



GIAN Right to quality education for all

Core group meeting

Madrid, 10 - 13th
October 2016

Final Document



The Core Group of GIANⁱ (Global Ignatian Advocacy Network) for the Right to Education comprised of representativesⁱⁱ from different Conferences (CPAL, Europe, JESAM, South Asia, and Canada/USA) and international organisations (Fe y Alegría and JRS) working within the schools, universities and social organisations of the Society of Jesus met from 10 to 13 October 2016 in Madrid (Spain).

We reflected on the current state of global education and discussed how to encourage a more concrete commitment among Jesuit institutions to support the right to a quality education for all. This is based on the urgent need for global access to a quality education and to the Jesuit priority to contribute positively to the universal good.

Lifelong quality education is internationally recognised as a fundamental human right. Those who are denied this right are forced to suffer discrimination and exclusion, since it is practically impossible to access the full complement of human rights and enjoy fundamental freedoms without a basic education. We know that we can only aim to live in a healthier, fairer, more peaceful and sustainable world by ensuring that all people without exception are able to exercise their right to a quality education and to lifelong learning.

We condemn the **systematic violation of the right** to inclusive, equitable and quality education for all as well as lifelong learning opportunities. In many countries, the educational gap continues to widen.

We are deeply concerned that **758 million** adults lack basic reading and writing skills - two thirds of whom are women - and **263 million** children and youth are out of school ([UNESCO](#)ⁱⁱⁱ, 2016). Furthermore, **75 million** children and youth have had their education directly affected by emergencies and protracted crises (Overseas Development Institute^{iv}, 2016).

The work of the Society of Jesus is inspired by a **faith that promotes justice** and takes on the responsibility of building societies with inclusion and promotes social justice and opportunities for everyone. The General Congregation (GC) 32 highlighted the need to revise, discern and complete our educational work in the light of this faith that promotes justice; moreover, the General Congregation (GC) 35 issued a direct call to the whole Ignatian family to implement **advocacy** as a new dimension of our apostolic mission, although advocacy has deep roots in our history.

The GIAN for the Right to Education affirms that we must look beyond the provision of educational services in our own schools and for our own students, but we **must also undertake efforts to improve quality education for everyone**.

We are aware of how the right to education is being violated and all of us must get involved personally and collectively through our institutions in the transformation of this reality; there will be no social justice as long as there is exclusion and discrimination.

We firmly assert that quality education is a basic human right and that we must allocate more and better resources for the most marginalized, including the extreme poor, women and girls, the displaced, indigenous communities and

those with special needs. Our daily work must focus on ensuring equitable access to a quality education for all to form persons of *Conscience, Competence, Compassion and Commitment*.

Education is a public good. The Society of Jesus, governing bodies and the larger community must assume joint responsibility in ensuring that this right is realized. The Society of Jesus manages a public good from our educational networks (through both formal and non-formal programs) and plays a critical role in ensuring this right. We acknowledge worrisome trends towards the privatisation of education and for-profit educational endeavours, which can infringe on this right due to the inability to meet tuition and other expense requirements resulting in the exclusion of vulnerable individuals and communities.

We defend and promote quality education for both **personal and social transformation** to promote global citizenship committed to the common good and assist in building socially and environmentally sustainable communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

To Father General:

- Given its critical urgency, 'quality education for all' should be a priority in the portfolios of Father General's Social and Education Secretariats.
- The defense and promotion of the right to quality education for all should be regarded as part of the Jesuit mission and of our Jesuit ministries.

To Jesuit Conferences:

- Provincials and Presidents of the Conferences should incorporate their duty to work for the right to education for all in their planning and allocate the necessary economic and human resources to support the GIAN for the Right to Education.
- The Society of Jesus should join forces with other religious and social organisations who are advocating on behalf of access to quality education for all.

To Jesuit Institutions:

- Education as a human right and a public good should be included in the work and the educational and strategic planning of Jesuit institutions from a faith that promotes social justice.
- Jesuit institutions must reflect on their role as educators, religious organizations and members of civil society, in enhancing education as a public good.
- The Society of Jesus promotes right to education research in Jesuit Universities and other institutions (including NGOs, social centre); awareness-raising actions, and citizen mobilisation to further the public debate on the right to education.

GIAN Commits to:

- Defining a clear structure and establishing a plan that makes this work possible.
- Serving as conveners and facilitators both within the Jesuit community and with external organizations to further these recommendations.

ⁱ *Global Ignatian Advocacy Network-GIAN* is an initiative launched by the Society of Jesus that promotes various international advocacy networks focused on several themes: Ecology, Peace and Human Rights, Right to a quality education, Natural resources and minerals governance and Migrations. These networks bring together Jesuit organizations around the world.

ⁱⁱ Members: Giulia McPherson (JRS USA), Jorge Cardoso (Europe – Social), Ricardo Angulo (JECSE – Europe), Luis Ugalde SJ (CPAL), M^{re} Eugenia Ocampo (CPAL-AUSJAL); William Muller SJ (USA- Canada Jesuit Schools Network), John Chathanatt SJ (South Asia), Augustin Kalubi SJ (JESAM) Carlos Fritzen SJ y Lucia Rodriguez (Fe y Alegría).

ⁱⁱⁱ UNESCO. (2016). Global Education Monitoring Report: Education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>.

^{iv} The Overseas Development Institute (2016). "Education Cannot Wait: Proposing a Fund for Education in Emergencies."

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10497.pdf>.