



## **“Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA” Operative Basis for the Provincial Educative Project of Youth Ministry (PEPYM)**

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On 24 September 2005, as was requested to the General Council by the XXI General Chapter, the document *That they may have life and have it to the full. Guidelines of the educational mission of the FMA* went to press. The text has been translated into nineteen languages and the Provinces continue to deepen its content, further study it and present it to the communities and further studying it. Furthermore, starting from the XXII GC in Orientation 1., *Continuing the process of vital renewal*, there is a particular demand that: “The *Guidelines of the Educational Mission of the FMA* need to be presented, studied and deepened on our own and also with the members of the educating communities so that they can be the basis for pastoral planning, appropriate to diverse contexts. In this way we FMA and laity together, promote a culture of vocations and the Salesian spirituality and educational method”.<sup>1</sup>

We are now at this point, though some Provinces, besides the study and reflection on the document, have already begun the elaboration of the provincial project (PEPYM: Provincial Educative Project of Youth Ministry) or interprovincial project, or a general frame of reference.

The *Ambito* of Youth Ministry sent a letter to the Provincial Coordinators of Youth Ministry and, for information also to the Provincials, indicating some notes related to the elaboration of the *PEPYM*; and concretely, in some meetings in the American and Asiatic continents, suggestions were given for the elaboration of the *Provincial Educative Project of Youth Ministry*. Some short reflection documents were also proposed.

The *Ambito* of Youth Ministry thought it opportune to send the indications of the text of the *Guidelines* that they may be the basis for a *Provincial Educative Project of Youth Ministry*. Some Provinces have already started this process.

I now offer you some of the elements already mentioned in that letter that they may be useful to remember for this reflection as well as for the work that will follow.

### **1. An operative translation in keeping with the contexts of life**

As first element it is significant to remember that the document was elaborated in collaboration with all the *Ambiti*, and with the contribution of “young people, FMA and lay people, together with competent persons from different continents who are involved in education in various ways”<sup>2</sup> as an answer of the General Council to the deliberation of the GC XXI.

The ample involvement and the shared elaboration are criteria to be clearly considered also in the elaboration of the project at the provincial level.

From the *Dedication* of the document we can already see that the text has been offered to all the educating communities of the Institute.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts GC XXII, n. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA*, p. 6.

The *presentation* clearly indicates that the text offers “essential *guidelines* that will have to be translated into appropriate programmes for the concrete situations of age, family and social environment, culture and religion. These *guidelines* are meant to accompany the process of inculturation of the charism in various contexts, acting as points of reference that will guide our mission, and offer inspiration, motivation and criteria”.<sup>3</sup>

The document offers some *fundamental basic ideas for the elaboration of projects*. The *Guidelines* propose the pastoral model that should animate our educative environment. They are intentionally general and broad because of the intercultural character of the Institute. They are meant to be inspirational. They re-launch today the principles from a pastoral point of view; for this reason they will need to be “translated at the level of provincial and inter-provincial planning”.<sup>4</sup>

Such proposal was not meant to guide a *re-writing*, but an *operative translation* in keeping with the different contexts. It is not a question of elaborating anew the elements of the educative mission, since they have already been offered by the document *That they may have life and have it to the full. Guidelines for the educational mission of the FMA*; it is meant instead to “offer elements for re-thinking our youth ministry, in an organic and planned way, according to the Salesian style with the characteristics of Mornese, of which we are trying to be ever more conscious interpreters”.<sup>5</sup>

In the *conclusion* it is clearly specified: “these guidelines, which we have tried to write together, need to be translated locally into educational plans”.<sup>6</sup>

This clarifies that the principles which animate the youth ministry of the Institute have already been expressed in the guidelines; therefore the work of each Province or Inter-provincial Conference is to translate into operative criteria what is expressed in the *Guidelines for the educational mission of the FMA*.

The educating communities, in turn, in the spirit of the Preventive System and according to the plurality of environments present in each Province, are called to promote “a Christian vision of reality and a youth-ministry project that has as its aim the holistic education of the person”.<sup>7</sup>

It is necessary to understand that this is meant to be an *educational project of youth ministry* at provincial or inter-provincial level. In the elaboration of a *provincial or inter-provincial educational project of youth ministry* is important to narrate the experience, but is just as necessary to see that the planning refers directly to the document *That they may have life and have it to the full* offered to the whole Institute; this is in coherence with the spirituality of communion which we try to live at all levels.

The *Guidelines* present the characteristics which identify the youth ministry of the Institute of the FMA as concrete realization of the educative mission in the certainty that the Youth Ministry “is a way of working that relates education to evangelization”<sup>8</sup>. The *Guidelines* indicate clearly who we are, what we do, what we want and in what direction we want to walk. They are therefore the frame of reference which functions as ultimate horizon.

Similarly, at the Provincial or Inter-provincial level, it is necessary to translate these *Guidelines* into PEPYM in a way that identifies the pastoral action of the Province, clarifying the stable elements of the educative mission by presenting clearly the fundamental elements of the educational mission before the society and the Church. It will be a theological, anthropological and educative frame of reference for every pastoral action as well as the ultimate and constant inspiration for the operative choices. It is elaborated as the result of a process of reflection, research and dialogue between the provincial coordinators of Youth

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<sup>3</sup> *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ivi* n. 12.

<sup>5</sup> *Focus of Attention – Plan for the Six-year period 2009-2014 in the Youth Ministry Sector*.

<sup>6</sup> *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA*, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup> *Ivi* n. 137.

<sup>8</sup> *Ivi* n. 4.

Ministry and members of the other *Ambiti*, and the Provincial Councils, in order to favour a convergence of thought and of action concerning educative choices. It will be shared with the Educating Communities (in the multi-religious reality it must be shared specifically with the animating nucleus and made known to the members of the educating community so that, knowing the reality, they may freely accept the cultural horizon aimed at by the educative choice they made). This PEPYM has 'stable' validity since it offers general principles which sustain and define the youth ministry of the Province.

The following are to be presented in the PEPYM:

- The challenges of the present world in which we live our educative mission;
- Who is the subject of youth ministry;
- The Theo-anthropology which guides our educative mission; the horizon we want to reach (principle of the Incarnation which orientates the educational mission in the vision of Christian salvation. This criterion is fundamental to the pedagogy of the Preventive System and requires to keep present some pedagogical perspectives that allow and favour the integral maturation of the person);
- To who is this reflection proposed? To the Educating Community and significant adults who live the evangelical values with the young and re-launch holiness for a peaceful co-existence in solidarity (FMA, lay people, members of the Salesian Family, young people);
- How can we carry out youth ministry in the contemporary context marked by *multi-culturality* and inter-religious dialogue? How can we announce Jesus? We can do so by proposing experiences and itineraries that direct the life of the young to Jesus, and with a vocational perspective of youth ministry;
- The criteria that are at the basis of the Salesian environment;
- Priority strategies which will help to reach the pre-established goals.

The PEPYM presents valid indications for all the works present and specifications according to the various presences (Oratories, Youth Centres, schools, initiatives for children and adolescents in situations of risk, etc.).

The Local Educative Project of Youth Ministry (LEPYM) is the application of the PEPYM to the local reality, and therefore it refers to a local situation in which an educative community works. It indicates the operative objectives, the concrete guidelines and the means to achieve the objectives.

## 2. Significance of the Planning

We now recall a few elements useful to motivate the research and the fatigue which inevitably accompanies a process of planning. It is indispensable to offer good motivations in order to create consensus and give meaning to the actions that are accomplished.

To project or to plan, means to face an *ideal*. To make a project some elements are necessary:

- *To set an ideal* (goal-objective), clear, precise, possible, desirable, verifiable
- *To study deeply the situation*: analysis of the cultural and religious context
- *To confront the ideal with the lived reality*
- *To establish a series of actions* capable of making the real situation evolve towards the ideal.

The starting point for a project is the Holy Spirit, as gift given to the believers, principle of unity and of diversity *of the Church* and *in the Church*. To live in the Holy Spirit means to live in charity: to achieve communion with God and with those who accept Him through faith; to walk in time as pilgrims attracted by hope. Charity, in turn, is authentic in the measure in which it builds unity in diversity or it affirms its diversity in unity with, and for the unity of the community.

The Church, in order to live in the Spirit, proposes places where every Christian can experience the integration of the differences. A Christian community, alive and dynamic, is the fruit of the balance and the harmony in which tensions are faced between the need to overcome that uniformity which levels, flattens and destroys all differences, and the excluding division which is born from the exasperation of diversities.

The elaboration of a Provincial Educative Project of Youth Ministry promotes the efficacy of the whole Christian experience.

The document of the *Guidelines* shows the necessity for the educating community to act with a planning mentality: “In dialogue with the local culture and area, the educating community draws up an educational plan and adopts some *strategies*, within the framework of Christian humanism, that aim to build a just, peaceful, democratic society in which differences are harmonized”.<sup>9</sup>

The *Guidelines* will remain unheard if at the Provincial and local level we do not draw up an efficacious Educative Project of Youth Ministry, one that will not merely remain on paper. A project which identifies *processes and strategies* to adequately adapt to the reality and to the situation in which the young generations live in a certain context.

In the Salesian charism, the planning is motivated by the privileged attention given to the young. In obedience to life in the Holy Spirit, the passion of the *da mihi animas* urges us to set in motion a large involvement so that the elaboration of the project may be the contribution of the different components of the provincial/local reality: youth, laity, Salesian Family, FMA.

The educative project of youth ministry is the outlining of the *concrete journey* that a Province or an educating community intends to walk in order to be, *here and now*, sign and instrument of salvation.

With the PEPYM the provincial community takes on itself the profound needs of the persons who live in a certain area, as well as the calls of God in a precise historical moment.

To elaborate an educative project of youth ministry does not mean to simply organize the various activities in order to carry them out in orderly manner, more efficient and with less expenditure of energies; it rather means to ask ourselves:

- What action, what intervention we see necessary to undertake in the area in order to contribute towards the growth of the Kingdom of God in it?
- What change, what conversion, must we undertake in the life and the pastoral action of the Province or the Community, that it may promote the Kingdom of God in this historical and socio-cultural context?

To accomplish an educative project of youth ministry means to propose with clarity the principles and the criteria of the evangelizing education of the mission, to project and organize the various activities keeping in mind the *pedagogical perspectives of reference* so that they may contribute towards the growth of the provincial/local community.

The educative project of youth ministry offers, therefore, the priority objectives and the methodology that a Province or local Educating community intends to adopt, starting from the *Guidelines of the Educational Mission of the FMA*, in a precise historical moment and in a concrete context of life.

This reflection intends to be a simple help to accompany your journey of reflection and of elaboration of the project. We are looking forward to receive the draft of your PEPYM.

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<sup>9</sup> *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA*, n. 12.