

REPORT ON THE THEOLOGICAL SESSION / COLLOQUIUM
“INTEGRAL EDUCATION AND CHRISTIAN FAITH”
(08.-14.03.2011, Kaunas, Lithuania)

General methodology of the colloquium

The animators' team decided in favor of the “see-judge-act” methodology as a part of the Pedagogy of Action. Thus the first two days (“see”) focused on an analysis of the issue “Integral Education and Christian Faith” mainly guided by the experts' inputs. The 11th-12th March (“judge”) however were used to reflect on and work with the results of the inputs. On the last day (“act”) the participants were expected to elaborate a plan of action from the results they gained the days before. Apart from the topic related activities, there were a Mass and an evening prayer on a voluntary basis every day. Moreover the animators' team took care of making an evaluation of each day together with the participants.

Chronological report/daily activities

08/03/2011

Informal evening:

Because the 8th of March was only planned for the participants' arrivals, there was an informal evening on this day. The animators and participants spontaneously organized some “ice-breaker-games” in order to acquaint with each other.

09/03/2011

Official opening and general introduction

To start the first working day, the European Coordinator and the animators' team did an official opening of the colloquium introducing themselves. Then they presented the timetable of the colloquium and outlined the methodology of it. Moreover they announced the founding of four committees for the colloquium: the documentation committee, responsible for taking notes in order to have a basis for the Coordination's statement and final report of the activity, the social committee, organizing games and ice-breakers to keep a good atmosphere among the participants, the prayer committee, choosing and preparing texts and songs for the morning Masses and evening prayers and the media committee, for taking photos of the entire activity. Finally, the animators' team together with the participants elaborated some basic rules necessary for a successful colloquium.

Clearing expectations and team building

After the general introduction by the animators' team the participants were asked to write down their expectations for the colloquium on pieces of paper and to put them into the “yellow light” of a “traffic light” that was prepared before. The participants could add as many expectations as they wanted for the rest of the morning. This procedure was part of a method being important for the final evaluation at the very end of the colloquium. As a result various expectations from learning more about the issue of Integral Education and becoming

more or less professional up to learning new languages and establishing contacts and friendships could be found on the “traffic light”. After this, the participants played some team building games organized by the animators’ team which had the focus on mutual communicating as a necessary part of the entire activity. By this means the participants finally got to know each other.

**Dr. Benas Ulevicus (Vytautas Magnus University of Kaunas, Faculty of Theology):
Christian Faith and Church teaching (input session)**

What follows are the contents of the first input lecture by Dr. Benas Ulevicius. The teaching of the church is “magisterial”, which means that the teaching is done by the Pope and the bishops. Ulevicius referred to his own experience in order to illustrate the meaning of this sentence: In his youth Benas Ulevicus experienced a sense of mystery, because after the decline of the USSR there was a hunger for spirituality, as a reaction to which people began to pray rosaries and found prayer groups. He entered a charismatic movement and a Christian Metal band himself; there were preachers and several thousand people participating. They propagated evangelisation. These “full-gospel” groups then became mainly protestant. They claimed, for example, statues in churches to be idols, the Pope to be antichrist and did not worship Virgin Mary. After some time they began to re-baptize people and to break the bread, celebrating in fact their own Eucharist. They claimed: “We are a church.” They started meeting other protestant churches such as, the Pentecostals or Lutherans. In these churches every pastor seemed to be and felt like a “little Pope” in his own community. The diversity of churches and opinions was justified by the Protestants with the supposition of a “spiritual unity”. Dr. Ulevicus realized that the teaching actually changes with him: “If I change, I change my teaching.” He came to the conclusion that his teaching actually forms or molds people to his own criteria. This recognition is related to a basic difference between protestant churches and the Catholic Church: whereas if a Protestant priest talking nonsense, he is his own master up to his opinion of truth, if a Catholic priest is talking nonsense, we have to remember that he is not the last authority – it is the Catechism. This discrepancy quite clearly illustrates the opposing concepts of subjective and objective truth. Dr. Ulevicus held the view, that, if there is God, he has arranged things like giving an installation program. If there is God, it is best to get into contact with his mind trying to find out, what his opinion is. Therefore, Ulevicus concluded, God became a human being to reveal his opinion in parables. But how can we find out which of the versions of the stories of Jesus is the correct one? Just imagine: At about 300 years after Christ there were 50 “gospels” and 25 “Acts of the Apostles”, which tell completely different things. People began to believe that if they had asked the Apostles, they would have had told them the truth, as they were authorized by Jesus Himself. The problem was, that the apostles were already dead, so they had to find the disciples of them, who learned their doctrine, which meant in those days, that they spent their entire lives with them. Since the disciples are also dead, they had to find their disciples and so on... Critics may claim that there is no high credibility in this method, but what alternative do

we in fact have? Everyone would have created his own bible otherwise. If people disagree with the Church's teaching, they often claim that this or that particular doctrine is not in the Bible. But Christianity is, in fact, not, as for example Islam or Judaism, a religion of the Book. Catholics believe in the apostolic tradition consisting of the Eucharist as well as verbal accounts, which in fact could have had the consequence of not having a Bible at all. Apostolic tradition contains apostolic succession, which offers us the connection of bishops back to the original story in the way of a symbolic tradition: This symbolic tradition reveals itself e.g. in Jesus' choice of 12 apostles related to the 12 tribes of Israel. One may ask, what happens if there are any bishops who are in fact bad ones. Church holds the view that the 12 who Jesus chose would stay in unity, although they were not perfect people at all. Even though their spokesman Peter betrayed Jesus he got a special role among the other apostles. It became clear very early, that there would not be any unity of church if there were two or more leaders – church would fall apart. The believers' faith in staying in unity reflects itself especially in the first congregation of the apostles, because they believed the Holy Spirit being with them just as Jesus told them. In contrast to Luther, who claimed only faith to be decisive, my faith being already there actually joins the Church – otherwise I would construct my faith completely independently, creating my own Bible. Ratzinger introduces the term of “understanding” (German: *verstehen*) what we believe as a kind of process. At its beginning there is a feeling or atmosphere during a ritual for example. The meaning of the ritual is explained later. Faith is grounded on Apostolic Church. The question is, how practical it is. Theology often consists of interpreting interpretations. The worldwide Church covers completely different cultures such as African, Asian and Latin American cultures. The problem related to this fact is, that the *Magisterium* reacts very slowly to changes in the world; although believing in a common “*sensus fidei*” church is too afraid of errors to change things hastily and unreflected. Protestantism and Catholicism have different points of view concerning mankind: Protestants suppose, that human nature was destroyed, whereas the Catholic Church supposes that the human nature was only wounded. There is something mysterious about the Catholic Church. According to Ratzinger the main difference between a philosopher and a theologian is the fact, that the philosopher produces new words, terms and statements, whereas the theologian has already a deposit or content of faith – only the means of interpretation or conveying are differing. Church did not create this truth – it is not a self-made faith. The “crisis of Catholicism” can be understood as not understanding what the Church teaches. One of the reasons for pushing forward this crisis is the fact that the Church is organized at university becoming a mere subject or topic. University however is expected to create something original, which does not fit to the way of interpreting the truth. The problem of our society is its habit of life, which became indeed too comfortable. Ulevicius added that we can learn a lot from the liturgy from the eastern Churches – it is in a way more efficient.

Reflection method

For the reflection of the expert's input the animators' team decided in favor of a special reflection method, based on the meditation practice of St. Ignatius of Loyola. It focused on the participants' very personal questions, feelings and reflections caused by the contents of the input. For this, the participants gathered in small groups with one animator per each. They were asked to write down their answers to several questions related to the lecture:

- What did I agree or disagree with and why?
- What was interesting to me?
- What did I not understand?

Afterwards all of them presented the answers without discussing them. Then the participants were asked to write three questions they regarded most important. These questions were put on a board. After having read all of them the participants were asked to categorize these questions first, then to choose the most important category and finally to choose the most important question out of this category. At the very end of the reflection, the participants looked for different answers for the question trying to find the best answer. This reflection exercise, apart from helping the participants to reflect on what they had just listened to, had the aim of training them to listen each other's reflections. This skill was useful as it was needed to construct the idea of Integral Education through collective reflection. It was a challenging method for most of the participants because they were expected not to start any kind of pro-con-discussion or to present their background knowledge. That is why this reflection method was evaluated quite in detail afterwards.

Market of Movements

In the evening of the first working day the participants had the opportunity to present their national movements during the "Market of Movements". They had been asked to prepare Powerpoint presentations in advance. During the presentations each movement gave information about its values and aims, structure, participants and current activities. Some of the movements showed short videos about their activities or distributed material like brochures, flyers and other kind of written information.

10/03/2011

Dr. Irena Egle Laumenskaite (Sociologist): Integral Education (part I: Input session)

What is a society? An aggregate of people? But people are everywhere. What makes them societies? Is it their organization? Nearly the whole western world seems to be organized in democracies. That makes no society distinguishable from each other. Society is defined by relations, not by organization. According to a theory of Peterburry two people together represent society, whereas the smallest number of people to form a society is three. Because of the fact, that these people do not only have relations to each other but also to the relations of each other pair, we have nine relations. How is a society formed? By historical development? What does that mean? We have to distinguish social or anonymous individuals, who are defined by abstract or social characteristics, from personality, which makes someone unique and whose uniqueness is expressed by a name. This turns our considerations from

sociology to anthropology, which is based upon human uniqueness. The main thesis is: Integral Education is based on the concept and experience of human person. The chances of the development of persons depend on what we understand as persons. What is a human being's personality? A human individual with special features and developments. What is an individual? A definite creature as a representative of the human race. Individuality and uniqueness have to be distinguished. We often do the mistake to put people in groups with certain characteristics and to see later, that these characteristics are too abstract, since we separate from concreteness. A human being consists of a body and a soul, is self-sufficient and social. Among the human nature we recognize tension between the facts that whilst we want to be independent, we cannot live without others. In other words: There is tension between humans as being shaped by society and human beings as unique persons. Are we in fact defined by a multiplicity of characteristics? Can "personalities" be measured by their status consisting of, for example, money, education and carrier? The experience of value in our society is up to the social value an individual has. What is then uniqueness? What are actually values? A value is nothing abstract, but what we live – it is a concrete realization. What is a person? According to the etymology a person is a mask we represent. What does it mean for Christianity to have a personal God? What does love mean? At first, love, or charity, means to give yourself to someone unconditionally. The opposite is possession, domination and manipulation. This occurs, when you do not see a person as a value in itself, when you deal with somebody functionally. Persons must be valued to their uniqueness, not to their characteristics. This is reflected in Martin Buber's thoughts which distinguish between regarding a person up to his or her usefulness as "it" or as "you". You can only find out who you are in relation. How can you convince anybody to become Christian? By acting Christian yourself, by testifying actively. The main statements in favor of Christianity are that God loves us unconditionally because we are unique and that he loved us so much, that he sent his Son to sacrifice Himself. This seems to be craziness. We cannot love ourselves with our own love, but only with the love of Christ. Love is interrelatedness. Characteristics can be understood differently regarding humans on the one and persons on the other hand: The character of humans is defined by their will and intelligence, whereas the character of persons is defined by being in relation. The biggest desire of mankind is to love and to be loved. Goods like a car, a sexy wife or money create respect among other human beings, but they are at last an expression of the bigger aim to be loved. In contrast to love, passion is blind searching for an object to possess it, not for valuing it for its own sake. Church means community, not collectivity. Church or communion means people being in the love of Christ. Christianity becomes weak, because we are less thinking about being persons. Two questions related to this problem: What constitutes persons? What is free will? Is it freedom to choose among things? No, it is freedom to choose how to live! Freedom is a relation, it is the essential decision in human life to say "yes" or "no" in front of others.

Dr. Irena Egle Laumenskaite (Sociologist): Integral Education (practical part on the orientation paper I)

Our aim is to witness personal uniqueness. That is why we have to think first, what a person is. Integral Education means for social life, that we not only receive it, but also realize it. Although unconditional love sounds trivial it is in fact difficult. Man is both the image and the likeness of God – one has to discriminate between these. Images are crushed: the individual is the result of the Fall. But in contrast to the Fall God has promised us redemption. Western Christianity was very much influenced by ancient philosophy, which had a very rational approach defining human beings by their will and intelligence. But Christian teaching should be a reality, not theory or ideology. *Gaudium et spes* (**I don't know why is it mentioned here – *Gaudium et spes* is one of the Vaticanum II constitutions**)– radical trend in western anthropology, Christ revealed who man really is and how we can live. The aim of Christianity is to use sacred experience to go to the secular world. You can say “show me how Christian you are.” So why did God become incarnate? There are two answers: because he is love and to show us who we really or essentially are. In a way God became some kind of model for mankind. What makes Christianity different from other religions is the fact that in Christian faith there is no differentiation between sacred and secular space and time. Our problem might be that Jesus is not only our model, but also our God. We can find human models in Mary and other Saints. We have to seek for a response to the call of Christ personally. What makes our religion furthermore peculiar is its teaching of humility: humility means, that human beings are taken from the ground (*hmda*) and that we should accept our fragility or our being from ground. It does not mean submission. Our current society in contrast tries to do things themselves not accepting being fragile. We should try to achieve Integral Education in order to be persons fruitful in love. What do we have to integrate? There are two pillars to be considered:

- a) Community or prayer as practice of love, not as competition or contract but as collaboration.
- b) Social principles of teaching of the Church, which are real – not only theoretical principles, but not rules:
 - 1) Respect for human beings as persons (dignity).
 - 2) Common good subsidiarity, which means helping others to act by oneself.

Group working with the expert's inputs

After these two parts of the lecture, Dr. Laumenskaite referred to some extracts and concepts taken from the orientation paper composed by the JECI-MIEC study group of 2004 entitled 'Integral Education' and the participants did a reflection in small groups on these the questionable passages (Is God in everything? What is meant by basic knowledge? What is autonomy? What is pluralism and what is it good for? Is a critical approach a good thing? What is the difference between action and activity?).

Results of the group working on the orientation paper (groups 1-4):

1) **Is God in everything?** We have to distinguish between creations and being.

Basic knowledge? There is no feeling of getting the values that we need.

Critical approach: Yes or no? A critical approach is good, but formal education does not teach us to be critical.

Autonomy? Means freedom to choose.

2) **Is God in everything?** God does not act through everything, because also bad things happen. God is in the nature of everything.

Basic knowledge? Students should be motivated to choose different subjects.

Critical approach: Yes or no? The *Magisterium* is important, but we also have to question ourselves.

Autonomy? Is the capacity to develop ourselves, based on some Christian rules.

3) **Is God in everything?** Yes, otherwise: Why are we here? At first we are pushed by God, then things are unfolding by themselves.

Basic knowledge? There is no basic knowledge objectively.

Autonomy? Either there is or not. We should change autonomy into confidence. It is freedom of decision.

Motivation: needs examination

4) **Is God in everything?** No pantheism!

Pluralism: a) of methods (how to teach children to become persons?)
b) of contents

Critical approach: Yes or no? To question believes etc. is basically good for better understanding. Searching for truth is a human need. A critical approach can also be described as being open.

Autonomy? Is being capable of choosing options.

Action vs. Activity: We have to distinguish actions with a purpose and sheer activism for its own sake.

Dr. Irena Egle Laumenskaite (Sociologist): Integral Education (practical part on the orientation paper II)

After having compared the results of the group working Dr. Laumenskaite summarized what is in her opinion decisive about the issues discussed:

Is God in everything? If God is in everything, but not a person, it is a pantheistic understanding of God – the potter is not in the pot. God is not in everything but can manifest himself in everything. Can God being manifest in everything be influenced by our destruction? Christian Faith is strongly influenced and penetrated by contemporary cultures like New Age. If God is not a person, we are not persons. Catholicism must be distinguished from pagan cosmology.

Pluralism: Does it mean multiplicity? Does it mean to have the opportunity to make a choice? Does it mean that there is a mixture of everything?

Autonomy? According to the etymology it means that we are the source of everything, that we can make the decisions but also take responsibility for them. We have to learn what decisions to make in relations within the society. Concerning love: We are not dependent or submitted to love, because love is something neutral or positive. What are the criteria of freedom? - Overcome internal limitations, take the risk not to betray oneself.

Critical approach: Yes or no? Etymology: kritikon, which means analysis. Today it usually means having an alternative answer. Can we criticize persons or only their actions since I make mistakes, but I *am* not the mistakes. We can only criticize things, which do not correspond with dignity. Concerning Church: Can we criticize the contents or only the manifestation of the contents? We cannot criticise the content of the teaching, but the implementation. A dogma is not a prescription, but a manifestation, that reveals God or a mystery. Dogmas do not correspond to everyday experience. We have to become open to mystery if we want to understand our religion. It wants us to be open for a content, which is bigger than ourselves. Dogmas are statements that express mystery. A mystery is not a secret, which is just hidden from us. The essence of Christianity is relation to God. Our wish is to accept ourselves as mysteries and gifts.

Debate (red line) and its debriefing

The debate was a method chosen by the animators' team to discuss certain issues brought about by the lectures and other controversies. For this purpose the room was divided with a red line. One area was named "agreement", the other "disagreement". The participants were expected to decide whether they agree, disagree or stay neutral about a presented motion and to take their position in the room. In this context the distance from the red line expressed the participants' gratitude of their position. After that each group elected a speaker. Then the speakers debate, which could take several rounds to convince the other groups. If one of the opponent groups was convinced by the others' arguments, he or she could switch sides. After some time the debate was finished and the next statement was presented. Since every speaker could have been elected only once, every participant had to speak once. After finishing the debate and a short break, the debate method was reflected and debriefed among the participants. They came to the conclusion, that this method was a good means to listen to one another and to think about your "opponents'" opinion carefully finding strong arguments both in favor and against one statement. Of course most of the participants held the view that it was not always easy to decide either for or against certain statements and that it was difficult to take a (dis)agreement position. That is why it is remarkable that most of the issues presented in the debate were discussed seriously and constructively during the break after the debate. The debriefing of the debate was carried out in the presence of the International Chaplain of IMCS/MIEC, Fr. Christopher McCoy, who also gave feedback on the activity.

Intercultural evening

The evening had the aim to get to know the participants' countries, cultures and traditions better. For this purpose the participants were asked to prepare a presentation of their home country and to bring typical food, clothing and other material. During the intercultural evening the participants showed short videos of their home countries' countryside, presented and explained their food and customs and shared traditional games, songs and dances.

11/03/2011

Fr. Christopher McCoy (IMCS International Chaplain): Catholic Church Teaching: Integral Education (input session)

If you look up "Integral Education" on the internet, you will find a strange Wikipedia article, which contains Indian and New Age teachings. After having changed the keyword into "Integrated Education" one will find more precise information, but still nothing from the Vatican and the bishops' conferences. So the phrase "Integral Education" was obviously created for JECI-MIEC over several years. Anyway there is space for a critique: In the orientation paper on "Integral Education" from 2004 a lot of ideas were put together, though not coherently, since they are not completely logical and lack philosophical precision. There are two possible solutions: We can use the term as an umbrella term or to interpret and translate it into our own reality. What does holistic Education mean in our understanding, since the term is also used by strange groups, such as New Age? In our eyes "integral" education means a well-rounded or universal education. If we try to find out, what the good ideas were, we can find three ideas or sentences, which are remarkable: As already said above, integral education shall form well-rounded, open persons. Moreover integral education shall be orientated on the common good. What does this mean? Is the definition of what the common good is up to the government? Obviously not! That is why we have to have a look at the Catholic Church's social teaching. The third aspect is that integral education should not only focus on skills or knowledge, but also on spirituality. Concerning these aims also the etymology of what a human being is can help us: The Greek word for human "anqropoj" depicts, that you are fully human, when standing and gazing upwards. That is why any kind of enslavement is in fact anti-Christian. There is a famous saying of Jesus, which shows, how Christians shall behave: "Be the as wise as snakes, and as gentle as doves" (Math. 10, 16). This shows that in a Catholic understanding of education both knowledge or skills and charity shall be realized. A further good approach of the orientation paper is to refer to the pillars of education as defined by the UNESCO:

- Learning to be...
- Learning to know...
- Learning to do...
- Learning to live together

This directly leads us to the question what the purpose of education is.

To find about this, Fr. Chris McCoy did a little role play with the participants: The girls had to imagine being cast away on an island, whereas the boys were the anthropologists visiting the island decades later observing what the girls do on the island and how they organized themselves.

At the very beginning of human interests there is the instinct to survive and to reproduce. This makes prioritizing (e.g. water, food, shelter, etc.) and therefore organization and differentiation of responsibilities necessary. As a result people formulate a kind of contract which leads into a society or civilization. That is why the main purposes of education are to learn skills in order to separate responsibilities and prepare a good society. Also the prophets in the Bible analyze, what is happening in a society, so we can say that education enables to have a prophetic voice. Knowing the purpose of education in general we may ask, what is then the purpose of schools and universities? According to the Ron Dearing Report in the United Kingdom (1997) there are four basic aims of university:

- To increase knowledge and understanding for its own sake and the economy
- To serve the needs of economy at all levels
- To develop an individual's potential to be well equipped for work and to contribute to society
- To shape a democratic, civilized and inclusive society

Economical considerations are obviously not the decisive elements of what we as Catholics understand as the aims of university education. Apart from this, in the orientation paper on "Integral Education" there is a paragraph referring to the thoughts of Albert Nolasco OP, but it is mentioned without its whole context: Nolasco says that education is different from mere memorizing, which could also be done by parrots. What is needed, is a new definition of education: Education develops the whole person in the context of today's world (John Paul II.). Nevertheless there is not yet a church's teaching on "integral" education, as explained above. What we as Catholics believe, is that Jesus is at the heart of the Church. In the concrete structure of the Church teaching is realized in the way, that the local bishops are the authority of teaching in community with the pope as the bridge-builder. The term "*Magisterium*" is a technical term in Church and does not necessarily imply that the *Magisterium* is infallible. Because of our baptism we as individuals also have the authority to speak in the name of the Church. Our impact on Church's teaching depends on what sense we can make out of the orientation paper. Throughout history Church's teaching was realized through both words and actions within several groups of teachers: The pope, bishops, the laity, the local churches and theologians. In general, education for all is a relatively new idea in western society:

- 200 years ago most children did not go to school
- Most universities were founded by the church
- Religious orders were often the pioneers in education for the poor
- Church's involvement in education is a practical expression of its teaching about dignity and value of each human person

This development again illustrates the Church's "teaching per action". What the aim of the coordination of our movements is, is the witnessing to Christ in the university world. Also John Paul II. says, that students should not be passive, but active protagonists for their life-choices. Their activity is caused by a searching spirit or curiosity, which tries to draw close to the beauty as the splendor of truth.

Free afternoon in Kaunas

After the lecture of and the reflections on the lecture of Fr. Chris McCoy the participants were given the opportunity to spend a free afternoon in the nearby city of Kaunas. They were taken to Kaunas by bus and one member of the hosting movement ATEITIS offered a guided tour through the city. Since it was the Independence Day of Lithuania there were many markets and activities in the city with folk music and stands selling local traditional items, which could be visited by the participants on a voluntary basis. In the evening the participants of the Colloquium gathered at the office of the ATEITIS federation, listened to a concert by their choir and did further joint activities like games and traditional Lithuanian songs and dances.

12/03/2011

Mr. Vyantas Malinauskas (former president of the Catholic federation ATEITIS): Analysis of Different Integral Education Concepts (input session)

Mr. Malinauskas explained that the term "integral" shows the need for completeness, while as Catholics we need to understand which perspectives belong to and which contradict Catholic understanding. His lecture was more or less a repetition or summary of the other lectures having a stronger focus on Catholic Church's teaching.

The participants were asked to compare two pairs of documents in groups: the first pair dealt with gender issues in education, the second pair dealt with the idea of social progress. The first pair of documents discussed the idea of equity from a Christian perspective. The second pair of documents discussed the rigid shaping of society (Dewey) as opposed to freedom (Church).

Results of the group work on the texts

On Gender

In the past there was the tendency of open gender domination. Men ruled over women in patriarchal structures, which lead to an antagonism. In the present there is the tendency of having gender equality. This socially constructed equality does not solve, but in fact reproduces an antagonism neglecting in theory all differences between men and women. That is why the Church's solution is a collaboration between men and women *with* recognizing the differences, not a mere compromise. We could imagine a combination of what the Vatican's and the Australian bishops' conference's document suggest. First of all we think it is important to differentiate sex as a biological disposition from gender as a social construct. Furthermore we must distinguish between the terms "gender equality" and "gender equity". Gender equality means that men and women are treated as if they have the same

characteristics, which is in fact not the case. Gender equity, however, means that men and women are treated to have the same opportunities.

On the ideal society

Does the fact, that we are formed by our education, that we do not have any freedom? Are certain structures in our society in fact an imposition? In this context we have to discriminate between personal and social education and the development of personal structure and social structure. Can there be ideal development of person *and* society only based on personal actions without any structural principles given by society? Since freedom is the capability of choosing what is right or wrong and education is a means to enable people to act freely, education is seemingly the best solution to realize freedom until now. Social education being the shaping of people nevertheless always costs personal freedom. Here we can recognize a dilemma between the aim of freedom and the means of imposed structures. That is why we should accept the fact that an ideal society always tends to be only a utopian or unrealistic attempt.

Creating a plan of action

After the expert's inputs and the group work on the texts a local plan of actions was created through the following activities:

- 1) Distinguishing between Formal, Non-Formal and Informal education through a whole-group discussion.

Group reflections on formal education:

What we understand by formal education is a structured and systematized, in other words institutionalized act of education, as done in schools or universities. Knowledge and skills – including social ones – are conveyed by formal education. In any case the knowledge and skills you learn are taught as useful means to reach a certain goal. The original aim of formal education is to create a person in a context – in other words: a citizen. That is why the education providers of formal education are the state and the Church, realizing it with teachers, professors etc. The places of where it takes place are often civic.

Group reflections on non-formal education:

What we understand by non-formal education is education outside institutions, such as schools. It is still an organized but not imposed kind of education and can also take place inside professional activities. Non-formal education develops and improves the knowledge and skills learned in the formal education helping to contextualize them and to make them practical. This promotes the process of lifelong learning. Non-formal education is provided NGOs and (youth) movements.

Group reflections on informal learning:

Informal learning is understood as the process of life-long learning brought about by socialization. The providers are the family, friends and also the media. It includes experimental learning. Informal learning means being shaped by society while growing up – learning the lessons of life. It is not planned or standardized, but cannot be avoided.

- 2) Presentation of the educational systems of Malta, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania. The rest of the participants presented 'What should we get outside formal education?' and 'What do we already get outside formal education in our movements?'

Result of the group work (What the national movements already teach):

Within the broad and common area of what all national movements of the JECI-MIEC European Coordination teach several topics can be distinguished:

Spirituality:

The National Movements promote one's personal spiritual development giving guidelines how to live and practice faith.

Practical skills:

The National Movements convey several practical skills for their members and animators, such as language and computer skills, learning how to play instruments or how to travel. They also teach rhetorical and pedagogical skills especially for animators.

Social skills:

There are a lot of social skills the National Movements focus on during their everyday work. Doing social projects for example, young people learn to take responsibility, to realize solidarity and to organize activities. Moreover youngsters learn how to communicate and discuss: They learn to listen to each other, to think critically, to speak freely and to compromise. Establishing relations, including international ones, people learn to become tolerant.

Cultural skills:

Apart from multilateral relations, the National Movements enable their members to understand the history and culture of their own home countries in order to find a national identity.

- 3) A role-play on creating a perfect educational system on a new island where resources are unlimited. The inhabitants of this island come from different European countries. The participants were divided into two groups to work on this task and all suggestions were then presented to the whole group.
- 4) With these ideas for the perfect educational system on the island, the participants were told that the island is sinking and that they need to return to our own countries. They were asked the following three questions in view of education in the participants' local situations:
 1. What can I do?
 2. What can we do together?
 3. Who else could we work with?

13/03/2011

Presentation of the statement

On the last working day the Coordination's statement about Integral Education by the documentation committee was presented. The participants were asked to analyse the statement and make amendments for its improvement. The plan of action for implementing this concept within the JECI-MIEC movements was also discussed and included. The statement was not fully adopted by the end of this day's meetings and it was agreed that the full adoption of the statement shall be carried out electronically after the necessary amendments and corrections were made.

Final evaluation, closing mass and closing ceremony

After having analysed the statement and the plan of action the participants were invited to take part in the final evaluation. For this purpose they should write down all fulfilled expectations and what they gained from the colloquium additionally on green papers and everything that was not fulfilled on a red paper. Then the papers were added to the yellow ones on the "traffic light" from the beginning of the colloquium. The main critical remark was that there was less time to discuss issues in detail during the group working activities. Every participant had the opportunity to state his or her opinion orally and to fill in an evaluation form. After a closing mass the European Coordinator had a speech and distributed the certificates of participation.

STATEMENT ON INTEGRAL EDUCATION (electronically adopted)

Introduction

Between the 8th and the 14th of March 2011, 31 young Christians of the JECI-MEC European Coordination gathered in Kaunas, Lithuania for a colloquium to reflect on "Integral Education and Christian Faith". As a result of our experiences, reflections and discussions during the colloquium, we present a statement on the conditions, needs and means of education in a Catholic way. In order to avoid any misunderstandings and differentiate our understanding of education from others, we introduce the term "Integral Education".

I. What is Integral Education based on?

We as Catholics hold the view that life's goal is to search for and to draw close to the truth - not merely subjective, but also objective truth. Both individuals and the community of the Church search for the truth using different methods. Every individual searches for the truth using his or her own experience of life. However, the Church draws on two sources during this journey towards the truth – both Tradition and the Scriptures.¹

As expressed by the *Magisterium* of the Church.

II. Why is Integral Education needed?

We as young Catholics have heard of and reflected on three major issues concerning individuals and society. We wish to express what we believe is our way of responding to these issues:

- 1) *The issue:* Often human beings are reduced to objects valued simply in terms of their usefulness. People are often judged superficially according to external criteria.

What we believe: Each person is unique and made in the image of God. Therefore a person is more than just a set of characteristics.

What we see to be done: We must always work to respect the dignity and uniqueness of every human person.

- 2) *The issue:* Society itself is often viewed in materialistic or mechanistic terms, where communities are not able to flourish.

What we believe: Society should be understood as an unconditional love-based relation between people; that is a community of communities.

What we see to be done: In our work and activities we will promote and practice the idea of the common good through solidarity and subsidiarity.

- 3) *Issue:* In the modern world the rights of individuals can be promoted in such a way that the common good is not served. For others, society is developed, so that the rights and the dignity of the individual are not valued.

What we believe: Every person lives in the context of his or her own society. We believe in a creative dynamic between the rights of the individual and the growth of a real society.

What we see to be done: Society should base its human relations on the value of charity, understood as unconditional love for the other person.

Recognizing the fact, that we, as imperfect creatures, will never be able to fulfill our suggested values fully, we search for the best solution within human measures. This solution, according to us, is Integral Education.

III. What is Integral Education?

We as Catholics hold the view that Integral Education is defined by its purposes.

- 1) To form a whole, well-rounded person, who is able to act responsibly and who is free enough to make individual life-choices.
- 2) To form a citizen, who is able to make life-choices guided by the common good.

The process of Integral Education actively enables people to act responsibly and beneficially. Integral Education does not only mean that people are taught or receive education but are also enabled to teach others. In this understanding Integral Education has got the third purpose

- 3) To form multipliers of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and spirituality amongst others.

IV. What is our plan of action?

What follows is a plan of action based on the statement previously presented. This plan holds for all stages of any educational system and is a list of practical suggestions which may be adopted and implemented in the view of local community needs.

- Encourage experiential learning for personal and social development through extracurricular activities such as outdoor education, civic education, and learning through games
- Reflection and dialogue on the Scriptures and issues of public interest, with the aim of finding ways of acting responsibly after becoming aware of societies' needs
- Learning through the knowledge and experience of experts
- Support the continuous professional development of teachers
- Collaboration with other organizations including secular ones
- Organization of collaborative learning through a peer-learning-system or a tutoring system
- Multicultural education through student exchanges such as *Erasmus*
- Promotion of the statement of the Colloquium to people in power, (which would include the *European Youth Forum*), following a pilot study of these suggestions

Personal reflections by Mr. Sergio Fenech

Colloquium 2011 – Integral education and Christian Faith 8th-14th March

During this week in Lithuania 31 people from 11 different countries met together and with the help of inputs from experts discussed and analysed if education as it is structured can really form up a whole person.

The first thing we noted was the fact that education is normally oriented to form a functional person. I.e. that education is oriented to form up people to do jobs, so society looks at its people as those means which without them it would not survive. This led to the fact that education is not actually forming persons but “functional machines” which are needed to society. This is a somewhat generic statement so it does not refer to a whole reality but it is still in some way true.

To see how we can truly form up persons, one has to define what he means by person. A person is not only defined by the participation and role in society. Also a person cannot be defined when on its own. A person is defined by the relationships and actions it has with others and the world. As Christians the greatest example of personhood is found in the triune God. This is because in our Triune God we can see the perfect relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Also in genesis we find that we are made in his liking and so we can only know and be who we are (humans/persons) when we meet God and act as He wills. Nonetheless God never impose himself on us since He respects our freedom. God lets us free to shape ourselves in our unique manner. Still this doesn't mean that God just let us to drown in our own mistakes. He himself has come in the world as a human and lived as a true human so that we may have an example to look at and learn from.

This shows the fact that a person in itself cannot be shaped or formed but can only be led to grow in its unique way. As God did to us we have to do to each other. We must respect each other's freedom and so we can never impose a system or a structure. We can only give out what we learned and what we did so that others can learn and shape up their own knowledge using ours. Pope Benedict XVI. in the encyclical *Spe Salvi* writes that one can never overlook freedom and "freedom must constantly be won over for the sake of good". (*Spe Salvi, Par. 24*).

As a conclusion we arrived to the fact that for education to form a whole person it (the educational system) cannot just give knowledge but it must give the opportunity for the students to shape up that knowledge and add their own unique experiences so that through this exercise they are also forming up themselves. In this manner one is not only exercising what he got from formal education but now he can also add the other knowledge he got through informal education and non-formal learning. In this manner people could feel more complete and also knowledge could find its practicality and wholeness in the persons mind.