Invitation to Congress

Friday 5 February 2016

Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the Leadership Forum, it is my great privilege to formally invite you to participate in the first International Congress for Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders. Our gathering will be held in Kolkata in the first week of October 2016, with a pre-Congress program the week before as part of the experience.

To our Congress we will welcome delegates from every part of the world where Edmund Rice Education makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people. We are one in mission in a global coalition of almost 300 schools educating over 200,000 young people. Our work has been enriched by the cultures in which the Brothers and others have laboured for generations. Each culture brings a particular insight into the power of this vision. How much richer will we become as we share beyond borders the insights and reality of that vision making a difference in so many different contexts!

Through our gathering, we answer our common call to grow the charism of Edmund Rice; to share the extraordinary riches that our differing cultures have bought to this charism over many generations and to take part in the formation of a new expression of the work of Edmund Rice education based on global partnership and solidarity. We proclaim that we can all be stronger by sharing our diverse and rich cultural insights into our common vision. We embrace and nurture our new identity as global partners; one community in mission united by a common purpose and heritage.

Core to the vision of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders is our common vocation to proclaim education as liberation for all in our world, particularly those who are marginalised and disenfranchised; liberation and possibility for those who crave full participation in a world of ‘haves and have nots’. Given this vision, it is extremely appropriate that we gather under the title ‘Educating and Encountering Humanity’. Central to our Congress experience will be deep engagement not only with each other, but with richness and beauty of Indian culture and tradition, as well as the wonderful work of our schools in India.

Registration for the Congress will open in early March and be coordinated through your local EREBB Leadership Forum Member. Please visit www.erebb.org/congress for further information.

Please keep our Congress intentions in your prayers and we look forward to potentially welcoming you to Kolkata.

With every best wish

Dr Wayne Tinsey
Chair
Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders
FAQs

**WHY AN EREBB CONGRESS?**
Across the world there are over 280 schools that continue to be inspired by the Edmund Rice Charism. Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders (EREBB) was developed to enable collaboration and connection between these schools. The EREBB Congress will be the first opportunity ever for many of these schools to come together and further develop ways of enhancing the Charism in our world today. It truly will be a historical event.

**WHY INDIA AND KOLKATA?**
India is the world’s second most populated country and has a wonderful mixture of cultures and faith traditions. India has a long tradition of Edmund Rice education and is home to 22 schools educating over 30,000 young people. Kolkata was the first foundation for the Brothers in India and in 2015, St Joseph’s College celebrated 125 years of education. It is fitting to have the inaugural EREBB Congress in Kolkata at this significant time. Kolkata itself epitomises our global reality. It has a variety of Edmund Rice schools serving a diversity of young people, many faiths co-exist together and the injustices of our world are clearly evident through the gap between rich and poor that is present.
As Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi says, “India may be a land of over a 100 problems, but it is also a place for a billion solutions”. Come and experience, learn from and share some of these amazing solutions to the needs of our world!

**WHAT IS THE CONGRESS THEME?**
The Congress theme is “Educating and Encountering Humanity”. As Catholic educators in the Edmund Rice tradition we are called to educate for the betterment of all of humanity. This best happens when we, in the words of Pope Francis, engage in a “Culture of Encounter”.
Being held in one of the world’s most populous countries and cities, you definitely will have the opportunity to encounter humanity during the Congress!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE CONGRESS?
The Congress has two parts, a pre-congress immersion and the Congress gathering.
During the immersion, you will arrive in one of a number of different places in India (eg Delhi, Mumbai, Puri, Kolkata etc) and be met by a host school/EREBB representative. (Delegates will have the opportunity in March to nominate a place they would like to undertake the immersion). During this time you will visit an Edmund Rice school and/or a ministry where the Church is involved in social outreach. You will have the opportunity to meet and dialogue with Indian educators, visit schools and community projects and see how different Church groups are ministering to the poor of India. At the end of the immersion the group will travel to Kolkata together.
During the Congress there will be different keynotes, workshops, dialogue groups and presentations by a variety of people both from Edmund Rice schools and beyond.

WHAT DATES DO I NEED TO BE IN INDIA?
It is best to aim to arrive in India on Tuesday 27th September, 2016. (Delegates will know by April which city to book to land in, according to your pre-congress preferences). This will enable you to be ready to start the pre-conference immersion on Wednesday 28th September, 2016. The Congress will finish with lunch on Thursday 6th October, 2016.

WHO WILL I MEET AT THE CONGRESS?
During the Congress you will have the opportunities to meet educators from over 25 different countries, people involved in mission and community development in India, Brothers and co-workers from the Indian Province, as well as the many wonderful Indian people who will cross your path each day.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?
In Kolkata delegates will be accommodated at a hotel in Central Kolkata (Hotel Peerless Inn or similar). Each person will have their own en-suited room. During the pre-conference program, hosts will organise appropriate accommodation in the area where you are staying.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
In March you will be able to register for the Congress and nominate your preferred immersion site. Further information will follow. Please do not hesitate to contact EREBB if you have any questions E: info@erebb.org