



# International Solidarity Reflection

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Transforming Education

*Shalom*

January 2023

## Introduction

The theme Transforming Education has two dimensions. One is education that transforms people, families, communities and ultimately our world. Second, there is the need to always be transforming education so that our efforts are meeting people where they are and bringing them toward fullness. For School Sisters of Notre Dame and all who embrace our charism, this is not new. *You Are Sent* Constitution 23 reminds us, “We are educators in all that we are and do. We continually choose ways of living and serving that call to growth. Responding to varying needs, we engage in a diversity of ministries, specific services through which we work for the enablement of persons.”

## Call to Prayer

What must I do? What must I be? What must we do? What must we be? Let me know my mission and my call. Let us know our mission and our call. Help me to be transformative. Help us to be transformative.

## Experience

In October 2020, Pope Francis held a meeting at the Vatican with representatives of the world’s religions focused on three important dimensions of education in the context of the Global Compact on Education:

- putting the person at the center of every educational process
- investing the best energy for an education of quality for all
- training people willing to put themselves at the service of the community.

In October 2022, I attended the Seminar on the Global Compact on Education virtually. Transforming hearts and systems to make them more humane was central to our collaboration.

The sheer vastness of this effort amazes me. I am moved by the courage and conviction of so many who minister in political and social climates in which the very thought of the person being central to the educational process is dangerous, or the goal of quality education for all is ludicrous. Through our own SSND sisters, I know this is true. And yet, it is so much bigger.

At first, I felt blessed and somewhat guilty that in my first-world experience these goals are so easily implemented. But are they really? We have education deserts in our urban areas and in remote rural areas and are we not responsible to our brothers and sisters throughout the world? There is work to be done in my backyard and around the globe.

Perhaps my best effort is to be invested in the third identified dimension: training people willing to put themselves at the service of the community. Encouraging, mentoring, and supporting those who are willing to serve the community especially in our education deserts locally and

globally. There is plenty of work in the vineyard, whether it be in South Sudan or Southern Missouri.

As for those of us who put ourselves at the service of the community where resources are plentiful, always putting first the dream of quality, person-centered, education for all and keeping the reality of global disparity in focus are paramount. Knowledge is power. Using power to raise others up is holy.

## Reflection

*“You Are Sent* presents a vision of the person, the educator, and the world. It takes Blessed Theresa’s vision and re-conceptualizes our ministry for the modern world. It says to consider yourself first and fundamentally an educator, a transformer, a doer of justice. We are educators in all that we are and do. We are educators called to embrace a worldwide vision, to open ourselves to see, really see, the world with global eyes; to know the world with a global mind, and to love the world with a global heart.” (Miriam Jansen SSND, “[Grasping the Full Meaning of our Educational Vision](#)”, August 12, 2006)

*What is the call to action that I hear today to work toward the enablement of persons and the promotion of human dignity, that contributes to positive systemic change in our world today? What is the vision of a person and world that inspires me to carry out my ministry?*

As it is written in the prologue to *Let Us Dream*, by Pope Francis, “This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities—what we value, what we want, what we seek—and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of. What I hear at this moment is similar to what Isaiah hears God saying through him: Come, let us talk this over. Let us dare to dream”.

*What are the priorities we are called to rethink to be faithful to our commitment to place the person at the center in view of transforming education in any of our ministries?*

## Action

- Encourage, congratulate, and respect teachers and other professionals as much as those in financially lucrative careers.
- Find ways to support those who serve in ‘education deserts’.
- Be a life-long learner and educator.
- Contribute books/supplies to a needy school or learner.
- Be an advocate for leaving no one behind and placing the person at the center as Jesus did.
- Reach out to an educator to offer encouragement and support.

## Closing Prayer

Jesus, you walked this earth as a student and as a teacher without the benefit of a classroom or curriculum guide. Guide the transformation of our educational systems. Be with all who endeavor to learn and to teach with compassion, effectiveness, and love. Show us the way to create societies with humane practices in economic, educational, and political arenas. Help us to cherish and respect God’s universe, our common home, in all our endeavors.

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