

Data Synthesis Report

On the 6th and 7th of October 2025, 250 people from Catholic schools all over South Africa participated in a conference about Religious Education. Over these two days, participants were put into 20 random groups, and each group discussed the various presentations. Each group had a leader and a scribe, and the transcribed discussions were given to the CIE's Knowledge Management Team to synthesise and analyse for the following:

- Emotional reactions to the content of the conference
- Cognitive reactions to the content
- Themes in the discussions
- Key statements or phrases

The outcome of the synthesis of the data is this report.

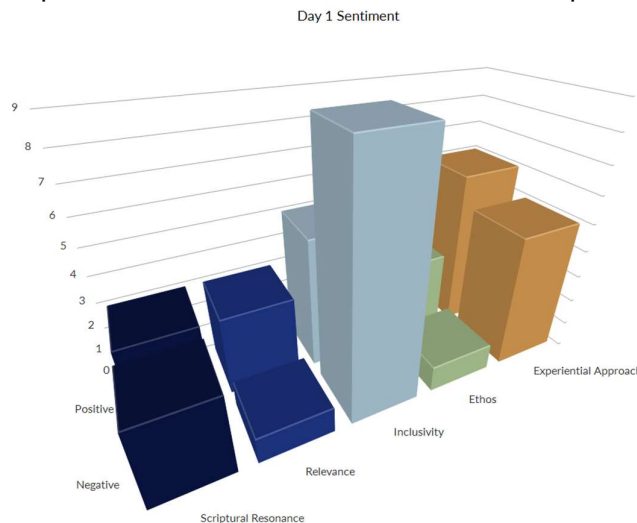
Overall Sentiment

<i>Positive</i> 120	<i>Moderately Positive</i> 102	<i>Very Positive</i> 18
<i>Negative</i> 85	<i>Moderately Negative</i> 53	<i>Very Negative</i> 32

Over the course of the two days, the presentations and discussions affected the participants in different ways. The overall experience was positive (roughly 65% of all comments), with about 1 in 11 comments showing a very positive sentiment towards the subject.

Of all the things discussed, the area showing the most negative sentiment was Inclusivity – perhaps due to the ‘heat’ generated in the discussions around the celebration of the Mass and the persistence of tradition, which is often perceived as a threat. When things are perceived as threatening, they might evoke fear and doubt as well as active disgust – and these are all strong emotions that need to be in the conversation when it comes to Ethos and Religious Education in Catholic schools in South Africa in 2025.

Of interest is the mixed sentiment around the scripture references that formed part of Day 1, which might point to the ‘personal journey’ element coded in more detail on the next page.

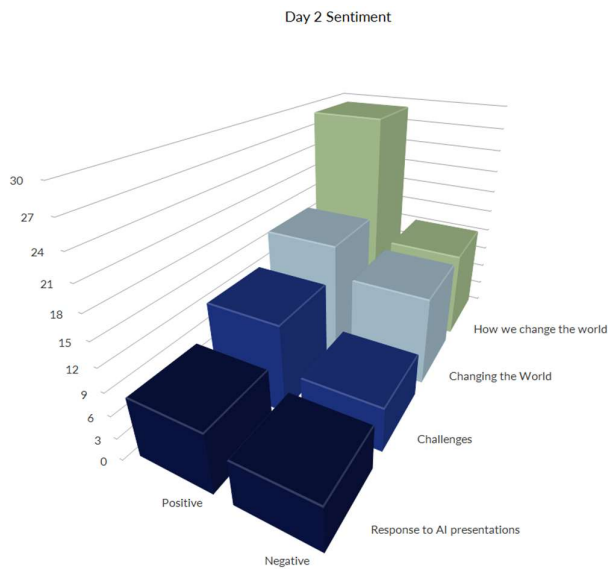


On day 2, there were significantly lower levels of negative sentiment in general, as well as a sharp spike in positive sentiment focused on discussions about 'how we change the world'. Optimism won the day, and the outlook was bright.

However, the discussions around AI were a mixed bag – a slight win for the positive sentiment, but a lot of fear and doubt about the future in the comments.

The optimism of the day showed even in the 'Challenges' section, where the overall sentiment was positive.

Day 1: Key Themes

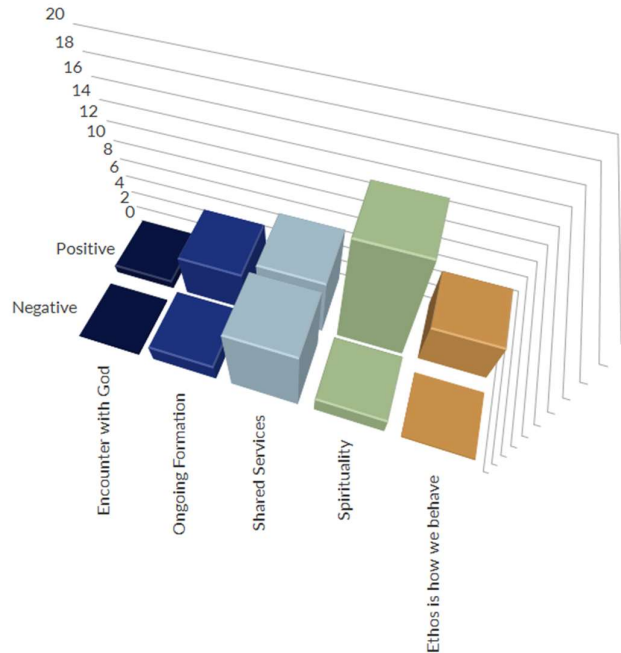


<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>References</i>
Experiential Approach [71 references]	'RE is caught, not taught'	12	"RE is about ethos of whole school; RE more caught than taught; Youth know digital, but need our guidance; need to protect the children."
	Trauma Recognition	16	"guiding learners through trauma toward spiritual maturity"
	Listen	22	"listen to give ear to their life experiences; listen to their stories and burdens"
	Relationship	5	"RE cannot be preached in the classroom, it is an experience, strong relationship with God among educators."

Inclusivity [38 references]	Paraliturgies	6	"Doesn't always have to be structured like Mass, paraliturgy is a good idea and a change"
	Do not judge!	5	"I felt let down in the comparison between paraliturgy and mass. I felt uncomfortable."
	Diversity	4	"Teachers: we judge our learners in the classroom. "
	Belonging	3	"Diversity is key and to be valued. Difficult balance between apologising for our faith and over respecting other beliefs to the detriment of our own."
	Truth	3	"Where do I belong?"
	Acceptance	2	"Can't engage with the truth and then ignore it, in Catholic schools."
	LGBTQIA+	2	"Do not judge anyone, accept one another as they are."
	Galileo	2	"What is the church's view on LGBTQ? Sexuality? Church mainly teaching about marriage between man and woman. Sae sex is a disordered attraction. Not sinful. Part of a person's development. Jesus walked with sinners. Church says you are called to holiness (holy life). The Church can be judgmental. LGBTQ. Don't judge. 200 years before Galileo was accepted. Meet children where they are. Love your neighbour, no matter what. Human, not man."
Relevance [30 references]	Rename RE to Humanity	9	"RE teaching is the centre of humanity"
	Agenda: Children / Adolescents	5	"Need to be more creative with paraliturgies, was touched by comment that we should let adolescence and childhood dictate our agenda."
Ethos [58 references]	Ethos as Values	41	"We all need to listen to the learners and value the Ethos of the school together"
	Model faith through actions	4	Teachers are role models and need to model the values and beliefs that they are teaching

In addition to this first level of analysis, the remaining discussions have also been analysed for sentiment (whether they express positive or negative feelings) about each of the topics.

An example of this is the sentiment analysis of 5 key topics of discussion from Day 2: Encounter with God, Ongoing Formation, Shared Services, Spirituality and “Ethos is how we Behave”. In the graph to the right, one can see the overall positive leaning of the discussions, with significant negative input on the topic of shared services and ongoing formation. This will be unpacked more over the next few pages, as follows:



- 2.1. Challenges
- 2.2. Response to AI
- 2.3. Changing the World
- 2.4. How we Change the World.

2.1. Challenges

[27 References]

This theme comes up at any conference, and this was no different from what is to be expected. At this particular conference, one portion of the discussions focused on challenges from different stakeholders, whereas another portion of the discussions were about broader societal or systemic challenges.

2.1.1. Different Stakeholders

Despite the peak of negative sentiment about ‘**Ownership**’ in the graph below, the discussion took place in only one group:

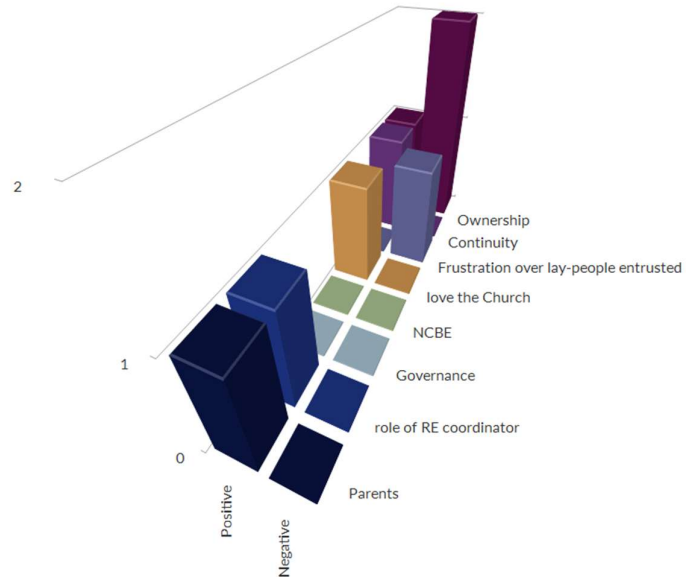
"The meetings with the Owners' Reps is very poor, often it is just insults."

"Enrolment has dropped and the Owners' Reps have been captured."

"The Community loves the school. But the Sisters own the school."

"No trust between management - board - owners - CIE – Bishop"

These four comments point to a single school in crisis, but it may also speak to an experience that is shared across the network.



The discussions about 'the Church' occurred in two different groups, and were quite positive by contrast:

"Respect the church - stand firm but show respect."

"Love the church."

This positive sentiment was balanced by the frustrated or need-filled comments from two other groups about the laity, trusts, and structures:

"The Sisters chose people to look after the school but they are not hands-on and it is very frustrating."

"Need solid structure - through RE Coordinators."

The overall discussion about continuity in the schools was a very forward-looking part of the data received:

I thirst - schools are crying out but we seem to ignore it. We are on the shoulders of others – continuity. We need to connect, share and store resources and all that is valuable for continuity for RE.

Then there are isolated comments about various things, including:

Parents

"I must have faith to help learners. Help each other. We need to nurture the learners, because parents don't seem to know about God."

RE Coordinators

"significant role of RE coordinator in our schools"

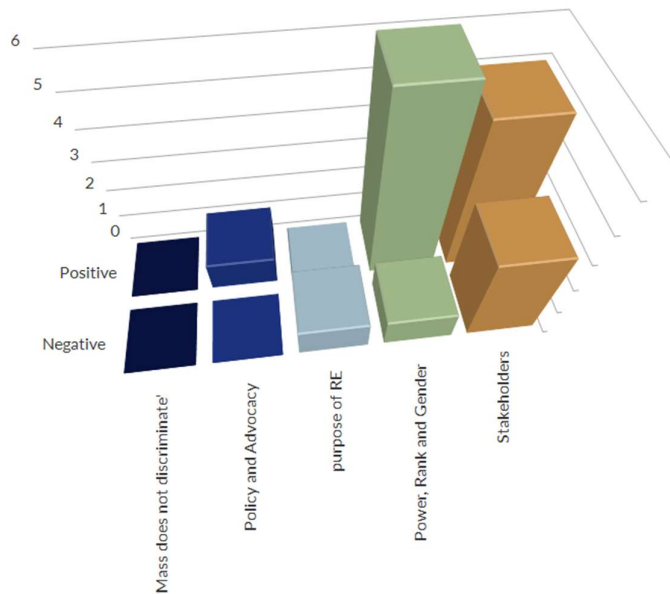
Governors

"The board do not understand Catholic Education."

The fact that these 13 comments account for such a small fraction of the responses from Day 2 of the Conference is a testament to the optimism, resilience and health of the network and the people in it.

2.1.2. Other Challenges

As mentioned above, these other challenges were broader in scope than the South African Catholic network. What is interesting right at the outset is the prevalence of positive sentiment in these discussions. This points to a solution-oriented or optimistic mindset regarding the matters being discussed.



Power, Rank & Gender was mentioned as a challenge in six statements, by contrast with the **Purpose of RE** (5 statements) and the remaining two about **Policy / Advocacy** and the quote **'Mass does not Discriminate'**.

What does the last statement mean? Here is the full response:

"Mass does not discriminate (everyone feels welcome)."

This statement is a continuation of the first day's discussions about inclusion.

The main points are as follows:

Power, Rank, and Gender

There are some very powerful statements in this section, and they need to be heard and processed properly in order to deploy resources, programmes and people where they are needed to address the imbalances of power, rank, class and gender that characterise our society.

"Girls are losing interest in programmes that will empower them."

"Going beyond teaching, after a letter that was written by a learner, taken to the Principal, who then did nothing."

"There is still hope. If we are hearing youngsters crying out. Allow the voices to be heard. Use policies as a gift. It will help you help others."

"We don't want to listen, we're like Mother, but we need to listen to the learners, listen more and speak less! Prepare lesson plans according to context. If I see a need to talk about sexuality or whatever I must incorporate it. Must be responsive to the need of learners!"

"I discovered that we are not developing the children - love your neighbour as yourself. My job is to develop the learners. As a non-Catholic, I'm picking up the similarities. I just went through the motion but now I have a better understanding of what we are doing. Have an awareness at our school of cleanliness etc. Relevance stuck in my mind. We want to put up

fences but we want our children to go out. But the world keeps on changing. Ultimately, we must be people of prayer.”

“Need formation for teachers, spirituality of the re is important, learners are human don’t shame them, ethos distinguishes a Catholic school, learners are gifted previously discriminated between clever learners, learn to listen to learners , commend people who put programme together and reminded of the dignity of each person, children need a sense of belonging, go back and inspire teachers, richness of conference, rituals, traditions, social justice be bold about it”

2.2. Response to AI [24 References]

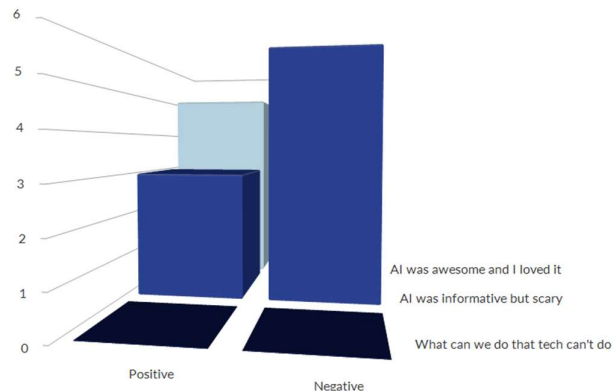
Day 2 was characterised by a presentation and a series of discussions about Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The overall response was balanced between two poles, with one question hanging in between them:

AI: informative but scary [11]

AI: awesome and I love it [12]

What do we do better? [1]



The following are a few quotes from the discussions:

“AI = Helps both the learners and the teachers. It saves time and produces quality lessons. Which are productive. To encourage teachers in schools to use AI effectively. I was fascinated by AI. Learners are excited by such lessons. I will download the app and use it.”

“don’t be afraid to use AI in a responsible way to generate resources”

“Incorporating AI in our lessons and prayer lives.”

“Intrigued by AI the ongoing learning we all have to do.”

“AI can help learners become excited about learning”

“Modernise RE lessons; use of AI (Learners Work vs AI), Critical Thinking”

“Enjoyed being in a community of like-minded people and learning about AI particularly in Grade 1 - very helpful - lives made easier.”

“AI: felt challenged: it’s up to us to find ways; humility: teachers are learners and learners are teachers; worried about AI and our kids; how to make it more responsible; have to move with the times; more poor children no access, so more left behind.”

“AI: It is very useful however there are challenges of learners steal from one another.

Going

back I have to encourage learners not to misuse gadgets.”

“AI = Transformation of AI will help our learners. It will assist learners with special needs. It

assures learners and prepares them for the future”

“AI is very scary is that we as humans we tend to do things and then years later realise that

we messed up. It needs to be introduced responsibly.”

“Change is the only constant; Resistance to Change – AI”

“AI unsettles me the most (Feel like an infant in new space)”

“AI: let's be patient & kind with ourselves”

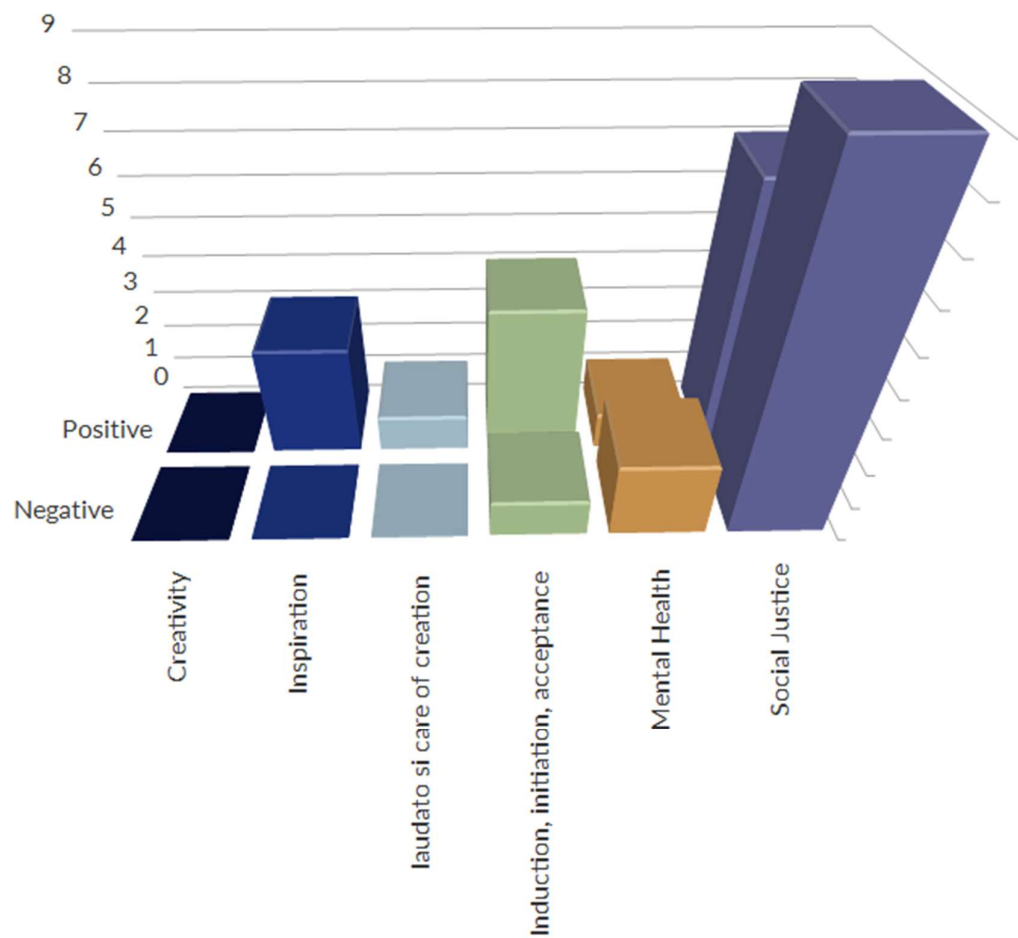
“Professionally I need to reflect on what we can offer our learners that technology can't do.”

It is clear that the presentations on AI had a profound effect on those who attended the conference.

2.3. Changing the World [53 References]

The overall positive approach of Day 2 is truly is a Pilgrimage of Hope in this section, where most of the conversations focused on Social Justice [16]; then on Induction, initiation, or acceptance [11]; Mental Health [11]; Laudato Si and the Nature Walk [9]. Overall, the day was characterised by Inspiration [4] and Creativity [2].

The statements in the table over the next three pages represent the kind of hope that is needed to change the world around us, and to transform ourselves and the learners in the classrooms.



Social Justice [16 statements total]	"Duty to bring about justice. Speak about social justice in schools." "I think we are doing well working together. We cannot ignore the inequality around us. What can I do? How can my children that are struggling know that God loves them I need to do something." "There is still hope. If we are hearing youngsters crying out. Allow the voices to be heard. Use policies as a gift. It will help you help others." "RE for Social Justice - challenged some structures. This has helped me find my voice." "Conversations with people were good - even people I disagree with - I want to believe they are good. Reading of poor Lazarus NB for me! And rich really need to hear it! Challenged in different ways. Fr talking of social justice - a young girl told me what happened at home - been sexually abused by step-father. We followed procedure for child safeguarding and used the social worker. Mother said not true. 'I saw nothing', but Mother didn't believe despite pics. Principal, social worker, and I went to hospital and confirmed that the child was abused. But then nothing happened and nothing happened to this man. This child grows up and knows mother did not fight for her. Family does not take it seriously and therefore no justice. I am so pained by this. Have to pray. Parents will not take action. It pains me and troubles me. I realise that I must let God do his part. We were reminded to fill ourselves spiritually because we can't give what we don't have." "Care to encourage distinctive and quality aspect of Catholic school. Care for whole person, Teacher and Child. Care for environment of school and neighbourhood care for social justice and creation." "Everything we are hearing. I am excited and learners at Catholic schools most NB to teach about love of God. Knowing rules of Church and school - love of God unlimited." "Significant conversations. Bishop Sipuka's message of vocational Hope. Fr Peter-John's call for Catholic Social Teaching to be explicit in our schools. Close reading of scripture: Fr David." "Social Justice: space must be made for CST. Centrality of human dignity; did not relate; reminded of protests during the struggle; need to have a prophetic voice; does anyone care?; awareness of structural evil / sin; expose elite Catholic school kids to the poor and listen to each other - dialogue." "As RE teaching. As a school - social justice - to stand up for what is right. The chairperson talking about the needs of Catholic school. You can identify the learner from a Catholic school. It was a huge reminder that as teachers we are pouring into the empty vessels of the learners and it is important to enrich yourself. We are beacons of hope to learners and staff members." "Need formation for teachers, spirituality of the RE is important, learners are human don't shame them, ethos distinguishes a Catholic school, learners are gifted previously discriminated between clever learners, learn to listen to learners, commend people who put programme together and reminded of the dignity of each person, children need a sense of belonging, go back and inspire teachers, richness of conference, rituals, traditions, social justice be bold about it."
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	“Continue to listen; Make RE the most important subject. Help learners become good citizens.” “We also need to be aware of INEQUALITIES in our schools and communities.” “Social Justice - was it appropriate for RE teachers who apply SJ in the classrooms at every lesson?” “RE has an unique language to uplift our young people - to be aware of the value of the smaller things in our observation of nature.” “Is human dignity preserved in our schools through their experience, through nature walks and social justice talks?”
Induction, initiation, acceptance [11 statements total]	“Transformation - transform challenges to something good, bring joy.” “A learner asking to join the church, uplifting and as RE teachers we need to embrace it and treat it with human dignity.” “I think I will have induction with new staff. I was trained by my former principal. I must help others understand Catholic Ethos” “Teachers who are not Catholic, need to be respectful” “Induction of new teachers in our schools is very important.” “RE teachers need to be supported by principal and SMT; need formation and workshops.” “Modernise RE curriculum, have humility and show AGAPE (love without restrictions), spirituality, importance of AI, but we must not lose our humanity...as we as people are SOCIAL BEINGS.” “We need to educate the HEART and MIND, and accept our common humanity.” “Prep for conference needed to clarify and revive the spirit of RE in the schools.” “Pray to implement and reenergize RE in their schools - be accountable for the spirituality of the young children in the classroom.”

Mental Health <i>[11 statements total]</i>	"Mental Health of our schools is suffering and I arranged a Mental Health Retreat." "Nurturing ourselves. I won't withdraw but I will make time for my spirituality. I felt drained when I arrived." "Learners committing suicide is very common." "We need to ensure that they understand Jesus' message of dying and rising in 3 days." "Reflection on the Samaritan woman - compassion shown by Jesus despite our sins." "I'm aware of the well-being of our learners and of our teachers." "School: the need for spiritual nourishment for educators is vital, through prayer and retreats." "Our cups need to be full so that we can give back and fill the cups of our children" "Better understanding of RE. You can't be kind to others unless you are kind to Yourself." "We as educators also need to look after our MENTAL WELL-BEING and be kind with ourselves" "Got emotion about doing things for ourselves."
Laudato si & Nature Walk <i>[9 statements total]</i>	"Spirituality, Pilgrimage and Scripture: I am spirit first, life is a pilgrimage, my work is an aid to help me to know and love and serve God." "The outside programme done with water, sun, wind and earth opened my eyes and minds towards nature." "As much as we are qualified and got our degrees, but we have to know that this is not ours but what God has sent us to do." "Pilgrimage - put everything aside and focus on nature and the wonder of God." "Care to encourage distinctive and quality aspect of Catholic school. Care for whole person, Teacher and Child. Care for environment of school and neighbourhood care for social justice and creation." "The Meditation walk" "Appreciation for nature; spirituality in nature." "Going on Pilgrimage; Children enjoying being outside." "The nature walk was very interesting and informative as an expression of life, sun, pure nature."

Inspiration [4 statements total]	"I have realised that I am there to inspire those I teach by who I am." "As a teacher one has to set the mood." "I feel touched, relieved, revitalised, inspired." "I have realised that I am there to inspire those I teach by who I am." "What was the dream of the founders of our schools? Have we met these?"
Creativity [2 statements]	"Creativity - make RE dynamic, RE should be enjoyable." "Create your classroom that it represents HOPE."

A suggestion for those reading this report:

If you are part of a school:

what are the social justice needs around you, and what is the school's role in addressing those needs?

If you are in the education development space:

how can resources be made available to those who want to change the world in these ways?

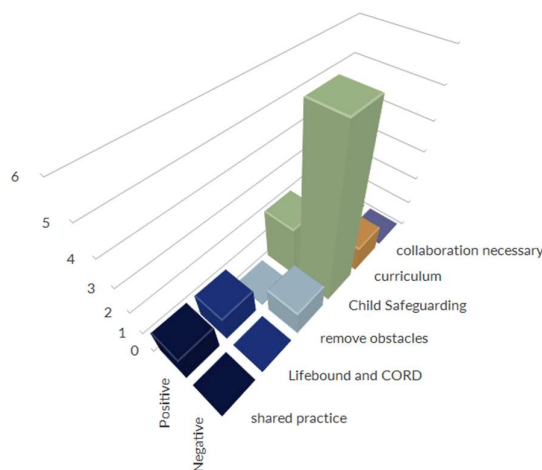
The next section focuses on concrete ways of changing the world, as distilled from Day 2 of the RE Conference.

2.4. How we change the world [109 References]

Much has been said about the need to change the world in the previous section - and in addition to those statements there were over 100 statements offering advice about how to go about changing it. The discussions here can be expressed as five themes: Shared Services [27]; Ethos is how we behave [26]; Spirituality [24]; Ongoing Formation [22]; and Encounter with God [10]. They are each presented below.

2.4.1. Shared Services

[27 References]



This section of the discussions looked closely at the ways that services, resources, practice and pathways should be shared across the network.

The spike of negative sentiment around Child Safeguarding relates to the content of stories shared by conference participants in relation to Child Safeguarding issues needing attention.

Apart from that, most of the discussions here were related to processes and functions, and how they could be shared more beneficially.

Here are a few comments representative of this section:

“What are we supposed to teach? It’s a Broad Curriculum.”

“You cannot do everything yourself but involve others in teaching RE.”

build “Remove Obstacles for the poor. Strengthen the child's dignity. Drop borders and bridges.”

“Connect, share and store resources and all that is valuable for continuity for RE.”

“Lifebound and CORD is very relevant always.”

“Do not keep quiet about children being abused. Teacher's responsibility to report.”

website.” “Context curriculum: spoke too much, did not enjoy it. Not all aware of curriculum website.”

“Region: To invite CIE Office to assist and support RE in schools”

“Region: Check if there are any programmes available through local CIE / CSO.”

“Share resources”

“Share good practice”

listen “Regions and networking important to support one another. Our roles as teachers: to and respond, respect the whole child, teachers being the living examples of Jesus. Learn from other faiths. We are all Jonahs. God meets us where we are. The importance of the RE curriculum.”

“Cooperation among ourselves.”

“How to teach RE and to work as a team”

“Re Curriculum is in our school we need to just teach it.”

“Woman at the well (Being our classroom); need of Jesus & Samaritan Woman; We walk on others' shoulders; sharing at the well.”

2.4.2. “Ethos is how we behave”

This theme was very prominent on day two of the conference, with the following sub-themes:

The calling is where I am right now
RE or Ethos minimum requirement
Teach through words and by witness
Ethos Plan at School
Protect RE on the timetable
Preach the gospel all the time and when necessary use words

These 6 sub-topics illustrate the way that this theme covers Ethos as a lived experience.

The statements below make it clearer in the words of the participants at the conference:

"It starts with me' but it is not about me. My calling is where I am right now."

"Preach the gospel all the time and when necessary use words."

"Humility, Patience, Calm - show by example, in God's Hands."

"As a RE teacher you cannot just be a normal teacher you have to have passion."

"Quote from Fr Hugh, to keep true and keep the Ethos as the heart of the school."

"Ethos, the responsibilities of the Ethos Committee. The statues around our school, need to be fixed."

"Personal and professional aspect. Teaching not a profession but a calling due to the situations we come across."

"That's why as teachers we have to put God first so that we can have wisdom."

"Not having RE or Catholic Ethos, your schools need to be closed."

"Ethos is the way we behave - how we communicate and support one another."

"RE relates to reality and to each learner. School is an environment - teach through words but also by witness."

"Care to encourage distinctive and quality aspect of Catholic school. Care for whole person, Teacher and Child. Care for environment of school and neighbourhood care for social justice and creation."

"stay true to the mission of the church"

"keep true to the ethos we buy into when we are employed at our Catholic schools"

"have an ethos action plan in your school"

"Protect RE on the timetable"

"Teaching is a calling. Our purpose as teachers is the wellbeing of the learners. Being pilgrims of hope. Faith is a journey, a process. Guide learners to make informed decisions. 1 student, 1 pen, 1 book and 1 teacher can change the world. The impact of the teacher on their learners' lives (positive or negative). Time management. Teaching RE is a lifestyle."

"Tolerance. Being present. Prayer is critical. Natural goodness. Humans have dominion over nature. Nature calms us, clears our minds. Link RE and nature. Ethos of school is important"

"Make sure we keep the Catholic Identity. Look after our pupils."

"I am where God needs me to be!"

"Revive RE at school level to give it the honour it deserves."

out “Importance of RE teacher attitude towards learners i.e. compassion, positivity, living the faith”

2.4.3. Spirituality

[24 References]

This section of the discussions overlaps somewhat with 2.4.5., as both consider ways that people can be brought into contact with the divine.

Here is a selection of statements under this theme:

“The spirituality of the RE teacher touched me deeply, I feel ashamed that I have not realised that I am not only teaching knowledge but that I need to be there spiritually.”

“I feel gratitude for spark of divine in each person here - compassion especially Bishop Sipuka”

“The intimate immediacy of God is present in the self, the other and everything”

“Humour. NB for establishing rapport”

“Learners must be able to see God.”

“Knowing that we are custodians of God's message.”

“As much as we are qualified and got our degrees, but we have to know that this is not ours but what God has sent us to do.”

“RE is for every child. Children need us to offer them respect and let the spirit flow, when dealing with them.”

“I've been feeling like I'm not growing. Today spiritual experience made me realise I have been hard on myself. Try to understand others. Be gentle with myself. We have a large Pentecostal community at school, staff and learners.”

“Scripture reflection - father David.”

“Gratitude for spark of divine in each person here: compassion (especially + Sipuka); the intimate immediacy of God is present in the self, the other and everything; humour: NB for establishing rapport.”

“Spirituality (I am spirit 1st), Pilgrimage, (Life is a pilgrimage) Scripture. My work is an aid to help me to know, love and serve God.”

“We remain spiritually enriched and feed our souls; see the other; bring love of god to others; if we are filled with love of God we can help others and share and the needy.”

“Importance of deepening own spiritual lives, through scripture, relationship with Jesus. Need to unpack scripture more. In touch and reality respond. More penitent and tilling the soil!”

“Spirituality of the RE educator: It can help one to have impact on the learners I am teaching. The things I say and how I carry myself.”

“Spirituality: standing on the shoulders of others.”

“Personal: Spirituality: Ensure that I take care of my own spirituality through prayer and introspection.”

“Spirituality reminded me that we can’t give to others if you don’t have it yourself. Take care of my spirituality.”

“Spirituality be aware how we effect learners have a Jesus personality to respect learners and not destroy them”

“Modernise RE curriculum, have humility and show AGAPE (love without restrictions), spirituality, importance of AI, but we must not lose our humanity...as we as people are SOCIAL BEINGS.”

“RE is sacred work & how we are standing on the shoulders of the religious”.

“Spirituality: difficult times will become easier if we accept the things we cannot change”

“The spirituality of the RE teacher touched me deeply, I feel ashamed that I have not realised that I am not only teaching knowledge but that I need to be there spiritually.”

“Pleased that we were reminded about the spirituality of the educator, sometimes I doubt myself, I am not sure that I give enough of myself.”

The importance of this section of the discussion, and why it is in the ‘Ways to Change the World’ part of this report, is that the personal spiritual transformation required of each teacher is the first step on the journey towards changing the world.

2.4.4. Ongoing Formation [22 References]

The next step (and one which must be repeated regularly along the journey of being an educator), is formation. There were 22 points at which this was mentioned, and 18 of them looked at the need for personal formation. Here is a selection of the statements in this regard:

“Conference has been a personal journey - you cannot teach a learner if we ourselves are not spiritually in a good place.”

“Learnt to stand firm on what God has called me to do.”

“Not an easy journey. It has many challenges. But by inviting Christ, I can do better.”

“Being a Catholic teacher made me real.”

“Faith journey - listening to others”

“I am being called. I felt burdened. I have to do everything because I am the only Catholic but I feel I want to work now for this precious pearl, RE.”

“Teachers are drained and overworked like Jonah. But today pressure has lifted. The child has given me joy”

“I am the only Catholic. I felt like I am fighting a losing battle. I feel I must stand firm.”

"We are called where we are - let's not run away like John. Teaching RE must be relevant to the real-life situation."

"Personal: It will help me to raise my kids at home."

"For the school: to have ongoing formation as staff"

"Personal: Spirituality: Ensure that I take care of my own spirituality through prayer and introspection."

"The input of RE. We can only be good RE teachers, if our own cups are full."

"Anne said we can't teach the way we were taught."

"I have come to realise that I am not the only one that is on a journey - the shell reminds me that everyone is on a journey."

"Conference has been a personal journey - you cannot teach a learner if we ourselves are not spiritually in a good place."

In the end, the point of the formation, reflection, processes and ways in which Religious Education occurs in schools, is the next and final section of this report: and Encounter with God.

2.4.5. Encounter with God [10 References]

The name for this theme comes from the prevalent phrase from the statements here:

"Encounter - how do we help learners to encounter God?"

"Know our kids. As RE teacher know your learners. So create an encounter."

"Bring learners to an encounter with Jesus."

"RE is extremely important. Need to create opportunities of hope and encounter"

"Prayer must be encouraged."

"Encounter, love God and neighbour, reflect and just be."

"Jesus: don't you know you can do nothing without me? I believe everyone is invited to relationship with God."

"Experiences: create spaces where everyone can experience God (such as Mass, Adoration, Pilgrimages, Prayers, Reflection)."

"Making experience for my learners."

"Need to give children the space and time to really encounter God to help them learn who they are."