

## GLOBAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION REPORTS AND ENGAGING ALUMNI

Edited by Philippe Richard and Quentin Wodon

Fall 2022



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## INTRODUCTION - INTRODUCCIÓN

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### **Global Catholic Education Reports and Engaging Alumni**

*Philippe Richard, OIEC, and Quentin Wodon, OIEC & Loyola University New Orleans*

This issue of the *Educatio Si Bulletin* is a bit different from previous issues. Several reports have been published over the last two months by the volunteer team managing the Global Catholic Education project. To make insights from these reports more easily available to OIEC members, we provide in this issue of the Bulletin the executive summaries of the Global Catholic Education Reports 2022 and 2023 as well as selected chapters from a report on engaging Jesuit alumni. The two executive summaries should be self-explanatory. The chapters on engaging alumni are case studies which are part of a broader report on “men and women for others” in recognition of a seminal address by Fr. Pedro Arrupe to Jesuit Catholic education alumni in 1973. The full texts of these various reports are available on the [Global Catholic Education website](#). We also would like to remind you that OIEC’s World Congress will take place on December 1-3, 2022 in Marseilles, France, and there is still time for you to register. It promises to be a great event to share experiences. Please [register here](#).

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### **Rapports mondiaux sur l'éducation catholique et engagement des anciens élèves**

*Philippe Richard, OIEC, et Quentin Wodon, OIEC & Loyola University New Orleans*

Ce numéro du Bulletin *Educatio Si* est un peu différent des numéros précédents. Plusieurs rapports ont été publiés au cours des deux derniers mois par l'équipe de bénévoles qui gère le projet Global Catholic Education. Pour rendre les informations de ces rapports plus facilement accessibles aux membres de l'OIEC, nous fournissons dans ce numéro du Bulletin les résumés analytiques des Rapports mondiaux sur l'éducation catholique 2022 et 2023 ainsi que des chapitres sélectionnés d'un rapport sur l'engagement des anciens élèves jésuites. Les deux résumés exécutifs

n'ont probablement pas besoin d'introduction. Les chapitres sur l'engagement des anciens élèves sont des études de cas qui font partie d'un rapport plus large sur “les hommes et les femmes pour les autres” en reconnaissance d'une allocution séminale du Père Pedro Arrupe aux anciens élèves de l'éducation catholique jésuite en 1973. Les textes intégraux de ces différents rapports sont disponibles sur le site Internet [Global Catholic Education](#). Nous souhaitons également vous rappeler que le Congrès mondial de l'OIEC aura lieu du 1er au 3 décembre 2022 à Marseille, en France, et qu'il est encore temps pour vous de vous inscrire. Cela promet d'être un grand événement pour partager vos expériences. Veuillez vous [inscrire ici](#).

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### **Informes de educación católica global y exalumnos comprometidos**

*Philippe Richard, OIEC, y Quentin Wodon, OIEC y Universidad Loyola de Nueva Orleans*

Este número del Boletín *Educatio Si* es un poco diferente a los números anteriores. El equipo de voluntarios que gestiona el proyecto de Educación Católica Global ha publicado varios informes en los últimos dos meses. Para que las ideas de estos informes estén más fácilmente disponibles para los miembros de la OIEC, proporcionamos en este número del Boletín los resúmenes ejecutivos de los Informes Globales de Educación Católica 2022 y 2023, así como capítulos seleccionados de un informe sobre la participación de ex alumnos jesuitas. Los dos resúmenes ejecutivos deben explicarse por sí mismos. Los capítulos sobre la participación de los ex alumnos son estudios de casos que forman parte de un informe más amplio sobre “hombres y mujeres para los demás” en reconocimiento de un discurso seminal del padre Pedro Arrupe a ex alumnos de educación católica jesuita en 1973. Los textos completos de estos diversos informes están disponibles en el sitio web de [Global Catholic Education](#). También nos gustaría recordarle que el Congreso Mundial de la OIEC tendrá lugar del 1 al 3 de diciembre de 2022 en Marsella, Francia, y aún tiene tiempo para registrarse. Promete ser un gran evento para compartir experiencias. Por favor [regístrese aquí](#).

OIEC WORLD CONGRESS 2022  
MARSEILLE - FRANCE  
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# Global Catholic Education Report

*2023*



## Transforming Education and Making Education Transformative

September 2022



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS

The Global Catholic Education Report is published annually, with two aims. The first is to make the experiences and contributions of Catholic schools and universities better known in the international community. The second is to bring to Catholic educators global knowledge and expertise from the international community on what works to improve education. There is much to be gained from stronger collaborations between Catholic schools and universities, governments managing national education systems, and international organizations. The Global Catholic Education Reports series aims to inform such collaborations through better mutual understanding.

This report is the fourth in the series. The first report (2020) was dedicated to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. The second report (2021) was about learning poverty, education pluralism, and the right to education. The third report (2022) was about the need to end violence in schools. This report is about transforming education (in reference to the summit held at the United Nations in New York in September 2022), and making education transformative (in reference to Pope Francis' call for a Global Compact on Education).

As for previous reports, this report is structured into two parts. Part I reviews enrollment trends in Catholic K12 and higher education. Part II is about the overlapping crises affecting education systems today, and what is needed to mitigate their impacts and end the learning crisis. In addition, Part II also discusses the need to make education transformative within the framework of the seven commitments outlined by Pope Francis for the Global Compact on Education. This executive summary highlights key findings by chapter.

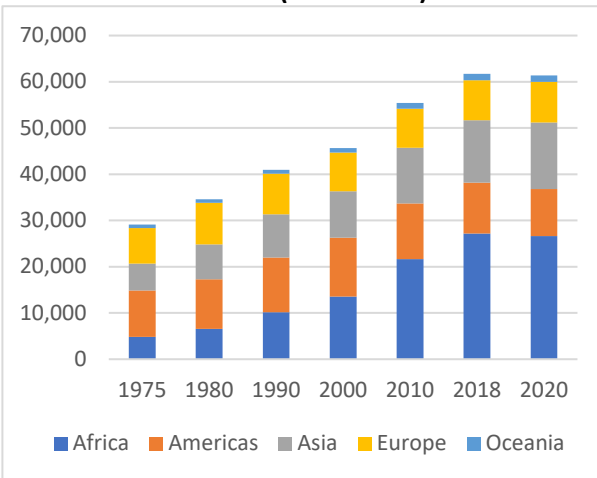
### Enrollment Trends in Catholic K12 Schools

The analysis follows closely that of previous reports, but with data updated to 2020. This helps in providing stylized facts about the footprint of Catholic education globally for readers who may not have seen previous reports. Globally, the Catholic Church estimates that 34.6 million children were enrolled in Catholic primary schools in 2020, with 19.3 million children enrolled in Catholic secondary schools and 7.5 million children enrolled at the preschool level. Below are a few highlights:

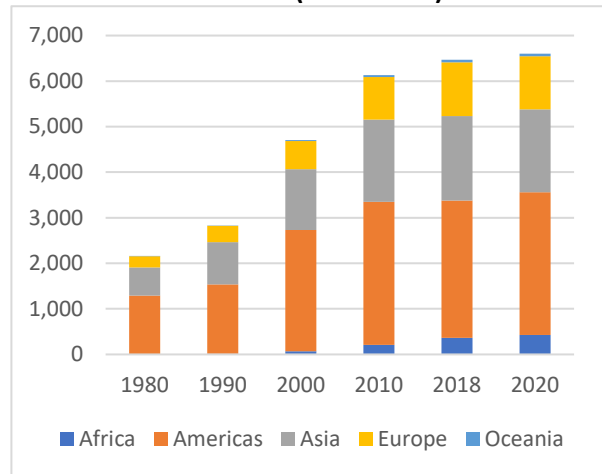
- Although there was a slight decrease in recent years, enrollment in K12 education almost doubled between 1980 and 2020 globally, from 34.6 million to 61.4 million students (Figure ES.1). Most of the growth was concentrated in Africa due to high rates of population growth and gains in educational attainment over time.
- The highest growth rates are also observed for Africa, but growth rates are also high in Asia and Oceania. The growth rates in those regions are two to three times larger than those observed globally. In the Americas and Europe, growth rates tend to be much smaller, and in some cases are negative.
- There are substantial differences between regions in the share of students enrolled by level. Globally, primary schools account for 56.4 percent of K12 enrollment, versus 31.4 percent for secondary schools, and 12.2 percent for preschools. In Africa however, primary schools account for 70.6 percent of total enrollment. In Europe, they account for only 34.8 percent of K12 enrollment.

Enrollment in Catholic K12 schools almost doubled from 1980 to 2020. For higher education, enrollment increased three-fold. Globally, there are seven times more students in K12 education than in higher education, but geographic patterns of enrollment and growth differ by education level.

**Figure ES.1: Total Enrollment in Catholic K12 Schools (Thousands)**



**Figure ES.2: Total Enrollment in Catholic Higher Education (Thousands)**



Source: Compiled by the author from the statistical yearbooks of the Church.

- India has the largest enrollment in Catholic K12 schools, followed by four sub-Saharan African countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi. Together, the top 15 countries in terms of enrollment size account for about two thirds of global enrollment in Catholic K12 schools.
- The highest growth rate in enrollment is for preschools. This is a positive development as research demonstrates that early childhood is a critical period in a child's education and investments at this time have high returns.

### Enrollment Trends in Catholic Higher Education

The analysis again follows that of previous Global Catholic Education Reports, but with data updated to 2020. The Church estimates that it provided post-secondary education to 6.6 million students globally in 2020. This includes 2.4 million students in non-university higher institutes, 0.4 million students enrolled in ecclesiastical studies at the university level, and 3.8 million students enrolled in other types of university studies. Below are a few highlights:

- Enrollment in Catholic higher education tripled between 1980 and 2020, from 2.2 million students to 6.6 million. Most of the growth took place in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. However, in proportionate terms from the base, the highest growth rates are in Africa (Figure ES.2).
- Globally, students in universities account for most of the enrollment. Yet in India and Asia, there are more students in higher institutes. Globally, the shares of students enrolled in higher institutes and universities did not change a lot despite ups and downs. But among university students, the share of students in ecclesiastical studies increased over time, especially in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, but with a recent decline.
- Together, the top 15 countries account for about four fifths of global enrollment. Enrollment remains highly concentrated in a few countries. The United States has the largest enrollment followed by three large middle income countries: India, the Philippines, and Brazil. Italy is next, probably in part due to historical reasons.

## Transforming Education

We live in challenging times marked by a pandemic, multiple wars, climate change, heightened competition, and a lack of resources for education. Most countries are far off a trajectory that would enable them to reach the education targets set forth in the SDGs and for the first time since the launch of the Human Development Report more than three decades ago, there was a substantial drop in the Human Development Index, with nine out of ten countries performing worse in 2021 than 2020.

Globally, nine in ten children complete their primary education, and three in four complete their lower secondary education. In low-income countries however, only two-thirds of children complete their primary education, and less than 40 percent complete lower secondary school. The latest estimates from UNESCO suggest that 244 million children remain out of school, with the number of out-of-school children increasing in sub-Saharan Africa. In low income countries, girls continue to lag behind boys especially at the secondary level. This is due in part to a high prevalence of child marriage and early childbearing, as well as a learning crisis leading children (girls and boys) to drop out prematurely. Today, education systems face major overlapping crises and challenges. Seven of them are discussed in the report.

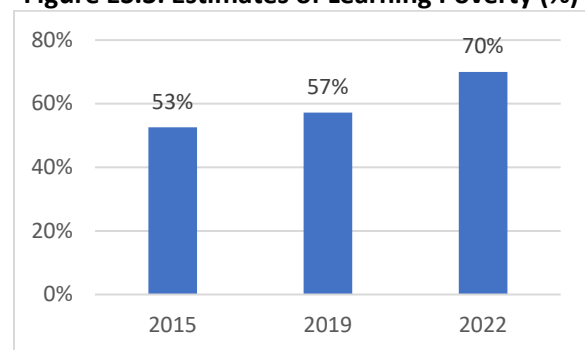
- 1) *Worsening learning crisis during the pandemic.* Simulations (Figure ES.3) suggest that in low- and middle-income countries, seven in ten children aged 10 are not able to read and understand a simple text. Before the pandemic, the estimate was at just over one in two.
- 2) *Rising inflation, policy responses, and risks for unemployment and poverty.* Measures to fight inflation in high-income countries may lead the global economy to fall into a recession, leading many households to fall into poverty, which would in turn affect their ability to send children to school.
- 3) *Rising debts and constrained budgets.* Many countries have accumulated debt at unsustainable levels. Rising interest rates

and a strong dollar contribute to debt distress, limiting funding for education.

- 4) *Fragility, conflicts, and climate change.* The war in Ukraine has exacerbated the forced displacement crisis which now affects more than 100 million people globally and disrupts children's education.
- 5) *Insufficient development aid.* From 2009 to 2019, there was no increase in real terms in official development assistance. In many areas, aid has fallen well short of the targets that were adopted.
- 6) *Labor markets and the changing nature of work.* An additional challenge is broader. The changing nature of work requires workers to become flexible team-oriented problem-solvers. This in turn requires high-order cognitive and socio-behavioral skills that tend to be in short supply.
- 7) *Secularization and the sex abuse crisis.* For Catholic schools and universities, secularization and the Church's sex abuse crisis are further challenges to overcome.

Education systems face overlapping crises, including a worsening learning crisis, risks from higher unemployment and poverty, lack of fiscal space for education, forced displacement, insufficient development aid, and longer-term challenges arising from the changing nature of work and (for Catholic education) secularization.

**Figure ES.3: Estimates of Learning Poverty (%)**



Source: World Bank data.

Note: Learning poverty is the share of 10 year old children not able to read and understand a simple text. Estimates for 2020 are based on simulations.



Within the context of these overlapping crises, the Transforming Education Summit was held at the United Nations in New York in September 2022. The summit led to policy recommendations along five action tracks: (1) Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools; (2) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; (3) Teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession; (4) Digital learning and transformation; and (5) Financing education. While the focus of policy recommendations at the Summit was mostly on public education, most recommendations are likely valid for Catholic schools and universities.

#### **Box ES.1: Priorities in low income settings**

Two useful World Bank reports suggesting priorities for low- and middle-income countries were mentioned in previous Global Catholic Education Reports. The first report (Realizing the Future of Learning) is a blueprint emphasizing five pillars: (1) Learners are prepared and motivated to learn; (2) Teachers are effective and valued; (3) Learning resources, including curricula, are diverse and of high quality; (4) Schools are safe and inclusive spaces; and (5) Education systems are well-managed. Recommendations are made for each pillar.

The second report (Cost Effective Approaches to Improve Global learning) categorizes potential interventions into four groups: (1) Great investments; (2) Good investments; (3) Promising low-evidence interventions; and (4) Bad investments. This categorization is useful to understand what works to improve learning, and what does not.

In addition, the World Bank and other organizations recently published a R.A.P.I.D. framework to tackle learning losses caused by the pandemic. The framework suggests evidence-based policy actions in five areas: (1) Reach all children; (2) Assess learning; (3) Prioritize the fundamentals; (4) Increase the efficiency of instruction; and (5) Develop psychosocial health and wellbeing.

## **Making Education Transformative**

While the theme of transforming education refers to the United Nations summit held in New York in September 2022, the theme of making education transformative refers to the Global Compact on Education suggested by Pope Francis *“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.”*

In calling for a Global Compact on Education, the Pope suggested a set of seven practical commitments for educators, communities, or even societies: (1) to make human persons the center; (2) to listen to the voices of children and young people; (3) to advance the women; (4) to empower the family; (5) to welcome; (6) to find new ways of understanding (the) economy and politics; and (7) to safeguard our common home.

These commitments are a call for action at the national, regional, and global levels, but they are also meant to guide the work of educators in their local communities. To inform this work, the Congregation for Catholic Education published a *Vademecum* with for each of the seven commitments a brief explanation of what the commitment entails, ideas for reflection, and suggestions for action.

To illustrate what educators can do to implement Pope Francis’ vision for a Global Compact on Education, examples of actions are shared based on interviews conducted with education practitioners and leaders.

Educators, Catholic or not, have already put these or similar commitments in practice all over the world in one way or the other. Sharing stories about those experiences can be helpful as challenges and opportunities faced by some can give ideas to others. To illustrate what educators can do to implement the vision set by Pope Francis for the Global Compact on Education, the analysis shares examples of actions based on



interviews conducted with education practitioners and leaders as part of the Global Catholic Education project (see Box ES.2).

Importantly, while Pope Francis recognized the fundamental role of schools (and universities) under the Global Compact, he also emphasized the role played by parents and communities in educating children and youth.

What could this mean in practice? In the last chapter of this report, two opportunities that Catholic and other educational institutions could seize are suggested: (1) engaging alumni (with analysis based on data from Jesuit education especially in the United States); and (2) promoting service-learning (with analysis based on data from Catholic universities globally).

Two opportunities for Catholic and other educational institutions to make education transformative are explored: (1) engaging alumni; and (2) promoting service-learning.

### ***Engaging Alumni***

Catholic schools and universities have a large number of alumni. Engaging just a fraction of these alumni could make a large difference in the education that they provide. Perhaps in part because of their faith, alumni of Catholic educational institutions may be more willing to contribute financially than the average alumni. But beyond their financial donations, alumni can bring many other benefits to students, including through tutoring or internships, or simply by sharing their experiences in the classroom.

Engaging alumni is not easy, but guidance is available. In addition, beyond alumni associations that serve a single school or university, at the local, national, and regional levels, associations of alumni have been created to share good practices. At the global level, OMAEC (*Organisation mondiale des anciens élèves de l'enseignement catholique* in French) federates national and regional associations of Catholic education alumni.

### **Box ES.2: Global Catholic Education Interviews**

The examples of teachers and other educators making education transformative are based on interviews from the Global Catholic Education project. Eight compilations of interviews are completed or are nearing completion to-date.

- The first compilation focuses on projects by the International Catholic Child Bureau for reach children 'at risk'. This included children in poverty, but also those facing the criminal justice system and children with disabilities.
- The second compilation is broader in terms of the themes it considers, but of note is a subset of interviews conducted with the Salesian Sisters of Saint John Bosco sisters who manage educational institutions especially for girls.
- The third compilation is about Catholic education in Africa and the Middle East. It provides perspectives from national leaders and is especially relevant for efforts to welcome children from all faiths in countries where Catholics are a minority.
- The fourth compilation consists of interviews with Catholic economists in North America. It provides insights into how teachers and researchers live and practice their faith in their professional roles (a separate collection is underway for other regions of the world).
- The fifth compilation is about research in service of Catholic education practice. It consists of interviews about the work of Gerald Grace, including on spiritual capital.
- The sixth compilation with Expanded Reason Award winners is about the dialogue between philosophy, theology, and science.
- The seventh compilation illustrates each of the seven commitments called for by Pope Francis under the Global Compact on Education (Chapter 4 is based on that compilation).
- The last compilation focuses on current challenges and opportunities emerging from digitalization in education.

## ***Promoting Service-learning***

Service-learning is not a practice that originated initially from Catholic schools and universities, but it represents a unique opportunity for Catholic educational institutions to contribute to the common good while strengthening their identity in a way that is respectful of the variety of religious beliefs in their student body. Some would argue that even more than an opportunity, service-learning should be an integral part of the curriculum of Catholic schools and universities, contributing to the holistic education that they aim to provide.

Service-learning could be a natural pathway to implement the commitments that Pope Francis suggested under the Global Compact on Education. The practice exemplifies the Pope's call for a culture of encounter. To various degrees depending on each particular school or university, or the context of each particular country, Catholic education has traditionally emphasized academic excellence and the transmission of the faith. The ideas behind service-learning are a bit different: they illustrate education's purpose to contribute to strong values beyond its benefits in terms of, say, ensuring literacy and numeracy, or increasing productivity and labor earnings in adulthood.

## **Summing Up**

The pandemic and other crises discussed in this report are having profound negative effects on children, including students in Catholic schools and universities. It is important for Catholic educational institutions to learn from evidence-based good practices emerging from international experience on how to respond to these overlapping crises. The Transforming Education Summit at the United Nations has been helpful to share such good practices and put education back at the top of the international agenda.

It is also useful for the international community to learn about the work of Catholic educational institutions, including their efforts to put in practice the commitments suggested by

Pope Francis for a Global Compact on Education. Previous reports in this series were more analytic. By contrast, part of this report is about telling stories from educators about how education can be transformative. This was a deliberate choice ahead of the World Congress of the International Office of Catholic Education that will take place in Marseilles in December 2022, three and a half year after the last Congress held in New York in June 2019.

While analysis is essential to inform educational programs and policies, one should not underestimate the power of stories to inspire. Hopefully, some of the stories mentioned in this report and the more in-depth interviews on which they are based will be a source of inspirations for educators.

### **Box ES.3: The Global Catholic Education Project**

[Global Catholic Education](https://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org) is a volunteer-led project to contribute to Catholic education and integral human development globally with a range of resources. The website went live symbolically on Thanksgiving Day in November 2020 to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. Catholic schools serve 61.4 million children in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools globally. In addition, 6.6 million students are enrolled at the post-secondary level (data for 2020). The Church also provides many other services to children and families, including in healthcare, social protection, and humanitarian assistance. Our aim is to serve Catholic schools and universities, as well as other organizations contributing to integral human development, with an emphasis on responding to the aspirations of the poor and vulnerable. If you would like to contribute to the project, please contact us through the website at [www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org](https://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org). On the website, you can also subscribe to receive our weekly blog.

# Global Catholic Education Report

2022



## Ending Violence in Schools: An Imperative for Children's Learning and Well-being

September 2022



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS

The Global Catholic Education Report is published annually, with two aims. The first is to make the experiences and contributions of Catholic schools and universities better known in the international community. The second is to bring to Catholic educators global knowledge and expertise from the international community on what works to improve education. There is much to be gained from stronger collaborations between Catholic schools and universities, governments managing national education systems, and international organizations. The Global Catholic Education Reports series aims to inform such collaborations through better mutual understanding.

This report is the third in the series. The first report published in 2020 was dedicated to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. The second report published in 2021 was about learning poverty, education pluralism, and the right to education. This third report is about the need to end violence in schools, and promising approaches to do so.

The report is structured into two parts. Part I reviews enrollment trends in Catholic K12 and higher education. Part II is about the need to end violence in schools for children's learning and well-being. The analysis is based in large part on a report by the author at the World Bank (the World Bank publications license permits re-using published material provided the original source is cited), but with additional insights for Catholic schools. It includes chapters on the prevalence of violence in schools, its impacts on children, promising interventions to prevent it, and the need to engage all stakeholders. This executive summary highlights key findings by chapter.

### Enrollment Trends in Catholic K12 Schools

The analysis follows closely that of previous reports, but with data updated to 2019. This helps in providing stylized facts about the footprint of Catholic education globally for readers who may not have seen previous reports. Globally, the Catholic Church estimates that 35.2 million children were enrolled in Catholic primary schools in 2019, with 19.4 million children enrolled in Catholic secondary schools and 7.5 million children enrolled at the preschool level. Below are a few highlights:

- Enrollment in K12 education almost doubled between 1980 and 2019 globally, from 34.6 million to 62.1 million students (Figure ES.1). Most of the growth was concentrated in Africa due to high rates of population growth and gains in educational attainment over time.
- The highest growth rates are also observed for Africa, but growth rates are also high in Asia and Oceania. The growth rates in those regions are two to three times larger than those observed globally. In the Americas and Europe, growth rates tend to be much smaller, and in some cases are negative.
- There are substantial differences between regions in the share of students enrolled by level. Globally, primary schools account for 56.7 percent of K12 enrollment, versus 31.2 percent for secondary schools, and 12.1 percent for preschools. In Africa however, primary schools account for 71.3 percent of total enrollment. In Europe, they account for only 35.4 percent of K12 enrollment.

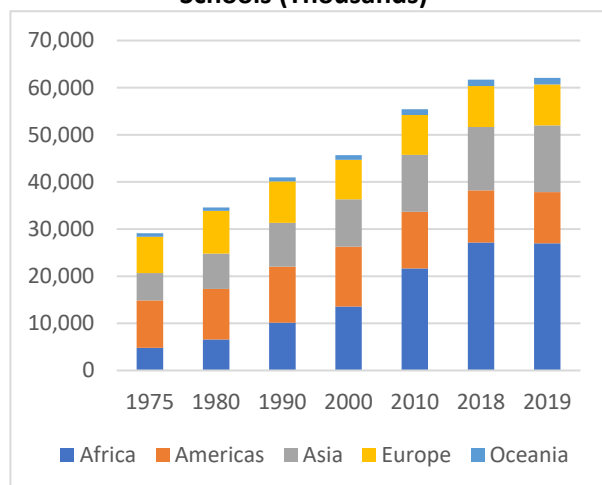
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Enrollment in Catholic K12 schools almost doubled from 1980 to 2019. For higher education, enrollment increased three-fold. Globally, there are seven times more students in K12 education than in higher education, but geographic patterns of enrollment and growth differ by education level.

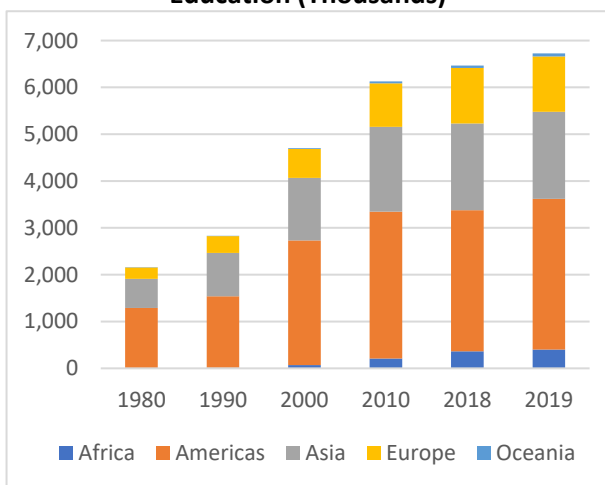
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**Figure ES.1: Total Enrollment in Catholic K12 Schools (Thousands)**



**Figure ES.2: Total Enrollment in Catholic Higher Education (Thousands)**



Source: Compiled by the author from the statistical yearbooks of the Church.

- India has the largest enrollment in Catholic K12 schools, followed by four sub-Saharan African countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi. Together, the top 15 countries in terms of enrollment size account for about two thirds of global enrollment in Catholic K12 schools.
- The highest growth rate in enrollment is for preschools. This is a positive development as research demonstrates that early childhood is a critical period in a child's education and investments at this time have high returns.

### Enrollment Trends in Catholic Higher Education

The analysis again follows that of the previous Global Catholic Education Report, but with data updated to 2019. The Church estimates that it provided post-secondary education to 6.7 million students globally in 2019. This includes 2.4 million students in non-university higher institutes, 0.5 million students enrolled in ecclesiastical studies at the university level, and 3.8 million students enrolled in other types of university studies. Below are a few highlights:

- Enrollment in Catholic higher education tripled between 1980 and 2019, from 2.2 million students to 6.7 million. Most of the growth took place in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. However, in proportionate terms from the base, the highest growth rates are in Africa (Figure ES.2).
- Globally, students in universities account for most of the enrollment. Yet in India and Asia, there are more students in higher institutes. Globally, the shares of students enrolled in higher institutes and universities did not change a lot despite ups and downs. But among university students, the share of students in ecclesiastical studies increased over time, especially in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, but with a recent decline.
- Together, the top 15 countries account for about four fifths of global enrollment. Enrollment remains highly concentrated in a few countries. The United States has the largest enrollment followed by three large middle income countries: India, the Philippines, and Brazil. Italy is next, probably in part due to historical reasons.

## Ending Violence in Schools<sup>1</sup>

The second part of the report focuses on the need to end violence in and around schools (VIAS). VIAS is a threat to schooling and learning and to children's well-being, health, and future earnings as adults. Violence is the result of an abusive use of force. The harm can be actual or threatened. It can lead to injury or death, but also to trauma or other mental health symptoms. Violence is often multidimensional, as individuals are often subjected to multiple forms of violence and in multiple locations.

VIAS remains widespread in developing and developed countries alike. Failing to prevent it will affect not only children today, but also their future families, communities, and societies as a whole. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were closed for substantial periods of time in many countries, but several of the factors that may lead to higher violence against children overall and violence on schools in particular have been exacerbated. The need to end violence in school is even more pressing today.

## High Prevalence of Violence in Schools

As shown in Table ES.1, more than one in three children are subjected to physical violence, and almost one in three are bullied. The prevalence of sexual violence is much lower, but likely underestimated especially when the topic remains taboo. Girls and boys experience VIAS in different ways. Apart from differences in exposure to sexual violence, girls are more likely to experience verbal/emotional abuse whereas boys are more likely to be physically abused. While there are no cross-country estimates of violence in Catholic schools, data for a few countries suggest that in some, Catholic schools have lower levels of violence, but in other countries, this does not seem to be the case.

More than one in three children are subjected to physical violence, and almost one in three are bullied. The prevalence of sexual violence is much lower, but likely underestimated.

**Table ES.1: Prevalence of Violence in Schools in Multi-country Surveys (%)**

	GSHS	HBSC	PISA	VACS	DHS
<b>GSHS, HBSC, and PISA surveys</b>					
Attacked in last 12 months	37.8	-	-	-	-
Involved in fight in last 12 months	27.6	31.2	-	-	-
Injured in last 12 months	31.3	44.5	-	-	-
Injured from fight	1.5	1.8	-	-	-
Bullied in last 30 days	29.5	29.0	-	-	-
Others left me out of things	-	-	36.8	-	-
Students made fun of me	-	-	42.7	-	-
Threatened by other students	-	-	23.8	-	-
Others destroyed my things	-	-	26.5	-	-
Hit by other students	-	-	23.4	-	-
Nasty rumors about me	-	-	33.5	-	-
<b>VACS and DHS surveys</b>					
Physical violence in schools	-	-	-	28.7	-
Emotional violence in schools	-	-	-	3.5(*)	-
Sexual violence in schools	-	-	-	2.8(*)	1.5(*)

Source: Authors' estimates.

Note: (\*) The prevalence of emotional and sexual violence in schools in VACSs and DHSs may be underestimated.

<sup>1</sup> This section of the executive summary follows closely the summary of a World Bank study by the author on which Part II of the report is based (Wodon,

Fèvre et al., 2021). For references, see the main text in this report or the original study.

### Box ES.1: Simple Approaches to Data Collection

Typical surveys of violence in schools are conducted at the national level for a sample of schools in a country. This is useful to obtain national estimates of the prevalence of violence and some of its effects, and to set national strategies, but for a particular school, such data may not be as useful as data collected specifically for the school. When a school implements its own survey, it can adapt the survey to its needs, and it may be able to implement the survey at very low cost. To assess patterns of violence in two Catholic schools in Nigeria, a web survey was implemented in such a way that student anonymity could be ensured. The survey had only 11 questions, but those questions enabled the school to better understand patterns of violence, how to prevent it, and how to respond when violence occurs.

While there are no cross-country estimates of violence in Catholic schools, data for a few countries suggest that in some, Catholic schools have lower levels of violence, but in other countries, this does not seem to be the case.

Corporal punishment by and corruption among teachers and school officials (which may involve threats of violence against students) also remain widespread. Some 67 countries still do not have legislation banning corporal punishment in schools. In Francophone Africa, data on corporal punishment from PASEC suggest that more than a third of teachers in sixth grade of primary school use corporal punishment in the classroom, leading to almost two-thirds of students being beaten by teachers.

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have exacerbated some of the factors that lead to violence against children in general, and VIAS in particular. Many individuals and households are under stress due among others to social isolation, losses in employment and income, and illnesses or death from the pandemic.

### Potential Impacts of Violence in Schools

Although this is not discussed in this report, the World Bank study estimates that the cost of VIAS in lost future lifetime earnings could be of the order of US\$11 trillion. The estimate is based on the risk of children not learning in school because of VIAS, and the risk of some children dropping out of school (other costs such as those related to health are not included).

- *Children learning less in school:* Based on regression analysis using data from the PISA and PASEC international student assessments, ending violence in school could result in gains in learning of about two percent versus baseline values. These effects may seem limited, but for students affected by violence, they are often similar and sometimes larger than the potential impact of variables capturing the socio-economic background of the student, a disability, or factors such as teacher absenteeism, the level of education of teachers, or selected characteristics of schools.
- *Children dropping out of school:* In a few countries where household surveys include VIAS as one of the possible reasons for dropping out of school, VIAS accounts for some of the drop-outs at the primary or secondary levels. If such drop-outs could have been avoided, and if children would have completed their secondary education, human capital could have been higher (for girls, dropping out of school involves higher risks of marrying as children – see Box ES.2 on the potential role of faith leaders in this area).

Apart from leading to losses in learning and more drop-outs, VIAS is highly detrimental for students' experience in school as well as their health and psychological well-being.

Apart from leading to losses in learning and drop-outs, VIAS is highly detrimental for students' experience in school as well as their

health and well-being. If VIAS were eliminated, this would have potentially large effects for a wide range of indicators of health and well-being. For example, for perceived health, surveys ask questions on difficulties sleeping, having headaches, stomach-ache, or back-ache and a self-assessment of health. For risky behaviors, questions are asked about whether the children have ever smoked, used alcohol, drug or cannabis, or had sex. Finally, for psychological well-being, questions are asked about whether the children ever considered suicide, planned to commit suicide, or attempted to commit suicide. Questions are also available on whether children are feeling low, irritable, nervous, or dizzy. In virtually all cases, experiencing VIAS is associated with worse indicators after controlling for other factors. Some of the largest effects are observed for the probabilities of feeling bad about one's health, trusting other people, having suicidal thoughts, and having sex before the age of 18.

In Catholic schools in Nigeria, girls who were the victim of violence often felt sad, depressed, or angry. While some level of forgiveness took place, for one fifth of students, there was no reconciliation. Students also felt that school responses to violence were insufficient.

### Promising Interventions

Risk factors for violence include factors at the levels of the individual, the household, the community, and society. The accumulation of risk factors often explains why an individual behaves more violently or is more prone to be victimized than others. Instead of looking for a single best intervention that would be most effective in preventing violence, it often makes sense to combine interventions that can both mitigate the most salient risk factors and enhance relevant protective factors in a given context and for a specific group. Many interventions have high returns (Box ES.3).

### Box ES.2: Girls Dropping Out of School, Child Marriage, and the Role of Faith Leaders

For adolescent girls, when VIAS leads them to drop out of school, it increases the risk of them marrying as a child (i.e., before the age of 18) or having a child when they may not yet be physically and psychologically ready to do so. In sub-Saharan Africa, faith leaders can play an important role in raising community awareness about the negative effects of child marriage and the benefits from girls' education. They have a great deal of influence on the population, and they have an attentive audience during masses, prayer ceremonies, or traditional festivals, as well as during court cases in which disputes are settled in the villages. Faith leaders are also those who perform most marriages, and they can advise against a marriage when girls are not psychologically or physically ready to marry.

Do faith leaders play this role? Data from qualitative fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo suggest that this is not always the case. In each of the two countries, data were collected in three communities (the capital city and two rural areas). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, responses to a question about whether faith leaders at least talk about the issue of child marriage suggests that this is the case in the two rural areas, but less so in Kinshasa. In the two rural areas, more than two thirds of faith leaders talk about the issue of child marriage, while in the capital city of Kinshasa, this is the case only for one third of faith leaders. In the Republic of Congo, about half of respondents in the capital city of Brazzaville and one of the rural areas state that faith leaders do not talk about this issue, and the proportion reaches nine in ten respondents in the other rural area.

This suggests that faith leaders could do more in both countries more to promote girls' education and prevent child marriage. The same holds for faith-based schools which often are not of high quality, as is the case for public schools.



### Box ES.3: Cost-Benefit Analyses

Cost-benefit analyses suggest that promising interventions have high benefits to costs ratios. While these ratios are sensitive to assumptions used in the analyses, results suggest that reducing violence in and around schools is a smart economic investment. While most of the available analyses are from developed countries, programs should generate high benefits in developing countries as well if one presumes that results of a similar magnitude could apply.

There is no unique way to categorize programs to prevent VIAS, but a lifecycle approach is useful because risk factors evolve over a child's life.

There is no unique way to categorize programs to prevent VIAS, but a lifecycle approach is useful because risk factors leading to VIAS evolve over time in a child's life.

- *Early childhood interventions* are essential to prevent VIAS. This includes center-based interventions, but many programs also include home visiting, parenting advice, health and nutrition services, and referrals for social services).
- In primary schools, programs helping children improve their social and emotional skills also have high returns.
- In secondary schools, a key area of focus should be to reduce bullying. Reviews suggest that intensive and long-lasting programs are needed to change behaviors, with parental sessions contributing to success.

### Engaging All Stakeholders

So-called whole school approaches can help reduce VIAS at a limited cost. Engaging with the entire school community is beneficial. A whole school approach uses multiple strategies to develop a common vision and shared values and rules for the school, and works through the curriculum, teacher training, parental engagement, and student learning towards a

safe and inclusive school climate and respectful school values.

### Box ES.4: Evaluating Pilot Interventions

Few interventions to reduce violence in schools have been evaluated in developing countries. A team from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is supporting a pilot intervention in Zimbabwe that will be rigorously evaluated. The intervention is supported by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). It will aim to promote Catholic values and ethos in schools, reduce teacher and peer violence, and strengthen referral mechanisms, so that responses to violence are appropriate. The focus on school responses to violence is an innovative component, as most existing interventions have focused more on prevention than response.

One example is the Good School Toolkit (GST) in Uganda. Evaluations suggest that after 18 months of implementation, the program reduced the risk of physical violence by teachers and school staff against students by 42 percent, halved the number of teachers who reported using physical violence against students, and improved students' connectedness and sense of safety and belonging with their school. The program also increased teachers' satisfaction in their role at school and increasing students' wellbeing and sense of safety at school. Importantly, if the GST program were implemented at scale, unit costs for implementation would be low.

Supporting teachers to enhance their skills in positive discipline and classroom management is also effective. Providing teachers with skills to improve their relationship with students and manage behaviors lessens disruptive and aggressive behaviors in the classroom and enhance prosocial behaviors later in life. By contrast, punitive interactions tend to feed a vicious circle of violence, delinquency, and further exclusion. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and the WHO handbook on school violence prevention provide

useful resources on positive discipline for teachers and schools. When teachers and the entire school community understand that respect and trust are key pillars for child's healthy development and that corporal punishment is not only counterproductive but negatively impacts a child's learning, the school climate can be transformed.

A whole school approach uses multiple strategies to develop a common vision and shared values and rules for the school, and works through the curriculum, teacher training, parental engagement, and student learning towards a safe and inclusive school climate.

#### **Box ES.5: Building Peace One School at a Time**

Under the leadership of the Catholic Institute of Education, schools in South Africa implement a Building Peaceful Schools programme focused on peacebuilding, conflict management, and restorative justice. Peace circles were one of the features used to encourage open discussion. Surveys were used to assess whether the program was having an impact on pupil-pupil interactions, pupil-teacher interactions, and the school environment. While progress has been slow in some areas, there were hopeful signs. For example, the surveys suggest a reduction in instances of teachers hitting pupils. Zooming too far out (to national aggregates) proved not as useful as looking at individual schools. In some schools, great progress was achieved, while this was less the case in other schools, which is useful to know for planning.

Families need to be part of school programs. Engaging with parents of adolescents that display behavioral problems can yield significant results even in a relatively short period of time. But parenting programs should follow evidence-based practices, including focusing on positive discipline, positive communication, and increased bonding among family members. As with teachers, providing alternative tools and skills to caregivers in

dealing with their children can help break the intergenerational cycle of violence. Effectively engaging with parents requires choosing wisely among alternative programs, as well as recruiting parents and keeping them engaged. The most challenging part is to keep parents engaged long enough to produce sustained behavioral change, but techniques have been developed to do so.

Engaging with communities to shift norms also matters. The SASA! program is a good example of how norms can be challenged. SASA! means "Now!" in Kiswahili. The program employs multiple strategies to build a critical mass of engaged community members, leaders, and institutions, including local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training. In comparison to control communities, SASA! communities reported a reduction in levels of violence against women of 52 percent, an increase in the share of women and men who believe it is acceptable for women to refuse sex of 28 percent, and an increase of 50 percent in the share of men and women who believe that physical violence against a partner is unacceptable. Essentially, SASA! works with key stakeholders at the community level to deconstruct power in intimate partnerships. Another interesting program is the Bell Bajao! (Ring the Bell) campaign in India. Engaging with community is also important to ensure safe passage to schools by identifying hot spots where children may feel vulnerable, and placing adult monitors on those spots.

These various interventions and approaches have proven benefits, but they are not exhaustive in terms of the types of programs and policies that may help prevent violence in school or cope with its effects. Guidance on how to prevent violence in school is available from the WHO Handbook on school-based violence prevention and for violence against children more broadly from the INSPIRE framework. Also relevant is the new strategy adopted by the Safe to Learn initiative to which a wide range of organizations are contributing.

Beyond efforts in individual schools, strategies to end VIAS should be led by Ministries of Education with other Ministries or agencies, as well as independent school networks such as those federating Catholic schools.

Beyond efforts in individual schools, strategies to end VIAS should be led by Ministries of Education with other Ministries or agencies, as well as independent school networks such as those federating Catholic schools. To sustainably shift norms, parent associations and teacher unions, as well as religious groups and political parties, need to participate and be heard. Several guides exist in that respect, including on engaging religious leaders to end VIAS. Codes of conducts and zero tolerance policies towards violence by teachers need to be adopted. More generally, four steps in the strategic process can be suggested: (1) Setting clear standards for all including through codes of conduct and appropriate laws including on corporal punishment; (2) Establishing a solid diagnostic of VIAS; (3) Developing a common vision and action plan with accountability mechanisms; and (4) Promoting a whole school approach to enhance students' connectedness with schools and ensure a positive learning environment.

Finally, better data are needed both to update existing school health surveys in many countries and to ensure that broader information is collected, especially on sexual violence. Figures on VIAS may represent lower bound estimates, especially because data are not widely available for some forms of violence. In some cases, prevalence may be underreported, as is likely the case for sexual violence. In addition, in many countries, the available data are dated and school health surveys should be updated. Improving and expanding questionnaires in various existing surveys would also be highly valuable.

#### **Box ES.6: Prevention Training for the Clergy**

In the Diocese of Lugano in Switzerland, the Foundation ASPI provided training for diocesan priests towards the prevention of sexual abuse and violence against children. The objectives were to help participants (1) deepen their knowledge of issues related to child sexual abuse and maltreatment; (2) identify potential indicators of abuse and maltreatment; (3) know the procedure to follow in cases of suspicion; (4) understand and integrate prevention messages in the clergy's activities; and (5) know what help is available for potential abusers.

Three sensitive aspects emerged during the training as well as from written evaluations (these are also aspects often mentioned by parents and teachers).

First, it must be recognized – including by the clergy, that sex education plays a fundamental role in the prevention of sexual abuse of children. As 50 percent of sexual abuse occurs in children under 9 years of age, and in 80 percent of cases this is by a family member), sex education is necessary from a very early age, and that this task cannot be entrusted to families alone. Schools must play an active role (in a way appropriate for children's age).

Second, the issue of secrecy must be dealt with, including as it relates to confession. Can a priest remain silent if he becomes aware of ongoing sexual abuse of minors, or if he becomes aware of a real risk that abuse may occur?

Third a key aspect of prevention is non-violent education. For some individuals, corporal punishment may still be perceived as acceptable or even part educating children. Yet when an adult suffers violence, it is considered a crime. Why then should violence done to a child who cannot defend himself or herself be justified?

## Summing Up

Violence in schools remains widespread, including in Catholic schools. Students and education systems around the world have been profoundly affected by the COVID-19 crisis that started more than two years ago. Apart from leading to much higher rates of learning poverty (defined as the inability for a ten year old child to read and understand an age-appropriate text), there is evidence that the crisis has exacerbated some of the risk factors traditionally associated with violence against children, including VIAS. The need to end VIAS is more pressing than ever.

Pope Francis' call for a Global Compact on Education emphasizes the need to put the human person at the center of what Catholic and other educational institutions do. Ending violence in school is a clear first step. Preventing VIAS is a moral imperative, but is also a smart investment. The negative effects of VIAS are widespread. Children's life is profoundly affected when they are victims or perpetrators of violence, with scars that last a lifetime. Ending violence in schools could bring large benefits. The good news is that promising evidence-based interventions to end VIAS are available.

### Box ES.7: The Global Catholic Education Project

[Global Catholic Education](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org) is a volunteer-led project to contribute to Catholic education and integral human development globally with a range of resources. The website went live symbolically on Thanksgiving Day in November 2020 to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. Catholic schools serve close to 62 million children in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools globally. In addition, almost 7 million students are enrolled at the post-secondary level (data for 2019). The Church also provides many other services to children and families, including in healthcare, social protection, and humanitarian assistance. Our aim is to serve Catholic schools and universities, as well as other organizations contributing to integral human development, with an emphasis on responding to the aspirations of the poor and vulnerable. If you would like to contribute to the project, please contact us through the website at [www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org](http://www.GlobalCatholicEducation.org). On the website, you can also subscribe to receive our weekly blog.



# Catholic Education Alumni Giving Back Series



## Men and Women for Others: How Jesuit Education Alumni Can Contribute to Social Justice

Selected Chapters for Fall 2022 Issue of *Educatio Si* Bulletin July 2022



## FOREWORD



Fr. José Mesa S.J.

Worldwide Secretary for Jesuit Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education

There are today more than 2,500 schools, members of the Jesuit Global Network (JGNS), operating in the world. They educate around 2 million secondary and pre-secondary education students in 5 continents and 80 countries. In addition, the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU) counts 177 member institutions that enroll more than one million students and have more than 30 million alumni.

The mission of Jesuit education is to provide a holistic formation where heart, mind, soul, and hands are fully integrated in the Christian Humanist tradition that has characterized Jesuit Education from the beginning; all at the service of God, Church, and Humanity. The role that alumni could and should play in creating a better world for all has long been recognized and encouraged. At the tenth European Congress of Jesuit Alumni in 1973, Father Pedro Arrupe, the 28<sup>th</sup> Superior General of the Society of Jesus, gave a seminal address to explain that our living educational tradition was calling us today to become “men and women for others” and “agents for change” towards social justice. Referring to the ideal human being that Jesuit education should strive to nurture, Father Arrupe concluded his address with the following words:

*“This is the ideal human being, the person who is the goal of our educational efforts... This is no longer homo faber, the clever toolmaker... Nor is it simply homo sapiens, the species whose intelligence and wisdom ... gave it the ability to understand and explain the universe. It isn’t even homo prometheanus ... who is called not only to contemplate the world but to transform it. Neither is it homo politicus, who is fully aware of the complexity of this world and adroit in finding and tapping into the neuralgic points that determine the great transformations. Nor is it simply homo ludens, who is endowed with the capacity to live life to the full... This is homo spiritualis, the person who is capable of loving even sworn enemies in this iniquitous world, and who is therefore also capable of transforming that world.”<sup>1</sup>*

The call for the Jesuit alumni and all persons of goodwill to transform the world by promoting a faith that does justice is as pressing today as it was almost 50 years ago when Father Arrupe delivered his address to the European alumni. They are echoed in Pope Francis’ recent call for a Global Compact on Education and the seven commitments outlined for such a compact <sup>2</sup>: (1)

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<sup>1</sup> Arrupe, P. 1973. Promotion of Justice and Education for Justice. Remarks at the 10<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Jesuit Alumni, August 1, Valencia, Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Francis. 2020. Video Message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the Meeting Organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education “Global

to make human persons the center; (2) to listen to the voices of children and young people; (3) to advance the women; (4) to empower the family; (5) to welcome everybody especially the marginalized; (6) to find new ways of understanding (the) economy and politics; and (7) to safeguard our common home.

As the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of the World Union of Jesuit Alumni is taking place in Barcelona in July 2022, this publication is opportune in providing

guidance to the necessary discernment to accomplish a New Global Compact on Education within Pope Francis' vision and showing with case studies how the Jesuit alumni are finding innovative ways to promote a faith that does justice and respond to Father Arrupe and Pope Francis' calls.

I hope that the contributions assembled in in this report will be useful in inspiring and guiding your own work towards those ideals.

## **PART II**

### **EXPERIENCES AND REFLEXIONS**

#### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **AFRICA – JESUIT ALUMNI AND THE EDUCATION OF VULNERABLE MIGRANT MINORS**

René Micallef S.J.  
Associate Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome

##### **Introduction: A Visit to East Africa**

In 2017, after nine years of theological studies and three years of lecturing at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, my Jesuit superiors asked me to spend eight months in Africa to complete my formal Jesuit training. I was based in Kenya, but my experience included six weeks of teaching English to urban refugees in Kampala, Uganda, with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). During those eight months, I visited Jesuit educational institutions in urban Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. Some cater specifically for refugees and are run by the JRS. Others are run by the Jesuit Order (or by an NGO founded and sustained by the Jesuits) and include refugees and migrants among their regular student population.

I did not manage to visit JRS schools within refugee camps. The situation in Maban, South Sudan, was quite unstable and it was costly to travel safely to that refugee camp. Militias were extorting and harassing aid workers all over the country and some of the compounds and schools had been attacked. I however met the director of JRS-Maban three times in Kenya and Uganda and had long conversations with him about the challenging situation they were facing. His job included setting up a school in a place with very little water, where staff couldn't take a shower for many weeks, and roads were not safe to go shopping for basic supplies not found in the camp; the creative solutions he had found were impressive. I also wanted to visit Kakuma Camp in Kenya, which is safer and much more urbanized than Maban. However, we were in the midst of a terrible drought in East Africa that year, and at some point I understood that the JRS staff working in Kakuma (which sits in a very arid region of Kenya)

were overwhelmed with “touristic” visits, which consume a lot of time and resources, and hinder their work with refugees in a time of crisis. Long-term volunteering was welcome, as were visits by generous donors, but other visits were best postponed indefinitely. I did not insist.

While I was in East Africa, the education of migrants and refugees was a very much on my mind. Given that my doctoral thesis dealt with the ethics of immigration policymaking, my university rector in Rome had asked me to represent the university on a scientific committee that was preparing an important international conference at the Gregoriana in November 2017. The conference – hosted by the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), Being the Blessing Foundation and our university – was to focus on the role and responsibility of universities in the education of refugees and migrants. During my weekly online meetings with committee members based in Connecticut, Paris and Rome, I learnt of many innovative projects which the committee wanted to showcase in the conference. Some were close by, for instance, within the Kibera informal settlement of Nairobi (where I spent a week during my time in Kenya), and I could visit them. The conference eventually gave rise to what is now called the *Refugee and Migrant Education Network* (RMEN), bringing together universities and non-profits to create synergies between universities and NGOs, and facilitate the education of migrants and refugees in countries of origin (in the case of internally displaced persons), transit and destination. RMEN also promotes the education of the students and staff of universities in first and third-world countries about the phenomenon of



mass migration and the educational challenges it raises, as well as research on these topics.



Photos: Fr. Micallef teaching with refugees in Uganda.



## Some Challenges in Migrant and Refugee Education

What can alumni do to support the education of vulnerable refugee and migrant minors? To answer this question, let us first start by recalling the viral photos of two-year old Alan Kurdi, lying lifeless on a beach near Bodrum, Turkey in 2015. At times, the media bombards us with these and other heart-wrenching images of refugees and vulnerable migrants trying to reach safety often using irregular means (given that wealthy countries have made it next to impossible for such persons to reach their territory legally). Yet, these images have to compete with other images of migrants shown in the same media which seemingly depict hordes terrorists, drug dealers, welfare queens and sickly persons infected with all sorts of “tropical diseases” or suffering from dangerous traumas all trying to invade our countries. It only takes a meme, for instance, the cartoon of a grown-up Alan Kurdi sporting a long beard and wearing a suicide bomb vest, to convince many people that maybe his death wasn’t such a bad thing after all. The fickleness of public opinion about vulnerable migrants, combined with the political movements intent on manipulating it demagogically, highlights the need of education of our staff, students, and alumni about these issues, preferably reinforced by meaningful encounters with vulnerable migrants in educational settings.

What can we do for Alan Kurdi and for many migrant minors like him? One thing we can do is try to offer a decent education to every child. Education is why many parents risk the life of their children taking them along, or sending them with a smuggler, to a country where they may have access to safety and decent schooling. Offering good education to all minors might seem too daunting a task, so perhaps we should focus on something more feasible: providing education to vulnerable migrant minors. Mobility implies instability and usually has a negative impact on schooling, as the child moves between regions having different educational systems, curricula and languages, missing months of schooling due to bureaucratic hurdles, trying to adapt every time despite being seen as a foreigner. Migrant minors have to make new friends and to

establish relationships of trust with teachers again and again, and so are in greater need of good education than most other children. The following table presents some data from the latest UNHCR report on refugee education, *Left Behind* (2017).

**Table 1: Access to Education for Refugee Children**

	Refugee children	International average
Primary education	61%	91%
Secondary education	23%	84%
Tertiary education	1%	34%

Source: compiled by the author.

In 2017, I recall accompanying refugee twins from the Democratic Republic of Congo to a local school in Kampala to have them enrolled in the middle of the school year. The Ugandan government discourages the founding of new schools for refugees in places where local schools already exist. The girls were 16 years old yet they were very shy in the company of strangers. I found it hard to communicate with them in French or English, but the driver however managed to convey some of my questions to them, probably mixing Luganda and Swahili, and they nodded again and again showing they understood. They did a placement test, did poorly, and were accepted in a primary school class with 9-year-olds.

Uganda is an important case study as poor country which has quietly hosted a million refugees at the same time when Germany's decision to welcome a million Syrians was considered pure folly by neighbors such as Poland. Poland has more recently discovered that welcoming 2 million Ukrainian refugees in two months is very doable, if there is the political will; Europe had managed 40-60 million refugees at the end of World War II, and many millions of migrants after the Fall of Communism in 1989, and we hardly remember those crises today. Since 1997, Uganda has adopted a Universal Primary Education system which remains severely underfunded (due to the rapid population growth, with many families having more than four children, and other factors such as corruption). In many places schools have 70-150 pupils per class, and principals must invent all kinds of fees (for cleaning, toilet paper, locker-room usage, lab usage, library access, uniforms, etc.) to balance their budgets. I

negotiated a financial package for the Congolese twins of around €15 per pupil per term, which may seem insignificant in countries where you can just about buy four cups of coffee for that amount. Yet, small NGOs like JRS struggle to fund-raise for "miscellaneous fees" to place thousands of refugee students in local schools in places like Uganda. Principals kick students out of school if the fees are not paid on time since they cannot afford to create a precedent.

After settling the bill, I took the twins to the seamstress to have their uniforms fitted and insisted with her that I wanted her to do a good job, since a 16-year-old girl would not want to go to school with 9-year-olds in a shabby, baggy old uniform. Though Uganda has reached nine refugee girls for every ten refugee boys enrolled in primary education, gender equality in secondary education is more challenging: refugee girls are only half as likely to enroll as their male counterparts. Getting more girls to school means taking care of the little details. For instance, girls are often underfed in their families with respect to boys and have a difficulty concentrating. Having separate and safe toilets for post-pubescent girls is a must if they are to complete their schooling.

Despite such challenges, some refugee kids mature quickly and thrive in situations of educational instability. Dina Nayeri, in her book *The Ungrateful Refugee*, recounts her struggles as a child with insensitive and ethnocentric teachers in wealthier countries who were incapable of conceiving that their refugee students may have had much better teachers and learning environments in some of the poorer countries they went through. Nayeri spent her childhood meekly pretending to be "grateful refugee" to avoid having to expose (while struggling every time with new language) the arrogance and ignorance of some of her teachers, and risk being penalized and seen as a "problem kid".

Given the lack of other resources, educators in many developing countries bank on their students' will to learn and make sacrifices, and on the intense competition for higher-ed scholarships, to push them to memorize certain notions at a younger age than in wealthier countries. I myself was formed in

a very competitive Jesuit school in Malta when my country was still an emerging country, and my science undergraduate studies at the University of Malta in the 1990s were quite demanding as administrators sought to cope with an exponential expansion of tertiary education eagerly drove out “lazy underachievers”. Yet, as a Biology major, I was amazed when I saw the level of detail biology students were expected to memorize at a Jesuit secondary school in Gulu, Uganda, in an area still devastated by the atrocities committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army.

High expectations and standards of excellence in Jesuit and other good schools catering to refugees and migrants is not limited to poorer countries. In 2007, I accompanied adolescent migrants from Ecuador and Peru at a Jesuit NGO called Pueblos Unidos, offering remedial classes and homework assistance in a poor neighborhood in Madrid, Spain. I was similarly amazed by the level of abstract and philosophical reasoning teachers in their Jesuit school, Centro Padre Piquer, expected from their 14-year-old students when commenting classical Spanish or English literature texts. In some cases, a lot of emphasis is placed on rote learning, abstract notions and standardized tests, and not enough on individuality or creativity, leisure reading, research on personal interests, hands-on learning.

The 2019 British drama film, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, written and directed by Chiwetel Ejiofor, illustrates how difficult it is for an inquisitive child to access books on gear systems and dynamos in Africa, to solve a serious problem threatening their village. In real life, I have seen top tier boarding schools in Africa where the library is only accessible to teachers, most books have been lying in boxes for years waiting to be catalogued, and students are exposed to 15 hours of schooling, sports, and chores every day with no time left, except during holidays, to read freely. While in Africa, I met a former teacher of mine who spent a year in a Salesian high school, cataloguing library books and establishing a lending library system (the school had just received a generous donation of books). This is an important service rendered by some alumni, but even then, educators and principals need to be convinced of the importance

of “leisure reading” and personal “research projects”.

One day, when I was at the JRS Kampala teaching English to refugees who were parents and young adults, the education project manager invited the children (who had been attending schools all over the city) to our center at the end of their school term. We asked them to do an evaluation and get a sense of which schools were offering better value for our donors’ money. Many children lamented the lack of books and computer classes, and some requested to use the library and computers in our center in the afternoon during the holidays, when they weren’t being used by their parents and elder siblings. We immediately said yes, astonished that the kids would want to spend their holidays reading books and learning word processing, but many of our colleagues were not too happy to have children around in the afternoons, and we had to convince them we could “keep them quiet”.

As soon as we started to cater to the children’s request, I started to discover many things. There was a lack of age-appropriate books in English, but many good books from my childhood were in the public domain and could easily be downloaded from the internet and printed out. The teachers at our center had never heard of the most famous authors of children’s’ books in English (even though all education in Uganda is in English); they still used readers compiled by colonial school authorities in the 1950s. I had previously visited a Jesuit school in a slum in Kenya, where students had been given cheap e-readers onto which the librarian could upload all sorts of books; nobody had tried to look for financing for something similar in Kampala. Several computers were lying in a store since they had “stopped working”: nobody had dared open them and remove the thick layer of dust blocking the fans. Others were overheating due to lack of thermal paste between the processor and heat sink, which was an easy problem to fix. I started showing the kids and the staff how to open the “black box” and do minor repairs on computers, following instructions from YouTube videos on their own smartphones.

In certain countries, googling for solutions is not as obvious as we take it to be in the Global North, even when people have an internet connection at their fingertips. At one point, after spending a morning in an office with a teacher who was phoning all her friends to figure out how to extract oil from palm fruit to produce a hair lotion, I got fed up and googled it for her. I still had to convince her that palm fruits in Uganda were like palm fruits in other parts of the world, so the extraction technique is exactly the same; I'm not sure I did convince her in the end. In a world of hoaxes and fake news, there is some wisdom in distrusting strangers on the internet, but prudently overcoming the fear of the unknown is an essential process in education. Children don't usually have internet access in Africa, but things are changing fast, and it is important for teachers (who often do have access via simpler, sturdier smartphones) to be keenly aware that there is more to internet than social media, and to be able to effortlessly convey that to their students. Over the last few years, through RMEN, I have met other educators who are aware of these difficulties and have launched important initiatives, such as Project Hello World's internet hubs, or Pangea Educational Development's work on children's books for Africa.

### **The Role of Jesuit Education Alumni in Migrant and Refugee Education**

I am not an expert in refugee education: the anecdotes above are intended to stimulate the curiosity and the creativity of alumni of Jesuits schools, colleges, and universities into contributing personally to the education of vulnerable migrants. Money sent to trustworthy organizations, such as those linked to the Jesuit Order, is generally money well spent and is crucial for the education of vulnerable migrants. Yet, personal contact and volunteering experiences are extremely important for Jesuit alumni, educated to become "men and women for and with others". I believe short volunteering experiences closer to home (1-2 months) are a useful start, but if a typical alumnus wants to volunteer in a very different cultural context, they need to spend more than two months in that setting to start to understand and appreciate

the new reality, learn from it, and contribute more effectively.

My experience of six weeks teaching in Kampala was indeed a very short one, but it was embedded in an 8-month experience in East Africa, where I travelled from city to city by bus, and visited the places where tourists don't usually go. My past experiences allowed me to understand many things immediately, as soon as I got off the bus in Kisenyi, took my first walk in the club-land of Kabalagala and in the muddy roads of "Catholic" Nsambya, and went shopping for ingredients to make lasagna. I made friends all over the place and started asking the hard questions about the city and its structural problems. I observed things and built hypothesis and tested them, given my personal inquisitiveness and experience living in many different contexts and countries. Years of life as a migrant, months of language courses in France, Spain and Germany: all this made me keenly aware of the educational and other needs of my students as soon as I entered the class in Kampala. Already during adolescence in a Jesuit high school in Malta in the 1990s, I met refugee students from South Sudan and from Iraq; they struggled at first, then flourished. Many Jesuit schools and colleges today welcome vulnerable migrants within their student bodies. Promoting refugee education could start quite early on in life: welcoming refugees into our clique of high school friends and getting our parents to meet their parents could be the first of many steps.

When I graduated from my Jesuit high school, I started volunteering with JRS-Malta. I typed a newsletter for our benefactors and made tea for refugees from Iraq and the Balkans who came to talk to Fr Joseph Cassar (who is now in Iraq setting up schools for internally displaced persons), worried about their children's schooling. During the summer before I joined the Jesuits, I travelled to Rome with Fr. Cassar and volunteered at Centro Astalli's soup kitchen and dormitories, which Pope Francis visited at the start of his papacy in 2013. I believe every young college student should seek out similar volunteer opportunities. Student buddy and academic mentoring programmes abound in Jesuit universities, and in some countries there are NGOs

who do good work matching volunteers with refugee students, such as Kiron in Germany.

As a young Jesuit, I lived in London for a year in a very diverse neighborhood in South Tottenham, and offered catechism classes to young people, many of whom were immigrants. At Pueblos Unidos, in Madrid, I met many other volunteers helping migrant children do their homework; some were fellow students at the Jesuit university in that city. The opportunities are endless if one knows where to look. To be sure, even adults and prisoners can benefit from educational opportunities. Some years later, after being ordained, while I was writing a doctoral thesis in Boston, I did four years of prison ministry with Hispanic immigrants. Together with the prison chaplaincy and fellow students at Boston College, we wondered how to offer education to the prisoners or support the programmes already in place. At one point, I was driving a religious sister to the prison to give a 6-month course on “how to start a business” to my congregation. I was also encouraging several fellow university students to enroll in the Partakers (College Behind Bars) Programme to help prisoners finish high school and obtain a college degree (albeit with a minimal library and no internet access). There are excellent initiatives out there, and some alumni who have taken up the challenge to volunteer in the education of vulnerable migrants have found it extremely rewarding.

### **Thinking Bigger**

What else can alumni offer besides financial support and individual volunteering? To be sure, we can create educational networks and hubs around some of our institutions, which reach out to families and beyond. In the USA, the Cristo Rey high schools present in migrant neighborhoods in many major cities often create an ecosystem around them, including downtown businesses where students work to cover part of their tuition, while spending time with high achievers who help them set more ambitious goals for their lives and eventually get into good universities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that some forms of education – though not all – can be

effectively offered online by excellent teachers and communicators. Thinking bigger includes creating online platforms accessible to refugee students around the world, even in remote refugee camp settings, and populating them with relevant royalty-free educational materials, dubbed or subtitled in languages accessible to those students. As regards content production, MOOCs already available online are often not very effective since they do not take into account the history, culture and social settings of refugees and students in third-world countries. As regards content accessibility, on the receiving end, there is need of better internet, computers, a computer repair industry, training in English (which is necessary to make good use of the Internet), training of teachers and administrators to integrate online materials into their curricula, and certification by local high schools and universities. We can best cater to these needs by creating teams and associations to support local Jesuit schools, JRS and Jesuit Worldwide Learning, as well as many other trustworthy educational institutions in many places where Jesuit institutions are absent.

As a final note, though I have a science background and believe that a STEM education can be very useful in secondary school in many emerging countries by allowing access to good employment opportunities (even in refugee camps), I think that the promotion of leisure reading in primary school is of the essence. The detective adventure novels I devoured as a child – Blyton’s Five Find-Outers, the Hardy Boys, Willard Price’s Adventure series – helped me to quickly improve my English while stimulating my inquisitiveness and interest in science subjects. A STEM education in a developing country, however, is best rounded off with a liberal arts education as soon as possible, or in any case later in life. This is necessary to see the big picture, reflect critically on the major existential, political, and ethical issues in life, and help people use their talents and training for positive social transformation. I believe the alumni of Jesuit schools, colleges and universities are especially equipped to intervene creatively and in a myriad of ways to support a well-rounded curriculum for refugees around the world.



## CHAPTER 5

### ASIA – JESUIT ALUMNI PROVIDE SUPPORT IN INDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Neel Mani Rangesh  
Secretary of the Federation of Jesuit Alumni Associations of India

The Federation of Jesuit Alumni Associations of India (JAAI) is an association of all alumni associations of Jesuit academic institutions in India. JAAI is a forum for networking between alumni from across India to play a role in shaping public policies, including for poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, upliftment of marginalized, human rights, the preservation of environment, and the spread of literacy. Neel Mani Rangesh is Secretary of JAAI. This article was prepared for JAAI and is used with permission. It demonstrates how Jesuit education alumni have mobilized to respond to emergency needs in the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic marks an unprecedented time in modern history that will require the best of humanity to overcome. The world is grappling with possibly the worst public health crisis seen in more than a century. The new coronavirus has taken thousands of lives and spread to nearly every country in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has gripped nations, compelling governments to impose countrywide lockdowns to contain the spread of the deadly virus. This crisis threatens everyone's way of life, but it is especially difficult for people who are already vulnerable, including those with pre-existing medical conditions, older adults, individuals experiencing homelessness, refugees and migrants, wage workers, and those with inflexible jobs. Jesuit Alumni Associations of India (JAAI) believes that Jesuit Alumni/ae deeply rooted in local communities are best positioned to lead and give the communities on the front lines of the crisis the resources they need to act quickly and protect the most vulnerable such as helping in delivering essential items to struggling families and individuals quarantined, arrange doctor, health care persons and other front line responders to communities in need, support hygiene awareness efforts and much, much more.

Many Jesuits and Jesuit Alumni Associations are working in coordination with local administration and providing critical medical support and meeting critical needs of communities around the country. Jesuit Alumni/ae are making efforts and living by the JAAI motto "to give and not to count the cost".

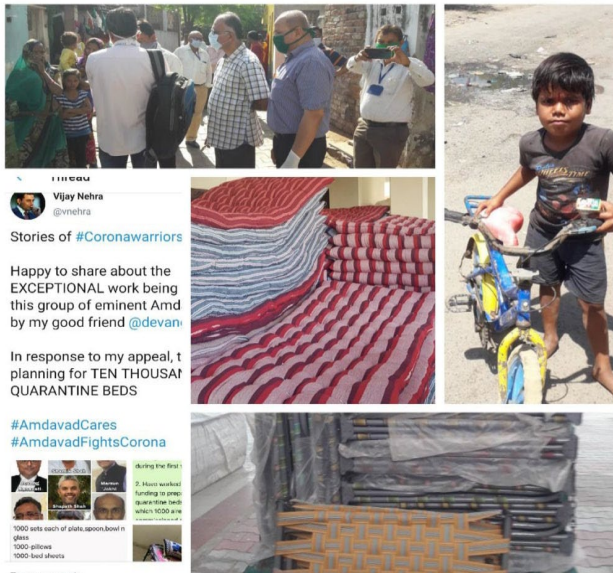
Although it will be very difficult to compile all the activities, but I have tried to include activities which have come to our knowledge through social media or other sources. I am very much sure that many services to humanity done by Jesuits and Jesuit Alumni/ae may have been so pure service and goodwill that they could not reach us and thus may not be included here. I sincerely apologize for non-inclusion of any such activities inadvertently. In the next issue of the report, we will surely try to include all such activities. The major activities in response to COVID-19 pandemic and critical situation of lockdown by the Jesuits and Jesuits Alumni Associations are as follows:

#### **1. Association of Past Xavierites (APX), Ahmedabad**

The COVID-19 pandemic marks an unprecedented time in modern history that will require the best of humanity to overcome. The world is grappling with possibly the worst public health crisis seen in more than a century. The new They have formed a small group (all are either APX members or connected to St Xavier's High School Loyola Ahmedabad) and are preparing food packets and distributing the same, for those daily wagers and needy who have no jobs and work currently. Ten Thousand food packets per day are being distributed under directions of Mr Vijay Nehra (IAS), Municipal commissioner of Ahmedabad. A task force has been formed by the Municipal Commissioner and APX, Ahmedabad is part of one such group and given this responsibility as well as tapping resources for bed sheets, pillows, mattresses, pillow covers, beds, sets of plate, spoon, bowls and glass etc.



Photos: 1000 beds, 1000 Mattresses and 1000 sets each of plate, spoon, bowl & glass, 1000 pillows, 1000 bed sheets, 1000 pillow covers, 1150 tooth brushes, 1150 tooth pastes, 1000 bathing soaps, 1040 hand wash, 1000 packets of paper napkins were supplied at Tapi facility, Nikol till 9 April 2020. With the help of Police, they have distributed milk, bread and Parle-G biscuits to the needy people of Khatraj & surrounding villages and outskirts of the city of Ahmedabad. They have already raised around Rs 1.55 Crores and as need arises are ready to raise more.



## 2. Loyola Alumni Association (LAA), Jamshedpur

Loyola Alumni Association (LAA), Jamshedpur is having a structured plan of action to support to needy people for at least 6 weeks rather than giving

them just one meal. This a joint effort of Loyola & XLRI. The main challenge was to identify the ones severely affected & the ones who do not have necessary documentation like BPL card & Ration Card. With the help of the Adarsh Seva Sansthan, an NGO which has been working in the 26 bustees of Sonari and Kadma for the last 30 years, they have found that there are close to 1100 families out of the total of 3554 families in these 26 Bustees who are in this category. They started with a lot of 489 packets. Each packet consists of 4 kg of Rice, 1kg of Dal, 1/2 Ltrs. of oil, Biscuits, salt etc. which will be good enough for a week for a family of 4/5 for 2 meals a day. The cost for 500 such packets is roughly Rupees One lakh Fifty thousand (approximately Rs.300 per packet). Every week, they are trying and delivering 500 such packets through Adarsh Seva Sansthan and their team of Volunteers. XLRI team works on procurement and packing of the material while LAA team are responsible for transporting the packets from XLRI to Adarsh Seva Sansthan in Sonari.

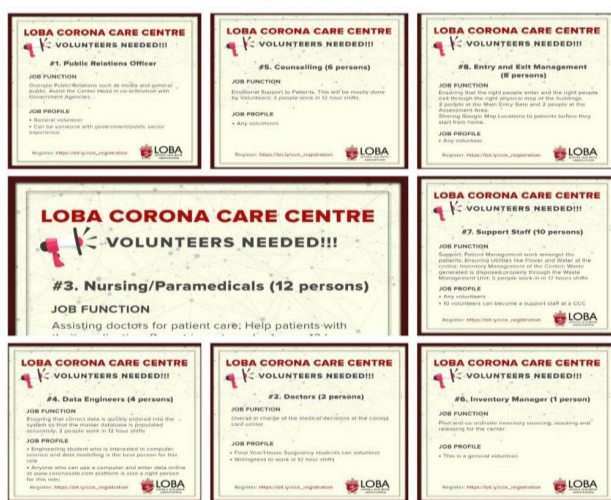


## 3. Old Boys' Association, Loyola School (LOBA), Trivandrum

Kerala State government is planning to setup Corona Care Centers (CCC) across the state in



anticipation of community spread (Stage 3) of the novel corona virus pandemic. LOBA, among others, is tasked with setting up a CCC when such a situation is called upon. Each Corona Care Center is a 24-hour facility that has to be manned by 50 people across 10 roles. The center is headed by a person appointed by the State Government just like how flood relief centers are set up at institutions and managed by the State Government. Old Boys' Association, Loyola School, Trivandrum (LOBA), has been tasked with planning, setting up and running a Corona Care Center (CCC) at Loyola School, Sreekaryam, Trivandrum.



#### 4. St. Xavier's College and St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association (SXCAA), Kolkata

Jesuit Priests of St. Xavier's, Kolkata and the Xaverians donated Rs. 40 Lakhs to the West Bengal CM's Relief Fund to fight against COVID-19. On the holy day of Good Friday, SXCAA under the leadership of its President and Principal of the College Rev. Fr. Dominic Savio SJ and other Jesuits of the college distributed food packets to the needy local people with the assistance from Kolkata Police.



#### 5. Doranda Old Xavierans (DOX), Ranchi

DOX has partnered with their alma-mater in supporting three shelter homes run by St. Xavier's, Doranda and District Administration and sponsoring food for 50 families of the outreach students of the school for a month. They have raised Rupees 2,28,000 for the Project in less than 24 hrs. They have supplied groceries including rice, dal, soya chunks, onion, potato, mustard oil, soap, sanitary pads etc. for a month for 49 families of school's outreach students and 38 families of non-teaching staffs of the school. They have also supplied rice, dal & potatoes to 20 families at C.F. Andrews Memorial English School, Tharpakhna, Ranchi with the help of local authorities. They are continuously supplying food provisions, bedsheets, pillow covers, etc. for the shelter homes. Stress Bursting messages are also being circulated in alumni group to get one motivated during the critical situation of lockdown.





## 6. Bokaro Old Xaverian Association (BOXA), Bokaro

Food Bags are being distributed to families of mishra colony, sector-1 and villages in Bokaro such as Balidih village under the supervision of local administration led by CO & BDO of the area. The St. Xavier's School, Bokaro is the Nodal Centre for planning, packing and distribution of food bags. They are also providing masks, gloves and caps.



## 7. Andhra Loyola College Alumni Association (ALCAA), Vijawada, Andhra Pradesh

They have collected donations for free distribution of food and water for poor and needy people and migrants. They are also distributing thousands of eggs per day to police colonies in Vijaywad and Guntur. The college campus has been given to poor farmers for selling vegetables and auditorium is being used by the Police to lodge quarantine victims.



## 8. Loyola Public School Alumni (LPSA), Guntur

Alumni of Loyola Public School, Guntur along with non-teaching and teaching staffs of the school have

carried out food distribution to needy homeless people on streets of Guntur and all neighboring villages around. One of its alumni, Aluri Inder Kumar (1976-1977 Batch), who is the CEO of Avanthi Feeds, has personally donated an amount of Rs. 1 Crore to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Relief Fund.



## 9. St. Michael's Alumni Association, Patna

St. Michael's Alumni Association, Patna is distributing food & essential items such as rice, jaggery, chewra, biscuits etc. on daily basis starting from 5 April 2020 to the poor people living behind St. Michael's High School, Patna, Makhdumpur locality, Bind toli and other localities of Digha area of Patna with direct involvement of Digha Police personnel.



### 10. St. Xavier's Alumni Association (SXAA), Patna

St. Xavier's Alumni Association, Patna is contributing Rs. 1 Lakh to Chief Minister Relief Fund, Bihar in a gesture of solidarity with fight against COVID-19. SXAA Vice-President Dr. Amulya Kr. Singh has personally donated an amount of Rs. 1 Lakh to PM Cares Fund on 30 March 2020 and Rs. 51,000/- to Chief Minister Relief Fund, Bihar. Alumni of 2006 batch are also preparing and distributing food on daily basis to destitute families. Patna Jesuit Society has also distributed cooked meal khichadi, rice, dal and chokha to members of Mahadalit community in the slums of Rupaspur, Khagaul, Shahpur and Naubatpur areas of Patna.

### 11. Loyola Ex-Students Association (LESA), Margaon

LESA committee member Ryan Vaz has invented a hard face mask and given them free of cost to help frontline brave medical brethren at ESI Hospital. They have also distributed perishable and non-perishable items to underprivileged senior citizens and others who have no means to get the essentials or too poor to purchase. They are also providing food for homeless daily. 1996 batch alone contributed Rs. 62,000/- towards provision of food for homeless and 150 biryani packets were distributed to people stranded at Navelim, Goa on 7 April 2020.

### 12. he Ex Xavierites Alumni Association of Surat (TEXAS), Surat

The Ex Xavierites Alumni Association of Surat (TEXAS), Surat have collected around 808 kits of essential items with the help of its members, fathers, sisters and PTA and distributed to needy people with help of Navsarjan organization. Another set of 220 kits have been distributed on 19 April 2020



### 13. Darjeeling Jesuits of North Bengal

St. Joseph's School & College, North Point, Darjeeling and Xavier Educational Society of North Bengal sent and distributed the load of essential materials such as food provisions, personal hygiene materials etc. to needy people of different areas such as Soam Tea Garden Villages, Lepcha Busty, Singla etc.



### 14. St. John's Jesuit Community, Tamar, Ranchi

Ranchi Jesuit Society under the umbrella of Ranchi Archdiocese are running two shelter homes – one at St. John's School, Dorea, Tamar and another at Ursuline Convent Girls High School, Muri. St. John's School, Dorea, Tamar shelter home is taking care of 200 males & 200 females migrants mostly coming from Uttar Pradesh & Bihar and few locals as well. All the essential things, food provisions etc. are being providing to them with the support from



Jesuit Institutions such as XISS, St. Xavier's, Doranda and sisters from Samlong, Ranchi.



#### 15. St. Aloysius Primary and High School, Mangaluru

St. Aloysius Primary and High School, Mangaluru distributed food grains and essential items to around 200 destitute families on 7 April 2020 to help them to cope up with the lockdown period. Many families of Kannada medium students studying in St. Aloysius High Primary and High School and even families of other more impoverished students benefitted from this move.



#### 16. St. Xavier's School, Jaipur

St. Xavier's School and St. Xavier's College, Nevta, Jaipur distributed food kits worth Rs. 2 Lakhs to 200

deserving poor migrant families in 5 villages of Nevta Panchayat, Jaipur on 4 April 2020.



#### 17. Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, Madurai

Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, Madurai distributed food packets to impoverished people during the lockdown period.



#### 18. St. Joseph's College and Mount Saint Joseph's, Bengaluru

St. Joseph's College, Langford Road and Mount Saint Joseph's, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru have distributed 31,754 of essential grocery kits

to the impoverished people. Each kit was consisting of 10 Kg Rice, 2 Kg Dal, 1 Litre edible oil, 3 Kg Potato, 1 Kg Salt and 1 packet of Sambhar Powder.

#### 19. St. Xavier's School, Shaibganj

St. Xavier's School, Shaibganj delivered essential items to the Paharia Tribals which are particularly vulnerable tribal group mostly staying in their hamlets in private clusters away from the civilized society and other needy people. Masks which are being made in school are also being distributed free.



#### 20. St. Stanislaus School, Bandra, Mumbai

St. Stanislaus School, Bandra, Mumbai has started a migrant relief camp in the school campus for 100 men and 25 women in coordination with the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC). The campus was sanitized and bedding, toilet kits and material for cooking is being supplied by BMC and a team of doctors from Bhabha Hospital checks migrants on daily basis.



## CHAPTER 6

### EUROPE – A NEW JESUIT SCHOOL IN BRUSSELS OR THE WILL TO GO TO THE FRONTIER

Alain Deneef  
President of the World Union of Jesuit Alumni

#### Introduction

Opening a school is not a trivial matter. Opening a Jesuit school in a small country that already has 16 is even less trivial. However, this was the intention of the initiators of the Matteo Ricci College <sup>113</sup> in Brussels when they got together in 2012 to set up this project. As former students of the Collège Saint-Michel, a large Jesuit high-school in Brussels, they were well aware of the need for new schools in the Belgian capital due to sustained demographic growth in this cosmopolitan and multicultural city.

They were also well aware that the need for new schools was felt above all in the working-class neighborhoods of Brussels, i.e., those with a population of immigrant origin, which had become predominantly Belgian, and which generally did not attend Jesuit schools. Wanting to give a concrete meaning to the exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI who asked the Jesuits in 2008 during their 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation "to go to the frontiers" <sup>114</sup>, they thought that opening a Jesuit college in a neighborhood where the school population would necessarily be very different from what it usually is in a Jesuit school would be their way of "going to the frontiers", by accompanying the Jesuits there.

However, their approach was not self-evident and their path was to prove rather complicated. The first difficulty was the Society of Jesus itself. Like almost everywhere in Europe, the French-speaking Belgian Jesuits had seen their numbers dwindle over the last 50 years, with a particular acceleration in the last 30

years. If the Dutch-speaking Belgian Jesuits were running seven high schools <sup>115</sup>, the French-speaking ones were already running nine. Asking them to open a new one at a time when the number of available Jesuits was getting smaller was a bit counter-intuitive. But this difficulty could to a large extent be overcome when one considers that the Belgian Jesuits had already passed the torch to the laity in all their educational institutions. Only 3 or 4 colleges still had a Jesuit on their faculty, none of them had a Jesuit headmaster, or a Jesuit president anymore, but all of them still had a Jesuit presence through one or two members in each Board of Trustees. Of course, the Society of Jesus in French-speaking Belgium continued to give impetus to its teaching network through the so-called Coordination of the Jesuit colleges, a body that was at first informal and then recently became a legal structure in its own right. This coordination presided over by the delegate of the Father Provincial of the Province of Europe occidentale francophone (French-speaking Western Europe) <sup>116</sup>, thus ensured the continuity of the Ignatian spirit and pedagogy.

More serious was the challenge of the type of college to be opened. In fact, Brussels already had a renowned French-speaking high school, aimed at the middle class and the bourgeoisie, and there was no question of opening a second one in the same mold. But the desire to open a college that was deliberately different from the first was precisely at the heart of the educational project carried out by these Alumni. The intentions were therefore well aligned in this respect and two successive Jesuit

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<sup>113</sup> See <https://collegematteoricci.be> (in French)

<sup>114</sup> See the speech of Pope Benedict XVI at the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20080221\\_gesuiti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080221_gesuiti.html)

<sup>115</sup> They will open an eighth one in Brussels (Molenbeek) in 2023, the Egied Van Broeckhovenschool.

<sup>116</sup> In 2017, the Southern Belgian Province of the Society of Jesus merged with the Province of France to create the Province of French-speaking Western Europe (or Europe occidentale francophone - EOF). At the same time, the Northern Belgian (Dutch-speaking) Province ended up forming the European Low Countries Region (ELC) with the Dutch Province.



provincials, then the father general of the Society of Jesus, confirmed the Society's commitment to open a new secondary school which would be the first in French-speaking Belgium for 91 years<sup>117</sup> and the first in Belgium for 51 years<sup>118</sup>.

The Alumni behind this initiative, including a former headmaster of a Jesuit college, joined together with a few other lay people and two Jesuits in a non-profit association, a legal entity representing the organizing authority of the school. Their intention was to create a French-speaking secondary school offering a general education, i.e., excluding technical education for the time being. This Jesuit school was therefore a Catholic school, part of what

is known in Belgium as the free, subsidized, denominational education network.

It is necessary to summaries here the way in which education is structured in Belgium. First of all, education in this federal country is now the responsibility of the three linguistic communities that make up the country: the French-speaking Community, the Flemish Community and the German-speaking Community. In the three Communities, there are the same three types of education networks: the public<sup>119</sup> schools (also called 'official schools'), the public subsidized schools and the 'free' subsidized schools<sup>120</sup>.



<sup>117</sup> The last Walloon college to open was the Collège Saint-Paul in Godinne in 1928.

<sup>118</sup> The last Flemish college to open was the Ruusbroeck College in Brussels (Laeken) in 1968.

<sup>119</sup> The word 'public' should not be taken in the sense of the British public schools which are actually private

schools. It should be taken literally, i.e. organized and fully financed by the public authorities

<sup>120</sup> Subsidized free schools are predominantly Catholic (90%), but also include a few Jewish schools, a handful of Muslim schools and a dozen non-denominational free schools.

The way in which these different school networks are financed is quite different. First, it should be noted that all teachers in all networks have their salaries paid by the government. Operating subsidies are also paid by the public authorities, but in different proportions, which clearly discriminate against free schools. Finally, it is in the area of investment in school buildings that the differences between networks are most marked. Under a political agreement forged in 1959 between the proponents of secularism and the supporters of Catholic education, known in Belgium as the 'School Pact', the buildings of public schools are fully financed by the public authorities. The buildings of subsidized public schools, organized by the municipalities and the provinces, are only 60% financed by the state. The buildings of 'free' schools are financed for by the schools themselves, organized around their organizing entity.

In fact, in Belgium, anyone can theoretically create a school and have it recognized as a 'free' school, which will be subsidized if it meets a certain number of criteria, such as gratuitous education. The high level of public funding for education explains the almost total absence of private schools in the country, except for a few international schools <sup>121</sup>.

### **Finding a Location**

In reality, setting up a new 'free' school is a daunting task, as the financial resources required are considerable. It is remarkable to notice that all schools recently created in the Brussels Region have been either 'free' schools or subsidized public schools (set up by municipalities). No truly public school has been created due to the lack of available financing at the level of the government of the French-speaking Community. But first of all, to

create a school, you need a place. The Matteo Ricci project looked after this place for a long time, between 2012 and 2018 precisely. There were several options: building on a greenfield site or reconverting an industrial building or former offices. But the possibilities never materialized. By the beginning of July 2018, the project team had become discouraged when providence manifested itself in the form of a former school that had quietly closed its doors a year earlier. It was a Jewish school, the Athénée Maïmonide <sup>122</sup>. Located 400 meters from the Gare du Midi ('South station') in the municipality of Anderlecht, it was on the edge of a working-class neighborhood with a great deal of cultural and religious diversity. In less than a month, the offer presented by the organizing authority of the Matteo Ricci College in formation was accepted by the sellers. History will record that the offer was countersigned on 31 July, St Ignatius' Day.

A little over a year later, the college opened its doors on September 3, 2019, after much needed renovation work. The first and third years of secondary school opened with 235 students and a staff of 27 teachers and educators <sup>123</sup>. The headmistress took up her post in April 2019.

The purchase of the buildings was made possible by multiple funding sources. The Society of Jesus provided the majority of the funding, supplemented by other sources. First of all, the public authorities had decided three years earlier to create an exceptional subsidy to be granted to schools creating a large number of new places to make up for the crying lack of places available. Secondly, 30-year bank loans guaranteed by the state were used, a classic mechanism for financing 'free' schools. Finally, and this was a kind of first for a secondary school, a real fund-raising operation was set up. The

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<sup>121</sup> There is also a network of European schools in Brussels for the children of EU officials, but these are not strictly speaking private schools. Similarly, several of Belgium's neighboring countries run schools centered on the language of the country, such as the British School, the Deutsche Schule or the Lycée français.

<sup>122</sup> This school had seen its enrolment decline over the last 30 years due to the gradual displacement of the Jewish community from the outlying area of the Gare du Midi, known as the 'Triangle', the site of the textile trade,

to more prosperous areas in the Brussels region or beyond.

<sup>123</sup> In September 2020, years 2 and 4 opened and the number of pupils was 486 and the number of teachers 50. In September 2021, year 5 opened and the number of pupils was 599 and the number of teachers 75. Year 6 will open in September 2022 and the number of pupils should be around 700. The prospects for development are such that we are considering acquiring the neighboring plot of land to expand.



aim was to raise awareness among former pupils of the Jesuit colleges. So far, they have responded to the expectations.

The Jesuit presence was to be marked by other means. The college received a young French Jesuit for two years to affirm the interest of the provincial in the new college. The new college also joined the coordination of the French-speaking Belgian Jesuit colleges (Cocéjé)<sup>124</sup>, the network of Jesuit colleges in Europe (JECSE)<sup>125</sup> and the world (Educate Magis)<sup>126</sup>.

In this respect, the college adopts the major themes of the worldwide network of Jesuit institutions, in particular the four 'C's' which call on each student to be a conscious, competent, compassionate and committed actor<sup>127</sup>.

It was the intention of the initiators to multiply pedagogical innovations since creating from scratch gives the advantage of a blank page. Anne L'Olivier, Headmistress of the school, intends to use the school as a platform for educational innovation. *"It's been 10 years that I dreamed about doing things differently," she says. "Here, there is no legacy, no reputation built up over decades that is difficult to break, no teaching staff stuck in a sterilizing routine."*

### **An Ingenious Combination of Pedagogical Innovations**

The first pedagogical innovation is the P90, which stands for '90-minute periods'. Instead of the traditional 50-minute periods, the college always groups classes together: 90 minutes of the same subject in one block, allowing 10 minutes every two hours, and a total of more than 2 hours each week for participatory and alternative activities:

- Class circle: this time allows students and especially class representatives to discuss with their referent (teacher) and to make proposals

of any kind, thus really participating in the organization of their class and school.

- Choice of workshops: each class chooses a 1.5-hour workshop which will be spread over three weeks and which will have a formative and educational value. Some examples: photography, writing, bread in the 3 monotheistic religions, ceramics, museum visits, dance...

- Reading time: because reading is central to learning.

- Time for interiority: a moment of silence, the reading of a text, a little meditation... can be paths that lead to interiority.

Other pedagogical innovations strengthen this first practice like:

- The pupil is evaluated in a bottom-up manner: this means that the teachers start from the positive, from what the pupil is doing well. Thus, the results of a test are seen as an opportunity to improve: a "right to make mistakes" is recognized. Teachers dialogue with students and give feedback. Positive behavior is clearly valued and any 'sanctions' can be 'reparations' for the damage done.

- The school promotes self-assessment: students are invited to assess themselves after most tests, but also when they receive their report cards: they present their portfolios to their parents, making them real actors in their learning process.

- Collaboration takes place at all levels: between pupils in different classes, between pupils and teachers, between teachers who teach the same subject, between all teachers whatever their subject, and with the management. The

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<sup>124</sup> <https://coceje.be> (in French)

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.jecse.org>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.educatemagis.org>. See the document: Jesuit Schools: A Living Tradition in the 21st Century - An Ongoing Exercise of Discernment:

<https://www.educatemagis.org/documents/jesuit-schools-a-living-tradition-in-the-21st-century/>

<sup>127</sup> On the four Cs, see [http://www.sjweb.info/education/doc-news/HUMAN\\_EXCELLENCE\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.sjweb.info/education/doc-news/HUMAN_EXCELLENCE_ENG.pdf)

members of the educational team meet every Friday afternoon for a consultation.

- The school is developing a school of citizenship: students learn the benefits of participation, co-construction and collective intelligence within the class circle and the *Matteo Council*. The Council is made up of class representatives, teachers and the headmistress; it meets every fortnight to ask questions, make proposals, circulate information and thus participate in the school's functioning.

- The school practices and teaches eco-responsibility: in these times of over-consumption, waste and global warming, students are trained throughout the year to become future eco-responsible citizens: continuous awareness-raising actions, water bottles and fountains, picnics and ecological packaging are examples.

None of these educational practices were invented by Matteo Ricci College, but it is the combination of these practices that is innovative. Isn't the famous *Ratio studiorum*, or reasoned plan of studies — adopted by the Jesuits in 1599 and still in force, with the necessary adaptation to the new times —, also an ingenious and innovative combination of teaching methods that existed before the creation of the Society of Jesus?

The college also wants to prepare its students for the digital world of tomorrow. In partnership with HP and its *Classroom of the Future* program, it is preparing its Knowledge and Learning Centre, which will combine learning the techniques and codes of the digital world, computer coding, audio and video creation and production in a fab lab. In this 400 sqm space, spaces will be infinitely flexible, allowing for individual work, two-to-one tutoring, group work with four students, half classes with twelve students, class work with 24 students, or double classes with 48 students, which allows for co-teaching, a learning method in which one teacher

teaches while the other provides immediate remediation in the classroom with the students.

These developments are particularly important when we know that the school is hoping to open a technical section one day on a plot of land next to the current site, which is in the process of being acquired. Moreover, the pedagogical reforms included in the 'Pact for an Education of Excellence'<sup>128</sup> of the French-speaking Community of Belgium foresee a lengthening of the common core in secondary school. At present, this core curriculum comprises the first two years of secondary school, during which a pupil cannot repeat a year. It would be extended to three years and called 'polytechnic core curriculum'. Pupils would take Latin as well as computer coding, drawing as well as English, mechanics as well as geography.

Opening a technical section would allow us to accompany our pupils beyond the first three years of the polytechnic core curriculum, whether they choose general education or technical education. In Belgium, and particularly in Brussels, technical schools do not have a good reputation. Enrolling in one is often seen as a consequence of failure in general education. The promoters of the Matteo Ricci secondary school believe that offering the possibility of a technical education within the school itself is likely to reassure parents, but even more so, it allows this section to be as qualitative as the general education section.

### **At the Heart of Social, Cultural, and Religious Diversity**

At the origin of the Matteo Ricci school, there was the intuition that this new school had to "go to the frontiers". Clearly, by choosing to set up in a working-class neighborhood, the school has done what it claimed to want to do. Although it is not possible to carry out a clear census, it is estimated that 2 out of 3 pupils are Muslim and come from families that came from Muslim countries, mainly from Morocco, one, two or three generations ago. 25% belong to different Christian denominations

by all school partners: to strengthen the quality of education for all pupils. It is a systemic reform that is part of the long term and is gradually being put in place.

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<sup>128</sup> The Pact for an Education of Excellence is a major educational reform. It is the result of intense collective work begun in 2015 and is based on an ambition shared

but come from families of foreign origin. Only 10% are pupils from Belgian families of origin, theoretically Catholic, but in fact largely secularized.

The prism of social affiliation offers a more contrasted view. Indeed, while a large part of the school population comes from poor or even disadvantaged families, an important minority belongs rather to the middle class, including Muslims. As Anne L'Olivier, Headmistress of the school, explained: *"(...) ethnic and religious differences are not the ones that emerge the most. However, my team and I are more struck by social diversity: we feel a real gap according to social background when, for example, we see pupils who do not have enough to eat at lunchtime, or when we had to buy computers to lend to our pupils who did not have them during the lockdown."*<sup>129</sup>

This coexistence of pupils from working-class and more affluent backgrounds is seen by the project leaders as a trump to be preserved. From the very beginning of the project, it was the intention of the founders to create a school where groups of pupils from very different backgrounds could mix harmoniously. If the predominance of Muslim students was a bit of a surprise to the initiators, the presence of a burgeoning middle class within this group was a rather welcome development.

In the coordination of the French-speaking Belgian Jesuit schools, the Matteo Ricci school is now considered a real laboratory for inter-culturalism. It is true that Jesuit schools in Belgium, as elsewhere in Europe, are tending to become more socially and culturally mixed, but this is a slow and progressive evolution. Two Jesuit colleges in Belgium<sup>130</sup> today have between 25 and 35% of pupils of Muslim origin, but these figures have been and are increasing very gradually and reflect the growing sociological mix of the country's urban centers. In

the case of Matteo Ricci, it is the very willingness of the initiators to reach out to diversity that has resulted in the clear majority share of Muslims among the students. Redouane Nadja, one of the two supervisors of immigrant descent at the school put it: *"Prejudices based on the child's neighborhood, religion or country of origin play a big role in demotivating students. We need to break the image that if you come from an immigrant family, you must be up to no good. I tell the young folk I meet to be proud of where they come from and to work hard."*<sup>131</sup>

However, the Matteo Ricci school, being a Jesuit school, is also a Catholic school. As such, it is affiliated to the *Secrétariat général de l'Enseignement catholique* (SeGEC)<sup>132</sup>, which groups together all the organizing authorities of the free Catholic schools in French-speaking Belgium. Its philosophy of action is summarized in its document *Mission de l'école chrétienne*<sup>133</sup>. As free Catholic schools educate 50% of the pupils in secondary education (general and technical) in the French-speaking Community<sup>134</sup>, they include many Muslim pupils, and indeed pupils of all faiths, who are welcomed. In Belgium, we can therefore say that the Catholic school is the school of and for everyone. But what does it mean to be a Catholic school in which a significant number or even a majority of pupils are Muslims?

Catholic schools are, of course, allowed to offer a two-hour religion course per week. In addition, religious ceremonies may be offered to pupils. As one can imagine, the time for proselytizing by the Catholic Church is over in Europe. There is a strong consensus within the Catholic school world that every pupil, whatever his or her belief, should be able to feel at home and be fully recognized. This should not prevent Catholic schools from proclaiming the Gospel and presenting the deeply

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<sup>129</sup> *Imag*, 358, CBAI, Bruxelles, octobre 2021

<sup>130</sup> Le Xaveriuscollege à Borgerhout, faubourg populaire et anciennement ouvrier d'Anvers, et le collège Saint-François-Xavier à Verviers, ancienne ville industrielle, dont le centre est aujourd'hui paupérisé.

<sup>131</sup> *America*, the magazine of the American Jesuits: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics->

[society/2020/01/28/jesuit-school-serves-predominantly-muslim-community-brussels](https://www.society/2020/01/28/jesuit-school-serves-predominantly-muslim-community-brussels).

<sup>132</sup> See: <https://enseignement.catholique.be> (in French)

<sup>133</sup> *Mission of the Christian School*, Brussels, May 2021. See: [https://enseignement.catholique.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/mec\\_2021-2.pdf](https://enseignement.catholique.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/mec_2021-2.pdf)

<sup>134</sup> In the Dutch-speaking part of the country, the rate is even 70%.

human and therefore universal character of the figure of Jesus. Of course, this is done with respect and delicacy, insisting on everything that unites the three religions of the Book rather than on what separates them<sup>135</sup>. Anne L'Olivier, headmistress of the school, put it this way:

*"I know that Muslim parents like our school because we say God. By definition of the Christian school project, our school is not neutral. But of course, through all our courses and in a transversal way, we teach our students the principle of the democratic game based on neutrality as it exists in Belgium, and not on secularism as in France.*

*We are certainly committed, but we all have a different outlook. We take this into account, for example when we organize a multi-faith and multi-cultural celebration three or four times a year. These are moments of interiority where everyone can draw on various sources of spirituality, whether it is an African song, a Hindu tale, a text from the Bible... I think that everyone finds their way there, although talking about God in a multi-faith context remains a delicate exercise that requires a lot of care and trained people. The religion teachers, but also the Jesuits, are a great help to us. The Catholic religion course allows us to explore the other monotheistic religions, their rites and sacred texts. The challenge is to get to know the other better. The religion programme has thus been opened up: it is not catechesis, but more the history of religions.*

*As soon as the pupils register, it is clear to the parents that the religion course is Catholic. Teachers, parents, pupils, all know what they are getting into. We have a school pastoral ministry accompanied by the Jesuit network, following multiconvictional and multicultural paths to allow each one "a path of meaning, a proposal of faith". We also organize privileged*

*moments for Christians, such as Eucharistic celebrations at the beginning of the day. Everyone is invited, no one is obliged. We are therefore a committed school which is not afraid to bear witness to its faith and which proposes."*<sup>136</sup>

The teachers and educators at Matteo Ricci College are also keen to promote religious traditions other than Catholicism by asking their representatives to speak about them in class. They also give other traditions a place in the celebrations. One anecdote may bear witness of this. In December 2019, Laurent Salmon-Legagneur, S.J., a French Jesuit scholastic working at the school, organized a Christmas celebration during which the teenagers wrote what the words "peace and hope" meant to them on pieces of paper and hung them on a tree. Then, two prayers were uttered by those who wanted to—the Lord's Prayer followed by the Quran's first Surah. Redouane Nadja, supervisor at the school recalls that *"Brother Laurent came to ask me if the Quran's Surah he had chosen was appropriate for the celebration," (...) "He thought about the students of other religious denominations, without me or the students ever asking for anything." For him, this was evidence of Matteo Ricci's commitment to inclusivity. "It was a moment of communion; it was wonderful,"*<sup>137</sup>.

Another sign is the preservation of a large bluestone Star of David in the courtyard, a reminder of the Jewish school that occupied the premises until 2017. Furthermore, in choosing the names of the classrooms, care was taken to ensure that Muslim, Jewish or secular figures were chosen. In this regard, one room deserves attention. During the design of the project, the question of the presence of a chapel arose. The latter does exist in the school, but in the form of a so-called 'space of interiority' where anyone can come to meditate, reflect or pray. On one of the walls, a ball of fire suggests the presence of a cross. But it is the name given to the room that

<sup>135</sup> See the excellent article in *America*, the magazine of the American Jesuits: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/01/28/jesuit-school-serves-predominantly-muslim-community-brussels>.

<sup>136</sup> *Imag*, 358, CBAI, Bruxelles, octobre 2021

<sup>137</sup> *America*, the magazine of the American Jesuits: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/01/28/jesuit-school-serves-predominantly-muslim-community-brussels>.

is worth noting: Mar Moussa<sup>138</sup>. This is the name of a very old Syriac Catholic monastery located north of Damascus where the Jesuit Father Paolo Dall'Oglio<sup>139</sup> maintained the Christian-Muslim dialogue.

The issue of dialogue between cultures and religions is taken very seriously at Matteo Ricci College. This is demonstrated by the creation of an intercultural and interdenominational committee which has taken on the task of reflecting on the best way to organize living together in a dynamic process of sublimation of identities rather than the search for the greatest common denominator between the beliefs of all. This committee is made up of the management, teachers, members of the Board of Trustees and outsiders with recognized expertise. Thanks to their external contribution, our objective is to be able to take a step back and articulate a reflection on intercultural and, behind them, interconvictional issues.

It also looks at a number of practical cases arising in the life of the school. Our second objective is to be able to solve practical cases that arise, on the basis of a philosophy that we would have given ourselves, without being surprised by the urgency since we would have had time to build our capacity for

discernment and analysis. The question of the wearing of the veil, which is forbidden during school activities, is notably the subject of analyses in which neither the reminder of principles nor the search for reasonable accommodation are absent, in a true perspective of Ignatian discernment.

The Matteo Ricci College wants to be a witness to the signs of the times, with its feet anchored in a tradition that is four centuries old and its head in the swirling wind of our world. It bears witness to the capacity of Jesuit pedagogy to reinvent itself again and again<sup>140</sup>.



Photo: A teacher with students in the school.

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<sup>138</sup> The Monastery of St. Moses the Abyssinian or Deir Mar Musa al-Habachi stands about 90 km north of Damascus in Syria, 13 km from Nabek, on a cliff top. First mentioned in 575 AD, it fell into oblivion in the 17th century and was only the object of an annual pilgrimage. The monastery was revived at the end of the 20th century and is home to a small, dual ecumenical religious community (monks and nuns) of the West Syriac rite, which promotes dialogue between religions and revives the tradition of the hospitable monks.

<sup>139</sup> Paolo Dall'Oglio, born on 17 November 1954 in Rome, is an Italian Jesuit priest and missionary in Syria. In the 1980s he refounded the Syriac Catholic monastery of Mar Mûsa, also called the Monastery of Saint Moses the

Abyssinian, in the desert north of Damascus, Syria. He is very involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue. Following his open denunciation of the crimes committed by the regime of Bashar al-Assad in the context of the Syrian civil war, he was expelled from the country on 12 June 2012. In July 2013, he returned to Syria in the rebel-controlled north, before being kidnapped in Raqqa on 27 July 2013 by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. He has since been reported missing.

<sup>140</sup> See in this regard the work of the International Jesuit Secondary Education Colloquium in Rio in 2021 and the modalities of its permanent update: <https://jesedu-global2021.educatemagis.org>.



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## OBJECTIVE OF THE BULLETIN AND CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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### Interested in Submitting an Article for the *Educatio Si* Bulletin? Please Let Us Know.

This Bulletin was launched in the summer of 2019 by OIEC (*Office International de l'Education Catholique* or International Office of Catholic Education in English). The organization federates national Catholic education associations in more than 100 countries and represents Catholic K12 education to international organizations, including the United Nations. Since January 2021, following the launch of the [Global Catholic Education](#) website in November 2020, while OIEC remains in charge of the Bulletin, the Bulletin is also co-sponsored by IFCU (International Federation of Catholic Universities), OMAEC (Organisation Mondiale des Anciens de l'Enseignement Catholique), UMEC-WUCT (World Union of Catholic Teachers), and the Global Catholic Education website.

The name of the Bulletin comes from the 2019 Congress of OIEC which was an opportunity for participants – including especially school teachers and principals, to share their experiences and achievements, as well as the challenges they face. The Congress is organized every three to four years. In June 2019, its name or theme was *Educatio Si*. It took place in New York in partnership with Fordham University. *Educatio Si* can be loosely translated as “Be Educated”. The more detailed theme of the Congress was *Educating to fraternal humanism to build a civilization of love*. The closing plenary was held at the United Nations to highlight the contribution of Catholic schools to the fourth Sustainable Education Goal (SDG4), namely ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

More than 550 delegates from 80 countries attended the Congress. Pope Francis sent a video message. Archbishop Zani, the Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, spoke at the closing plenary. Augusta Muthigani, the President of OIEC, gave a keynote speech, as did several other speakers who have been featured in various issue of this bulletin. In addition, school teachers, principals, and

administrators from all corners of the world made a wide range of contributions at parallel sessions.

The aim of this Bulletin was originally to share highlights from OIEC's World Congress and work related to the themes of the Congress with the Catholic community and all those interested in achieving SDG4. When we launched the Bulletin, we hoped to publish three issues to share materials from the Congress and other contributions.

Given interest in the Bulletin, we have continued its publication, and now also welcome articles related to the missions of FIUC, OMAEC, and UMEC-WUCT, and more generally about global Catholic education in all its forms. Catholic schools and universities are effectively delivering education to tens of millions children and youth globally, yet ways of sharing how this is done, what is working well, and what may need to be improved are lacking. In a small way, we hope that this Bulletin will partially fill that gap.

Another important rationale for producing this bulletin is the fact that while Catholic schools and universities contribute in significant ways to SDG4, teachers, principals, and administrators may not always have access to lessons from evidence-based approaches to improving educational attainment and learning. The Bulletin showcases practical examples of programs that work and tools that can be used to improve educational outcomes for children.

The first Bulletin was structured around sections to (1) provide guidance from the Magisterium; (2) relay news from OIEC's leadership; (3) share experiences from national Catholic education associations; (4) give voice to teachers and principals; (6) explore data and analysis on Catholic schools; (6) document innovative programs with beneficial outcomes for students and schools; (7) suggest readings related to SDG4 that are free online; and (8) mention open access tools that can be of use to teachers, principals, and administrators. These various topics have been pursued in subsequent issues as well.

The second issue included the address by Msgr. Zani at the OIEC Congress, contributions of the role of education for sustainable development, as well as other articles on various aspects of Catholic education. In the third issue, a stronger focus was placed on Catholic schools in the Spanish speaking world with a set of articles written in Spanish. The fourth issue was devoted to the Global Catholic Education Report 2020 and the COVID-19 crisis. The fifth issue focused on Catholic schools in the French speaking world with a set of articles in French. The sixth issue was devoted to the event for the Global Compact on Education held in Rome in

October 2020. The seventh issue features interviews from the new [Global Catholic Education](#) website and in particular its interview series. The eighth issue focused on the Global Catholic Education Report 2021 and the proceedings of the event held by OIEC in February 2021 to mark its commitments to the Global Compact on Education. The ninth issue shared interviews with Catholic education leaders. The tenth issue was about recent development from the Global Compact on Education and some of the activities of OIEC. The eleventh issue was about integral human development and also featured interviews about Professor Gerald Grace. The twelfth edition was about World Catholic Education Day. The twelfth issue was about World Catholic Education Day. And the last issue was about theology, philosophy, and science in dialogue.

We are hoping to put together additional issues of the Bulletin based on submissions of articles received or commissioned. Please feel free to suggest ideas - the aim is to include articles that are relatively short, neither too long to read, but also not too short to risk lacking substance. We expect to keep each issue of the Bulletin at about 40 pages.

We encourage you to share the Bulletin broadly with friends and colleagues, including teachers, principals and professors in Catholic school and universities in your country, as well as alumni of Catholic education and others who may be interested. All issues of the *Educatio Si* Bulletin are freely available for download on the [OIEC](#) and on the [Global Catholic Education](#) websites.

#### **Guidelines for Submission of Articles**

Articles can be submitted by participants to the OIEC Congress and any other individuals with an interest in Catholic and faith-based education. Articles should typically be between 1,500 and 4,000 words in length. Authors are encouraged to first submit their idea for an article to the editors to ensure that the topic is of interest before submitting a draft. Articles may be submitted in English, French, or Spanish. The bulletin is edited by Philippe Richard and Quentin Wodon. To contribute to the bulletin, please send an email to both Philippe ([secretaire.general@oiecinternational.com](mailto:secretaire.general@oiecinternational.com)) and Quentin ([rotarianeconomist@gmail.com](mailto:rotarianeconomist@gmail.com)).

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