Editorial

Welcome to our June 2020 newsletter, which showcases some of the many ambitious and exciting projects we are working on. Forced marriage, forced labour and slavery-free supply chains remain a focus of our work, particularly during COVID19 when more people than ever are vulnerable to trafficking.

Like many others, our staff and volunteers have been flexible and creative in adapting and developing new tools to ensure our work has continued. During COVID-19 time we have continued supporting our companions who are supporting trafficked women; we have also generated two major awareness-raising resources - the education webinars and the forced marriage online resource featured in this newsletter.

All of our projects are possible because of your support, whether that’s financial donations, prayers, volunteer time, advocacy through letter writing, or conscious purchasing.

June and July are ACRATH’s fundraising months, as we receive no government funding. We know it is a very difficult time for so many of you. If you can offer us some financial support, terrific. If you can't manage anything this year, we understand. Enjoy the stories!

Louise Cleary cb (President) and Christine Carolan (EO)

Forced Marriage video to be launched

Liz Payne, ACRATH’s forced marriage worker, has spent over five years building networks across Australia, educating Australian secondary school teachers, front-line workers and developing resources. She has now brought all her knowledge and collaborations together in a free, recorded video called, 2020 ACRATH-Developed Forced Marriage Presentation. The video, and supporting material for front-line workers, will soon be launched on the ACRATH website and, webinars to explore the topic will be advertised.

The 35-minute video, produced in collaboration with Liz’s brother Matt James a professional corporate education specialist and videographer, has accompanying resources developed specifically for educators, midwives, nurses and other healthcare professionals, and for front-line professionals such as child protection workers.

The 2020 ACRATH-Developed Forced Marriage Presentation explores the complexities of forced marriage, the impact on a victim of forced marriage, the extent of the problem in Australia and globally, and Referral Pathways for victim/survivors, usually young women under the age of 18.

It is a compelling tool for those working to combat forced marriage and provides some disturbing information about forced marriage in Australia. Australian Federal Police (AFP) had 93 open investigations in 2019, most involving girls under 18 years who have been taken off-shore to be married without their full and free consent. A law specifically banning forced marriage was enshrined in law in Australia on International Women’s Day 2013.

“It’s so important that health workers, midwives, child protection workers and teachers know the right referral pathways for a person who discloses a forced marriage or an imminent forced marriage,” Liz said.

For further information about the launch of the video and webinar dates please contact fm@acrath.org.au or watch the ACRATH website for an announcement.

NOTE: Liz Payne is retiring on June 26th 2020. Her ACRATH colleagues and friends, collaborators and fellow forced marriage workers thank her for the passion, commitment and collegiality she has shown in trying to combat forced marriage in Australia and globally. Liz, your contribution has made a difference.
Fairtrade supplier urges people to ‘wear what you believe in’

Nick Savaidis began Etiko in 2005, and it became the first fashion brand in the Southern Hemisphere to be certified Fairtrade. All the brand’s clothing, footwear and sports equipment are made in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in factories that are part of certified fairtrade supply chains. Not only does this mean that their supply chains are child, sweatshop and slave free, but it also means that the farmers who produce the raw materials and workers who make the products are fairly compensated for their produce and labour. Nick, who has regular contact with those involved in Etiko’s supply chain, has an acute understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of those people and has offered to share some thoughts with ACRATH.

Q. Why did you start Etiko?
A. I felt that there was a need for a fashion brand that could guarantee its products were 100% free from the exploitation of farmers and workers, young and old. Back in 2005 there was no fashion brand in Australia which could make that guarantee.

Q. You sell lots of great gear. So if we are looking at supply chains, talk us through the life of a t-shirt sold by Etiko.
A. Thanks for the compliment! All of the organic and fairtrade cotton that is used in our underwear, t-shirts, hoodies and sneakers comes from a cotton growing co-operative called Chetna Organic Farmer Co-operative. They started in 2006 with around 200 farmers and have grown to more than 7000 farmer members. We are one of their longest and oldest customers.

The cleaning, weaving and dyeing are all done by certified fairtrade organisations. The fabric then goes to a factory in Kolkata which is actually part-owned by the Chetna Organic Farmer Co-operative (which means that the farmers actually benefit from the sale of the completed garment as well).

This is where the t-shirts are made and the designs printed before being packed and sent to us in Australia.

Q. Have orders to Chetna Organic Farmer Co-operative dropped because of COVID-19?
A. Demand for cotton as a whole, not just fairtrade/organic cotton, has dropped around the world as fashion brands cancel their orders. This has impacted not only Chetna Organic but also the factory that makes our garments. In India and Pakistan there are no support programs like JobKeeper or JobSeeker. After being closed for more than two months, the factory has re-opened despite the growing spread of COVID-19 in order to provide the workers with a source of income.

Although our door and wholesale sales have dropped, Etiko’s online sales have actually increased. Therefore, we’ve actually been placing orders with our suppliers. And to assist them we’ve been providing them with cash advances.

In addition to the impact of COVID-19, the area where our clothing is made was severely hit by Cyclone Amphan about a fortnight ago. Luckily there was no loss of life amongst our workforce, but there was severe damage to many of the homes of the workers.

Q. What can we do?
A. COVID-19 has turned nearly everything on its head. Many businesses have closed, some permanently. Many individuals have lost their jobs. Shopping ethically is even more important in the new normal.

We have an opportunity to re-shape how our society operates- to create a society that prioritises the planet, workers and people over profit which is something that the fairtrade movement has been advocating for many years.

We need people who believe in social justice, whether they are social justice ‘warriors’, or people of faith, to start shopping their values.

To check out Etiko’s great range, go to: https://etiko.com.au/
ACRATH’s successful series of webinars for secondary school teachers, wanting to teach students about modern day slavery, has been extended with another webinar on June 23 at 4pm.

The Modern Slavery: A Kit for Senior Secondary Students, which can be found on ACRATH’s website https://acrath.org.au/resources/teaching-kit/ was first developed with a focus on human trafficking in 2013 by teachers with over 30 years teaching experience and has recently been updated to include relevant information and contemporary examples.

More than 30 people participated in the May webinars, co-hosted by ACRATH education committee members Marguerite Buckley and Cindy Bohan. The four-step teaching kit now contains up-to-date resources and offers opportunities for investigation, deepening of knowledge and response by all students.

Kelly Chase, Head of Humanities at Assisi Catholic College at Upper Coomera in Queensland, said the webinar had given her the capacity to explore modern slavery and see how it could be taught in history and geography classes.

“Human trafficking and modern day slavery fits in Year 10 Geography on units covering women’s rights and human rights. Lots of people see geography as just about the geographic features of countries, but it is also about the experiences of people who live in the world," Kelly said.

As Queenslanders she said it is important to teach students doing Year 9 Australian history about ‘blackbirding’ - the 19th and early 20th century practice of kidnapping and enslaving Pacific Islanders to work on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland.

Kelly (pictured) also used resources from the Modern Slavery: A Kit for Senior Secondary Students, the day after the webinar when working with Year 9 geography students on the impact of the chocolate industry.

The benefits of the webinar and the kit will be shared more widely with other Geography teachers thanks to Kelly’s participation in a Senior Geography teachers Facebook forum.

Rosa Ranieri, an ACRATH member from Western Australia, joined the webinar to deepen her understanding of human trafficking. Rosa said ACRATH members were often asked to speak to students in schools and they could refer teachers to the resource, which was informative and easy to navigate.

The next webinar is on Tuesday June 23 2020 at 4pm. To join click https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81932167316?pwd=cnBVRWJLdXZ3cDkvMlB6TG04YS8rZz09

For more information on the kit contact Marguerite Buckley at margueritebuckley01@gmail.com

For information on joining the webinars contact Joseph Dunn at office@acrath.org.au

For any other information on ACRATH contact Rosie Hoban on 0431 471 046 or rap@acrath.org.au
Oxfam's campaign *What She Makes* - Response to COVID-19

Oxfam is calling us to **stand with the women who make our clothes**, and urge large companies to honour their contracts with their international supply chains. By clicking on this link [https://actions.oxfam.org/australia/](https://actions.oxfam.org/australia/) you can send a direct message to these large companies urging them to honour their contracts – your action will help to bring justice to the women and their communities.

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**Rerum Novarum Awards 2020**

ACRATH is excited to play a part in the 2020 **Rerum Novarum Awards**. Senior Secondary students in Victorian Catholic schools have the opportunity to nominate for this year’s Rerum Novarum Awards – showcasing school actions that are addressing a key social justice concern.

This year a special ACRATH Rerum Novarum Award will be given to a school working on a project, campaign or action to combat human trafficking.

ACRATH is aware of a number of schools addressing slavery - by investigating supply chains for school resources, in a curriculum focus, or ensuring staff room tea/coffee and chocolate are slavery free. We encourage each school to consider applying for one of these awards. Your actions will help build a world free of slavery; your example will be a good model for other schools to follow.

By Cindy Bohan

Peter O’Neill ssc volunteers with ACRATH where I am a community development worker. During Volunteer Week in May I thought a lot about the work done by Peter and many others who believe People are NOT for sale.

Peter and I grew up in the same community – 2 years apart.

He and I attended the same primary school – 2 years apart.

We went to the same local Catholic Church – 2 years apart.

We had a lot of things in common – but we didn’t know it then – we didn’t even know each other existed. Peter’s dad played footy for the local team – my dad’s team.

Peter’s dad was a local footy identity – my dad was a local footy barracker.

Peter was the child of a footy hero – I was the child of a one-eyed cats (AFL team Geelong) supporter. We had a similar childhood – camping by the beach, barbequed sausages, surfing and Frisbee throwing, a strong Catholic faith, a wide extended family and Irish heritage – 2 years apart!

I knew none of this until we met at ACRATH in 2019. Who would have known that a life similar to mine would see Peter, a Columban priest, develop a life-long commitment to social justice, becoming a Catholic missionary and spending his life making others’ lives better, safer, valued?

I met Peter, who had been active in ACRATH since returning from 20 years in Taiwan where he had witnessed international workers employed in slave like conditions. He advocated for fair working conditions, with the government and businesses and when he returned to Australia he wanted to share his knowledge and skills to avoid what he witnessed in Taiwan.

Unfortunately this was not to be. When we met at ACRATH, he was already advocating with the Federal Government and the Fair Work Ombudsman for 22 men who came from Vanuatu to Australia on a government aid scheme and went home without pay, superannuation and any recourse for claiming.

I am getting to know Peter and learn of his dogged commitment to these men, and his ability to speak for the downtrodden and people who are unjustly treated. I am learning about Peter who can bring supporters with him, to put language to their emotion so they write the letters that encourage government action. I am getting to know Peter who reminds ACRATH supporters of a world where people are not for sale.

I am lucky to call Peter a colleague, a child of my youth and a person who helps us take small actions to make the world a just and safe place. Peter eats chocolate, but it probably has a Fairtrade or UTZ label, he drinks tea, fair-trade, and he even wears nice clothes – ethically sourced!

We don’t have to make huge changes in our lives – small ones will help a child go to school – and not pick our cocoa beans, and help a mum feed her children. Read more about Peter’s work at https://acrath.org.au/acrath-member-visits-seasonal-workers/

OR follow an ACRATH campaign https://resourcecem.com/slavery-free-resources/

Your small step could make a huge difference.

Update by Peter: Almost 6 years ago 22 seasonal workers from Vanuatu were egregiously exploited by their employer, Mr Bani, who stole $76,649 from their wages. In May, ACRATH received the disappointing news that after seven enforcement hearings at the Federal Circuit Court of Australia in Brisbane, the Fair Work Ombudsman has obtained financial information to establish Mr Bani does not have any substantial means to pay the workers their stolen wages. In effect Mr Bani has gotten off scott free and the Australian legal system has failed in its duty to protect the human rights of vulnerable migrant workers. ACRATH is now seeking legal advice on how to assist the workers in pursuing an Ex-gratia payment or an Act of Grace payment from the government.
Global Initiative, a network of over 500 independent global and regional experts working on human rights, democracy, governance, and development issues where organized crime has become increasingly pertinent, has published a report, *Aggravating Circumstances how coronavirus impacts human trafficking*. The following graphic is an excellent summary. To read the report in full, go to: [https://globalinitiative.net](https://globalinitiative.net)

### What you can do to combat slavery

1. Buy products that are certified Fairtrade, UTZ or Rainforest Alliance. Have a look at Etiko’s website.
2. If you are a teacher, check out the human trafficking teaching kit on ACRATH’s website.
3. Join the education webinar on June 23 at 4pm to learn more about the issue.
5. Donate to ACRATH.
6. If you are doing some anti-trafficking projects or lessons in your school – then apply for the Rerum Novarum Award.

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**ACRATH needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.**

*Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead. Thanks.*


Donations of $2 or more are tax deductible