

Toward an Economy of Inclusion



dear members

It's spring and for me the unbelievable has happened. My book *A Nun on the Bus* has gone on sale! I must confess that it makes me nervous to be so public about my life and what I think, but it is also a great opportunity to share the mission of NETWORK with new audiences. My favorite part is that 14 of my poems are at the end. It is the first time that they have been published together.

But our goal wasn't just to get a book published. Rather, we want to use this opportunity to encourage you, our members, and others to tell your own stories about how faith and politics work together for you. To that end we have a study guide that is online. We hope you will share your insights with us and celebrate this vibrant living of the Gospel.

It is like Pope Francis says—the role of people in politics is to create a new economy of inclusion. We see glimmers of possibility, but must create this new moment together. By telling our stories to each other we might help to create the new. I urge you to join me on this amazing adventure and share your perspective. Together, in the Spirit, we can renew the face of the earth.

Simone Campbell, SSS

Stay connected with us!
 www.facebook.com/NetworkLobby
 <http://twitter.com/#!/networklobby>

Contents

- 3 envisioning**
Economic Justice and Real People's Lives
 Simone Campbell, SSS, speaks of the power of people's personal stories in defining the realities of poverty and injustice. 
- 5 cover story**
Addressing Poverty at the Federal Level
 Representative Chris Van Hollen writes of the need for bipartisan action to alleviate poverty in our nation. 
- 7 focus on the hill**
Initial Hope for More Effective Congress Replaced by Election-year Partisanship
 Will Congress move beyond partisan gamesmanship? 
- 9 toward a global community**
A Ray of Light in the Red Corridor
 Malini Manjoly, SCN, writes of Catholic Sisters' powerful ministries in an impoverished region in India. 
- 12 highlighting people**
"I Have Great Hope for Uganda."
 Daisy Kabuleeta, CSC, tells her story of working to alleviate poverty in her nation. 
- 13 spread the word**
The Federal Budget
 How do the 2015 proposals stack up to the Faithful Budget?
 Photocopy and distribute this fact sheet. 
- 15 making a difference**
Moving with Pope Francis toward an Economy of Inclusion
 Are you ready to respond to the calls for economic justice? Shantha Ready Alonso provides some suggestions. 

Sister Simone Campbell & Shantha Ready Alonso
NETWORK's Executive Director & *NETWORK's Field Organizing Manager*
 are newly published authors!
 SEE BACK COVER FOR MORE INFORMATION.



NETWORK

A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

NETWORK Board of Directors

- Regina Ann Brummel, CSJ
- Kevin M. Callahan
- Tom Cordaro
- Ouisa Davis
- Patricia Mullahy Fugere
- Lorena G. Gonzalez
- Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ
- Thomas Kelly
- Alice Kitchen
- Donna Marie Korba, IHM
- Betsy McDougall
- Patricia Mejia
- Terence J. Moran
- Ann Scholz, SSND

NETWORK Education Program Board of Directors

- Delia Garcia
- Dierdre Griffin
- Diane Guerin, RSM
- Barbara Lange
- Rudy Lopez
- Dean Manternach
- Melba Rodriguez
- Anna Sandidge
- Judy Sharpe
- Jerry Zurek

NETWORK/NEP Staff

- Managing Editor, Communications/Media Coordinator*—Stephanie Niedringhaus
- Development Coordinator*—Maggie Brevig
- Education Associate*—Katie Miller
- Education Fellow*—Hallie Clark
- Education Program Manager*—Shannon Hughes
- Executive Assistant*—LaTreviette Matthews
- Executive Director*—Simone Campbell, SSS
- Fellows*—Carolyn Burstein (Communications); Barbara Hazelett (Development); Nancy Groth (Management); Nancy McKenzie (Development); Joan Neal (Lobby)
- Field & Lobby Assistant*—Ashley Wilson
- Field Associate*—Claire Markham
- Field Organizing Manager*—Shantha Ready Alonso
- Lobby Associate*—James Luisi
- Lobbyists*—Marge Clark, BVM, Laura Peralta-Schulte
- Managing Director*—Paul Marchione
- Membership Assistant*—Megan Dorniny
- Technology Coordinator*—Joy Wigwe

Articles in *NETWORK Connection* may be reprinted. Please include the following on the reprints: "Reprinted by permission of NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, 25 E Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20001, www.networklobby.org." Please send us a copy of the reprinted article.

Second Quarter 2014—Vol. 42, No. 2
Copyright © 2014 NETWORK.

NETWORK Connection – ISSN 0199-5723
Published quarterly by NETWORK
PHONE: 202-347-9797 FAX: 202-347-9864
E-MAIL: connection@networklobby.org
WEBSITE: www.networklobby.org

POSTMASTER:
SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
NETWORK • 25 E Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001

Annual dues: \$50/\$60 international.
Cover photo by Leon Bonaventura

Economic Justice and Real People's Lives

By SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

This past November, Pope Francis wrote that “growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, programs, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality” (*Joy of the Gospel* 204). Since studying this document, we at NETWORK have been exploring what it would mean to create an econ-

omy of inclusion. It is a daunting challenge to imagine what this new economy would look like, to say nothing of how we would get there. But I am privileged to have the opportunity to meet people who are working in this direction. Let me share a few of their stories.

In Detroit, at the end of February, I got to visit Mercy Education Program for women and girls, where Sharon told me about her secret: she had never graduated from high school, but had never told her husband or three daughters.

She fought through mental illness and worked hard to keep her family together, but she could not compete in the economy without a GED. She told me that she had a night shift job but could not advance unless she could give her employer a graduation certificate. It was her reading that was tripping her up. She had a learning disability but had never learned how to compensate for it. In fact, she had come to dread school and the failure she associated with it, but, because of the needs of her family, she came to Mercy Education and discovered she was capable.

She entered into that welcoming community, improved her reading and math skills, and got her GED. When the time came for her graduation, she invited her husband and girls to the center without telling them what it was about. They were so surprised (and pleased) that she got her high school diploma. Sharon said that the very next day she went to her employer with her diploma and he said, “Today is your lucky day!” Just that morning, a worker had left so there was an opening on the day shift. Sharon moved into that new position with increased pay. All of her hard work was beneficial for herself, her family and her employer.

On the other side of Detroit I met Kristine, whose flashing eyes and ready smile are a magnetic attraction for anyone who walks within ten feet of her. She wrestled with dyslexia all of her life. Her mom was a champion for her needs, but it wasn't until she was an adult and went to the Dominican Literacy Center that she got the individualized attention that made all the difference. There, she learned skills to compensate for her disability. With that experience and her great personality she became the center of mentoring at Dominican. Because of her growth and development, Kristine became a part-time mentor there, which eventually led to a full-time position. She is now the magnetic hub that encourages and supports other adults as they strive to gain essential skills.

Marcella, another woman I met at the Dominican Literacy Center, told me

A woman prepares mangos for sale on a New York City street.



ANNA BRYUKHANOVA

that though she came to the Center for tutoring, she never said anything until Kristine started talking with her. It was because of Kristine that she began telling her story and sharing her struggles with reading and math. This made all of the difference for her as she gained confidence in her skills. Kristine recruited Marcella as a mentor for new adults who come into the Center. With her newfound confidence, Marcella has now learned computer skills and is being welcomed back to a QuickBooks programming project as well as being an individual mentor. She delights that she is now giving back to others.

Later, Elizabeth chimed in that it was Kristine who had helped her through a rough patch as she struggled to stay clean from drugs and learn to read. Kristine encouraged her to create a flyer to promote a cleaning business that she had the idea to start. Because of that flyer Elizabeth is now employed and celebrating her steps into the labor force. Thanks to Kristine and others at the Center, Elizabeth and her new employer delight in the growth and contribution that Elizabeth is making as she uses her improved reading and math skills to contribute to her employer's business.

Finally, Antonio told me that Kristine was the one who encouraged him to even come to the Center. He had always been a good kid in school, but was extremely shy and afraid to speak up when he did not understand what was going on, and he could not read. He was passed along from grade to grade and received his high school diploma, but he had severe dyslexia and did not understand much of what was happening academically. He had been afraid to tell anyone that this was the case. Because of the Dominican Center he now has developed skills that are making a difference for him. He spoke to me with confidence about how much he had learned and where he was headed.



A construction worker directs traffic on a city street.

These two agencies in Detroit, started and sponsored by Catholic Sisters, are specific programs that are geared to addressing the income disparities in our nation. Through individual tutoring and small classes they are making a difference as adults wrestle with lifelong limitations. But what is often overlooked is that they both use some government funding to pay for their programs. They combine government money with donations, grants and volunteers to make a difference for many. This is the public-private partnership that is making change happen. But it is only one step of many that are necessary to change the face of poverty in our society. At the core of an economy of inclusion are people, people making the difference in relationships and care.

We need more centers like Mercy Educational Program and the Dominican Literacy Center, not fewer. We need more employment, not less. We need better wages so that work does pay. We need to restructure some of our educational programs so that students do not get lost or discouraged. All of the people I met in Detroit were invested in making

a difference in their city and doing their part. They were not seeking a "welfare state," they were looking for a "just state." We have a long way to go to overcome that challenge. But these people in Detroit were well on their way to making something new in their city.

Then, at a NETWORK fundraiser in La Jolla, California, I met Jason, who had decided to pay his workers more than minimum wage. He was paying above \$10.10 an hour to his lowest-paid workers and was providing benefits. He said he did it as an ethical stance, but it annoyed him that many business owners he knows lament government spending, yet pay their workers so little that those workers need to use government benefits to survive. This business owner said that it did not seem right to have the government subsidizing his competitors' businesses.

Now don't get me wrong, he was not for the elimination of these critical programs. Rather, he believed that employers should be responsible for paying the true cost of their business by paying their workers a living wage. Jason told me that paying an ethical wage meant he had lower turnover in employment, greater productivity, and employee loyalty. He understands that wages are not just a business cost, but an investment—paying a just wage is not only the right thing to do, it's good for his business. He believes that all employers should pay a just wage as a true cost of their business. At the heart of an economy of inclusion are employers who put their people at the center of their concern.

Pope Francis is right. We are all needed to further the quest for the common good. All of us are needed to create an economy of inclusion that has 100% of people at its core. May it be realized in our entire nation.

Sister Simone Campbell is NETWORK's Executive Director and author of A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change, and Community.



JOBS banners adorn the U.S. Chamber of Commerce building in Washington, DC

J. CARILLAT

Addressing Poverty at the Federal Level

BY REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, JR.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, there is no question we have made progress. In fact, a recent report from the Council of Economic Advisors finds that existing programs that provide greater economic security cut the poverty rate by nearly 40 percent from 1967 to 2012. It found that without these programs, an additional 45 million Americans would be living in poverty in 2012. In other words, without these programs, we would have almost twice as many Americans in poverty.

But we have a long way to go to make good on the goal of ensuring that families have the chance to succeed. More than 40 million Americans are still living in poverty today—that is unacceptable.

The best antipoverty program is a good job with a livable wage. As we continue to emerge from the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression, the good news is that 8.7 million jobs have been created over the last 48

months. The bad news is that unemployment remains stubbornly high and about three Americans are searching for every one open job.

Meanwhile, over the last three decades, a very disturbing pattern has emerged. Since 1980, our productivity is up by over 90 percent and our economy has more than doubled in size. But the real income of a typical family has grown by only nine percent, while the overwhelming benefits of increased output have flowed to fewer and fewer Americans.

Time for Change

This growing income inequality makes clear that it's time for us to change the status quo. The first thing we need to do is to promote policies to boost economic growth, jobs and wages. That is why the president and Democrats in Congress have called for a major investment in our national infrastructure—to modernize the backbone of our economy, to spur innovation, to keep America

at the cutting edge of global competition, and to put more Americans back to work with good-paying jobs.

Americans should be able to keep more of the fruits of their labor. We could help over 28 million hardworking Americans and immediately start lifting five million people out of poverty by increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. Right now—at \$7.25—it is lower, in real terms, than when Harry Truman was president. It is disgraceful that someone can work full-time, year-round at the current minimum wage and still fall below the federal poverty line.

We must also immediately extend emergency unemployment benefits to help the over two million long-term unemployed Americans—and their families—who have lost benefits since the start of the year. These men and women lost their jobs through no fault of their own and are continuing to search for work, but have been cut off the unemployment rolls. Thousands more are joining them each week. The Congressional



ETHAN MILLER

Lon Plotkin (L) and Jesus Aguilar share a laugh as they wait to be called for application reviews at a Las Vegas career center.

Budget Office has told us that helping these struggling families helps all of us by adding 200,000 jobs to the economy.

What's in the Way

But despite the recent rhetoric we've heard from my Republican colleagues in Congress, they are making it harder and harder for the economic gains our country has achieved to reach everyone. They have fought us tooth and nail on these proposals—despite the fact that the proposals have widespread support from voters. They have blocked the president's jobs agenda and failed to offer their own, instead focusing exclusively on repealing the Affordable Care Act and turning control of Americans' healthcare back to insurance companies.

What really reflects their vision for our country is their most recent budget proposal. The Republican budget punishes people with the least power in Washington in order to coddle those with the most. It refuses even one penny of deficit reduction from closing special-interest tax breaks, like those for corporate jets, big oil and overseas tax havens. Instead, it makes massive cuts to nutrition, healthcare and other critical supports that give low-income children and

families a chance at a decent life. Slashing the safety net does not create jobs. All it does is put seniors, persons with disabilities, and children living in poverty at greater risk of hardship.

Their plan stands in stark contrast to the president's budget, which is focused on expanding economic growth, making critical investments in our future, and growing the middle class. President Obama's budget would eliminate the across-the-board cuts from the sequester and make key investments in infrastructure, research and development, and education. His proposal would expand the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)—which is highly effective in reducing poverty and encouraging work among low-income parents—for childless workers. This would help ensure that work pays for more Americans. The budget also includes a multi-year \$75 billion universal preschool initiative with states, along with expansion of a highly effective home-visiting program for at-risk children. And to help Americans get the skills they need to find jobs in the fast-changing economy, the president's plan targets a variety of expanded and new job training services to adults, youth, and the long-term unemployed.

Bipartisan Action Needed

If congressional Republicans are genuinely interested in enacting policies that will help more Americans climb out of poverty, they will find a willing partner in Democrats. We welcome any new ideas that work. What we will not accept are Trojan Horse policies that, under the guise of helping people climb out of poverty, actually shred the social safety net and push more people into poverty. And so far, the GOP has asked drowning Americans to stay afloat while they pull back the life raft.

I believe that the War on Poverty is a war worth fighting, and a war we can win. In 1964, Americans decided as a nation that children should not go hungry, that seniors should not be driven into destitution by medical bills, and that job training empowered people better than any other avenue. We need to recommit to that promise—and the work Sister Simone Campbell and NETWORK have done to raise awareness on this critical issue is so important.

But we won't get to a solution by dismantling programs that have allowed us to make progress and penalizing families who are struggling to get out of poverty.



Representative Chris Van Hollen (D) has represented the Eighth District of Maryland since he was first elected in 2002.

Initial Hope for More Effective Congress Replaced by Election-year Partisanship

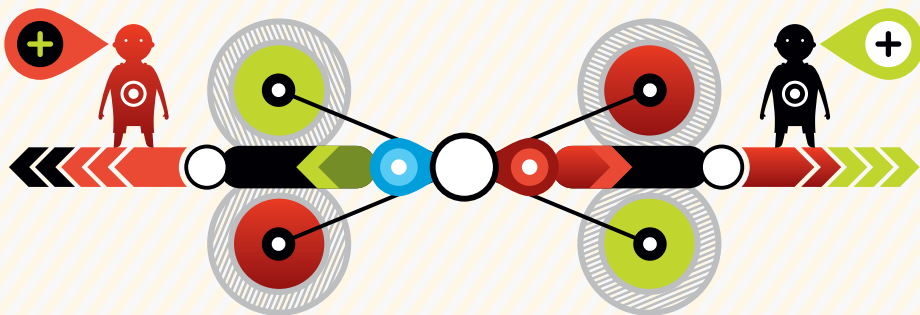
By NETWORK ISSUE STAFF

When Congress returned to work in January there were signs that perhaps the worst of partisan gridlock could be over. Following the budget agreement brokered in December 2013 by Senate Budget Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and House Budget Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI), there was hope that members might consider working together in a more pragmatic, results-oriented way to deal with critical issues facing our country. The budget agreement demonstrated that Congress can legislate on key issues if there is the political will to do so.

In fact, three large bills passed early

Budget

This is a critical time for legislation affecting safety-net programs and other human needs. Although the Ryan-Murray agreement reached last year means no FY15 budget resolution is needed, President Obama has released his budget requests, two House groups are offering budget resolutions, and the Senate decided to put their energies into appropriations. All have agreed to adhere to the caps in the Ryan-Murray agreement, and to the wall between defense and non-defense spending—at least for FY15.

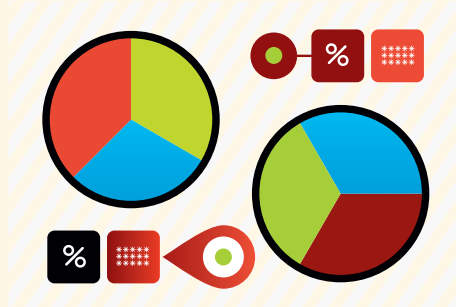


in the year with little of the usual political wrangling we have seen so frequently. Actions included passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 in January, which implemented the outlines of the Ryan-Murray budget agreement; passage of the controversial farm bill, which cut food assistance programs to people living in poverty in February; and, most surprisingly, passage of a “clean” temporary debt limit extension with no threat of a government shutdown.

By this point, however, both parties have begun to focus in earnest on issues they hope will define their differences in the run-up to the November elections. Republicans, hopeful that they will benefit from problems related to the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), are in full-blown campaign mode. Democrats are pivoting to messages that traditionally resonate with party voters and are geared to benefit the middle class.

The president’s budget request emphasizes investment in infrastructure, which would create jobs. According to Bob Greenstein of the Center for Budget Policy Priorities it is, “a solid blueprint that would reduce deficits.” In addition to the base budget, President Obama is requesting separate funding of \$56 billion for an Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative to be split 50-50 by defense and non-defense.

The House Progressive Caucus published “The Better Off Budget,” which reverses harmful sequestration cuts, restores Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) funding, enhances federal programs to create



greater equity for women and people of color, and protects veterans and workers through retirement. However, we can expect extensive pushback as they pay for these highly desirable expenditures by closing expensive tax loopholes dear to the wealthiest in the corporate world.

As this article is being written, Representative Ryan is preparing for a markup of the House majority budget. It is a very different FY15 budget than either the president’s request or the “Better Off Budget.” Provisions affecting those in our nation who are suffering economically will exacerbate their dire straits. Proposed budget cuts expand already huge holes in the social safety net. Discretionary human needs programs lose funding and mandated programs such as SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP face flat or reduced funding. As one example, in order to reduce overall spending levels, seniors would be asked to pay more for preventive services and prescription drugs to keep the wealthiest in the nation from contributing more to the security of the 100%.

Appropriations

Given the top spending levels, subcommittee members are now charged with dividing up the ever-smaller amounts across programs within their jurisdiction. NETWORK will be visiting, calling and writing to legislators to ensure that they ask themselves the following



questions as they propose program spending levels:

- What will this expenditure or cut mean for those who are long-term unemployed, elderly, struggling with disabilities, or caring for a veteran severely injured in our wars?
- Who will gain the most from this decision?
- What impact will this decision have on the gap between the very wealthy and the most vulnerable members of our communities?

Pope Francis raises moral concerns about how governments and corporations contribute to the economic security of all:

“As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world’s problems or, for that matter, to any problems. Inequality is the root of social ills.” (*Joy of the Gospel* 202)

This must be a concern of all legislators, and all engaged citizens.

Emergency Unemployment Compensation

Federal assistance to unemployed individuals seeking work beyond the period of assistance available from their state was terminated on December 28, 2013. We continue to lobby for reinstatement. A five-month extension will, hopefully, pass the Senate within days. This is quite inadequate, as this funding would end by the end of May—leaving workers again without money for rent or house payments, healthcare, sufficient food, transportation or child care (further complicating for them what is already a difficult job search). If this passes the Senate, there will be a push to bring it to the floor in the House. This may be a much more difficult lift, even though many members of both parties are supportive.



Minimum Wage

A major legislative priority for the president and Democratic members of Congress this year is to increase the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative George Miller (D-CA) introduced bills to raise the minimum wage in their respective chambers at the beginning of the session. The Senate will bring the bill to a vote following completion of action on the extension of emergency Unemployment Insurance (UI). House Republican leadership strongly opposes an increase, and no action has been taken in the chamber.

Immigration Reform

Once the House Republican Standards for Immigration Reform were released in January, we expected House leaders to act to repair our broken immigration system. Unfortunately for the thousands of families torn apart each day, we are still waiting for Speaker Boehner. In an attempt to jumpstart the process, Democrats in the House of Representatives introduced a discharge petition asking the Republican leadership to allow a vote on H.R. 15, the House comprehensive immigration reform bill that has 199 cosponsors. If the discharge petition reaches 218 signatures, they will succeed in forcing a vote on a bill, even though House leaders, who usually control what legislation makes it to the floor, are resistant.

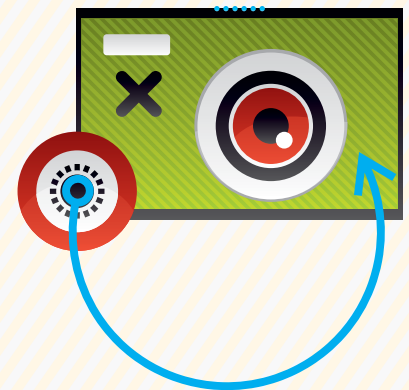
There is hope for some bipartisanship in the House of Representatives: in March, Representative Pearce (R-NM) and Representative O’Rourke (D-TX) introduced the Border Enforcement, Accountability, Oversight, and Community Engagement Act of 2014 (H.R. 4303). Though this bill is still far from the reform we desperately need, it is encouraging to see bipartisan legislation from two border representatives that will



increase accountability for Customs and Border Protection agents.

Additionally, we are calling on the Obama Administration to look for ways to reduce family separation. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

(DACA) is set to be renewed. President Obama can also make our deportation practices safer; he announced that in the coming weeks and months the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will be reviewing ways to make practices more humane. We will continue to work with Congress, Secretary Johnson in DHS, and President Obama to advocate for the rights of migrants. We must not lose hope!



Prevention of Gun Violence

As part of the coalition Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, NETWORK participated in the 2014 Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend March 13-15 in Washington, DC. The weekend began with a gathering at the Washington National Cathedral, which included a panel discussion on gun violence, a national webcast discussion of the causes and community responses to the issue, and a vigil prayer service with a blessing of First Responders. This is an annual event meant to draw attention to the increasing incidences of gun violence and the need for comprehensive reform of our country’s gun laws.

Want timely information about key issues in Congress? NETWORK members can sign up for our weekly email legislative updates. Send your name, zip code and email address to networkupdate@networklobby.org.



A woman and her baby in Tetiatarid Village, Sokho.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NAZARETH

A Ray of Light in the Red Corridor*

By MALINI MANJOLY, SCN

Trafficked to Patna and Delhi at a tender age of 12, Jeevanlata Hembrom survived her ordeals. She is now a regular eighth-grader of St. Mary's Middle School in Sokho, a rural community in India. If it were not for the consistent efforts of Sister Cornelia Ekka, SCN, the school principal, Jeevanlata would have been in one of the brothels of Mumbai or Delhi.

Living in a troubled family, Jeevanlata ran away to Patna with her mother. In an unknown city with no place to stay, they came in contact with a woman who supplied girls to the brothels of Mumbai. In Patna, they were groomed to

go to Mumbai. After getting the news, Sister Cornelia contacted a person in Patna who posed as a policeman to prevent the woman from sending them to Mumbai. After returning safely to the village, some agents took them to New Delhi for domestic work. In Delhi, the mother and daughter were separated. Jeevanlata's employer treated her cruelly by locking her up in a room whenever they went out of the house.

As she got an opportunity to escape, Jeevanlata ran away from the clutches of her employer. With no money in hand, providence brought her back to her vil-

lage safely. As Sister Cornelia got word that her student was back in the village, she rushed to convince the girl to return to school. Jeevanlata stays now in the hostel.

Sanju Kherwar is the first girl to complete high school from her village, Tetiatarid. Her two sisters, Baghya and Sushila, are studying in Classes 8 and 4. These three girls would have remained illiterate if not for the efforts of the Sisters in Sokho. Sisters visited the family to convince them to send the girls to the hostel for studies. Today, the family is proud of Sanju.

*The Red Corridor is an impoverished region in eastern India. This is an account of how Catholic Sisters are making a difference in the lives of the people there.



Above: Sanju Kherwar and her family with Sister Corenlia Ekka (in eyeglasses). Below left: Hostel girls enjoy an evening game. Below right: School assembly.

The School has 575 students from kindergarten to class 8, 204 girls and 371 boys. The students pay a minimal annual tuition fee. There are 12 teachers, including two SCNs. The sisters run a hostel for girls. There are 51 girls in the hostel, of which 16 are Catholics.

Serving the People of Sokho

There are about 600 Catholics in Sokho parish, part of the Bhagalpur Diocese. The parish is proud to have two priests and two nuns, and many have joined various Congregations. Since 1972, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (SCN) have been ministering in various capacities as teachers, social and pastoral animators and as nurses. SCN Sisters regularly visit the Catholic families, those who are sick and the homes

of the students. They assist in preparing young children for Holy Communion and Confirmation. Daily catechism is taught in the school.

Bringing Healthcare to the Region

At Nazareth Health Centre in, Sokho, Sister Sushma Xaxa, SCN, a nurse, gives specialized treatment with acupressure, seed therapy, herbal medicines and sujothrapy. Though there are private and government hospitals with doctors around Jamui, patients come from far and wide to Sokho for treatment of skin diseases, ear infection, sterility, arthritis, cerebral malaria, migraine head ache and scorpion and snake bites. The place is infested with Anopheles mosquitoes. Though cerebral malaria death is con-

trolled with prevention and timely treatment, it is still highly prevalent.

Sister Sushma takes great care to prepare herbal medicines. The health assistant, Seema Dungung, helps her to cultivate, prepare and store the herbal medicines. Talo Murmu (45), from Sayadori village, had a chronic spleen problem. He spent a lot of money in various hospitals and with quacks. At last, financially drained and with no cure, Sister Sushma put him on herbal medication for three months. As the treatment progressed, Talo felt better and he is able to work and feed his family. Arjun Turi (40), from Pasnor village in Jharkhand, was brought on a cot to the Health Centre with severe deformity in his joints due to arthritis. Sister Sushma gave him herbal medicines for two weeks. After two weeks of medication, Arjun returned to Sokho by himself to thank them.

Standing with Women in the Quest to Become Self-sufficient

Over the years, SCNs have organized women to form groups in 25 villages, in six Panchayats (local self-government unit). Women's groups are formed through awareness training and songs. The women gather in their groups to discuss issues affecting their lives under the guidance of animators. Each month, the women contribute a small sum towards a common fund. The women take loans from it whenever need arises. Some of the groups have done community farming through their savings. Women are trained to make detergents, candles, incense sticks, phenyl, vermi-culture (natural compost) and for mushroom





Far left: Sister Sushma Xaxa attends to a patient. Above: Animators present a street play. Left: Author. Below: Sister Franciska Sanga solves a problem in the village.

cultivation. They are also given health classes to make home remedies and herbal medicines.

Also, various empowerment programs are offered to the people through *nukkad* (street play) by the Nazareth Social Work Centre, Sokho. They focus on making the people aware of their rights through Panchayati Raj to avail the government schemes. Through Aam Sabha (public gathering), government school and *anganwadi* (early schooling for rural children), teachers, helpers of *anganwadi*, elected village head and ward members and the public are brought together to discuss issues affecting the people. One of the major issues discussed in the Aam Sabha is the Right to Food Act 2013. Government schemes under this Act are implemented through Panchayat. Puppet shows are effectively utilized to create political awareness among people. Though illiterate, women have contested elections and won at Panchayat level.

Teenage girls attend 10-month cutting/tailoring classes at the centre. Around 92 girls have been trained so far. Three women have learnt weaving at the centre. Due to lack of funds and marketing facilities, the women shy away from pursuing this trade.

Badamia Devi of Bardon village created history by rowing a boat for a living. Her initiative was featured in the local Hindi newspaper. Through the various empowerment programs at the centre, Badamia became the leader of

the women's group in her village.

With very little education and no employment opportunities in the villages most of the men migrate to cities for a living. The women and children engage in leaf plate and *bidi* (local cigarette) making for a living.

A nearby dam displaced a large number of people. With no proper land papers, the villagers were ousted and given a small amount to put up a small house.

Dawn is still to break forth in the lives

of the people in Sokho. With no modern development, the youth are restless and easy prey to anti-social elements. Much more needs to be done to awaken the collective consciousness of the people and the apathy of the government officials. The efforts of the Church and the SCN Sisters are a drop in the ocean of deprivation, hunger, malnutrition, malaria and much more. The Christian presence is a ray of hope for the people in Sokho.

Sister Malini Manjoly is the SCN Communications Coordinator in India.



“I Have Great Hope for Uganda.”

By DAISY KABULEETA, CSC

Sister Daisy Kabuleeta, CSC, is trained in Business Administration and Management. She currently serves as the Director of Holy Cross Family Centre in Uganda, one of the world’s most economically poor nations. At the Family Centre, Sister Daisy manages the finances for Moreau Primary School, which has more than 300 students, and for Kyembogo Holy Cross Health Centre, that employs 31 staff and provides services to more than 14,000 patients each year. This is her story.

I was born in a family of nine, five sisters and four brothers; I am the seventh-born. I lived in the village with my parents until after grade school when I moved to the city for high school and college. Both my parents lived a happy life until the year 2000, when my father passed on. My father was a teacher by profession. My mother works for the church as a catechist.

Education in the city was not very easy at the beginning as I had to learn many languages spoken by the other students. My father did not earn a lot of money as a teacher but he worked so hard to make sure that we all received a good education.

I first heard of the Sisters of the Holy Cross when I was in grade five. Because I wanted to be a nun with all my heart I contacted my sister, Gertrude, who was already a nun. She helped me find more information, and it was then that I made my first application to join the Sisters of the Holy Cross. These sisters kept in touch with me until the year 1999, when I joined the formation program. I made

Sister Angelica feeds one of the twins who was malnourished.

my first vows January 2003 and final vows January 2009. Both of my parents supported my decision to be a nun.

My Work in Rural Uganda

For the past 14 years I have been with the Sisters of the Holy Cross, offering most of my services in the rural areas of Uganda. Most of the people where I minister still live below the national rural poverty line. They are smallholder farmers but have no access to vehicles and roads to transport their produce. They also lack financial services which would enable them to boost their incomes.

The education we offer to the children in this area will play a significant role in releasing them from poverty. An educated child is equipped with the tools to fight poverty and conquer diseases. Our school offers a safe and supportive environment for children to learn life skills and make friends.

Our health clinic provides lifesaving services to the poor people of western Uganda, Kirinda village. The women of this area are especially affected by lack of



Sister Daisy at Moreau Primary School.

health care and social services. They work long hours, and they walk long distances in order to get to our health unit for antenatal care. So far, thousands of patients and HIV clients have been treated at our unit. In addition to the services at our clinic, we have a village health team and vaccinators who go out to the people in the remote parts of our catchment areas. Because of our existence, poor communities are now accessing more health services than ever before.

In one case, I was able to help a mother with twin babies who were severely malnourished. The parents were so poor; they only had \$1 to live on for a whole week. There was no food to feed the babies. The parents had lost hope as the babies looked like they would die the next day! Sister Angelica Birungi, CSC, and I worked hard to provide for these babies who weighed only a few pounds even though they were three years old. Because of these efforts, the twins are now growing up and they can walk.

Our health and education services are improving people’s awareness so that they can make changes in their lives. I have great hope for Uganda.



PHOTOS COURTESY SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS

The Federal Budget

How do the 2015 proposals stack up to the Faithful Budget?

The federal budget is a clear illustration of our priorities as a nation. The Faithful Budget is a collaboration of the interfaith community that promotes comprehensive and compassionate budget principles to serve 100% of our nation. With that in mind, how do these three budget proposals match up with the priorities in The Faithful Budget?

	President Obama	House Congressional Progressive Caucus	Representative Paul Ryan & House Budget Committee
Job Creation	\$143 billion over 10 years to revitalize infrastructure ✓	\$1.3 trillion over 10 years in job creation funding ✓	No funding for job creation ✗
Medicaid	Maintains the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act ✓	Increases funding for Medicaid while reducing fraud and waste ✓	Deep cuts to Medicaid, including a repeal of Medicaid expansion ✗
SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)	No proposed changes ✗	Increases funding for SNAP over the next 10 years ✓	Deep cuts to SNAP; conversion to block grant administered at state level ✗
Pentagon Spending	Prevents sequestration cuts and increases military spending ✗	Reduces military spending by \$255 billion over 10 years ✓	Special protection from sequestration ✗
Tax Loopholes	Ends “carried interest” loophole and implements Buffett Rule, raising \$664 billion over 10 years ✓	Limits corporate loopholes, raising \$153 billion over 10 years ✓	Plans to close loopholes, but does not specify which ones ?

Adapted from National Priorities Project’s “Competing Visions: President Obama, Rep. Paul Ryan, and House Progressives Release Budget Proposals for 2015” <http://nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2014/budget-proposals-2015/>

We encourage the reproduction and distribution of this back-to-back fact sheet.



NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace
25 E Street NW, Suite 200 • Washington DC 20001
202-347-9797 • www.networklobby.org

A Faithful Budget

“Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality.”

—Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*

Our budget shows our priorities, and we must prioritize what is good for 100% of our nation, with special care for those at the margins.



Learn more about Pope Francis’s vision
for an economy of inclusion:
www.network-education.org/JoyoftheGospel

Learn more about the Faithful Budget:
www.faithfulbudget.org

We encourage the reproduction and distribution of this back-to-back fact sheet.

Moving with Pope Francis toward an Economy of Inclusion

BY SHANTHA READY ALONSO

In his exhortation, *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis has called each of us to deepen our faith and reorient our lifestyles and economies from paradigms of exclusion to those of inclusion. The prospect of taking up his challenge seems daunting. Massive cultural and structural changes all around us are required to build an economy of inclusion.

As an individual, I must examine my own privileges, biases, and ways I choose to spend my time, talent and money. When I ask myself carefully whether things that bring me everyday joy contribute to an economy of exclusion, I have to question matters as basic as where my food and clothes come from, or how my house is heated and cooled. In fact, it is very nearly impossible to live in the United States and completely abstain from contributing to an economy of exclusion.

Yet, we are a people of faith and hope. In fact, Pope Francis calls us to live our lives with a contagious joy. It is in this spirit that I know I can do my best to be a conscious participant in a broken economic system, while also engaging in civic participation to transform our economy toward an economy of inclusion.

The NETWORK community has joyfully taken up 2014 as a year helping engaged participants in our democracy to respond to Pope Francis's call to live out *Joy of the Gospel*. We hosted well-attended congressional briefings in both the House and Senate, sharing some of the highlights of *Joy of the Gospel's* message for U.S. politicians. More than once, we have seen members of Congress use resources from our congressional briefing packet in speeches and writing. We have also seen Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders use Pope Francis's message to highlight issues of social justice on social media.

You are invited to join in spreading the Gospel Joy. Below are some suggested small ways you can get started orienting yourself and your community toward an economy of inclusion.

"No one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas. This is an excuse commonly heard in academic, business or professional, and even ecclesial circles...None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice." (*Joy of the Gospel* 201)



"We are not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a 'dignified sustenance' for all people, but also their 'general temporal welfare and prosperity.' This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives." (*Joy of the Gospel* 192)

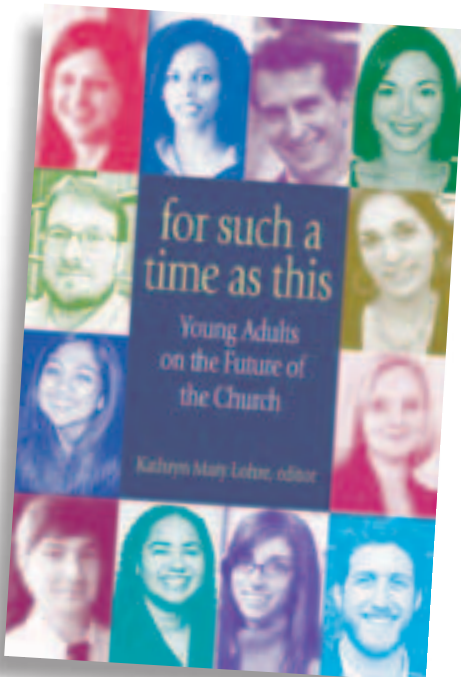
1. Pray, reflect, and discern what you might do. Go to network-education.org/JoyoftheGospel to find a link to NETWORK's *Joy of the Gospel* study and action materials.
2. Deepen your understanding of the origins of the economy of exclusion in the United States. NETWORK's educational curriculum *Mind the Gap!* tells the story of how wealth inequality developed to crisis levels. It can be accessed at network-education.org/MindtheGap.
3. NETWORK also developed a study guide to accompany the film "Inequality for All," a documentary that shows U.S. economic history and present reality in an entertaining way. The film features former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich. Find resources surrounding this film at network-education.org/InequalityforAll.

4. Learn about policies that could heal the economy of exclusion. NETWORK offers two curricula about policies that can heal wealth inequality. Mend the Gap! is a series of online lessons about four areas of public policy that are important for mending the wealth gap: asset-building, housing justice, labor justice, and tax justice. You can access all the lessons at network-education.org/MendtheGap. Our tax system is one of the most powerful ways "We the People" gather resources to share for the common good and extend opportunities to thrive. NETWORK developed *We the Taxpayers*, a 5-session interfaith curriculum designed for small group learning. Access it at network-education.org/WetheTaxpayers.
5. Once you've checked out all these resources yourself, please share them with others!

Shantha Ready Alonso is NETWORK's Field Organizing Manager.



A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Home, Change, and Community
by Sister Simone Campbell, NETWORK Executive Director, HarperOne <http://www.networklobby.org/BookOrder>



For Such a Time as This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church, ed. by Kathryn Mary Lohre, with first chapter, "What Are You? Hybrid Identities and Today's Multicultural Church," by Shantha Ready Alonso, NETWORK Field Organizing Manager, Judson Press http://www.judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=17768

A participant in our Senate briefing last month called NETWORK's presence "a drop of water in the desert" because it is so rare that he hears clear social justice messages in Congress. We're counting on you to help us bring our ministry to all people across this country who hunger and thirst for justice.

Your contributions to the NETWORK community help us effectively amplify Pope Francis's message on Capitol Hill. Please make a special donation today with the envelope in this magazine or online at www.networklobby.org/donate.

Thank you for your participation in our ministry!