



## JESUIT EDUCATION AIMS TO HUMAN EXCELLENCE:

### Men and Women of Conscience, Competence, Compassion and Commitment

In 1973 Fr. Arrupe wrote that “today our prime educational objective must be to form **men-for-others**; men who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ” (*Men for Others*, Valencia, 1973). “**Men and women for others and with others**” is considered a contemporary expression of the humanism that Jesuit education has embraced from the beginnings. It captures, in a nutshell, the ultimate goal of our educational efforts and our current emphasis in a **faith that does justice**.

Twenty years later, in 1993 Fr. Kolvenbach commenting on the publication of the document **Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach** ratified Arrupe’s formulation and expanded its meaning stating that “our goal as educators [is] to form **men and women of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment**” (*Letter Regarding the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm*, Rome, 1993). These four Cs have also inspired the renewal of Jesuit education in the last two decades. Many of our schools have used the four Cs as a way to explain our vision of educating the whole person. The four Cs capture the true meaning of excellence as explained by Fr. Kolvenbach: “maximum development of the gifts and capacities with which each person is endowed... for the deployment of [them] in the best possible service of others.” (*Contemporary Education in the Spirit of Saint Ignatius*, Toulouse-Purpan, November 26, 1996)

Lately, Fr. Nicolas has unpacked the meaning of the four Cs and their contribution to the vision of the human excellence we offer to our students: “These four adjectives express the ‘**human excellence**’ that the Society of Jesus wants for the youth who society has entrusted to us:

**Conscience**, because in addition to knowing themselves, thanks to developing their ability to internalize and cultivate a spiritual life, they have a consistent knowledge and experience of society and its imbalances.

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**Competent**, professionally speaking, because they have an academic background that exposes them to advances in science and technology.

**Compassionate**, because they are able to open their hearts to be in solidarity with and assume the suffering of others.

**Committed**, because, being compassionate, they honestly strive toward faith, and through peaceful means, work for social and political transformation of their countries and social structures to achieve justice.” (*Jesuit Alumni and their Social Responsibility: The Quest for a Better Future for Humanity. What Does it Mean to be a Believer Today?* Medellín, 2013).

The **SIPEI** (International Seminar on Ignatian Pedagogy and Spirituality)—celebrated in Manresa, Spain, in 2014—**focused on the four Cs as the pillars and background for Jesuit Education**, thus the seminar provided a unique opportunity to discuss, in depth, the meaning of each one of the four Cs and their implications for defining Jesuit/Ignatian education/pedagogy today. The Secretariat for Education wants to offer a short reflection on each of the four Cs, based on the discussions during SIPEI, with the hope that our schools can find them useful in their ongoing efforts to renew and, at the same time, can help them maintain **our tradition of creative fidelity**.

(Original in English)

## THE PERSON of CONSCIENCE

In his speech to the *Congress World Union of Jesuit Alumni(ae)* in Medellín, Colombia, on August 15th, 2013, Father Adolfo Nicolás defined the person of conscience we want to form in our schools as “**an individual who, besides knowing himself**, thanks to the development of his capacity for internalization and his cultivation of spirituality, **has a significant knowledge and experience of society and its imbalances**”.

At the SIPEI (International Seminar on Ignatian Pedagogy and Spirituality)—held in Manresa, in the Sanctuary of the Manresa Cave from November 3rd to 7th, 2014—Jesuit representatives of the entire Society of Jesus reflected on this trait and its importance in this moment in history.

From its beginnings, the Society has participated in education, striving to ensure that all students were exposed to

- a) **eruditio**: the acquisition of knowledge (not erudition!)
- b) **pietas**: the formation of an individual's moral and personal character in the service of the common good (not pity!)

Within this task of forming a good character, the formation of a conscience is of great importance. Keeping in mind that a **conscience is “an individual's intrinsic ability to discern the rightness and goodness of their own actions”** (George Nedumattam, sj. in *The Conscious Person*; SIPEI, Manresa, March 2014), we affirm that this conscience can be educated.

In this education, **profound work on our spirituality will be extremely useful**. We should feel inhabited and accompanied by God the Father, who sends us his Spirit to help us discover and discern our life's trails, following the example of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Ignatian Examen (*Spiritual Exercises*; Ignatius of Loyola, #43) is a great tool for rediscovery and exercise and it offers us clues to choose what most helps to make this world the kind of world God wants: a world of fellowship, where no one is in need. We'll learn that each of us has the possibility of doing our part for this objective every day.

**The person of conscience will feel called to look at the world, at reality, with the eyes of God; to discover the goodness and beauty of creation and individuals but also places of pain, misery and injustice.** From this contemplation will come thankfulness for all the goodness received, and from this thankfulness, the desire to dedicate oneself to being an agent of change.

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In this age we've been chosen to live in, **we need to take care of the time in our curricula allocated to looking at the world and helping to move affections;** the time we dedicate to accompanying actions that might arise in our students and the proposal of models that, from our position of educators, we can make them witness and present to them.

**All of this will help our students develop their life projects;** it will help them have a life horizon; it will illuminate their choices in study, work, family, social commitment...

In order to achieve all of this, **in our educational task we have to promote the creativity we need in order to propose new learning models,** which can lead us to a greater and better understanding of reality, to analyze it and look for ways to contribute to the generation of new personal habits, new forms of organization, and happiness and justice for all. These are models that will generate a better society, according to God's dream.

By doing so, we will remain loyal to our mission, and the existence of the Jesuit schools will be justified and will have a purpose.

(Original in Spanish)

## THE COMPETENT PERSON

“**Competent**, professionally speaking, because they have an academic background that exposes them to advances in science and technology.” (Fr. Nicolás, Medellín, 2013).

As Fr. General Nicolas points out the four Cs manifest the **human excellence** we want to share with our students. All of the four Cs must be considered together although each one refers to a specific dimension of our educational vision. In the case of the **competent person** it refers to the traditional academic dimension that leads to solid knowledge, to an adequate development of skills and abilities to reach an effective/satisfactory professional performance that can contribute to human fulfillment. “**Competent students are able to interact with reality**; they are the ones who have learned to be amazed, to ask questions and to be able to understand and resolve problems... so they are the ones who learn for life.” (Montserrat del Pozo, *The Competent Person*, SIPEI. 2014). Thus, in the Ignatian vision it is not possible to be a person of competence without interacting with the world as it is and as it should be... a competent person must engage the world to learn from it and, at the same time, transform it.

The SIPEI vision statement defines the **competent person as someone who is “capable of creating, understanding and using knowledge and skills to live in his/her own context and transform it**; able to be part of the changing and diverse world creating a life project for others and with others; and able to develop the intellectual, academic, emotional and social skills required for professional and human achievement.” (SIPEI - *Vision Statement*)

As the SIPEI vision statement points out, preparing competent students means that **Ignatian education commits to a process of continuing pedagogical renewal** that helps students to reach a satisfactory command of knowledge and skills. This is certainly a **student-centered approach**. This ongoing process of renewal, faithful to our tradition, must be able to incorporate new pedagogical practices that suit our vision better. Certainly, preparing competent persons today also requires not only the renewal of our pedagogies but the renewal of our classroom environments, school organization and the curriculum (to the point each nation’s legislation allows) so that **the manner we educate can be consistent with our vision**, the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements and **our eclectic tradition of combining the best practices to serve our mission**. The IPP (Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm) provides the **style** for any such change but the IPP requires,

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instead of replacing, the incorporation of current pedagogies and methodologies that can implement the sort of renewal we need in our schools.

Thus, in today's educational context, educating competent students requires a school that is able to adapt to the students' individual-cultural-social differences and find the best ways to accompany them in their development. Of course, this entails, in the part of students, **their willingness and commitment to their education**. It also requires **an educator conceived as a facilitator-guide-tutor-coach** and not the teacher-centered education of the past.

It is important to stress that a competent student, in the context of the human excellence, is well aware that **being competent means being able to work and flourish with others** and that the competitive character of some of the contemporary pedagogical styles is actually a hindrance to the competence we have been describing.

(Original in English)

## THE COMPASSIONATE PERSON

**“Compassionate**, because they're capable of opening their hearts in solidarity and taking on the suffering others experience.”(F. Nicolás, Medellín, 2013)

**The compassionate person is capable of evolving from feelings of charity and compassion towards a sense of justice and solidarity**, which favors their contribution to changing the unjust social structures of the world they live in.

**Ignatian pedagogy combines processes of reflection and an active stance against injustice and the pain of others**, through the classical curriculum presented in the IPP (Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm), made up of Experience, Reflection and Action. Compassion doesn't just mean feeling sorry for an individual or group of individuals. **Compassion is a prerequisite for positive action. It involves recognizing human dignity and the value of the person** who, just for having been born, is deeply loved by God.

Jesuit education promotes experiences that encourage students to put themselves in their fellows' shoes, of the marginalized. **Our educational reference for the compassionate person is the figure of Jesus, in his most human form: understanding of our weaknesses, but steadfast in denouncing injustice.**

Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach (*La Pedagogía Ignaciana: un planteamiento práctico*. Villa Cavalletti, 1993) and Father Adolfo Nicolás have encouraged, in numerous texts, reflection on Jesuit education in order to promote compassionate individuals in the context of the globalization that has dominated the world since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It becomes necessary for Ignatian pedagogy to update the education of an individual “capable of compassion”, because the **“globalization of solidarity certainly needs us not only to be on the bounds of universality, but also to live on the bounds of profoundness”** (Margenat, J., *Competentes, conscientes, compasivos y comprometidos*, PPC, 2010). It's not enough to be conscious of the reality of injustice and violence in the world; **we need to educate in commitment to collaborate in the transformation of these realities.** It's the Social Humanism P. Kolvenbach describes as the **specific translation of Jesuit humanism, challenging Christian humanism in our time.**

In the words of Father Peter McVerry (*The Compassionate Person*. SIPEI. 2014), “first, we have to offer our students the opportunity for an intensive experience of being with the poor”. He adds that “experience on its own is a necessary but not sufficient condition for creating students who are compassionate. That experience must be reflected upon, within the school context. A structured reflection, supported by the school, is critical”. The challenge of Jesuit education is centered on the creation of a compassionate school context.

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Compassion that leads to solidarity should move us to shake the structures of our schools, so that our educators and students can become agents of change and collaborate with God's dream.

(Original in Spanish)



## THE COMMITTED PERSON

**“Committed, because, being compassionate, they honestly strive toward faith, and through peaceful means, work for social and political transformation** of their countries and social structures to achieve justice.” (Fr. Nicolas, Medellin, 2013)

As Fr. General clearly illustrates, being committed is inseparably tied to being compassionate.

The SIPEI vision statement defines the committed person as, **“A person of commitment is one of courageous action. Through our openness to the guidance of the Spirit and companionship with Jesus, he or she will be able to discern the urgent needs of our time, so that our ways of serving will be as rich and deep as our ways of loving. We realize that an Ecological commitment to the reconciliation and healing of the earth, hand in hand with the commitment for social justice, are urgent needs as they affect all persons everywhere on the earth.”**

Fr. Carver identified our need for a substantive commitment to the environment as an **“urgent need of our time”** (*Committed Person*, SIPEI, Manresa, 2014). The SIPEI appropriately reminded that as a global network, Jesuit schools have yet to fully embrace this particular call of past General Congregations with a response that reflects the attention it so deserves; **a call that requires our schools to work more and more as a global network to respond to a challenge that is really global in its roots, impact and solution.** Caring for the environment will compel our schools communities to work closely and globally.

This essential commitment to ecology cannot be seen as weakening or replacing the **service of a faith that does justice**, but, on the contrary, it has to be seen as an integral part of this service.

The education of the committed person according to the Ignatian perspective will require our schools to provide students with **transformative experiences to help them form expansive hearts and minds, real persons of solidarity** with all those in suffering, disadvantage or oppression. These experiences, informed by the values of the Gospels, should call Jesuit/Ignatian schools to a deep reflection on how we educate, why we educate, and the importance of creating and sustaining educational structures, curricula and environments that embody the kind of commitment we want to see in our alumni/ae: **we need to educate by example...**

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(Original in English)

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