



VOICES
OF FAITH



THIS MAGAZINE
WILL SHOWCASE
THE STORIES AND
DISCUSSIONS
FROM THE 2017
VOICES OF FAITH
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
EVENT FROM THE
HEART OF THE
VATICAN. THE
THEME FOR 2017'S
EVENT WAS
"STIRRING THE
WATERS, MAKING
THE IMPOSSIBLE
POSSIBLE".

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THE MOST
POWERFUL
VOICE IS
NOT ALWAYS
THE BOLDEST
OR THE
LOUDEST.
IT'S THE ONE
THAT SPEAKS
THE TRUTH.

OUR VISION:

A prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men.

OUR MISSION:

To empower and advocate for women's leadership in the Catholic Church

OUR VALUES:

Inclusive: We want to include and hear women's diverse voices and bring them to the forefront

Honest: We seek open and honest dialogue on an issue where varied opinions exist

Respectful: We are respectful of all people and seek constructive solutions

Unapologetic: We are unapologetic about our vision and mission

Innovative/ Bold: We believe women are a solution to the many problems the Catholic Church is facing in a 21st century world

Faithful: We are women and men of faith



WELCOME

Chantal Götz
Managing Director, Voices of Faith

Chantal M. Götz is the Executive Director of the Fidel Götz Foundation. A lawyer by training with a Master's degree in business entrepreneurship, Chantal has led the Fidel Götz Foundation for 18 years. The foundation provides opportunities for a just and equal world. Its core area of focus is education to empower women and girls as change agents and leaders. Voices of Faith is a flagship initiative of the Foundation and has been running for the past 5 years.

Women's voices must be heard.

I am often asked, "Chantal are you angry? Are you angry with the world, with the church, with our religious leaders?" It seems that women are not allowed to be angry. I am sometimes even told by my colleagues that an angry tone is not particularly good for a woman. Not good for Voices of Faith and its mission and goals.

The world is in crisis.

We look at this 21st century where we still have to claim that women's voices must be heard, where we still have far too much violence and injustice against women, where girls still have less access to education because of being a woman! Am I not allowed to be angry? Shouldn't we all be angry?

Because, in my experience anger brings the positive change we are looking and driving for. Anger is a response of Pope Francis's call to stop being indifferent to a world that is full of hate, jealousy, greed for power and wars. We need many more people who are angry to turn this strong emotion into action.

Voices of Faith 2017 presents women who have the skills to combine inner faith with outer action. Who have the ability to transform conflicts, who listen to others, communicate clearly and develop trust, to come up with creative innovation and energy to resolve local and global problems.

These women want to give back, not sit back! These women are stirring things up in the name of peace and are responding to Pope Francis's call to recommit to the centrality of non-violence. Women are gifted peace builders above all in their families and communities. Women's activism starts from a platform of nonviolence, the changes they want are achieved by dialogue and this is true even when their strength is overwhelmed by armed forces.

Voices of Faith 2017 proves today, that peace can be secured by a change of heart and mind. Peace is rarely achieved by more violence or imposed action.

Women's voices must be heard if peace is to come and peace is to be sustained.

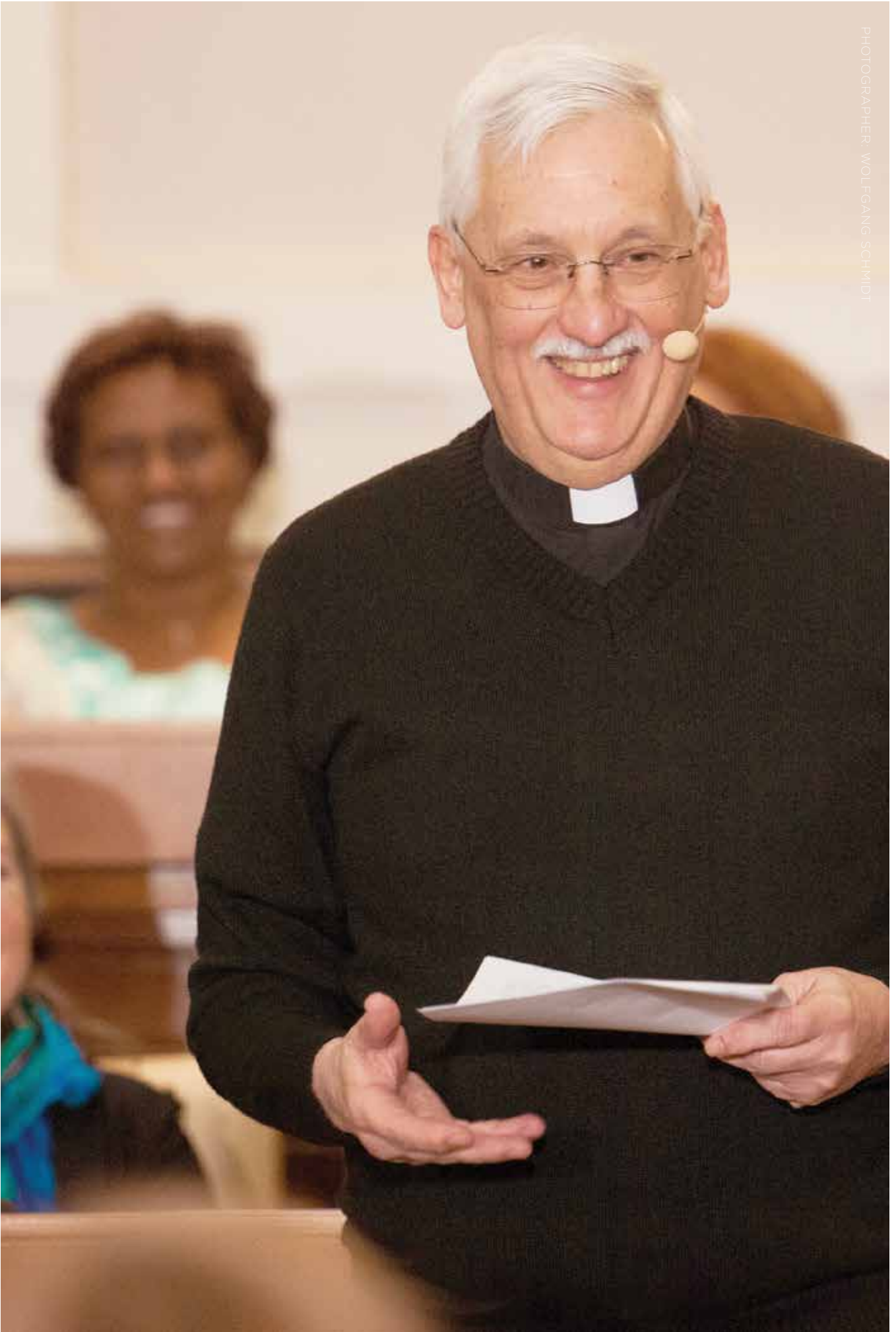
WOMEN SHOULD BE AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE TOO. THEY HAVE TO BE PART OF THE DECISION MAKING THAT WILL ULTIMATELY AFFECT THEIR PERSONAL LIVES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

Today, we are using our voices, our courage, passion, our anger and leadership to support a global conversation on non-violence. Welcome to the Voices of Faith 4th annual storytelling event at the Vatican "Stirring the Waters - Making the Impossible Possible".

To all who have tirelessly worked to make today possible, thank you! A warm and heartfelt thanks to the Jesuit Refugee Service, who partners with us to support the Catholic Church to see their mission and work through a gender lens. To the Fidel Götz Foundation for their belief and continuing support, thank you! A humble and special thank you to Pope Francis, Cardinal Pietro Parolin and the chancellor of the Casina Pio IV Archbishop Sanchez-Sorrondo who continue to make this event possible each year including all those at the Vatican who support us behind the scenes.

Pope Francis says, "women are often more courageous than men". Well, I couldn't agree more with him. Ladies and gentlemen here from the heart of the Vatican and those live streaming around the world, **I am so proud to present our women speakers of 2017 who stir things up in the name of peace!**





OPENING SPEECH

Father Arturo Sosa Abascal, SJ

Father Sosa was born in Caracas, Venezuela on 12 November 1948. He is currently the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He obtained a licentiate in philosophy from l'Università Cattolica Andrés Bello in 1972. He later obtained a doctorate in Political Science from l'Università Centrale del Venezuela, in 1990. He speaks Spanish, Italian and English. Between 1996 and 2004, Father Sosa was provincial superior of the Jesuits in Venezuela.

In 2008, during General Congregation 35, Father General Adolfo Nicolás appointed Father Arturo Sosa as General Counselor, based in Venezuela. In 2014, Father Sosa joined the General Curia community and took on the role of Delegate for Interprovincial Roman Houses of the Society of Jesus in Rome, which include: the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Pontifical Biblical Institute, the Pontifical Oriental Institute, the Vatican Observatory, Civiltà Cattolica, as well as international Jesuit colleges in Rome.

Father Arturo Sosa has dedicated his life to research and teaching. He has held different positions in academia. He has been a professor and member of the Council of the Andrés Bello Catholic Foundation and Rector of the Catholic University of Tachira. He has pursued research and teaching in the field of political science, in various centers and institutions, as the Chair of Contemporary Political Theory and the Department of Social Change in Venezuela at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

“STIRRING THE WATERS - MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE”

I would like to thank Voices of Faith and the Jesuit Refugee Service for inviting me to celebrate International Women's Day with you and all of those gathered here today. I take this opportunity to show my gratitude to the women who will be speaking today, women making a difference in their families and communities, especially in the most remote corners of the world. These are difficult times in our world, and we need to stand and work together as women and men of faith.

As you know, the global theme for this year's celebration of International Women's Day is Be Bold for Change. Here in Vatican City, physically at the center of the church, Voices of Faith and JRS seek to be “Making the Impossible Possible”. Especially here in Rome, that is a bold change!

I would like to reflect on what making the impossible possible means to me as the leader of the Society of Jesus, as a citizen of the world, and as a member of the Catholic Church. We need to have the faith that gives the audacity to seek the impossible, as nothing is impossible for God. The faith of Mary that opened her heart as a woman to the possibility of something new: to become the Mother of God's son.

PART I:

RESILIENCE

As you may be aware, I come from Latin America, a continent with millions of displaced people.

WITH ALMOST 7 MILLION, COLOMBIA HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, AND A DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF THEM ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

I served at the border between Colombia and my native Venezuela for 10 years. I have seen first-hand the suffering of those forced to abandon everything to save their lives. In Colombia, for example, women and girls are among the most vulnerable due to widespread violence caused by decades of conflict. They are exposed to armed recruitment and are likely to fall victim to one form of exploitation or another, ranging from modern day slavery, to sexual and human trafficking. Many of them flee to neighboring countries in search of safety, and often find themselves on their own in efforts to sustain their families.

I have also witnessed women's resilience. Despite this traumatic reality, women often find their way to not just surviving, but

also overcoming all the difficulties of exile and forced migration. Resilience is what enables us to move forward and think of the future. Resilience is essential for making the impossible possible. Let me offer an example. At the Venezuelan-Colombian border, the Jesuit Refugee Service has been present for more than ten years. During this time, JRS has brought refugee women from Colombia together by using their artistic expression as a starting point for rediscovering resilience. While expressing themselves creatively through art, women also share their experiences and create a network of support to improve their psychosocial well-being.

This healing environment is a place for listening and coming together—in other words, resilience. Resilience empowers women and ultimately results in hope and the possibility of reconciliation with the past, with those who have harmed them, and with those where they now live. Reconciliation requires courage, and too often, even in 2017, women's courage, women's resilience, is unrecognised and undervalued.

By building human connections resilience re-knits the communal fabric. Some may say such resilience is impossible to discover:

JRS and Voices of Faith say otherwise.

PART II:

THE WORLD; COLLABORATION

As a member of the human community, each of us is likely appalled at the situation of our world. Human displacement has hit an all-time high, representing incredible human suffering around the world. Ongoing conflicts are at the root of most of this forced exile. There are more than 65 million forcibly displaced among us: one in every 113 people globally is now an asylum-seeker, an internally displaced person, or a refugee. We have to think about the ways that we, as the human community can respond. I cannot put enough emphasis on this need for collaboration between women and men.

I BELIEVE THAT ONLY TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE WHAT TODAY SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE: A HUMANITY RECONCILED IN JUSTICE, LIVING IN PEACE IN A COMMON HOUSE WELL KEPT.

Where there is room for everyone because we recognise that we are sisters and brothers, sons and daughters of the same God who is Mother and Father of us all. We need to collaborate, support and learn from one another. It already seems impossible to imagine peace in places like Central African Republic, or South Sudan, or Colombia. Can we have the audacity to dream that women and men working together will bring peace to these countries? I think these impossibilities can come closer to reality if women play a greater role in the conversation. I am not

surprised that Angela Merkel has been the most courageous and visionary leader in Europe during this time of phenomenal forced migration. She had the compassion to look at those who were in need, and the vision to see that they would make a contribution to Germany and Europe. Another extraordinary leader is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia. Through her single-minded dedication and vision, she has brought peace and reconciliation to her war-torn country in a way that most men thought would be impossible.

At the same time, the widespread reality is that women are not paid for the work they do, or are paid less than men for the same work. In the West, women earn on average 70 cents for each dollar or Euro a man earns. The gap grows larger in developing areas of the world. Many of us are looking at the world through the prism of xenophobia and narrow-mindedness these days, a prism which seems to feed on discord and marginalisation. In the Jesuit Magazine America, political commentator Cokie Roberts, the daughter of two former members of the US Congress, puts the reality succinctly: "Congress needs more women. Then maybe, just maybe, Washington would work again."

We can listen carefully to the experience of women in the public sphere, hear how they work together, and be inspired by their courage. These are stories of doing the impossible.



PART III:

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: INCLUSION

The role of women in the church can be, and has been, described in many ways: keepers of the faith, the backbone of the Church, the image of Mary alive among us. We Jesuits are deeply aware of the roles that women play in our ministries: lay and religious women serve as presidents and headmistresses, retreat center directors, teachers, and every possible role one can think of. As you probably know, the Spiritual Exercises, the foundation of Jesuit spirituality, were first developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola before the Jesuits were founded. Our spirituality is open to all, women and men that want to become women and men with others and for others.

In the broader church, there are contrary currents about the role of women at this time. As stated by Pope Francis, women play a fundamental role in passing on the faith and are a daily source of strength in a society that carries this faith forward and renews it. Church teaching certainly promotes the role of the women within the family, but it also stresses the need for their contribution in the Church and in public life. It draws upon the text of Genesis, which speaks of men and women created in the image of God and the prophetic praxis of Jesus in his relationship with women.

Pope Francis has been quite outspoken about women in making decisions and holding responsibilities in the church. He has also created a "Study Commission on the Women's Diaconate" to explore the history and role of women in this church structure.

But if we are honest, we acknowledge that the fullness of women's participation in the church has not yet arrived. That inclusion, which would bring the gifts of resilience and collaboration even more deeply into the church, remains stymied on many fronts. One aspect has been mentioned by the Pope: we have to work harder to develop a profound theology of women. I would add that an ecclesiology...the study of the church...that includes women is equally needed if women's roles are to be included as they should.

Indeed, the inclusion of women in the Church; is a creative way to promote the necessary changes in it. A theology and an ecclesiology of women should change the image, the concept and the structures of the Church. Should push the Church to become the People of God, as was proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council.

**WOMEN'S CREATIVITY CAN OPEN
NEW WAYS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES,
MEN AND WOMEN TOGETHER,
WITNESSES AND PREACHERS OF
THE GOOD NEWS.**

But perhaps more importantly, the inclusion of women will also be an outcome of the key concerns of the Pope. By bringing Vatican II to life and incorporating the poor into our church, Francis is giving women's voices more opportunity to speak and be counted. No one

is more resilient than women building and supporting the church in the poorest parts of our world. In his efforts against clericalism and the elitism and sexism that come with it, the Pope seeks to open our future to voices outside of the Vatican, to bring the experience of the world into forming that future. The opposite of clericalism is collaboration, working together as baptised daughters and sons of God.

These efforts have begun the process of deeper inclusion of women into the core of the Church. As challenging as the refugee crisis or other world issues are, to some of us, this might be truly, the impossible. St. Francis of Assisi himself said: "Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." In that spirit, we are here today to listen to Voices of Faith, to hear stories of resilience, collaboration and inclusion. We have more than started. We will not stop.

Thank you very much.





STORY TELLING

Dr Mireille Twayigira

Mireille's story is one of defying all odds, from her near-death experience in infancy to her graduation in 2016 from medical school at Shandong University in China. Forced to flee her native Rwanda at age 2 when the genocide occurred, she survived in the forests of Rwanda, the DRC, Zambia and Angola for 6 years before reaching the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi.

While it might be an overstatement to say that Mireille thrived at the camp, she excelled academically and was offered scholarships to attend both secondary school outside the camp in Malawi and also to study medicine in China. This latter scholarship was a hard-won award for her academic achievement and involved the government of Malawi granting her citizenship.

Mireille always wanted a career that would enable her to help others, especially orphans. When she was offered the scholarship, medicine seemed like it presented the opportunity to help the greatest number of people. She also wants to help refugee youths in pursuing secondary school education.

EMPATHY HAS NO BORDERS



My name is Mireille Twayigira. My story can be given quite a number of titles. One could say it is a tragic story, or that this is a story of courage and perseverance, and yet others give it the title “against all odds”.

WELL, I CHOOSE TO CALL IT A STORY OF HOPE, A STORY OF GOD. SOMETHING YOU WOULD CALL “FROM ASHES TO BEAUTY...A BEAUTIFULLY STAINED GLASS WINDOW.”

Remembering my childhood—did I have one? Most of you know of the war that tore the country of Rwanda apart in 1994. I was barely three at that time. Before the war, we were a big happy family. Our house was close to my grandparent’s house, so my young sister and I spent most of our days with aunties and uncles. I even had my own cow from which I drank milk. It was a happy, comfortable life like for any other Rwandese child, drinking sour milk with sweet potatoes. This all ended in April of 1994. I do not remember much from Rwanda when the war started, but what is stuck in my mind is my father’s burial. I remember being told that my father had been killed and his body being brought home wrapped in a blue tent. I remember at his burial, I was told to chew some sorghum and spit it into the grave as a Rwandese tradition, but I swallowed it instead. I was too young to understand what was going on. So innocent, yet my life, my whole family’s lives, together with so many

other Rwandese lives, were about to be turned upside down. Life was never the same after my father’s death. My family knew it was no longer safe for us, so we packed up and left.

My family first fled to another district, hoping that the war would end soon so we could return home again. While in this other district, my sister who was about a year old got sick, and because of the war she was not able to get proper treatment, and she sadly passed away. So, I lost a second sister, because I had had a sister who passed away before I was born. War did not end as soon as they had hoped. We had to flee through Burundi to reach a refugee camp called Shimanga in Congo. My whole family lived close to each other. I had cousins, aunties, uncles all around, we received food including yummy biscuits from donor agencies, so for a child, life was not so bad. There were no schools available but there were some volunteers from the camp who taught kids who were old enough under trees, and later on in tents. I was a happy kid until I encountered more loss. My mother later got sick and one night, she was gone. I had to stay with my grandparents, and life moved on.

In November of 1996, our little sanctuary of Shimanga was invaded by war. We were about to experience a life that was unimaginable. We fled the camp, entered the forests of the Congo, with bullets behind our backs. My whole family got separated until at some point, it was just me, grandpa and grandma. We wandered so long that

whatever resources we had managed to carry had finished. We survived by begging for food from the natives if we found any in the villages. Sometimes we were lucky if we were given nsima (an African maize pulp) that had mould on it. If the village was abandoned, we would go in and help ourselves. If nothing at all was available, we even had to eat roots from the forest. Sometimes we had to drink water from a river with dead bodies floating in it. It was survival of the fittest.

Imagine yourself, all the wandering on foot, sometimes we walked on tarred roads. When we no longer had shoes, walking on these roads in the hot weather was so painful and we developed sores. So we had to make something from grass called Ingata in kinyarwanda, and tied it under our feet to be able to walk. We escaped death from hunger, bullets, drowning, wild animals, you name it. No child should really go through what I went through, in fact, no one should go through what I went through.

We later entered Angola, but life was not better there. At certain points in Angola, and in Congo as well, we had soldiers who were on our side who were protecting us. But these same soldiers would take young boys from their families and would make them carry their bullets. And these are those young men you find in refugee camps now, with some sort of trauma. The soldiers also would come and take young girls to sleep with them, make some their wives. Some got pregnant, others got HIV and AIDS.

Some parents, for fear that their daughters would be taken, would sleep on top of their girls, then cover themselves with a tent so that they were not seen by the soldiers. The only reason I survived this is because I was still very little. So, it was back and forth, Congo into Angola, back into Congo, and Angola again. By the time we reached Angola for the second time, my grandmother was very exhausted. As for me, I was very malnourished with a big tummy, thin brown hair, and swollen cheeks and feet. As if I had not suffered enough loss, my grandmother passed away just before we reached a refugee camp. We weren't able to give her a proper burial. There was no crying at this point, my little heart had hardened after wandering for almost a year - a long and painful journey. Had we not reached the refugee camp in Zambia/Angola (I have forgotten exactly), I was also almost gone. Once at the camp, we were revived with lots of soya bean porridge, and my kwashiorkor shelve came back to life.

We were later moved to Meheba refugee camp. After some time, my grandfather decided to move to Lusaka, Zambia's capital, for no other reason but for his granddaughter to get a better education. My grandfather believed in me. He did not ever say "she is a girl, let me not waste my time on her". He later learnt about Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, that it had better conditions, better schools. So we moved to Malawi in September 2000.

MY EDUCATION

I immediately enrolled in Katubza primary school, a JRS funded school. For a child my age, life was not very bad in the camp. There was food, shelter, clothing and education and there were no bullets. I had friends and a grandfather who loved me very much, although at times I would find myself crying, being jealous of those who had parents. At school I was always top of my class, and this really gave me joy, because I made many people proud, and I was getting attention that I did not get from parents. At least, there was something going well for me, school. So life continued in the camp, and in grade eight, I got selected to continue secondary education at Likuni girls secondary school. At that time, the Jesuit Refugee Service had not built their own secondary school in the camp, so they used to pay for students wherever they were selected to. So they paid for my school fees.

When I had just finished form two in 2007, my grandfather suddenly got sick, and a few days later he was no more. I cried uncontrollably that day. Life continued and although I was in pain from the loss of my loved ones, this did not stop me from working hard, in fact good grades consoled me. I did not know what my future held, but I knew my hard work would pay off.

I sat for the national final examination in 2009, where I was among the top six students. During a best girl award ceremony organised by Zodiak broadcasting

station, the Chinese embassy offered full scholarships to study in China ... and there I was among the scholarship awardees! Me, a refugee, no citizenship status, with no passport. How could I go? But thank God for the radio station and many other people who fought for me, even in the Parliament until I was granted Malawian citizenship by the Head of State. So I was able to go to China to pursue medicine in 2010 on a Malawian passport. If it was not for this opportunity, my future in terms of higher education was not certain. There is a program in the camp called World University Service of Canada which takes refugee students to study in Canada, but each year, they can only take about 20 students out of hundreds. So it was not guaranteed for me.

I learnt Chinese language for a year, then proceeded to study medicine in Chinese, which as you can imagine was very challenging! I wanted to give up at many points but I persisted. I got to realise that God did not spare me and take me this high just for myself. There are people I am meant to serve and I had to be competent to do so, people I was meant to inspire.

I was living proof to them that there is a God who works on their behalf. So even though it was very tough, I had to push through, work even harder, Glory be to God, I graduated from medical school in July 2016 and I am currently interning at Queen Elizabeth central hospital in Blantyre.

From the impossible...
to the possible.



I have gone through a lot in my life, a lot of pain, a lot of loss. I wish none of it happened, but now that it did, should I spend my whole life dwelling on the past, holding grudges? I have come to realise that I am alive for a purpose.

I HAVE ATTAINED PEACE IN MY HEART SO I HAVE PEACE WITH OTHER PEOPLE, AND SO I CAN FORGIVE.

Now I look back at my life and I see that everything, good or bad has shaped my character for the better.

Before I went to China, I used to look at myself as just a girl with a tragic past, who has gone through a lot and it ended there, at tragedy. I used to blame God for what happened. I did not feel loved. It was in China when I realised that I am a girl with a story to tell, a story of hope, a story of God and his Love, a story that can change somebody's

life. Someone with a lot to give, and a lot more now as a doctor. That is why I try to find opportunities to talk with kids in schools, raising hope among the youth, especially refugee youth. In the future, hopefully the near future, I would like to work with refugees on whatever platform God provides, because I believe I have a lot to share, having gone through what they have been through.

So, this is my story. But there are so many Mireille's out

there from all over the world. Unfortunately for many, their stories end at the tragedy part. A lot of them do not even get to have a safe place, a place with no bullets behind their backs, a place where their lives could move on, where they could get an education and in future help rebuild their country. A lot of others are privileged to have that safe place, but because they have lost their families, they are forced to be bread winners at a young age, and the hope to get an education is lost. While a whole lot of others are in a safe refugee camp, they get a chance to finish primary and secondary education, have a desire to continue, but get no opportunities to attain higher education, which is the case in Dzaleka refugee camp.

So what can we do for these Mireille's?

There is a lot we can do. For an immediate start, why not end all this violence? I am not talking about people from other countries coming to end the violence in our own countries. I mean, why wait for an outsider to come tell you to stop hurting and killing people of your own blood, your brother, your sister? Is the power or the money at the expense of their blood really worth it? Why not try the cheaper alternative of resolving conflicts like negotiation, forgiveness and love?

I mean, is there still humanity in us or have we become robots? What is happening to innocent people, especially children, is completely not fair, it needs to stop. I believe it starts from within us, from love, forgiveness, mercy.

But now that wars are all around us and a lot of people are fleeing their countries, we can help the Mireille's by opening our homes to them, giving them a safe place where they can have a normal childhood. Providing them with food, shelter, medicine and clothing is very important, but it is not enough. They need a chance to gain an education, higher education, because these are the leaders of tomorrow who will strive for peace and help rebuild their countries. They need know they are loved, by those around them and by God, they need to know that they matter, they need to see there is hope for them, to see they have a purpose in life.

So are you with me?



PHOTOGRAPHER: WOLFGANG SCHMIDT

PEACE IS THE
ABILITY TO BE
YOURSELF.





STEPHANIE LORENZO DIDN'T BEGIN HER CAREER PLANNING TO START A CHARITY. IT WAS A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH A BOOK ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING WHEN SHE WAS 22 FOLLOWED BY A LIFE-CHANGING TRIP TO CAMBODIA THAT LEFT HER ASKING "HOW COULD THIS BE REAL?"

In 2009 combining a passionate vision, with a purpose-driven action plan, Stephanie founded Project Futures, an Australian not-for profit organisation that works with local and international groups in the Asia-Pacific region to end human trafficking and slavery. Project Futures creates meaningful experiences to raise funds, educate and empower her generation of millennials.

Stephanie holds a Bachelor of International Communication from Macquarie University. In 2016, she was a finalist in the Qantas and Women's Weekly 'Women of the Future Award', in 2014 named one of the Financial Review and Westpac's 100 Women of Influence, in 2013 was nominated as Australian of the Year. Most recently, Stephanie has joined the Emerging Leaders Advisory Board for the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) and is a Board Member of Loreto Normanhurst College Sydney.

HARNESSING THE 'POWER OF PURPOSE' IN OUR LIVES

Stephanie Lorenzo Founder, PROJECT FUTURES



Today I want to acknowledge and give voice to the millions of women and girls who are bought and sold each and every day to service a billion dollar trade in human beings.

From the sex trade in Cambodia where girls as young as 10 are used for their innocent bodies, to sweat shops in China where employees churn out the clothes we wear in harsh factories for as little as \$4 a day. In the digital age with a wealth of information at our fingertips, you and I can no longer sit by and say we didn't know. My story was motivated by these uncomfortable truths. It's a story about perseverance. Living by the motto that "actions speak louder than words" and refusing to let the status quo dictate the life we lead. It's about standing up for what you believe in, but also knowing when to let go.

Let me start off by saying never in a million years did I ever think I would be working in the charity industry. As a young person, it lacked the prerequisite "cool factor" and didn't appeal to me the same way popular culture did. My exposure to charity was through my school, my church or my family, but I never felt compelled to take part in it independently. In hindsight I can see how selfish, shallow and fickle this attitude was, but it's my cold hard truth.

But the course of my life changed at 22 years old when I picked up a book about a woman sold into the sex trade as a child in Cambodia. Here was a story of a young girl, sold, raped, beaten and deemed worthless simply because she was a woman. I was captivated by this book; not just because of the tragic story that unfolded, but more about what this woman had managed to achieve in spite of this tragedy and with no formal education, resources or money.

She turned her experience into something positive, and for over 20 years had established and run safe houses in her country for women and girls who had suffered her same fate.

I put this book down and I took a long hard look at myself and to be honest, I felt ashamed. I was one of the lucky ones, born into a good Catholic family, had a great education, food on the table every night and a roof over my head. I had travelled to many amazing places, I could vote, I could speak freely... I was free. But what had I used these good graces for? My biggest issue at the time was what to wear out on a Saturday night! So I decided right then and there, I was going to use my voice, my skills and my network to do one thing to help this woman's work. That one thing was a charity bike ride across Cambodia the following year to raise money and awareness for victims of sex trafficking.

I knew I couldn't make this bike ride happen on my own. So I called on favours from my closest friends and together we created a basic website, and promoted it to everyone we knew! A year went by and I was astonished to have 21 people ready to go and we had collectively raised \$80,000. I was ecstatic! A simple decision to do something after reading this book had an outcome that was beyond any of my expectations!

Now I have to confess, this bike ride was going to be my one epic good deed. At the time, I had no intention of doing another one. I mean getting 21 people to raise that kind of money for a charity has to be worth at least a decade of brownie points right? But the Lord truly works in mysterious ways. That first bike ride in 2009 just so happened to coincide with International Women's Day and we were able to visit one of

the safe houses we had raised money for. When I saw first hand the work on the ground and met these incredible, resilient, beautiful women and girls whose lives were so very different to my own, something sparked in me and I knew I would not be able to let it go so easily.

I CAME HOME DETERMINED TO SHINE A LIGHT ON THESE ATROCITIES AND WANTED TO GIVE MY GENERATION AN OUTLET TO GIVE BACK USING THEIR TIME, SKILLS & TALENTS, LIKE I JUST HAD.

But how do you engage a selfie-obsessed millennial generation? And how do you engage them on an issue that they couldn't see or understand given our first world status. There was very little recognition in Australian media at the time and the stories that were being told seemed surreal to someone who was so far removed from this sort of tragedy.

We all know young people love a good party, so I thought the best place to start speaking to my generation would be in a forum they knew and loved - when out on a Saturday night enjoying themselves with friends. Enter the first 'Party for Purpose'. What's a Party for Purpose? Exactly that. With my same team of friends, we organised a party by having a venue donated, engaged a friend who was a DJ and even wrangled a free drink for everyone who came. We then charged an entry fee - like every other night club - but our difference was that 100% of the fee went to our cause. Half way through the evening, we paused to talk about sex trafficking and what I had seen first hand in my time in Cambodia. 300 people were stunned into silence as I told the story of Lythia, a quiet but confident 16 year old who had spent 3 years in the safe house after being trafficked from Vietnam to Cambodia and sold as a sex slave at just 10 years old. We didn't want to 'guilt' people into caring, we wanted them to realise their time there tonight had meaning beyond having a great time. We wanted them to see that philanthropy was no longer a label for those with deep pockets. We removed 'guilt' and added purpose.

And that was how we continued. Party after party, bike ride after bike ride. We wanted social networking to equal social responsibility and use our creativity for a greater purpose.

And that's how PROJECT FUTURES was born. There was no grand plan. We were a bunch of young people who wanted to use our position of privilege to help those less fortunate and running fun events was one way to achieve that goal. Obstacles faded when we saw the results of what we were achieving. I felt in my gut young people had the power to be influential amongst their peers, that they wanted to stand for something and create real and lasting change. PROJECT FUTURES became their outlet to do just that.

Even though we were a voluntary organisation for the first 4 years of our operation, we did create some structure. That first group of friends, became our management team. We were young, impulsive and ready to take on the world. I surrounded myself with positive people, you know those 'glass half full types'. They were friends who knew things that I did not and even in the hardest of times, can propel you to heights you never imagined. We set a culture of openness and honesty and if we clashed in opinion (which was a lot of the time) we always remained respectful and remembered why we were there in the first place. We talked it out and came up with solutions. I attribute so much of PROJECT FUTURES success to those positive influences in my life. With those people in my corner challenges have always seemed like opportunities.

In 8 years of running this wonderful organisation, our young professional network has raised over \$5 million dollars, and supported 5 anti-human trafficking projects in the Asia Pacific region. We partner with these projects on a long term and sustainable basis, tracking their impact and connecting people in Australia to the issue in new and meaningful ways. The hard work didn't seem so hard when we heard of stories like Nora who had graduated from a Bachelor of Psychology after being supported by the safe house we funded for years, or the countless number of women who managed to start their own small business to support themselves, or a young woman Srey Pich who secured a segment at a local radio station to share stories of the women she lived with in the safe house and so on. These were the outcomes that our network bound together for.

My toughest challenge actually came after I was asked to speak here today. It was my decision to resign as CEO of PROJECT FUTURES. To decide it was time to let go of the very thing

PHOTOGRAPHER: SOSEREYBOT KRY



STEPHANIE LORENZO



I had built from nothing, that I shed blood, sweat and tears to create, was incredibly difficult. The last few years had been incredibly successful. We were raising over a million dollars a year, grew from 2 to 4 full time staff and took on a new impact partner in Cambodia. The challenges of managing staff and being responsible for a team was pressure that took a personal toll on me. I became indecisive, slow to react, my passion seemed deflated and nothing seemed to inspire me. I asked for some extended time off which was rejected by our Board and that hurt me greatly.

Running a voluntary organisation had been vastly different. Running a business needed structure, expertise and a fresh perspective that had new energy and insight. I felt drained of ideas and was confused as to why I was feeling so down. I was scared of losing control; that I'd let our supporters down, that my personal legacy might somehow be forgotten. So I took some time to reflect, to listen to my gut, to pray and I realised that this work was hard. It had taken its toll and I needed a change. I believe everything in life has a cycle. These cycles allow a person to explore, discover and get curious about new things once again, not stay stuck. My passion for ending human trafficking is far from gone, but it may manifest into something new - who knows? I have some time now to figure that out.

My last official day was 3rd March, so the change is still very raw, but in the process of letting go I have realised the fear of it was much worse than actually doing it. I didn't want to make the mistake of letting my pride or ego take over, falsely believing that because I had created it, I was always going to have the right answer for it or be the best person to lead it forward.

It's sort of weirdly fortuitous to be standing here at the Vatican in my first public forum after stepping down as CEO to share my story. See I was raised by two amazing Catholic parents who attended church without fail every single week. We would sit right up the front row and my dad would belt out every hymn at the top of his lungs...maybe it was to make sure God knew we were there? They were both active in the church, my Dad, still to this day serves as an acolyte, while mum volunteered wherever she could. As a child growing up, I was sure any good graces God would shower upon my parents for all their hard work, would naturally

extend to me. So I never really took the time to understand my faith, what it meant and how to live it out....until now. Seeing my parents live out their faith taught me that what speaks volumes about a person is in them living their values each and every day.

**LESS TALK, MORE ACTION.
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY
IS NOT GOING TO HEAL FROM
ATROCITIES SUCH AS HUMAN
TRAFFICKING, POVERTY, WAR
AND CLIMATE CHANGE WITHOUT
YOU AND I TAKING REAL AND
CONTINUOUS ACTION.**

My generation gets a lot of flack in today's world and to some degree it's well deserved. Our innate narcissism is often viewed by other generations as an indifference to the plight of others. But my experience in growing a movement led and carried by the millennial generation proves otherwise. That narcissism sits hand in hand with an insatiable desire to connect with each other, to connect with our world and that is something our world needs now, more than ever. In a world so digitally linked that geographical boundaries are almost irrelevant, we should stoke that desire and tap into the unrealised potential of younger generations.

So please remember to always encourage and nurture those who strive to change the world and fight for injustice but also those that look to someone to show them how. Because every voice matters, your voice matters. Your decisions and your ideas matter.

What I believe most importantly is that your actions matter because they will truly change someone's world.



IT'S ALWAYS LOVE THAT TAKES THE LAST WORD

Marguerite Barankitse

ON OCTOBER 12, 1993, TWO DAYS AFTER HER TUTSI FAMILY WAS MURDERED BY HUTUS IN BURUNDI, MARGUERITE BARANKITSE STOOD IN FRONT OF A HOUSE OF HUTUS TO STOP A MOB OF LOCAL TUTSIS FROM TAKING REVENGE.

"Before I am a Tutsi, I am a Christian" Marguerite remembers telling the mob. "I will not allow you to kill those people." That day, she realised that her mission would be to fight the violence ravaging her country by giving the children who had been orphaned by the civil war, and the 20,000 who would follow an alternate to hate.

Maison Shalom, the house of peace. How did I create that? As a result of wars, many wars. The civil war in Burundi from 1993-2006, that killed more than 300,000 people, was just one of several internal conflicts I've seen in my life. When I was 16 and experienced killings between Hutus and Tutsis, I said to my mother: Why are we killing each other? We are the same people, speak the same language and go to the same church. Why? It was then I decided that I wanted to become a teacher. I was convinced that the change had to come with the children. And as a fairly young, unmarried woman, I also adopted seven children, four Hutu and three Tutsi children to show that in my home there was no discrimination.

But it was the civil war from 1993 to 2006 that changed everything. I lost 60 members of my own family. I'm a Tutsi, and when I understood that 72 of my close neighbours and friends, all Hutu, were in danger, I tried to hide them in the compound of the Bishop's house. But they were found and killed. The attackers also wanted to kill me since I was a Tutsi and tried to save children of Hutus, but they did not dare since I was

their sister, a Tutsi. But they called me a traitor and then forced me to watch all of the 72 being butchered by machetes.

But there was no time for mourning, because the war had also made tens of thousands of children orphans. We found many just wandering aimlessly along the roads, alone, starving and traumatised. In the beginning I gathered 25 of them in my hometown Ruyigi, to give them food, shelter and education.

That was the beginning of Maison Shalom, a house where all groups were welcomed. Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, and even Muzungus...white people. But the main objective of Maison Shalom was not to welcome orphans, but to create the conditions to gather children who otherwise would grow up hating each other, who would grow up with prejudices. These children were fragile and hurt by civil wars and ethnic conflicts. It was to crush the long-standing tradition of hate between Hutus and Tutsis that made me establish Maison Shalom.

For this reason I set up an educational system which taught independence to the young. To learn how they could take back their lives and not have to depend on anyone, to be free without the chains of hate. I wanted to give them a key to love and compassion.

But soon the rumours spread amongst children, that there was a lady in Ruyigi who helped those who had lost their families. And they came from all provinces of Burundi.

THEY CAME FROM RWANDA, THEY CAME FROM CONGO, AND WE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE COULDN'T ACTUALLY MANAGE TO BUILD AN ORPHANAGE FOR ALL OF THEM.

We started looking for surviving family members of the orphans, and gradually we were able to repatriate many of them back to their villages. But all of this took time, and during the 12 years of war thousands and thousands of children went through our system. In the end we assisted close to 30,000 children. Still, at the end of the civil war we had more than 2,000 children and young ones for whom we couldn't find any relatives. So what to do? We built houses for each and all of them, free of charge. And I never called them orphans. I repeatedly said that they were my princes and princesses.

Later on, when some of them were sent to boarding school and were served food they considered to be of bad quality, they refused to eat and said "No, we won't eat it, because we are princes and princesses. How did you manage to do all this, people ask me? I then often think of my mother. Her capacity to love was tremendous. She had an open heart and an open home. Even as a widow she took care of several children that were not hers. She gave me an imprint for life.

My first name is Marguerite. The family name, Barankitse, was given to me by my

grandfather. It means the one they are against. And I can promise you, I have had to fight for my vision: one people, one country, no discrimination, no hatred and no war. For many, especially politicians, having a vision like mine in Burundi, is a big provocation. Through the years I have lived with death threats. Thanks to providence and good friends I have survived.

I have often heard people call me the "crazy woman of Ruyigi." Because I did all those things a Burundian was not supposed to do; to adopt without being married, to refuse to reproduce the lie that Hutus and Tutsis are enemies, and to be willing to speak the truth about our past and present history. Still, as long as I did my humanitarian work and built schools, libraries, and a big, modern hospital – as long as I repaired what others had ruined through wars – I was more or less accepted by the greater majority of our political establishment.

The change came in the spring of 2015. The President at the time, Ierre Nkurunziza, decided to violate our constitution and run for a third period. This led to serious political turmoil. I protested against the human rights violations that took place in Burundi. Especially that the police were shooting and killing young people on the streets of our capital, Bujumbura. This made me an enemy of the State. I ended up on a list of five well-known Burundians that were supposed to be killed before the elections. After a couple of them were assassinated, I escaped Burundi in July 2015.

After assisting refugees for more than 20 years, I was suddenly a refugee myself. I had left everything behind. A lady in her late fifties stranded in a new country with only a suitcase and a bag. I had to remind myself that Maison Shalom actually wasn't all the buildings I had managed to build through our 23 years of service: the hospital, the schools, the children's village, the library and cinema or the auto repair shop run by former child soldiers. No, Maison Shalom is an inner conviction, a conviction that the forces of hatred can be met. Not with more hatred, not with more aggression, not with the same methods as our current regime is using. No, Maison Shalom has a starting point, love. It has an action plan, love. It has an executive branch, love, and an aim, love.

But mind you, this is not the sugar-coated love that you see in the cinema or in TV-series. This is sometimes tough love; the kind of love that picks up a half dead child from the lap of their dead mother. That tries to rescue a young child that was close to being burned to death.... and here you see him. This is Richard. His family was burned to death. He survived. I consider him my eldest son and he is now the country director of Maison Shalom. But this love I'm talking about is also the kind of love that tells the truth even if it puts your life in danger. And it is a love that has taken me across half the globe to speak up for Burundi and for our children. If I should describe it further I would say that it's like a folly inside of me. It's not logical.

You can't put it down on paper or inside a formula. But it has another interesting side effect: It makes me creative.

It has taught me how to go on when everybody else says it's impossible.

IT'S LIKE A WHISPER: NEVER GIVE UP!

The atrocities of the civil war in Burundi killed 300,000 people, but broke the hearts and minds of many, many more. Strangely enough, that war made me stronger. Made me more convinced that a society without war is possible. That hatred never will win, and that working for a society where people can live in dignity is a goal that we can achieve.

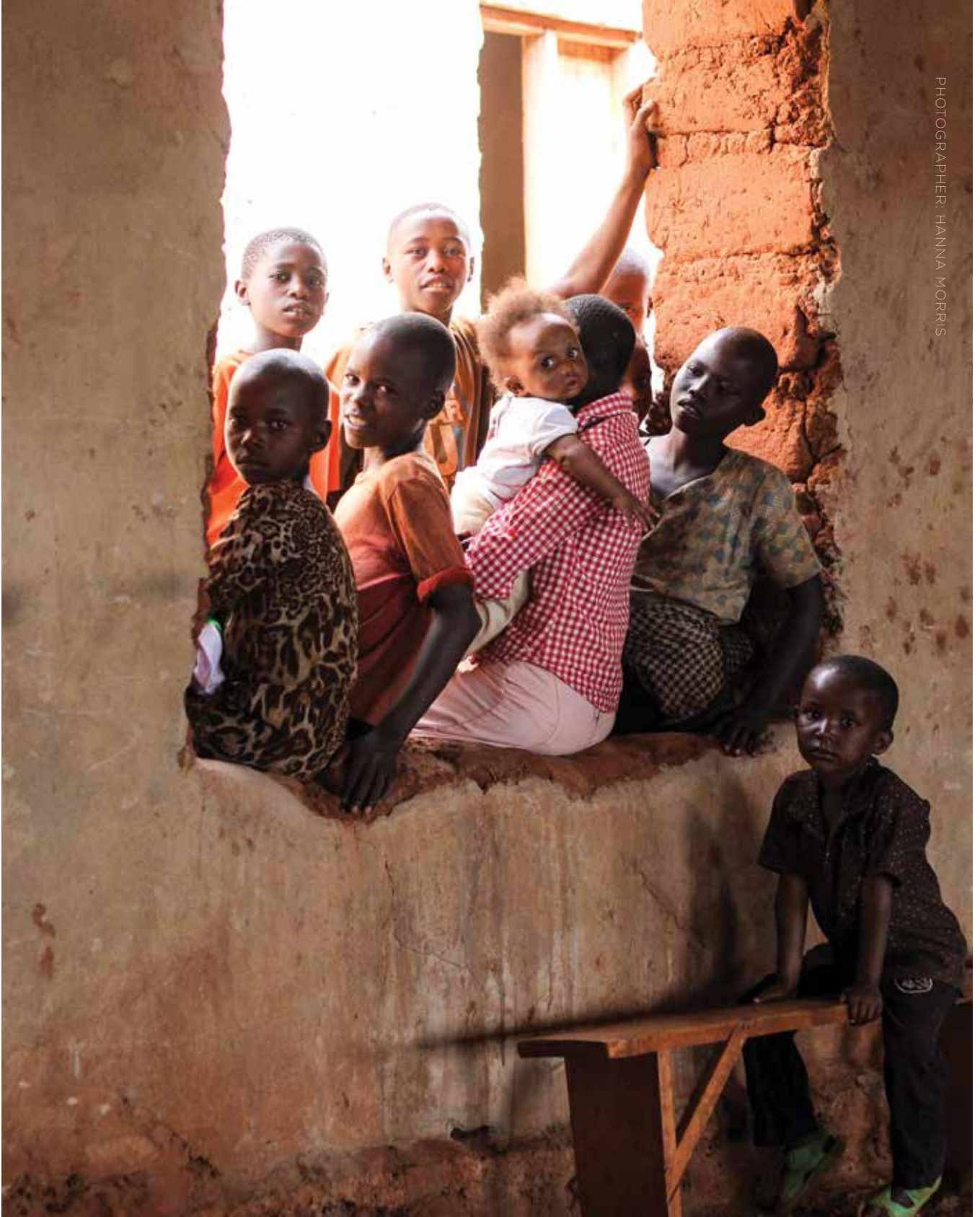
So as a refugee in Rwanda, the neighbouring country of Burundi, Maison Shalom has risen from the ashes once more. We have just moved into what we call OASIS community centre, a centre that ideally shall be of service to 32,000 Burundian refugees in Kigali and the urban areas of Rwanda. An impossible task, most people would say. But I started more than 23 years ago with nothing but orphaned children. Now again I start with little, but have 23 years of experience of how to help people in an emergency situation.

Again I am able to greet refugees from all over Burundi coming to Maison Shalom Rwanda. Some come for psychosocial help, some are physically injured and need to go to hospital, others are young without their family to accompany them, they just need basic care. Some come and ask us for help to buy food for their families. And we try to help them all. In addition we have set up classes in English, in French and basic computer knowledge. Soon we will open a little restaurant and gather all the brilliant artists from Burundi, also amongst the refugees, so that they can perform music and theatre to lift the spirit of those who have lost their families and their country.

In early 2015 my plan was to take a sabbatical year. Then I felt that all my efforts had come to a successful conclusion with Maison Shalom in Burundi. I had excellent staff to take care of the organisation. I was gradually trying to "sneak out the back door" so to speak.

The political turmoil that year turned my life upside down and made me a refugee. So as you understand, this is how my sabbatical year turned out.

But I'm very happy and honoured to stand in front of you today as a witness for Burundi, as a representative for those who have not succumbed to cynicism, as a person who still believes that the politics of rule and divide will lead us nowhere. As a person that is convinced that to create a good and just society you have to start with



the children. Give them good education and raise them in an atmosphere of respect and dignity.

My children from Burundi are grown-ups today. They have become doctors and nurses, journalists, artists and car mechanics. I hope they will go on and carry out what I

call my silent revolution. Not one with guns and machetes, but a revolution built on love and compassion in action.

Life has given me the chance to do it all over again, this time in Rwanda. We are not anywhere near the resources we need to help all the 32,000 Burundians that need

our help. And for now I don't really know where and how we shall find these resources.

But I'm sure we will make it. As I said, love makes us creators.

So let me end: You can say I'm a crazy, I'm a dreamer. But I'm not the only one....



PHOTOGRAPHER: WOLFGANG SCHMIDT

AN INSPIRING STORY OF HOPE AND SURVIVAL NAGHAM AND SHADAN

Story by Tracey McClure

Reprinted from L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO,
17 March 2017

Shadan and Nagham's eyes light up when they think back to the days spent hiking and camping with Fr Frans Van der Lugt in their native Homs, Syria. The young sisters met the charismatic Dutch Jesuit, a long time Homs resident, some 15 years ago. Though Orthodox, Shadan explained, "I believe I was closer to the Jesuits because of Fr Frans" who ran a home for disabled youth and often took young people, Muslims and Christians alike, on spiritual retreats, teaching them mutual respect and hope.

But that all changed with the eruption of the Arab Spring, the war that soon engulfed Homs and all of Syria, and the murder of 75-year-old Fr Frans by a lone gunman in April 2014 in what appeared to have been a targeted assassination.

Later, at the General Audience in Rome, Pope Francis recalled his "Jesuit brother," saying "his brutal slaying filled me with profound pain and made me think again about the many people who are suffering and dying in that martyred country,

my beloved Syria.” Fr Frans had refused to abandon the besieged city when, earlier that year, a U.N brokered ceasefire allowed some 1,400 starving residents to leave.

It was against this background that I met Shadan and Nagham in the Vatican on International Women’s Day, 8 March 2017, where they told their story at the fourth annual Voices of Faith event, “Stirring the Waters: Making the Impossible Possible”, organised by the Fidel Götz Foundation. And their journey to the Vatican and first, to Europe, had proved indeed to be an impossible one, one that took boundless faith and immense courage — a journey on which the sisters drew hope and inspiration from their beloved Fr Frans.

NAGHAM TOLD ME OF THE ANGER SHE FELT AS THE BOMBS WERE FALLING AND AS THE SHOTS RANG OUT IN HOMS, “I KNEW THAT IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS THE SYRIANS SHOOTING AT EACH OTHER”.

Where once the minority Christian and Alawite communities lived in harmony with the Muslim Sunni majority in Homs, celebrating in common each other’s religious feasts, “all of a sudden, we started to be afraid of each other, of our neighbours,” Shadan said. “We used to be neighbours, friends, colleagues, and all of a sudden, we couldn’t trust the taxi driver. Everything was really upside down.”

The only Christians in their class at school, the girls counted many Muslims among their closest friends. They continue to stay in touch. But Islamic extremism had begun to seep into Syrian communities like Homs. Since the war erupted, Nagham said, “there has been no chance for dialogue” but early into the conflict, “if a person was open, the war somehow could not change him.” The sisters fled Homs as the violence escalated, making their way with their mother and brother first to Damascus and later, with fighting raging around the capital, to the coastal region of Tartus, from which yet again, they had to flee.

Finally, in August 2015, together with Nagham’s new husband, the small family decided to attempt to reach Europe, leaving on what was to become a dramatic journey through Lebanon, Turkey, the Balkans,

Hungary, Austria and Germany. Nagham cringed as she remembered being “treated like animals” by the smugglers who had arranged their passage to Greece, the harrowing trip on a rubber boat which left Turkey in the dark of night. Built to hold thirty, the boat was overflowing with terrified passengers, almost none of whom knew how to swim. It was a dangerous journey that eventually took them to safety and to a new home in Ghent, Belgium.

But Shadan and Nagham recall that even during their dark voyage on that terrifyingly crowded boat, the echo of Fr Frans hope was there to sustain them: the impossible is possible. A psychotherapist by training, Fr Frans, the sisters recalled, had taught them “how to start from the inside.” “All the spiritual basis that we have, we learned from him” said Shadan. The sisters carried these spiritual lessons with them when they began counselling with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Syria, helping children traumatised by the conflict “to deal with the horrible things they’ve been through” Nagham told me.

In the “Life-skills” programme they taught in Syria and now continue among Iraqi, Afghan and Syrian refugees with JRS in Belgium, the sisters help children to realise they can step out of the spiral of despair, anger and violence and “suppress it in a peaceful, non-violent way”. Through games, activities and watching films, the sisters show them how, “from the inside” they can take charge and resolve problems themselves rather than rely on help from the “outside”. Smiling, Nagham said the children end up seeing that they are the masters of their feelings and hopes. When they are angry, “they discover how they can calm themselves” and “find a solution to a problem without always depending on others” critical skills amid the chaos of conflict or adapting to an unfamiliar country.

The programme has been so successful that it’s been extended to women refugees. The impact on the women, tired and defeated, some consumed by resentment, was immediate. The women’s sons and husbands would come to us, Nagham laughed, asking, “what are you doing to my mother [or wife] in those sessions? She is so different ... so relaxed ... Could you please continue what you’re doing?”

As the war in Syria marks its fifth anniversary this March, it leaves in its wake more than 250,000 dead, countless wounded, millions of refugees and some 18 million people displaced. What will it take, I ask, to stop what seems to be a never-ending cycle of revenge and hatred? For Nagham, the answer will come when people rediscover the common good, when people learn to hope and conduct business with honesty and when “the teacher teaches from the heart.” Shadan, less optimistic, thinks things will only worsen “because violence begets violence and a lot of people want revenge.” Children, she says, must help trigger a change in the mind-set, and religions should work together for peace. She returned again to the example of Fr Frans who never saw the differences between Muslims and Christians, only what unites them.

“PEOPLE NEED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE ACCEPTED [AS THEY ARE] AND THEY DON’T HAVE TO BE SOMEONE ELSE TO BE LOVED OR ACCEPTED”

she said. Young people need something to hope in too. Those who’ve stayed behind in Syria are faced with terrible hardships, a lack of basic necessities, and a hopeless future: no jobs and no education, the sisters tell me. All of this “stops the dreams, you don’t think of big things because you are consumed with the small things necessary to survive.”

The sisters, whose impossible voyage brought them into a brave new world where their dreams are possible, tell me they don’t like to be labeled “refugees” or seen merely as “numbers.”

Refugees need opportunities “to study and to work,” they say “to see themselves as effective again in life, to know they are not just sitting and doing nothing, waiting for help”.

ABOUT NAGHAM AND SHADAN:

NAGHAM AND SHADAN ARE SISTERS FROM HOMS, SYRIA. THEY ARE BOTH UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE WHO HAD BLOSSOMING CAREERS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SECONDARY SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY LEVEL. THEIR LIFE’S WORK AND CALLING WAS TO HELP CHILDREN LIVE IN PEACE WITH THEMSELVES SO THEY CAN LIVE IN PEACE WITH OTHERS.

The sisters began working with JRS Syria soon after the outbreak of war in their country in 2011. They used their background in teaching and their natural compassion to help children aged 6 to 12 years develop values and life-skills to cope with their feelings toward a war that destroyed their homes and killed their families.

In the fall of 2015, when they were forced to flee Syria and travel along the deadly Balkan route to Belgium, they continued to help children along the way.

Now both sisters are living in Ghent and plan to replicate the life-skills program with JRS Belgium.







PHOTOGRAPHER: WOLFGANG SCHMIDT

MARIE DENNIS HAS BEEN CO-PRESIDENT OF PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL SINCE 2007, A POSITION SHE SHARES WITH BISHOP KEVIN DOWLING FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

From 1989-2012, 15 years as director, Marie worked with the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, charged with bringing the global experience of Maryknoll missionaries into the process of shaping public opinion in the United States and policies of the U.S. and other

governments, the United Nations and international financial institutions.

Marie is a laywoman and a mother of six. She holds a Masters Degree in Moral Theology from Washington Theological Union and honorary doctorates from Trinity Washington University and Alvernia University.

Author or co-author of seven books, Marie serves on the steering committee of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network and as a contributing editor to Sojourners magazine, and recently ended her service

on the national board of JustFaith Ministries. She has previously served on the White House Task Force on Global Poverty and Development; the advisory committee of Orbis Books; and the boards of the Washington Office on Latin America, the Latin America Working Group, the International Resource Center, the Washington Office on Africa and the Jubilee USA Network. A Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, Marie has served on the board of Pax Christi International since 1999.

THE CHURCH MUST RECOMMIT TO GOSPEL

Marie Dennis

Almost a year ago, 85 people from around the world gathered here in Rome for what has been called a “landmark” conference on nonviolence and just peace. Invited by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, participants came together to imagine a new framework for Catholic teaching on war and peace that could help the world move beyond perpetual violence and war.

CENTRAL TO OUR CONVERSATION WERE THE VOICES OF PEOPLE PROMOTING ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE IN THE MIDST OF HORRIFIC VIOLENCE AND AMONG THEM, THE VOICES OF WOMEN.

Many participants came from countries that have been at war or dealing with serious violence for decades: Iraq, Sri Lanka, Colombia, South Sudan, the DR Congo, Mexico, Afghanistan, Palestine, El Salvador, the Philippines, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Burundi, Guatemala and more. Their testimony was extremely powerful. Iraqi Dominican Sister Nazik Matty whose community was expelled from Mosul by ISIS said, “We can’t respond to violence with worse violence. In order to kill five violent men, we have to create 10 violent men to kill them. It’s like a dragon with seven heads. You cut one and two others come up.”

Ogarit Younan, who co-founded the Academic University for Nonviolence and Human Rights in Lebanon, shared her positive experience of youth, educators and community leaders throughout the Middle East with nonviolent skills to end vicious cycles of violence and discrimination.

Jesuit Francisco DeRoux told the story of Alma Rosa Jaramillo, a courageous woman, an audacious lawyer, who had joined their team in the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia to support displaced small farmers. She was kidnapped by the National Liberation Army, and finally released. Then she was captured by the paramilitaries. “When we managed to recover Alma Rosa,” Francisco told us, “she was lying in the mud, dead; they had cut off her arms and legs, with a chainsaw.” Immediately, another woman stepped in to take her place, as did Alma Rosa’s son, Jesus and the team continued to talk with the guerrillas, the paramilitaries and the army, searching for a nonviolent solution to a war that had gone on for 50 years. Over and over again they heard from campesinos, native people, afrocolombians – people whose youngsters had joined the guerrilla groups, the paramilitary groups and the army: “Stop the war, stop the war now, and stop the war from all sides!”

Gathered in Rome we heard similar stories from many of the conference participants - courageous people in local communities living with unimaginable danger who said, stop the militarisation, stop the bombing, stop the proliferation of weapons, rely on nonviolent strategies to transform conflict. Together during the conference we wrote an Appeal to the Catholic Church to re-commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence, urging the Church to move beyond the language of “just war” that has been central to Catholic theology on war and peace for centuries and to “integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church through dioceses,



PHOTOGRAPHER: GIULIO D'ERCOLE

parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others." We asked Pope Francis to write his World Day of Peace message, and someday an encyclical, on nonviolence.

Obviously, we were delighted with his 2017 World Day of Peace message on "Nonviolence A Style of Politics for Peace." But central to the Church's process of studying and promoting active nonviolence must be the full participation of women:

women who are theologians to help develop a new moral framework for Catholic social thought on war and peace, a rich theology of nonviolence, and excellent exegesis around the nonviolence of Jesus;

women in politics and social sciences to help articulate effective nonviolent strategies to use in a dangerous world;

grassroots women to design nonviolent practices that can in fact protect vulnerable communities;

women in Catholic schools, Catholic universities, seminaries and parishes who can teach nonviolence;

women who will bring Catholic values to the public debate on the use (or not) of violent force close to home or on the other side of the world;

women who will insist that resources be devoted to meeting basic human needs and protecting the integrity of the natural world, not building more weapons for war;

women who will help the world shape a just and sustainable peace that responds to the real needs of our families and local communities; and on and on.

What if Catholics were formed from the beginning of life to understand and appreciate the power of active nonviolence and the connection of nonviolence to the heart of the Gospel – trained to understand the implications in the 21st century of love your enemy?

What if the Catholic Church committed its vast spiritual, intellectual and financial resources to developing a new moral framework and language for discerning ways to prevent atrocities, to protect people and the planet in a dangerous world?

What if women were central to articulating and implementing this shift in Catholic understanding of and commitment to nonviolence and just peace?

For Christians, nonviolence is a way of life, a positive and powerful force for social change, and a means of building a global community committed to the well-being of all. Active nonviolence is a multi-layered approach that is fundamental to the teaching of Jesus and recognises the humanity of every person, even our sons and daughters who are perpetrators of terrible violence. It is a process for ending violence without lethal force, for transforming conflict, and for protecting the vulnerable. It is a process that women own in the depths of our souls.

NOW MORE THAN EVER IT IS TIME TO PUT ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE INTO PRACTICE IN OUR OWN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND AROUND THE WORLD.

No one knows how to do this better than the women in any society and so Voices of Faith today honours women: makers of peace and promoters of active nonviolence in a troubled world.

WHY IS THE
IDEA OF AN
EDUCATED
WOMAN SO
DIFFICULT FOR
SO MANY TO
ACCEPT?

- FR. OROBATOR AGBONKHIANMEGHE SJ





PHOTOGRAPHER: GIULIO D'ERCOLE



KERRY ALYS ROBINSON

Kerry Robinson is the founding executive director and global ambassador of Leadership Roundtable, dedicated to promoting excellence and best practices in the management, finances and human resource development of the Catholic Church by harnessing the managerial expertise and financial acumen of senior level lay executives.

She is a member of the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities). Since 1990 she has been an advisor or trustee for numerous grant-making foundations and nonprofits including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development, America Media, Jesuit Volunteers Corps, and the National Pastoral Life Center.

Kerry served as the director of development for Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University and led a \$75 million fundraising drive to endow the Chapel's intellectual and spiritual ministry and to construct a Catholic student center on Yale's campus.

She is the author of *Imagining Abundance: Fundraising, Philanthropy and a Spiritual Call to Service*. Kerry received a B.A. degree from Georgetown University, and an M.A.R. degree from Yale Divinity School.



FLAVIA AGNES

It was her own experience with domestic violence that inspired Flavia to become a women's rights lawyer and co-founder of the Majlis Legal Centre, a legal and cultural resource centre that campaigns for and provides legal representation for women and children. Since its inception in 1990, Majlis has provided legal services to 50,000 women. She has played an important role in bringing women's rights to the forefront within the legal system and in contextualising issues of gender and identity.

She applied to college for the first time at the age of 33 and went on to earn a Master of Law (LLM) degree from Bombay University followed by a MPhil in family law from the National Law School, Bangalore so that she could best serve women in need.

A prolific writer, in addition to her autobiography, *'My Story...Our Story of Rebuilding Broken Lives'*, her publications include "Law and gender inequality", "Women and Law in India", "A Reader on Law, Justice and Gender". She is the recipient of both the National Film Award for Best Film on Social Issues and the National Film Award for Best Anthropological/Ethnographic Film.



DR SCILLA ELWORTHY

Dr Scilla Elworthy is a distinguished activist for peace and has worked on peace related issues for over 30 years. In 1982 she founded the Oxford Research Group, dedicated to researching defence-decision making and developing effective dialogue between nuclear weapons policy-makers and their critics. For this work she was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize and awarded the Niwano Peace Prize.

In 2002 she co-founded Peace Direct to fund, promote and learn from local peace-builders in conflict areas, leading to the acceptance by the UN of the value and cost effectiveness of 'locally-led' initiatives. It was named the "Best New Charity" in 2005.

She received her Diploma in Social Sciences from Trinity College, Dublin and a Ph.D in political science, Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University. She is the author of "Pioneering the Possible - Awakened Leadership for a World That Works".



ALL PHOTOS BY WOLFGANG SCHMIDT

SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

Sister Simone Campbell is the Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice – a US group inspired by Catholic Sisters. The group has a more than 40-year track record of lobbying for critical federal programs that support those at the margins and prioritise the common good.

Simone has led four cross-country "Nuns on the Bus" trips, focused on economic justice, comprehensive immigration reform, voter turnout and bridging the divide in politics and society. She wrote the famous "Nuns' Letter," considered by many as critical in convincing Congress to support the Affordable Care Act. She is the author of "A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change, and Community." She has received numerous awards including the "Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom Award" and has appeared on 60 Minutes, The Colbert Report, The Daily Show and as a speaker at the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

She received a bachelor's degree from Mount St. Mary's College and a JD from the University of California, Davis, School of Law, where she was an editor of the UC Davis Law Review.

VOICES OF FAITH PANEL MEMBERS

Kerry Alys Robinson

Flavia Agnes

Dr Scilla Elworthy

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS

Kerry: It is an uncommon privilege for me to moderate a conversation with three extraordinary women, from three continents who advance economic and social justice, human rights, and peace, by their very presence, by their scholarship and by their daily dedication to the common good. Sister Simone Campbell is from the United States. She is the executive director of Network, advancing social justice principles and economic justice in the United States through lobbying, as well as the director of the "Nuns on the bus" movement. She's also the protagonist and central figure of a soon to be released documentary "Nuns on the bus", the movie.

Flavia Agnes is from India and is an internationally acclaimed leader in human rights and human dignity. She is a lawyer and founder of Majilis Legal Centre, who advocates and has protected over 50,000 women and their children, particularly women who endured physical and sexual abuse.

Doctor Scilla Elworthy is a leading voice promoting peace with over 30 years experience. An activist and an acclaimed author, she is a three-time nominee of the Nobel Peace Prize.

I had the privilege of following these extraordinary women through their writings and their work from afar but also the special honor of accompanying them over these last few days right here in the Vatican and I want you all to have a glimpse into their work before we continue the discussion.

Beginning with you Sister Simone, your life is dedicated to the common good, and to advancing Catholic social justice teachings, and particularly in the political and economic spheres. What are some of the motivations and tell us a little bit about your work these days in particular.

Sr. Simone: Thank you Kerry, it is really amazing to be here. I think my deepest motivation comes from my religious community. I'm a sister of Social Service, we were founded in response to Rerum Novarum - the first of the

social encyclicals - to work with those at the margins and to say that laborers have a right to organize, a right to a fair wage, a right to engage and negotiate with power, following the Industrial Revolution. And so, my community continues to be troublemakers when it comes to the issue of justice. And I will rejoice in the most recent encyclical from the Holy Father, *Laudato Si'* and the call to say that **CARE FOR THE EARTH AND CARE FOR THE POOR COME FROM THE SAME REALITY OF EXPLOITATION OF BOTH, AND THAT UNTIL WE LEARN TO END THE EXPLOITATION WE WILL NOT CARE FOR THOSE AT THE MARGINS, WE WILL NOT CARE FOR OUR EARTH.**

That is what moves me in such a deep way. My community is dedicated to the Holy Spirit, so I trust that the Spirit will work within us and we take the gospel to where it wouldn't be otherwise. So, for me it is taking the gospel to Capitol Hill! We work right now on the issues of healthcare, of income and wealth disparity and the anguish of our time that we do not recognise the needs of those at the margins. And it's all about individualism and isolation. So, I think because I live in community, I know that the only way forward is if we work together, in community to each do our part. And it's that belief that I believe congress too could work together and do their part and in that process that's the good news we try to bring to them. That's what really moves me to do this work. I should also say that I'm a lawyer, so when the community's message doesn't work I use law.

Kerry: This is something you have in common with Flavia.

Sr. Simone: Absolutely

Kerry: Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice". You've dedicated your life to justice on behalf of women, especially women on the margins. You yourself are a lawyer. Tell us something about your story and how you came to dedicate your life so entirely to women who need your help.

Flavia: Let me begin by saying what a pleasure it is to be here amongst you, to be in the Vatican and to be speaking to this audience. I wish you all a very happy Women's Day and I hope this message of Women's Day goes far and wide into the world, into the world of women. Women

are peacemakers, women are leaders. Starting from my own background, like the stories that you've heard of some of our young people today, my story starts in the same way; a story of violence, a story of degradation, a story of humiliation. Brought up with strong Roman Catholic values, coming from a small town, Mandilo, one doesn't think that marriage has violence written into it. So, when it struck me I was totally unprepared. I was 20 years old, brought up in the belief that marriage is forever, the Virgin Mary will guide you, the Spirit of the Lord will guide you, and your marriage will work out fine. But when it doesn't work out, I found the only answers were "you adjust," and "this is your destiny," or "this is your faith". But deep inside me I believed that this could not be my faith, this cannot have been my destiny, and I needed to change this. Not just for myself, but for my children. I had to break the cycle of violence, from generation to generation, and be a model for my children but also for the community of women out there, Roman Catholic women, non-Christian women who are victims of abuse, domestic violence, degradation and who suffer in their own homes. So, I started with my own story as a story of rebuilding broken lives. Way back in 1981 people asked me "What is it that brings you to the women's movement. Are you a leader? Are you coming from Marxist groups? Where are you coming from?". I said I come from a situation of violence and I'm telling my story so it will go out far and wide and change the dynamic of violence in India. Now you must have heard a lot about violence in India, of the continuous stories of gang rape. I come from that land. I also come from a land where women are worshiped, we have goddesses, yet we live in this dichotomy. When I started to share my story, I had nothing, I wrote a book when I had nothing, I was down and out, I only had my faith in me. I fought my legal case, I got custody of my children, I became a lawyer. That was a long struggle. We set up this group called Majilis to provide legal services for women, for the marginalised, who cannot approach court, who do not have recourses for justice. This was way back in 1991. We have completed 25 years, we have a group of all women lawyers and support persons. By God's grace we have moved on, one step at a time. I didn't have

any management skills, but the fact that we managed to survive shows the deed for such work and today I'm here among you and I'm very happy to be here. Along the way, apart from domestic violence, we started sexual violence cases, being support persons for children who are abused not only by outsiders but in their own homes, in their own neighborhoods. Small children 5, 10, 12 or 15 years old, you find them pregnant, they don't know what to do, they come from very poor families, so what to do to reverse the criminal justice system? All of them, they see only one thing: they want justice. But what does justice mean? They don't know what justice means. They don't know where justice lies. Our motto is: while you walk this legal journey, your dignity must be maintained. No one has the right to violate you. No judge, no prosecutor, no police, nobody has the right to violate you. **WE WILL HOLD YOUR HAND AND WALK THIS JOURNEY WITH YOU** and that's the motto with which we have moved. Thank you.

Kerry: So Scilla, we've heard a testimony already about the centrality of confidence in one's God given dignity and a commitment to justice for others. What does this have to do with peace and can you say something about your advocacy for a more peaceful world?

Scilla: In 1982 the UN in New York was having a conference on nuclear disarmament and after two weeks there was not very much progress. There was a huge demonstration in the streets of New York to protest this lack of progress. The following day I was working at the UN and I was thinking: this will make all the difference, but no one country changed its position half a centimeter. Riding back on the tram on Broadway I was deeply depressed. All of a sudden, I got one of these flashes: you're talking to the wrong people. Who is it that actually makes decisions on nuclear weapons? Go and find out. So, I packed up my job, went home and started a research group around my kitchen table, which is where all the best research groups start and I said we are going to find out who designs the warheads, who does the intelligence on this, who informs the military, how the military strategies, who builds the weapons, who they pay for, who signs the checks etc... how it all works. Everybody said you're

mad! So, I said well, let's start with China as it must be the most difficult, but actually it wasn't. France was the most difficult.

In 4 years we published our first book which was called "How nuclear weapons decisions are made". With diagrams of how all the different departments in all the countries worked and who were the people who worked in it, because we wanted to make the process accountable. It was completely unknown how it all worked. Then I realised we needed to open a dialogue with those actual human beings and get them to meet the opposite members from other countries, whom they didn't know. At first it was very difficult, they were very suspicious. So, I did my doctorate and interviewed many of them with the result that having had conversations with them over hours, they began to trust the process and were willing to come outside Oxford and meet not only their supporters from other countries, but their informed critics, those who had left the business for ethical reasons. Over 21 years we held these meetings steadily always supported by prayer and meditation. That's what made a difference. And as a result we were able to lay the basis of two treaties and in 2002 I handed it onto my colleagues who are now doing a much better job, working on the cusp between Iran and the United States on nuclear issues. I got really interested in how peace works at the grassroots because I met a lot of people who were risking their lives so that other people didn't get killed, like you. I realised there must be a lot of these people in the world, so we did some research and we were able to identify 350 locally led initiatives building peace on the ground in hot conflict areas. We did another survey 2 years ago and found that number has gone up to 1400 initiatives that are actually preventing and resolving conflicts in their own areas, because local people do the best that needs to happen. These people don't have much support, so what my organisation does is to get media coverage for them, because that makes it safer if they're known and their ability to get small sums of money is greater, but also to give them moral support and training. So this is like green shoots coming through the concrete of the terrible results of the international arms trade. As a result of that I got to realise the extraordinary

ability of women and I can tell a couple of stories about what women like ourselves are doing in these very dangerous situations, but as a result of that I have started an organisation called "Rising women, rising world" and we've identified the qualities of feminine intelligence, so maybe we can talk about that between ourselves.

Kerry: Wonderful! So the individual example of each of the 3 of you is convincing enough for myself, but if we look at this in a broad way, **WHY WOMEN? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO BE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND AT THE TABLE OF DECISION-MAKING, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO PEACE?** I will note that it is available to all of us to see the data, there are studies being conducted in every sector and industry that demonstrate that when women are included along with men at the highest levels of decision-making and leadership, that industry thrives. If we're talking about an international corporation that has a high percentage of women included along with men on the board, the return for the shareholder increases. If we look at the military, we hear testimonies and we know that the military is better run. Women physicians are less likely to be sued for malpractice, and so on and so on. So, could we open this conversation to why from your own experience, is it essential for women to be leading and participating in decision-making for peace?

Sr. Simone: I bring one of these stories into the room from the bus. This past summer we were on the bus in St. Louis Missouri and I met Ms. Bavi, a senior citizen African-American who is organising her neighborhood in the central city of St Louis to prevent gentrification - that's where all the wealthy people move in, forcing all of the poor people out. Ms Bavi decided that she and other senior citizens were going to make their presence known. So, she organised these women, mostly seniors, who owned their homes to hold on to them, to get loans for the rehabilitation of their homes, to make



PHOTOGRAPHER: GIULIO DIERCOLE

...TO REALLY LISTEN TO SOMEBODY ELSE IS THE BIGGEST RESPECT I CAN PAY THEM, AND RESPECT IS THE ANTIDOTE TO HUMILIATION AND HUMILIATION IS THE BIGGEST DRIVER OF CONFLICT.

them habitable and affordable and then they organised themselves into this group called Voices of Women, using the acronym VOW. Their vow is to be faithful to their community and welcome in the new people but stay faithful to that presence. But the best thing they did is they created an urban farm in everyone's backyard to grow vegetables for those parts of the city that had no food, or no fresh food. This one woman showed me the picture of her big cabbage because she won a prize at the fair. She was so proud it was so big that they had to divide it in half so two families could eat. For me that's the combination of organizing, financing and the simple needs women respond to. It doesn't have to be a big theory. It just needs to be responded to. What do you think? Is that your experience?

Scilla: That is exactly how it needs to happen, from the bottom up. I've often been the only woman in a room full of 200 men, making decisions on nuclear weapons for example. My experience with the military now is that women, for their skills are being moved up into the very highest positions. There's a female vice-marshal. There is a woman who is second head of all the 3 defense forces in Britain. Now what the senior generals tell me is "This has been such an increase for us in our capacity to do our job well". First of all, these women have called us to account, because they know what is like to be in the ranks and to graduate, they say "these women have humanised what we do, so no longer are we ignoring servicemen who come back from terrible experiences in Iraq or Afghanistan and suffer trauma. We're now beginning to take care of them better". But in every case, and I was very surprised about this, particularly with the Chinese military, who are pretty tough, and even they are saying "bringing women up to the top and getting their skills and being able to recognise the skills they have, even the skill of women to listen, and the same is true in corporations. I'll just tell you a quick story here, I was asked 3 years ago to work with

the top leadership team of the biggest luxury goods firm in the world. 21 global presidents and vice-presidents. I realised that the internal culture of the company was not good at all, it was tense, people felt unheard and so on. I asked them about their ability to listen and they said, "we are all very good listeners!" I said "well, should we check?". So, I put them through a listening exercise and when we began it, they were all looking at their phones, gradually they got into working in pairs and checking out with experiencing 5 minutes each how they would listen. They got into the sort of feeling of it so strongly that they then invited me to train the next 200 executives and then the next 400 of their executives in this field of listening. Why? Because to really listen to somebody else is the biggest respect I can pay them, and respect is the antidote to humiliation and humiliation is the biggest driver of conflict. And they told me "the skills you've thought us enable us to resolve in 15 minutes what would have taken 4 hours of debate and arguments and still not being solved". So, learning to listen is so underrated and so vastly important.

Sr Simone: Flavia, can I ask you how helping women in your practice of law, how has that changed law in India? Have you seen an impact in that?

Flavia: Yes, I want to deal with it at two levels. We started in 1980 asking for a law reform and if you see the decade of the 80s we got lots of laws changed at the top level. We have a law for everything, like sexual violence and child protection, but they don't work on the ground and in the lower judiciary. **THERE IS ALWAYS A SUSPICION THAT A WOMAN'S IS TELLING LIES. EVEN WHEN SHE SAYS "MY HUSBAND IS BEATING ME" THERE IS NO FAITH THAT SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH,** when she says "I've been sexually abused, by my father, abused by my boyfriend" nobody believes her. That's the situation we've started with. Particularly when we started our support program. The main concern was talk to the judiciary, talk to the police, talk to the prosecutors, talk to people who matter. And it is not a big change, but one can see today that language has changed. Today they don't say "I don't believe this woman" or "this woman must be telling lies". That's the big change: you don't see women as

liars. The challenge was to see in the world, in all institutions that women are not telling lies. Sometimes you'd see a body that has been killed, a girl who's been violated and you think "what did she do?". It happened to me. What did you do? And I say, "I don't do anything!" So, over a period of time, maintaining dignity was to trust the woman's words, trust a woman when she goes to the police station, which is very rare, 99% will not go, 1% when she goes you must trust her. You investigate a case, you are a support when she goes to court. Now, over a period of time what we have done is for sexual violence, we have women police officers who must investigate, we have women judges who must hear the case, we have women prosecutors who have to defend one victim. Yet we have worked with them because patriarchy is so deep in each of us and anti-women vice is so strong that unless you work with them very concretely to change, to tell the stories of these girls, from which background they come. There are many girls whose mother has died or because of violence the mother has left, and the father expects this girl to be his wife. And cook for the family, provide for the family and be of sexual service to the father. These are the terrible stories we deal with. And if you don't trust this girl, I mean what will happen to her? Our main motto is that when she goes through the system, she should not be re-victimised. When the anti-rape movement started the girl, who was raped by policemen on duty in the police station, the local court said "she's telling lies", the next court was ok but the final court said "no, she's telling lies because there are no massive injuries on the body". This happened in the 70s. The girl's name was Mattara. Mattara was raped twice, first by the police and then by the court. Now, after 30 years we have to again say the same thing that when she comes to the court you have to believe her. So, we tried having more women, but in the initial stages women behaved like men. They are there because they are like men. So, you have to change the dynamics and help men and women to have a feminine intelligence, feminine sensitivity, to understand the rights of this girl whose future you are judging. And you cannot start with a negative attitude. And today, apart from providing support to the victims, our biggest challenge is to change the attitude

of the judiciary. And to do this we constantly write in the newspapers, we do training of the judges in the academies, we train the police, it's a big battle, it's a hard battle. But I feel that everywhere we're moving forward and making some successes. That's my point of view.

Sr. Simone: I have to say though, that sitting here I do feel some echoes of that same struggle in a beloved institution that we all value, and I think your learning can be helpful to us to know that women don't tell lies. And the statements need to be taken seriously. Thank you for that.

Kerry: This provides a perfect segway to your articulation of the 5 attributes of feminine intelligence. It's distinct from what we understand as feminine genius. This is your articulation. Scilla, please run down these 5 qualities of feminine intelligence.

Scilla: We arrived at this for our summit last summer in Berlin, which was called Fem-Q. We've got IQ, EQ, but I do want to underline it's equally available to men as it is to women. And it's the intelligence that we need in my view if humanity is to survive. I'll come back to that at the end if I may and say why. But the qualities are first of all compassion; now that may be obvious, but it's compassion with action. The difference between compassion and empathy is compassion brings you to action and here I would quote the example of Gulalai Ismail in North-Western Pakistan, probably the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman, who started Aware Girls when she was 16 to get girls into school. She went on to train young women and men to go into the madrasas where young men are being trained to be jihadis - suicide bombers - and go home with them to their families and talk about why the Quran would not approve. And they have dissuaded 203 suicide bombers. So that's compassion in action. The second one is inclusivity and it's exactly what you've been talking about, what everybody's been talking about this afternoon. Nobody left out, not just the gentrification and only have the top people, the most successful in the decision-making. It's consultation, it's bringing the intelligence of everybody. The third one is listening, and I've talked about that. My experience of how listening works when things get really hot

is illustrated by Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes who was leading a platoon of his men down the street in Najaf, in Iraq, three months after the invasion in 2003. All of a sudden, people started streaming out of the houses on both sides of the roads, screaming and yelling, waving their fists, and his men who were very young didn't speak any Arabic and had no idea of what was happening. **AND HE WENT TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FRONT, WITH HIS WEAPON POINTED AT THE GROUND AND SHOUTED AN ORDER TO HIS MEN THAT THEY HADN'T NEVER HEARD IN THEIR LIVES, "KNEEL!". AND THE HEAVY BODY ARMOR, THE HELMETS, THEY WOBBLER TO THE GROUND AND PUT THEIR WEAPONS INTO THE SAND, EVERYONE WENT COMPLETELY QUIET.**

And after 3 minutes everybody went home. So, what he had done was using his presence of mind and his attention, his listening to the situation to do what was needed in the instant that it was needed. The fourth one is interconnectedness. What Desmond Tutu calls "ubuntu", I am because you are. We are all part of the same system that keeps the whole planet alive, and we have to respect that. We have to respect it to the seventh generation. What our indigenous leader tells us is that we should not make decisions without thinking about the effect on the seventh generation. And the last one is regeneration. Using our understanding of nature, which is inherited, it's innate. To help nature now regenerate. We have to go way beyond sustainability, we have to help the mountains that have had their tops sliced off, mined for minerals, we have to start putting that back. You can see the gouges in the earth from the moon. We have to start putting that back.

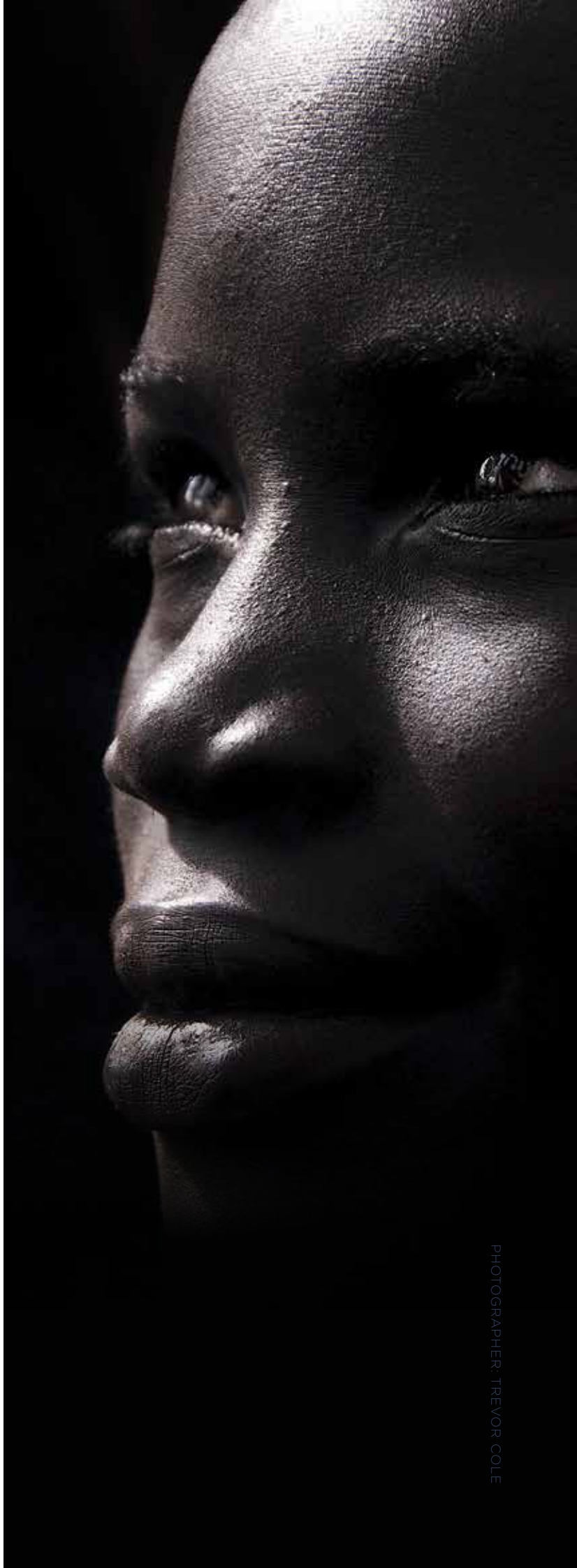
Sr. Campbell: I am so struck, especially by the inclusivity because there is another story I want to tell from the bus is that we have this big bus and it has sort of a wallpaper. Google "Nuns on the bus" and you will see pictures of it. But the biggest joy of the bus is that all are welcome to the bus, and if you commit to participating in a community to do whatever to build bridges and welcome prosperity. If you commit to that, then you get to sign the bus. So, by the end of our various trips, it's not just nuns on the bus, but it's everyone on the bus. And that

becomes the community that works together to makes the change. I know that if you have signed the bus,

THERE IS A SENSE OF BELONGING THAT SOMEBODY HAS YOUR BACK AND IT EASES SOME OF THE FEARS, LONELINESS, THE ISOLATION, THAT REALLY IS ABLE TO BRING THAT PEACE.

Kerry: I want to ask the three of you about the importance of mentoring. Perhaps you benefit from mentors, but also isn't it incumbent upon us to mentor young women, particularly in the context of the Catholic Church. I'm really struck by this talented, beautiful, compassionate generation of young Catholic women who yearn to live out their vocation. Any comments about young women and how to ensure that they are part of justice and peace and our Church?

Flavia: I think it is very important to mentor young people. It is not necessarily within the Church, but there are a lot of Roman Catholic women. We train young people to be support persons to victims of domestic violence, to victims of sexual violence. Now even in our own office about 30% are Roman Catholic women. They're not there because they are Roman Catholic, but because they have compassion, commitment and they want to change the world. But we have other commitments as well. The important part is for them to have a role-model, to have inspirational stories that go out far and wide, the communication then becomes a very important part and one thing we are doing now with the Church in Mumbai is to bring out policies. One is a policy of child protection for schools, so the authorities of Mumbai have got the policy, but they don't know how to train people on that policy. So, we've got our curriculum, we've got a booklet and we are training the dioceses - it's called Dioceses policy for children, for schools. We will train all Roman Catholic schools. There are a lot of these schools and a lot of abuse happens in the schools. So, it is very important to have a policy. Next, which



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is much more difficult, is sexual abuse of adult women by the priests. We are getting support by our own Cardinal Gracias. But there is a lot of resistance to recognise this and I think this is a very important aspect. Very vulnerable girls become victims. So, this is a huge problem in India. We need a lot of young people to participate in this program, so that we become a voice that matters for the Roman Catholic Church. **THE CHURCH MUST CHANGE, THE CHURCH MUST ACCEPT OUR VOICES. THE CHURCH MUST INCLUDE THEM AS ITS OWN POLICY.** That is our current struggle, so that the message goes out for young and vulnerable people that the Church is with them and not against them.

Sr. Campbell: I realise as a young sister my older sisters saw in me talents I didn't see in myself and I got appointed to jobs I would never have had the courage to apply for on my own. But this was in the old days, when we got assigned places. I've tried to do that in Network and every year we have five new graduates from college come and work with us for a year so that they learn how to put Catholic social teachings into a life of advocacy and organising. And I know that for the people that have passed through this program it has been liberating and they have found courage and commitment to carry the gospel into wherever it is that they're called. So, it's that combination of both training and continuous relationship after they graduate. But it is joy and it is what we need for the future that they take the gospel to places I could never go.

Scilla: In sort of a sequence to what you've just said, there's something happening worldwide now in response to the advent of the President of the United States and the xenophobic rise in Europe. That there are literally thousands of young people coming to ask what can they do. They want to be useful. The response that we found so far most effective is 3 questions:

What breaks your heart? Because what breaks our heart is what gives

us the fuel, to get up in the morning and move forward.

What are your skills? Are you good at social media? Are you an organiser? Are you a speaker? Are you a painter? Are you a musician? Apply your skills to what breaks your heart

What cracks your heart open with joy? And that's what being of service does.

Flavia: We're going through a very difficult phase, because the whole country is becoming very right-wing, very majoritarian and the minorities are facing troubles. Minorities are Christian and Muslim minorities. But they don't work together, they work in conflict. My role has been to work as a minority with Christian communities and with Muslim communities, particularly about the rights of women and to bring peace there. **SO AS A ROMAN CATHOLIC, AS A MINORITY, I FEEL THAT IT IS MY DUTY TO ALSO WORK IN THE SPACE OF ISLAM AND WORK WITH A MINORITY THAT HAS BEEN TARGETED AND BRING A DIGNITY TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO BRING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO THE COMMUNITY.** It is a very difficult choice. We have a caste system, marginalised, troubled communities and each one works separately. It is a very big challenge for the Christian community in India today to build these bridges. When you're talking about Syria, when you're talking about Iran, we have Kashmir - we have a terrible conflict there between religious communities - or between India and Pakistan, we have North East which is largely made of Christian communities and we have terrible laws that are oppressive to the people. So, we need to work in a wider framework, starting with domestic violence to sexual violence. Today the challenge for us in India is to build these bridges for peace, for community, otherwise we're constantly in a state of conflict. All of us, we are getting sucked into our identity politics. We need to go beyond that in order to save our religions, save our communities, and build these bridges and bring hope, peace amongst us. I think this is a very important mission that I would like to work on for the future.

Kerry: It's my unhappy task to know that we only have a few more minutes left in this panel although I could spend the rest of my

life listening to the three of you.

One of the central reasons Voices of Faith came to be is to shine a spotlight on women all over the world who are making a profound difference in the area of peace, justice and human rights. And we're doing so from a profound sense of conviction and faith, and when I look at our institutional church it's absolutely essential from everything we are learning over these four years that women must be included at the highest level of leadership and at the table of decision-making. And it's not so much for the sake of women, of course it's what women deserve, it's for the sake of our Church that it could be more effective, that they could be better advocates of human rights alleviating human suffering and advancing justice and the gospel. Are there any final closing thoughts that you might like to offer?

Sr Campbell: I have 4 virtues as a good Catholic that I would like to urge on you all. These 4 virtues are very simple. The first is the virtue of joy. Too often most of us, at least in the first world, who care about these things get grimed and oppressed. We're not a good advertisement to come join us and the Catholic social teachings. So, I urge a new joy. The second I urge a new holy curiosity where you listen and ask the questions and hear people's stories. The third is as important. After you've learned someone's story I urge you to sacred gossip, not ordinary gossip, which is sharing those stories so that the stories get multiplied and it's in that connection we find we're interdependent. The last one is the virtue of doing your part. In the Scriptures Paul says that we're one body and if we're all just ears or all just eyes, it's not going to work. I've been praying, since I no longer do direct service as I did as a lawyer for so many years, and my prayer is what is my role in the body of Christ at this time and what came to me in prayer, you might appreciate, is that my role is to be stomach-acid in the body of Christ. That is because I'm called to nourish, to break down food to release energy but I can be toxic in large quantities, so I need to be contained.

But if we each do our part, then the body is whole. And it all gets done. So, I urge you to do your part, because I rely on you to do

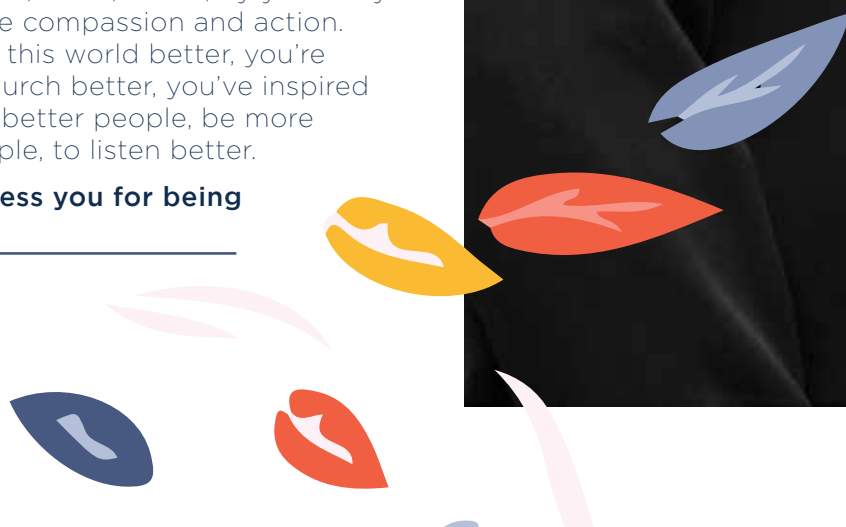
more because I'm breaking down food to release energy, so I hope you might do something with that.

Scilla: Here in Rome I am both deeply impressed and very sad. I'm deeply impressed by the richness of the Catholic religion. I've met people from all over the world who do extraordinary work. My sadness is that for the reason of not including women fully, the Catholic Church is being left behind. All the major institutions that we live with now (the military, politics, business, even banking) have all acknowledged, used and allowed to populate to the top the skills of women. And I am really sad that there is this restriction in the Catholic Church.

Flavia: My message is very simple. **MY MESSAGE IS TO MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE YOU HAVE TO STIR THE WATERS**, and when you stir the water, this becomes messy. And from this mess we need to create something positive. And I can give the example of my own life. Because I stirred the waters and made everything so messy, for me, for my family, for my community, my church, everyone, from there I was able to do something positive. So, you have to be courageous. When you see injustice, you have to stir the waters. Unless you stir the waters, you cannot get something positive. If you're just ok with the status quo, and are comfortable in the comfort zone, and do some good outside, without stirring the waters, we will get nowhere. And I hope each of you, when you go back, you begin to stir the waters. Make it messy, make it muddy, so that you bring in a new dynamic, a new positive energy out of the mess that you create.

Kerry: Sr Simone, Scilla, Flavia, by your very lives you evoke compassion and action. You're making this world better, you're making our church better, you've inspired all of us to be better people, be more authentic people, to listen better.

Thank you! Bless you for being here today!





PHOTOGRAPHER: WOLFGANG SCHMIDT

The **strength**
is to be a

of a woman a woman

- SILVIA GENOVESI





A PAINTING FOR MARGUERITE

Can art inspire generosity and altruism? “A Painting for Marguerite” is an artistic charity project that answers this question.

In 2017, Costanza was invited to the Vatican in order to attend the Voices of Faith 2017, an event that inspired extraordinary women from all around the world to speak up. They told their stories of faith, courage, beauty and joy. The testimony of Marguerite Barankiste was the one that struck Costanza deeply, igniting her desire to actively

participate in projects geared towards those who needed support. This is how Costanza came up with the idea of bringing together art, her greatest passion, with her desire to help others. She decided to start an initiative called “A Painting for Marguerite.”

Shortly after, she was joined by Iacobella, Suzanne, Alice and Jelena. A Painting for Marguerite was born with the idea of creating a meeting point between charity and art. Its main goal will be

supporting education projects around the world through works of art. Carefully selected projects will be managed professionally and monitored over time. Special attention will be given to different forms of artistic expression, all of which are geared towards a cultural movement inspired by generosity and altruism. We also aim to organise events dedicated to selected projects and to promote new ones, all while offering great exposure to the artists involved.

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

WE BELIEVE THAT INVESTING IN EDUCATION SHOULD BE A PRIORITY WHEN IT COMES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY OR NATION.

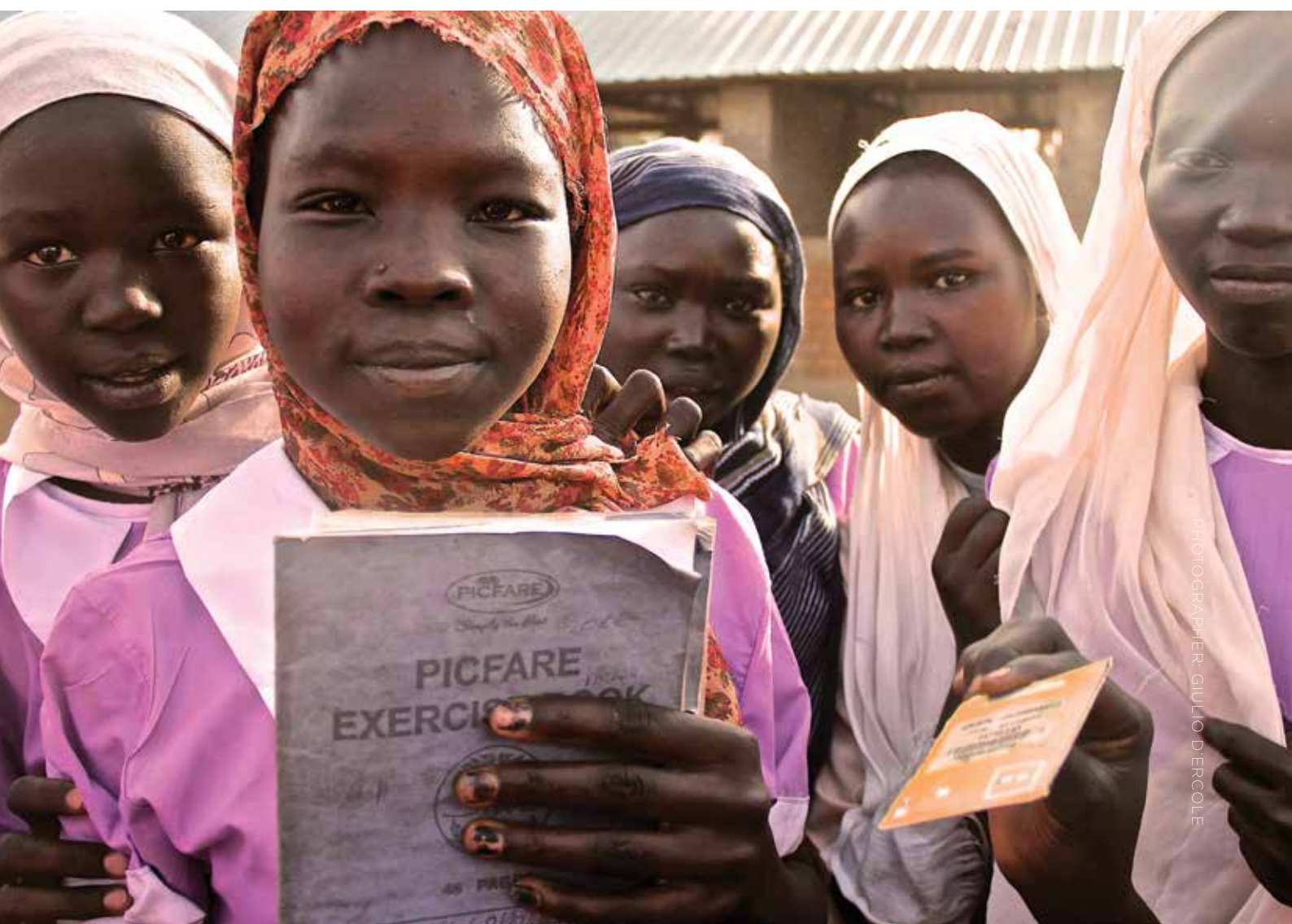
The word development fully reflects our vision, because investing in education means believing in people and their growth. The investment in education is not limited

to building schools and universities, but to help students complete their coursework.

We believe that culture is not merely scholarship, but it is also possessing the values and critical knowledge of the world which is necessary to learn to respect others and to gain awareness of your own actions. Having a good and healthy education not only offers more opportunities in the job market, but also allows you to see the world

in a different way. Every human being deserves a quality scholastic education, but unfortunately, in many countries near and far, it is not possible due to war, violence, corruption, discrimination.

This initiative's name is inspired by the work of Marguerite Barankiste who is particularly active in Burundi and Rwanda through her organisation Maison Shalom. We dedicate our first project to her work.



WHO WE ARE



COSTANZA ALVAREZ DE CASTRO

Born in Rome in 1989. After completing her Baccalaureate from a French school, she studied Economics for International Cooperation and Development at University of Rome (La Sapienza). Costanza's studies left her thoroughly unfulfilled and she decided to pursue her true passions – painting and dance. Soon after, Costanza started working in scenography for cinema and theatre. In 2011 she worked as a production designer assistant to Jean Rabasse in the movie “You and Me”, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci.

The encounter with Jean was extremely important for Costanza; in 2012 she was admitted to the Institut Supérieur de Peinture Van Der Kelen et Logelain in Brussels achieving excellent results. In 2013 she worked at the Opera Theatre in Rome dedicating herself with passion to the learning of background painting technique. She decided to focus exclusively on painting on canvas, where she feels free to combine her technical capabilities with a larger self expression. Since 2015 she has been involved with both personal and collective exhibitions and has participated in various art contests. Costanza has had personal exhibitions at Spazio Cerere, curated by Valentina Moncada, Spazio makemake, curated by Giovanni Argan and at Spazio Menexa, curated by Christina Underhill Danielli.

In 2017, Costanza started the project named “A painting for Marguerite” to bring art and aid together.



JELENA CEROVIĆ

Born and raised in Belgrade, Serbia in 1989 where she first discovered her interests in languages, literature and dancing. Ever since, these have become her passion which have led to many awards and recognitions at national and international levels. Jelena first graduated from a Serbian school for gifted students, The Philological Secondary School, geared towards those particularly talented in humanities and art, with a special focus on languages and literature. She studied English and German, but as she entered the University of Belgrade, Jelena switched to Italian studies. At the very beginning of her twenties, this passion led her to Rome, where, as a European Scholarship holder, she completed her B.A. at La Sapienza University. She then continued on to earn her M.A. graduating summa cum laude at the University of Rome, Roma Tre. While working on her studies, Jelena also pursued a path as a professional latin and ballroom dancer, initially competing for Serbia, then for Italy. This brought her to New York, where she currently lives and is continuing to follow her dance dream. Even while dancing, Jelena never stopped writing, translating and exploring the magical world of literature.



IACOBELLA GAETANI

Born in Kelowna, Canada in 1982. Iacobella lived in New York and Brazil and then continued her studies in Italy and England.

In 2000 and 2002 she spent several months at Mother Teresa's Center in Addis Abeba. In 2005 she traveled to India where she spent time in Kolkota at the Mother Teresa House. She then continued her journey working as an assistant director and actress for the documentary 'Laco's' directed by Gaia Franchetti.

In 2010 she went to Africa to film a documentary for the "100percent2thechildren" foundation that focused on children who live in the world's largest dumps. In 2009, she decided to return to Rome where she started working in the film industry as assistant director for Giovanni Piperno, a documentarian. Finally, she decided to dedicate herself entirely to establishing her brand, Iacobella: Naked & Sacred.



SUZANNE PHILLIPS

Born in Paris in 1989. Suzanne has lived in France, England and Belgium, but spent most of her life in Rome, the place she considers her true home. After graduating with a degree in Biology from Oxford University and earning a Masters in Environmental and Economic Development from the London School of Economics, she worked for the European Commission in Brussels in the African, Pacific and Caribbean Agricultural Technical Center (ACP). Since 2013 she has worked on rural-education related projects at FAO in Rome. She was a lecturer of languages and scientific subjects for several years. This experience helped her understand the importance of student-teacher exchange, realising that everyone can learn while offering something in return. Through her activities, Suzanne has developed sensitivity toward the most vulnerable population and works to give them an opportunity for autonomy and empowerment, inspired by Paulo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.



ALICE ALBANESE

Born in Rome in 1989, Alice has always been passionate about art, creativity and aesthetics. She spent several years of high school in France where she got her diploma, then, in 2013, she earned a B.A. in History of Art and Archeology at the Université de Franche-Comté in France. After graduating, she went back to Rome where she carried out various works in the field of restoration. In 2015 she went to live in Switzerland and then finally returned to France where she currently lives. In the same year, she developed a passion for animation which has been her career ever since. Initially, she did animation for Amirabags, a handbag and fashion items brand, while also working for the artist Costanza Alvarez de Castro. Her success with animation grew, and the subjects became more complex and started making videos for different brands and associations. Her work is characterised by unique originality and thorough research that allow her to achieve one-of-a-kind results.



PHOTOGRAPHER: GIULIO DI FERCOLE

OUR FIRST PROJECT, “RAIN FOREST”

WHEN YOU INVEST IN EDUCATION, NOT ONLY DO YOU INVEST IN THE INSTITUTION, BUT ALSO IN THE PEOPLE.

When you give a child a good education, you are not only giving them an opportunity to go to school or university, but the possibility to learn fundamental principles such as respect for others and the importance of sharing.

This is why we decided to help young refugees living

in Kigali. Funding will be provided for 20 students for cooking classes and sewing for 15 students by Maison Shalom.

Shipping costs and necessary materials for starting their own small businesses after finishing their studies will be financed by our initiative. Volunteers visit the Oasis of Peace Centre, a community centre created by Maison Shalom, daily to help young refugees learn English. Part of the funding will be used for providing

lunch and transportation to these volunteers.

MAISON SHALOM- OASIS OF PEACE

MAISON SHALOM WAS CREATED IN BURUNDI SO THAT EVERY CHILD COULD LIVE WITH A FAMILY AND IN A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.

Later on, Maison Shalom Rwanda was born as well as a new community center named Oasis of Peace in Kigali. This is a place where refugees

from Burundi, not only have access to education, but where they can interact with each other and where they can start the dialogue for peace.

By promoting children's rights, education for peace and integration for sustainable development, Maison Shalom has encouraged long-lasting peace in Burundi. Maison

Shalom fights to give to every child an identity and dignity from birth by protecting both the mothers and children in order to reduce the number of orphans and children in need.

Maison Shalom operates in various fields such as socio-cultural education, medical health and sustainable economic development.



The image features several decorative elements on the left side. At the top is a light blue leaf with a white vein. Below it is a red leaf. Further down is a white, wavy line. At the bottom is a light blue leaf with a yellow vein. The text is centered on the right side of the image.

OUR VOICES
STIR THE
WINDS OF
CHANGE,
SO WE
MUST SPEAK.





VOICES
OF FAITH

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