

# **IUS Intercontinental Seminars on Education and Social Inclusion**

In preparation for the 200th birth anniversary of Don Bosco from 25-28 February 2013 the first phase of the Intercontinental seminars designed by the IUS Education Group was held at CES Don Bosco, Madrid attended by over 150 participants hailing from the host institution, the institutions of higher learning of Salesians in Europe – Venice and Prague – and from resource persons from the University of Madrid focusing on the inclusion of ‘marginalised youth in the European contemporary context’.

The seminar was inaugurated by the president of the university of Madrid in the presence of Fabio Attard, the Councilor for Youth of the Salesians, the FMA provincial Maria Lujan Serrano, SDB provincial Benjamin Fernandez Ruiz, Mario Olmos the Coordinator General. The principal of the institution Mara Izcue Ancin welcomed Sabino Juan Lopez explained the history and the Secretary General of Catholic Education International Angel Astorgano Ruiz from Brussels spoke on the theme of Social Exclusion and Inclusion in the European Context.

The three days event was meticulously planned and actively participated by the various departments and the students of the host institution. The research papers covered the European contemporary situation and there were two guest presentations by way of video presentations of the situation in Brazil and in India. Prof. (Emeritus) TK Oommen, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Padma Bhushan recipient spoke on the situation of social exclusion in India. There were also student research presentations and every evening a theme based cultural programme highlighting the need to make society egalitarian through the attempts made by educational institutions to bring about greater acceptance of the marginalized.

While the language of the seminar was Spanish, there were simultaneous translations into English and Italian. The idea of Intercontinental Seminars concretized during the planning session of the IUS education Group in the General Assembly held in July 2012 in Rome and had its preparatory seeds laid in the earlier meetings of the delegates held at Becchi, Turin in 2007 and in Santiago de Chile in 2010. The coordinators of the group presently are Sabino Juan Lopez (Spain), Renzo Barducca (Italy), Romane Fortes Bernado (Brazil) and George Thadathil (India).

The theme of Education and Social Inclusion was chosen as a means to measure the Salesian commitment to inclusive education and its evolution across the regions. The goal is to put together the research papers presented in each of the three seminars highlighting the Salesian Educational reach into higher education and its impact in the respective regions. While Madrid seminar focused on the 'deprived, at risk and marginalized youth', the one in Sao Paolo, Brazil will focus on 'community based education' and in India it will stress 'challenges of diversity'. The effort is to bring together scholars from the different institutions and Salesians engaged in youth ministry to reflect on the investment in education and the transformation it envisages in terms of a more inclusive society.

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