture



change as people discuss what brands of beverages they will switch to, why they will make the switch, and what other products in their lives are associated with slavery.



Catholic Education Melbourne's Jess Brady, worked with ACRATH on the slavery free

staffrooms initiative. 'Even though I had always been involved in social justice, the issues around human trafficking and modern slavery weren't on my radar.' said Jess, who is aware of the power education has on young people.

- In the 'Canberra advocacy campaign', ACRATH advocates have raised the desirability of a switch to slavery-free staffrooms. The ACRATH advocacy team were delighted with the uptake of this challenge by Members of Parliament committing to change their own staffroom products. We were particularly excited when some Members of Parliament canvassed a joint motion in the House of Representatives. We will work to support this happening in the near future.

Slavery-free logos

FAIRTRADE is the same as we all know it to be: & this is the new Rainforest Alliance logo (this year Rainforest Alliance and UTZ have combined and now have a new logo):



- ACRATH has continued our slavery-free Easter chocolate campaign, and has begun work on slavery proofing schools by exploring the manufacturing of uniforms and sports equipment. ACRATH has also worked with mostly Catholic groups across Australia to address the reporting requirements of the new Modern Slavery Act, and to help those groups to embed the reasons for change within their organisation.



The fragility of world systems in the face of the pandemic has demonstrated that not everything can be resolved by market freedom. It has also shown that, in addition to recovering a sound political life that is not subject to the dictates of finance, "we must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need".

Pope Francis, FT #168

Goal 5: develop our sustainability to address human trafficking

COVID 19 changed the way we do things – in 2020 we engaged in

151 ACRATH in-house zoom meetings

34 Regional team meetings

11 Community training (webinars) on:
education
forced marriage
Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI)
rights

10 Face to face in school presentations (reduced significantly due to COVID-19)

14 ACRATH companions supporting 35 trafficked women and their children

143 Seasonal workers supported to overcome challenges brought on by COVID-19
Including housing, visas, work and health care

Development and revision of resources

Secondary Students Education Kit
Slavery free staffrooms kit
2021 Calendar
ACRATH brochure
16 Days 'take action'
Forced marriage recorded webinar
Pre-recorded presentation year 9
In Australia! Slavery! Recording
Prayers/reflections for special days
4 Newsletters

Social media reach

132 new website uploads
1228 Facebook followers
767 Twitter followers

Members & Subscribers

113 members (10 new in 2020)
1014 Subscribers receiving 4 newsletters
& 11 monthly information notices
7835 Volunteer total hours

ACRATH has focussed strongly in 2020 on sustainability of finances, membership and leadership.

- ACRATH has worked to build a sustainable membership with a session at the National Conference 2020 and a Membership and Recruitment working group working throughout the year.
- ACRATH printed and distributed the 2021 ACRATH Calendar. As an acknowledgement of COVID-19 financial challenges it was distributed for free with an invitation for donations if people so wished.
- We designed and printed a new ACRATH brochure.
- We had a very successful mid year fundraising period. Since then donations have continued to come in. Many note ACRATH's good work in responding to a need for action, especially during this pandemic. Many schools have run ACRATH-specific fundraising campaigns with a notable 2020 online effort by Loreto Normanhurst.
- ACRATH has worked to build sustainable finances through grants from the following organisations: UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Mary Ward International Australia, Mercy Foundation, Highways & Byways, Catholic Church Insurances Limited, Sisters of Charity Foundation.
- Our Communications team's penetrating review in April 2020 helped us draw a line on past piecemeal practices and begin working together more effectively towards collaborative and relational ways of communicating our ACRATH message.



"It's never just about the money. But it is always about telling the stories, advocating for those people who are forced into labour, those women forced to marry and those people making products in unsafe conditions."

- Heather and Rosa sum up ACRATH WA's approach to fundraising

GOING FORWARD ... WITH HOPE AND WITH THANKS

Apart from meeting following the National Conference in February, the National Committee has, like most other groups, met virtually. A significant part of our two day meetings has been working with Patricia Bergin from *Energyforce* to review our operations and structures. It has been a timely exercise in this ACRATH's sixteenth year, and is work not yet completed.

The National Committee is looking to refine its governance and management processes to better reflect current reality and needs. In the coming year it is the intention to involve members in this dialogue with a view to any changes to the Rules being proposed at the 2022 Annual General meeting. A second strand of this work has been seriously taking up the good work on Membership and Recruitment begun at the 2020 National Conference. A report from this working group and an opportunity to respond to its recommendations will form part of this Annual General Meeting. What it does call for is the active engagement of our members in shaping the future. ACRATH is greatly encouraged by the participation of a wider group of collaborators who have become members in more recent times. This diversity and richness is clearly enriching ACRATH's work.

As part of its due diligence responsibilities the National Committee continues to review and develop its policies and this year has given attention to establishing a Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as required for all entities within the Church. A vote of thanks must be given to the National Committee working group for their generous service and deep commitment to the spirit and mission of ACRATH.

Since 2017 ACRATH has not been in receipt of any government funding to support its work. However the work has continued and grown, even more so in the midst of the pandemic! The support from Religious Congregations throughout the year both through the extensive voluntary service of members and generous financial and in-kind support has been very significant and greatly appreciated. ACRATH sees you as partners and collaborators in the mission to 'free those who are oppressed'. ACRATH is grateful to so many congregations for the support – time, computers, travel costs and more - they give regional co-ordinators and individual members to engage in our work. Financial support has been augmented by grants from groups affiliated with religious congregations, and from some other groups - all resulting from the arduous task of grant-writing. We thank the Archdiocese of Perth for the ACRATH WA office space, and the Brigidine Sisters for making available space for the National ACRATH office in Albert Park, Victoria; we also thank the Christian Brothers at Parkville whose staff member assists with the issuing of Tax Receipts to donors.

A gift to ACRATH is the collaborative relationship with Catholic Religious Australia. The staff are extremely willing and most generous in supporting ACRATH in promoting its mission, providing advice and assisting ACRATH organisationally. This collaboration is practical in providing payroll and employment support, promoting ACRATH initiatives in the media, distributing letters and campaign information to CRA members and in staff members being generous responders to ACRATH's requests for assistance. ACRATH is most grateful.

In a year when one might have thought it could have been quieter with COVID-19 lockdowns this was certainly not the case. New instances of trafficked and exploited people required assistance. The intelligent 'pivoting' to re-imagine and meet ACRATH's goals and the calls for support reflected the professional and committed hard work of ACRATH's staff members. They, and many of our volunteers, were on a steep learning curve to carry out ACRATH's regular work via new web-based platforms. Productive relationships were maintained with government departments and other

partners with whom ACRATH liaises and new calls were responded to with generosity. ACRATH is grateful for the skills of web manager, Noelene Simmons, whose expertise and constant updating of the website has helped maintain ACRATH's reach. The leadership and hard work of ACRATH's Executive Officer, Christine Carolan, and the cooperation of staff and volunteers are enormous assets which bring strength and compassion to ACRATH's service of vulnerable trafficked and exploited people. Thank you to each one.

Louise Cleary

President

24 February 2020



We recognize the loving and life-giving presence of God in all those working to eradicate this form of modern-day slavery, and welcome collaboration and dialogue with all people engaged in this work, regardless of differences of faith, politics or culture. ..The principle of solidarity reminds us that because we are all connected, we are called to join with those who are suffering under systems of oppression to work together for peace and justice, and for our collective freedom. A spirituality of solidarity prevents us from turning a blind eye or a deaf ear to the cries of those who suffer from human trafficking. Instead we throw our lot in with them, accompanying those who have already been impacted by trafficking and working to prevent others from becoming victims.

Jennifer Reyes Lay and Colleen Jackson, rsc, *The Spirituality of Talitha Kum*

ACRATH GIVES THANKS

Gratitude must be given to each and every member of ACRATH. Members bring a range of gifts and a passion for justice to our mission. There are myriad ways in which members serve the mission of bringing hope and freedom to people who have been trafficked and enslaved. Thank you.

National Committee (Left to Right)

Carmel Heagerty rsm, Clare Condon sgs, Meredith Evans rsm, Shane Wood cfc, Claire Griffin csb, Janine Bliss fmm, Lorraine Phelan rsm, Peter O'Neill ssc, Kathy Fagan, Louise Cleary csb,



Regional Coordinators

Queensland - Janine Bliss fmm

Victoria - Claire Griffin csb

Western Australia - Kathy Fagan.

(whilst Kathy was on leave, Heather McNaught & Rosa Ranieri ably fulfilled related duties)

South Australia - Meredith Evans rsm

New South Wales - Lorraine Phelan rsm

National Committee sub-committees

- Finance Committee
- Public Fund Committee
- Membership & Recruitment Working Group
- Regional Co-ordinators and EO Committee
- Safeguarding
- Conference planning

National office working groups

- Staff team
- Communications working group
- Newsletter team
- Calendar planning team
- Brochure planning team
- Research and Advocacy Group
- Evaluation committee
- Companionship steering group
- Companionship peer support group
- Companionship supervision group
- National education committee
- Victorian education committee
- National advocacy campaign team
- Forced labour e-group
- Internationally focussed e-group

Thank you