

THE CARITAS IN VERITATE FOUNDATION WORKING PAPERS  
*“The City of God in the Palace of Nations”*

***Education as a Driver  
to Integral Growth and Peace***

*Ethical Reflections on the Right to Education*



With a selection of recent documents on the  
Church's engagement on education

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# ***EDITORIAL: EDUCATION, THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT***

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**T**hirty years ago, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The right to education, mentioned in Article 28, is essential not only because of the intrinsic benefits that education provides, but also because it is fundamental for the enjoyment of many other rights recognized in the CRC. Education is truly a cornerstone in a child's development from early childhood to adulthood. It is a key driver for future opportunities in life – or the lack thereof. A similar point can be made about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. The fourth goal, or SDG4, is to, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” While this is but one of 17 goals, it has major implications for the ability to achieve many of the other goals.

In commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through this publication on Education as a Driver to Integral Growth and Peace, the *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation provides us with an opportunity to reflect on where the world stands today in ensuring quality education for all children, and what remains to be done. In this editorial, after a brief discussion of the limited progress achieved so far towards quality education for all, and based in part on some of my recent research, I have four aims: (1) to document the impact of education on other development outcomes; (2) to emphasize the need to improve learning apart from schooling; (3) to acknowledge the importance of character education; and (4) to explore the particular contribution of faith-based schools and the issue of partnerships between those schools and national education systems.

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## **1. Slow progress**

**G**lobally, according to data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators, nine in ten children complete their primary education, while three in four complete their lower secondary education. In low-income countries however, despite progress over the last two decades, only two-thirds of children complete their primary education, and just above 40% complete lower secondary school.

Estimates<sup>2</sup> indicate that in 2018, 258 million children and youth (aged 6 to 17) were out of school. Even if the rate of out-of-school children declined slightly since the adoption of the SDGs, there has not been real progress in reducing the number of out-of-school children globally.

Girls have caught up with boys for primary education completion rates in most countries, but they continue to lag behind boys at the secondary level in low-income countries, due in part to the high prevalence of child marriage (marrying before the age of 18) and early childbearing (having a first child before the age of 18) in those countries. While some countries are making more progress than others towards SDG4, progress is typically too slow to achieve the targets set forth by the International Community.<sup>3</sup> The poor and vulnerable continue to be left behind with dramatic implications for their opportunities in life.

Apart from low levels of educational attainment in many countries, children suffer from a global learning crisis, with too many students – especially in the developing world – not acquiring the foundational skills that education systems should provide. Data from international student assessments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), as well as regional assessments such as PASEC (*Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN*) and SACMEQ (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) in Africa, suggest that many students are not learning enough in school. Among East African students in third grade, three in four do not understand a simple sentence. Meanwhile in rural India, three in four students cannot solve a two-digit subtraction. On average, a student in a low-income country performs worse on basic literacy and numeracy than nine in ten students in high-income countries. The situation is only marginally better in some middle-income countries.<sup>4</sup> Performance on socio-emotional skills is harder to measure, but if education systems fail on basic cognitive skills such as literacy and numeracy, it is unlikely that they will nurture socio-emotional skills.

The severity of the global learning crisis can be illustrated with data on harmonized learning outcomes, released in 2018 by the World Bank as part of its Human Capital Index.<sup>5</sup> The education component of the index combines data on the average number of years of schooling that children in various countries are expected to complete, with data on what they actually learn while in school. This leads to the concept of learning-adjusted years of schooling. Globally, across all countries for which data are available, children are expected to complete 11.2 years of schooling on average. But this is only valued at 7.9 years under the learning-adjusted measure. In other words, 3.3 years of schooling or almost 30% of the average expected years of schooling are “lost” due to insufficient learning. In low-income

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countries, these measures are much lower. Most countries with very low performance are located in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>6</sup>

While children from all socio-economic backgrounds are at risk of dropping out and/or not learning enough, it is well known that children in extreme poverty are especially at risk. But another important group at risk is that of children with disabilities. While primary and secondary completion rates increased for all children over the last few decades and especially for the poorest, smaller gains were achieved for children with disabilities. This has led to larger gaps between children with and without disabilities over time. Similar trends are observed for literacy rates. Regression analysis suggests large negative effects of exclusion associated with disabilities, for both completion and literacy rates.<sup>7</sup> Disabilities are also associated with lower performance on student assessments. In francophone Africa, PASEC data for ten Francophone countries suggest that controlling for other factors affecting learning, children with hearing or seeing difficulties tend to do worse on mathematics and reading tests in all but one of ten countries that participated in the assessment for primary schools. Unfortunately, screening in school for visual and hearing impairments is rare, and less than one in ten teachers benefit from in-service training on inclusive education. Among a dozen categories of in-service training, this is the category with the lowest coverage rate among teachers across the ten countries.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Benefits from education

**M**ore needs to be done to improve educational opportunities for children, not only because of the intrinsic benefits that education provides, but also because of the large impact that education has on many other areas of children's lives, including future opportunities in adulthood. Said differently, ensuring the right to education is essential for the enjoyment of human rights in their indivisibility. To show how education matters, it can be useful to consider the benefits from education for human development in a few areas:

**Labor market earnings and poverty reduction:** Education is key to escaping poverty. According to estimates,<sup>9</sup> men and women with primary education (partial or completed) earn only 20 - 30% on average more than those with no education at all. However, these impacts are observed only when workers actually learned while in school, as proxied (given data limitations) by whether or not they are literate. Learning in primary school is also necessary in most countries in order to pursue education at the secondary level or higher, and this is where the labor market returns on education are larger. Indeed, men and women with secondary education may expect to make almost twice as much as those with no education at all, and those with tertiary education may expect to make three times as much as those with no education. In addition, secondary and tertiary

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education are often (albeit not always) associated with higher labor force participation (especially full-time work for women) and a lower likelihood of unemployment. Since labor earnings are key for households to avoid poverty, improving education outcomes – both in terms of educational attainment and learning – has the potential to reduce poverty dramatically<sup>10</sup> (refer to case study - page 235).

**Child marriage, fertility, and women's health:** Poor education outcomes have negative impacts for both men and women, but not educating girls is especially costly. When girls drop out of school, they are more likely to marry or have children at an age when they are not yet ready to do so, whether physically or emotionally. This in turn leads to a wide range of negative consequences not only for them, but also for their children and societies as a whole.<sup>11</sup> Keeping girls in secondary school until they graduate is one of the best ways to end child marriage and early childbearing.<sup>12</sup> Each additional year of secondary education is associated with a reduction in the risks of child marriage (marrying before the age of 18) and early childbearing (having a child before the age of 18). Universal secondary education for girls could virtually eliminate child marriage and thereby also reduce the prevalence of early childbearing by three fourths<sup>13</sup> (refer to case study - page 105). In addition, women who have children earlier (including when they are still children themselves) tend to have more children over their lifetime. By reducing the risks of child marriage and early childbearing, as well as providing agency for women, universal secondary education could also indirectly reduce fertility rates by up to a third in many developing countries.<sup>14</sup> This, in turn, would accelerate the demographic transition, and potentially generate a large demographic dividend which could help in raising standards of living and reducing poverty (refer to case study - page 167). Finally, analysis suggests that universal secondary education for girls would increase women's health knowledge and their ability to seek care, improve their psychological well-being, and reduce the risk of intimate partner violence.<sup>15</sup>

**Child health and nutrition:** Education for children has potentially large intergenerational impacts when the children become parents. It is obvious that educated parents are better equipped to help their children succeed in school. But parental education also matters for health and nutrition. Even after controlling for many other factors affecting under-five mortality and stunting (an indicator of malnutrition), children born of better educated mothers have lower risks of dying by age five or being stunted. In addition, children born of mothers who were younger than 18 at the time of their birth, also face a higher risk of dying by age five or being stunted.<sup>16</sup> Thus, better education reduces these risks both directly and indirectly through its impact on early childbearing. Universal secondary education for mothers and fathers would also, as abovementioned, reduce household poverty, which again would be beneficial for reducing under-five mortality and

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Children born of educated mothers are more likely to be registered at birth, a key right for children that may influence the life-long exercise of a range of other rights, including political and civil rights.

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stunting rates. Finally, children born of educated mothers are more likely to be registered at birth, a key right for children that may influence the life-long exercise of a range of other rights, including political and civil rights.<sup>17</sup>

**Agency and decision-making:** Better educated men and women tend to have more agency in their lives. Agency can be broadly defined as the capacity to exercise choice. It depends on the enabling environment – including policies, regulations, and social norms at the community or societal level-, as well as whether men and women have access to specific resources. It also depends on a person's past achievements, since past achievements can impact, among other things, a person's level of confidence<sup>18</sup> (refer to case study - page 263). Education clearly has an impact on the resources available to individuals, including through its impact on labor market earnings. It affects past achievements, capabilities, and confidence. Dropping out of school, for example, can undermine such confidence. But education also affects decision-making ability in other ways: for women, lack of educational attainment leads to lower decision-making ability within their households. Research suggests that achieving universal secondary education would increase by one tenth women's reported ability to take decisions, whether by themselves or jointly with their partner, from baseline values. Better educated women and men also report lower satisfaction rates with basic services. While this may sound paradoxical, it is likely to reflect better agency through a more realistic assessment of their quality.

**Social capital and institutions:** A secondary or tertiary education is also associated with a higher reported likelihood of being able to rely on friends when in financial need. Achieving universal secondary education could also enable more women and men to engage in altruistic behaviors such as volunteering, donating to charity, and helping strangers. This is of course not because those who are better educated are intrinsically more altruistic than those who are less well educated. Rather, individuals with more education are often in a better position to be able to help others.

### 3. Stronger focus on learning

**W**hile primary education is necessary, it is not sufficient. For many of the development outcomes mentioned above, having a primary education, versus having no education at all, does not make a large difference. For boys and girls alike, the gains associated with educational attainment are much larger with secondary education than with primary education. This is likely, in part, a reflection of the failure of many education systems to deliver learning of foundational skills in the early grades. But the broader implication is that it is essential to enable all children to pursue their education through the secondary level,

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**While primary education is necessary, it is not sufficient. For many of the development outcomes mentioned above, having a primary education, versus having no education at all, does not make a large difference.**

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which requires that adequate learning occurs early on in order to reap the full benefits of more education.

When the CRC was adopted 30 years ago, educational attainment was very low in many developing countries, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>19</sup> Article 28 called on States Parties to “make primary education compulsory and available free to all; and (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education [...]” As progress has been achieved, thanks in part to the Education for All Initiative, the bar has been raised. The first target for education under the SDGs adopted in 2015 reads: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.” This shift among the International Community in recent years from an emphasis on enrollment and completion rates, to an emphasis on the need to improve learning in school was overdue.

The issues of schooling and learning are like two facets of the same coin. Schooling is necessary for learning, but learning is also necessary for schooling. Indeed, without learning, it is very difficult for children to remain in school, and for many parents to make the financial sacrifices needed to keep their children in school. While some countries are improving the performance of students in school, average performance on student assessments may be worsening in others, as suggested by PASEC data for Francophone Africa. In low-income countries, policies ensuring free basic education have enabled more students from disadvantaged backgrounds to go to school and remain in school longer. However, as they come from more disadvantaged backgrounds, some of these students may be less prepared for school. They may do poorly unless special efforts are made to enable them to thrive. In addition, as more children go to school due to population growth and gains in enrollment rates, education systems may become overstretched, including in their ability to ensure that all teachers are qualified and well-trained.

As the nature of work changes, the need to improve learning outcomes globally is all the more pressing, as are the skills children and youth need in order to have decent jobs.<sup>20</sup> Fears of job displacement from technology and artificial intelligence may be overstated as technology could also bring new job opportunities and lead to smarter delivery mechanisms for basic services. Still, the changing nature of work implies that workers need to become team-oriented problem-solvers who can adapt to changing circumstances. While cognitive skills emphasize mastery of subject-specific knowledge, socio-emotional skills relate to how we behave, including how we motivate ourselves and how we interact with others. High-order cognitive and socio-behavioral skills will be increasingly needed in labor markets. Enabling children to acquire these skills requires investment by governments to build human capital starting from an early age (early childhood development interventions), especially for disadvantaged groups.

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It is sometimes suggested that an emphasis on learning performance, as measured through national or international standardized student assessments, is misplaced, as it may lead to over-emphasizing cognitive skills and success on examinations to the detriment of broader socio-emotional skills. The argument has relevance if only to avoid the risk of “teaching to the test” becoming a dominant practice. But the argument may be overstated. Without foundational skills such as basic literacy and numeracy, it is harder to nurture socio-emotional skills. Students in schools that do well on cognitive skills often do well also on socio-emotional skills. Rather than pitting one skills set against the other, we should recognize that both are needed, and may reinforce each other. Success in one area helps students to achieve success in the other.

What can be done to improve learning? Literature reviews<sup>21</sup> suggest – not surprisingly – that better pedagogy in the classroom is key, especially when teachers adapt their teaching to students’ individual learning needs. Some teachers are truly inspirational. This is the case of Peter Tabichi, the 2019 Winner of the Global Teacher Prize and a Franciscan Brother teaching in a public secondary school in a remote part of Kenya’s Rift Valley. Asked in an interview how he teaches, Peter responded: “It is all about having confidence in the student. Every child has potential, a gift or a talent. I try to engage students [...]. It is not a matter of telling them “do this” and then walking away. You need to work with them closely.”<sup>22</sup> As a science teacher, Peter also explained that “you also need to improvise. Materials are very expensive for practicums. So, I improvised picking up materials from surroundings. If I am talking about resistance, I can show a radio or another electrical gadget and explain how it is working, or not working. So that students can appreciate how resistances works in practice. This avoids learning to become too abstract or conceptual.”<sup>23</sup>

The behaviors exemplified by Peter Tabichi can be emulated by all teachers. Yet for teachers to be successful they need to be adequately supported. Based on a review of practices that work, five principles have been suggested to guide teacher policies:<sup>24</sup> (1) Make teaching an attractive profession by improving its status, compensation policies, and career progression structures; (2) Promote a meritocratic selection of teachers, followed by a probationary period, to improve the quality of the teaching force; (3) Ensure that pre-service education includes a strong practicum so that teachers are equipped to transition and perform effectively in the classroom; (4) Provide continuous support and motivation through high-quality in-service training and strong school leadership, to allow teachers to continually improve; and (5) Use technology wisely to enhance the ability of teachers to reach every student, factoring their areas of strength and development. These principles make sense, although they tend to emphasize more extrinsic (based on external rewards) than intrinsic motivation, in part because this is where more lessons can be drawn from the existing literature.

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Of course, intrinsic motivation matters too, and perhaps even more. This was noted among others by Gerald Grace for faith-based schools<sup>25</sup> but it applies more generally – many teachers become teachers because they have a passion for education and working with children.

Empowering principals and a positive school culture are also essential for students to thrive, as are broader conditions for school autonomy and accountability.<sup>26</sup> The importance of school management can be illustrated with the case of *Fe y Alegría* schools in Latin America.<sup>27</sup> Evidence in Peru suggests that the schools perform well.<sup>28</sup> According to focus groups and interviews, factors contributing to the good performance of *Fe y Alegría* schools include a high degree of independence at the school level for generating and managing resources, a favorable institutional climate, an emphasis on the proper selection, tutoring, supervision, and training of teachers, autonomy and authority for school principals, and the capacity to adapt to local realities. Principals convey the mission of the schools in order to engage students, teachers, and the whole community. *Fe y Alegría* teachers are motivated by the sense of purpose they witness in the schools and experienced teachers enjoy the opportunity to coach and mentor younger teachers. These various elements of the culture of the schools are mutually reinforcing, leading to better teaching and, ultimately, better student learning.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. Values, character education, and school choice

What is the purpose of education? What should education systems strive to achieve? The title of this publication “Education as a Driver to Integral Growth and Peace”, makes it clear that education has a broader purpose beyond its benefits in terms of labor earnings. The concepts of integral growth or integral human development refer to the growth of the whole person, including in terms of the values that the person acquires. Furthermore, the subtitle of this publication, “Ethical Reflections on the Right to Education”, may lead some readers to ponder whether the issue of school choice should be part of discussions about the right to education. For these reasons, let me briefly explore these two topics: character education and school choice.

Education systems should help children to become engaged citizens, respectful of others and of the Earth. This was recognized in Article 29 of the CRC.<sup>30</sup> It is also recognized by most school networks, whether of public, private, secular or faith-based nature. In the case of Catholic schools, the Congregation for Catholic Education calls for an education that leads to fraternal humanism and a civilization of love.<sup>31</sup> This was also the focus of the most recent World Congress of the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC in French).<sup>32</sup> What exactly the call for promoting values and character education in educational systems entails, may differ depending

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on the particular school system considered, but respect for others and for pluralism (which does not imply relativism) should be at the core.<sup>33</sup>

The issue of character education is related in part to that of school choice. Because parents may have different priorities for what children should learn in school, they may also be differences in parental preferences for various types of schools. In the United States, parents were asked in a recent survey what their children should learn in school.<sup>34</sup> They could select three priorities among a set of nine options. Five options were related to skills, including preparation for college and work. The other four options were related to values and faith. Parents with children in Catholic schools placed a higher emphasis on values and faith in comparison to parents relying on other types of schools, as well as parents willing to consider Catholic schools but with their youngest child not enrolled in one. In the particular context of the United States, where enrollment in Catholic schools has been declining, this may lead to trade-offs for Catholic schools in terms of the aspects of their identity that they choose to emphasize<sup>35</sup> (refer to regional framework - page 61). But the broader point is that one size may not fit all: a diversity of schooling options may help to respond to parental preferences and respect the pluralism of views (hopefully with an overlapping consensus<sup>36</sup>) that is an essential feature of democratic societies (refer to theoretical approach - page 149).

Differences in parental priorities for the education of children are also observed in developing countries. Qualitative fieldwork in Ghana and Burkina Faso suggest that parents relying on public schools tend to choose those schools for their location and the low cost of enrollment, and in some cases for their academic quality.<sup>37</sup> For parents sending their children to Christian schools (quite a few of whom are not Christian themselves), the emphasis is first on academic quality, and next on values or character education. Religious education also plays a role, but a smaller one. Finally, parents sending their children to Islamic schools tend to specifically emphasize the opportunity for their children to receive an Islamic religious education which is then also perceived as contributing to building strong communal values for the children (refer to regional framework - page 49). All three types of schools emphasize values or character education to some extent. But faith-based schools are perceived by parents as providing a more natural environment for transmitting (their) values to (their) children, whether this perception is warranted or not. Does the fact that different parents may have different priorities for the education of their children imply that school choice should be provided, for example, through public funding for (non-profit) private schools, including faith-based schools? Not necessarily, but there is something to be said for taking parental priorities into account when providing education to children.

The debate on school choice is complex. In part because of historical circumstances, different countries have adopted different positions. In my

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country of origin, Belgium, the Constitution requires communities to fund faith-based schools, as students have the right to moral or religious education at the community's expense (refer to case study - page 163). By contrast, in the country where I live, the United States, separation between Church and State, under the Constitution, leads faith-based schools not to be funded by the federal State, although limited State-level funding can take place through school choice legislation (refer to regional framework - page 61). While not taking a strong position here on the issue of school choice, it should be noted that especially in developing countries, school choice may in some cases be beneficial for educational attainment and learning. The qualitative work just mentioned for Ghana and Burkina Faso also suggests that in some Muslim communities, parents do not want to send their adolescent girls to public secondary schools because of a perception, warranted or not, that the schools may not be fully safe. The concern is that girls may be sexually harassed, or may become sexually active, whether with a teacher or another student. In such cases, expanding the network of Arab-Islamic schools where religious education, as well as secular topics, could be taught could lead communities to have more confidence that the behavior of teachers and boy students would not affect girls negatively.

## 5. Contribution of faith-based schools

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**Faith-based schools form an important percentage of private schools. They typically operate as nonprofits and often aim to serve the poorest. While data on the global reach of other faith affiliations are not available, data for the Catholic Church suggest that 34.6 million children were enrolled in Catholic primary schools in 2017, with an additional 20.3 million enrolled in Catholic secondary schools. When adding nurseries and preschools (7.3 million children enrolled), the Church provides education services to more than 62 million children.**

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In considering character education and school choice, the discussion naturally mentioned the case of faith-based schools. These schools, as well as private schools more generally, play an important role in efforts to achieve quality education for all. The market share of private schools has been rising for decades. Globally, data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators suggest that they now serve at least one in eight primary school students, and more than one in four secondary school students. Faith-based schools form an important percentage of private schools. They typically operate as nonprofits and often aim to serve the poorest. While data on the global reach of other faith affiliations are not available, data for the Catholic Church suggest that 34.6 million children were enrolled in Catholic primary schools in 2017, with an additional 20.3 million enrolled in Catholic secondary schools. When adding nurseries and preschools (7.3 million children enrolled), the Church provides education services to more than 62 million children.<sup>38</sup> This estimate does not account for the role played by Catholic institutions in technical and vocational education and training, courses for adult literacy, or tertiary education. Clearly, the Catholic Church is one of the largest providers of education services after the governments of China and India.

Six basic facts emerge from an analysis of trends over time for enrollment in K-12 (preschool to secondary) Catholic schools.<sup>39</sup> First, combined enrollment in K-12 schools has almost doubled since 1975. Second, primary

schools, while still accounting for a majority of total enrollment, account for a smaller share of the total over time, as enrollment is rising faster in nurseries, preschools and secondary schools. Third, the highest growth rates in enrollment are observed in Africa, both in absolute terms and in percentage terms from the base. Fourth, there is substantial heterogeneity between countries in the size of the Catholic school networks and in the growth of these networks. Fifth, the highest growth rates in enrollment over the last four decades are observed for nurseries and preschools, which is good news given the importance of investments in early childhood development. Sixth, despite growth in enrollment, the market share of Catholic schools decreased slightly at the secondary level, while it increased slightly at the primary level.

What about the footprint of other types of faith-based schools? While data similar to those for Catholic schools are not available globally, insights can be gained from specific countries or regions. For example, in countries with majority Muslim populations, Arab-Islamic schools often play an important role. In West and Central Africa, *madrasas* or *medersas* and Franco-Arab schools teach secular as well as religious topics. By contrast, Koranic schools such as *daaras* in Senegal emphasize memorization of the Qur'an in Arabic and religious education often without secular topics. Yet efforts are underway by governments to strengthen the education provided in Koranic schools and facilitate transitions to public schools.<sup>40</sup> The sizes of Arab-Islamic school networks differ between countries,<sup>41</sup> but there are indications that these networks continue to play an important role in many countries, including Niger,<sup>42</sup> even as formal public education provision is expanding. Globally, as the share of Muslim populations is expected to increase, especially in Africa,<sup>43</sup> one should not underestimate the role Arab-Islamic schools may continue to play in the future (refer to regional framework - page 49).

From the point of view of efforts by the International Community to help countries achieving SDG4, an overlooked contribution of faith-based schools is the budget savings they generate for governments. In many countries, at least part of the cost of attending the schools is paid for by parents. This leads to budget savings for governments since enrollment in public schools is then lower.<sup>44</sup> These savings are much larger than official development assistance for education globally, and therefore could be said to help fund this assistance indirectly.<sup>45</sup> Another economic contribution of faith-based schools is through human capital wealth, defined as the value today of the future earnings of the labor force. Human capital wealth accounts for two thirds of global wealth, a much larger proportion than natural capital (such as land, oil, or minerals) and produced capital (such as machineries and infrastructure).<sup>46</sup> Based on an assessment of the share of human capital wealth attributed to educational attainment, estimates suggest that the contribution of faith-based schools to global wealth is

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**Based on an assessment of the share of human capital wealth attributed to educational attainment, estimates suggest that the contribution of faith-based schools to global wealth is large. The main contribution of faith-based schools is not economic, but rather about the transmission of values such as those of solidarity, respect, justice, and peace, as well as the transmission of the faith. Yet there should be no doubt that faith-based schools make important economic contributions to education systems.**

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**While faith-based schools play an important role in efforts to achieve SDG4, this role is rarely recognized in policy discussions.**

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large.<sup>47</sup> The main contribution of faith-based schools is not economic, but rather about the transmission of values such as those of solidarity, respect, justice, and peace, as well as the transmission of the faith. Yet there should be no doubt that faith-based schools make important economic contributions to education systems and national economies.

While faith-based schools play an important role in efforts to achieve SDG4, this role is rarely recognized in policy discussions. A full discussion of policy options towards faith-based, and more generally, private schools is beyond the scope of this editorial. Still, a few pointers on “balancing freedom, autonomy, and accountability”<sup>48</sup> may be useful. At the World Bank, guidance on engaging the private sector (EPS) is available under the EPS domain of SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results). SABER is an effort to help governments systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems. The initiative relies on diagnostic tools and policy data to evaluate country policies through the lens of global evidence-based standards in order to help countries determine which policies could be implemented to improve learning. Recognizing the role that private schools already play in many countries, SABER-EPS suggests a particular approach to assess whether laws, regulations, and policies towards the private sector are likely to achieve four policy goals: (1) Encouraging innovation by education providers; (2) Holding schools accountable; (3) Empowering all parents, students, and communities; and (4) Promoting diversity of supply (refer to theoretical approach - page 193).<sup>49</sup>

The idea behind these goals comes in part from the World Development Report on making services work for poor people.<sup>50</sup> The report suggested that for service providers to be responsive to the needs of citizens, and especially the poor, accountability was required. One approach to accountability is the long route, whereby citizens hold the state accountable for the delivery of basic services through the political process, with the State in turn holding various service providers – public or private – accountable. This route is long because several steps and conditions are needed for it to work. In the alternative short route service providers are held accountable by their clientele. This requires information on the quality of the services provided and mechanisms to make services both accessible and affordable.

It must be acknowledged that the policy goals under SABER-EPS and their rationale are not without debate. What constitutes good policies towards private schools, including faith-based schools, remains contested.<sup>51</sup> Without solving those debates here, it should be acknowledged that private provision is no panacea in solving the issues confronted by educational systems – especially in the developing world. But at the same time, one should also acknowledge the positive contributions made by many private schools, including faith-based schools. While not perfect, the SABER-EPS

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**While not perfect, the SABER-EPS framework is useful in assessing country policies towards the private sector in order to balance autonomy and accountability.**

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framework is useful in assessing country policies towards the private sector in order to balance autonomy and accountability.

## 6. Conclusion

The essays included in this publication cover a wide variety of topics from conceptual analyses to case studies of schools and teachers succeeding in their educational mission. This variety of contributions is also why I ventured in this editorial into wide-ranging considerations. I hope that the information I shared will be useful to readers, and especially to teachers, school principals, administrators, and policy makers. Let me conclude by quoting again Peter Tabichi. In the interview mentioned earlier, acknowledging that he was addressing himself specifically to Catholic educators, Peter was asked whether he had any parting thoughts. He said: “Everyone has their potential to change the world. We were created for a reason and to be happy. We can work towards happiness, but all of us need to do our part so that the world becomes a better place. We need to promote peace through what we do. Whatever we do, the main focus should be to promote peace. If we are serving God, we will be able to teach well.”<sup>52</sup>

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Peter Tabichi

## NOTES

1. The analysis and views expressed in this editorial are those of the author only and may not reflect the views of the World Bank, its Executive Director, or the countries they represent.
2. UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2019). *New Methodology Shows that 258 Million Children, Adolescents and Youth Are Out of School*. Fact Sheet no. 56. Montreal: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.
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5. World Bank, (2018), *The Human Capital Project*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
6. World Bank, (2019), *Africa Human Capital Plan: Powering Africa's Potential through Its People*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
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10. UNESCO Institute of Statistics, (2017). *Reducing Global Poverty through Universal*

*Primary and Secondary Education*. Policy paper 32/Fact Sheet 44. Montreal, Canada: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

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12. Botea, I., S. Chakravarty, and S. Haddock, and Q. Wodon, (2017), Interventions Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes and Delaying Child Marriage and Childbearing for Adolescent Girls, *Ending Child Marriage Notes Series*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

13. Wodon, Q., C. Male, and A. Onagoruwa, Forthcoming. A Simple Approach to Measuring the Share of Early Childbirths Likely Due to Child Marriage in Developing Countries, *Forum for Social Economics*.

14. Analysis based on estimates provided in Onagoruwa, A., and Q. Wodon, (2018), Measuring the Impact of Child Marriage on Total Fertility: A Study for Fifteen Countries, *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 50(5), pgs. 626-39.

15. Wodon, Q., A. Onagoruwa, C. Malé, C. Montenegro, H. Nguyen, and B. De la Brière, (2019), How Large Is the Gender Dividend? Measuring Selected Impacts and Costs of Gender Inequality, *The Cost of Gender Inequality Notes Series*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

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17. Estimates in this paragraph and the next two are from Wodon, Montenegro, et al., op cit.

18. Kabeer, Naila. 2008. "Paid Work, Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice: Critical Pathways of Social Change." Pathways Working Paper 3, Research for Development, Department for International Development.

19. For example, data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators suggest that in 1989, the primary completion rate in low income countries was at 40.4 percent, versus 67.3 percent in 2018.

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21. Evans, D., and A. Popova, (2016), What Really Works to Improve Learning in Developing Countries? An Analysis of Divergent Findings in Systematic Reviews, *World Bank Research Observer*, 31, pgs. 242-70.

22. Wodon, Q, (2019). Meet the Winner of the Global Teacher Prize 2019: Interview of Franciscan Brother Peter Tabichi, *Educatio Si Bulletin*, pgs. 1:17-19, Summer 2019.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Beteille, T., and D. Evans, (2018), *Successful Teachers, Successful Students: Recruiting and Supporting Society's Most Crucial Profession*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

25. Grace emphasized the role of spiritual capital, which can probably be interpreted in the context of this editorial as a form of intrinsic motivation, in the dedication of teachers and principals in Catholic schools. See Grace, G. 2002. Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

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29. Alcázar, L. and N Valdivia, (2014), *Fe y Alegría Schools in Peru: Analysis of the Institutional Management and Pedagogy Model and Lessons for Public Education*. In J. C. Parra Osorio and Q. Wodon, editors, *Faith-Based Schools in Latin America: Case Studies on Fe y Alegría*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

30. Article 29 states that: “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; (c) The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.”

31. Congregation for Catholic Education, (2017), *Educating to Fraternal Humanism: Building a “Civilization of Love” 50 Years after Populorum Progressio*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

32. Richard, P., and Q. Wodon, Editors, (2019), Highlights and Reflections on OIEC’s World Congress, *Educatio Si Bulletin*, International Office for Catholic Education, Issue 1 (Summer).

33. In an interesting essay, DelFra and co-authors suggest that education, “in a Catholic key” is based on a personal encounter with others who pass on faith and wisdom; it is sacramental, permeated by an intentional culture; it is Eucharistic in affirming the communal nature of the person; and it is unitive, combining faith and reason. When they are successful, Catholic schools create an environment that fosters not only academic excellence, but also spiritual growth – not only for children who are themselves Catholics, but also for the many children from other faiths, who enroll in Catholic schools and can pursue their own journey towards the fullness of human flourishing. See Delfra, L. A., W. C. Mattison, S. D. McGraw, and T. S. Scully, (2018), Education in a Catholic Key, in W. H. James, editor, *The Handbook of Christian Education*, New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell.

34. National Catholic Education Association, (2018), *The Catholic School Choice: Understanding the Perspectives of Parents and Opportunities for More Engagement*, Washington, DC: National Catholic Education Association. See also Wodon, Q., (2019) *Parental priorities for what children should learn in school*, NCEA Knowledge Note No. 4, Washington, DC: National Catholic Education Association.

35. Wodon, Q., (2019), Enrollment in Catholic Schools in the United States, Great Britain, and Ireland: Diverging Trends, Similar Trade-offs? *Educatio Catholica*, forthcoming.

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# ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

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## **Introduction and state of play**

**N**ever before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity, [...] an alliance that generates peace, justice and hospitality among all peoples of the human family, as well as dialogue between religions.”<sup>1</sup> – Pope Francis

Today’s world is constantly evolving and new crises are emerging. Every change calls for an educational process to evolve “leaving no one behind.” Indeed, the right to education, as an economic, social and cultural right, is a precondition for many other rights including the right to health, the right to social security, and the right to work. Education is a civil and political right without which people cannot realize their freedoms. It is also an empowerment right enabling individuals to take charge of their lives.<sup>2</sup>

Every child has a right to receive life skills, to strengthen their capacities to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture infused by appropriate human rights values. Education in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, self-esteem, self-confidence, talents and abilities and to live a satisfying and dignified life. Pope Francis recently recalled that “teaching cannot be merely a trade, but is a mission.”<sup>3</sup> Education, therefore, must not be considered a commodity, just as students and their families are not clients.

However, 258 million children and youths worldwide still lack access to education<sup>5</sup> and continue to suffer violations of their rights. Childhood is challenged by new emerging global changes: the rise of digital technology, environmental change, conflicts, mass migration, etc. Undoubtedly, today’s children face new threats and risks which, nevertheless, also create new opportunities.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a unique occasion to take stock of the significant progress made since the adoption of the Convention and to celebrate one of its most empowering rights, that of education. The CRC is a milestone in the international human rights legal framework and represents the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history.<sup>6</sup> It is rooted in the fundamental vision that considers children as persons with their own rights and responsibilities to be protected, promoted and respected, recognizing the fundamental human dignity and the urgency of ensuring their well-being and development. As foreseen in Article 29 of the CRC, education must be aimed at the development of the child's personality, talents and potential; the child's respect for human rights; the child's respect for his or her parents, cultural identity, language, cultural and country values; and respect for the natural environment.<sup>7</sup> The right to education encompasses access to education beyond formal education and advocates for a holistic, ever present, education. It is catalyst for human development and should prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society.

In this context, the Catholic Church plays an important role by continuously contributing to the right to education for 62 million students and a network of almost 270,000 schools in 107 countries.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church is one of the foremost effective and established educators in the world with nearly 2000 years of experience working for the right to education. Her scholars, monks, priests, missionaries and sisters have done a great amount of work to promote the right to education, especially for those living at the margins of societies. These schools and institutions are guided by values inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and envisioned in the fundamental text *Gravissimum Educationis* – still tremendously up to date: “The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education [...] and at the same time do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human.”<sup>9</sup>

The Church, in fulfilling this mandate, “has a specific task with regard to the progress and development of education.”<sup>10</sup> Catholic education, indeed, contributes to inclusive, integral and qualitative education for all, capable of responding to both emerging global challenges as well as the diverse needs of each individual student. Last September, Pope Francis launched the Global Compact on Education, to be issued in May 2020, and intended to renew, “our passion for a more open and inclusive education.”<sup>11</sup> In this light, the Pope calls for global commitment to creating a person-centered “educational village,” in which formal and informal educational processes can open education to a “long-term vision” and a “culture of encounter”.<sup>12</sup>

## Methodology and content

The *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation, with the expertise of the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL), *Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice* (IIMA), New Humanity, and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), propose to analyze and offer some guidelines, through this publication, to some of the challenges and concerns raised above by integrating an ethical perspective to the right to education and giving voice to some of the thousands of Catholics inspired by their faith to give their lives and careers to the pursuit of quality and inclusive education.

The chosen methodology, far from being exhaustive, divides the publication into two sections. The first, “Education as a Driver to Integral Growth and Peace,” provides new insights on the legal framework of education, the importance of values education, and the critical issues of addressing both quality in education and inclusive education. The second section, “The Church and Education,” consists of a collection of selected texts from the Church’s engagement in education introduced in two separate articles by Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation of Catholic Education and by Dr. Philippe Richard, Secretary General of the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC). This anthology is certainly not exhaustive and does not aim to reflect the complexity of Catholic Social Teaching, but underlines the vital role played by the Church in education over the past 2000 years, as shown by the figures abovementioned. As a matter of coherency with the first section of the publication, papal statements and statements from representatives of the Holy See (referenced at the end of the publication) are included from 1989, the year the Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed, and up to September 2019.

The first section covers four main topics (the international legal framework, education and values, quality education, and inclusive education). For each chapter, a dual approach is proposed – academic and theoretical – which is then underscored by ‘voices from the ground’ and experts who proactively work to promote the right to education in the field (the majority of which belong to faith-based organizations). Since the majority of activities related to education are based on the ground, a geographical balance in including all continents of the world, was respected. The tireless work of the actors on the ground is essential to “develop innovative and complementary approaches that help advance the right to education, especially for the most excluded groups.”<sup>13</sup> This is why the elaboration of this publication could not have been successful without the contribution of faith-based organizations that, with their different and specific missions, project a person-centered

vision into the discussion of the right to inclusive and quality education worldwide.

The first chapter of the publication focuses on a legal analysis of the international framework surrounding the right to education and gives an overview of United Nations instruments available to promote this right, starting with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This international framework is then channeled into regional and local legal frameworks, which are examined respecting a geographical balance.

Regarding the empowering dimension of education, it is critical to develop education systems which are resilient and responsive in the face of conflict, emergencies, post-conflict situations, climate change, natural disasters, globalization, advanced technologies and robotization.<sup>14</sup> Those aspects are at the center of Chapter 2, which is introduced by the reflection of Chantal Paisant, highlighting that education it is not only a catalyst for human and sustainable development, but that it builds inclusive societies and invites the re-discovery of the richness of the other. As recalled by the late lamented Alfred Fernandez in his contribution, it is important to consider the cultural dimension of the right to education, both from a theoretical and a legal perspective, which goes beyond a merely instrumental vision shaping personal identity and human cohesion. How can digital technologies be used to support the right to education and the preservation of human values? How can leisure activities build resilience in situations of conflict or help to develop consciousness of the human body? Chapter 2 analyses these questions through the experiences of faith-based organizations in diverse contexts preparing children, in a responsible manner, to participate in the communities in which they live. Many of these organizations, indeed, particularly reach out to children living at the margins of society.<sup>15</sup>

An integral part of the right is ensuring that education is of sufficient quality to develop and enhance flexible skills and competencies needed to live and work in a more secure, sustainable, interdependent, knowledge-based and technology-driven world. Objectives in achieving quality education include the need for innovative training and are examined by Dr. Zacharie Zachariev in Chapter 3. He outlines that quality must also be judged on the basis of equality. Furthermore, quality education is also closely interlinked to the right of parents' freedom to choose their children's education. Hence, Dr. Charles Glenn, outlines that often schools that provide effective and deeply-rooted education are more exposed to critics and threats. This is further elaborated in practical cases which look at the financial aspects of education, public expenditures, and current challenges such as the Liberian Ebola crisis.

As highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),<sup>16</sup> education must focus increasingly on inclusion, equity, quality and learning outcomes at all levels and within a lifelong learning approach (SDG4).

Thus, the future of education requires dialogue and inclusion of different realities,<sup>17</sup> and to put it in Jan de Groof's words, "the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity."<sup>18</sup> The latter is demonstrated in its many facets in Chapter 4 on "Inclusive Education and its Limits" by addressing exclusion, marginalization and inequality that impede access to and participation in the right to education. Learners need to be placed at the center of a transformative process capable of recognizing, accepting and responding to the different needs of learners.<sup>19</sup> The argumentation is further developed through numerous case studies outlining that the differences and particularities of each person can become positive incentives for fostering learning among children, young people and adults, and promoting employment opportunities, social and civic engagement, and life satisfaction, while at the same time reducing poverty, risk, discrimination, exclusion and violence.

### Conclusion

**F**rom the perspective of the Church's long experience and global work in education, this publication hopes to demonstrate the following: Profiting from the empowering dimension of education will require creating more opportunities everywhere, especially in countries and regions of conflict, and for everyone, particularly those living at the margins of society.<sup>20</sup> Education is not only a catalyst for human and sustainable development, but also a driver of preventing crises and promoting global peace. To this end, this publication intends to better understand the development of good practices for parental formation, public awareness campaigns, guidelines, educational opportunities crucial for increasing communication between parent and child, providing support and safety, with a view to giving them the tools to protect themselves, and to contribute in a responsible manner to the society in which they live and to impede them from becoming "a lost generation."<sup>21</sup>

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2. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art.4, 20 November 1989
3. Pope Francis, Address to the Community of the Brothers of the Christians Schools (De La Salle Brothers), 16 May 2019
4. *Ibid.*
5. UNESCO, New Methodology Shows that 258 Million Children, Adolescents and Youth are Out of School, Fact Sheet no.56, September 2019, UIS/2019/ED/FS/56 [Accessed 9th October 2019]. The last UNESCO Fact Sheet, dated 13th September 2019, updates out of school children rates up to 258 million. However, here a clarification has

to be made in order to have congruence with subsequent data contained in the working papers. As a matter of fact, in the following articles, the data provided could be referred to previously UNESCO (UIS data) statistics referred to the school year ending in 2017, that reports 262 million out of school children.

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10. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, Preamble.
11. *Ibid.*
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16. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
17. Second Vatican Council, Declaration On Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, p. 31.
18. Cfr. De Groof, J., "To ensure that no learner is left behind:" *On inclusion, equity, diversity in education - A theoretical approach and specific focuses*, chapter 4
19. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, 2015, par.13
20. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: towards a global common good?*, 2015, pp.4-5
21. Archbishop Ivan Jurković, *Statement at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council Annual Full Day Meeting: Rights of the Child*, 5 March 2018

**SECTION ONE:**  
**EDUCATION AS A DRIVER TO INTEGRAL  
GROWTH AND PEACE**

*Chapter 1:*  
*Education and the International  
Legal Framework*

# ***THE CHILD’S RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW: THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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## **1. Introduction**

**E**nsuring education for all children has been a governmental responsibility in many countries for a long time. As the former United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education argues, “the rationale of the right to education is that it functions as a multiplier, enhancing all rights and freedoms when it is guaranteed while jeopardizing them all when it is violated.”<sup>1</sup>

Education is an economic, social, and cultural right – a group of rights which includes the right to health services, the right to social security and the right to work. In many respects, the right to education is also a civil and political right since people cannot fully realize their freedoms without education. The right to education is sometimes described as an empowerment right, as it has an enormous liberating potential and makes it possible for the individual to take charge of his or her life.<sup>2</sup>

Quality education for all children is a worldwide commitment. The right to education has been recognized in a number of international and regional legal instruments: binding treaties and also in soft law, such as general comments.

This chapter reflects on a select number of issues pertaining to the child’s right to education. In this respect, while reference is made to a number of instruments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) gets a specific focus. Within this framework, the drafting history, the relevant provisions on education, and reservations will be highlighted. Some aspects of the jurisprudence of the CRC Committee is reflected upon. New developments, such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also covered.

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**In many respects, the right to education is also a civil and political right since people cannot fully realize their freedoms without education.**

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## 2. The right to education in international human rights law

**T**he first instrument to recognize the right to education in international human rights law is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 26 of the UDHR states that, “everyone has the right to education.”<sup>3</sup>

Subsequent instruments that recognize the right to education include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Moreover, there are International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, international humanitarian law instruments, as well as regional treaties that recognize children’s right to education. This right is part of the UNESCO constitutional mandate<sup>4</sup> (refer to “The Right to Education in the Throes of Globalization: Recontextualizing UNESCO” by A. M. Vega Gutiérrez - page 41).

There has been a change in the world’s perception of the right to education over the past few decades. Where the UDHR proclaims that, “everyone has the right to education,” that elementary and fundamental education shall be “free,” and that “elementary education shall be compulsory”<sup>5</sup>, the Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 proclaims that “every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.”<sup>6</sup> The UDHR does not mention “learners” or “learning needs”. The two notions of “elementary and fundamental education” have been overtaken by the concept of “basic education,” while at the same time there has been a shift in emphasis from “education” to “learning”: from what society should supply, i.e. education that is “free,” “compulsory,” and “directed towards” what members of society demand or need (“educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs”).

The shifts in thinking about education have recently been confirmed in the latest text dealing with education and disability, contained in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), requiring that education and learning be directed to “the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity.”<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

#### *A. Drafting*

The final draft of the complete CRC was accepted by the UN General Assembly in 1989.<sup>8</sup> However, it was preceded by the Polish Draft Convention,<sup>9</sup> which had similar provisions to those found in the CRC.<sup>10</sup> The provision which spoke of education in the Polish Draft Convention mentions that every child is entitled to an education, which shall be compulsory and free, at least at the elementary stage.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the child's education shall promote his (you will note that the language of the Polish Draft Convention speaks only about the male child) general culture, and on the basis of equal opportunity, enable him to develop his abilities, build his social responsibility, as well as become a useful member of society.<sup>12</sup> These provisions can be likened to those found in Article 28(1) of the CRC.

The Polish Draft Convention also mentions that the best interests of the child should be the guiding principle for those responsible for the realization of the child's right to education.<sup>13</sup> Finally, it outlines that the child shall also have the full opportunity for play and recreation, which shall be directed to the same purpose as his education.<sup>14</sup>

A number of countries, such as Barbados, Germany, Malawi and New Zealand, as well as organizations such as the UNESCO and the International Council of Women, made comments on the Polish Draft Convention Article 7.<sup>15</sup> A Revised Polish Draft (Commission on Human Rights Document E/CN.4/1349) was presented in 1979. Article 16 later became the basis of Article 28 of the CRC.<sup>16</sup> While the Revised Draft still calls for free and compulsory elementary education, it further calls on States and parents to create conducive conditions for children to access education.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, State Parties are mandated to develop various forms of general and vocational secondary education systems, as well as gradually introduce free secondary education.<sup>18</sup>

Hereafter, the Modified Proposal submitted by Poland (Document A/C.3/36/6, part II) was then drafted and the provisions in Articles 15(1) and 15(2) were identical to the content of the Revised Polish Draft, barring removal of the responsibility of States and parents to create conducive conditions for children to access education.<sup>19</sup>

Various countries and organizations submitted further comments to the Working Group to the High Commission and these were considered between 1983 and 1985.<sup>20</sup> The Working Group then discussed and adopted a document in 1985.<sup>21</sup> In 1986, Bangladesh submitted more comments and in 1987 the Working Group had further discussions.<sup>22</sup> The Working Group then drafted a new Article 15 (Document E/CN.4/1988/WG.1/WP.1/Rev.1), which is almost identical to the present day Article 28 of the

CRC. indeed, the new Article 15(1)(a) stated that free and compulsory elementary education shall be made available “as early as possible.”<sup>23</sup> During the technical review of 1988, UNESCO pointed out that this clause gave the right to free and compulsory basic education a ‘weaker’ protection and therefore should be removed.<sup>24</sup> UNESCO also took issue with the fact that the new Article 15(1)(b) mandated State Parties to ‘encourage’ and not ‘develop’ different forms of secondary education ‘systems.’<sup>25</sup>

From 1988 to 1989 there was a second reading, which was held by the Working Group,<sup>26</sup> and suggestions were made by countries and organizations. A pivotal addition mandated State Parties to prevent drop-outs.<sup>27</sup> Conversations about Article 29 of the CRC happened concurrently.<sup>28</sup>

### *B. Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*

**T**he CRC protects the child’s right to education, however in the subsections it splits the types/levels of education and affords each a different type of protection. In Article 28, State Parties must recognize the right to education progressively, with equal opportunity in mind.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the SDGs also place equal opportunity at the centre of the realization of the right to education.<sup>30</sup>

Article 28 goes on to protect the right to receive education at the primary, secondary and higher levels, specifically and differently.<sup>31</sup> With regard to the right to primary education, the Convention mandates State Parties to make education available and free for all.<sup>32</sup> Article 28 emphasizes that the right to education is to be realized “on the basis of equal opportunity.”<sup>33</sup> This aspect of the provision is critical as discrimination against girls, children with disabilities, children in rural areas, children belonging to minority groups, migrant, asylum seeking and refugee children, etc. is usually pervasive. One of the added values of Article 28, as compared to a number of other instruments pertaining to the right to education, is that, even though the right is to be achieved “progressively,”<sup>34</sup> the core minimum elements, namely free and compulsory primary education, is not subject to this criteria.

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One of the added values of Article 28, as compared to a number of other instruments pertaining to the right to education, is that, even though the right is to be achieved “progressively,” the core minimum elements, namely free and compulsory primary education, is not subject to this criteria.

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For example, the South African Constitution recognizes the right to basic education in a similar way and in similar language to the CRC. The Constitution states that everyone has the right to basic education.<sup>35</sup> The Constitutional Court recently held that this socio-economic right, unlike other socio-economic rights, does not have the qualification of the availability of resources as it is an immediately realizable right.<sup>36</sup>

While this interpretation of the right to basic education in South Africa, within the context of the CRC, may be welcomed, the wording of Article 28(1) of the CRC may cast some doubt on the truth of the interpretation. This is because, while Article 28(1)(a) of the CRC may look as though it can be read in the way in which the Constitutional Court of South Africa interpreted the right to basic education; it can also be argued that the

wording of the Article supports the progressive realization of all levels of education as it must be applied throughout the section.

The provision which offers protection of the right to secondary education is the longest.<sup>37</sup> It has more content and specific ‘instructions’ than the provisions which protect the rights to basic and higher education.<sup>38</sup> Be that as it may, the fact that it does not make secondary education ‘compulsory’ or ‘available free for all’ makes it easier to immediately identify this right as a progressively realizable right.<sup>39</sup> According to the CRC, State Parties have a duty to develop both general and vocational secondary education.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, these types of secondary education must be made available and accessible to every child, and State Parties should also take the appropriate steps to ensure that free secondary education is introduced, and those who need financial aid should also be provisioned for.<sup>41</sup>

While it is generally agreed that the right to secondary education is progressively realizable, there is also a new debate about the importance or value of secondary education. There is now evidence showing that the effect of secondary education is more positive than originally imagined.<sup>42</sup> This may be seen as an opportunity to read Article 28(1)(b) with a bit more seriousness than before and to plan more vigorously when it comes to secondary education policies.

In terms of higher education, the CRC states that it must be accessible, not available, to all “on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means.”<sup>43</sup> When contrasted with the provisions on protecting the rights to basic and secondary education, it seems that this provision, or protection, is the weakest. The replacement of the word ‘available’ with ‘accessible’ might lead one to come to the conclusion that the higher education is, the more it is almost completely subject to the availability of resources.

In addition, the provisions which protect the rights to primary, secondary and higher education, Article 28 also offers general protections and measures which speak to the provisioning for education. For example, over and above items (a), (b) and (c), the CRC also states that State Parties must make educational and vocational information available.<sup>44</sup> Noting that the different levels of (formal) education are dealt with specifically from Article 28(1)(a) to 28(1)(c), it would not be unreasonable to imagine that Article 28(1)(d) speaks about efforts such as dissemination of information about school enrollment and guidance to children on what may be necessary and expected from them when they want to access education.

Another important provision of the CRC mandates that State Parties focus efforts towards reducing drop-out rates and keeping children enrolled.<sup>45</sup> A lot of data which reflects information about children in schools actually focuses on the enrollment rates, and not the completion rates.

The collection of data allows State Parties to reflect on their efforts and the results thereof, thus, allowing them to properly plan, in terms of infrastructure, budgets, etc., to ensure the rights of the people. Therefore,

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**Be that as it may, the fact that it does not make secondary education ‘compulsory’ or ‘available free for all’ makes it easier to immediately identify this right as a progressively realizable right.**

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the collection of data, particularly enrollment and completion rates of children at the end of each grade and level of school may assist State Parties in their endeavors to reduce drop-out rates and keep more consistent completion rates.

Article 29 of the CRC speaks about the right to education, however, it does so from a qualitative dimension.<sup>46</sup> In other words, Article 29 highlights the importance and the ends of Article 28. Essentially, Article 29 states that education, protected under Article 28, must be aimed at the development of the following: the child's personality, talents and potential;<sup>47</sup> the child's respect for human rights;<sup>48</sup> the child's respect for his or her parents, cultural identity, language, cultural and country values; and<sup>49</sup> respect for the natural environment.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, Article 29 states that education should prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society.<sup>51</sup> All of these provisions are meant to reflect the idea that the dignity of children is to be respected and schools are to be child-friendly.<sup>52</sup>

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has also stated that Article 29 insists on the need for education to be "child-centered, child-friendly and empowering."<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the Committee has also stated that the education, to which every child has a right, is one which equips the child with the necessary life skills to enjoy a responsible life, and to be aware of both, his or her rights and the rights of those around him or her.<sup>54</sup> This means that the right to education, as contemplated in the CRC, encompasses access to education beyond formal education and advocates for a holistic, ever present education.<sup>55</sup>

Essentially, Article 29 of the CRC is important as it highlights the context within which the right to education, as contemplated within Article 28, is to be understood and realized.

As the CRC Committee has outlined, education is more than formal schooling involving skills related to literacy and numeracy. Rather it should "embrace the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities, and to live a full and satisfying life within society."<sup>56</sup> The Committee also stresses that fulfilling the right to education is not only a matter of access, but also of content.<sup>57</sup>

It should perhaps be noted that it is not necessary to make attendance at school compulsory in order to fulfill the obligation concerning the right to education under the CRC. In other words, "education and school are not synonymous – children can be educated without schools, though this is unusual, and, sadly, attendance at school does not necessarily mean the child is being educated."<sup>58</sup> However, analysts believe that the provisions of Article 28(1)(e), which impose an obligation upon State Parties to increase school attendance, reflect an underlying belief of the drafters of the CRC, that schools in general are the best place for children to receive education.<sup>59</sup>

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**Essentially, Article 29 states that education, protected under Article 28, must be aimed at the development of the following: the child's personality, talents and potential; the child's respect for human rights; the child's respect for his or her parents, cultural identity, language, cultural and country values; and respect for the natural environment.**

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### *C. Reservations*

The CRC allows State Parties to make reservations to the Treaty.<sup>60</sup> These reservations must be made at the time of ratification or accession and can be withdrawn at any time thereafter.<sup>61</sup>

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties states that a ‘reservation’ (to a treaty) is a statement which purports to exclude or modify the legal effect of a treaty in its application to a State.<sup>62</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee has written a General Comment on reservations.<sup>63</sup> While this General Comment was written specifically for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Protocols thereto, there are a number of ideas which can be borrowed from it. For example, the Committee notes that there are certain provisions to which reservations should not be placed - such as non-derogable rights, the Committee’s competence as to monitor State Parties and some safeguards of rights.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the Committee also stated that, even with reservations, domestic mechanisms should always allow for the Covenant rights to be enforceable.<sup>65</sup>

It is also important to note that reservations should not be contrary to the object and purpose of the Covenant.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the CRC states that reservations which are against the object and purpose of the Convention will not be permitted.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, reservations made should be specific and transparent, refer to a particular provision, indicate their scope precisely, as well as consider their overall effect (within the context of the full treaty).<sup>68</sup> Finally, when making reservations, States should institute procedures to ensure that each and every proposed reservation is compatible with the object and purpose of the Covenant.<sup>69</sup>

A number of countries have made reservations to Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC. These reservations have been made on different sub-articles of the provisions. The Holy See, for example, is considering the possible withdrawal of its reservations to the CRC, including to Article 28(2).<sup>70</sup> The CRC Committee regretted that Kiribati has not yet made a decision regarding the withdrawal of its reservation to Article 28(1)(a), (b) and (c).<sup>71</sup> The Committee has also expressed the opinion that the reservations made by Malaysia are unnecessary.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the Committee recommended to Malaysia an expedited review of its reservations, particularly to Article 28(1)(a), and the eventual withdrawal thereto.<sup>73</sup> With regard to Samoa, the Committee has reiterated its concern about the State’s reservation to Article 28(1)(a) and recommends its withdrawal.<sup>74</sup> The Committee also encouraged Turkey to withdraw its reservation to Article 29,<sup>75</sup> and regretted the position of Singapore to not withdraw its reservations to a number of provisions, including to Article 28.<sup>76</sup> On a positive note, Thailand withdrew its reservation to Article 28 because it is not mentioned in the latest Concluding Observations.

### *D. Private education*

**A**rticle 29(2) covers the freedom to establish schools outside the State system which conform to both the aims of education under the CRC, as well as any minimum standards laid down by the State. This is a right to opt out of State education and is aimed at protecting individual freedoms. In particular, this provision is critical for the provision of faith-based education.

In accordance with Article 29(2), this freedom is subject to two conditions: “[...] the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present Article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.” This paragraph is drafted as a right of individuals rather than as an obligation of the State. However, since Article 3(3) of the Convention obliges the State to “ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform to standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision,” States may put “minimum standards” for private education.<sup>77</sup>

## **4. Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals**

**I**t has been argued that the wording of Article 28(1) is such that State Parties have a duty to ensure ‘free’ and ‘compulsory’ education for all children, not only certain categories of children, such as those from low-income families.<sup>78</sup> It is also noted however, that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights offers a stronger protection of the right to free primary education as Article 13(2)(1) therein makes the right immediately realizable.<sup>79</sup>

The SDGs speak of international cooperation for the realization of the right to education. Target 4.b, for example, speaks of the expansion of the number of scholarships to be made available to developing countries.<sup>80</sup> Target 4.c further states that there should be international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries.<sup>81</sup>

Although it applies to the entire document, Goal 17 speaks about the importance of international cooperation. Target 17.6 particularly emphasizes that States should enhance international cooperation on access to science and technology.<sup>82</sup> This target speaks directly to the goal of universal education as science and technology are both important focuses necessary for a holistic education.

One of the limitations of the Convention is the absence of a right to pre-primary education. The SDGs on the other hand, provides for pre-primary education that States are expected to work towards achieving.

## 5. Jurisprudence of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Committee in respect to Articles 28 and 29

**O**n a number of occasions, the CRC Committee has provided guidance in the interpretation of the obligations of States under Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC. This is done mainly through the Concluding Observations issued to State Parties as well as its General Comments.

The first General Comment adopted by the CRC Committee actually focused on Article 29 addressing the aims of education. There are two critical added values that Article 29(1) provides. First, it provides a qualitative dimension to the right to education as provided in Article 28. Secondly, as the CRC Committee rightly elucidates, “it also insists upon the need for education to be child-centered, child-friendly and empowering, and it highlights the need for educational processes to be based upon the very principles it enunciates.”<sup>83</sup> It has also been stated that the notion of the word “education” in Article 29 should be interpreted broadly: it should go beyond formal schooling. This entails embracing “the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society.”<sup>84</sup>

There is also acknowledgment that business enterprises and non-profit organizations may play a role in respect to the provision of education services. In such circumstances the CRC Committee emphasizes that, “States are not exempted from their obligations under the Convention when they outsource or privatize services.”<sup>85</sup> Among others, States are expected to set minimum standards and exercise adequate oversight and monitoring of the service being provided to comply with the obligations in the CRC.<sup>86</sup>

Since education is part of so-called economic, social, and cultural rights, Article 4 of the Convention, which indicates that “State Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources,” is applicable, at least, as far as education beyond the primary level is concerned. The CRC Committee has indicated that “maximum extent of their available resources” should be understood to mean “that States parties are expected to demonstrate that they have made every effort to mobilize, allocate and spend budget resources to fulfill the economic, social and cultural rights of all children.”<sup>87</sup> It has also been interpreted to imply that deliberate retrogressive measures in respect of education should not be undertaken,<sup>88</sup> save in exceptional circumstances.

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**One of the limitations of the Convention is the absence of a right to pre-primary education. The SDGs on the other hand, provides for pre-primary education that States are expected to work towards achieving.**

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In the context of children in street situations, the importance of accessible and quality education in keeping children away from the streets is acknowledged. The obligations that States have to assist children to stay in school, including “second-chance education,” as well as “pathways into formal education” are critical.<sup>89</sup> It would also be remiss if mention is not made of the need to ensure that the effort to empower children in street situations cannot only be done through the formal school system, but should also include efforts to reach out-of-school children.<sup>90</sup>

The CRC Committee, jointly with the Committee on Migrant Workers, has adopted two Joint General Comments (JGCs) that address the rights of children in the context of international migration<sup>91</sup> (refer to migration case studies - pages 235; 243; 271).

In the JGCs the issue of firewalls is covered in five places including in respect to the rights to health and education. States are requested to establish “effective firewalls between child protection services and immigration enforcement should be ensured”<sup>92</sup>, and to ensure “access to justice in case of violation of their rights by public or private actors, including by ensuring effective complaints mechanisms and a firewall between labour rights and immigration enforcement.”<sup>93</sup> Also, there is an emphasis on the obligation to, “[...] establish firewalls between public or private service providers, including public or private housing providers, and immigration enforcement authorities.”<sup>94</sup>

The JGCs provide more detailed guidance regarding firewalls and education. Apart from establishing effective firewalls between education institutions and immigration authorities, States are prohibited from the sharing of student data. Moreover, immigration enforcement operations are prohibited in or around school premises.<sup>95</sup> There are good examples of State practices on the application of firewalls, in respect to migrant children. For instance, in Spain, there was a policy and practice that allowed irregular migrants full access to education and health care.<sup>96</sup> The only requirement to access these services, at least until 2012, was to register at a local registry.

Since the adoption of the JGCs, a number of concluding observations issued to States have covered various aspects of education and children in the context of international migration. These include following: weak learning outcomes for children with migrant backgrounds,<sup>97</sup> compared to those of the general student population; the need to implement zero tolerance for school setting discrimination against children in the context of migration, including by ensuring recurrent training for staff;<sup>98</sup> support measures to ensure that children with migrant backgrounds have adequate support to remain in school;<sup>99</sup> the need to apply flexible education measures to accommodate children in the context of migration in order to facilitate continuation of their education with minimal disruption;<sup>100</sup> and facilitating inclusion of migrant children and support for their aspirations through the implementation of a human rights based approach at all levels

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**The need to implement zero tolerance for school setting discrimination against children in the context of migration, including by ensuring recurrent training for staff.**

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of the education system.<sup>101</sup> In Belgium, concern has been expressed about barriers to access quality education by migrant children, as well as their over-representation, for example in drop-out rates, and expulsions.<sup>102</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Education is a catalyst for human development and it improves quality of life. The drafters of the CRC, fully aware of its importance, provide some detailed obligations on States, but also accord individuals some rights. The jurisprudence from the CRC Committee has helped to further consolidate rights for children by providing guidance to States. Indeed, it shows that the full realization of the right to education for children remains a work in progress. With the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which also has some added values in respect to pre-primary education, which is one of the shortcomings of the CRC, it is anticipated that the full enjoyment of the right can be within our reach.

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Indeed, it shows that the full realization of the right to education for children remains a work in progress.

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### NOTES

1. J. Sloth-Nielson & B Mezmur (2007), *Free Education is a Right for Me: A Report on Free and Compulsory Primary Education*, Save the Children, 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, article 26, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 9 September 2019]
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5. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, article 26, available at [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 9 September 2019]
6. Available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/9.WorldDeclarationonEducationforAll\(1990\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/9.WorldDeclarationonEducationforAll(1990).aspx)
7. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 13 December 2006, Article 24(1)(a) available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx> [accessed 9 September 2019].
8. The final text was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989.
9. The Polish Draft Convention was drafted in 1978 and can be found in the 1978 report of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1292, pp. 124 to 125).
10. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ‘Legislative History of the Convention on the Rights of the Child’ Volume II (2007) HR/PUB/07/1 p 632.
11. Polish Draft Convention, art VII (1).
12. *Ibid.*
13. Polish Draft Convention, art. VII (2).
14. Polish Draft Convention, art. VII (3).

15. (n. 9), pg. 633-637.
16. (n. 9), pg. 638.
17. Revised Polish Draft art 16(1).
18. Revised Polish Draft art 16(2).
19. Modified Proposal (submitted by Poland) arts 15(1)-(2).
20. (n. 9), pg. 638-640.
21. (n. 9), pg. 641-645.
22. (n. 9), pg. 645.
23. (n. 9), pg. 645-646.
24. Sloth-Nielsen & B Mezmur (2007), *Free Education is a Right for Me: A Report on Free and Compulsory Primary Education*, Save the Children, 1..
25. *Ibid.*
26. (n. 9), pg. 647.
27. (n. 9), pg. 647-652.
28. (n. 9), pg. 652-674.
29. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 20 November 1989, art 28(1).
30. Sustainable Development Goal No 4, Target 4.1.
31. CRC, arts. 28(1)(a)-(c).
32. CRC, art. 28(1)(a).
33. CRC, art. 28(1).
34. CRC, art. 28(1).
35. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), sec 29(1).
36. *Governing Body of the Juma Masjid Primary School & Others v Essay N. O. and Others*, (2011), (8), BCLR 761 (CC), para 37.
37. CRC, art. 28(1)(b).
38. CRC, arts. 28(1)(a) & (b).
39. Article 28(1)(a) of the CRC states that "[State Parties... shall] make primary education compulsory and free for all". Article 28(1)(b) does not offer such a strong protection.
40. CRC, art. 28(1)(b).
41. CRC, art. 28(1)(b).
42. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 20 on the Implementation of the Rights of the Child During Adolescence, (2016), CRC/C/GC/20, para 68.
43. CRC, art. 28(1)(c).
44. CRC, art. 28(1)(d).
45. CRC, art. 28(1)(e).
46. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 1 on the Aims of Education, (2001), art. 29 CRC/CG/2001/1, para 2.
47. CRC, art. 29(1)(a).
48. CRC, art. 29(1)(b).
49. CRC, art. 29(1)(c).
50. CRC, art. 29(1)(e).
51. CRC, art. 29(1)(d).
52. (n. 41), para 8.

53. (n. 41), para 2.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Sloth-Nielsen & B Mezmur (2007), *Free Education is a Right for Me: A Report on Free and Compulsory Primary Education*, Save the Children, 1.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. CRC, art. 51.
61. CRC, art. 51(1) and 51(3).
62. Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 22 May 1969, art 2(1)(d), available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%201155/volume-1155-i-18232-english.pdf> [accessed 9 September 2019].
63. UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 24: Issues Relating to Reservations Made upon Ratification or Accession to the Covenant or the Optional Protocols thereto, or in Relation to Declarations under Article 41 of the Covenant, (1994), CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.6.
64. (n. 62), para 10.
65. (n. 62), para 12.
66. (n. 62), para 13.
67. CRC, art. 51(2).
68. (n. 62), para 19.
69. (n. 62), para 20.
70. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of the Holy See, (2014), CRC/C/VAT/2, para 11..
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72. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations: Malaysia, (2007), CRC/C/MYS/1, para 11..
73. (n. 14), para 12.
74. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations on the combined Second to Fourth Periodic Reports of Samoa, (2016), CRC/C/WMS/2-4, paras 6-7.
75. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations: Turkey, (2012), CRC/C/TUR/2-3, para 9.
76. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations on the Combined Fourth and Fifth Reports of Singapore, (2019), CRC/C/SGP/2-4, para 7.
77. Implementation Handbook (2007) 451.
78. Sloth-Nielsen & B Mezmur (2007), *Free Education is a Right for Me: A Report on Free and Compulsory Primary Education*, Save the Children, 1,pg 16.
79. (n. 19), pg. 17.
80. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/> [accessed 11 July 2019].
81. *Ibid.*
82. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>, [accessed 11 July 2019].
83. General Comment No 1: Article 29(1) the aims of education, CRC/GC/2001/1,17

April 2019, para 2.

84. General Comment No 1: Article 29(1) the aims of education, CRC/GC/2001/1, 17 April 2019, para 2.

85. General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, (2013), CRC/C/GC/16. Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-second session (14 January – 1 February 2013), para 33.

86. Para 34.

87. General Comment No. 19 on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, (2016), (CRC/C/GC/19), art. 4 para 30.

88. General Comment on public spending, (2016), para 31.

89. General Comment No. 21 on children in street situations, (2017), CRC/C/GC/21, para 54

90. General Comment No. 21 on children in street situations, (2017), CRC/C/GC/21, para 55

91. The first one is Joint General Comment (JGC) No. 3 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 22 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is entitled "general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration"; while the second one is joint general comment No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child entitled "State obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return".

92. JGC No 23 supra, para 42.

93. (n. 91), para 46.

94. (n. 91), para 52.

95. (n. 91), para 60.

96. S. Carrera and J. Parkin (2011), *Protecting and Delivering Fundamental Rights of Irregular Migrants at Local and Regional Levels in the European Union*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, available at: <http://cor.europa.eu/>, at 20. It is reported that the policy no longer exists.

97. CRC Committee, COBs: Spain, CRC/C/ESP/CO/5-6, March 2018, para 39..

98. CRC Committee, COBs: Norway, CRC/C/NOR/CO/5-6, July 2018, para 29(a).

99. CRC Committee, COBs: Argentina, CRC/C/ARG/CO/5-6, October 2018, para 37(c).

100. CRC Committee, COBs: El Salvador, CRC/C/SLV/CO/5-6, November 2018, para 43(e).

101. CRC Committee, COBs: Italy, CRC/C/ITA/CO/5-6, February 2019, para 32(a).

102. CRC Committee, COBs: Belgium, CRC/C/BEL/CO/5-6, February 2019, para 11(a) and para 38(a).

# ***THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN THE THROES OF GLOBALIZATION: RECONTEXTUALIZING UNESCO***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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## **1. Introduction**

**E**ducation systems designed for the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century fail to meet the needs of societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. “The challenges facing the world have moved on, as has our understanding of the meaning of humanism,”<sup>1</sup> and both have changed throughout history. It is important at this point to recall what UNESCO said on humanism: “In the context of globalization, this concept has to concentrate on cultural diversity, dialogue in the age of the internet, and reconciliation between the North and the South [...]. The new humanism has to be an authentically pluralist cosmopolitanism, inspiring reflections and expressing aspirations from everyone everywhere.”<sup>2</sup>

“The current threats to the planet’s precarious ecological balance, the ethical problems raised by digital and biomedical technologies, the economic and political crises – these are all global challenges that demand concerted responses.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is urgent to rethink the purpose of education and the organization of learning.

This paper will analyze UNESCO’s work in the field of education in order, “to build a civilization that is democratic, tolerant, efficient for humanity and each human being, and that respects nature.”<sup>4</sup>

## **2. UNESCO and education as a holistic right**

**C**onsistent with these premises, UNESCO is inspired by a humanistic and holistic conception of education on the grounds of our common humanity: “The respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice, cultural diversity, international solidarity, and shared responsibility for a sustainable future.”<sup>5</sup> In order to make it a reality, UNESCO has issued many conventions and recommendations regarding this right. In 1960, it drafted the first major legally-binding international instrument devoted exclusively to education: The Convention Against Discrimination in Education.<sup>6</sup> This text is the first document to offer a

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**The current threats to the planet’s precarious ecological balance, the ethical problems raised by digital and biomedical technologies, the economic and political crises – these are all global challenges that demand concerted responses. Therefore, it is urgent to rethink the purpose of education and the organization of learning.**

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comprehensive consensual definition of discrimination in education.<sup>7</sup> In line with Article 26.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), UNESCO ratified the aims of the right to education: promotion of the full development of the human personality, strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of understanding, tolerance, and friendship among nations and groups.<sup>8</sup> Consistent with the humanistic vision of education advocated by UNESCO, the main objective of this right is directed primarily to the educated person and only secondarily in the social fabric of relations, approached from the perspective of human rights.<sup>9</sup> As Mehedi states, “the desirability of directing education primarily to personal development does not mean to say that the other objectives, more social in nature, should be disregarded. Nevertheless, this priority does appear to imply that social objectives should themselves serve the person, who can only be fulfilled if placed in an environment where human rights are respected for and therefore by that person. If education is supposed to enable the educated person to ‘play a useful role in society,’ it is because such a role is useful to persons and to their development and not ‘for the sake of’ society as an abstract entity.”<sup>10</sup> Only from this personalist perspective of the indivisibility of the right to education are the rest of the UNESCO’s objectives made possible.

UNESCO has endeavored to ensure that these ends become guiding principles for the education policies of States. A clear reflection of this is the adoption of the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the 18th Session of the General Conference (1974) which applies to all stages and forms of education. The Recommendation reaffirms the earlier vision of the right to education and requires Member States to make learning and training include ethical, civic and cultural aspects adapted to humanity’s main problems.<sup>11</sup>

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Continuing this path, UNESCO has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to “a holistic approach to education and learning that overcomes the traditional dichotomies between cognitive, emotional and ethical aspects [...]” This was made clear in the 1996 Delors Report by means of four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together.

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Continuing this path, UNESCO has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to “a holistic approach to education and learning that overcomes the traditional dichotomies between cognitive, emotional and ethical aspects [...]”<sup>12</sup> This was made clear in the 1996 Delors Report<sup>13</sup> by means of **four pillars of learning**: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together. “These four pillars of learning remain relevant to an integrated approach to education, and their generic nature allows for interpretation of the type of integrated learning required in response to different contexts and times.”<sup>14</sup> However, as UNESCO recognizes, “the pillars themselves might need fresh interpretation, given growing concern for sustainability,”<sup>15</sup> and in the challenges to social cohesion posed by increasingly complex societies. From this perspective, the two pillars that best reflect the socializing function of education are

particularly important, as we shall see later: learning to be and learning to live together.

Aware of the profound and rapid transformations happening in the world, UNESCO considers that, “sustaining and enhancing the dignity, capacity and welfare of the human person, in relation to others and to nature, should be the fundamental purpose of education in the twenty-first Century.”<sup>16</sup> In so doing, it does not transform the foundations and aims of education, but adapts to current changing situations. Indeed, by broadening its scope in these ways, education can be transformative and contribute to a sustainable future for all.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. UNESCO and cultural demands

UNESCO itself has also evolved in its approach to cultural diversity.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, cultural diversity is receiving ever greater legal and political recognition, as evidenced by the strengthening of its protection and promotion through various legal instruments: The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) are clear examples.<sup>19</sup> Aware of the importance of the subject, UNESCO has spared no effort to guarantee the plurality of cultures and to protect their particularities without neglecting the rights and duties of our common humanity. This is the spirit of the Proclamation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022).

UNESCO has always been clear about the important role education plays in this field, given that it constitutes one of its main testing grounds for managing cultural diversity. We must not forget that “public education has always had an important social, civic and political function; it is related to national identity, the creation of a sense of shared destiny and the shaping of citizenship.”<sup>20</sup> For a long time, however, education was guided by political models that sought social cohesion through cultural assimilation or homogenization. Equality was sought by guaranteeing identical treatment and removing the differences. In contrast, what is being requested today is the recognition and protection of legally relevant differences. Inclusive education policies must therefore take full account of the cultural dimension of education, which is at the same time a civil, social and cultural right. This implies recognizing plurality ‘in’ the school and plurality ‘of’ schools. In this sense it is of utmost importance to recall the international commitment to ensure “schools for all”.<sup>21</sup> This intent was captured by the Salamanca Declaration and respectively its Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), which proposed aims to achieve “institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning and respond to individual needs”. Notwithstanding the

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**Inclusive education policies must therefore take full account of the cultural dimension of education, which is at the same time a civil, social and cultural right.**

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focus on children with special needs, the framework is based on a right-based perspective that addresses the educational system as a whole aiming at improving quality education. Indeed, it asserted from the outset its commitment to: “Reaffirming the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renewing the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to ensure that right for all regardless of individual differences”.<sup>22</sup>

Protection of cultural freedom in education involves “the choice of language(s) of instruction and the nature of citizenship education, including the study of history, geography, social studies and religion in multicultural societies.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, that diversity of perspectives and the variety of lived worlds improves the quality of education. It also calls for ensuring a plurality of educational offers that respects the right to freedom of education recognized in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (Articles 2 and 5).

It is true that the increase in diversity makes it difficult to reach a consensus on educational policy options and requires more inclusive consultation procedures. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that “the right to quality education is the right to meaningful and relevant learning.”<sup>24</sup> This means reconsidering the purpose of education in light of a renewed vision of sustainable human and social development that is both equitable and viable.

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#### **4. Where we are now: Education 2030**

**W**ith the goal of “no one left behind,” the International Community approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an update of the Millennium Development Goals which takes on a rights-based approach. The Agenda sets Sustainable Development Goal 4 to “ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.” In the Incheon Declaration adopted at the World Education Forum in May 2015, UNESCO, as the United Nations agency specialized in education, was mandated to lead and coordinate the 2030 Education Agenda with its partners. The roadmap for achieving the ten education goals is the 2030 Education Framework for Action, adopted in November 2015, together with the Global Education Monitoring Report<sup>25</sup> which provides guidance to governments and their partners on turning commitments into action.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, to remind us of the relevance of education as a matter of human dignity, UNESCO has established the International Literacy Day<sup>27</sup> in 1966, celebrated worldwide to raise awareness on advancing towards a more literate and sustainable society (refer to “List of Messages Delivered by the Pope on the Occasion of the International Literacy Day” - page

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**The roadmap for achieving the ten education goals is the 2030 Education Framework for Action, adopted in November 2015, together with the Global Education Monitoring Report which provides guidance to governments and their partners on turning commitments into action.**

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429). Furthermore, on 24th January 2018, the International Day of Education<sup>28</sup> was inaugurated to celebrate the role of education as a means to development and peace, and to recognize universal quality education as a leading priority for UNESCO. As stated by its Director-General, Ms. Audrey Azoulay “education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility”.<sup>29</sup>

This is an agenda that for the first time takes on serious problems facing education today. It thus confirms the humanistic conception of education advocated by UNESCO based on renewed ethical and moral foundations; education that is inclusive and does not merely reproduce inequalities. Considering education and knowledge to be global common goods may, according to UNESCO, provide a useful way to reconcile the purpose and organization of learning as a collective societal endeavor in a changing world.

#### NOTES

1. UNESCO in 2011: *Towards a new humanism and globalization that rhymes with reconciliation*, in ‘The UNESCO Courier. Humanism, a new idea’, vol. 64, n° 4, October-December 2011, p. 2.
2. *Idem.* 2011, p.2
3. BOKOVA, I., *Editorial*, in ‘The UNESCO Courier. Humanism, a new idea’, cit., p. 5
4. BUARQUE, C., *Seven pointers for the future of mankind*, in ‘The UNESCO Courier. Humanism, a new idea’, cit., p. 42.
5. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?*, UNESCO, Paris, 2015, p. 9. Available in: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Cairo/images/RethinkingEducation.pdf> (2/8/2019).
6. It became law on 22 May 1962 and was ratified by 104 States.
7. In 2009, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provided guidance, in its General Comment No. 20 on how this principle should be understood in the context of economic, social and cultural rights.
8. *Cfr.* MEHEDI M., *The content of the right to education*, working paper presented at the 51st session Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 8 July 1999 (UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/10, paragraphs 16 and 17). See also HODGSON, D., *The Human Right to Education*, Ashgate/Dartmouth, Alderhot, 1998, pp. 71-82.
9. *Cfr.* MEHEDI, M., *The content of the right to education*, cit., para. 22.
10. *Ibid.*, para. 23.
11. UNESCO, 18th Session of the General Conference, 1974, para 5, 10-21 ; available at [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000012013\\_fre](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000012013_fre) [Accessed 15 September 2019]
12. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education...*, cit., p. 39.
13. DELORS, J. et al., *Learning: The treasure within*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996. ELFERT, M. 2015. *UNESCO, the Faure Report, the Delors Report, and the Political Utopia of Lifelong Learning*. ‘European Journal of Education’, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 88-100.
14. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education...*, cit., p. 39.
15. *Ibid.*

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Considering education and knowledge to be global common goods may, according to UNESCO, provide a useful way to reconcile the purpose and organization of learning as a collective societal endeavor in a changing world.

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
18. Here I follow the illustrative work of STENOUE, K., *L'UNESCO et la question de la diversité culturelle: bilan et stratégies*, 1946-2000. Study based on a selection of official documents, in BORGUI, M. - MEYER-BISCH, P. (Ed.), *La pierre angulaire*, cit., pp. 42-69.
19. See also, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General comment no. 21, Right of everyone to take part in cultural life -art. 15, par. 1a of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights-*, 21 December 2009, UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/21.
20. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education...*, cit., p. 65.
21. UNESCO, *Salamanca Declaration*, Preface, 1994
22. *Ibid.*, p. VII
23. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
24. UNESCO, *Rethinking Education...*, cit., p. 32.
25. For more information on the Global Education Monitoring Report please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>
26. UNESCO, *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning* (ED-2016/WS/28). Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656> (accessed on 4/9/2019).
27. UNESCO, *General Conference Resolution*. 14C/RES 23, par. 1.44, 1966
28. A/RES/73/25, 6 December 2018
29. Audrey Azoulay, Message on the occasion of the International Day of Education, 24 January 2019, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366448.locale=en> [accessed 26 September 2019]

*Chapter 1:*  
*Regional Frameworks*

# ***THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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**T**his chapter gives a short overview of the protection assured to the right to education at the regional level, and in particular by legal instruments adopted in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Before starting the study, it is important to make several specifications regarding the instruments on which this article will focus. The analysis of human rights in the Middle East must cover both the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, which were respectively adopted by the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Cairo Declaration, although legally non-binding, is of utmost importance for two reasons: first, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is made up of numerous States in the Middle East, and second, the Declaration is characterized by a strong religious dimension which emerges in a significant manner as regards to the right to education.

At the European level, our analysis will focus on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) adopted in 1950 by the Council of Europe, the organization founded in the aftermath of World War II to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. As is well known, the ECHR set up the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that represents the most well-developed regional human rights court around the world. We will not analyze the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. While the European Union is paying an increasing attention to the protection of fundamental rights and the Charter plays a critical role in the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, the EU was not created with the specific aim to protect human rights. Moreover, it is worth considering the influence played by the ECHR and the case-law of the ECtHR on the interpretation of the Charter elaborated by the Court of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. The right to education in the Middle East: the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam

**T**he Arab League, established in 1945, is the expression of Pan-Arab Nationalism against foreign power. According to the Pact of the League, it promotes a close collaboration between Member States, safeguards their independence and sovereignty, and takes into account the interests of the Arab countries.<sup>2</sup> In 1968, in the aftermath of the Proclamation of Teheran adopted at the end of the United Nations' International Conference on Human Rights, an Arab Permanent Commission on Human Rights was established.<sup>3</sup> In 1993, the Commission drafted a first version of the Arab Charter on Human Rights. Although adopted by the Council of the League the following year, it has never entered into force as no State ratified it. A revised version of the Charter was adopted in 2004 and entered into force in 2008.<sup>4</sup> Despite the intent of the Council and the comprehensive nature of the drafting process, the actual compliance of the Arab Charter with the international human rights principles is highly debated among scholars. In this regard, although the Arab Charter shows a stronger secular approach than the Cairo Declaration, it includes some provisions significantly influenced by Islamic *Shari'a*.<sup>5</sup>

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The Arab Charter is characterized by numerous provisions referring to the right to education. In the previous version there was only one provision securing the right to education of every citizen, recognizing free and compulsory primary education, and promoting easy access to secondary and university education. In the new version of the Charter, the right to education is secured by Article 41 which keeps the provision characterizing the previous version, but is enriched with more significant references.

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The Charter includes another meaningful reference to education in its provision concerning mentally or physically disabled persons: recognizing the importance of their integration in the educational system and professional training, and to provide them with suitable job opportunities.

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The Arab Charter is characterized by numerous provisions referring to the right to education. In this regard, it is worth noting a significant advance in the 1994 version of the Charter. In the previous version there was only one provision securing the right to education of every citizen, recognizing free and compulsory primary education, and promoting easy access to secondary and university education.<sup>6</sup> In the new version of the Charter, the right to education is secured by Article 41 which keeps the provision characterizing the previous version, but is enriched with more significant references.<sup>7</sup> First, referring to the establishment of national plans promoting education of adults, Article 41 adopts a more comprehensive notion of education covering lifelong learning as well. Second, the provision affirms the aim of education in the "total fulfilment of the human being and the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental liberties."<sup>8</sup> This latter reference is further developed in the following paragraph including a significant reference to human rights education which States are requested to promote through training programs and educational methods, both at official and non-official levels. Finally, it is remarkable that the Charter requests that States take the appropriate measures in every domain "to ensure partnership between men and women to reach the goals of development". The Charter includes another meaningful reference to education in its provision concerning mentally or physically disabled persons: recognizing the importance of their integration in the educational system and professional training, and to provide them with suitable job

opportunities. Article 40 affirms that they must enjoy access to suitable educational services.<sup>9</sup>

The Charter significantly stresses the critical role played by education in promoting the effectiveness of other human rights; in particular, education and awareness-raising programs are recognized as important instruments for promoting health (Article 39, para.2, (c), and fighting disability (Article 40, para. 3).<sup>10</sup>

As already recalled, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam was adopted in 1990 by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This organization was founded in 1969 and is characterized by a strong religious influence. Indeed, it pursues not only the classical aims of regional organizations (the promotion of cooperation, security, and solidarity among Member States, respect of self-determination, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and the protection of human rights), but also some objectives targeting the preservation and dissemination of Islamic teachings and values, the promotion of Islamic culture and heritage, and the defense of ‘the true image of Islam’.

The religious approach characterizing this organization significantly emerges from the Cairo Declaration, as a whole. Its preamble identifies *Shari’a* as the only source of reference defining human rights. In other words, human rights may be recognized and interpreted insofar as they are consistent with Islamic Law.<sup>11</sup> It is very significant that in the provision on the freedom of religion the Declaration identifies Islam as “the religion of true unspoiled nature” banning every behavior aiming “to exercise any form of pressure on man or to exploit his poverty or ignorance in order to force him to change his religion to another religion or to atheism.”<sup>12</sup>

In the Cairo Declaration, education is identified as one of the fundamental requirements States must ensure to individuals to guarantee their right to a decent living.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the right to education is secured by Articles 7 and 9. Like the Arab Charter, the Cairo Declaration points out that the right to education entails a specific duty owed by family, society and State.<sup>14</sup> The Declaration recognizes parents’ rights with regards to their children’s education to a larger extent than other human rights instruments. As a matter of fact, it does not secure the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions, but it recognizes parents’ “right to choose the type of education they desire for their children” (Article 7 (b)<sup>15</sup>). This is a comprehensive right which must take into account not only the interest and future of the child, but also ‘the principles of the *Shari’a*.’ The religious dimension emerges in a more significant way from Article 9 which identifies the knowledge of Islam and the strengthening of Islamic faith among the aims that education must pursue.<sup>16</sup>

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**The religious dimension emerges in a more significant way from Article 9 which identifies the knowledge of Islam and the strengthening of Islamic faith among the aims that education must pursue.**

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## 2. The right to education under the European Convention on Human Rights

**T**he right to education is secured by Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR. This provision reads as follows:

“No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

The English version of the Protocol does not make a difference between education and instruction. Indeed, the French version of the first paragraph refers to the right to instruction (*droit à l'instruction*). In this reference the Court specified that “the education of children is the whole process whereby, in any society, adults endeavour to transmit their beliefs, culture and other values to the young, whereas teaching or instruction refers in particular to the transmission of knowledge and to intellectual development.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite its concise formulation, this provision secures numerous rights. The first sentence recognizes the right to education, as a whole. The second sentence was qualified by the Court as an “adjunct” of the right to education.<sup>18</sup> It is worth remarking that in the *Kjeldsen* case the ECtHR specified that the primary responsibility for the education of children belongs to the parents: indeed, this responsibility can be qualified as “a natural duty towards their children,”<sup>19</sup> and it is in discharge of this duty that parents can require the respect of their religious and philosophical convictions by State authorities (refer to “Why Freedom is Necessary for Effective Education” by C.L. Glenn - page 149). The second sentence of Article 2 must be interpreted in harmony with other rights secured by the Convention, and in particular the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8, ECHR), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 9, ECHR), and freedom of expression (Article 10, ECHR).<sup>20</sup> Special attention has been paid by the Court to the interplay between the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own convictions, and their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In this regard, while the Court has specified that in the area of teaching and education “Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 is the *lex specialis* in relation to Article 9 of the Convention;”<sup>21</sup> it has also stressed that the former must be read in light of the latter provision. This is of utmost importance as, according to well-established case law of the ECtHR, freedom of thought, conscience and religion entails a State duty of neutrality and impartiality.<sup>22</sup> Against this background, it is clear that the second sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 aims to assure a pluralism in education which – as underlined by the

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It is worth remarking that in the *Kjeldsen* case the ECtHR specified that the primary responsibility for the education of children belongs to the parents: indeed, this responsibility can be qualified as “a natural duty towards their children,” and it is in discharge of this duty that parents can require the respect of their religious and philosophical convictions by State authorities.

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Court – plays a critical role in assuring the existence and preservation of a democratic society.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike other provisions of the ECHR, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 is characterized by a negative formulation deliberately chosen by States during the drafting of the Convention. This formulation lead the Court to specify that the right to education does not entail any obligation for State Parties to the Convention “to establish at their own expense, or to subsidize, education of any particular type or at any particular level.”<sup>24</sup> Despite this interpretation, the right to education gives rise to certain positive obligations. In particular, the right to education covers the right of access to educational institutions authorized or established.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, it is particularly interesting to note the famous Belgian linguistic Case concerning francophone children living in Dutch-speaking regions who were unable to attend French classes, whereas Dutch-speaking children living in the French-language area had the chance to follow Dutch classes. The Court took the occasion to specify that although Article 2 of protocol No. 1 does not make any reference to the language of education, the effectiveness of the right to education implies the recognition of “the right to be educated in the national language or in one of the national languages.”<sup>26</sup> However, as clarified by the ECtHR, the Convention does not protect the right to choose the language or culture of education. As regards to this specific case, the Court found that Belgian domestic law constituted a discriminatory treatment as the measure in question was not motivated by administrative or financial reasons linked to the interests of the school, but it was only caused by “considerations relating to language.”

As the case law of the ECtHR shows, the right to education is not an absolute right; however, the necessity not to compromise the essence and the effectiveness of the right implies that restrictions imposed on the right to education must be foreseeable for people concerned. The restriction must pursue a legitimate aim proportionate to the pursued aim.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, as specified in the Belgian linguistic Case, by its nature the right to education needs to be regulated by the State, therefore the Court has recognized that national authorities enjoy a certain margin of appreciation in education matters.<sup>28</sup> In particular, States parties to the Convention retain their competence to define school curricula and to integrate them with teaching or education including “information or knowledge of a directly or indirectly religious or philosophical kind.” If, on the one hand, the second sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 does not entitle parents with the right to object to the integration of this type of education, on the other hand, it implies that “the State, in fulfilling the functions assumed by it in regard to education and teaching, must take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. The State is forbidden to pursue an aim of indoctrination.”<sup>29</sup> Moreover, when the curriculum includes some school subjects not complying with

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**As the case law of the ECtHR shows, the right to education is not an absolute right.**

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Unlike other international instruments of human rights protection, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 does not include any reference to private schools. Despite that, the European Commission on human rights and the European Court have clarified that this provision guarantees the right to found and run a private school.

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these criteria, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 implies that pupils must have the possibility to be exempted from these classes.

Unlike other international instruments of human rights protection,<sup>30</sup> Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 does not include any reference to private schools. Despite that, the European Commission on human rights and the European Court have clarified that this provision guarantees the right to found and run a private school.<sup>31</sup> The Court has specified that it does not entail a State obligation to subsidize private schools.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, when a State decides to grant subsidies they must comply with the principle of non-discrimination (Article 14 ECHR).<sup>33</sup> In the *Costello-Roberts* case, concerning corporal punishment in private schools, the Court made a critical specification with specific regard to privatization of education. It pointed out that the “State cannot absolve itself from responsibility by delegating its obligations to private bodies or individuals.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, States retain the obligation to regulate private education assuring that it complies with the standards defined by the Convention. A case study from a faith-based organization working on the ground is outlined in Chapter 3 (refer to “The EU Situation of Public Funding for Non-Governmental Schools: More Light than Shadow” by I. Grau I Callizo - page 163).

### 3. The right to education in the African system

The analysis of the right to education in the African area allows us to stress that in this region the right to education is secured by several instruments adopted by the African Union, the regional organization which in 2002 replaced the Organization of African Unity with, among others, the aim to protect human rights.

This study must also make mention of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981) This Charter secures the right to education with a very concise provision (Article 17, para. 1); moreover, it is necessary to recall Article 25 which affirms the State’s duty to promote and ensure the protection of human rights through teaching, education and publication.<sup>35</sup> Although in the last few years human rights education has received a great deal of attention at the universal level,<sup>36</sup> it is quite remarkable that a regional binding instrument of human rights defines some State duties in this regard.

The most significant references to the right to education can be found in Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). Case studies from faith-based organizations working on the ground are outlined in the following Chapters 2, 3 and 4 (refer to case studies in Africa - page 149; 173; 225; 259; 271).

The relevance of the provision lies in numerous elements. First, it defines the aim of education making reference to some traditional aims, such as the development of children’s personality, the preparation of children to

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This Charter secures the right to education with a very concise provision; moreover, it is necessary to recall Article 25 which affirms the State’s duty to promote and ensure the protection of human rights through teaching, education and publication.

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The most significant references to the right to education can be found in Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990).

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live in a free society in the “spirit of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, tribal and religious groups.”<sup>37</sup> The provision points out the importance of other aims which reflect a specific approach to human rights, such as the promotion of African traditional values and cultures, the development of respect for the environment and natural resources, and the promotion of primary health care. Second, the Charter specifies that the right to education gives rise to some specific State obligations, such as the provision of free and compulsory basic education, the encouragement of secondary and higher education, and the promotion of their accessibility. Along with these obligations, which reflect those defined by other international human rights instruments, it is worth underlining the references to measures to assure equal access to education of “female, gifted and disadvantaged children.”<sup>38</sup> Finally, the Charter includes a specific reference to the right to found and direct educational institutions: however, these latter must comply with the principles defined by Article 11 of the Charter with standards defined at domestic level. This right is deeply linked with the parents’ right to choose private schools. It is explicitly recognized along with their right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children. Therefore, it is meaningful to remark that this right is recognized “in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.”

In conclusion, we can underline that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is consistent with the standards of the right to education defined by the United Nations, but at the same time it is able to include some specificities expressing the African approach to human rights protection. Among them, we must recall the role played by education in promoting other human rights. In this regard, we have already mentioned that the promotion of the child’s understanding of primary health care is included by the Charter among the aims of education. This approach emerges in a more significant manner from the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003). This Protocol is meaningful because alongside specifying the content of the right to education with specific regard to women, it recognizes the role played by education in promoting women’s rights. In this regard Article 2, para. 2, concerns the elimination of discrimination against women, which refers to the State commitment to combat harmful cultural and traditional practices and all other practices based upon the idea of women’s inferiority “through public education, information, education and communication strategies.” Similarly, Article 4.2(d) on the rights to life, integrity and security, defines State obligation to promote peace education in order to fight against traditions, cultural beliefs, practices and stereotypes legitimizing violence against women.

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**This right is deeply linked with the parents’ right to choose private schools. It is explicitly recognized along with their right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children.**

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#### 4. Conclusion

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Compared to these latter, the right to education seems to occupy a subordinate position in the European Convention. First, it is not secured by the main Convention, but by an additional Protocol; second, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 simply refers to the right to education, as a whole, and it does not detail its content.

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The Arab and – even more - African Conventions include some meaningful references to the fundamental role played by education in promoting the effectiveness of other human rights: according to these instruments, States have the obligation to organize education and awareness-raising programs to promote the right to health, and encourage women's rights.

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Based on the forgoing analysis, it is possible to point out a meaningful difference between the approach of the ECHR, and that characterizing the Arab and African instruments. Compared to these latter, the right to education seems to occupy a subordinate position in the European Convention. First, it is not secured by the main Convention, but by an additional Protocol; second, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 simply refers to the right to education, as a whole, and it does not detail its content. At the same time, it must be recognized that the European Court has paid a great deal of attention to the right to education: as a matter of fact, it has put flesh on the bone of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 by detailing States obligations stemming from the right to education.

At the same time, a significant difference remains between the European Court's jurisprudence on the right to education, and the Arab and African approach. The Arab and – even more - African Conventions include some meaningful references to the fundamental role played by education in promoting the effectiveness of other human rights: according to these instruments, States have the obligation to organize education and awareness-raising programs to promote the right to health, and encourage women's rights. This latter aspect particularly emerges from African instruments: while they recognize the importance to maintain African traditional values and cultures qualifying their promotion among the aims of education, these instruments stress that education, along with information and communication strategies, can play a fundamental role in combating cultural and traditional practices and stereotypes based upon the idea of women's inferiority. The necessity to reinforce States obligation to prevent human rights violations through education campaigns and awareness raising programs is an element which has not been (yet) recognized and promoted by the European Court. In this regard, it should further specify the content of the right to education by following the example of the African and Arab Conventions.

#### NOTES

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1. This influence is based upon Article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, according to which: "In so far as this Charter contains rights which correspond to rights guaranteed by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the meaning and scope of those rights shall be the same as those laid down by the said Convention. This provision shall not prevent Union law providing more extensive protection". This influence is particularly relevant as regards the right to education because according to the Explanations relating to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Charter's provision on the right to education (Article 14) "corresponds to Article 2 of the Protocol to the ECHR, but its scope is extended to cover access to vocational and continuing training."

2. Pact of the League of Arab States, Article 2: “The League has as its purpose the strengthening of the relations between the Member States, the coordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. It has also as its purpose the close co-operation of the Member States, with due regard to the Organisation and circumstances of each State, on the following matters: a) Economic and financial affairs, including commercial relations, customs, currency and questions of agriculture and industry; b) Communications; this includes railroads, roads, aviation, navigation, telegraphs and posts; c) cultural affairs; d) Nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments and extradition of criminals; e) Social affairs; f) Health affairs”. The achievement of the League’s objectives is entrusted to the Council which is made up of the representatives of each the Member States of the League; in particular, for the questions listed in Article II, the Council sets up some special committees tasked with promoting the cooperation, inter alia, by drafting agreements to be submitted to the Council.

3. The Permanent Arab Commission was established by the Resolution 2443 of September 3, 1968; with the Resolution 2443 of September 11, 1969, the Commission was tasked with: (1) supporting joint Arab action in the field of human rights; (2) endeavouring to protect individual rights, while emphasizing the human rights dimensions of Arab concerns; and (3) promoting awareness among the Arab People about human rights and their protection.

4. The Charter sets up a Committee tasked with monitoring its implementation by States, although it is very far from other regional Court of human rights: the Committee, which consists of seven independent experts elected by the State Parties to the Charter, has the competence to receive and examine periodic State reports, but does not have the power to examine individual communications submitted by individuals alleging human rights violations.

5. In this regard, cf. Rishmawi, M., (2005), *The Revised Arab Charter on Human Rights: A Step Forward?*, “Human Rights Law Review”, 5(2), pp. 361–376, pp. 366 ss.

6. Arab Charter on Human Rights, (1994), Article 34: “The eradication of illiteracy is a binding obligation and every citizen has a right to education. Primary education, at the very least, shall be compulsory and free and both secondary and university education shall be made easily accessible to all.”

7. Arab Charter on Human Rights, (2004), Article 41: “1. The eradication of illiteracy is a binding obligation and every citizen has a right to education. 2. The State Parties ensure free primary and fundamental education to their citizens. Primary education, at the very least, shall be compulsory and shall be made easily accessible to all. 3. The State Parties shall, in every domain, take the appropriate measures to ensure partnership between men and women to reach the goals of development. 4. The State Parties shall ensure an education aimed at the total fulfilment of the human being and the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental liberties. 5. The State Parties shall work to promote the principles of human rights and fundamental liberties through educational programs and activities, educational methods and training programs, both official and non-official. 6. The State Parties shall ensure the establishment of mechanisms necessary to ensure primary education to all citizens, and shall establish national plans for the education of adults...”

8. *Ibid.*, Article 41

9. *Ibid.*, Article 40, para. 4: “The State Parties shall provide all educational services suitable for disabled persons, taking into account the importance of integrating these persons in the educational system, the importance of professional training and preparation for pursuit of a professional activity, and the creation of suitable job opportunities in public or private sectors.”

10. Like other human rights instruments, Article 30 concerning the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion includes a provision securing the freedom of parents and legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of children.
11. See in particular Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, Preamble, second and forth recital and Article 25.
12. Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, Art. 10.
13. Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, Art. 17 (c): "The States shall ensure the right of the individual to a decent living that may enable him to meet his requirements and those of his dependents, including food, clothing, housing, education, medical care and all other basic needs."
14. *Ibid.*, Art. 7 (a): "As of the moment of birth, every child has rights due from the parents, the society and the State to be accorded proper nursing, education and material, hygienic and moral care"; Article 9: «The seeking of knowledge is an obligation and provision of education is the duty of the society and the State."
15. *Ibid.*, Art. 7 (b): "(b) Parents and those in such like capacity have the right to choose the type of education they desire for their children, provided they take into consideration the interest and future of the children in accordance with ethical values and the principles of the *Shari'a*."
16. *Ibid.*, Art. 9: "a) The seeking of knowledge is an obligation and provision of education is the duty of the society and the State. The State shall ensure the availability of ways and means to acquire education and shall guarantee its diversity in the interest of the society so as to enable man to be acquainted with the religion of Islam and uncover the secrets of the Universe for the benefit of mankind. (b) Every human being has a right to receive both religious and worldly education from the various institutions of teaching, education and guidance, including the family, the school, the university, the media, etc., and in such an integrated and balanced manner that would develop human personality, strengthen man's faith in Allah and promote man's respect to and defence of both rights and obligations."
17. ECtHR, *Campbell and Cosans v. the UK*, App. No. 7511/76 7743/76, 25 February 1982, para. 33.
18. ECtHR, *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, App. No. 5095/71 5920/72 5926/72, 7 December 1976, para. 52
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. ECtHR, *Folgerø and Others v. Norway*, App. No. 15472/02, 29 June 2007, para. 54; *Lautsi et al. v. Italy*, App. No. 30814/06, 18 March 2011, para. 59.
22. *Ibid.*, para. 60.
23. See inter alia ECtHR, *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, cit., para. 50; *Folgerø and Others v. Norway*, cit., para. 84; *Lautsi et al. v. Italy*, cit., para. 62.
24. ECtHR, Case "relating to certain aspects of the laws on the use of languages in education in Belgium" v. Belgium, App. No. 1474/62; 1677/62; 1691/62; 1769/63; 1994/63; 2126/64, 23 July 1968, para. 3.
25. Case "relating to certain aspects of the laws on the use of languages in education in Belgium" v. Belgium, para. 4: "The first sentence of Article 2 of the Protocol (P1-2) consequently guarantees, in the first place, a right of access to educational institutions existing at a given time». Moreover, the Court recognised the effectiveness of the right to education supposes that the individual must have the possibility of drawing profit from the education received and this entails the «the right to obtain, in conformity with the rules in force in each State, and in one form or another, official recognition of the studies which he has completed." (*Ibid.*)
26. *Ibid.*, para. 3; see also, more recently, ECtHR, *Catan and Others v. Moldova and*

Russia, App. No. 43370/04 18454/06 8252/05, 19 October 2012, para. 137.

27. *Ibid.*: “[U]nlike the position with respect to Articles 8 to 11 of the Convention, it is not bound by an exhaustive list of “legitimate aims” under Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 [...] Furthermore, a limitation will only be compatible with Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 if there is a reasonable relationship of proportionality between the means employed and the aim sought to be achieved.”

28. ECtHR, *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey*, App. No. 44774/98, 10 November 2005, para. 154: “the regulation of educational institutions may vary in time and in place, inter alia, according to the needs and resources of the community and the distinctive features of different levels of education. Consequently, the Contracting States enjoy a certain margin of appreciation in this sphere, although the final decision as to the observance of the Convention’s requirements rests with the Court.”

29. ECtHR, *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, cit., para. 53; *Folgerø and Others v. Norway*, cit., para. 84 (g); *Lautsi v. Italy*, cit., para. 62;

30. In this regard, see for example the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 14, para. 3 “The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right.”

31. ECtHR, *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, cit., para. 50; ECommHR, *Jordebo and others v. Sweden*, App. No. 11533/85, 6 March 1987; *Vereins Gemeinsam Lernen v. Austria*, App. No. 23419/94, 6 September 1995.

32. ECtHR, Case “relating to certain aspects of the laws on the use of languages in education in Belgium” v. Belgium, cit., para. 13; ECommHR, *Vereins Gemeinsam Lernen v. Austria*, cit.

33. *Ibid.*

34. ECtHR, *Costello-Roberts v. the UK*, App. No. 13134/87, 25 March 1993, para. 27.

35. African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Article 25: “States parties to the present Charter shall have the duty to promote and ensure through teaching, education and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the present Charter and to see to it that these freedoms and rights as well as corresponding obligations and duties are understood.”

36. General Assembly, UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, UN Doc. A/RES/66/137, 19 December 2011.

37. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 11, para. 2 (4); in this regard, the provision significantly recalls Article 13, para. 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

38. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 11, para. 3 (5); in this regard, see also para. 6 concerning children becoming pregnant before completing their education.



# THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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This chapter explores the right to education in the United States. On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), it should be noted that the United States has signed, but not ratified, the CRC, and is the only UN Member State that is not party to the treaty. This is one of many major international treaties – a number of which establish the right to education – that the U.S. has signed, but not ratified. Therefore, to consider the question of the right to education in the United States, we must look to the U.S. Constitution, state constitutions, and the relevant federal and state case law to understand the legal framework for a right to education in the U.S.

## 1. Towards a right to education in U.S. law

First, education is not mentioned in the United States Constitution. The United States Supreme Court considered the question of whether education was an implicit Constitutional right in *San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez* (1973).<sup>1</sup> The Court determined in *Rodriguez* that education was not a “fundamental right”<sup>2</sup> as it was neither explicit, nor implicit under the Federal Constitution, and cited the tradition of state and local control over education in its decision. Some members of the Court were also reluctant to open a door to have other governmental services – not mentioned in the Constitution – be regarded as fundamental rights. However, there have also been instances where the Supreme Court has recognized aspects of a right to education. In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925),<sup>3</sup> the Supreme Court protected the rights of parents to choose a private faith-based school for their children and the freedom of non-state actors and churches to found schools. Famously, in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954),<sup>4</sup> when the Supreme Court struck down racial segregation in public schools, the Court declared that education, “where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.” Finally, in *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972),<sup>5</sup> the Supreme Court granted the Old Order Amish a religious liberty exemption to a compulsory school attendance law after students reach the eighth

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Collectively these decisions begin to form the contours of a constitutional right to education. The primary handling of education rights and duties, however, falls to the states. Each of the fifty state constitutions has an education provision calling for what is variably described as “free,” “thorough,” “efficient,” “adequate,” or “uniform,” etc. systems of public schools.

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Thus, one can point to case law and state constitutional provisions that begin to articulate aspects of a right to education in the U.S., but no clear “fundamental right” is recognized in either federal or state constitutional provisions.

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grade, and emphasized in their decision, “that some degree of education is necessary to prepare citizens to participate effectively and intelligently in our open political system if we are to preserve freedom.” Collectively these decisions begin to form the contours of a constitutional right to education.<sup>6</sup>

The primary handling of education rights and duties, however, falls to the states. Each of the fifty state constitutions has an education provision calling for what is variably described as “free,” “thorough,” “efficient,” “adequate,” or “uniform,” etc. systems of public schools.<sup>7</sup> However, state courts have been reluctant to find that education is a fundamental right under state constitutions – with a few exceptions.<sup>8</sup> This is primarily due to state judicial deference to the role of state legislatures as being responsible for establishing and maintaining a state-wide system of education. Most state constitutions explicitly grant legislatures this plenary authority.<sup>9</sup> However, some state courts have suggested that the education articles in state constitutions contain a legally enforceable constitutional guarantee.<sup>10</sup> Thus, one can point to case law and state constitutional provisions that begin to articulate aspects of a right to education in the U.S., but no clear “fundamental right” is recognized in either federal or state constitutional provisions.

## 2. Protection of vulnerable classes

To what extent is there a legal framework for protecting the educational rights and opportunities of vulnerable populations, including racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, children with disabilities, girls, and immigrants? There are significant legal protections in U.S. law to ensure that these groups receive equitable and quality educational opportunities, though again, not a clear fundamental right to education as such.

The most famous and influential case pertaining to the education of vulnerable classes is *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.<sup>11</sup> In an unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that “separate educational facilities [for black and white children] are inherently unequal,” and thus violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This set a precedent for applying equal protection reasoning to the education provision of vulnerable groups. However, the efforts to implement *Brown* and enforce desegregation in the U.S. faced “massive resistance” from whites in the South, and only started to gain traction following the 1964 Civil Rights Act<sup>12</sup> and two additional pivotal cases.<sup>13</sup> In *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968),<sup>14</sup> the Court required public school districts to develop realistic plans to “convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch,” to do so immediately, and to have these efforts monitored and enforced by the courts. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of*

*Education* (1971)<sup>15</sup> the Court allowed cross-town busing as a means of integrating schools in the face of widespread residential segregation.

These combined efforts lead to a high-water mark of racial integration in U.S. schools in the 1980s and a corresponding narrowing of the black-white academic achievement gap.<sup>16</sup> However, ‘white-flight’ to the suburbs and discriminatory housing practices against African Americans left few white families in increasingly low-income, non-white urban areas.<sup>17</sup> To continue to enforce desegregation the courts would need to require inter-district busing, bringing white students from the suburbs to the city and vice-versa. In *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)<sup>18</sup> the U.S. Supreme Court – amidst increasing political opposition to busing – disallowed inter-district busing – and so foreclosed the primary avenue for further integration. *Milliken* marks the beginning of the end of court-ordered desegregation in the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

The Supreme Court in the 1990s has since largely unwound desegregation efforts. “Since 1991, more than 35 school districts have been declared ‘unitary’, that is, not segregated by district policy, and therefore free from court oversight.”<sup>20</sup> With the Supreme Court case, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007),<sup>21</sup> the Court prohibited district school assignment’s systems from using race as a primary factor. The result of these developments has been significant re-segregation of schools nationally, returning to 1960s levels, and the persistence of achievement gaps between white and minority students.<sup>22</sup>

Following the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle (PICS)* decisions, socio-economic equity – rather than racial or ethnic - has increasingly been the lens through which equal protection or adequacy related education cases have been considered. The system in the U.S. has fundamental equity concerns that tends to create “multiple disadvantages” for low-income students. Social science research has long identified children’s family background and socio-economic status as powerful predictors of educational and life outcomes.<sup>23</sup> In the U.S., poor students are further disadvantaged by being more likely to attend schools with a larger proportion of other poor students, which tends to be negatively associated with various indicators of school quality (i.e. experienced teachers, achievement gaps, etc.). Finally, schools serving the poorest students also tend to be relatively under-resourced. Public schools generally receive 50% or more of their funding from local property taxes, with the result that wealthier neighborhoods generate more education funding than low-income neighborhoods.<sup>24</sup> The combined result is a pernicious compounding of inequities that has led to a growing body of case law seeking to ameliorate these issues in U.S. education. Concerns over the equality of opportunity and adequacy of education for poor and minority populations have fueled dozens of cases in the state courts, most of which have enforced the need for more equitable funding and adequate quality of schools for poor children.<sup>25</sup>

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With regard to immigrant children, *Plyler v. Doe*<sup>26</sup> struck down a state statute denying funding for education of undocumented children in U.S. public schools, effectively protecting the rights to a K-12 education for all immigrants residing in the U.S. – regardless of legal status. However, the application of *Plyler* has been limited to U.S. K-12 schools; states can deny undocumented immigrant students in-state tuition, scholarships, or enrollment at public colleges and universities. Yet, this case may be increasingly relevant to a growing crisis at the U.S. southern border and the thousands of children being held in detention centers with minimal educational offerings.

With regard to educational opportunities for children with disabilities, there are three primary sources of legal protections. First, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973<sup>27</sup> was one of the first U.S. federal civil rights laws ensuring protection for people with disabilities. It prohibited denying benefits, excluding participation, or discrimination of individuals on the basis of a disability and includes any program or activity receiving federal assistance (which includes U.S. Public Schools). The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990<sup>28</sup> is a civil rights' law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and imposes accessibility requirements on public facilities (including schools). Finally, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)<sup>29</sup> – reauthorized in 1990 - ensures that students with a disability are provided a “Free Appropriate Public Education,”<sup>30</sup> tailored to their needs, such that children receive the same opportunity for education as those students who do not have a disability.

A final area of legal protection for educational equity is Title IX<sup>31</sup> of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects against discrimination, exclusion, or the denial of benefits pertaining to education on the basis of sex. Title IX has had rather broad reaching implications for U.S. K-12 schools as well as colleges and universities, primarily in the areas of equity in athletics, sexual harassment and sexual violence. The enforcement of the latter two categories, however, has varied in recent years based upon changing guidance of the U.S. Department of Education under the Obama and Trump administrations.<sup>32</sup>

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Another area pertaining to the right to education in the U.S. concerns educational freedom and the rights of parents to choose the form of school their children attend. The U.S. is relatively unusual among Western, developed democratic countries in that it provides almost no public aid to support equitable access to diverse forms of schools, including faith-based schools.

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### 3. A shifting landscape for educational freedom: From bigotry to pluralism

Another area pertaining to the right to education in the U.S. concerns educational freedom and the rights of parents to choose the form of school their children attend (refer to “Why Freedom is Necessary for Effective Education” by C.L. Glenn - page 149). The U.S. is relatively unusual among Western, developed democratic countries in that it provides almost no public aid to support equitable access to diverse

forms of schools, including faith-based schools. This has roots in America's historical context.

Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiment at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and a Protestant ideology in public schools, catalyzed the creation of a private, Catholic school system in the United States.<sup>33</sup> The effort of Catholic leaders to gain equal access to funding for Catholic schools fueled a persistent debate and generated an accompanying body of case law. The advocacy efforts of Catholic leaders led to strong anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant backlash, culminating in the passage – in nearly forty state constitutions – of ‘Blaine Amendments,’<sup>34</sup> which sought to prevent public funds from going to Catholic, or ‘sectarian,’ schools.

Cases regarding faith-based schools, their access to public funds, and their regulation by the State have subsequently been examined in light of the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause<sup>35</sup> (the two religion clauses) of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

### *A. Free exercise protections*

**A**s early as 1925, the Court recognized a constitutional right to the freedom of education, namely, the right of parents to send their children to faith-based schools and more generally make decisions pertaining to their education. In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), the Supreme Court nullified an Oregon Law requiring all parents to send their children to public schools, which would have outlawed both faith-based and non-faith-based private schools. The Court argued: “The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.”<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), the Supreme Court granted the Old Order Amish a religious liberty exemption to a compulsory attendance after the eighth grade. Both cases protect the religious liberty of parents to make educational choices for their children.

However, the courts have not historically supported the principle that parents enjoy a constitutional right to public financial support to send their children to a faith-based school. A set of lawsuits in the 1980s sought public funding for faith-based schools based on free exercise grounds and these cases were not successful.<sup>37</sup> The effect has been that parents have the right to choose a faith-based school so long as they have the financial means and willingness to pay tuition.

### *B. Shifting conceptions of the ‘separation of church and state’*

**I**n the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Court held a restrictive interpretation of the Establishment Clause as disallowing most forms of public aid to faith-based schools. The Supreme Court over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has shifted its view from “strict separation” between church

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and state, to one accepting church-state cooperation, whereby neutrality towards religion has emerged as the defining constitutional principle.<sup>38</sup>

Starting with *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947)<sup>39</sup> the U.S. Supreme Court took a strict view of “the separation of church and state,” - borrowing a metaphor from one of Thomas Jefferson’s letters, and now popularly mistaken as part of the U.S. Constitution. At the conclusion of the majority opinion, the Court declared: “The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state.” Some two decades later, questions regarding permissible public support for faith-based schools still beguiled the courts. In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971)<sup>40</sup> the Court laid out a test for Establishment Clause cases related to state’s funding for faith-based schools. The test had three parts. The first two essentially pointed towards a neutrality principle requiring the intent and effect of the law to be neutral towards religion. The last part of the test required that the statute not result in “an excessive government entanglement with religion.” However, *Lemon* significantly departed from the notion that the constitutional standard is a wall of separation between church and state. The Court, instead, stated: “Our prior holdings do not call for a total separation between church and state; total separation is not possible in an absolute sense. Some relationship between government and religious organizations is inevitable [...]” This marks a notable shift in the tone of the Court on these questions, from a wall of separation to an inevitable relationship.

*Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002)<sup>41</sup> was the seminal Supreme Court case that affirmed the constitutional permissibility of public funds flowing indirectly to faith-based schools in the form of publicly funded vouchers. *Zelman* ruled that a voucher program that allowed parents to enroll their children in private faith-based or secular schools using public scholarships was constitutional for two primary reasons. First, it was neutral towards religion. Secondly, parents made the decision of where to enroll their children and, thus, directed the use of public funds. They exercised an independent and private choice, which meant that the government was not aiding religious organizations, but aiding people to make free choices. This ostensibly ensures neutrality but also, to some extent, protects against entanglement, the two key elements of the *Lemon* test.<sup>42</sup>

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**The emergence in the 1990s of publicly-funded private school choice programs, and the *Zelman* ruling in 2002 began a gradual but revolutionary change of the legal landscape concerning educational freedom in the U.S.**

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The emergence in the 1990s of publicly-funded private school choice programs (i.e. voucher or tax-credit scholarship programs), and the *Zelman* ruling in 2002 began a gradual but revolutionary change of the legal landscape concerning educational freedom in the U.S. *Zelman* paved the way for a constitutionally permissible means of financially enabling parents to freely choose faith-based sponsored schools for their children. Yet, the courts have not consistently protected the rights of religious institutions to equitably participate in voucher-like programs<sup>43</sup>, and moreover, relatively few states have large programs available to a large percentage of the student population. Also, voucher and voucher-like programs are

regularly challenged in court on the basis of the Blaine Amendments in state constitutions. Faith-based schools have occasionally been barred from participating, or programs have been deemed unconstitutional, and thus, shut down. A recent court case, *Trinity Lutheran* (2017), and a forthcoming case, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, are beginning to address the constitutional limits of Blaine Amendments.

In *Trinity Lutheran* (2017), the Supreme Court protected religious liberty and established a principle that bars states from prohibiting the participation of religious institutions from generally available public benefits, simply because of their religious status. The case involved Trinity Lutheran Church, which has a pre-school that sought to replace a playground as part of a state funded program. Trinity Lutheran's application was denied due to its status as a church, and in light of Missouri's Blaine Amendment, which prohibits public funds being spent "in aid of any church, sect or denomination of religion." In reviewing the case, the Supreme Court ruled, in a 7-2 vote, that Missouri's decision to deny Trinity Lutheran Church the ability to compete for grant funding along with other secular institutions violated the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, and its neutrality principle that laws should not discriminate on the basis of religion. The Court argued: "The exclusion of Trinity Lutheran from a public benefit for which it is otherwise qualified, solely because it is a church, is odious to our Constitution [...] and cannot stand." This ruling creates a legal reasoning that would seem to call into question the very premise of Blaine Amendments in 38 state constitutions, which the Court previously noted as being "born of bigotry" and urged to be "buried."<sup>44</sup> Yet, a footnote, in the majority opinion, suggested that the case should be interpreted narrowly, such that it is not clear whether *Trinity Lutheran* applies to the constitutional permissibility of excluding faith-based schools from voucher and voucher-like programs.

A case to be heard by the Supreme Court this term, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, may settle this question. The Montana State Supreme Court has ruled that the no-aid provision (i.e. the Blaine Amendment) in the state's constitution prohibits families from using a tax-credit scholarship program to choose a faith-based school. The Montana tax credit law allowed the program to fund scholarships to faith-based schools, and so, the Montana Supreme Court held that this made the program unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court will consider this case, and if the Court overturns the Montana State Court's ruling it will resolve the question of whether the Free Exercise or Equal Protection Clause precludes a state from relying on a Blaine Amendment to exclude faith-based schools from a tax credit program. In other words, it may remove one of the few remaining legal barriers to private school choice policies in the U.S., and further strengthen the constitutional foundation for the freedom of education.

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**Also, it is permissible for the government to financially support parents in the form of scholarships or grants, in which this aid ultimately flows to faith-based schools so long as parents freely choose to enroll their children in a faith-based school, thus mediating the state-aid, and ensuring its neutrality.**

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**A broader legal framework for the right to education remains incomplete and – to the extent that it exists in any form – is primarily grounded within the education provisions of state constitutions.**

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Thus, constitutional law pertaining to faith-based schools has established the following legal principles: parents enjoy the freedom to attend faith-based schools, and while this is not a guaranteed right (i.e. there is not a requirement for public financial support to enable access), nonetheless, neither institutions nor individuals can be prohibited from receiving a generally available public benefit for reasons of faith-based status. Also, it is permissible for the government to financially support parents in the form of scholarships or grants, in which this aid ultimately flows to faith-based schools so long as parents freely choose to enroll their children in a faith-based school, thus mediating the state-aid, and ensuring its neutrality. This aid need not be limited to secular functions of the school, but can support the general mission. These principles are now established constitutional law.

#### 4. Conclusion

In recent decades, the U.S. has experienced important shifts in its legal and policy landscape that have increased support for educational freedom through new policy mechanisms and a growing body of case law that favors educational pluralism and supports parents' right to choose the form of education for their children. While the question of whether to enact policies that provide funds for parents to attend faith-based schools remains entirely within the domain of state legislative action, the legal and constitutional barriers to such policies have been largely removed. The question, going forward, is primarily a matter of politics, whether parents' demand for vouchers is sufficient to contend with vested special interest, namely, powerful public employee teachers' unions, which seek to avoid competition from faith-based and private schools.

A broader legal framework for the right to education remains incomplete and – to the extent that it exists in any form – is primarily grounded within the education provisions of state constitutions. Though issues of inequity and segregation continue to plague the U.S. education system, there is little hope – in the near future – of resolving these challenges through a more robust recognition of the right to education. Rather, these are questions of political will and policy design, and the need for a broader recognition of the role of education in cultivating a more just, free, and flourishing society.

#### NOTES

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1. 411 U.S. 1 (1973).
2. "Fundamental rights are a group of rights that have been recognized by the Supreme Court as requiring a high degree of protection from government encroachment. These rights are specifically identified in the Constitution (especially in the Bill of Rights), or have been found under Due Process." [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/fundamental\\_right](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/fundamental_right)

3. 268 U.S. 510 (1925).
4. 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
5. 406 U.S. 205 (1972).
6. Daniel S. Greenspahn, *A Constitutional Right to learn: The Uncertain Allure of Making a Federal Case out of Education*, 59 S. C. L. Rev. 755 (2008).
7. Michael A. Rebell, *Education Adequacy Litigation and the Quest for Equal Educational Opportunity*, Stud. in Jud. Remedies & Pub. Engagement, (1999), at 1, 3-4, 13. See the Appendix for a list of state constitution education clauses and school funding cases.
8. *Serrano v. Priest*, 487 P.2d 1241 (Cal. 1971) ruled that education was a fundamental right protected by the California State Constitution. The court concluded: “the distinctive and priceless function of education in our society warrants, indeed compels, our treatment of it as a ‘fundamental interest.’”
9. Hubsch, (1992).
10. Ibid
11. 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
12. Pub. L. No. 88–352, 78 Stat. 241, enacted July 2, 1964
13. James Edward Ryan, *Five miles away, a world apart: One city, two schools, and the story of educational opportunity in modern America*. Oxford University Press (2010).
14. 391 U.S. 430 (1968).
15. 402 U.S. 1 (1971).
16. See Berends & Peñaloza (2010); Gamoran & An (2016); Grissmer, Flanagan, & Williamson (1998); Hedges & Nowell, (1999)
17. Ryan (2010).
18. 418 U.S. 717 (1974).
19. See Goldring, et al. (2006); Ryan (2010).
20. Adam Gamoran and Brian P. An. *Effects of school segregation and school resources in a changing policy context*, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 38.1 (2016), p. 44.
21. 551 U.S. 701 (2007)
22. See Garmoran & An (2009); Gamoran & Long (2007); Reardon, Grewal, Kalogrides, & Greenberg (2012)
23. Adam Gamoran, Daniel A. Long. *Equality of educational opportunity a 40 year retrospective*. International studies in educational inequality, theory and policy. Springer, Dordrecht, (2007); James S. Coleman, *Equality of educational opportunity*. Integrated Education 6.5 (1968).
24. Greg J. Duncan, Richard J. Murnane. *Restoring opportunity: The crisis of inequality and the challenge for American education*. Harvard Education Press, (2014).
25. Michael Heise, *State constitutions, school finance litigation, and the third wave: From equity to adequacy*. Temple L. Rev.68 (1995).
26. 457 U.S. 202 (1982)
27. Pub. L. No. 93-112, 87 Stat. 394 (Sept. 26, 1973), codified at 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.
28. 42 U.S.C. § 12101
29. Public Law No. 94-142
30. *Ibid*.
31. Passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Public Law No. 92 318, 86 Stat. 235 (June 23, 1972), codified at 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681–1688.
32. Moriah Balingit, “Education Department no longer investigating transgender bathroom

complaints” Washington Post, (12 February 2018); David Smith, Molly Redden, “Trump administration rescinds Obama-era protections for transgender students,” The Guardian, (23 February 2017); Andrew Ujifusa, “How Have Obama’s K-12 Policies Fared Under Trump?” Education Week.

33. Ashley Rogers Berner. *Pluralism and American public education: No one way to school*. Springer, (2016); Charles Leslie Glenn. *The myth of the common school*. Univ of Massachusetts Pr, (1988). John T. McGreevy. *Catholicism and American freedom: A history*. WW Norton & Company (2004).

34. Richard W Garnett. “Church, state & playgrounds.” *Commonweal* 144, no. 14 (2017): 12; Joseph P. Viteritti. *Blaine’s Wake: School Choice, the First Amendment, and State Constitutional Law*. Harv. JL & Pub. Pol’y 21 (1997): 657.

35. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (U.S. Const. amend. I).

36. Notably, and indicative of its anti-Catholic origins, the Ku Klux Klan was a champion of this Oregon ballot initiative leading to the statute to prohibit private and ‘sectarian’ schools (see Tyack, James, and Benavot, 1987).

37. See Nicole Stelle Garnett, *The Legal Landscape of Parental-Choice Policy*, American Enterprise Institute, (2015).

38. John Witte and Joel A. Nichols. *Religion and the American constitutional experiment*. Oxford University Press (2016).

39. 330 US 1 (1947).

40. 403 US 602 (1971).

41. 536 US 639 (2002).

42. A few caveats are in order. The case was decided on a narrow 5 to 4 majority, with strong dissenting opinions referencing earlier separationist precedent (see *Witte & Nichols*, 2016; *Nyquist*, 1973). Secondly, *Zelman* (2002) places restrictions on the design of programs that must be met for them to be constitutionally permissible. Third, following *Zelman* (2002), the fight has continued, but focused more on state constitutional challenges.

43. See *Strout v. Albanese* (1999), *Eulitt v. Maine Department of Education* (2004), and *Garnett* (2015).

44. *Mitchell v. Helms*, 530 US 793 (2000).

# ***REGIONAL FRAMEWORK – LATIN AMERICA***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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## **1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

**E**ducation is one of the fundamental social, economic and cultural rights and plays a vital and universal role in lives. Indeed, education is a means of achieving other human rights and is a tool to create more just, equitable and tolerant societies. The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 recognizes this, not only by including it as Goal 4 “to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education, promoting life-long learning opportunities for all”, but also by conferring education a key role across all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>2</sup>

While the right to education, expanded for every child, youth and adult, is considered one of the most challenging and important projects of social development<sup>3</sup>, it is not a reality. In the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, 14 million children are out of the educational system, and 1.6 million children are excluded from pre-primary education. 3.6 million children are out of primary school. The situation is even more critical at the secondary level where 2.8 million children and adolescents are out of lower secondary school and 7.6 million are out of upper secondary<sup>4</sup>.

An analysis of the right to education from a Latin American perspective offers us an important variety of components which we will try to synthesize. The report presented by UNICEF and the Economic Commission for LAC on the occasion of the meeting “On the Road to Equality” in Santiago (Chile) in 2018 gave the following information: “The situation of LAC regarding the fulfilment of the right to education shows significant progress, but also some remaining problems that still have to be solved. In the last decades, several countries in the region have made considerable efforts to expand enrolment in early childhood education. Although disparities remain in countries of the region, the fact of analysing averages shows that nearly nine out of ten children aged 5 attend early childhood education. However, among children aged 3 and 4, school attendance is still at lower levels (64.6% and 38.2% respectively), according to data from eight Latin American countries for which updated information is available, children coming from richer households are 2.5 times more likely to attend early childhood education programmes than those from poorer households.”<sup>5</sup>

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The complexity of the economic and social situation in Latin America, characterized by widespread inequality and deep disparities – especially among adolescents – enormously limits the full exercise of the right to education. Nevertheless, processes of profound transformation (inclusion, active participation and updated construction of knowledge alongside appropriate use of new technologies), proposed by the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and its Framework for Action make it possible to generate and promote spaces for participation and dialogue, for socialization and exchange, for support and systematization of experiences.

In recent years, the region appears to have made progress in terms of both increasing enrolment and attendance. Indeed, between 2007 and 2016 the average school attendance rate of the population aged 12 to 14 in LAC rose from 87% to 95%, whereas the attendance of young people aged 15 to 17 rose from 77% to 82%. However, 10.4 million adolescents in LAC are still excluded from their right to secondary education. Specifically, 8% (2.9 million) of the adolescents of lower secondary school age are outside of the education system, whereas 34% (7.5 million) of adolescents of secondary school age do not attend any school.

The right to education is foreseen and provided with a normative framework in many international and regional legal instruments. In the following, the regional framework of LAC is outlined and explained by analyzing the patterns and peculiarities that characterize it. To have a clearer and more practical idea of the provisions entailed in the legal documents, some law-cases have been described in support of the prescribed obligations. One important concept that has been integrated and widely consolidated in this regional normative framework is the “4 A’s” Approach developed by Katarina Tomaševski, the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education (refer to “To ensure that no Learner is Left Behind”: On Inclusion, Equity, Diversity in Education - A Theoretical Approach and Specific Focuses” by J. De Groof - page 193).

Namely, to be a meaningful right, education shall entail these interrelated and essential four (in a later reformulation, five) features:<sup>6</sup> availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. In recent years, the accountability of public and social actors has been added.

## **2. The Latin American and Caribbean Legal Framework**

**I**n the legal and normative framework of the region, two different categories must be considered: “hard law” instruments composed of treaties and ratified by and binding to States, and “soft law” instruments, including declarations and recommendations imposing guidelines, principles and moral obligations.

The fundamental “hard law” tool of the LAC region is the Charter of the American States of 1967.<sup>7</sup> Chapter VII on integral development stresses

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the importance of education as a cornerstone for development. In Article 47 it states:

“The Member States will give primary importance within their development plans to the encouragement of education, science, technology, and culture, oriented toward the overall improvement of the individual, and as a foundation for democracy, social justice, and progress.”<sup>8</sup>

Another important aspect in the Charter considers education as “fuel to development,” implying that the right to education is not only a duty for single States, but is a shared responsibility of the Community. Indeed, education embraces culture, identity and heritage patterns which must be preserved and promoted. In Article 48, the Charter calls on member States to:

“Cooperate with one another to meet their educational needs, to promote scientific research, and to encourage technological progress for their integral development. They will consider themselves individually and jointly bound to preserve and enrich the cultural heritage of the American peoples”.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of education as guardian of cultural heritage and care taker of identity, is an element that will be interwoven in all the subsequent legal frameworks and normative systems.

The American Convention on Human Rights entered into force in 1978 and while not explicitly referring to the right to education, it stresses that “parents or guardians, as the case may be, have the right to provide for the religious and moral education of their children or wards that is in accord with their own convictions.”<sup>10</sup> The additional San Salvador Protocol of the American Convention on Human Rights (1988) was supplemented by Article 13 foreseeing the right to education.<sup>11</sup> The content of this Article aligns with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, and reaffirms that education should pave the way to “the full development of the human personality and human dignity and should strengthen respect for human rights, ideological pluralism, fundamental freedoms, justice and peace.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the nature of education should “enable everyone to participate effectively in a democratic and pluralistic society, and achieve a decent existence, and should foster understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and promote activities for the maintenance of peace.”<sup>13</sup> This specific reference to no discrimination, friendship and tolerance must be seen in the regional specificity of LAC, where about 8%<sup>14</sup> of the total population is made up of indigenous people of the nearly 800 different ethnic/indigenous groups.<sup>15</sup>

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**This specific reference to no discrimination, friendship and tolerance must be seen in the regional specificity of LAC, where about 8% of the total population is made up of indigenous people of the nearly 800 different ethnic/indigenous groups.**

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The American Convention on Human Rights amended the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man<sup>16</sup> to establish the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Together with the Inter-American Court (established under the American Convention on Human Rights), the Commission has formulated case-law practice on the right to education. For example, in the case of *Jehovah's Witnesses v. Argentina* (1978), a violation of the right to education was found (specifically, the right to equality of opportunity in education). These infringements violate almost all components of the right to education: availability (as the possibility to exercise the right to education is denied for certain groups of children), accessibility (as children of Jehovah's Witnesses are discriminated on the ground of their religious beliefs), acceptability (as it does not allow the parents of the children to educate their children with respect for the parental freedom in conformity with their religious, moral or philosophical convictions), and adaptability (as it fails to adapt teaching processes toward a religious minority).

The last binding document elaborated in the regional area is the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001)<sup>17</sup> with the aim of strengthening and upholding democracy and democratic institutions in the Americas. In specifying how democratic institutions should be promoted and defended, the Charter identifies education as key to "strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the development of human potential, and alleviating poverty and fostering greater understanding among our peoples."<sup>18</sup> Note that within the Inter-American Democratic Charter is enshrined the language of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990): "To achieve these ends, it is essential that a quality education be available to all, including girls and women, rural inhabitants, and minorities."<sup>19</sup>

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Moving now to some of the "soft law" instruments, the Dakar Framework for Action, *Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*,<sup>20</sup> welcomes the commitments made by the International Community during the 1990s and particularly the rights-based approach to education supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Dakar Framework affirmed the International Community's commitment to achieving education for 'every citizen in every society'<sup>21</sup> as well as integrating the Regional Framework of Action for the Americas. Meeting in Santo Domingo in 2000, the countries agreed to the Regional Framework in which they renewed their commitments to "Education for All" over the next fifteen years. The countries of the region base their proposals and actions upon the recognition of the universal right of everyone to high quality basic education from birth.

This Regional Framework of Action seeks to fulfil still-pending commitments of the past decade "to eliminate the inequalities that persist in education and to ensure that everyone has access to basic education which

prepares them to be active participants in development.”<sup>22</sup> The diversity of situations among countries and the heterogeneity of internal conditions, have forced States to “convert regional commitments into national goals according to their capabilities. Nevertheless, within this diversity there is a common denominator of poverty, inequality and exclusion that affects a large proportion of families in the region, who lack educational opportunities to aid their development and that of their communities. From this arises the countries’ shared commitment to giving priority to these individuals through differentiated strategies and focuses.”<sup>23</sup>

Because turning promises into action requires joint agreements and common regional priorities, the Latin American and Caribbean Ministry of Education adopted the Buenos Aires Declaration in 2017. This Declaration was the starting point to establish the necessary regional coordination mechanisms and to carry out further changes, which would entail a new outlook on education, learning, teaching, policies and actions in the region.<sup>24</sup> The Ministry of Education reaffirmed that “education shall contribute to eliminating poverty, reducing inequalities and caring for the environment, through inclusive, quality education and lifelong learning.”<sup>25</sup> Further development in the region was achieved with the *Cochabamba* Agreement and the Regional Roadmap for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Education 2030 in LAC in July 2018. This constitutes a frame of reference for the design and execution of regional actions in education, but it also contains recommendations for the national implementation of public policy on this issue. The Agreements start from a solid point of view, namely: regional solidarity as a fundamental means to advance the Education Agenda.<sup>26</sup> In this vision, only a regional approach could support coordinated and coherent progress on priority issues for the countries of the region (quality of education, equity and inclusion, teachers and education personnel and lifelong learning), and therefore, a regional coordinating institution and organizational mechanism have been established.<sup>27</sup>

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### 3. Religious education and the secular State<sup>28</sup>

**T**he establishment and development of Nation States in Latin America cannot be dissociated from the influence of the Catholic Church, particularly in education. The secularization of those States was not linear: there were contradictions, retrocessions and breakthroughs.

Education, and particularly public education and the interplay between religion and law, is one of the main areas of contemporary debate, especially regarding the meaning of secularism and the management of religious differences.

In an international scope, the laws enacted by some States consider religious education as an individual right, associating it with the integral formation of the person and with personal discretion (Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26; Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13). However, adopted solutions concerning provisions for religious education in schools vary in each country. For example, in Uruguay there is no religious education in public school while in Venezuela, neither public nor private schools are allowed to provide religious instruction. In Argentina, there is no single national solution as each province has the right to choose. In Chile, religious education is compulsory, but enrolment is optional.

#### 4. Conclusion

**N**eedless to say, the LAC region is a dynamic environment, where education is a priority. There is a constant stream of new specific and targeting action plans, commitments, and road maps that define and determine the regional action. The LAC regional framework enshrines the peculiarity of an area in which the success of the right to education relies on the ability of States and education partners to move together in a coherent and coordinated manner<sup>29</sup> (refer to case studies in LAC - pages 105; 159; 229). Without rejecting peculiarities and characteristics of the States, dialogue, accountability, collaboration, participatory and inclusive processes are fundamental to the success of joint agreements and the entire legal framework – both “hard law” and “soft law.” In such a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and heterogeneous area, education is not only a right, but, as part of “integral development,” it is a great added value to the regional normative landscape.

#### NOTES

1. <https://www.mruni.eu/upload/iblock/e91/8praneviciene,%20puraite.pdf>
  2. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Santiago/pdf/Education-Policies-Recommendations.pdf>
  3. *Ibid.*
  4. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/investing-education-0>
  5. UNICEF, Annual report 2016, PDF, available at: [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Annual_Report_2016.pdf) [Last access: 24th September 2019]
  6. <https://www.right-to-education.org/page/understanding-education-right>
  7. Art. 47-52; Article 49
- The Member States will exert the greatest efforts, in accordance with their constitutional processes, to ensure the effective exercise of the right to education, on the following bases:
- a) Elementary education, compulsory for children of school age, shall also be offered to all others who can benefit from it. When provided by the State it shall be without

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charge;

b) Middle-level education shall be extended progressively to as much of the population as possible, with a view to social improvement. It shall be diversified in such a way that it meets the development needs of each country without prejudice to providing a general education; and

c) Higher education shall be available to all, provided that, in order to maintain its high level, the corresponding regulatory or academic standards are met.

#### Article 50

The Member States will give special attention to the eradication of illiteracy, will strengthen adult and vocational education systems, and will ensure that the benefits of culture will be available to the entire population. They will promote the use of all information media to fulfill these aims.

#### Article 51

The Member States will develop science and technology through educational, research, and technological development activities and information and dissemination programs. They will stimulate activities in the field of technology for the purpose of adapting it to the needs of their integral development. They will organize their cooperation in these fields efficiently and will substantially increase exchange of knowledge, in accordance with national objectives and laws and with treaties in force.

#### Article 52

The Member States, with due respect for the individuality of each of them, agree to promote cultural exchange as an effective means of consolidating inter-American understanding; and they recognize that regional integration programs should be strengthened by close ties in the fields of education, science, and culture.

8. Art. 47 [http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter\\_american\\_treaties\\_A-41\\_charter\\_OAS.asp#Chapter\\_IV](http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-41_charter_OAS.asp#Chapter_IV)

9. Art. 48, [http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter\\_american\\_treaties\\_A-41\\_charter\\_OAS.asp#Chapter\\_IV](http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-41_charter_OAS.asp#Chapter_IV)

10. Art. 12 [http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties\\_B-32\\_American\\_Convention\\_on\\_Human\\_Rights.htm](http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights.htm)

11. <http://www.oas.org/juridico/English/treaties/a-52.html>

12. Protocol San Salvador, art. 13

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/4AdditionalProtocoltotheAmericanConventiononHumanRightsintheAreaofEconomic,SocialandCulturalRightsProtocolofSanSalvador\(198\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/4AdditionalProtocoltotheAmericanConventiononHumanRightsintheAreaofEconomic,SocialandCulturalRightsProtocolofSanSalvador(198).aspx)

13. *Ibid.*

14. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/lac/brief/indigenous-latin-america-in-the-twenty-first-century-brief-report-page>

15. [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/37222/S1420521\\_es.pdf?sequence=1](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/37222/S1420521_es.pdf?sequence=1)

16. One of the non binding/soft-law instruments. <http://www.oas.org/juridico/English/ga-res98/eres1591.htm>

17. Art. 16, 27. [http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1\\_en\\_p4.htm](http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1_en_p4.htm)

18. *Ibid.*

19. Inter American Democratic Charter Art. 16. [http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1\\_en\\_p4.htm](http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1_en_p4.htm)

20. Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first

century, which are affected by rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency. Drawing on the evidence accumulated during the national and regional EFA assessments, and building on existing national sector strategies, all States will be requested to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest.  
[https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar\\_Framework\\_for\\_Action\\_2000\\_en.pdf](https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf)

21. The Dakar Framework for action. Education for all: Meeting our Collective Commitments, 2000, PDF, p.3, Available at:  
[https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar\\_Framework\\_for\\_Action\\_2000\\_en.pdf](https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf)  
 [Accessed 10th September 2019]

22. The Dakar Framework for action. Education for all: Meeting our Collective Commitments, 2000, PDF, Available at:  
[https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar\\_Framework\\_for\\_Action\\_2000\\_en.pdf](https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf)  
 [Accessed 10th September 2019]

23. *Ibid.*

24. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/education-2030/>

25. [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247286\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247286_eng)

26. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/education-2030/>

27. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265750>

28. Ranieri, N.; Limongi, A.; Rossi, D.; Lucena, E.; Souza, M.C; Lutaif, M.K.; (2017); *Religious Education and the Secular State: An Overview of Latin America*, Religion, Law and Education: Tensions and Perspectives.

29. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265870>

# ***EDUCATION AND ITS LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN ASIA***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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Asia is a very diverse region both politically and culturally, discussing education and the legal framework supporting education should therefore be done with caution. This article will be divided into three parts: inclusive education in China and East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. The discussion of inclusive education implementation, in this article, is based more on the classification of those three geographical regions, rather than the educational system used in each country.

Geographically part of East Asia, China is discussed separately because its population and area are very different from other East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. South Asia is also politically and culturally very diverse. India, with the second largest population in the world, has very complex educational problems. Southeast Asia includes Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. Maritime Southeast Asia includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, East Timor and Brunei. Although it is very diverse politically and culturally, countries in Southeast Asia have similar educational systems, so they will be discussed very briefly as one.

## **1. Regional framework in China and East Asia**

The Eastern Asian region includes China, Japan and the Korean Peninsula. As the region does not specifically have an association of East Asian Countries, there is no specific charter or agreement on education. Educational systems are formed based on the laws of their respective countries. This article will include a brief discussion on general education regulation for each country followed by regulations on education for children with special needs. As the fulfillment of the right to education for children with special needs is one of the indicators of inclusive education for the general public, an examination of these rights shows how far the regulations are implemented and how far they still need to go.

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**Educational systems are formed  
based on the laws of their  
respective countries.**

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### ***A. China***

In 1985, the Chinese government, experiencing rapid economic development, launched an education reform program to meet the demands of the growing labor market entitled Resolution of the

Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Regarding Reforms of the Educational System. The major change was to extend the six-year basic educational system, into a nine-years system. It also reformed the secondary and higher educational system, separating high schools into public schools and vocational schools. It was followed by the adoption of a Compulsory Education Act in 1986. The policies that were made in a top-down manner did not sufficiently solve problems such as high drop-out rates and minimal standards for low primary graduates.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this reform has not been able to solve problems such as gender inequality. Several empirical studies show that the policies of the reform are more beneficial to male students, and, thus, actually broaden the gender equality gap.<sup>2</sup>

The development of inclusive education in China occurred at almost the same time as the educational reform. In the 1980s, China began to include students with special needs into public school classes. Initially this was done in remote areas where no teacher, expert or special school was available.

In 1990, a regulation on inclusive education was issued under the name 'Learning in Regular Classrooms'. According to Chinese government statistics, 60.1% of students with special needs are currently served by public schools. However, the government will not completely close schools and institutions for students with profound special needs, and these institutions will continue to operate. There are at least three major obstacles to the application of inclusive education in China: competitive school culture, traditional instructional practices, and large class sizes, which prevent teachers from using more individualized curriculum and teaching methods.<sup>3</sup>

### *B. Japan*

**T**he Japanese Constitution enacted in 1946 and revised in 2006 provides the basic right for all citizens to receive an equal education corresponding to their abilities, which is free of charge. This right, enshrined in the Japanese Constitution, requires that education addresses the full development of personality, and strives to nurture citizens to build a peaceful and democratic State and society.<sup>4</sup> Further articles in the Constitution specify that all citizens are given the opportunity to continue lifelong learning opportunities, without any form of discriminations on the basis of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin.<sup>5</sup>

In Japan, approximately 3.58% of school-aged students have special needs.<sup>6</sup> The right to education experienced a significant development in 2006 when the law changed 'special education' to 'education for students with special needs'.<sup>7</sup> Before 2006, there were various types of education for children with special needs including special needs schools, special needs classrooms, special program classrooms and regular classrooms. Making sure that all points had been fulfilled, Japan ratified the Convention on

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**There are at least three major obstacles to the application of inclusive education in China: competitive school culture, traditional instructional practices, and large class sizes, which prevent teachers from using more individualized curriculum and teaching methods.**

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**Further articles in the Constitution specify that all citizens are given the opportunity to continue lifelong learning opportunities, without any form of discriminations on the basis of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin.**

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the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) only in 2014, although the Convention was adopted by the UN in 2006 and has been in force since 2008. Japan has set a goal to promote special needs education for constructing an inclusive education system as well as to educate children with and without disabilities together insofar as possible. Japan strives to realize six strategies to develop education for children with special needs: realizing diverse education settings; enhancing school organizations; creating rich study environments; providing high degrees of expertise in teachers; developing school curriculum based on the principle of the inclusive education system; and having a continuous support system.<sup>8</sup>

### *C. Korean Peninsula*

South Korea established the Education Act in 1948 that laid the foundation of the education system. Compulsory education lasts nine years and includes primary and junior secondary school for students aged 6 to 15. Primary and secondary school is free and designed for students aged 6 to 12. The Ministry of Education was renamed into the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in 2001, and is responsible for policies for primary, secondary and higher education institutions; the creation and publication of new textbooks and curricula; the provision of administrative and financial support to the entire school system; and the supervision of teacher-training colleges and human resource policies.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the laws governing education for students with special needs in Korea came into force in 2010.<sup>10</sup> Public schools cannot refuse students with special needs. Similar to the situation in Japan, regarding the law on inclusive education, before 2010, students with special needs were placed in separate classrooms or special schools. Competition in schools and a lack of understanding towards inclusive education by teachers and school administrators form the greatest challenge for developing the educational system of students with special needs in Korea. Another difficulty lies in the dichotomous view of special schools and public schools.

## **2. South Asia**

Regional collaboration in South Asia was first proposed in 1980 and was followed by a meeting of the foreign secretaries of seven countries in South Asia in 1981, that identified five broad areas for regional cooperation. They adopted the Declaration on South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and in 1983 launched the Integrated Program of Action (IPA) for five areas of collaboration: agriculture; rural development; telecommunications; meteorology, and health and population.<sup>11</sup> The development and well-being of children is a major area of cooperation identified by SAARC from its very beginning. Objectives

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**Japan strives to realize six strategies to develop education for children with special needs: realizing diverse education settings; enhancing school organizations; creating rich study environments; providing high degrees of expertise in teachers; developing school curriculum based on the principle of the inclusive education system; and having a continuous support system.**

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**Competition in schools and a lack of understanding towards inclusive education by teachers and school administrators form the greatest challenge for developing the educational system of students with special needs in Korea.**

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of the SAARC Charter include the goal “to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials.”<sup>12</sup> The right to education, however, was not specifically mentioned in this Charter.

In 2002, the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia was adopted, and Article II, IV, and V include ideas on the right to quality education.

In Article II, paragraph 2, the South Asian Nations commit “to facilitate and help in the development and protection of the full potential of the South Asian child.”<sup>13</sup> In paragraph 3, they cooperate in “facilitating, fulfilling and protecting the rights of the child, taking into account the changing needs of the child.”<sup>14</sup> In Article IV on regional priorities, they commit to pursuing “a policy of development and a National Program of Action that facilitate the development of the child.”<sup>15</sup> They are also dedicated to providing “opportunities and access for the child to: a) Seek and receive information; b) Express views, directly or through a representative, and receive due weight and consideration for them, in accordance with age and maturity, in all matters affecting them; c) Participate fully and without hindrance or discrimination in the school, family and community life.”<sup>16</sup> Article V puts emphasis on “enhancing the quality and impact of their national efforts to create the enabling conditions and environment for full realization of child rights and attainment of the highest possible standard of child well-being.”<sup>17</sup>

India is one of the nations in South Asia which has implemented the Charter and its agreements. India’s so-called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* law specifically stipulates compulsory education for students aged 6 to 14 including students with special needs.<sup>18</sup> However, inclusive education has not been implemented well, due to various constraints such as customs, poverty, and limited local government resources. As one of the signatories of UNCRPD, India has the obligation “to take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programs.”<sup>19</sup> The rights of people with disabilities have been championed by various parties since the 1980s, but in reality, this has not been fully realized other than in superficial matters such as providing parking spaces. Persons with disabilities are still marginalized in terms of educational and employment opportunities. This is compounded by discrimination due to caste, social class and gender.<sup>20</sup> At present, there are still 40 million students with special needs who have not been able to get an education even though the Indian government has tried to deal with this by issuing various regulations since the 1990s such as: the Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992), the Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act (1995), and the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act (1999).<sup>21</sup> In June 2019, the Indian Government released a draft National Education Policy calling for fundamentally restructuring

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**However, inclusive education has not been implemented well, due to various constraints such as customs, poverty, and limited local government resources.**

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the country's education system with a focus on delivering better education, nurturing students' skills, and preparing them to deal with real-world problems. Some of the pillars of the new reform concentrate on: reshaping the education age structure to ensure longer duration of schooling; creating a stress-free learning environment; giving greater attention to language learning; simplifying higher education system; as well as a new Scholarship Program for Diaspora Children (refer to "The Advantages of Inclusive Education: Case Studies from Sneha Bhavan (India)" by S. Fernandez and V. Pukho - page 253).

### 3. South-East Asia

**T**he Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter was signed on 12 November 2007 in Singapore. It has 55 articles covering different areas of cooperation among the ten Member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam). While the Charter does not include the right to education specifically, paragraph 10 of Chapter 1, Article 1 states that one of the purposes of the collaboration is "to develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and lifelong learning."<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 11, Article 1 specifies that another purpose of the cooperation is "to enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to opportunities for human development, social welfare and justice."<sup>23</sup>

On 18 November 2012 the heads of ASEAN countries signed the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. Paragraph 31 of the Article on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights lays down the right to education of the citizen:

"(1) Every person has the right to education.

(2) Primary education shall be compulsory and made available free to all. Secondary education in its different forms shall be available and accessible to all through every appropriate means. Technical and vocational education shall be made generally available. Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(3) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of his or her dignity. Education shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in ASEAN Member States. Furthermore, education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in their respective societies, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and enhance the activities of ASEAN for the maintenance of peace."<sup>24</sup>

Although this Charter has been ratified, the implementation of education policies in each country is very different. Educational inequalities in

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**Educational inequalities in South-East Asia exist not only between rural, urban and provincial areas, but are also caused by gender and socioeconomic conditions.**

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**Thus, although there are many similarities between countries, each country must adopt its own appropriate strategies in order to implement inclusive education successfully.**

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South-East Asia exist not only between rural, urban and provincial areas, but are also caused by gender and socioeconomic conditions.<sup>25</sup> There are similarities with South Asian and East Asian countries, but Southeast Asian countries also have more specific problems related to the implementation of inclusive education such as identity, power sharing and social class, in addition to general issues such as competitive culture, availability of resources, and understanding of inclusive education.<sup>26</sup> Thus, although there are many similarities between countries, each country must adopt its own appropriate strategies in order to implement inclusive education successfully. Case studies from faith-based organizations working on the ground are outlined in the following Chapters (refer to case studies in Asia - pages 111; 167; 249; 253).

#### 4. Conclusion

All Asian countries have to a certain degree, laws or acts on the right to education. However, the implementations of the laws vary due to different conditions. Therefore, there is an educational gap between cities and rural areas, different SES groups, and gender. Hence, the regulations are in place, but the implementation needs to be improved.

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## ***Chapter 2:***

# ***Education and Values as Drivers to Integral Human Development and Peace***

# ***WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER? WHERE IS YOUR SISTER? EDUCATION AND VALUES FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**CHANTAL PAISANT**

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“Where is your brother?” (Genesis 4:9)

God asks Cain after the murder of his brother Abel. They were the first humans born on Earth. By exposing our tendency towards violence, the biblical stories challenge our responsibility for ourselves, for the other, and for the bond that unites us. We can deny this bond. We can deny the other. We may even want to eliminate the other and banish them from humanity. But nevertheless, that very real bond, that link is real, and we must protect it, because it is part of ourselves. Humanity is not shared: it exists fully in every person.

“That whoever kills a person it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; and whoever saves it, it is as if he saved the whole of mankind.” (Qur’an 5:32).

Where is your brother? Where is your sister? This question raises an ethical conscience that is concerned about the other, about his or her destiny, and about a concern for solidarity. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9) Should we take responsibility for the other or refuse to learn anything about him? This issue involves our common destiny. It is about human ties and the Human City that we are building together.

Talking about inclusion requires us to question how we view the relationship between identity and otherness within our societies and at the global level: either identities closed into being ‘among-us’ that exclude those who are different, or inclusive identities that embrace differences in plural societies. Do we view ourselves as enemy brothers or as a fraternity open to men and women everywhere, members of the same human family<sup>1</sup> rich in the diversity of our cultures, and living on the same planet of which we must all be caretakers?

To speak of inclusion confronts us with the gaps between our ideals and realities; between the refusal of any form of discrimination affirmed in

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**Do we view ourselves as enemy brothers or as a fraternity open to men and women everywhere, members of the same human family<sup>1</sup> rich in the diversity of our cultures, and living on the same planet of which we must all be caretakers?**

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Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>2</sup> after World War II and the *Shoah* (and reaffirmed by so many international declarations and conventions<sup>3</sup>), and the reality of practices that constantly violate the inalienable dignity of the human person and the strict equality of all in their fundamental rights, beginning with the right to education, which is the condition to the exercise of all others.<sup>4</sup>

As we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the desire to build inclusive societies, to 'leave no one behind', draws particular attention to those individuals and groups most at risk of being deprived of their right to education<sup>5</sup> and imposes a constant struggle, within the same education system, against all forms of exclusion, violence and discrimination. What education and values should promote for inclusive societies? An inclusive education both provides a livelihood and teaches us to build a plural and supportive human society together with those who are different. The following will focus on four interdependent dimensions.

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**An inclusive education both provides a livelihood and teaches us to build a plural and supportive human society together with those who are different.**

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### **1. The right to education: A culture of respect**

**L**et us first consider what is most fundamental: respect for the rights of the child, respect for him or her as a person, implementation of his or her right to protection, care and education.

The effective implementation of equal access to education for all children, including legal frameworks and infrastructure, depends on the political will of governments. Inequalities in this area are also due to traditions and attitudes that weigh heavily against girls. More than 130 million girls in the world aged 6 to 17 are not in school,<sup>6</sup> while their brothers are. Where is your daughter? Where is your sister?

What does it mean to 'leave no one behind'? It means educating parents about children's rights, early childhood care and education. It means promoting education for girls. It means working in poor environments with families and communities to promote the (re)schooling of working children; enabling street children, former child soldiers and girls demobilized from armed forces to regain their dignity; establishing ways of resocialization and learning that ensure financial independence. A number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are working on this (refer to case studies on resocialization - pages 225; 263). For these organizations, it is an act of violence against the child to leave him or her without an education.

There are, however, other forms of violence often concealed and sometimes unconscious, between adults and young people. The psychological ravages of physical violence – particularly sexual violence (rape, excision), bullying and beatings sometimes interpreted as necessary for education – call for campaigns and information at all levels, both on the part of families and

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education professionals. Developing a culture of respect for the child's physical and psychological integrity requires training, mechanisms for listening to victims of violence, and the systematic establishment of observatories for proper treatment in organizations caring for minors and vulnerable people in general.

Physical, psychological and sexual violence among young people in schools has equal consequences and is among the causes of failure in school.<sup>7</sup> Assault, stigmatization and harassment aim at excluding or eliminating the lame duck: the one who is perceived as not conforming to norms of gender, of different physical appearance, nation, skin color, ethnicity or religion, the poor child, the migrant, the one in a weaker position. The prevention and response to such phenomena involve the entire educational community and require actively engaging of young people to deconstruct stereotypes (sexist, racist, xenophobic and other), to review their relational practices and to reflect on the ethical use of digital technology (refer to "How can Digital Technologies be used to Support the Right to Education and the Preservation of Human Values?" by J. Garcia-Gutiérrez - page 149). There are stigmatizations that can literally kill: cyber-bullying leading to suicide is one tragic example.

Educating parents about human rights and the sanctity of the child means helping adults understand their duty to protect the integrity of children and to implement conditions conducive to their integral development (physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual). Promoting a culture of self-respect and respect for others among and with young people is a reversal of values: the strong are not those who crush others and hide behind numbers, but those who protect the weak and those in a position of minority. A culture of self-respect teaches that, "my body is not an object that others can make their own and my freedom should not be disposed of as if it were a commodity."<sup>8</sup>

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**The strong are not those who crush others and hide behind numbers, but those who protect the weak and those in a position of minority. A culture of self-respect teaches that, "my body is not an object that others can make their own and my freedom should not be disposed of as if it were a commodity."**

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## **2. Education in non-judgmental reception: A culture of hospitality**

**I**t is about envisioning the other as he or she is, whoever he or she is, from wherever they may come, as brothers or sisters, instead of defacing the other by affixing labels. This is to free them and to free ourselves from prejudices. It is to open the way for an encounter that allows humanity to grow so that the walls of our inner prisons can fall down.

These walls can be abolished in conviviality with a multicultural meal prepared together, in sports teaming up with foreigners, in fun games and shared laughter, artistic exchanges (dance, music, painting, manufacturing of instruments, toys or costumes): these are all forms of inclusive activities where the one coming from abroad or the so-called 'bad student' can reveal their talents and capabilities in a common project with the possibility of

giving themselves to the other. Welcoming the other is to learn from him so that we can move forward together.

Hospitality is a path of mutual discovery and recognition. Walls of prejudice about the other's religion can be shattered when we discover our own religion. There is nothing more difficult than teaching religion in schools, especially in contexts of inter-religious tensions. Teachers are poorly prepared for this. However, there are possible access points to establish bridges between religions and discover a common heritage. Those who seek symbols, rites, festivals and their meanings from one culture to another discover the anthropological and spiritual dimensions of religion even through differences. Those questioning common values (love, mercy, compassion) are leading to meditate on the universal golden rule and thus gain the highest wisdom of life based on an ethics of reciprocity, as many different religious traditions outline:

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Hinduism: "You cannot behave towards others in a way that is unpleasant to yourself; this is the requirement of morality." (Mahabharata XIII, 114)

Buddhism: "A situation that is neither pleasant nor pleasing to me could not be more pleasing to him; how could I wish him that?" (Samyutta Nikaya V, 353.35-354.2)

Islam: "None of you is a believer, as long as you do not wish for your brother what you wish for yourself." (Mohammed, 13° from 40 Hadith of an-Nawawi)

Judaism: "Don't do to anyone what you wouldn't like to be done to you." (Judaism, Tobit 4:15)

Christianity: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12).

It is definitely not a matter of being our brother's or sister's 'keeper' in the sense of surveillance, but in the sense of a benevolence that does not wish or does harm others. More than this, it wishes them well and works towards their good.

In an educational sense, hospitality offered to the other means, 'in my eyes, you are valuable, you are capable'. Hospitality sees in others resources instead of shortcomings: Whatever your past, you can control your life. It is a liberating act of confidence that opens the way for those convinced by wounds or failures that they are worthless (or that they are scoundrels); for she who dares not to aim too high because she's a girl, for those who dare not to believe in their future because they are disabled, the quality of the educational relation remains essential.

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**For she who dares not to aim too high because she's a girl, for those who dare not to believe in their future because they are disabled.**

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A culture of hospitality changes the view of the other from a view of insufficiency to one of trust, from disregard to valorization. Hospitality considers a stranger knocking on the door not a disturbance, but a Godsend: a source of financial, human, social and cultural enrichment. Hospitality welcomes all children, wherever they may come from or whatever they are, as a promise that calls for fulfilment. A relationship of trust liberates spiritual energy, an energy of life, leading the destitute to unsuspected possibilities: resilience has no other springboard.

### 3. Education for dialogue: A culture of listening

**E**ducation for democratic dialogue is not only about learning argumentation. It is not only a question of strengthening one's theory to convince the other at all costs. Rather it is about learning to listen to each other in a shared search, and, first of all, of knowing what we are talking about. We must question the meaning of the words used and what the other intends by those same words. Justice or equity? What does that mean? Any teacher, any appropriately trained adult, can lead a philosophy workshop adjustable to any age, from primary school to high school. Education for dialogue aims at teaching self-decentralization. It invites us to abandon the arrogant ego-/ethno-/occidental-centered posture, certain that we hold the truth, and to listen to the other and consider things from his or her point of view. Reality is complex, and attributes multiple facets to the truth that we tend to identify. Provided that the desire to understand – and not to assert power – is the driving force, listening to each other leads to understanding each other better as a group (refer to "Project "Patio 13": My Book of Life by S.C. Sierra Jaramillo and H. Weber - page 105). In conflict mediation, listening is the first step. It is the path to possible reconciliation when each takes the other into consideration. Adults and young people of all ages can be trained for it.

During a shared reading of texts of the literary heritage (fables, tales and other narratives, poems, founding texts of the great religions when the context allows it), mutually listening to how the text resonates in each other, broadens the meaning, allowing for the discovery of possible interpretations never fathomed individually. The initiation to a reading that is both faithful to the text and that liberates its symbolic meaning is crucial. The great difficulty in radicalized young people is to bridge the gap separating reality from what is imagined, detaching from literal meaning.

In discovering a beautiful work, in contemplating nature, as well as in prayer (for the believer), and in meditation, inner listening is a path of spiritual deepening and self-peace building. The initiatives to support migrants show how important it is to provide them, if they so wish, with a place to meditate. Listening, dialogue and respect for silence needed by others are all part of hospitality. In a world of noise, learning what speaking

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**Education for dialogue aims at teaching self-decentralization.**

**It invites us to abandon the arrogant ego-/ethno-/occidental-centered posture, certain that we hold the truth, and to listen to the other and consider things from his or her point of view.**

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In a world of noise, learning what speaking means as well as the different language levels, learning to listen to others, to dialogue with them, learning to quiet oneself, are part of the same educational approach for human and spiritual development.

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A culture of co-responsibility is also established through collective projects for others near or far (international projects, actions for people in difficulty, environmental projects), where school learning takes on meaning while developing an ethically responsible global citizen consciousness. Where is your brother? Where is your sister? Not wanting to leave any one behind means seeking the best for everyone to enable them to develop their capacities to learn, create, think and act with others in groups where, regardless of their origin, they feel welcomed and recognized as full-fledged actors, co-builders of a more equitable and united world, under the sign of an encounter with otherness.

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means as well as the different language levels, learning to listen to others, to dialogue with them, learning to quiet oneself, are part of the same educational approach for human and spiritual development.

#### 4. Education for cooperation: A culture of co-responsibility

Where is your brother? Where is your sister? There are disabled children isolated at home due to a lack of facilities to accommodate them. Others are confined in specialized institutions. Many could join other young people of their age in the regular system provided that teachers, educators and school principals, in collaboration with families, find together the necessary bridges and support systems (refer to case studies on children with disabilities - pages 223; 229; 249). There are young people who drop out of school risking of being exposed to all the dangers of the street. Analyzing failure processes to avoid reproducing them, inventing remobilization devices in an interdisciplinary team requires, again, a change of perspective: the dropout as one dropped! There are also young migrants whose needs (medical, psychological, linguistic and educational) require a coordinated effort in a multi-professional team (refer to case studies on migration - pages 149; 173; 225; 259; 271). In all cases, it is a matter of adapting the system to the child and not the other way around (refer to "To ensure that no Learner is Left Behind": on Inclusion, Equity, Diversity in Education - A Theoretical Approach and Specific Focuses" by J. De Groof - page 193). Welcoming the most disadvantaged can be a rich source of pedagogical innovation.

In pedagogical practices, digital technology used by trained teachers makes it possible to combine the individualization of learning and interactive cooperation (refer to "E-based Education: Breaking limitations" by P. Meyer - page 187). Learning to help each other, learning to live together means involving young people in the development and respect of «institutional» rules for the life of the class, school or community center which then become schools of co-responsibility. A culture of co-responsibility is also established through collective projects for others near or far (international projects, actions for people in difficulty, environmental projects), where school learning takes on meaning while developing an ethically responsible global citizen consciousness.

Where is your brother? Where is your sister? Not wanting to leave any one behind means seeking the best for everyone to enable them to develop their capacities to learn, create, think and act with others in groups where, regardless of their origin, they feel welcomed and recognized as full-fledged actors, co-builders of a more equitable and united world, under the sign of an encounter with otherness.

## NOTES

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, Preamble, available at [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 25 July 2019]
2. *Ibid.*, article 7
3. In particular, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).
4. Access for all to “equitable, inclusive and quality education” including lifelong learning opportunities (ODD4) is one of the essential conditions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (or Agenda 2030) adopted in September 2015 by 193 countries at the United Nations, following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The theme of the 2020 Global Monitoring Report on Education (GEM) will be “Inclusion and Education.”
5. The global dialogue on education has gradually broadened the concept of inclusion to all groups likely to be excluded from the education system: not only people with disabilities, but also girls, migrants and refugees, ethnic minorities; see UNESCO (2018), Concept Note for the GEM 2020, p. 3.
6. This figure was recalled at the International Conference organized by the G7 and UNESCO in Paris on July 5, 2019, “Innovating to empower girls and women through education,” with the contribution of the Ministers of Education of the G5 Sahel and Senegal countries, and the Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai (Pakistan). In 2016, nearly a quarter of young women aged 15 to 24 (116 million) in developing countries had never completed primary school (they accounted for 58% of those in this situation). Two thirds of the 774 million illiterate people in the world were women.
7. The UNESCO 2019 report, Behind the numbers: ending school violence and bullying, shows that violence in schools affects all countries, affects a significant number of children and adolescents (at least 32%), is most often perpetrated by peers, but can also be perpetrated by teachers and other school personnel.
8. The commoditization of prostitution to pay for education is becoming more and more common, not only in poor countries.



# ***THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION - A CORNERSTONE OF CULTURAL RIGHTS***

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**A**t least, since the end of World War II, the International Community has valued the importance of education as a right that goes beyond an instrumental vision of the human being, which places the latter at the center. In focusing on education, the human being is perceived in a holistic way, bearing in mind all its dimensions (spiritual, physic, social, professional, etc.). This vision of education is compatible with the idea that man is a social being, “*solitaire et solidaire*”<sup>1</sup> and as Mounier said, “*un dedans qui a besoin d’un dehors*”<sup>2</sup>. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also considers this holistic approach: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.”<sup>3</sup> Equally, the right to participate in cultural life is acknowledged in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>4</sup>.

What do we mean by the word “culture”? The Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights contains a global definition: “The term “culture” covers those values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, traditions, institutions and ways of life through which a person or a group expresses their humanity and the meanings that they give to their existence and to their development.”<sup>5</sup> According to Patrice Meyer-Bisch, a drafter of the Fribourg Declaration, culture is not determined by “cultural goods,” but by the ability of a subject to “self-provision with projects of sense”.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting here to observe the link between culture and the expression of humanity.

Having established the definition of culture, we can now analyze the unquestionable link between cultural rights and the right to education. Indeed, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stresses that, “The right of everyone to take part in cultural life is also intrinsically linked to the right to education (arts. 13 and 14), through which individuals and communities pass on their values, religion, customs, language and other cultural references, and which helps to foster an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect for cultural values”.<sup>7</sup> We can observe this at two levels.

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**In focusing on education, the human being is perceived in a holistic way, bearing in mind all its dimensions (spiritual, physic, social, professional, etc.).**

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**In this regard, it is important to recall that education is not limited to the transfer of knowledge and instruction, but to the initiation of humanity.**

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The first level concerns the full development of human personality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights guarantee the right to education for all and affirm that, “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”.<sup>8</sup> In this regard, it is important to recall that education is not limited to the transfer of knowledge and instruction, but to the initiation of humanity. Because of that, the cultural approach is essential for human beings to know their natures, their origins and to decide about their futures. Above all, education is a cultural right without which it would be complicated to develop an identity. The Delors Report stresses that, “Education must contribute to the full development of each individual – spirit and body, intelligence, sensibility, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility, spirituality”.<sup>9</sup>

This dimension of the right to education must necessarily take into account that the human being is not an island, but that he is part of a social environment. The loss of this vision leads us to a utilitarian conception that aims at education to prepare future workers while limiting curiosity.

The second level concerns the right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (refer to “Why Freedom is Necessary for Effective Education” by C.L. Glenn - page 149).

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**“the States [...] undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents [...] to choose for their children’s schools, other than those established by the public authorities, [...] and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”**

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It is also important to note that, in the two main human rights instruments concerning the right to education, the rights of parents are also acknowledged: “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”<sup>10</sup> and “the States [...] undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents [...] to choose for their children’s schools, other than those established by the public authorities, [...] and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”<sup>11</sup> In this regard, freedom of education plays an important role in ensuring the best interest of the child, because, as the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education Mrs. Katarina Tomasevski points out, “international human rights law demands substitution of the previous requirement upon children to adapt themselves to whatever education was available by adapting education to the best interests of each child [...]”.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the International Community establishes that the full development of the personality leads to the ability to build an identity. Also, in the right of parents to choose the education of their children, we observe the will of the International Community to invite the public authorities to dialogue with the different communities so that those groups can educate their children according to their values and convictions. It is important to note that both documents<sup>13</sup> enable the construction of education as “learning to be.”

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**“All persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respects their cultural identity.”**

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In this context, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity<sup>14</sup> states that “all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully

respects their cultural identity.” This statement is the cornerstone of our reflection and acknowledges education in three dimensions: (a) A social right (access to education); (b) A civil and political right (freedom to education); (c) A cultural right (right to identity).

In effect, the cultural dimension justifies the other two. Education is both an “empowerment right”<sup>15</sup> in itself, and one of the pillars to the exercise of other cultural rights. In regard to cultural rights, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that, “The right to take part in cultural life can be characterized as a freedom. In order for this right to be ensured, it requires from the State party both, abstention (i.e., non-interference with the exercise of cultural practices and with access to cultural goods and services) and positive action (ensuring preconditions for participation, facilitation and promotion of cultural life, and access to and preservation of cultural goods)”.<sup>16</sup>

Since identity depends on education, State support is necessary. This assistance must, at the same time, respect the freedom of non-State actors (parents, civil society, students, and educators) to enable a free construction of identity. Habermas asserts that in order to preserve cultural rights, the State must ensure, “to all citizens equal access to cultural contexts, interpersonal relationships and traditions to the extent that they are necessary for their development and reinforcement of personal identity”.<sup>17</sup>

The cultural approach to the right to education concerns all humanity, but in the current situation it is especially important for minorities and indigenous peoples that, “States parties should adopt measures and spare no effort to ensure that educational programmes for minorities and indigenous groups are conducted on or in their own language, taking into consideration the wishes expressed by communities and in the international human rights standards in this area”.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, it is important to take into account that “States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole”.<sup>19</sup> Once again, we observe that public authorities have a positive obligation to promote educational pluralism and diversity. “Minority group identity requires not only tolerance but a positive attitude towards cultural pluralism on the part of the State and the larger society”.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, “the State cannot fully implement them without ensuring adequate conditions for the existence and identity of the group as a whole”.<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes in political and theoretical debates, educational pluralism is presented as opposed to equality. Nevertheless, as indicated by the Committee on Human Rights “the enjoyment of rights and freedoms on an equal footing, however, does not mean identical treatment in every instance”.<sup>22</sup> In addition “not every differentiation of treatment will constitute

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**Three dimensions: (a) A social right (access to education); (b) A civil and political right (freedom to education); (c) A cultural right (right to identity).**

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**“States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole”.**

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**In conclusion, from both a theoretical and legal perspective, we observe the acknowledgement of a right to education that goes beyond a merely instrumental vision; and which upholds the importance of the cultural dimensions particularly in relation to personal identity.**

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discrimination, if the criteria for such differentiation are reasonable and objective”.<sup>23</sup> To finish with this point it is important to focus on religious minorities, and to recall that the Human Rights Committee assures, “the liberty of parents or legal guardians to ensure that their children receive a religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions, [...] is related to the guarantees of the freedom to teach a religion”.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, from both a theoretical and legal perspective, we observe the acknowledgement of a right to education that goes beyond a merely instrumental vision; and which upholds the importance of the cultural dimensions particularly in relation to personal identity. This vision is explicitly approached at an international level. Nevertheless, we can note a lack of sufficient elements through which the different cultural communities can play a role in the construction of their identity. It is necessary to clarify the forms through which the State channels the participation and interaction with the different communities in the educational systems. It is also imperative to improve the access to culturally acceptable education for children belonging to low-income families that do not belong to mainstream culture.

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*Chapter 2:*  
*Case Studies*

# PROJECT “PATIO 13”: MY BOOK OF LIFE

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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Project Patio 13, ‘a pedagogy for children and youth at risk’, was a response to a specific education need not only of those at risk but also of teachers and professionals who are committed to the transformation of this problem in Colombia. One of the fruits of Project Patio 13 is the creation of an Educational Program for pregnant girls and young women in street situations.

With the goal of understanding the situation of homeless pregnant girls and teenage mothers, and providing them with advice, support and guidance, the education students of *Escuela Normal Superior Maria Auxiliadora* in Copacabana (Colombia) took part in a special project called ‘My Book of Life’.

The Book of Life can also be called a course of life. It enables homeless girls to write an intensive autobiographical account. Whoever intends to write and create a book about one’s life, must reconstruct their own history. The book can be compared to a diary or a scrapbook. As they recall the past, the girls living on the streets face the sad events of their lives and remember the happy moments too. These memories may awaken in them vital internal resources of strength and help them to overcome their current situations.

The girls participating in the project, either pregnant or young mothers, create a personal, intimate biography of their lives. They decide what it contains, how it is presented and how much time they need to prepare. There is space in the book for texts, drawings, photos, memorabilia and objects with symbolic value.

The texts and illustrations can represent several themes: the situation of her current life, her family, her history, her hometown or region, her current feelings and moods.

The book should also describe her daily life, special events, hopes and plans for the future. One theme often emphasized is what worries the girls most: pregnancy, childbirth and concerns about their children.

In the preparation phase, the students ask the girls to reflect on these questions: Who am I really? How did I become who I am? How will my life change as the baby develops in my belly?

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As the girls capture their memories in the Book of Life, they deepen their self-knowledge and reflect on their choices, the course of their lives and their futures.

Dealing with the course of life raises many questions, both for street girls and for students: What is the meaning of my life and yours? What path should I (you) follow? What measures should be adopted to be able to decide autonomously about my (and yours) destiny?

The course of the girls' lives can only be understood when the critical events of their lives are known. One of the special challenges of this method is that sad and painful moments of the past are inevitably stirred. Almost always, the lives of these girls are scarred by misery, scarcity, violence, rejection and lack of opportunities. A past heavily charged with negative experiences transforms into a threatened present and clouds the horizon of something better. This reality seems to deny them the possibility of planning the future.

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What girls in street situations have suffered often remains a secret until the Book of Life. They wonder: Who would want to hear about what they have been through? Even before they can start sharing their lives, their sense of rejection catches up with them and characterizes their experiences as insignificant. They put their memories in capsules, repressing and forgetting them. However, in reality, the unresolved past has a strong influence in the present. For girls in street situations, repression often develops into guilt. Not only are they vulnerable because of lack of food, clothing and money, but they also have a diminished image of themselves, and an unexpressed, deep and usually unconscious need for affection, protection and longing to be listened to. Their situation and environment deny them the recognition of their experiences of suffering and leads to an underestimation of their existential capacities.

Students hope that the conversations they have with these girls provide some relief. They hope to soften manifestations of possibly traumatic events for a more realistic and hopeful outlook of the past and vision for the future. Meanwhile, by allowing the students a look into their lives, the pregnant teens and young mothers are giving the students a precious opportunity to deepen their understanding of people in very different life situations.

## 1. The phases of the project

**S**tudents divide the Book of Life project into four modules or structural bases. Each module is subdivided, and its components are organized according to the current situation and the interests of the girls.

*A. First module: Who am I?*

**W**ho am I? My life: The current situation' is a recurring theme throughout the project. This question seeks to engage the girls in a realistic assessment of themselves. This helps to better recognize abilities, strengths, talents, and weaknesses. Students know that the girls' self-esteem – and their self-efficacy – is key to personal development and the ability to plan for the future.

*B. Second module: I will be a mother*

**T**his module reflects the issues related to pregnancy: 'I will be a mother: Now what?' This part of the Book of Life collects information, guidance aids and practical advice. Students bring illustrative materials and graphic texts that the girls can color, cut, label and paste.

The girls ask themselves: 'What does the birth of my baby mean to me?' The conversation surrounding these topics is beyond the medical aspect. It gives the girls an opportunity to talk about their concerns and worries: 'What am I going to do in my state as a young woman living in the street?' 'Why do some women decide to give birth and others do not?'

*C. Third module: My life project*

**M**y life project' is an especially important chapter in the Book of Life which refers to the future. This chapter is closely linked to the first module: 'Who am I?' For young people in the streets the future is often something secondary. They don't reflect much about tomorrow or next week. In general, their attention is focused on dealing with the present. But when a girl gets pregnant, this changes. With childbirth imminent, they are confronted with many questions: 'What should happen now? What can actually happen? What can I change? What do I want to achieve in life?'

During pregnancy, questions about the future are inevitable: 'Where am I going to live with my child? What can I do to avoid being separated from him or her? What will become of us?' When young people reflect on certain perspectives of their lives, they inevitably face questions such as: 'What do I consider myself capable of doing? How much strength do I have to change my life?'

*D. Fourth module: Change is possible*

**F**ormulating pedagogical objectives is relatively easy. Reaching them is much more complicated. Without a doubt, all projects have specific intentions. In their development, new goals arise along with the usual difficulties. Some goals may not be realized, yet it is also

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common to achieve objectives that nobody had thought of. As the project developed, which sought to improve the existential situation of street girls, the students expressed that there had been changes both in them and in the young mothers.

## 2. What the project changed for the girls in street situations

**B**ecause their futures and those of their children are at stake, when pregnant girls or mothers share their past, they also express expectations. The conversations about experiences lead to reflections about the present and the future. This reflection asks them to put their memories into one story. In this way, the girls have managed to narrate beyond the traumatic parts of their lives and acquire a different view of life and of themselves. Those bitter, scattered experiences are recovered and complemented by positive memories. Every person who has lived on the streets has overcome threatening situations and existential crises. When they recognize their ability to overcome and incorporate that ability into the image they have of themselves, their value and confidence increase. These biographical narratives strengthen the self-image of the girls, develop their self-esteem and help them to regain their identity.

Students also provide girls with useful knowledge that guides them in their daily lives. Thanks to the information presented on nutrition and health, young mothers take greater precautions to protect themselves from certain diseases that are easily transmitted on the streets. The students hope that the young mothers transmit knowledge about institutions and people who can help in case of emergency. The girls have greater theoretical and practical knowledge to help them care for their newborns and young children adequately. Students hope young mothers become more sensitive and understanding of their children, as many child mothers go through paralyzing depression and experience indifference and aggressive rejection of their newborns.

## 3. What the project changed for the students

**W**hile the goals achieved for pregnant girls and young mothers remain difficult to assess, the positive results of the program for students are obvious. The students benefit from an expanded knowledge about the situation of socially marginalized children and youth, as they learn their way through the streets and how to build relationships with those who inhabit it. They treasure the lessons learned and the experiences gained in the application of scientific methods (both ethnographic and biographic) that have pedagogical relevance to other areas of formation and training.

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The experience of the Book of Life project provides students elements to plan training and teaching situations for street youth and apply them in a didactic, analytical, reflexive and methodical way. In future, students will be equipped to offer State, religious and international institutions their knowledge on training, support and sustainable learning programs for young mothers and pregnant girls. Students develop an appropriate medical, psychological, and sociological knowledge about teenage pregnancy that they transmit to girls on the streets. Their consciousness deepens after having recognized that the phenomenon of homeless children and young people reveals not only an individual problematic situation, but also a political one.



# USING THEATER TO HELP TEENAGERS DIALOGUE WITH PARENTS

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

## DON BOSCO SCHOOL

Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco (Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice), *Tuol Kork*, Cambodia

In Cambodia, tradition and respect demand that children abide by parental decisions. Questioning parents' decisions is unimaginable. In some cases, where there is uncompromising discipline and parental control at home, children grow up with timidity and full of uncertainties.

"Tough love" is often considered "protective love" for children, while a softer approach to discipline is seen as permissive. Sometimes even the children view this "tough love" as a form of parental concern.

One of the areas in which parents exercise considerable control over children is in the choice of a life partner. Parents still arrange the marriages of their children based on similar social standing, economic class and other factors. It is believed that parents, with more wisdom and experience in life than their children, are the best judges of a future spouse for their son or daughter. Meanwhile young people are expected to abide by parents' decisions regardless of their own feelings. This is true not only among teenagers and young couples, but also among adults working and ready to start a family – even those already in their 30's.

Despite the many signs of development in Cambodia, the present generation still has to battle the tradition and the social norm of arranged marriage. It is still considered a parental right and even a duty to find suitable matches for children, and a good Cambodian boy or girl is expected to leave the choice of a husband or a wife up to the parents, or at least to give them the final say.

This practice however is changing fast. Many young people feel a sense of rebellion after being denied the right to choose their own life partner. "After all, it is me, not my parents, who would be living with this person for my whole life," said one outspoken girl. Parents are recognizing that their children want more autonomy and more freedom to socialize with the opposite sex, to date and to choose their own spouses.

At Don Bosco Vocational Training Center for Girls, where young women (aged 17 to 25) learn a skill and earn a certificate after two years of theory and practice, girls have started to assert this right. However, since it touches a sensitive cultural issue, talking to parents is not easy. Parents are often not ready to dialogue with their daughters.

Wishing to be obedient, most of these young ladies – the majority from remote towns and villages steeped in social traditions – dare not to

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**It is believed that parents, with more wisdom and experience in life than their children, are the best judges of a future spouse for their son or daughter.**

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**This practice however is changing fast. Many young people feel a sense of rebellion after being denied the right to choose their own life partner.**

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oppose parents' choices for them. Some fall in love with boys of their own choosing, but are willing to sacrifice love rather than hurt their parents and be branded "bad daughters." In the worst cases, girls follow parents' wishes to get married, but eventually break up with the husband and escape with the boyfriend. This is also done by boys who have chosen their own sweethearts.

### 1. The Core Group of kindergarten parents

**T**hanks to a group of young parents from the Kindergarten Department (aged 3 to 5 who receive formal pre-school education), these young ladies have been able to break the silence and "talk" to their parents regarding this topic via an unusual medium – the stage.

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**The Core Group (likened to the officers of the Parents' Association), helping the sisters and teachers at the Don Bosco Kindergarten, are mostly young parents who are themselves poor or belong to the working class.**

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The Core Group (likened to the officers of the Parents' Association), helping the sisters and teachers at the Don Bosco Kindergarten, are mostly young parents who are themselves poor or belong to the working class. They work in factories, as tricycle or motorcycle drivers, market sellers or construction workers. A few work in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations. Because they live in the city of *Phnom Penh*, they have access to higher education and pursue university degrees if they can afford it. A few parents work during the day and go to university in the evening. This opportunity to earn a university degree opens a range of future jobs and professions for them and assures their family a brighter future.

This group of young parents are active and appreciate the kind of education provided to their children at Don Bosco School. Many put their gifts and talents at the services of the school. The group currently leading the Core Group is active in theater.

During the Parents' Formation meeting in 2018, the Core Group dramatized the situation of children in today's society and what the parents and the school could do to help solve certain problems impacting the youth. Some of the parents acted out the roles of the children, others those of parents and adults, government agents, law enforcers, etc.

After the presentation, they asked parents how they understood the situations presented. The parents discussed topics like: 'The effect of modern technology and gadgets on children, Listening to children and understanding their behavior, How parents/family situations affect children, Contemporary problems of children and youth and how to help,' etc.

The same group of parents were invited by the Vocational Training Center, another department of Don Bosco School, when the latter held a formation session for parents on the theme 'current problems faced by the youth of Cambodia'.

Weeks before the Parents' Formation meeting, the Core Group of the Kindergarten asked the girls of the Training Center what they considered the most urgent problems of youth in their age bracket (aged 17 to 25). When the Parent's Formation meeting was held, the Core Group dramatized the teenagers' problematic situations. The foremost problem of these young people was how to convince parents to give their sons and daughters the freedom to choose a life partner.

The parents were serious and attentive while watching the play. It was something most did not expect. It showed the pros and cons of both marriages arranged by the parents, and marriages willed and arranged by the sons and daughters themselves. At the end, no conclusion or judgment was provided (in the play) in order to allow parents to discuss the topic freely. In the discussion, the students who came with their parents also expressed their opinions. They tried to talk to their parents and with one another with respect. It was a healthy discussion, although many parents, especially mothers, emphatically stated that they were doing everything for the sake of their children. A few fathers warned daughters of the danger of falling in love with married men who preyed on young girls, or with men 'who pretend to be good while courting and then showing their true cruel selves once married.'

The girls expressed gratitude for and appreciation of their parents' love and concern, but at the same time asked to be trusted and given freedom of choice. We could say that the encounter was a success. The message was clear and most parents reacted well. Of course, there were those who reacted negatively, but in due time it is hoped that they too will open their minds and hearts to trust their children's choices. Of course, their guidance, advice and suggestions must always be a precious help.

The educating community realized that the choice to ask the Core Group parents to act in the play was a wise decision because if the students themselves had acted in the play, this could have caused tension between parents and children.

## 2. In accord with the wish of Don Bosco

**W**hy is this experience and educative intervention important to us at Don Bosco School? Being advocates of a person-oriented method of education, we put the person and her integral development at the center of the educating process. Girls and boys must be oriented towards the vocation willed for them by God. If they are called to the married state, they must be helped to follow a life path that would lead them to the fulfillment of their vocation.

From the very beginning of his mission, Don Bosco wished the involvement of lay persons: teachers, parents, benefactors and collaborators who understood his mission. He envisioned a family-like atmosphere

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**Being advocates of a person-oriented method of education, we put the person and her integral development at the center of the educating process.**

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pervading Salesian centers and schools. Thus, priests, brothers, sisters and lay co-workers fulfill their missions in various ways united by a common spirit – that of the Salesian Family.

### **3. Values education: a continuing process and a basic component of Salesian education**

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**Values education has become a defining feature of the curriculum in all Salesian schools and centers. These values include the meaning and value of life, the dignity of the human person, freedom and responsibility, living with others in peace and harmony, justice, respect and solidarity, awareness of one's rights and respect for those of others, oneness with creation and care for the environment.**

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First offered to the students as a means of becoming good persons and honest citizens, values education has become a defining feature of the curriculum in all Salesian schools and centers. These values include the meaning and value of life, the dignity of the human person, freedom and responsibility, living with others in peace and harmony, justice, respect and solidarity, awareness of one's rights and respect for those of others, oneness with creation and care for the environment.

Graduates and past pupils continue to receive values education through regular meeting and parents are invited to formation sessions where a Sister or a resource person speaks to them of social, educational and moral issues, especially those impacting children and family life.

Working in often multicultural, multi-religious and multiethnic situations and realities, the Salesian Sisters in the FMA Province of Cambodia-Myanmar (CMY) are challenged by the ever-growing problems of their complex societies and the needs and demands of today's youth. The problems caused by migration (both internal and external), family separation and displacement seem to be increasing day by day. Hence, the great need for moral and values education.

As Don Bosco and the Salesians made use of the stage to impart moral values, the Salesian Sisters find this means an effective vehicle of education and relevant way to transmit values especially in Cambodia where the theater is an important aspect of culture.

# ***THE FRATELLI PROJECT: EDUCATION AND RESILIENCE AMONG REFUGEE CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE NATIVE CHILDREN IN LEBANON***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**ANGELA MATULLI**

Associate Director, Development, Fondazione De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ONLUS

“I will remember every happy moment I spent here at Fratelli till the day I die. I will tell my children about it too one day [...]”  
Salsabil, 16 years old

“When I grow up, I will work at Fratelli. I want to help the children the way Fratelli is helping me and my friends now.”  
Hanan, 14 years old

## **1. Syrian and Iraqi children in Lebanon**

**M**arch 2019 marks the 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the beginning of the armed conflict in Syria. Eight years of bloody conflict which caused the death or disappearance of about 500,000 people, and the largest social, economic and humanitarian crisis of the Middle East. More than 5 million Syrians left their homes, of whom one million have fled to neighboring Lebanon. Meanwhile Iraqis have also taken refuge in Lebanon, fleeing from the religious persecution orchestrated by ISIS / DAESH in the Mosul region.

It is estimated that over 1.5 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees live in Lebanon, overcrowding and straining the hosting capabilities of this country of only 4 million inhabitants. The living conditions of many Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are below the extreme poverty line. The main problems refer to a lack of decent housing, of drinkable water and food, economic insecurity, and the subject of this case study: difficult access to education.

After experiencing the trauma of war in their countries of origin, around 58% of children (aged 5 to 17) do not have access to education.

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**The living conditions of many Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are below the extreme poverty line. The main problems refer to a lack of decent housing, of drinkable water and food, economic insecurity, and the subject of this case study: difficult access to education.**

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## 2. What is the Fratelli Project?

In this context the La Salle Brothers and the Marist Brothers have chosen to intervene with the creation of the Fratelli Project.

Located in Beirut and in the outskirts of Saida, the Fratelli Project welcomes refugee children from Syria and Iraq as well as vulnerable Lebanese children. It provides education for those who would not otherwise have access to formal education, supports retention of those who were following education programs set up in governmental schools for refugees, and prepares those who are eligible for admission into public schools, through an entrance test. The two centers assist more than six hundred children and young people per day, of whom 50% are girls, aged 3 to 15 years old, who normally participate from Monday to Saturday in the various programs. During the months of July and August, the Summer School and Summer Camp provide spaces of recreation, creativity, arts and excursions for the children.

These socio-educational centers also integrate permanent psycho-social support, vocational and life-skills training for young adults, and sport activities in partnership with *Fundación Real Madrid*.

## 3. Why is Fratelli effective?

Beyond the focus on holistic personal development of younger children, Fratelli also offers courses in literacy, information technology, languages and sewing to young adults, with a constant transversal action of life-skills development, particularly working to engage mothers and siblings of the children involved in Fratelli programs (Fathers are often either absent or reluctant to get involved).

These efforts promote personal development and enhance the employability of youngsters in the precarious situation of refugees at high-risk of falling into crime, addictions, and the fundamentalism trap. It also strengthens the school-family link, so that the educational action that Fratelli promotes and the conducive environment children experience in the Fratelli atmosphere can continue at home.

## 4. Care for the professional development of staff

Implementing child safeguarding measures necessitates skills-upgrading of educators and personnel. Every year, Fratelli activates capacity-building actions to improve the knowledge and competence of its personnel.

In this sphere, great support has been provided to Fratelli by the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE) which made it possible to start a partnership with the Resilience Research Unit of the Catholic University

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of the Sacred Heart based in Milan. The program offered by these expert organizations forms educators and social workers into “tutors of resilience” to enable them to help the children they serve more efficiently.

## 5. Becoming ‘Tutors of Resilience’

**I**n biology, resilience is the ability of a system to reconstruct itself after a traumatic event. Similarly, when we talk about human beings and in particular children, we mean the ability to grow and fully develop in a context of great challenges, or in the presence of difficult and/or traumatic events.

‘Tutors of Resilience’ trainees work with beneficiaries who face the risk of migration, armed conflicts or widespread poverty, and need to develop resources and soft-skills to reintegrate into a new social and cultural context.

Started in 2017, the course has become an important annual meeting for the Fratelli team. The innovative and interactive methodology equips educators and social-workers with concrete tools to help children use their inner resources to overcome trauma and become resilient in the vulnerable circumstances in which they live, as well as proactive agents of change for their personal and community development.

During 2017 and 2018 over 40 professionals have been trained thanks to BICE’s support and the experts of the Catholic University of Milan. The multiplier effect of this training impacts over 1000 refugee and vulnerable kids in Lebanon. The next session of training for ‘Tutors of Resilience’ will take place in October 2019.

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**‘Tutors of Resilience’ trainees work with beneficiaries who face the risk of migration, armed conflicts or widespread poverty, and need to develop resources and soft-skills to reintegrate into a new social and cultural context.**

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## 6. Building bridges, not walls

**T**he Fratelli Project began with great resistance from the Lebanese population due to the painful memory of the war, the 30-year Syrian occupation, the large number of refugees in the country and the consequences of the financial crisis that has severely shaken the Lebanese economy.

A feature that deserves to be mentioned is that the core idea that underlies Fratelli since the beginning is the promotion of dialogue, of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, in a context where a diversity of conflicts sadly merges. Children and youth attending Fratelli programs have experienced traumas and a past of violence which they reflect in their daily human relationships. Most Lebanese still have open wounds deriving from the decades of war between Lebanon and Syria, the sorrow Lebanese families have lived in the past regains strength in front of the numerous refugees present in the country. International economic crisis and politics do not help. On the contrary the language of media and of these spheres of public life is a language of clash, a violent language.

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The tool that Fratelli started to use to promote progressive openness among the different communities involved is encounter and mutual knowledge. Fratelli team started inviting people, first of all Lasallian and Marist schools' population, scouts, international volunteers from all around the world to visit Fratelli programs in *Rmeileh* and in *Bourj-Hammoud*.

People started to know each other, relationships thrive and prejudice and bias disappeared paving the way to solidarity.

Today, the Fratelli Project is a beacon of hope for the entire community, hosting volunteers from all over the world, including young Lebanese. It is inspired by the values of justice, peace, fraternity and hope, providing educational and recreational activities for all the beneficiaries entrusted to its care.

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**The Fratelli Project works to build bridges and to destroy walls of prejudice among populations, to promote dignity and human rights, to ensure that vulnerable children have equitable access to quality education in a protected and inclusive environment to return their rights stolen by violence.**

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The Fratelli Project works to build bridges and to destroy walls of prejudice among populations, to promote dignity and human rights, to ensure that vulnerable children have equitable access to quality education in a protected and inclusive environment to return their rights stolen by violence. The main message of the Fratelli Project is that ALL children and youth have the right to quality education, no matter their situation and their provenance. Human beings recognize each other and immediately want to help each other; this is the 'miracle' Fratelli wishes to continue witnessing every day.

"The only thing I will miss badly when I go back to Syria is Fratelli. I don't know how it's going to be without the Brothers and teachers. I hope I can stay here forever."  
(Tasneem Hamsho, 17 years old )

# ***SEXUAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION: FOR BETTER RATHER THAN WORSE***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

INÈS DE FRANCLIEU

Founder of *Com' je t'aime*

**T**he concept of positive sexual and emotional education, increasingly used by parents and educators, is relatively new and brings both good and bad news. The good news is that explaining the meaning of love, of sexual otherness, and of the transmission of life allows a child to grow up with confidence and to develop into a free person.

The bad news is that beautiful messages can be easily degraded and that, what contributes to the development of a person, can also destroy them; that something beautiful can be turned into something ugly, and that there is only one step between wonderment and voyeurism. What should be reassuring, should not also convey fear and disgust.

While some parents have always been able to talk to their children about the beauty of the sexual body made to give life, and to talk about the life that springs from a union of bodies expressing a union of hearts – in short, love – thinking about emotional and sexual education is a relatively recent approach. Indeed, this field has long remained taboo under the influence of a Jansenist philosophy, which despises the body and leaves doubt about sexuality.

Using words which do not denigrate the body, but which express and respect the transcendental nature of each person requires honesty, but also delicacy. Notably, it includes biological explanations. However, the words used should, above all, reflect the profound meaning of the acts performed.

That being said, the question is whether this field of emotional education inherently belongs only to the family sphere. Some say that it does, since sexuality is part of the intimacy and existential aspect of every person.

Unfortunately, many parents remain reluctant to discuss these issues with their children, often feeling helpless in the face of their child's questions, not knowing how to approach this area or what words to use. In short, there is little or no dialogue on these topics in many families.

At the same time, the field of sexual education has moved into the educational environment in both primary and secondary schools. The deconstruction of many families and the malaise of young people living in an over-sexualized society, are not unrelated to this takeover by the State of a domain formerly restricted to the family alone.

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**The good news is that explaining the meaning of love, of sexual otherness, and of the transmission of life allows a child to grow up with confidence and to develop into a free person. The bad news is that beautiful messages can be easily degraded and that, what contributes to the development of a person, can also destroy them.**

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**In this context, the question is not whether emotional and sexual education is needed in primary and secondary education, but rather how to approach emotional and sexual education and what words to use.**

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**School curriculum often only discusses the body. Because the person is reduced to merely a body and thus to the body's impulses, sexuality is presented as an obligatory passage, a body technique that must be as effective as possible to provide maximum pleasure.**

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**Children at the end of primary and early secondary school must be told that this sexual body is made to express love someday, and thus sometimes to give life, to reconcile body and heart, sexuality and life.**

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Moreover, the evolution of communication technology increasingly giving access to pornographic content to younger children, urges us to communicate the truth on these issues.

In this context, the question is not whether emotional and sexual education is needed in primary and secondary education, but rather how to approach emotional and sexual education and what words to use.

### 1. When to start then?

**T**he figures are alarming: 80% of boys are exposed to pornography before the age of 14, and 50% before the age of 12.<sup>1</sup> "Human reproduction" is often an obligatory course in the final year of primary school.

Our children live in a world of voyeurism without taboos. Voyeurism is an even more serious issue when it comes to violent sexuality, totally uncorrelated with love, as is the case of pornography. 70 % of pornography watched by minors passes through the mobile phone. What has been seen at home or in the streets is reported to peers in the school yard. With mobile and unsupervised Internet access by younger and younger children, playgrounds are becoming places of sexual experimentation.

In middle and high schools, the noble goal of teaching young people about sexuality is often limited to health prevention, the sole aim of which is to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. School curriculum often only discusses the body. Because the person is reduced to merely a body and thus to the body's impulses, sexuality is presented as an obligatory passage, a body technique that must be as effective as possible to provide maximum pleasure. All kinds of sexual practices are then explained and justified. Peer pressure is relentless. Pregnancy becomes a tragedy to be avoided at all costs via contraceptive methods.

### 2. Where has love gone?

**T**his is a matter of great urgency. From an early age, our children are in need of the great truth that sexuality is not just about the body. Pope Paul VI's description of the Church as an "expert in humanity" tells us that revealing the beauty of humanity is deeply Christian. In his "Theology of the Body", Pope John Paul II renewed our gaze of wonder on sexuality. In this same spirit, *Com' je t'aime* has built a pedagogy, which aims to reveal the reality of the human person, our deep vocation and our universal aspirations, in a way that is understandable to young people living in a de-Christianized world.

Children at the end of primary and early secondary school must be told that this sexual body is made to express love someday, and thus sometimes to give life, to reconcile body and heart, sexuality and life. Anthropology

will explain to them who they really are: a body, of course, the physical manifestation of an invisible reality – as well as a mind, and a heart. These three dimensions (body, mind, and heart) cannot be separated and therefore interact. “What I do with my body, will touch my heart”. “What I look at with my eyes, can do good to my heart when I look at something beautiful, but can also terribly damage my heart when I see something violent, vulgar, or pornographic”. “I can hurt my heart with my body.”

The mind allows me to guide the body so that I do not become a slave to it. Considering and mastering the desires of one’s body leads to interior freedom.

There is an urgent need to allow children to marvel at this body made to love, to make them understand that love is the most precious thing in life and the only thing that can lead to real and lasting joy. When a child can admire his body, and understand what it is meant for, he/she is then ready to respect his/her own body and that of others. This is called purity and means that children must learn to stop mocking others’ bodies, making vulgar comments in the playground, looking at others in a degrading way, etc.

For children whose hearts have already been hurt by degrading images and violent or false statements, these interventions can reassure them about the truth of sexuality: body language can say how much we love each other.

As for the older children in middle school and high school, they desperately need to hear about love, and not just about sex and danger which is often conveyed by textbooks and natural science classes. They should be told that it is not a question of protecting themselves from love, but of protecting love as an eminently precious good. This is a matter of emergency, equal to providing help to people in great danger.

This anthropology is also necessary to understand who we are in order to help the young person recognize the deep meaning and longings of his heart. It is up to adults to guide him/her on this steep path of building lasting love which leads to happiness. Each break-up carries a wound of the heart, whose scars take time to fade and which undermine happiness.

It is so important for young people to discover that differences are enriching. Sexual difference allows union and enables life. Acknowledging the difference in our gender psychologies and in our emotional expectations allows us to experience the richness of complementarity.

Finally, *Com’ je t’aime* seeks to help children and teenagers understand that friendship is the foundation of love. Friendship makes it possible to know a person in truth, with their qualities and flaws, and, thus, to choose them one day in full knowledge of the facts. Friendship between boys and girls requires a form of silence: keeping silent about the emerging romantic feeling in order to let those feelings mature or die. Silence guarantees one’s freedom to observe others as they really are, without being blinded by emotions or being overwhelmed by the bodies, which are beginning to

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experience desire. Pleasure attracts because it is immediate, but happiness is a process and therefore requires time. Helping young people to think about the life they want to live, gives them the keys to future happiness. This means that they must freely renounce to some immediate pleasures in order to achieve greater happiness. Choosing one's life requires freedom from external pressure and a certain interior liberty, which is a true source of happiness.

### 3. Com' je t'aime<sup>2</sup>

In this spirit, and using experiences gained in over 750 presentations in private Catholic institutions in more than 10 years, my husband and I decided to create the association *Com' je t'aime*. The aim of this association is to convey a message of beauty about the sexual body and its purpose: love. Our teachers, trained in the *Com' je t'aime* pedagogy, have two targets. First, children and young people will be divided in age groups and taught to admire and respect sexuality, the language of the body that expresses true love. Secondly, parents and educators are invited to participate in conferences presenting them with the tools for a fair, respectful and age-appropriate dialogue. In-depth training workshops complete the core curriculum for those who want to be even better equipped in answering the questions of young people facing a hyper-sexualized world and most often pornography.

1) Children up to 12 years old are gathered for two non-consecutive hours in single-sex groups in order to preserve the privacy of the children. We begin with anthropology, and attempt to answer the question, "Who am I?" We reveal to children their ability to perform free and therefore responsible acts. We talk about the biological functions of the body. This helps them understand how the body works and to realize that sexual functions are those of life; that life will flow from sexual intercourse, that is, from this language of the body that says love. Love and life are linked, and life is born out of sexual difference. After realizing the beautiful purpose of sexuality, we make children aware that they are called to manifest it through their behavior: to refrain from mockery, to control the way they look at others, to live beautiful friendships and not to be embroiled in shallow and fleeting romances.

The testimonies of the children following the interventions are touching:

"Before, I was afraid of this subject, now I'm reassured."  
(A 10-year-old girl)

"I thought it was dirty, now I think it's beautiful! Thank you."  
(An 11-year-old girl)

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After realizing the beautiful purpose of sexuality, we make children aware that they are called to manifest it through their behavior: to refrain from mockery, to control the way they look at others, to live beautiful friendships and not to be embroiled in shallow and fleeting romances.

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“I understand, we’re not sheep [...] I’m not going to follow others when they make fun of the body.”

(A 10-year-old boy)

2) We also give a three-hour session for teenagers who are divided in single-sex groups in order to help free them from self-consciousness. Here, they work to answer the question: “What do I want to live?”

We start from an anthropology that describes the human person and we then give the tools to build lasting love and real joy. They realize that they yearn to be loved in truth, that is, for who they are, and not only for their bodies; but also, that giving one’s body is giving everything and that the wounds of the heart take time to heal.

The testimonies of young people following our interventions are often very moving:

“I didn’t realize the difference between pleasure and happiness. It changes everything! Thank you for coming to talk to us.”

(A 16-year-old boy)

“I thought you were going to talk to us about sexuality, and in fact you talked about love. It feels good! That’s what I would like to experience!” (A 17-year-old girl)

“You’re right, I feel so trapped in my relationship!”

(A 15-year-old girl)

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**They realize that they yearn to be loved in truth, that is, for who they are, and not only for their bodies; but also, that giving one’s body is giving everything and that the wounds of the heart take time to heal.**

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## NOTES

1. Olivier Florant, *Halte au porno*, Éd. du Cerf

2. <https://www.comjetaime.com>



# ***THE TEEN STAR PROGRAM***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**SR. DR. HANNA KLAUS, PHD**

Founder of Teen STAR, USA

**A**dolescence is a time of remarkable self-discovery and self-definition. In order to establish their unique identity, teens will often distance themselves from their parents' world view, religion, community, etc. Teens still need parental love, approval and support, but must navigate their own rapidly-changing bodies and emotions. They can often be seen alternating between rejection of their parents and displaying a deep need for affection. Their peer group becomes very important during this period, particularly if the home is dysfunctional. Adolescence is indeed a challenging time – not only for the teen but for the entire family. Amid this physical and emotional turbulence, teens must choose between the many conflicting messages received in the home, culture, society and media.

Teen STAR (Sexuality Teaching in the context of Adult Responsibility) is a developmental curriculum which utilizes experience of the body's fertility patterns to discover the values and derive the norms. It teaches responsible decision-making and communication skills in the area of sexual behaviour; enhances teens' self-understanding and self-esteem; moves teens from being victims of their hormones to being in control; demands self-discipline – which is counter-cultural; offers methods to reject peer, as well as media and pressure; affirms virtues, but is not moralistic; and treats human intercourse as a gift to be respected and valued. During the school year, trained Teen STAR teachers offer weekly or fortnightly programs. When offered in faith-based settings, teachers may link their religious teachings to the basic curriculum. With agreement of the school director, pastor or group director, a letter is sent to the parents of the potential participants inviting them to a meeting to explain the program. Teens are then invited to participate, with parental consent.

Some of our teachers are sent by their schools, others volunteer. We ask our teachers to uphold the values they teach. Teenagers are very sensitive to inauthenticity and see in the teacher's examples to look up to. A 35-hour training workshop equips teachers to offer the program in their first practicum year. Experienced teachers can become trainers after two years' experience.

The middle school program addresses early adolescence (aged 12 to 13). In developmentally-appropriate programs we begin with teens' questions about their bodies. "What do our bodies say?" Lessons in anatomy and physiology are taught in gender-separated classes (in order for teenagers to

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**Lessons in anatomy and physiology are taught in gender-separated classes (in order for teenagers to feel more comfortable talking openly about their respective bodies) while topics concerning relationships, responsibility and decision-making can be taught coeducationally.**

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feel more comfortable talking openly about their respective bodies) while topics concerning relationships, responsibility and decision-making can be taught coeducationally.

The high school program addresses middle adolescence (aged 14 to 16) when abstract thinking is developing. The program addresses the many bodily changes occurring at this time. With parental consent, the program uses experiential learning to recognize and learn about the ovulatory cycle, menstruation and fertility. Once understood, girls can correlate their findings with the feelings elicited by the hormones and their possible impacts on behavior. We have found that it requires on average three ovulatory cycles before the girls feel in possession of their body and fertility. By then they have learned that the length of their luteal phase – the time from ovulation until their next period – is the same length each month<sup>1</sup>, and they can predict the onset of their next period.

Once girls understand their cycles, they acquire control and the ability to make independent, informed decisions. At the same time, students begin to talk more about these issues with their parents, thus establishing new levels of parent-child communication.

Established Teen STAR programs have developed widely over the past few years and exist in Austria, Canada, Chile, Congo, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Uganda, U.K. and USA are qualified to train teachers, while smaller programs in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Burma, Central African Republic, Ecuador, Kenya, Jamaica, Madagascar, Pakistan, Portugal, Senegal are training students.

In Ethiopia, for example, sex and menstruation are taboo subjects. One parent reported her joy of finally being able to talk with her daughter about these previously forbidden topics.

While boys do not have a monthly cycle, they have many questions about their physical reactions, changes and the impacts of external stimuli and emotions on their reactions, as well as how to master them. They need a safe environment to discuss these issues and a male teacher who can help support students in their self-determination and model positive masculine behavior in both speech and behavior. Boys also need time to integrate their paternal capacity and its inherent responsibility into their own self-understanding. They are invited to chart their emotions in order to better understand their physical reactions.

An example refers to a boy who reported that he stopped drinking beer after school since he began Teen STAR. He brought his friends home to do schoolwork instead. Later his father reported the same thing at the parents' meeting, and further added, "I am the government education officer in this district. I have 22 schools and I want Teen STAR in Ethiopia in all of them!" Since then, we trained his teachers.

The final program for late adolescence (aged 18 and more) and young adults is called Holistic Sexuality. It is a lecture/discussion Program in which topics are selected by participants and include fertility and charting of emotions by both women and men. Thus, the Holistic Sexuality Program can be coeducational, since the youngsters are grown up enough to talk about their body without feeling embarrassed. In university settings, participants often ask to bring their friends. The program at the Catholic University of Daegu (South Korea), for example, was so popular that it had to be expanded to four sections. The Holistic Sexuality Program is taught in the chaplaincies at Makerere University in Kampala (Uganda), Hosanna and Adrigat Universities in Ethiopia, the University of Dallas in Texas (USA) as well as in two crisis pregnancy centers in the United States.

Individual interviews with teachers/facilitators are integral to all Teen STAR courses to offer a personalized approach, to learn what students have retained from the courses, to understand their social life, and if necessary, to offer guidance if the participant is engaged in risky behavior. Any disclosure is governed by the confidentiality agreement signed in the consent form.

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# COMPARATIVE STUDY, CHILE

## ✕ Behavioral outcomes

	Study	Controls	sig.
✕ N males	251	195	
✕ N females	147	147	
✕ % transitions virgin – non-virgin			
✕ Males	8.8	17.6	p=<0.004
✕ Females	3.4	12.4	p=<0.001
✕ Discontinuation of intercourse *			
✕ Rate increase	20%	9%	p=<0.03
✕ Resumption of intercourse	0	11%	p=<0.04

✕ \* No intercourse within the last three months of the program

✕ Vigil P et al. J Ped & Adol. Gyn 2005:212

We administer anonymous behavioral outcome questionnaires at the end of each course and have demonstrated support for both primary and secondary abstinence by female and male participants. Primary abstinence – defined as remaining sexually uninvolved – averages 95%. One to 2/3 of sexually-experienced students discontinue sexual activity three months before the end of the course on average (which is the definition of abstinence of the US Department of Health, Center for Disease Control and Prevention<sup>2</sup>).

To date we have taught Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist and traditional religious adherents, as well as students who profess no religious adherence. We have found that all people are interested in learning to understand themselves.

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**To date we have taught Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist and traditional religious adherents, as well as students who profess no religious adherence.**

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NOTES

1. Normal luteal phases are from 11-16 days long but vary by no more than 24 hours for a given woman
2. Klaus H, Bryan LM, Bryant ML, Fagan MU, Harrigan MB, Kearns F. Fertility awareness / natural family planning for adolescents and their families: report of multisite pilot project.1987. Int J Adolesc Med Health. 1987;3(2):101-19.
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# ***HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES BE USED TO SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF HUMAN VALUES?***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**DR. JUAN GARCÍA-GUTIÉRREZ, PHD**

Faculty of Education, National Distance Education University (UNED), Madrid and New Humanity, Geneva

## **1. Introduction**

**T**he digital environment is of great concern not only for professors, communicators and families, but also for governments, political leaders, and even religious leaders. In fact, Pope Francis recently referred to the digital environment as “an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter, and exchange between people, as well as access to information and knowledge” and as an opportunity for “social and political engagement and active citizenship.” However, he also warns us about “forms of control as subtle as they are invasive,” and about the creation of “mechanisms for the manipulation of consciences and of the democratic process”<sup>1</sup>.

Due to the two-sided nature of technology (positive and negative uses and senses), it is necessary to put a pedagogy in place which helps us to reflect on the meaning of technology, rather than being limited to its utility. That is to say, an education in technology must include and stress the human element, which cannot be lost under any circumstances or in any environment. It is not enough to know that using digital technology is necessary. First and most importantly, we must reflect on the purpose of digital technology and why it must remain linked to human values like creativity, critical thinking, solidarity and prudence.

In this essay, we will examine how to use technology to promote human values, the “spirit of brotherhood” and human solidarity as it has been developed successively by the United Nations Special Rapporteurs appointed for this purpose<sup>3</sup>. To demonstrate these principles in action, we will look at a service-learning called “Spanish Live” (*Español en Vivo*) developed by the innovation group COETIC of the Faculty of Education at the National Distance Education University (UNED), Madrid.

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## 2. Promoting human values through virtual service-learning

**C**an digital technologies help us to grow as human beings? Is it possible to pass on values through cyberspace? Can technologies help us to understand and accept each other and our differences? Can we develop civic commitment regarding global citizenship by means of cyberspace? Pedagogical literature shows that international organizations are concerned that universities and other institutions of higher education are focusing on students' technical and professional training, and thus their employability, to the detriment of their social skills, character, civic responsibility and engagement. In 2017, the European Union recommended ensuring that "higher education institutions are not ivory towers, but civic-minded learning communities connected to their communities<sup>4</sup>."

This is the path in which service-learning methodology is heading. It is known that service-learning can adopt various names like "community service," "learning from community volunteer work", "community-based learning", "civic engagement" etc. All refer to a form of community-based education. To clarify this active and practical methodology, two vectors help identify service-learning projects as opposed to other practices developed in universities. The two vectors are community service and intentional learning<sup>5</sup>.

In activities highlighting the service component we find university volunteering programs, university cooperation, and community service. In these cases, the focus is on the help, or the alleviation, of a social need, and less on the practical skills learned by the students. When the emphasis is on intentional learning, other activities appear such as work placement, field work, and internships. This vector emphasizes the link between the practical activity and the learning of materials, and does not focus on community collaboration and on addressing problems or social needs.

Service-learning projects however constitute a type of active education based on experience, in which learning, skills development, and community service are all combined in a single and unitarian project. A link is established between learning and service in such a way that knowledge and the learning environment have a humanitarian intentionality: to make a difference in the community. At the same time, community service becomes a practical and real experience for learning and the development of skills and values.

Usually, the word 'community' transmits an idea of closeness, but this is not necessarily territorial or geographical. In fact, developing a relationship with the community through service-learning can help to reach bigger or more distant communities, and ultimately, connect to the idea of global community, and therefore a responsibility toward humanity. In these cases, service-learning is an international global method, since the experience takes place in developing countries and addresses the notion of global

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citizenship. At the same time, this facilitates the introduction of content related to sustainable development, to give just one example.

In addition, the possibility exists to project this methodology into cyberspace through digital technologies. This is known as online or virtual service-learning<sup>6</sup>. This method incorporates and unites the positive effects of face-to-face service-learning to the pedagogical possibilities of the internet and digital technologies based on the notion of 'ubiquitous learning' in particular. Specifically, with the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies, 'ubiquitous learning'<sup>7</sup> is introduced, breaking down temporary barriers as a result, such as geographic impediments. Said another way, learning is made possible in any place and at any time. The notion of access and portability therefore is key. Drawing on these characteristics, service-learning is learning at any time and in any place, depending on the application environment, and supported by digital tools that allow the inclusion of different participants in the formation process<sup>8</sup>. Through service-learning, we can also pedagogically spread the development of civic engagement through cyberspace.

In this context, 'Spanish Live' initially came about in response to needs expressed by a group of students studying Spanish at the University of Porto Novo in Benín. It is a pioneer project in service-learning, and was developed in the context of distance education that is web and digital technology-based. The project is geared towards promoting human values, such as civic responsibility, by means of intercultural dialogue and global citizenship development. This pedagogical experience is therefore presented as a case study connecting the advocacy of human values, as indicated by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Kishore Singh, with the Internet and digital technologies. This project was developed by the Innovation Group COETIC at UNED together with various African universities: the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) and the *Escuela Normal Superior of Porto Novo* (Benín), Strathmore University (Kenya), and the University of Dschang (Cameroon).

The project is relatively simple. 'Spanish Live' fosters a series of virtual encounters between Spanish and African university students, with the goal of practicing Spanish live. The project came about as a result of the African students' need to speak and practice their Spanish with native speakers. At the same time, the Spanish students develop various intersectional skills, as laid out in the skills map of the university, particularly those related to ethics and civic engagement.

During the development phase, students on both sides carried out various preparatory activities both individually and in groups. The Spanish students prepared for interviews with their African classmates using themes and content from their courses as a starting point. This way, prior to the virtual meeting, they become interested in learning about their African classmates' lives and countries, while preparing a series of questions to

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**'Spanish Live' fosters a series of virtual encounters between Spanish and African university students, with the goal of practicing Spanish live.**

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shape the discussion. Once the interviews are prepared, they are sent to the coordinators at the African universities, as well as the students, so they can prepare their answers before the virtual meeting. Finally, the online interviews of at least three times 30 minute sessions are carried out via various instant messaging programs (Skype, WhatsApp etc.).

### 3. What has been learned from the virtual service-learning project?

One significant result has been the verification, thanks to the Internet and digital technologies, of not only the viability of this type of online approach, but also the warm acceptance between the students. The development of a virtual modality in service-learning is necessary because it allows distance and/or online-learning institutions to offer innovative educational experiences which some students would not otherwise have due to work, family, disability, etc. Additionally, it can be verified that by relying on appropriate methodology and technology, the virtual environment is conducive to developing ethical and civic skills. In these cases, it is important that digitization does not replace the presence of a person or said another way, that technologies do not mask or simulate the reality of a personal encounter, but instead drive and facilitate a face-to-face between students.

Results among students have been very positive. The majority of the students had not known about or participated in this type of service-learning projects before, but once they decided to participate, they made a wide range of discoveries regarding learning and skills development. As indicated previously in other projects, the results observed concerned three separate fields: learning related to different pedagogical cultures; learning pertaining to global citizenship and international dialogue; and lastly, learning related to the development of communication skills<sup>9</sup>. Since the academic year of 2018/2019, a renewed evaluation process called the 'Intercultural Field-Notebook' allows students to address different issues, reflecting on and recounting their own personal experience throughout the project. From this perspective, the three objectives most valued by the students were (in this order): to develop civic engagement through global citizenship, and use intercultural dialogue as a way to overcome prejudices and foster a culture of peace; to become familiar with the design and implementation of innovative pedagogical activities; and to get to know different pedagogical cultures existing in an international context. Ultimately, this type of cyberspace project offers the possibility to try out, in a practical way, different kinds of learning and skills-building. Above all, this type of experience helps to construct and conceive the Internet as a place of solidarity and encounter.

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## 4. Conclusion

It is less necessary to remember that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (and this ‘full development’ also includes the religious or spiritual dimension of human being).<sup>10</sup>

We recognize that digital technology easily extends and prolongs the educational phenomenon by diluting the boundaries between formal and non-formal educational parameters, in a lifelong learning continuum, where non-formal education takes on a greater role. However, one of the consequences of the irruption of the Internet and technologies in education has been the ease with which private providers of education multiply. What can be supposed, as the former UN Special Rapporteur indicates, is a threat to education as a public good; the promotion of material values to the detriment of the humanist mission of education; and a impairment of students’ abilities to think critically.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it is necessary that the international organizations encourage and support a broad reflection on the so-called “fourth generation human rights” or “digital rights”. An example of this are the good practices followed by the Children Rights Commitment. First, through the “Day of General Discussion on Digital Media and Children’s Rights” (2014), and then with the “Concept Note for a General Comment on Children’s Rights in Relation to the Digital Environment” (2019).

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**However, one of the consequences of the irruption of the Internet and technologies in education has been the ease with which private providers of education multiply.**

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### NOTES

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*Chapter 3:*  
*Quality Education*

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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Many studies and internationally adopted documents including resolutions, conventions and declarations address the various aspects of the right to education and its quality. Usually most often, they focus on issues of access for different population groups (especially young people, girls and women); on adult education; on the management of education; on its public and private funding; and on teacher training. It is noteworthy that although the quality of education has always appeared in the texts, it had been indicated in general terms and mainly defined by quantitative parameters.<sup>1</sup>

According to the latest international data, there are still about 262 million (18% of the world population) young people, children and adolescents (aged 6 to 17), who are still out of school.<sup>2</sup> The rate of out-of-school children in primary education decreased from 15% to 9% between 2000 and 2008, however it has remained unchanged in subsequent years.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many adolescents of lower secondary school age are not enrolled in secondary schools. The rate of out-of-school adolescents (aged 12 to 14) fell from 25% to 17% between 2000 and 2010, but has since then stagnated. Between 2012 and 2015, the rate of out-of-school adolescents decreased to 14% in middle-income countries, while in low-income countries it decreased to 36%. Finally, 138 million young people (36% of the world population) of upper secondary school (aged 15 to 17) are not enrolled. Adult literacy rates have improved in recent decades around the world, but 750 million adults still cannot read.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that literacy programs have produced the best results where actions went beyond reading and writing skills, and provided knowledge that allows people to respond better to the fundamental needs of living in their own environment.<sup>5</sup>

The denial of the right to education continues to be linked to wealth, with large school attendance rate gaps between the world's richest and poorest. Significant financial resources are still needed for poor countries. Compared to low-income countries, children in richer countries are nine times more likely to complete upper secondary education. A quarter of all countries spend less than 4% of their GDP, and less than 15% of their budget, on education, which is well below the required minimum.<sup>6</sup> Enrolling children in school and enabling them to complete a quality education remains a priority.

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The question of the quality of education is not sufficiently defined in relation to individuals and society, as mentioned in most of the official documents. Work-relevant skills, such as those in information and communications technology (ICT), are often cited without satisfactorily defining their essential components.

The question “What is quality education?” leads to many and varied answers. A significant body of literature advocates that quality education must, for example, “prepare children for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”; that students must be ready for the labor market; or that education should integrate new technologies. But, whether a particular education system is of high or poor quality can only be determined by examining the extent to which specific objectives are achieved. Governments, international and non-governmental organizations, teachers, families and learners may not see these goals in the same way, but for most of these groups, education objectives include at least three elements: improving cognitive skills; the promotion of attitudes and values that are deemed necessary for good citizenship; and gaining the ability to effectively participate in the life of the community. Quality must, thus, also be judged on the basis of equality.

The evolution of requirements and the parameters to which quality and teaching must respond recall the conclusions of two reports<sup>7</sup> presented to UNESCO after numerous international consultations. They confirm the role of education and the characteristics it must possess to meet the multiple needs of individuals and societies, facing a rapidly changing world and evolving technologies.

These two reports have made it possible to specify the essential objectives of education in a series of guidelines, forecasts (content and structures) and provisions (material and human resources) necessary for the development of appropriate educational policies and programs. The achievement of these goals, still valid today, should benefit as many people as possible, and place lifelong learning at the heart of society. According to the Delors Report, this should be based on four principle pillars:

- “Learning to know by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity of working in-depth on a small number of subjects; learning to learn throughout life;
- Learning to do, to acquire the competence to deal with many situations and work as a team;
- Learning to live together by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence;
- Learning to be, in order to better develop one’s personality and to be able to act with an ever-increasing capacity for autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility.”

These reports have presented new concepts on the future of education, both formal and informal. They have encouraged the creation of quality education systems capable of training people to respond to the problems

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of our time, to act for change and to anticipate and prepare for events, to shape people with a strong individuality motivated by initiative and self-realization, able to know and assume their responsibilities. Education systems, therefore, which strengthen the spirit of independence (as opposed to that of obedience and conformism), and which, through humanistic aims,<sup>8</sup> envision the global development of society, and conceive the learner as an independent individual and a member of society.

In the same line of thought, a very large number of documents, decisions, recommendations and research examine the need to ensure the right to education through the provision of quality education.<sup>9</sup>

It is also worth recalling, among the major landmarks, two decisive events which have prolonged the reflection on the right to education and its quality, in order to translate those reflections into action. The first was the World Conference on Education for All (1990) in Jomtien, Thailand. This marked a new beginning in ensuring the right to education for all, in making basic education universal, and in eliminating illiteracy.

Ten years after this conference, the global commitment to education was renewed at the World Education Forum (2000) in Dakar, Senegal.<sup>10</sup> The Forum represented one of the major events of the International Decade for Education in the Field of Human Rights (1995–2004) which once again stimulated the debate on education and its quality, but also on the indivisibility, complementarity and interdependence of human rights. The Forum recalled the need of: “Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills.”<sup>11</sup>

The Dakar Forum adopted the “International Strategy to put the Dakar Framework for Action on ‘Education for All’ into operation” (April 2000). Its objective was to strengthen the international consensus around the Dakar vision, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in education.

Among the international actions that followed, is worth recalling the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim the United Nations Literacy Decade from 2003 to 2012, as well as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2014. These initiatives have again stimulated the debate on education, its quality and its role in society.

In order to meet the challenges of globalization and reconfirm educational goals, the International Community has adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>12</sup> These objectives underline the necessity of access to quality education in a global and universal approach. Objective 4 is to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”, calling for the joint efforts of all actors in civil society. Target 4.4 (“by 2030, substantially increase the number

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of youths and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”)<sup>13</sup> may seem very limited in defining the set of skills that young people and adults need for the world of work. However, this innovative indicator aims, first, to transmit skills beyond reading, writing and numeracy. Second, it tries to identify skills becoming universally important in the labor market. Finally, it points out the need of reflecting on ways to assimilate knowledge acquired ‘inside and outside the school’.

More recently, with the same goal of “Education for All”, UNESCO organized the World Education Forum (2015) in Incheon, Republic of Korea,<sup>14</sup> in partnership with other international organizations and the participation of more than 160 countries. The Incheon Declaration: Education 2030, adopted at the Forum, defines a new fifteen-years vision of education and recalls the goal of achieving an “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.” It confirms education as a fundamental human right, called to play a key role in sustainable development and respect for human rights. “We, the representatives of the international education community, stand strongly united on a new global approach to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for children, youth and adults, while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.”<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted as a result of a broad and open consultation process, demonstrating the determined commitment of countries and the International Educational Community to achieving a “holistic, ambitious, inclusive and inspiring education agenda for 2016–2030.”<sup>16</sup>

All these documents, resulting from international consensus, refer to the quality of education. The documents stress the importance of education, but do not indicate the quality parameters and indicators that would enable it to be measured.

Some research primarily uses quantitative indicators<sup>17</sup> to measure the quality of education. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a set of studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),<sup>18</sup> measures the performance of the education systems of member and non-member countries through school performance on standardized national and international tests. The evaluation, likewise, indicates the best performances, without insisting on, or detailing, aspects of the quality of education or its contents.

An analysis of other documents of international importance highlights that the emphasis is often on the ability to successfully integrate into the world of work. An example is the 2008 Leaders’ Declaration at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) in Lima (Peru),<sup>19</sup> which indicates the importance of ICT in promoting sustainable development. The document, further, calls for the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to be integrated into the educational process, and adapted to the

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**The documents stress the importance of education, but do not indicate the quality parameters and indicators that would enable it to be measured.**

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rapidly changing demands of the world of work and new challenges for the 21st Century.

Among the first texts providing details on the quality, it is worth mentioning the “P21 Framework” developed in the United States with the participation of educators, experts and business leaders to define and illustrate the skills, knowledge and experiences students need to succeed in 21st Century work, life and citizenship. The Framework includes a systematic and detailed presentation, listing the competencies, attitudes and behaviors that learners must assimilate to enter the working world confidently and ready to face difficulties and the unknown.<sup>20</sup> According to the P21 Framework, learners, future citizens and workers must be able to create, evaluate and use information, media and technology effectively to succeed in a world where change is permanent and learning never ceases. An analysis of the Framework suggestions shows, above all, a utilitarian and productivist vision of the role of education.

Quality public education is the result of a broad commitment for the well-being of learners and the future of the country — a long-term strategic commitment on the part of society, governments, communities, families, parents and teachers. It cannot be the result of short-term strategies, or improvised educational or financial decisions. Its evaluation cannot be based solely on quantitative parameters.

First, quality should not be measured by the same indicators for all. The different groups and categories of learners need skills, attitudes, values and behaviors, in harmony with the demands of the integral development of the individual and the societies in which they live. At the same time, quality requirements cannot be fragmented ad infinitum. They must have common characteristics corresponding to groups of individuals and societies. Let us try to recall those that seem most important to us:

- An interdisciplinary and systemic approach to knowledge; the integration and structuring of all the educational resources of society, including those existing outside the school; assessment and recognition of experiences, knowledge and know-how acquired outside the school system.
- The ability to develop independent thinking, to think differently, to make judgements, to anticipate and make decisions. This gives a sense of capacity, self-confidence and independence. It protects against conditioning and the robotization of minds, as well as against unquestioning obedience.
- The acquisition of logical instruments for structuring information and knowledge through the application of a systemic approach in the analysis and the search for solutions; the ability to consider facts in their complexity: “If the learner does not have conceptual tools for the new facts communicated to them, they cannot understand their meaning.”<sup>21</sup>

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and teachers.**

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- The capacity to analyze: to think logically; the capacity of choice; effective and creative investment of knowledge acquired in the solution of specific problems; the ability to integrate traditional and modern knowledge.
- The consideration of cultural roots; the different aspects of multicultural and intercultural education.
- The spirit of initiative; the capacity to organize individual work; to plan short- and long-term goals; to find solutions in a multicultural environment.
- The autonomy of the learner; the encouragement of the capacities of innovation, creation, and of self-training. However, creativity requires learning to unlearn: to doubt, to question oneself, to rebel against established paradigms, to seize opportunities, in order to break new ground (refer to “Education on Ebola prevention - Missioni Don Bosco and the Salesian Educational Mission” by M. Mantovani - page 173).
- The capacity for self-assessment and the limitation of choices.
- The notion of responsibility: to know how to care for oneself without forgetting others, the notion of duty, and of a legitimate counterpart.
- The acquisition of habits of participation, coexistence, exchange and dialogue for the strengthening of the social bond, of solidarity; the need to build collective benchmarks; the ability to live in society and work in a group (refer to “The Xajanaj Kahalepana Socio-Educational Project: for the Right to Quality Education of Children and Youth in the Marginal Urban Area of Chinautla, Guatemala” by E. M. Sendra Gutiérrez - page 159).
- The transmission of knowledge and procedures; learning to learn, to teach, to work with others.
- New culture of equality based on the principles of human rights, in which all can see themselves.
- The indispensable inclusion of the ethical, moral and humanist aspects of the right to education, but also of the values that it encompasses: honesty, uprightness, sincerity, trust in human nature. Simple and generally accepted principles regarding morality but which constitute its foundation. This requirement highlights the values shared by all humanity and serves as an instrument of regulation in order to avoid cultural relativism that may deny universal referents or assume referent identities frozen in a radical otherness: fertile ground for extremism.
- The choice of the language(s) of instruction: the economic, social and cultural aspects of the introduction of the mother tongue (national language, lingua franca), or one or more foreign languages as the basis for teaching; the competence of education in multilingual and multicultural environments. The choice of the language of instruction used at school is of the utmost importance for the quality of education.

Initial instruction in the learner's first language improves learning outcomes and then reduces repetition of year and drop-out rates.

- Concerning the digital world: the need to reconsider and increase the educational perspectives of ICT; the innovation of educational structures, content, methods of learning and improving access to knowledge and information without undue difficulty; the capacity to systematize that information and to use it in problem-solving (refer to "E-based Education: Breaking limitations" by P. Meyer - page 187).
- When presented with a series of ideas, the ability to accept, interpret and analyze images; to understand the role of emotion and sentiment, the influence of context in interpretation, and the deciphering of subliminal messages.
- The components and quality of teacher training: the division of tasks between trainers and new technologies (refer to "Good Practices in Primary Education: Teacher Training and Therapeutic Pedagogy" by J. Arenal Jorquera and A. H. Castillo - page 155).

## Conclusion

**E**ducation for All" cannot be achieved without improving quality. The world of tomorrow, like that of today, needs education that trains independent, creative individuals capable of developing independent thought, resistant to indoctrination; individuals with high moral qualities, full of confidence and respectful of collective benchmarks; individuals capable of managing their own destiny and living in a society that is not governed by urgency, the immediate, or the short term. A new approach to quality education is important in meeting the challenges of tomorrow.

Let us recall Noam Chomsky's vision on the role of education: "To form free beings, whose values are not accumulation and domination, but rather free association on terms of equality, sharing and solidarity, and who would cooperate with a view to common and democratic objectives".<sup>22</sup> He adds further, that it is necessary to form, "creative and independent individuals" capable of "resisting indoctrination, of managing new situations, of projecting through imagination," and of having an "intellectual self-defense."<sup>23</sup> Education is not and cannot be a mere transfer of knowledge and information but the essential factor which, by taking advantage of the vastness of information, helps to create conditions for the transfer, acquisition, assimilation and structuring of knowledge to produce specific capacities and skills. Knowledge has no value without a moral charge. Future research and curricula should focus on the ethical aspects of any form of learning. We must learn to live with principles. The absence of an emphasis on values and the understanding and acceptance of cultures and

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**The absence of an emphasis on values and the understanding and acceptance of cultures and civilizations of others, risk fueling extremism and opposition to ethnicity, race and/or religion.**

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civilizations of others, risk fueling extremism and opposition to ethnicity, race and/or religion.

The exponential development of the means of communication and information, as well as the constant progress of mobile technology, obliges decision-makers to reconsider the place of ICT, and to re-examine and reform the contents and structures of education. The integration of ICT into the educational process requires policies, strategies and long-term planning, as well as a sound assessment of impact and the synchronization of multiple processes to ensure the achievement of objectives and projects. The evaluation of the implementation of the right to education requires further reflection on its quality: research on criteria and indicators, on the indivisibility and interdependence of the human rights and quality of education. It cannot only be done by quantitative criteria (alone).

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# ***WHY FREEDOM IS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**DR. CHARLES L. GLENN, ED.D, PHD**

Professor Emeritus, Boston University

**T**he systems of public instruction established, often with much difficulty and conflict, in most Western nations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have undergone a fundamental shift of purpose over recent decades. The original purpose was to create loyal and well-behaved subjects or citizens, often as part of a nation-building project. François Guizot, when France's Minister of Education in the early 1830s, described this as establishing "a certain governance of minds" through the village schoolmaster, while the successful Piedmontese leaders of the Risorgimento insisted, "Now that Italy has been created, it is necessary to create Italians." It was perhaps in Prussia and in the United States that this need was felt most urgently and acted upon most comprehensively, while the relative tardiness of England in creating a system of popular instruction can in part be attributed to the unquestioned unity of that country and its people.

The focus of government-sponsored popular schooling was thus educational: it was concerned to form character and civic virtues. In most countries, this brought it into conflict with Catholic and (sometimes) Protestant schools that also gave priority to education on the basis of an understanding of the nature of a purposeful life and to loyalties deeper than – though not excluding – the demands of citizenship.

In recent decades, though, Western democracies have become uneasy about attempts to promote positive virtues through their public schools. A flaccid tolerance based on an extreme individualism committed to unlimited self-definition has replaced any clarity about life's purposes and demands. The focus of such schools (with a nervous attention to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)) has shifted almost exclusively to instruction in the measurable academic skills considered necessary for individual and societal success.

Meanwhile, Catholic and other faith-based schools (including the Evangelical, Islamic and Orthodox Jewish schools that have been the focus of my recent research), alongside an appropriate concern for the quality of instruction, continue to pursue educational goals based on their traditions (refer to "The Right to Education in the United States of America" by

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Recent research suggests, somewhat paradoxically, that a focus on education in this broader sense has a positive influence on the success of instruction; that schools that actively promote character and a rooted sense of life-purpose provide the resilience and self-discipline that sustain academic effort and thus measurable results.

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But contrary to his totalitarian prescription, it is the ground-level “seedbeds of virtue” – families, churches, functioning neighborhoods, schools educating on the basis of a vision of worthy lives – upon which the health of the wider society depends.

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TJ D’Agostino - page 61). This constitutes a major source of attraction to parents concerned with the influence of anomic consumerism on their children.

Recent research suggests, somewhat paradoxically, that a focus on education in this broader sense has a positive influence on the success of instruction; that schools that actively promote character and a rooted sense of life-purpose provide the resilience and self-discipline that sustain academic effort and thus measurable results.

In addition to benefits to the students who receive such character-forming education, and to their families, there is a clear benefit to society as well. Liberal democracies, and any free society, depend on the character of their citizens; Tocqueville and countless others have warned that individualism undisciplined by stable loyalties and settled dispositions would over time tear any society apart. What else, indeed, was Plato’s central concern in “The Republic”? But contrary to his totalitarian prescription, it is the ground-level “seedbeds of virtue” – families, churches, functioning neighborhoods, schools educating on the basis of a vision of worthy lives – upon which the health of the wider society depends. The civic dispositions developed by Catholic schools, as Mary Ann Glendon points out, have been shown conclusively “to foster in the nation’s citizens the skills and virtues essential to the maintenance of our democratic regime.”<sup>1</sup> In support of this, David Campbell reports that testing of American secondary school students on three dimensions of citizenship education found that “students in Catholic schools perform better than students in assigned public schools on all three objectives of an civic education – capacity for civic engagement, political knowledge, and political tolerance.”<sup>2</sup>

There are two threats to the contribution that schools with a clearly-defined educational mission, whether faith-based or pedagogically-distinctive make to their students and to the wider society.

The first is a loss of nerve on the part of school leadership and staff, a loss of confidence in the value of continuing to provide a distinctive education based upon convictions at odds with those prevalent in the wider culture. This may also take the form of uncertainty about how to present academic content in a manner informed by such an alternative worldview, or how to shape a school culture and behavioral expectations in contrast with those of the society. Unfortunately, capitulation before the expectations of the world is all too common, and is fostered by the failure of many faith-based programs for teacher preparation to help their students to think through how their work will be different from that of their peers in secular public schools.

The other threat is from government requirements that often constrain the distinctiveness of schools. These may be in the form of “strings” attached to public funding, but may also involve requirements for the awarding of diplomas, or curriculum content that must be covered in order to retain

accreditation. From the bitter resistance by Catholic schools and parents to 'education for citizenship' in Spain several decades ago to the current enforcement against Haredi (Orthodox Jewish) schools in England and Flanders, these controversies often center on government requirements to teach about sexual matters from a perspective contrary to the convictions of a faith-community and the schools to which it chooses to entrust its children.

Effective instruction can often be provided under government monopoly of schooling, as was the case in the former Soviet Union, but effective education – the formation of character and virtue – flourishes best in schools that express a distinctive understanding of how to prepare youth for a generous and deeply-rooted life. Such schools require the freedom to develop and express their distinctiveness, as well as the wisdom and courage to maintain it in the face of all the pressures for conformity. Only schools with such a character can truly educate (refer to "Freedom of Education in the Netherlands" by T. G. W. Frankmölle - page 183).

#### NOTES

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*Chapter 3:*  
*Case Studies*

# ***GOOD PRACTICES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: TEACHER TRAINING AND THERAPEUTIC PEDAGOGY***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

SR. M<sup>a</sup> JOSÉ ARENAL JORQUERA. FMA

Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice (Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco), Director, CES Don Bosco, Spain

ANA HORCAJO CASTILLO

Center of Higher Education in Humanities and Sciences Education Don Bosco

## **1. Introduction**

**T**he current and growing interest on the issue of teacher training is associated with the concern for better quality education. We must remember that the ultimate goal of education is to contribute to the integral development of the person. The educator and the way he or she works, influences the entire teaching-learning process.

## **2. Development of the activity**

**A**t the *Centro de Enseñanza Superior en Humanidades Ciencias de la Educación Don Bosco* (CES Don Bosco), future educators are formed. Students are trained to become teachers of Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT), to practice activities of awareness and inclusion in order to enter into the reality of working among people with functional diversity. These students will become specialized teachers responsible for supporting students with special educational needs in any of the educational stages (preschool, primary and secondary). As specialists, they will compensate for deficits, deficiencies, gaps, etc. that impact the integral development of their students. The goal is that, to the extent of their abilities, students with special educational needs will achieve the objectives of their educational cycle or stage.

In their future work, PT students within the field of special educational needs should be confident, aware and open to the importance of empathy, diversity and flexibility of thought.

In order to confront PT students with the reality of the teaching-learning process, and to listen to the opinions and expectation of those with functional diversity, the following activity was formulated:

A group of young people, eighteen years old and above, with intellectual functional diversity come to the university and become Special Education teachers for a day. These young people are from the *Centro Ocupacional de*

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*la Fundación Trébol*, where they carry out their work and continue their daily training. The Occupational Center integrates people with functional diversity as closely as possible into the working world.

As teachers, they share with PT students their experiences in the educational process. They talk about the differences between ordinary and special schooling. They tell students about their opinions and personal experiences; they show photos; they raise questions about teaching; they make students reflect on the role of teachers; and they share how they would like their teachers to be – that is, how they want to be supported in their schooling and academic training. All of these create an atmosphere of debate and participation among teachers and students.

The first phase of the project is complemented by a second one, in which PT students visit the Occupational Center.

The objective of this day of coexistence is to actively participate in a normal day in the routine of people with functional diversity. PT students put names and faces to the theories they have learned in the classrooms. They confront the reality in which they want to develop and grow professionally. In addition, they observe day-to-day difficulties, and how the Center adapts, so that those with intellectual functional diversity can work in an autonomous way. All this is done in a relaxed environment in which experiences and opinions are exchanged. All the while, realizing their collaborative efforts in participating in academic support and enjoying moments of rest with the students of CES Don Bosco.

### 3. Results and conclusion

Positive results are observed in both groups after both days. PT students experience certain realities in the field of functional diversity. People with functional diversity are understood as important contributing members of society – far from being mere recipients of social services. Those with intellectual functional diversity become teachers and agents of change in building a better society.

After this experience, an interview was conducted to collect impressions, experiences, feelings, experiences, emotions and points of view from the PT students who participated in the study. The students showed more interest in their future professional work, since they realized what their support for these people would really mean. They felt motivated, eager to continue training to get closer to people with special educational needs, and to support and accompany them in their academic, professional and personal growth. They learned how to approach the needs of the people with whom they will work, realizing that the teacher is not the center of the teaching-learning process, but one who asks and listens to students in order to know their rhythm, their desires and their personal interests. They understand that a teacher should ensure that people with functional

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diversity express their needs and desires, and that one of the teacher's most important tasks is to treat students as primary agents of their own lives.

In the project, people with diversity become the teachers, transmitting their knowledge and helping PT students to get closer to the role that teachers should play in this group. After this day, the PT students are able to approach the reality of functional diversity and to apply their theoretical knowledge in the field. In the future, they will approach this group with more coherent knowledge.

The same interviews were conducted with people with intellectual diversity, who played the role of teachers. These people passed on first-hand their knowledge and their experience. For this reason, they showed improved self-esteem from the feeling of being heard and having their contributions valued.

Both groups reported the same experience: a conviction that one cannot work for the improvement of the quality of life of people with functional diversity without listening to people with functional diversity themselves.

We consider that this teaching-learning process is a systemic approach that involves both teachers and students. Among them, there must be a link of listening and respecting the needs and differences of the individual.

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**In the project, people with diversity become the teachers, transmitting their knowledge and helping PT students to get closer to the role that teachers should play in this group.**

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# ***THE XAJANAJ KAHALEPANA SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL PROJECT: FOR THE RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE MARGINAL URBAN AREA OF CHINAUTLA, GUATEMALA***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

ESTRELLA MARÍA SENDRA GUTIÉRREZ

Pedro Poveda Foundation, Guatemala

**X***ajanaj Kahalepana* (“Going Forward Together” in the Mayan *Poqomam* language) is a socio-educational Project promoted by the Teresian Institution through the Pedro Poveda Foundation, with the support of the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE).

The Project contributes to quality education through services and programs, including approaches of inter-culturalism, gender equality and human rights, especially those relating to education and a life free from violence. It minimizes some of the causes of exclusion. For the children and young people in the area, *Xajanaj Kahalepana* represents one of the only opportunities for access to pedagogical and alternative spaces which promote their development and their affective, cognitive, social, artistic and spiritual growth.

Launched in 2005, the Project is based in the urban-marginal area of Chinautla, Guatemala. The local *Poqomam* and Mestizo Mayan populations are often in precarious situations and children and young people live at risk of social exclusion, not only because of poverty, but also because Chinautla is considered a ‘red zone’ with high levels of violence. Families must face the daily reality of *maras*<sup>1</sup> or gangs engaged in criminal activities. This leads to the stigmatization of the younger population, and thus a perpetual circle of exclusion.

*Xajanaj Kahalepana* has evolved to respond to the needs of the community, progressively involving various social players. Many actions are carried out in networks with other groups seeking the protection of children and youth and the promotion of their rights. This networking is a valuable resource for the follow-up of children and adolescents whose right to education has been violated, since each organization contributes with its best in creating a synergy with the whole group. Through the *Xajanaj Kahalepana* Project, the Pedro Poveda Foundation contributes to education with its experience in training based on a humanizing and transforming approach. Over 1000 children and adolescents participate annually in the Project.

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**For the children and young people in the area, *Xajanaj Kahalepana* represents one of the only opportunities for access to pedagogical and alternative spaces which promote their development and their affective, cognitive, social, artistic and spiritual growth.**

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The library, playroom and computer room are educational, friendly and violence-free spaces that contribute to the improvement of learning as well as the personal and social development of children, adolescents and young people. Parents express appreciation that their children regain the pleasure of going to school – a place where they cannot always receive personalized assistance.

The playroom promotes the right to recreation and artistic expression through games and music workshops, dance and handicrafts, workshops that favor creativity, personal growth and self-esteem, collaborative work, interaction among peers, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, gender equality, the appreciation of one's culture and intercultural coexistence. Children have the opportunity to prepare presentations exhibiting their skills to the community. Popular *batucada*-style music and dancing also provides a means of expression and participation for adolescents and young people.

The computer room provides access to new technologies and thus contributes to reducing the digital divide. For two years now, a workshop on information, computer technology and cyber bullying prevention has been offered for adolescents and young women who are initially more resistant to new technologies and more at risk of violence in social networks. These workshops offer the opportunity to reflect together and promote action on women's right to a life free from violence and of equal opportunities with men.

On occasions of commemorations or festivities, activities are organized at the Project facilities or in public spaces to raise awareness of the rights of children and to promote the need to foster safe and caring family and school environments.

In November, a holiday school allows children to enjoy their holidays developing skills and abilities through creativity while also living together and expressing their feelings and opinions during various workshops. Teachers at the public schools have noticed the advantages and positive results from the holiday school, and highly recommend it to families in the area.

Around 25 teenagers and youths constitute the volunteer and youth leadership group, which welcomes new members every year. They engage in the facilitation and follow-up of children engaged in project programs – especially those in the playroom, those held in public spaces and those who participate in the holiday school. These young leaders invest time, skills and abilities at the service of their community. They learn, together with the children to generate spaces of expression and confidence as an alternative to street violence. They unfold their potential and develop a sense of responsibility while also learning to exercise leadership, take on challenges and interact cooperatively with other adolescents and young people in order to achieve a common goal. The Project is a platform which

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connects youths and civil society groups, and allows them to participate and organize training and citizen advocacy activities. Thus, they become not only subjects, but also promoters of rights.

For young people everywhere, there is a deep need and longing to belong to a group. Boys and girls living in our areas who are in danger of becoming entangled by gangs, or *maras* involved in illicit activities find in the Project an alternative space for leisure and socialization.

The Project also includes a non-formal education program with official academic recognition for children and adolescents excluded from the formal education system due to extreme poverty, over-age or with learning or behavioral difficulties. This program allows them to attain a primary education. The roughly 40 students divided into two classes are provided with meaningful education based on their needs and interests, including affective-sexual education and education for peaceful coexistence. Teachers accompany them in a personalized way, even after the program has concluded. For most students, their social and family context is difficult and, in addition to contextualized and creative pedagogical methods, they also require nutritional support and various elements for emotional support such as listening, dialogue, and psychological assistance provided by practicing psychology students.

The educational atmosphere contributes to the promotion of well treatment, while encouraging confidence and motivation for learning. It enables children to improve their self-esteem and believe in their abilities. This program has enabled vulnerable children and adolescents, often over-aged, to have access to formal education and remain in the system, thus offering the opportunity to continue into secondary studies and for some even going on to tertiary education.

Psychological support offers students a qualified space to express themselves freely, to share their experiences, and to look for ways to feel better with themselves and their communities. It strengthens their ability to refuse offers which put them at social risk, especially from the *maras*. Evaluation has shown a positive evolution: children and adolescents who participated in the program have shown an improvement in interpersonal relations with peers.

As one participant points out: “Here in the Project, I am able to study in order to successfully validate two academic years. If it wasn’t for this opportunity, I don’t know what I would be doing. I feel supported, listened to, and happy here. I have improved my self-esteem and I am very happy to participate in flute and dancing classes. I will always thank the educators and my parents for believing in me and giving me this opportunity.” (Alison, 16-years-old, a participant in the non-formal education program)

Via training sessions, we seek to involve families, and especially women by giving them the tools to change unhelpful parenting patterns and to

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open spaces for dialogue. In these spaces they feel supported and discover that other women share the same life circumstances.

Upon completion of primary school, those who wish to continue their studies are offered support and personal or group follow-up through a scholarship program.

In recent times, the Pedro Poveda Foundation has intensified its work with teachers in public schools through a teacher training program that aims to improve the educational quality of their professional practice as well as fostering spaces for dialogue and significant follow-up in teachers' lives. Teachers are trained to enforce, at least in the public schools, the rights of children, adolescents and young people to a life free from violence. When teachers evaluate what they have gained from their training and classroom support, they point out that they have been stimulated to be closer to students who are open to share their situations, their fears and problems, and thus, as educators, they can go beyond the academic level to offer help and guidance.

The Pedro Poveda Foundation is committed to contribute to justice and equality in education in order to allow for the recognition of the rights and dignity of children and youth. Thanks to the support and solidarity of BICE it allows Chinautla children's and youth's dreams to come true.

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#### NOTES

1. Maras – together with pandillas - are an unfortunately very widespread phenomenon in Central America. Maras are characterized by transnational roots that are linked to migratory patterns. Violent gangs of adolescents and young people are thus involved in different criminal activities, including rackets and drug trade.
2. In most cases women are the only adult of reference. Men often migrate or when they are present are often violent, alcoholic, resistant, etc.

# ***THE EU SITUATION OF PUBLIC FUNDING FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLS: MORE LIGHT THAN SHADOW***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**IGNASI GRAU I CALLIZO**

Director General, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL)

**F**rench constitutionalist Jacques Robert once pointed out that freedom of education is the right with the least consensus in the political debate.<sup>1</sup> Currently, the perception in Europe on freedom of education for the different stakeholders participating in non-governmental schooling is that this freedom is in danger. Most of the controversy surrounding the freedom of education concerns the funding dimension. The recent educational crisis in Portugal provoked alarm when the government decided to cancel the association contract with non-governmental schools (NGS). This led to the closure of more than 100 schools and a decrease in freedom of education, especially for those families without enough financial resources.<sup>2</sup>

However, beyond emotions, isolated bad news and the fanfare of political life, what is the larger picture of funding for NGSs in Europe? The EU recognizes freedom of education in Article 14.3 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (refer to “The Right to Education in Europe, the Middle East and Africa by F. Bestagno and M. Ferri - page 49) : “The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right”.<sup>3</sup> The 1984 Resolution of the European Parliament on Freedom of Education in the European Community stated that: “In accordance with the right to freedom of education, Member States shall be required to provide the financial means whereby this right can be exercised in practice, and to make the necessary public grants to enable schools to carry out their tasks and fulfill their duties under the same conditions as in corresponding State establishments, without discrimination as regards administration, parents, pupils or staff”.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to observe that without the existence of public funding of NGSs, freedom of education becomes simply a privilege of families with sufficient income.

In 2016, the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL) released a study called the “Freedom

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**The study found that almost 80% of EU countries fund at least the salaries of the teachers (such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Malta or Slovakia) while only 12% of the State Members provide no funding at all for NGSs (such as Bulgaria or Greece).**

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of Education Index 2016.” The study focused on four indicators, one of which asks the following question: Does public funding for NGSs exist? If yes, what costs are subsidized by the State? The possible answers were (1) no funding at all, (2) low public funding or the conditions to access public funding are not well defined, (3) funding limited to the salaries of the teachers, (4) funding of the salaries of the teachers and operating costs and (5) funding of the salaries of the teachers, operating costs and investment costs.<sup>5</sup> The study found that almost 80% of EU countries fund at least the salaries of the teachers (such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Malta or Slovakia) while only 12% of the State Members provide no funding at all for NGSs (such as Bulgaria or Greece).

Moreover, some European Union Member States grant public funding to assure that families do not have to assume additional investment costs. Among these countries, we can point to the Netherlands and Belgium. In the Netherlands, granting public funding for NGSs is essential for guaranteeing freedom of education as established in Article 23 of the Constitution:

- “The requirements for primary education shall be such that the standards both of private schools fully financed from public funds and of public-authority schools are fully guaranteed. The relevant provisions shall respect in particular the freedom of private schools to choose their teaching aids and to appoint teachers as they see fit.”<sup>6</sup>
- “Private primary schools that satisfy the conditions laid down by Act of Parliament shall be financed from public funds according to the same standards as public-authority schools.”<sup>7</sup>

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**Some opponents argue that funding NGSs, especially religious schools, is contrary to the principle of neutrality. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the country with the most Catholic schools funded by the State is the same country whose first Constitutional Article is the principle of secularism: France.**

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Some opponents argue that funding NGSs, especially religious schools, is contrary to the principle of neutrality. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the country with the most Catholic schools funded by the State is the same country whose first Constitutional Article is the principle of secularism: France.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, among countries that do not grant any public funding for NGSs, we can identify Greece and Bulgaria.

Fourteen years earlier, in 2002, OIDEL produced similar research enabling us to observe the evolution of the right to freedom of education across a time period. When we compare the situation of countries funding at least the salaries of the teachers, we observe a positive trend. More than 8% of countries provide funding for teachers’ salaries. Also the percentage of countries providing no funding at all decreased from 17% to 12% since 2002. Nevertheless, the percentage of countries that fund NGSs decreased by 10%. We can explain this phenomenon probably because of the financial crisis.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting to observe that despite the mediatic fuss, EU Member States and politicians are more and more aware of the importance of public

funding in ensuring freedom of education. In this regard, the European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2018 on the modernisation of education in the EU was approved by a vast majority. This resolution not only acknowledges that “the right to education includes the freedom to set up educational establishments, [...] and for the right of parents to ensure that their children are educated and taught according to their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions,” but also “encourages, with regard to increasing inclusiveness and ensuring freedom of educational choice, the provision of adequate financial support for schools of all categories and levels, both State schools and not-for-profit private schools, provided the curriculum offered is based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and complies with the legal systems and rules and regulations regarding the quality of education and the use of such funds in force in the Member State concerned.”<sup>10</sup>

It is true that freedom of education in Europe still has a long way to go and some fundamental questions remain. However an overly simplistic look at some mediatic debates in places such as Spain or Sweden can disrupt the peace of many parents who want to exercise their freedom of education. In Spain for instance there have been many political debates with the aim of limiting the access of NGSs to public funding. In Sweden there has been a growing political debate with the aim of banning the existence of faith-based schools. In summary, freedom of education is a politically controversial right that cannot be taken for granted. However, a quite and calm overview of the European situation invites us to be more optimistic than pessimistic.

#### NOTES

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**In summary, freedom of education is a politically controversial right that cannot be taken for granted. However, a quite and calm overview of the European situation invites us to be more optimistic than pessimistic.**

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10. European Parliament, European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2018 on modernisation of education in the EU, paragraph 76

# ***HOW CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY EMPOWERED WOMEN TO RISE FROM POVERTY AND REACH THEIR DREAMS***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**SR. TERESITA C. PADRON, FMA**

Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice (Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco), Commission on Education Coordinator, Philippines and Papua New Guinea

**M**ary Our Help Technical Institute for Women (Cebu), Inc. or MOH is a Technical and Vocational Education and Training college situated in the southern part of the Philippines. It is owned and managed by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians – also known as the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco in the Philippines. Through the Catholic faith and the Salesian spirituality, the Institute forms women leaders who are champions of character, committed to service and achieving relevance and excellence in building the Filipino Nation. With the collaboration of the Educating Community and their partner companies, students are prepared to become effective leaders, productive lifelong learners and honest citizens.

The majority of prospective students are from *Minglanilla*, and nearby localities *Naga*, *San Fernando*, *Talisay City* and Cebu City. Their fathers, if not unemployed, are usually construction workers, carpenters, drivers, vendors, laborers, farmers and fishermen. The majority of their mothers are homemakers, vendors, dressmakers, sewers, housekeepers, and laundry women. Students come from economically challenged families who aspire to a better future through education. The girls' range is from 16 to 23 years old and 85% are graduates of public schools. They belong to families with an average of 4-8 children and an income range of Php. 5,000.00 (96.8241 USD) to Php 8,000.00 (154.934 USD) per month. Some of these students help augment their family incomes or support their studies by working as vendors, house helpers, sales personnel, even prostitutes who underwent rehabilitation and were helped by partner agencies.

These young girls are determined to complete their education and to succeed in order to support their families. They have strong capacities to make sacrifices for the future. However, they also lack confidence and communication skills. Many suffer from very low self-esteem.

The girls understand that education is the only way to improve the quality of their lives, to alleviate poverty and to support the various needs of their families. They need a school that can understand them and accept their

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dignity as persons. They want a school that has values/moral formation and spiritual guidance. They are looking for a quality education that is affordable, and if possible free. They want to develop self-confidence, personality, social and communication skills. They need to acquire knowledge and skills that will make them professionally competent for their future work. They prefer on-the-job training (OJT) to develop their professional competencies and to increase their chances of gainful employment after graduation. The majority need a job after graduation to pay their school debts, to help their families or to save for college. And since almost all college students are working students, they need a flexible school schedule that is responsive to each particular situation.

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MOH Cebu was established in 1986 under the name of “The Women Development and Technology Center”. It was dedicated to providing technical/vocational education and skills training to graduates or non-graduates of secondary education. Through the efforts of the Salesian Sisters, MOH was recognized as a college, offering courses in Electronics Engineering, Office Administration in Entrepreneurship and Travel Management. In June 2014, MOH also became one of the three schools in the district who piloted the Senior High School Program that offers an academic, technical vocational and livelihood track.

## 1. Best practices

### *A. Dual Training System (DTS)*

**M**OH Cebu has adopted a Dual Training System (DTS) which takes place in both the college and in partner companies. The OJT enables students to enrich their knowledge and hone their skills to make them professionally ready for work. The length of time in OJT depends on the student’s level of schooling. For those in the Senior High School, in-plant training is 5 months; while those in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training program have 10 months. College students have OJT for 6 months. Partner companies are required to pay a daily allowance which is 75% of the minimum wage.

Each student is matched to a partner company taking account of the needs of the company and the skills and interests of the student. Most students get absorbed by the partner companies after their training. The employment rate of students is 90-100%, even before they graduate.

Partner companies appreciate the work ethic and values formation of the students. They find the girls respectful, polite, honest, punctual and reliable. It has been noted that students take initiatives and are fast learners, and that they are more competent than those coming from other schools and colleges.

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*B. Industry-driven, innovative curriculum*

**W**ith the DTS program, partner companies give feedback on the performance and attitudes of the students as well as on programs and course offerings, so that these become more relevant and responsive to industry needs.

The course offerings in the Senior High School program go especially beyond the minimum requirements of the Department of Education. The ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management) track is one example. The following courses were added to the government requirements: Financial Accounting, Accounting Software Application, Office and Records Management, Office Automation, Total Quality Management, Gender Sensitivity, Theology, Values Education, Creative Thinking and Tourism.

*C. Outcome-based educational programs*

**M**OH also adopted an Outcome-Based Educational (OBE) program wherein students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and skills level. OBE has oriented teachers to think about the individual needs of their students and to give opportunities for each to succeed at his or her own rhythm and according to the developmental needs.

*D. Responsive to the needs of students*

**I**n response to the different situations of our students, MOH has adopted many strategies including a “study now, pay later” program wherein students pay a minimal amount upon enrollment. The rest of their school fees are paid once they begin training with a company. In order to help students to focus, we follow a modular schedule wherein students are learning only 2-4 subjects per day. For working students, classes are held on weekends. There is also a nearby dormitory for girls who live far from the school. The college also provides a monthly formation for the parents of the students. Parenting, social issues and spiritual accompaniment of families are discussed during monthly encounters between parents and administrators. Human trafficking, cyberbullying, and bridging the generation gap are only some of the topics frequently discussed during this monthly formation. Scholarship grants are also available to typhoon and earthquake victims:

*a. Typhoon Haiyan Scholars*

**T**yphoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines on 8 November 2013, as a Category 5 storm. It laid waste to the Visayas group of islands, the country’s central region and home to 17 million

people. Haiyan was the most powerful storm in 2013 and one of the most powerful typhoons of all time.

One hundred and four Haiyan Scholars were helped by the Institute and the Province to study in MOH. Twenty of them graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electronics Engineering and the rest completed either Senior High School or technical vocational courses. About 76% of the scholars were able to work after graduating, mostly in the companies where they had training, either as a contractual or probationary employee. The majority of these students are now enjoying regular employment in reputable companies in Cebu and elsewhere.

Nearly 30% of the scholars pursued college degrees, enrolling in Bachelor of Science programs in Electronics Engineering and Office Administration.

Two senior high school students from the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program competed in the 2015 Cebu Skills Competition, and emerged as winners at the provincial or division level. They went on to represent Region VII in the national level competition in Manila. This accomplishment demonstrates that our students can excel, given the appropriate training. Both of them are now employed as regular employees in multi-national companies in Cebu.

#### b. Earthquake Ormoc Scholars

On 6 July 2017, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake hit *Leyte*, causing at least 4 deaths and 100 injured. The quake also caused power interruptions in the whole of Eastern Visayas and nearby Bohol. The Philippine archipelago is located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, where earthquakes and volcanic activities are common.

39 women from *Ormoc Leyte*, victims of a 6.5 magnitude earthquake in July 2017, were given the privilege of studying in the Senior High School Program in MOH. They arrived in August 2017 in the school and in April 2019, 38 graduated from the secondary level of education. Some of them are pursuing a college education, while others received job offers from companies where they had training.

Part of the guidance program of the Institute is to debrief and help these student victims of the Haiyan and Ormoc earthquakes adjust to their new environment. They were given 'coping skills' to help them respond positively to the difficulties and challenges that they will have to face when starting a new life away from home. The Haiyan students took seven months to go through the program while those from Ormoc only two months. Meanwhile their families were left behind in *Leyte* and *Ormoc*. They were provided with child and youth protection programs, medical mission, psychological first aid, liturgy and para-liturgy, capacity building (livelihood training) and provision of livelihood helping them to rebuild their lives and their homes.

## 2. Testimony

Hereafter is a testimony from one of our students:

“My name is Filomena G. Paragoso. When I grow up I want to become a teacher.”

“To become a teacher was what I have dreamed of since kindergarten graduation. I never thought of any other options back then.

The year 2006 arrived and I finally graduated from high school but my biggest question then was, “Can I fulfill my dream?” my answer was simple “I cannot.” My parents cannot support 6 children at the same time: two of us will be studying college, two siblings are in high school and the other two in elementary. My parents don’t have a stable job to support all of us. Three of us were able to study with the help of scholarship grants. I was given a scholarship for high school level only. During high school, I took a series of scholarship exams in preparation for college. My high school Alma Matter offered to help me with a scholarship for one year but for a vocational course through a Study Now, Pay Later Program. I needed to be practical. Being the second child meant we had a long way to go before everyone can stand on their own. Even with a scholarship grant, hurdling my daily expenses was a tough struggle. I started to modify my dream. I accepted the scholarship under the Study Now, Pay Later Program and then decided to study at Mary Our Help Technical Institute for Women, hoping to find work after two years of studying. Months before my graduation, I was accepted for work. And six days after my graduation I was hired as a regular employee.

Looking back at my 9 years of service in the company, I saw a lot of improvements in me: from a timid young and fresh graduate, to a confident and experienced professional. I was able to develop my social skills with the help of my work.

Aside from improvements, difficulties and challenges were never lacking. Being a two-year vocational course graduate and then being assigned to an Engineering Division was quite tough especially when you have the same workload as the engineers and the Bachelor of Science graduates.

For me, seeing my machine becoming a reality is my fulfillment. The time spent for the conceptualization, wiring, assembling, programing, testing and troubleshooting is all worth it. Seeing the machine in a good and usable condition is my pride as a designer. Being acknowledged in one’s job is another fulfillment which boosts self-confidence and self-worth.

I never regretted changing my dream perspective. Sometimes our dreams are not meant to be ours because we are being prepared for a bigger opportunity. Having a positive outlook helps a lot. My dream became my guide to personal success; it changed my life’s direction which is why I still continue to dream and work hard for it.”

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# ***EDUCATION ON EBOLA PREVENTION - MISSIONI DON BOSCO AND THE SALESIAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

MARCELLA MANTOVANI

Head of Project Office, Missioni Don Bosco ONLUS, Turin

The association *Missioni Don Bosco* ONLUS was established in Italy in 1991 in order to support the Salesians of Don Bosco who care for the education and professional training of children and young people in need in over 3,500 Salesian houses in more than 130 countries. Through the missionary style of the Salesian congregation, founded in 1859 by Saint John Bosco, the Salesians carry out educational work based on understanding different cultural, social and religious realities. This can be considered the fruit of Don Bosco's long and intense experience among the poor youth of Turin.

The goal is to offer children, poor and marginalized young people the opportunity to receive an education, and empower their futures through concrete tools – especially those of vocational training and work, thus becoming active players in the social development of their countries.

The first mission of the Salesians of Don Bosco is to build a future of opportunities and integration into society for the most disadvantaged children. Because education is the first mean to encourage autonomy, the school is at the heart of everything they do.

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**The goal is to offer children, poor and marginalized young people the opportunity to receive an education, and empower their futures through concrete tools – especially those of vocational training and work, thus becoming active players in the social development of their countries.**

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## **1. Salesian education during the Ebola period**

When the Ebola epidemic of 2014-2016 broke out, there were over 11,000 victims in West Africa. The Salesians in the countries impacted by the disease remained with the people, carrying out not only first aid, but also educational projects for increasing awareness and prevention.

Their work concentrated on the two most impacted countries Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In Liberia, Salesians have been present in Monrovia since 1979 and in Tappita since 2017. They created oratories, youth centers, primary schools and high schools, as will be highlighted in point 2 of this case study. In 1993, during the civil war, they also founded Don Bosco Homes which offer shelter and care for the needs of homeless children and young people.

The Salesians arrived in Sierra Leone in 1986. In 1998, they founded the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Don Bosco Fambul – which

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**They worked to stop the virus through awareness and information campaigns but also through concrete preventive actions such as the distribution of basic hygiene products. They helped families in need by distributing food and responding to the needs of orphaned children by satisfying their primary needs and through educational activities.**

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means ‘family’ in the local language in order to work on behalf of children and young people at risk, especially street children.

During the Ebola epidemic, the Salesians immediately began work in all the countries impacted. They worked to stop the virus through awareness and information campaigns but also through concrete preventive actions such as the distribution of basic hygiene products. They helped families in need by distributing food and responding to the needs of orphaned children by satisfying their primary needs and through educational activities.

The work of Don Bosco Fambul during the epidemic was recognized all over the world, as the Salesians accepted the request of the Sierra Leone Government to care for orphaned children and in many cases to help them overcome the disease.

Below is a general overview of the Salesian intervention:

#### SIERRA LEONE

- Food distribution program to 150 quarantined families, 150 poor families and 200 children. It consisted of healthy meals three times a week;
- Construction of 5 hand pump wells to ensure clean and healthy water to 5 communities and prevent the spread of diseases and epidemics;
- Construction of the Interim Children Care Centre, to accommodate up to 120 children orphaned by Ebola. The Centre carries various educational, counselling and rehabilitation activities through music, sports and games to offer immediate support to these children. In addition, the Salesians sought to reunite children with their extended families.

#### LIBERIA

- Food distribution program to more than 500 families;
- Health program consisting of the distribution of medical devices necessary for prevention such as disinfectants, chlorine, long-sleeved jerseys;
- Awareness programs.

#### GHANA

- National prevention campaigns to educate the population about health, through the use of video, radio, posters, flyers, stickers and banners.

#### NIGERIA

- Awareness and educational programs to prevent the spread of the disease;
- Food distribution program;
- Distribution of medical devices necessary for prevention such as disinfectants, chlorine, long-sleeved jerseys.



## 2. Fighting Ebola in West Africa

**T**he program carried out by the Salesians in Liberia consisted of two interventions; both promoted with the involvement of young people from schools and Salesian centers:

1. The distribution of basic sanitary material (soaps, disinfectants, detergents, gloves, etc.) in schools in order to contain the spread of the Ebola epidemic. The campaign focused on the poorest families and those who could not afford sanitary products and often did not know any prevention measures to the disease;
2. Awareness and information campaigns on disease prevention, hygiene and health practices in the area of Monrovia. At the beginning, the missionaries selected 10 schools with 1000 targeted beneficiaries. However, between July 2014 and February 2015 due to the closure of schools because of the Ebola diffusion, they redirected their target to disadvantaged areas of the capital. It is estimated that it was possible to reach about 6,000 people.

These two types of interventions were closely linked because the distribution of sanitary products would have been totally useless if it had not been accompanied by a constant work of information and awareness raising.

The interventions were carried out in two phases. The first between August 2014 and February 2015 with the goal of reducing the spread of the virus among poor communities and young people. The second phase between February and June 2015 promoted action to consolidate the work of prevention among students, young people and families.

It is interesting to highlight the success of the educational strategy that could be defined by a play of words: “educating through education.” The missionaries trained the children and young people of their schools and centers, so that they in turn could become promoters of education, information and awareness for others. The young people of the Salesian centers organized home-to-home awareness campaigns, public demonstrations on hygiene and health practices, songs and public theatrical plays on Ebola, along with other information campaigns.

In order to fully understand the fundamental role played by education during the epidemic, we can read the testimony of Father Silvio Roggia hereafter. He has been a missionary in Nigeria and Ghana for eighteen years and lived directly the dramatic events related to the spread of Ebola.

“The Salesians soon realized that the impact of the Ebola virus went far beyond the public health tragedy. They learned to distinguish between those who were infected by Ebola, i.e. those who were physically affected by the virus (the mortality rate exceeded 50%

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according to the World Health Organization), and those who were affected by Ebola, i.e. the much higher number of people who saw their lives radically changed due to the fatal impact of the virus on families and communities. Among the latter, the most vulnerable were children who lost their parents, siblings, or even their entire families from the infectious disease.”

The story of those months is a story of heroism: medical and nursing staff literally gave their lives to save and treat the suffering and to prevent the spread of the disease. Family members of patients, including children, consciously chose to expose themselves to the disease at a risk of dying to continue caring for their loved ones.

Education became the mission of many people in those months. They saved hundreds of lives, without fear of jeopardizing their own.

Two of these impossible missions are particularly exemplary.

- The first was in Liberia, the country from which the virus quickly spread after entering the capital, Monrovia. All schools were closed for many months. Josephat was a young Nigerian boy who studied in the Don Bosco centers in his country of origin and later in Ghana and Liberia. He managed to involve four young Liberian friends, two Muslims and two Christians, in doing something that humanitarian organizations would have discouraged as it was really dangerous. The aid (especially sanitary products) that slowly arrived in the country, did not meet the needs of the population and only reached urban centers. Nobody went to the remote countryside because of the high risk of infection. As a consequence, even basic prevention (especially to avoid the spread of the extremely contagious virus) did not reach the places where it was needed most. These five young people chose to dedicate themselves to this mission. They asked for help from supermarkets in the city to gather hygienic products, shelf-stable food and money to rent a car for the long and dangerous trip. They passed through the rural communities and went from house to house teaching how to prevent the infection and how to deal with it when symptoms occurred. Soon they started another urgent intervention to provide means of survival to poor quarantined families who, without external aid, would have fallen into starvation. A simple but effective chain of solidarity was created. When Josephat and his four friends returned to Monrovia to obtain supplies for a new expedition (almost every week or ten days), they explained via WhatsApp how the mission had been carried out, providing a detailed economic report and pictures. These messages, when shared, became a form of education and awareness campaign and generated solidarity among friends who allowed the group to continue this educational and welfare mission for months, until the Ebola disease was totally eradicated in the country. Hundreds

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of people are alive today thanks to them.

- The second of these impossible missions took place in Sierra Leone. Here the Government asked the Don Bosco centers to intervene due to the growing number of orphans in dramatic situations. These children had lost parents and sometimes even brothers and sisters within a few days. In most cases they were completely excluded and rejected by their communities for fear of contagion.

The Salesians soon organized a home for these children as well as medical help to avoid contagion. The surrounding urban and rural communities found it difficult to accept the presence of this center, precisely because of the prejudices which were no less contagious than the virus. However, through extensive awareness raising and information campaigns, this problem was also overcome.

The next challenge was to find people to care for these hundreds of boys and girls. The situation was presented to the young Salesians preparing for religious life who had already decided to commit their lives to education in the style of Don Bosco. Isaac, Samuel, Bernard and Augustine were aware of the risks this service would entail and they freely chose to become older brothers and, in some ways, fathers and mothers to those children whose past was characterized by unimaginable trauma. They were joined by Sarah, who agreed to volunteer, moving to the center from a city where she was working as a teacher. For months, they welcomed these orphans. With much patience, they were able to revive the children through dialogue, exchange, understanding and educational activities after their tragic experiences. These children and the Salesians who ministered to them, had to rebuild, step by step, their lives. The night was even more difficult than the day, as the children had to overcome nightmares and unconscious anxieties. Psychologically they were impacted by Ebola in a way even more violent than the virus itself. The school provided a place for exchange of experiences lived by the children and helped them to make a first step in slowly returning to everyday life which was tragically interrupted by the virus.

A closer look can help us to understand the depth of the choice made by these young people who welcomed the Ebola orphans.

Isaac and Bernard are from Ghana. They left to serve in Sierra Leone when the risk of contagion was confirmed and was the main topic of news and media worldwide. Most tragically, after only a few months working with the orphans, Sarah fell ill and died from the virus. She gave her life for those boys and girls.

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**These two examples of Liberia and Sierra Leone are just a small picture compared to the larger educational commitment to work during the epidemic. Education defeated the virus so that life could once again flourish in those populations. Medical intervention was very important, but in cases of such total emergency prevention, awareness campaigns, rehabilitation after trauma, and reconstruction of relationships with the families and the society had a pivotal role.**

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### 3. Conclusion

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**If the importance of education is clear when we are exposed to great tragedies, is that importance less real in the ordinary flow of life in any social context or human community? Isn't education, in its whole meaning, one of the most essential and vital parts for the existence of every human group? Our future depends on how we live it.**

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**T**hese two examples of Liberia and Sierra Leone are just a small picture compared to the larger educational commitment to work during the epidemic. Education defeated the virus so that life could once again flourish in those populations. Medical intervention was very important, but in cases of such total emergency prevention, awareness campaigns, rehabilitation after trauma, and reconstruction of relationships with the families and the society had a pivotal role.

If the importance of education is clear when we are exposed to great tragedies, is that importance less real in the ordinary flow of life in any social context or human community? Isn't education, in its whole meaning, one of the most essential and vital parts for the existence of every human group? Our future depends on how we live it.

As Josephat, Samuel, Isaac, Bernard, Augustine and Sarah have shown, education is nothing without those who are willing to commit themselves to it. It is not a question of structures, subsidies, means or programs. It is primarily a question of people and how they take this art of generating life to heart. The training of the educators is the core business of any commitment that truly targets the growth of people, especially of the new generations."

(Fr. Silvio Roggia, Salesian of Don Bosco)

# ***HOMS, SYRIA: RESILIENCE EDUCATION THROUGH SPORTS***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**PROF. CRISTINA CASTELLI**

Director of the Resilience Research Unit, Faculty of Psychology, Catholic University of Milan, Vice President of the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)

## **1. Introduction**

**W**ar, inevitably paradoxical, challenges men and women in their intrinsic need to find meaning. It violently breaks into the existence of those who experience it. This occurs in an even more dramatic way in children, the victims of a world unable to protect them. Overwhelmed by a violence they cannot comprehend, children are the most fragile, the most defenseless, and affected in their very right to be children. This reality often leads to a compromised psycho-social development. For these children it is critical to act promptly to prevent the impact of war trauma. When war affects a child's ability to emotionally and psychologically develop into an adult, the question is urgent: What can be done? How can we give them back their smile and their right to be children? How can we help integrate negative experiences into the unfolding of life to continue their development despite everything? How can we promote what is called resilience? One of the answers to it is education.

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**What can be done? How can we give them back their smile and their right to be children? How can we help integrate negative experiences into the unfolding of life to continue their development despite everything? How can we promote what is called resilience? One of the answers to it is education.**

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## **2. Sports and resilience**

**T**he Project 'Sports and Resilience: Hope for Syria (2018-2020)' attempts to answer these questions through educational activities aimed at supporting resilience in those who were exposed to major traumatic experiences. Located in Homs at the sports center of the *Deir Al Mukhalles* Monastery, the Project is an initiative of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan, the Associazione Francesco Realmonte, Humanity and the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE). The center is supported by Jesuit priests who kept their oratory open to hundreds of children of different faiths in times of war. The neighborhood is still in need of everything today: material assistance, as well as psychological

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**In child psychology, resilience is a process that implies the capability of a child to grow harmoniously despite the difficulties she/he may encounter, managing a comprehensive adjustment and development, and based on the oyster metaphor of Boris Cyrulnik, “obtaining precious pearls even from the most threatening grains.”**

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**Thanks to a language that knows no boundaries, sports become a symbol of redemption and a bridge to a better life.**

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and moral support, and, especially a safe place that offers opportunities to rebuild resilience.

In child psychology, resilience is a process that implies the capability of a child to grow harmoniously despite the difficulties she/he may encounter, managing a comprehensive adjustment and development, and based on the oyster metaphor of Boris Cyrulnik, “obtaining precious pearls even from the most threatening grains.”<sup>1</sup>

In contexts where many elements of protection have been lost (home, school and often some of the most important people of reference – parents, siblings, neighbors), the ability to live again goes through brief moments of re-established serenity, of balance with one’s own body, and of playful moments when one can let down their psychological guard and experience a sense of belonging to a team, a community or a group. Many studies on resilience confirm that educational practices, including sports, can help strengthen internal protection mechanisms while removing risk factors.

Especially in contexts of war and destruction, sports represent for young people a valuable tool to make them feel alive and socially integrated again. Thanks to a language that knows no boundaries, sports become a symbol of redemption and a bridge to a better life. As Paul Claudel says, “the word resilience combines the idea of elasticity, vitality, energy, good humor”<sup>2</sup>; all these elements are inherent to sports, that is leisure, escaping from daily worries, joy, but also commitment and pressure to do better, overcome obstacles and achieve goals. Sports coaches become “tutors of resilience,” giving back to children the opportunity and the desire to run, play, win or lose with peers they can trust.

Recipients:

- 110 boys and girls (aged 6 to 12) divided into 3 groups and 1 group of young girls (aged 16 to 21) involved in soccer activities twice a week;
- 80 boys and girls divided into 4 groups (aged 5 to 12) practicing basketball;
- 45 girls divided into 3 groups involved in rhythmic gymnastics.

### 3. Reference model

Vulnerability often takes on the appearance of a raft adrift without a compass, filled with languishing castaways lacking the energy to save themselves. Several studies in the field of resilience help us understand the informal educational process which helps a person acquire skills useful in facing these events. One example is the triangular model of Lecomte (2010) based on the principle that resilience is built by leveraging three elements: a relation of assistance with one or more tutors, a sense of belonging to a group or a culture that supports the integration process, and rules providing order and predictability (security) in life.<sup>3</sup>

In today's Syrian context, sports can provide an environment where the quality of relationships, the value of rules and the feeling of being actively involved become a stimulus for the future.

#### 4. Objectives

**G**eneral objectives include the promotion of the psychological well-being of 235 children and adolescents through the strengthening of their internal ability to manage emotions, awareness of values and belonging, the existence of external resources (safe spaces, the relationships with peers and adult tutors), the prevention of abuse and violence often resulting from conflicts and finally the overcoming of post-traumatic conditions.

The specific objectives of the Project concern four related aspects:

1. The training of six “coach-tutors of resilience” who combine educational-psychological values and specific sports skills to become stable references for the children;
2. The organization of sports-educational activities which allow children and adolescents to:
  - Regain mastery of the game as a fundamental element of their growth according to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
  - Experience safe spaces in a welcoming environment to aid (in) regaining confidence in others;
  - Express their abilities and overcome their sense of inadequacy and lack of self-confidence;
  - Acquire the means to release tension and stress;
  - Re-establish balance in their bodily functions compromised by traumatic experiences (hypersensitivity to external stimuli, sleep disturbances, motor coordination, etc.);
  - Decrease the risk of isolation and discrimination (due to gender and/or religious faith);
  - Develop the capacity of managing emotions, conflicts and difficulties;
  - Have opportunities to develop the cognitive tools needed to cope with discomfort (attention, problem solving, creativity, decision making strategies).
3. Consulting with the center management for concrete implementation of the sports program and with the psychologist for more serious cases of psycho-social distress and trauma;
4. Evaluation.

The verification of the validity of the activities and their impact on resilience in children and youngsters will be carried out by the Unity on Resilience of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan and

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will take place at the end of the 2019/2020 school year through the administration of the RPQ test - Resilience Process Questionnaire (Erison ed.) to children attending the sports center and a control group of non-attending children.

## 5. Conclusion

Play and sports are dimensions of life, concrete experiences and represent attainable goals. Children can find therein precious opportunities that, especially in difficult times, lead to a serene behavior and resilience, helping to transform suffering into hope.

### NOTES

1. Boris Cyrulnik (1999), *Un merveilleux malheur*.
2. P. Claudel (1962-1965), *L'élasticité américaine, Oeuvres complètes*, Gallimard, Bibliothèques de la Pléiade, Paris
3. Lecomte, J. (2010). *La résilience: Se reconstruire après un traumatisme*. Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm

# ***FREEDOM OF EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

DEACON DR. TITUS G.W. FRANKEMÖLLE, PHD

President of the Dutch Catholic Schools Council, Vice President of the European Committee for Catholic Education

**F**or the past 102 years the Netherlands has known freedom of education. It is a freedom that has brought this country many self-aware and independent minds. It is a freedom that gives parents the right to found schools based on their own convictions and educational *ethoi*. It is a freedom that creates great diversity between schools, each teaching in their own way. To this day, we are still reaping the benefits of this freedom, yet more and more voices are questioning it. However, the real question should be: “What is best for our children?” (refer to “Why Freedom is Necessary for Effective Education” by C.L. Glenn - page 149).

Every year new children begin their school career and new adults enter society. We all want the transition from childhood to adulthood to go as smoothly as possible. We all want the best for our children. But ‘best’ can mean a great many things depending on whom is asked. It is a personal optimum found in a landscape of choices regarding all and any aspect of education. Is the school socially secure? Is enough attention given to extracurricular activities? What are our children taught about nature? Economy? How important are sports? Are the teachers well-versed in religion?

Views on education might be personal in some respects, but no matter whom you ask, the quality of education will be central. To ensure national quality standards, the government gives all schools certain attainment targets. These are skills and knowledge that every student should have by the end of their school careers. How they are taught is entirely up to the schools themselves. Schools can educate in the manner in which they see fit while still bound to quality standards. They can do this from a religious point of view or an educational philosophy. All schools get equal state funding and thus we have a great variety of schools. In addition to public schools, we have Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Jewish, Hindustani, Waldorf schools, etc. At the end of their school careers all children have had a high-level education, independent of which school they attended.

Because of this freedom of education parents have the choice to ask what is best for their child. This diversity of schools gives parents and children the chance to choose which road to take, each road resulting in an equally

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**Catholic schools provide inclusive education where everyone is welcome. Intercultural dialogue matters and is being openly held. The quality of education is high and both parents as well as students are content with the current pedagogical climate in privately-run schools. Catholic schools are not just for Catholics.**

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valued diploma. Nowadays, in the Netherlands, for every ten schools, four are Catholic, three are Protestant and three are for example Islamic, Jewish, public or anthroposophical. Even though this diversity has given us a great many things, there are still voices trying to undermine it. Most voices pleading for abolition of privately-run schools are from the side of public schools. They wrongfully hold our schools responsible for inequality of opportunity and segregation. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education however has fortunately concluded the exact opposite.<sup>1</sup> Catholic schools provide inclusive education where everyone is welcome. Intercultural dialogue matters and is being openly held. The quality of education is high and both parents as well as students are content with the current pedagogical climate in privately-run schools. Catholic schools are not just for Catholics. In the larger Dutch cities, 80 to 95 % of Catholic school students are not even Catholic. The image of Catholic schools painted by advocates of purely state-regulated education is thus completely false. Quality, diversity and inclusiveness go side by side.

In the history of the Netherlands, freedom of education has been a catalyst for the emancipation or relief of the Catholics. Between 1588 and 1795 there was a severe bias in favour of Protestants laid down in the Constitution. Due to the law Catholics were deemed second class citizens, not equal to Protestants. Catholics did not have the same economic, social and political rights. In 1795, this constitutional discrimination ended and from that moment on Catholics were also allowed to build schools and their emancipation could slowly commence. Later, in 1917, equal financing was enacted. The government would fund all legitimate schools equally.

With the emancipation of Catholics, a large and self-aware part of the population could begin to wield great social, administrative and political influence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. With their own churches, schools, universities, hospitals, newspapers, magazines, clubs, unions, and so on, Catholics finally became full-fledged members of society.

Everyone, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, wants the best education for children. From a Catholic point of view education does not merely consist of transferring knowledge and skills. Rather '*educatio*' forms a person. It allows students to think for themselves and to interact in society with discernment. Our world is secularising and in the grip of individualism. Increased numbers of fugitives have rekindled the discussion concerning a supposed threat from Islam. The presumed downfall of our Jewish-Christian traditions in the Occident makes it so that neoliberals, socialists, right- and left-wing populists seek to overthrow freedom of education. In the slipstream of xenophobia and atheism, people get stuck in an existential pinch. The number of followers of the traditional Christian parties is shrinking, the political landscape is slowly fragmenting and Islamophobic parties are winning more and more ground. Catholics must not yield in an

age of extremes, phobias and dangerous ideologies, education which forms the mind and heart of persons is a primordial defence against extremism.

For Catholic schools, this conviction defines our perspective toward the relation between persons, society, and God. And that is also the mission of education: to form our students into free, caring and critical citizens. We form pupils and students to act properly and to notice others, especially the weak. Our goal is to raise, educate and tutor students to become independent, democratic and functioning members of society. Catholic schools provide education for every person and for the whole person. It should be education for head, hand and heart. Our approach is based on human dignity, the common good, solidarity, justice and subsidiarity. These are the five key principles of our Catholic Social Teaching.

This social mission springs clearly from our traditions and is taken seriously. Education is first and foremost a service to society. The current political focus on the social quality of education, on development of social skills, and on personal development and citizenship has given us a perfect opportunity: to show adversaries of privately-run schools that freedom of choice, multiformity and diversity contribute to the checks and balances of our society. Banishing religion from the public domain in order to glorify '*laïcité*', is a thin veneer that cracks before it has even been applied. Proponents of laicity want a solely humanistic society without any religious identity or values. In the end, it denies and restricts individual freedom and personality.

Freedom means that anyone can decide who they want to be, regardless of ancestry, gender or conviction. Yet our own freedom cannot and should not be at the expense of someone else's. Freedom and in particular freedom of education has taught us that the real challenge is to take responsibility together. Education provides an essential environment in which the youth can flourish and contribute to a multi-coloured and peaceful society which offers a place for all: a place where all are accepted and everyone is encouraged to be him- or herself. In the end, that is what is best for our children.

#### NOTES

1. <https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/documenten/rapporten/2018/04/11/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs> page 29 [Accessed 3 May 2019]

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**Catholic schools provide education for every person and for the whole person. It should be education for head, hand and heart. Our approach is based on human dignity, the common good, solidarity, justice and subsidiarity. These are the five key principles of our Catholic Social Teaching.**

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**Proponents of laicity want a solely humanistic society without any religious identity or values. In the end, it denies and restricts individual freedom and personality.**

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# ***E-BASED EDUCATION: BREAKING LIMITATIONS***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

PASCAL MEYER S.J.

Student Services and Alumni Manager, Jesuit Worldwide Learning

**D**uring the past years, more and more international troops have been leaving Afghanistan. While officially the Taliban regime has been defeated, the fundamentalists are still controlling several regions in the country. Afghanistan remains both unstable and one of the poorest countries in the world. The situation is compounded by internal ethnic conflicts. The *Hazara* people in particular, Shiite descendants from Mongolian tribes living in the poor and under-developed highlands of central Afghanistan, have faced violence and terror for many years. This particular region received attention when the Taliban destroyed the famous Buddha statues of *Bamyan* – relicts of the Buddhist age of the region – in 2001. Since then there hasn't been much development for this neglected population.

In 2009, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) started the first educational initiatives in the Bamyan region. Jesuit education addresses people from all gender, ethnic and religious groups in order to make a change within societies, transform communities and eventually foster peace. However, the JRS program has mostly focused on primary and secondary education. This is indeed very important, but it does not offer opportunities for adults who have already accomplished their secondary education. In 2017, Jesuit Worldwide Learning – Higher Education at the Margins (JWL) launched an education program in a learning center in the same foothills where the Buddha statues were destroyed. Here, JWL offers different courses of higher education. Participants in the JWL program can earn a Diploma in Liberal Studies created in collaboration with several universities and fully accredited by Regis University in Denver, Colorado (USA). While most colleges focus on specialized studies, the Diploma in Liberal Studies builds a broad general knowledge based on the long Jesuit tradition of education which is summarized in the motto 'men and women for others'. The emphasis is on transforming learners into critical thinkers who are able to deal with different challenges, ideas, traditions and circumstances. The major goal of this educational program is to help transform the local mentality through an open-minded way of thinking and through the social commitment of graduates. The Jesuit perspective gives witness to their faith and core belief that all people are children of God and deserve the same rights, recognition and attention – no matter their race or creed.

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Since 2010, JWL has offered high-quality blended higher education which combines the advantages of e-learning with those of onsite support.

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## 1. Blended learning at the margins – the JWL Model

Since 2010, JWL has offered high-quality blended<sup>1</sup> higher education which combines the advantages of e-learning with those of onsite support. A good education through online learning is impossible to attain if it consists only of downloading documents from an application, which students must learn by heart. Successful education is only possible when combined with self-learning efforts, peer interaction, and regular discussion. Students should question theories and challenge each other's ideas. While today's workforce demands specialized experts, and many 'educated' individuals close off from the world around them as a result of such specialized training, JWL creates communities of broadly-educated people able to use their skills in many fields and in multiple ways.

While primary and secondary education is needed all over the world, in order to tap the full potential of the people it is important to provide quality higher learning opportunities. JWL is implementing this goal through the Diploma in Liberal Studies. It includes 45 credits of coursework over three years and has been developed within the framework of Ignatian pedagogy which seeks to develop the whole person. Students choose one of three concentrations, gaining specialized skills in either business, education, or social work. Within each course and across the curriculum, student learning is structured around the concepts of experience, reflection, and action – all marks of Jesuit education. Many of the students in Afghanistan who opted for the business concentration have successfully started their own shops in their villages. Many of these new business owners are women – remarkable in a country with few official opportunities for them. Numerous graduates of the education concentration now work as teachers – developing new learning centers in remote areas of the country.

## 2. Offering online education without internet

In the age of digitalization, a successful education program is not only about the variety of courses and the academic content. In remote areas – and Afghanistan has a vast number of these – effective logistics and functioning learning material are critical. While it is not difficult to get books and computers to cities like *Herat* in Western Afghanistan or *Bamyan* in Central Afghanistan, there are many mountainous regions where even basic goods are scarce. For many students, a large part of their daily life is taken up in doing chores or working in local agriculture. Areas outside the big cities are often without television or a telephone signal. The people in these villages know Wi-Fi only from hearsay.

To receive an education, students must travel to schools in the bigger villages, but the distances are long and travel on footpaths is difficult. Spending this time to go to school is a huge investment for students who

would otherwise be working in the fields. Most children and adolescents walk two to three hours to reach school. A small minority of them can afford a motorbike, but almost no one owns a car. However, all of them see education as more important than the exertions they have to undertake to attain it. Nonetheless, distance and lack of communication infrastructure were great challenges for both students and the success of the program.

JWL explored ways in which students could access education more easily and this is where the digital age offered a key. E-learning allows students access to learning material without heavy books. Most digital education programs require a stable internet connection, and this was a huge problem for the villages mentioned above. To address this challenge, JWL invented a unique learning environment. With the help of technology specialists, JWL built an online Learning Management System (LMS) with the possibility for students to study on and offline, and for courses to be accessed on different types of Android and Windows devices. This allows students to study at home most of the time, while taking care of their daily chores and duties on the field. As part of a blended learning community, they still meet two to three times a week with fellow students at the JWL Learning Centre. In this learning model, students join an international network which becomes an important aspect of the experience. Being connected through the LMS allows students from Afghanistan to discuss with fellow students in Africa, the Middle East, South- and East Asia. They are also connected with a digital faculty room, where they interact with instructors and tutors whenever they want. Many students in Afghanistan say that this international dimension is a huge sign of hope for them, as they often feel forgotten by and disconnected from the rest of the world. Suddenly, they are exposed to other traditions and religious views and they gain a better understanding and appreciation of other cultures and beliefs.

### 3. Education transforms communities

One of the most important questions on the future impact on a post-war Afghanistan refers to whether education is really the key to a better and more peaceful society? The answer is simple: Yes! While most governments spend their budgets on national defense and cut funds for education, we are now witnessing terrific results in regions where JWL offers the Diploma Program. In places where girls and women once could not go to school, they are now the majority in most classes. In places where women were not allowed to run their own businesses, they have started establishing their own shops. In places where, for many decades, authorities did not support educational programs, our graduates are educating children and adolescents with approval and benevolence of the local authorities. One of the local governors said, "War and the Taliban regime have led to regression. This is why these remote areas are

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**Most children and adolescents walk two to three hours to reach school. A small minority of them can afford a motorbike, but almost no one owns a car.**

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**To address this challenge, JWL invented a unique learning environment. With the help of technology specialists, JWL built an online Learning Management System (LMS) with the possibility for students to study on and offline, and for courses to be accessed on different types of Android and Windows devices.**

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**Being connected through the LMS allows students from Afghanistan to discuss with fellow students in Africa, the Middle East, South- and East Asia. They are also connected with a digital faculty room, where they interact with instructors and tutors whenever they want.**

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**One of the most important questions on the future impact on a post-war Afghanistan refers to whether education is really the key to a better and more peaceful society? The answer is simple: Yes!**

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**If we really want to improve our local agriculture and social structures, we are in big need of higher education – for both boys and girls. The time of gender-based discrimination must come to an end.**

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underdeveloped. If we really want to improve our local agriculture and social structures, we are in big need of higher education – for both boys and girls. The time of gender-based discrimination must come to an end. Therefore, we will support the education projects of the Jesuits.”

The will for change and progress is in the mind of our graduates. While some want to develop the local economy, others are focused on social goals. For instance, *Zainab*, a young woman from *Daikundi* in Central Afghanistan, sees it as her mission to empower young women in her region and eventually in the rest of Afghanistan: “In the past, the authorities wanted girls and women not to study or get a better education. But we want to change this idea that is still in the head of many people in my country. There mustn’t be any discrimination between girls and boys. Especially girls need good examples that they can do more than what we find in our traditions. I see it as my task to empower and inspire them through my own example.”

#### 4. Conclusion

**T**he Jesuit education model is contributing to transforming people from isolated communities into a community of open-minded and critical thinkers who want to make a change – thus incarnating the motto ‘men and women for others’. In many countries, the lack of higher education, and hence the ignorance towards other cultures, religious beliefs and traditions, is the source of conflicts and war. A solid formation beyond basic education is therefore the key to transforming the hearts of marginalized people in order to foster peace in regions where conflicts between ethnic groups or discrimination between men and women are part of everyday life. If we want peace in this world, we have to go further, cross the borders of the impossible, and by doing so, give testimony to the Gospel: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

#### NOTES

1. ‘Blended learning’ means the combination of online and onsite learning.

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**In many countries, the lack of higher education, and hence the ignorance towards other cultures, religious beliefs and traditions, is the source of conflicts and war. A solid formation beyond basic education is therefore the key to transforming the hearts of marginalized people in order to foster peace in regions where conflicts between ethnic groups or discrimination between men and women are part of everyday life.**

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***Chapter 4:***  
***Inclusive Education and its Limits***

# ***“TO ENSURE THAT NO LEARNER IS LEFT BEHIND”: ON INCLUSION, EQUITY, DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION - A THEORETICAL APPROACH AND SPECIFIC FOCUSES***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**JAN DE GROOF**

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“Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.”<sup>1</sup>

“[...] Build an educational relationship with each student, who must feel welcomed and loved for what he or she is, with all of their limitations and potentials. Building bridges: there is no nobler challenge! Building union where division is advancing, generating harmony when the logic of exclusion and marginalization seems to have the upper hand.”<sup>2</sup> (Pope Francis)

## **Abstract**

**E**ducation is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is essential for the success of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing the important role of education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4): Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The SDG 4 - Education 2030 focuses on increased and expanded access, inclusion and equity, quality and learning outcomes at all levels, within a lifelong learning approach. Therefore, the contribution of this paper is a theoretical approach based on inclusion, equity and diversity in education. We will also look at some specific focuses.

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**Recognizing the important role of education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4): Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

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**Learners are placed at the center of a system that must be able to recognize, accept and respond to learners' diversities. IE aims to respond to the principles of efficiency, equality and equity, where diversity is perceived as an asset. The key message is that every learner matters and matters equally.**

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Historically, inclusive education (IE) appears to be an ambitious model which only earned legal status in recent years. However, this does not mean that inclusion is fully implemented into educational practice even in countries where it enjoys normative support. IE has developed differently in various countries. It necessitates a real change at both the level of policy and the level of practice in education. Learners are placed at the center of a system that must be able to recognize, accept and respond to learners' diversities. IE aims to respond to the principles of efficiency, equality and equity, where diversity is perceived as an asset.

The key message is that every learner matters and matters equally. The complexity arises, however, in putting this message into practice. Implementing IE will likely require changes in thinking and practice at every level of an educational system, from classroom teachers and those who provide educational experiences directly, to those responsible for national policies. We conclude that meeting the challenge of inclusion and equity in education will require substantial efforts from countries and from the International Community. Despite the substantial progress over the last two decades, the lack of the fulfilment of inclusion and equity remains massive.

## **PART I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Seventeen SDGs and 160 targets of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the empowering concept of SDG4**

**1** 93 United Nations Member States adopted unanimously the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in New York on 25 September 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in 2000. Those goals were not reached by the 2015 deadline and further action was needed to complete the unfinished agenda. The new agenda, which ushers in a new era of national action and international cooperation, obliges each country to take a series of measures that not only address the root causes of poverty, but also increase economic growth and prosperity to meet people's health, education and social needs while also protecting the environment.

Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is essential for the success of all SDGs. Recognizing the important role of education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4): "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".<sup>3</sup> Targets on education are also included in several other SDGs, notably those on gender equality, health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production and climate change. In fact, education can

accelerate progress towards all SDGs and should therefore be an integral part of each of their strategies towards achievement.

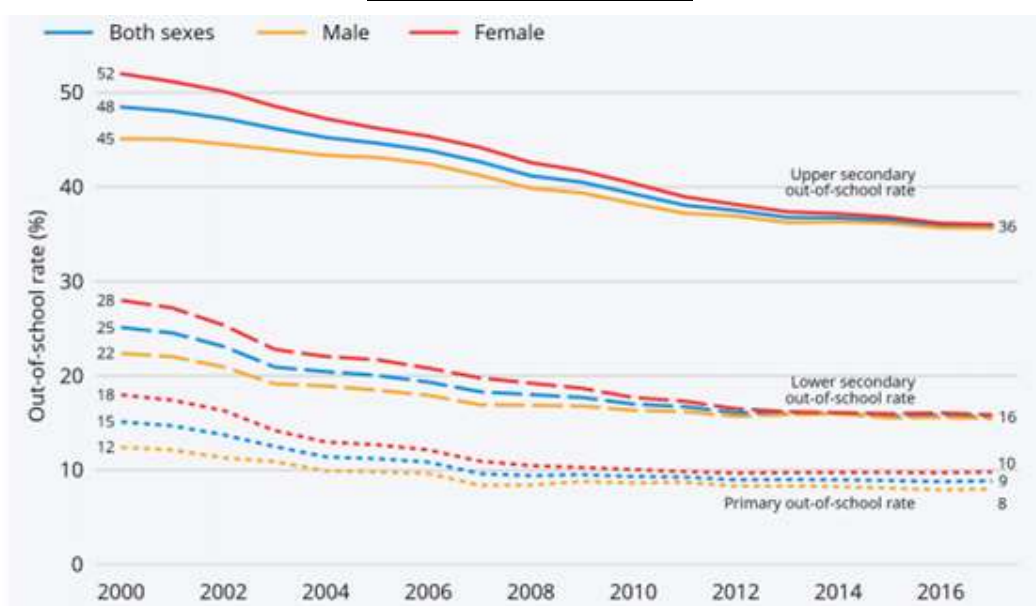
Building on and continuing the Education for All (EFA) movement, SDG 4 - Education 2030 takes into account the lessons learned since 2000. What is new about SDG 4 - Education 2030 is its focus on increased and expanded access, inclusion and equity, quality and learning outcomes at all levels, within a lifelong learning approach. Figure 1 shows that access to education has increased since 2000. But still many children, youth and adolescents of primary and secondary school age are out of school.

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**What is new about SDG 4 - Education 2030 is its focus on increased and expanded access, inclusion and equity, quality and learning outcomes at all levels, within a lifelong learning approach.**

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**FIGURE 1: OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE**



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database<sup>4</sup>

A key lesson of recent years is that the global education agenda should operate within the overall international development framework, with strong links to humanitarian response, rather than alongside it, as occurred with the separate EFA goals and education-related MDGs.

“By adopting the Incheon Declaration, the education community set a single renewed education goal in accordance with the overall development framework. The new education agenda’s focus on inclusion and equity – giving everyone an equal opportunity, and leaving no one behind signals another lesson: the need for increased efforts especially aimed at reaching those marginalized or in vulnerable situations. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, color, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status, should have

access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.”<sup>5</sup>

The new Agenda was defined as a formal commitment and promise by leaders to all people everywhere. It is a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world. But the true test of commitment to the 2030 Agenda will be implementation.

**2. Inclusive education: A complex and multi-dimensional concept**

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Because there is currently no formal and internationally agreed definition regarding what inclusive education means, the concept of ‘inclusion’ has been debated for many years.

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Because there is currently no formal and internationally agreed definition regarding what IE means, the concept of ‘inclusion’ has been debated for many years. The concept was originally used in relation to disability. This was the case in the 1990s, when talking about combating the discrimination or segregation that learners with special educational needs (SEN) experienced as a result of disability in gaining full access to and participation in mainstream educational provisions. The concept remains ambiguous, varying from inclusion as concerned with disability SEN, to inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.<sup>6</sup> Multiple researchers<sup>7</sup> point out differences in perspectives from politicians, researchers and practitioners regarding what schools can and should do for IE to succeed, and what should be considered when implementing and monitoring IE.

IE has developed differently in the various countries.<sup>8</sup> IE supposes a real change at both the level of policy and practice regarding education. Learners are placed at the center of a system that must recognize, accept and respond to learners’ diversities. IE aims to respond to the principles of efficiency, equality and equity,<sup>9</sup> where diversity is perceived as an asset. Learners also need to engage in society, to access meaningful citizenship and to acknowledge the values of human rights, freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination.<sup>10</sup> IE includes ideas on how education and schools should be organized and can therefore be regarded as an educational philosophy; however, there will always be an existing education system from which to set the goals for IE.<sup>11</sup>

**3. Policies and practices: What is the core and what is at stake?**

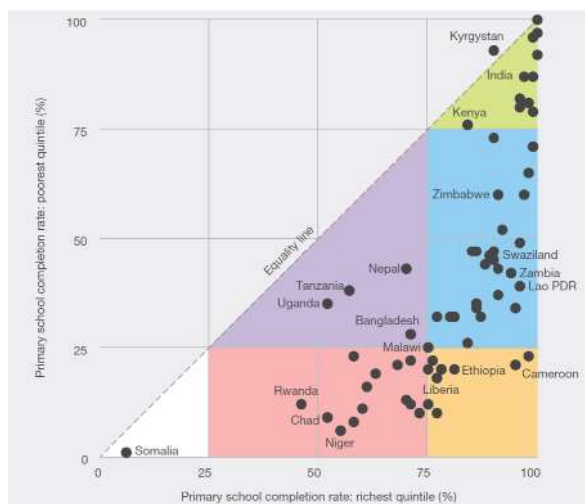
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Figure 2 illustrates that in almost every country, poorer children are far less likely than richer children to complete primary school.

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Historically, IE appears to be an ambitious goal which only earned legal status in recent years. However, this does not mean that inclusion is fully implemented into educational practice, even in countries where it enjoys normative support. Figure 2 illustrates that in almost every country, poorer children are far less likely than richer children to complete primary school.

FIGURE 2: COMPLETION RATE OF POOR VS. RICH CHILDREN



Source: UNESCO Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education<sup>12</sup>

According to Mittler “inclusion implies a radical reform of the school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of pupils. It is based on a value system that welcomes and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, level of educational achievement or disability.”<sup>13</sup>

The key message is clear: “every learner matters and matters equally”.<sup>14</sup> The complexity arises in putting this message into practice. Implementing this message will likely require changes in thinking and practice at every level of an educational system, from classroom teachers and those who provide educational experiences directly, to those responsible for national policies. The latter can influence and support inclusive thinking and practices by establishing the equal right of every individual to education, and by outlining the forms of teaching, support and leadership that lay the foundation for quality education for all.<sup>15</sup> Developing inclusive and equitable policies requires the recognition that students’ difficulties arise from aspects of the education system itself, including the ways in which education systems are currently organized, the forms of teaching provided, the learning environment, and the ways in which student progress is supported and evaluated.

Even more important is translating this recognition into concrete reforms, seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning. Differences can act as a catalyst for innovation that can benefit all learners, regardless of their personal characteristics or home circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Educational inclusion has to be revealed as part of a wider social policy framework.<sup>17</sup> This principle requires the respect of diversity and ‘otherness.’

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According to Ledesma Marín, the current theoretical approach to diversity and inclusion has evolved since the selective model (‘expressly advocating the exclusion of pupils considered different, that is, not fit for studying and therefore sent to a different facility or expelled from the education system’).<sup>18</sup>

The model of compensation, conceived ‘diversity as a problem of academic and intellectual achievement [...] emphasizing deficiencies and dealing with diversity through “extraordinary” and individual measures applied *a posteriori* (such as review, enrichment, make-up activities, repetition, individual curricular adjustments).’

Thirdly, the comprehensive model ‘considers diversity as inherent to each individual in multiple spheres and as a richness of human groups’, and hence ‘SEN [...] are considered contextual, that is, they may or may not appear in each specific situation and therefore there is no stigmatization of pupils.’

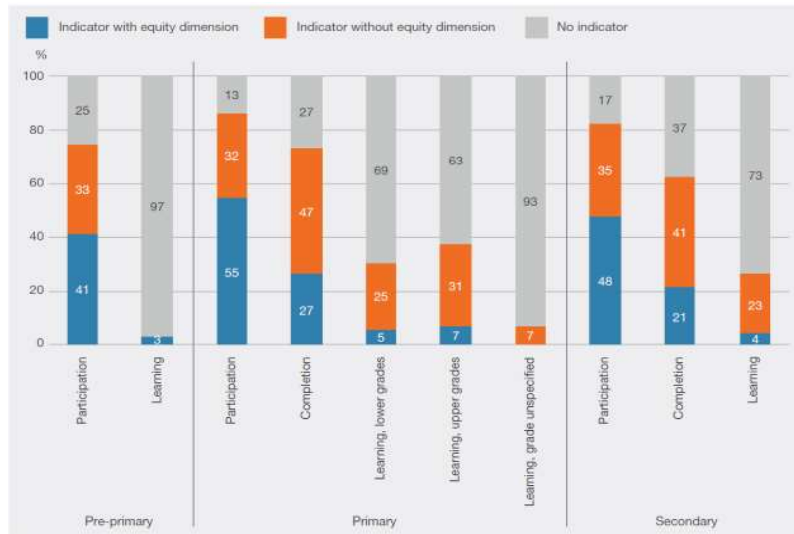
Ledesma Marín stipulates: “what distinguishes the inclusive model of the comprehensive model is that, in the former, some manifestations of diversity should be reinforced while others (considered unfair) should be eradicated – those that create discrimination and exclusion. In addition, it is assumed that the school environment itself creates some barriers for learning and for the participation of pupils and of the community that should be overcome. [...] In an inclusive school, it is essential that pupils actually “live” collaboration, participation and critical (self-) reflection experiences and that the relationship with teachers is warm and kind as well as demanding.”<sup>19</sup>

Figure 3 illustrates that, in the education plans of 75 countries, participation and completion indicators feature more heavily than learning indicators.

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it is essential that pupils  
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**FIGURE 3: PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION INDICATORS IN EDUCATION PLANS**

Source: UNESCO Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Inclusion and equity as overarching principles

The ‘UNESCO Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education’ offers a policy review framework to assess existing education policies for their attention to equity and inclusion, to create and implement an action plan to advance education policies, and to monitor progress in the measures being taken.

The Guide especially articulates that inclusion and equity are overarching principles that should guide all educational policies, plans and practices, rather than being the focus of a separate policy. These principles recognize that education is a human right and is the foundation for more equitable, inclusive and cohesive communities.<sup>21</sup>

Ensuring that all learners have access to quality education acknowledges the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity. In this way, differences come to be seen in a positive light as the incentive for fostering learning among children, young people and adults, and to promote gender equality. The principles of inclusion and equity are not only about ensuring access to education, but also about having quality learning spaces and pedagogies that enable students to thrive, to understand their own reality, and to work towards a more just society.<sup>22</sup>

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**These principles recognize that education is a human right and is the foundation for more equitable, inclusive and cohesive communities. Ensuring that all learners have access to quality education acknowledges the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity.**

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#### 5. Holistic approach: Implementing the right to education

In conclusion, the concept of IE has evolved in recent years and has expanded towards the concept of the right to high-quality education for all learners, regardless of any individual or social characteristic.

This right contains different components, including both an individual and a collective dimension.<sup>23</sup>

IE supports the right to equal access opportunities to education. It rejects any form of segregation or exclusion of learners for any reason and refers to placement in education. It relates to the social outcomes of education and the protective effect of mainstream education.<sup>24</sup> It increases individuals' employment opportunities, social and civic engagement and life satisfaction, and reduces the level of exposure to poverty, crime and drugs.<sup>25</sup>

But, placement in education does not necessarily guarantee high-quality education. Implementing the right to education involves providing learners with equal learning opportunities. IE may therefore be seen as a process which takes into account social, cultural and learning diversities and builds on factors that help to identify and remove barriers to learning and participation in education. Such barriers may relate to the ability of schools to stimulate creativity, problem-solving and democratic forms of governance support, for example civic and social engagement.<sup>26</sup>

High-quality education for all also includes equal achievement opportunities. The concept of IE refers to the system's ability to combine performance and equity and to the enabling effect of teaching practices and support in terms of outcomes. Outcomes may be related to academic achievements. Existing data suggests that learners with SEN are less likely to have the same academic achievements, despite existing support.<sup>27</sup>

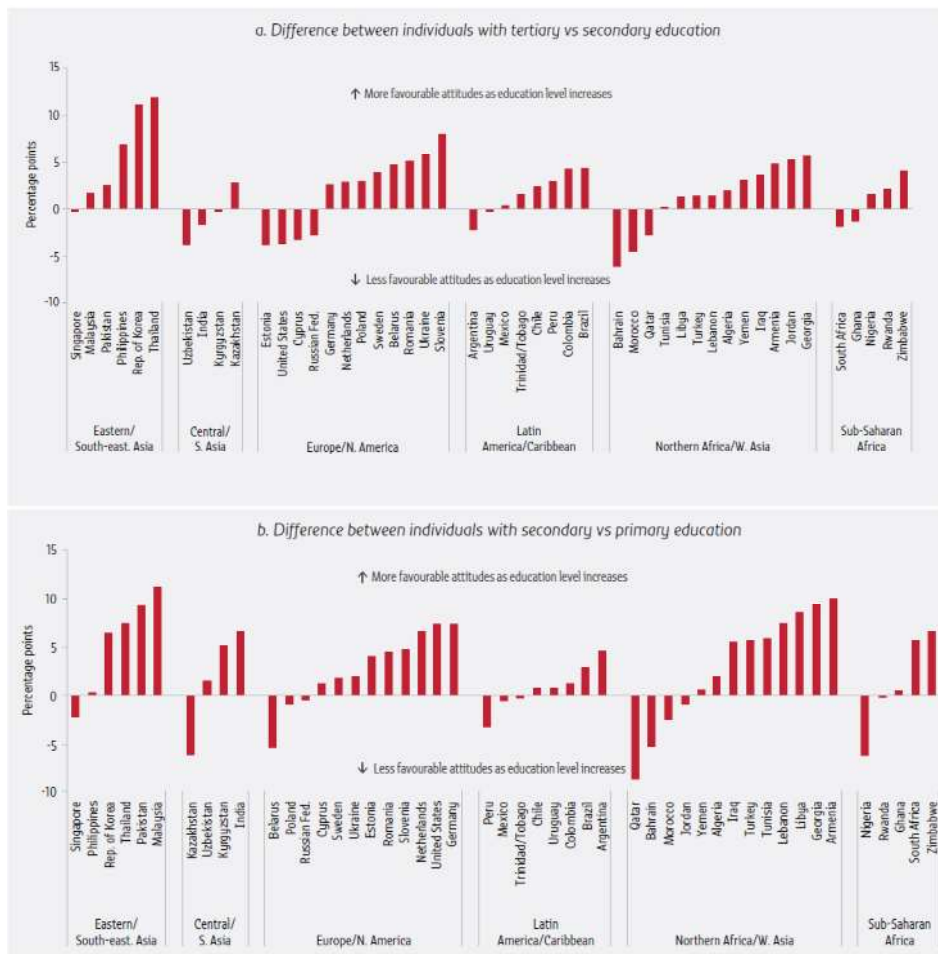
Outcomes can refer to skills that help to prevent poverty and exclusion. Data suggests that learners with SEN are more likely to be exposed to drop out and poverty.<sup>28</sup>

While inclusion builds on IE, it is not synonymous with it. Implementing the right to education also implies considering learners' access to equal citizenship opportunities. The concept of IE relates to social inclusion and individuals' ability to be recognized as citizens and to act as such. Beyond participation in employment, it includes skills that enable learners to be self-determined and to take and assume responsibilities that are associated with one's rights.<sup>29</sup> It also refers to active social engagement and is related to tolerance. Civic education has a positive impact on attitudes towards gender and cultural diversity. Figure 4 shows that educational attainment is linked to more positive attitudes towards immigration.

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**The concept of IE relates to social inclusion and individuals' ability to be recognized as citizens and to act as such.**

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**FIGURE 4: MORE EDUCATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH MORE FAVORABLE VIEWS OF IMMIGRANTS**Source: Global Monitoring Report 2019 <sup>30</sup>

## PART II. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL GROUNDS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The right to education (RtE) and rights in education are embedded in an impressive set of legal norms and standards.<sup>31</sup>

International and regional human rights law contain many elements that can be construed as a normative basis for IE. Considering only the UN core instruments, at least five of these texts should be examined: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Several of those norms are particularly relevant for understanding the relationship between the legal aims of education and the idea of inclusiveness - also taking into account the most comprehensive definition of educational rights in international and regional law: “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality [...].<sup>32</sup>”

The RtE is an internationally recognized right. It is at the heart of UNESCO’s mission, and central to the Education For All (EFA) process. The UNESCO Constitution expresses the belief in ‘full and equal opportunities for education for all.’

The normative framework for the RtE is essentially contained in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), which occupies the most important place among UNESCO’s instruments. This principle is reflected in treaties and conventions of the United Nations which provide for the RtE<sup>33</sup> as well as in UNESCO’s conventions and recommendations in the field of education.<sup>34</sup> Equality of educational opportunity is an entitlement and overriding attribute of the RtE. It constitutes a core obligation in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Convention and measures taken by States to that end. The principle of equality of educational opportunity goes hand-in-hand with the principle of universal access to education. General Comment No. 13 on the RtE lays emphasis on accessibility. It provides that educational institutions and programs have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party. “Education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds.”<sup>35</sup>

Special reference should be given to:

1. The national constitutional and legal norms on equality and non-discrimination in education, in general as applied to the several levels and domains of education;<sup>36</sup>
2. The role of the judiciary in implementing the RtE: the principle of justiciability of the RtE;<sup>37</sup>
3. The regional legal system and common ‘constitutional practices,’ as sanctioned by the international courts, - including the aspects of inclusiveness and indirect discrimination, as articulated by case law;<sup>38</sup>
4. The relevancy of comparative education law.<sup>39</sup>

The characterization of the RtE by the General Comment, inspired by the UN Special Rapporteur Katherine Tomaševski focused on several substantive aspects:<sup>40</sup>

1. Availability: “Functioning educational institutions and programs have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the State party”;
2. Accessibility: “Educational institutions and programs have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction

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**Equality of educational opportunity is an entitlement and overriding attribute of the RtE.**

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of the State party” (non-discrimination, physical accessibility and economic accessibility);

3. Acceptability: “The form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, have to be acceptable,” (e.g. relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality) to students and, in appropriate cases, to parents who are also addressed in a sets of rights: curricula for individual growth, fair assessment, governance, safe education and parental recognition;
4. Adaptability: “Education has to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings” (idem other sets of rights, as well as, cross-border teaching & learning).

In my report ‘Fulfilling the Right to Education’<sup>41</sup> as the *Chargé de Mission* to UNESCO for the RtE, I complemented this 4A scheme by 5A principles: Awareness, Advocacy, Adequacy, Accountability and Autonomy.<sup>42</sup>

## PART III. SPECIAL FOCUSES

### 1. Introduction

The Global Education Monitoring Report has long taken an equity, pro-inclusive perspective when monitoring progress towards global education goals. The report has shown that the poorest children are four times more likely to be out of primary school than richer children. It is estimated that one-third of all out-of-school children at the primary level have a disability. Aggregated analysis from 51 countries showed a 10 % point gap in primary completion rates between people with and without disability. This is likely an underestimate. About 40% of people around the world are not taught in a language they speak or understand. Figure 5 illustrates that in many countries a large proportion of students do not achieve minimum proficiency in reading at the end of lower secondary education.

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**The report has shown that the poorest children are four times more likely to be out of primary school than richer children.**

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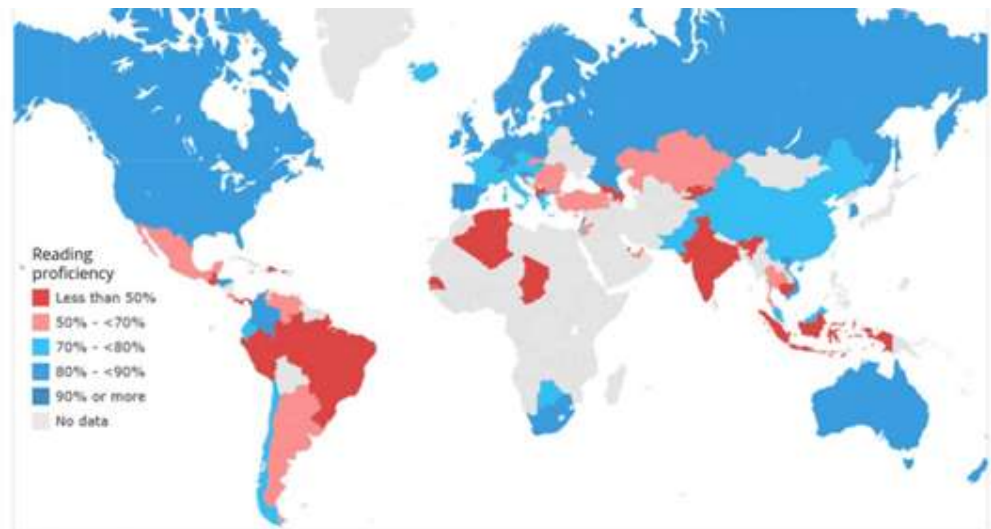


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**Figure 5 illustrates that in many countries a large proportion of students do not achieve minimum proficiency in reading at the end of lower secondary education.**

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**FIGURE 5: PROPORTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVING AT LEAST A MINIMUM PROFICIENCY LEVEL  
IN READING AT THE END OF LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

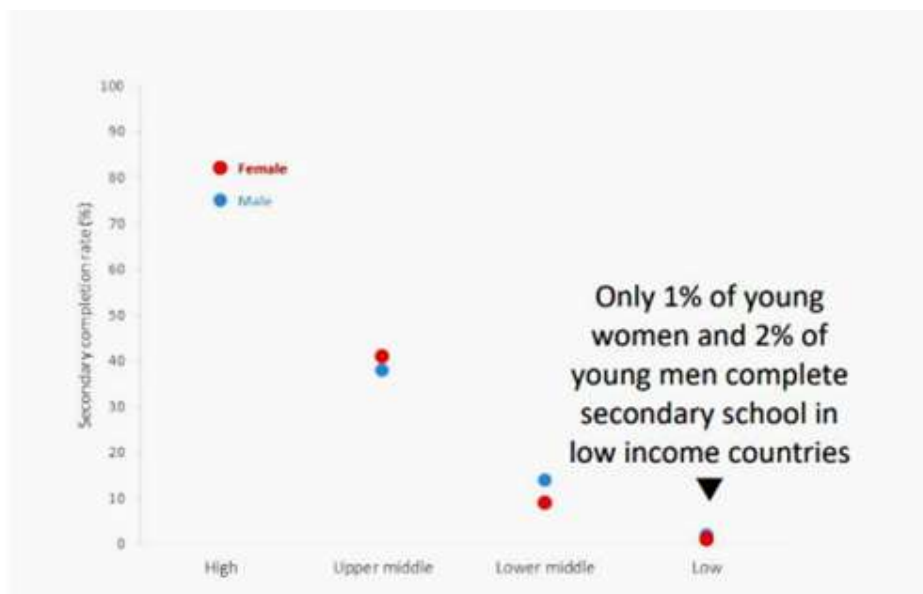


Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database<sup>43</sup>

**Some students will be less successful than others due to particular circumstances or unequal opportunities: poor students, learners with disabilities, girls, members of minority groups, students of rural populations, indigenous communities, internally displaced persons, nomadic peoples, Roma, stateless people and other vulnerable groups.**

Progress has not been equitable: the children who face the most severe barriers to education, such as those associated with gender, poverty, displacement, disabilities, are still left behind.

Some students will be less successful than others due to particular circumstances or unequal opportunities: poor students,<sup>44</sup> learners with disabilities, girls, members of minority groups,<sup>45</sup> students of rural populations, indigenous communities, internally displaced persons, nomadic peoples, Roma, stateless people and other vulnerable groups. These students face additional obstacles that require assistance to ensure that they can succeed.<sup>46</sup> It has been estimated by UNESCO that 15 million girls of primary school age will never get a chance to learn to read or write. Compared to about 10 million boys.<sup>47</sup> Figure 6 below shows low levels of completion: only 1% of the poorest young women and 2% of the poorest young men complete secondary school in low-income countries.

**FIGURE 6: SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES**

Source: Global Education Monitoring Report: Migration, displacement and education (2019) <sup>48</sup>

In this contribution we have a special focus on parents of children with SEN, learners with disabilities and refugees.

## 2. Attitude of parents vis-à-vis inclusive education

**A** bundant research analyzed reviews on IE on its conceptualization, on teachers' professional development fostering IE, and on participation of learners with SEN.

Studies pointed out that parents generally hold positive or neutral attitudes towards IE and that parents of children with SEN hold more neutral attitudes towards IE than parents of typically developing children. Often, parents did not prefer IE because of concerns about their child's emotional development, individual instruction and the services available in regular schools.<sup>49</sup> When choosing a secondary school, parents considered the experiences of the child in primary school, the expected level of support, the child's ability to cope with a large class and the teachers' capacity to meet the child's needs.<sup>50</sup> Parents 'with a higher socio-economic status (SES), higher education level and more experience of inclusion hold more positive attitudes compared with parents with a low SES, lower education level and less experience of inclusion.'<sup>51</sup>

Parents of children with autism were optimistic that IE gave their child a better chance to have a 'normal life,' but were not convinced that IE was the best educational environment for their child.<sup>52</sup>

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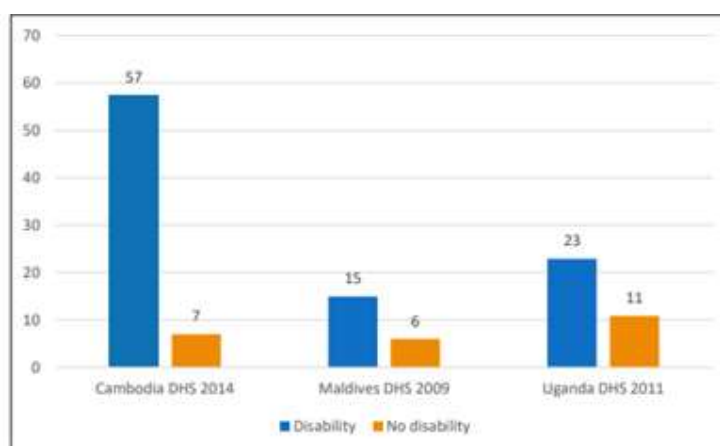
**When choosing a secondary school, parents considered the experiences of the child in primary school, the expected level of support, the child's ability to cope with a large class and the teachers' capacity to meet the child's needs.**

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### 3. The progressive realization of inclusive education and the immediate obligation to provide reasonable accommodation

Although many developing countries have recognized the right to education, it has not always been applied to persons with SEN who are sometimes excluded from public schools because of the severity of their disabilities, lack of facilities and trained staff, long distances to schools, and the fact that regular schools do not accept pupils with special educational needs.<sup>53</sup>

FIGURE 7: OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE OF CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE,  
BY DISABILITY STATUS (%)



Source: Demographic and Health Surveys<sup>54</sup>

Figure 7 illustrates that the out-of-school rate of children with a disability is much higher than that of those without a disability. This issue also remains in the so-called developed world.

Huge attention by education lawyers is paid to the rights of persons with disabilities. “It is a complex and continually evolving field of law.”<sup>55</sup> “A child with special educational needs has a statutory right to an IE.”<sup>56</sup> “The statutory protections afforded students with disabilities raise fundamental questions about our notions of equality and fairness.”<sup>57</sup> The topic is popular, especially because of the impact of appropriate structures and measures for those learners who have the most difficulties to be enabled to learn and study.

The evolution of the legal terminology since the first specific law by the end of the 19th Century is impressive: the first legislation referred to the ‘uneducable,’ later the ‘abnormal’ learner, and further the ‘handicapped’ and ‘less valid.’ ‘Special schools’ were established and the stage previous to our current era in legislation mentioned those with SEN,- thus allowing authorities to use a broader scope. The most correct and comprehensive term is now ‘IE’.

Formal definitions differ, and comparative education law shows accurately the complexity and its challenges vis-à-vis the legislator, public authorities, education institutions, parents and learners themselves (refer to “Tajikistan: The Right to Education of Children with Mental Disabilities” by D. Filatova - page 249).

International reports reveal the embarrassing dimension of the challenge. The EFA Global Monitoring Report proved that disability status increases the risk of educational exclusion. In developing countries, disability status has been found to be highly correlated with poverty,<sup>58</sup> and even more predictive of non-enrolment than socio-economic status, rural location or gender.<sup>59</sup> Girls with disabilities can be especially marginalized. They face increased isolation, stigmatization and discrimination, experience a lack of schooling and other opportunities to participate in communal life, and are at particular risk of abuse, including forms of sexual violence.<sup>60</sup> Children with disabilities who attend school are more likely to be excluded in the classroom and to drop out. An aggregated analysis of 51 countries showed a gap of 10 % points in primary completion rates between people with and without disability. This is likely underestimated given the undercounting of people with disabilities.<sup>61</sup>

The Monitoring Report also mentioned a recent analysis conducted across 30 countries hosting Plan International Sponsorship Programs, which confirms earlier findings. The study found that children with disabilities are far less likely to attend school, have less accumulated schooling and are more likely to report a serious illness in the last year. Children with hearing or visual impairments had better schooling outcomes compared with children with learning or communication impairments.<sup>62</sup>

Research pointed out that various barriers by governments, schools, communities and families limit disabled children’s access to schooling.<sup>63</sup> These include a lack of understanding about forms of disability and disabled children’s needs, insufficient resources to accommodate diverse needs including a lack of teacher training and physical facilities, discriminatory attitudes towards disability and difference, and poor data on which to build policy<sup>64</sup> (refer to “Education is a Matter of Heart”: Inclusive Education in Bolivia” by G. Corno and L. Marfisi - page 229).

Several high-profile declarations in the past decade signaled growing regional interest in providing access to education for children with disabilities.<sup>65</sup> The UK Department for International Development (DFID), a prominent funder in international education, has now committed to prioritizing disability-related programming and research, and the Global Partnership for Education has pledged to make disability a priority financing area in education planning.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4. Learners in rural and remote areas

**T**he main goal of IE includes providing educational opportunities for learners who attend school but who, for different reasons, do not achieve adequately, and for students who are not attending

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**The main goal of IE includes providing educational opportunities for learners who attend school but who, for different reasons, do not achieve adequately, and for students who are not attending school for a variety of reasons.**

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school for a variety of reasons.<sup>67</sup> This paragraph focuses on learners who are not attending school, or are attending infrequently because they live in geographically challenging settings in rural and remote areas. It is measured by UIS and UNICEF that, on average, the out-of-school population is nearly twice as large in rural areas as it is in urban areas<sup>68</sup>. In many low and middle-income countries rural students have half the chance – and often much less – of completing upper secondary school, compared with urban peers<sup>69</sup>. In addition, the number of children who remain out of school staggering, but progress in reducing these numbers has stagnated since 2007. In many countries, children living in poor, rural areas are among the most affected.<sup>70</sup> The situation is complicated by the fact that many schools in rural areas do not have the necessary access to resources to support the children, which makes it difficult to provide quality education. A special interest is dedicated to learners in rural and remote areas because disparities between those living in rural or children of urban areas appear to be a persistent issue in many countries<sup>71</sup> (refer to “Refugees in West Africa and the Challenge of Inclusive Education” by A. B. Bado - page 271).

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**It has indeed been historically proven that women in rural areas have less access to educational opportunities than men.**

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The RtE for rural areas derives from the rights that apply to all people, but also includes special measures to ensure that, for example, rural women have access to educational opportunities. It has indeed been historically proven that women in rural areas have less access to educational opportunities than men. To address prejudicial attitudes, Articles 10 and 14 (d) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women call for States parties to ensure equal access to all forms of education for rural women and that rural women have equal access to formal and non-formal education, including that relating to literacy and vocational training.<sup>72</sup>

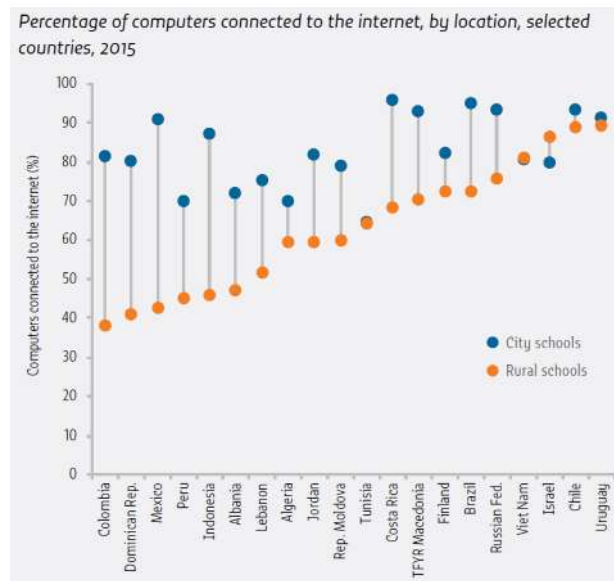
Geographical inclusion refers to students in all regions of a country that should receive equity in IE no matter where the community is located, but this doesn't always happen.<sup>73</sup> The assessment of the extent to which rural areas are lagging behind in the various countries depends on comparable definitions of ‘rural’ and ‘urban’, but unfortunately comparability is low. This has important implications for monitoring education inequality between urban and rural areas. Current estimates of rural education outcomes may include a large number of locales that are *de facto* urban, masking the situation of truly rural areas<sup>74</sup> (refer to “The Xajanaj Kahalepana Socio-Educational Project: for the Right to Quality Education of Children and Youth in the Marginal Urban Area of Chinautla, Guatemala” by E. M. Sendra Gutiérrez - page 159).

It remains crucial to promote the quality of education and learning in rural and remote areas, but there are several challenges that have to be taken into account. These vary from country to country. These challenges range from issues of government policy to practical issues such as distance and security.<sup>75</sup>

Learners in rural and remote areas often have to travel long distances to their school, if they at least even have a school at their disposal.<sup>76</sup> Also, the education facilities and learning environments play a big role in rural education. Computers in rural schools are less likely to be connected to the

internet, while technology has the potential to enhance teaching and learning in interactive and participatory ways.<sup>77</sup>

**FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF COMPUTERS CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET**



Source: Global education monitoring report 2017

In addition, they usually live in agricultural settings where they are expected to help their parents with agricultural activities instead of going to school. Parents of these children also lack to see the benefits of education, especially when there are costs for transport, uniforms or equipment<sup>78</sup>.

Teachers, too, are often reluctant to teach in abandoned communities that are not open to education<sup>79</sup>. However, in order to improve the quality of education and learning, it is necessary to provide and sustain qualified and trained teachers in rural areas and to improve their working conditions.<sup>80</sup> Research shows that teachers in remote settings need to be provided with more training and professional development to better understand how to implement inclusive practices and how to develop resources that are culturally relevant for effective learning.<sup>81</sup>

Rural to urban migration accounts is particularly a salient phenomenon in low- and middle-income countries, leading to higher level of urbanization. Declining rural populations are also observed, primarily in richer countries. Among a variety of possible movements, permanent or temporary, between or within urban and rural areas, it is rural to urban flows and seasonal or circular flows that tend to pose the biggest challenges for education systems.<sup>82</sup>

One policy that can help rural schools is to build a network and to encourage them to share resources and learn from each other. In Canada there is an example of a district school in Ontario that made e-learning available to ensure that all students could complete secondary education. In Catalonia, rural schools are part of rural education zones and share teachers for some courses, such as foreign languages and music<sup>83</sup> (refer to “E-based Education: Breaking limitations” by P. Meyer - page 187).

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## 5. Refugees

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The Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 shows that the number of refugee and migrant children has increased 27% since 2000. This means we could fill over half a million classrooms with these children.

Still, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), estimates that only 50% of refugee children have access to primary education.

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Not only legal citizens, but also all those lacking legal documents can refer to the international framework in order to enforce access to education and every right attached to education (free admission, grants, access to special language courses, etc.).

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As of 2018, 70.8 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced.<sup>84</sup> The Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 shows that the number of refugee and migrant children has increased 27% since 2000. This means we could fill over half a million classrooms with these children.<sup>85</sup> Still, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), estimates that only 50% of refugee children have access to primary education.<sup>86</sup>

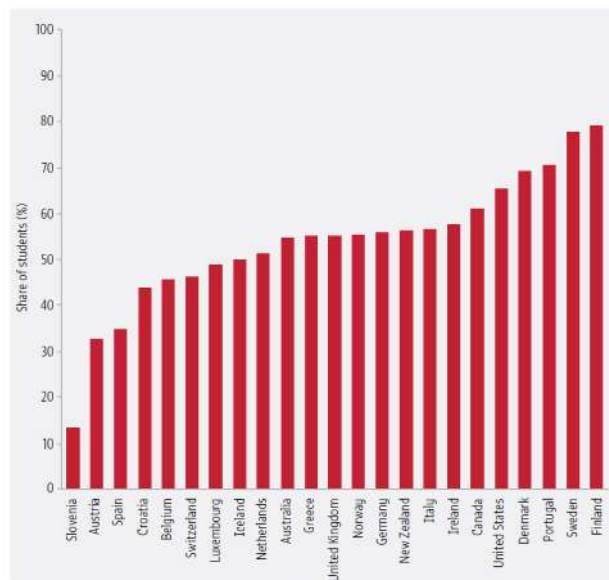
States have to ensure education rights to any child within their jurisdiction<sup>87</sup>. The enjoyment of rights stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are not limited to children who are citizens of a State and must therefore, if not explicitly stated otherwise in the Convention, also be available to all children – including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children – irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness.<sup>88</sup> States should ensure that access to education is maintained during all phases of the displacement cycle. Every unaccompanied and separated child, irrespective of status, should have full access to education in the country that they have entered<sup>89</sup> (refer to “Free to Sow, Free to Grow” Project: Marketing Gardening and Integration Pathways” by M.F. Posa and F. Orlandi - page 243).

Not only legal citizens, but also all those lacking legal documents can refer to the international framework in order to enforce access to education and every right attached to education (free admission, grants, access to special language courses, etc.). However, the legal truth is more complex. In the words of the Special Report of the United Nations on the RtE of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers: “Human rights law does not sufficiently address the question of binding obligations of States to take positive measures,” and “it is largely unclear which distinctions between migrants and the citizens are admissible and which are not.”<sup>90</sup> Overall, the material effects of international human rights legislation on improving (irregular) migrants’ access to social rights in the European countries have remained limited: due to the lack of guarantee of effective incorporation in the municipal legal order and due to the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, they are often little more than a statement of normative intent.<sup>91</sup>

The fact that refugees are unable to follow the normal curriculum in their current country of residence due to their limited knowledge of the local language or due to the limited schooling they received at home is no excuse to deny them the right of access to existing education facilities. As figure 9 shows, on average half of the immigrants receive language support in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Where it can be assumed that school authorities — given a limited number of places — may impose admission requirements or may refuse to admit learners in specific cases (for example because they lack the necessary skills or aptitude for a particular course of study), in any case the regulatory

power does not give the government the right, through the imposition of access conditions, to deny them their RtE.

**FIGURE 9: LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN OECD COUNTRIES FOR IMMIGRANTS**



Source: Global Education Monitoring Report, 2019<sup>92</sup>

Inclusive higher education requires the recognition of qualifications and competences for refugees, asylum seekers and subsidiary protected people.<sup>93</sup> At stake is the formal acknowledgement of all proving the successful completion of a higher education program.

The academic recognition of qualifications serves study purposes.<sup>94</sup> Recognition for access to higher education is mostly assessed by the individual higher education institutions. The legal framework guiding this type of recognition is the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Based on this Convention, each country should recognize qualifications similar to the corresponding qualification in that country, unless the responsible authority can demonstrate a substantial difference.<sup>95</sup> The Convention also provides guidance for the treatment of refugees and people in a refugee-like position: “Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programs or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.”<sup>96</sup>

Besides the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Recommendation on Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation was submitted in 2017. The recommendation addresses this issue of the lack of documents by advocating for the use of the Background Document, providing a description of the qualification or study period for which the documentation is lacking as a tool to facilitate recognition.

Regarding the access to higher education, institutions are obliged to follow the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Furthermore, they are allowed to admit people to their programs based on alternative admission requirements, among which are humanitarian reasons. Learning outcomes are crucial to the qualification recognition procedure.

Professional recognition, on the other hand, aims to establish credentials in the labor market:<sup>97</sup> for regulated occupations *de jure* professional recognition is required, namely the right for professionals to work in regulated professions.<sup>98</sup> For non-regulated occupations, *de facto* recognition by employers is, in principle, sufficient.<sup>99</sup> However, most employers are not familiar with foreign degrees. Therefore, to help facilitate professional recognition for unregulated occupations, one can apply for an official recognition with a recognition authority assessing whether the foreign degree is equivalent to the one currently needed. Decisions are based on the earlier mentioned principle of substantial difference and refugees are to be able to apply free of charge.

Promising practices are being shaped to fasten inclusive higher education such as the Qualifications Passport for Refugees, a pilot-project of the 'Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education' (NOKUT). The standardized statement by NOKUT regards the highest completed qualification, work experience, and language proficiency. NOKUT offers advice for career paths based on a careful scrutiny of the documentary evidence at hand and a structured interview by two experienced officers. This Pilot Program was taken as a starting point for the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. The aim of this passport is to, "establish a multinational, quality-assured framework in Europe for the recognition of refugees' competence," thus providing refugees with a documentation of their qualifications that can be used across European national borders.<sup>100</sup> The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a cooperation between the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and qualification recognition authorities in Greece, Italy, Norway and the UK and the UNHCR Office in Greece.<sup>101</sup>

In conclusion, developing a more competence-oriented method of qualification recognition could not only allow for a more specific form of recognition, but also provide a path for people without documents towards recognition. This could be developed in corporation with assessment agencies

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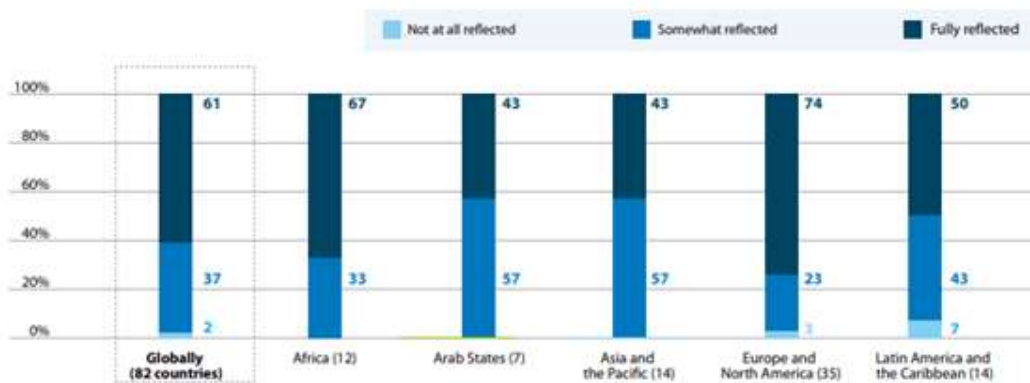
that already possess the necessary expertise in developing an (shortened) assessment track for this target population.

#### PART IV. CONCLUSION

Meeting the challenge of inclusion and equity in education will require substantial efforts from countries and from the International Community. Figure 10 illustrates that 98% of 80 countries reported that the Guiding Principles of ‘cultural diversity and tolerance’ and topics such as ‘equality, inclusion and non-discrimination’ were reflected (fully or partially) in the Constitution or domestic legislation. The question is whether this is implemented in the policy of these countries.

Figure 10 illustrates that 98% of 80 countries reported that the Guiding Principles of ‘cultural diversity and tolerance’ and topics such as ‘equality, inclusion and non-discrimination’ were reflected (fully or partially) in the Constitution or domestic legislation. The question is whether this is implemented in the policy of these countries.

**FIGURE 10: REFLECTED GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND TOPICS  
IN THE CONSTITUTION OR DOMESTIC LEGISLATION (IN %)**



Source: Progress on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education<sup>102</sup>

Despite the substantial progress over the last two decades, the lack of the fulfilment of inclusion and equity remains massive. Several initiatives are undertaken to set out a conceptual framework for measuring inclusion and equity in education based on policy-data components and indicators, initiated by among others the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and OECD Education at a Glance and Teaching and Learning International Surveys (TALIS).

Among others, the Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education<sup>103</sup> presented key concepts (Chapter 2) on how these concepts can be applied in practice (Chapter 3) and concluded – by analyzing 75 national plans – that many countries do not have regular standardized national assessments. (Chapter 4).

The World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) collects and analyses information on policies and actionable priorities for strengthening education systems.<sup>104</sup>

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**Educational and public authorities should be held accountable in fulfilling inclusion through law, policy, and, most importantly, through practices.**

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SABER paper, “the What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results,” provides guidance for tackling those challenges and compiles the most important policy goals that countries should strive to achieve.

The Global Monitoring Report<sup>105</sup> contains valuable information on implementing the commitment to IE for all learners concerned. Educational and public authorities should be held accountable in fulfilling inclusion through law, policy, and, most importantly, through practices.

It was without surprise that the Global Education Meeting 2018<sup>106</sup> focusing chiefly on the prior role and value of inclusion and equity concluded:

1. We commit to instituting and strengthening legislation, policy measures and strategic approaches to make education and training systems more equitable and inclusive “leaving no one behind,” including in contexts of protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies;
2. We call for a commitment to include migrants, displaced persons and refugees in our education and training systems and to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies, in line with national legislation and international agreements;
3. We commit to quality gender-responsive education and training to achieve the empowerment of all women and girls.”

#### NOTES

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2. [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/december/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151205\\_agesc.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/december/documents/papa-francesco_20151205_agesc.html) en [https://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2015/12/catholic-schools-educating-in-fullness.html?fbclid=IwAR0h8fZiUUuP\\_ns1Z3l\\_ozE5umP4wRn-ifmV5iif2zHYXa539492KLFw\\_l4](https://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2015/12/catholic-schools-educating-in-fullness.html?fbclid=IwAR0h8fZiUUuP_ns1Z3l_ozE5umP4wRn-ifmV5iif2zHYXa539492KLFw_l4)

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9. *Inclusion* could be defined as a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners. *Diversity*: People's differences which may relate to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class, and immigration status. *Equity* is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance. *Inclusive education*: Process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.
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***Chapter 4:***  
***Case Studies***

# ***AL FARAH CENTRE: SUPPORTING AND DEFENDING INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE HEART OF THE HOLY LAND***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**GEORGE M. NABER**

Director, *Collège des Frères Beit Hanina*

**T**he Joy Centre (*Al Farah* Centre in Arabic) is a school located on the Eastern side of Jerusalem in the neighbourhood of *Beit Hanina*. The *Al Farah* Centre was founded in 2000 by the Brothers of the Christian Schools who have had a presence in Jerusalem since 1876 when they opened their first school in the Old Town.

With over 1050 students of different faiths (mostly Christians and Muslims) and more than 70 teachers, the Centre functions on the fundamental belief that all students need love and support. This is especially relevant for students with learning disabilities. *Al Farah* Centre has developed various programs to put this conviction into action and to prepare students to overcome difficult circumstances through emotional strength, confidence and determination.

The aim of *Al Farah* Centre is the development of individual and collective programs prepared according to the needs and capacities of the students. Programs are elaborated with the collaboration and support of parents, school staff and the various educational stakeholders, and are specially focused on children with learning difficulties and those who require additional support.

By developing mechanisms of assessment and direct intervention based on Arabic and international practices and adapted to a Palestinian context, the Centre has made important efforts to help children with learning difficulties. The school insists that all teachers – both those focused on students with learning disabilities, and those working with other students – are aware of these practices. The ultimate objective of the school is the positive integration of students into the regular educational system. To achieve that goal, the Centre has established an internal diagnostic system for children with learning disabilities. The results are used to create an individualized program for each student. Additionally, the Centre has harmonized programs so that, while all students interact, those with learning disabilities also have access to booster lessons.

The Centre works to raise awareness in the Educational Public Administration in order to develop policies more adapted to students with learning disabilities, including those policies concerning access to university

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**In order to ensure the motivation and the application of students in their studies, the school uses non-traditional and alternative assessment and learning methods.**

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education. In this regard, the school has published articles and organized workshops and conferences to increase awareness and sensitivity among politicians and the educational community. *Al Farah* Centre collaborates with other schools of the area so they, too, can benefit from these strategies.

In order to ensure the motivation and the application of students in their studies, the school uses non-traditional and alternative assessment and learning methods. All the school stakeholders work together in research and publication, producing resources, organizing workshops, creating web content and a resource centre to enabling parents and all students access to materials. An example of this are the afternoon seminars and workshops for small groups. These seminars are adapted to the different needs of the students who participate. Students also have the opportunity to meet with specialists to overcome difficulties via functional or behavioral therapy. Finally, we should highlight the educational conferences, workshops and the mentoring program organized to support parents and teachers.

# ***ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR STREET CHILDREN IN BUKAVU – DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**JACQUES MUKANIRE NGABO**

Program Manager, Programme d'Encadrement des Enfants en Situation de Rue (PEDER)

**MARIE-LAURE JOLIVEAU**

Program Manager for Africa, International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)

## **1. Context**

**A**rmed conflicts raging in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for more than a decade have caused massive displacement of families fleeing from the killings and insecurity in the outlying territories of Bukavu to the cities. This situation deteriorates the socio-economic conditions and reduces families' ability to care for their children. Naturally, parents prioritize the survival of the household over the schooling of their children. The school drop-out rate has contributed to the phenomenon of street children, which has taken on worrying proportions in the city of Bukavu and is often linked to juvenile delinquency. Struggling to survive, these children often turn to theft, prostitution, violence, drugs and alcohol.

Initiated in 2018 with the support of the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), the current project carried out by the *Programme d'Encadrement des Enfants en situation de Rue (PEDER)* and run by the Congregation of the Sisters of Santa Gemma, aims to reduce the number of street children by:

- Identifying and providing support for vulnerable families;
- Proposing solutions to avoid family breakdowns;
- Ensuring access to education and vocational training for children;
- Training mentors to monitor the rehabilitation of children with local childhood protection committees;
- Organizing campaigns to raise awareness of children's rights and childhood protection.

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**The school drop-out rate has contributed to the phenomenon of street children, which has taken on worrying proportions in the city of Bukavu and is often linked to juvenile delinquency.**

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## **2. Beneficiaries**

**6**0 children (30 girls and 30 boys) aged 8 to 16, participate in the program. Out of school and in situations of family breakdown, they are commonly referred to as street children. These children come from poor neighborhoods and poor families. They are subjected to all

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**These children come from poor neighborhoods and poor families. They are subjected to all manner of abuse, including from law enforcement. Girls are increasing in number and are among those most vulnerable. Often raped and forced into prostitution, they struggle to survive in a country where HIV is still rampant.**

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manner of abuse, including from law enforcement. Girls are increasing in number and are among those most vulnerable. Often raped and forced into prostitution, they struggle to survive in a country where HIV is still rampant.

Another group of beneficiaries are the 40 women aged 28 to 65 years old organized into 4 support groups to help each other succeed in financing the education of their children. These women, mothers, aunts and grandmothers, are offered assistance to develop their small businesses. They are chosen based on their dynamism, influence and geographical proximity to the families of the selected children. In forming small businesses to help the education of their children, the women are also able to contribute to other areas of the family's financial needs.

### 3. Actions

**V**ia several initiatives, the Congregation of the Sisters of Santa Gemma supports socially excluded children in their schooling and/or professional development in order to offer them hope for the future. Educators contact children on the street, informing them about the different services available in the reception centers managed by the Congregation.

The main initiatives are:

- The Street Children Mentoring Program organizes and trains educators in civic education, pedagogy and children's rights in order to improve educational services and promote childhood resilience. Training workshops focus on civic education and the rights of the child, dealing with the following topics: Civics, citizenship and democracy; State and nation; human rights, democracy and elections; culture of peace and conflict management; health, environment, development, natural disasters and natural disaster risk reduction. Educators have noted that learning the concepts related to civic education and children's rights have a considerable impact on children's behavior and stability;
- Identifying and supporting 60 street children candidates for school reintegration. 30 girls and 30 boys were enrolled in 25 partner schools. Of these children, 51 were initially enrolled in 21 primary schools and 9 children were enrolled in 4 high schools. However, some school officials would not accept older children (aged 13 to 15) who were several years behind the others in school. PEDER then applied for enrolment in other schools which accepted the children;
- Developing the capacity of marginalized families to bear the costs of their children's education through the establishment of women's support groups. 40 women in 4 groups were provided with technical support and funds to set-up business activities. The women were able to buy a first stock of goods and to develop their businesses in order to

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**Educators have noted that learning the concepts related to civic education and children's rights have a considerable impact on children's behavior and stability.**

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fund the education of their children;

- Providing partner schools with the ability to finance school fees for the most disadvantaged children in the community through the “School Enterprises” pilot project. The objective of these enterprises is to cover school fees for 20 children referred by PEDER – enabling them to follow the regular school curriculum. Support is provided thanks to earnings from income-generating activities within the schools and financed by the project. The income-generating activities are carried out by the 40 mothers, aunts or grandmothers of the students. They sell vegetables, fish, spices, etc. PEDER meets them weekly to check their financial situation, stock needs or any other issue in order to ensure a smooth development of their activity.

#### 4. Outcome

**I**n evaluating the impact of the project, we first observe that conditions for non-formal basic education are improving in PEDER centers thanks to additional human resources and the acquisition of new skills. Indeed, children have gradually begun to take concrete steps towards peace and solidarity. For example, the number of disputes between children has decreased. Also, children who regularly destroyed the center’s equipment (benches, tables, playground equipment, kitchen utensils, etc.), in previous years, are now the same children responsible for managing the center’s materials. Among these 60 children:

- 20 boys and 20 girls were reintegrated into PEDER partner schools in Bukavu and their schooling costs were fully covered by the project for the first year. They will continue studying thanks to their mothers’ efforts in the support groups. They will pay their school fees with the interest of the income-generating activities (IGAs) supported by the project. This activity’s main objective is the school reintegration of street children that have abandoned the regular educational system for more than a year;
- 20 children (10 girls and 10 boys) have been reintegrated into two “school enterprises” institutions and their school fees are covered by interest funds generated by the IGAs organized by these schools.

Another important achievement is that 40 women have developed a capacity to pay school fees through their sustainable involvement in activities aimed at supporting their children’s education. The 40 women exercising parental authority over the 40 children referred to schools, received each a personal fund which they applied to a gainful activity. 34 of them have improved the financial situation in their households. PEDER’s financial support to these women allowed them enough capital to generate

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**Indeed, children have gradually begun to take concrete steps towards peace and solidarity.**

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**It is a priority for the program to involve participation, discussion, group work, educational and recreational activities with beneficiaries and partners to enable accompanied children to learn from others, to deepen and develop their understanding, to practice critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making.**

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**Each child has strong inner potential which can be revealed if he is able to communicate, feel understood, cared for, fed and educated.**

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benefits for the entire family – initially school fees for one child, but then also health costs for the family.

Lastly, and as a result, we see the emergence of a family and social environment open to promote children's education.

## 5. Conclusion

**I**n line with BICE's mission<sup>1</sup>, PEDER applies a participatory approach to its activities, both with beneficiaries and the members of the management committees of School Enterprises. This reflects the BICE approach of conferring responsibility to local partners, thereby applying the principle of subsidiarity to bring about sustainable and in-depth change in communities. It is a priority for the program to involve participation, discussion, group work, educational and recreational activities with beneficiaries and partners to enable accompanied children to learn from others, to deepen and develop their understanding, to practice critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making. When the rights of the child or young person are denied by poor living conditions, it is possible to help them regain confidence and self-esteem. Each child has strong inner potential which can be revealed if he is able to communicate, feel understood, cared for, fed and educated.

### NOTES

1. BICE, Who we are?, available at: <https://bice.org/en/the-bice/decouvrir-le-bice/who-we-are/> [Accessed 31 July 2019]

# “EDUCATION IS A MATTER OF HEART:”<sup>1</sup> INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BOLIVIA

A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by

GIORGIA CORNO

Research Fellow, Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in Geneva

LORENZO MARFISI

Project Coordinator, *Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (VIS)* Bolivia

## 1. Introduction: Context and country situation

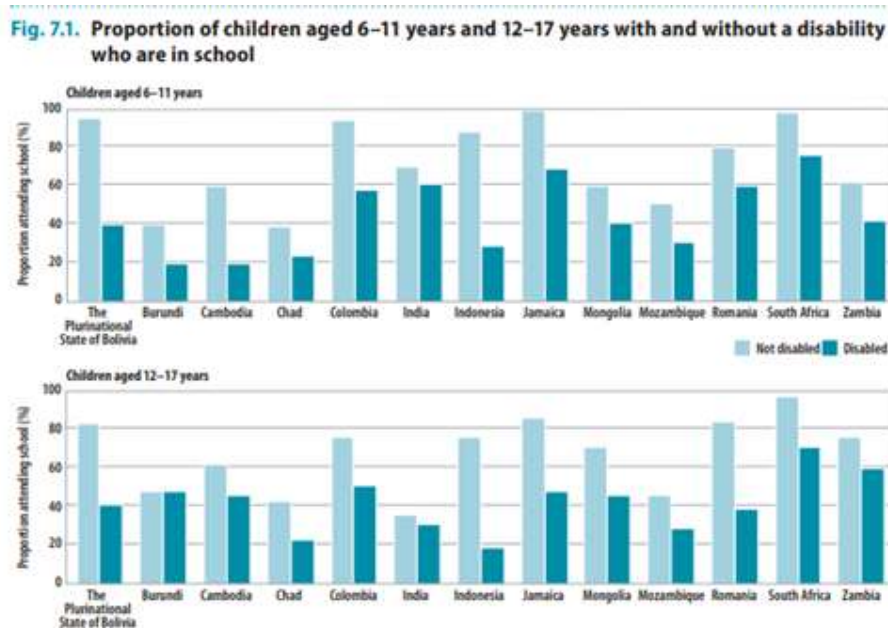
In Bolivia, between 62% and 97% of children with disabilities are out of the education system.<sup>2</sup> This follows the global trends reported by the World Health Organization (WHO): “In general, children with disabilities are less likely to start school and have lower rates of staying and being promoted in school.”<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows the comparable data on the attendance of pupils both with and without disabilities in several low-income countries.

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In general, children with disabilities are less likely to start school and have lower rates of staying and being promoted in school.

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FIGURE 1: PROPORTION OF CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN SCHOOL



Source: WHO, World Bank; *World Report on Disability*, Malta, 2011<sup>4</sup>

Recently, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published its concluding observations on the initial report submitted in 2016 by the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The Committee expresses concern about the low percentage of school enrollment and high drop-out

rates of children with disabilities, stressing that these children mostly attend special and segregated schools. Another concern is that the commonly used criteria for treating disability does not address barriers to integration, thus, not providing a holistic approach to their education.

Taking into consideration these current challenges, the introduction of an inclusive approach to education could pave the way to strengthen Bolivian human development. Inclusive education is a fundamental aspect of the project 'Strategies of inclusion in social, health and educational services: Operational models for accompanying children with disabilities in Bolivia', promoted by the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation in partnership with International Volunteer for Development<sup>5</sup> (VIS), implemented with local partners and co-sponsored by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development<sup>6</sup> (AICS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 2. The work of the VIS and Salesian institutions in Bolivia

**V**IS is an Italian NGO founded in 1986 by the National Center of Salesian Missions<sup>7</sup> working to help the youth population living in vulnerable conditions in 20 countries worldwide. The NGO is inspired by Don Bosco's preventive educational system as a modern and effective way to promote human rights and overcome inequalities and injustices. The association's motto, "together for a possible world," highlights the goal of a global network to improve children's lives and support communities in conditions of poverty. VIS believes that it is possible to address root causes of extreme poverty through education and training.

In Bolivia, VIS promotes inclusive education of children with disabilities or learning difficulties in primary schools in the department of *Cochabamba*. It works with the Don Gnocchi Foundation, the Salesian University of Bolivia, Don Bosco Popular Schools (EPDB),<sup>8</sup> and the Local Church Community Education (CEIL).<sup>9</sup> Besides, VIS promotes the right of every child to live in a family environment, and implements a deinstitutionalization project to facilitate family reintegration processes of children living in residential care.<sup>10</sup>

## 3. Promoting strategies of inclusive education in Bolivia

**T**he main goal of the project is to promote the rights of children with disabilities and/or special needs. Specifically, this project strengthens access to inclusive and quality education, health and social services in the department of *Cochabamba*.

Applying an approach based on human rights, the project focuses on the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Model proposed by the WHO. CBR services provide effective rehabilitation and therapy to persons with

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disabilities through the combined efforts of other people with disabilities, families and communities. Because of its community orientation, CBR is designed to address structural, architectural, communicative, social and cultural barriers that affect a person's ability to participate in the community.

The project is organized in three components, each geared towards an expected outcome:

	<i>Component</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>
1	Access to health	Strengthened and increased accessibility of rehabilitation services of five municipalities in the department of <i>Cochabamba</i> ;
2	Inclusive education	Improved, replicable processes of inclusive education for children with disabilities and/or special needs in four primary schools within the EPDB network;
3	Empowerment of organizations set up by persons with disabilities	Improved technical competencies, advocacy, and planning capacities of organizations set up by persons with disabilities.

Hence, this article will focus on the second component, namely inclusive education.

In line with the international legal framework,<sup>11</sup> the project embraces, as previously explained in “Why Freedom is Necessary for Effective Education” by C. L. Glenn (page 149), the distinction between integration and inclusion.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, it aims to achieve “an inclusive education system at all levels.”<sup>13</sup> Ensuring the right to inclusive education entails a transformation in culture, policy and practice with the educational environment in order to accommodate the differing requirements of individual students, together with a commitment to remove the barriers that impede access to education on a quality basis.

One of the first challenges faced by the project was removing architectural barriers that impede access to school facilities for children with physical disabilities. On 31 August 2019, one of the schools inaugurated new ramps and bathrooms to facilitate access and raise awareness on the issue of accessibility. However, focusing only on physical infrastructure of school facilities would be too limited. Thus, a training course for teachers was launched by the project alongside awareness initiatives for parents and students to develop individual support for children with disabilities while also addressing communicational barriers that limit access to education.

With all these considerations in mind, the project proposes various actions. First, parents of primary education students attend a cycle of awareness sessions about the importance of inclusive education. During

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**Ensuring the right to inclusive education entails a transformation in culture, policy and practice with the educational environment in order to accommodate the differing requirements of individual students, together with a commitment to removing the barriers that impede access to education on a quality basis.**

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**Among the innovations of the project is the great opportunity for universities and vocational training students to support students with disabilities and/or special needs.**

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these meetings, parents are invited to focus on learning or social difficulties that some students with special needs may experience at school. These meetings are important because some parents are convinced that in accepting children with disabilities, teachers may take inordinate time and attention away from other children.

Among the innovations of the project is the great opportunity for universities and vocational training students to support students with disabilities and/or special needs. Interns and practitioners follow and tutor assigned primary students with learning difficulties for 12 hours each week.<sup>14</sup> In collaboration with the teacher, they provide curricular adaptations in classrooms. Such initiatives require the teacher and practitioner to develop individualized teaching methods focused on learning capabilities and results, more than on didactic lessons. The initiative is supervised by EPDB and strengthened by a training course for student practitioners provided by the Salesian University of Bolivia in partnership with VIS.

Moreover, two publications will be issued soon: a manual to guide school directors and teachers on methods to realize inclusive education, and a text to sensitize parents about a new way of organizing formal education in an inclusive school.

Lastly, the project will establish an evaluation system that will certificate institutions as 'inclusive' for children with disabilities and special needs.

#### **4. Potential project impact**

**E**PDB is a Salesian institution committed to increasing access to and improving education – especially with and in favor of children and teenagers living in peripheral or rural areas. Through its five local offices, EPDB supports a network of about 250 schools throughout Bolivia and offers training to teachers and school directors, non-formal education to students, capacity and institutional building formation, and last but not least equipping or building of school units, and refurbishment of existing facilities. Thanks to different projects of restoration, construction and refurbishment of school units, EPDB is progressively achieving the principles of universal design.<sup>15</sup> Regarding awareness sessions with primary school parents, EPDB manages to draw attention to the problems some students with disabilities and/or special needs face at school and break the isolation suffered by their parents. In one of the four schools selected for awareness sessions, a father expressed his disagreement with the inclusive education approach. After listening to his words, a mother of a child with disability pointed out the problems her child was facing at school, admitting that she was considering changing school. The episode produced an intensive dialogue among the parents, that led to a compromise to solve these problems. Now that father, as member of the parent school council,

is the first to adapt to the needs of the child with disabilities – fostering the child's inclusion in all educational activities.

The support offered by student practitioners is also very helpful and appreciated by the entire education community and as a result many students with special needs are registering better grades at school.

## 5. Conclusion

As educating young people means also shaping a new society, the international institutions have placed a growing priority on changing education and its basic principles. Indeed, the institutions have conferred a central role to inclusive education, providing new instruments and specific methodologies, and requiring new policies for promoting education. Inclusive education and effective development interventions are necessary to spread new multidimensional strategies that bridge the “big” words of human rights to simple and concrete actions, capable of passing into reality. In conclusion, this project not only represents a replicable good practice, it is also in line with the VIS vision, and embeds the idea of inclusive and universal education that values all children “leaving no one behind.” It reflects Don Bosco’s words: “It is enough for me that you are young, for me to love you very much.”

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**In conclusion, this project not only represents a replicable good practice, it is also in line with the VIS vision, and embeds the idea of inclusive and universal education that values all children “leaving no one behind.” It reflects Don Bosco’s words: “It is enough for me that you are young, for me to love you very much.”**

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### NOTES

1. Saint John Bosco
2. Molino Garcia, S.; Taurà Reverter, C. (2012); *Educación especial: inclusión socioeducativa y discapacidad.*, cit., p. 23.
3. WHO; World Bank (2011), *World Report on Disability*, Malta
4. More recent data on Bolivia is unfortunately not available at this time
5. Italian acronym, which means: *Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo*.
6. Italian acronym, which means: *Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*.
7. *Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane* (CNOS)
8. EPDB is the Spanish acronym for “*Escuelas Populares Don Bosco*” (Don Bosco Popular Schools).
9. CEIL is the Spanish acronym for *Comunidad Educativa de la Iglesia Local*
10. This project is sponsored by UNICEF and AICS and is currently being carried out in the departments of *Cochabamba*, La Paz and Santa Cruz in collaboration with the Salesian University of Bolivia and the Don Bosco Project, this last being a network of centers, social services, general and special schools, vocational training schools, dedicated to children without parental care of Santa Cruz. The project includes: an important blended learning Master for professionals working with institutionalized children (training courses for educators, social workers and psychologists operating in the child protection system, implementation of family reintegration processes in partnership with the local public social services, and finally, institutional building activities).
11. United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Persons with*

*Disabilities*, A/RES/61/106 , 13 December 2006, art.24; United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Children*, A/RES/44/25, 20 November 1989, art. 23, 28 and 29.

12. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in its General Comment N. 4 of 2016, clarifies that, while integration is the process of placing children with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions with the understanding that they can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions, inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students with an equitable and participatory learning experience.

13. *Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities*, art.24.

14. It corresponds at 55% of the time spent by a student in primary level at school.

15. The universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, including persons with disability. In particular, the universal design for learning approach consists of a set of principles providing teachers and other staff with a structure for creating adaptable learning environments and developing instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

# ***LIVELIHOODS TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES AND VULNERABLE LOCAL POPULATIONS IN JORDAN AND PAKISTAN***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION  
(ICMC)<sup>1</sup>

## **1. Introduction**

**T**he International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) is a registered non-profit organisation working in the areas of refugee and migration issues. It coordinates a network of structures mandated by the Catholic Bishops Conferences worldwide and has staff and programmes in over fifty countries. ICMC's mission is to protect and serve uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants - regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

ICMC responds to the needs of uprooted individuals and their communities, providing assistance and protection in a broad range of sectors, including protection, education, health, shelter, water and sanitation. It facilitates community empowerment and refugee resettlement processes. Furthermore, ICMC contributes to enhance sustainable development for refugees and migrants through vocational trainings and livelihood programmes. This article presents two key livelihood initiatives led by ICMC through its operations in Pakistan and Jordan.

Despite the decreased migration flow from Syria, Jordan continues to experience much pressure as it addresses the needs of the refugee population with already stretched resources, particularly in the health and education sectors. Moreover, the labour market has struggled to generate sufficient formal sector jobs to accommodate the large number of Syrian refugees, in addition to unemployed Jordanians.

Pakistan faces similar challenges. The volatile security situation in Afghanistan, even in government-controlled areas, has not proven to be conducive to the safe return of many Afghan refugees from Pakistan, who continue to rely, for the most part, on Government infrastructure, while the funding support of the International Community continues to decline.

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**ICMC's mission is to protect and serve uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants - regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.**

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## 2. Livelihood activities in Pakistan

Since the beginning of the mass migration from Afghanistan (1979), and for 33 out of the 35 past years, Pakistan has been ranked as one of the world's top countries hosting Afghan refugees. In 2016, after living in exile for almost 20 years, more than 370,000 Afghans, and, in 2017, 59,020 returned to their country of origin. However, Pakistan is still hosting 1.4 million refugees and an undetermined number of undocumented migrants, mainly Afghans. They are living in camps/refugee villages and urban areas. Pakistan's government has extended the stay of Afghan refugees until the end of June 2018. For several years, refugees have been facing multiple issues including the lack of livelihood opportunities. Insufficient financial means to acquire the appropriate skills, training on marketable trades, orientation on local trades and employment opportunities contribute to the economic issues faced by the refugees. In Pakistan, ICMC has assisted Afghan refugee communities for many years and has successfully implemented livelihood projects.

ICMC's Livelihoods Project was carried out for three years, until July 2017; it aimed to develop income-generating activities for Afghan refugees and disadvantaged host community members in the province of *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* in Pakistan. The assessments conducted by ICMC showed that a majority of the refugees remain unskilled and are fearful of going back to Afghanistan without proper means of earning a living. The project sought to promote social cohesion through improved livelihoods for both refugee and indigenous communities and to facilitate potential return of refugees by equipping them with income-generating skills that can be put into use both in Pakistan and, upon return, in Afghanistan.

Access to employment was facilitated through a multi-pronged approach that started with the provision of vocational training in different trades identified with a significant labour market demand and good economic potential, both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan (shoe-making, carpet weaving, dress making, embroidery, beautician, motorcycle repairing, etc.). Trainees were invited to choose a training programme among the pre-selected trades, based on their respective capacities and interests. In parallel, literacy and numeracy classes were offered to illiterate trainees. Upon completion of the vocational training, comprehensive support also was provided to find a job or start a small business, including enterprise development training, provision of tool kits or small grants to start one's own business, linkages with employers, exposure visits to relevant industries and markets and job placement and follow-up of previous trainees.

As an ICMC beneficiary of this livelihood project, Masour<sup>2</sup> (30 years old) attended a six-month shoe-making training. His performance was outstanding, and, upon completion of an additional three-day training, Masour then was selected as a beneficiary of a business development grant.

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He has lost his father when he was a child and has been living in the Charsadda district, in Pakistan, along with his older sister and his mother. The family resides in a room after they left the grand-parents' home and Masour has been staying in a tent just outside this room. Moreover, Masour abandoned his studies after ninth grade and immediately started to work, he accepted different jobs, including sale of popcorn on the streets, in order to earn money to support his family. As a result of this training, Masour has set up his own shoe-making business and he now purchases for a better future and an increased household income.



MASOUR PORTRAYED DURING HIS DAILY BUSINESS OF SHOE-MAKING

(PHOTO: ICMC PAKISTAN)

### 3. Livelihood programmes in Jordan

As of April 2018, there are 661, 859 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan, of which 80% live in urban settings, outside camps. Eight years into the protracted conflict, the economic and social infrastructure and services in Jordan continue to be under pressure, with numerous gaps across sectors. The impact of the crisis on families and individuals in Jordan has resulted in drastic changes to the traditional social norms and in complex protection concerns. The poor socioeconomic situation in the country also has resulted in significant financial vulnerabilities for the respective populations of Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees. Despite the announcement of the Jordan Ministry of Labour, in December 2017, to deliver Work Permits for a period of less than six months to Syrian refugees, the latter face challenges in obtaining legal, non-exploitative work opportunities. They also struggle to find regular employment, due to limited job opportunities and specialised trainings available, thus leaving both groups financially insecure and at increased risk of protection issues.

ICMC's livelihoods programming in Jordan started in 2016 and aims to prepare and equip vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian youths (between 18 to 30 years of age), living in *Irbid* and *Mafraq*, with competencies and skills to proactively position themselves for employment and to participate in

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**Eight years into the protracted conflict, the economic and social infrastructure and services in Jordan continue to be under pressure, with numerous gaps across sectors.**

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income-generating activities. ICMC identifies and selects individuals in this age range and offers them the opportunity to take either one of the following two pathways within the livelihood programme, depending on their background knowledge and financial skills:

- Enroll in a financial literacy course, or
- Attend a vocational training course for those candidates who demonstrate financial capabilities.

While attending the vocational training courses, participants are provided with a stipend to cover food and transportation expenses. This incentive offers them an opportunity to learn how to best manage and track their expenses, which is a key skill that will be needed once they find a job or decide to take on a microfinance loan. Beneficiaries of the Vocational Training programme also are supported with job matching, provision of grants/loans for small business start-ups, on-the-job learning and/or support to acquire a job permit either through ICMC or through a partner agency. The Vocational Training courses and the follow-up support they receive, provide an opportunity for beneficiaries to diversify their household income and increase their chances to find an employment, thus contributing to an overall increase in resilience.

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#### *A. Beneficiary identification and selection*

**I**n order to identify potential beneficiaries, ICMC conducts community outreach visits among refugee and host country populations. During these visits, outreach caseworkers gather personal data but also share information about the vocational training programme. Additionally, ICMC engages directly with local community-based organisations (CBOs) through thematic awareness-raising sessions and distribution of information materials. All interested candidates who approach ICMC undergo a first interview, during which ICMC caseworkers collect data about their financial situation, their educational background, and their interests. After the initial interview, the profile of the candidates is reviewed and assessed to determine their eligibility to attend the training programme.

In 2017/2018, 492 first interviews were conducted across Irbid and Mafrq, of which 329 were Syrians and 163 were Jordanians. 281 candidates were female, and 211 candidates were male. Once courses are confirmed with the service providers, pre-selected candidates are called for a second interview during which they confirm their interest to participate in the upcoming training.

### ***B. Selection of Vocational Training Centres and Vocational Training Classes***

**V**ocational Training Centres were selected after an accurate mapping of service providers offering training courses in line with the candidates' interest and in-depth capacity assessments, across various Governorates in Jordan. Specific features of each potential training centre, as well as the curricula offered, were evaluated. Relevant criteria included the organisational structure, the mission and values, history and past performance, programme management capacities, financial management system, the location of the facilities, accessibility by the target group, the quality of the programming, and the reputation of the training centre. ICMC is currently working with three Vocational Centres, which deliver two courses in beautician services, one in Mafraq and one in Irbid, and one cooking class in Mafraq for 55 women. Five additional vocational training courses have started in April 2018, and include barbering, mobile maintenance and sewing, there are 75 students (60 males, 15 females) in these courses, which generally are segregated by gender, due to different interests among the gender groups.

Each training course is 240 hours long, over the period of twelve weeks. Classes are held five days per week, for four hours daily. The number of training hours is determined by the curriculum of each course, which is established by the Ministry of Labour (MoL). Participants who complete the course can take a final exam in their respective area of learning and obtain a certificate of competence, which is officially certified by the MoL. This allows the graduates to seek employment and to receive a certificate to practice a profession. Alternatively, they may decide to start their own businesses for which they have gained both the qualification and the formal requirements. This is an important way through which the youth, particularly among the Syrian refugees, can access the local job market in Jordan. Vocational and employability courses provide beneficiaries with portable skills and competencies that could be reinvested in the long run, including in the event of return to Syria.

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*C. Testimony from Rania, one of 15 Syrian and Jordanian women attending beauty courses in Mafraq*



**RANIA IS FULFILLING HER DREAM THANKS TO ICMC'S BEAUTY COURSE**

**(PHOTO: ICMC JORDAN)**

**T**his has been my dream since I was a child.” Rania says, as she weaves her new friend’s hair into an intricate rose-shaped style. “I am so excited to continue learning and developing myself.” Starting a new career can be hard. There are new skills to learn, new people to meet, not to mention training and development which can be daunting and expensive.

Rania also found out that the journey to become a beauty therapist was filled with many challenges, with additional complications due to her *status* as a Syrian refugee living in Jordan. For twelve weeks, she attended classes every day, learning everything from hair styling and cutting, to eyebrow threading and waxing. Guiding her every step of the way was a veteran beauty trainer, Wissam, who, for eight years has helped many students to start their careers in the beauty industry. If the trainees have any questions the chances are that Wissam has heard them before.

Upon graduation, Rania and the other course participants also were supported with tool kits, job counselling, referral or matching. One way to overcome the challenge of obtaining a work permit for Syrian refugees is micro-business partnerships between Jordanians and Syrians, as explained by Wissam.

“For Syrians, there are many issues with work permits. It’s hard for them because most of them are not legally allowed to work. They learn all these new skills and sometimes can’t legally use them. I have, however, seen an amazing success story, where a Jordanian and a Syrian, Sara and Mariam, met during the course, became friends, and went into business together.” Wissam is hopeful that more success stories like Sara’s and Mariam’s will emerge from ICMC’s beauty course.

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**One way to overcome the challenge of obtaining a work permit for Syrian refugees is micro-business partnerships between Jordanians and Syrians, as explained by Wissam.**

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For girls like Rania, who have always wanted to be beauticians, the course is ideal, but it is also beneficial for those who had other dreams but have had to re-focus due to the nature of displacement.

#### NOTES

1. Contributions from ICMC Operation team in Pakistan and ICMC Operation team in Jordan, edited by Amélie Peyrard
2. The name was changed to protect the identity of the beneficiary



# ***“FREE TO SOW, FREE TO GROW” PROJECT: MARKET GARDENING AND INTEGRATION PATHWAYS***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**MARIA FRANCESCA POSA AND FRANCESCA ORLANDI**

Minors Department, Caritas Rome

## **1. Introduction**

**I**n harmony with Christian principles and the demands of the contemporary world, Caritas Rome pursues the integral development of people by serving the justice and charity needs of those who are marginalized. Caritas works to provide adequate responses to the poor in situations of exclusion and inequality while at the same time generating spiritual and cultural change via education in the civil and ecclesial community. One of the areas of intervention is the reception and welcome of children and adolescents in difficulty.

Over the last 30 years, Caritas Rome has welcomed around 8500 unaccompanied foreign minors, aged 11 to 17 with an average age of 15 and a half, who have come to Italy in search of a better future.

The experience we have acquired leads us to highlight the difficulties these boys and girls face on a daily basis in their occupational, social and cultural integration. Underlying their difficult integration in the school system is a lack of vocational training and language proficiency.<sup>1</sup> Absence of such elements in their country of origin risks becoming an even more burdensome drawback in their country of emigration. Lack of vocational training and a recognised qualification in Italy denies them access to suitable jobs and risks jeopardising their future, fuelling social exclusion and marginalisation with the risk of entering into networks of deviant behaviour and petty crime. Therefore, there is a risk that the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will continue to be denied to children who already come from deprived situations if they are not accompanied by concrete actions that promote its implementation.

Our commitment is to ensure that all resources are made available to ensure the right to life, survival and development of each individual child.

The right to education should be guaranteed to all children around the world so that everyone has the opportunity to improve their culture and education – essential elements in ensuring peace and international security. In every country, investing in education is the surest and most direct way to promote economic and social wellbeing and to lay the foundations for a democratic society on a human scale.

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## 2. The project

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The main objective of the “Free to Sow, Free to Grow” project which is part of the Italian Bishops’ Conference “Free to Leave, Free to Stay” national campaign, is to offer young people welcomed in our Rome centres a listening, evaluation and training path, in order to give them better chances for social integration and inclusion.

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The main objective of the “Free to Sow, Free to Grow” project which is part of the Italian Bishops’ Conference “Free to Leave, Free to Stay” national campaign, is to offer young people welcomed in our Rome centres a listening, evaluation and training path, in order to give them better chances for social integration and inclusion. It is an integrated approach in which their needs are met with great interest, welcome and an appropriate response.

Initially, each child is followed by a psychologist. The children tell their own stories via the use of specific techniques which evaluate their strengths and aptitudes in order to support their inclusion in tailor-made courses. The children are helped to discover their internal resources and skills, thereby strengthening their self-esteem.

Various training courses have been organised: screen printing, pizzeria employment and market gardening in parallel with Italian language lessons and schooling support. Recreational activities – theatre, sports, music, etc. – are also offered. Indeed, it is important to allow everyone to continue to acquire training skills at various levels, thus contributing to school learning as well as to socialisation and relational skills.

The decision to develop a market gardening course stems from the principle that this activity develops the skill sets of young people, many of whom come from rural areas with previous experience of farm work. Gardening also has widely-documented therapeutic effects including reduction of stress and anxiety. The course encourages integration of students’ personal stories, their own roots and their present reality, thus enabling everyone to look towards the future. The students have different vulnerability factors due to their many traumatic experiences: surviving war, torture or the death of a family member, experiencing hunger, imprisonment, death of friends, rape, etc.

Finally, market gardening can offer considerable employment opportunities in local areas in Italy, which has thriving agricultural production.

The choice of materials and the various market gardening processes include organic farming which helps to protect and sustain the environment and improve the quality of the produce grown.

Through the market gardening course, the previously weak training element of social integration has been strengthened by increasing and enhancing the skill sets of students through practical and theoretical activities relating to care of the soil, understanding its requirements, optimising space and managing the succession of crops.

### 3. Implementation

**T**hree courses were scheduled during the year.

Each training course was structured in accordance with three aspects, which responded to the characteristics and needs of the participants:

- Specificity: learning real skills through experience with pre-selected training in a field that has an occupational impact;
- Brevity: both of individual training sessions, and of the entire two-month course;
- Teaching method: active and/or cooperative, mainly in the coaching mode, with the help of an experienced tutor/agronomy instructor to offer support throughout the course.

The training course lasted eight weeks, with 2-hour sessions held twice a week. The minors join classes to prepare for a high school diploma, which is a prerequisite for obtaining a residence permit in Italy and being employed. In fact, they finish compulsory education. Only a few continue with their secondary education. The project also includes assistance with learning Italian.

Each course was attended by 14 unaccompanied minors.<sup>2</sup>

The activities were organised into two parts. The first was held at one of the Caritas reception centres for minors. Theoretical and practical lessons provided students with a wealth of technical knowledge and practical skills regarding the use of the work equipment needed to carry out the activity.

These subjects also included:

- Climate cycle and seasonality;
- Agricultural implements and practices used to work the land;
- Horticultural species;
- Caring for crops;
- Use and storage of different products.

In the second part of the course, a new garden was designed and built at another Caritas Rome reception centre. The students took part in the design phase and identification of the necessary construction materials and then actually created the new vegetable garden themselves. They had the opportunity to make use of the knowledge they had acquired. Participants all received a certificate for the course.

Over the last few years, we have seen how caring for a vegetable garden promotes an environment of encounter and integration which counteracts the processes of marginalisation and discrimination, especially in more peripheral and disadvantaged situations. Indeed, local schools, which have been able to share practical experiences with their students, as well as local associations, have come to learn more about the solidarity-based gardens

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at our reception centres. Together with students, we have participated in various farm product fairs in order to share knowledge.

#### **4. Testimonies highlighting the impact of the project on beneficiaries**

**M**ila is a 16-year-old girl from Central Africa. In her country she lived with her widowed mother and brother. She had a good relationship with her mother, although she describes her as a very depressed woman, who spends most of her day sleeping. The mother lived by selling fruit from her garden while Mila helped local families with domestic work while attending school for a few years. After arriving in Italy alone, Mila immediately asked to look after the vegetable garden in the reception centre where she was staying. She's a very friendly girl, who is able to develop good relationships with adults and peers. She took the course described above, as well as a more professional agriculture course which she attended four days a week for nine months. Then she started an apprenticeship at a farm. At the same time, she went to school and obtained her high school diploma. She also joined the parish youth group. In addition, she found her own accommodation and will move there once she is eighteen. This will enable her to develop specific skills, and we are confident that she will soon have a job.

Vala is a 14-year-old boy from Albania. Both his parents are disabled and unemployed, and he left his country due to his family's serious financial problems. He had studied for seven years in Albania, and then interrupted compulsory schooling to come to Italy. He is very timid, and has an air of vulnerability which is linked to his young age and his separation from his parents. He would like to continue studying, but he is also very interested in farming. Therefore, he is enrolled in school as well as in the market gardening course. Slowly he is managing to overcome his timidity and socialise with his peer group.

#### **5. Conclusion**

**E**ducators have witnessed the growth of these children in terms of skills, but also from a personal perspective. Placed in contexts that gave them opportunities and confidence, with attention paid to their inclinations and aptitudes, they have been able to develop their potential and resources. At the same time, they have been able to begin healing from their past experiences and traumas thanks to their participation in a project in which they were put at the centre of attention and in which every aspect of their person was considered and valued.

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**Placed in contexts that gave them opportunities and confidence, with attention paid to their inclinations and aptitudes, they have been able to develop their potential and resources.**

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**NOTES**

1. The minors we welcome have not usually received a great deal of schooling. In Italy they join classes and are helped with learning Italian, which is a priority for any integration process in our country. However, there is still a gap between them and their peers.
2. Children under 14 attend classes in normal schools in accordance with their age. After 14 they continue to follow specific courses to obtain a primary school diploma.



# ***TAJIKISTAN: THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES***

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**DIANA FILATOVA**

Programme Manager for Europe and the CIS, International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)

**T**he Association of Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (IRODA) was founded in 2008 to defend the rights and interests of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Located in *Dushanbe*, the capital of Tajikistan, with the support of the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), IRODA promotes universal and unconditional access to education for all Tajik children.

In Tajikistan, many children do not attend school. Children with ASD represent the most excluded minority in the school system. According to a 2009 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 80% of these children do not receive any formal education.<sup>1</sup> In *Dushanbe*, of the 8700 identified children with disabilities, 6730 have no access to education and another 450 are enrolled in boarding schools.<sup>2</sup> In these boarding schools children are isolated from their families and often do not receive the necessary care for their development or even survival. Parents are, thus, faced with a difficult choice: institutionalization in boarding schools or abandoning formal schooling altogether.

In face of this situation, the Tajik government has provided for inclusion in its public policy objectives with the 2011 National Framework on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities. In addition, the government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018. Article 24 of the Convention recognizes “the right of persons with disabilities to education,” which must promote their development, self-esteem and effective participation, so that “they are not excluded.”<sup>2</sup>

In terms of implementation, IRODA and BICE have already seen progress during the 2016-2018 period during which they launched two pilot schools which adopted the inclusive model. During this phase, the necessary adaptations were made in two public schools of *Dushanbe* (54 and 72) who partnered for this project:

- The necessary equipment was purchased;
- The individual plans were elaborated;
- Teachers and tutors were trained to support children.

The project allowed 80 children with disabilities to fulfil their right to education in public schools. In addition, 150 teachers and tutors were trained to develop the inclusive model in their schools.

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**The following awareness raising activities are foreseen in the frame of the current project: awareness raising events in cultural, family, sport spaces of *Dushanbe*; participation of children with and without disabilities in common extra-school events; and quarterly open discussions for parents and families about inclusive education.**

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Nevertheless, to be truly universal and non-discriminatory, efforts must continue in order to expand access to education for those who are most marginalized. First, by learning about inclusive education, attitudes in both society and the school system must overcome the profound prejudice and misunderstanding of disability. The following awareness raising activities are foreseen in the frame of the current project: awareness raising events in cultural, family, sport spaces of *Dushanbe*; participation of children with and without disabilities in common extra-school events; and quarterly open discussions for parents and families about inclusive education. Secondly, sufficient State budgetary resources must be allocated for the implementation of an inclusive school policy. Finally, families must be made aware of the possibilities of open schooling for children with disabilities. To overcome these prejudices and insufficient resources, BICE and IRODA have implemented a new two-year project (2018-2020) aimed at ensuring access to quality education for children with mental disabilities in Tajikistan. This multidimensional project includes various intervention axes in order to offer the best education for children and to ensure the project's sustainability. Each axis of the project focuses on a specific target audience.

The project supports and promotes the schooling of nearly 200 children with mental disabilities. A child can be referred to different classes according to his or her needs. Adaptation classes by BICE and IRODA are offered for children aged 6 to 8 who are preparing to enter a regular class. These classes include children aged 6 to 18 with the most severe disabilities, and children aged 7 to 18 who attend regular classes but who need special support.

In these classes, children have access to individual and group lessons. They are monitored individually, and each has a learning plan based on their abilities, personality and needs. In accordance with this plan, children follow additional courses both in the academic program (reading, writing, mathematics, computer science) and in -so-called- pre-professional courses (art, music, physical education, cooking, autonomy, social communication, going to the cinema, shopping). This approach allows them to integrate into the professional system later, and also to develop leisure activities that can contribute to their development and social integration.

Other children with mental disabilities are supported during their inclusion process in regular classes in four schools in *Dushanbe*. They benefit from individual learning plans and from the support of school life assistants. These assistants are trained in topics ranging from the social model of disability to the creation of a suitable and supportive learning environment.

To improve the functioning of adaptation and promote inclusive classes in mainstream schools, IRODA has translated and distributed ULIS (*Unité Localisée pour l'Inclusion Scolaire* - Localized Unit for Inclusive Education) materials, used in France to support inclusive classes.

The association has also equipped adaptation classes with therapeutic equipment. Children develop their sensory and cognitive skills through trampolines, sensory swings, cupboards and school desks.

Since children are not alone in this fight for inclusion, it is also a question of providing the best support for their families. Indeed, the collaboration of families to promote inclusion is fundamental. To respond to this need, IRODA organizes information and training sessions for parents. Parents are trained in support practices and the principles of inclusion.

In order to change attitudes, IRODA has also trained and sensitized at least 50 teachers and 50 school principals through observation courses. Teachers have access to the inclusive classes of the pilot schools and the adaptation classes during two open days. They are able to interact with children, parents and school principals. International expert Sylvie Leone from the Catholic Institute of Paris was invited to address the educators on inclusion principles. In addition, modules on inclusive education have been integrated into the curriculum of the *Dushanbe* Institute of Continuing Education for Teachers (IFCE).

Among the goals of IRODA is to promote inclusive education as an alternative to institutionalization. To this end, the association has developed a long-term partnership with two boarding schools in *Dushanbe*, in which at least 60 parents and boarding school directors have been made aware of the advantages of inclusive education. As a result, parents who wish to move towards the deinstitutionalization of their children are supported by the association on an administrative, legal and psychological level.

Finally, IRODA combines these activities with direct and immediate impact advocacy activities at the national level so that inclusion becomes generalized in the public schooling system and all children in Tajikistan will have the opportunity to develop themselves. Thus, several awareness-raising events are organized for the general public and the authorities as part of the project. These events include cultural and artistic events and discussions with the participation of children with and without disabilities.

An annual 'Living Together' inclusion week has also been launched in cooperation with the Department of Education of *Dushanbe* to highlight the right of children to education. A fashion show and the 'Inner Voice of Beauty' Ball were organized as inclusive cultural activities to raise funds for socio-professional development programs for adolescents and young adults with autism and other neuropsychic developmental disorders.

The ticket sale and auction generated 13,140 Somoni (which accounts to 1250 Euros). This sum will be transferred to the organization's special reserve account and used to create a new center for children with ASD and those with neuropsychic development problems.

Advocacy initiatives encourage the Ministry of Education to create official school life assistant positions integrated into the public-school system and to allocate a part of the State budget for these important positions.

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**Sustainability is a key feature of the project and each activity is implemented with a view to creating leverage effects at the local level that will allow the project's impact to be constantly renewed. Cooperation with public institutions dedicated to children with mental disabilities makes it possible to build this project over the long term since these institutions are stable infrastructures that aspire to become models of inclusive education for other educational structures in the country.**

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Cooperation with public institutions dedicated to children with mental disabilities makes it possible to build this project over the long term since these institutions are stable infrastructures that aspire to become models of inclusive education for other educational structures in the country.

Also, the introduction of the module on inclusive education in the IFCE *Dushanbe* curriculum will make it possible to train teachers well beyond the end of this project. The unprecedented partnership developed with two State boarding schools will continue in order to further contribute to the emerging process of deinstitutionalization in Tajikistan.

As for awareness-raising work, it will prepare a favorable ground in Tajik society for the fullest inclusion of people with disabilities.

Finally, the main challenge is to ensure the success of advocacy work, as this will ensure the sustainability of the inclusive education system, its development beyond a few model schools, and, in particular, the State's responsibility and recognition of the profession of the school life assistant, which is essential for the successful schooling of children with certain types of disabilities.

#### **NOTES**

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1. OECD, (2009), Review of National Policies for Education, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan: Students with special needs and those with disabilities,
2. These figures are from Tajik civil society and are confirmed by the Tadjik Ministry of Social Affairs. They were transmitted to BICE by their local partner, NGO IRODA.

# ***THE ADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES FROM SNEHA BHAVAN (INDIA)***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

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**P**rogress in society affects individuals differently and unequally. For many, the globalizing economy can herald substantial changes in countries such as India, with improvement in the lives of citizens through increased access to socio-economic opportunities. But for substantial numbers in the developing world, increased economic prosperity remains an irrelevant process. For minority groups it can sometimes even enhance difficulties and hardships, particularly for children. In a country where the majority may become moderately prosperous, the very poor remain very poor. The children of the very poor are the most vulnerable, and continue to face hunger, poverty, insecurity, high infant and child mortality, illiteracy, and exploitation and abuse of varied kinds. India is no exception, and the most vulnerable include working children, street children, those living in slums and resettlement colonies, children of sex workers, prisoners, construction workers and other migrant laborers.

Fast-paced and unplanned urbanization, often without commensurate increases in services, has only multiplied the number of these children and further aggravated their sufferings, particularly in terms of lack of education access. It is they who deserve the immediate attention of the planners, administrators, and educators. Today's human rights conscious society is obliged to recognize this aspiration and the fundamental right of each child to education and social welfare.

## **1. The situation in India**

**I**ndian society, like many others, has failed to fully realize these twin values, being education and social welfare, associated with the optimizing of children's development. In India there are perhaps the highest number of out-of-school children in the world – most are working or are considered 'street children' – at the mercy of the exploitative adult world that surrounds them. According to India's 2011 Census Data,

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According to India's 2011 Census Data, there are 444 million children in India under the age of 18 belonging to disadvantaged and underprivileged backgrounds. This constitutes nearly 37% of the total population of the country.

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"Many of the things we need can wait. But the child cannot. Right now is the time, his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his sense being developed. To him, we cannot answer, 'Tomorrow.' His name is 'Today.'"

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there are 444 million children in India under the age of 18 belonging to disadvantaged and underprivileged backgrounds. This constitutes nearly 37% of the total population of the country. Their challenges include education, child labor and exploitation, health, and gender equality. One in four children of school-going age is out of school in our country. 99 million children have dropped out of school. Out of every 100 children, only 32 finish their schooling age appropriately. Barely 2% of schools offer complete school education from Class 1 to Class 12.<sup>1</sup>

In commenting on this situation, Justice Krishna Iyer appropriately quoted poet and Nobel Laureate Gabriela Mistral of Chile: "Many of the things we need can wait. But the child cannot. Right now is the time, his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his sense being developed. To him, we cannot answer, 'Tomorrow.' His name is 'Today.'"<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Inclusive education and vulnerable children

Inclusive education implies the creation and implementation of a vast repertoire of learning strategies to respond in a personalized way to learners' diversities. In view of the current condition of education, such a structure facilitates the betterment of all parties involved. It provides opportunities to all students, including physically, mentally and socially-challenged ones. The National Draft Policy on Education in India of June 2019 has placed an emphasis on inclusive education which has the possibility of addressing issues of access and participation by all (refer to "Education and its Legal Framework in Asia" by O. T. Ena -page 79).

The following section will focus on few case studies from *Sneha Bhavan* (Home of Love) located at Imphal in the northeast Indian State of Manipur, catering since 1994 to the needs of vulnerable children, HIV-infected and affected, abandoned, orphans, single-parented, street children, child laborers, etc. *Sneha Bhavan* is a venture of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Province of Guwahati, Assam (India). It is unique because it exclusively accommodates vulnerable children and chemically-dependent mothers for education and treatment. Students come from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles and mental capacities and thus, *Sneha Bhavan* creates an exceptional environment for its students. It promotes and sustains activities that uphold and assist in the integration of individuals with varying abilities into 'normal' societies. It functions on the basis that the best way to impart knowledge is to provide a supportive yet challenging environment for the students. The children do not learn in seclusion, but instead learn, play and evolve together with other members of society.

The following case studies (the names have been changed to protect anonymity) will demonstrate the quality of education and care rendered by *Sneha Bhavan* to the children under its care. True to its name, *Sneha Bhavan* works to improve life for disadvantaged children through education,

inclusion and mobilization. The institution welcomes vulnerable children and guides them into age-appropriate classes in formal schools. Their experiences suggest that a tailored approach does not bear much fruit unless it is coupled with the activities of other sectors such as safe shelter, life coping skills, protection from all forms of abuses, food and health care. The centre is bound by a strong child protection policy that ensures the rights of every child. All children are informed of the procedures and protection measures to be taken in case of abuse, whether verbal, physical or sexual.

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### 3. Case study one

**R**ani, a ten-year-old girl, was born to an HIV infected couple. Her father died when she was small and thereafter Rani lived with her mother, two brothers and one younger sister. Her mother was often sick and they had to manage with a meager income. Most of the time, the children did not have proper food or other necessities. They lived in a condition where no love or care was given to them. During a field visit, our outreach workers brought them to our short stay home, Ngarian. After completing their stay at Ngarian, the Sisters offered to take Rani to *Sneha Bhavan*. Her mother begged the Sisters to take the youngest daughter as well. She told them that at least they would then have sufficient food. So the Sisters took them both. Rani had never seen the portals of a school. With her consent, the Sisters sent Rani to the Bridge School for a year after which she was admitted to Class 2 at Little Flower School, Imphal. In the same year her mother passed away. In spite of all the hardships and difficulties, she passed Class 10 and Class 12 (Science Stream) with good results from Little Flower School and Imphal Valley Higher Secondary School respectively. Currently she is undergoing a nursing course at Lairik Memorial Nursing Institute Sangaiprou, Imphal, aspiring to find a decent life with a promising professional career.

Counseling was the key component that helped Rani to overcome her anxiety, fear, social ostracism and depression. This motivated Rani to continue her studies. “The Sisters are not just extending help or giving education, they are giving me a ray of hope in my life,” Rani said. “The loss of my parents infused in me depression, fear, anxiety, loneliness and social exclusion. No one wanted to take care of me. Everything seemed to be over, but God has provided motherly love and care through the Salesian Sisters of *Sneha Bhavan*.” She says the Sisters are the anchor for her family. As a token of gratitude for all that the Sisters have done for her, she helps other children who, like her, have had to face many difficulties. During her holidays, she stays at *Sneha Bhavan* and helps children at the Center by giving them free tuition. We hope that after completing her nursing course, she will be on her own feet and able to live a dignified life.

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#### 4. Case study two

Francis' father died of HIV when he was seven years old. His younger brother was five years old, followed by his sisters who were three and one respectively. Their mother was very sick and almost dying so we brought her to our Short Stay Home along with her four little children. They were all malnourished and miserable. It took months for the children to regain their health with extra nutritional supplements. The most difficult part was stabilizing them after the severe emotional shock they suffered and finding a way to reintroduce them into society. Francis was rebellious and at the same time frightened to face people. With personal follow-up and counseling, Francis was able to communicate with other peer groups in his school. He completed Class 12 in a public school, accommodating himself very well with other children, integrating himself in every scholastic activity. Presently he is teacher in a private school in St. Thomas School in Chhattisgarh. Supporting his mother who is still sick, he continues to teach inside and outside the classroom. He organizes tuition, music and spoken English classes for students. During his summer holidays, Francis and his colleagues (also former pupils of *Sneha Bhavan*) will organize a summer camp for 150 children in the school where they teach. Francis said, "What I am today is because of the help and support given to me and to my family members by the Salesian Sisters of *Sneha Bhavan*. If they were not there I would have never seen the world that I enjoy today. Thank you, Sisters."

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#### 5. Case study three

Kim was born to an HIV/AIDS infected parent. Her father died at the hospital and no one was there to take his body. So one of the Sisters from *Sneha Bhavan* along with another staff member took the dead body back to his village and helped to organize a decent burial. Meanwhile Kim's mother was found pregnant. After the funeral, the mother with her three children was brought to *Sneha Bhavan*. Few months later, her mother gave birth, yet the facilities to look after the newborn child were not available. The child was given to Mother Teresa's House for a year. Kim and her mother went back home but within a year, the mother, too, passed away. Kim was then brought back to *Sneha Bhavan* and admitted to Little Flower School. Though she was admitted for formal schooling it took much time for her to cope with the environment, the school, her studies and other children. By the end of the year, and after counseling and personal follow-up, she was promoted to the next class. With support and motivation, she is now a self-confident and an independent person who believes in herself and her abilities. Four of her siblings are also in *Sneha Bhavan*. She completed Classes 10 and 12 (in the Commerce Stream) from Little Flower School and Don Bosco College, Maram respectively. She is

now a teacher at the School run by the Congregation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, in Uttar Pradesh.

While teaching, she is pursuing higher studies and is preparing herself for the entrance exam to the Indian Army. She is very grateful to the Salesian Sisters for taking care of her and providing her with integral quality education. Most of the holidays, she spends at *Sneha Bhavan* helping the Sisters and children in every possible way.

## 6. Conclusion

**A**t *Sneha Bhavan* we do not only offer a school for vulnerable children, but we work to reintegrate them into mainstream education and society. We, thus, help them to find their own space in the world, while learning to live in a complex society, strutting and fretting, and developing into strong persons. In the context of a broader vision of integration, inclusive education implies the conception and the implementation of a vast repertoire of learning strategies to respond in a personalized way to learners' diversities. Therefore, this is an essential concept that is vital in view of the current condition of education. Such structures facilitate the betterment of all parties involved, giving every vulnerable child the power to stand strong and face today's challenges courageously.

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### NOTES

1. District Information System for Education (DISE) 2014-15
2. Iyer, 1979



# ***LERATO EDUCATIONAL CENTRE***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**SR. HELEN HARTNETT, FMA**

Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice (Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco), Project Coordinator, Lerato Educational Centre, South Africa

**T**he Lerato Educational Centre was founded in 1999 by a Salesian Sister, Mary Hughes, to support unemployed women and to create a place of safety for young children in the informal settlement of Jackson's Drift in Johannesburg, South Africa. The local women chose the name 'Lerato' which means 'Love' in Sesotho, one of the African languages.

While the South African Constitution promotes the right of every child to attend school, this does not mean that all children are able to find a place in governmental schools (refer to "The Right to Education in Europe, the Middle East and Africa by F. Bestagno and M. Ferri - page 49). Poverty and lack of legal documents leave many children unable to attend school and their parents powerless to send them.

In Jackson's Drift, Lerato Educational Centre has put down roots to assist children and parents with schooling, life skills and nourishment. Thanks to a strong group of trustees, donors and a dedicated staff, the Centre has continued to function in spite of social, community and financial challenges.

Today, the Educational Centre serves 500 children from kindergarten to junior primary (aged 3 to 11). At Lerato they are offered the opportunity to attend school and receive a daily nutritious breakfast and lunch. Many children without birth certificates or foreign passports would not have access to education if not for the Lerato Educational Centre.

At first, the Educational Centre used converted shipping containers as classrooms. While the containers were mobile and cost effective, they were not the best option for classroom teaching. Now, most have been converted into proper classrooms. In total, the Centre employs 28 staff members – a principal, a secretary, 18 teachers, two assistant teachers, a cook, three cleaners, a care taker and a night watch-man. The staff consists mostly of women who live locally in Jackson's Drift and have been trained in early childhood development and primary school education through Lerato Centre. This year the staff welcomed three former alumni and gave them the opportunity of working with young children.

Apart from primary and preschool education, we offer an active after school programme. At a newly developed playground, the children may use the equipment and play soccer and netball. Art and culture programmes depend on skilled volunteers who offer drama, music and dancing classes.

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A new library has recently been added, equipped with books and educational games. It is used during school hours to help children with basic reading and literacy skills. Shine Literacy Organization launched the first resource centre at Lerato in 2017. This successful initiative is realized through a group of mothers and retired teachers who dedicate their time to help children improving their reading skills.

A well-equipped computer room is available to teach basic computer skills to school children. In the afternoons, courses are run for unemployed young adults. After completion of a three-month course, the young adults can move into more advanced computer literacy and administration skills classes.

As there is no electricity in the informal settlement, and of course a lack of space in the shacks (which serve as housing), children of any age, but especially those in high school, are invited to use the facilities, assisted and supervised by volunteers, to do homework and school projects.

The project offers family support in the form of assistance with grant applications, hospital visits and access to HIV/AIDS counselling through one of the community social outreach workers.

Lerato Educational Centre is targeted directly at the Jackson's Drift Informal Settlement Community, where the majority of families are extremely poor. The Lerato Centre was established at the request of desperate mothers in the community who needed a safe place for their children, thus enabling them to look for a job. The community still forms a large part of the decision process to determine which services should be added. This is done through informal requests, needs assessments, parent meetings and parent representatives.

Next year, the Lerato Centre will celebrate 20 years at the service of the disadvantaged, mainly migrant community. This has been achieved through funds from private donors, and is only possible through the work of a strong Management Board and founding documents, which guide us through good times and rough patches.

The project is strongly supported by the Salesian Sisters Provincial Leadership Team who have committed themselves as a Province to continue to provide assistance to Lerato Center. The agreement has been worded in a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the Management Board and the Salesian Sisters.

Unfortunately, all our efforts to register the school with the Department of Education have been thwarted by endless red tape. As government funding is available only for registered schools, sustainability of the project is, thus, a major concern.

Theft, vandalism and violence are also on the rise in the Jackson's Drift area similar to the situations in all the informal settlements.

August and September 2019 saw an outbreak of xenophobia and criminal violence in the area and created major obstacles for migrant children

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attending school. Despite uncertainty and fear, the Lerato Centre managed to remain open and the children who 'disappeared' during that time are gradually coming back and settling into schools again.

The following testimony by Dawn Vaax (dated 22 November, 2018) provides an illustration of the Lerato Educational Centre:

"I am an employee of the Gauteng Department of Education as an Institutional Development and Support Officer. In my line of duty, I visit, support and develop schools in the Johannesburg South District. The above school is well-known to me. Lerato Educational Centre is situated in a disadvantaged informal settlement plagued by tremendous socioeconomic challenges. In spite of the challenges the Centre offers a vibrant educational programme which has become "an oasis in a barren land." The quality of education compares with the best primary schools in our district. Besides academic excellence, children are offered life skills, moral values and daily nutrition."

Lerato Educational Centre will continue, trusting in the powerful protection of Mary Help of Christians, to empower parents and children to look with confidence towards the future, and to hold to their dreams of a more productive life through education, Christian values and community uplifting.

## 1. Testimonies

**Thato** is an orphan. He lives with his grandfather who is very ill and looked after by neighbours. Four years ago, a concerned neighbour brought Thato to the Lerato Centre. Since then, he has been provided with food, a uniform and many other basic needs. He is now in Grade 3 (aged 11) and hopes to be admitted to one of the governmental schools. Lerato Centre will continue to keep contact and support him.

**Morgan** comes from a family of six children. His mother is a single parent and cannot receive child support due to lack of documentation. She collects tins from the street to earn some money. Morgan is an intelligent child who is very eager to learn. He is 11 years old and the Centre will negotiate with the local public school in the hope that he will be accepted into the senior primary school.

**Kamogelo** has no support from home and very often displays aggression and anger. His mother is an alcoholic. If it were not for Lerato Project, he would be on the streets day and night. The centre organized with concerned neighbours to make sure he is safe at night and ready for school every morning.

Four-year-old **Yambelani** was abandoned as a baby and left at the front door of a house. She is in foster care and was accepted in Lerato Centre in January 2019. She has been diagnosed with HIV and is very sick. By supporting her foster mother, the Project enables Yambelani to receive the treatment she needs.

**Sizwe's Mum (Ntabeni):** "I had no place to stay with my child, no work, and no food. I hated having to sell my body for food. I knew it was wrong and I felt very bad. One day, I walked into Lerato and a Sister listened to my story. Thanks to Lerato Centre, my child has food to eat every day and is learning to read. I am proud that my child is learning to read as I cannot read or write. With the help from Lerato Centre in taking care of my child, I now have a job three days a week."

## 2. Conclusion

Every child who comes to Lerato Educational Centre has a story similar to the abovementioned testimonies. The families are struggling with extreme poverty and lacking basic needs. While the Centre cannot answer to every need, the volunteers and staff are there to listen, to offer hope and to be instruments of God's love and care for each child.

# ***HOW EDUCATION CAN LEAD THE WAY OUT OF TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**FABIO AGOSTONI**

Lawyer, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

**CATERINA GHIOZZI**

Street Units Coordinator, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

**IRENE CIAMBEZI**

Journalist, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

**MARIA MERCEDES ROSSI**

Main Representative at the United Nations, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

## **1. Introduction**

**T**he Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) is an International Catholic NGO, founded by Fr. Oreste Benzi in the early 1960s and accredited to the United Nations, with Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Today, APG23 operates five hundred welcoming structures all over the world, of which 298 are “family homes” where orphaned children, persons with physical and mental disabilities, survivors of prostitution, homeless, ex-prisoners and other marginalized persons have found a substitute family.

The Association is present in forty countries on five continents. Its specific mission is to share life directly with the “least among us”<sup>1</sup> and to remove the causes that generate injustice, poverty and marginalization.

Victims of sex trafficking are a special focus of the association. It was with the desire to empower women enslaved in prostitution that APG23 started its work through different street units in all regions of Italy. By meeting the women on the streets, we discovered that all of them are slaves and victims of trafficking, forced into prostitution for sexual exploitation or other economic reasons. APG23 welcomed these women in its family homes and opened protected structures in order to support them, helping them to rebuild themselves and plan a better future. During all these years, APG23 has implemented many specific projects and initiatives of inclusive education and social inclusion for survivors of prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking. All those projects share the same key elements: The recognition of the dignity of women, the necessity of fulfilling human rights through integration, and the need to address the root causes preventing their empowerment.

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One root cause preventing the empowerment of trafficked women is, among many others, the lack of education. Inclusive education in the case of trafficked children means to give equal opportunities for their educational progress. Unfortunately, this still remains a challenge worldwide. As outlined by the UNESCO, “Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education and the Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasize inclusion and equity as laying the foundations for quality education. [...] Reaching excluded and marginalized groups and providing them with quality education requires the development and implementation of inclusive policies and programs [...] and the removal of the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, the respect of diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and the elimination all forms of discrimination in the learning environment.”<sup>2</sup>

As APG23, we have experienced that inclusive education in the formal school system has a value in itself for empowering women; it is however not enough to fully integrate and rehabilitate trafficked girls. It should be accompanied by additional programs of informal inclusive education, tailored on the needs and deep wounds of these women. Hence, this case study will also describe some examples of such additional informal paths that can give continuity to the girls once they become adults.

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## 2. Basic education and professional skills

Since 2015, following the increase in migratory flows from sub-Saharan Africa and a restart of the phenomenon of trafficking from Albania and Eastern Europe, the association has witnessed a new wave of young women and teenage girls entering into prostitution.

These young women (aged 17 to 22) interrupt their studies enticed by the promise of easy money, by the mirage of a skilled job or by the opportunity to learn a trade.

Inclusive education has become an important way to help these women to:

- Rebuild themselves after the traumatic experience of prostitution;
- Rethink their future by designing paths to enhance their skills and abilities and also their dreams and aspirations;
- Integrate into a new territory by enhancing positive ties and relationships built during this path;
- Manage relationships with their families of origin as well as conflicts and the difficulties of integration;
- Acquire autonomy and managerial skills closely linked to the renewed awareness of their dignity and empowerment as young women and mothers.

Any path of inclusive education starts first and foremost with learning the Italian language.

### *A. Children and minor survivors of trafficking: Inclusive education*

**A**fter the first literacy courses, commonly carried out by volunteers of APG23 in the protection structures of the first reception period, the younger victims of trafficking are gradually inserted into middle school classes (aged 12 to 14).

However, the scholastic integration of these young victims is sometimes difficult because the school administrators do often not take the specific needs of these girls into account. The lack of specific training for teachers and school administrators, the lack of supportive figures such as cultural mediators or special needs teachers - which are only provided in certain schools and can only be activated at the beginning of the school year, makes their schooling difficult and often involves the risk that trafficked girls lose an entire school year.

To implement the Guidelines for the Reception and Integration of Foreign Students (March 2014) published by the Italian government, it would be desirable that the coordinator for inclusion proposed by such guidelines may also have competence over the gradual inclusion and integration of trafficked children, and may be accompanied by an intercultural mediator who is competent in the inclusion of foreign accompanied minors in the national school system.

Therefore, in the path for inclusive education, APG23 professional volunteers (teachers, mediators, psychologists) support the minors' victims of human trafficking first in the initiation of literacy and then in the follow up in schools as tutors. In all the locations where the Association welcomes minor victims of trafficking, it also carries out special talks with the teacher who coordinates the class group.

The educational path goes hand in hand with the path of integration. In fact, children victims of trafficking have experienced traumas that sometimes create difficulties in communication, expressiveness and daily relationships with peers and adults. The tutor plays this 'bridge' role between the school environment and the reception facility, where the victim lives daily.

The method used during schooling is characterized by a first phase of learning 'knowing and experimenting', starting from semantic areas of daily interest (e.g. nutrition, personal hygiene, feelings and parental relations, documents necessary for integration in Italy connected to civic education and health). In the second phase 'expressing and building relations', APG23 organizes afternoon activities such as expressive laboratories, theater and dance, also in collaboration with young volunteers in civil service who, being young, can better promote socialization. In the third phase of inclusive education 'overcoming prejudices and sharing', the support teachers, tutors and volunteers of the Association organize trips to some cities or monuments of historical and religious importance in the welcoming area, as well as the streaming of videos focusing on education to affectivity and enhancement of the spiritual dimension.

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During summer, in order to develop the learning of the Italian language and of general culture, APG23 encourages the girls to participate in residential summer camps with peers where concrete experiences of solidarity, moments of reflection and discussion on fundamental issues are offered. This inclusive process always takes place in an atmosphere of non-violence and interculturality, with the participation of other peers who are from different cultural backgrounds, and with young people with disabilities, thus valuing the spiritual dimension of young people.

APG23, in fact, strongly believes that every person is a resource and the growth and integration of those who survived trafficking is favored by the encounter with minors who come from different life experiences.

***B. Adult survivors of trafficking: Inclusive professional paths/  
vocational training***

**F**or trafficking survivors over the age of 18, inclusive education takes place in vocational training courses.

In these cases, the first literacy courses are carried out in the initial reception and protection structures, through networks of volunteers and qualified personnel. Subsequently, the person is introduced to the Italian language through specific courses promoted by the Permanent Centers for Adult Education (CPIA) and by other accredited training institutions.

Once the survivor has acquired a certain linguistic competence, educational/professional paths of social reintegration are activated. These can take the form of trainings in companies for three-months' internships with the possibility of renewing them. Internships are paid directly by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Government, and do not in any way engage the company in the future hiring of the worker.

As trafficking survivors are not considered a disadvantaged group, they cannot access official protected or facilitated work start-up paths. Therefore, they often fail to achieve work and housing autonomy because they lack the skills and abilities necessary to give continuity to their work and their integration path.

Moreover, while the government provides for the possibility of accessing education regardless of the ownership of a residence permit and registry documents<sup>3</sup>, the practice often violates this rule. Indeed, the lack of a residence permit or of registered residence becomes an obstacle for the insertion of trafficking survivors in the training circuits, provided by the European Fund for Vocational Training and the CPIA.

These difficulties can generate a return of victims to prostitution.

APG23 tries to cope with the difficulties of the system by ensuring the continuity of reception and support during the start-up phase of work even for a period longer than that required by law (aged 12 to 24 months), since victims of trafficking received into family homes are considered as an integral part of the host families. APG23 seeks to build working and

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housing autonomy by promoting specific and highly professionalizing training courses in the fields of catering, textile or manufacturing industry and basic health care.

The association also identifies vocational training courses for unemployed adults (funded by the European Social Funds), and matches them to the abilities and aptitudes of the trafficking survivors. This is the case for the pilot project started in 2019 in Florence, for the realization of leather bags with decorations designed by the Academy of Fine Arts. This program provides internships to learn the ancient trade of leather tanning and the subsequent marketing and sale of products.

An important way of bolstering this type of projects is to favor employment contracts that provide tax relief for companies and cooperatives hiring victims of trafficking. An example are the benefits provided for women victims of violence by the Decree of 11 May 2018 of the Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Policies.<sup>4</sup> This decree provides support for social cooperatives, which grant permanent contracts to women victims of gender violence by granting exemption from social security contributions.

### *C. Education in the use of social networks*

**L**earning from the stories of victims, it is becoming clear that social networks are often a dangerous tool of exploitation. The lack of awareness, unwise and superficial use of social networks primes girls to become the next victims. Criminal networks both in Nigerian trafficking and East European trafficking use social networks to control victims. Girls and women who fall into their exploitation are often convinced to return to the streets months or even years after they have come out from the prostitution system.

Many girls, victims of trafficking, make an improper use of social networks exposing themselves to a new risk of solicitation.

To combat this phenomenon, APG23 reception networks and family homes focus increasingly on a relational approach, intercultural mediation and multi-generational dialogue. This is then accompanied by constant psychological support based on the recovery of the victim's own bodily, sexual and affective dimensions.

### **3. The practical case of the house “San Giovanni Battista” in the province of Bologna: Education through a “Theatrical and Expressive Laboratory”**

**I**n the San Giovanni Battista House in the province of Bologna, APG23 works for the integration and social inclusion of victims of trafficking with mental disorders and addictions.

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**To combat this phenomenon, APG23 reception networks and family homes focus increasingly on a relational approach, intercultural mediation and multi-generational dialogue. This is then accompanied by constant psychological support based on the recovery of the victim's own bodily, sexual and affective dimensions.**

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**The beneficiaries of these Laboratories rebuild self-awareness, not only thorough pharmacological therapies but also through relational and social rehabilitation, with an intercultural approach, empathy and non-violent communication.**

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Inclusive education is developed through a “Theatrical and Expressive Laboratory”, and supported by personalized rehabilitation programs for social and labour reintegration.

The beneficiaries of these Laboratories rebuild self-awareness, not only thorough pharmacological therapies but also through relational and social rehabilitation, with an intercultural approach, empathy and non-violent communication.

In establishing relationships with volunteers, community members, and professionals in a context of peer support, the victims of trafficking learn to recognize their own dignity by expressing their emotions and talents. They learn to establish a healthy relationship with their bodies and the construction of skills useful in the process of social integration and job reintegration. In building empathy, victims develop self-awareness and learn to overcome patterns that hinder their well-being.

The objective of the laboratory is to promote self-expression and empathy and is based on the principles of non-violent empathic communication. It is organized into two phases:

- First phase: expressing emotions and building empathy, in which beneficiaries learn which conditions hinder them. They enhance active listening and focus on emotions and needs. They practice orientation in space and time, breathing, posture, visual and physical contact.
- Second phase: outsourcing and staging, starting from the identification of a theme, an author, and a literary or poetic text to the construction of the script and scenography.

The Laboratory is based on the principles of non-violent empathic communication which is an important methodology for reintegration into society. Conflict management is exercised by learning to express emotions in multi-problematic groups as in every day's social life. The experience also serves to decrease the stigmatization of mental illness.

The Laboratory gives these women the skills to build relationships and the opportunity to discover that they are important and unique. In ‘going on stage’ they learn that it is possible to tell a piece of one's story without lies. No mental disorder can prevent the freedom to express who we are.

In a free and healthy relationship with their own body and with others around them, these women find a space to recount their experiences as survivors. The Laboratory builds a foundation to begin social, housing, and job inclusion programs.

Often, girls, victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, are completely destroyed in their personality and carry profound wounds that impact the perception of their own dignity. There is an urgent need for an accompaniment along a path that helps them to re-discover their own value and their inner beauty. These girls need to feel that they are deeply loved, so that they can make projects for their future and start dreaming again. Informal paths of inclusive education are also very useful instruments

that, due to their intrinsic characteristic of informality, allow these girls to develop their skills and potentialities sometimes in a freer and friendlier environment.

#### NOTES

1. “We need to build up society in the light of the Beatitudes, walking towards the Kingdom with the least among us” Pope Francis via Twitter, 4 June 2015
2. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education>
3. Presidential Decree No. 394/1999 art. 45
4. Issued pursuant to art. 1, paragraph 220, of the 2018 Budget Law (L. 205/2017)

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**Informal paths of inclusive education are also very useful instruments that, due to their intrinsic characteristic of informality, allow these girls to develop their skills and potentialities sometimes in a freer and friendlier environment.**

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# ***REFUGEES IN WEST AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION***

*A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report by*

**ARSÈNE BRICE BADO S.J.**

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Deputy Director of the Institute for the Dignity and Human Rights, Centre for Research and Action for Peace, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

**F**or refugees, schooling and higher education are among the best ways to restore a sense of dignity and to give the possibility of a better future. In Côte d'Ivoire, as in many countries, refugees have become important figures of success in several areas, thanks to the possibility of continuing their education in secondary and university studies.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organizations as well as many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), are doing a remarkable job in the education sector for refugees. Indeed, educational services form an important part of the emergency services offered within a few months of the outbreak of a crisis.

While it is important to recognize the efforts and generosity of the institutions and actors involved in refugee education services, it is equally important not to overshadow the limitations and challenges they face. These limitations challenge the conscience of the International Community as well as the actors involved in the educational sector for refugees.

Among these challenges is the choice of educational system and curriculum. As refugees are outside their countries of origin, the question arises whether to use the educational program of the country of origin or that of the host country. The use of the education system of the country of origin is the preferred option of the UNHCR. This allows refugees to continue their education as if they were in their own country. It also prepares them for a possible return. But this situation also confines refugees to camps or specific areas and thus prevents their adaptation and integration into host countries.

This was the case for Liberian refugees in Tabou, a town in Western Côte d'Ivoire, where from 1992 to 2007, the Liberian education system had been established. Students educated in the Liberian system had many difficulties in pursuing higher education in Côte d'Ivoire. They also could not return to Liberia. Due to their lack of education, they were forced to do jobs as plumbers, cleaning agents, laborers, street vendors, small dressmakers, unqualified construction workers, etc., in order to survive. This led to a generation of frustrated and discontented people, ready to use violence or unethical practices to ensure survival.

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In fact, when the opportunity is given to refugees to be integrated into the education system of host countries, they are better able to adapt and integrate. This facilitates socio-occupational integration. Then, when they manage to save money, they invest in their home country in order to prepare for their eventual return. This is the case for Roberts, one of the more than 24 000 Liberian refugees who were given opportunities to integrate in Côte d'Ivoire<sup>1</sup>. After his training as electrician in Cote d'Ivoire, he opened his own business in the city of Tabou, in Cote d'Ivoire. He was able to save money and hence bought grain mills, that he installed in his hometown of Barclayville in Liberia. Now he owns four mills run by him and his younger brother. This business allowed him to build a house in Liberia where he relocated with his Ivorian wife two years ago. Like Roberts, there are many successful stories of Liberian refugees thanks to their integration in Côte d'Ivoire.

For this reason, it is important for local and international bodies engaged in the education of refugees to reconsider their preference for the establishment of a parallel education system, and instead to follow the example of those programs which have demonstrated the most success in facilitating repatriation to home countries.

The second challenge concerns the preponderance of vocational training in the education of refugees. Local NGOs as well as international organizations have set up vocational training centers in which refugees can learn professions such as carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, sewing, shoemaking, catering, etc. The advantage of these training centers is that a refugee can acquire a competence in a short amount of time and begin to exercise a trade. Thereby, the refugee is able to take charge of himself quickly. Generally, this type of vocational training is less expensive than formal education.

An example of this type of vocational training is the case of Social Action in Urban Areas (ASMU), one of the services of the Center for Research and Action for Peace (CERAP) in Abidjan. Every year, the ASMU trains about 350 young people in trades such as sewing, mechanics, hairdressing, tapestry, kitchen-pastry, shoe repair, electricity, photography, etc. These young people receive equipment and a repayable loan in order to open their own workshop and set up business.

Vocational training centers certainly have a positive impact in allowing many refugees to find small jobs. However, this type of vocational training also has limitations. First, unlike the example of the ASMU mentioned above, most training centers do not have funding for the necessary equipment which would allow beneficiaries to open their own businesses. As a result, many refugees become unemployed after training. In addition, the trades acquired in these courses are often practiced in the informal sector which does not lead to financial autonomy. Thus many refugees with

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the capacity and desire for higher university studies are forced to choose professional training, which feeds frustration.

The third challenge concerns refugees who pursue formal education. Nowadays, education is becoming ever more expensive. It requires computer hardware, software and access to documentation, all of which are expensive for refugee and non-refugee students alike. Under such conditions, refugee students who do not have scholarships or financial support are tempted to resort to illegitimate means to finance their studies. Many girls, for example, resort to prostitution to survive and to pay for their education. In appearance, they seem to enjoy a better circumstance than boys, but in reality, they are in a more precarious situation. Because sex should not be a source of funding for studies, the education of refugee girls deserves special attention.

The fourth challenge is literacy for refugees from rural areas in their countries of origin where they could not attend school. These illiterate refugees are the most vulnerable and often experience exclusion. The inability to read and write can threaten the survival of the person, especially as a refugee. Indeed, these rural refugees face many difficulties even to express their needs or access the help addressed to them. However, as much as it is easy to find primary schools for refugee children, it is very difficult to find adult literacy structures. Some local NGOs provide adult literacy services, but their capacity is minimal in comparison with the demand.

There is an urgent need for the UNHCR, and other organizations involved in refugee education to initiate literacy programs for rural illiterate refugees.

Finally, a difficulty that affects the education of refugees in West Africa is the stigmatization of refugees perceived as a security threat, that is to say, as potential criminals or even potential terrorists. As a result, many doors are closed to them, limiting their access to education services. Important communication and awareness-raising work is needed to reduce the negativity that comes with the term 'refugee' in order to facilitate access to education in host countries. For example, during the 2011 post-election conflict between Alassane Ouattara's forces and Laurent Gbagbo's, Liberian refugees in Abidjan were targeted because there were Liberian mercenaries among Laurent Gbagbo's forces. More than 700 Liberian refugees living in Abidjan had to flee their homes to camps on the UNHCR parking to escape the lynch mob and the police. As Liberian refugee Jerry S. Ferguson, who became the spokesman for refugees who had sought refuge at the UNHCR's Abidjan facility, said: "Last December (2011), Liberians from different communities in Abidjan began to gather in front of the UNHCR office. We had become a target [...]. Throughout the press and on the street, people have begun to conflate these violent mercenaries with us. We were hunted down and some Liberian refugees were killed. [...] People in Côte

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d'Ivoire do not want us.”<sup>2</sup> With the rise of terrorism in West Africa, there is a real fear that refugees will become scapegoats and will pay a high price.

All in all, refugee agencies have provided many services to refugees. But the path is still long. Since new challenges emerge and contexts evolve, old solutions are no longer slow to show their limits. The current importance and gravity of the refugees' phenomenon at the global level calls for concerted action and coordinated efforts to respond effectively to it, in respect and protection of the dignity of refugees.

#### NOTES

1. UNHCR (2009), *Appel global 2009 du HCR – actualisation*, p.193, accessible at <https://www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/publications/fundraising/4ad2f72ee/appel-global-2009-hcr-actualisation-partie-i-complet.html?query=Principes%20directeurs%20sur%20la%20protection%20internationale> [Accessed 20 August 2019]
2. France 24, Interview of 29 June 2011. Accessible at: <https://observers.france24.com/en/20110629-liberiens-cote-ivoire-would-ne-ne-ne-terre-asile-commissariat-refugies-camp> [Accessed 20 August 2019]

**SECTION TWO:**  
**THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION**

# CHURCH, EDUCATION, AND INCLUSION

A *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

CARDINAL GIUSEPPE VERSALDI

Prefect of the Congregation of Catholic Education, Vatican

## 1. Introduction

In the preamble to the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, we read that the Church, in fulfilling the mandate received by its divine Founder "has a specific task with regard to the progress and development of education."<sup>1</sup> In the post-conciliar years, the responsibility for this undertaking has fallen on the Congregation for Catholic Education, which – through its offices and its expertise as an organism of the Holy See – has studied the principles of Catholic education in a context of social and geopolitical changes. It has published, among other things, a number of documents that address in detail general educational issues and analyze its most current challenges.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. A global vision

These guidelines can be a useful tool for the continued formation not only of teachers, but for all those who have the education of the younger generations at heart.<sup>3</sup> First of all, "true education must promote the formation of the human person both for his or her ultimate purpose, and for the good of the various groups of which he or she is a member and in which, as an adult, he or she will have duties to perform."<sup>4</sup> From this starting point, the identity and mission of Catholic education in its capacity as ecclesiastical subject has become central to reflection.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, within schools the role of educators has been analyzed in depth. They are called to live their profession as a Christian vocation and to invest into the educational process their identity as faithful laypeople<sup>6</sup> and consecrated persons.<sup>7</sup> Their shared mission, based on ecclesial communion, is a great educational opportunity to develop through the path of formation and inclusion.<sup>8</sup>

Another area of study is the religious dimension of the Catholic school and the place of religious education.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the educational community in a Catholic school is also a faith community in which teachers, principals, parents, pupils, and non-teaching staff work in harmony towards a common purpose. It is, therefore, called to impart not only knowledge, but also a specific understanding of man, the world, and history rooted in the Gospel message.

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The Catholic school respects the freedom of religion and conscience of pupils and their families, but it cannot sacrifice its right and its obligation to share the Christian message and its values. Within this framework, the issue of sexual education in schools was addressed<sup>10</sup> in order to offer a correct formative path educating pupils to respect themselves and others, in partnership with parents, who have primary responsibility for their children, and avoiding any form of unjust discrimination and bullying.<sup>11</sup>

The Congregation for Catholic Education continues its study of educational principles, made even more urgent by the great ‘educational emergency.’ This issue was often raised by Benedict XVI in the horizon of contemporary society, which has been invaded by globalization and secularization with all their countless consequences from an economic, political, social, and educational point of view.<sup>12</sup> Advanced technology, moreover, helped transform the world into a ‘global village,’ while mass migration has led to diverse cultures living together.

The multicultural nature of contemporary society can be both a source of wealth, and at the same time, a challenge for social cohesion, for exercising the rights of individuals and groups, and for the relationship between pre-existing and new cultures, in a context of apathetic indifference to the common good where a ‘throwaway culture’ seems to prevail. For these reasons, governments and international organizations recommend education and schools as the fundamental means for safeguarding and favoring social cohesion in the face of the epoch-making changes that we are witnessing.

From the perspective of the Church, the continental Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops draw attention to widespread secularized cultures and multi-religious societies, both in the North and the South of the world. Faced with this situation, the Church considers education a part of her mission and an effective tool in the promotion of a truly human and universal development, in overcoming injustices, as well as in combatting material and spiritual poverty. Catholic educational and academic institutions and organizations, both on the international and the local level, have long been inspired by such challenges to develop a ‘culture of encounter’, in the belief that “it will never be possible to liberate the destitute from their poverty if first we do not liberate them from the misery resulting from an inadequate education.”<sup>13</sup>

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### **3. The priority of inclusion**

**I**n this way, we go towards the peripheries, bringing the light of Christian hope, not only to places of violence, poverty, and injustice, but also to those situations of existential and moral distress that mark the lives of so many. Catholic schools, indeed, teach an approach of openness and respect and promote interreligious understanding through vital dialogue

for civil harmony.<sup>14</sup> This is the new model that we propose, based on an integral and fraternal humanism.<sup>15</sup> To make this process effective – as Pope Francis states in the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* – “we must bear in mind that modes of thought have a very real influence on behavior. Education will be ineffective, and its efforts will be sterile if we do not also concern ourselves with implementing a new approach regarding human beings, life, society, and our relationship with nature.”<sup>16</sup>

‘A humanized education’, therefore, does not restrict itself to doling out an educational service, but keeps in mind and has at heart the bigger picture of the personal, moral, and social attitudes of the participants in the educational process. It does not merely ask the teacher to teach and the student to learn, but urges each person to live, study, and act together, in respect of the reasons for integral humanism. It does not design spaces of division and conflict but, on the contrary, proposes places of encounter and discussion in order to carry out valid educational projects.

It is a complete education, solid and open at the same time, which breaks down the walls of exclusivity, promotes the wealth and diversity of individual talents, and extends the perimeter of the classroom to every corner of the social experience to which education can bring solidarity, sharing, and communion.<sup>17</sup> The very nature of education makes it possible to build the foundations for peaceful dialogue and to enable diversity with the aim of building a better world.

This is, first and foremost, an educational process where the search for peaceful and enriching coexistence is anchored in the broadest understanding of being human – in its psychological, cultural, and spiritual characterization – beyond every form of egocentrism and ethnocentrism, according to a concept of integral and transcendent development of the person and society.<sup>18</sup> The main aim is therefore to allow every citizen to be an active participant in the construction of a new humanism, thus favoring an opening to the horizons of the common good that progressively encompasses the human family as a whole.

This inclusive process extends beyond those now living. Scientific and technological progress has shown, in recent years, how the choices made in the present can affect the lifestyles, and in some cases the very existence, of future citizens of the planet. “The concept of common good encompasses also future generations.”<sup>19</sup> Today’s citizens, indeed, need to live in solidarity with their contemporaries wherever they are, but also with the future citizens of the planet. Given that “the problem is that we do not yet have the necessary culture to tackle this crisis [...] and there is a need for leadership which paves the way, seeking to respond to the needs of current generations, including everyone, without compromising future generations,”<sup>20</sup> this means that education is extending its traditional scope of activity through intergenerational ethics.

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There is a growing demand for education that overcomes the pitfalls of cultural standardization, from which the harmful effects of levelling derive, and with this, consumer manipulation. The rise of cooperation networks on a regional and international level can allow us to tackle such challenges, because they offer decentralization and specialization. The perspective of educational subsidiarity encourages sharing of responsibilities and experiences, which is needed to optimize resources and avoid risks. In this way, we build a network not only of research but also of service where we help each other and share good practices and the most innovative teaching methods, “swapping teachers for short periods and developing those initiatives which increase their collaboration.”<sup>21</sup>

Education has always been central to the Catholic Church’s public ministry. The Church has always defended the freedom of education when highly secularized cultures reduced the space assigned to education to religious values. Today, as in every era, the Catholic Church has the responsibility to contribute, with her heritage, to the building of an equal and more decent world on a path shared with the United Nations’ Goals for Sustainable Development.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Catholic educational institutions – now more than ever – are urged to be places of education for encounter and critical reflection. In order for pupils to dialogue and put into practice solidarity, they need the support of a community that is a living witness to these values. In fact, if we consult and encourage our pupils, they become active protagonists in the educational process.<sup>23</sup> In faithfulness to its original vocation, moreover, Catholic education is called to broaden its horizons beyond the walls of the classroom and the school, endeavoring to work together with families and civil society in all its forms, thus supporting and promoting complete human growth.<sup>24</sup>

The ‘educating community’ is the privileged ‘place’ for a new and efficient education for citizenship. Within this community, young people can grow their conception of freedom as a relational value, that is, as responsibility and solidarity. We must live all of this nowadays within the complexity and the contradictions of postmodern culture, in a humanity that exists within an interdependent community. This demands the obligation of joint responsibility on the part of all in the face of the challenges that threaten our common survival.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, on the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989) the first instance of legitimacy in educational institutions remains, as always, the ‘centrality of the person’, and the related human values. Such a focal point is strictly connected to our capacity to immerse ourselves in the horizon of the ‘planetary interdependence’ of

human events at our current point in history, as well as to the very idea of humanity's survival. The proposals and needs connected to 'universalism' demand that pedagogical and educational research in our time is anchored to a network of potentially universal values.

Catholic education, with its specific understanding of man, the world, and history, is undoubtedly challenged by today's society to endeavour to overcome any temptation towards ethnocentric egotism, making the awareness of its own identity the condition for its understanding of others and for its respect of diversity. In this respect, Catholic schools, which have always welcomed students from different cultural and religious backgrounds, have a rich tradition of inclusion and acceptance.

Today, however, requires courage and innovative faithfulness, which succeed in marrying our identity with new social demands, without falling into the extremes of fundamentalism or relativism. It is necessary, therefore, to commit to work on the essential concepts of contemporary education: dialogue, otherness, difference, responsibility, recognition, and sharing.

#### NOTES

1. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, Preamble.
2. Cfr. R. Donghi, "Presentazione a Educazione Interculturale e Pluralismo Religioso", *Seminarium*, a. XLVIII/2-3 (2008), pp. 269-276.
3. See the monographic issue of the Magazine *Educatio Catholica*, II/1-2 (2016) specifically dedicated to the training of educators.
4. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, 1.
5. Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 19 March 1977 and *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 28 December 1997.
6. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 15 October 1982.
7. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools. Reflections and Guidelines*, 28 October 2002.
8. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating together in Catholic Schools. A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, 8 September 2007.
9. Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 7 April 1988.
10. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love. Outlines for sex education*, 1 November 1983.
11. Congregation For Catholic Education, «Male and Female He Created Them». *Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education*, 2 February 2019.
12. Cfr. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Participants in the Convention of the Diocese of Rome*, 11 June 2007.
13. St John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, 22 January 1999, n. 18.
14. Cfr. St John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, 14

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September 1995, n. 102.

15. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating to fraternal humanism. Building a "civilization of love"* 50 years after *Populorum progressio*, 16 April 2017.

16. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 215.

17. Pope Francis, *Address to the Participants at the World Congress on "Educating today and tomorrow, a renewing passion" promoted by the Congregation for Catholic Education*, Rome, 21 November 2015.

18. Cfr. Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools. Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Vatican City 2013, n. 45.

19. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 159.

20. *Ibid.*, 53.

21. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, 12.

22. See the monographic issue of the Magazine *Educatio Catholica*, II/1-2 (2016) specifically dedicated to education for a humanism of solidarity.

23. Cfr. G. Pani, "I diritti dell'infanzia", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, n. 4055/2019, pp. 444-455.

24. Cfr. I. Fiorin, "A misura di fanciullo: il progetto educativo della scuola cattolica", *Seminarium*, LI/4 (2011), pp. 833-846.

25. See the monographic issue of our review *Educatio Catholica*, II/1-2 (2016) specifically dedicated to the educational community.

# ***THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS***

*A Caritas in Veritate* Foundation Report by

**DR. PHILIPPE RICHARD, PHD**

Director of the Catholic University Center of Bourgogne, Secretary-General of the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC)

**I**n 1952, the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC) was created by the impulse of certain European bishops to promote freedom of education throughout Europe as well as to give Catholic schools the opportunity to be represented in international organizations. Since 1952, OIEC has been recognized by the Holy See and, in continuity with the universality of the Catholic Church, has expanded its representational action around the world. To carry out this mission of representation, OIEC relies on regional secretaries.<sup>1</sup> In other parts of the world, OIEC maintains a direct link with its members (in Asia in particular).

Today, OIEC represents a network of 107 constituent members composed of the national organizations in charge of Catholic schools (under the authority of the Episcopal Conference) in a country, and more than 20 associate members (religious congregations engaged in education) with their respective network representatives for their own network. Some of these networks are very large and are present in nearly every country in the world. One example is the Lassallian network, present in more than 70 countries, or that of the Jesuits or Salesians. In total, there are more than 210,000 Catholic schools around the world, and about 62 million students. This makes OIEC one of the largest educational networks in the world.

To date, OIEC has a representative status within the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), both in Geneva and New York, in the UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Representatives are present in each of these international institutions, working alongside with other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and representatives, following the activities related (but not limited) to education.

This representation work is very important as education is a human right defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.<sup>3</sup> The Church has recognized this right through various texts of the Magisterium (including *Gravissimum Educationis*), making education an essential element of Catholic Social Teaching. The commitment of the

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**The commitment of the Church to education is legitimized by the fact that the Church is truly an “expert” – engaged in education throughout the centuries and through the many members who have devoted their lives to the education of children – especially the poorest – as well as the development of educational and pedagogical practices.**

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**The defence of the right to education and the principle of educational freedom, as reflected in international and regional instruments, is vital for the Catholic schools of the world, who are its actors (the right to education) and its beneficiaries (principle of educational freedom).**

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Church to education is legitimized by the fact that the Church is truly an “expert” – engaged in education throughout the centuries and through the many members who have devoted their lives to the education of children – especially the poorest – as well as the development of educational and pedagogical practices. We think of Jean Baptiste de la Salle (refer to “The Fratelli Project: Education and Resilience among Refugee Children and Vulnerable Native Children in Lebanon” by A. Matulli - page 115), Marie Javouhey, Don Bosco (refer to case studies on Salesian missions - pages 105; 111; 155; 167; 173; 229; 253; 259) and many more.

OIEC has the mission of bringing the contribution of Catholic schools to debates and discourses on education, and to contribute to the emergence of new proposals in connection with the Church’s discourse. This is how Pope Francis frequently and insistently invites the recreation of the educational pact. He constantly pleads for education to reach out and join those who live in -what he calls- “the peripheries of society.” With his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis insists on the responsibility of educators in engaging with global issues on education, including integral and sustainable development and respect for the climate. In a guidance document published in 2016 by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Church calls for inclusive schooling and a culture of dialogue.<sup>4</sup> All these proposals are important contributions to the great contemporary debates of international organizations, including Education 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

On another level, it is important to consider educational freedom and the freedom of parents to choose schools for their children. This educational freedom, recognized as a right by the various universal and regional human rights instruments, must be defended. Article 13.3 and 13.4 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Article 26.3 of the Human Rights Declaration recognize the right of parents to choose the education of their children.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Article 13.3 recognizes the importance of school choice for the protection of moral and religious convictions of parents.<sup>6</sup> The defence of the right to education and the principle of educational freedom, as reflected in international and regional instruments, is vital for the Catholic schools of the world, who are its actors (the right to education) and its beneficiaries (principle of educational freedom). It is thanks to this educational freedom that Catholic schools exist throughout the world and can participate in the public service of education while maintaining their own unique “character.” Beyond the sometimes controversial issue of State participation in the funding of Catholic schools, it must be recognized that the defence of educational freedom is vital for the Catholic schools, and that it generates advocacy and discussion in international organizations, particularly in the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. Without the recognition and

defence of this freedom, Catholic schools would no longer exist in many countries.

We will discuss the work of OIEC within international organizations by some significant examples including the three main activities of representation: monitoring (data collection), advocacy (defence of a particular cause), and lobbying (proposals and promotions of innovative ideas).

### **1. The right to education for all (UNESCO)**

Since 1998, UNESCO has been engaged in promoting the “Education for All” (EFA) Program to strengthen States’ commitment to education policies. The EFA program was launched in Jomtien and resulted in the first World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 and a second in 2015 in Incheon. OIEC has always supported the principle of education for all, while challenging a dominant ideology within UNESCO, that private Catholic schools constitute an “obstacle” to this goal. Due to the lack of recognition for the contribution of Catholic schools, it was not possible to contribute significantly to the final resolution of the 2015 NGO Forum (Incheon). This contribution remained a minority and therefore was not retained. On the other hand, this “failure” shows that while it is important to be present in these forums, it is even more important to define a good strategy and seek support from Member States and within the NGO community. To be absent from these forums is to erase Catholic schools from the global education landscape. This is why we exercise vigilance regarding the functioning of decision-making structures through the UNESCO’s Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA) (now called CCNGO/Education2030, or ED2030), and demand respect for the mechanisms created. We are also taking action to place a representative of the network of Catholic schools in the Coordination Group of the CCNGO/ED2030.

### **2. The culture of dialogue (Council of Europe)**

The OIEC’s commitment to interculturality at the Council of Europe dates to when the OIEC was invited to participate in a Working Group on Education for Intercultural Dialogue. The aim was to collect and problematize the current best practices of NGOs accredited to the Council of Europe and to develop innovative proposals:

- The analysis of achievements focused on intercultural education in European cities, mainly in educational establishments and organizations;
- Analysis of difficulties faced by children and young people from ethnic minorities, mainly Roma, in connection with the DGII (General

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In June 2017, the Commission published a working document, which highlights the promotion of four skills and competencies: 1) Education for creativity, empathy, expression and listening; 2) Development of a culture of communication; 3) Training in critical understanding of others and oneself; 4) Initiate an introduction to democracy.

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Direction for Democracy), the other committees of the Conference of INGOs, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the City of Strasbourg.

In June 2017, the Commission published a working document<sup>7</sup>, which highlights the promotion of four skills and competencies: 1) Education for creativity, empathy, expression and listening; 2) Development of a culture of communication; 3) Training in critical understanding of others and oneself; 4) Initiate an introduction to democracy. It also insists on specific recommendations with regard to schools:

- To emphasize the role and relationship of the parents in the education of their children;
- To open the institutions to the outside: to enter into partnerships with other institutions, neighbourhood associations, etc.;
- To organize a cultural mix of students and teachers;
- To facilitate an intercultural perspective in the school environment;
- To include interculturality in all disciplines by choosing multi-perspectivity in all areas of school learning (not only history).

To build on this important reflection, OIEC has engaged in the Council of Europe's Program entitled "Intercultural Cities" (I.C.C).<sup>8</sup> Promoting intercultural dialogue is indeed an important orientation for OIEC and a topic in which the Church has long been a leading voice (cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*<sup>9</sup>).

### 3. The defence of the right to education and educational freedom (ECOSOC)

As the right to education is supported by the social discourse of the Church, any breach of the principle of freedom of education undermines Catholic schools. Once again, OIEC's goal is to mobilize through the procedures and mechanisms for the defence of human rights within international institutions and the United Nations. On this issue, OIEC could benefit from the expertise of the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (refer to "The Right to Education - a Cornerstone of Cultural Rights" by A. Fernandez and I. Grau I Callizo - page 97).

We can mention here two interesting cases in Albania and the Central African Republic (CAR) that required intervention by OIEC. In both cases, faith-based schools were struggling to receive financial support from the State in order to fulfil the right to education and freedom of education. OIEC was therefore asked for assistance by its members (*Komisioni per Edukimin Katolik Shqiptar* in Albania and Associated Catholic Education of Central African Republic). Several cases led to the preparation of a report

under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) procedure of the Human Rights Council. Particularly, OIEC made an oral intervention on Albania as part of the pre-session organized by UPR-Info on 28 April 2014 in Geneva in presence of the ambassador of Albania in Geneva.<sup>10</sup>

Following this report on the situation in Albania, OIEC presented an oral statement at the 37th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in response to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom, stating that: “Concerning Catholic Schools – these are the schools that are managed by Catholic institutions – there are only two schools in their program; but instead, they have chosen to offer religious culture based on very open dialogue and acceptance of the diversity of students. The other 55 schools are subject to the same program as the State school. We wonder if the term religious school is the most suitable name for schools with a curriculum of this nature. [...] Faith-based schools in Albania do not receive any public funding. Most of the countries of Europe provide some degree of public funding for faith-based schools, but this is not the case of Albania. The lack of public funding for schools necessitates that many religious communities depend on foreign sources of funding. Additionally, in many cases, families cannot choose the education they want for their children. We would like the Special Rapporteur to consider the importance of public funding for faith-based schools in Albania as an important step for a full realization of freedom to education.”<sup>11</sup> In accordance with this oral statement, we can quote an excerpt from the Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom, which echoes the content of this oral statement, recommending in his report that “the right of parents to provide a moral and religious education, consistent with their religious worldviews and in accordance with the evolving capacities of the child, must be fully respected. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur would like to highlight the useful guidance provided in the Final Document of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination”.<sup>12</sup>

Regarding the CAR, OIEC participated in the UPR process with other NGOs involved including the World Evangelical Alliance and Caritas Internationalis, with the support of Caritas Central Africa and *Enseignement Catholique Associé de Centrafrique (ECAC)*, presenting a Joint Statement at the 31st Session of the UPR Working Group in March 2018. The example of the CAR is certainly the most successful so far, because the framework of education is outdated. The right to education must indeed be thought of in a holistic way. Thus, with the help of its local partners in CAR, OIEC produced information on other subjects such as the administration of justice, including impunity, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life, the right to work and to favourable conditions of work, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons and, of course, education. In the joint

statement the various issues related to violence were examined, as well as the situation of the educational system ravaged by the civil war. The report made recommendations for the restoration of State authority, the right to education and the protection of children, the fight against impunity and the need to ensure justice for victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as advocating for assistance to victims of sexual violence.<sup>13</sup>

As a possible follow-up to this contribution to the CAR debate, it is worth noting that during her visit to Bangui in January 2019, the UN Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in the Central African Republic, Marie-Thérèse Kéïta-Bocoum, met with groups representing young people including students and demobilized miners who took part in the conflict. She stressed the urgency of providing these young people with training offers, psychological support and any other help necessary for their professional and social integration. “The adoption of a child protection code, the construction of reception and vocational training centres, the renovation of schools and the adaptation of juvenile justice to international standards are national imperatives that respect the interest of young people in the Central African Republic and to prevent their involvement in armed conflict,” said the expert. “The State must strengthen its commitment to the creation and improvement of health, education and social services, and re-deploy the civil administration, as far as possible.” The UN also called for an assessment of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan in CAR, focusing on the rules of good governance and the real interests of the people.<sup>14</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that in 2017, for the third cycle of UPR, OIEC submitted a report on Ukraine.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

**T**he work of representation in international organizations (lobbying, monitoring, advocacy) is complicated, it requires great skill and professionalism. It is not possible to carry it alone. On this subject, the “International Forum of Rome” was launched in order to allow a fruitful dialogue between Catholic-inspired organizations, the various dicasteries and the Holy See missions within the international organizations. All have a responsibility to address the various dysfunctions and injustices in the world and to contribute to the definition of an “international order such as the present rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can find full effect.”<sup>16</sup>

#### NOTES

1. The CIEC (America), the CEEC (Europe), the MENA-OIEC (Middle East and North Africa) and various under secretariats in Africa including ARNECAO (West Africa), and Central Africa-OIEC

2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, Article 26, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr\\_translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 30 August 2019]
3. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), 16 December 1966, Article 13 and 14, available at : <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2019]
4. Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating to fraternal humanism, Building a “civilization of love”. 50 years after Populorum progression. Guidelines, Rome, 16 April 2017, available at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20170416\\_educare-umanesimo-solidale\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20170416_educare-umanesimo-solidale_en.html) [Accessed 24 August 2019]
5. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, Article 26, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr\\_translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 30 August 2019]
6. *Ibid.*
7. Commission Education et Culture, *Eduquer au dialogue Interculturel – vivre ensemble en Europe*, Strasbourg, June 2017, available at : <https://rm.coe.int/intercultural-dialogue-wg-report/168076c403> [Accessed 28 August 2019]
8. The Council of Europe and the European Commission have launched the Intercultural cities (ICC) initiative in order to develop, implement and monitor a novel approach to integration, based on the concept of diversity advantage. Diversity is not a threat – it can be an asset for communities if managed in a positive and competent way, if inter-cultural interaction and co-creation are encouraged by urban policies and governance models and if urban institutions and officials have the cultural competence enabling them to communicate positively about diversity and manage the challenges and conflicts which may arise.
9. Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating to fraternal humanism, Building a “civilization of love”. 50 years after Populorum progression. Guidelines, para. 11, Rome, 16 April 2017, available at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20170416\\_educare-umanesimo-solidale\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20170416_educare-umanesimo-solidale_en.html) [Accessed 24 August 2019]
10. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR), Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/2. Albania, A/HRC/WG.6/19/ALB/3, 24 January 2014, available at : <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/105/17/PDF/G1410517.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 30 August 2019]
11. OIEC, Oral Statement at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council, ITEM 3 –ID with the SR on freedom of religion, 14 March 2019: “Thank you Mr. President, First of all we want to thank the Special Rapporteur for both rapports. I speak on behalf of OIEC; OIEC stands for International Association for Catholic Schools and we represent about 210.000 catholic schools and 50 millions of students in the world. Also, we want to support your mandate, and we hope that we can work closely in the future reports. Having said that I would like to make a few comments on your report on Albania where there are 57 Catholic Schools. We would like that the Special Rapporteur considers the term religious schools. Concerning catholic schools besides the fact that these schools are managed by catholic institutions, there are only two schools that have permission to offer the subject of religion in their program; but instead, they have chosen to offer religious culture based in very open dialogue and acceptance to the diversity of students. The other 55 schools are subject to the same program than the state school. We wonder if the term religious school is the most suitable name for schools with a curricula of this nature.

Secondly, when you refer to State Muslim licensed schools, do you include in this group the Koranic Schools also known as Madrasas? Could you talk a bit more about that? Do you think these schools in Albania are playing a role of indoctrination? Finally, faith-based schools in Albania do not receive any public funding. Most of the countries of Europe provide at certain extent some public funding for faith-based schools, this is not the case of Albania. The lack of public funding for schools provokes that many religious communities depend on foreign sources. In many cases families cannot choose the education they want for their children due to the lack of resources. Article 13.3 and 13.4 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as Article 26.3 of the Human Rights declaration recognize the right of parents to choose the education they want for their children. Moreover, the Article 13.3 recognizes the importance that the right to choose the school has for the protection of the moral and religious convictions of the parents. We would like that the Special Rapporteur considers the importance of public funding for faith-based schools in Albania as an important step for a full realization of freedom to education. Thank you”.

12. OHCHR, Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, para. 85, A/HRC/37/49, 28 February 2018, available at : <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/37/49> [Accessed 29 August 2019]

13. OHCHR, Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Central African Republic, para. 39 and 41, A/HRC/WG.6/31/CAF/3, 24 August 2018, available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/258/63/PDF/G1825863.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 30 August 2019]

14. *RCA : une experte de l’ONU appelle à la fin immédiate des violences*, ONU Info, 1 February 2019, available at : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2019/02/1035402> [Accessed 30 August 2018]

15. OHCHR, Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Ukraine, para. 64, A/HRC/WG.6/28/UKR/3, 31 August 2017, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/WG.6/28/UKR/3> [Accessed 30 August 2019]

16. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, Article 28, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr\\_translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf) [Accessed 30 August 2019]

**COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS ON  
THE CHURCH'S ENGAGEMENT  
ON EDUCATION**

## ***CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH***

### ***(Selected Excerpts)***

1783. Conscience must be informed, and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. the education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

1784. The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. the education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

[...]

1917. It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of the members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others. Participation begins with education and culture. «One is entitled to think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism.»[34]

[...]

#### The duties of parents

2221. The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. «The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.»[29] The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.[30]

[...]

2223. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. the home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the «material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.»[31] Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them: He who loves his son will not spare the rod.... He who disciplines his son will profit by him.[32] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. [33]

[...]

2229. As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators. [38] Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise.

## **NOTES**

[34] GS 31,3

[29] GE 3

[30] FC 36

[31] CA 36,2

[32] Sir 30:1-2

[33] Eph 6:4

[38] GE 6

## ***COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH***

### ***(Selected Excerpts)***

238. In the work of education, the family forms man in the fullness of his personal dignity according to all his dimensions, including the social dimension. The family, in fact, constitutes “a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society”.<sup>[539]</sup> By exercising its mission to educate, the family contributes to the common good and constitutes the first school of social virtue, which all societies need.<sup>[540]</sup> In the family, persons are helped to grow in freedom and responsibility, indispensable prerequisites for any function in society. With education, certain fundamental values are communicated and assimilated.<sup>[541]</sup>

239. The family has a completely original and irreplaceable role in raising children <sup>[542]</sup>. The parents’ love, placing itself at the service of children to draw forth from them (“e-ducere”) the best that is in them, finds its fullest expression precisely in the task of educating. “As well as being a source, the parents’ love is also the animating principle and therefore the norm inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity, enriching it with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love” <sup>[543]</sup>.

The right and duty of parents to educate their children is “essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others” <sup>[544]</sup>. Parents have the duty and right to impart a religious education and moral formation to their children <sup>[545]</sup>, a right the State cannot annul but which it must respect and promote. This is a primary right that the family may not neglect or delegate.

240. Parents are the first educators, not the only educators, of their children. It belongs to them, therefore, to exercise with responsibility their educational activity in close and vigilant cooperation with civil and ecclesial agencies. “Man’s community aspect itself — both civil and

ecclesial — demands and leads to a broader and more articulated activity resulting from well-ordered collaboration between the various agents of education. All these agents are necessary, even though each can and should play its part in accordance with the special competence and contribution proper to itself”..[546] Parents have the right to choose the formative tools that respond to their convictions and to seek those means that will help them best to fulfil their duty as educators, in the spiritual and religious sphere also. Public authorities have the duty to guarantee this right and to ensure the concrete conditions necessary for it to be exercised. [547] In this context, cooperation between the family and scholastic institutions takes on primary importance.

241. Parents have the right to found and support educational institutions. Public authorities must see to it that “public subsidies are so allocated that parents are truly free to exercise this right without incurring unjust burdens. Parents should not have to sustain, directly or indirectly, extra charges which would deny or unjustly limit the exercise of this freedom”. [548] The refusal to provide public economic support to non-public schools that need assistance and that render a service to civil society is to be considered an injustice. “Whenever the State lays claim to an educational monopoly, it oversteps its rights and offends justice ... The State cannot without injustice merely tolerate so-called private schools. Such schools render a public service and therefore have a right to financial assistance”. [549]

242. The family has the responsibility to provide an integral education. Indeed, all true education “is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share”. [550] This integrality is ensured when children — with the witness of life and in words — are educated in dialogue, encounter, sociality, legality, solidarity and peace, through the cultivation of the fundamental virtues of justice and charity. [551]

In the education of children, the role of the father and that of the mother are equally necessary. [552] The parents must therefore work together. They must exercise authority with respect and gentleness but also, when necessary, with firmness and vigor: it must be credible, consistent, and wise and always exercised with a view to children’s integral good.

243. Parents have, then, a particular responsibility in the area of sexual education. It is of fundamental importance for the balanced growth of children that they are taught in an orderly and progressive manner the meaning of sexuality and that they learn to appreciate the human and moral values connected with it. “In view of the close links between the sexual

dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to a knowledge of and respect for moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality".[553] Parents have the obligation to inquire about the methods used for sexual education in educational institutions in order to verify that such an important and delicate topic is dealt with properly.

[...]

375. For the Church's social doctrine, the economy "is only one aspect and one dimension of the whole of human activity. If economic life is absolutized, if the production and consumption of goods become the centre of social life and society's only value, not subject to any other value, the reason is to be found not so much in the economic system itself as in the fact that the entire socio-cultural system, by ignoring the ethical and religious dimension, has been weakened, and ends up limiting itself to the production of goods and services alone".[770] The life of man, just like the social life of the community, must not be reduced to its materialistic dimension, even if material goods are extremely necessary both for mere survival and for improving the quality of life. "An increased sense of God and increased self-awareness are fundamental to any full development of human society". [771]

376. Faced with the rapid advancement of technological and economic progress, and with the equally rapid transformation of the processes of production and consumption, the Magisterium senses the need to propose a great deal of educational and cultural formation, for the Church is aware that "to call for an existence which is qualitatively more satisfying is of itself legitimate, but one cannot fail to draw attention to the new responsibilities and dangers connected with this phase of history ... In singling out new needs and new means to meet them, one must be guided by a comprehensive picture of man which respects all the dimensions of his being and which subordinates his material and instinctive dimensions to his interior and spiritual ones ... Of itself, an economic system does not possess criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying human needs from artificial new needs which hinder the formation of a mature personality. Thus a great deal of educational and cultural work is urgently needed, including the education of consumers in the responsible use of their power of choice, the formation of a strong sense of responsibility among producers and among people in the mass media in particular, as well as the necessary intervention by public authorities". [772]

[...]

528. The Church's social doctrine is an indispensable reference point for a totally integrated Christian formation. The insistence of the Magisterium in proposing this doctrine as a source of inspiration for the apostolate and for social action comes from the conviction that it constitutes an extraordinary resource for formation; "this is especially true for the lay faithful who have responsibilities in various fields of social and public life. Above all, it is indispensable that they have a more exact knowledge... of the Church's social doctrine". [1121] This doctrinal patrimony is neither taught nor known sufficiently, which is part of the reason for its failure to be suitably reflected in concrete behaviour.

529. The formative value of the Church's social doctrine should receive more attention in catechesis. [1122] Catechesis is the systematic teaching of Christian doctrine in its entirety, with a view to initiating believers into the fullness of Gospel life.[1123] The ultimate aim of catechesis "is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ".[1124 ]

In this way, it becomes possible to recognize the action of the Holy Spirit, from whom comes the gift of new life in Christ. [1125] Seen in this light, in its service of educating to the faith, the concern of catechesis must not fail "to clarify properly realities such as man's activity for his integral liberation, the search for a society with greater solidarity and fraternity, the fight for justice and the building of peace" .[1126] In order to do so, the fullness of the social Magisterium must be presented: its history, its content and its methodology. Direct contact with the texts of the social encyclicals, read within an ecclesial context, enriches its reception and application, thanks to the contribution of the different areas of competency and professions represented within the community.

530. In the context of catechesis above all it is important that the teaching of the Church's social doctrine be directed towards motivating action for the evangelization and humanization of temporal realities. Through this doctrine, in fact, the Church expresses a theoretical and practical knowledge that gives support to the commitment of transforming social life, helping it to conform ever more fully to the divine plan. Social catechesis aims at the formation of men and women who, in their respect for the moral order, are lovers of true freedom, people who "will form their own judgments in the light of truth, direct their activities with a sense of responsibility, and strive for what is true and just in willing cooperation with others" . [1127] The witness of a Christian life has an extraordinary formative value: "In particular the life of holiness which is resplendent in so many members of the People of God, humble and often unseen, constitutes the simplest and

most attractive way to perceive at once the beauty of truth, the liberating force of God's love, and the value of unconditional fidelity to all the demands of the Lord's law, even in the most difficult circumstances" . [1128]

531. The Church's social doctrine must be the basis of an intense and constant work of formation, especially of the lay faithful. Such a formation should take into account their obligations in civil society. "It belongs to the layman, without waiting passively for orders and directives, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live". [1129] The first level of the formation of lay Christians should be to help them to become capable of meeting their daily activities effectively in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres and to develop in them a sense of duty that is at the service of the common good. [1130] A second level concerns the formation of a political conscience in order to prepare lay Christians to exercise political power. "Those with a talent for the difficult yet noble art of politics, or whose talents in this matter can be developed, should prepare themselves for it, and forgetting their own convenience and material interests, they should engage in political activity". [1131]

532. Catholic educational institutions can and indeed must carry out a precious formative service, dedicating themselves in a particular way to the inculturation of the Christian message, that is to say, to the productive encounter between the Gospel and the various branches of knowledge. The Church's social doctrine is a necessary means for an efficacious Christian education towards love, justice and peace, as well as for a conscious maturation of moral and social duties in the various cultural and professional fields.

The "Social Weeks" of Catholics that the Magisterium has always encouraged are important examples of formational opportunities. They represent privileged moments for the expression and growth of the lay faithful, who are then capable of making their specific high-level contribution to the temporal order. Various countries find that these Weeks are veritable cultural laboratories for the exchange of reflections and experiences, the study of emerging problems and the identification of new operative approaches.

#### NOTES

1. [539] Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, Preamble, E, Vatican Polyglot Press, Vatican City 1983, p. 6
2. [540] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Gravissimum Educationis*,

- 3: AAS 58 (1966), 731-732; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 52: AAS 58 (1966), 1073-1074; John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37, 43: AAS 74 (1982), 127-129; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1653, 2228.
3. [541] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 43: AAS 74 (1982), 134-135.
4. [542] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Gravissimum Educationis*, 3: AAS 58 (1966), 731-732; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 61: AAS 58 (1966), 1081-1082; Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, art. 5, Vatican Polyglot Press, Vatican City 1983, pp. 10-11; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2223. The Code of Canon Law devotes canons 793- 799 and canon 1136 to this right and duty of parents.
5. [543] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 36: AAS 74 (1982), 127.
6. [544] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 36: AAS 74 (1982), 126; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2221.
7. [545] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Dignitatis Humanae*, 5: AAS 58 (1966), 933; John Paul II, *Message for the 1994 World Day of Peace*, 5: AAS 86 (1994), 159-160.
8. [546] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 40: AAS 74 (1982), 131
9. [547] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Gravissimum Educationis*, 6: AAS 58 (1966), 733-734; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2229
10. [548] Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, art. 5 b, Vatican Polyglot Press, Vatican City 1983, p. 11; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, 5: AAS 58 (1966), 933
11. [549] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction Libertatis Conscientia*, 94: AAS 79 (1987), 595-596.
12. [550] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Gravissimum Educationis*, 1: AAS 58 (1966), 729.
13. [551] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 43: AAS 74 (1982), 134-135.
14. [552] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 52: AAS 58 (1966), 1073-1074.
15. [553] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37: AAS 74 (1982), 128; cf. Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family* (8 December 1995), Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1995.
16. [770] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, 39: AAS 83 (1991), 842.
17. [771] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2441.
18. [772] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, 36: AAS 83 (1991), 838-839.
19. [1121] Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christi fideles Laici*, 60: AAS 81 (1989), 511.
20. [1122] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 30, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1997, pp. 30-32.
21. [1123] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 18: AAS 71 (1979), 1291-1292.
22. [1124] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 5: AAS 71 (1979), 1281.

23. [1125] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 54, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1997, p. 54.
24. [1126] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 29: AAS 71 (1979), 1301-1302; cf. also Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 17, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1997, p. 21.
25. [1127] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration Dignitatis Humanae*, 8: AAS 58 (1966), 935.
26. [1128] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Veritatis Splendoris*, 107: AAS 85 (1993), 1217.
27. [1129] Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Populorum Progressio*, 81: AAS 59 (1967), 296-297.
28. [1130] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 75: AAS 58 (1966), 1097-1098.
29. [1131] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 75: AAS 58 (1966), 1098.

# ***DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS***

SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

*28 October 1965*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Sacred Ecumenical Council has considered with care how extremely important education is in the life of man and how its influence ever grows in the social progress of this age [1].

Indeed, the circumstances of our time have made it easier and at once more urgent to educate young people and, what is more, to continue the education of adults. Men are more aware of their own dignity and position; more and more they want to take an active part in social and especially in economic and political life [2]. Enjoying more leisure, as they sometimes do, men find that the remarkable development of technology and scientific investigation and the new means of communication offer them an opportunity of attaining more easily their cultural and spiritual inheritance and of fulfilling one another in the closer ties between groups and even between peoples.

Consequently, attempts are being made everywhere to promote more education. The rights of men to an education, particularly the primary rights of children and parents, are being proclaimed and recognized in public documents [3]. As the number of pupils rapidly increases, schools are multiplied and expanded far and wide and other educational institutions are established. New experiments are conducted in methods of education and teaching. Mighty attempts are being made to obtain education for all, even though vast numbers of children and young people are still deprived of even rudimentary training and so many others lack a suitable education in which truth and love are developed together.

To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling [4]. Therefore she has a role in the progress and development of education. Hence this sacred synod declares certain fundamental principles of Christian education especially in schools. These principles will have to be developed at greater length by a special post-conciliar commission and applied by episcopal conferences to varying local situations.

## **1. The Meaning of the Universal Right to an Education**

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education [5] that is in keeping with their ultimate goal [6], their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share.

Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. Let them be given also, as they advance in years, a positive and prudent sexual education. Moreover, they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good.

This sacred synod likewise declares that children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently, it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right. It further exhorts the sons of the Church to give their attention with generosity to the entire field of education, having especially in mind the need of extending very soon the benefits of a suitable education and training to everyone in all parts of the world [7].

## **2. Christian Education**

Since all Christians have become by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit a new creature<sup>8</sup> [8] so that they should be called and should be children of God, they have a right to a Christian education. A Christian education does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person as just now described, but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23) especially in liturgical action, and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness

of truth (Eph. 4:22-24); also that they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13) and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body; moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15) but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society [9]. Wherefore this sacred synod recalls to pastors of souls their most serious obligation to see to it that all the faithful, but especially the youth who are the hope of the Church, enjoy this Christian education [10].

### **3. The Authors of Education**

Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators [11]. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people [12].

The family which has the primary duty of imparting education needs help of the whole community. In addition, therefore, to the rights of parents and others to whom the parents entrust a share in the work of education, certain rights and duties belong indeed to civil society, whose role is to direct what is required for the common temporal good. Its function is to promote the education of youth in many ways, namely: to protect the duties and rights of parents and others who share in education and to give them aid; according to the principle of subsidiarity, when the endeavors of parents and other societies are lacking, to carry out the work of education in accordance with the wishes of the parents; and, moreover, as the common good demands, to build schools and institutions [13].

Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to

those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life [14]. The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ and at the same time do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human [15].

#### **4. Various Aids to Christian Education**

In fulfilling its educational role, the Church, eager to employ all suitable aids, is concerned especially about those which are her very own. Foremost among these is catechetical instruction [16], which enlightens and strengthens the faith, nourishes life according to the spirit of Christ, leads to intelligent and active participation in the liturgical mystery [17] and gives motivation for apostolic activity. The Church esteems highly and seeks to penetrate and ennoble with her own spirit also other aids which belong to the general heritage of man and which are of great influence in forming souls and molding men, such as the media of communication [18] various groups for mental and physical development, youth associations, and, in particular, schools.

#### **5. The Importance of Schools**

Among all educational instruments the school has a special importance [19]. It is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding; and it establishes as it were a center whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community.

Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools. This vocation demands special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and to adapt.

#### **6. The Duties and Rights of Parents**

Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools. Consequently, the public power, which has the obligation to protect and

defend the rights of citizens, must see to it, in its concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children.[20]

In addition, it is the task of the state to see to it that all citizens are able to come to a suitable share in culture and are properly prepared to exercise their civic duties and rights. Therefore, the state must protect the right of children to an adequate school education, check on the ability of teachers and the excellence of their training, look after the health of the pupils and in general, promote the whole school project. But it must always keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity so that there is no kind of school monopoly, for this is opposed to the native rights of the human person, to the development and spread of culture, to the peaceful association of citizens and to the pluralism that exists today in ever so many societies. [21]

Therefore, this sacred synod exhorts the faithful to assist to their utmost in finding suitable methods of education and programs of study and in forming teachers who can give youth a true education. Through the associations of parents in particular they should further with their assistance all the work of the school but especially the moral education it must impart. [22]

## **7. Moral and Religious Education in all Schools**

Feeling very keenly the weighty responsibility of diligently caring for the moral and religious education of all her children, the Church must be present with her own special affection and help for the great number who are being trained in schools that are not Catholic. This is possible by the witness of the lives of those who teach and direct them, by the apostolic action of their fellow-students,[23] but especially by the ministry of priests and laymen who give them the doctrine of salvation in a way suited to their age and circumstances and provide spiritual aid in every way the times and conditions allow.

The Church reminds parents of the duty that is theirs to arrange and even demand that their children be able to enjoy these aids and advance in their Christian formation to a degree that is abreast of their development in secular subjects. Therefore the Church esteems highly those civil authorities and societies which, bearing in mind the pluralism of contemporary society and respecting religious freedom, assist families so that the education of their children can be imparted in all schools according to the individual moral and religious principles of the families.[24]

## **8. Catholic Schools**

The influence of the Church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic school. No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth.

But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.[25] So indeed the Catholic school, while it is open, as it must be, to the situation of the contemporary world, leads its students to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepares them for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community.

Since, therefore, the Catholic school can be such an aid to the fulfillment of the mission of the People of God and to the fostering of the dialogue between the Church and mankind, to the benefit of both, it retains even in our present circumstances the utmost importance. Consequently, this sacred synod proclaims anew what has already been taught in several documents of the magisterium, [26] namely: the right of the Church freely to establish and to conduct schools of every type and level. And the council calls to mind that the exercise of a right of this kind contributes in the highest degree to the protection of freedom of conscience, the rights of parents, as well as to the betterment of culture itself.

But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs.[27] They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. Let them work as partners with parents and together with them in every phase of education give due consideration to the difference of sex and the proper ends Divine Providence assigns to each sex in the family and in society. Let them do all they can to stimulate their students to act for themselves and even after graduation to continue to assist them with advice, friendship and by establishing special associations imbued with the true spirit of the Church. The work of these teachers, this sacred synod declares, is in the real sense of the word an apostolate most suited to and necessary for our times and at once a true service offered to society. The Council also reminds Catholic parents of the duty of entrusting their children to Catholic schools wherever and whenever it is possible and of supporting these schools to the best of their ability and of cooperating with them for the education of their children.[28]

## **9. Different Types of Catholic Schools**

To this concept of a Catholic school all schools that are in any way dependent on the Church must conform as far as possible, though the Catholic school is to take on different forms in keeping with local circumstances.[29] Thus, the Church considers very dear to her heart those Catholic schools, found especially in the areas of the new churches, which are attended also by students who are not Catholics.

Attention should be paid to the needs of today in establishing and directing Catholic schools. Therefore, though primary and secondary schools, the foundation of education, must still be fostered, great importance is to be attached to those which are required in a particular way by contemporary conditions, such as: professional[30] and technical schools, centers for educating adults and promoting social welfare, or for the retarded in need of special care, and also schools for preparing teachers for religious instruction and other types of education.

This Sacred Council of the Church earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfill their function in a continually more perfect way, and especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of Faith.

## **10. Catholic Colleges and Universities**

The Church is concerned also with schools of a higher level, especially colleges and universities. In those schools dependent on her she intends that by their very constitution individual subjects be pursued according to their own principles, method, and liberty of scientific inquiry, in such a way that an ever deeper understanding in these fields may be obtained and that, as questions that are new and current are raised and investigations carefully made according to the example of the doctors of the Church and especially of St. Thomas Aquinas,[31] there may be a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science. Thus there is accomplished a public, enduring and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture and the students of these institutions are molded into men truly outstanding in their training, ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world.[32]

In Catholic universities where there is no faculty of sacred theology there should be established an institute or chair of sacred theology in which there should be lectures suited to lay students. Since science advances by means of the investigations peculiar to higher scientific studies, special attention should be given in Catholic universities and colleges to institutes that serve primarily the development of scientific research.

The sacred synod heartily recommends that Catholic colleges and universities be conveniently located in different parts of the world, but

in such a way that they are outstanding not for their numbers but for their pursuit of knowledge. Matriculation should be readily available to students of real promise, even though they be of slender means, especially to students from the newly emerging nations.

Since the destiny of society and of the Church itself is intimately linked with the progress of young people pursuing higher studies,[33] the pastors of the Church are to expend their energies not only on the spiritual life of students who attend Catholic universities, but, solicitous for the spiritual formation of all their children, they must see to it, after consultations between bishops, that even at universities that are not Catholic there should be associations and university centers under Catholic auspices in which priests, religious and laity, carefully selected and prepared, should give abiding spiritual and intellectual assistance to the youth of the university. Whether in Catholic universities or others, young people of greater ability who seem suited for teaching or research should be specially helped and encouraged to undertake a teaching career.

### **11. Faculties of Sacred Sciences**

The Church expects much from the zealous endeavors of the faculties of the sacred sciences.[34] For to them she entrusts the very serious responsibility of preparing her own students not only for the priestly ministry, but especially for teaching in the seats of higher ecclesiastical studies or for promoting learning on their own or for undertaking the work of a more rigorous intellectual apostolate. Likewise it is the role of these very faculties to make more penetrating inquiry into the various aspects of the sacred sciences so that an ever deepening understanding of sacred Revelation is obtained, the legacy of Christian wisdom handed down by our forefathers is more fully developed, the dialogue with our separated brethren and with non-Christians is fostered, and answers are given to questions arising from the development of doctrine.[35]

Therefore, ecclesiastical faculties should reappraise their own laws so that they can better promote the sacred sciences and those linked with them and, by employing up-to-date methods and aids, lead their students to more penetrating inquiry.

### **12. Coordination to be Fostered in Scholastic Matters**

Cooperation is the order of the day. It increases more and more to supply the demand on a diocesan, national and international level. Since it is altogether necessary in scholastic matters, every means should be employed to foster suitable cooperation between Catholic schools, and between these and other schools that collaboration should be developed which the good of all mankind requires.[36] From greater coordination and cooperative endeavor greater fruits will be derived particularly in the

area of academic institutions. Therefore, in every university let the various faculties work mutually to this end, insofar as their goal will permit. In addition, let the universities also endeavor to work together by promoting international gatherings, by sharing scientific inquiries with one another, by communicating their discoveries to one another, by having exchange of professors for a time and by promoting all else that is conducive to greater assistance.

## CONCLUSION

The sacred synod earnestly entreats young people themselves to become aware of the importance of the work of education and to prepare themselves to take it up, especially where because of a shortage of teachers the education of youth is in jeopardy. This same sacred synod, while professing its gratitude to priests, Religious men and women, and the laity who by their evangelical self-dedication are devoted to the noble work of education and of schools of every type and level, exhorts them to persevere generously in the work they have undertaken and, imbuing their students with the spirit of Christ, to strive to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today's world, especially the intellectual world.

## NOTES

[1] Among many documents illustrating the importance of education confers above all Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter, *Communes Litteras*, April 10, 1919: A.A.S. 11 (1919) p. 172. Pius XI, Apostolic Encyclical, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 31, 1929: A.A.S. 22 (1930) pp. 49-86. Pius XII's allocution to the youths of Italian Catholic Action, April 20, 1946: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 8, pp. 53-57. Allocution to fathers of French families, Sept. 18, 1951: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 13, pp. 241-245. John XXIII's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Message on the publication of the Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 30, 1959: A.A.S. 52 (1960) pp. 57-59. Paul VI's allocution to members of Federated Institutes Dependent on Ecclesiastic Authority, Dec. 30, 1963: *Encyclicals and Discourses of His Holiness Paul VI*, Rome, 1964, pp. 601-603. Above all are to be consulted the Acts and Documents of the Second Vatican Council appearing in the first series of the ante-preparatory phase. vol. 3. pp. 363-364; 370-371; 373-374.

[2] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961) pp. 413-415; 417-424; Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963) p. 278 ff.

[3] *Declaration on the Rights of Man* of Dec. 10, 1948, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and also cf. the *Declaration of the Rights of Children* of Nov. 20 1959; additional protocol to the *Convention Safeguarding the Rights of Men and Fundamental Liberties*, Paris, March 20, 1952; regarding that universal profession of the character of human laws cf. Apostolic Letter, *Pacem in Terris*, of John XXIII of April 11, 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963) p. 295 ff.

[4] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961) p. 402. Cf. Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 17: A.A.S.

57 (1965) p. 21, and schema on the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 1965.

[5] Pius XII's radio message of Dec. 24, 1942: A.A.S. 35 (1943) pp. 12-19, and John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris* April 11, 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963) p. 259 ff. Also cf. Declaration cited on the rights of man in footnote 3.

[6] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 31, 1929: A.A.S. 22 (1930) p. 50 ff.

[7] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra*, May 15 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961) p. 441 ff.

[8] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri* 1, p. 83.

[9] Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 36: A.A.S. 57 (1965) p. 41 ff.

[10] Cf. Second Vatican Council's schema on the *Decree on the Lay Apostolate* (1965), no. 12.

[11] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, p. 59 ff., Encyclical Letter *Mit Brennender Sorge*, March 14, 1937: A.A.S. 29; Pius XII's allocution to the first national congress of the Italian Catholic Teachers' Association, Sept. 8, 1946: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 8, p. 218.

[12] Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, nos. 11 and 35: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 16, 40 ff.

[13] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, p. 63 ff. Pius XII's radio message of June 1, 1941: A.A.S. 33 (1941) p. 200; allocution to the first national congress of the Association of Italian Catholic Teachers, Sept 8, 1946: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 8, 1946: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 8 p. 218. Regarding the principle of subsidiarity, cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963) p. 294.

[14] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1 pp. 53 ff. and 56 ff.; Encyclical Letter, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, June 29, 1931: A.A.S. 23 (1931) p. 311 ff. Pius XII's letter from Secretariat of State to 28<sup>th</sup> Italian Social Week, Sept. 20, 1955; *L'Osservatore Romano*, Sept. 29, 1955.

[15] The Church praises those local, national and international civic authorities who, conscious of the urgent necessity in these times, expend all their energy so that all peoples may benefit from more education and human culture. Cf. Paul VI's allocution to the United Nations General Assembly, Oct. 4, 1965: *L'Osservatore Romano*, Oct. 6, 1965.

[16] Cf. Pius XI, Motu Proprio, *Orbem Catholicum*, June 29<sup>th</sup> 1923: A.A.S. 15 (1923) pp. 327-329; decree, *Provide Sane*, Jan. 12, 1935: A.A.S. 27 (1935) pp. 145-152. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Bishops and Pastoral Duties*, nos. 13 and 14.

[17] Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 14: A.A.S. 56 (1964) p. 104.

[18] Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Communications Media*, nos. 13 and 14: A.A.S. 56 (1964) p. 149 ff.

[19] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, p. 76; Pius XII's allocution to Bavarian Association of Catholic Teachers, Dec. 31, 1956: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 18, p. 746.

[20] Cf. Provincial Council of Cincinnati III, a. 1861: *Collatio Lacensis*, III, col. 1240, c/d; Pius XI's encyclical letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, pp. 60, 63 ff.

[21] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, p. 63; Encyclical Letter, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, June 29, 1931: A.A.S. 23 (1931) p. 305, Pius XII's letter from the Secretary of State to the 28<sup>th</sup> Italian Social Week, Sept. 20, 1955: *L'Osservatore Romano*,

Sept. 29, 1955. Paul VI's allocution to the Association of Italian Christian Workers, Oct. 6, 1963: *Encyclicals and Discourses of Paul VI*, vol. 1, Rome, 1964, p. 230.

[22] Cf. John XXIII's message on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Encyclical Letter *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 30, 1959: A.A.S. 52 (1960) p. 57.

[23] The Church considers it as apostolic action of great worth also when Catholic teachers and associates work in these schools. Cf. Second Vatican Council's schema of the *Decree on the Lay Apostolate* (1965), nos. 12 and 16.

[24] Cf. Second Vatican Council's schema on the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (1965), no. 5.

[25] Cf. Provincial Council of Westminster I, a. 1852: *Collatio Lacensis* III, col. 1334, a/b; Pius XI's encyclical letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1, p. 77 ff.; Pius XII's allocution to the Bavarian Association of Catholic Teachers, Dec. 31, 1956: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 18, p. 746; Paul VI's allocution to the members of Federated Institutes Dependent on Ecclesiastic Authority, Dec. 30, 1963: *Encyclicals and Discourses of Paul VI*, 1, Rome, 1964, 602 ff.

[26] Cf. especially the document mentioned in the first note; moreover, this law of the Church is proclaimed by many provincial councils and in the most recent declarations of very many of the episcopal conferences.

[27] Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1 p. 80 ff.; Pius XII's allocution to the Catholic Association of Italian Teachers in Secondary Schools, Jan. 5, 1954: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, 15, pp. 551-55B; John XXIII's allocution to the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Associations of Catholic Italian Teachers Sept. 5, 1959: *Discourses, Messages, Conversations*, 1, Rome, 1960, pp. 427-431.

[28] Cf. Pius XII's allocution to the Catholic Association of Italian Teachers in Secondary Schools, Jan. 5, 1954, 1, p. 555.

[29] Cf. Paul VI's allocution to the International Office of Catholic Education, Feb. 25, 1964: *Encyclicals and Discourses of Paul VI*, 2, Rome, 1964, p. 232.

[30] Cf. Paul VI's allocution to the Christian Association of Italian Workers, Oct. 6, 1963: *Encyclicals and Discourses of Paul VI*, 1, Rome, 1964, p. 229.

[31] Cf. Paul VI's allocution to the International Thomistic Congress, Sept. 10, 1965: *L'Osservatore Romano*, Sept. 13-14, 1965.

[32] Cf. Pius XII's allocution to teachers and students of French Institutes of Higher Catholic Education, Sept. 21, 1950: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, 12, pp. 219-221; letters to the 22<sup>nd</sup> congress of Pax Romana, Aug. 12, 1952: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, 14, pp. 567-569; John XXIII's allocution to the Federation of Catholic Universities, April 1, 1959: *Discourses, Messages and Conversations*, 1, Rome, 1960, pp. 226-229; Paul VI's allocution to the Academic Senate of the Catholic University of Milan, April 5, 1964: *Encyclicals and Discourses of Paul VI*, 2, Rome, 1964, pp. 438-443.

[33] Cf. Pius XII's allocution to the academic senate and students of the University of Rome, June 15, 1952: *Discourses and Radio Messages*, 14, p. 208: "The direction of today's society principally is placed in the mentality and hearts of the universities of today."

[34] Cf. Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, *Deus Scientiarum Dominus*, May 24, 1931: A.A.S. 23 (1931) pp. 245-247.

[35] Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Humani Generis* Aug. 12, 1950 A.A.S. 42 (1950) pp. 568 ff. and 578; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesiam Suam*, part III Aug. 6, 1964; A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 637-659; Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Ecumenism*: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 90-107.

[36] Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963) p. 284 and elsewhere.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MUSLIM CHRISTIAN COLLOQUIUM ON “RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND MODERN SOCIETY”***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*7 December 1989*

Your Eminence,  
Distinguished Visitors,

I am pleased to welcome you, the participants in the Muslim Christian Colloquium on “Religious Education and Modern Society”, jointly organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Al al-Bait Foundation of Amman, Jordan. I congratulate you on the choice of this theme, which deserves careful attention on the part of religious educators.

In the contemporary world, great challenges are facing humanity. Advances in the fields of science and technology, in communications, in health care and social services – to mention but a few – offer the promise of a better life for the human family. But in many ways these same advances present ambiguous and even negative aspects, including the fact that the ease of modern life is sometimes accompanied by the danger that people may forget or ignore the transcendent, spiritual aspect of the human person before God.

On the one hand, material comforts and advances are not distributed equally within the human family. Poverty is a widespread and oppressive factor in the lives of millions and raises issues of justice and the defence of human dignity. On the other, increasing material well-being sometimes leads to an exaggerated individualism, a frantic quest for self-fulfillment, a sense of lonely isolation within society, and violent or self-destructive practices. Such circumstances often contain an implicit refusal to acknowledge God as the Creator and Lawgiver, whose will mankind should respect and obey.

Although there are specific differences between us, Christians and Muslims both hold that the true path towards human fulfilment lies in carrying out the divine will in our personal and social lives. For this reason, we have much to discuss concerning the ways of teaching religious values to the younger generations.

Our youth need to learn the transcendent sense of human life, so that they may be equipped to view critically all aspects of modern living. They must know how to discern between those scientific and technological advances which enhance human life and those which plant seeds of destruction. They must be educated to understand that an uncritical acceptance of all that modern life has to offer can lead to selfishness and unchecked ambition.

At the same time, turning backwards and rejecting development is unrealistic and implies a lack of confidence in the intellectual powers with which. God has endowed humanity, It amounts to an abdication of the very vocation which God has given to man – the vocation to collaborate with him in the work of creation.

Young people are best served by being taught to discover God and his will within the new confines of their modern surroundings. This includes rediscovering the social nature of human life, and the inalienable rights and pressing responsibilities of individuals. They should understand the changes taking place in our world, so that they can continue to bear a dynamic message of transcendent hope to the society of our time. Furthermore, religious education, of its very nature, must teach respect for others and openness to them as children of God independently of race, religion, economic status, gender, language or ethnic group.

Ultimately, the heart of all religious education is the endeavour to bring the student to a personal awareness of and encounter with the Living God. Thus, religious education is not merely talking about God, but accompanying young people in their search for God, deepening their desire to know him and to do his will. Through the work of your Colloquium, may you all, Christians and Muslims, advance in the knowledge of the ways of communicating better the religious values which the contemporary world so urgently needs. I pray that your meeting will be a further step forward in the spirit of collaboration and in common witness to the One God.

May the blessings of the Most High God be upon you!

## ENCYCLICAL LETTER *CENTESIMUS ANNUS*

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*1 May 1991*

### *(Selected Excerpts)*

16. These reforms were carried out in part by States, but in the struggle to achieve them *the role of the workers' movement* was an important one. This movement, which began as a response of moral conscience to unjust and harmful situations, conducted a widespread campaign for reform, far removed from vague ideology and closer to the daily needs of workers. In this context its efforts were often joined to those of Christians in order to improve workers' living conditions. Later on, this movement was dominated to a certain extent by the Marxist ideology against which *Rerum novarum* had spoken.

These same reforms were also partly the result of *an open process by which society organized itself* through the establishment of effective instruments of solidarity, which were capable of sustaining an economic growth more respectful of the values of the person. Here we should remember the numerous efforts to which Christians made a notable contribution in establishing producers', consumers' and credit cooperatives, in promoting general education and professional training, in experimenting with various forms of participation in the life of the work-place and in the life of society in general.

Thus, as we look at the past, there is good reason to thank God that the great Encyclical was not without an echo in human hearts and indeed led to a generous response on the practical level. Still, we must acknowledge that its prophetic message was not fully accepted by people at the time. Precisely for this reason there ensued some very serious tragedies.

[...]

46. The Church values the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate.[93] Thus she cannot encourage the formation of narrow ruling groups which usurp the power of the State for individual interests or for ideological ends.

Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the «subjectivity»

of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

#### NOTES

1. [93] Conc. Ecum. Vat. II, Pastoral Constitution on Church in Contemporary World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 29; Pio XII, Radio Christmas Message, 24 dicembre 1944: AAS 37 (1945), 10-20

## ***ADDRESS TO THE YOUTH DURING THE PASTORAL JOURNEY TO BENIN, UGANDA AND KHARTOUM (SUDAN)***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*6 February 1993*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

4. You are convinced, I know, that a sound education is necessary both for your personal maturity and for your Nation's development. Yet you have told me that remaining in school is often very difficult and that you are tempted to give up. You ask: What is the use of so much effort?

From my own experience of studying during the time of war in my land I can assure you schooling is one of the main paths leading us out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of truth. To seek, discover and rejoice in the truth are among life's most thrilling adventures. Education frees you, so that you can become a fully-integrated man or woman. Remaining in school requires perseverance and patience; it requires self-denial and discipline. Above all, it calls for courage! Do not give in to defeatism and discouragement. The truth alone can make you free (cf. Jn. 8:32), so pursue it fearlessly. Christ calls you to cure the blindness of ignorance with the light of truth.

May the lamp of learning radiate in every corner of the "Pearl of Africa's Crown!" In a few years, my dear friends, you will be the men and women of the Third Millennium. Uganda and the Church are counting on the harvest of your talents (cf. Mt. 25:14-30)!

## ***ENCYCLICAL LETTER EVANGELIUM VITAE***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*25 March 1995*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

97. Closely connected with the formation of conscience is the work of education, which helps individuals to be ever more human, leads them ever more fully to the truth, instils in them growing respect for life, and trains them in right interpersonal relationships.

In particular, there is a need for education about the value of life from its very origins. It is an illusion to think that we can build a true culture of human life if we do not help the young to accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and in their close interconnection. Sexuality, which enriches the whole person, "manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love".[128] The trivialization of sexuality is among the principal factors which have led to contempt for new life. Only a true love is able to protect life. There can be no avoiding the duty to offer, especially to adolescents and young adults, an authentic education in sexuality and in love, an education which involves training in chastity as a virtue which fosters personal maturity and makes one capable of respecting the "spousal" meaning of the body.

The work of educating in the service of life involves the training of married couples in responsible procreation. In its true meaning, responsible procreation requires couples to be obedient to the Lord's call and to act as faithful interpreters of his plan. This happens when the family is generously open to new lives, and when couples maintain an attitude of openness and service to life, even if, for serious reasons and in respect for the moral law, they choose to avoid a new birth for the time being or indefinitely. The moral law obliges them in every case to control the impulse of instinct and passion, and to respect the biological laws inscribed in their person. It is precisely this respect which makes legitimate, at the service of responsible procreation, the use of natural methods of regulating fertility. From the scientific point of view, these methods are becoming more and more accurate and make it possible in practice to make choices in harmony with moral values. An honest appraisal of their effectiveness should dispel certain prejudices which are still widely held, and should convince married couples, as well as health-care and social workers, of the importance of proper training in this area. The Church is grateful to those who, with personal sacrifice and often unacknowledged dedication, devote themselves

to the study and spread of these methods, as well to the promotion of education in the moral values which they presuppose.

The work of education cannot avoid a consideration of suffering and death. These are a part of human existence, and it is futile, not to say misleading, to try to hide them or ignore them. On the contrary, people must be helped to understand their profound mystery in all its harsh reality. Even pain and suffering have meaning and value when they are experienced in close connection with love received and given. In this regard, I have called for the yearly celebration of the World Day of the Sick, emphasizing "the salvific nature of the offering up of suffering which, experienced in communion with Christ, belongs to the very essence of the Redemption".[129] Death itself is anything but an event without hope. It is the door which opens wide on eternity and, for those who live in Christ, an experience of participation in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

#### NOTES

1. [128] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981), 37: AAS 74 (1982), 128+
2. [129] Letter establishing the World Day of the Sick (13 May 1992), No. 2: *Insegnamenti* XV, 1 (1992), 1410

## ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN AFRICA***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*14 September 1995*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

102. "Catholic schools are at one and the same time places of evangelization, well-rounded education, inculturation and initiation to the dialogue of life among young people of different religions and social backgrounds". The Church in Africa and Madagascar should therefore make its own contribution to the fostering of "education for all" in Catholic schools, without neglecting "the Christian education of pupils in non-Catholic schools. For university students there will be a programme of religious formation which corresponds to the level of studies". These contributions presuppose the human, cultural and religious formation of the educators themselves.

103. "The Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes in Africa have a prominent role to play in the proclamation of the salvific Word of God. They are a sign of the growth of the Church insofar as their research integrates the truths and experiences of the faith and helps to internalize them. They serve the Church by providing trained personnel, by studying important theological and social questions for the benefit of the Church, by developing an African theology, by promoting the work of inculturation especially in liturgical celebration, by publishing books and publicizing Catholic truth, by undertaking assignments given by the Bishops and by contributing to a scientific study of cultures".

In this time of generalized social upheaval on the Continent, the Christian faith can shed helpful light on African society. "Catholic cultural centres offer to the Church the possibility of presence and action in the field of cultural change. They constitute in effect public forums which allow the Church to make widely known, in creative dialogue, Christian convictions about man, woman, family, work, economy, society, politics, international life, the environment". Thus they are places of listening, respect and tolerance.

## ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION VITA CONSECRATA***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

***25 March 1996***

***(Selected Excerpts)***

96. The Church has always recognized that education is an essential dimension of her mission. The Master of her inner life is the Holy Spirit, who penetrates the innermost depths of every human heart and knows the secret unfolding of history. The whole Church is enlivened by the Holy Spirit and with him carries out her educational work. Within the Church, however, consecrated persons have a specific duty. They are called to bring to bear on the world of education their radical witness to the values of the Kingdom, proposed to everyone in expectation of the definitive meeting with the Lord of history. Because of their special consecration, their particular experience of the gifts of the Spirit, their constant listening to the word of God, their practice of discernment, their rich heritage of pedagogical traditions built up since the establishment of their Institute, and their profound grasp of spiritual truth (cf. Eph 2:17), consecrated persons are able to be especially effective in educational activities and to offer a specific contribution to the work of other educators.

Equipped with this charism, consecrated persons can give life to educational undertakings permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, in which young people are helped to mature humanly under the action of the Spirit. In this way a community of learning becomes an experience of grace, where the teaching programme contributes to uniting into a harmonious whole the human and the divine, the Gospel and culture, faith and life. The history of the Church, from antiquity down to our own day, is full of admirable examples of consecrated persons who have sought and continue to seek holiness through their involvement in education, while at the same time proposing holiness as the goal of education. Indeed, many of them have achieved the perfection of charity through teaching. This is one of the most precious gifts which consecrated persons today can offer to young people, instructing them in a way that is full of love, according to the wise counsel of Saint John Bosco: "Young people should not only be loved, but should also know that they are loved".

97. With respectful sensitivity and missionary boldness, consecrated men and women should show that faith in Jesus Christ enlightens the whole enterprise of education, never disparaging human values but rather confirming and elevating them. Thus, do consecrated persons become witnesses and instruments of the power of the Incarnation and the vitality of the Spirit. This task of theirs is one of the most significant manifestations of that motherhood which the Church, in the image of Mary, exercises on

behalf of all her children. It is for this reason that the Synod emphatically urged consecrated persons to take up again, wherever possible, the mission of education in schools of every kind and level, and in Universities and Institutions of higher learning. Making my own the proposal of the Synod, I warmly invite members of Institutes devoted to education to be faithful to their founding charism and to their traditions, knowing that the preferential love for the poor finds a special application in the choice of means capable of freeing people from that grave form of poverty which is the lack of cultural and religious training. Because of the importance that Catholic and ecclesiastical universities and faculties have in the field of education and evangelization, Institutes which are responsible for their direction should be conscious of their responsibility. They should ensure the preservation of their unique Catholic identity in complete fidelity to the Church's Magisterium, all the while engaging in active dialogue with present-day cultural trends. Moreover, depending on the circumstances, the members of these Institutes and Societies should readily become involved in the educational structures of the State. Members of Secular Institutes in particular, because of their specific calling, are called to this kind of cooperation.

## ***MESSAGE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CHILD BUREAU ON THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

***3 March 1998***

***(Selected Excerpts)***

4. To encourage and guide a child's development, it is particularly important to support the families and natural communities of young people; in this regard, I urge the directors, teachers and leaders of the ICCB to continue their work of prevention and of rehabilitating street children, in order to remove them from situations which lead to delinquency, to put them back in a family structure and to give them a human and moral education. The same should be done for handicapped children, who need special care and assistance if they are to have the place that is theirs by virtue of their intrinsic dignity. Projects for literacy, basic education and professional training should be continued and intensified, so that each child, after receiving the necessary instruction, may be prepared to enter social and economic life. I extend a special greeting to the women involved in these different projects. By their closeness to children they have a beneficial influence, for they establish an affective and educational relationship with them which is based on trust and gradually teaches them responsibility.

5. At the local, national and international levels, the ICCB is also a partner in dialogue and action with the various civil authorities and with institutions that have responsibility for children, so that youth policies can be reoriented with respect for their dignity, their culture and their human and religious development. Its participation in drafting the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a significant aspect of the work it has undertaken.

[...]

On this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *International Catholic Child Bureau*, I impart an Apostolic Blessing to those responsible for this international Catholic organization, to all its members and to all their co-workers.

### **NOTES**

[1] *Evangelium vitae*, n. 10

***ADDRESS TO THE BISHOPS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
REGIONS OF CHICAGO, INDIANAPOLIS AND  
MILWAUKEE (U.S.A.) ON THEIR "AD LIMINA" VISIT***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*30 May 1998*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

Dear Cardinal George,  
Dear Brother Bishops,

[...]

In the course of this series of ad Limina visits, the Bishops of the United States have again borne witness to the keen sense of communion of American Catholics with the Successor of Peter. From the beginning of my Pontificate I have experienced this closeness, and the spiritual and material support of so many of your people. In welcoming you, the Bishops of the ecclesiastical regions of Chicago, Indianapolis and Milwaukee, I express once more to you and to the whole Church in your country my heartfelt gratitude: "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers" (Rom 1:9). Continuing the reflection begun with previous groups of Bishops on the renewal of ecclesial life in the light of the Second Vatican Council and in view of the challenge of evangelization which we face on the eve of the next millennium, today I wish to address some aspects of your responsibility for Catholic education.

2. From the earliest days of the American Republic, when Archbishop John Carroll encouraged the teaching vocation of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and founded the new nation's first Catholic college, the Church in the United States has been deeply involved in education at every level. For more than two hundred years, Catholic elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities have been instrumental in educating successive generations of Catholics, and in teaching the truths of the faith, promoting respect for the human person, and developing the moral character of their students. Their academic excellence and success in preparing young people for life have served the whole of American society.

As we approach the third Christian millennium, the Second Vatican Council's call for generous dedication to the whole enterprise of Catholic education remains to be more fully implemented.<sup>1</sup> Few areas of Catholic life in the United States need the leadership of the Bishops for their re-affirmation and renewal as much as this one does. Any such renewal requires

a clear vision of the Church's educational mission, which in turn cannot be separated from the Lord's mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations. Like other educational institutions, Catholic schools transmit knowledge and promote the human development of their students. However, as the Council emphasized, the Catholic school does something else: "It aims to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity. It aims to help the young person in such a way that the development of his or her own personality will be matched by the growth of that new creation which he or she has become by baptism. It strives to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the light of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life, and of the human family"<sup>2</sup>. The mission of the Catholic school is the integral formation of students, so that they may be true to their condition as Christ's disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.

3. Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom. In its recent document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, the Congregation for Catholic Education drew attention to the importance of communicating knowledge in the context of the Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history: "In the Catholic school there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered" (No. 14).

The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the United States today, and the greatest contribution that authentically Catholic education can make to American culture, is to restore to that culture the conviction that human beings can grasp the truth of things, and in grasping that truth can know their duties to God, to themselves and their neighbors. In meeting that challenge, the Catholic educator will hear an echo of Christ's words: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). The contemporary world urgently needs the service of educational institutions which uphold and teach that truth is "that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished".<sup>3</sup>

To educate in the truth, and for genuine freedom and evangelical love, is at the very heart of the Church's mission. In a cultural climate in which moral norms are often thought to be matters of personal preference, Catholic schools have a crucial role to play in leading the younger generation to realize that freedom consists above all in being able to respond to the demands of the truth.<sup>4</sup> The respect which Catholic elementary and secondary schools

enjoy suggests that their commitment to transmitting moral wisdom is meeting a widely-felt cultural need in your country. The example of Bishops and pastors who, with the support of Catholic parents, have persevered in leadership in this field should encourage everyone's efforts to foster new dedication and new growth. The fact that some Dioceses are involved in a program of school building is a significant sign of vitality and a great hope for the future.

4. Almost twenty-five years have passed since your Conference issued *To Teach as Jesus Did*, a document which is still very relevant today. It emphasized the importance of another aspect of Catholic education: "More than any other program of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be...oriented to Christian service because it helps students acquire skills, virtues and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others" (No. 106). On the basis of what they see and hear, students should become ever more aware of the dignity of every human person and gradually absorb the key elements of the Church's social doctrine and her concern for the poor. Catholic institutions should continue their tradition of commitment to the education of the poor in spite of the financial burdens involved. In some cases it may be necessary to find ways to share the burden more evenly, so that parishes with schools are not left to shoulder it alone.

A Catholic school is a place where students live a shared experience of faith in God and where they learn the riches of Catholic culture. Taking proper account of the stages of human development, the freedom of individuals, and the rights of parents in the education of their children, Catholic schools must help students to deepen their personal relationship with God and to discover that all things human have their deepest meaning in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Prayer and the liturgy, especially the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance, should mark the rhythm of a Catholic school's life. Transmitting knowledge about the faith, though essential, is not sufficient. If students in Catholic schools are to gain a genuine experience of the Church, the example of teachers and others responsible for their formation is crucial: the witness of adults in the school community is a vital part of the school's identity.

Numberless religious and lay teachers and other personnel in Catholic schools down the years have shown how their professional competence and commitment are grounded in the spiritual, intellectual and moral values of the Catholic tradition. The Catholic community in the United States and the whole country have been immeasurably blessed through the work of so many dedicated religious in schools in every part of your country. I also know how much you value the dedication of the many lay men and women who, sometimes at great financial sacrifice, are involved in Catholic education because they believe in the mission of Catholic schools.

If in some cases there has been an eroding of confidence in the teaching vocation, you must do all you can to restore that trust.

[...]

6. The Church's tradition of involvement in universities, which goes back almost a thousand years, quickly took root in the United States. Today Catholic colleges and universities can make an important contribution to the renewal of American higher education. To belong to a university community, as was my privilege during my days as a professor, is to stand at the crossroads of the cultures that have formed the modern world. It is to be a trustee of the wisdom of centuries and a promoter of the creativity that will transmit that wisdom to future generations. At a time when knowledge is often thought to be fragmentary and never absolute, Catholic universities should be expected to uphold the objectivity and coherence of knowledge. Now that the centuries-old conflict between science and faith is fading, Catholic universities should be in the forefront of a new and long-overdue dialogue between the empirical sciences and the truths of faith.

If Catholic universities are to become leaders in the renewal of higher education, they must first have a strong sense of their own Catholic identity. This identity is not established once and for all by an institution's origins, but comes from its living within the Church today and always, speaking from the heart of the Church (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*) to the contemporary world. The Catholic identity of a university should be evident in its curriculum, in its faculty, in student activities, and in the quality of its community life. This is no infringement upon the university's nature as a true center of learning, where the truth of the created order is fully respected, but also ultimately illuminated by the light of the new creation in Christ.

#### NOTES

[1] cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1

[2] *ibid.*, 8

[3] cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, No. 4

[4] cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, No. 84

[5] cf. 1 Pt 3:15

[6] cf. 1 Cor 15:1

[7] cf. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, No. 27

[8] cf. 1 Pt 3:15

[9] Pope John Paul II, *Address to the European Congress of University Chaplains*, May 1, 1998, No. 4

# ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN AMERICA***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*22 January 1999*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

The Church in the field of education and social action

18. One of the reasons for the Church's influence on the Christian formation of Americans is her vast presence in the field of education and especially in the university world. The many Catholic universities spread throughout the continent are a typical feature of Church life in America. Also in the field of primary and secondary education, the large number of Catholic schools makes possible a wide-ranging evangelizing effort, as long as there is a clear will to impart a truly Christian education.(49)

## **NOTES**

1. (49) Cf. *Propositiones* 23 and 24.
2. (50) *Propositio* 73.

# ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN ASIA***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

***6 November 1999***

***(Selected Excerpt)***

## **Education**

37. Throughout Asia, the Church's involvement in education is extensive and highly visible, and is therefore a key element of her presence among the peoples of the continent. In many countries, Catholic schools play an important role in evangelization, inculturating the faith, teaching the ways of openness and respect, and fostering interreligious understanding. The Church's schools often provide the only educational opportunities for girls, tribal minorities, the rural poor and less privileged children. The Synod Fathers were convinced of the need to extend and develop the apostolate of education in Asia, with an eye in particular to the disadvantaged, so that all may be helped to take their rightful place as full citizens in society. (187) As the Synod Fathers noted, this will mean that the system of Catholic education must become still more clearly directed towards human promotion, providing an environment where students receive not only the formal elements of schooling but, more broadly, an integral human formation based upon the teachings of Christ. (188) Catholic schools should continue to be places where the faith can be freely proposed and received. In the same way, Catholic universities, in addition to pursuing the academic excellence for which they are already well known, must retain a clear Christian identity in order to be a Christian leaven in Asian societies. (189)

## **NOTES**

1. [187] Cf. Propositio 21.
2. [188] Cf. *ibid.*
3. [189] Cf. *ibid.*

## ***MESSAGE TO THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF THE SACRED HEART (MILAN)***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*5 May 2000*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

6. The Catholic University, precisely because of its Christian inspiration, has something significant to say in response to this appeal for solidarity made by the culture of our time. In particular, it is called to help overcome that stifling dichotomy between scientific progress and spiritual values which encourages materialistic habits, leading to an individualistic and competitive society that is often the source of injustice and violence, marginalization and discrimination, conflict and war.

The process of economic globalization, although not without positive aspects, is creating new gaps in the area of solidarity in Europe and in the world. The value of solidarity is in crisis, perhaps mainly because there is a crisis in the only experience which could guarantee its objective and universal value: that communion between persons and peoples which the believing conscience traces back to the fact that we are all children of the one Father, the God who “is love” (1 Jn 4: 8). In Christ, he brought us into the “fullness of time” (cf. Gal 4: 4), calling us to the genuine freedom of a life of love and solidarity.

[...]

8. For all this, the Catholic University can offer valuable theoretical-scientific support by making the most of that coordination of the branches of knowledge which characterizes it as a university. It must therefore feel obliged to bring the multiplicity of the sciences to a sapiential synthesis which can truly help man by guiding him to a just and peaceful civil society: a synthesis which remedies the radical fragmentation of knowledge, which is very different from the legitimate methodological autonomy of the individual disciplines. Indeed, such fragmentation expresses and aggravates that disorientation in the perception of the meaning of life which for so many of our contemporaries is often the prelude to nihilism.

Faced with these challenges, the scholarly output of the Catholic University, already rich in so many areas, will have to continue expanding its horizons in the future, dealing in an ever more systematic way with those serious contemporary problems indicated in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*: “The dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and

political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level" (n. 32).

In this range of topics much depends on the joint action of the men and women of our time. It is the task of Christians to bring the light of the Gospel to them, as the witnesses of the One who in the Incarnation "in a certain way united himself with each man"<sup>2</sup> and showed by the gift of his life what solidarity with others means.

9. I therefore hope that the Catholic University, by remaining faithful to the Christian orientation of its well-established tradition, will increase its service of *teaching solidarity to the younger generation*, the hope of our country's future. It is an education to be offered through instruction, but also by creating an authentic climate of communion in the university's everyday life, since solidarity is learned through "contact" rather than through "concepts", and should permeate the sphere of being before that of acting.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 24
2. [2] *Ibid.*, n. 22

## ***MESSAGE FOR THE 2001 WORLD DAY OF PEACE***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

***8 December 2000***

***(Selected Excerpt)***

### **The value of education**

20. In order to build the civilization of love, dialogue between cultures must work to overcome all ethnocentric selfishness and make it possible to combine regard for one's own identity with understanding of others and respect for diversity. Fundamental in this respect is the responsibility of education. Education must make students aware of their own roots and provide points of reference which allow them to define their own personal place in the world. At the same time, it must be committed to teaching respect for other cultures. There is a need to look beyond one's immediate personal experience and accept differences, discovering the richness to be found in other people's history and in their values.

Knowledge of other cultures, acquired with an appropriate critical sense and within a solid ethical framework, leads to a deeper awareness of the values and limitations within one's own culture, and at the same time it reveals the existence of a patrimony that is common to the whole of humanity. Thanks precisely to this broadening of horizons, education has a particular role to play in building a more united and peaceful world. It can help to affirm that integral humanism, open to life's ethical and religious dimension, which appreciates the importance of understanding and showing esteem for other cultures and the spiritual values present in them.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF EUROPE***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

***28 April 2001***

Your Excellency,  
Dear Friends,

1. I extend a cordial welcome to you on the occasion of the *International Congress of the Catholic Schools of Europe*, organized by the *European Committee for Catholic Education*. Joining you in a fervent prayer, I hope that your meeting may be the source of a new awareness of the specific role and mission of the Catholic school in the European historical and cultural sphere. By basing yourselves on the richness of your pedagogical traditions, you are invited to seek courageously for suitable answers to the challenges presented by the new ways of thinking and acting of young people today, so that the Catholic school may be an area of total education with a clear educational programme whose foundation is Christ. The theme of your Congress, “*The educational mission: a witness to a hidden treasure*” places at the centre of the educational programme of Catholic schools the basic requirement of every Christian educator: to transmit the truth not only with words, but also by explicitly testifying to it with one’s life.

By assuring high quality teaching, Catholic schools present a Christian vision of man and of the world that offers young people the chance for a fruitful dialogue between faith and reason.

Likewise, it is their duty to transmit values to be assimilated and values to be discovered, “with the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment and consequently their unity in Christ”<sup>1</sup>.

2. Cultural upheavals, the relativization of moral values and the worrisome weakening of the family bond generate a sincere anxiety in young people, which is inevitably reflected in their way of living, learning and planning their future. Such a context invites European Catholic schools to propose an authentic educational programme that will permit young people not only to acquire a human, moral and spiritual maturity, but also to commit themselves effectively to the transformation of society, while also being concerned about working for the coming of the Kingdom of God. They will thus be able to spread in European cultures and societies, as also in the developing countries where Catholic schools can offer their contribution, the hidden treasure of the Gospel, to build the civilization of love, of fraternity, of solidarity and of peace.

3. In order to accept the numerous challenges that they must face, educational communities must place an emphasis on the formation of both religious and secular teachers, so that they may acquire an increasingly vivid awareness of their mission as educators, combining professional skill with a freely made choice to testify coherently spiritual and moral values, inspired by the Gospel message of “freedom and love”<sup>2</sup>. Conscious of the nobility but also of the difficulties of teaching and educating today, I encourage in their mission all the personnel involved in the Catholic educational system, that they may nourish the hopes of the young people, with the desire to “propose simultaneously the most extensive and deep acquisition of knowledge possible, a demanding and persevering education to true human freedom and the introduction of the children and adolescents entrusted to them to the highest ideal that there is: Jesus Christ and his Gospel message”<sup>3</sup>.

The experience acquired by the educational community of the Catholic Schools of Europe, in a “*creative fidelity*” to the charism experienced and transmitted by the men and women founders of the religious families involved in the world of education, is irreplaceable. It allows teachers to keep together pedagogical and spiritual programmes and to adapt them to the overall development of young people. How can we fail to insist also on the close relations of cooperation that must unite schools and families, especially in this time when the family life is more fragile? Whatever the scholastic structure, it is the parents who remain primarily responsible for the education of their children. It is the task of the educational communities to promote cooperation so that parents may become newly aware of their educational role and be assisted in their basic task, but also so that the educational and pastoral programme of the Catholic school is adapted to the legitimate aspirations of families.

4. Catholic schools must, finally, accept another challenge that regards a constructive dialogue in the multicultural society of our time. “Education has a particular role to play in building a more united and peaceful world. It can help to affirm that integral humanism, open to life’s ethical and religious dimension, which appreciates the importance of understanding and showing esteem for other cultures and the spiritual values present in them”<sup>4</sup>. In this way the effort made to welcome young people belonging to other religious traditions into the hearts of Catholic schools must continue, without, however, weakening the typical character and Catholic specificity of the institutes. By permitting the acquisition of skills within the same educational sphere, the social bond is formed by acceptance and mutual knowledge is favoured in a serene confrontation, making it possible to plan the future together. This concrete way of overcoming fear of the other undoubtedly constitutes a decisive step towards peace in society.

5. The Catholic schools in Europe are thus called to be dynamic communities of faith and evangelization, in close contact with diocesan

pastoral activity. By being at the service of the dialogue between the Church and the community, undertaking to promote man as a whole, they remind the people of God of the central point of their mission: to permit every man to give meaning to his life by making the *hidden treasure* that is his flow, thus inviting mankind to join in the plan of God manifested by Jesus Christ.

In entrusting the fruitfulness of your Congress to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, I invite you to allow yourselves to be instructed by Jesus Christ, receiving from Him, who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14: 6), the strength and joy to fulfil your exciting and delicate mission. To you all, organizers and participants in this Congress, as also to all your families, to all the personnel within the Catholic educational sphere and to the young people that they follow, I sincerely impart my Apostolic Blessing.

#### NOTES

1. [1] Congress for Catholic Education, *Circular Letter*, 28 December 1997, n. 9
2. [2] *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 8
3. [3] *Speech to the Council of the World Union of Catholic Teachers*, 1983
4. [4] *Message for the 2001 World Day of Peace*, 8 December 2000, n. 20

# ***ADDRESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CENTER FOR THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*10 May 2002*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

Your Eminence,  
Mr President,  
Friends of the International Catholic Centre for UNESCO,

2. Your centre facilitates the work and cooperation of the Catholic International Organizations that participate in the important activities of UNESCO connected with education and formation. In your mission, I encourage you to spread your specific knowledge and wisdom through your projects and publications, enabling our contemporaries to take up the serious cultural challenges of our time and give them responses worthy of the human person.

The great realms of education and culture, of communications and science, entail a fundamental ethical dimension. To respond appropriately, it is necessary to acquire a correct scientific knowledge, to undertake a deep reflection and to offer the enlightenment of Christian humanism and the universal moral values. The family must be the object of special attention, because the family has the first responsibility for educating the young.

3. I encourage you to pursue your work without respite so that there may be a fruitful dialogue between Christ's message and the cultures. I am grateful to you for the service you carry out in the formation of Catholic experts, taking pains to train them seriously and to root them in the faith, suitably preparing them to bring the world a credible witness, nourished by the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. It would be desirable that your research on scientific, cultural and educational topics, carried out in the light of the Gospel, be made available regularly and easily to the Catholics who work in these areas according to the possibilities offered by modern technology.

In choosing to hold your meeting in Rome, you show your attachment to the Successor of Peter and to the Holy See. Touched by this gesture, I thank you for the Church's mission with UNESCO that you carry out generously and attentively, at the service of all men and women.

I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to each and everyone of you, and to all your loved ones.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON "GLOBALIZATION AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY"***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*5 December 2002*

Your Eminences,  
Mr President of the International Federation of Catholic Universities,  
Rectors and Professors of the Catholic Universities,  
Dear Friends,

1. I am pleased to offer you a cordial greeting and to express to you my appreciation for the cultural and evangelizing activity of Catholic universities throughout the world. Your presence gives me the opportunity to address the academic staff, the personnel and students of your institutions, who together make up the university community. Today's meeting fondly recalls to me the years in which I took part in university education.

I thank Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski for expressing your affection and also for illustrating the motives and prospects that guide the activities of research and teaching that take place in your universities.

2. Organized jointly by the Congregation for Catholic Education and the International Federation of Catholic Universities, your congress on the theme *Globalization and the Catholic University* is particularly timely. It highlights the fact that in their reflection the Catholic university must always pay attention to the changes of society in order to formulate fresh reflections.

The institution of the university was born in the heart of the Church in the great European cities of Paris, Bologna, Salamanca, Padua, Oxford, Coimbra, Rome, Krakow, Prague, highlighting the Church's role in the field of teaching and research. It was around men who were both theologians and humanists, that higher education was organized not just in theology and philosophy but also in the majority of profane disciplines. Today Catholic universities continue to have an important role on the international scientific scene and they are called to take an active part in researching and developing knowledge for the promotion of the human person and the good of humanity.

3. New scientific issues require great prudence and serious, rigorous study; they pose many challenges, both to the scientific community and to those who must make decisions, especially in the areas of politics and law. I encourage you to be vigilant, to discern in scientific and technical progress and in globalization what is promising for the human person and humanity, but also the dangers they entail for the future. Among the topics that deserve special attention, I would like to point out those that relate

directly to the dignity of the person and his fundamental rights, with which the important issues of bioethics are closely connected, such as the status of the human embryo and of stem cells, today the object of experiments and disturbing manipulation, not always moral or scientifically justified.

4. Globalization is most often the result of economic factors, which today more than ever shape political, legal and bioethical decisions, frequently to the detriment of human and social concerns. The university world should strive to analyze the factors underlying these decisions and should in turn contribute to making them truly moral acts, acts worthy of the human person. This means strongly emphasizing the centrality of the inalienable dignity of the human person in scientific research and in social policies. Through their activities, the professors and students of your institutions are called to bear clear witness to their faith before the scientific community, showing their commitment to the truth and their respect for the human person. For Christians, research must in effect be undertaken in the light of faith rooted in prayer, in listening to the word of God, in Tradition and in the teaching of the Magisterium.

5. The role of universities is to train men and women in the different disciplines, taking care to show the profound structural connection between faith and reason, “the two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”<sup>1</sup>. It should not be forgotten that a true education ought to present a complete and transcendent vision of the human person and educate people’s consciences. I am aware of your efforts, in teaching the secular disciplines, to transmit to your students a Christian humanism and to present to them in their university curriculum the basic elements of philosophy, bioethics and theology; this will confirm their faith and inform their consciences.<sup>2</sup>

6. The Catholic university must exercise its mission by being careful to maintain its Christian identity and by taking part in the life of the local Church. While preserving its own scientific autonomy, it has the mission of living the teaching of the Magisterium in the various areas of research in which it is involved. The Apostolic Constitution *Ex corde Ecclesiae* stresses this twofold mission: a university is “an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of the cultural heritage, through research, teaching and various services offered” (n. 12). Since it is Catholic, it manifests its identity based on the Catholic faith by its fidelity to the teachings and orientations of the Church, ensuring “a Christian presence in the university world, confronting the great problems of society and culture” (n. 13). In fact, it is the responsibility of each teacher or researcher, and of the whole university community and of the institution itself, to live this obligation as a service to the Gospel, the Church, and the human person. As their area of concern, the authorities of the university have the duty to be sure of the rectitude and the upholding of Catholic principles in the teaching and

research going on in their institution. It is clear that university centres that do not observe the law of the Church and the teaching of the Magisterium, especially in the matter of bioethics, cannot be considered as having the character of a Catholic university. I therefore invite each person and each university to assess his/her way of living the fidelity to the characteristic principles of Catholic identity, and, as a consequence, to make the decisions that are required.

7. At the end of our meeting, I would like to express to you my confidence and my encouragement. The Catholic universities are of great value for the Church. They fulfil a mission in the service of the understanding of the faith and the development of understanding; they tirelessly create bridges between scientists in all the disciplines. They are called ever more to be places of dialogue with the whole of the university world, so that cultural formation and research may be at the service of the common good and of the human person, who cannot be considered a mere object of research.

As I entrust you to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, of St Thomas Aquinas and of all the Doctors of the Church, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to the persons and institutions you represent.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Fides et Ratio*, n. 1
2. [2] *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, n. 15

# ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN EUROPA***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*28 June 2003*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

An important part of any programme for the evangelization of culture is the service rendered by Catholic schools. There is a need to ensure the recognition of a genuine freedom of education and equal juridical standing between state schools and other schools. Catholic schools are sometimes the sole means by which the Christian tradition can be presented to those who are distant from it. I encourage the faithful involved in the field of primary and secondary education to persevere in their mission and to bring the light of Christ the Saviour to bear upon their specific educational, scientific and academic activities. (109) In particular, greater recognition is due to the contribution made by Christians who conduct research and teach in universities: in their “service to thought” they hand down to the next generation the values of an intellectual tradition enriched by two thousand years of humanistic and Christian experience. Convinced of the importance of academic institutions, I also ask the various local Churches to promote an adequate pastoral care of the university community, favouring whatever corresponds to present cultural needs. (110)

## **NOTES**

1. (109) Cf. *Propositiones* 25 and 26,2.
2. (110) Cf. *Propositio* 26,3.

## ***MESSAGE TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FORUM***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*31 March 2004*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

2. It is important in our age to rediscover the bond that unites the Church to the world of higher education. For the Church not only played a decisive role in founding the first universities, but throughout the centuries she has been a workshop of culture, and continues in the same direction today through the Catholic Universities and various forms of presence in the vast world of higher education. The Church sees the University as one of those "workplaces in which man's vocation to acquire knowledge, and the constituent bond of humanity with truth as the purpose of knowledge, become a daily reality" for so many professors, young researchers and generations of students.<sup>1</sup>

Dear students, in the University you are not only recipients of services, but you are the true protagonists of the activities performed there. It is no coincidence that the period spent in higher education is a vital stage in your existence, in which you prepare yourselves to take on the responsibility for decisive choices that will direct the whole of your future life. It is for this reason that you must approach higher education with a searching spirit, to seek the right answers to the essential questions about the meaning of life, happiness and complete self-fulfilment, and beauty as the splendour of truth.

Fortunately, the influence of ideologies and Utopias fomented by the messianic atheism that had such an impact in the past on many University environments has waned considerably today. But there are also new schools of thought, which reduce reason to the horizon of experimental science alone, and hence to technical and instrumental knowledge, sometimes enclosing it within a skeptical and nihilistic vision. These attempts to evade the issue of the deepest meaning of existence are not only futile; they can also become dangerous.

3. Through the gift of faith we have met the One who introduces himself with these surprising words: "I am the truth" (Jn 14,6). Jesus is the truth of the universe and of history, the meaning and the destiny of human existence, the foundation of all reality! It is your responsibility, you who have welcomed this Truth as the vocation and certitude of your lives, to demonstrate its reasonableness in the University environment and in your work there. The question that then arises is: how deeply does the truth of Christ affect your studies, research, knowledge of reality, and

the comprehensive education of the human person? It may happen that, even among those who profess to be Christians, some will behave in the University as if God did not exist. Christianity is not a mere subjective religious preference, which is ultimately irrational, and relegated to the private sphere. As Christians we are duty-bound to bear witness to what the Second Vatican Council affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes*: "For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God's design for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human" (no.11). We must demonstrate that faith and reason are not irreconcilable, but that, "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth".<sup>2</sup>

4. My young friends! You are the disciples and the witnesses of Christ in the University. May your University days be for all of you a period of great spiritual and intellectual maturity, which will lead you to deepen your personal relationship with Christ. But if your faith is linked merely to fragments of tradition, fine sentiments or a generic religious ideology, you will certainly not be able to withstand the impact of the environment you are in. You must therefore seek to keep your Christian identity steadfast, and rooted in the communion of the Church. To do this, you must be nurtured by persevering in prayer. Whenever possible, seek out sound University professors and lecturers. Do not remain isolated in what are often difficult environments, but play an active part in the life of Church associations, movements and communities operating in the university environment. Draw close to the University parishes, and allow the chaplaincies to help you. You must build the Church within your Universities, as a visible community which believes, prays, gives account for our hope, and lovingly welcomes every trace of good, truth and beauty in University life. All this has to be done wherever students live and meet, and not only on the campus. I am certain that the Pastors will not fail to devote particular care to ministering to the University environments, and will appoint holy and competent priests to perform this mission.

5. Dear participants at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Youth Forum, I am happy to know you will be present in St Peter's Square next Thursday, to meet the young people from the Rome diocese, and later for the Palm Sunday Mass, when we shall be celebrating together the 19<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day on the theme "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12, 21). It will mark the final stage in the spiritual preparation for the great gathering in Cologne in 2005. It is not enough to "speak" about Jesus to young undergraduates: we must also "show" Jesus to them, through the eloquent witness of our lives.<sup>3</sup> My wish for you is that this Rome meeting will help to strengthen your love for the universal Church and your commitment to serving the University world. I am depending on each and every one of you to hand on to your local Churches and your ecclesial groups the richness of gifts that you are receiving in these intense days here.

Invoking the Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, to protect you on your path, I impart a special heartfelt Apostolic Blessing on you and on all those - fellow students, rectors, professors, lecturers, chaplains and administrative staff - who, with you, make up the great "University community".

#### NOTES

1. [1] Address to UNESCO, 1980
2. [2] *Fides et ratio*. Intr.
3. [3] *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 16

## ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SYMPOSIUM ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION***

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*3 July 2004*

Monsignor,  
Dear Friends,

1. I cordially greet the teachers, educators and parents here representing universities and pedagogical associations, as well as those in charge of the pastoral apostolate in schools and universities that the Episcopal Conferences of Europe provide. I thank Bishop Cesare Nosiglia, President of the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education, Schools and Universities of the Italian Bishops' Conference, for his words and his dedication in organizing the Symposium entitled: *The challenges of education*.

2. I am delighted with your attention to educational issues that are particularly important in Europe today, when many young people are in a state of confusion. In their educational policies, States are struggling to find new approaches for dealing with the problems of adolescents in their personal lives or in their social milieu. Financial needs often induce people to give priority to academic learning, to the detriment of the integral education of the young. To give youth a future, it is important that education be understood as a search for the integral and harmonious development of the person, as the maturation of the moral conscience to discern good and act accordingly, and as attention to the spiritual dimension of young people as they develop. The European Continent has been enriched by a humanist tradition that has communicated down the centuries spiritual and moral values whose fundamental reference and full meaning are found in its Christian roots.

3. Wherever students live, education must help them each day to grow into more and more mature men and women, and "to be" better rather than "to have" more. Scholastic formation is one aspect of education, but not the only one. The essential connection between all the dimensions of education must be constantly reinforced. A coordinated educational process will lead to ever greater unity in the personality and life of adolescents.

It is right to mobilize everyone and to join forces to work for young people: parents, teachers, educators, chaplaincy teams. They should all also remember that what they teach must be supported by their own witness and example. In fact, young people are sensitive to the witness of adults who are their models. The family continues to be the essential place for education.

4. The lack of hope in the youth of today is blatant; yet it conceals within it a whole range of aspirations, as I have come to understand especially during the World Youth Days. In my Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, I noted that "at the root of the loss of hope is an attempt to promote a vision of man apart from God and apart from Christ", making man occupy the place of God. "Forgetfulness of God led to the abandonment of man" (n. 9). True education must start from the truth about man, the affirmation of his dignity and transcendent vocation. Looking at every young person in this anthropological perspective means seeking to help him develop the best of himself so that in exercising all his skills he may carry out whatever God calls him to do.

5. The Christian community also plays a role in the educational process. It is responsible for passing on the Christian values and making known Christ as a person who calls each one to a more and more beautiful life and to the discovery of the salvation and happiness that he offers us. May Christians never shrink from proclaiming to the new generations Christ, the source of hope and light on their journey! May they also be able to welcome teenagers and their families, to listen to them and help them, even if this may often be very demanding! It is the business of all Christian communities and of society as a whole to educate the young. It is up to us to present the essential values to them, so that they themselves may be responsible for them and do their share in building up society. I hope that your Symposium will give new dynamism to the educational process in the various European countries, and as I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ECCLESIAL CONVENTION***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*19 October 2006*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

## **Education**

Basically, in order for the experience of Christian faith and love to be welcomed and lived and transmitted from one generation to the next, there is the fundamental and decisive question of the education of the person. The formation of his mind must be a concern, without neglecting his freedom and capacity to love. This is why recourse to the help of Grace is necessary.

Only in this way can that risk for the fate of the human family be effectively opposed, which is represented by the imbalance between the very rapid growth of our technological power and the more laborious growth of our moral resources.

A true education must awaken the courage to make definitive decisions, which today are considered a mortifying bind to our freedom. In reality, they are indispensable for growth and in order to achieve something great in life, in particular, to cause love to mature in all its beauty: therefore, to give consistency and meaning to freedom itself.

From this solicitude for the human person and his formation comes our "no" to weak and deviant forms of love and to the counterfeiting of freedom, seen also in the reduction of reason to only what is calculable or manipulatable. In truth, these "nos" are rather "yeses" to authentic love, to the reality of man as he has been created by God.

I want to express here my wholehearted appreciation for the great formative and educative work that the single Churches never tire of carrying out in Italy by their pastoral attention to the new generations and to families; thank you for this attention!

Among the multiple forms of this commitment, I cannot but think of Catholic schools in particular, because in their regard there still exists, in some measure, antiquated prejudices which cause damaging delays, and are no longer justifiable, in recognizing their function and in permitting their concrete work.

# ***MESSAGE FOR THE 41<sup>ST</sup> WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY ON "CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA: A CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION"***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

***20 May 2007***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. The theme of the Forty-first World Communications Day, “Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education”, invites us to reflect on two related topics of immense importance. The formation of children is one. The other, perhaps less obvious but no less important, is the formation of the media.

The complex challenges facing education today are often linked to the pervasive influence of the media in our world. As an aspect of the phenomenon of globalization, and facilitated by the rapid development of technology, the media profoundly shape the cultural environment.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, some claim that the formative influence of the media rivals that of the school, the Church, and maybe even the home. “Reality, for many, is what the media recognize as real”<sup>2</sup>.

2. The relationship of children, media, and education can be considered from two perspectives: the formation of children by the media; and the formation of children to respond appropriately to the media. A kind of reciprocity emerges which points to the responsibilities of the media as an industry and to the need for active and critical participation of readers, viewers and listeners. Within this framework, training in the proper use of the media is essential for the cultural, moral and spiritual development of children.

How is this common good to be protected and promoted? Educating children to be discriminating in their use of the media is a responsibility of parents, Church, and school. The role of parents is of primary importance. They have a right and duty to ensure the prudent use of the media by training the conscience of their children to express sound and objective judgments which will then guide them in choosing or rejecting programmes available.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, parents should have the encouragement and assistance of schools and parishes in ensuring that this difficult, though satisfying, aspect of parenting is supported by the wider community.

Media education should be positive. Children exposed to what is aesthetically and morally excellent are helped to develop appreciation, prudence and the skills of discernment. Here it is important to recognize the fundamental value of parents’ example and the benefits of introducing

young people to children's classics in literature, to the fine arts and to uplifting music. While popular literature will always have its place in culture, the temptation to sensationalize should not be passively accepted in places of learning. Beauty, a kind of mirror of the divine, inspires and vivifies young hearts and minds, while ugliness and coarseness have a depressing impact on attitudes and behaviour.

Like education in general, media education requires formation in the exercise of freedom. This is a demanding task. So often freedom is presented as a relentless search for pleasure or new experiences. Yet this is a condemnation not a liberation! True freedom could never condemn the individual – especially a child – to an insatiable quest for novelty. In the light of truth, authentic freedom is experienced as a definitive response to God's 'yes' to humanity, calling us to choose, not indiscriminately but deliberately, all that is good, true and beautiful. Parents, then, as the guardians of that freedom, while gradually giving their children greater freedom, introduce them to the profound joy of life.<sup>4</sup>

3. This heartfelt wish of parents and teachers to educate children in the ways of beauty, truth and goodness can be supported by the media industry only to the extent that it promotes fundamental human dignity, the true value of marriage and family life, and the positive achievements and goals of humanity. Thus, the need for the media to be committed to effective formation and ethical standards is viewed with particular interest and even urgency not only by parents and teachers but by all who have a sense of civic responsibility.

While affirming the belief that many people involved in social communications want to do what is right,<sup>5</sup> we must also recognize that those who work in this field confront "special psychological pressures and ethical dilemmas"<sup>6</sup> which at times see commercial competitiveness compelling communicators to lower standards. Any trend to produce programmes and products - including animated films and video games - which in the name of entertainment exalt violence and portray anti-social behaviour or the trivialization of human sexuality is a perversion, all the more repulsive when these programmes are directed at children and adolescents. How could one explain this 'entertainment' to the countless innocent young people who actually suffer violence, exploitation and abuse? In this regard, all would do well to reflect on the contrast between Christ who "put his arms around [the children] laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing" (Mk 10:16) and the one who "leads astray ... these little ones" for whom "it would be better ... if a millstone were hung round his neck" (Lk 17:2). Again I appeal to the leaders of the media industry to educate and encourage producers to safeguard the common good, to uphold the truth, to protect individual human dignity and promote respect for the needs of the family.

4. The Church herself, in the light of the message of salvation entrusted to her, is also a teacher of humanity and welcomes the opportunity to offer

assistance to parents, educators, communicators, and young people. Her own parish and school programmes should be in the forefront of media education today. Above all, the Church desires to share a vision of human dignity that is central to all worthy human communication. “Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave”.<sup>7</sup>

#### NOTES

1. [1] Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *The Rapid Development*, 3
2. [2] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Aetatis Novae*, 4
3. [3] Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 76
4. [4] *Address to the Fifth World Meeting of Families*, Valencia, 8 July 2006
5. [5] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Communications*, 4
6. [6] *Aetatis Novae*, 19
7. [7] *Deus Caritas Est*, 18

## ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EUROPEAN MEETING OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*23 June 2007*

Your Eminence,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends!

I am particularly pleased to receive you during the first European Meeting of University Lecturers, sponsored by the Council of European Episcopal Conferences and organized by teachers from the Roman universities, coordinated by the Vicariate of Rome's Office for the Pastoral Care of Universities. It is taking place on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which gave rise to the present European Union, and its participants include university lecturers from every country on the continent, including those of the Caucasus: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. I thank Cardinal Péter Erdő, President of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences, for his kind words of introduction. I greet the representatives of the Italian government, particularly those from the Ministry for Universities and Research, and from the Ministry for Italy's Cultural Heritage, as well as the representatives of the Region of Lazio and the Province and City of Rome. My greeting also goes to the other civil and religious authorities, the Rectors and the teachers of the various universities, as well as the chaplains and students present.

The theme of your meeting – "*A New Humanism for Europe. The Role of the Universities*" – invites a disciplined assessment of contemporary culture on the continent. Europe is presently experiencing a certain social instability and diffidence in the face of traditional values, yet her distinguished history and her established academic institutions have much to contribute to shaping a future of hope. The "question of man", which is central to your discussions, is essential for a correct understanding of current cultural processes. It also provides a solid point of departure for the effort of universities to create a new cultural presence and activity in the service of a more united Europe. Promoting a new humanism, in fact, requires a clear understanding of what this "newness" actually embodies. Far from being the fruit of a superficial desire for novelty, the quest for a new humanism must take serious account of the fact that Europe today is experiencing a massive cultural shift, one in which men and women are increasingly conscious of their call to be actively engaged in shaping their own history. Historically, it was in Europe that humanism developed, thanks to the fruitful interplay between the various cultures of her peoples and the Christian faith. Europe today needs to preserve and reappropriate

her authentic tradition if she is to remain faithful to her vocation as the cradle of humanism.

The present cultural shift is often seen as a "challenge" to the culture of the university and Christianity itself, rather than as a "horizon" against which creative solutions can and must be found. As men and women of higher education, you are called to take part in this demanding task, which calls for sustained reflection on a number of foundational issues.

Among these, I would mention in the first place the need for a comprehensive study of the crisis of modernity. European culture in recent centuries has been powerfully conditioned by the notion of modernity. The present crisis, however, has less to do with modernity's insistence on the centrality of man and his concerns, than with the problems raised by a "humanism" that claims to build a *regnum hominis* detached from its necessary ontological foundation. A false dichotomy between theism and authentic humanism, taken to the extreme of positing an irreconcilable conflict between divine law and human freedom, has led to a situation in which humanity, for all its economic and technical advances, feels deeply threatened. As my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, stated, we need to ask "whether in the context of all this progress, man, as man, is becoming truly better, that is to say, more mature spiritually, more aware of the dignity of his humanity, more responsible and more open to others".<sup>1</sup> The anthropocentrism which characterizes modernity can never be detached from an acknowledgment of the full truth about man, which includes his transcendent vocation.

A second issue involves the broadening of our understanding of rationality. A correct understanding of the challenges posed by contemporary culture, and the formulation of meaningful responses to those challenges, must take a critical approach towards narrow and ultimately irrational attempts to limit the scope of reason. The concept of reason needs instead to be "broadened" in order to be able to explore and embrace those aspects of reality which go beyond the purely empirical. This will allow for a more fruitful, complementary approach to the relationship between faith and reason. The rise of the European universities was fostered by the conviction that faith and reason are meant to cooperate in the search for truth, each respecting the nature and legitimate autonomy of the other, yet working together harmoniously and creatively to serve the fulfilment of the human person in truth and love.

A third issue needing to be investigated concerns the nature of the contribution which Christianity can make to the humanism of the future. The question of man, and thus of modernity, challenges the Church to devise effective ways of proclaiming to contemporary culture the "realism" of her faith in the saving work of Christ. Christianity must not be relegated to the world of myth and emotion, but respected for its claim to shed light on the truth about man, to be able to transform men and women

spiritually, and thus to enable them to carry out their vocation in history. In my recent visit to Brazil, I voiced my conviction that "unless we do know God in and with Christ, all of reality becomes an indecipherable enigma"<sup>2</sup>. Knowledge can never be limited to the purely intellectual realm; it also includes a renewed ability to look at things in a way free of prejudices and preconceptions, and to allow ourselves to be "amazed" by reality, whose truth can be discovered by uniting understanding with love. Only the God who has a human face, revealed in Jesus Christ, can prevent us from truncating reality at the very moment when it demands ever new and more complex levels of understanding. The Church is conscious of her responsibility to offer this contribution to contemporary culture.

In Europe, as elsewhere, society urgently needs the service to wisdom which the university community provides. This service extends also to the practical aspects of directing research and activity to the promotion of human dignity and to the daunting task of building the civilization of love. University professors, in particular, are called to embody the virtue of intellectual charity, recovering their primordial vocation to train future generations not only by imparting knowledge but by the prophetic witness of their own lives. The university, for its part, must never lose sight of its particular calling to be an "*universitas*" in which the various disciplines, each in its own way, are seen as part of a greater *unum*. How urgent is the need to rediscover the unity of knowledge and to counter the tendency to fragmentation and lack of communicability that is all too often the case in our schools! The effort to reconcile the drive to specialization with the need to preserve the unity of knowledge can encourage the growth of European unity and help the continent to rediscover its specific cultural "vocation" in today's world. Only a Europe conscious of its own cultural identity can make a specific contribution to other cultures, while remaining open to the contribution of other peoples.

Dear friends, it is my hope that universities will increasingly become communities committed to the tireless pursuit of truth, "laboratories of culture" where teachers and students join in exploring issues of particular importance for society, employing interdisciplinary methods and counting on the collaboration of theologians. This can easily be done in Europe, given the presence of so many prestigious Catholic institutions and faculties of theology. I am convinced that greater cooperation and new forms of fellowship between the various academic communities will enable Catholic universities to bear witness to the historical fruitfulness of the encounter between faith and reason. The result will be a concrete contribution to the attainment of the goals of the Bologna Process, and an incentive for developing a suitable university apostolate in the local Churches. Effective support for these efforts, which have been increasingly a concern of the European Episcopal Conferences,<sup>3</sup> can come from those ecclesial associations and movements already engaged in the university apostolate.

Dear friends, may your deliberations during these days prove fruitful and help to build an active network of university instructors committed to bringing the light of the Gospel to contemporary culture. I assure you and your families of a special remembrance in my prayers, and I invoke upon you, and the universities in which you work, the maternal protection of Mary, Seat of Wisdom. To each of you I affectionately impart my Apostolic Blessing.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Redemptor Hominis*, 15
2. [2] *Address to Bishops of CELAM*, 3
3. [3] *Ecclesia in Europa*, 58-59

## ***ADDRESS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTER ON THE URGENT TASK OF EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*23 February 2008*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am grateful that so many of you have accepted the invitation to this Special Audience at which you will receive from my hands the Letter I have addressed to the Diocese and City of Rome on the urgent task of education. I greet with affection each one of you: priests, men and women religious, parents, teachers, catechists and other educators, children, adolescents and young people, including those who are watching this Audience on television. I greet and thank in particular the Cardinal Vicar and everyone who has spoken, representing the various categories of people taking up this great educational challenge.

We are gathered here, in fact, because we are motivated by our common solicitude for the good of the generations to come and for the growth and future of the children the Lord has given to this city. We are also motivated by a worry: the perception of what we have called “a great educational emergency”. Educating has never been an easy undertaking and seems to be becoming increasingly difficult today; thus, many parents and teachers are tempted to give up their task and do not even succeed in understanding what the mission entrusted to them truly is. Indeed, too many uncertainties, too many doubts are circulating in our society and our culture, too many distorted images are transmitted by the media. It thus becomes difficult to propose to the new generations something valid and reliable, rules of conduct and worthwhile objectives to which to devote one’s life. We are here today, however, also and above all because we feel sustained by a great hope and strong trust: by the certainty, that is, that the clear and definitive “yes” which God in Jesus Christ has said to the human family (cf. II Cor 1: 19-20), is also valid for our boys and girls and young people, valid for our babies who today are at the beginning of life. Therefore, it is also possible to teach goodness in our time; it is a passion we must carry in our hearts, a common enterprise to which each one is called to make his own contribution.

Indeed, we are here today because we wish to respond to that educational question felt by parents who worry about their children’s future, teachers who are living the school crisis from within, priests and catechists who know from experience how difficult it is to teach the faith, and the children, adolescents and young people themselves who do not want to be left on their own to face life’s challenges. This is why I wrote this Letter to you,

dear brothers and sisters, which I am about to present to you. In it you will find some simple and practical guidelines concerning fundamental and common aspects of the task of education. Today, I address each one of you in order to offer you my affectionate encouragement to take on joyfully the responsibilities the Lord entrusts to you, so that the great heritage of faith and culture which is the truest treasure of this beloved city of ours may not be lost in passing from one generation to the next, but on the contrary, be renewed and invigorated and serve as a guide and incentive on our journey towards the future.

In this spirit I address you, dear parents, to ask you first of all to remain firm for ever in your reciprocal love: this is the first great gift your children need if they are to grow up serene, acquire self-confidence and thus learn to be capable in turn of authentic and generous love. Further, your love for your children must endow you with the style and courage of a true educator, with a consistent witness of life and the necessary firmness to temper the character of the new generations, helping them to distinguish clearly between good and evil so they in turn can form solid rules of life that will sustain them in future trials. Thus, you will enrich your children with the most valuable and lasting inheritance that consists in the example of a faith lived daily.

In the same way, I ask you, teachers at different kinds of schools, to have a lofty and great conception of your demanding work despite the difficulties, misunderstandings and disappointments that you meet with all too often. In fact, teaching means satisfying that desire to know and understand that is inherent in man and which in the child, adolescent and young person is expressed in its full force and spontaneity. Your task, therefore, cannot be limited to providing notions and information, leaving aside the important question concerning truth, above all that truth which can serve as one's guide in life. Indeed, you are properly qualified educators: the noble art of forming the person is entrusted to you, in close sympathy with parents. In particular, those who teach in Catholic schools bear within them and express in daily action that educational project centred on the Lord Jesus and his Gospel.

And you, dear priests and Religious, catechists, leaders and teachers in parishes, youth groups, ecclesial associations and movements, prayer and recreation centres, sports and leisure activities: always seek to feel for the children and young people around you the same sentiments that were in Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 2: 5). Be trustworthy friends, therefore, in whom they may tangibly feel Jesus' friendship for them, and at the same time be sincere and courageous witnesses of that truth which sets us free (cf. Jn 8: 32) and points out to the new generations the path that leads to life.

Education, however, is not only the work of educators: it is a relationship between people in which, as they grow older, the freedom and responsibility of those who are educated comes increasingly into play. I therefore turn

with deep affection to you, children, adolescents and young people, to remind you that you yourselves are called to be the architects of your own moral, cultural and spiritual growth. It is up to you, therefore, to freely accept in your hearts, your minds and your lives, the patrimony of truth, goodness and beauty which has taken shape in the course of centuries and whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ. It is up to you to renew this patrimony and develop it further, liberating it from the many falsehoods and ugly things that often make it unrecognizable and give rise to diffidence and disappointment in you. In any case, know that you are never alone on this difficult journey: close to you are not only your parents, teachers, priests, friends and formation teachers, but above all the God who created us and is the secret guest of our hearts. It is he who illumines our intelligence from within and directs to goodness our freedom that we often feel is frail and unsteady; he is the true hope and the solid foundation of our lives. In him, first and foremost, can we trust.

Dear brothers and sisters, as I symbolically present to you the Letter on The Urgent Task of Education, let us together entrust ourselves to the One who is our true and only Teacher (cf. Mt 23: 8), to work with him, with trust and joy, in that marvellous undertaking which is people's formation and authentic growth. With these sentiments and hopes, I impart my Blessing to you all.

## ***ENCYCLICAL LETTER CARITAS IN VERITATE***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

***29 June 2009***

***(Selected Exerpts)***

11. The publication of *Populorum Progressio* occurred immediately after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and in its opening paragraphs it clearly indicates its close connection with the Council[14]. Twenty years later, in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II, in his turn, emphasized the earlier Encyclical's fruitful relationship with the Council, and especially with the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*[15]. I too wish to recall here the importance of the Second Vatican Council for Paul VI's Encyclical and for the whole of the subsequent social Magisterium of the Popes. The Council probed more deeply what had always belonged to the truth of the faith, namely that the Church, being at God's service, is at the service of the world in terms of love and truth. Paul VI set out from this vision in order to convey two important truths. The first is that the whole Church, in all her being and acting — when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity — is engaged in promoting integral human development. She has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities: all the energy she brings to the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity is manifested when she is able to operate in a climate of freedom. In not a few cases, that freedom is impeded by prohibitions and persecutions, or it is limited when the Church's public presence is reduced to her charitable activities alone. The second truth is that authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension[16]. Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing-space. Enclosed within history, it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity thus loses the courage to be at the service of higher goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity. Man does not develop through his own powers, nor can development simply be handed to him. In the course of history, it was often maintained that the creation of institutions was sufficient to guarantee the fulfilment of humanity's right to development. Unfortunately, too much confidence was placed in those institutions, as if they were able to deliver the desired objective automatically. In reality, institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. Moreover, such development requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God: without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of

thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development. Only through an encounter with God are we able to see in the other something more than just another creature[17], to recognize the divine image in the other, thus truly coming to discover him or her and to mature in a love that “becomes concern and care for the other.”[18]

[...]

61. Greater solidarity at the international level is seen especially in the ongoing promotion — even in the midst of economic crisis — of greater access to education, which is at the same time an essential precondition for effective international cooperation. The term “education” refers not only to classroom teaching and vocational training — both of which are important factors in development — but to the complete formation of the person. In this regard, there is a problem that should be highlighted: in order to educate, it is necessary to know the nature of the human person, to know who he or she is. The increasing prominence of a relativistic understanding of that nature presents serious problems for education, especially moral education, jeopardizing its universal extension. Yielding to this kind of relativism makes everyone poorer and has a negative impact on the effectiveness of aid to the most needy populations, who lack not only economic and technical means, but also educational methods and resources to assist people in realizing their full human potential.

#### NOTES

1. [14] Cf. nos. 3-5: *loc. cit.*, 258-260.
2. [15] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 6-7: AAS 80 (1988), 517-519.
3. [16] Cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Populorum Progressio*, 14: *loc. cit.*, 264.
4. [17] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005), 18: AAS 98 (2006), 232.
5. [18] *Ibid.*, 6: *loc cit.*, 222.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY DURING THE APOSTOLIC VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

***27 September 2009***

Mr President,  
Distinguished Rectors and Professors,  
Dear Students and Friends,

Our meeting this evening gives me a welcome opportunity to express my esteem for the indispensable role in society of universities and institutions of higher learning. I thank the student who has kindly greeted me in your name, the members of the university choir for their fine performance, and the distinguished Rector of Charles University, Professor Václav Hampl, for his thoughtful presentation. The service of academia, upholding and contributing to the cultural and spiritual values of society, enriches the nation's intellectual patrimony and strengthens the foundations of its future development. The great changes which swept Czech society twenty years ago were precipitated not least by movements of reform which originated in university and student circles. That quest for freedom has continued to guide the work of scholars whose *diakonia* of truth is indispensable to any nation's well-being.

I address you as one who has been a professor, solicitous of the right to academic freedom and the responsibility for the authentic use of reason, and is now the Pope who, in his role as Shepherd, is recognized as a voice for the ethical reasoning of humanity. While some argue that the questions raised by religion, faith and ethics have no place within the purview of collective reason, that view is by no means axiomatic. The freedom that underlies the exercise of reason – be it in a university or in the Church – has a purpose: it is directed to the pursuit of truth, and as such gives expression to a tenet of Christianity which in fact gave rise to the university. Indeed, man's thirst for knowledge prompts every generation to broaden the concept of reason and to drink at the wellsprings of faith. It was precisely the rich heritage of classical wisdom, assimilated and placed at the service of the Gospel, which the first Christian missionaries brought to these lands and established as the basis of a spiritual and cultural unity which endures to this day. The same spirit led my predecessor Pope Clement VI to establish the famed Charles University in 1347, which continues to make an important contribution to wider European academic, religious and cultural circles.

The proper autonomy of a university, or indeed any educational institution, finds meaning in its accountability to the authority of truth.

Nevertheless, that autonomy can be thwarted in a variety of ways. The great formative tradition, open to the transcendent, which stands at the base of universities across Europe, was in this land, and others, systematically subverted by the reductive ideology of materialism, the repression of religion and the suppression of the human spirit. In 1989, however, the world witnessed in dramatic ways the overthrow of a failed totalitarian ideology and the triumph of the human spirit. The yearning for freedom and truth is inalienably part of our common humanity. It can never be eliminated; and, as history has shown, it is denied at humanity's own peril. It is to this yearning that religious faith, the various arts, philosophy, theology and other scientific disciplines, each with its own method, seek to respond, both on the level of disciplined reflection and on the level of a sound praxis.

Distinguished Rectors and Professors, together with your research there is a further essential aspect of the mission of the university in which you are engaged, namely the responsibility for enlightening the minds and hearts of the young men and women of today. This grave duty is of course not new. From the time of Plato, education has been not merely the accumulation of knowledge or skills, but *paideia*, human formation in the treasures of an intellectual tradition directed to a virtuous life. While the great universities springing up throughout Europe during the middle ages aimed with confidence at the ideal of a synthesis of all knowledge, it was always in the service of an authentic *humanitas*, the perfection of the individual within the unity of a well-ordered society. And likewise today: once young people's understanding of the fullness and unity of truth has been awakened, they relish the discovery that the question of what they can know opens up the vast adventure of how they ought to be and what they ought to do.

The idea of an integrated education, based on the unity of knowledge grounded in truth, must be regained. It serves to counteract the tendency, so evident in contemporary society, towards a fragmentation of knowledge. With the massive growth in information and technology there comes the temptation to detach reason from the pursuit of truth. Sundered from the fundamental human orientation towards truth, however, reason begins to lose direction: it withers, either under the guise of modesty, resting content with the merely partial or provisional, or under the guise of certainty, insisting on capitulation to the demands of those who indiscriminately give equal value to practically everything. The relativism that ensues provides a dense camouflage behind which new threats to the autonomy of academic institutions can lurk. While the period of interference from political totalitarianism has passed, is it not the case that frequently, across the globe, the exercise of reason and academic research are – subtly and not so subtly – constrained to bow to the pressures of ideological interest groups and the lure of short-term utilitarian or pragmatic goals? What will happen if our culture builds itself only on fashionable arguments, with little

reference to a genuine historical intellectual tradition, or on the viewpoints that are most vociferously promoted and most heavily funded? What will happen if in its anxiety to preserve a radical secularism, it detaches itself from its life-giving roots? Our societies will not become more reasonable or tolerant or adaptable but rather more brittle and less inclusive, and they will increasingly struggle to recognize what is true, noble and good.

Dear friends, I wish to encourage you in all that you do to meet the idealism and generosity of young people today not only with programmes of study which assist them to excel, but also by an experience of shared ideals and mutual support in the great enterprise of learning. The skills of analysis and those required to generate a hypothesis, combined with the prudent art of discernment, offer an effective antidote to the attitudes of self-absorption, disengagement and even alienation which are sometimes found in our prosperous societies, and which can particularly affect the young. In this context of an eminently humanistic vision of the mission of the university, I would like briefly to mention the mending of the breach between science and religion which was a central concern of my predecessor, Pope John Paul II. He, as you know, promoted a fuller understanding of the relationship between faith and reason as the two wings by which the human spirit is lifted to the contemplation of truth<sup>1</sup>. Each supports the other and each has its own scope of action<sup>2</sup>, yet still there are those who would detach one from the other. Not only do the proponents of this positivistic exclusion of the divine from the universality of reason negate what is one of the most profound convictions of religious believers, they also thwart the very dialogue of cultures which they themselves propose. An understanding of reason that is deaf to the divine and which relegates religions into the realm of subcultures, is incapable of entering into the dialogue of cultures that our world so urgently needs. In the end, "fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom"<sup>3</sup>. This confidence in the human ability to seek truth, to find truth and to live by the truth led to the foundation of the great European universities. Surely we must reaffirm this today in order to bring courage to the intellectual forces necessary for the development of a future of authentic human flourishing, a future truly worthy of man.

With these reflections, dear friends, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for your demanding work. I pray that it will always be inspired and directed by a human wisdom which genuinely seeks the truth which sets us free (cf. Jn 8:28). Upon you and your families I invoke God's blessings of joy and peace.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Fides et Ratio*, Proemium
2. [2] *Ibid.*, 17
3. [3] *Caritas in Veritate*, 9

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*8 February 2010*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

Your Plenary Assembly has “The Rights of the Child” as its theme. This was chosen with reference to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. Following Christ’s example, the Church down the centuries has encouraged the protection of the dignity and rights of minors and has taken care of them in many ways. Unfortunately in various cases some of her members, acting in opposition to this commitment, have violated these rights: conduct which she does not and will not fail to deplore and condemn. The tenderness and teaching of Jesus, who saw children as a model to imitate in order to enter the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 18: 1-6; 19: 13-14), have always constituted a pressing appeal to foster deep respect and care for them. Jesus’ harsh words against those who cause one of these little ones to sin (cf. Mk 9: 42), engage everyone always to adhere to this degree of respect and love. Thus the Convention on the Rights of the Child was accepted favourably by the Holy See since it contains positive statements on adoption, health care, education, the protection of the disabled and the defence of little ones against violence, neglect and sexual or labour exploitation.

In its Preamble the Convention describes the family “as a natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of all its members and of children in particular”. Indeed, it is precisely the family founded on the marriage between a man and a woman that can give children the greatest help. They want to be loved by a mother and a father who love each other, and they need to live and grow together with both their parents, because the maternal and paternal figures are complementary in the raising of children and the development of their personality and identity. It is therefore important that everything possible be done to enable them to grow up in a united and stable family. To this end, it is necessary to urge spouses never to lose sight of the profound reasons and sacramentality of the conjugal covenant and to strengthen it by listening to the word of God and by prayer, constant dialogue, reciprocal acceptance and mutual forgiveness. A family environment that is not serene, the separation of the parental couple, particularly with divorce, is not without consequences on the children. On the other hand, supporting the family and promoting its true good, its rights, its unity and its stability is the best way to protect the rights and authentic needs of minors.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CELEBRATION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION DURING THE APOSTOLIC VISIT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM: ADDRESS TO THE TEACHERS AND RELIGIOUS***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*17 September 2010*

Your Excellency the Secretary of State for Education,  
Bishop Stack, Dr Naylor,  
Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution made by religious men and women in this land to the noble task of education. I thank the young people for their fine singing, and I thank Sister Teresa for her words. To her and to all the dedicated men and women who devote their lives to teaching the young, I want to express sentiments of deep appreciation. You form new generations not only in knowledge of the faith, but in every aspect of what it means to live as mature and responsible citizens in today's world.

As you know, the task of a teacher is not simply to impart information or to provide training in skills intended to deliver some economic benefit to society; education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for “both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts” (Wis 7:16).

This transcendent dimension of study and teaching was clearly grasped by the monks who contributed so much to the evangelization of these islands. I am thinking of the Benedictines who accompanied Saint Augustine on his mission to England, of the disciples of Saint Columba who spread the faith across Scotland and Northern England, of Saint David and his companions in Wales. Since the search for God, which lies at the heart of the monastic vocation, requires active engagement with the means by which he makes himself known – his creation and his revealed word – it was only natural that the monastery should have a library and a school.<sup>1</sup> It was the monks' dedication to learning as the path on which to encounter the Incarnate Word of God that was to lay the foundations of our Western culture and civilization.

Looking around me today, I see many apostolic religious whose charism includes the education of the young. This gives me an opportunity to give thanks to God for the life and work of the Venerable Mary Ward, a native of this land whose pioneering vision of apostolic religious life for

women has borne so much fruit. I myself as a young boy was taught by the “English Ladies” and I owe them a deep debt of gratitude. Many of you belong to teaching orders that have carried the light of the Gospel to far-off lands as part of the Church’s great missionary work, and for this too I give thanks and praise to God. Often you laid the foundations of educational provision long before the State assumed a responsibility for this vital service to the individual and to society. As the relative roles of Church and State in the field of education continue to evolve, never forget that religious have a unique contribution to offer to this apostolate, above all through lives consecrated to God and through faithful, loving witness to Christ, the supreme Teacher.

Indeed, the presence of religious in Catholic schools is a powerful reminder of the much-discussed Catholic ethos that needs to inform every aspect of school life. This extends far beyond the self-evident requirement that the content of the teaching should always be in conformity with Church doctrine. It means that the life of faith needs to be the driving force behind every activity in the school, so that the Church’s mission may be served effectively, and the young people may discover the joy of entering into Christ’s “being for others”<sup>2</sup>.

Before I conclude, I wish to add a particular word of appreciation for those whose task it is to ensure that our schools provide a safe environment for children and young people. Our responsibility towards those entrusted to us for their Christian formation demands nothing less. Indeed, the life of faith can only be effectively nurtured when the prevailing atmosphere is one of respectful and affectionate trust. I pray that this may continue to be a hallmark of the Catholic schools in this country.

With these sentiments, dear Brothers and Sisters, I invite you now to stand and pray.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Address to representatives from the world of culture at the “Collège des Bernardins”* in Paris, 12 September 2008

2. [2] *Spe Salvi*, 28

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CELEBRATION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION DURING THE APOSTOLIC VISIT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM: ADDRESS TO PUPILS***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*17 September 2010*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
Dear Young Friends,

First of all, I want to say how glad I am to be here with you today. I greet you most warmly, those who have come to Saint Mary's University from Catholic schools and colleges across the United Kingdom, and all who are watching on television and via the internet. I thank Bishop McMahon for his gracious welcome, I thank the choir and the band for the lovely music which began our celebration, and I thank Miss Bellot and Elaine for her kind words on behalf of all the young people present. In view of London's forthcoming Olympic Games, it has been a pleasure to inaugurate this Sports Foundation, named in honour of Pope John Paul II, and I pray that all who come here will give glory to God through their sporting activities, as well as bringing enjoyment to themselves and to others.

It is not often that a Pope, or indeed anyone else, has the opportunity to speak to the students of all the Catholic schools of England, Wales and Scotland at the same time. And since I have the chance now, there is something I very much want to say to you. I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.

Perhaps some of you have never thought about this before. Perhaps some of you think being a saint is not for you. Let me explain what I mean. When we are young, we can usually think of people that we look up to, people we admire, people we want to be like. It could be someone we meet in our daily lives that we hold in great esteem. Or it could be someone famous. We live in a celebrity culture, and young people are often encouraged to model themselves on figures from the world of sport or entertainment. My question for you is this: what are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be?

When I invite you to become saints, I am asking you not to be content with second best. I am asking you not to pursue one limited goal and ignore all the others. Having money makes it possible to be generous and to do good in the world, but on its own, it is not enough to make us happy. Being highly skilled in some activity or profession is good, but it will not satisfy us unless we aim for something greater still. It might make us famous, but it will not make us happy. Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple – true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.

Not only does God love us with a depth and an intensity that we can scarcely begin to comprehend, but he invites us to respond to that love. You all know what it is like when you meet someone interesting and attractive, and you want to be that person's friend. You always hope they will find you interesting and attractive, and want to be your friend. God wants your friendship. And once you enter into friendship with God, everything in your life begins to change. As you come to know him better, you find you want to reflect something of his infinite goodness in your own life. You are attracted to the practice of virtue. You begin to see greed and selfishness and all the other sins for what they really are, destructive and dangerous tendencies that cause deep suffering and do great damage, and you want to avoid falling into that trap yourselves. You begin to feel compassion for people in difficulties and you are eager to do something to help them. You want to come to the aid of the poor and the hungry, you want to comfort the sorrowful, you want to be kind and generous. And once these things begin to matter to you, you are well on the way to becoming saints.

In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subjects you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed in the context of growing in friendship with God, and all that flows from that friendship. So you learn not just to be good students, but good citizens, good people. As you move higher up the school, you have to make choices regarding the subjects you study, you begin to specialize with a view to what you are going to do later on in life. That is right and proper. But always remember that every subject you study is part of a bigger picture. Never allow yourselves to become narrow. The world needs good scientists, but a scientific outlook becomes dangerously narrow if it ignores the religious or ethical dimension of life, just as religion becomes narrow if it rejects the legitimate contribution of science to our understanding of the world. We need good historians and philosophers and economists, but if the account they give of human life within their particular field is too narrowly focused, they can lead us seriously astray.

A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints. I know that there are many non-Catholics studying in the Catholic schools in Great Britain, and I wish to include all of you in my words today. I pray that you too will feel encouraged to practise virtue and to grow in knowledge and friendship with God alongside your Catholic classmates. You are a reminder to them of the bigger picture that exists outside the school, and indeed, it is only right that respect and friendship for members of other religious traditions should be among the virtues learned in a Catholic school. I hope too that you will want to share with everyone you meet the values and insights you have learned through the Christian education you have received.

Dear friends, I thank you for your attention, I promise to pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me. I hope to see many of you next August, at the World Youth Day in Madrid. In the meantime, may God bless you all!

***ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS  
DURING THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO MADRID On the  
Occasion OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> WORLD YOUTH DAY***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

*19 August 2011*

Your Eminence,  
My Brother Bishops,  
Dear Augustinian Fathers,  
Dear Professors,  
Distinguished Authorities,  
Dear Friends,

I have looked forward to this meeting with you, young professors in the universities of Spain. You provide a splendid service in the spread of truth, in circumstances that are not always easy. I greet you warmly and I thank you for your kind words of welcome and for the music which has marvellously resounded in this magnificent monastery, for centuries an eloquent witness to the life of prayer and study. In this highly symbolic place, reason and faith have harmoniously blended in the austere stone to shape one of Spain's most renowned monuments.

I also greet with particular affection those of you who took part in the recent World Congress of Catholic Universities held in Avila on the theme: "The Identity and Mission of the Catholic University".

Being here with you, I am reminded of my own first steps as a professor at the University of Bonn. At the time, the wounds of war were still deeply felt and we had many material needs; these were compensated by our passion for an exciting activity, our interaction with colleagues of different disciplines and our desire to respond to the deepest and most basic concerns of our students. This experience of a "Universitas" of professors and students who together seek the truth in all fields of knowledge, or as Alfonso X the Wise put it, this "counsel of masters and students with the will and understanding needed to master the various disciplines",<sup>1</sup> helps us to see more clearly the importance, and even the definition, of the University.

The theme of the present World Youth Day – "Rooted and Built Up in Christ, and Firm in the Faith" (cf. Col 2:7) can also shed light on your efforts to understand more clearly your own identity and what you are called to do. As I wrote in my Message to Young People in preparation for these days, the terms "rooted, built up and firm" all point to solid foundations on which we can construct our lives (cf. No. 2).

But where will young people encounter those reference points in a society which is increasingly confused and unstable? At times one has the idea

that the mission of a university professor nowadays is exclusively that of forming competent and efficient professionals capable of satisfying the demand for labor at any given time. One also hears it said that the only thing that matters at the present moment is pure technical ability. This sort of utilitarian approach to education is in fact becoming more widespread, even at the university level, promoted especially by sectors outside the University. All the same, you who, like myself, have had an experience of the University, and now are members of the teaching staff, surely are looking for something more lofty and capable of embracing the full measure of what it is to be human. We know that when mere utility and pure pragmatism become the principal criteria, much is lost and the results can be tragic: from the abuses associated with a science which acknowledges no limits beyond itself, to the political totalitarianism which easily arises when one eliminates any higher reference than the mere calculus of power. The authentic idea of the University, on the other hand, is precisely what saves us from this reductionist and curtailed vision of humanity.

In truth, the University has always been, and is always called to be, the “house” where one seeks the truth proper to the human person. Consequently it was not by accident that the Church promoted the universities, for Christian faith speaks to us of Christ as the Word through whom all things were made (cf. Jn 1:3) and of men and women as made in the image and likeness of God. The Gospel message perceives a rationality inherent in creation and considers man as a creature participating in, and capable of attaining to, an understanding of this rationality. The University thus embodies an ideal which must not be attenuated or compromised, whether by ideologies closed to reasoned dialogue or by truckling to a purely utilitarian and economic conception which would view man solely as a consumer.

Here we see the vital importance of your own mission. You yourselves have the honour and responsibility of transmitting the ideal of the University: an ideal which you have received from your predecessors, many of whom were humble followers of the Gospel and, as such, became spiritual giants. We should feel ourselves their successors, in a time quite different from their own, yet one in which the essential human questions continue to challenge and stimulate us. With them, we realize that we are a link in that chain of men and women committed to teaching the faith and making it credible to human reason. And we do this not simply by our teaching, but by the way we live our faith and embody it, just as the Word took flesh and dwelt among us. Young people need authentic teachers: persons open to the fullness of truth in the various branches of knowledge, persons who listen to and experience in own hearts that interdisciplinary dialogue; persons who, above all, are convinced of our human capacity to advance along the path of truth. Youth is a privileged time for seeking and encountering truth. As Plato said: “Seek truth while you are young, for if you do not, it

will later escape your grasp”<sup>2</sup>. This lofty aspiration is the most precious gift which you can give to your students, personally and by example. It is more important than mere technical know-how, or cold and purely functional data.

I urge you, then, never to lose that sense of enthusiasm and concern for truth. Always remember that teaching is not just about communicating content, but about forming young people. You need to understand and love them, to awaken their innate thirst for truth and their yearning for transcendence. Be for them a source of encouragement and strength.

For this to happen, we need to realize in the first place that the path to the fullness of truth calls for complete commitment: it is a path of understanding and love, of reason and faith. We cannot come to know something unless we are moved by love; or, for that matter, love something which does not strike us as reasonable. “Understanding and love are not in separate compartments: love is rich in understanding and understanding is full of love”<sup>3</sup>. If truth and goodness go together, so too do knowledge and love. This unity leads to consistency in life and thought, that ability to inspire demanded of every good educator.

In the second place, we need to recognize that truth itself will always lie beyond our grasp. We can seek it and draw near to it, but we cannot completely possess it; or put better, truth possesses us and inspires us. In intellectual and educational activity the virtue of humility is also indispensable, since it protects us from the pride which bars the way to truth. We must not draw students to ourselves, but set them on the path toward the truth which we seek together. The Lord will help you in this, for he asks you to be plain and effective like salt, or like the lamp which quietly lights the room (cf. Mt 5:13).

All these things, finally, remind us to keep our gaze fixed on Christ, whose face radiates the Truth which enlightens us. Christ is also the Way which leads to lasting fulfilment; he walks constantly at our side and sustains us with his love. Rooted in him, you will prove good guides to our young people. With this confidence I invoke upon you the protection of the Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom. May she help you to cooperate with her Son by living a life which is personally satisfying and which brings forth rich fruits of knowledge and faith for your students. Thank you very much.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Siete Partidas*, partida II, tit. XXXI
2. [2] *Parmenides*, 135d
3. [3] *Caritas in Veritate*, 30

## ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION AFRICAE MUNUS***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

***19 November 2011***

***(Selected Excerpts)***

134. Catholic schools are a precious resource for learning from childhood how to create bonds of peace and harmony in society, since they train children in the African values that are taken up by those of the Gospel. I encourage bishops and institutes of consecrated persons to enable children of the proper age to receive schooling; this is a matter of justice for each child and indeed the future of Africa depends on it. Christians, and young people in particular, should study the educational sciences with a view to passing down knowledge full of truth: not mere know-how but genuine knowledge of life, inspired by a Christian consciousness shaped by the Church's social doctrine. It will also be fitting to ensure that personnel in the Church's educational institutions, and indeed all Church personnel, receive just remuneration, in order to strengthen the Church's credibility.

135. Given the great ferment of peoples, cultures and religions which marks our age, Catholic universities and academic institutions play an essential role in the patient, rigorous and humble search for the light which comes from Truth. Only a truth capable of transcending human standards of measure, conditioned by their own limitations, brings peace to individuals and reconciliation to societies. For this reason, it would help to establish new Catholic universities wherever these do not yet exist. Dear brothers and sisters in Catholic universities and academic institutions, it falls to you, on the one hand, to shape the minds and hearts of the younger generation in the light of the Gospel and, on the other, to help African societies better to understand the challenges confronting them today by providing Africa, through your research and analyses, with the light she needs.

136. The mission which the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* entrusted to Catholic institutions of higher education is as pertinent as ever. In it my blessed predecessor wrote: "The Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes in Africa have a prominent role to play in the proclamation of the salvific Word of God. They are a sign of the growth of the Church insofar as their research integrates the truths and experiences of the faith and helps to internalize them. They serve the Church by providing trained personnel, by studying important theological and social questions for the benefit of the Church, by developing an African theology, by promoting the work of inculturation, by publishing books and publicizing Catholic truth, by undertaking assignments given by the bishops and by contributing to the scientific study of cultures. Catholic cultural centres offer to the Church the possibility of presence and action in the field of cultural exchange. They

constitute in effect public forums which allow the Church to make widely known, in creative dialogue, Christian convictions about man, woman, family, work, economy, society, politics, international life, the environment. Thus they are places of listening, respect and tolerance.”[190] Bishops will take care that these institutions of higher education maintain their Catholic identity by always moving in directions faithful to the teaching of the Church’s magisterium.

137. In order to make a solid and proper contribution to African society, it is indispensable that students be taught the Church’s social doctrine. This will help the Church in Africa serenely to prepare a pastoral plan which speaks to the heart of Africans and enables them to be reconciled to themselves by following Christ. Once again, it is up to bishops to support a pastoral outreach to the life of the intellect and reason so as to foster a habit of rational dialogue and critical analysis within society and in the Church. As I said in Yaoundé: “Perhaps this Century will permit, by God’s grace, the rebirth on your continent, albeit surely in a new and different form, of the prestigious School of Alexandria. Why should we not hope that it could furnish today’s Africans and the universal Church with great theologians and spiritual masters who could contribute to the sanctification of the inhabitants of this continent and of the whole Church?”[191]

138. It is good that bishops support chaplaincies within the Church’s universities and schools, and establish them in their public counterparts. The chapel will be, as it were, the heart of those institutions. It will enable students to encounter God and to stand in his sight. It will also allow the chaplain, who should be carefully selected for his priestly virtues, to exercise his pastoral ministry of teaching and sanctification.

#### NOTES

1. [190] No. 103: AAS 88 (1996), 62-63.
2. [191] Benedict XVI, *Address to Members of the Special Council for Africa of the Synod of Bishops* (Yaoundé, 19 March 2009): AAS101 (2009), 312.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CHILD BUREAU***

POPE FRANCIS

*11 April 2014*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

Continuing to grow up and mature in a correct relationship represented by the masculinity and femininity of a father and a mother and thus preparing for affective maturity.

At the same time, this implies supporting the right of parents to decide the moral and religious education of their children. And in this regard I would like to express my rejection of any kind of educational experimentation on children. We cannot experiment on children and young people. They are not lab specimens! The horrors of the manipulation of education that we experienced in the great genocidal dictatorships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have not disappeared; they have retained a current relevance under various guises and proposals and, with the pretense of modernity, push children and young people to walk on the dictatorial path of “only one form of thought”. A little over a week ago a great teacher said to me... “At times with these projects — referring to actual educational projects — one doesn’t know whether the child is going to school or to a re-education camp”.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DURING THE VISIT TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT***

POPE FRANCIS

*25 November 2014*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

To give Europe hope means more than simply acknowledging the centrality of the human person; it also implies nurturing the gifts of each man and woman. It means investing in individuals and in those settings in which their talents are shaped and flourish. The first area surely is that of education, beginning with the family, the fundamental cell and most precious element of any society. The family, united, fruitful and indissoluble, possesses the elements fundamental for fostering hope in the future. Without this solid basis, the future ends up being built on sand, with dire social consequences. Then too, stressing the importance of the family not only helps to give direction and hope to new generations, but also to many of our elderly, who are often forced to live alone and are effectively abandoned because there is no longer the warmth of a family hearth able to accompany and support them.

Alongside the family, there are the various educational institutes: schools and universities. Education cannot be limited to providing technical expertise alone. Rather, it should encourage the more complex process of assisting the human person to grow in his or her totality. Young people today are asking for a suitable and complete education which can enable them to look to the future with hope instead of disenchantment. There is so much creative potential in Europe in the various fields of scientific research, some of which have yet to be fully explored.

We need only think, for example, of alternative sources of energy, the development of which will assist in the protection of the environment.

## **NOTES**

1. [2] John Paul II, *Address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (8 October 1988), 3.

2. [3] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 7; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes*, 26.

3. [4] Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 37.

## *ENCYCLICAL LETTER LAUDATO SI'*

POPE FRANCIS

*24 May 2015*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

210. Environmental education has broadened its goals. Whereas in the beginning it was mainly centred on scientific information, consciousness-raising and the prevention of environmental risks, it tends now to include a critique of the “myths” of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mindset (individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market). It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.

211. Yet this education, aimed at creating an “ecological citizenship”, is at times limited to providing information, and fails to instill good habits. The existence of laws and regulations is insufficient in the long run to curb bad conduct, even when effective means of enforcement are present. If the laws are to bring about significant, long-lasting effects, the majority of the members of society must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond. Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment. A person who could afford to spend and consume more but regularly uses less heating and wears warmer clothes, shows the kind of convictions and attitudes which help to protect the environment. There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle. Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.

212. We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread. Furthermore,

such actions can restore our sense of self-esteem; they can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on earth is worthwhile.

213. Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life. Here, though, I would stress the great importance of the family, which is “the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life”.<sup>[149]</sup> In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say “thank you” as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings.

214. Political institutions and various other social groups are also entrusted with helping to raise people’s awareness. So too is the Church. All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education. It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God’s world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment. Because the stakes are so high, we need institutions empowered to impose penalties for damage inflicted on the environment. But we also need the personal qualities of self-control and willingness to learn from one another.

215. In this regard, “the relationship between a good aesthetic education and the maintenance of a healthy environment cannot be overlooked”.<sup>[150]</sup> By learning to see and appreciate beauty, we learn to reject self-interested pragmatism. If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market.

## ***ADDRESS TO EDUCATORS DURING THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO ECUADOR, BOLIVIA AND PARAGUAY***

POPE FRANCIS

*7 July 2015*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

My Brother Bishops,  
 Father Rector,  
 Distinguished Authorities,  
 Dear Professors and Students,  
 Dear Friends,

Here, in this university setting, it would be worthwhile reflecting on the way we educate about this earth of ours, which cries out to heaven.

Our academic institutions are seedbeds, places full of possibility, fertile soil to be cared for, cultivated and protected. Fertile soil thirsting for life.

My question to you, as educators, is this: Do you watch over your students, helping them to develop a critical sense, an open mind capable of caring for today's world? A spirit capable of seeking new answers to the varied challenges that society sets before humanity today? Are you able to encourage them not to disregard the world around them, what is happening all over? Can you encourage them to do that? To make that possible, you need to take them outside the university lecture hall; their minds need to leave the classroom, their hearts must go out of the classroom. Does our life, with its uncertainties, its mysteries and its questions, find a place in the university curriculum or different academic activities? Do we enable and support a constructive debate which fosters dialogue in the pursuit of a more humane world? Dialogue, that bridge word, that word which builds bridges.

One avenue of reflection involves all of us, family, schools and teachers. How do we help our young people not to see a university degree as synonymous with higher status, with more money or social prestige? It is not synonymous with that. How can we help make their education a mark of greater responsibility in the face of today's problems, the needs of the poor, concern for the environment?

I also have a question for you, dear students who are here. You are Ecuador's present and future, the ones who must stir things up. You are the seedbed of your society's future growth. Do you realize that this time of study is not only a right, but also a privilege which you have? How many of your friends, known or unknown, would like to have a place in this house but, for various reasons, do not? To what extent do our studies help us and bring us to feel solidarity with them? Ask these questions, dear students.

Educational communities play a fundamental role, an essential role in the enrichment of civic and cultural life. Be careful! It is not enough to analyze and describe reality: there is a need to shape environments of creative thinking, discussions which develop alternatives to current problems, especially today. We need to move to the concrete.

Faced with the globalization of a technocratic paradigm which tends to believe “that every increase in power means an increase of progress itself, an advance in security, usefulness, welfare and vigor; ...an assimilation of new values into the stream of culture, as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such” (*Laudato Si'*, 105), it is urgent today for you, for me, for everyone, to keep reflecting on and talking about our current situation. And I am saying urgent that we be motivated to think about the culture, the kind of culture we want not only for ourselves, but for our children and our grandchildren. We have received this earth as an inheritance, as a gift, in trust. We would do well to ask ourselves: “What kind of world do we want to leave behind? What meaning or direction do we want to give to our lives? Why have we been put here? What is the purpose of our work and all our efforts?” (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 160). Why are we studying?

Personal initiatives are always necessary and good. But we are asked to go one step further: to start viewing reality in an organic and not fragmented way, to ask about where we stand in relation to others, inasmuch as “everything is interconnected” (*Laudato Si'*, 138). There is no right to exclusion.

As a university, as educational institutions, as teachers and students, life itself challenges us to answer these two questions: What does this world need us for? Where is your brother?

May the Holy Spirit inspire and accompany us, for he has summoned us, invited us, given us the opportunity and the duty to offer the best of ourselves. He is the same Spirit who on the first day of creation moved over the waters, ready to transform them, ready to bestow life. He is the same Spirit who gave the disciples the power of Pentecost. The Spirit does not abandon us. He becomes one with us, so that we can encounter paths of new life. May he, the Spirit, always be our companion and our teacher along the way. Thank you very much.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION IN NEW YORK***

POPE FRANCIS

*25 September 2015*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

To enable these real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny. Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity cannot be imposed. They must be built up and allowed to unfold for each individual, for every family, in communion with others, and in a right relationship with all those areas in which human social life develops – friends, communities, towns and cities, schools, businesses and unions, provinces, nations, etc. This presupposes and requires the right to education – also for girls (excluded in certain places) – which is ensured first and foremost by respecting and reinforcing the primary right of the family to educate its children, as well as the right of churches and social groups to support and assist families in the education of their children. Education conceived in this way is the basis for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for reclaiming the environment.

At the same time, government leaders must do everything possible to ensure that all can have the minimum spiritual and material means needed to live in dignity and to create and support a family, which is the primary cell of any social development. In practical terms, this absolute minimum has three names: lodging, labour, and land; and one spiritual name: spiritual freedom, which includes religious freedom, the right to education and all other civil rights.

For all this, the simplest and best measure and indicator of the implementation of the new Agenda for development will be effective, practical and immediate access, on the part of all, to essential material and spiritual goods: housing, dignified and properly remunerated employment, adequate food and drinking water; religious freedom and, more generally, spiritual freedom and education. These pillars of integral human development have a common foundation, which is the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE “JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE”***

POPE FRANCIS

*14 November 2015*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Jesuit Refugee Service works to offer hope and prospects to refugees, mainly through the educational services you provide, which reach large numbers of people and are of particular importance. Offering an education is about much more than dispensing concepts. It is something which provides refugees with the wherewithal to progress beyond survival, to keep alive the flame of hope, to believe in the future and to make plans. To give a child a seat at school is the finest gift you can give. All your projects have this ultimate aim: to help refugees to grow in self-confidence, to realize their highest inherent potential and to be able to defend their rights as individuals and communities.

For children forced to emigrate, schools are places of freedom. In the classroom, they are cared for and protected by their teachers. Sadly, we know that even schools are not spared from attacks instigated by those who sow violence. Yet they are places of sharing, together with children of other cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds; places which follow a set pace and a reassuring discipline, places in which children can once more feel “normal” and where parents can be happy to send them.

Education affords young refugees a way to discover their true calling and to develop their potential. Yet all too many refugee children and young people do not receive a quality education. Access to education is limited, especially for girls and in the case of secondary schools. For this reason, during the approaching Jubilee Year of Mercy, you have set the goal of helping another hundred thousand young refugees to receive schooling. Your initiative of “Global Education”, with its motto “Mercy in Motion”, will help you reach many other students who urgently need an education which can help keep them safe. I am grateful to the group of supporters and benefactors and the international development group of the Jesuit Refugee Service who are with us today. Thanks to their energy and support, the Lord’s mercy will reach any number of children and their families in the future.

## **ADDRESS TO THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS**

POPE FRANCIS

**5 December 2015**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to welcome you all, representatives of the *Associazione di Genitori delle Scuole Cattoliche* on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your founding. You are here not only to confirm yourselves in your journey of faith but also to express the truth of the commitment that distinguishes you: that of having freely chosen to be educators in accordance with the heart of God and of the Church.

An important World Congress organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education took place recently. On that occasion I highlighted the importance of promoting education in the *fullness of humanity*, because speaking of Catholic education is equivalent to speaking of humans, of humanism. I called for inclusive education which makes room for everyone and avoids elitism in selecting the beneficiaries of its commitment.

The same challenge lies before you today. Your Association is dedicated to the service of schools and families, contributing to the delicate task of *building bridges between schools and territories, between schools and families, and between schools and civil institutions*. Restoring the educational pact because the educational pact has collapsed into ruin, because the educational pact is broken! And we must restore it. Building bridges: there is no nobler challenge! Building union where division is advancing, generating harmony when the logic of exclusion and marginalization seems to have the upper hand.

As an ecclesial association you draw from the very heart of the Church the abundance of mercy that makes your work a daily service to others. As parents, you are *depositories of the duty and of the primary and inalienable right to educate your children*, and in this regard to give the school positive and constant help with the task. It is your right to demand proper education for your children, an education that is *integral and open to the most authentic human and Christian values*. It is also your task, however, to ensure that the school is equal to the educational role entrusted to it, particularly when the education it offers claims to be “Catholic”. I pray the Lord that Catholic schools may never take for granted the meaning of this adjective! Indeed, being *Catholic* educators makes all the difference.

And so we must ask ourselves: what are the requirements that enable a school to call itself truly Catholic? This can be a good thing to do in your Association. You have certainly done so and are doing so; but the results are never achieved once and for all. For example, we know that

Catholic schools must pass on an *integral, not ideological* culture. But what does this mean in practice? And further, we are convinced that Catholic schools are called to *foster harmony in diversity*. How can this be concretely implemented? It is a challenge that is anything but easy. Thanks be to God, there are so many positive experiences in Italy and in the world which may be known and shared.

In the meeting St John Paul II had with you in June 1998, he reaffirmed the importance of the “bridge” that must exist between school and society. May you never forget the need to construct an educational community in which, together with the teachers, the various operators and students, you parents are able to be *protagonists in the educational process*.

Do not withdraw from the world but be active, like leaven in dough. The invitation I address to you is simple but bold: *may you be able to make a difference in the quality of formation*. May you be able to find the ways and means so as not to pass unobserved behind the scenes of society and culture, not to create an uproar, and not with projects packed with rhetoric. May you be able to distinguish yourselves through your constant attention to the person and in a special way to the lowliest, to those who are discarded, rejected and forgotten. May you be able to distinguish yourselves not by your “façade” but rather by educational coherence rooted in the Christian vision of mankind and of society.

At a time when the economic crisis is also making itself felt heavily in comprehensive schools, many of which are being forced to close, the temptation of “numbers” surfaces more insistently, and with it that of discouragement. Yet, in spite of all, I repeat to you: what makes the difference is the quality of your presence, and not the quantity of the resources that you can invest in this field. The quality of your presence here, by building bridges. And I am glad that you, [addressing the President], discussing schools spoke of children, parents and grandparents also. Because grandparents have a lot to do! Do not disregard the grandparents, who are the living memory of the people!

Never sell off the human and Christian values to which you are witnesses in the family, in schools, and in society. Make your contribution generously so that Catholic schools never become a “fall-back” solution or an insignificant alternative among the various educational institutions. Collaborate in order that Catholic education may have *the face of that new humanism* which emerged from the Ecclesial Convention in Florence. Strive to ensure that Catholic schools are *truly open to all*. May the Lord Jesus who in the Holy Family of Nazareth increased in stature, in wisdom and in grace (cf. Lk 2:52) accompany your steps and bless you in your daily commitment.

Thank you for this meeting, thank you for your work and thank you for your witness. I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, and please do not forget to pray for me.

## ***ADDRESS TO MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT OF CHRISTIAN WORKERS***

POPE FRANCIS

*16 January 2016*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

I would like to suggest three words that can help us. The first is education. To educate means to “draw out”. It is the capacity to draw forth the best from one’s heart. It is not just about teaching some technical skill or imparting ideas, but is about rendering both ourselves and the world around us more human. And it refers in a special way to work: we need to formulate a new “humanism of work”. For we live in a time when workers are being exploited; in a time, where work is not really at the service of personal dignity, but is slave labour. We must form, educate in a new humanism of work, where man, and not profit, is at the centre; where the economy *serves* man rather than it being *served* by man.

Another aspect is important: education helps people not to believe in the deception of those who would like to convince them that work, one’s daily effort, the gift of oneself and one’s study do not have value. I would add that today, in the world of work — and in every environment — it is essential to educate and follow the luminous and demanding path of honesty, avoiding the shortcuts of favouritism and recommendations. There is underlying corruption here. There are always these temptations, large or small, but it always pertains to “moral commerce”, which is unworthy of man: it must be rejected, by habituating the heart to remain free. Otherwise it creates a false and noxious mentality which must be fought: that of lawlessness, which leads to the corruption of people and of society. Lawlessness is like an octopus in hiding: it is concealed, submerged, but with its tentacles it seizes and poisons, polluting and doing so much harm. Educating is a great vocation: as St Joseph trained Jesus in the art of carpentry, you too are called to help the younger generations to discover the beauty of truly human work.

### NOTES

1. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 192

## *APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION AMORIS LAETITIA*

POPE FRANCIS

*19 March 2016*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

Parents have a serious responsibility for this work of education, as the Biblical sages often remind us<sup>1</sup>. Children, for their part, are called to accept and practice the commandment: “Honour your father and your mother” (Ex 20:12). Here the verb “to honour” has to do with the fulfilment of family and social commitments; these are not to be disregarded under the pretence of religious motives (cf. Mk 7:11-13). “Whoever honours his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure” (Sir 3:3-4).

[...]

84. The Synod Fathers also wished to emphasize that “one of the fundamental challenges facing families today is undoubtedly that of raising children, made all the more difficult and complex by today’s cultural reality and the powerful influence of the media”.<sup>2</sup> “The Church assumes a valuable role in supporting families, starting with Christian initiation, through welcoming communities”<sup>3</sup> At the same time I feel it important to reiterate that the overall education of children is a “most serious duty” and at the same time a “primary right” of parents.<sup>4</sup> This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them. The State offers educational programmes in a subsidiary way, supporting the parents in their indeclinable role; parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education – accessible and of good quality – which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions. Schools do not replace parents, but complement them. This is a basic principle: “all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization”<sup>5</sup> Still, “a rift has opened up between the family and society, between family and the school; the educational pact today has been broken and thus the educational alliance between society and the family is in crisis”<sup>6</sup>

85. The Church is called to cooperate with parents through suitable pastoral initiatives, assisting them in the fulfilment of their educational mission. She must always do this by helping them to appreciate their proper role and to realize that by their reception of the sacrament of marriage they

become ministers of their children's education. In educating them, they build up the Church,<sup>7</sup> and in so doing, they accept a Godgiven vocation.<sup>8</sup>

[...]

### **Towards a better education of children**

259. Parents always influence the moral development of their children, for better or for worse. It follows that they should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately. Since the educational role of families is so important, and increasingly complex, I would like to discuss it in detail.

### **Where are our children?**

260. Families cannot help but be places of support, guidance and direction, however much they may have to rethink their methods and discover new resources. Parents need to consider what they want their children to be exposed to, and this necessarily means being concerned about who is providing their entertainment, who is entering their rooms through television and electronic devices, and with whom they are spending their free time. Only if we devote time to our children, speaking of important things with simplicity and concern, and finding healthy ways for them to spend their time, will we be able to shield them from harm. Vigilance is always necessary and neglect is never beneficial. Parents have to help prepare children and adolescents to confront the risk, for example, of aggression, abuse or drug addiction.

261. Obsession, however, is not education. We cannot control every situation that a child may experience. Here it remains true that "time is greater than space".<sup>291</sup> In other words, it is more important to start processes than to dominate spaces. If parents are obsessed with always knowing where their children are and controlling all their movements, they will seek only to dominate space. But this is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability lovingly to help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy. Only in this way will children come to possess the wherewithal needed to fend for themselves and to act intelligently and prudently whenever they meet with difficulties. The real question, then, is not where our children are physically, or whom they are with at any given time, but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. The questions I would put to parents are these: "Do we seek to understand 'where' our children really are in their journey? Where is their soul, do we really know? And above all, do we want to know?"<sup>292</sup>

262. Were maturity merely the development of something already present in our genetic code, not much would have to be done. But prudence, good

judgement and common sense are dependent not on purely quantitative growth factors, but rather on a whole series of things that come together deep within each person, or better, at the very core of our freedom. Inevitably, each child will surprise us with ideas and projects born of that freedom, which challenge us to rethink our own ideas. This is a good thing. Education includes encouraging the responsible use of freedom to face issues with good sense and intelligence. It involves forming persons who readily understand that their own lives, and the life of the community, are in their hands, and that freedom is itself a great gift.

### **The ethical formation of children**

263. Parents rely on schools to ensure the basic instruction of their children, but can never completely delegate the moral formation of their children to others. A person's affective and ethical development is ultimately grounded in a particular experience, namely, that his or her parents can be trusted. This means that parents, as educators, are responsible, by their affection and example, for instilling in their children trust and loving respect. When children no longer feel that, for all their faults, they are important to their parents, or that their parents are sincerely concerned about them, this causes deep hurt and many difficulties along their path to maturity. This physical or emotional absence creates greater hurt than any scolding which a child may receive for doing something wrong.

264. Parents are also responsible for shaping the will of their children, fostering good habits and a natural inclination to goodness. This entails presenting certain ways of thinking and acting as desirable and worthwhile, as part of a gradual process of growth. The desire to fit into society, or the habit of foregoing an immediate pleasure for the sake of a better and more orderly life in common, is itself a value that can then inspire openness to greater values. Moral formation should always take place with active methods and a dialogue that teaches through sensitivity and by using a language children can understand. It should also take place inductively, so that children can learn for themselves the importance of certain values, principles and norms, rather than by imposing these as absolute and unquestionable truths.

265. Doing what is right means more than "judging what seems best" or knowing clearly what needs to be done, as important as this is. Often, we prove inconsistent in our own convictions, however firm they may be; even when our conscience dictates a clear moral decision, other factors sometimes prove more attractive and powerful. We have to arrive at the point where the good that the intellect grasps can take root in us as a profound affective inclination, as a thirst for the good that outweighs other attractions and helps us to realize that what we consider objectively good is also good "for us" here and now. A good ethical education includes showing a person

that it is in his own interest to do what is right. Today, it is less and less effective to demand something that calls for effort and sacrifice, without clearly pointing to the benefits which it can bring.

266. Good habits need to be developed. Even childhood habits can help to translate important interiorized values into sound and steady ways of acting. A person may be sociable and open to others, but if over a long period of time he has not been trained by his elders to say “Please”, “Thank you”, and “Sorry”, his good interior disposition will not easily come to the fore. The strengthening of the will and the repetition of specific actions are the building blocks of moral conduct; without the conscious, free and valued repetition of certain patterns of good behaviour, moral education does not take place. Mere desire, or an attraction to a certain value, is not enough to instil a virtue in the absence of those properly motivated acts.

267. Freedom is something magnificent, yet it can also be dissipated and lost. Moral education has to do with cultivating freedom through ideas, incentives, practical applications, stimuli, rewards, examples, models, symbols, reflections, encouragement, dialogue and a constant rethinking of our way of doing things; all these can help develop those stable interior principles that lead us spontaneously to do good. Virtue is a conviction that has become a steadfast inner principle of operation. The virtuous life thus builds, strengthens and shapes freedom, lest we become slaves of dehumanizing and antisocial inclinations. For human dignity itself demands that each of us “act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within”.<sup>293</sup>

### **The value of correction as an incentive**

268. It is also essential to help children and adolescents to realize that misbehaviour has consequences. They need to be encouraged to put themselves in other people’s shoes and to acknowledge the hurt they have caused. Some punishments – those for aggressive, antisocial conduct – can partially serve this purpose. It is important to train children firmly to ask forgiveness and to repair the harm done to others. As the educational process bears fruit in the growth of personal freedom, children come to appreciate that it was good to grow up in a family and even to put up with the demands that every process of formation makes.

269. Correction is also an incentive whenever children’s efforts are appreciated and acknowledged, and they sense their parents’ constant, patient trust. Children who are lovingly corrected feel cared for; they perceive that they are individuals whose potential is recognized. This does not require parents to be perfect, but to be able humbly to acknowledge their own limitations and make efforts to improve. Still, one of the things children need to learn from their parents is not to get carried away by anger. A child who does something wrong must be corrected, but never treated as

an enemy or an object on which to take out one's own frustrations. Adults also need to realize that some kinds of misbehaviour have to do with the frailty and limitations typical of youth. An attitude constantly prone to punishment would be harmful and not help children to realize that some actions are more serious than others. It would lead to discouragement and resentment: "Parents, do not provoke your children" (Eph 6:4; cf. Col 3:21).

270. It is important that discipline not lead to discouragement, but be instead a stimulus to further progress. How can discipline be best interiorized? How do we ensure that discipline is a constructive limit placed on a child's actions and not a barrier standing in the way of his or her growth? A balance has to be found between two equally harmful extremes. One would be to try to make everything revolve around the child's desires; such children will grow up with a sense of their rights but not their responsibilities. The other would be to deprive the child of an awareness of his or her dignity, personal identity and rights; such children end up overwhelmed by their duties and a need to carry out other people's wishes.

### **Patient realism**

271. Moral education entails asking of a child or a young person only those things that do not involve a disproportionate sacrifice, and demanding only a degree of effort that will not lead to resentment or coercion. Ordinarily this is done by proposing small steps that can be understood, accepted and appreciated, while including a proportionate sacrifice. Otherwise, by demanding too much, we gain nothing. Once the child is free of our authority, he or she may possibly cease to do good.

272. Ethical formation is at times frowned upon, due to experiences of neglect, disappointment, lack of affection or poor models of parenting. Ethical values are associated with negative images of parental figures or the shortcomings of adults. For this reason, adolescents should be helped to draw analogies: to appreciate that values are best embodied in a few exemplary persons, but also realized imperfectly and to different degrees in others. At the same time, since their hesitation can be tied to bad experiences, they need help in the process of inner healing and in this way to grow in the ability to understand and live in peace with others and the larger community.

273. In proposing values, we have to proceed slowly, taking into consideration the child's age and abilities, without presuming to apply rigid and inflexible methods. The valuable contributions of psychology and the educational sciences have shown that changing a child's behaviour involves a gradual process, but also that freedom needs to be channeled and stimulated, since by itself it does not ensure growth in maturity. Situated freedom, real freedom, is limited and conditioned. It is not simply the

ability to choose what is good with complete spontaneity. A distinction is not always adequately drawn between “voluntary” and “free” acts. A person may clearly and willingly desire something evil, but do so as the result of an irresistible passion or a poor upbringing. In such cases, while the decision is voluntary, inasmuch as it does not run counter to the inclination of their desire, it is not free, since it is practically impossible for them not to choose that evil. We see this in the case of compulsive drug addicts. When they want a fix, they want it completely, yet they are so conditioned that at that moment no other decision is possible. Their decision is voluntary but not free. It makes no sense to “let them freely choose”, since in fact they cannot choose, and exposing them to drugs only increases their addiction. They need the help of others and a process of rehabilitation.

### **Family life as an educational setting**

274. The family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom. Certain inclinations develop in childhood and become so deeply rooted that they remain throughout life, either as attractions to a particular value or a natural repugnance to certain ways of acting. Many people think and act in a certain way because they deem it to be right on the basis of what they learned, as if by osmosis, from their earliest years: “That’s how I was taught”. “That’s what I learned to do”. In the family we can also learn to be critical about certain messages sent by the various media. Sad to say, some television programmes or forms of advertising often negatively influence and undercut the values inculcated in family life.

275. In our own day, dominated by stress and rapid technological advances, one of the most important tasks of families is to provide an education in hope. This does not mean preventing children from playing with electronic devices, but rather finding ways to help them develop their critical abilities and not to think that digital speed can apply to everything in life. Postponing desires does not mean denying them but simply deferring their fulfilment. When children or adolescents are not helped to realize that some things have to be waited for, they can become obsessed with satisfying their immediate needs and develop the vice of “wanting it all now”. This is a grand illusion which does not favour freedom but weakens it. On the other hand, when we are taught to postpone some things until the right moment, we learn self-mastery and detachment from our impulses. When children realize that they have to be responsible for themselves, their self-esteem is enriched. This in turn teaches them to respect the freedom of others. Obviously this does not mean expecting children to act like adults, but neither does it mean underestimating their ability to grow in responsible freedom. In a healthy family, this learning process usually takes place through the demands made by life in common.

276. The family is the primary setting for socialization, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one. The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home. In the family, we learn closeness, care and respect for others. We break out of our fatal selfabsorption and come to realize that we are living with and alongside others who are worthy of our concern, our kindness and our affection. There is no social bond without this primary, everyday, almost microscopic aspect of living side by side, crossing paths at different times of the day, being concerned about everything that affects us, helping one another with ordinary little things. Every day the family has to come up with new ways of appreciating and acknowledging its members.

277. In the family too, we can rethink our habits of consumption and join in caring for the environment as our common home. “The family is the principal agent of an integral ecology, because it is the primary social subject which contains within it the two fundamental principles of human civilization on earth: the principle of communion and the principle of fruitfulness”.<sup>294</sup> In the same way, times of difficulty and trouble in the lives of family life can teach important lessons. This happens, for example, when illness strikes, since “in the face of illness, even in families, difficulties arise due to human weakness. But in general, times of illness enable family bonds to grow stronger... An education that fails to encourage sensitivity to human illness makes the heart grow cold; it makes young people ‘anesthetized’ to the suffering of others, incapable of facing suffering and of living the experience of limitation”.<sup>295</sup>

278. The educational process that occurs between parents and children can be helped or hindered by the increasing sophistication of the communications and entertainment media. When well used, these media can be helpful for connecting family members who live apart from one another. Frequent contacts help to overcome difficulties.<sup>296</sup> Still, it is clear that these media cannot replace the need for more personal and direct dialogue, which requires physical presence or at least hearing the voice of the other person. We know that sometimes they can keep people apart rather than together, as when at dinnertime everyone is surfing on a mobile phone, or when one spouse falls asleep waiting for the other who spends hours playing with an electronic device. This is also something that families have to discuss and resolve in ways which encourage interaction without imposing unrealistic prohibitions. In any event, we cannot ignore the risks that these new forms of communication pose for children and adolescents; at times they can foster apathy and disconnect from the real world. This “technological disconnect” exposes them more easily to manipulation by those who would invade their private space with selfish interests.

279. Nor is it good for parents to be domineering. When children are made to feel that only their parents can be trusted, this hinders an adequate process of socialization and growth in affective maturity. To help expand the parental relationship to broader realities, “Christian communities are called to offer support to the educational mission of families”,<sup>297</sup> particularly through the catechesis associated with Christian initiation. To foster an integral education, we need to “renew the covenant between the family and the Christian community”.<sup>298</sup> The Synod wanted to emphasize the importance of Catholic schools which “play a vital role in assisting parents in their duty to raise their children... Catholic schools should be encouraged in their mission to help pupils grow into mature adults who can view the world with the love of Jesus and who can understand life as a call to serve God”.<sup>299</sup> For this reason, “the Church strongly affirms her freedom to set forth her teaching and the right of conscientious objection on the part of educators”.<sup>300</sup>

### **The need for sex education**

280. The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for “a positive and prudent sex education” to be imparted to children and adolescents “as they grow older”, with “due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences”.<sup>301</sup> We may well ask ourselves if our educational institutions have taken up this challenge. It is not easy to approach the issue of sex education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialized and impoverished. It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched. The sexual urge can be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and selfcontrol capable of nurturing valuable capacities for joy and for loving encounter.

281. Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age. It is not helpful to overwhelm them with data without also helping them to develop a critical sense in dealing with the onslaught of new ideas and suggestions, the flood of pornography and the overload of stimuli that can deform sexuality. Young people need to realize that they are bombarded by messages that are not beneficial for their growth towards maturity. They should be helped to recognize and to seek out positive influences, while shunning the things that cripple their capacity for love. We also have to realize that “a new and more appropriate language” is needed “in introducing children and adolescents to the topic of sexuality”.<sup>302</sup>

282. A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty

a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used. Without a sense of modesty, affection and sexuality can be reduced to an obsession with genitality and unhealthy behaviours that distort our capacity for love, and with forms of sexual violence that lead to inhuman treatment or cause hurt to others.

283. Frequently, sex education deals primarily with “protection” through the practice of “safe sex”. Such expressions convey a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against. This way of thinking promotes narcissism and aggressivity in place of acceptance. It is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires, as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage. They end up being blithely encouraged to use other persons as a means of fulfilling their needs or limitations. The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it.

284. Young people should not be deceived into confusing two levels of reality: “sexual attraction creates, for the moment, the illusion of union, yet, without love, this ‘union’ leaves strangers as far apart as they were before”.<sup>303</sup> The language of the body calls for a patient apprenticeship in learning to interpret and channel desires in view of authentic self-giving. When we presume to give everything all at once, it may well be that we give nothing. It is one thing to understand how fragile and bewildered young people can be, but another thing entirely to encourage them to prolong their immaturity in the way they show love. But who speaks of these things today? Who is capable of taking young people seriously? Who helps them to prepare seriously for a great and generous love? Where sex education is concerned, much is at stake.

285. Sex education should also include respect and appreciation for differences, as a way of helping the young to overcome their self-absorption and to be open and accepting of others. Beyond the understandable difficulties which individuals may experience, the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for “thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment”.<sup>304</sup> Only by losing the fear of being different, can

we be freed of self-centredness and self-absorption. Sex education should help young people to accept their own bodies and to avoid the pretension “to cancel out sexual difference because one no longer knows how to deal with it”.<sup>305</sup>

286. Nor can we ignore the fact that the configuration of our own mode of being, whether as male or female, is not simply the result of biological or genetic factors, but of multiple elements having to do with temperament, family history, culture, experience, education, the influence of friends, family members and respected persons, as well as other formative situations. It is true that we cannot separate the masculine and the feminine from God’s work of creation, which is prior to all our decisions and experiences, and where biological elements exist which are impossible to ignore. But it is also true that masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories. It is possible, for example, that a husband’s way of being masculine can be flexibly adapted to the wife’s work schedule. Taking on domestic chores or some aspects of raising children does not make him any less masculine or imply failure, irresponsibility or cause for shame. Children have to be helped to accept as normal such healthy “exchanges” which do not diminish the dignity of the father figure. A rigid approach turns into an over accentuation of the masculine or feminine, and does not help children and young people to appreciate the genuine reciprocity incarnate in the real conditions of matrimony. Such rigidity, in turn, can hinder the development of an individual’s abilities, to the point of leading him or her to think, for example, that it is not really masculine to cultivate art or dance, or not very feminine to exercise leadership. This, thank God, has changed, but in some places deficient notions still condition the legitimate freedom and hamper the authentic development of children’s specific identity and potential. Passing on the faith

287. Raising children calls for an orderly process of handing on the faith. This is made difficult by current lifestyles, work schedules and the complexity of today’s world, where many people keep up a frenetic pace just to survive.<sup>306</sup> Even so, the home must continue to be the place where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour. This begins with baptism, in which, as Saint Augustine said, mothers who bring their children “cooperate in the sacred birthing”.<sup>307</sup> Thus begins the journey of growth in that new life. Faith is God’s gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop. Hence “it is beautiful when mothers teach their little children to blow a kiss to Jesus or to Our Lady. How much love there is in that! At that moment the child’s heart becomes a place of prayer”.<sup>308</sup> Handing on the faith presumes that parents themselves genuinely trust God, seek him and sense their need for him, for only in this way does “one generation laud your works to another, and declare your mighty acts” (Ps 144:4) and “fathers make known to children

your faithfulness” (Is 38:19). This means that we need to ask God to act in their hearts, in places where we ourselves cannot reach. A mustard seed, small as it is, becomes a great tree (cf. Mt 13:31-32); this teaches us to see the disproportion between our actions and their effects. We know that we do not own the gift, but that its care is entrusted to us. Yet our creative commitment is itself an offering which enables us to cooperate with God’s plan. For this reason, “couples and parents should be properly appreciated as active agents in catechesis... Family catechesis is of great assistance as an effective method in training young parents to be aware of their mission as the evangelizers of their own family”.<sup>309</sup>

288. Education in the faith has to adapt to each child, since older resources and recipes do not always work. Children need symbols, actions and stories. Since adolescents usually have issues with authority and rules, it is best to encourage their own experience of faith and to provide them with attractive testimonies that win them over by their sheer beauty. Parents desirous of nurturing the faith of their children are sensitive to their patterns of growth, for they know that spiritual experience is not imposed but freely proposed. It is essential that children actually see that, for their parents, prayer is something truly important. Hence moments of family prayer and acts of devotion can be more powerful for evangelization than any catechism class or sermon. Here I would like to express my particular gratitude to all those mothers who continue to pray, like Saint Monica, for their children who have strayed from Christ.

289. The work of handing on the faith to children, in the sense of facilitating its expression and growth, helps the whole family in its evangelizing mission. It naturally begins to spread the faith to all around them, even outside of the family circle. Children who grew up in missionary families often become missionaries themselves; growing up in warm and friendly families, they learn to relate to the world in this way, without giving up their faith or their convictions. We know that Jesus himself ate and drank with sinners (cf. Mk 2:16; Mt 11:19), conversed with a Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:7-26), received Nicodemus by night (cf. Jn 3:1-21), allowed his feet to be anointed by a prostitute (cf. Lk 7:36-50) and did not hesitate to lay his hands on those who were sick (cf. Mk 1:40-45; 7:33). The same was true of his apostles, who did not look down on others, or cluster together in small and elite groups, cut off from the life of their people. Although the authorities harassed them, they nonetheless enjoyed the favour “of all the people” (Acts 2:47; cf. 4:21, 33; 5:13).

290. “The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in

which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy”.<sup>310</sup> All this is an expression of our profound Christian belief in the love of the Father who guides and sustains us, a love manifested in the total self-gift of Jesus Christ, who even now lives in our midst and enables us to face together the storms of life at every stage. In all families the Good News needs to resound, in good times and in bad, as a source of light along the way. All of us should be able to say, thanks to the experience of our life in the family: “We come to believe in the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). Only on the basis of this experience will the Church’s pastoral care for families enable them to be both domestic churches and a leaven of evangelization in society.

#### NOTES

1. [1] cf. Prov 3:11-12; 6:20-22; 13:1; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:17
2. [2] *Relatio Synodi* 2014, 60.
3. [3] *Ibid.*, 61
4. [4] *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1136; cf. *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, 627.
5. [5] Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* (8 December 1995), 23.
6. [6] *Catechesis* (20 May 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 21 May 2015, p. 8.
7. [7] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (28 November 1981) 38: AAS 74 (1982), 129.
8. [8] Cf. *Address to the Diocesan Conference of Rome* (14 June 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 15-16 June 2015, p. 8.
9. [291] Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 222: AAS 105 (2013), 1111.
10. [292] *Catechesis* (20 May 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 21 May 2015, p. 8.
11. [293] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 17.
12. [294] *Catechesis* (30 September 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 1 October 2015, p. 8.
13. [295] *Catechesis* (10 June 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 11 June 2015, p. 8
14. [296] Cf. *Relatio Finalis* 2015, 67
15. [297] *Catechesis* (20 May 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 21 May 2015, p. 8
16. [298] *Catechesis* (9 September 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 10 September 2015, p. 8.
17. [299] *Relatio Finalis* 2015, 68.
18. [300] *Ibid.*, 58
19. [301] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1.
20. [302] *Relatio Finalis* 2015, 56
21. [303] Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, New York, 1956, p. 54
22. [304] Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si’* (24 May 2015), 155.
23. [305] *Catechesis* (15 April 2015): L’Osservatore Romano, 16 April 2015, p. 8.
24. [306] Cf. *Relatio Finalis* 2015, 13-14.

25. [307] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate* 7,7: PL 40, 400.
26. [308] *Catechesis* (26 August 2015): L'Osservatore Romano, 27 August 2015, p. 8.
27. [309] *Relatio Finalis* 2015, 89.
28. [310] *Ibid.*, 93.

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS OF PASTORAL CARE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS***

POPE FRANCIS

*1 December 2016*

Dear Cardinals,  
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,  
Dear Students,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters!

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the Fourth World Congress of Pastoral Care for International Students, organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. I thank the Cardinal President for having introduced our meeting, and I offer a cordial greeting to the pastoral workers and university students present here.

The theme of your Congress is very interesting: it speaks of the moral challenges in the world of international students, with a view to a healthier society. This is the objective to keep in mind: to build a healthier society. It is important that the younger generations go in this direction, that they feel they are responsible for the reality in which they live and are architects of the future. The words of Saint Paul are also a powerful reminder and inspired advice for today's new generations, when he challenges the young disciple Timothy to act as an example to the faithful in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity, without fear that some might taunt him for his youth (cf. 1 Tim 4:12).

In our time, the moral challenges are many and it is not always easy to struggle for the affirmation of truth and values, especially when you are young. But with God's help, and with the sincere will to do good, all obstacles can be overcome. I'm happy because, if you are here, it is to demonstrate that challenges do not scare you, but impel you to work to build a more human world. Never stop and do not be discouraged, for the Spirit of Christ will guide you if you listen to his voice.

In contrast to the modern concept of the intellectual, engaged in the realization of self and in search of personal recognition, often without taking the other into consideration, it is necessary to propose a more supportive model, which promotes the common good and peace. Only in this way does the intellectual world become capable of building a healthier society. Those who are given the opportunity to study also have the responsibility to serve the good of humanity. Knowledge is the privileged path to the integral development of society; and being students in a country other than

your own, in another cultural horizon, allows you to learn new languages, new customs and traditions. It allows you to look at the world from another perspective and to fearlessly open yourselves to the other and to those who are different. This leads students, and those who receive them, to become more tolerant and hospitable. By increasing their social skills, they become more confident in themselves and in others; horizons expand, their vision of the future broadens and their desire to build together the common good grows.

Schools and universities are a privileged environment for strengthening sensitivity towards more solidarity-based development and for advancing an “evangelizing commitment in an interdisciplinary and integrated way”<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, I urge you teachers and pastoral workers to instil in young people love of the Gospel, the desire to live it concretely and to proclaim it to others. It is important that the period spent abroad may be an opportunity for human and cultural growth for students and be a starting point for them to return to their country of origin to offer their valuable contribution together with the inner urge to transmit the joy of the Good News. An education that teaches critical thinking and which encourages the development of mature values<sup>2</sup> is indispensable. In this way, young people are formed with a thirst for truth and not for power, ready to defend values and to live out mercy and charity, which are the main pillars for a healthier society.

Personal and cultural enrichment allow young people to more easily enter the labour force, securing their place in the community and becoming an integral part of it. For its part, society is called to offer viable employment opportunities to new generations, so as to avoid the so-called “brain drain”. If someone chooses freely to go abroad to specialize and to work, it is good and fruitful; however it is painful when educated young people are induced to leave their country because they lack adequate opportunities.

The phenomenon of international students is nothing new; however, it has increased because of the so-called globalization, which has broken down spatial and temporal boundaries, encouraging encounter and exchange between cultures. But here too we see negative aspects, such as the rise of a closed mentality, defence mechanisms in the face of diversity, inner walls that do not allow one to look a brother or sister in the eye and notice his or her real needs. Even among young people — and this is very sad — the “globalization of indifference” can creep in, which makes us “incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain”.<sup>3</sup> So, it happens that these negative effects have an impact on people and communities. Instead, dear friends, we want to believe that the way you live globalization can produce positive outcomes and generate great potential. Indeed, for you students, spending time away from your own country, in families and different contexts, you can develop a remarkable ability to adapt, learning to be guardians of others as brothers and sisters,

and of creation as our common home, and this is crucial to make the world more human. The educational process can accompany and guide you, young students, in this direction, and it can do so with the freshness of current events and the boldness of the Gospel, to form new evangelizers ready to infect the world with the joy of Christ to the very ends of the earth.

Dear young people, Saint John Paul II liked to call you “morning watchmen”. I encourage you to be so every day, keeping Christ and history in mind. In this way you will be able to proclaim the salvation of Jesus and to bear his light in a world too often obscured by the darkness of indifference, selfishness and war. I entrust you all to the maternal protection of Most Holy Mary, our Mother. I bless you, your studies, your friendship and your missionary commitment. And you, please, do not forget to pray for me.

#### NOTES

1. [1] cf. Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 134
2. [2] cf. *Ibid.*, 64
3. [3] *Ibid.*, 54

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE DURING THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO EGYPT***

POPE FRANCIS

*28 April 2017*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

As-salamu alaykum!

I consider it a great gift to be able to begin my Visit to Egypt here, and to address you in the context of this International Peace Conference. I thank my brother, the Grand Imam, for having planned and organized this Conference, and for kindly inviting me to take part. I would like to offer you a few thoughts, drawing on the glorious history of this land, which over the ages has appeared to the world as a land of civilizations and a land of covenants.

## **A land of civilizations**

From ancient times, the culture that arose along the banks of the Nile was synonymous with civilization. Egypt lifted the lamp of knowledge, giving birth to an inestimable cultural heritage, made up of wisdom and ingenuity, mathematical and astronomical discoveries, and remarkable forms of architecture and figurative art. The quest for knowledge and the value placed on education were the result of conscious decisions on the part of the ancient inhabitants of this land, and were to bear much fruit for the future. Similar decisions are needed for our own future, decisions of peace and for peace, for there will be no peace without the proper education of coming generations. Nor can young people today be properly educated unless the training they receive corresponds to the nature of man as an open and relational being.

Education indeed becomes wisdom for life if it is capable of “drawing out” of men and women the very best of themselves, in contact with the One who transcends them and with the world around them, fostering a sense of identity that is open and not self-enclosed. Wisdom seeks the other, overcoming temptations to rigidity and closed-mindedness; it is open and in motion, at once humble and inquisitive; it is able to value the past and set it in dialogue with the present, while employing a suitable hermeneutics. Wisdom prepares a future in which people do not attempt to push their own agenda but rather to include others as an integral part of themselves. Wisdom tirelessly seeks, even now, to identify opportunities for encounter

and sharing; from the past, it learns that evil only gives rise to more evil, and violence to more violence, in a spiral that ends by imprisoning everyone. Wisdom, in rejecting the dishonesty and the abuse of power, is centred on human dignity, a dignity which is precious in God's eyes, and on an ethics worthy of man, one that is unafraid of others and fearlessly employs those means of knowledge bestowed on us by the Creator.[1]

Precisely in the field of dialogue, particularly interreligious dialogue, we are constantly called to walk together, in the conviction that the future also depends on the encounter of religions and cultures. In this regard, the work of the *Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue* offers us a concrete and encouraging example. Three basic areas, if properly linked to one another, can assist in this dialogue: *the duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions.*

*The duty to respect one's own identity and that of others*, because true dialogue cannot be built on ambiguity or a willingness to sacrifice some good for the sake of pleasing others. *The courage to accept differences*, because those who are different, either culturally or religiously, should not be seen or treated as enemies, but rather welcomed as fellow-travellers, in the genuine conviction that the good of each resides in the good of all. *Sincerity of intentions*, because dialogue, as an authentic expression of our humanity, is not a strategy for achieving specific goals, but rather a path to truth, one that deserves to be undertaken patiently, in order to transform competition into cooperation.

An education in respectful openness and sincere dialogue with others, recognizing their rights and basic freedoms, particularly religious freedom, represents the best way to build the future *together*, to be *builders of civility*. For the only alternative to the *civility of encounter* is the *incivility of conflict*; there is no other way. To counter effectively the barbarity of those who foment hatred and violence, we need to accompany young people, helping them on the path to maturity and teaching them to respond to the incendiary logic of evil by patiently working for the growth of goodness. In this way, young people, like well-planted trees, can be firmly rooted in the soil of history, and, growing heavenward in one another's company, can daily turn the polluted air of hatred into the oxygen of fraternity.

#### NOTES

1. [1] "An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue": *Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace, Message for the 2017 World Day of Peace*, 5.

2. [2] John Paul II, *Address to Muslim Religious Leaders*, Kaduna (Nigeria), 14 February 1982.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONGRESS ON "CHILD DIGNITY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD"***

POPE FRANCIS

*6 October 2017*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

The acknowledgment and defense of the dignity of the human person is the origin and basis of every right social and political order, and the Church has recognized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as “a true milestone on the path of moral progress of humanity”.<sup>1</sup> So too, in the knowledge that children are among those most in need of care and protection, the Holy See received the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959) and adhered to the relative Convention (1990) and its two optional protocols (2001). The dignity and rights of children must be protected by legal systems as priceless goods for the entire human family.<sup>2</sup>

While completely and firmly agreed on these principles, we must work together on their basis. We need to do this decisively and with genuine passion, considering with tender affection all those children who come into this world every day and in every place. They need our respect, but also our care and affection, so that they can grow and achieve all their rich potential.

[...]

We are living in a new world that, when we were young, we could hardly have imagined. We define it by two simple words as a “digital world”, but it is the fruit of extraordinary achievements of science and technology. In a few decades, it has changed the way we live and communicate. Even now, it is in some sense changing our very way of thinking and of being, and profoundly influencing the perception of our possibilities and our identity.

[...]

As you know well, and are teaching us, what is distinctive about the net is precisely that it is worldwide; it covers the planet, breaking down every barrier, becoming ever more pervasive, reaching everywhere and to every kind of user, including children, due to mobile devices that are becoming smaller and easier to use. As a result, today no one in the world, or any single national authority, feels capable of monitoring and adequately controlling the extent and the growth of these phenomena, themselves interconnected and linked to other grave problems associated with the net, such as illicit trafficking, economic and financial crimes, and international

terrorism. From an educational standpoint too, we feel bewildered, because the speed of its growth has left the older generation on the sidelines, rendering extremely difficult, if not impossible, intergenerational dialogue and a serene transmission of rules and wisdom acquired by years of life and experience.

But we must not let ourselves be overcome by fear, which is always a poor counsellor. Nor let ourselves be paralyzed by the sense of powerlessness that overwhelms us before the difficulty of the task before us. Rather, we are called to join forces, realizing that we need one another in order to seek and find the right means and approaches needed for effective responses. We must be confident that “we can broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral”<sup>3</sup>.

[...]

I firmly and enthusiastically support the commitments that you have undertaken.

These include raising awareness of the gravity of the problems, enacting suitable legislation, overseeing developments in technology, identifying victims and prosecuting those guilty of crimes. They include assisting minors who have been affected and providing for their rehabilitation, assisting educators and families, and finding creative ways of training young people in the proper use of the internet in ways healthy for themselves and for other minors. They also include fostering greater sensitivity and providing moral formation, as well as continuing scientific research in all the fields associated with this challenge.

#### NOTES

1. [1] cf. John Paul II, *Addresses to the United Nations Organization*, 1979 and 1995
2. [2] cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Nos. 244-245
3. [3] *Laudato Si'*, 112

# ***ADDRESS TO THE COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY***

POPE FRANCIS

*28 October 2017*

*(Selected Excerpt)*

## **Room for solidarity**

Instead, many young people are lost, without roots or prospects, they are uprooted, “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14). At times they are even “held captive” by possessive adults who struggle to carry out their own responsibilities. It is a grave responsibility to provide an education, not only by offering technical and scientific knowledge, but above all by working “to promote the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human”.<sup>[4]</sup> This demands the involvement of society as a whole. Education is a shared duty that requires the active and combined participation of parents, schools and universities, religious and civil institutions. Without education, culture does not develop and the life of the community dries up.

## **NOTES**

1. [4] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* (28 October 1963), 3.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES***

POPE FRANCIS

***4 November 2017***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you at the conclusion of the International Conference entitled “Migrants and Refugees in a Globalized World: Responsibility and Responses of Universities”, organized by the International Federation of Catholic Universities. I thank the President for the words with which he introduced our meeting.

For little less than a century this organization, with the motto “*Sciat ut serviat*”, has sought to promote Catholic formation at a higher level, availing itself of the great richness that derives from the encounter of many diverse university situations. An essential aspect of this formation aspires to promote social responsibility, for the building of a more just and more humane world. Thus, you have felt called by the global and complex situation of contemporary migration and have organized a scientific, theological and pedagogical reflection deeply rooted in the Social Doctrine of the Church, in an endeavour to overcome the prejudice and fear linked to an inadequate awareness of the migratory phenomenon. I congratulate you and would like to point out the need for *your contribution in three areas* that are within your competence: those of *research, teaching, and social promotion*.

With regard to the first area, Catholic universities have always sought to harmonize *scientific* with *theological research*, placing reason and faith in dialogue. I think it would be timely to begin further — even long-term — studies into the remote causes of forced migration, with the aim of identifying practical solutions, because it is important first to ensure people the right not to be forced to emigrate. It is likewise important to take into account the reactions — negative in principle, at times even discriminatory and xenophobic — that the arrival of migrants is generating in countries of ancient Christian Tradition, in order to recommend programmes for educating consciences. Moreover, the migrants and refugees’ many contributions to the host society certainly deserve greater appreciation, as do those contributions that benefit their communities of origin. In order to give “rationales” to the pastoral care of migrants and refugees, I invite you to deepen theological reflection on migration as a sign of the times. “In migrants the Church has always contemplated the image of Christ who said, ‘I was a stranger and you made me welcome’ (Mt 25:35). Their condition is, therefore, a challenge to the faith and love of believers, who

are called on to heal the evils caused by migration and discover the plan God pursues through it, even when caused by obvious injustices”.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the *teaching* sphere, I hope that Catholic universities may set up programmes aimed at fostering the education of refugees, at various levels, both by offering correspondence courses for those living in reception camps and centres, and by allocating study grants that allow for their relocation. By taking advantage of the extensive international academic network, universities can also facilitate the recognition of the qualifications and professional status of migrants and refugees, to their benefit and that of the societies that welcome them. In order to respond satisfactorily to the new challenges of migration, it is important to train, in a specific and professional way, the pastoral workers who strive to assist migrants and refugees: this is another compelling task for Catholic universities. At a more general level, I would like to invite Catholic universities to educate their own students — some of whom will become political leaders, entrepreneurs and creators of culture — to understand the migratory phenomenon, in a perspective of justice, global co-responsibility and communion in cultural diversity.

The sphere of *social promotion* views the university as an institution that undertakes to bear the burdens of the society in which it operates, by exercising first and foremost its role of critical conscience with regard to the various forms of political, economic and cultural powers. With regard to the complex world of migration, the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has recommended “20 Action Points” as a contribution to the process that will lead to the the international community’s adoption of two Global Compacts, one on migrants and the other on refugees, in the second half of 2018. In this and other areas, universities can carry out their role as privileged actors even in the social sphere, such as, for example, by encouraging students to engage in volunteer assistance programmes for refugees, asylum seekers, and newly arrived migrants.

All the work that you carry out in these great areas — research, education and social promotion — finds a sure reference in the four milestones on the Church’s path through the situations of contemporary migration: *to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate*.<sup>2</sup>

#### NOTES

1. [1] Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, 12

2. [2] cf. *Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees* 2018

# ***ADDRESS TO THE PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CHILE DURING THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO CHILE***

POPE FRANCIS

***17 January 2018***

Grand Chancellor, Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati,  
My Brothers Bishops,  
President Dr Ignacio Sánchez,  
Distinguished University Authorities,  
Dear Professors, Administrators, University Personnel,  
Dear Students,

I am happy to be here with you at this House of Studies, which in its 130 years of life has rendered a priceless service to the country. I thank the President for his words of welcome on behalf of all, and for everything you do with such wisdom to administer the University and defend courageously the identity of the Catholic University. Thank you.

The history of this university is in some sense woven into the history of Chile. Thousands of men and women who were educated here have made significant contributions to the development of the nation. I would like especially to mention Saint Albert Hurtado, who began his studies here a century ago. His life is a clear testimony to how intelligence, academic excellence and professionalism, when joined to faith, justice and charity, far from weakening, attain a prophetic power capable of opening horizons and pointing the way, especially for those on the margins of society, particularly in our day where a throwaway culture prevails.

In this regard, I would like to take up your words, dear President, when you said: “We have important challenges for our country that have to do with *peaceful coexistence as a nation* and the ability to *progress as a community*”.

## **Peaceful coexistence as a nation**

To speak of challenges is to acknowledge that situations have reached the point where they need to be rethought. What was hitherto an element of unity and cohesion now calls for new responses. The accelerated pace and a sense of disorientation before new processes and changes in our societies call for a serene but urgent reflection that is neither naïve nor utopian, much less arbitrary. This has nothing to do with curbing the growth of knowledge, but rather with making the University a privileged space for “putting into practice the grammar of dialogue, which shapes encounter”.<sup>1</sup>

For “true wisdom [is] the fruit of reflection, dialogue and generous encounter between persons”.<sup>2</sup>

Peaceful coexistence as a nation is possible, not least to the extent that we can generate educational processes that are also transformative, inclusive and meant to favour such coexistence. Educating for peaceful coexistence does not mean simply attaching values to the work of education, but rather establishing a dynamic of coexistence within the very system of education itself. It is not so much a question of content but of teaching how to think and reason in an integrated way. What was traditionally called *forma mentis*.

To achieve this, it is necessary to develop an “integrating literacy” capable of encompassing the processes of change now taking place in our societies.

This literacy process requires working simultaneously to integrate the different languages that constitute us as persons. That is to say, an education (literacy) that integrates and harmonizes intellect, affections and hands, that is to say, head, heart and action. This will offer students a growth that is harmonious not only at the personal level, but also at the level of society. We urgently need to create spaces where fragmentation is not the guiding principle, even for thinking. To do this, it is necessary to teach how to reflect on what we are feeling and doing; to feel what we are thinking and doing; to do what we are thinking and feeling. An interplay of capacities at the service of the person and society.

Literacy, based on the integration of the distinct languages that shape us, will engage students in their own educational process, a process that will prepare them to face the challenges of the near future. The “divorce” of fields of learning from languages, and illiteracy with regard to integrating the distinct dimensions of life, bring only fragmentation and social breakdown.

In this “liquid” society<sup>3</sup> or “society of lightness”,<sup>4</sup> as various thinkers have termed it, those points of reference that people use to build themselves individually and socially are disappearing. It seems that the new meeting place of today is the “cloud”, which is characterized by instability since everything evaporates and thus loses consistency.

Such lack of consistency may be one of the reasons for the loss of a consciousness of the importance of public life, which requires a minimum ability to transcend private interests (living longer and better) in order to build upon foundations that reveal that crucial dimension of our life which is “us”. Without that consciousness, but especially without that feeling and consequently without that experience, it is very difficult to build the nation. As a result, the only thing that appears to be important and valid is what pertains to the individual, and all else becomes irrelevant. A culture of this sort has lost its memory, lost the bonds that support it and make its life possible. Without the “us” of a people, of a family and of a nation, but also the “us” of the future, of our children and of tomorrow, without the “us” of a city that transcends “me” and is richer than individual interests, life will be not only increasingly fragmented, but also more conflictual and violent.

The university, in this context, is challenged to generate within its own precincts new processes that can overcome every fragmentation of knowledge and stimulate a true *universitas*.

### **Progressing as a community**

Hence, the second key element for this House of Studies: the ability to progress as a community.

I was pleased to learn of the evangelizing outreach and the joyful vitality of your university chaplaincy, which is a sign of a young, lively Church that “goes forth”. The missions that take place each year in different parts of the country are an impressive and enriching reality. With these, you are able to broaden your outlook and encounter different situations that, along with regular events, keep you on the move. “Missionaries”, in the etymological sense of the word, are never equal to the mission; they learn to be sensitive to God’s pace through their encounter with all sorts of people who they either did not know, did not have daily contact with or were at a distance.

Such experiences cannot remain isolated from the life of the university. The classic methods of research are experiencing certain limits, more so when it is a question of a culture such as ours, which stimulates direct and immediate participation by all. Present-day culture demands new forms that are more inclusive of all those who make up social and hence educational realities. We see, then, the importance of broadening the concept of the educating community.

The challenge for the community is to not isolate itself from modes of knowledge, or, for that matter, to develop a body of knowledge with minimal concern about those for whom it is intended. It is vital that the acquisition of knowledge lead to an interplay between the university classroom and the wisdom of the peoples who make up this richly blessed land. That wisdom is full of intuitions and perceptions that cannot be overlooked when we think of Chile. An enriching synergy will thus come about between scientific rigour and popular insight; the close interplay of these two parts will prevent a divorce between reason and action, between thinking and feeling, between knowing and living, between profession and service. Knowledge must always sense that it is at the service of life, and must confront it directly in order to keep progressing. Hence, the educational community cannot be reduced to classrooms and libraries but must progress continually towards participation. This dialogue can only take place on the basis of an *episteme* capable of “thinking in the plural”, that is, conscious of the interdisciplinary and interdependent nature of learning. “In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed”.<sup>5</sup>

The educational community can enjoy an endless number of possibilities and potentialities if it allows itself to be enriched and challenged by all who are part of the educational enterprise. This requires an increased concern for quality and integration. For the service that the university offers must always aim for quality and excellence in the service of national coexistence. We could say that the university becomes a laboratory for the future of the country, insofar as it succeeds in embodying the life and progress of the people, and can overcome every antagonistic and elitist approach to learning.

An ancient cabalistic tradition says that evil originates in the rift produced in the human being by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Knowledge thus gained the upper hand over creation, subjecting it to its own designs and desires.<sup>6</sup> This will always be a subtle temptation in every academic setting: to reduce creation to certain interpretative models that deprive it of the very Mystery that has moved whole generations to seek what is just, good, beautiful and true. Whenever a “professor”, by virtue of his wisdom, becomes a “teacher”, he is then truly capable of awakening wonderment in our students. Wonderment at the world and at an entire universe waiting to be discovered!

In our day, the mission entrusted to you is prophetic. You are challenged to generate processes that enlighten contemporary culture by proposing a renewed humanism that eschews any form of reductionism. This prophetic role demanded of us prompts us to seek out ever new spaces for dialogue rather than confrontation, spaces of encounter rather than division, paths of friendly disagreement that allow for respectful differences between persons joined in a sincere effort to advance as a community towards a renewed national coexistence.

If you ask for this, I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit will guide your steps, so that this House will continue to bear fruit for the good of the Chilean people and for the glory of God.

I thank you once again for this meeting, and please I ask you to remember to pray for me.

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Address to the Plenary of the Congregation for Catholic Education* (9 February 2017).
2. [2] Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si*, 47.
3. [3] Cf. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernidad líquida*, 1999.
4. [4] Cf. Gilles Lipovetsky, *De la ligereza*, 2016.
5. [5] Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si*, 146.
6. [6] Cf. Gershom Scholem, *La mystique juive*, Paris, 1985, 86.

# ***INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS FOR THE XV GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD 2018 “YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT”***

POPE FRANCIS

*8 May 2018*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

## **Education, School and University**

19. Educational and training institutions are not just the places where young people spend most of their time: first and foremost these are existential spaces that society dedicates to their intellectual and human growth and vocational guidance. However, there are several problems, mainly related to the fact that school and university systems often provide information without formation, and do not foster the development of critical thinking and a deeper sense of what studying means, also in vocational terms. In many countries, unequal access to school systems is evident, as well as training opportunity gaps between rural and urban areas and alarming drop-out rates: all in all, these things are a threat to the future of young people and society. In some countries, the situation of those who neither study nor work (so-called “NEETs”) is equally worrisome and requires attention also in terms of pastoral care.

20. In many countries where education systems are inadequate, the Church and her educational institutions play a fundamental remedial role, whereas elsewhere they have a hard time keeping up with national quality standards. A particularly sensitive domain is professional training, where in several countries Catholic school institutions play an important role: they do not just teach technical skills but help students discover how they can make the most of their abilities, irrespective of what and how many they are. Distance learning or informal education initiatives are extremely important in contexts where poverty and deprivation are greater, since they provide opportunities to bridge the gaps in access to schooling.

21. It is not just schools: as the PM states, «the young person’s identity is also shaped by our external interaction and membership within specific groups, associations and movements which are also active outside of the Church. Sometimes, parishes are no longer places of connection» (PM 1). The wish to find positive role models is still strong: «We also recognize the role of educators and friends, such as leaders of youth groups who can become good examples. We need to find attractive, coherent and authentic models» (PM 1)

[...]

### **The Ubiquitousness of the Digital Continent**

34. The pervasiveness of digital and social media in the world of young people is evident. This was clearly stated by young people in the PM: «The impact of social media in the lives of young people cannot be understated. Social media are a significant part of young people's identity and way of life. Digital environments have a great potential to unite people across geographical distances like never before. The exchange of information, ideals, values and common interests is now more possible. Access to online learning tools has opened up educational opportunities for young people in remote areas and has brought the world's knowledge to one's finger tips» (PM 4).

35. The web can also be a place of loneliness, manipulation, exploitation and violence, up to the extreme case of the "dark web". Young people are aware that risks are out there: «The duplicity of - 14 - technology however, becomes evident when it leads to the development of certain vices. This danger is manifested through isolation, laziness, desolation and boredom. It is evident that young people around the world are obsessively consuming media products. Despite living in a hyper-connected world, communication among young people remains limited to those who are similar to them [...]. With the advent of social media, this has led to new challenges over the extent to which new media companies have power over the lives of young people» (PM 4). Developing the ability to engage in a sober conversation and dialogue with diversity is being hindered by this situation, and becomes a real educational challenge where the young are concerned. BC also agree on this ambiguity, albeit focusing more on critical evaluations. Also due to ignorance or inadequate formation, pastors and adults in general have a hard time understanding this new language and also tend to be scared, feeling they are in front of an "invisible and ubiquitous enemy" that they demonize at times.

[...]

### **Family, Formative and Social Accompaniment**

127. The contexts in which ordinary life unfolds provide many opportunities for a closeness that can accompany our journey of growth, in a specifically spiritual or more broadly human sense. There are instances when this kind of accompaniment falls within the institutional tasks of those who provide it, and others in which it is based on the willingness, capacity and commitment of the individuals who are involved.

Several BC mention the indispensable role families play in vocational discernment, especially when parents are inspiring role models of faith and dedication: parents are always the first witnesses, and even more so in places where there is a shortage of ordained ministers. However, the opposite can also happen, when families overemphasize the importance of economic or professional success, and this ultimately hinders the possibility for a rigorous journey of vocational discernment. Sometimes, the breakdown of families leads to young people's disillusionment regarding the possibility to plan the future with long-term hope.

Accompaniment, also under different names, is at the center of attention of many education systems, both at school and university level. Before being a task that is assigned to specific individuals, it is a basic pedagogical attitude and a mindset that pervade the entire educational community. Tutoring within vocational training, to help young people start their career, is also valuable. As several BC point out, these kinds of accompaniments are «the most important conduit through which schools, universities and other educational institutions contribute to young people's vocational discernment», in addition to being an opportunity to stimulate a critical approach to reality starting from a Christian perspective and listening to God's voice.

Lastly, there are several contexts, roles and professions in which adults who get in contact with young people, perhaps due to specific issues, can provide an accompaniment that favors their human maturity or the solution of problem situations: we could think about the role of sports coaches, people who have education responsibilities or work in specific kinds of institutions (prisons, shelters of various kinds, counseling offices or clinics) or professions (physicians, psychologists, educators, etc.). Albeit within the confines of their responsibilities, also as professionals, we must admit that these forms of accompaniment can have a spiritual significance, and play a role in the process of vocational discernment.

[...]

### **Accompaniment in Schools and Universities**

146. Practically all BC underline the importance that schools, universities and educational institutions of different kinds have in accompanying young people in their search for a personal life plan, and for the development of societies. In several regions they are the main - if not the only - places without explicit ecclesial character, where many young people come into contact with the Church. In some instances, they even become an alternative to parishes, that many young people neither know nor frequent. The young people of the Pre-synodal Meeting also underline the importance of the Church's engagement in these contexts: «Resources are not wasted when

they are put into these areas as these are the places in which many young people spend most of their time and where they often engage with people of varied socioeconomic backgrounds» (PM 13). In particular, more attention is requested for the great number of young people who drop out of school or have no access to it.

### **The Need for an Integral Outlook and Formation**

147. In many schools and universities, including Catholic institutions, education and formation are geared towards purely utilitarian goals, emphasizing the application of acquired knowledge in the labor market, rather than personal growth. Instead, we need to place technical and scientific knowhow in an integral perspective, whose reference horizon is the “ecological culture” (cf. LS 111). Also, we need to reconcile intellect and desire, reason and affectivity; we need to form responsible citizens, who are able to deal with the complexity of our contemporary world and engage in dialogue with diversity; we need to help them integrate the spiritual dimension in study and cultural engagement; we need to enable them to discern not only personal paths of meaning, but also trajectories of common good for the societies they belong to.

148. This integral notion of education requires a systemic conversion, that involves all members of educating communities, as well as the material, economic and institutional structures they rely on. Instructors, professors, tutors and all the professionals who are involved in educational pathways, in particular those who work in abandoned and disadvantaged areas, provide a valuable service for which the Church is grateful. A renewed investment in their integral formation is necessary, to facilitate the rediscovery and reappropriation of what a true vocation is: they are called not only to convey contents, but also to be witnesses to human maturity, by initiating generative dynamics of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood that are able to make young people the subjects and protagonists of their own adventure.

### **The Specificity and Richness of Catholic Schools and Universities**

149. Many BC worldwide express their appreciation for Catholic schools and universities. Their goal, as Pope Francis said, is not to proselytize, but «to bring young people and children forward in human values in all realities, and one such reality is transcendence».<sup>1</sup> This perspective directs them to work with other local educational agencies and, at the same time, shows how in free and open societies, in which different identities need to engage in dialogue, closed ideologies make no sense.

150. In order to be faithful to their mission, these institutions must verify whether students have actually received the values presented to them and they must promote a culture of continuous evaluation and self-evaluation. Beyond abstract statements, we have to ask ourselves to what extent our schools help young people see their studies as a responsibility for the world's

problems, for the needs of the poorest and for the care of the environment. For Catholic universities – Pope Francis was saying this to Portuguese universities – it is not enough to analyze and describe reality; they need to create «spaces for real research, debates that generate alternatives for contemporary problems» and «include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in their research. Catholic schools and universities are invited to show in practice what an inclusive and integral pedagogy is all about».<sup>2</sup>

151. In particular, for ecclesiastical universities, faculties and institutes – and by the same token also for all Catholic schools and universities – it is important to consider certain inspiring criteria: the spiritual, intellectual and existential contemplation of the kerygma; an all-encompassing dialogue; interdisciplinarity exercised with wisdom and creativity; the urgent need for “networking” (cf. VG 4).

#### NOTES

1. [1] *Address to the Participants in the World Congress on “Educating Today and Tomorrow. A Renewing Passion”*, 21 November 2015

2. [2] *Audience with the Portuguese Catholic University*, 26 October 2017

## ***ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE "GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS" FOUNDATION***

POPE FRANCIS

*25 June 2018*

Dear Friends,

I offer a cordial welcome to those taking part in the Conference “To Educate is to Transform” promoted by the *Gravissimum Educationis* Foundation. I thank Cardinal Versaldi for his words of introduction and I am grateful to each of you for bringing the richness of your experiences in various sectors related to your personal and professional activities.

As you know, I established this Foundation on 28 October 2015, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*, at the request of the Congregation for Catholic Education. By this foundation, the Church renews her commitment to Catholic education in step with the historical transformations of our time. The Foundation is in fact a response to the appeal made by the conciliar Declaration, which suggested that schools and universities cooperate so as better to face today’s challenges (cf. n. 12). This recommendation of the Council has developed over time, and can also be found in the recent Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, which speaks of “the urgent need for ‘networking’ between those institutions worldwide that cultivate and promote ecclesiastical studies” (Foreword, 4d) and, more broadly, among Catholic educational institutions.

Only by changing education can we change the world. To this end, I should like to offer you some suggestions:

1. First, it is important to “network”. Networking means uniting schools and universities for the sake of improving the work education and research, drawing upon everyone’s strong points for greater effectiveness on the intellectual and cultural levels.

Networking also means uniting the various branches of knowledge, the sciences and fields of study, in order to face complex challenges with an inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach, as recommended by *Veritatis Gaudium* (cf. n. 4c).

Networking means creating spaces for encounter and dialogue within educational institutions, and encouraging similar spaces outside our institutions, with people of other cultures, other traditions and different religions, so that a Christian humanism can consider the overall reality of humanity today.

Networking also means making the school an educating community where teachers and students are brought together not only by the teaching curriculum, but also by a curriculum of life and experience that can educate the different generations to mutual sharing. This is so important so as not to lose our roots!

Moreover, the challenges facing our human family today are global, in a more wide-ranging sense than is often thought. Catholic education is not limited to forming minds to a broader outlook, capable of embracing distant realities. It also recognized that mankind's moral responsibility today does not just extend through space, but also through time, and that present choices have repercussions for future generations.

2. Another challenge facing education today is one that I pointed out in my Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: "we must not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!" (n. 86). With this appeal, I meant to encourage the men and women of our time to face social change optimistically, so that they can immerse themselves in reality with the light that radiates from the promise of Christian salvation.

We are called not to lose hope, because we must offer hope to the global world of today. "Globalizing hope" and "supporting the hopes of globalization" are basic commitments in the mission of Catholic education, as stated in the recent document of the Congregation for Catholic Education *Educating to Fraternal Humanism* (cf. nn. 18-19). A globalization bereft of hope or vision can easily be conditioned by economic interests, which are often far removed from a correct understanding of the common good, and which easily give rise to social tensions, economic conflicts and abuses of power. We need to give a soul to the global world through an intellectual and moral formation that can support the good things that globalization brings and correct the harmful ones.

These are important goals that can be attained by the growth of scientific research carried out by universities and present, too, in the mission of the *Gravissimum Educationis* Foundation Quality research, which looks to a horizon rich in challenges. Some of these challenges, as I noted in my Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, have to do with processes of global interdependence. The latter is, on the one hand, a beneficial historical force since it marks a greater cohesion among human beings; on the other, it gives rise to injustices and brings out the close relationship between grave forms of human poverty and the ecological crises of our world. The response is to be sought in developing and researching an integral ecology. Again, I should like to emphasize the economic challenge, based on researching better models of development corresponding to a more authentic understanding of human fulfilment and capable of correcting some of the perverse mechanisms of consumption and production. Then too, there is the political challenge: the power of technology is constantly expanding. One of its effects is to spread a throw-away culture that engulfs objects and persons without distinction.

It entails a vision of man as a predator and the world in which we live as a resource to be despoiled at will.

Certainly, there is no shortage of work for academics and researchers engaged with the *Gravissimum Educationis* Foundation!

3. The work before you, with the support you give to innovative educational projects, must respect three essential criteria in order to be effective:

First, identity. This calls for consistency and continuity with the mission of schools, universities and research centres founded, promoted or accompanied by the Church and open to all. Those values are essential for following the way marked out by Christian civilization and by the Church's mission of evangelization. In this way, you can help to indicate what paths to take, in order to give up-to-date answers to today's problems, with a preferential regard for those who are most needy.

Another essential point is quality. This is the sure beacon that must shed light on every enterprise of study, research and education. It is necessary for achieving those "outstanding interdisciplinary centres" recommended by the Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (cf. n. 5) and which the Foundation *Gravissimum Educationis* aspires to support.

Then too, your work cannot overlook the goal of the *common good*. The common good is difficult to define in our societies characterized by the coexistence of citizens, groups and peoples belonging to different cultures, traditions and faiths. We must broaden the horizons of the common good, educating everyone to understand that we belong to one human family.

To fulfil your mission, therefore, you must lay its foundations in a way consistent with our Christian identity; establish means appropriate for the quality of study and research; and pursue goals in harmony with service to the common good.

A plan of thought and action based on these solid pillars will be able to contribute, through education, to building a future in which the dignity of the person and universal fraternity are global resources upon which every citizen of the world can draw.

I thank you for all that you can do with your support for the Foundation, and I encourage you to continue in this worthy and beneficial mission. Upon you, your colleagues and families, I cordially invoke the Lord's abundant blessings. And I ask you, please, to remember to pray for me. Thank you.

# ***FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON “YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT”***

POPE FRANCIS

***27 October 2018***

***(Selected Excerpts)***

## **A first look at the Church of today**

### *The Church's commitment to education*

15. In many regions, young people see the Church as a force that is vital and engaging, meaningful too for their contemporaries who are not believers or are followers of other religions. The Church's educational institutions seek to welcome all young people, regardless of their religious choices, cultural origins, and personal, family or social situations. In this way the Church makes a fundamental contribution to the integral education of the young in various parts of the world. This takes place also through the education provided in schools of all kinds and levels, in centres of professional training, in colleges and in universities, but also in youth centres and oratories. It is also seen in the welcome given to refugees and in the wide gamut of forms of social engagement. In all these ways the Church joins her witness and her proclamation of the Gospel to her work of education and human promotion. When inspired by intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the Church's educational activity is also appreciated by non-Christians as a form of authentic human promotion.

[...]

### *A pedagogy capable of dialogue*

70. Mission is a sure target for life's journey, but not a "satellite navigation system" which lays out the whole route in advance. Freedom always entails a dimension of risk which needs to be evaluated with courage and accompanied wisely, according to the "law of graduality". Many pages in the Gospel portray Jesus inviting us to be daring, to put out into the deep, to pass from the logic of following commandments to that of generous and unconditional gift, without concealing the requirement to take up one's cross (cf. Mt 16:24). He is radical: "He gives all and he asks all: he gives a love that is total and asks for an undivided heart".<sup>1</sup> Without misleading the young through minimalist proposals or overwhelming them with a body of rules that give Christianity a reductive and moralistic image, we are called to invest in their fearlessness and to educate them to take on

their responsibilities, in the sure knowledge that error, failure and crisis are experiences that can strengthen their humanity.

[...]

*Youth centres*

143. Specific places dedicated to the young by the Christian community, such as oratories, youth centres and other similar structures, manifest the Church's passion for education. They can take many forms, but they remain privileged spaces in which the Church becomes a welcoming home for adolescents and young adults, who can discover their talents and offer them in service. They transmit a very rich educational patrimony, to be shared on a large scale, to support families and civil society itself. In the context of a Church that looks outwards, though, a creative and flexible renewal of these realities is needed, moving away from the idea of static centres, to which the young can come, towards the idea of pastoral subjects moving with and towards the young, capable, that is, of meeting them in their ordinary places of life – school and the digital environment, existential peripheries, the rural world, the world of work, musical and artistic expression, etc. – generating a new type of apostolate that is more dynamic and active.

[...]

*Education, school and university*

158. During the Synod there was a particular insistence on the decisive and essential task of professional formation in schools and universities, not least because these are places where most young people spend much of their time. In some parts of the world basic education is the first and most important question that the young put to the Church. For the Christian community it is important therefore to maintain a significant presence in these fields with good teachers, flourishing chaplaincies and serious cultural engagement. Catholic educational institutions should be the subject of particular reflection. They express the Church's concern for the integral formation of the young. These are precious arenas for encounters between the Gospel and the culture of a people and for the development of research. Such institutions are called to propose a model of formation that can bring faith into dialogue with the questions of the contemporary world, with different anthropological perspectives, with the challenges of science and technology, with changes in social customs and with the commitment to justice. Special attention should be given in these settings to the promotion of young people's creativity in the fields of science and art, poetry and literature, music and sport, the digital world and the media, etc. In this way the young will be able to discover their talents and put them at the disposal of society for the good of all. Preparing new formators

159. The recent Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* on ecclesiastical faculties and universities put forward some fundamental criteria for formation capable of addressing the challenges of the present day: spiritual, intellectual and existential contemplation of the kerygma, holistic dialogue, multi-disciplinary work carried out with wisdom and creativity and the urgent need for “networking”.<sup>2</sup> These principles can inspire all educative and formative spheres; their adoption will be particularly beneficial for forming new educators, helping them to open themselves to a vision capable of integrating experience and truth. At a global level the Pontifical Universities play a key part and so too, at a continental and national level, do Catholic universities and centres of study. Periodic review, aiming for the highest standards and the constant renewal of these institutions, is a great strategic investment for the good of the young and of the whole Church.

#### NOTES

1. [1] Francis, *Homily*, 14 October 2018

2. [2] cf. *Veritatis Gaudium*, 4d

# ***ADDRESS TO THE INTERRELIGIOUS MEETING DURING THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES***

POPE FRANCIS

*4 February 2019*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

The logo of this journey depicts a dove with an olive branch. It is an image that recalls the story – present in different religious traditions – of the primordial flood. According to the biblical account, in order to preserve humanity from destruction, God asked Noah to enter the ark along with his family. Today, we too in the name of God, in order to safeguard peace, need to enter together as one family into an ark which can sail the stormy seas of the world: the *ark of fraternity*.

[...]

## *Education and Justice*

Let us return, then, to the initial image of the dove of peace. Peace, in order to fly, needs wings that uphold it: the wings of education and justice.

*Education* – in Latin it means “extracting, drawing out” – is to bring to light the precious resources of the soul. It is comforting to note how in this country investments are being made not only in the extraction of the earth’s resources, but also in those of the heart, in the education of young people. It is a commitment that I hope will continue and spread elsewhere. Education also happens in a relationship, in reciprocity. Alongside the famous ancient maxim “*know yourself*”, we must uphold “*know your brother or sister*”: their history, their culture and their faith, because there is no genuine self-knowledge without the other. As human beings, and even more so as brothers and sisters, let us remind each other that nothing of what is human can remain foreign to us.[7] It is important for the future to form open identities capable of overcoming the temptation to turn in on oneself and become rigid.

Investing in culture encourages a decrease of hatred and a growth of civility and prosperity. Education and violence are inversely proportional. Catholic schools – well appreciated in this country and in the region – promote such education on behalf of peace and reciprocal knowledge in order to prevent violence.

Young people, who are often surrounded by negative messages and *fake news*, need to learn not to surrender to the seductions of materialism, hatred and prejudice. They need to learn to object to injustice and also to

the painful experiences of the past. They need to learn to defend the rights of others with the same energy with which they defend their own rights. One day, they will be the ones to judge us. They will judge us well, if we have given them a solid foundation for creating new encounters of civility. They will judge us poorly, if we have left them only mirages and the empty prospect of harmful conflicts of incivility.

[...]

A fraternal living together, founded on education and justice; a human development built upon a welcoming inclusion and on the rights of all: these are the seeds of peace which the world's religions are called to help flourish. For them, perhaps as never before, in this delicate historical situation, it is a task that can no longer be postponed: to contribute actively to *demilitarizing the human heart*. The arms race, the extension of its zones of influence, the aggressive policies to the detriment of others will never bring stability. War cannot create anything but misery, weapons bring nothing but death!

Human fraternity requires of us, as representatives of the world's religions, the duty to reject every nuance of approval from the word "war". Let us return it to its miserable crudeness. Its fateful consequences are before our eyes. I am thinking in particular of Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya. Together, as brothers and sisters in the one human family willed by God, let us commit ourselves against the logic of armed power, against the monetization of relations, the arming of borders, the raising of walls, the gagging of the poor; let us oppose all this with the sweet power of prayer and daily commitment to dialogue. Our being together today is a message of trust, an encouragement to all people of good will, so that they may not surrender to the floods of violence and the desertification of altruism. God is with those who seek peace. From heaven he blesses every step which, on this path, is accomplished on earth.

#### NOTES

1. [7] Cf. Terence, *Heautontimorumenos* (*The Self-Tormentor*) I, 1, 25

# ***APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION CHRISTUS VIVIT, POST-SYNODAL EXHORTATION TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND TO THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD***

POPE FRANCIS

*25 March 2019*

*(Selected Excerpts)*

213. Any educational project or path of growth for young people must certainly include formation in Christian doctrine and morality. It is likewise important that it have two main goals. One is the development of the *kerygma*, the foundational experience of encounter with God through Christ's death and resurrection. The other is growth in fraternal love, community life and service

[...]

221. Schools are unquestionably a platform for drawing close to children and young people. Precisely because they are such privileged places of personal development, the Christian community has always been concerned to train teachers and administrators, and to found its own schools of various kinds and levels. In this field of educating the young, the Spirit has raised up countless charisms and examples of holiness. Yet schools are in urgent need of self-criticism, if we consider the results of their pastoral outreach, which in many cases focuses on a kind of religious instruction that proves often incapable of nurturing lasting experiences of faith. Some Catholic schools seem to be structured only for the sake of self-preservation. Fear of change makes them entrenched and defensive before the dangers, real or imagined, that any change might bring. A school that becomes a "bunker", protecting its students from errors "from without" is a caricature of this tendency. Yet this image reflects, in a chilling way, what many young people experience when they graduate from certain educational institutions: an insurmountable disconnect between what they were taught and the world in which they live. The way they were instructed in religious and moral values did not prepare them to uphold those values in a world that holds them up to ridicule, nor did they learn ways of praying and practicing the faith that can be easily sustained amid the fast pace of today's society. For one of the greatest joys that any educator can have is to see a student turn into a strong, well-integrated person, a leader, someone prepared to give.

222. Catholic schools remain essential places for the evangelization of the young. Account should be taken of a number of guiding principles set forth in *Veritatis Gaudium* for the renewal and revival of missionary

outreach on the part of schools and universities. These include a fresh experience of the kerygma, wide-ranging dialogue, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches, the promotion of a culture of encounter, the urgency of creating networks and an option in favour of those who are least, those whom society discards.[116] Similarly important is the ability to integrate the knowledge of head, heart and hands.

223. On the other hand, we cannot separate spiritual from cultural formation. The Church has always sought to develop ways of providing the young with the best education possible. Nor should she stop now, for young people have a right to it. “Today, above all, the right to a good education means protecting wisdom, that is, knowledge that is human and humanizing. All too often we are conditioned by trivial and fleeting models of life that drive us to pursue success at a low price, discrediting sacrifice and inculcating the idea that education is not necessary unless it immediately provides concrete results. No, education makes us raise questions, keeps us from being anaesthetized by banality, and impels us to pursue meaning in life. We need to reclaim our right not to be sidetracked by the many sirens that nowadays distract from this pursuit. Ulysses, in order not to give in to the siren song that bewitched his sailors and made them crash against the rocks, tied himself to the mast of the ship and had his companions plug their ears. Orpheus, on the other hand, did something else to counter the siren song: he intoned an even more beautiful melody, which enchanted the sirens. This, then, is your great challenge: to respond to the crippling refrains of cultural consumerism with thoughtful and firm decisions, with research, knowledge and sharing”.[117]

[...]

247. The Church’s educational institutions are undoubtedly a communal setting for accompaniment; they can offer guidance to many young people, especially when they “seek to welcome all young people, regardless of their religious choices, cultural origins and personal, family or social situations. In this way, the Church makes a fundamental contribution to the integral education of the young in various parts of the world”.[135] They would curtail this role unduly were they to lay down rigid criteria for students to enter and remain in them, since they would deprive many young people of an accompaniment that could help enrich their lives.

#### NOTES

1. [116] Cf. Apostolic Constitution, *Veritatis Gaudium* (8 December 2017), 4: AAS 110 (2018), 7-8.
2. [117] *Address at the Meeting with Students and Representatives of the Academic World in Piazza San Domenico*, Bologna (1 October 2017): AAS 109 (2017), 1115.
3. [135] FD 15.

## ***ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS***

POPE FRANCIS

*16 May 2019*

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

I offer my welcome to you who represent the entire spiritual family founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, on the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. I greet and thank Br Robert Schieler, Superior General; I address my warm greeting to each one of you and I would like it to be conveyed to all the Brothers of Christian Schools who work in the Church with generosity, skill and faithful adherence to the Gospel. This important anniversary of your Founder is an auspicious occasion for your Institute to highlight the figure of a pioneer in the field of education, who created an innovative educational system in his time. His example and his witness confirm the original timeliness of his message for today's Christian community, illuminating the path to be followed. He was a brilliant and creative innovator in the vision of schools, the concept of teachers, and in teaching methods.

His vision of schools led him to become ever more clearly persuaded that education is the right of everyone, including the poor. For this reason he did not hesitate to renounce the Canonry and his wealthy family inheritance, in order to dedicate himself entirely to the lowest social class. He gave life to a community of exclusively lay people in order to advance his ideal, convinced that the Church cannot remain extraneous to the social contradictions of the times which she is called to confront. It was this conviction that led him to institute an original experience of consecrated life: the presence of religious educators who, without being priests, would interpret in a new way the role of "lay monks", by immersing themselves completely in the reality of their time and thus contributing to the progress of civil society.

Daily contact with the educational world ripened his awareness of identifying a new concept of teachers. Indeed, he was convinced that education is a serious reality, for which people need to be adequately prepared; but he had before his eyes all the structural and functional flaws of a precarious institution that required order and form. He then sensed that teaching cannot be merely a trade, but is a mission. Therefore he surrounded himself with people suited to popular education, inspired by Christianity, with attitudinal and natural talents for education. He devoted all his energy to their formation. He himself became an example for they

who had to provide both ecclesial and social service, and work promptly in order to promote what he defined as the “dignity of the teacher”.

With the intention of providing concrete responses to the requests of his time in the educational field, John Baptist de La Salle undertook bold forms of teaching methods. In this respect he was moved by an extraordinary pedagogical realism. He substituted the French language for Latin, which had normally been used in teaching; he separated the students into homogenous learning groups in view of more effective work; he established Seminaries for countryside teachers, that is for young people who wanted to become teachers without becoming part of any religious institution; he founded Sunday Schools for adults and two hostels, one for juvenile delinquents and another for the rehabilitation of the incarcerated. He dreamt of a school open to everyone; for this reason he did not hesitate to address even extreme educational necessities, by introducing a method of rehabilitation through school and work. In these formative realities he initiated a corrective pedagogy which, in contrast to the custom of the times, brought study and work to young people under sentence — with arts and crafts rather than just a cell or lashes.

Dear spiritual children of John Baptist de La Salle, I exhort you to study and imitate his passion for the least and the discarded. In the furrow of his apostolic testimony, may you be protagonists of a “culture of resurrection”, especially in those existential contexts where the culture of death is prevalent. Never tire of going in search of those who find themselves in modern-day “sepulchres” of dismay, degradation, distress and poverty, in order to offer hope of new life. May a passion for the educational mission — which made your Founder a teacher and witness for many of his contemporaries — and his teaching still nourish your projects and your actions today.

His ever timely figure is a gift for the Church and a precious stimulus for your Congregation, called to a renewed and enthusiastic adherence to Christ. Looking to the Divine Teacher, you can work with greater generosity in service to the new evangelization to which the entire Church is committed today. The forms of the Gospel message demand to be adapted to the concrete situations of different contexts, but this also entails an effort of fidelity to the origins, so that the apostolic style that is proper to your religious Family may continue to respond to people’s expectations. I know that this is the task that animates you and I exhort you to walk with courage in this direction.

May you fulfil with renewed vigour your mission among the young generations, with that bold reforming spirit that characterized John Baptist de La Salle: he proclaimed the Gospel of hope and charity to everyone. May the Blessed Virgin always sustain you and obtain for you abundant apostolic fruits.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for all you do in the field of education. I accompany you with my prayers and my blessing. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!

## ***List of Addresses delivered by the Pope to the Congregation for Catholic Education***

*Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education*

Pope John Paul II, 26 October 1998

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Pope John Paul II, 4 February 2002

*Address to the Members of the Congregation for Catholic Education on the Occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution Sapientia Christiana*

Pope John Paul II, 27 April 2004

*Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education*

Pope John Paul II, 1 February 2005

*Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education*

Pope Benedict XVI, 21 January 2008

*Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education*

Pope Benedict XVI, 7 February 2011

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Pope Francis, 13 February 2014

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Pope Francis, 9 February 2017

## ***List of Messages delivered by the Pope on the Occasion of the International Literacy Day***

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Pope John Paul II, 8 September 1997

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Pope John Paul II, 3 September 2003

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Pope Benedict XVI, 10 July 2010

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Pope Francis, 8 August 2015

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## ***List of Statements Delivered by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other Specialized Organizations in Geneva***

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Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 2-6 December 2003.

*Statement at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 8 June 2004

*Statement at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 4 October 2006.

*Statement at the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 23 March 2007

*Statement at the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 10 March 2010

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Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 10 March 2011

*Statement at the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 6 June 2011

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Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 6 July 2011

*Statement at the 31<sup>st</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 28 November - 2 December 2011

*Statement on the Occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 7-8 December 2011

*Statement at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 8 March 2012

*Statement at the 54<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 26 June 2012

*Statement at the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 27 June 2012

*Statement at the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 3 July 2012

*Statement at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 10 September 2012.

*Statement at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 24 September 2012

*Statement at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 2 October 2012

*Statement at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 7 March 2013

*Statement at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 27 May 2013

*Statement at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 12 June 2013

*Statement at the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude a Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Marrakech (Morocco), 18 June 2013

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Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 10 September 2013

*Statement at the Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 16 January 2014

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Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 13 March 2014

*Statement at the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 17 March 2015

*Statement at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 16 June 2016

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Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 9 June 2017

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Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 5 March 2018

*Statement at the 71<sup>st</sup> World Health Assembly*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 25 May 2018

*Statement at the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 19 June 2018

*Statement at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 14 September 2018

*Statement at the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 3 April 2019

*Statement at the Conference on “Interreligious Cooperation for Peace and Human Development – Creating an Environment for Thriving Families”*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 14 May 2019

*Remarks at the Event on “Countering Terrorism and other Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief: Fostering Tolerance and Inclusivity”*

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 24 June 2019

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Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, 26 June 2019

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 28 February 2011

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 28 July 2011

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*Statement at the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals*

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 5 March 2015

*Statement at the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women*

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 13 March 2015

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 18 March 2016

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 6 May 2016

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 28 June 2017

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*Statement at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Assembly*

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 12 October 2017

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 14 March 2018

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Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, 15 March 2018

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## ***List of Statements delivered by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization - (French Version)***

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Sr. Carmen Moranville, Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris and Expert of the Commission on Education, 4 October 2003

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 2 November 2006

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 22 October 2007

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 10 October 2009

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 9 February 2012

*Statement at the International Catholic Child Bureau Congress on “Juvenile Justice, Which socio-educational approach?”*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 26 June 2013

*Statement at the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 9 November 2013

*Statement at the International Catholic Child Bureau Congress on “Child Sexual Abuse: Protection Mechanisms and Resilience”*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 20 May 2015

*Statements at the International Forum “Educate Today and Tomorrow”*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris

Card. Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State

Mgr A. Vincenzo Zani, Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education

3 June 2015

*Statement at the 199<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 8 April 2016

*Statements at the Conference “The Earth, Our Common Home: Challenges and Hope”*

Card. Peter Kodwo Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council “Justice and Peace”

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris

9 November 2016

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 15 November 2016

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Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 25 April 2017

*Statement at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 2-4 November 2017

*Statement at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference*

Mgr. Francesco Follo, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, 6 November 2017



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“Isn’t education, in its whole meaning, one of the most essential and vital parts for the existence of every human group?  
Our future depends on how we live it and how people take this art of generating life to heart.”

Every child has a right to receive life skills, to strengthen his/her capacities to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture infused by appropriate human rights values. Education is a mission, enabling every child to develop personalities, self-esteem, self-confidence, talents and abilities and to live a satisfying and dignified life. However, not only do 258 million children and youths worldwide still lack access to education but childhood is also facing new emerging global challenges with, among others, the rise of new conflicts and mass migration, environmental change, and digital technology. The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a unique occasion to take stock of the progress made since its adoption, that considers children as persons with their own rights and responsibilities to be protected, promoted and respected. This publication proposes to analyze and offer guidelines to some of the challenges and concerns raised, by integrating an ethical perspective to the right to education and giving voice to people who, having embraced the duty to shape the youth with a strong and robust consciousness of life, dedicate their lives and careers to the pursuit of quality and inclusive education. With centuries of experience and through educational institutions worldwide, the Catholic Church continues to be one of the main providers of education.

*[www.fciv.org](http://www.fciv.org)*

