Catholic Education and the Challenge of Religious Pluralism: The Private Catholic High School Saint Luc in Burkina Faso

Alexandre Bingo
LIVED EXPERIENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Research and Reflections from Sub-Saharan Africa and North America
Alexandre Bingo is a Burkinabe priest. He served for more than a decade as Diocesan Director of Catholic Education and Vicar at the Cathedral Parish, and since 2019 he has been the Principal of the Saint Luke Catholic High School as well as parish priest. He holds Master degrees in theology and educational sciences.
Burkina Faso is one of the West African countries with the lowest school enrollment rates, as well as high levels of learning poverty. To help meet these challenges, Catholic schools in the country aim to provide a quality education and are perceived as such by parents. But they operate in a context of religious pluralism. The students who attend Catholic schools come from different religious denominations (Islam, Christianity, traditional African religions). How can Catholic schools transmit their values in a context of religious pluralism? How can they educate in a school environment composed of Christians and non-Christians, while ensuring that their own Catholic identity is respected?

1 Article translated and adapted for the author from an article drafted in French.
2 Measures of learning poverty, defined as to whether 10-year-old children are able to read and understand a simple age-appropriate text, are available from World Bank, Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take? (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2019). In 2019, 85% of children in Burkina Faso were not proficient in reading (the estimate accounts for out-of-school children).
There is an emerging literature on those questions. Essays collected by Seligman\(^5\) look at religious education and state policies in seven countries globally and in the European Union as a whole, exploring how religious education may provide a framework of meaning without excluding any individuals or communities. Research on teacher perceptions of religious diversity in European countries show how teachers’ personal experiences and broader socio-cultural factors as well as national norms shape their responses to diversity.\(^6\) Teacher diversity and their respect for different religions can be an asset for religious education, as suggested in a study of student perceptions in an American Jewish high school.\(^7\) The benefit of having teachers from different religions is also noted in a case study on a Finnish school.\(^8\) While much of the literature in this field has been conducted in high income countries,\(^9\) there are also examples of studies for developing countries. For example, studies have explored religious education for peaceful coexistence in Indonesia,\(^10\) and the context of the introduction in South Africa of a new curriculum for religion education, with proposals put forward sensitive to the fact that the Constitution was forbidding discrimination on religious grounds.\(^11\)

---


At a theological level, conciliar and post-conciliar documents provide some guidance.\(^{12}\) These themes include mission alignment for Catholic schools and a Christian anthropology, but also how Catholic schools must be in dialogue with the world, which has implications for how they approach the questions of evangelization and catechesis in religiously diverse contexts. What is clear is that the bishops have called for caution in catechetical education when the student body is religiously diverse. This was discussed in the foundational document *The Catholic School* published 45 years ago by the Congregation for Catholic Education.\(^{13}\)

The aim of this article is not to provide a conceptual contribution to these debates, but rather to show through a case study how a school in Burkina Faso approaches those questions. The private Catholic high school Saint Luke of Banfora offers in its educational project two major areas of emphasis to meet this challenge: (1) Clearly affirming one’s Christian identity and (2) Promoting inter-religious dialogue. In this article, I will first describe this educational experience in its concrete realization through educational, pastoral, and organizational activities, then show its effectiveness and relevance by analyzing the results it produces and finally meet the challenges this project is confronted with. But first, it seems useful by way of introduction to present the Lycée Saint Luc with particular emphasis on the motives for its creation and the specificities of its educational project.

**PRESENTATION OF THE SCHOOL**

The private Catholic high school (*lycée* in French) Saint Luke of Nafona was created in September 2012 thanks to the will of the bishop and the diocesan director to launch a new high-quality school in the city of Banfora. As I served previously as diocesan director of Catholic education, I saw that in both the public and the private sectors, schools were facing many challenges, including a drop in the academic

---


level of students, a lack of discipline, and the disavowal of the school environment by students with as a result of the multiple strikes disrupting the normal course of the year, the increase in the rate of absenteeism, and problems of peaceful cohabitation between different denominations in some of the Catholic establishments.

On this specific point I would like to recall an anecdote. In 2010, in a secondary Catholic school run by the clerics of Saint Viator, the brother director of Canadian origin allowed students of different religions to speak in turn for prayer before class. This openness was a source of great difficulties for the conduct of the prayer sessions because each made his prayer according to his faith and his convictions. The Catholic recited his formulas, the Protestant chanted his “hallelujahs” and the Muslim his Koranic verses. Unfortunately, students of traditional African religion did not have an altar to sacrifice their chickens before class. This amalgamation had created some concerns of cohabitation when there was a demand from other denominations to have a place of worship within the grounds of the establishment, as Catholic Christians have the chapel. As diocesan director, I told the director that clarifying the proper identity of the establishment while respecting the confessions of others could be a solution.

It is therefore at the heart of these challenges, of which the peaceful cohabitation between religions is major, that we wanted to create a pilot establishment with an innovative educational project capable of answering the questions of the quality of education, acceptance of the religion of the other, conviviality in the school environment, and awakening of the talents of young people.
The private Catholic high school of Banfora is a diocesan establishment under the administrative and pastoral management of the diocesan director appointed by the bishop. It is a general education establishment ranging from the 6th grade to the final year with a scientific series and a literary series from the second year. There is a boarding school for girls and boys with a capacity of 40 places for each category. The establishment was built entirely with funding from the Spanish organization Manos Unidas. The school welcomed 503 students at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, distributed as follows: 248 boys and 255 girls. In terms of religious affiliations, the distribution is 249 Catholics, 83 Protestants, 139 Muslims and 33 traditional religions. These students are supervised by 57 people (28 teachers, 12 workshop monitors, 12 administrative and support staff, 3 supervisors, and 2 boarding schoolteachers). Since the school started, it has introduced its first students to the BEPC in 2016 and its first BAC students in 2019. Each year we have obtained the best success rates in the Cascades region of the country.

Table 1: Success Rates for BEPC and Baccalaureate Examinations (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEPC</td>
<td>95.65</td>
<td>95.83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94.73</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School archives.
THE SCHOOL IN PICTURES

All photos courtesy of Alexandre Bingo.
PRINCIPLES SPECIFIC TO THE SCHOOL

The school’s educational project is inspired by that of Catholic education at the national level, which stipulates that Catholic education has the function of teaching, educating and training. Like other Catholic establishments, the Lycée Saint Luc wants to: through teaching, enable young people to acquire intellectual knowledge; through education, give young people human, moral, and civic values, enlightened by the light of the Gospel; through formation, prepare young people to engage in social life in the name of their faith and to assume their responsibility in the nation and in the Church. To achieve these general national objectives and meet the challenges raised, the Lycée Saint Luc adopted a few principles in its operation and initiated innovations in its teaching programs.

Motto of the school

This motto is “the love of hard work and perseverance.” The educators of Saint Luke are convinced that when you can get a learner to enjoy what he is learning, then he does it well and he is ready to make all the sacrifices over the long term to learn. Get the learner to love what he does, and the consequence will be discipline and perseverance. A hymn was composed from the motto. Here are the words:

Chorus:

To love work, in discipline and perseverance, Saint Luke, protect us!
Saint Luke bless us! (Bis)
To be successful, you must love what you do, and you do well what you love;
To succeed, you have to persevere, only the effort is strong;
To succeed, you must love discipline and life will smile on you.

This hymn is sung by all students on the descent and rise of the colors at the start and end of the week throughout the year.
Status of the teaching staff

All the teachers in the high school are on fixed-term contracts. They are all temporary contractors for a renewable school year after their work has been assessed. Learners contribute to this assessment through a survey in which each student appreciates the educational action and human values of their teachers. Conscious of the essential role of the educator, Saint Luke’s educational project relies heavily on the quality of the teaching staff, including both moral and intellectual qualities.

Diversity of subjects taught

In addition to the subjects included in the official program, specific courses such as the African culture course, the music theory course and a Latin course are given to students, particularly in the first cycle of studies. The course on African culture allows learners to appropriate their cultural values in a world of exchange and change. As for the music theory course, it is an introduction to music to awaken potential talents. The Latin course is not only a reinforcement of the learning of French but above all an initiation to logic and critical thinking.

Organization of the evaluations

The regularity of the evaluations which aim to push the learners to continuous work is an educational choice at Saint Luke. In the first cycle, an evaluation is required every 15 days in each subject. The term is sanctioned by a written “composition.” In the second cycle, in addition to composition, one homework per month is required in each subject.

Workshops commonly known as “talent groves”

Workshops are places for developing the talents of learners where we call on other types of intelligence than logical-mathematical intelligence. They are places of creativity and expression of the natural potential of learners. Among the “talent groves,” there are the talent groves of basketball, football, choreography, music, theater, male and female hairstyling, drawing, Tae N’kondo and “apprentice entrepreneurs.” Every week, on Thursday evening from 3 to 6 p.m., classical lessons are suspended, and each student goes to “a breeding ground for talents” that he or she chooses freely.
TALENT WORKSHOPS IN PICTURES

Talent Groves for Choreography (above) and Football (left). Photos courtesy of Alexandre Bingo.
Catholic Education and the Challenge of Religious Pluralism: The Private Catholic High School Saint Luc in Burkina Faso

Talent Groves for Hairdressing. Photos courtesy of Alexandre Bingo.
Talent Groves for Acrobatics and Gymnastics (above) and Entrepreneurship (left). Photos courtesy of Alexandre Bingo.
Coaching

Personal development coaching is provided to students for one hour per week. We develop there the theory of virtuous leadership of Alexander Harvard where self-knowledge, mastery of temperament and character, and the culture of virtue are taught.

Transmission of the flame of excellence

This is a ritual organized at the beginning of the school year, more precisely on October 18, the feast of Saint Luke. Since the first class achieved exceptional results, we had the idea to organize a ritual to instill in the students the ambition for excellence. During a ceremony, the two class leaders from the winning promotions to BEPC and BAC hand out a large candle (looking like a paschal candle) to the third and final year class leaders, the future laureates. In turn, those in charge, starting from the big candle, light the small candles that each candidate holds in their hand. Two speeches are made: that of the representative of the winners and that of the representative of the candidates for the current year. The first is a reminder of their performance and the sacrifices made, and the second commits on behalf of others to keep the torch of excellence high. After this, all lift their candles with their right hand and hold the other hand to their breasts as the hymn of excellence is performed. It is a moment of solemn commitment in the presence of all the other students in the school, parents, and teachers in the community meeting room.

Success together

The last activity that is specific to Saint Luke both in content and form is the “success together” study camp. It is an extracurricular activity organized at the end of the school year on the premises of the school for the school’s candidates for the BEPC and the BAC. The program offers students in the Third and Final (terminale in French) classes, at the end of the lectures, a period of boarding for reviews and consolidation of prior learning. The study camp takes place three weeks before the exam date. The camp program is punctuated by various activities, from the reception until the last meeting with the principal the day before the exam in
the evening at 8 p.m. Among the activities, there is the inaugural meeting during which the objectives of the camp and the internal regulations are reminded to the participants. At the inaugural meeting, the film of the ceremony of the transmission of the flame of excellence also takes place. As mentioned earlier, this ceremony consists for each promotion in passing the torch of excellence to the following promotion. It is a moment of solemn commitment to perpetuate excellence in the establishment. This ritual, which takes place at the start of the year, is filmed and screened at the start of the study camp. The inaugural meeting is accompanied by a written commitment by each student to scrupulously respect the internal rules of the camp. They are taught two songs inviting candidates for solidarity and communion.

Time for personal study, group study, meeting with teachers, sports (team sport) and recreational activities (showing films and video clips on Saturday evenings) are part of the program. The camp lasts three weeks. The day before the exam, the camp ends with a day of relaxation and a walk in nature, followed by a meal with the teachers who give their final advice. Then follows the meeting of each parent with their child. During this one-on-one meeting, each parent encourages and provides blessings and guidance to their child. This interview is followed by a community meeting of all the students with all the parents. During this community meeting two parents (a father and a mother) are chosen for the community blessing of the students. Camp activities end with the candidates making contact with their venue and composition room and the last meeting at 8 p.m. with the principal who provides his final advice and blessings to the candidates. This camp seems to be a “booster” of motivational dynamics for candidates in immediate preparation for their exams. This is evidenced by the exceptional academic results in the various exams. A study on the impact of this camp on the motivational dynamics of candidates is underway.
EDUCATING IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE OTHER IN THEIR RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

Asserting your identity while opening up to others

Beyond tolerance, Saint Luke’s educational project aims for the acceptance of the other in his difference of faith. According to the Larousse dictionary, “to tolerate is to endure with patience what one finds unpleasant and unfair”. On the other hand, “accepting” means willingly taking what is proposed, what is offered by giving consent. The idea of tolerance implies resistance, while that of acceptance implies free and voluntary adherence. At Saint Luke, this free and voluntary membership is materialized by a contract (Appendix 1) signed by the parent of the pupil, the pupil, and the principal.

It all begins with the enrollment of the student at the Lycée Saint Luc. A registration form for the specific nature of the school’s educational project is given to each parent of a student wishing to enter high school. Its content is explained and given to parents for approval and signature. The specificity of the educational project is explained to the parent and the new pupil. It clearly mentions the pastoral activities which are an integral part of the establishment plan. These include the Catholic Christian prayer regularly said at the beginning and at the end of classes both in the morning and in the evening, Masses said within the establishment, religious instruction, and the course on African culture, as well as specific matters such as the existence of Catholic action movements such as the YCS and scouting, the existence of the inter-religious dialogue committee, and workshops as places for the awakening of talents.

How do prayers take place in the school? We must remember the sacred principle of participation for Catholic Christian students and that of assistance for other denominations. It is not a question of everyone praying according to his or her faith in a general cacophony. The prayer is said by a Catholic. Catholic pupils recite the prayers while students from other denominations respect the climate of prayer without reciting the prayers themselves or making the sign of the cross.
Participation allows Catholic Christian students to clearly express their faith and attendance for all educates in respect for the faith of others. In practice, from the beginning of the year, in each class, four Catholic Christian students are chosen, trained and responsible for saying the daily prayers. The prayers take place every day at 7 a.m. (start of classes), at 12 p.m. (end of classes), at 3 p.m. (start of evening classes) and at 5 p.m. (end of classes). The person designated for prayer stands in front of the others, makes the sign of the cross, and says the prayer.

The prayer is usually an invocation of God’s blessing for an educational activity. It begins with the sign of the cross and ends with the recitation of a pater or an Ave Maria for the beginning of the lessons. At the end of the lessons at noon and in the evening, it is the recitation of the Angelus. During these prayers, students of other denominations, respecting the climate of prayers, fully attend the activity. As for respectful assistance, it is the expression of the freedom of those who do not share the same faith as those praying but respect it as an expression of the identity of the institution that welcomes them. In the same way as in social life in Burkina Faso, when a follower of one religion takes part in a social event of another religion (marriage, baptism, religious funeral), he respects the climate of prayer of the said religion. In the same way, at Saint Luc high school, students are educated in this acceptance and respect for the faith of others. This acceptance is not a resignation but a consideration of the relationship of the other with transcendence.

For activities specific to the Catholic Christian religion (daily prayers, Masses) the “sacred” principle is participation for Catholic Christian students and assistance for other students of other faiths. Participation enables Catholic Christian students to clearly express their faith, and assistance educates in respect for the faith of others. Thus, from the beginning of the year, in each class, four Catholic Christian students are chosen, trained and responsible for saying the daily prayers. Prayers are read by the person praying in front of all the students in the presence of the teacher. At the end of classes at noon and in the evening, it is the recitation of the Angelus.
Promoting inter-religious dialogue

Two activities fall within this perspective: the religious instruction course and the inter-religious dialogue committee called “Balimaya.” The compulsory religious instruction course for all is provided throughout the student’s course of study. In the first cycle of studies, it is mainly focused on knowledge of different religions, namely Christianity, Islam, and the traditional African religion commonly known as Animism. The objective is for students to discover the history, the values, the religious practice of each religion. In the second cycle, a more critical look is cast on religions with an emphasis on their contribution to peace and social cohesion. An opening is made to other world religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.). This course is taught by teachers with religious training, capable of a certain openness. Proselytizing for any religion is prohibited in this course since the course is meant to introduce students to other religions and enable them to respect these religions.

The other educational tool for promoting dialogue between religions is the “Balimaya” committee. It is made up of students representing different religions. Its role is to represent all the students at the level of the various events specific to a religion. These are mainly the time of Lent, the Muslim fast, and the various Christian and Muslim holidays. For example, at the beginning of Lent, Muslims wish all Christians in the presence of Muslims a good time of Lent. The message is read by a Muslim student. It is the same for the fast of Ramadan where it is a Christian who reads the message (see Appendix 2).

In addition, a common gesture of solidarity is made every year by Christian and Muslim students at the end of Lent and for fasting during Ramadan. This year, both during Lent and the Ramadan fast, Christian and Muslim students set aside money and donated to an orphanage in the area.
Visit of the “Balimaya” committee to a Muslim student in the 6th grade (above) and donation to an orphanage (left). Photos courtesy of Alexandre Bingo.
EDUCATION BY EXAMPLE: A MULTI-FAITH EDUCATIONAL TEAM

The educational team is made up of teachers, administrative staff, workshop instructors, supervisors and boarding schoolteachers of different faiths. Table 2 provides an overview of the faith affiliations of team members. We have overall in the staff the following proportions: 68.4% Catholic Christians, 29.3% Muslims and 3.5% traditional African religion. The denominational diversity of the management team is an instrument of education for inter-religious dialogue. In fact, teachers and other staff enter into the spirit of education in the acceptance of the other by attending, on the same basis as students of other faiths, various prayers and celebrations. It is a testimonial from adults that impacts young people in learning.

Table 2: Religious Composition of the Educational Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Staff</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Leaders</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding School Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shares</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>29.82%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Administrative data.

EDUCATION FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE THROUGH THE EVENTS OF SOCIAL LIFE

School is not the only place where values are transmitted to students. Social life through the events that take place there also contributes to the education of young people to accept others in their difference of faith. In terms of inter-religious
dialogue, it should be noted that in Burkina Faso, many social events bring together people of different religions in mutual respect. These are funerals, baptisms and weddings or other traditional ceremonies. In general, in the same family, we find Muslims, Catholic or Protestant Christians, followers of traditional religions or outright non-practitioners. When a family member is affected by an event (death, baptism, marriage, or another customary ceremony) all family members participate or attend depending on their denomination. Beyond religion, it is fraternity that counts above all. Moreover, a proverb says in this sense that “brotherhood is older than religion.” In Africa, the elders have the right to receive respect and if the brotherhood is older than religion, then it requires strict respect. This dialogue in life and in social life is a major asset that accompanies and reinforces the efforts made in the school environment to accept the other in their difference in beliefs. What is experienced at the school level is a continuity of what is taught in the family context.

Consider as an example the burial of the father of a pupil. That year in December, a Muslim 8th grader had lost his father and the students were informed. In support to the family, all students in the grade took part in the funeral ceremony. Gathered in the courtyard of the deceased, the neighborhood imam led the funeral ceremony according to the ritual of Islam. It consists of praying in the presence of the mortal remains and making blessings for the repose of the soul of the deceased. During this funeral prayer, students who are not Muslims were in the assembly. They attended the prayer. Without reciting the prayers in Arabic and bowing, they sat in a spirit of communion and strict respect for the Muslim faith. Here as in the school, it is assistance with respect for the faith of the other that is encouraged. We pray with others by our respectful presence. When Christians or followers of traditional religions attend a social or religious event for a Muslim, they pray not like him but with him by a silent and respectful presence. It should be noted that in the case of the death of the father of the Muslim student, Christian students also asked for a requiem Mass for the father of their comrade. Their comrade and members of the bereaved family came to attend the Mass in the school’s chapel.
EFFECTIVENESS AND RELEVANCE OF AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

Here we want to evoke the immediate and visible results of what we have described above, as well as the challenges that still have to be faced. Consider first the impact of the educational principle of participation and assistance. To allow an expression of one’s Christian faith without imposing it on others who are invited to respect it, we apply the principle of participation for Christians and that of assistance for others. The observable result of this principle respectful of the freedom of the other within the school is the acceptance of the other in their difference in belief and denominational practice. More than tolerance, which is acceptance of the other despite his difference, at Saint Luc high school, it is the acceptance of the other thanks to his difference. Conviviality, respect for the climate of prayer by others, the total absence of conflicts and violence with religious connotations, the existence of friendships and comradeships of students of different denominations, a good peaceful coexistence between followers of different religions clearly show that interreligious dialogue takes place within the establishment.

Religious instruction is also part of the fight against ignorance and misunderstanding of the faith of others. By studying not only from a historical perspective the religion of others but also by discovering its values, the veil of ignorance falls and opens the way to the esteem of the other in his relationship with transcendence. By esteeming each other, the students of Saint Luke carry out common projects. This is the example of the gift that is made each year to people in need from the efforts of Lent and the fast of Ramadan. In addition, a nativity competition is organized every year as Christmas approaches. Each class must build a nativity which will be assessed by a jury. In a spirit of openness, Muslim students participate in the construction of these nativities not as believers but by offering their “architectural expertise.”

Consider next the difficulties and challenges. The educational project of the Lycée Saint Luc in its dimension of interreligious dialogue is not without some resistance and even difficulties both at the level of the students and at the level of parents. At
the level of the students, especially those who enter the school for the first time, we sometimes encounter mistrust and at times resistance to passive participation in prayer. These resistances are due to prejudices about the Catholic religion with a fear of being converted. This resistance, in general, disappears when a climate of trust and respect sets in. Most of the students finish their school curriculum while remaining in their religion with an open mind towards other faiths.

It should be noted, however, that there are parents who, in view of the Christian specificity of the establishment, decide not to enroll their children here. By seeking to know more about the reasons for this refusal, some expressed their legitimate fear of too much influence of the school’s educational project which could impact their offspring. They fear that their children will relativize their religious beliefs and end up being influenced by Christianity. Facts confirm this concern of parents. Indeed, it has occasionally happened that a student of another denomination upon discovering Christianity expressed the wish to convert.

What should be done when the student is not yet of legal age? Might the educational project by producing this effect be accused of proselytizing? Isn’t passive participation in spiritual activities a subtle and disguised way of evangelizing? Isn’t conversion to evangelical values, which are above all human values, an important mission of the Catholic school? Should she renounce this mission in the name of the principle of secularism? Is the application of the principle of secularism in our Catholic schools synonymous with renouncing our Christian identity and our mission of evangelization? In the name of a certain secularism, can the Catholic school renounce these cardinal values? Openness to others, knowledge of the faith of the other are effective means to fight against radicalism and religious obscurantism. The Catholic school in its vocation to educate “all men and all” seems to offer the world this possibility of openness and dialogue between religions. In a national and international context of a rise of religious extremism, it is more than ever necessary to promote education in interfaith dialogue in educational structures.

This education is not synonymous with renouncing one’s cultural or religious identity. It is openness to the other, as he is, acceptance of the other as he believes. We cannot love each other without knowing each other; we cannot know each
other without going to the other. In the African context, education in accepting the other in what is most dear to him, his relationship to God, is more necessary than ever. In a multi-faith social context, it is essential to put at the heart of any educational project the concern to discover the other in his relationship to transcendence. While not renouncing one’s religious identity or compressing it into a private sphere, one expresses it and one learns to discover and respect that of others. We learn to believe well in order to live better together. It is faith in the service of social cohesion, a weapon against violent extremism in the world.

APPENDIX 1: ENROLLMENT CONTRACT TO THE PRIVATE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SAINT LUC DE NAFONA

This contract is signed between the parent or guardian of the student wishing to join the private Catholic school Saint Luke and the educational team of Saint Luke, represented by the principal.

Objective of the contract

Show parents or guardians who choose to enroll their child in the school the specificity of the establishment in terms of values, principles and educational objectives.

Allow him to choose in soul and conscience and in full knowledge of the facts the educational framework of the Saint Luc school with its requirements and constraints.

The nature and status of the establishment

The private Catholic school Saint Luke de Nafona, as its name suggests, is a private Catholic structure belonging to the diocese of Banfora. The founder is the diocese of Banfora and the legal sponsor Monsignor Lucas Kalfa SANOU, bishop of Banfora. It is headed by a principal appointed by and approved by the bishop. It is an approved establishment that welcomes students with strict respect for its educational specificity.
Main objective: “to promote the human person in his spiritual and intellectual, moral and civic dimensions, in a harmonious manner and enlightened by the Gospel”—“to educate all people and all.”

Means used: Providing the learner with a framework of academic excellence

- Providing competent teachers.
- Recruiting educators with values in line with the educational objectives of the school.
- Creating a framework of friendliness and trust for the learner.
- Motto of the school: “the love of work in discipline and perseverance.”

Spiritual activities in the school

- Being a Catholic establishment, spiritual activities are carried out with strict respect for the faith and freedom of other believers.
- A Christian Catholic prayer written by the high school chaplain will be read during the first class of each day and at the last class. At the end of class at noon, the Angelus will be said. Prayer is addressed to God the Creator, asking him to bless the students and to use their intelligence and memory to fully understand and remember what will be provided to them.
- The prayer is said in turn by (4) Catholic Christian students chosen by the general overseer.
- Students belonging to other faiths are not obliged to recite the prayers but are required to respect the prayer climate.
- A course of religious instruction will be given to the pupils. This course teaches the history and fundamental principles of different religions (Christianity, Islam, traditional African religion, Buddhism, etc.). The major objective of this course is education in accepting others in their faith.
- This is a compulsory course for everyone.

From education to inter-religious dialogue

- An inter-religious dialogue committee called “Balimaya” is set up each year. Composed of students belonging to religious denominations present in the establishment, its role will be to represent the establishment in religious and
social events where a member of the establishment is concerned. This committee will spend the days of Christian or Muslim holidays to greet in some families on behalf of all the students.

- At the beginning of the fast of Ramadan or Christian Lent, a word is addressed by this committee to the various believers.
- A search is made both during the fast of Ramadan and Christian Lent for an action of solidarity in favor of the most disadvantaged.

**Specific courses and training specific to the establishment**

- In addition to the classic courses, specific courses are given in the school: the course on Africa, the music theory course and the Latin course.
- The course on Africa is an African culture course whose objective is to allow learners to discover their own cultural values.
- The Latin course, in addition to strengthening the level in French, develops critical thinking and logic in the learner.
- The music theory class teaches the basics of music to awaken potential talents in this field.
- A framework for awakening talents is offered to learners through workshops (sewing, male and female hairstyling, music, flute, football, basketball, volleyball, acrobatics, choreography, Tae-kondo, apprentice entrepreneurs. Each student freely chooses his workshop This training takes place every Thursday evening from 3 pm to 6 pm. It is compulsory for everyone.

**Signature**

*Read and approved by the student’s parent or guardian*

*The student*

*The Director*

Banfora on …………………………… ..2021…
APPENDIX 2: STUDENTS’ MESSAGES FOR RAMADAN AND LENT

Word from Muslim students to Catholic Christians on the occasion of Christian Lent

Dear Christian and Catholic Christian students, since yesterday with the celebration of the ashes, you began Lent. Christian Lent is 40 days of penance, prayer, and sharing. It is also 40 days to convert, to submit to the will of God. Lent offers you the opportunity to improve the quality of your life with God and with your brothers and sisters. So we are counting on you during this time of Lent so that the quality of life in the school can improve. We wish there was more love, sharing, forgiveness, discipline, and less delay and chatter in the school. Especially since intellectual work improves with good grades. We Muslims promise to do our best during our fast.

Happy Lent to everyone! May Allah the Merciful bless us!

Your Muslim brothers and sisters from Saint Luc school.

Words from Christian students to their Muslim brothers and sisters on the occasion of the beginning of the fast in Ramadan

Dear Muslim comrades, today begins the fast of Ramadan for you. It is an important time in living your faith: a time of invocation of the holy name of God and of his prophet, a time of sharing, fraternity and forgiveness. We wish you all a good fasting time! May you be exemplary and disciplined students during this fasting month of Ramadan. May there be more generosity, sharing, and brotherhood at the school level thanks to you! Let there be less chatter in the schoolyard. May Allah the Merciful fill you with His blessings!

Good fasting time!

Your Christian brothers and sisters from Saint Luc school
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Gemignani, Regina and Quentin Wodon. “Gender Roles and Girls’ Education


