

Empowering Youth for Change: My Journey with Talitha Kum Japan

Clarita “Claire” Sanchez

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member



Since joining the Talitha Kum network in Japan in 2021, I have focused on supporting and guiding the next generation of leaders committed to ending human trafficking. Talitha Kum is an international Catholic Christian faith-based organization dedicated to eradicating this crime against humanity. In this organization, I serve as the adviser to Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador (TKYA). This role has allowed me to work closely with young people, inspiring and empowering them to become advocates for social justice in their communities.

As an adviser, I helped TKYA establish its organizational direction, ensuring its vision aligns with Talitha Kum’s global mission. I believe in the power of youth-led initiatives and am passionate about nurturing young people’s leadership potential. I have witnessed their growth and development as influential advocates by providing continuous support and guidance. Together, we have carried out advocacy campaigns in schools and churches, raising awareness about the realities of human trafficking and encouraging young people to take action. I firmly believe that youth possess immense potential to create change; by equipping them with the right tools, resources, and knowledge, they can become powerful advocates against human trafficking.

My involvement with Talitha Kum Japan has been deeply fulfilling. Collaborating with dedicated and compassionate individuals, especially the youth, has reinforced my belief that ending human trafficking is possible when we work together. By guiding and nurturing the youth involved in TKYA, I aim to create a ripple effect that extends beyond our immediate activities, encouraging more young people to join the fight against human trafficking and advocate for human dignity.

Seeing these young advocates grow in their understanding and confidence has been incredibly rewarding. The passion and energy they bring to their work inspire me, motivating me to continue fostering their growth as change-makers.

Through this journey, I remain committed to Talitha Kum’s mission and the fight against human trafficking. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this vital cause and look forward to seeing TKYA's impact grow as we continue our mission. Together, I believe we can build a future where human trafficking is eradicated and every person can live in freedom and dignity.



Talitha Kum Japan Fall 2024 Online Seminar
Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Young Women:
Towards a Society Free from Exploitation

Sr. Shizue Hirota, MMB
Chairperson of Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee

We are pleased to report on the online seminar on Saturday, November 9, 2024. The issue of sexual exploitation of children and young women—including child pornography, adult videos, JK businesses, and prostitution—has grown more severe with the expansion of internet use in Japan. This seminar featured impactful presentations from Ms. Hiromi Hataji of ZOE Japan, an organization raising awareness of trafficking in persons in Japan and abroad to prevent the sexual exploitation of children, and Ms. Megumi Oka of PAPS, which provides counseling and support to young women who are victims of coerced and revenge pornography.

ZOE Japan is actively engaged in prevention, rescue, and recovery efforts to free children from traffickers and help them build new lives. Recovery means creating a safe and secure environment where children can grow up with the support of their families, and it involves protecting children who have been victimized. Sadly, the reality behind sexual exploitation is that many children face abuse at home, leaving them unable to stay there; they may find themselves hungry and out on the streets, vulnerable to exploitation. Predatory industries target these young women through JK businesses, concept cafés, and maid cafés, which often hide exploitative practices behind ‘secret menus.’ Additionally, young women struggling with loneliness sometimes develop dependencies on host clubs, and to finance these activities, they may engage in patronage dating or sugar daddy arrangements. This is the tragic reality of modern-day slavery, happening all around us.



The exploitation is further fueled by faceless communication through SNS, sexting (exchanges of sexual messages and images), and sextortion (where sexual content is used to blackmail victims), all of which frequently target children and young women. Many young people acquire knowledge about sex not from their families or schools but from comics, anime, video games, and pornography—sources that often normalize sexual violence and victimization. This underscores the critical need for education on sexuality and human dignity, the right to refuse unwanted advances, and the importance of equal and respectful relationships.

Ms. Megumi Oka from PAPS shared insights into the reality faced by young women who are often ‘coerced’ into appearing in adult videos. PAPS provides consultation and support for those affected by digital sexual abuse and exploitation within the adult video and sex industries. Their work

includes removing non-consensual sexual images, outreach, advocacy, public relations, and awareness-raising initiatives. PAPS also operates a night café where young women can find a safe place to relax and a shelter where they can stay overnight.

Young women seeking part-time jobs with dreams of becoming idols or TV personalities are often targeted for recruitment as models. Initially, they are taken around and verbally persuaded to accept modeling work. Gradually, this leads them into situations where they are pressured to undress. If they resist, they face large penalty fees and threats of informing their parents and schools. This cycle of coercion and threats is used to control them, ultimately trapping them in a situation where they feel no escape, which often results in being forced to film adult videos. Images of crying and suffering are also sold as entertainment. Additionally, visual depictions of children and young women being forced into sex are increasingly being sold worldwide. We live in an age where 'sex can be bought,' and sex has become a form of entertainment. The sexual exploitation of women and children has become deeply entrenched on a global scale, sustained and reinforced by the enormous profits it generates. Reversing this trend is no easy task, but in the past two years, PAPS has successfully driven societal change through the passage of the Prevention and Relief Act for AV Victims, the criminalization of non-consensual filming, and the crime of sexual grooming. In response to a question from the audience, 'Do you think adult videos should be banned?' Ms. Oka replied, 'AVs that involve children being forced into sex should be banned.'

Sex is an act meant to be celebrated with joy and gratitude, serving as the ultimate expression of love and respect for each individual. Such an expression of love is a hymn to our growth, both as individuals and together. In contrast, sex without consent is an act of domination, an expression of violence, and a denial of the humanity of both the victim and the perpetrator.

The challenge presented to each of us by this online seminar is the responsibility to transform Japan and the world into a society where all people can live with dignity. May we continue to spread and deepen awareness and interest in addressing human trafficking, the modern-day form of slavery.



ZOE Japan <https://www.gozoe.jp>



PAPS <https://www.paps.jp>

Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador Report

Rise Hosoi
Talitha Kum Japan Youth Ambassador



It has been three years since the launch of Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador. With the support of many, we have been able to continue our activities up to this point. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude.

Let me explain the core of our activities: providing lectures on request at Catholic schools and parishes. I hope that this article helps you learn more about our work and inspires you to consider inviting us, the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassadors, to hold sessions at your schools and in your communities.

Our lecture program has evolved significantly over the past three years. Initially, our primary focus was on sharing information, but I sensed it didn't resonate with the students. I began to consider that the message and the call to action might need to come from a different approach.

Today, with the ease of accessing information on the Internet, we've come to understand that the true value of offering lectures at schools is to touch the hearts of young people, by showing the attitude that we, the same youth as them, are doing our best in original ways with interests in social issues. Just as Jesus showed his love for God through his journey to the cross, we believe that our presence and actions can carry a message to them.



We then began dedicating more time to sharing our motivations for working with Talitha Kum, including our thoughts and what we hope to convey. By focusing on ourselves in this way, I feel that more students have started to feel a sense of closeness with us.

The young people we meet through our lecture program already possess incredible potential. During class reflections and case studies, we are continually amazed by their diverse perspectives, deep compassion, hopeful dreams, and sincere commitment to society. Meeting these young people has shown us the importance of making our classes not just a teaching experience but an opportunity to inspire them to think, thus the range of our activities has expanded furthermore.



We hope that more young people will develop an interest in social issues and take action in their unique ways. It would be our joy if our lectures could catalyze such change. We aim to keep a prayerful heart, sharing the blessings we have received as God's children so that we might inspire young people. We look forward to receiving applications from you all for this awareness-raising program.

Activities of the Japan Network Against Trafficking in Persons (JNATIP)

Motoko Yamagishi

Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member



The Japan Network Against Trafficking in Persons (JNATIP) is a coalition of NGOs, researchers, lawyers, and others from across Japan working together to address issues like human trafficking, violence, exploitation, and human rights violations against foreigners. JNATIP members collaborate to lobby the government and advocate for society-wide efforts to eradicate human trafficking and forced labor. As a member organization, Talitha Kum Japan participates in JNATIP meetings to exchange views with government officials and engages in awareness-raising activities, such as seminars.

In 2024, JNATIP held an online seminar titled *The Reality of Sexual Exploitation, Including Children - Prompt Action to End Exploitation* on April 17. Additionally, JNATIP has been preparing for its two annual autumn meetings to exchange views with the government.

At the first meeting with the government on October 28, JNATIP presented requests, received government responses, and engaged in discussions on general measures to combat labor exploitation and human trafficking. This annual meeting, held at the invitation of the Cabinet Secretariat, aims to foster cooperation between the public and private sectors toward the shared goal of eradicating human trafficking. Government representatives included members from the Cabinet Office, National Police Agency, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and others.

JNATIP's requests focused on the newly established Development Employment System, which will replace the Technical Trainee System, as well as labor exploitation issues affecting domestic workers and foreign students. In light of the forthcoming implementation of the Development Employment System, JNATIP highlighted concerns such as the right of workers to change employers, heavy debt burdens, and other human rights violations that were overlooked in the recent legal revisions—issues including frequent violence, forcible deportation, restrictions on pregnancy and childbirth, and low wage structures. JNATIP urged prompt action to address these concerns in the ongoing review process. Among the broader anti-trafficking measures discussed, key topics included the adequacy of penalties under domestic law and criteria for recognizing victims. The second meeting is scheduled for November 21 and will focus on sexual exploitation.

On October 17 in Geneva, Switzerland, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reviewed Japan's report. On October 29, the Committee released its summary findings, including recommendations for the Japanese government to improve its response to human trafficking. During this review, the Japan Network of NGOs for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women submitted an NGO report on Japan, with JNATIP responsible for the section on trafficking in persons. We hope the Japanese government will take these recommendations seriously to strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking in Japan.



Smile is Regained!

Sr. Atsuko Kano AASC
Talitha Kum Japan Steering Committee Member

“A technical intern trainee’s passport has been taken away by her employer and she is about to be fired. She needs a safe place to stay until the negotiation with the company is finished. Is there anything you can do?” This is the consultation Talitha Kum Japan received. Ms. A has just completed her one year stay in Japan and in fact, she can stay for another two years. The one requesting added, “We will do the negotiation and resolve the issue in about a month.” I heard also that when the economy worsens the vulnerable people are the first to be fired. It was December. The shelter contact member of Talitha Kum requested the congregation to accept her to the shelter considering the following points.

Ms. A does not speak Japanese very well (her native language is not English)/ Finding an interpreter seems to be difficult during this period/ Not sure whether it is possible to ask the congregation for help during the year-end and New Year holidays/ It is difficult to contact support groups during this time/ It is necessary to accompany Ms. A in her daily life during the New Year holidays/ It is doubtful if the problem could be completed in one month.

In mid-December, we consulted a congregation and received a response that “there are rooms available. It also appeared that the facility staff would be available even during the year-end and New Year holidays, and that in case of an emergency, albeit long distance, a member of this congregation residing in another convent would be able to speak with the person by phone or online in her native language. She arrived a week before the end of December. The elderly and younger sisters from the convent located 3 meters away came to say to her “Welcome”.

Ms. A has mother, husband, and children in her home country, and she came to Japan to earn money for her mother’s medical expenses and her children’s education. In mid-January, a sister who was doing missionary work in Ms. A’s home country visited the convent and met Ms. A and spoke with her in her native language. When the sister and many staff gathered, Ms. A made sweets for everyone. I could feel how happy she was to be able to speak in her native language as I stood by her side.

In Mid-February a support group helped her find a new job, but it was not easy. Although Ms. A was starting to lose her energy, she started cooking what she wanted to eat and studying Japanese for the qualification test (At this point, less than two months had passed).

In April, she took the qualification test for technical intern trainee and passed it on May 13. In June, she found a job and moved out of the shelter, working in a factory similar to the one she had been working in before. She stayed in the shelter for 173 days. During this time, she had to make payments to the facility for her daily livelihood but Talitha Kum supported her financially using assistance from support groups and the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move, and the Multicultural Emergency Assistance Fund by Religious Congregations and Missionaries.

Ms. A made a fresh start with a wonderful smile on her face. I am sure she will do her best until the end of her three years as a technical intern trainee.

Voices of Youth in Talitha Kum Assembly 2024

*Mariel Aden Rubio
Talitha Kum Youth Ambassador*



I visited Rome, Italy, last May to attend Talitha Kum's 2nd General Assembly, representing Talitha Kum Youth Ambassadors Japan. It was both amazing and inspiring to witness the vastness of this network and to see God's work in each of us.

On the first day, each network brought a symbol that represented them to the assembly. In total, there were 153 delegates from 71 countries. The panelists discussed a global synthesis from all the TK networks. Reflecting on this, three important topics emerged as Talitha Kum's priorities: 1) Migration, 2) The issue of Neoliberalism, and 3) Survivors. The issue of migration, driven by factors such as globalization and climate

change, has contributed to increased exploitation. Moving forward as a network, we must consider emerging forms of trafficking, including those facilitated by technology and social media. Additionally, the health crisis could potentially fuel organ trafficking for scientific purposes, and we must also not overlook the role of artificial intelligence in this landscape.

At the end of the session, the question posed was: What is the way forward? There is a strong need for sustainability, and the role of youth was emphasized. As a young person, I feel hopeful and grateful for having a seat at the table where my voice could be heard. The network's intention to diversify and involve more youth is promising, and this is our opportunity to raise greater awareness.

The second day focused on the empowerment of women, children, and survivors. How can we better support those who are suffering? This was a vital question. Women, in particular, are the most vulnerable to sexual exploitation, though we must also remember that men can be victims. The question of how best to educate and protect them is one for the networks to address. Hearing from survivors and absorbing all the knowledge shared pushed us to become more proactive. A quote from one of my tablemates during our group discussion stayed with me: "Don't just love them; love them with action."

The impact of forced migration on human trafficking is undeniable, and this has been exacerbated by climate change. This was the focus of the third day. Those who work with migrants carry an enormous responsibility. A people-centered approach is necessary, and protection must be ensured for all migrants. On the final day, the youth ambassadors had the chance to present the work we are doing in our respective countries. Though our efforts are currently small, we believe they will grow. By contributing to our communities, we set things in motion.



With the theme 'Transforming compassion into action,' my heart was truly transformed. I want to invite more youth to join this cause and continue raising awareness against human trafficking.

"We are invited to not fear; God loves littleness. We have to continue to try and end human trafficking with compassion"

Lectures at Catholic Schools by Talitha Kum Japan

タリタクムによる
出前授業 はじめました!

2 Courses Available

<p>人身取引</p> <p>タリタクムの若者による授業 人身取引や人権について幅広い内容の授業をします</p> <p>アクティビティなど多様を使って学べる 中高生・大学生が仮い単位にも対応</p> <p>日本語・英語可</p>	<p>移民難民</p> <p>タリタクムの専門家による授業 日本に暮らす移民・難民の姿を知り、人権の尊重について学べます</p> <p>グループワークを行います 社会的学習が実践可能です</p> <p>日本語</p>
---	---

交通費は基本、当方負担

タリタクム: カトリック教会の反人身取引国際ネットワーク
 ① タリタクムニュース: info@talithakum.jp
 ② タリタクム日本: www.talithakum.jp
 ③ 日本カトリック移民難民支援委員会: www.gebcj.catholic.jp

申し込み用のQRコード

Human trafficking as a global issue cannot be eradicated without individual awareness and action. Talitha Kum Japan offers lectures at Catholic schools to encourage the next generation to see human trafficking not as someone else's problem, but as their responsibility.

Our programs include a 'Trafficking in Persons Course' led by Youth Ambassadors and an 'Immigrant and Refugee Course' presented by our expert member. We have already conducted participatory sessions using group discussions at 11 Catholic schools and a parish, receiving positive feedback. Classes in English are also available at international schools.

For more information, please refer to page 4 of this issue and the left flyer. (Previous issues No.15 P4, No.14 P3, and No.13 P5 are also informative.)

To sign up for the class, please visit our website or scan the QR code on the right:

<https://forms.gle/btoNftesZWVTf6zr9>



International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking (Feb. 8)

The Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, also recognized as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking, will fall on Saturday, February 8, 2025. Although program details from Talitha Kum International have yet to be finalized, we invite you to join us and will share more information as soon as it becomes available.

We thank you for your generous financial support for Talitha Kum Japan. The donation will be used to provide support for victims of human trafficking for shelter expenses, emergency living expenses, legal casework, translation/interpretation expenses, newsletter, seminars, and workshops for the prevention of trafficking in persons.

**~Japan Post Bank money transfer form is available at the J-CaRM Secretariat office~
Postal # 00110-8-560351**

Talitha Kum Japan (Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move (J-CaRM))
Japan Catholic Center 2-10-10 Shiomi, Koto-Ku, Tokyo, Japan 135-8585
Tel: (81)03-5632-4441 Fax: (81)03-5632-7920 ✉ jcarm@cbcj.catholic.jp / ✉ apan@talithakum.info