

International Day of Education 24 January

Recover and revitalize education for the COVID-19 generation



The International Education Day occurs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a global learning disruption of unprecedented scale and severity. The closure of schools, universities and other learning institutions, as well as the interruption of many literacy and lifelong learning programmes, has affected the lives of 1.6 billion students in over 190 countries. As a new year begins, now is the time to step up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery and the transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies.

Capturing the spirit of the International Day of Education, Jesuit Education in South Asia and also globally have decided to celebrate the Day with meaningful reflections and actions.

Education is a human right

The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

Education is key to sustainable development

When it adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the international community recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

Challenges to achieving universal education

Education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future. But about 265 million children and adolescents around the world do not have the opportunity to enter or complete school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and it is unacceptable.

Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind.

Education must change

Gender discrimination still persists in South Asia and lot more needs to be done in the field of women's education in SA. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. India the male literary rate is more than 82.14% and the female literacy rate is just 65.46%.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and subsequent treaties established the right to education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child,

reaffirms the right to free and compulsory primary schooling and emphasizes child well-being and development.

International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR - UN 1977) identifies four components in peoples' right to education: – Available – Accessible – Acceptable – Adaptable.

Education for all (EFA) Launched in 1990.

As per the published objectives this initiative was to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society.” It committed to achieving six specific education goals.

They are:

1. Early childhood care.
2. Free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. Increased adult literacy.
5. Eliminate gender disparities.
6. Improve all aspects of the quality of education.

The Stark Reality today

Even after decades of efforts by the United Nations', money lenders such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank etc.; is getting worse day-by-day. More than 15 million children in the world have affected AIDS and 80% of them are from Africa. The Rights of millions of children are violated by trafficking, labour, abuse, and neglect. Births of about 50 million of children are not registered in each year and unable to access schooling and basic services. At global level: poverty (economic), armed conflict (political), unequal distribution of resources (social),

lack of gender equity (social) are the major constraints continuing. About one in four children under the age of five are underweight. In South Asia, 60% of children in the poorest areas are underweight compared to 25% of children in the richest households.



In Asia, Africa and Latin America regions overall, girls in the poorest 20% of households are 3.5 times more likely to be out of school than girls in the richest households and four times more likely to be out of school than boys from the richest households.

For women in the poorest households and among those with no education, negligible progress was seen over the last decade.

Only about half of the so called developing world's population are using improved sanitation. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain daunting, with only 40% of rural populations covered. And while 77% of the

population in the richest 20% of households use improved sanitation facilities, the share is only 16% of those in the poorest households.



The cost of schooling remains a major obstacle to education for millions of children and youth despite the abolition of primary school tuition fees in fourteen countries since 2000.

Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society. Out of 129 countries, 51 have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals (universal primary education, adult literacy, gender and quality of education), 53 are in an intermediate position and 25 are far from achieving EFA as a whole.

Although child mortality rates have dropped, a majority of countries are not taking the necessary policy measures to provide care and education to children

below age 3. Early childhood care and education programmes generally do not reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, who stand to gain the most from them in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

Worldwide, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, as measured by conventional methods. Some 64% of them are women, a share virtually unchanged since the early 1990s. Direct measurement of literacy skills would significantly increase the global estimate of the number of adults denied the right to literacy. Most countries have made little progress during the past decade in reducing the absolute number of adult illiterates, with the notable exception of China.

72 out of 101 countries will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2025. South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa remain regions with low enrolment in secondary education.

There are about 77 million children of school age, who are still not in school due to financial, social, or physical challenges. Poor learning outcomes and low-quality education also remain overriding concerns in the education sector. For example, in many developing countries, less than 60 percent of primary school pupils who enroll in first grade reach the last grade of schooling. Additionally, pupil/teacher ratios in many countries exceed 40:1 and many primary teachers lack adequate qualifications. (Data Ref. UNESCO Report).

Failure of Governance: The Root Causes

What we experience today is weak governance systems in every aspects of the society. Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Good Governance is supposed to be ensuring political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the

poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.



Role of Education

Building awareness of the self, society and human welfare more and more rests upon education. Education is considered the best strategy of initiating, achieving and sustaining progress and development. Moreover, education can mitigate disparities in society amongst people. In short Education is the most powerful tool of achieving what we ought to achieve.

Jesuit Education is best suited in educating pupils on Post Corona schooling

What we experience today in the market driven economies are the efforts to sell the knowledge, the education, the experiences, the skills and so on in the open market. The market mechanism is not concerns on the human angles as it

emphasis rely on the level of achievements from the supply and demands of the marketable products and services.

Jesuit Education is not driven by market goals. It does not consider each and everything including the human relations, their knowledge and skills are considered as economic commodities, as in the market driven economy.

Jesuit Education believes;

- 1) Education perpetuates eternal values**
- 2) Promotes capacity to welcome social change**
- 3) Evaluation of social change**
- 4) Transmission of culture**
- 5) Removal of obstacles**
- 6) Increasing the areas of knowledge**
- 7) Leadership role**
- 8) Mother of new changes**
- 9) Spreading knowledge**
- 10) Stabilizing democratic values**
- 11) Control channelizes and modifies thoughts of new generation**
- 12) School as a workshop for citizenship training**
- 13) Awareness against social evils**
- 14) National and international understanding**
- 15) Equality among masses**
- 16) Social Awakening**
- 17) Global citizenship**

Hence we reiterate that Jesuit schools are committed to the following points in the Post Pandemic Education.

- 1) Jesuit Schools are committed to creating a Safe and Healthy Environment for all.
- 2) Jesuit Schools are committed to Global Citizenship.
- 3) Jesuit Schools are committed to the Care of all Creation.
- 4) Jesuit Schools are committed to being Catholic in dialogue with other worldviews.
- 5) Jesuit Schools are committed to justice.
- 6) Jesuit Schools are committed to being Accessible.
- 7) Jesuit Schools are committed to Interculturality.
- 8) Jesuit Schools are committed to being a Global Network.
- 9) Jesuit Schools are committed to human excellence.
- 10) Jesuit schools are committed to life-long learning.

Our commitment to education is only strengthened during the pandemic. We consider every challenge is an opportunity for us to change, modify and be innovative. The World Day of Education on 24th January is an opportunity for us to reiterate, revise and re-invent our teaching-learning-pedagogy and schooling.

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