



Annual Report 2009
Franciscans International

From the President of the International Board of Directors

Today, Franciscans International (FI) is one of the largest non-governmental faith-based organisations at the UN, which advocates for human rights on concerns related to peace, poverty and the planet.

The original dream, through the collaborative workings of the Franciscan Family (FF) and the Holy Spirit at the grassroots, continues to form FI. This year, the FI International Board of Directors (IBD) representing the FF worked to revise the mission and vision statements. A three-year strategic plan is underway so that the Franciscan voice at the UN is heard more effectively on matters of extreme poverty, peace building and the environment. Also new initiatives are being taken to enable FI to attain greater financial sustainability.

In the name of the General Ministers of the FF and the members of the IBD, we express our gratitude to our donors, both within and outside the FF. It is your generosity and sacrifices that make it possible for the Franciscan voice to be heard at the United Nations (UN) in New York and Geneva, and at the grassroots in over 142 countries.

FI is making a difference, both locally and globally, in protecting the vulnerable and the forgotten, and our wounded earth.

Gratefully yours,



John Doctor OFM, President of FI IBD



FI International Board of Directors (L-R): Harry McKnight, Markus Fuhrmann OFM, José Antonio Martorell TOR, Denise Boyle fmdm, John Doctor OFM (President), Regina Holtz FSP (Secretary), Odilon Tiankavana OFM Cap, Doug Clorey SFO (Vice President), John Celichowski OFM Cap (Treasurer), Averil Swanton TSSF, Francisco Nel Leudo OFM Conv, Patricia Tan Huat Neo SFO.

From the Executive Director

Early last year I was sitting with the Staff Team in our New York office when the conversation turned to the beginnings of FI. Hearing the story of how the dream was translated into a reality from Sisters Bernadette Sullivan SFP, Mary Teresa Plante FMM and Kathie Uhler OSF, who were part of the beginnings, was fascinating. We present this Annual Report of 2009, as part of the continuing 'story' of FI.

The year began well with a gathering of the Staff Team from our three offices in Bangkok, Geneva and New York, to launch the Strategic Plan for FI. Throughout 2009 we listened to the views, hopes and dreams for FI of our key stakeholders, including donors and members of the FF, as we formulated our strategic plan, 2010-12. Now we face the exciting phase of its implementation.

There were challenges aplenty in 2009. Some provided the opportunity for FI to look anew at our 'modus operandi' and to respond creatively; whilst others called for immediate action. An example of this was the financial challenge we encountered mid-year. As a result of the negative impact of the global financial crisis on many of our donors, it was necessary to introduce severe cost-cutting measures across the organization.

Despite this, 2009 was a successful year for the ministry of FI, as this annual report reflects. Through the professional competence and hard work of our Staff Team in the three offices, FI provided a more extensive service to the FF. We raised their concerns through meetings and reports at the UN; addressing experts and diplomats during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Human Rights Council's (HRC) sessions, the Commission on the Status of Women and other mechanisms. This ensured that FI continued its unique ministry at the UN, to achieve positive change for the most vulnerable.

FI is most grateful for the continuing generosity of all our donors, which made the above possible. To the IBD, the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF), and all the Franciscans who actively worked with FI in 2009 to implement our mission, I offer our deepest gratitude. In 2009, FI strengthened our collaborative partnership with Edmund Rice International (ERI), the Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale (FMSI) and the Good Shepherd Sisters, to our mutual benefit.

As we move into a new decade in 2010, FI does so inspired by St. Francis of Assisi's words: "First do what is necessary, then what is possible, and before long you will be doing the impossible!"



Denise Boyle fmdm, Executive Director FI

31 March 2010



Sr. Denise Boyle and Fr. John Doctor during an IBD team meeting in the FI-NY office.



ADVOCACY

Working at the UN— Geneva

The unique value provided by FI is largely due to the official position we possess known as “General Consultative Status.” Awarded to FI by the UN in 1995, this status is an acknowledgement by the Family of Nations that FI, through the global FF, is a legitimate, authentic and trusted ally of the poor and most vulnerable whom we represent. With this unique Status, FI is able to make formal presentations and submit official reports at the UN. Our mission is to highlight the challenges faced by the most vulnerable, and to seek changes to the systems that maintain these injustices. During 2009, in partnership with Franciscans serving at the grassroots, the FI Advocacy Team undertook initiatives at the UN in Geneva and New York that resulted in a number of successes.

UN Human Rights Council

FI formally represents the FF at the annual, regular and special sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC) — the 47 States responsible for strengthening the promotion, protection and implementation of human rights worldwide.

During the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Normal and Special Sessions of the HRC in 2009, FI actively submitted oral and written statements; worked with other NGOs and UN Special Experts in open-ended consultations on draft resolutions; and organised side

events, radio interviews and press releases, to highlight different countries’ Human Rights violations. FI addressed the following issues, amongst others:

SRI LANKA: Human rights violations of over 300’000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and detention of migrants and asylum seekers.

HONDURAS: Violations and abuse against human rights defenders and the religious.

PAKISTAN: Blasphemy Laws and communal violence against the Christian minority where victims were burned alive.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of CONGO

(D.R. CONGO): Killings, armed violence and forced evictions of over 300 families.

PORTUGAL: Human trafficking and domestic violence.

Urgent Action

At the request of the FF and those whom they serve, FI intervenes immediately at the UN to address the imminent threats or gross violations they are experiencing. In 2009, FI mobilised our advocacy expertise to urgently call the attention of the international community and the UN HRC on the following concerns:

D.R. CONGO: Forced eviction of people, humanitarian crisis, insecurity, sexual violence, attacks on properties including churches.

MADAGASCAR: Political turmoil, violence, summary and extra-judicial killings.

PHILIPPINES: Extra-judicial killing of Fr. Cecilio Lucero, Head of Human Rights & Social Action, Diocese of Catarman, and Mr. Romulo Mendova, peasant activist.

Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is the Human Rights mechanism through which the HRC reviews the human rights record of each member State every four years. The UPR offers one of the best and most comprehensive tools for FI to advocate on the challenges and injustices faced by the FF and the poor. FI significantly utilised the UPR in 2009 to champion for social change in the following countries: Cambodia; Ivory Coast; Italy; Kenya; Kiribati; Madagascar; D.R. Congo; Portugal; Slovakia; Sweden, and Vanuatu.

In 2009, FI addressed the following issues:

IVORY COAST: Freedom of movement; right to education; right to food; right to decent work; right to a sustainable environment; exploitation of child domestic workers.

ITALY: Concerns related to in vitro fertilisation, treatment of migrants, abuse of detainees, delays in the implementation of justice, environmental degradation and the right to water.

PORTUGAL: Trafficking in persons; domestic violence; rights of disabled persons.

SLOVAKIA: Discrimination against minority groups (Roma); right to adequate access to health; right to work; right to an adequate standard of living; right to education.

VANUATU: Free and compulsory primary education; social, family and health factors that interfere with school attendance.

Importantly, as part of the UPR process, recommendations are issued to each State. These recommendations address specific human rights and social injustices in-country. A key component of FI Advocacy is to continue our work with local Franciscan Brothers and Sisters to track, monitor and report on the implementation of these recommendations. In 2009, FI worked with the FF in Benin, Canada, Indonesia and Zambia to undertake follow-up action on specific UN Recommendations.

IVORY COAST: Freedom of movement; right to education; right to food; right to decent work; right to sustainable environment; exploitation of child domestic workers.

BENIN: The infanticide of “witch” children.

CANADA: Protection for victims of human trafficking and migrant workers.

INDONESIA: The mistreatment of Internally Displaced Persons.

ZAMBIA: Access to education in the Copperbelt region and the right to food for children under five-years old.

UN Treaty Bodies

In service to the poor and in partnership with our Franciscan Brothers and Sisters, FI engages with UN Treaty Bodies — the official committees of Independent Experts that monitor implementation of international treaties on Human Rights; Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Racial Discrimination; Discrimination Against Women; Torture; Rights of the Child; Migrant Workers; and Persons with Disabilities.

In 2009, FI worked with the local FF and other NGOs to submit Reports to UN Treaty Bodies on social injustices and human rights issues in Cambodia, Chad, D.R. Congo, France, Kiribati and Switzerland. This work included:

CAMBODIA: Shadow report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with a focus on children with disabilities and their access to education.

CHAD: Alternative report and meetings with the Experts of the HRC on inequality, injustice, discrimination, exploitation of children, abduction of children, gender and religion-based violence.

FRANCE: Alternative report on the mistreatment of elderly persons in institutions.

SWITZERLAND: Shadow report and active participation in the review process highlighting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

UN Special Procedures

The UN HRC has designed “special procedures” to address specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world, usually via a “UN Special Rapporteur,” “UN Independent Expert” or “UN Working Group.”

Because FI collaborates with the FF who work among the poor and most vulnerable, the information and evidence that we provide at the UN is highly valued and trusted. Accordingly, FI maintains excellent relations with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery,

who utilises our expertise in confronting the issue of trafficking in persons.

From the outset, FI has played an instrumental role in the creation and development of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, as well as the mandate of the Independent Expert on the question of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty.

Advocacy and Programmes at the UN Headquarters — New York

The FI New York office’s activities and programmes reflect the agenda of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The work of ECOSOC is carried out through its Commissions that meet annually for two weeks to address: Social Development, Status of Women, Sustainable Development, and Indigenous Issues (UN Permanent Forum). FI participates in this framework through memberships in the NGO Committees that parallel each Commission and the Forum. The NGO Committees organise coalitions of NGOs into working groups that seek to influence the ECOSOC agenda.

In 2009, through committee membership, FI made advocacy visits to the UN Missions of Austria, France, Fiji, Honduras, Holy See, Turkey, UK and the USA. FI collaborated in nine written interventions given during UN conferences and prepared four side events.

UN Millennium Development Goals

The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are another guide for FI and ECOSOC activities. At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 world leaders set the MDGs, an eight-point road map with measurable targets and clear deadlines for improving the lives of the world’s poorest people. World leaders have agreed to achieve the MDGs by 2015; though as the 2007 midterm report on these suggests, achieving these goals is uncertain.

The Millennium Development Goals:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
 - Achieve universal primary education
 - Promote gender equality and empower women
 - Reduce child mortality
 - Improve maternal health
 - Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 - Ensure environmental sustainability
 - Develop a global partnership for development
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Inter-Religious Cooperation and UN Security Council Relations

FI is involved in the issue of Inter-Religious Cooperation through participating in a number of UN Committees and Working Groups. To encourage inter-religious cooperation, FI worked with the UN Tripartite Forum as well as the NGO Working Group on Israel/Palestine and the NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Through membership of the NGO Committee on the Security Council, FI worked to strengthen relations with the UN Member States of the Security Council and challenged them to address issues that are of importance to the FF.

Advancement of Women and Girls

FI pays special attention to the issues and challenges facing the female gender. Prior to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), FI directed the fourth Annual Training Programme to inform participants about the workings of the UN and NGOs as well as about Franciscan spirituality.

FI also organised various side events, visits with UN missions and departments, and meetings with the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Gender Issues.

UN Commission Project on the impact of Mining on Indigenous People

FI led the formation of a coalition of NGOs in creating the Mining Working Group that works within the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. This Working Group tracks the impact of extractive industries and mining. It has led to the strengthening of ties between the UN and FI, and also among populations affected by mining such as the Shoshone Nation, USA, and the indigenous peoples of Flores Island, Indonesia.

UN Delegations

In 2009, FI arranged for Franciscan delegations to participate in many UN conferences including: The UN Framework Conventions on Climate Change in Bonn and Copenhagen; the Commission for Social Development; the Commission on Sustainable Development; the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; and the Commission on the Status of Women.

In September 2009, FI led Franciscans in the 62nd Annual NGO Conference held in Mexico City that addressed disarmament. Franciscans from the Western USA drafted an FI Disarmament Statement entitled: *"For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!"*

Anti-Racism Programmes

In the spring of 2009, FI co-chaired the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the NGO Committee on Human Rights and hosted a number of related seminars.



THEMATIC AREAS

Extreme Poverty

While the world recovers from one of the most serious economic crises in history, the gap between the rich and the extreme poor widens. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, 1.02 billion persons are undernourished every day. This tragically is an 'historic' all time high.

People living in extreme poverty are denied the right to live in dignity. Access to basic human rights such as education, health care, adequate food, clean water, housing, as well as to culture and participation in decision-making processes is barred. They are often marginalised and face discrimination. They are invisible, voiceless, powerless, and living in a profound insecurity. It should be an absolute priority for governments to focus on the poorest. Extreme poverty remains a priority for FI Advocacy.

FI works to achieve positive change at the structural level, so decision-makers will listen to the poorest, and give priority attention to the social and economic injustices that they face.

Activities in 2009

In 2009, FI lobbied for the adoption of the UN's proposed, "Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights," which had the potential to become an essential tool for implementing human rights for the extreme poor. To reach this objective, FI worked with other NGOs and had regular contact with the

Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty.

FI aimed to give Franciscans the opportunity to participate in finalising these guiding principles by ensuring the concerns of the poorest are considered.

In 2009, FI published an updated German edition of our book: "Poverty in the World. Franciscan Reflections," which can be ordered at: www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/3-643-80035-0.

Capacity Building

With the generous support of donors and members of the FF, FI developed an educational manual on the UPR process called: "Practical Guide for Participating in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) — So That The Most Vulnerable May Not Be Forgotten." It lists the steps required to understand and participate in the UPR. A condensed version, and a one-page leaflet, are available in five languages. FI also published the: "Human Rights Advocacy Initiation Guide: Practical Orientations." Using a 'Question & Answer' method, this work explains the UN Human Rights System, and emphasises the UPR mechanism.

Environment Programme: Climate Change and the Poor

FI advocates for the integrity of the environment with a focus on climate change and its impact on the poor. Countries have a responsibility to uphold the environmental treaties and conventions they have signed (Eg. Kyoto Protocol).

Without a healthy environment, the earth will not be able to sustain future societies and economies. Uncontrolled use of natural resources such as forests, land, water and fisheries have caused distressing changes and unnecessary pressure on the global ecosystem and consequently the poor and most vulnerable.

Unfortunately, this profound impact on natural resources is primarily due to over-consumption and over-production by a powerful minority.

Activities in 2009

In December, FI participated in the Committee of Parties (COP 15) Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. In the lead-up to this important world event, FI collaborated with other NGOs to seek commitments from governments for specific reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) which are a key contributor to climate change.

While the Copenhagen Accord achieved far less than what most deemed necessary, it did highlight the issues impacting negatively on the most vulnerable such as:

- Rising sea levels; increased severe weather
- Increased numbers of climate refugees
- Changing seasonal patterns impacting small-scale farmers
- Increasing conflict from changes in access to water and natural resources

FI worked to gain grassroots support for the COP 16, which will be held in Mexico in November 2010. FI met with the FF and key NGOs to further define the areas of interest and priority concerns related to the environment. A key theme that consistently appeared was the impact of environmental degradation, pollution and climate change on the poor.

In December, FI participated in the French-speaking gathering of the FF in Lourdes, France, and highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change upon the poor.

In New York, FI participated in the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), including the two Official Working Groups that drafted the final outcome document. Additionally, FI co-sponsored several side events with the 'Fresh Water Caucus' and developed a paper on water issues that were underrepresented. As a result of circulating this paper to Country Delegates, many of these issues were included in the final document.

THEMATIC AREAS

Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Slavery has not been eradicated. In fact, contemporary forms of slavery affect millions around the world today. Members of the global FF have witnessed terrible accounts of persons becoming the property of others, thus losing their dignity and freedom. FI contributes to the eradication of slavery throughout the world by bringing this issue to the UN.

Assisted with evidence and first-hand accounts from our grassroots Franciscans, we ask States to take all necessary measures to combat this scourge and to uphold the rights of victims.

Activities in 2009

During the HRC, FI called upon States to give more attention to debt bondage. Together with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, FI organised a joint event with NGOs Anti-Slavery International, Fastenopfer and the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) to raise the profile of this issue.

Our grassroots members often include contemporary forms of slavery as a top issue for their UPR reports. In 2009, the issues of human trafficking related to sexual or labour exploitation, domestic workers, forced marriage and child labour were prominent in the UPR reports on Canada, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Portugal. In September 2009, FI conducted training with the FF and others involved in combating human trafficking in Montreal, Canada.

Debt Bondage

Debt bondage (also known as bonded labour) is probably the most common, but least known contemporary form of slavery today. Debt bondage affects millions of men, women and children around the world. It occurs in a variety of sectors, including agriculture, logging, construction, domestic work, brick kilns and the textile and garment industries.

A person becomes a bonded labourer when their labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan, often for a very small amount such as the cost of medicine for a sick child. Once in debt, the person loses all control over their work conditions and is forced to work long hours, often for seven days a week, for very little or no pay.

The value of their work is invariably greater than the original sum of money borrowed. The debt becomes inflated through charges for food, transport and interest on loans; making it impossible to repay. The worker becomes trapped in a cycle of debt.

Entire families may be bonded, including children who work alongside their parents to help repay the debt. In some cases, the debt will be passed down through generations. Bonded labourers are often subjected to other forms of coercion including violence and restrictions on their freedom of movement.

We call on the Human Rights Council to urge all States to:

- Sign, ratify, enforce and monitor the 1926 Slavery Convention and the 1956 Supplementary Convention
- Criminalise all forms of slavery, including debt bondage, through national legislation and ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators with sentences commensurate with the crime
- Establish effective and comprehensive national action plans for the eradication of all forms of slavery. These should include, inter alia, measures to identify, release, rehabilitate and reintegrate those subject to slavery. National action plans must contain effective measures to combat the root causes of slavery, including poverty and discrimination
- Acknowledge and address manifestations of debt bondage that do not take place in the context of trafficking in persons and develop specific legislation to address debt bondage, ensuring that similar penalties apply to conditions of debt bondage as those applied to trafficking in persons.

Abstract from a joint written statement submitted by Franciscans International, Anti-Slavery International, the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW), and Fastenopfer. *Tenth Session, HRC, March 2009*

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking affects men, women and children. From recruitment to exploitation, trafficked persons lose their identity and desperately struggle against a situation that reduces them into slavery.

Since the Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking (2001), approximately 80% of countries now have an anti-trafficking legislation. However the protection element needs to be improved. FI raised the concern that too often victims of trafficking are treated as criminals or illegal migrants, and go through traumatizing experiences. Often they are detained as illegal migrants and do not receive adequate counseling or medical/psychological assistance.

Together with Franciscans at the grassroots, FI worked to raise the concern that trafficked persons are having to first demonstrate that they are victims before getting protection measures.

Yesterday, a "congratulatory ovation" welcomed FI's UPR report when it was presented to the Franciscan Sisters and Brothers and the members of CATHI (Network Against Human Trafficking). "You truly deserve these congratulations for your hard work to help make a difference on the issues of water, migration and trafficking in persons."

—Sr. Danielle Julien FMIC, Québec, Canada

THEMATIC AREAS



PROGRAMMES

Africa Programme

Over the years, the FI Africa Programme has developed, maintained and consolidated a strong connection with Franciscans in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2009 we significantly implemented more advocacy initiatives, including technical assistance and training to encourage local leadership.

Largely based on strong Missionary links with Africa, as well as the promise of a growing centre of faith, the FF of Europe and Africa maintain a special interest in the FI Africa Programme.

In Zambia, together with our partners, FI raised concerns about the lack of access to social services and education, especially the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In addition, FI highlighted, "various risks such as child trafficking, child labour, child abuse - including sexual mistreatment and exploitation" and called upon the Government for appropriate actions. Our in-country Franciscans tell us that the local street children phenomenon remains a serious concern since nothing has concretely changed on the ground.

Extract from FI's Statement submitted during the Eleventh UN Human Rights Council, June 2009

Franciscans in Africa say that the "Advocacy work of FI is a complement to and an extension of local pastoral ministry." Franciscans increasingly utilise the human rights aspects of social and economic injustice to demonstrate the relevance of Catholic Social Teaching. As a result of the empowerment and capacity building undertaken by FI, sub-Saharan African Franciscans are developing a human rights based approach to their local justice and peace activities.

Advocacy and Human Rights

FI worked with the local FF of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Benin, and Zambia to formally participate in the UPR Process at the UN. Our work addressed the following issues:

CHAD: FI submitted a Report drawing attention to serious injustices including: Religious-based discrimination, extreme poverty, child labour and exploitation, street children and the abduction of children.

MADAGASCAR: Political turmoil in early 2009 led to violence, executions and extra-judiciary killings in Madagascar. FI sent a Letter of Allegation to the UN Secretary General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, proposing a fact-finding mission to uncover human rights violations. Our UPR Report for Madagascar emphasised: "The right to decent housing for the poor and street families; the right to access basic health care services; the right to food; the right to education; and the need to stop human trafficking — especially among women and children."

BENIN: In June 2009, one year after the country's UPR Review, FI submitted a written statement on the progress of the implementation of UN Recommendations issued during the 2008 UPR. FI continued to be extremely concerned about the lack of concrete measures to stop the infanticide of so-called "witch" children in Northern Benin. Children labeled as "witch" children included those born with their feet first, those born with teeth or those who lost their mother during childbirth. Approximately 60% of these children were killed. Those not killed during childhood suffered discrimination, stigmatisation and even death throughout life.

FI's commitment to Franciscans in Benin shattered taboos surrounding the infanticide of so-called "witch" children, which were based on traditions, customs and cultural beliefs.

Thank you for bringing to the light this disgraceful phenomenon in this 21st century. We are not able to speak out and tackle the issue ourselves because of political and social implications of these deep-rooted practices. We are grateful and will do whatever possible to eradicate this ignominious situation.

—A Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Benin in Geneva

D.R. CONGO: FI hosted Msgr. Fridolin Ambongo OFM Cap, as well as other Congolese representatives and NGOs participated, through statements at the HRC, on the humanitarian disaster, sexual violence, and increased violence affecting the FF and the poor. Msgr. Ambongo further met with diplomatic missions of all regional groups and called for urgent action to address the violations against the Congolese people.

Additionally FI submitted a UPR Report with 16 other NGOs, an Alternative Report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and two letters of Allegation to the Special Rapporteur, in urgent response to gross human rights violations concerning the right to health care, adequate housing and education; discrimination and violence against women; and natural resource exploitation.

Capacity Building

For the third consecutive year, FI offered Human Rights Advocacy Training in Cameroon to over 25 Franciscans from ten Francophone countries. Using the FI "Human Rights Advocacy Initiation Guide: Practical Orientations," the training developed the advocacy capacity of the participants and provided the tools for human rights work at the local, regional and national levels.

PROGRAMMES

Asia Pacific Programme

FI opened the Bangkok office in 2008 in order to better serve the FF across the Asia Pacific. 2009 continued to see expanded activities and requests for engagement from both Franciscans and our partner organisations. Activities included regional advocacy efforts and capacity building, as well as support for the UN Mechanisms in Geneva and New York.

INDIA and PAKISTAN: COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Violent events in Orissa, India, in 2008 affected hundreds of thousands of Christian Dalits. In 2009 many of them continued to live under dire conditions in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Other Christians could not return home without converting to Islam. Ignoring this condition meant losing all means for daily survival. FI, along with a number of faith-based organisations, organised a side event, "Communal Violence and its Effects on Religious Minorities," in order to draw the UN's attention to this discussion.

Together with the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Pakistan, Pax Romana, and the Dominicans for Justice and Peace, FI presented a report on Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan. The report demonstrated that the laws were discriminatory and posed a challenge to religious diversity in Pakistan. FI also urged the HRC to ensure States provide protection to all religious minorities, by repealing discriminatory laws that lend themselves to abuse, instill suspicion and lead to violence.

CAMBODIA and VANUATU: THE CASE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND EDUCATION

Working with our partners FMSI, FI submitted a UPR Report and a report to the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights on Cambodia. These reports highlighted several issues including: children's rights in general; disabled children's right to education; teachers' rights to adequate salaries; and the importance of human rights education.

As part of our advocacy efforts on the adoption of the UPR report of Vanuatu, the Government took on the commitment to provide free primary education to all children in the country from 2010. By using these reports, FI and FMSI further encouraged the Special Rapporteur on Education to request a visit to Vanuatu as well as for the Government to offer an invitation.

SRI LANKA: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Due to the on-going, long term armed conflict in Sri Lanka, 2009 saw intensive fighting between the parties, massive people displacement and dire living conditions. Following requests from the FF of Sri Lanka, FI reached out to the UN, diplomatic missions and all actors engaged in ensuring the Government respected the human rights of its entire population. Such efforts included various urgent actions with the Special Representative on IDPs.

FI was active before and during the HRC Special Session on Sri Lanka. Awareness raising was the goal when FI invited Franciscans worldwide to send letters to their own governments, pressuring them to take action on the humanitarian crisis affecting thousands in Sri Lanka.

In 2009, the FF committed to Sri Lanka's future by establishing the Franciscan Solidarity Peace and Reconciliation office. FI will continue to provide assistance to Franciscans working on this new project.

WEST PAPUA, INDONESIA: CHALLENGES FACING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

"Papuanians cannot live without their forests..." This was the message delivered by Fr. Yohn Jonga, from the Catholic Diocese of Jayapura, at FI's side event during the Twelfth Session of the HRC in September 2009: "Indigenous Rights: Challenges faced in Indonesia." Co-sponsored by the Faith Based Network on West Papua, this event opened up a dialogue on the rights of indigenous Papuans.

Advocacy Training Programme

Recognising that promotion is the first step towards protection, the FI training programmes provide the knowledge and skills needed to enable Franciscans in the region to foster human rights. In 2009 three training programmes were provided in Bangkok for 60 participants, including 32 Franciscans from 12 different countries and addressed three specific themes: Introduction to the United Nations; The Rights of the Child and; Protection of the Environment.

Over the past year the Bangkok office has worked to locate the thousands of Franciscan communities across the region so as to obtain a clearer picture of the issues they face, the projects they sponsor, and their key needs.

An Expanding Network

The benefits of the training programmes reach far beyond the actual training. FI continues to stay in contact with participants and provides them with technical assistance and with resources to enrich the initial training. We have worked towards establishing Memorandums of Agreement with inter-Franciscan organisations in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In 2010 staff from Bangkok will travel to these centres, to offer training and to help support human rights initiatives. They have also provided opportunities for Franciscans and partners to work on inter-congressional projects to help the poor and the vulnerable.

"The two weeks were graced encounters. What we received in our head will really sink deep into our beings: aside from the fact that listening to one another will create deep bonding among ourselves. We need each other's support in the kind of work we are doing. It was really a deepening of our commitment to the poor, the image of Christ crucified – in the language of Francis."

—Br. Pete Montallana OFM, The Philippines

In accordance with the new Association of Southeast Asian Nations human rights body to "Promote and Protect Peace," FI has a specific mandate to assist Franciscans and partners working to improve the lives of the people among whom they live and work.

PROGRAMMES

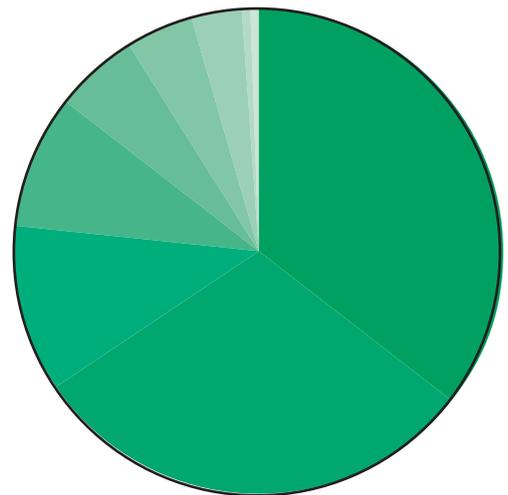
FINANCE

Income

In 2009, the total income for FI was EUR 980.890 / US\$ 1,364,390 which represented a decline of approximately 10% in Euros and 15% in US\$ from 2008.

The primary factor for this decline was the global economic crisis. Due to a reduction in donations received, or due to serious decreases in investment income, many donors stated they were unable to give at the same level as in previous years.

	Analysis of 2009 Income Received — Unaudited			
	CHF	EUR	USD	
	Amount	Amount	Amount	Percent
Major Franciscan Donors	529,718	350,756	481,562	35.8
Funding Agencies	443,655	293,768	403,323	29.9
Grants from Rose Marie Khoo Foundation	165,584	109,642	150,531	11.2
Franciscan Superiors	129,086	85,475	117,351	8.7
Individuals	83,949	55,587	76,317	5.7
Partners	67,125	44,447	61,023	4.5
Franciscan Houses	46,484	30,780	42,258	3.1
International Board of Directors	10,000	6,622	9,091	0.7
Bank Interest	5,758	3,813	5,235	0.4
	1,481,359	980,890	1,346,690	100



Accordingly, donations specifically from the FF declined by approximately EUR 91.535. Donations from the FF made up just over 47% of total donations in 2009, compared to 53% in 2008. As a partial off-set to the above declines, FI realised an increase from funding agencies of approximately EUR 17.742. Our continuing primary donors include Cordaid (Netherlands), Missionzentrale der Franziskaner (Germany), Missio Aachen (Germany), Fastenopfer (Switzerland) and Miseen Cara (Ireland).

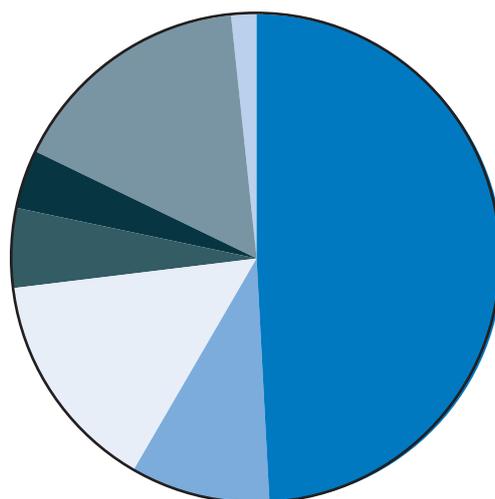
In 2009 we received support from additional funding agencies including Misereor (Germany) and the Rose Marie Khoo Foundation (Switzerland).

Expenses

Both unrestricted funding from the FF as well as project funding was directed primarily towards capacity building, training, workshops and seminars for Franciscans being served by the three FI offices.

Due to the downturn in donations, cost-cutting measures were implemented in all offices. Additionally, renewed outreach via the CFF in Rome is intended to assure long-term support for FI based on the Franciscan ideal of "inter-dependency". It is essential to emphasise the need for unrestricted donations from the FF, as FI continues to request donor agencies for restricted funding to support specific project work.

	Allocation of 2009 Expenses — Unaudited			
	CHF	EUR	USD	Percent
	Amount			
Advocacy	773,550	512,210	703,227	49.4
Administration	254,192	168,315	231,084	16.2
Development	230,056	152,333	209,142	14.7
Communications	142,196	94,156	129,269	9.1
Animation	82,540	54,654	75,036	5.3
Partner Collabouration	60,437	40,019	54,943	3.9
IBD Support	21,527	14,254	19,570	1.4
Total 2009 Expenses	1,564,498	1,035,940	1,422,271	100



New Initiatives

FI created a new email newsletter: 'The Franciscan Voice,' which is published each month in five different languages and sent to over 1'500 FI supporters. Subscription is available on the FI website.

In 2009, FI undertook its first financial audit by an independent external auditor. This will be done annually going forward.

FINANCE



PARTNERS



Edmund Rice International

Edmund Rice International enjoyed an eventful and productive year. In 2009 Br. Donal Leader CFC, resigned due to ill health and Br. Brian Bond CFC, replaced him as the new Executive Director.

Highlights in 2009:

- The approval and adoption of the ERI Strategic Plan
- Collaborative efforts with FI, especially the joint submissions included in the UPR for Kenya
- Setting up a network among the Edmund Rice Family working throughout the world
- Identifying a "Link" person in each of our Provinces and establishing a job description for them
- The publishing of the monthly ERI email newsletter

ERI maintains a healthy relationship with FI, FMSI and the Good Shepherd Sisters.



Br. Brian Bond, CFC
Executive Director, ERI
Geneva, Switzerland



Foundation for Marist Solidarity International

Foundation for Marist Solidarity International (FMSI) greatly values its partnership with FI. FMSI has been in existence for only four years and so working alongside the staff at FI, and tapping into the collective wisdom of the organisation, provides us with great opportunities to personally advocate for the rights of children around the world. It is an organisation established by the Marist Brothers Religious Congregation, whose specialty is in the field of education, especially for children.

Over the last year we have participated in the UPR on the countries of Vanuatu and Cambodia. We are grateful to the FI staff for helping us to present documents for the UPR of these countries. Part of our contribution to the partnership with FI is our expertise in education and so we have mutually benefited from working together on our submissions in defending the rights of the child.



Br. Jim Jolley FMS
Advocacy Coordinator, FMSI
Geneva, Switzerland

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

- Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF)
 - Franciscan Family (FF)
 - Franciscans International (FI)
 - Human Rights Council (HRC)
 - Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
 - United Nations (UN)
 - Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
-

Franciscans International works at the United Nations (UN) to address human rights injustices that impact on the poor and most vulnerable.

We are a non-governmental organisation with UN General Consultative Status and a shared ministry of the global Franciscan Family.

VISION: A global community built on Franciscan values, in which the dignity of every person is respected; resources are shared equitably; the environment is sustained; and nations and peoples live in peace.

MISSION: We are a Franciscan voice at the United Nations protecting the vulnerable, the forgotten, and our wounded earth.

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A voice at the United Nations