



## SOCIETY OF JESUS

### SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECOLOGY

*July 2015*

This document responds to the request to prepare an outline of the key areas of our long-term plans in the fields of the 17 SDGs, taking into account successes already achieved and potential alignment with these goals.

*Initial precisions:*

1. The Society of Jesus is responding to several of the SDGs, in different ways, depending on regions and countries. Regions and countries vary in the issues they face, and in the way their governance is organized. We are very much adapted locally to these different situations. Much of our strength comes from our closeness to peoples and communities.

This means that in many fields we do not have a complete and comprehensive global agenda, but a large range of diverse initiatives that vary from region to region, adapted to local challenges. Then, this Contribution will refer to this diversity of initiatives and not to a complete global agenda.

2. We are not present in all the countries in the world and our work capacities in each one them differ very much depending on the number and kind of institutions we have. There is a lot of local autonomy with regards to initiatives.
3. We are engaged in long-term commitments in these regions and countries, but local works usually renovate their action plans every 3 to 5 years. It is difficult for this Contribution to go beyond 2020.

Nevertheless, as many of these local works remain in the same geographical area and operating in the same areas of action for a long time, the commitments that we express here most likely will be active for a long period. Then, we include here commitments that are already present, will also be operating in the coming years.

4. We have different kinds of institutions: schools (primary and secondary); universities and colleges; pastoral institutions (parishes and retreat centres); social institutions (charitable works, accompaniment of poor communities, defense of rights...). Many of our efforts related to the SDGs happen in schools, as aspects addressed through education, trying to achieve a cultural shift in the long term. However, in this report we focus in more specific initiatives.

The report follows the SDGs where our activities are already developing.

## GOAL 1: END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

- We work with marginalized and poor communities in most of the countries where we are present, both at rural and urban settings. This is a long-term commitment, which is usually related to the defense of their rights and to provision of services (education, shelter, food security...). We consider that the poor are the ones that can get out from poverty. In that sense, accompanying them in their struggles – and not just covering their actual needs – is one of the main strategies. This will continue in the years to come.
- In the last years we have promoted social entrepreneurship in many locations, in the believe that the poor can come out from poverty by selling goods in the market and by having access to cheap goods, adapted to their situations. There are some initiatives in this area with a global aim<sup>1</sup>, but many others develop in a local community. In this area, there are social centres involved, but also business schools. Sometimes, the coalition in between the two is very fruitful. In that way, business schools can provide their expertise to poor communities that can learn how to access the market. This kind of activity is still increasing.
- We are also involved in providing microcredits. This is very uneven, depending on countries. Where these microcredits work, they spread fast. They allow poor people to grow economically.
- We are committed to indigenous communities in Latin America, North America, India and Asia Pacific. Most of these communities are poor and marginalized. This commitment is part of a long and historic tradition, and we hope it will remain for

many years. We accompany them in their struggles and defend their rights. We also provide education, which is a means to come out from poverty in the long run.

- We also understand that providing education to the poor is a way of combatting poverty, but we will speak longer about this in SDG 3.

## GOAL 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- There are *eco-agricultural farms*, teaching farmers to grow crops in sustainable ways in many regions: Latin America, India, Africa and Asia Pacific. These initiatives began years ago and are growing. They promote specific seeds, vermiculture, compost, proper use of water, prevention of plagues through natural ways, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to change the culture of the farmers.

- There are several efforts, mainly in Latin America, to help rural *cooperatives of farmers* access national or international markets where they can sell their local products, grown ecologically with qualified standards. In Latin America, these cooperatives<sup>2</sup> and institutions of the Society of Jesus supporting them are creating a network to learn from good practices.

- In India *water harvesting* has been an important effort to allow rural communities grow a second crop, guaranteeing food security and preventing families from seasonal migration into the cities.

- There are also some few initiatives to support people *grow their own crops in urban* areas in very small pieces of land as a complement to their daily diet.

- In schools, whenever nutrition of the children is an issue, food is provided<sup>3</sup>.

- In India, social centres are trying to create a network to help implement the National food security act (2013) among deprived and marginalized communities, both at rural and urban settings. This network is expected to be active in the coming years.

## GOAL 3: ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELLBEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

- This promotion of healthy lives is an aspect of many of our works, especially in the field of education. We could say it is a transversal dimension in many of our presences.

– There is an institution worth mentioning in this field, AJAN, a network of Jesuits and their co-workers in sub-Saharan Africa, involved in the ministry of AIDS care and HIV prevention. It has been working in this area since 2002.

#### GOAL 4: ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

- In the last decades, we have built many schools devoted to education of children from poor families. There have been three main efforts in this field:
  - **Fe y Alegría** in Latin America (both for children and adults, in total some 1,5M students; 0,5M of them are children). It has recently extended to some countries in Africa and Europe. Fe y Alegría does not only work with students, but with the communities where schools are placed.
  - Schools for indigenous communities in India. They account for more than 250m students.
  - **Jesuit Social Service** offers education to refugees and internally displaced people in many countries, both in refugee camps and outside them. Last year there were some 175m students.
- There are also radios emitting education programs. Some of them are in indigenous languages. This is mainly happening in Latin America, but also in Africa and in the Canary Islands.
- Efforts to offer education to adults are taking place in India, Africa and Latin America. These initiatives are many, but dispersed, depending on the situation of the communities we accompany.
- A new initiative that is gaining ground is Higher education at the margins. It offers online tertiary education in refugee camps and other marginalized places. They have begun in Africa and Asia. Students access a graduation in a US university, and then give training to teachers in camps to improve the quality of education. The experience will spread in the coming years.
- We have recently created a global network to promote the right for quality education for all. We call it **Edujesuit** and it is connected to the Global Campaign for education. We expect it to grow in the coming years and we hope it will also be able to address the right to education not only internationally, but also nationally. This

network is also showing how quality education can reach marginalized communities: handicapped, refugees, indigenous, poor students...

## GOAL 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

- This is a major concern in all our activities. It is embedded in most of the initiatives. There are many women working in our institutions and there are many who benefit from our services.
- There are some initiatives specifically related to women, such as income generating activities, microcredits, etc. Education of girls specifically is also largely promoted.
- The aim is to change our cultures, so that they may become more just for women and girls. This is slow process which is already happening, but which will require many more efforts.

## GOAL 6: ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

- We have created a global network on ecology<sup>4</sup> that is facing the problem of water more specifically in a project called “water for all”. The members of the network have engaged in dialogs with scientists and they address the question of water in the different regions where we are present. The water issues involved in the different continents differ widely.
- In those places where we accompany poor communities, sanitation is one of the infrastructures that eventually is obtained. Also water.

## GOAL 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

- Inequality is also addressed at national levels: raising awareness to change a culture that marginalizes<sup>5</sup>, advocating for the improvement of conditions of the poor, and supporting and accompanying poor communities (this is also related to what we said in Goal 1).
- In the Society of Jesus there is an important and stable flow of resources coming from richer into poorer countries: people, funds, education... This has been going on for many decades and will continue in the future.
- We have a network of NGOs for development that coordinate some efforts to

support institutions working with marginalized communities in the global South. It is very active as a coordinating actor in case of emergencies due to natural disasters.

## GOAL 12: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

- There are many non-coordinated local efforts to reduce consumption, reuse goods or recycle them, both in our life-styles and in our institutions. A document we produced years ago, *Healing a broken world*, has helped us very much in this area, raising our awareness and promoting effective action. It is a change of mindset that is slowly gaining ground.
- Some of the initiatives appear in **Ecojesuit**, which is allowing us to keep the interest and share from good practices.
- We have created a global network on Governance of natural and mineral resources, trying to address mining conflicts that are happening all over the world today. The aim of the network is to defend local communities that are helpless – sometimes displaced or suffering strong contamination – before large extracting companies.
- Next January 2016 there will be a webpage available for secondary education in which ecological issues will be addressed through four approaches: scientific, ethical, spiritual and action. It is called *Healing Earth* and it aims to raise awareness among students about the environment. It will also collect good practices all over the world. It will focus in six areas: biodiversity, natural resources, energy, water, food, global climate change.

## GOAL 13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

- In many places, we are slowly trying to use renewable sources of energy, instead of only fossil fuels. Though this effort is not coordinated, the increasing awareness about climate change is pushing institutions into these practices. It will be slow. Some institutions are also taking care of the way they build up new facilities, in order to save energy spending.
- There is a movement promoting divestment from fossil fuels. It is still weak.

## GOAL 16: PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR

## ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

- There are efforts to work for reconciliation in countries where there is (or has been) a conflict. Again, they are not concerted, but very much based in the local and present situation. This is happening in Latin America, South Asia, Asia Pacific, and Africa...
- Prevention of armed conflicts is also an area of work of some institutions, mainly in Africa.
- There are social centres specifically devoted to the defense of human rights in Latin America, Africa and South Asia, usually in situations where there are many violations. There are also university institutes on human rights.
- We have many initiatives in the field of migration: confronting xenophobia, defending the rights of migrants at borders or at detention centres and accompanying them in the process of integration. These kind of initiatives are present in North America and Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia Pacific.
- We have created an international network to address the issue of migration. It is promoting in several countries a culture of hospitality. Among other initiatives, there are families and religious communities receiving migrants or asylum seekers in their homes.

## GOAL 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Collaboration with other institutions – both governmental and no-governmental – working in the same fields as we do is very strong at the local and national levels.
- This collaboration at the international level has also been present for many years, it is still gaining ground and will increase in the years to come.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Global Social Benefit Institute.

<sup>2</sup> An example of these is Capeltic.

<sup>3</sup> In a school in Haiti, when parents were asked about what they value most about their children going to school, they answered: first, safety; second, the food they receive; third, their education. There is no possible education without good nutrition.

<sup>4</sup> It has its own webpage, called Ecojesuit.

<sup>5</sup> This is an important content of the education we offer