

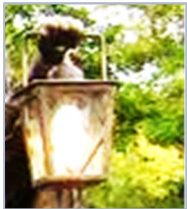
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING

Nano Nagle was a pioneer of formal education in Ireland. In 1754, feeling compelled to meet the needs of those 'left behind' in Cork, she secretly began her schools to educate the young Catholic children of the poor – something prohibited by the Penal Laws of the time. Her courage and passionate commitment to alleviating economic and spiritual poverty sets an example for us in the twenty-first century, as we try to respond to the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda, to – '*Leave No-one Behind*'.



The spirit of Nano Nagle lives on in "iScoil"



The 3,000 plus students, between the ages of twelve and sixteen, who leave the formal education system every year in Ireland, are doing so for different reasons from their counterparts in less developed countries. Causes vary from anxiety, phobia, behavioural issues, bullying, social disadvantage, medical conditions and family situations, which means that mainstream learning does not suit them.

Set up by the Presentation Sisters in 2007, **iScoil** is a transformative educational programme operating out of the belief that all young people inherently want to learn but not all are 'school-shaped'. It is an online learning community that offers an alternative path to learning, accreditation and progression for pupils aged 13-16 years. Initially funded by Presentation Sisters, iScoil has received matched funding from the Irish Department of Education & Skills in the last few years.



At a recent (2016) ceremony showcasing social enterprise and technical innovation, **iScoil** was one of four projects receiving an award, being praised for demonstrating excellence and innovation in using technology to address a critical social issue in Ireland today. Sr. Ann Marie Quinn PBVM, **iScoil** Company Director, stated "This award is an acknowledgement of many years of financial support and commitment by the Presentation Sisters in Ireland, the dedication of the **iScoil** Executive Team and Mentors, Board Directors and Members".

The iScoil model is based on principles of inclusivity, equality and adopts a non-judgmental approach. It serves as an example of good practice and it offers a significant contribution to Ireland's national plan for the realisation of several specific targets in Goal 4.

The Spirit of Nano alive in the Philippines

Presentation Sisters in the Philippine Vice-Province are also demonstrating fidelity to Nano's vision of caring for the vulnerable in their society. They have begun a new enterprise which provides an education for the marginalised mentally challenged children of Southern Negros Occidental, where previously there were no facilities for children with special educational needs. Parents approached the Sisters who responded by initiating training for their kindergarten teachers, so that these children could be integrated into the school system while learning basic life skills towards independent living. Community respect for the dignity and rights of these children is growing as a result of the intervention by the Sisters in Binalbagan.

**Nano would be justly proud of the way her charism is alive and active
in so many parts of our world today!**



Significant progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools, particularly for women and girls. The world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education. The outcome of the **Millennium Development Goals** in 2015 saw basic literacy skills improve tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides towards achieving universal education goals by 2030.

The 2013 adult literacy rate worldwide has risen to 85% from 76% in 1990 but women continue to account for over 60% of the world's illiterate.



in more developed countries **99%** of women are literate

in less developed countries **77%** " " " "

in least developed countries **53%** " " " " (Source: <http://www.unwomen.org>)

“In some parts of the world, students are going to school every day. It's their normal life. But in other parts of the world, we are starving for education... it's like a precious gift. It's like a diamond.” Malala Yousafzai

All the SDGs come down to EDUCATION



EDUCATION can make a critical difference in achieving the SDGs – to **reducing poverty (Goal 1)**, to a range of **health issues (Goals 2 and 3)**, to **Goal 5's** focus on **gender equality** and **Goal 10's** **social and economic equality**, to **increasing knowledge, skills and capacity for more sustainable living (Goals 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)** and to **promoting inclusive and peaceful societies (Goal 16)**. The final **Goal 17** which is all about making sustainable development happen – all of us **working in partnership** to make the SDGs a reality, requires lifelong learning in how to promote sustainable policies and practices.

FACTS

- **Enrolment in primary education in less developed countries has reached 91 per cent, but 57 million children remain out of school**
- **More than half of children not enrolled in school, live in sub-Saharan Africa**
- **An estimated 50 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas**
- **103 million youth worldwide lack basic literacy skills, and more than 60 per cent of these are women**
- **Children, especially girls, from households headed by someone with less than a primary education are more than four times as likely to be out of school as children from households headed by someone with a secondary or higher education.**
- **Survey data from 63 low- and middle-income countries between 2008 and 2012 show that children of primary school age from the poorest 20 per cent of households were more than four times as likely to be out of school as their richest peers.**

(UN SDG Report 2016)



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



INCLUSIVE,
EQUITABLE,
QUALITY EDUCATION,
LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Inclusive, equitable and quality education requires that all related aspects must be taken into consideration – it requires qualified teachers, adequate educational materials, acceptable sanitation in schools and ensuring school children don't go hungry. What's the point in having access to education if you are so hungry you can't even concentrate or you catch diseases from poor school facilities?

Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives, as well as achieving sustainable development.

Education shaping values and perspectives.

If we're only learning to further our own careers and income, and not learning how to behave responsibly, how to find new and creative ways to relate and to protect our planet, education will not have fulfilled its purpose.

Aristotle stated that '*Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.*' Our complex world today urgently needs educators who incorporate into their teaching, sound values, respect for the dignity of persons and for all of life.

"Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature."

[Laudato Si'](#) ("Praise Be"), Pope Francis, 2015, Chapter 6, #215.

Reflect and share on the following questions:

1. What is stirring in you as you reflect on Nano Nagle's pioneering work and our Presentation contribution to formal education?
2. How do the *iScoil* and *Philippines* stories inspire you and what are similar success stories in your own area?
3. Who are the people in your local area who are not benefiting from the educational system?
4. How are the Presentation Family in your area educating the minds and hearts of those left behind? How are they promoting life-long learning?
5. How familiar are you with your government's policies and plans in relation to education, especially their provisions for the less academic?
6. What are the specific targets of Goal 4 asking of us, of the Church, your local community, local authority and government? See the targets at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

TAKE ACTION:

UP4SCHOOL PETITION: <http://www.aworldatschool.org/upforschool> - a campaign targeting world leaders to support the effort to get millions of children who are not currently in school, into school.

Watch the video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLD2FG10n0w&feature=youtu.be>
Help create a message no government, politician, or leader can ignore.

SDG 4

The following are links to RESOURCES which provide information and material for use in workshops:

- ✓ **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BEGINS WITH EDUCATION:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OdP7bYe5wk>
- ✓ **PROJECT EVERYONE:** <http://worldslargestlesson.org> - aims to share the Global Goals with all 7 billion people on this planet.
- ✓ **EDUCATION 2030:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uneOexN9IA>
Education 2030 Framework for Action aims to mobilize all stakeholders around the ambitious education goal and targets, and proposes ways of implementing, coordinating, financing and reviewing the 2030 education agenda - globally, regionally and nationally - guaranteeing equal educational opportunity for all.
- ✓ **WORLD EDUCATION BLOG:** <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2015/11/02/a-data-revolution-for-education-2030/>
- ✓ **GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING:** <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/Textbook%20activity.pdf> - a comprehensive, analytical reference for the global follow-up and review of education.
- ✓ **STATISTICAL TABLES:** https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/GEM_Report_2016_2nd_edition_Statistical_Tables.pdf - provides indicators for each country's level and quality of education
- ✓ **CHANGING EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS - KEN ROBINSON:**
https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms - radical rethinking of school systems
- ✓ **RETHINKING GLOBAL EDUCATION – Towards a Global Common Good:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WIkXDUsHXg> - a call for public policy dialogue around the purpose of education and the organization of learning in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.

