

Marist International Solidarity Foundation Onlus

## Working with FMSI

*Switzerland - 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012*

Here's Robyn Young's account on her internship experience with FMSI (February-March 2012).

"My two month internship at the Marist International Solidarity Foundation was an inspiring experience! It enabled me to obtain a comprehensive insight into the work and processes of an NGO working as a Civil Society Actor with the United Nations. With the beginnings of a Bachelor degree in Law and Arts I applied for the internship because I wanted to put myself in the position where my passion for social justice was challenged. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the chance to live and work in Geneva seemed too good to be true... I felt naively prepared to cope with the language barrier in a foreign country and the type of tasks expected of me to complete and it turns out that no amount of pre-learning can compare with the reality of working within an International Organization focused on children's rights.

My first impression of the office was of the overwhelming positive energy of the people who constantly inspired and helped me grow. The office had the feeling of a community and family with everyone actively participating and sharing resources because of their commitment to a cause and shared values. The internship largely consisted of the research and development of several submissions for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and attending sessions held during the Human Rights Council. Researching the situation of Child Human Rights in several countries, was eye-opening. The confronting nature of being constantly exposed to child rights' abuses and exploitation has allowed me to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the incredible work being undertaken by Civil Society Actors in pushing for real tangible change in governments.

Living in a foreign native French-speaking region acerbated the challenge of the internship and the feeling of achievement once it was completed. Being placed in an unfamiliar culture provided me with the opportunity to learn from people I would not normally have been able to and having that real world experience has only just solidified my interest in advocating for the disadvantaged.



I was able to work independently, undertaking research, observing sessions of the HRC and drafting reports and felt that I was actively contributing because of the trust placed in me. The work was constantly evolving due to the nature of the United Nations and was a definite learning curve. The experience was more than I could have expected and allowed me the freedom to develop my passion for social justice and policymaking. Being able to experience the different mechanisms



of the United Nations has encouraged my ambition to work for a not-for-profit organisation after I graduate because of the welcome I received. Undoubtedly the most enriching experience of my life, I couldn't have

asked for more support whilst in Geneva and cannot express my gratitude enough."

Robyn Young, Melbourne, Australia

## FMSI adds its contribution to the animation of the Institute

*Italy - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012*

It is clear for all that FMSI is an expression of the Marist Institute and an instrument at the service of its mission in today's world. Its specific contribution is in the co-ordination of projects for Provinces having great financial difficulties and, through the Geneva office, in education in and implementation of the defence and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents. In recent days the link between FMSI and the General Administration of the Institute has been particularly visible through two significant experiences: a meeting (14-16 June) of those in charge of the Secretariats: Mission, Brothers today, AMAG (Asia Mission Ad Genes), CMI (Collaboration for Mission International), Marist Laity and FMSI, and in a work in common with the General Council (19-20 June).

During the first meeting, held at Tor San Lorenzo, on the outskirts of Rome, we shared the experiences of our specific works in support of

the General Council. We were able to become aware of how our offices are linked with one another : "Brothers today", that is, our actual identity as Marists, cannot go without the understanding of the "Mission" to which we are called : schools, non formal education, bold frontier experiences (AMAG and



CMI), sharing of the charism with lay people, solidarity and promotion of rights (FMSI).

By way of example, the annual report of FMSI was very much appreciated, but it was remarked that Marist solidarity is very much wider. Sooner or later, it will be neces-

sary to make a report to the whole Institute on the importance of social promotion, solidarity, economic commitment to sustain development projects and "frontier experiences" which we set in motion each year in the 80 countries of the Marist world. In a formation course for Brothers or Laity, when one talks

about Marist identity and mission, there must be a place for topics such as the rights of children, proposals for volunteer service, and the bolder frontier experiences ... And how not to involve our pupils and teachers, wherever they are, in these subjects which touch on the essence of the human being and the meaning the

Marist mission?

From these meetings has emerged the need for a greater mutual co-ordination, and perhaps also a common data bank, so as to dispose of a continually growing wealth of information updated and co-ordinated for the service of the Institute.

## Presented the joint stakeholders' submissions for Pakistan and Sri Lanka

*Switzerland - 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012*

We are pleased to publish the latest reports prepared by FMSI and its partners relating to its advocacy with the United Nations. They are the joint stakeholders' submission for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Pakistan, presented jointly with Franciscans International (FI), Dominicans for Justice and Peace: Order of Preachers and VIVAT International. We also submitted a joint stakeholders' report for the UPR of Sri Lanka with our partner, Franciscans International. Both the reports were sent to

the Human Rights Council in Geneva on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, in preparation for the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group due in October-November 2012. On that occasion, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be examined on their performance regarding compliance with human rights.

The submission on Pakistan aims to promote issues of social justice relating to the Rights of the Child and Women's rights. In particular, it is concerned with 1) education; 2) the right

to be protected against all forms of exploitation and abuse; 3) protection from armed conflicts; 4) Women's Rights.

Our report on Sri Lanka highlights key concerns relating to: 1) Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); 2) peace and reconciliation; 3) urban slums and adequate standards of living; 4) domestic and migrant workers and trafficking in persons; 5) the rights of the child; and 6) the rights of persons with disabilities.

## FMSI in Rio de Janeiro

*Brazil - 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Economy in Solidarity and Equitable Trading, called by RIPESS (International Network for Promotion of the Economy Social and in Solidarity) and by FBES (Brazilian Forum of Economy in Solidarity), opened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 11 June. The participants numbered about 300, representing organisations, local governments and enterprises of solidarity commerce of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. FMSI was represented at the meeting by Br Vicente Falqueto, of the Geneva office, who is in Rio de Janeiro to take part in Rio+20, the international conference organized by the UNO on sustainable development. One of the objectives of FMSI is to develop structures which encourage economy in solidarity within the



Marist Institute, centred on financial sustainability and independence. Fostering an economy in solidarity means decreasing poverty and creating better conditions of life for families and children. The 5<sup>th</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Economy in

Solidarity and Equitable Trading was held on the eve of the «Peoples Summit» and the Rio+20 Conference, in order to contribute to the discussion, in this context, with alternative proposals of economy in solidarity and equitable trading.

P.le Champagnat, 2 • 00144 Roma, Italia  
Tel.: +39 06 545171 • Fax: +39 06 54517500  
www.fmsi-onlus.org • fmsi@fmsi-onlus.org

