

SND Global Education Conference, January 11-13, 2022: Cultivate a Culture of Encounter and Caring



On September 12, 2019, Pope Francis issued a statement inviting dialogue on a “Global Compact on Education”, a worldwide effort “to rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education, including patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding.”

On October 15, 2020, Pope Francis conducted a meeting via ZOOM with selected educators and church officials from around the world to launch the Global Compact. The Pope opened this event with a video message, encouraging the renewal of Catholic education worldwide, bringing together “families, communities, schools, universities, institutions, religions, governments and the entire human family” in order to develop young people for a more humane world.

The Pope shared 7 areas or commitments to transform education:

1. To make the human person the center of every educational program
2. To listen to the voices of children and young people
3. To encourage the full participation of girls and young women in education
4. To see in the family, the first and essential place of education
5. To educate and be educated on the need for acceptance of the most vulnerable and marginalized
6. To find new ways of understanding economy, politics, growth, and progress that can truly stand at the service of the human person and,

7. To safeguard and cultivate our common home

As Sisters of Notre Dame with almost 100 educational institutions and ministries throughout the world, it is important for us to also understand Pope Francis' vision for the renewal of Catholic education worldwide.

So for three days on January, 33 SND Educators, both Sisters, and some of our lay colleagues gathered via ZOOM to learn more about Pope Francis' vision for a Global Compact on Education. Sr. Mary Ann Culpert, Assistant General and the congregational liaison for education organized the meeting. The meeting included two keynote speakers – Dr. Quentin Wodon and Archbishop Vincenzo Zani. Dr. Wodon is a Lead Economist for the World Bank and the past two years has compiled reports on Global Catholic Education. His presentation included information about trends in Catholic education worldwide, especially how Catholic education helps to close the learning poverty gap in many countries. Archbishop Zani is the Secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome. His presentation made several excellent connections between the 7 commitments of the Global Compact and our educational principles as Sisters of Notre Dame.

The conference also included presentations by each of the Units on innovative practices and projects in their Units that are helping to promote the Global Compact in very practical ways.

Comments from participants:

"It was a joyful experience for me to be a part of the SND Global Education Meeting. It was informative and enriching. We are one with Pope Francis and together we can make a big difference." Sr. Mary Manisha, Bangalore, India

"What a joy it was to learn of the rich diversity of SND educational programs addressing the hopes and dreams of young people and their families in so many communities across the globe. Sharing in the common foundation of the SND charism.... we are well-positioned to answer Pope Francis' call for a global compact on education." Dr. Laura Koehl, Chardon, USA

"The great impact of this conference was to realize that we work connected with the Church's guidelines, especially with the Global Educational Compact and that the Notre Dame Educational Principles are alive, rooted in all the schools of the Congregation. May SND Education be an effective way 'to humanize the world and history', as Pope Francis asks us." Sr. Renete Maria Cocco, Canoas, Brazil

"[The Conference] was a moment when I could feel that the mission of Notre Dame is great and that the flame of Saint Julie and the first Sisters pulsates through so many committed people." Mr. Vagner Paulo Maccalli, Canoas, Brazil

The conference materials will soon be available on the SND1 congregational website with translations in English, Portuguese, Indonesian and Korean.