



Non-Formal Education Meeting in Salamanca, Spain (October 2018)

Since the opening of our first school at St. Dorothy Church in Rome in 1597, the Piarist Fathers have tried to be innovators in the area of education. All of our members take a religious vow to educate the young, especially the poor.

Representatives from our various demarcations (provinces and vice-provinces) throughout the world met in Salamanca, Spain to discuss what some would consider a non-traditional type of education. The meeting took place from October 23 through October 26, 2018. They discussed *non-formal education*.

Father Federico Avila, Sch.P. and Father Nicolas Zunan, Sch.P. represented our Province of the United States and Puerto Rico at the workshop. Father Federico currently serves as the Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Playa de Ponce, PR. Father Nicolas is on temporary loan to our Province of Mexico, while he awaits permission from the Department of State of the United States to work as a religious in our country.

When a person thinks about the term *education*, he/she probably and immediately thinks about what educators usually refer to as *formal education*. In other words, he/she would think about “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded education system, running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.”ⁱ

Since the late 1960's and early 1970's, educators have increasingly also used the term *non-formal education*. This type of education acknowledges “the importance of education, learning and training, which takes place outside of recognized educational institutions.”ⁱⁱ

In short, “The distinction made is largely administrative. *Formal education* is linked with schools and training institutions. *Non-formal education* is linked with community groups and other organizations.”ⁱⁱⁱ



ⁱ Coombs, P. H. with Prosser, C. and Ahmed, M. (1973) *New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth*, New York: International Council for Educational Development.

ⁱⁱ Tight, M. (1996) *Key Concepts in Adult Education and Training*, London: Routledge.

ⁱⁱⁱ Smith, M. K. (2001). 'What is non-formal education?', *the Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*. [<http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-non-formal-education/>].