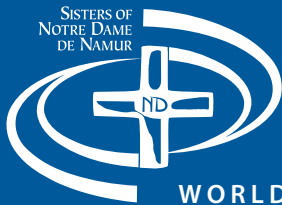


SISTERS OF
NOTRE DAME
DE NAMUR



GoodWorks

WORLDWIDE MISSION: *Making known God's goodness*

With Hearts as Wide as the World



*“You see the entirety of your life as a Mission...
in the Mission you have received.”*

Pope Francis

GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE: *The Call to Holiness* #23, May 2019

Dear Friends of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,

As we serve across the globe on five continents and as the Synod invites us to listen more, the Mission is not just a duty but a calling that inspires us daily in all we are and do.



(Front L to R): Sisters Amarachi Grace Ezeonu, Mary Johnson, Congregational Leader and Evalyne Aseyo (Back L to R): Sisters Miriam Montero Bereche and Lorraine Connell.

We deepen our sense of call and commitment by walking with those living in poverty, witnessing God’s goodness in each moment of our lives in varied ways. Our Chapter Calls invite us to **listen and respond within our local and global realities** to those who suffer and to pray and work to transform the attitudes, structures and systems that cause profound suffering.

This edition of *Good Works* highlights the SNDdeN

NGO ministry at the United Nations and the holistic approach to education in all our ministries. These ministries compel us to deepen and strengthen our commitment and collaboration with our partners to advance the mission. Together, we pool our skills and expertise to address global issues, including sustaining livelihoods and educating for life as we act with reverence to God’s creation.

Dear Friends, we are deeply grateful for the synergy you form with us to advance the mission. Your support and collaboration are invaluable and indispensable as we serve people of all backgrounds.

We want to express our appreciation for your significant and impactful contributions, which are why we can make a difference.

We are companions on this shared journey of hope and transformation.

Gratefully,

Sr. Amarachi Ezeonu, SNDdeN
Sr. Amarachi Ezeonu, SNDdeN

Sr. Evalyne Aseyo, SNDdeN
Sr. Evalyne Aseyo, SNDdeN

Sr. Lorraine Connell, SNDdeN
Sr. Lorraine Connell, SNDdeN

Sr. Mary Johnson, SNDdeN
Sr. Mary Johnson, SNDdeN

Sr. Miriam Montero, SNDdeN
Sr. Miriam Montero, SNDdeN

Front Cover:

From left to right:
Sr. Lucyane R. Diniz,
Sr. Isabelle Izika, Megan
Novak and Sr. Elizabeth
Chinamo Boroma,
at the United
Nations during the
2024 High-Level
Political Forum.



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With Hearts as Wide as the World

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at the United Nations

By Sr. Isabelle Izika, SNDdeN NGO Representative at the United Nations



Since Saint Julie Billiart founded the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) in a small French village two hundred and twenty years ago, our Mission has been unwavering. **Our hearts, as wide as the world, seek to make known the goodness of God with others across the globe, a mission that has led to our presence on five continents.**

Since 2001, SNDdeN have been present at the United Nations (UN) as an accredited Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to the Economic and Social Development Council (ECOSOC). Now, I serve as NGO Representative for the Congregation, preceded by three other SNDdeN: Sisters Joan Burke (USA), Jean Stoner (USA) and Amarachi Ezeonu (Nigeria).



Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur NGO

As an international Congregation of Catholic Sisters serving in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America, we firmly believe that we can make a significant difference based on our experience on the ground.

We provide feedback and suggestions during the discussions that shape policies and programs impacting peoples' lives in education, health care, climate change, environmental issues, and other critical matters. As Saint Julie taught us, it is important to reach out to those in the most abandoned places and to lift up their stories and their needs so that they might live lives in a safe environment, with dignity and the means to provide for themselves and their families.



(From L to R): Sr. Elizabeth Chinamo Boroma, Sr. Lucyane R. Diniz and Megan Novak on their way to the UN.

As SNDdeN NGO Representative at the UN, my ministry involves sharing knowledge and global news from the organization with Sisters on each continent where we serve. This service in sharing keeps us all informed and connected to the United Nations and among ourselves. We also invite Sisters, Associates, and colleagues to participate in relevant sessions, conferences, and forums when they occur at the UN headquarters. An example of such a program was the recent High-Level Political Forum 2024 (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.

SNDdeN UN Participants

Annually, the UN Forum offers an opportunity for a certain number of governments to report on their progress in achieving their country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year, among the thirty-seven participating countries were six where the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur serve: Brazil, Congo Brazzaville, Kenya, Peru, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

In preparation for this important Forum, our SNDdeN NGO Office at the United Nations, through the Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR), joined a coalition of twenty-two Congregations of Catholic Sisters. As members, SNDdeN, residents and ministers in four of the above countries participated in a seven-month training program about the UN, Sustainable Development Goals, and advocacy skills to prepare them for the High-Level Political Forum.





(From L to R): Sr. Isabelle Izika, SNDdeN NGO Representative at the United Nations with Sr. Lucyane R. Diniz and Sr. Elizabeth Chinamo Boroma preparing for a work session.

Sr. Lucyane R. Diniz, SNDdeN (Brazil) and Sr. Elizabeth Chinamo Boroma, SNDdeN (Zimbabwe), who followed the training, were invited to attend the HLPF Forum in person at the UN headquarters. They added their voices to that of Megan Novak, a student from Emmanuel College in Boston, Massachusetts and an intern with us at the UN. The Sisters and Megan participated in many events and listened to country reports. The other Sisters, like Sr. Brigid Rose Tiernan, SNDdeN (South Africa) who attended the Voluntary Review training, but were not able to be present at the UN Headquarters, were able to follow the HLPF on Web TV.

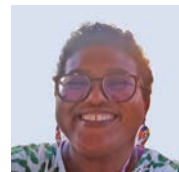
Goals of the Voluntary Review and Forum

In general, citizen participation in the Voluntary Review allows for valuable feedback. Citizens listening to government presentations, are able to express opinions and concerns, helping them to unite with other members of their society in shaping future policies and initiatives. This feedback ensures government actions in alignment with the needs and aspirations of the people, leading to better governance.

Involvement by the citizens and Sisters in voluntary reviews at the United Nations is necessary for enhancing transparency, accountability, and civic participation. Being informed and involved strengthens their communities and contributes to a more responsive and responsible government. **The process fosters a sense of shared responsibility, empowering individuals to advocate for the change they wish to see in their societies.**

Reflections on the Experience

Sister Lucyane R. Diniz, SNDdeN (Brazil)



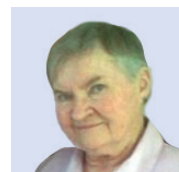
Leave no one alone is a concept I heard regularly. In fact, countries have a voice and can share their visions for the world in this space. The day Brazilian Foreign Minister, Marcio Macedo presented our country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) assessment, I had the opportunity to speak with him about what the government is doing to develop the SDGs in Brazil. We also talked about the Amazon, Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN and COP 30, which will take place in my city of Belem do Para and which he will also be attending.

Sister Elizabeth Chinamo Boroma, SNDdeN (Zimbabwe)



The High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, which I attended in July 2024, opened my eyes and gave me valuable experience. I am grateful to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur for continuing to equip us for action in service to others in so many different ways. I am also grateful to our SNDdeN office at the United Nations for inviting us to take part in the voluntary national assessment of our countries' progress toward the sustainable development goal of eradicating poverty.

Sister Brigid Rose Tiernan, SNDdeN (South Africa)



When I was invited earlier this year to take part in the JCoR 2024 training sessions in preparation for South Africa's Voluntary Review, I wasn't quite sure what it was all about. What I discovered by participating in the monthly training sessions, so expertly led, was a whole new way of looking at our Congregation's mission statement. From the outset, the United Nations SDGs were described as the secular path to the City of God. I found myself on a journey using different terminology but talking essentially about the Kingdom of God.

Megan Novak, Intern (United States)



As an intern at the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Office at the United Nations, I had the honor of attending the 2024 High-Level Political Forum. This experience was a valuable opportunity to deepen my understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions were rich and varied, offering important perspectives on the current global challenges.

Notre Dame Seishin University Looks to the Future

By Tsutomu Kanayama, Ph.D., Director of the International Center at Notre Dame Seishin University (from an Interview with Sr. Aoi Tsuda, SNDdeN)



Notre Dame Seishin University (NDSU) embarked on a special journey, an exciting new venture, embracing the vision for the future. During this Centennial Year for the SNDdeN Japan Province, Sr. Aoi Tsuda, SNDdeN, Chairperson of Notre Dame Seishin Gakuen and President of Notre Dame Seishin University launched the opening of two innovative departments: Faculty of Global Studies and Faculty of Information Data Science. These new departments address the needs of the local community in Okayama, Japan as well as global needs. They intend to advance the pursuit of sharing God's goodness with others throughout the world, through higher education.



Sr. Aoi Tsuda, SNDdeN

Sr. Aoi has dedicated five years of unwavering effort to research the needs of the local area in Okayama and also has studied multiple educational projections for solving social problems on a global level. The establishment of the two new departments passed a rigorous review process in 2023 with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology with the end goal of establishing these new departments in 2024.

Honoring the Past and Embracing the Future

Sr. Aoi's planning and wisdom, based on the educational philosophy of St. Julie Billiart, led to the opening of these two new departments, creating an educational environment where students will research, study and act to solve current social problems. In addition to these new Faculties, NDSU heralds this new era with the completion of

Trinity Hall, a symbolic tower building dedicated to the University's commitment to excellence and service. Marking in 2024 the 100th Anniversary of the arrival in Japan of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, this important milestone embraces the **forward-looking vision of the NDSU as well as the Sisters' vision.**

Addressing the Needs of Our Time in the Spirit of Saint Julie

As the globalized world becomes increasingly complex, issues such as conflict, refugees, poverty, racism, and gender can be seen in every aspect of society. Social issues that undermine the dignity of human rights are piling up before our eyes. Since Sister Aoi believes that NDSU, located in the hub of Asia and the Pacific region, plays a central role in education in Japan, and since the University has an important role in the Notre Dame de Namur network, she took bold and needed steps to address the extraordinary needs of our time.

St. Julie Billiart's educational philosophy, rooted in overcoming adversity, adjusting to a changing environment, naturally and with flexibility, awakens strongly **our call to our core Mission to the world.** This is the rationale for establishing two new faculties at NDSU, in addition to the conventional liberal arts-based faculties, such as the Faculty of Literature and the Faculty of Human Life Sciences.

TWO NEW INNOVATIVE DEPARTMENTS AT NDSU

Faculty of Global Studies



Dean Chen Laixing

Faculty of Information and Data Science



Dean Professor Yukikazu Nakamoto



(From L to R): Sr. Marie Yose, Chair of Tarakanita Foundation, Sr. Aoi Tsuda and Sr. Brigitta meet in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Collaboration with a Foundation in Indonesia

In November 2023, President Tsuda visited the Tarakanita Foundation at a mission in Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. At this Foundation, a Congregation of Catholic Sisters, headquartered in the Netherlands, shared the importance of opening to the world the spread of the Gospel of God's love through all levels of education. They expressed their desire to engage and promote collaboration with SNDdeN at NDSU and in the schools, between Japan and Indonesia. The University envisions continued communication and collaboration with Indonesia.

The Next Steps of the Journey

We look to the future with the vision of Notre Dame Seishin University and Notre Dame Seishin Foundation in the establishment of these two Faculties that respond to the demands of modern society. This is a grace from God and a reflection on how we can serve the international community and promote the goodness of God in our commitment, through our educational vision and our educational programs for societal transformation. These new Faculties at our University aim to engender peace and growth in a global community.

*Come, join us as a
NDdeN Associate!*



On the West Coast of the USA, there are 85 Associates of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. These NDdeN Associates, with the Sisters, live the charism and Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. At annual gatherings in Belmont, CA, they renew their commitments in living out a Gospel ministry and making known the goodness of God in their daily lives, and in their own environments. The Associates are happy to join the Sisters at Assemblies of the East-West Province and on other occasions for celebrations in California.



SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR
Making known God's goodness

For more information contact us at: INQUIRY@sndden.org

Julie Billiard Women's Literacy Centers in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

By Sr. Patience Mpela, SNDdeN

Translated into English by Sr. Evelyn McKenna, SNDdeN

For many years, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in the Province of Congo-Kinshasa, have been providing formal education for children in elementary and high schools, as well as caring for the sick in hospitals, clinics and health centers. Moreover, SNDdeN have opened, managed and supported **Women's Centers for rehabilitation and literacy in some mission sites**. Grants from the Congregational Mission Support Fund have provided financial assistance for some of these centers in continuing this educational ministry for young women.

In these centers, the Sisters and lay teachers help young women who have left school, who do not have the financial means to follow the normal course of national education, or those who have had early pregnancies. The Sisters assist them in establishing themselves for life.

Literacy, Housekeeping and Making Clothing

In these centers, the young women focus on literacy, follow classes in housekeeping and study some elementary French and mathematics. In addition, they have classes in sewing, the primary field which attracts and motivates these young women to register for these centers.

These centers are located in three SNDdeN missions: Kisantu, Mpese and Nselo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Young women in Mpese learn how to prepare, lay out and cut the material for the clothing.



Sr. Virginie Bungudi Kalemba, SNDdeN teaches women various skills at the Center in Mpese.

Sometimes the women who attend the program travel distances of several kilometers in order to come and receive this formation. During three years, they follow courses and engage in hands-on work for household management and making clothing.



Learning about the Mission and charism of St. Julie Billiard is part of the educative program.

Completion of Three-Year Program

At the end of their final year, they present and share the results of their achievements, especially in sewing, before a jury who also question them on what they have learned over their entire formation period. A certificate of achievement is awarded to those who qualify. This marks the end of their formation, and enables them to become involved in society and community, and be recognized in the public for their skills and training.

On the day for the distribution of certificates of achievement, the graduates invite their families and friends and organize a reception with food, drinks and dancing. **Everyone is filled with joy!**

This event is also enhanced by the **presentation of a sewing machine to each graduate**. This very important instrument will help them to practice and continue what they have learned and is most important and useful as they begin earning a living by making clothing.



On completion of the courses, young women display and rejoice in the gift of sewing machines from donors to the Center.

Training in housekeeping allows them to maintain well their houses, while some among them who are not married are more prepared for marriage in the future.

This apostolate of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is significant and beneficial for these young women. **This education for life is also much appreciated by the people in the missions where the Sisters minister.** Many young women travel great distances to benefit from this education and formation.

We highlight that this apostolate, adjusted in small details by the “*signs of the times*,” is very similar to that given by the early missionaries. The Belgian Sisters taught young women how to maintain their households as well as to be formed for strong relationships in community and family life. At the successful presentation of certificates, **the Sisters rejoice with Mère Julie Billiart, and with the families and friends of these students!**

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

Invite You to

Support Our Mission



Your donations support and sustain our worldwide Mission on five continents.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) is a charitable institution with 501 (c) 3 status in the United States. Contributions support our Mission in a variety of ministries across the world.

How to support our Mission?

- 🌿 Give Charitable Gift Annuities
- 🌿 Remember the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in your will
- 🌿 Contribute gifts of stocks
- 🌿 Send gift envelopes and more
- 🌿 Contribute online

For more information, please contact:

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Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Congregational Mission Office
30 Jeffreys Neck Road
Ipswich, MA 01938 USA
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RENEWING THE 7 HALLMARKS:

Engaging Future Generations in the SNDdeN Mission

Julie Dowd, Director of Mission Integration, Sponsorship Office,
US East-West Province.

The US East-West and Ohio Province Sponsorship Offices led a year-long discernment process to refresh and reaffirm the **7 Hallmarks of a Notre Dame Learning Community**.



Notre Dame Elementary (Belmont, CA) celebrating the Hallmarks.

While each Notre Dame de Namur school and ministry is unique and responsive to the needs of its particular social context and location, the Hallmarks provide a connective thread that binds us all to one another.

The 7 Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community have illuminated the special characteristics of SNDdeN sponsored schools and ministries since their inception in the early 2000s. Developed by a team of Sisters, Associates, and lay educators primarily from California, the Hallmarks sought to answer the question, **“What makes our school a Notre Dame school?”**

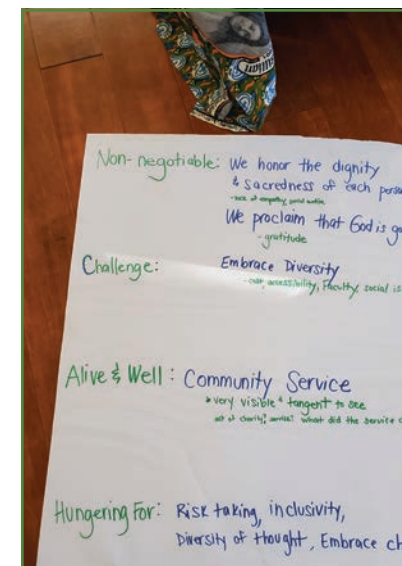
While the Hallmarks originated from a U.S.-based educational context, they have gained resonance with other SNDdeN ministries in health care and social justice and have been embraced by many across the Congregation globally.



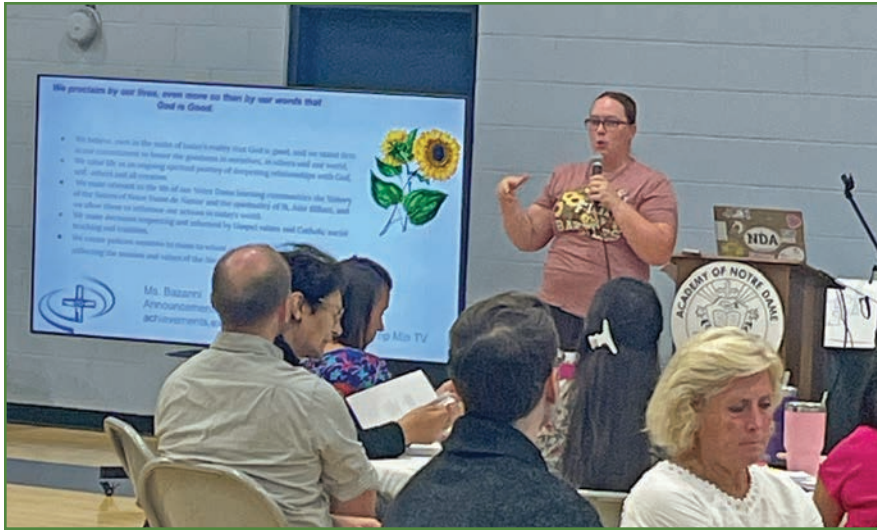
Students and faculty from Notre Dame Education Center (Lawrence, MA) engaging in community service.

In 2024, sponsorship office staff from the U.S. East-West and Ohio Provinces released an updated version of the Hallmarks reflecting new insights and priorities expressed by our learning communities. The updated text resulted from a **year-long reflection and discernment process that included over three hundred educators, students, Sisters, and Associates from sponsored schools in the two provinces.**

Through conversations, surveys, and focus groups, a strong consensus emerged affirming the current relevance of the Hallmarks language and meaning. A significant change to the content was the addition of “care of creation” to Hallmark 3, reflecting the urgent focus on environmental justice expressed in *Laudato Si’* and the *Calls of the 18th SNDdeN General Chapter* in 2021. The constituents who engaged in this Hallmarks review expressed their belief that the Hallmarks were and are a relevant and prophetic part of understanding a Notre Dame de Namur ministry.



Posters & notes from annual faculty Hallmarks retreat in Ohio.



Academy of Notre Dame campus minister Jamie Deignan (Tyngsboro, MA) leads a faculty retreat on the Hallmarks.

As Sr. Louise O'Reilly, SNDdeN wrote in a recent issue of *Sowing Goodness*, *rooted in the Gospel and the principles of Catholic social teaching, the Hallmarks express the distinctive identity of a Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur learning community in terms both practical and aspirational.*

The Hallmarks give values-based direction for decisions and activities so that the learning community continues to express the spirituality and mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The Hallmarks express who we are and who we aspire to be.

As St. Julie Billiart responded to the needs of her day, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur educators today continue to provide a transformational education that improves the lives of our students, and the communities in which they live, learn and dream.

Through the Hallmarks, we engage current and future generations in the Notre Dame de Namur mission and charism of making known God's infinite goodness.

7 HALLMARKS OF A NOTRE DAME LEARNING COMMUNITY

HALLMARK 1

✿ We proclaim by our lives even more than by our words that God is good.

HALLMARK 2

✿ We honor the dignity and sacredness of each person.

HALLMARK 3

✿ We educate for and act on behalf of justice, peace, and care for all creation.

HALLMARK 4

✿ We commit ourselves to community service.

HALLMARK 5

✿ We embrace the gift of diversity.

HALLMARK 6

✿ We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.

HALLMARK 7

✿ We develop holistic learning communities that educate for life.

SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR



St. Julie Billiart's expression:

"How good is the good God!"

showed her special gift of unique trust in God. Today Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur on five continents make known God's goodness.

SNDdeN Mission

Sisters of Notre Dame, women with hearts as wide as the world, make known God's goodness and love, with and among people living in poverty, through a Gospel way of life, community and prayer.

Continuing a strong educational tradition, we take our stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children, in the most abandoned places.

Each of us commits her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all.

Africa

Democratic Republic of Congo
Congo
Brazzaville
Kenya
Nigeria
South Africa
Zimbabwe

North America

United States (21 states and the District of Columbia)

South America

Brazil
Peru

Asia

Japan

Europe

Belgium
France
Italy
United Kingdom



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• *Read our stories*

 [x.com/sndden](https://www.x.com/sndden)

• *Share in our hope*

Visit international websites of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at:

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