

BRIDGING BORDERS



In Mtauchira, villagers and relief workers gather to pray for victims of Cyclone Freddy, with the mountain behind them showing the path of a devastating mudslide.



Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development

‘STRANGERS IN OUR COUNTRY’ CLIMATE-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION IN MALAWI

Br Ngonidzashe Edward, SJ, is Executive Director of the Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development in Malawi, and focal person on ecology and climate justice of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network-Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar.

“These cyclones have made us strangers in our country; we do not have homes; we do not have fields to plant crops or a village to call our own. We are being forced to live in camps now.”

These were Chief Mussa’s words of despair after Cyclone Freddy wiped out his entire village of

Mtauchira, in Chiradzulu, southern Malawi, killing 18 people, injuring 133, and leaving 11 others missing, now presumed dead.

About 700 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mtauchira have been living in a camp since the cyclone brought torrential rains

to Malawi on March 12 to 15, 2023. They are struggling to access necessities such as food, water, and medicines. This has left them feeling like destitute strangers in their own country.

Climate-induced displacement and migration have swiftly become



ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

When we visited our Jesuit partners in Nepal last year, we met several young women who were participating in training and further education at the Nepal Jesuit Social Institute (NJSI). They were full of hope and dreams for their communities.

Shristi, who joined NJSI while she was still pursuing her Master of Social Work degree, said that even as a young child, she wanted to be involved in her community. “I love doing things for people,” she told me. NJSI does much-needed work, Shristi said, citing its support for the underprivileged, especially among Nepal’s Indigenous peoples.

Rina, an intern at NJSI who wants to become a social worker, spoke about the need to educate girls, noting that some in her community have been subjected to forced marriages and domestic violence.

I remembered Shristi and Rina when news came out about the 16th World Social Forum (WSF) in Kathmandu in February. NJSI, a partner of CJI, was represented at WSF, which serves as a counterweight to the World Economic Forum, where the rich and powerful gather annually in the Swiss town of Davos (see page 5).

Shristi and Rina, like the WSF, embody service and action, and they represent the people that the forum

stands for. The forum brings together thousands of people from social movements and civil society organizations who dare to imagine and pursue a just world where no one goes hungry, where the dignity of every person is respected, where there is peace, where everyone can enjoy their human rights and shape their own destiny.

The theme of this year’s forum, “Another World is Possible,” resonates strongly today. As the forum notes in its opening statement, our world is facing “an unprecedented environmental crisis,” along with rising inequality, wars and conflicts, the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the threat of a future one, and “escalating tensions between major powers,” among others.

Two of our stories in this issue highlight how the climate crisis is displacing millions of already marginalized people. A series of devastating cyclones and droughts have forced hundreds of thousands to relocate in Malawi (see page 1), while extreme weather events are contributing to cross-border migration in Latin America (see page 3).

As members of a community of faith, the Gospel call to serve, especially those in need, is more important for us now than ever. This includes fighting against climate change, and defending everyone’s human rights.

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.

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HOSPITALITY IS A CALL TO WELCOME MIGRANTS, REFUGEES

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide will reach an unprecedented 130 million this year.

Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for one third of the 2.6 million new individual asylum applications globally in 2023, according to the UNHCR. It also hosts 22.1 million forcibly displaced people, 25% of whom are children.

To better understand the situation, CJI interviewed **Lizbeth Gramajo Bauer**, coordinator of the Jesuit Migration Network (Red Jesuita con Migrantes or RJM) in Latin America and the Caribbean.



 Lizbeth Gramajo Bauer

International institutions such as the UN have stated that the world is in the grips of an unprecedented migration crisis. What does the situation look like in Latin America?

Mobility restrictions and border closures during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic reduced migration flows. But in the post-pandemic period, migration has increased. People who postponed their departure or became stranded in other countries are on the move. We have seen an increase in migratory flows especially from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean, as well as “extra-continental migrants” (migrants from Africa and Asia transiting through Latin America) seeking to reach the United States in pursuit of the “American dream.”

What are the main causes of these increased migrations?

The structural causes include high rates of poverty, violence, and social inequality in Latin America. The socio-political crises in the region – in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Haiti, and Ecuador, among others – are fueling new migrations in the region. The

impact of environmental and climatic events, as well as environmental degradation, are also causing internal and international displacement in some countries in the region.

How is your organization responding to the migration crisis?

The Jesuit Migration Network is an expression of the work of the Society of Jesus, which promotes work with migrants, displaced persons, refugees, and their families, as well as with other agents of change. The network seeks to respond comprehensively to this reality. It provides socio-pastoral accompaniment, which involves direct attention (humanitarian, legal, pastoral, psychosocial) to migrants, refugees, displaced persons, and their families. It conducts investigative research and analysis that allow a better understanding of the reality of migration and the search for alternatives. It advocates for defending the rights of migrants, addressing the structural causes of forced migration, raising awareness of policies that make migrants more vulnerable, and contributing to reconciliation, justice, and a culture of hospitality.

Why should people care about this issue?

Migration is an historical and global reality. There are concrete actions and fundamental values that we can promote. Hospitality is a call to welcome migrants and displaced persons warmly. It is a fundamental characteristic of a truly humane society and is a value that needs to be upheld by policies and legal systems. Hospitality is the Christian expression of welcoming the other. We seek full inclusion, which is a structural dynamic that integrates people into a society in the fullness of their rights, without distinction of ethnic origin, cultural, religious, or economic condition.

What is the impact of support from organizations such as Canadian Jesuits International? Why is it important?

CJI’s support helps the network to continue to fulfill its mission as part of the Society of Jesus’ commitment to the most vulnerable migrants, displaced persons, refugees, and their families in the region.

FEATURED PROJECT: LOK MANCH


Lok Manch (People’s Forum) is a national platform that promotes the dignity and well-being of poor and marginalized people in India by advocating for and with them to access their legal rights.

A CJI partner, Lok Manch is made up of approximately 100 Jesuit and civil society organizations in 15 Indian states.

Many of India’s rural and urban poor – especially Dalits (scheduled castes) and Adivasis (scheduled tribes) – lack access to education, adequate housing, and health services, and suffer from food insecurity.

Lok Manch programs include awareness-raising, training, and capacity-building of community leaders to promote full and meaningful participation of people in governance and building climate-resilient communities. The process is guided by thousands of community leaders, half of whom are women.

Involvement with Lok Manch is “a real formation process to help people become aware of their rights and to work at a community level to effect change,” said CJI Executive Director Jenny Cafiso, who had the opportunity to visit Lok Manch in 2023. She met local leaders, most of them women, who have won major victories to make their communities better places to live.

 Women activists share how their involvement with Lok Manch has helped their communities.



Jenny Cafiso/CJI



Here are **some highlights** of Lok Manch’s impact for fiscal year **2023-2024**:



325,100 beneficiary households in 15 states



500,000-plus indirect beneficiaries



6,000 leaders trained to help their communities achieve their rights, and social protection



803 community infrastructure projects completed to provide roads, water, sanitation facilities and street lights



300 people elected to local government after working with Lok Manch



Over 300,000 educational materials on how to access rights distributed in 15 states

NJSI, FE Y ALEGRÍA-NEPAL

UNDERScore RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Fr Roy Sebastian, SJ, is Director of the Nepal Jesuit Social Institute.

The Nepal Jesuit Social Institute (NJSI), a Canadian Jesuits International partner, underscored the importance of education as a human right, and as a path to dignity and empowerment during the 2024 World Social Forum (WSF) held in Kathmandu February 15 to 19.

“Students are not to be treated as puppets programmed to behave according to anybody’s interests, they are evolving conscious beings,” said Fr. Roy Sebastian, SJ, Director of NJSI. Children have the right to develop their own consciousness and should have the opportunity to discover their relationship with other human beings, with nature and the Divine, he added.

Fr Sebastian spoke during a panel discussion organized by NJSI and Fe y Alegría Nepal on the theme, Right to Education is Right to Truth, at Ratna Rajya Campus on February 17.

A “conducive and open environment” for students to discover the truth “is a fundamental right in opposition to limitations set by the narrow, often one-side worldview of the fundamentalism of one particular culture, religion, politics, or business,” he said. Critical thinking among students must be developed even from primary education, he added. “The sustainability of humanity depends on the formation of the minds of human beings whose decisions and actions have a participatory role in designing the future.”

The NJSI-Fe y Alegría presentation was one of about 400 programs, workshops and other events featured at the WSF, which adopted the theme “Another World is Possible.” An estimated 50,000 participants attended

– in person and virtually – from more than 1,400 organizations representing 98 countries, and discussed economic inequality, climate justice, gender equality, peace, migration, democracy, authoritarianism, human rights, Indigenous rights, and the right to information, among others.

A WSF statement noted that the world is facing “an unprecedented environmental crisis coupled with rising inequality, widespread food insecurities, majoritarian violence, the aftereffects of the last pandemic and the threat of a future one, and escalating tensions [among] major powers.”

The world has “transformed significantly as globalization, formerly championed by the West, gives way to trade conflicts and military confrontations,” it noted. “Corporate power, short-term state interests and right-wing majoritarian forces are employing all means possible to undermine democratic participation and the well-being of our societies and the globe at large.”

The WSF was launched in 2001 as an alternative to the World Economic Forum, which gathers world leaders and powerbrokers annually in Davos, Switzerland. The WSF offers a space for diverse social movements, trade unions, academia, youth organizations and other groups to gather and collaborate on social justice issues.

The WSF ended with a solidarity march attended by thousands in downtown Kathmandu, and with 60 declarations pledging action to create a just world.

 Nepal Jesuit Social Institute staff and supporters join a World Social Forum solidarity march in Kathmandu.



major challenges in Malawi. This is largely due to repeated climate-related disasters and extreme weather events, such as cyclones and droughts, that the country has been experiencing in recent years.

Over the past decade, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), has recorded over 25 disasters in sub-Saharan Africa associated with severe rainfall events, such as floods, landslides, and storms, affecting millions of people and displacing thousands. IDMC is an international non-governmental organization established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

According to UNICEF, the devastation caused by Cyclone Idai in 2019 brought the issue of climate-induced displacement and migration to the forefront in Malawi. Idai destroyed nearly 224,000 homes and displaced more than 160,000 people across Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

Since Idai, Malawi has been hit by several tropical cyclones, including Chalane (2021), Eloise (2021), Guambe (2021), Ana (2022), and Gombe (2022). Malawi is now one of the top five countries in the world that are most vulnerable to climate change and severely affected by extreme weather events on the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index.

The most recent climate disaster, Cyclone Freddy (2023), is recorded as one of the deadliest tropical storms to have hit Malawi. Freddy dumped six months' worth of rainfall in just six days, resulting in the loss of approximately 1,200

lives and the displacement of more than half a million people. About 2.3 million people were affected, with 659,278 of them displaced and homeless. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment estimated that two million farmers lost their crops, 440,000 acres of land were destroyed, and 1.4 million livestock drowned, starved, or got lost.

It is estimated that by the end of the 21st century, weather anomalies in sub-Saharan Africa could lead to an annual migration of 11.8 million people. Such high levels of climate-induced migration will have a profound impact on a country like Malawi, which is already struggling with major issues of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity. The UN's International Organization for Migration has stated that the surge in climate-induced migration and displacement will have a significant impact on global development, putting pressure on urban infrastructure and services, hindering economic growth, increasing the risk of conflict, and ultimately reducing migrants' health, education, and social outcomes.


As the global climate crisis worsens, climate-related disasters are causing

human displacement and migration, affecting poor communities in Africa on a significant scale. Malawi is projected to experience more climate-related disasters and extreme weather events in the future, which will only exacerbate the situation.

In response to this issue, the Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development (JCED) has launched the Caravan of Hope Campaign to provide humanitarian support, raise awareness about the impacts of climate disasters, and advocate for climate justice for affected frontline communities in southern Africa.

However, more support is needed to help frontline communities, especially those who have been internally displaced. These people have become "strangers and destitute" in their own country, forced to either live in camps or migrate elsewhere, often temporarily or permanently far from home.

It is time to act to address the impact of climate change on poor communities. No one should be a stranger in this "our common home."

 Cyclone Freddy swept away several villages in Southern Malawi, leaving them covered in mud and rocks from mudslides.



WEBINAR EXPLORES ROOT CAUSES OF MINING MISERY IN THE DRC

The legacy of colonialism, racism, unchecked consumerism, and a rapacious global economic and political system that overlooks ethical and environmental concerns are among the main reasons why mining and the extraction of natural resources is causing untold suffering in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Any analysis of the impact of extractive industries in the DRC must take these into account, said Fr Dr Toussaint Kafarhire Murhula SJ, Director of the Arrupe Center for Research and Training, Lubumbashi, DRC, and Dr. Evelyn Namakula Mayanja, Assistant Professor at Carleton University, Ottawa.

Fr Murhula and Dr Mayanja spoke on this issue at Cobalt Blues: the politics of extraction and education in the DRC, a hybrid event on March 21 co-organized



The hybrid event, Cobalt Blues: the politics of extraction and education in the DRC, discussed the impact of mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

CJI SURVEY SAYS...

Thank you to those who participated in Canadian Jesuit International's recent survey. We are grateful that you contributed your valuable time and offered thoughtful comments and suggestions.

The results are now available at:

bit.ly/CJIResults

by Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) and the Arthur V. Mauro Institute for Peace & Justice at St. Paul's College, Winnipeg.

Millions of Congolese have been forced off their land, pushed deeper into poverty, made ill by mining pollution, and denied access to necessities, and education for their children, even as multinational mining companies reap billions of dollars in profits from the country's mineral wealth, Dr. Mayanja said. The DRC is rich in gold, diamonds, and strategic minerals such as cobalt, copper and lithium, which are used in energy transition and technology.

Fr Murhula urged Canadians to dig deeper into why such blatant exploitation is happening. "Every time we face a social reality, it's important for us to understand the history of the present, the history that's behind that," he said.

Read the full story:

bit.ly/CobaltBlues

13 NEW PROJECTS APPROVED

The Board of Trustees of Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) recently approved 13 new projects that range from addressing gender-based violence in Kenya's Kangemi slums to strengthening the leadership of Indigenous people in Latin America who defend their ancestral territories and culture.

The projects, totaling \$411,673, will be implemented by CJI Jesuit partners in India, the Dominican Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Cambodia, Honduras, Kenya, and in Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The projects address issues related to the right to education, human rights and democratic participation, ecology and sustainability, the rights of forcibly displaced people, and emergencies and humanitarian assistance.

Learn more about these projects by visiting:

bit.ly/CJIProjects

'THERE IS JOY IN GIVING'

Ben Hochhausen is a long-time donor to Canadian Jesuits International.

Forty years ago, my wife and I were introduced at a neighbourhood gathering to Fr Joseph Murray Abraham SJ, a Canadian Jesuit stationed in Kurseong, India. He was on one of his cross-Canada trips talking about his work with the poor in what is now known as the Darjeeling Jesuit Province and seeking financial support for projects. Fr Abraham's first major project was to carve out a hillside in the foothills of the Himalayas and build a school funded by Canadian donors for fifteen hundred students whose parents could not afford to pay for their children's education.

He later converted Woodcot, an abandoned building that had been the summer residence of Belgian Jesuits who had preceded the Canadians, into a home for about seventy disadvantaged and abandoned children. It also became the headquarters of Saint Alphonsus Social and Agricultural Centre (SASAC), which developed projects to employ the underprivileged.

Before my first of three visits to SASAC in 2002, with my daughter and son-in-law, a building had been constructed from concrete blocks made by the people themselves, to house a chicken and egg farm (later converted to a more profitable mushroom farm). A piggery with several breeding sows was in operation.



Submitted

Ben Hochhausen (right) and his daughter, Jeanie Brown (left), with Fr Joseph Murray Abraham SJ, during one of their visits to India.

Shoats were offered on credit, to be paid for when they reached market size. SASAC also provided over 50 small concrete block houses for those most in need, and people with disabilities, all built by SASAC labour.

SASAC also developed at a new site one thousand feet higher in elevation than Woodcot. Fr Abraham built a seven thousand square-foot training centre at SASAC II, which has become known as SOJASI, and start a dairy farm at SASAC I. Our family donated funds to build the Training Centre to purchase twenty-five New Zealand born Holstein cows, to construct several small concrete block houses, and purchase a van for the hospital at Jesu Ashram.

On two subsequent trips to India, we visited SASAC, Hayden Hall, Jesu Ashram, and other Jesuit projects. All the missions have been effective, but they need regular donations to maintain present levels of service. Your help is needed. There is joy in giving!

A DOUBLE-DOUBLE IMPACT: DONATE TO CJI BEFORE JUNE 30

Help us raise \$20,000. A long-time friend of CJI has pledged to match all donations until June 30, up to a total of \$10,000. If you double your own donation, its impact, will be quadrupled!

Our goal is to raise \$20,000 in the next two months to support the work of our Jesuit partners

who provide vital assistance to poor and marginalized people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of many.

The Jesuit-run Mazzolari Teacher Training College helps primary school teachers in South Sudan acquire skills and credentials.



MTTC