

Welcome

As 2015 draws to a close, it is natural to look back over the year that is about to end and to identify some of its highlights, invitations and challenges. What strikes me in doing so today is the urgency for value-based education in which every child is welcomed, accepted, heard and included. Sophie's vision for education of girls was born out of the French Revolution. Today that vision is as relevant and imperative as it was 215 years ago, no matter how much more globalized our world cur-

rently is. The hallmark of Sacred Heart education is a focus on the whole child – mind, body and spirit – and 2015 has shown us why such education remains a top priority on any educator's list in our day. May 2016 bring us, our world and Earth closer to the wholeness and inclusiveness of which Pope Francis so often speaks, and may we all grow in listening to and hearing the voices of children. Happy Christmas and wishes of peace to all throughout the New Year.

Popular education in Peru

by *Cecile Meijer, rscj*

Education can have many faces: formal education, popular education, vocational training, education of persons with a handicap, to name just a few. When I visited the Province of Peru in May 2015, I saw all these forms of education in action. From our high school "Sophianum," to Universidad Femenina del Sagrado Corazón UNIFÉ, and Instituto Pedagógico Nacional Monter-

rico (a teacher training college ran by RSCJ since its foundation in 1876), our sisters are dedicated to the highest quality of education for global citizenship and leadership. Visiting Institución educativa parroquial gratuita "Madre Admirable", a parochial school in one of Lima's poorest neighborhoods which offers free vocational training to young people, was a true inspiration – from the carpentry shop to the



Photo: Cecile Meijer, rscj

handicraft and bakers class room, young women and men were brimming with enthusiasm because they are learning something they are good at. In Bambamarca,

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In Memoriam Joan Kirby, RSCJ

After close to fourteen years as NGO Representative at the United Nations for the Temple of Understanding, Joan Kirby, RSCJ, died on September 9, 2015. Joan's heart was in interreligious dialogue and she lived this calling with great passion and conviction. Thank you Joan, for the many doors and windows you have opened in people's hearts and minds by witnessing to the power of dialogue, respect and mutual cooperation.

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an area that suffers frequent water shortages due to mining activities by big corporations, I witnessed how respect and participation in popular education empowers people. Likewise, the Layo community in the high Andes taught me that reality for people living in poverty is very complex: working in the mines is often the only option for employment and it brings food on the table. No easy choice for the local population.

The experience in Peru led me to focus our first written intervention to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on popular education and its transformative action. Thanks to a wonderful collaboration with RSCJ in Peru and the USA, in particular Sisters Imma

De Stefanis and Reyna González on behalf of the Stuart Center in Washington DC, and other partners in mission in Brazil and Mexico, the Society submitted in October its first statement for the Commission for Social Development, which will meet for its annual session in February 2016. The statement is entitled "*Children as Present Agents of Social Transformation for a Sustainable Future*" and explains how popular education is an

effective tool to strengthen the social pillar of sustainable development.

As of today, we don't know whether our statement has been accepted, but hopefully it is being translated into the six languages of the United Nations, after which it will become an official UN document. More about this new collaboration in a more elaborative article on the website, once everything has become "official."

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Election Time

In 2016, it will be time for the 193 Member-States of the United Nations to elect a new Secretary-General (SG), as Mr. Ban Ki-moon will end his two terms in office on December 31, 2016. Names of potential candidates to succeed him are already surfacing in the informal circuits. Many voices, including those of some NGOs, advocate for a woman candidate.

According to the UN Charter, the election of a new SG is a two-step process: 1) the Security Council makes a recommendation; and 2) the General Assembly appoints. But the Security Council usually recommends only one person, which gives the General Assembly no choice. This has to change, many say.

Furthermore, there is no Charter provision that says how long a SG's term in office is. Instead, the resolution with the Security Council's recommendation, as well as the General Assembly's resolution of appointment, specifies the length of the new SG's mandate. It usually is a term of five years, once renewable.

But voices are being heard to change both the length of a SG's term in office and the selection process itself because it is not transparent and doesn't necessarily guarantee that the best candidate is recommended and chosen. The Elders are among these voices calling for reform.

The [website of The Elders](#) describes them as “an

independent group of global leaders who work together for peace and human rights. They were brought together in 2007 by Nelson Mandela.” In a short, two-minute video on The Elders' website, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who is the current chair of The Elders; Jimmy Carter, Martti Ahtisaari, Hina Jihani and Mary Robinson, all members of The Elders, propose a new selection process for the next Secretary-General with only one term of seven years, non-renewable. To view the video, [click here](#).

Website

Have you looked at our [website](#) lately? We have posted the following articles in 2015:

- [Newsletter Issue 8](#)
- [The life of a displaced woman – finding the strength to carry on](#)
- [Remembering Rwanda](#)
- [Report of the DPI/NGO Conference 2014](#)
- [Preparing for a just climate agreement in Paris](#)
- [International Women's Day 2015 in Torpa: “Agriculture our Livelihood”](#)
- [Pause for Peace 2015: Climate Change – What has this to do with us/me?](#)
- [Study Tour by Sacred Heart Students from Japan](#)
- [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons](#)
- [Blue Heart Campaign](#)
- [Literacy for Social Inclusion](#)
- [Wake Up the World](#)
- [A Defining Week](#)
- [International Day of Non-Violence 2015](#)
- [Cop 21](#)
- [Secretary-General's Message for Human Rights Day 2015](#)
- [Why December 18 will be different for me](#)