

# Bringing Popular Education to the United Nations



*Photo: Imma De Stefanis, rscj*

## Children as Agents of Social Transformation for a Sustainable Future

Deciding upon the topic of our first written intervention to the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations was not a difficult one. Knowing that the theme of the session in February 2016 will be "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world," the popular education process, which is characterized by equity, respect, solidarity and the common good, seemed a good starting point to bring our RSCJ experience and analysis to the international policy table in New York.

Our sisters in Latin America have successfully applied the popular education methodology for many years in both informal and formal educational settings.

Its transformative effects on the lives of women, men and children living in poverty have been noticeable and valued. Writing our statement on popular education methodology, we have not only given input to the UN in an area of our expertise, but we have also shared the methodology's basics with an international audience stretching far beyond Latin America, and that is exciting.

We three, the authors of the statement, met together to conceptualize the document and soon concluded to focus our statement on the role of children as agents of social transformation. In light of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we gratefully linked to some of the major tenets of that ambitious development agenda. Lastly we partnered with the Medical Mission Sisters by submitting the statement jointly.

Crafting the intervention has entailed broad consultation with both RSCJs and partners in mission who possess extensive experience in popular education. Among the RSCJ who shared their wisdom and insights were Sisters Rosario Sanchez and Rosario Valdeavellano from Peru. Each has an impressive history of working at both applied and policy levels in both formal and popular education settings.

Consultation with partners in missions was even more extensive and has included the following people who have generously contributed to what eventually became UN document E/CN.5/2016/NGO/8: Ana Maria Alarcon Valenzo, Coordinator of the Teacher Project in Ayutla de los Libres, Mexico; Ulises Gallardo, Team Member Teacher Project in Ayutla de los Libres, Mexico; Maria Cristina Fernandez-Galan Espinosa, Coordinator of the Teacher Project in San Luis Potosi, Mexico; Maribel Pruneda, Children's Project: Hands in Movement, San Luis Potosi, Mexico; all four from [lyolosiwa A.C.](#), a not for profit organization of the Province of Mexico. From Brazil, Luis Felipe Ulloa Forero participated, a Visiting Research Fellow at INSA - [Instituto Nacional do](#)

[Semiárido](#) - (National Institute for the Semi-Arid), and also a Consultant for [La Red Americalatina y Caribeña de Educación Popular](#) (the Popular Education Network for Latin America and the Caribbean) of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

A heartfelt Thank-You to each of the contributors for your generosity of time and talent. As is so often the case, broad-based participation deepens bonds of collaboration and strengthens joint efforts in addition to enriching the final results of these efforts. Our statement is strong because you joined us. In fact, the process we used to identify our topic, develop the idea and compose the article integrated aspects of the methodology of popular education. In particular, it reflects the integration of examination of context or reality, our practices/experience, and exercising critical analysis throughout.

We hope you enjoy reading the written statement entitled: [Children as Agents of Social Transformation for a Sustainable Future](#).

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