

Sisters In Argentina Working To End Human Trafficking



Sr. Estela Gómez (left) participates in a radio programme to raise awareness about human trafficking in Argentina with Ana Caligaris and Gabriela Montaña.

In the province of Formosa, on Argentina’s north-eastern border, Clorinda is more than just a point on the map. It’s a richly diverse town, including the Qom indigenous people, but it is also witness to the complexities and challenges faced by any border community. Since they arrived in 1992, the Sisters of Mercy have supported the local community in many ways. In 2000 they created Ñande Roga Guazú, a space dedicated to empowering women and children on gender-related issues.

The work expanded to include workshops on various topics, including alternative medicine and practical skills, such as sewing and cooking. However, over time, sisters have become ever more committed to the work to end human trafficking and gender violence.

The inflection point came when more women, mostly from neighbouring Paraguay, began to seek aid, and those cries for help moved the sisters to intensify their efforts to stop this evil, not only by raising awareness but also through legal aid and emotional support for the victims.

Working on the border has unique challenges, but also offers opportunities to join forces with diverse organizations and movements dedicated to ending human trafficking nationwide. Through these alliances, the sisters were able to coordinate efforts and maximize their impact.

“We noticed a change, and evolution, from when we arrived here in 1992 to today,” Sister Estela Gomez said. “Before there was complete denial about the problem of trafficking. Today there is recognition, more awareness.”

However, the path towards justice and rehabilitation is fraught with obstacles. Many victims face difficulties reintegrating into society after they are rescued, as well as a lack of ongoing support and broken promises. The process of psychological and emotional healing is long and arduous, and all women have differing levels of resilience.

The work of the Sisters of Mercy is changing lives and challenging the power structures and complacency that allows human trafficking to continue. Their example inspires others to join the fight and keep hope alive for a world where the dignity and freedom of each person is respected.

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