

I am Sr Gloria Adoga, a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) and one of the Alumni of ASEC/SLDI who graduated from Veritas University in 2020. As a congregation, we have a network called Shalom Network. Shalom is our international network for justice, peace, and integrity of creation and we as SSNDs, are committed to the principle of **integral ecology** as described by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. ... We are intrinsically part of nature's chain of being, in which each species has its place and deserves protection." Therefore, as a student of Veritas University, I joined the Climate Change Mitigation Club, which would report to the school on concerns of hygiene in the students' hostels and pick up plastics wherever we saw them. During one of our visits to the dormitory area, we met the Vice Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Professor Hyacinth Ichoku, who was so taken with the Club's efforts that he nicknamed me the Climate Sister until he figured out my identity. He also put us in touch with the school works department, which handled our reports from the hostel and classroom area.

I was appointed as the club's coordinator from the start, and we educated ourselves on climate change issues internally and obtained resources for it outside of school on a weekly basis. We also asked the matron how to best collect plastic from food and water, and for a while, we would buy garbage bags for the cleaners to collect this plastic that we once used for practical purposes. We attempted to make an interlocking block out of the waste plastic.

We were busy from afar during the 2020 lockdown and had 50 trees ready for planting in the school by June. When we presented the trees to the Vice Chancellor, he was so impressed that he gave the funds for the purchase of a thousand, five hundred more trees of neem, the famous umbrella tree, as well as fruit trees such as orange, mango, palm, guava, and banana, among others. He also hired someone to handle these. Another student was inspired by what was going on and donated about thirty trees to the school through the club.

As I ended my time at the school, I left with a sense of accomplishment not only in my academic pursuit, but also in the enlightenment that many have received from the club's activities. I also left thinking about the beauty, protection, and food these trees will provide the school in the years to come. I am fulfilled and happy with the cooperation and collaboration toward the partial achievement of the *Laudato Si* and UN goals in my Alma Mata because I know that as trees grow, they help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. Every day, trees provide numerous benefits for us. They provide shade, purify the air we breathe, prevent soil erosion, clean the water we drink, and add grace and beauty to our homes and communities.