



# MISSION NEWS

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)

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## Lok Manch and the right to food

A meeting of the *Lok Manch* partners of the Central Zone, in India.

Joseph Xavier SJ is Consultant to the National Secretariat of *Lok Manch*

Food security is a necessary condition for safeguarding the right to food. Yet too often capacity for food security at a national level does not automatically result in all citizens having enough food for survival. While food security is about the availability of food, access to food, proper nutrition and the stability of food supplies over time, the right to food is about guaranteeing physical and economic access to adequate food at all times so that no one goes hungry or becomes malnourished.

Many people in India, particularly the poor and marginalized, suffer on both counts: they experience food insecurity and the denial of their right to food. There are multiple factors involved. Among these are lack of investment in agriculture, overwhelming debt among small farmers, the corporatization of farmland and increasing urbanization.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis emphasizes the need for sustainable agricultural production, and rejects the idea that global hunger and poverty will be resolved simply by market growth. He decries growth that is devoid of "authentic social and moral progress" (LS, 4). Yet this is the kind of growth that the booming Indian economy relies on.

The accumulation of tons of grain in government godowns (or warehouses) where it is left to go rotten or eaten by rats is a glaring example of the violation of the right to food. This was a startling revelation in India, as it came at a time when the death of poor people due to hunger and malnutrition was being reported. Particularly affected were women and children of socially excluded communities like adivasis (indigenous peoples),

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## The vision & mission of CJI

The vision of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The mission of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

To learn more about Canadian Jesuits International or to make a donation, please contact us at:

70 Saint Mary Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 1J3

Tel: 416.465.1824  
Toll Free (within Canada & USA)  
1.800.448.2148

[canadianjesuitsinternational.ca](http://canadianjesuitsinternational.ca)

[facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational](https://facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational)

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E-mail: [cji@jesuits.ca](mailto:cji@jesuits.ca)

Madeline Lunney  
*Director*

Craig Hincks  
*Editor*

Stefano Maero  
*Design*

G.Grayhurst



## A word from Madeline Lunney, CJI Director

I am pleased to write this message as CJI's Interim Director while Jenny Cafiso is on sabbatical until January 2017. Since this issue of *Mission News* is published during the season when we in Canada celebrate harvest and bounty, it seems fitting to focus on the intersection of food security and food sovereignty.

*Food security* is a basic element of social justice around the world. Twenty years ago, the World Food Summit stated that food security exists "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Although this goal remains within economic and ecological reach, we have yet to achieve it. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that one in nine persons worldwide suffers from chronic undernourishment. We need resolute moral and political action to realize food security for all.

*Food sovereignty* is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. Advocates of food sovereignty believe that the people who produce and consume food should control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution. Instead, we see that agribusiness and market forces control global food systems.

Food security and food sovereignty are priorities for many of our overseas partners. I hope you find the newsletter stories about a few of them as inspiring as I do.

This Thanksgiving, when I sit down to a feast with my family, I know I will be grateful for many blessings: among them the opportunity to be involved in the meaningful work of CJI. I want to express my heart-felt gratitude for the contributions of our wonderful staff, volunteers and the supporters across Canada who make it possible.

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## Lok Manch and the right to food

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dalits (the former untouchables) and other vulnerable minorities.

Taking note of these deaths, the Supreme Court of India passed a number of orders directing Indian states to ensure that no citizen dies in such a way. Many schemes were evolved but most of them met with failure. Then, in 2013, after much struggle and continuous campaigns by civil society organizations, the Government of India enacted the National Food Security Act. Although the right to food is now the law of the land, it is still possible for the law to be toothless, unless supplemented by public pressure. Indeed, only last year, it was reported that more than 70 starvation deaths took place among tea garden workers in the Darjeeling area of West Bengal.

It is against this background of widespread hunger in India that *Lok Manch* (People's Forum) was launched in April 2016. *Lok Manch* is envisioned as a movement of and by dalits, adivasis, women, minorities, the urban poor and other marginalized communities. It is comprised of about 100 Jesuit and lay organizations from 12 states. Together, the partners in *Lok Manch* aim to promote the dignity and rights of priority communities by enabling them to become informed citizens, using their entitlements under the law as a tool.

The goal is to develop the *Lok Manch* network as a vibrant national platform to engage in policy interventions to improve quality of life. The process will be guided by more than 5,000 community leaders, of whom 50% are women. These lead-

ers will serve as volunteers in their local community with up-to-date knowledge of food and related entitlements, how to access these entitlements, and also what redressal measures to take if there are gaps.

One of the major partners of Canadian Jesuits International, the

Human Life and Development Resource Centre (HLDRC) of the Darjeeling Jesuit Province, is leading the West Bengal unit of *Lok Manch*. The Jesuits of India view *Lok Manch* as a collective venture to ensure the right to food. "We have taken the right step forward" is the sense among them and their partners. ■

### TESTIMONY OF TRUST IN LOK MANCH

In May 2015, Fr Gyan Prakash Kujur SJ informed me that Jesuits and partners at the national level were working on something called *Lok Manch* (Peoples' Forum). As I was familiar with the peace-building efforts of Jesuits in Kandhamal, I expressed my interest.

I was invited to participate in the zonal workshop of *Lok Manch* held at Ranchi in December 2015. It was an amazing experience. We were about 35 men and 25 women, heads and other key personnel of 28 organizations. In two days I got a very good idea of *Lok Manch* – its vision, objectives, core values, expected outcomes and governance structures. I sensed that *Lok Manch* was evolving as a movement of the common people. Everything was transparent. Proposal and budget copies were distributed, and I felt deeply that I was trusted and my views were respected.

As a result, I joined *Lok Manch* happily. Being part of it is a gift and I am confident that I and my organization will learn more and be able to support vulnerable communities in accessing entitlements in Kandhamal.

*Ms Sabitri Patra, President,  
Development Education Trust, Kandhamal, Odisha*

Release of the Lok Manch training resource in Hindi. Sabitri Patra is second from left.



# Food Security in Zambia: A tale of two farmers

Ilishebo Susiku is Project Coordinator at Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) in Zambia

The two farmers featured in this article were participants in a three-year training project implemented by KATC and supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). The final report on the project, submitted earlier this year, noted the project's success not only in training the 100 farmers involved (including 60% women) but also in demonstrating the benefits of organic agriculture to thousands of neighbouring farmers.

## Hervent Silwindi

Hervent Silwindi is a farmer who resides in a village called Mwalubemba in Zambia. She is 39 years old and has 7 dependents, including 3 grandchildren. Before joining KATC's farmer training program in 2012, Hervent was a conventional mono-cropping maize farmer. Feeding her family was difficult and she rated the nutritional value of their diet as "poor."

Hervent Silwindi in her home garden.



When Hervent enrolled in KATC's program, she was trained in organic vegetable production, biological pest management, food processing and preservation, small animal production, and other areas. By the third year of the program, she had a home garden with 9 different vegetables. She was also practising crop rotation in her rain-fed field, with maize, soya beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, and other crops.

Hervent's annual income is now over four times higher than at the beginning of the program. She has been able to send her children to school, build a new house, rent a garden plot, and buy a water pump, solar panels and household goods. She believes the KATC program has changed her life in many valuable ways. These include self-confidence, leadership and family relationships. She is thankful to GAC and CJI and asks God to continue blessing the people of Canada.

## Robert Lungu

Robert Lungu resides in Chipokolo village in Zambia. He is aged 55 and currently has 3 dependents. Robert worked for an employer for 12 years, but due to low wages he chose to leave his job and focus on farming. He could typically produce 14 bags (700kg) of maize on his 3 hectare field per year. This was sufficient for home consumption, but it left him with nothing extra to sell at market.

Robert heard about organic farming at KATC from his wife, but he did not have the money for tuition. It was a prayer answered when he learned that KATC was recruiting farmers for the GAC-funded project.

By his third year in the KATC training program, Robert's annual income had also greatly increased and enabled him to build a larger house for his family. He appreciates the knowledge he acquired of organic agriculture and now also rears goats and ducks and collects manure from the animals for his garden and rain-fed fields.



Robert Lungu and his wife in their rain-fed maize field.

Robert rates the current nutritional quality of food in his household as "excellent" and reports that the incidence of illness in his family has been reduced. He is thankful to GAC and CJI for the KATC project and wishes it could continue. ■



# Comparte: Food in a people's economy

Álvaro Idarraga Quintero is Executive Secretary of Comparte

The Comparte (“Share”) program of the Jesuit Conference of Latin American Provinces (CPAL) is a community of learning and action comprised of 16 social organizations, as well as Alboan in Spain. It seeks to promote alternative economic processes and to reflect on these processes critically to ensure that they are economically, politically, culturally and environmentally sustainable.

Latin America and the Caribbean exist in a paradox of food crisis: in spite of their biodiversity and abundant food supply, adequate food is not accessible for around 15.3% of the population, or 68.5 million people (FAO, 2014). In a bid to address this crisis, Comparte is working to foster economic production in diverse regions and to promote food security, food sovereignty and the conservation of natural heritage. It also advances an environment of participation, based on principles of gender equality and generational inclusion.

Two examples follow from the many communities in the seven countries where Comparte serves.

## Food security in San Ignacio, Paraguay

Since 2000, CEPAG (the Antonio Guasch Centre for Paraguayan Studies, a member of Comparte) has assisted 320 farmers in San Ignacio district, in southern Paraguay, toward greater food security. CEPAG’s work focuses on strengthening the technical capacity of *campesinos* (small-holder farm families). It also accompanies groups as they develop shared management and alternative marketing channels. One such group is AOSSI (the Association of Community Organizations of San Ignacio), which was established in 2008 to support coordinated action by producers.

The Balbuena-Roda family is a member of AOSSI. Before joining the group, the family found that the cost of investing in the kind of infrastructure that assures production, such as an irrigation system, exceeded their financial capacity. So they turned to AOSSI’s micro-credit program for help. AOSSI also offered them the opportunity to sell their produce once a month at an agro-ecological fair in the capital Asunción.



Members of the Balbuena-Roda family prepare their garden for planting.

Today Aureilio Balbuena happily regards his family’s prospects: “Our goal is to be able to establish a family-owned micro-enterprise where our children can work. With the help of CEPAG, we recently built a greenhouse and later I want to purchase a vehicle to take our products to market.”

## Micro-dams in Ccatcca, Peru

Ccatcca is a rural district in southern Peru where 80% of the people are small-holder farmers. In 2000, when CCAIJO (Agro-industrial Training Centre of Jesus the Worker) began to accompany the people of Ccatcca, it found that the biggest barrier to improving productive capacity on family farms was the lack of water for irrigation. In response, a collective decision was made to build micro-dams to store rainwater for irrigation during the drier summer months.

Twelve micro-dams have now been constructed at strategic points in hydrographic basins where small quantities of rainwater naturally accumulate. With this technology, the farmers of Ccatcca have collected over one million cubic metres of water.

Along with micro-dams, CCAIJO has also helped with other capacity-building in agriculture and livestock production (cattle, llamas and guinea pigs). Farmers in Ccatcca now produce enough for their own consumption as well as surplus to sell at regional markets. Moreover, the food security and sovereignty they enjoy is serving as an example to *campesinos* in neighbouring districts. ■

## Sharing a legacy: Fr Abraham

By Mary Ellen Sullivan

Fr Joseph Murray Abraham SJ grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, during the Depression. His family's experience of poverty and food insecurity led him to dedicate his life to "the poorest of the poor" in the Kurseong region of Darjeeling, India. During his life, he often returned to the gospel teaching "I was hungry and you fed me" to inspire his work.

I met "Fr Abe" in India ten years ago. While there, I made friends in a community called SASAC, which was established by Fr Abe and included people of different faiths and backgrounds. They managed Fr Abe's innovative programs, including square-metre gardening, composting, dairy and reforestation. Today some

of them are involved in SOJASI (Society of Jesus Agricultural and Social Institute) which Fr Abe helped set up before his death in 2012.

Last fall, I returned to visit my friends, and attended a huge celebration of Fr Abe's life and legacy. A statue of him was erected on the main street of Kurseong. Many people of different faiths told me that it inspired them to reflect on their duty to the poor.

I am blessed to have known Fr Abe as a friend and spiritual guide. In April of this year, I spoke about him and my SOJASI friends to an audience of 60 at the Halifax Central Library. I feel privileged and proud to be able to share their stories.



Fr Abraham and Mary Ellen celebrate Diwali in 2005.

*Mary Ellen successfully negotiated with the City of Halifax to have 26 September declared "Father Abraham Day." For more, please see [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5546](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5546).*

*Copies of Mary Ellen's book of poems My Farm Whispers are available from CJI for \$18.00. All proceeds go to support the work of SOJASI. For more information, please see [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5586](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5586).* ■

## Ecuador earthquake response

The response by partners of Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) to the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck northern Ecuador on 16 April 2016 is ongoing and multifaceted. CJI has coordinated its assistance with the Xavier Network and it also continues to collaborate with its local on-the-ground partner Fundación Río Manta (FRM). To date, more than \$30,000 have been sent by CJI. Thanks to those who have given so generously! For a more detailed update, please visit [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5625](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5625). ■

FRM staff share preventative health information.



## Lampedusa concert!

The Lampedusa Concert for Refugees will visit over 10 North American cities this fall, including Toronto on 14 October. This benefit concert tour is a major fundraiser for the Global Education Initiative of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). It is named after Lampedusa Island, where Pope Francis met with refugees in 2013, on his first trip outside of Rome.

Emmylou Harris and other Grammy Award-winning artists will be featured at all the concerts to raise awareness of the unprecedented worldwide refugee crisis and what JRS is doing to help. For tickets or more information, please visit [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5491](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5491). ■



## Y4O Social Justice Day

CJI's 2016 Youth for Others Social Justice Day was held on 26 April at St Michael's College, Toronto. More than 80 students and educators gathered for plenary meetings and workshops on this year's theme: "Mercy and Justice." Fr Daniel Syauswa SJ from the Democratic Republic of Congo was the keynote speaker. See more at [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5248](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5248).

## Global Repair nomination

On 10 June, CJI attended the Global Compact SDG Awards where Global Repair was nominated for their contribution toward the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For many years, Global Repair has donated equipment to CJI's partner Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in Zambia. We congratulate them on their nomination!

## In brief ...

### International Assistance Review

On 29 July, CJI's staff and board sent a collective response to Global Affairs Canada, following the government's request for input on refocusing Canada's international assistance programs. See our response at [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5588](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5588).

### Feast day support for Syria

CJI received \$2,000 in donations for Jesuit Refugee Service work in Syria at the celebration of St Ignatius Day in Pickering, Ontario, on 31 July. Thank you to those who contributed and to the Province for making this possible!

## Mission Co-op Sunday

On Mission Co-op Sunday in August, Fathers Bill Robins and David Creamer spoke about the work of CJI's partners in Nepal and India, respectively. Fr Bill visited Holy Spirit Parish in Scarborough and Fr David was at St Paul the Apostle Parish in Alliston, both in the Archdiocese of Toronto. CJI receives a share of the collections from this Sunday for its partners' work.

## Open Doors on Nepal

CJI hosted an "Open Doors Day" with Fr Bill Robins SJ on 6 September. Fr Bill gave an update on Nepal and especially on the Jesuits' work in education and reconstruction since the 2015 earthquake. We are grateful for his visit to Canada this summer! For more, please see [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5590](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5590). ■

## Honduras: Beyond the headlines

Fr Ismael (Melo) Moreno Coto SJ spoke with great sensitivity and passion about Honduras and the struggle for human rights and the environment at a public event organized by CJI on 15 August in Toronto. Numerous people in the audience were moved to learn about the crises in Honduras and also to support Fr Melo and his work with Radio Progreso.

During and since Fr Melo's visit to Canada, there has been much new coverage of the issues that he raised, as well as new advocacy, including a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau from the Jesuit Provincial Superiors of Canada. To learn more, please visit [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5528](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5528). ■

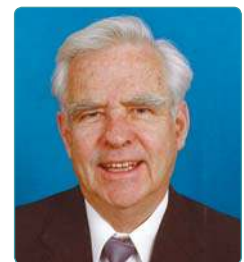


Fr Melo talks about human rights in Honduras.

## Fr Henry Nunn SJ

CJI honours the memory of Fr Henry (Hank) Nunn SJ, who died at the age of 86 in Bangalore, India, on 31 July 2016.

Fr Hank entered the Jesuits in 1951 and taught for many years, first in Ethiopia and then in Darjeeling, India. In 1977, he moved to Bangalore, where he began working with young people suffering from serious mental disorders and helped to establish a unique therapeutic community. For more on Fr Hank's remarkable life, please see [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5483](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5483). ■



Fr Henry Nunn SJ

## A Thanksgiving Day prayer

By Philip Shano SJ

CJI has a particular interest this Thanksgiving in helping to provide food security for displaced Syrians through the Jesuit Refugee Service. Let us pray for an increased consciousness of the situation in Syria and for the will and strength to share from all that we have.

*“God, whose gifts are countless and whose goodness is without limit, teach us, we pray, to treasure and use wisely the rich blessings of this country. Help us to be attentive to the needs of others, and to give as freely as we have received. You have blessed Canadians with a genuine embrace of Syrian refugees who have been welcomed to this land. Help us to be mindful of Syrians who remain in their land. Grant that we may share with others all that we hold in trust from you, and live as a people in true gratitude of heart.”*

### THANKSGIVING APPEAL!

Please support CJI – your contribution to food security and other human rights will bring much-needed change.

All donations are tax deductible. All personal information is held in accordance with Canadian Government Privacy Policy.

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**Thank you for your support!**

Please consider including CJI in your will. Your legacy gift will bring real hope and opportunity to people struggling for a better life! For further information, phone toll-free (ask for Isabel), email [iperezdoherty@jesuits.ca](mailto:iperezdoherty@jesuits.ca), or visit [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5592](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5592).

### WE NEED A NEW NAME!

Enter our contest to help us re-name our newsletter! Everyone can participate. Contest closes on 15 October. For details, please go to [www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5256](http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=5256).

## New board members

CJI is pleased to welcome Tatiana Romero and Basant Kayastha to its Board of Trustees.

Tatiana brings to CJI many years of experience in international development in Latin America and Africa. In Colombia, her country of origin, she worked at the Jesuit-founded Centre for Research and Popular Education. Currently she works as Senior Advisor on education and child protection at Save the Children Canada.



K.Vaz/CJI

Tatiana Romero

Basant holds a master's degree in economics and is fluent in five languages. For over a decade he worked with Caritas in Cambodia. Currently he works in Canada with refugee claimants. Basant brings to CJI considerable knowledge of international programs. ■

Basant Kayastha



K.Vaz/CJI

## Interim Director

The board and staff at CJI are very pleased, and fortunate, to have Madeline Lunney as our Interim Director, while Jenny Cafiso is on a well-deserved sabbatical until January 2017.

Madeline is no stranger to CJI or the work of the Jesuits. Most recently, she was a key consultant for one of our biggest projects – the farmer training program at Kasisi in Zambia. Madeline also has solid overseas work experience (including facility in Spanish), and in-depth knowledge of international non-profit organizations through Lunney Consultants. Please join us in welcoming her! ■