

Promotio Iustitiae

Education at the margins

Popular education at the center of our educational mission

José Alberto Mesa, SJ

"Fe y Alegría" and the promotion of justice (Latin America)

Joseba Lazcano, SJ

Educating with indigenous wisdom and world vision

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An overview of priorities in Jesuit schools of South Asia

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The Cristo Rey model (US)

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Sacred Family vocational schools (SAFA – Spain)

Manuel Á. Galán Marín and Roxana Rosales Migliore

"Baher dar", a school for the poor in Ethiopia

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Global advocacy network for the right to education

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Editorial

Patxi Álvarez, SJ

The Society of Jesus has been dedicated to education since the time of Saint Ignatius. Throughout history the prestige generated by the educational work of the Jesuits has been always very high, so much so that in the present day the Society constitutes a benchmark for quality education worldwide.

At the same time however, alongside this prestige there has also been frequent criticism of an alleged elitism, implying that the Society's contribution to education has been provided mainly for the most affluent classes. It is in fact certain that, since the restoration of the Society in 1814, most of our schools have been obliged to defray costs with the help of funding from students' families. This meant that only certain families could enjoy access to this kind of education. For many years and in many places this reality was inevitable. Nonetheless, this practice was not in line with the tradition of the early Society which made great efforts to economically support their colleges – a commitment dear to Saint Ignatius – in such a way that students' lack of economic resources did not prevent them from attending school.

In 1955 a remarkable episode occurred in a poor suburb of Caracas. Abraham Reyes, a bricklayer and father of a poor family with eight children, offered a farm he had built with his own hands with the help of his wife to Father Vélaz, so that he could found a school. As Reyes himself many years later recalled, he said to Father Vélaz, "look, we have a lot of problems here, problems with water, electricity.....there are so many things wrong that we cannot list them all. However the greatest problem we have here is that we have no schools and our children have nowhere to study". Thus Reyes donated his farm to be used as a school and Father Vélaz took on the task of finding teachers. This was the very beginning of "Fe y Alegría", an international movement which has built and founded countless schools throughout Latin America, bringing education to "where the tarmac ends".

In a symbolic way we can identify this particular moment in Caracas as representing the huge effort made by the Society over the last few decades to bring their educational experience and tradition to those living at the margins. This is a mission which has been brought to many latitudes in the world, simultaneously – although with specific features relative to each region – and which now makes the number of pupils of humble origins studying in the classrooms of the institutions of the Society much greater than the amount of students of wealthy origins. This is a reality to be recognised and valued.

It is only right to point out that this tremendous work done in a very short period of time, would not have been possible without the generous and creative collaboration of an infinite number of female religious Congregations and countless lay groups. To this we must add the families and students, both boys and girls, who enthusiastically aspired to receive an education and have assisted in building and maintaining many of these schools, which reflect

the personality and dynamism of those who became involved. Therefore the work done cannot be exclusively attributed to the Society – it has been a collective effort and this is the secret of its success. Essentially it is a gift that God has made to the Jesuits who are part of this great dynamic of life.

This current issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* illustrates the reality of “living at the margins” offered by means of the Society, at times relatively unknown even among Jesuits themselves. In particular we will review initiatives that by volume are the most significant - Fe y Alegría, education in India for *dalits* –intouchables– and indigeous peoples as well as the school programmes offered by the Jesuit Refugee Service. The issue also covers some special networks, such as Cristo Rey in the United States and SAFA in Spain, which offer quality education to those who need it most. Finally we have included some experiences from educational centres aimed at the poorest, in areas where this type of network does not exist, except for individual schools. For his part, José Alberto Mesa SJ, the Society’s Secretary for Education, has written the first article to help us understand the broader historical and global overview of education for those most in need.

Certainly there are other realities which could be illustrated, other goals which would need a more systematic follow-up, however these are outside of the scope of the aspirations of this periodical. All the same the following pages can be of help in offering an initial overview of the education at the margins which the Society, together with many other people, is currently providing.

Original Spanish
Translation Judy Reeves



Popular education at the center of our educational mission

José Alberto Mesa, SJ
Secretary for Education, Rome

Introduction

The Society of Jesus is well known for its educational apostolate, so much so that many people identify the Jesuits exclusively with educational work and forget the many other types of apostolic labor they engage in. This identification of Jesuits with education is paradoxical when we consider that Saint Ignatius and the first Jesuits did not initially contemplate the founding of schools; they were more interested in itinerant apostolates that were quite different from formal education. Once the first realized the apostolic potential education, however, they enthusiastically embraced schools and universities as a privileged means for carrying out the mission of the nascent Society of Jesus. Pedro Ribadeneira SJ expressed well the sentiments of the early Society with his celebrated statement: “The wellbeing of Christendom and the whole world depends on giving young people a good education” (Mon. Paed. I, p. 475). It is this conviction that has motivated Jesuits to devote themselves eagerly to the field of education as a principal apostolate.

When Saint Ignatius died in 1556, the Society had already founded some 35 educational institutions. When the Jesuits were suppressed in 1773, they were running about 800 schools and universities in all parts of the world. In the Constitutions of the Society Saint Ignatius affirmed the gratuitous character of the education imparted by the Society, thereby guaranteeing access to everyone without regard to financial capability. Saint Ignatius did determine, however, that primary education (teaching people to read and write) should not be part of the Jesuit educational apostolate; his reason was simply that the Society did not have enough personnel for such work.

When the Society was restored in 1814, Jesuits immediately began to reopen schools and found new ones, but the historical situation had meanwhile changed radically. The nascent bourgeoisie was demanding quality education, but there were no longer wealthy aristocratic donors to finance the schools. As a result, many schools had to charge tuition. Before the suppression many Jesuit schools had the reputation of being elitist since they especially served the nobility and prepared the bourgeoisie for public service. After the restoration Jesuit schools continued to have this reputation because they had to charge tuition and because of the often hostile educational policies of the new national states.

A living tradition: from the *Ratio Studiorum* to our own day

Technically speaking, the first Jesuits were not educators. Their training did not prepare them to found, manage, or work in educational institutions. Nevertheless, all of them had studied in prestigious universities, and they were quite familiar with school routine from the student's side. They therefore had to learn the corresponding role of preparing classes, teaching, designing curricula, and building schools. Saint Ignatius stated the importance of method in the Constitutions: "They should bestow appropriate study upon the method of teaching Christian doctrine and of adapting themselves to the capacities of children and simple persons" (Const. 410).

In keeping with the apostolic spirit of the new Society, the first Jesuits devoted themselves to the task of creating an educational system that would respond to their apostolic goal as stated in the Constitutions: "The end of the Society and of its studies is to aid our fellowmen to the knowledge and love of God and to the salvation of their souls" (Const. 446). In 1599, after 50 years of educational experience and various experiments and debates, the Society published a document that would set down norms for the educational apostolate: the *Ratio Studiorum*. The *Ratio* established the positions, the curricula, and the teaching methods that were to be used in Jesuit schools and universities. In this document the Jesuits distilled the best educational practice of the time, adapting them to the apostolic criteria born of their spiritual experience of the Exercises. The central principles of the *Ratio* were these: 1) the teaching method would be that of the University of Paris (the *modus parisiensis*), the one in which the first Jesuits were trained; 2) the curriculum would include important elements of the Italian humanism of the time, which emphasized the formation of character through study of the classical thought of antiquity. The Jesuits also included new elements derived from their own growing apostolic and educational experience. The *Ratio* leaves no doubt about the apostolic character of education as proposed by Ignatius in the Constitutions: "One of the primary ministries of our Society is teach all subjects that are in keeping with our Institute for the purpose of moving people to knowledge and love of our Creator and Redeemer" (*Ratio Studiorum*, Rules of the Provincial, no. 1)

The Second Vatican Council and the Society's response

The Council and the changes that it brought about in the Church stimulated in the Society a spirit of creativity and renewal that is still alive today. Fr. Pedro Arrupe, who was elected General in 1965 while the Council was still in session, summoned the Society to set out on a path of renewal in "creative fidelity" to the spiritual experience of Ignatius. He urged Jesuits to work to form men and women "for others": "Our educational goal is to form persons who live not for themselves but for God and for his Christ, for him who died and rose for us. Our goal is to form men and women for others, persons who do not conceive the love of God apart from love of neighbor, persons for whom love is efficacious because it has justice as its first principle" (1973, p. 1). This new emphasis on justice that is born from love of neighbor became the new reference point for the Society's educational apostolate. Arrupe made it clear that we had not done enough previously in educate our students for this task of justice:

Have we educated you for justice? Are you educated for justice? My answer is this: if we understand the word "justice" and the phrase "education for justice" in the profound sense given to those terms by the Church today, then I think that we Jesuits in all humility have to answer, "No, we have not educated for justice in the way God is asking of us today" (Arrupe, 1973, p. 2).

And he concludes: "Education for justice, therefore, is education for change. It means forming persons who will be effective agents of transformation and change" (1973, p. 8). Decree 4 of General Congregation XXXII expresses the principle in terms that are familiar to us all: "*Our mission today is the service of faith and the promotion of justice.*" General Congregation XXXIII developed this principle by stating that the Church's preferential option for the poor is also an integral part of the Society's mission and should therefore be evident in our choice of new ministries (Cf. GC 33, d. 1, Part II).

This is the spirit of innovation that provides the context not only for the Society's traditional educational work but also for new forms of education, especially those which serve the poorest sectors. Networks like Cristo Rey and Fe y Alegría find here their *raison d'être* by virtue of offering quality education to those who live on the margins. Other educational models also flourish in this context, such as the Nativity schools in the United States, the schools for Adivasis and Dalits in India, the foundation of professional schools (SAFA) in Spain, the JRS schools in the refugee camps, and many other innovative ventures. Some of these models and networks predate the Council, and some of them are not "Jesuit" in the strict sense of the term, but they are all attempting to offer a quality Christian education to excluded populations, and since the Council all of them have been creatively assisted by the Society in carrying forward their mission.

It is also true that the Society's traditional education has been transformed in recent years. The schools have made a great effort to develop programs which form staff and students in faith and justice. They have also tried to restore the initial spirit of the first Jesuits by making access to education independent of the students' economic circumstances. This has not been easy since many schools have encountered serious obstacles in countries where the governments distrust private and/or Christian education and therefore cause difficulties for such educational work. Many of these schools have served poor students from the start, but it is the new models and the grassroots networks that best express the Society's new apostolic thrust. That is why Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás SJ said recently: "We can affirm that at the present time the number of disadvantaged students receiving a Jesuit education exceeds by far the number of those attending our traditional schools" (Nicolás, 2013, p. 9).

Nevertheless, the difficulties of offering a quality education in keeping with the tradition of the Society of Jesus are enormous, and they require us to maintain an spirit of creativity and constant renewal. I would like to describe here briefly three of the principal challenges now facing popular education:

Quality education

The World Forum on Education held in Dakar in 2000 emphasized basic education as a universal right, stating that it should be "free, compulsory, and of good quality."¹ The Forum's document recognizes that quality education is a high priority and that its absence affects most seriously the marginalized and excluded populations. It is no doubt true that inferior education for poor people does not promote real justice, nor can it empower marginalized persons to take their true place in society. The popular education offered by the Society has to meet the challenge of providing quality education, but it should be kept in mind that quality education is a dynamic concept that is constantly evolving; the quality needed in years gone by may not be the same as that needed today, given the ever-changing contexts

¹ World Forum on Education, 2000, *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments*, at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>, p. 12, accessed January 2014.

and challenges. We must always dare to innovate and refashion educational models that can truly offer people the quality education that is needed.

A new global and technological context

It is certainly true, as the last General Congregation reminded us, that “globalization and the new technologies have opened up our world and offer us new opportunities to announce with enthusiasm the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom he proclaimed” (GC 35, d. 3, no. 19). “They can be powerful instruments for building and supporting international networks in our advocacy, in our work of education, and in our sharing of our spirituality and our faith. This Congregation urges Jesuit institutions to put these new technologies at the service of those at the margins” (GC 35, d. 3, no. 29).

This summons provides a challenge and an opportunity for our apostolic creativity. Not long ago that challenge was made plain for us in a school for Adivasis in a remote part of India. While we were taking part in an assembly with the school’s students, I saw one of them using a smart phone—the truth is, our students are already taking part in the technology of a globalized world. The challenge facing us is so great that if we are not able to confront it through popular education, then it is possible that new forms of marginalization and exclusion will develop: “From the perspective of those living on the margins, globalization appears to be a massive force that excludes and exploits the weak and the poor; it intensifies exclusion on the basis of religion, race, caste, and gender” (GC 35, d. 3, no. 25). In order to place globalization and technology at the service of solidarity, we must reinforce our networking capabilities and design new educational models for those living on the margins, models that allow the people to integrate the new context and the new opportunities into their lives. There is an urgent need to develop hybrid on-line models which can bring quality education to those living on the margins, “where the cables end,” just as in many places quality education is already being offered in those places “where the asphalt ends.”

The challenge of mission and identity

Great efforts have been made in recent years to keep our educational institutions focused on and faithful to their apostolic mission. This challenge becomes even more critical as cultures become progressively more secularized and as the pressure increases to make institutions measure up to the success and competency expected of them.² Certainly this challenge demands of us great creativity so as to achieve an identity centered on our mission and on our Christian roots. Only thus will we maintain our present commitment to offering quality education to those on the margins without distinction of race, gender, culture, or religion.

There is no question that in recent decades there have been increased efforts to offer quality education to the most disadvantaged populations according to the educational tradition of the Society of Jesus. All the same, the magnitude and the nature of the challenges facing popular education require us to continue to offer the best we can offer by way of creativity and imagination.

Original Spanish
Translation Judy Reeves

² Cf. Huang, D., 2012, *Report from Nairobi: Reflections on Jesuit Identity from the 70th Congregation of Procurators*, ICJSE, Boston, in <http://www.icjse.org/assets/Keynote-Huang-SJ.pdf>, accessed January 2014.



“Fe y Alegría” and the promotion of Justice

Joseba Lazcano, SJ

Fe y Alegría, Caracas, Venezuela

Today, it is fair to put the traditional criticism of “elitism” of Jesuit education into the context of its undisputed quality. In the words of Fr Arrupe (I cite them by memory), in the Society of Jesus “many of us work with the poor, some as the poor, and all of us for the poor, also find meaning in education. At an institutional level, we are reminded by the guidance we received from famous Rio de Janeiro letter¹, General Congregation 32 (and the following three congregations which reaffirmed and enriched it)², the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm³, GIAN⁴ and numerous contributions by FLACSI⁵ and AUSJAL⁶.

Within this framework, I would like to highlight four points in relation to *Fe y Alegría* (FyA):

- quantitative contribution;
- socially transformative intentionality;
- specificity in terms of quality; and
- spirituality at the heart of its identity.

Quantitative contribution

In its diverse education and social justice programme, FyA serves 1,528,973 students and participants. Adjusting this figure to take into account those who participate in more than one programme, it serves 1,155,467 people from working class communities. “FyA begins where the pavement ends” is the most frequently used expression of the founder, José María Vélaz SJ, (Rancagua, Chile, 1910 – Masparro, Venezuela, 1985). Of this number, 578,207 are formal education students; 58,598 Radio and Blended Learning students; and 541,069 are students from the alternative and informal education. There are 1,423 school campuses in 1,968 different geographical locations (physical centres), attended to by 36,366 educators⁷.

¹ From the Latin American Provincials, gathered in Rio de Janeiro with Fr Arrupe from 6 to 15 May 1968.

² General Congregation 32 (1975), General Congregation 33 (1983), General Congregation 34 (1995), General Congregation 35 (2008).

³ Drafted by The International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE), 1993.

⁴ *Global Ignatian Advocacy Network*. The coordination of the education network of GIAN is the specific responsibility of FyA.

⁵ The Latin American Federation of Schools of the Society of Jesus.

⁶ The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities entrusted to the Society of Jesus.

⁷ Data collected in November – by the Fr Joaquín Centre for Training and Research (CFIPJ) of FyA, Maracaibo – for the book by Lazcano Joseba, 2013, *FyA, un Movimiento con Espíritu. Las claves de una experiencia exitosa de Educación Popular de Calidad*, Caracas.

FyA is present in 17 countries in Latin America, two in Europe (Italy and Spain), and in the heart of Africa (Chad). At the time of writing these notes, there was a reflection in some other African countries as to the possibility and desirability of starting the movement⁸.

According to the Jesuit Curia website of the Secretariat for Education (ICAJE), 57.8% students of the Jesuit primary and secondary schools attend FyA schools; and they are served by only 5% of the Jesuits working in education and management at this level.

Socially transformative intentionality

Ever since its foundation FyA has been defined as popular education. The “simple” understanding of the adjective “popular” seems obvious for its recipients, the poor.

However, since the advent in the 1960s of approaches of “Education for Liberation” of Paolo Freire with strong challenges to formal education (accepting, uncritical, domesticating, education for repetition and submission, etc.) the expression “popular education” has other semantic connotations. Understandably, they have been the subjects of serious reflection and recurring debate among the personnel of the movement. An indication of this debate is that it has been a central focus of five international FyA congresses between 1987 and 2003. The founder also made it clear that “FyA was not established to have a network of schools, but to transform society through education”.

The XVIII international FyA congress (Cali, 1987), two years after the death of Fr Vélaz and the approval of the international document of vision and values, was the first of five international congresses that took as its theme "Popular Education". As such both approaches to Popular Education, formal and informal, were approved as "authentic application of our lines of thinking."

The Lima congress (2000) focused on assistance in “relationship between our institutions and the communities they serve”, from the perspective of the poor and excluded, and the specificity of popular education as an effective strategy for personal formation and social transformation.

The Antigua Congress (Guatemala, 2001) deepened its understanding of Popular Education, preciously as a founding component of the identity of FyA. The first paragraph affirms “We will truly be Fe y Alegria to the extent that we faithfully implement Popular Education and insofar as our practices respond to its principles and exigencies”.

Possibly the most central paragraph of the reflection of this Congress is the text in which it defines Popular Education:

In the face of these conceptions we define Popular Education not in terms of its beneficiaries or its modalities, but in terms of its transforming intentionality. Further, we understand it as an alternative movement which confronts the traditional educational practices and attempts to promote a more just and democratic society... In Fe y Alegria we understand Popular Education as an ethical, political and pedagogical proposal for the transformation of society, in such a way that the excluded become subjects of power and action in their own life and in a humanizing project for the society and the nation.

⁸ FyA sees itself as a movement and not merely as an institution. Thus, references to "the Movement" should be understood simply as FyA (Note from the editor).

The ethical perspective makes references to the world of the poor, such as the ethos from ancient Greece: the place where one is, thinks and acts. That is to say, the epistemological place from where transformative or political intentionality, with a pedagogic specificity, arises. The following Congress (Asuncion, 2002) deepened understanding of the Pedagogy of Popular Education.

The specificity of the quality of Popular Education

The following International Congress (Bogota, 2003), which worked on the fundamental dimensions necessary to guarantee “the quality of Popular Education”, was particularly important. Beginning with this Congress, after five or six years of research, proposals and pilot projects, the International Federation of FyA included as its first programme (P1) of the second and third Strategic Plan, the **System of improving the quality of Popular Education**. It is, without doubt, the “star programme” of FyA. Its objectives are to encourage centres to acquire a culture of evaluation, learning and improvement. The tool of evaluation and improvement has been implemented in 510 centres in 15 countries in Latin America, with the participation of directors, educators, students and communities.

The system consists of three phrases, taking the form of circular action, re-initiating at the end of the third phrase:

- Diagnostic evaluation of the centre;
- Reflection-interpretation (systemisation); and
- Planning-implementation of the improvements.

Summarising some learning from the experience, we consider that: 1) above all, quality plays the role in education processes and not in the end results; 2) non-cognitive aspects should also be incorporated in the evaluation: values, attitudes, temperature in the centre and the classroom, etc.; 3) the context of the school should be taken into account in the evaluation: socioeconomic and cultural features of students and their families (particularly important in situations of vulnerability); 4) the concept of quality is broader than the school, and require the accompaniment of coordination and technical bodies and communication between diverse schools.

In 2010, the Colombian Ministry of Education equated the recognition of the FyA with the American system, the ISO quality standard and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), and validated it as a “Certified Entity of Quality”. Equally, the Ministry for Industry in Paraguay recognised FyA as an “instrument for the improvement of quality”, and those in Panama, Guatemala, and El Salvador as an “instrument to accompany the improvement of public education centres”.

Spirituality at the heart of identity

The key to the secret of FyA without doubt has its basis in spirituality, which is the heart of its objective identity.

Vélaz, a passionate dreamer, above all sought to be effective in offering our spiritual goods, including education.

He found the reply in the experience of deep joy and happiness of those young people of the recently established Catholic University of Caracas (UCAB) whom he met in some of the poorest districts (They go with faith and return with happiness, an observer commented) and

in the experience of Abraham Reyes, a night worker in urban sanitation. Thinking of the future of his eight children and in order to establish the first FyA school, Abraham Reyes offered up his home which he and his wife had built with seven years of weekly savings. "When Father accepted my house – he told us – I understood it was the Virgin who was accepting (to begin the construction, he had offered praying the Our Father, the only prayer he knew). Then he felt a huge joy of being able to collaborate with the things of God, with service". Abraham concluded the interview "I experience Fe y Alegría as a work of the Virgin. I offered her the little house I had built, and she accepted it. Some time ago I made a kind of contract with the Virgin, because I treat her as my mother. I told her: "Look, I am going to work hard in the Legion of Mary, and you will work hard in Fe y Alegría." Of course, FyA got the better part of the deal.⁹

These and many other experiences cemented Vélaz's anthropological optimism: "we all have more good than bad", "we can all be beckoned if we raise a worthwhile flag". It is like slowly reading the paragraph which undoubtedly best encapsulates what Vélaz discovered in his search: "It has been said that there is no great joy if we are not close to mystery. I believe that this is true, because... faith brings us closer to the mystery of God, who wanted us to be required for the salvation of our brothers. Faced with this mystery of predilection, which clearly points to the true life, it is not strange that all the powers of joy that transform the world light up".¹⁰

It is common – and undoubtedly recognisable – to speak of the heroism of those who have preceded us. However, perhaps it is more acceptable to affirm that FyA, more than a product of heroism, is the fruit of "taste and simplicity" of the gifts of the Spirit of God.¹¹

From our – privileged and joyful – approach to the spirit of FyA, to say it better, from our recognition of the Spirit of FyA12, we can affirm, with humility and joy: I believe in the Holy Spirit. To get a better understanding of the FyA Movement (and of its institutionalization) we get a better understanding of the Movement of Jesus and of the institutionalization of His Church. Conversely, we could similarly speak of the movement of Ignatius and his companions, the companions of Jesus.

To conclude, we can celebrate this same "tone" of joy and happiness (to say the least) found in the Aparecida statement as in the *Evangelii Gaudium*.¹³

Let us confess the unity of the Spirit of God in the diversity of His manifestations!

Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton

⁹ Pérez Esclarín, Antonio, 1999, *Raíces de Fe y Alegría* (Roots of Faith and Joy) *Testimonies*, pp. 3-8, at <http://goo.gl/R4WXcw>, visited in January 2014.

¹⁰ Lazcano, Joseba (2005), *Palabras de Fe y Alegría. Citas inspiradoras del Padre José María Vélaz*, (Words of Fe y Alegría. Inspiring quotations of Fr José María Vélaz). The International Federation of Fe y Alegría, Caracas, p. 16, at http://www.feyalegria.org/images/acrobat/PalabrasFinal_7750.pdf, visited in January 2014.

¹¹ St Thomas, in his *Secunda Secundae*, question 8, defined the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as "states or qualities created by God which allow man to follow with pleasure and ease the divine impulses of *salvific order*".

¹² The distinction and mutual relationship between the Spirit is explained in *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 261: "A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for He is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel. Before offering some spiritual motivations and suggestions, I once more invoke the Holy Spirit".

¹³ On the other hand, it seems intended that Fe y Alegría cited the same Pope Francis, in citing St Justin, in his first encyclical *Lumen Fidei* "Saint Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, uses a striking expression; he tells us that Mary, receiving the message of the angel, conceived 'faith and joy'".



Educating with indigenous wisdom and world vision

Rafael García Mora SJ

National Director Fe y Alegría, Bolivia

After over twenty-five years spent in companionship with indigenous Bolivian people, I have undeniably understood that the major cause of exclusion for these populations is their lack of access to education. I am not talking here merely of physical access, an issue that in many places has been more or less resolved. I intend to focus especially on seeking the best possible way of bringing education to people living in situations and contexts which are very different to those where educational programmes are planned and discussed.

Fe y Alegría considers this issue from a fundamental principle. This educational work, established by Jesuit Father José María Velaz in the fifties, aims to offer quality education to socially marginalised and impoverished populations. This is the initial inspiration which led the founder to undertake work of a social nature in one of the slum districts on the outskirts of Caracas. He was to become a pioneer and staunch defender of what we know today as the universal right to education.

Fe y Alegría is present today in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a total of more than one and a half million students. The organisation has however also extended its education assistance to Europe where it works with immigrants and has begun to provide similar services with excellent results in countries in Central Africa.

Even though the underlying methodology is always the same, the way in which Fe y Alegría has developed its programmes varies in different places, achieving spectacular enrolment rates in some cases, thanks to agreements¹ set up with respective governments. In other countries, where States consider themselves the sole legitimate authority for the provision of formal education and do not allow any input from other institutions, different forms of education have developed – for adults, young people at risk and the disabled – within the context of what is considered non-formal education.

It must be pointed out that Father José María Velaz's original inspirational idea "to offer free yet quality education to sections of the population with meagre resources", is clearly and deeply rooted with the initial insight of Saint Ignatius when he founded the Society's first

¹ Agreement with the Government or Education Ministry stipulating that educational administration is entrusted to an external institution while the State finances teachers' salaries and sometimes also other staff. This agreement is known as "concerted schools" in some places.

colleges, granting them funding for their maintenance so they could offer free education to those in need.

However it is not only the early inspiration of Fe y Alegría that coincides with the founding ideas of the Society. Its epistemology, based first of all on the “ratio studiorum”², later enhanced and adapted thanks to the philosophy and ideas of more recent thinkers, such as Paulo Freire, demonstrates a very distinctive way of approaching and orientating classroom education compared to the methods traditionally practised in schoolrooms in our countries. We are talking about an education based on dialogue with the student, which seeks to develop a critical mentality towards the surrounding world and integrated personal growth, not merely in terms of competency, but also in terms of values.

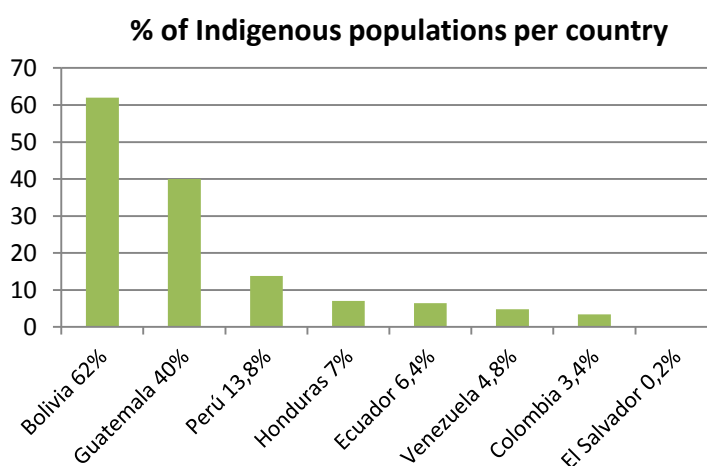
This kind of education system is linked to the context, the people and the prevailing culture, developed in joint responsibility with teachers, administrative bodies, students, parents and community authorities. This understanding of education is in any case orientated not only towards personal and community development but also towards social transformation, in other words, Fe y Alegría organises its educational programmes on the basis of the concept of “Popular Education”.

A direct consequence of this initial inspiration was the incorporation of the concept of inclusive education in the methodology of Fe y Alegría. That is to say that education must reach all sectors of the population, including sectors that for any reason – physical, geographical, linguistic or cultural – are excluded from classic scholarly teaching systems. The basic presupposition is that school must adapt to the pupil and not the pupil to the school.

Nonetheless this kind of education has pertinence and quality, orientated towards recognising and appreciating the abilities, knowledge, values and language skills of living civilisations present in the areas we are working in.

It was from this viewpoint of inclusive education that the Fe y Alegría proposal reached out to sectors of the population outside the system. Yet each one of these sectors required the preparation of a curriculum and adequate learning methods tailored to the characteristics of different students.

This is how Fe y Alegría have prepared bilingual intercultural education programmes for indigenous or migrant populations.



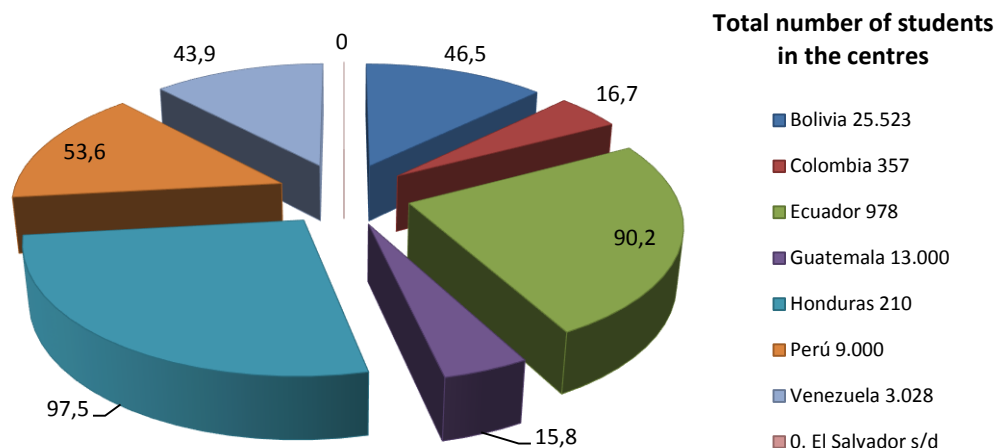
² The educational method developed in the early years of the Society from 1599 onwards.

These initial experiences were undoubtedly the very ones which led Fe y Alegría to begin developing education programmes for indigenous people.

Some years went by before Fe y Alegría became aware that, even though in some countries they had worked with considerable success on the issue of bilingual intercultural education, it was also true that, beyond the language, not much had been done to incorporate other issues into education. These are of issues of vital importance, when dealing with populations who maintain and practise a combination of traditions, conforming to their own world of values, in situations incompatible with the contents, methodologies and values of a unifying classic education.

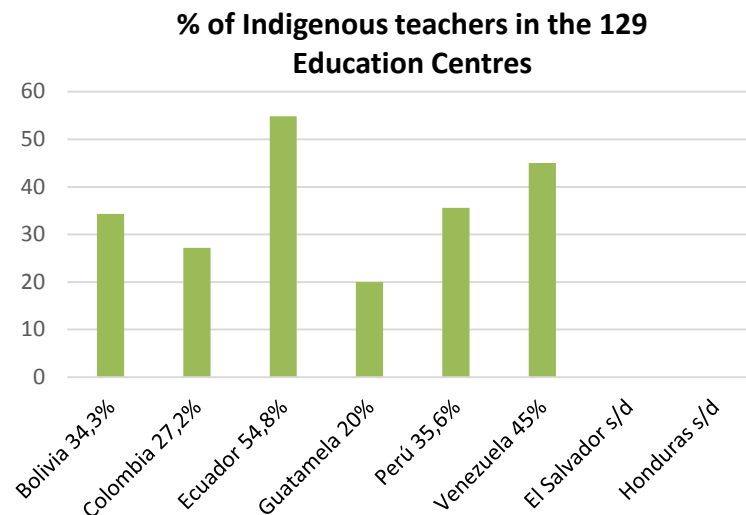
Once conscious of this weakness, Fe y Alegría set up a key study in 2010 with the goal of determining how important the presence of Fe y Alegría was in schools in areas with a majority of indigenous peoples.

% of indigenous students attending 129 Fe y Alegría education centres



Once the survey was completed we were surprised to see that the presence was greater than what we had expected at first. This, despite the fact that, as often occurs in this type of study, the information gathered was not fully complete since some countries lack precise figures. The data produced a figure of 129 educational centres, assisting more than 55,000 indigenous pupils, being taught their own culture through their own language by teachers with the same cultural origins. It was also revealed that outreach to indigenous zones was not always planned in advance, since there is not always a relationship between the percentage of indigenous people in the country and our presence in certain areas.

It was the outcome of these figures which inspired us to reflect on the need to frame a new form of education for these pupils, different to what had been organised up until then. With this goal an international commission was created, with delegates participating from countries belonging to the International Federation of Fe y Alegría –*Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, Panama and Honduras*–, which have demonstrated the greatest experience in this type of accompaniment to indigenous peoples.



The education proposal, which at first only covered primary level education, was put together and entitled “Indigenous Fe y Alegría”, inspired by the wealth of experience gained by these five countries in their daily accompaniment of indigenous cultural groups. The departure point was and is the intent to recover, strengthen and increase the value of the identity of each indigenous culture, in addition to their own knowledge, wisdom, methodologies and educational practices, which have been used to transmit learning and achieve integrated community formation. This allows for articulated coordination between the educational outline programme planned for indigenous populations and “traditional” curricular proposals.

Information on each specific cultural context connected to the socio-cultural identity of local populations was collected, emphasising such diverse aspects as culture, customs, typical food, dances, textiles and handcrafts, rituals, biodiversity, archaeological and historical heritage, linguistic competence and other elements specific to each individual context, forming part of the indigenous world vision.

The information was gathered with the assistance of the community, since we had decided that only in this way could we discover what their real centres of interest are, the exact means they use to transmit knowledge and which elements of this knowledge are considered the most important to be passed on. For this each team devised a methodology based on permanent dialogue with their own indigenous population.

Different cultural groups –*Tolupán and Garífuna in Honduras, Quechua in Perú and Bolivia, Ch'orti and K'iche' in Guatemala, Ngäbe in Panamá and Guaraní in Bolivia*– were involved in this process, all populations that Fe y Alegría teams have accompanied over long periods of time in the countries signed up to take part in the study programme.

The process implied the involvement of distinct actors within the educational community – *elders, leaders, authorities, parents, young people and teachers* – in order to obtain as the end result a curriculum and an educational methodology incorporating the specific requirements and cultural characteristics of each nationality, as well as an understanding of the educational process in culturally different populations.

Table summarising total programme participants*

| Country | Cultural context | No. of educational centres | Students | | Teachers | |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | | | M | F | M | F |
| Honduras | Tolupán and Garífuna | 13 | 537 | 619 | 13 | 34 |
| Peru | Quechua | 22 | 1325 | 1329 | 58 | 72 |
| Guatemala | Ch'orti y K'iche' | 15 | 709 | 684 | 33 | 22 |
| Panama | Ngäbe | 1 | 40 | 140 | 3 | 2 |
| Bolivia | Quechua y Guaraní | 16 | 1135 | 1420 | 34 | 91 |
| Sub-total | | 67 | 3764 | 4192 | 141 | 221 |
| Total | | 67 | 7956 | | 362 | |

Interpretation of the data was carried out with the participation of community leaders, scholars and elders, in order to be able to reflect with them on their needs and the kind of education they require, since knowledge of their culture and social reality is considered an essential part of the education they desire for their children. This particular form of approaching the process, in close relation with the educational community, came from experience developed by Fe y Alegría in bilingual and intercultural education processes, a practice moreover already well consolidated.

The estimated figures relative to the total group of countries involved reveal the participation of 2,668 students, 520 parents, community elders and leaders and 200 teachers.

Table summarising the principle programme activities

| Integrated curriculum in all its aspects | Participative educational management | Community participation | Teacher formation | Research and development of coherent educational material |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participative assessment of the cultural context of indigenous populations (customs and traditions) Identification of specific educational needs Regionalised and/or diversified curricula in accordance with the cultural context Implementation of classroom curricula Drawing up of an Institutional Educational Project (IEP) EIB³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the profile of administrative bodies Strengthening school organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening community organisation within the indigenous population Strengthening specific and traditional cultural practices. School influences the community and is part of the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of informational needs in order to implement the EIB. Defining the teacher profile from an EIB perspective The teacher must be a native of the community or have a strong connection to the local culture. Implementing training and/or refresher courses for teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying local knowledge (world vision, customs, traditions). Incorporating them into class sessions so that students become familiar with their own culture. <i>The success of this activity depends on the active participation of teachers, students and parents.</i> Establishing guidelines for developing educational materials. Preparation of educational materials (textbooks, copybooks, etc) in line with the socio-linguistic assessment of students for mother tongue and second language learning. |

An understanding of specific requirements allowed us to identify an intra and intercultural⁴ bilingual educational proposal, with operational components identified from the perspective

³ EIB (Spanish abbreviation) stands for Bilingual Intercultural Education.

⁴ We speak of intra and intercultural in order to differentiate between aspects of our own culture and those that refer to our relationship with other cultures.

of each of the participating cultures, who acted as guarantors to ensure that the educational proposal responds to the conception of primary education required by indigenous populations.

One of the first results of the educational proposal was the creation of a specific integrated curriculum, to be used in local schools. In some countries, such as Bolivia, the use of such a curriculum is already facilitated, since the state has officially recognised the existence of one curriculum for everybody with fundamental content, another which is regionalised and finally another diversified one which includes aspects that the educational community consider important.

Now this stage of research and dialogue with indigenous people is concluded, we still face the challenge of putting the new curriculum and its teaching methodology into practice in an experimental form, in at least two schools in each nation which participated in the study process. Therefore it will be necessary to train teachers in every aspect of the newly devised curriculum and its methodology, based essentially on the open classroom.

Original Spanish
Translation Judy Reeves



An overview of priorities in Jesuit schools of South Asia

Norbert Menezes, SJ

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Although the Jesuits in South Asia Assistancy conduct several educational initiatives in India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, I shall confine my writing to the educational priorities of our schools in India and Nepal. India and Nepal constitute 19 provinces and regions of South Asia Assistancy. India has twenty-eight states and seven union territories, and according to 2011 census, it has an estimated population of 1.21 billion. Currently Jesuits manage Primary (classes first to fifth consisting of children of 6-11 years); Middle (classes from sixth to eighth); Secondary (classes ninth and tenth) and Higher Secondary (classes eleventh and twelfth classes) schools. Most of the States have their Education Boards and local language as the medium of instruction. 85% of Jesuit schools are aided by the State Government and so our students write their secondary and senior secondary examination through various State Government Boards. This poses a challenge in terms of common syllabus and the medium of instruction. 15% of our unaided schools are affiliated to the National Boards, namely, The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and The Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE). These schools have their medium of instruction in English.

There are several reasons why our provinces have started schools. The three important criterion are:

1. *Option for the Poor:* A few years ago, the literacy rate in Nepal and India was very dismal especially among the poor. As a response many educational initiatives were started, especially the primary schools and non-formal schools in rural areas. Further, these initiatives were in tune with the national literacy mission. These schools ensured the three Rs- reading, writing and arithmetic at appreciative levels. Hence, we have many schools for the poor, dalits and tribals in rural areas. To overcome the financial burden and to ensure that the medium of instruction is close to students' mother tongue, Jesuits opted for aid from the State government. Our priority was to spread literacy among the poor, and among those who on their own would not seek education.
2. *Service to the Church:* Christians constitute a small fraction of the population. The numbers are not in our favour to have a 'voice'. Hence, many of our English medium schools were started to make known the presence of Christian community. These also became centres of influence having amiable contacts with public and leaders of the local community. As a result, the Church was able to conduct smoothly many of its pastoral and social activities.

3. *Request of People*: There is general perception among the people that Church/Convent schools impart values and promote character development. Further, they are affordable for the middle class families. Hence, from time to time several groups have requested the church to start new schools in areas where there is no presence of Christianity. These schools were noted as institutions that are inclusive, selfless, and genuinely committed for the welfare of people.

Inspired by the Documents of the General Congregations and the needs of people, our schools, while fulfilling certain academic standards of the Boards, have focused on certain priorities that fashion our teaching learning experiences. Some of the important priorities are:

1. *Sharing of Jesuit Legacy*: The manifold challenges that pose the smooth running of a Jesuit school demands teamwork and unity of purpose. Hence there is periodical sharing of Jesuit legacy not only with our teaching staff but also with alumni, students and parents. Thus schools ensure that all its stakeholders share a common vision of Jesuit education.

2. *Care for the Whole Person*: Our schools aim at the development of the whole person- intellectually, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially. Through various curricular and co-curricular activities and attempts in mentoring and counselling, our schools seek to nurture and promote the best in every one and enable them to reach their potential.

3. *Academic Excellence*: Academic excellence takes its manifold meanings depending on the context of the school. Our schools encourage students to achieve beyond their current level of performance. The teaching-learning experiences are directed to include a love for learning, discovery, integration across a wide range of disciplines and interests.

4. *Justice Consciousness*: Our schools seek to educate students for justice. With a strong emphasis on social cohesiveness, the school climate attempts to promote concern for the marginalised and show solidarity with and care for all who struggle for justice. Students are encouraged to develop their talents, and use them to make a positive difference in their local community.

5. *Care for the Environment*: Most of our schools are involved in promoting awareness of our planet and the importance of affirmative action for the care and protection of Mother Earth. Our education seeks to foster eco-friendly orientation to life, namely, 'reduce, recycle, reuse' and reduction of one's 'carbon footprints' as a strong expression of care for the environment.

6. *Respect for Other Faiths*: In the context of pluralism of faiths, our schools foster inclusivity by having students of diverse faith and respect for each other's sacred space. By celebrating various religious festivals, conducting serious studies of various faiths, reading sacred texts of various religions in the school prayer, etc. our schools encourage respect and understanding of various faiths.

7. *Orientation to life*: In today's society, people have been conditioned to think of life within the reference of material possession. People make choices to facilitate an enhancement to their material wealth. Pursuing possessions and consuming more is a factor leading to undernourishment of vital relationships in our lives. In this context our schools offer classes on value clarification, the importance of giving back to the society so that personal goals and societal development are seen not as mutually exclusive but its harmonious coexistence can lead to betterment of all and equitable society.

8. *Process of Reflection*: There are several exercises to promote 'reflection' which is the heart of our teaching-learning process. Reflection improves students' learning and develops their aptitudes, skills and values. Our goal is to promote personal development by enhancing self-awareness, sense of community, and a sense of one's capacities.

9. *Networking*: During the last five years, our schools are taking small steps in the area of intra-province and inter-province networking. Within the province, there are common programmes for teachers and principals, sharing of resources, twinning of schools, etc. At the inter-province level, zonal programmes and initiatives are gaining currency. We still need to explore networking at different levels.

10. *Technology Savvy*: As technology is becoming more accessible and affordable, many of our schools are using technology to help improve student learning and to love technology at a greater depth. Further schools are encouraging students to become innovative by blending technology and smart thinking. Though our urban and big schools have made certain strides in this area, our rural schools are beginning to make this transition.

Our schools have been responding to various social and global challenges. As competition and high grades become the sole criterion for higher education, schools face tension of pursuing high academic demands and formation of students along the priorities of Jesuit education. This tension may not be easily resolved but its challenges keep Jesuit schools alive in South Asia.

Original English



Empowering the Dalits through education in South Asia

John Kennedy, SJ

Principal of Loyola Academy School, Madurai Province, India

Education is the key to empowering the marginalized so that they can develop their potentials and enjoy their God – given dignity. It is a significant tool for the full development, and empowerment of the poor and the marginalized. So it is an agent of individual, social and societal transformation. Today's world is a knowledge dominated world with a tremendous progress in science and technology. It has increased the human capacities. This age of knowledge explosion, information and communication spearheaded by the IT revolution, has necessitated people to get at least basic education. At the same time, knowledge gap between the privileged and marginalized has widened.

In India, knowledge and quality education are unavailable to the underprivileged. Overabundance of knowledge and affluence remain with a few rich and powerful. India has one third of world's illiterates. 46% of our people have not reached the portals of education (2001 census – 296.2 million). 82.2 million children between the age 6 to 14 are not in schools. Even those who pursue education drop out in the early stage itself due to poverty, caste and gender discrimination, irrelevant education and lack of educational facilities. Decent employment needs at least basic education. Otherwise, the illiterate and the less educated will be pushed to the margins of the society and not be able to enjoy the benefits of development.

In this context, with the firm belief that education is a comprehensive tool for Dalit empowerment, I would like to write on the 'Education of Dalits in South Asia'.

Dalit Education down the Centuries

Dalits suffer from low rates of literacy and primary education enrolment. History and unequal access are the causes. The ancient caste system of India, which has resulted in the social, cultural and economic oppression of the Dalits, continues to play a dominant role in India. The Dalits have been experiencing constant denial to access to education and are physically and emotionally harassed. In spite of Government's initiatives through positive discrimination and affirmation by reservation, the Dalit literate population still remains much lower than that of the rest of India.

Historical Context

Deeply entrenched in Indian society is the complex social stratification of individuals known as the caste system. It is a division of society traditionally based on occupation and family

lineage. In this stratification, the fifth and the lowest placed group, which was seen as being so low as not deserve being placed in a caste, were the Dalits, often referred to in Indian culture as the untouchables, these were the people who have the harshest and most unjust restrictions imposed upon them.

Curiously, the bases of this discrimination were not religion, language, sex or colour, which normally constitute the common grounds for discriminatory treatment in most parts of the world. Rather it was 'caste' or 'birth', which is unique. Around 140 forms of untouchability practices exist at different levels. The visible forms may be denial of the right to access to places of worship, common properties, common burial ground etc. But the invisible forms of caste based discrimination exist in all places – even legislative assemblies, bureaucracy, judiciary, media, educational institutions, NGO sector and even in the Church. For centuries Dalits have remained socially subjugated, culturally oppressed, politically powerless and economically exploited.

After the introduction of the Scheduled Caste (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989, the practice of the caste system became illegal in India. Despite this, the discrimination and mistreatments of Dalits still occur. Today, the Dalit population represents 16% of the country's population and still struggles to achieve social equality. Many Dalits have attempted to escape the tyranny of the caste system by converting from Hinduism to other religions, although this rarely allows the individuals to escape their social and economic hardships as clearly evidenced by the Dalits who have converted themselves to Christianity.

As per 2001 census, India's Dalits numbered 167.2 million. There is a sizable population among the Muslims and Christians who are known as Dalit Muslims (roughly estimated at forty two million) and Dalit Christians (roughly estimated at sixteen million). Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians are not treated as Scheduled castes by the government, though they experience untouchability from their coreligionists, and are therefore not entitled to positive discrimination policies. On the other hand, Dalits who are converted to Sikhism and Buddhism do not face such deprivation.

The importance of education

The past century has been characterized by a global expansion of education. Education can be a way to increase the incomes of the impoverished people. Education helps to ensure that benefits of growth are experienced by all. It is a means of empowering socially and economically deprived groups into seeking political reform. Education results in the improved quality of life.

One of the most important Dalit political activists who saw the value of social equity within India was Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who became the chief architect of Indian constitution after years of social activism. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, he dedicated a significant portion of his life to improving the quality of life and social status of Dalits. He established the People's Education Society in 1945 which believed that increasing access to education to the Dalits would increase their empowerment. Ambedkar believed that the value of education was in the empowerment of Dalits to pursue political action for social reform through informed lobbying.

The history of education

For centuries, the Dalit population of India was forbidden from gaining access to education. Originally reserved for the upper castes only, the denial of conventional education to Dalits

was designed to prevent them from increasing their quality of life and to highlight caste division. Then, during the 1850s, the British began the long process of increasing the accessibility of education to all citizens of India. A combination of a history of oppression and a lack of access to local, quality education systems prevented Dalits from getting educated. Between 1983 and 2000, improvements in access to education for all in India have been made, although the difference between education rates for Dalits, especially females, and those in higher castes remained constant. In the seventeen year period, the enrolment rates for Dalit boys grew from only 47.7% to a meager 63.25%. When compared to those males in upper castes, enrolments jumped from an already relatively impressive 73.22% to 82.92%. Even poorer results were observed when looking at the female Dalit enrolment rate, which inched from 15.72% to 32.61% when compared to their upper caste counterparts, whose enrolment climbed from 43.56% to 59.15%.

Ninety-nine percent of Dalit children, if they go to school, attend government schools. Dalit children face considerable hardships in schools including discrimination, discouragement, exclusion, alienation, physical and psychological abuse, and even segregation, from both their teachers and fellow students.

According to the Sixth All India Educational Survey conducted by NCERT (National Council for Education Research and Training 1998), Dalit communities mainly avail of government schooling. Of the Dalit children in primary schools, 91.3 percent in rural areas and 64.6 percent in urban areas were in schools managed by State government and local bodies (municipalities or corporations). Many of these schools are plagued by various problems such as lack of basic infrastructure, classrooms, teachers and teaching aids. Dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs and mud floors appear quite common in schools and provide a depressing atmosphere for children. Teaching aids, apart from blackboards are relatively absent. There is also the problem of absenteeism of students and teachers. Thus Dalit children do not have access to quality education. They also face discrimination and discouragement from higher caste community members who perceive education for Dalits as both a waste and a threat. Their hostility towards Dalits' education is linked to the perception that Dalits are not meant to be educated, are incapable of being educated, or if educated, would pose a threat to village hierarchies and power relations.

The practice of segregation in schools and discrimination serve to discourage and alienate Dalit children, contributing to their high dropout rates. In fact, such practices serve to instill and reinforce Dalit children's sense of inferiority, erode their sense of personal dignity and force them to internalize caste distinctions. Financial situation of the families, distance of schools, domination and discrimination of the upper caste teachers are some of the reasons for the low enrolment rate of the Dalits. In fact, it is the longest surviving apartheid like system of exclusion in the world.

Dalits and Curriculum

The treatment of caste system in textbook and curriculums suggest that the official curriculum barely acknowledges the existence of Dalit and tribal communities, despite the fact that they form nearly a quarter of India's population. Dalit and lower caste children are alienated from the language and course content as both the content of education and the medium through which it is transacted do not relate to their own cultural experience. The treatment of caste discrimination in textbooks and curriculums can strengthen caste division and prejudices. Even progressive curriculums either exclude any mention of caste discrimination or discuss the caste system in a way that suggests that caste inequities and discrimination no longer exist. Some of them may even attempt to justify the origins of caste discriminations. The Central

Advisory Board on Education (CABE) subcommittee on 'Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System', found that a Social Studies textbook approved for use by the Gujarat State Board, is shocking as it describes the caste system as a 'precious gift' given by the Aryans to the world and extols the virtues of the caste system for socially and economically organizing society on the basis of labour.

There is another systemic problem in Indian educational system. The authority of the teacher is unquestioned and children usually ask no questions or are not encouraged to do so, even to clarify their doubts. Children listen to the teacher, copy lessons, memorize them and answer questions. Such processes and experience of education in Indian schools for Dalit students have not produced good results.

In such a dismal context and in order to empower the Dalits through education, the option for the Dalits was adopted in several provinces in South Asia.

Implementation of the option for the Dalits

While mentioning a few initiatives from other Provinces in South Asia, I am focusing on Madurai Province as a concrete example of various initiatives for Dalit education. Other provinces too implement this option through various initiatives and programmes.

Evolution of Dalit option in Madurai Province

As a result of II Vatican council, GC 32 Decree 4 and Madeline Conference which used the phrase 'preferential option for the poor', awareness of the same was building up in the Province. The Province Congregation – 1974 felt the need and obligation to witness to justice and serve the poor. It officially postulated that 'in the context of India today we have an urgent obligation to serve the poor and to witness to justice. This implies a change in our mode of life and a reassessment of the relevance of our ministries and institutions'.

The Province Congregation in 1978 officially postulated that the Province be 'strongly urged to take as its highest priority the work among the exploited and humiliated Harijan and Tribal brethren of our country through mass education and mass movement.

With the motto 'Together Towards Tomorrow', the Province Meet in 1979 declared 'preferential option for the poor and the downtrodden in every sphere of our apostolic activities'.

In 1987, the Province Congregation officially postulated that the Province 'joins hands with the Dalit Christian Movement at the regional and national levels and support this struggle for equality within the Christian communities and for securing for them the privileges due to the Scheduled Castes'.

In April 1990, Dalit commission was constituted in the Province to work for the Dalits effectively. The main role of the commission has been to assist the Provincial in all matters pertaining to the work among Dalits especially in the realization/concretization of the option that the Province has taken to work for the Dalits.

- *Dalit Coordinators*: a Jesuit is appointed in each educational institution as a local Dalit coordinator and his roles are the following:
- be in the admission committee to ensure that the Province policies regarding the admission of Dalit students are strictly followed,

- study the background of the students to arrange for counselors and financial assistance
- collaborate with a team of Dalit teachers in accompanying the Dalit students, arrange follow-up, remedial and summer programmes
- NEVET scholarship¹ to the tune of 450.000 lakhs is given as educational scholarship to the Dalit students at the Province level.

Empowerment of Dalits through the educational institutions

All the Dalit students especially the Catholic Dalits are given admission in all the Jesuit educational institutions in the Province. The policy now in the schools is to make sure that 50% teachers recruited are Dalits. Educational scholarships, midday meals are given to Dalit students. In academics they are helped through the mentor system and the local Dalit coordinator attends to their needs. Special coaching classes are conducted during the summer holidays in different places under the guidance of the local Dalit coordinator. Dalit staff are given training to face interviews in the colleges. Dalit staff and student empowerment training programmes are arranged in ISI, Bangalore, DACA and IDEAS centres.

Out of 62682 students, studying in the nine Tamil medium schools in Madurai Province, 26.69% are Dalits. Out of 636 staff members in the aided posts, 43.78% are Dalits.

Jesuit missionaries and parish priests have all along been encouraging and supporting the education of the Dalits in their parishes and other places. They have taken active interest in enrolling Dalit students in educational institutions.

Besides admission to the Dalit students, the following programmes are organized for their effective formation:

- Future Perfect Project – an ELT movement, promoting communicative competency of the students in English
- Co curricular and extracurricular activities to bring out and nurture their latent potentials and talents.
- Leadership training and social conscientization done through the LASAC (Leadership and Social Awareness Camp) movement
- Remedial and extra coaching for the slow learners
- Motivational lectures and seminars to build up their self-esteem and confidence
- GSP (Government Service Programme): Potential and prosperous Dalit students are identified and given extra training to become socially enlightened leaders in government administrative posts tomorrow
- Special counseling and guidance programmes for the Dalit students
- Extended and supervised study and special classes for the Dalit students in the evening
- Scholarships and fee concessions to the deserving Dalit students
- Special and residential coaching during summer vacation for a month
- Dalit students are given preference in the hostel admission and most of them receive fee concession

Besides the appointment of the Dalit staff members, constant capacity building is done through regular workshops. These teachers have formed a forum and meet every month for chalk out programmes for the Dalit students and implement them.

¹ Nevet stands for the name of a special scholarship.

Empowerment of Dalit students through the Social Action Centres

Social action centres have created an all round awareness among the Dalits about the need for education. These centres provide formal education to those who are ready for school by providing free residential facilities and supplementary education for those unable to cope with other children by running evening study centres. These centres have become one of the important components of all the social action centres. Through this, the literacy level among the Dalits and other marginalized communities in the Social action areas has increased considerably. Special schools for drop outs are run so that they are sufficiently trained to join the mainstream educational courses. Summer coaching camps is another common phenomenon to enhance the educational level and create interest in education. Usually Science, Mathematics, English, extra-curricular skills, Dalit history, Dalit dignity and self respect are taught through this programme. This aims at enhancing self pride and self discipline in the young mind to develop emancipator interest in their future. Besides these activities, these social action centres have been playing an instrumental role in the economic mobility of the Dalits. Capacity building is one of the sure ways of preparing the Dalits to join the economic activities. Girihini schools, Industrial and Technical skills through technical schools and community colleges are introduced as means to economic and social mobility.

The following social action centres in Madurai Province actively promote education among the Dalit students.

- PALMERA (People's Action and Liberation Movement in East Ramnad District) started in 1978 established DASTEC (Dr. Ambedkar Scio-Technical Education centre) in 1991. It is completely managed by lay Dalit leaders. 30 Dalit girl students stay here and study in the nearby school.
- DACA (Dr. Ambedkar Cultural Academy) was started in 1996 in Madurai. There are 170 girls students in the Vidivelli hostel which includes 15 college going girls. DACA, till last year, was running evening study centres in 250 places spread over seven districts in Tamil Nadu, educating 9640 Dalit students. These study centres have become social education centres now and run with the help of Self Help Groups and well wishers. Right now there are 70 social education centres catering to the needs of about 2000 Dalit students.
- PEAK (People's Education and Action in Kodaikanal hills), started in 1988, has been running three hostels where 280 students stay and evening study centres in 15 places where 450 children study.
- PATHAAI social action centre at Chengalpet started functioning from 2000 onwards. It is running evening study centres in 52 places in five districts. Monthly coaching camps are organized for the 10th and 12th standard students. It runs a hostel for the economically poor Dalit students.
- KARISAL (Kamaraj District Rural Institute for Social Action and Leadership) is located at Alangulam in Virudhunagar district and started functioning from 1993 onwards. It runs a day care centre for babies, technical training for girls, training for school drop outs and offers residential facility for 60 school going students.
- AHAL (Arunthathiyars Human Rights and Action for Liberation) located at Kilpannathur in Thiruvannamalai district has been in existence since 1999. It provides free residential facilities for 70 Dalit students and conducts evening study centres in 21 places where 1200 students study.

Thus educational institutions and social action centres actively promote the education of the Dalits in Madurai Province. This is just one example of South Asian Jesuits involvement in the education of Dalits. A few other remarkable examples can be cited here from other Provinces.

Significant Ventures from other Provinces:

- **St. Xavier's High School, Manmad in Bombay Province:** It was started in 1959. This is the only all Dalit school in Bombay province. Dalits are the priority here. This is a coed Marathi medium school. About 2000 students are studying in the primary and secondary schools. This gives free boarding and lodging facilities to 78 deserving Dalit students. Adoptive parents' scheme exists here for the SSC (10th std) students. Each teacher is given four or five students for constant accompaniment as a guide and companion.
- **Raj Rajeshwar HS School in Patna Province:** It is located in Barbiga, Sheikhpura dt in Bihar. It was founded in 1943 to cater to the needs of the poor Christian students especially the Dalits of the locality. All children from the Maha Dalit group are admitted here and other Dalit children from nearby areas as far as possible. 50% of the school strength is Dalits. This school has over 1000 students and 40 to 50 percent of the students are girls.
- **Hazaribag Province:** It is running 19 primary schools, 26 non-formal schools, 2 high schools for Dalits, with a total of 4000 Dalit students. It is also running 2 hostels for Dalits who are attending either our Jesuit school or parish school. There are 617 Dalit boys and girls in these hostels. The Province is also running a girihini school for about 20 Dalit girls. The fees of the Dalit students are very highly subsidized by the Province. Many of the Dalit students who study here have become teachers in our own schools or in government schools and have government jobs at the block and district levels.

A few challenges have emerged in the implementation of this option for the Dalits.

Challenges for Dalit Education:

The following challenges exist regarding the education of the Dalits in South Asia:

- Acceptance of the option for Dalits: Still some of our non Dalit teachers and a few Jesuits find it extremely difficult to accept this option for Dalits and fail to actively collaborate with all the initiatives taken in this regard. In order to take our staff members along, there is an urgent need to conscientize them regarding our option and our ways of functioning to get their full cooperation and collaboration.
- Lack of motivation: Lack of motivation exists both among the Dalit students and their parents. Constant and continuous motivation is needed for the parents and the students in order to empower and enhance them through formal education.
- Dalits from the middle class get benefitted from all our initiatives and schemes whereas the really poor and deserving Dalits, oftentimes, are not aware of our option and helps and so concerted efforts need to be made to make available all the educational opportunities to these really deserving people. We need to reach out to these people with our schemes and plans. The downtrodden among the Dalits need our help and attention more than the others.
- Most of our schools have high students' strength and so individual attention is, indeed, a causality. All the Dalits who apply to our institutions are given admission and a lot of fee concession and scholarships are given as per the need and availability of funds. Constant accompaniment and individual attention are not given to them. We need to evolve plans to follow them up completely even after they leave our institutions.
- As the educational system is completely controlled by the government in India, we follow the curriculum, given by the government. Oftentimes, this curriculum is

irrelevant and callous to the realities and culture of the Dalits. There is a need to evolve a Dalit friendly curriculum, being sensitive to their realities and culture.

- Corpus fund needs to be created in all the institutions in order to ensure continued financial assistance for the Dalit students.
- Networking with all NGOs and likeminded groups is the need of the hour. Thus, we will be able to collectively lobby and influence the policy makers to come up with Dalits' friendly plans and policies.
- Dalits, once appointed as teachers in our institutions, do hardly anything to help the Dalit students either inside or outside. They are appointed with the hope that they would empathetically accompany the Dalit students. This does not happen in several of our institutions. The Dalit teachers have to be effectively organized and motivated to empathetically accompany the Dalit students.
- Five factors influence the formation of the Dalit students and they are parents, teachers, peer group, society and mass media. Ensuring a proactive influence of all these five factors will result in holistic formation of the Dalit students.

Dalits have been denied education for centuries. Education being key element to empower the Dalits, various initiatives and ventures are made to realize this dream at the South Asian level. A lot more needs to be done. Being attuned to the voice of God, revealing Himself through historical situations and being sensitive to the harsh realities of the Dalits, we need to rededicate ourselves to the liberation of the oppressed and the marginalized Dalits and work unitedly for their welfare and upliftment.

Original English



Jesuit education among tribals

With special reference to Central Zone of South Asian Assistancy

Augustine Kujur, SJ

Principal of Loyola High School, Ranchi Province, India

Education is widely recognized as a means of human development. The 86th Constitutional amendment in India recognizes education as a fundamental right to all its citizens. However, a large section of the dalit (37.2%) and the tribal (38.4%) communities¹ are still out of school, having no opportunity or no access to education.

India with its huge population of 1.21 billion also has a huge tribal population of 104,281,034 (8.2%), spread all over India². Some of the states have a very large tribal population, particularly in the North Eastern States (Mizoram-94.4%; Nagaland-86.5%; Meghalaya-86.1%; Arunachal-68.8%; Manipur-35.1%; Tripura-31.8%) and central India (Chhattisgarh-30.6%; Jharkhand-26.2%; Odisha-22.8% and Madhyapradesh-21.1%)³. In fact this estimate is considered low by many social scientists.

This huge population of tribals has remained the victims of oppression, exploitation, inequality, illiteracy, injustice, and neglect for decades. According to an Oxford University study done, using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the poverty level among the tribals is 81.4% and among the Scheduled Castes it is 65.8%⁴. Seeing the pathetic condition of these tribals in Central India, the Jesuits of central zone provinces, namely Dumka-Raiganj, Hazaribag, Jamshedpur, Madhya Pradesh and Ranchi, have taken a clear option and priority to bring education among them. The Jesuits have a huge task to bring them to the main stream. Having worked mainly in central India, I will reflect in this article only on Jesuit education in the central Zone of South Asian assistancy. These 5 provinces cover only some parts of the five states i.e., Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal.

This paper has five sections: 1) Response of the missionaries to Educational need; 2) Present Challenges to Jesuit Education; 3) Jesuit response to these challenges; 4) Impact of Jesuit Education; and 5) Conclusion and a way forward.

¹ GOI, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05 and NSSO.

² <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/indiaatglance.html>

³ <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/indiaatglance.html>

⁴ Arun Kumar, Half of India's Population lives below the poverty line, 3rd August 2010, <http://www.countercurrents.org/akumar030810.htm>

Response of the missionaries to educational need in the past

The history of Education in the central zone provinces dates back to the beginning of the missionary work towards the end of 19th century in Chhotanagpur, Santhal Paraganas and Singhbhum. One must note that Chhotanagpur mission was part of the Bengal mission till 1928 when Ranchi diocese was created. In the broad umbrella of Chhotanagpur mission were the present dioceses of Hazaribag, Raiganj, Gumla, Khunti and Simdega in Jharkhand; diocese of Sambalpur in Odisha, and the dioceses of Raigarh and Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh.

Right from the beginning of the mission work, the education was very much associated with the proclamation of the good news to the poor and building of Christian community with special attention to the tribals. The missionaries realized very early that formal education was absolutely necessary to help tribals manage their own affairs especially in relation to the many land related court cases; excessive land taxes and to withstand forced labour and indignity they faced from their oppressors. It was further realized, if the Christians were to be faithful to the Gospel and stand up against the onslaught of external and unfriendly forces, education was a must.

Present challenges to jesuit education in the Central Zone

There is no doubt that education of the tribals has improved in the last few decades, but there is still a long way to go. The forms of discrimination and deprivation have changed while the gap between the rich and the poor is getting widened. Thanks to early missionaries and the present educational thrust, the provinces have opened primary and high schools in the interior rural areas, called *dehat*. The Society has also opened a considerable number of educational institutions for higher and professional studies.

Another area of concern is in terms of branding of tribals as 'Naxalites' or 'Maoists'⁵ (militant communist groups operating in different parts of India) and the use of violence, murder, rape, kidnapping, abduction, dacoity, robbery, arson, etc. against the innocent tribals in the name of eliminating these naxal/Maoist movements. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha and some parts of Andhra Pradesh are considered as the "red corridor" states, (due to the colour that represents them) infested by these left wing extremist group. Many tribal boys and girls are kept behind bars under the pretext of being "Maoists/Naxalites" or even their supporters.

What can the Jesuit education offer to reduce the pain and agony of these people and also to identify ourselves more with the 'suffering Christ'? This is one of the major challenges for our education system in the provinces.

A Jesuit response to the contemporary challenges

When the Christian mission began to spread far and wide in Chhotanagpur, every mission station or a parish had a school. This was true especially wherever Jesuits went as pioneers; they spread Christian faith and at the same time promoted formal education. This was a process and a method used for the liberation of people from exploitation and oppression, and a way to empower and to give voice to the voiceless.

⁵ The terms 'Naxalite' and 'Maoist' are often used interchangeably.

Focus of our Education Ministry

In the recent past, the focus of our education is to cater education to the priority groups: tribals, poor and less privileged people. Our vision-mission statement goes as follows: “United by the bond of Ignatian spirit and mission, we commit ourselves to the service of faith and promotion of justice through educating all with whom we are associated – staff, students, parents – and make them competent, compassionate and persons of goodwill guided by well thought out networking. We further commit ourselves to prepare and update our men to be able to read the signs of time to bring social transformation”.

Our Targets and Priorities:

The central Zone has been trying to implement the resolutions of the annual meetings of Jesuit Education Apostolate (JEA) South Asia and carry out the action plans made in the triennial assemblies and the workshops held at the Zonal level. A lot of efforts have gone to share the Jesuit legacy with teachers, parents, students and other collaborators of which enhancement of self esteem, promoting tribal leadership and empowering them, faith formation, imparting human values, initiative to establish peace and communal harmony and care for mother earth are integral part of our priorities. It tries to spell out the characteristics of Jesuit education in Educational institutions.

Central zone Provinces have made a great leap in this endeavour. A number of primary and high schools have been opened in the recent past in the tribal and backward regions with the purpose of educating and empowering them.

The following table presents the number of Schools/Educational institutions run by Central Zone Jesuits and the number of students studying in them, which clearly indicates the option:

| Province | No. of Schools / Institutions | No.° of Students | Tribals |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Dumka Raiganj | 23 | 21,000 | 60 % |
| Hazaribag | 82 | 26,032 | 46 % |
| Jamshedpur | 34 | 37,100 | 50 % |
| Madhya Pradesh | 36 | 25,132 | 55 % |
| Ranchi | 94 | 49,092 | 70 % |

Impact of the Jesuit Education Ministry

The Central zone Provinces have identified the main issues and challenges in terms of illiteracy, unemployment, exploitation caused by various forces, human/women trafficking, displacement, migration, ignorance, human rights violations, militarization of tribal areas (conflict), lack of governance, corruption, communalism, secularization, naxalism, and so on. These problems, however, are symptoms of the larger malaise.

The Jesuit education in the Central Zone does not claim to resolve all these issues. However, it has been trying to bring in meaningful interventions in the lives of the people to make this world a little better place to live in. Hence, that “Kingdom of God”, which is being concretized through Jesuit education, is constantly promoting the Jesuit charisms. Hence, as part of the mission of the Jesuit education, the kingdom of God in concrete terms would be ‘to enhance

the quality of life and protect the sacredness of the human person, primarily of the marginalized sections of society’.

The Jesuit education has been able to do this to some extent. I try to capture here, the way in which the Jesuit education is trying to concretize God’s Kingdom here on earth for the tribal groups.

Historically, the Jesuit education in the Central Zone has been able to empower the ‘powerless’ tribals, who due to their ignorance, were exploited and oppressed by anti-Kingdom forces, like *zamindars* (landlords), contractors, moneylenders, colonizers, and so on. The tribals were made to work as bonded labourers as they had virtually no voice. The Jesuit education gave them courage, power and strength to be their own voices. This process continues even to this day.

Economically, the Jesuit education has helped the poor tribals to make progress in life. The tribals depended primarily on hunting and gathering subsistence economy for their daily sustenance. The Jesuit education equipped them with adequate knowledge to facilitate diversification of their economy. While they depended primarily on agriculture and forests, education helped them explore new vistas through professional occupations, jobs and other self-employment possibilities.

Religiously, Jesuit education has also facilitated many local vocations, not only to the Society of Jesus but also to other religious congregations and dioceses. While in the Provinces of Jamshedpur, Hazaribag and Dumka-Raiganj, there are many tribal Jesuits, the Provinces of Ranchi and Madhya Pradesh has almost 99 percent of them from tribal communities. This would not be possible without the Jesuit education.

Culturally, Jesuit education has helped in protecting, preserving and promoting tribal cultures in the region. Those who have been educated in Jesuit institutions have composed tribal hymns, collected tribal songs, myths, legends, stories, and tribal idioms and proverbs for the posterity. Above all, Jesuit education has been instrumental in initiating the process of enculturation in the region after the Second Vatican Council that has helped in the works of evangelization as well.

Socially, the Jesuit education is trying to arrest the outmigration of tribal boys and girls to mega cities as domestic helps and cheap labour. Though Jesuit schools were primarily for boys initially, recognizing the need for girls’ education, many of our schools are starting to have both boys and girls. One of the efforts of the Jesuit schools in this zone has been to give quality education to its students so that there are fewer dropouts, and much fewer migrants to cities.

Politically, tribals have become more conscious of their rights and duties to be good citizens of the country. Without education they are manipulated by vested interests. The Jesuit education equips them with adequate knowledge so that they can use their franchise to elect the right people. This political consciousness is also a sign that they are participating in the democratic process of the country to bring in transformation in their lives. This is also a sign that our students are participating in the process of nation-building.

Spiritually, there is character formation of the students in Jesuit institutions, which is absent in many other educational institutions. The charism, such as *magis*, excellence, discernment, choices, the greater glory of God, etc. are translated in terms of action. These become the buzzwords for the teachers and the students. These values are carried home when the students pass out from our institutions.

Education is one of the crucial solutions to the problem of Maoism and Naxalism. Many tribal youth today join the naxal movement because they are disillusioned by the system. Most of them are dropouts. They recognize the injustices done to them through pillaging and plundering of their tribal land and other natural and mineral resources. If they are educated well, instead of taking to arms, they will be employed in other institutions and enterprises. Although the Jesuit education is preventing many youngsters from joining such underground movements, much more still needs to be done to bring the misguided youth back to the mainstream.

In a multi-cultural context like ours, the Jesuit institutions, to some extent, are able to inculcate in our students, reverence and respect for all cultures, all faiths and all traditions. Fundamentalism in any form is not tolerated in our institutions. Some of our institutions have also collaborated with other organizations promoting peace and harmony. Some anti-social forces are trying to poison the young minds by spreading hatred. Our institutions try to inculcate love, harmony, social justice, etc. in the consciousness of our students.

Conclusion and the way forward

To conclude, we would like to humbly submit that the endeavor of the Jesuit education is only a drop in the ocean. There are anti-Kingdom forces constantly at work. However, we try our best to make at least 'some difference' in the lives of people, primarily among the tribals and other marginalized sections of the society. Thanks to the Jesuit missionaries, education entered into remotest villages, where no other schools - the government or any other - had any access.

The real way forward for the Jesuits of the Central Zone at this juncture of history is to adhere to the guiding principles of the Society of Jesus and the early missionaries manifested in their vision. It must continue its legacy of bringing about Human freedom from all types of bondages as started by the great missionaries. More specifically it needs to address today the above mentioned issues and challenges besides others. The Jesuit educators must respond to these challenges squarely through programs of action in their respective contexts as per their knowledge, expertise and social movements.

Original English



Education in the Jesuit Refugee Service

Joaquín Ciervide, SJ
Jesuit Refugee Service

Introduction

In 1980, in the face of the dramatic situation of refugees fleeing Vietnam, the Superior General Fr Pedro Arrupe called on the Society of Jesus to come to the assistance of the so-called 'boat people'. The generous response of the Jesuits led to the establishment of a new institution offering humanitarian assistance, the Jesuit Refugee Service.

From that year onwards, JRS has been present in one way or another in different countries affected by war and natural disaster: Vietnam, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Colombia, Angola, Ethiopia, among others. The 1994 Rwandan genocide led to the establishment of refugee camps in various African countries, including: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya. Around the year 2000, there were wars in Liberia and in Sierra Leone.

Afghanistan, Syria and its neighbours, and Sudan are all suffering the consequences of conflict; and are all theatres of massive flows of refugees in need of assistance. JRS is actively present in nearly all these places.

JRS provides a range of different humanitarian services. Its principal areas of work are: education, psychosocial assistance, psycho-pastoral, emergency services, income-generating activities, human rights protection and healthcare. Of these, education is the most important area of work, in quantity and in quality. In 2012, 222,515 people benefited from educational activities of JRS, out of a total number of beneficiaries of 615,437, 36 percent. In terms of the quality of education services, UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) considers JRS to be one of the five most "professional" agencies providing education to refugees¹.

In this article, we will describe the work of education in JRS, its particular characteristics, virtues and weaknesses.

A work of emergency, but of the second wave

When there is a humanitarian crisis, the provision of education is not as urgent as that of water, nutrition, health and other services. It is true that there is an effort to ensure children

¹ The UNHCR document, Refugee Education, mentions JRS on p. 40: "There has also been the emergence of professional leaders in this field and consolidation of expertise within NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), NRC, and CARE,..." at <http://www.unhcr.org/4fe317589.html>, Spanish version was viewed by the author in January 2014.

have schools to go to, albeit of a provisional nature, within the first month of a camp's establishment. Yet, it must be recognised that education takes on a different sense of urgency to that of health or nutritional services. Medical needs are particularly crucial at the beginning of a humanitarian crisis; these lessen as the situation returns to a sense of normality. Education is the opposite. Schools are usually opened progressively, that is to say, increasing by a certain amount every year, step-by-step. This means that every year, schools get bigger and the needs grow.

This explains why most JRS education initiatives are not found in active conflict zones. For instance, in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, JRS focuses on psycho-pastoral assistance. There are education services but they are in their early stages of development. Larger JRS schools are to be found, for example, in Chad for refugees from Darfur who have been living there for some 10 years or in Dzaleka, a large camp in Malawi for Congolese, Burundian and Rwandan refugees which has been there for nearly 20 years.

Work of a provisional nature

Refugee camps are emergency operations in exceptional circumstances that cannot go on forever. Conflicts must be resolved and refugees must return to a normal life. In this sense, the education activities of JRS are of a provisional nature which needs to be foreseen from the beginning, by means of an 'exit strategy'. Despite the fact that it has been in existence for less than 35 years, there are quite a lot of schools established by JRS and later let go, so as to say "mission accomplished", either because the camps were closed, or because JRS handed over control of the school to a local institution. Such incidences occurred in schools in Tamil Nadu (India), Ranong (Thailand), **Adjumani** (Uganda), Panzi (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Lainé (Guinea-Conakry), as well as those in Byumba and Kibuye, Rwanda. All of these made history at a particular moment, but afterwards JRS left them for diverse reasons.

A wide range of activities

The Refugee Education Trust (RET) is an NGO exclusively dedicated to the education of refugees. As stated above, this is not the case of JRS which works in different areas of humanitarian assistance. Similarly, JRS has not specialized in a particular field of the education sector, such as secondary school teaching for which Jesuit education is so famous. JRS is multifaceted; it adapts to particular situations, many very different from others.

Overall, one must distinguish the formal schools managed by JRS, from the activities in which JRS is involved, without taking over the management of the schools, or 'informal/ non-official education activities' it organizes. In 2012, 91,014 pupils or students were enrolled in the first category of schools, which are more representative as they are situated in refugee camps in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The second category is made up of a variety of diverse groups, benefitting 131,501 people.

With regards to the different levels of education, the first category comprised 25,793 pre-school students, 61,400 primary school students, 2,177 students classical secondary schools, 1,321 in vocational schools, and 322 in a recently established online higher education programme with US-based Jesuit universities. The large number of primary students can be explained in part by the fact that in certain countries, such as Sudan and Nepal, the primary-school cycle lasts nine years. However, the disproportion is real and JRS has an unfinished task in considerably increasing the number of secondary school students.

With regard to other ongoing education activities, in 2012 it should be noted that 1,943 teachers received training, 7,132 students participated in 'English as a second language' courses, and scholarship programmes benefitted 7,274 students. Moreover, vocational training workshops were organised for 1,455, remedial classes for 10,869 students, literacy classes for 892, as well as courses on peace studies, school building, support for the schooling in situations of refugee return, special education, and so on.

This diversity reflects some particularities of the education initiatives undertaken JRS. Perhaps the most striking is the massive programme of ongoing teacher training. There are very few teachers with specialised training in a refugee camp. However, it is not difficult to find young people who have finished secondary school studies and have nothing to do in the camp. Many of them are ready to give classes in a primary school, but they need ongoing training in basic didactic methods and pedagogy.

Another important point worth mentioning is the large number of adult refugees who want to learn English. Most of them come from rural areas but the loss of their land and uncertainty regarding return to their home countries leaves them thinking they have to emigrate; and their preference is to go to English-speaking countries: Kenya, South Africa, Australia, Canada, the United States...

Finally, it is important to highlight that in places where JRS manages primary schools, it also offers preschool education to three, four and five-year olds. The protection of young children is an obligation in times of crisis. Curiously, this leads to an increase in the quality of education. One of the most important and pedagogical discoveries in recent times is that children between three and years of age have a great capacity to acquire language, music and fine motor skills, and that those who attend preschool start with a big advantage.

The jewel in the crown

Refugee camp schools are of a rather low quality. In many cases, the population is poorly educated, there are few teachers and there is a lack of resources. We cannot ignore that some JRS schools suffer from the same problems and require a lot of attention to improve the quality of their education services.

However, there are reasons not to lose hope. It is significant that the trauma of exile awakens in refugees a sense of the importance of education. They have lost their livestock, land, and many of their other belongings. Yet those who had an education did not lose it. It is not money that they will take with them wherever they go, but their education. "The school is the bank of the camp".

Thus, it is in the camps that have been around for many years where the most effort is made to improve the quality of their schools and we have already said that UNHCR considers JRS to be among the five most professional NGOs in the area of education. This is no little praise if one considers that UNHCR sub-contracts more than 200 different NGOs².

In Africa, JRS schools in Dzaleka camp in Malawi are frequently cited as exemplary. There is an excellent ratio between attendance rates in preschool, primary, secondary, vocational and third-level education; and the level of harmony between Tutsis, Hutu, Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese refugees is admirable.

² "Over 200 national and international Implementing Partners deliver education at the field level" UNHCR Refugee Education, Geneva, November 2011, p. 36.

However, the first prize goes to the JRS schools in Nepal. Suzanne Kindler-Adam, when she was UNHCR Director for Education, confided in Tim Browne that for her taste the JRS refugee schools in Nepal were the best refugee schools in the world.³

According to a study undertaken by Tim Brown, the merit goes not to JRS, but to the 100,000 refugees: “the commitment and sacrifice of the Bhutanese refugee staff is inspiring and calls for admiration”⁴. The ongoing training of teachers is of high quality above all the follow up undertaken by JRS after the workshops. They publish their own manuals, saving a lot of money. The local classrooms are used for two cohorts of students per day. The students take responsibility for cleaning the classrooms and the schools as a whole.

Football, volley and oratory competitions are organised, as are debates. They publish a school magazine, and organise singing, dancing, athletics and aerobic activities.

However, the most significant are the exam results: practically all the children in all the camps are enrolled in school. Some 94.7 percent of the students pass the first national exam (for 11 year olds), 96.6 percent pass the second national exam (for 15 year olds), and 91.5 percent pass the third exam (for 18 year olds). They are extremely good results for very little money; it costs UNHCR 12 US dollars per student per year.⁵

The only flaw found by Tim Brown is that the students were weaker in sciences than in humanities and their knowledge of computer was inadequate.

Conclusion

JRS has made a name for itself inside the Society of Jesus as one of its institutions dedicated to the education of the poorest, much in the same way as Fe y Alegría has for the education its offers to poor indigenous communities.

Within the world of humanitarian assistance, JRS is one of the institutions put the importance of education as an integral part of its model for saving lives on the agenda of large international organisations like the International Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders).

Unfortunately, most modern emergencies in the world are due to war, more than natural disasters. Education is not only an obligation for victims of war, God willing, it is also a privileged means of the prevention of future wars.

*Original Spanish
Translation James Stapleton*

³ “Personal communication” in Brown, Timothy, *Improving Quality and Attainment in Refugee Schools: The Case of the Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal*, in Crisp Jeff, Talbot Christopher and Cipillone Daiana B, *Learning for a Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2001, 122.

⁴ Brown, Timothy, *ibid.*, p. 124

⁵ This is possible because UNHCR does not pay the salaries of the teachers in the camps. At the most it makes an ‘incentive’ payment to the teachers, who like the rest of the refugees are housed for free, receive monthly food rations, medical services and free education.



The Cristo Rey model

Joseph Parkes, SJ

Principal of Cristo Rey High School, New York, US

Background

One of the greatest and most damaging of the many scandalous inequalities that mark United States society today is the inequality of access to first-rate educational institutions that successfully prepare young people from low-income families, especially in our large urban areas, for college. As a consequence, the percentage of young people from urban, low-income families who attend and graduate from college is pathetically small -- most studies indicate that only about 10% graduate with a baccalaureate degree by the time they are 23 years old. In the USA economy today, one is almost condemned to a life of slim earnings, in other words, life on the economic margins, if one does not earn at least a baccalaureate degree within six years of the time one could have enrolled in college.

Urban Catholic grade schools and high schools in the USA from more or less the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century provided such access to wave after wave of children from immigrant families. In short time, the children of German, Italian, Irish and Polish immigrants, who came to the USA in massive numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, achieved "college readiness" status and began to have access to major colleges and universities. Higher education opened the door into professional and business careers that elevated them from the economic margins of their parents' world to more comfortable and in many cases somewhat plush surroundings.

In the latter part of the twentieth century the traditional model of the urban, Catholic grade school and high school, especially in large urban areas, fell apart. The precipitous decline in the number of sisters and brothers who administered and taught in the schools and only received sustenance wages broke the financial sustainability of the schools. More and more lay people had to be hired and paid living wages. Inner cities were wracked by decay and massive out migration such that numerous schools and parishes had to be closed for lack of students and parishioners.

The decline in the number of inner city Catholic schools, which had always been beacons of light for the poor, has continued unabated to this day.

At the same time, inner city public schools in the USA have experienced all sorts of problems that impact the education of children from low-income families. The litany of ills is too tiresome to list, but some key ones are lack of funding (some cities are now bankrupt), political fear of powerful teachers' unions and poor supervision of teachers.

Origins

Jesuits in New York, in the early 1970's, established a middle school for boys at Nativity Parish on the Lower East Side, which was then largely Puerto Rican and poor. The Nativity model was: small school, lots of individual and family support, and a laser focus on readiness for college prep high schools. The school was very successful and eventually replicated all over the United States.

About a decade later Jesuits in Detroit, inspired by the Nativity model, opened Loyola High School for students from low-income, mainly African American families. In general, these students were not well enough prepared in grade school to gain admittance to the traditional Jesuit high school in town. But it was felt that a new model, which started with where the students were at when they entered and raised the bar and pushed them to academic success, could get them ready for college. The school succeeded and caught the attention of the Jesuits in Chicago.

A decade later the Chicago Jesuits discerned that they should become involved in a direct way with the burgeoning Mexican immigrant community in their titular city. A feasibility study determined that the immigrant families wanted a small, Catholic, college preparatory high school for their children, and the Jesuits, with the assistance of Cardinal Bernadin and several key lay business and community leaders, set to work. In 1996, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School opened in the Pilsen area of town, which had been transformed from a Slavic neighborhood to a Mexican neighborhood. Cardinal Bernadin had provided the location: a closed Slovenian church and small grade school building, with a fairly large piece of property.

Since the immigrant families, most of whom were living on the margins economically, could not afford a typical Catholic high school tuition, Cristo Rey did something unique, and quite daring. It created a Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP) in which each student would work one dedicated day a week at an entry-level clerical job in an office downtown. In effect, five students would share one fulltime job, and the pay for services would go directly to Cristo Rey to help pay for the operating costs of the school. Students were truly working for their education, and Cristo Rey became known as “the school that works”, a very astute marketing term that brought it great recognition and publicity. Tuition was kept very low, and the work program covered the majority of operating expenses.

Growth

In 2001, 2002 and 2003 schools in Portland (OR), Los Angeles and Denver were begun as Cristo Rey-like schools or transformed into a Cristo Rey-like school. Other religious communities and dioceses were welcomed to sponsor or endorse schools. As a consequence of this growth and to ensure adherence to mission and quality control, the Cristo Rey Network was formed in 2003, with an office in Chicago. Mission Effectiveness Standards were established; today they number ten. They include the sine qua nons of a Cristo Rey school: Catholic, serve low-income families & be involved in the local community; academically rigorous; college preparatory & support graduates in college; work program; professionally run; financially sustainable; support the Network.

In 2004 six more schools joined the Network. Today there are 26 schools in the Network, spanning every region of the United States, with two more ready to open this summer and several more on the drawing board. Jesuits are involved in about 40% of the schools, with about two dozen other communities and dioceses sponsoring or endorsing the other schools.

This growth of inner city Catholic schools at a time when large numbers of inner city Catholic schools are closing every year is astonishing.

Today the Network office in Chicago has grown from a few people to 15 full-time equivalent employees, who provide professional development, curricular expertise, assistance with the work program, growth management and adherence to standards services to all schools.

Present situation

The 26 schools enrolled 8,195 students at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year. Gender, faith and ethnicity breakdowns are as follows:

- 57% Female; 43% Male
- 58% Catholic, 30% Christian, non-Catholic, 12% Other
- 55% Hispanic, 35% African American, 4% Caucasian, 6% Other

The average family income is \$33,931 and 77% of freshmen qualify for the Federal Free or Reduced Lunch Program.

Last year the work program brought in \$39,500,000 to the schools. And fund raising brought in \$44,200,000 for operations, and another \$9,300,000 for capital projects and endowment. Thanks to the work program and fund raising, tuition is kept very low and thus manageable for low-income families.

The percentage of Cristo Rey graduates who enroll in college within the year after graduation is approaching 90%, significantly higher than the rate for their socio-economic peers. Data on college completion rates, using the six years to graduate norm that has become standard, will be meaningful after May, 2014, when ten schools will have classes that have hit the six years out mark. The early indications are that the numbers will be good but not yet what we aim to achieve.

Cristo Rey schools are unique in that they combine three factors that no other schools combine: 1) the *cura personalis* culture and religious/values systems of Catholic schools; 2) a data driven culture that measures everything and holds everyone accountable; and 3) the Corporate Work Study Program, that introduces Cristo Rey students to corporate America and builds up in them poise, self-confidence and a lived knowledge that the future will be bright for them if they study hard in school, gain acceptance to college and study hard and complete college.

The success of Cristo Rey schools has been very impressive, but we still have room to improve. We are learning every year how to serve our students better academically, spiritually and socially. We share a massive amount of data on an annual basis, and we are committed to following best practices, which we often learn from one another. We are still young and restless, and that is good in a field that can often grow tired and stale. We are very mission driven, always aspiring for the magis and inculcating that desire in our students.

The Society of Jesus can be justly proud that many of her members have played key roles in the foundation, development and growth of the Cristo Rey model. Likewise, a large number of our colleges and animated by the same call to faith and justice that binds us together as we serve the young who place their trust and hope in us.

The motto of our Network of schools is “Transforming Urban America, One Student at a Time.” Our goal is not just that our graduates become men and women for others, but that they become professionals for others, transforming the world for the good of all.

That's a large task, but one that we are confident our graduates will embrace and fulfill, AMDG.

Original English



Sacred Family vocational schools (SAFA)

Manuel Á. Galán Marín (Director) and Roxana Rosales Migliore (Professor)

SAFA – Blanca Paloma Centre, Seville, Spain

The SAFA foundation was established in 1940, shortly after the Spanish Civil War ended. At that time the Andalusia region urgently needed schools. The highest rate of illiteracy was in Jaén¹ and this problem was compounded by the huge amount of orphaned children in the province. It was in this context that Jesuit Father Rafael Villoslada Peula founded the first vocational school in Alcalá la Real (Jaén) with a clear intent and vocation to serve others. After Alcalá la Real other centres were founded later on in Villanueva del Arzobispo, Úbeda and Andújar (also in the province of Jaén) and in Baena (in the province of Córdoba), followed by many others. So between the schools they set up themselves and others which were added to the network, the SAFA Foundation now numbers a total of 27 centres – distributed over eight Andalusian provinces – which cover all levels of school education, from preschool up to final state examinations (Bachillerato), as well as Vocational Training Certificate courses and Teacher training.

SAFA educational management is entrusted to the Society of Jesus and the Foundation has 1,200 teachers looking after 20,000 students, both boys and girls, every day, with the same goal and a common ultimate horizon – to form men and women who are happy, academically competent, and aware of the world and of the Gospel. In its founding charter, SAFA defines itself as an *“institution whose teaching services, always free of charge, aim to promote, among the modest and humble classes in Andalusian towns and countryside, a Christian and social education, as well as human and social promotion of beneficiaries (...) with a special commitment to vocational training”*. Since its earliest days, SAFA has accompanied the least privileged social groups, promoting teaching innovations and developing into much more than a school in the areas or districts in which the Foundation is present. With different historic experiences and accents, this group of schools connects together in an institution which has continued to evolve over time but has never forgotten its founding principles, based on attention to the real needs of beneficiaries and constant dedication to the educational mission, which is very different today from the time of foundation, but continues to constitute a special responsibility and challenge.

This is the background to the charism which inspires SAFA Blanca Paloma School in Seville, since its earliest beginnings still in the same working class neighbourhood known as the Tres Barrios – Amate District, in turn made up of three smaller boroughs, Madre de Dios, Amate and Los pajaritos, where residents find themselves facing a series of major social problems on a daily basis. The district is considered by the Andalucian local government as

¹ Jaén is a provincial capital in Andalusia, a region in the south of Spain which corresponds to the Jesuit province Bética.

an “area of social transformation and priority action”, due to structural situations of acute poverty and social marginalisation. Low levels of income affect the material conditions and livelihoods of the inhabitants, a problem which has exacerbated even more in these last years of economic recession. The presence of marginalised groups and endemic poverty is compounded by a complete lack of funding for cultural activities, daily episodes of violence and domestic relationship breakdown which converge together in a student population suffering from socialisation difficulties, a huge lack of self motivation, absenteeism and understandably high levels of early school failure.

Therefore our school is linked to the deepest roots of the identity of the Society of Jesus, working on the “frontier” and accompanying the most vulnerable. This constitutes a permanent challenge in our efforts to foster care and concern in issues of conflict, provide a framework of possibility to compensate for the moral and material abandonment of pupils, encourage respect and understanding with regard to ethnic minorities and promote an indispensable nurturing of dialogue and tolerance in order to harmonise different sensitivities. This is where our school aims, to the greatest extent possible and with the resources available, to provide answers to the questions and issues raised by our pupils and their families.

Circa 560 students, of eight different nationalities, are enrolled in *Blanca Paloma* School, from pre-school up to the age of 16. The school is authorised to teach two Initial Vocational Certification programmes and a vast range of courses designed for Occupational Vocational Training, courses which are aimed at meeting the needs of students in accordance with their own personal characteristics and level of formation, in an area hard hit by unemployment. With some of these training courses (such as setting up low tension electrical installations), in a special project which includes obligatory school instruction, we have managed to obtain an academic qualification for our students and furthermore, an authorised certificate for professional training. The centre also has a remedial educational department, in order to guarantee access, continuity and advancement for pupils in serious situations of social disadvantage. In line with the particular realities and identity of the student population, pupils present significant schooling differences, insertion and adaptation difficulties and special needs due to late enrolment in school, irregular early schooling or lack of knowledge of Spanish, in the case of those originally from other countries. Additionally, there are two support units for integration which attempt to assist with scant success a total of 149 pupils who require this type of educational assistance. The accent is on prioritising the pupils with the greatest needs, due to scant resources which translate into very few practical classroom hours.

In our centre tutoring and accompanying pupils at all levels, whether human, spiritual or educational, is of fundamental importance. Teaching activities in the classrooms are carried out with a variety of methods and are very closely linked to continuous pastoral care throughout the whole course of education, aimed not only at promoting reflection and developing an awareness of values but also at accompanying personal growth processes which we can summarise in the expression “**forming persons of good will**”.

Great efforts are being made in the centre to incorporate new methodologies of teaching and learning into school programmes. These are methodologies designed to motivate the students and are highly functional since they are based on cooperative and introductive work, developed insofar as possible from the students’ point of interest. Teachers in preschool classes promote learning by means of work projects devised by the children themselves and obtain very positive results in the total development of each pupil, inspiring great motivation for learning which then begins to blossom as the child progresses on. Teachers organise

“corners” where school work is done according to the principles of cooperative teaching and family participation in classroom activities is greatly encouraged and appreciated.

At primary level, core subjects are taught for between one and a half to two hours every day through **“interactive groups”**, a form of organising work in the classroom which focusses on joint resolution of activities to reinforce curricular content and encourages pupils at different levels to work together in a similar way, as part of the quest for an inclusive education.

With pupils aged between 12 and 14 we begin a special kind of educational experience based on a concept known as **“cooperative classrooms”**, where schoolwork takes the form of relating different subjects to others (on the basis of projects), ensuring great flexibility with the grouping and encouraging cooperative learning and schoolwork. This experience is continuously evolving, depending to a great extent on the characteristics of the pupils in each class. Our future ideal is to be able to continue to expand this kind of work with the entire educational community in what are known as **“learning communities”**. The aim is that the centre could opt for an even broader community exchange basis for good formation, so long as the majority of the staff were in agreement with this.

At the same time, one of the centre’s investments has been to include the presence of a social worker and a community worker who carry out different activities within the school. Their work includes joint monitoring with tutors regarding prevention of and following up on student absenteeism, encouraging cooperation with families at home in relation to a variety of issues, guidance counselling, the preparation of social reports to apply for the granting of different forms of aid (such as free school meals, student assistance grants ...), joint tutoring follow up in possible cases of illtreatment or abuse of minors and so on.

With regard to complementary services provided – of special importance in order to keep students within the school structure for as long as possible – our centre runs a solidarity with families project, based on the basic needs of families as much as among the pupils themselves. The school has an **“early morning classroom”** which allows students to arrive early and remain safely in the centre before classes actually begin. We also provide school meals, in the main free of charge for everyone attending school, following the filling out of a social report form. Since the very start of this meal service we have served **27,000 lunch menus** for free. We also provide free after school care for pupils in the form of games and sports activities, planned for all children from preschool to secondary level. In this way our students find our doors open from 7.45 in the morning (when the early classroom opens) until 6 or 6.30 in the evening (when activities draw to a close).

The way we see it is that these districts, these frontiers, these social margins, are our challenge on a daily basis. They put us to the test and require a committed and profound response, which can encourage and inspire general tendencies of change in our pupils and their families in order to overcome inequalities. These tendencies range from the most practical, concrete and everyday kind to those that can be set in motion on a much larger scale to reach the entire district and help towards a positive transformation of the society we have opted to become part of.

*Original Spanish
Translation Judy Reeves*



“Baher Dar”, a school for the poor in Ethiopia

Atakelt Tesfay, SJ

Principal of Baher Dar school, Ethiopia

General history of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is an ancient country located in north-east Africa, in what is generally known as the Horn of Africa, so called because of the horn shaped tip of the continent that marks off the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. Ethiopia, or Abyssinia as it used to be called, is largely a Christian nation, bounded by Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea and Djibouti, all of which are largely Muslim countries. Christianity in Ethiopia was introduced around the middle of the fourth century, and Ethiopia has staunchly maintained its Christian heritage up to the present day despite many obstacles. As a Christian country surrounded by Muslim countries, Ethiopia has faced many challenges. Much of its heritage of ancient monasteries, ancient scripts, Holy Scriptures and artifacts were destroyed during invasions from neighbouring countries. Numerous invasions over centuries have meant that Ethiopia has never been able to devote itself to developmental works and strategies. As a result, poverty, hunger, and unemployment remain deeply entrenched in the lives of the people. Famines have ravaged the land. One of the worst was the famine of 1984-85 during which many people died and very many were displaced. In fact it has been said that famines could have possibly been prevented if there had been peace, for Ethiopia has many lakes and four major rivers, the Takeze, Baro, Atbara, and the Nile, and the rain that fills these rivers and lakes comes twice a year.

The main reason for Ethiopia's underdevelopment and poverty therefore is geo-political. This is not to say that Ethiopia is not affected by natural disasters such as drought. What I mean is that it could have been managed so as not to reach famine levels. Planning and control could have saved people's lives. This is the reason why, in the reasonable peace that prevails now in Ethiopia, the war we wage is against deep rooted poverty that has lasted very many years.

The Role of Catholic Church in Poverty Eradication in Ethiopia

The Catholic Church has long played a vital role by providing humanitarian assistance especially in times of famine, but also before and after. For many years now the church has contributed significantly to development by offering education to thousands of poor children and helping many young people achieve success.

Baher Dar, where the Jesuit School is located, is the Administrative capital of the regional state of Amhara. It is the largest town in the region with a population that is growing rapidly each year. According to the 2007 census, the population of Baher Dar comprises about

200,000 inhabitants, a figure that is expected to rise by at least 3 percent each year. Since the revolt against the communist regime, this area is still rebuilding itself, improving its economy and reducing poverty levels. The region was a war zone in Ethiopian history for many years, and a great deal of infrastructure -- buildings, hospitals and schools -- was destroyed, not only during the counter attack by the communist regime but even before. Although extensive measures have been taken to rebuild the town and countryside, it will be many years before ordinary people get back their normal standard of living. The Catholic School in Baher Dar helps substantially in alleviating current schooling problems and has significantly improved the quality of education in this area. The number of schools that are being built does not match up with the numbers of children aspiring to join school. In many places children have to walk at least an hour, sometimes bare foot, to get to the nearest school. The burgeoning urban population, as in the case of Baher Dar, is more serious than one imagines.

The children of our school and our activities

The Jesuit school is located in an area where many poor people live. Poverty, illiteracy and poor health conditions are rampant. Children are often malnourished and thus vulnerable to various communicable diseases. Besides providing education we also provide assistance in the form of food and uniforms for the children.

Women are the most affected among the people in this area. Though the number of girls attending school grows every year by leaps and bounds, the majority of women experience hardships. Husbands leave their families and migrate to urban places in search of paid work and the women have to face the responsibility of looking after the children by themselves. When hardships worsen in the family, girls also migrate to urban centres and earn their living by doing various odd jobs. Many parents lack the financial means and material support to provide adequate care for their children.

At the moment our limited teaching staff is not the only challenge we face; we also need to provide meals, uniforms and other basic necessities. The children of these people are the beneficiaries of our school and will one day be of benefit their country and able to relieve the stress their families undergo. Expertise and professionals who come to work in this area in development and poverty-reduction activities also benefit by sending their children to our school. In general, directly or indirectly, the Baher Dar population stands to gain from this school which, in recruiting these children, does not in any way discriminate on the basis of race, religion or colour.

Our school at the moment has about 240 children on its rolls, of whom 180 are at the KG level and 60 in the first grade. 40 per cent of these are children from extremely poor families. By September 2014, when our building now under construction is ready, we plan to run the primary school with about 640 students. This means we have to work hard to ensure that equipment for the laboratory and library, furniture for class rooms, uniforms and food, are all ready and available.

Increasing the existing capacity of our school will enhance our present capability to the point where more children can have access to school and provide quality education. We believe that our school will offer the following benefits:

- Reducing the numbers of students in overcrowded classrooms
- Providing better facilities which other schools can also use and share, for example, science laboratories.

- Preparing intellectuals who can help this region become self-reliant in terms of expertise and professionals.
- Building an environment for students that fosters mutual understanding based on love and harmony so as to promote unity while acknowledging cultural, religious and custom diversity.
- Obtaining school fees from affluent families to cover teachers' salaries and enable intake of poorer non-fee-paying students.

To sum up, our school has started with the big vision of using education as a means of eradicating poverty from the lives of the many children who live in our area. This will be possible however only if we work in partnership with others who are willing to help. We welcome with open arms any individual or organization interested in being part of our work.

Original English



Advocacy network for the right to education

Lucía Rodríguez

Entreculturas, Madrid, Spain

“You will assume the purpose of generating a broad global awareness for quality education for all. ... To give priority to the implementation of this fundamental right, thereby achieving a fundamental step for the exercise and respect of others’ rights”.

Fr General Adolfo Nicolás, SJ¹

A violated right

Education is a fundamental human right, and is furthermore necessary in order to access and enjoy other human rights, whether they be cultural, social, economic, civil or political. In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”. A basic quality education guaranteed to all men and women equally would have the power to transform individuals, communities and every nation.

Nonetheless the reality of this situation is very different. Last January UNESCO released their eleventh Global Monitoring Report², which every year reviews the progress achieved towards the Education For All (EFA) goals. Once again, the data presented reveals systematic violations of the right to quality education. The victims are the millions of boys and girls, young people and adults throughout the planet who are deprived of education.

Since the international community established the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 and committed to collective action in order to reach all EFA goals by 2015, some countries have made significant progress, mainly however in terms of access to primary education. Yet too many countries are very far from reaching the objectives set. We recall the six EFA goals agreed now nearly fourteen years ago.

Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education

Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all

Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults

Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent

Goal 5: Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015

¹ “Jesuit alumni and Social Responsibility for a better future for Humanity “What does it mean to be a believer today?” Conference by Father General Adolfo Nicolás at the VII WUJA Congress in Medellín

² UNESCO 2014 *Global Monitoring Report*, <http://goo.gl/j72PTn>

Goal 6: Improve the quality of education

Moreover, despite some improvements, such as the fact that the number of boys and girls who have never ever attended school was halved between 1999 and 2011,

- preschool education remains a dream for the great majority of children under six years of age,
- there are still 57 million boys and girls who do not attend school,
- and 774 million adults are unable to read, a figure which has dropped by only one percent since the year 2000.

Approximately half of the non school-going infant population live in countries affected by conflict. The possibilities of receiving an education diminish even further for poor girls and women, persons suffering from any kind of disability and anyone belonging to an ethnic minority group or living in rural or isolated areas.

Concern for the quality of education increases daily. We now know that 250 million boys and girls around the globe are receiving poor quality education in packed classrooms, with no teaching materials nor adequate infrastructure and with poorly trained and even worse paid teachers. This means that in practice the children do not acquire the basic rudiments of education and do not even manage to learn to read and to write. The school dropout rate has not decreased practically since 1999 and in some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, the rate has actually increased, and only 56 percent of school children succeed in finishing primary school.

Even though educational inequality is much greater in poor countries, high-income countries also show significant failures among the most vulnerable minorities. In France, for example, less than 60 percent of immigrants have reached the standard level in reading.

If the necessary measures are not taken, the future which lies ahead does not leave much room for optimism. According to the estimates presented in the Report, in sub-Saharan Africa the goal of universal primary education for all will not be achieved until 2086 and girls in the poorest families will not manage to finish the first stage of secondary school until 2111.

How many generations will have to keep on waiting? Why do they have to? The causes of this are many and vary greatly. Some of them are structural; poverty, probably the deepest and most persistent, armed conflict, inequality, a shortage of teachers with sufficient training and above all, a lack of genuine political will, are at the origin of this disastrous situation.

Insufficient public financing is another major obstacle. Countries should allocate at least 20 percent of their budget to education but instead the world average is only 15 percent, a proportion which has barely changed since 1999. Aid to development in education began to drop in 2011 and all the indicators seem to suggest that donors will continue to reduce their aid budgets over the next few years.

Today, global awareness that education is an inalienable right and the key to ending poverty and exclusion is more widespread than ever before. Since 1990 there have been a succession of international declarations and pacts developed resulting from consensus reached among governments, civil society, the educational community and other relevant actors. Different platforms have emerged and been consolidated to drive forward the cause for the right to education for the whole world. Undoubtedly such efforts have led to some improvements however these are simply not enough. The rhythm of improvement is far too slow.

In fact the year 2015 is rapidly approaching on the horizon, and this is the year that governments will review the results obtained over the last 15 and already we know that the goals agreed to will not be reached.

Questions abound regarding how education rights should be envisaged in a post-2015 situation and what the priorities should be tackled first. To succeed in providing **equal access** to **quality** education for each and every person **throughout their lives** is a huge challenge but not impossible.

All of us are responsible for continuing to work together and join forces to make this goal a reality. Far from letting ourselves be discouraged, civil society organisations such as ours must redouble the pressure on governments and international bodies in order to:

- Ensure that the universal right to education remains a top priority on the post-2015 development agenda
- Oblige national governments and international cooperation and development to increase funding in order to cover the deficit and ensure the provision of a basic and continuous education for everyone including pre-school, obligatory primary and secondary levels and basic education for adults. This would cost 38,000 million dollars, an amount equivalent to two percent of world military spending.
- Intensify efforts to put into effect efficient educational policies in order to guarantee equality and establish mechanisms to ensure transparency and control of the use of assets through requests made with civil society representation.

Defence and promotion of the right to education in the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus has a long history of working in education. Even though there is no mention of this vocation in the Formula of the Institute, from very early on Ignatius and his first companions decided to establish schools in order to be better able to help others and promote the dignity of all persons as human beings and sons and daughters of God.

Despite the many efforts we dedicate towards direct outreach to persons in need and the task of providing education, our work will always tend to have a limited impact, restricted to the minority of people who define our alumni base, yet we cannot and must not resign ourselves to this. All of us who are part of the Ignatian family must be aware of our responsibility towards millions of people who every day see their right to a quality education violated and along with this, their opportunities for personal development limited. Without an education, they are condemned to a life of poverty and social exclusion.

An awareness of this reality calls us to engage even further with these persons in need in order to complement the educational work we are already doing and go even further along the road to achieve these development goals.

The responsibility of guaranteeing access to quality education lies with States, however this does not exclude public obligation and social responsibility. In some Jesuit works there is already active participation, at local level, in the drawing up, planning, implementation and assessment of educational policies. However, in the globalised world in which we live it is necessary to raise our vision higher still, going further and expanding the scope of our advocacy, already determined in many cases. Policy decisions affecting the local communities we accompany are not made in local or national spheres but in the international “political arena”.

It “is necessary to **create awareness** about what needs to be done to ensure that quality, life-long education reaches all persons, especially those who today are deprived of it. Likewise,

we must increase social consciousness about what needs to be changed to make sure that children receive as many years of education as will provide them with the learning they need to live decently and that adults become literate and have access to pertinent, ongoing, quality education”³.

In the words of Father General Nicolás, in his speech to the Jesuit Alumni in Medellín, “....we are called to strengthen international awareness of the need for quality education for all, since it is a right of all human beings and, therefore, **a requirement for public policy** regarding education”.

The Ignatian political advocacy network for the right to education

With the purpose of achieving a greater impact at an international level, GC 35 launched the challenge of making the most of the potential represented by the multiplicity of our apostolic institutions at universal level. This can be achieved by creating networks to inspire and encourage projects whose scope reaches well beyond provincial, national and continental borders.

We are talking here about us being “capable of intervening in the international arena and to assume the new reality of a world that is built beyond narrow frontiers, where we are all citizens and stewards”⁴.

This is exactly what a group of Jesuit organisations working in education in different Conferences is seeking to do with the founding of the “Ignatian political advocacy network for the right to education”. We have decided to unite our efforts and resources to work jointly in promoting political advocacy for the right to quality education for every person in the world, within the Society of Jesus. We are convinced that operating in a universal network will allow us to develop and extend our educational work in the most efficient manner possible, aiming to achieve the greatest universal good.

We began by preparing a position document⁵ to generate and promote reflection and debate within the Society of Jesus. The idea is to find a common stance and a specific vision of the right to quality education for everyone and what this effectively entails with regard to our work in promoting and defending this right.

The upcoming challenges for the network are:

- the development of a global campaign at international level regarding the right to education for persons suffering the greatest exclusion, which will demonstrate, from concrete experience, how it is possible to provide education in contexts of extremely high vulnerability and raise the voices of those in most need so that they reach the notice of the decision makers,
- establishing dialogue and raising awareness of the presence of the network vis-à-vis international organisations and relative institutions concerning the right to education for all,

³ “Right to quality education for all”. Position document of the Network for the Right to education – GIAN, Promotio Iustitiae No 110, 2013 page 56

⁴ “Jesuit alumni and Social Responsibility for a better future for Humanity “What does it mean to be a believer today?” Conference by Father General Adolfo Nicolás at the VII WUJA Congress in Medellín

⁵ “The right to quality education for everyone” GIAN Position Paper Promotio Iustitiae 110, pg 55

- the creation of a virtual meeting space for all member organisations where they can share progress and challenges at local and national level, which is also a cooperative platform serving as a support basis for the development of political advocacy action at global level, and
- action to support and enhance the international dimension of all initiatives inspired by Jesuit works, which either report violations of the right to education at local level or present proposals and requirements to citizen groups or political leaders.

This is a growing initiative, an important challenge not exempt from a series of difficulties which we must all face together. The network was created on the basis of a vocation aiming to integrate as many works possible, each one with a common interest in contributing to the creation of this joint endeavour.

"...We want schools and education for every child's bright future. No one can stop us. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world because we are all together, united for the cause of education... So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education First..."

Malala Yousafzai⁶

*Original Spanish
Translation Judy Reeves*

⁶ An excerpt from the speech made by Malala Yousafzai to the Youth Assembly of the United Nations in New York, on 13 July 2013. Pakistani student aged 16, civil rights activist and blogger, Malala was the victim of a Taliban-linked terrorist attack because she upheld her right to an education.

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