

Rome, 01 November, 2019

Dear Link Coordinators of Marist Provinces and Districts,

Our warm greetings from the Institute's Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation. To begin, thanks for the time it will take to read this letter and for having accepted to be part of this Project. Thanks very much.

In 2017 the Marist Institute celebrated two hundred years of life! In that year the Marists of the world met at the XXII General Chapter and we took on some commitments. One of these commitments consists in **"developing initiatives for the participation and empowerment of children and young people in all the ministries"** in which we work.

The importance of the participation of children and young people on the international stage has gained strength in the last 30 years thanks, among other things, to the impetus given to it by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention has also had an impact on the Marist Institute and in this period there has been a multiplication of opportunities and forums for the participation of children and young people at different levels of animation and government.

It is also necessary to recognize that since the foundation of the Little Brothers of Mary, we have found valuable elements of what has developed over time into the rights of children and young people to freely express their opinion in all matters that affect them. Listening is a very important phase of the participative processes and we can affirm with certainty that listening to children and young people is at the heart of the Marist charism since its foundation, and in a particular way, listening to those who were living in the midst of poverty, spiritual ignorance and exclusion.

Such listening to children and young people is closely linked to the rights of children and adolescents to express their opinions freely in all matters that affect them, their opinions being duly taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity, as established in article 12 of the Convention on Child Rights, the most important international treaty on the human rights of children and young people.

It is thanks to these calls and to our charism that the **"Stand Up, Speak Out & Act"**¹ Project was born. With this initiative we think that in the framework of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on Child Rights and in view of the process that the Institute is going through, a suitable step is to promote and strengthen listening to the voices of the children and young people in our works, as well as to know and deepen their participation in the activities and processes in which they are involved.

In short, **we would like to ask the children and young people to help us build a document that defines criteria and suggests lines of action that promote their listening by the Marist Institute at different levels, in order to encourage their participation and empowerment.**

In each of the administrative units of the Institute we have the help of link persons who will be in charge of monitoring this consultation process and will send the contributions made by children and young people from different countries. In addition, and given the scope that we want to give to this document and to the process in general, we have also considered it important to listen to the voices and reflections of groups of educators on the right of children and young people in Marist ministries to play an active role. We thank you for sending us these ideas as well.

Both contributions, those of children and young people as well as those of educators, will enrich the **DRAFT DOCUMENT** that constitutes the starting point for this activity of consultation.

In the materials attached to this communication you will find different resources that will be useful for the work you have in your hands:

1. Document: *"Guide on the rights of children and youth to play an active role in the Marist Institute - Draft November 2019"*.
2. Document: *"Guide for the consultation of MARIST CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH on their rights to play an active role"*.
3. Document: *"Guide for the consultation of EDUCATORS on the rights of Marist girls, boys, adolescents and young people to play an active role"*.
4. Video² to motivate the Project: ((to be published November 18/2020)
<http://www.champagnat.org/000.php?p=832>

¹ The name of the Project in the official languages of the Institute has been translated as follows: (EN) "Stand Up, Speak Up & Act" Project, (ES) Proyecto "Levántate, Opina & Participa", (PT) Projeto "Levante-se, fale & participe" and (FR) Projet "Debout, Parle & Agis".

² The video has been prepared by young people from the Marist Youth Ministry of the Province of Central Mexico. To them our thanks.

5. Logo and poster³ of the Project.
6. Consent format for video, photos and interviews.

The Project schedule is as follows:

- **March 2019** - Launch of the Project at a meeting of the General Council with the Provincials and District Superiors.
- **March / November 2019** - Contact and mobilization of the "ad hoc" team⁴ and the "youth advisory team" (group of young leaders participating in Weaving Life, Guatemala 2019). Communication to the Institute. Sending of support materials.
- **March / November 2019** - Preparation of the "first draft" of the Guide.
- **March / November 2019** - Preparation of the strategy to be disseminated and validated in the Institute (during 2020).
- **November 20, 2019** - 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: local and provincial celebration activities to implement the project (including youth participation).
- **December 2019 / June 2020** - Participation in the local/provincial process with children and youth of the Institute for consultation, revision and improvement of the document.
- **May/June 2020** - Possible local/provincial "flagship" activity to compile and systematize (synthesize) contributions to the document (e.g., Brother Provincial or District Superior meetings with youth, Mission/Provincial Council with youth, youth festivals, etc.).
- **June 30, 2020** - Deadline for sending results of consultations to the General Administration in Rome: mission@fms.it
- **July / October 2020** - Systematization (synthesis), elaboration and design of the "final document".
- **20 November 2020** - Presentation of the "Orientation Guide" in an enlarged session of the General Council with the participation of young people. Possible simultaneous celebration with young people in the regions (and/or in their own countries). e.g.: Regional Councils, Provincial Councils, Launching of emblematic initiatives, etc.

³ The Project poster was designed by young people of the Marist College in Seville "San Fernando". Our thanks to the team and the Marist Province of Mediterranean.

⁴ Ad hoc" team proposal: Province of Central Mexico - Mrs. Socorro Álvarez, Mrs. Mónica Yerena; Province of Brazil Centro Sul - Brother Lucas Ramos; Province of Mediterránea - Mr. José Luis González; Province of Santa María de los Andes - Mrs. Claudia González; Secretariat of Education & Evangelization: Brother Carlos Rojas, Brother Mark Omede, Mr. Diugar Madera.

We now invite you to read in detail the complementary materials to this letter to know precisely what to do and the type of return formats we need.

Again, thank you very much for being willing to participate in this initiative. As you can see, your work and contributions will join those of the other Administrative Units in developing the final document.

In conclusion, we would like to mention that since 2011 the Marist Institute has been participating in the Day of General Discussion (DDG), an activity of the United Nations International Committee on the Rights of the Child. DDG is a biennial listening process for children and young people (0-18 years) based on specific articles of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2018, 11 administrative units participated in this listening with a total of 1652 participants. The next DDG will take place in 2020 with the theme of "Alternative Care". The General Administration in Rome is studying how to boost this process in accordance with the Marist institutional project that we have just presented to you. We will give you more information in future communications.

If you have any questions and/or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us to give you as much support as possible.

May God bless you and give us all the health and wisdom we need to continue serving children and youth.

Faternally,

Br Carlos Alberto Rojas
Director
Secretariat for Education & Evangelization

Br Mark Omede
Assitant Director
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