

SHALOM-UN/NGO Newsletter

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SSND Delegates to Commission Continue Work on Behalf of Girls by Michelle Quinn, Member SSND Delegation to the CSW



SSND delegates to the February 26–March 9, 2007 meeting of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) have been busy sharing what they learned about discrimination and violence against girls and have taken advantage of opportunities to speak to various groups and media—television, radio, and newspapers.

German television stations sought out Nadine Binder from the [Brede Gymnasium](#) (German only) in Brakel and Stephanie Braun of [Theresia Gerhardinger Gymnasium](#) (German only) in Munich for interviews when these students returned from New York. Stephanie also participated in youth broadcasts on the main Bavarian radio station and was invited to serve as a female youth representative on a radio talk show. Agnes Agyemang-Barnie from Notre Dame Girls Senior Secondary School in Sunyani made three appearances on Ghana's two national television stations. In addition, she has been invited to address radio audiences, with one station asking her to appear on the children's channel whenever she is home in Accra on holiday.

Many of the student-delegates gave extensive interviews to local and national newspapers before the CSW meeting, and others have been featured since returning home. Agnes was interviewed by Ghana's national newspaper *The Daily Graphic*, and used the opportunity to stress the importance of education for girls. Jamie St. Eve from [Notre Dame High School](#) in St. Louis (USA) has been featured in several articles in both the religious and secular press.

Not surprisingly, the delegates have proven to be popular speakers and have addressed a wide variety of groups. Jamie and her teacher Linda Kennedy made a presentation to 400+ girls at Notre Dame High School and to a group of SSNDs at the St. Louis motherhouse. They hope to visit other schools and faith-based organizations in the area. Stephanie addressed students and parents at her Gymnasium and, like Jamie, plans to give her presentation to other schools in Munich.

Caitlin Byrnes, a student at [St. Saviour High School in Brooklyn](#), NY (USA) spoke to her school community at their Founder's Day Liturgy on May 9. Nadine gave three presentations: to all of the classes at the Brede School, to interested parents, and to her church community. Vanessa de los Milagros Juarez Arevelo from Maria Teresa de Jesus Technical High School in Tejedores, Peru has spoken at her high school and with the youth group JUFASCA, which includes youth leaders from all the villages served by the [Fe y Alegria](#) (Spanish only) #48 school system.

SSND delegates also see the need to push government and church leaders to follow through on promises made to protect girls' rights. Vanessa, along with Sister Yvonne Nosal, SSND and Marleny Bardales Raymundo, SND, was invited to Congress to greet President Mercedes Cababillas and Rosa Maria Gonzales, the Congresswoman from Piura. Nadine, on her return to Westphalia, sent a report to the appropriate government official from her district. Agnes has visited the Catholic Bishop of Sunyani to share her experience and has plans to meet with Ghana's Minister of Women and Children's Affairs.

Finally, the delegates plan to build on the interest that their experience has generated. Nadine and Stephanie, helped by faculty members Felizitas von Boeselager and Juliane Bungartz, plan to begin SHALOM clubs at their schools to continue working for girls. Linda and Jamie will work with an already existing SHALOM club, and Caitlin will work with her school's SEEK (Christian Service) club on projects and fundraisers.

Delegates also hope to stay connected to one another and to share ideas and resources. Nadine is already at work on a bilingual website in German and English and will post information about their new SHALOM working groups as well as news from the other SSND delegates. Julie Gilberto-Brady, Communications Coordinator for the North American Major Area Coordinating Center, has offered to continue to update the website that she developed for use during the CSW. Additional information and pictures will continue to be available at www.ssnd.org.

A Reflection: The Cry of Xavante's Children by S. Erika Czermak, (SP) translated by S. Inês Camiran, (SP)

For the past 15 years, the Lenten season in Brazil has provided a time to reflect and focus on urgent social needs. This year the theme was *Amazon and Fraternity—Life and Mission on the Ground*. Through the Episcopal Conference every parish in Brazil received material to study the reality of the Xavante people in the Amazon region.



The life of our people in the Amazon region is threatened in different ways. During the Fraternity Campaign in Lent, we felt the call to begin the work of *Pastoral da Criança* with the Xavante's Indians in Maraiwatsede. During the early 1960's the people were evicted from their lands in order to provide pasture land for animals owned by the rich families. Many of them, especially children, became ill and died. About five years ago, families, with the help of Salesian priests, started to come back to their land, Suiá-Missu, but not without difficulty. During this time, the Xavante people went through all kinds of deprivation and were the victims of social injustice. Their special companion was hunger.

In February 2007, our sisters began a course to train community leaders for the Xavantes People. They began by registering children from 0 to 6 years old, measuring them and taking their weight. The results were disturbing: 86 families registered, which included 120 children from 0 to 6 years old. Of these, 75 children were underweight and malnourished. One four-year-old weighed 3.5 kg. Sixty-two children were sick with diarrhea, cough, and measles.

During the course training, adults and children would appear holding their little pan for food. The words **bread** and **hunger** are still very loud in my ears. When I wake up during the night, I see hands holding a little pan and begging for food.

Many people say that the Indians do not work, but last year the people from the Maraiwatsede tribe planted their land and waited for the harvest. One night a diabolic hand set fire to their plantation and their village. The only thing that remained for them was hunger, sickness, malnutrition, and death.

This reality is our *life and mission on this ground* from where *we hear the cries of the earth and its people*.

SSNDs and IHMs Join Forces for Sustainability by Mary Heather MacKinnon (CA)

The [Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe, Michigan](#) and several [School Sisters of Notre Dame](#) and their colleagues have launched a joint venture to explore working for justice and making a shared response to the cries of the whole earth community in our times. The

joint venture will be facilitated by Nancy Seubert, Coordinator of the IHM Justice, Peace, and Sustainability Office, and Mary Heather MacKinnon SSND, an IHM Associate and SHALOM Contact for the Canadian Province. The long-term goal of the SSND/IHM joint venture is international advocacy for environmental sustainability by holding governments of the world accountable for the implementation of the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs), ([Español](#)) especially Goal #7.

The collaboration between the SSND and IHM congregations will begin with bringing together, via internet and phone conferences, a small group of members from each community who have agreed to spend a year together in prayer, study, and action on Goal #7 of the MDGs: *Ensure Environmental Sustainability*. Nancy and Mary Heather hope that the members of this reflective learning community will first become acquainted with one another, share experiences and resources, and then in a year or two begin to work toward active participation in the meetings of the [UN Commission on Sustainable Development](#) ([Español](#)). The hope is that, in time, the initial group will grow to include more members from each community who will find ways to collaborate locally and internationally for justice, peace, and sustainability.

The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe have a long-standing and profound commitment to justice and peace. Today they “consider sustainability a moral mandate for the 21st century.” The School Sisters of Notre Dame are a [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#) ([Español](#)) (ECOSOC) accredited Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). This status gives the SSND Congregation and their colleagues the opportunity to attend meetings of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Currently the CSD is focused on: (1) energy for sustainable development, (2) industrial development, (3) air pollution/atmosphere, and (4) climate change. Its [agenda](#) for 2008-2009 will include agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and Africa.

SHALOM CLUB Celebrates International Women’s Day by S. Margrit Höpfler (BY)



Each year the SHALOM Club of [Dr-Joanna-Decker-Gymnasium](#) in Amberg, Germany organizes activities during the Lenten season to raise consciousness about poverty in our world. This year the students chose to support the German charities MISEREOR and BROT FÜR DIE WELT (Bread for the World). Money was also raised for AIDS orphans in South Africa and for young women in El Salvador. The activities began on International Women’s Day, March 8, and the focus during Lent was on women and children and giving them a chance to live in and build a better world.

SSND Joins International Call for Action to End Violence against Children

The General Council of the School Sisters of Notre Dame has joined the [International Call for Action to End Violence against Children](#) and is urging governments to fully implement the [UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children](#) ([Español](#)). The full text of the call appears below.

Violence is a daily reality for millions of children around the world, affecting girls and boys of all ages, all social contexts, and all nationalities. In every part of their lives—their homes and families, schools, institutions, workplaces, and communities—children may be beaten, sexually assaulted, tortured, and even killed. The perpetrators of this violence are often the very individuals who are responsible for protecting children—their parents, guardians, teachers, employers, the police, and security forces. Violence is a global epidemic of scandalous proportions, violating every child’s right to a safe and healthy



environment.

The UN Secretary-General's 2006 Study on Violence against Children exposes the shocking scope of violence against children and documents its devastating effects on children, their families, their communities, and broader society. The Study clearly establishes the urgent need for immediate action to prevent and respond to violence against children in all of its forms.

We, as local, national, regional, and international non-governmental organizations from every part of the world, call on each UN member state to fully implement the Study's important recommendations.

Having carefully considered alternative ways of ensuring global leadership on this issue, we also call on member states to act at the 2007 UN General Assembly to establish a Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to work with the UN system, member states, NGOs, children and youth as a high-level and high-profile advocate to ensure concrete action to end violence against children in all parts of the world.

Organizations which wish to sign the International Call to End Violence against Children can do so at www.crin.org. Additional information about the issue is available at www.unviolencestudy.org ([Español](#)).

July 7, 2007- Midway Point for the MDGs



In 2000 189 governments pledged to achieve the eight [Millennium Development Goals \(Español\)](#) (MDGs) by 2015. July 7, 2007 marks the midway point to 2015. MDG 7-7-7 provides a strategic point in time to remind leaders of their commitments and the need to urgently accelerate their efforts if the MDGs are to be attained. Lend your voice to the [Millennium Campaign: Voices Against Poverty \(Español\)](#). Learn more at: [MDGs](#).

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