



**Fe y Alegría**  
INTERNACIONAL

**70**  
years  
Educating  
hearts



# **Fe y Alegría's**

popular education in

## **Africa and Madagascar**

**Nairobi, 2024**





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## Introduction

This document is the result of a long and fruitful work of reflection by the people who carry out the work of Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar. For more than a year (2023-2024) we have been analyzing and reviewing the educational and social work of Fe y Alegría at the local and national level in order to define common future lines of action based on what we have learned in the different contexts.

There were two milestones in this process, firstly, the collaborative work prior to the workshop that allowed a wide participation of the stakeholders involved in the movement with the intention of being able to hear as many voices as possible. They shared the challenges of the current context, expectations, dreams as well as the commitment to social transformation that has guided Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar since its inception.

The second milestone was the same workshop held in April 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya, with the participation of representatives from nine countries. The exchange and dialogue on the concrete experiences of each country created a favorable environment for building the foundations of this educational document. The consensus on the concerns and challenges common to all participating countries was key, making possible to develop a common language that strengthens the collective work and allows outlining a roadmap to improve Fe y Alegría education in Africa and Madagascar.

This document, in coherence with the principles of Popular Education in Fe y Alegría, takes up three fundamental components: the identity from which it defines its *raison d'être*, the context to which the work responds and the fundamental commitment to transformation through education. I hope that it will be the basis for the continuity of our Mission in this continent and that it will contribute to concretize the strategic commitments of our movement in Africa and Madagascar

I would like to heartfully thank so many people involved in this process, especially to the international preparatory committee of this Popular Education Workshop and to the Kenyan team for their organization and hospitality.

Daniel Villanueva SJ  
General Coordinator





## 1. Fe y Alegría<sup>1</sup>

It is essential to begin this document by recognizing that Fe y Alegría is an International Movement of Popular Education and Social Promotion, supported by the Society of Jesus in collaboration with various individuals and institutions committed to building a more humane and fairer world. Our focus is on the communities where we operate, promoting comprehensive and inclusive educational processes, and defending the universality of the right to quality education as a public good. Fe y Alegría is dedicated to the transformation of people and the promotion of a global citizenship that contributes to the construction of democratic social systems.

Our movement has its roots in Fe y Alegría, understood as essential attitudes. It arises from the experiences of faith in Jesus of Nazareth and his call to build the Kingdom of God and his Justice, especially in contexts of poverty and exclusion, always respecting and dialoguing with diverse religious and cultural expressions. This faith leads us to believe in the transforming capacity of all people, without distinction, to build a better world.

Our joy is nourished by encounters with people and communities, as well as by the commitment to personal and social transformation that emanates from the liberating experience of faith in Jesus. For this reason, we adopt a pedagogy that is both joyful and liberating.

As a Movement, we convey to society the urgent need to work collectively to eradicate poverty, inequality, injustice and the suffering of the most vulnerable people. This sense of urgency inspires us to network with boldness and creativity, leading us to re-examine our context and our identity, transcending limits and borders. To foster entrepreneurship and creativity, we value and empower the autonomy of countries and schools, thus unleashing community initiative.

We close this section by making our own the remarks of our general coordinator: “May the indignation that drives us in the face of marginalization and exclusion be transformed into prophetic hope for the thousands of people who are part of this movement. May the desire for educational justice be translated into concrete proposals that facilitate radical transformations, capable of awakening

1. FIFYA (2021) Mission, Vision and Decalogue of the International Federation of Fe y Alegría. Link to website: [International Federation of Fe y Alegría](#).

citizens and empowering communities in the most humanizing project possible. We are heirs of the great hopes of Vélaz, and it is a requirement of our identity as a movement to constantly review and uninstall ourselves, in order to live with greater coherence and fidelity our commitment to those most in need".<sup>2</sup>



2. FIFYA (2025) XLIX International Congress of Fe y Alegría "Challenges and Opportunities of Popular Education". Inaugural Speech General Coordinator. Quito.

## 2. Fe y Alegría Identity in Africa and Madagascar

Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar endorses the Mission and Vision of Fe y Alegría International as a work of the Society of Jesus and a Movement of Popular Education and Social Promotion that works to promote comprehensive quality education, especially for the most marginalized and vulnerable populations and communities.

As a work of the Society of Jesus, we make our own the Universal Apostolic Preferences<sup>3</sup> that guide us and inspire our mission.

Fe y Alegría Africa and Madagascar is part of a broader movement that transcends our continent and links us globally with other Fe y Alegría in joint actions from the International Federation of Fe y Alegría<sup>4</sup>.

The identity of Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar is articulated around three major indissoluble axes: spirituality, context and commitment.

### 2.1. Spirituality

Popular education in Fe y Alegría Africa and Madagascar is fueled by faith. As Christians, the spirituality that guides us is inspired by the Holy Scriptures. The book of Exodus, for example, tells us of the social and political commitment of Moses in the liberation of God's people, where God is seen as a liberator. Also, through the prophets, God opposes injustice, violence and exploitation of the poor. Christ, in turn, shows himself opposed to injustice and oppression, promoting love towards our neighbor, compassion and justice.

Spirituality allows us to become aware of our inner life and the people around us. Thus, we recognize our identity, which invites us to be more human and to commit ourselves to improve the living conditions of those who suffer, therefore, for us the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises are vital and lead us to internalize the following of Jesus and commit ourselves like him for the causes of justice and freedom<sup>5</sup>.

3. Jesuits Global (2019) Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus. 2019-2029 Link: [Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, 2019-2029](#).

4. International Federation of Fe y Alegría. Link to website: [International Federation of Fe y Alegría](#).

5. Mayemba, B. and Angarita, C. (2024) Spirituality and Liberation Theology from the perspective of Latin America and Africa. Papers presented prior to the May 2024 workshop. [Internal document](#).

As Paulo Freire, one of the founders of popular education, would say, spirituality inspires us to transform the world to restore human dignity. The popular education of Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar, following in the footsteps of Vélaz, is based on a “daring and missionary spirit” that responds to social crises, leading to the search for justice and transformative action, respecting cultures and contexts.

## 2.2. Context

Context is the second axis of the identity of popular education in Africa and Madagascar. Like our roots in Latin America, for us, the particular relationship with the context and with the members of the communities where we work is key, and from there we contribute to social transformation. As Freire pointed out, in order to understand the reality of the communities, we must first get close to their people, listen, observe, to understand and commit ourselves to their transformation. The commitment of Fe y Alegría Africa and Madagascar arises from this praxis.

In Africa and Madagascar there are injustices, oppression, exclusion, poverty and even “paupérisation anthropologique”<sup>6</sup> at the structural, pseudo-philanthropic, corrupt, indebtedness and cultural levels.

Engelbert Mveng<sup>7</sup> describes the situation in Africa by saying: “Who in Africa is poor and who is not poor? Everyone lives in uncertainty and insecurity..... Everything is beyond the control of the African man; he is not sure either of his independence or of the riches of his land. He has no control over his gold, uranium, oil, copper, diamonds, precious woods, cocoa, coffee, banana, cotton. To make matters worse, the family, solidarity, authority and tribal framework, everything has been undermined by the colonial system, almost everything has been pulverized”.

In the face of this alarming situation, we must dare to commit ourselves by reading the signs of the times, as suggested by the Social Doctrine of the Church.

6. Engelbert Mveng. (2016) Paupérisation et développement en Afrique. Link: <https://peuplesawa.com/fr/bnlogik.php?bnid=667&bnk=24&bnrub=1>

7. Engelbert MVENG, l'Afrique dans l'Eglise Parole d'un croyant, L'harmattan, Paris, 1985, p.207.

### 2.3. Commitment

The third axis of the identity of popular education in Africa and Madagascar, “commitment”, implies not only reading the signs of the times, but also responding appropriately. Considering the resources, potentialities and riches available in Africa and Madagascar, popular education invites to an action that prioritizes educational justice<sup>8</sup> and contributes to development through a liberating education.

Paulo Freire<sup>9</sup> distinguishes between banking education and liberating education. In banking education, the educator fills the students’ heads without considering their own capacities. For Freire, knowledge is made possible by recognizing that there is something to know, curiosity and the desire to know must be developed. If this desire is lacking, curiosity must be instilled and stimulated. To develop an educational program, one must first work collaboratively, get to know the community, its culture, customs, realities; dialogue with people and collaborate in the development of program content.

Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar, as in Latin America, responds to the crises that affect human dignity and access to education, which is a right. Africa and Madagascar need an education that liberates, promotes equality and justice as opposed to the education promoted by the African education system which has the characteristic of being “banking”, training students to memorize, not to develop curiosity and critical thinking. African educational systems are too much influenced by Western ones, out of step with African realities. It is necessary to emphasize practical training that responds to the social, economic and cultural needs of Africans.

The pillars of popular education<sup>10</sup> (ethical, pedagogical, epistemological and political pillars) and the social promotion promoted by Fe y Alegría invite us in Africa and Madagascar to be bold, effective and committed to the poorest, education is from them, with them and for them; as José María Velaz would say, “we should not give them a fish, but teach them to fish”, we should offer a quality education, “we

8. Borjas, B (2024) The Markers of Faith and Joy. Paper presented for the Africa-Madagascar PD Workshop. [Internal document.](#)

9. Cendales, L. and Gómez S. (2024) Freire’s Thought. Paper presented for the Africa-Madagascar PD Workshop. [Internal document.](#)

10. Cerrillo, L. (2024) La intencionalidad transformadora y los pilares de la educación popular en Fe y Alegría, paper presented for the PD Africa-Madagascar Workshop. [Internal document.](#)

cannot offer the poor a poor education". This education must prepare them for work, teaching them a trade that will allow them to be professionals and create their own businesses.<sup>11</sup>.

### Chapter summary

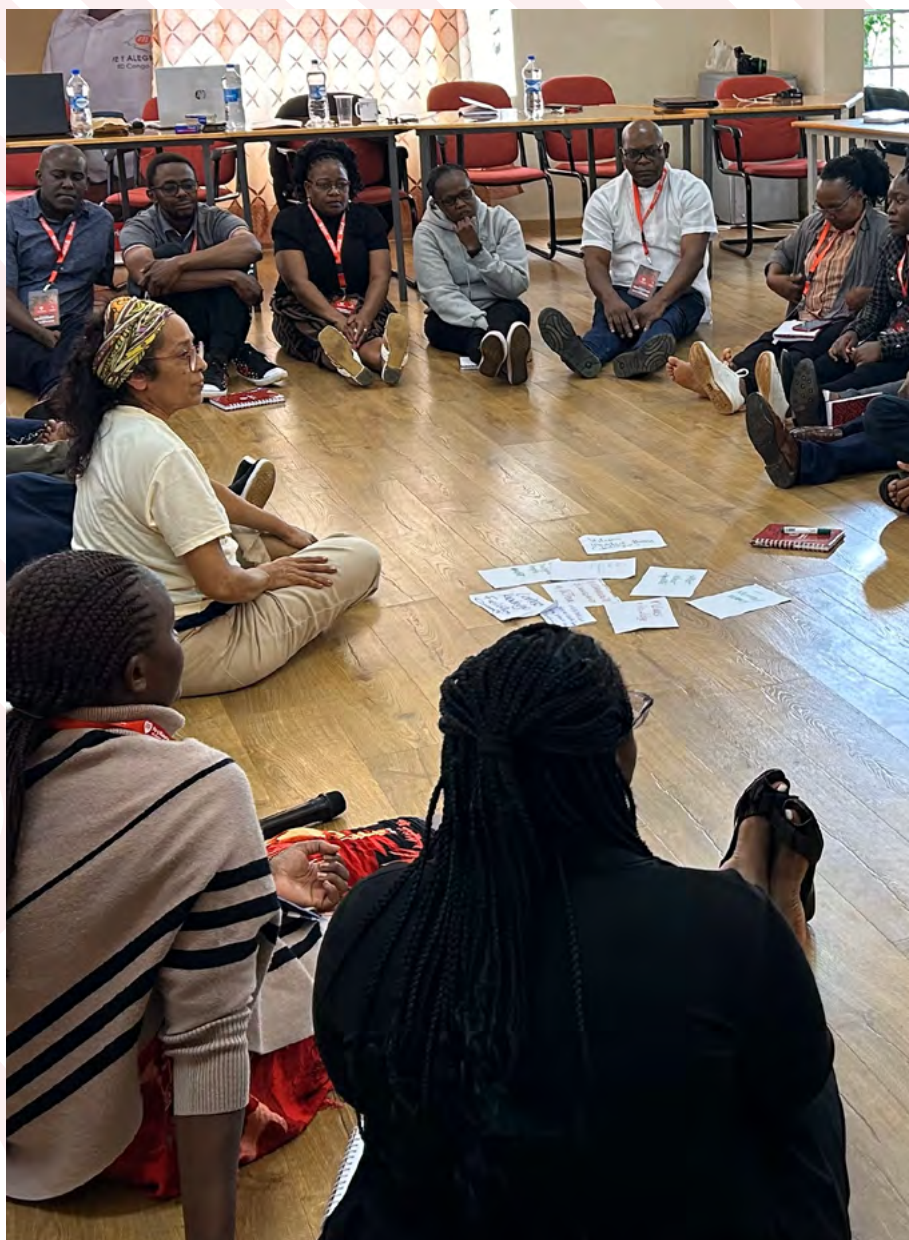
In summary, as a movement of popular education and social promotion we embody a bold and profoundly human vision, rooted in a living spirituality with a firm commitment to social justice. We work for human dignity, the defense of quality education and the empowerment of vulnerable populations, contributing contextually to the reduction and transformation of the inequalities that affect them.

At the heart of our mission, community collaboration and participation are essential. Because it is with and from the communities that we work for a liberating education, while taking into account their cultures, their aspirations and their desire to develop skills for the world of work and society.



11.- FIFYA (1999) From Spark to Fire. The history and stories of Fe y Alegría. Publication presented by the International Federation of Fe y Alegría. Link: [From Spark to Fire. The history and stories of Fe y Alegría.](#)







### 3. Education and the Cultural, Social and Economic Context

#### 3.1. Historical and cultural context

Historically, education arrived in Africa with evangelization, which developed at the same time as colonization<sup>12</sup>. Colonizers sought wealth by occupying territories to exploit their resources. The development of the population had to be aligned with this objective, even at the cost of exploitation and oppression. Thus, colonization projected a negative image of itself. In contrast, missionaries sought the integral salvation of the population through education, health care and social works. However, African countries had their own beliefs and cultures, which were often destroyed by the colonists. The independence of Africa and Madagascar occurred around 1960.

It is true that education was not a real path for the colonized countries towards their future, that is, towards true human flourishing. On the other hand, evangelization went hand in hand with colonization. After independence<sup>13</sup>, the colonization-evangelization association was not favorable for the early African era. Being seen as a colonization campaign, the school was initially received with reluctance and distrust, although it later became an object of desire and greed. To this day, the history of colonization and evangelization remains an obstacle to true development. It is clear that education was quickly understood, and schooling was supported and encouraged by Africans and Malagasy. Unfortunately, this education was guided by the colonial administration.

Traditional culture is more important than education. Many parents do not send their children to school due to poverty and certain mindsets. For example, in 2019, there were about 105 million out-of-school children<sup>14</sup> of primary and secondary school age in Africa, representing 41% of the global total. In addition, many children drop out of school without completing a cycle of education. Thus, in one cohort, one child in three does not complete primary school. In secondary education, only 41% of children in a cohort complete the first cycle, and only 23% complete the second cycle. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 87% of children have limited learning outcomes, cannot read and fail to comprehend simple text by the age of 10.

12. Kalubi, A. (2024) A critical look at education systems in Africa Madagascar. Paper presented for the Africa-Madagascar PD Workshop. [Internal document](#).

13. Ludovic, L. (2024) Socio-cultural Challenges of Education in Africa. Paper presented for the Africa-Madagascar PD Workshop. [Internal document](#).

14. Kalubi, A. (2024) A critical look at education systems in Africa Madagascar. Paper presented for the Africa-Madagascar PD Workshop. [Internal document](#).

From the cultural point of view, in some African countries, there is a tension between traditional culture and school education for boys and girls. For example, in the presentation of the educational context of Fr. Kalubi it is said that in the world we have 122 million girls are still out of school, moreover the proportion is worrying for Africa and Madagascar, since it is estimated that there are about 18.8 million girls out of school in primary<sup>15</sup> and in secondary in sub-Saharan Africa about 34 million adolescents of secondary school age are still out of school<sup>16</sup>.

The most frequently mentioned causes of girls' non-schooling are the following: physical and moral exhaustion due to forced labor, recurrent pain due to domestic slavery, early pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections due to sexual violence and female genital mutilations, which prevent them from having a normal schooling. We have a culture of belief in various divinities and tradition about girls who do not have access to advanced education. Boys among other tasks have the role of taking care of livestock.

### **3. 2. Socio-political context**

The socio-political context plays a crucial role in the definition and quality of the education system in Africa and Madagascar. Political dynamics, conflicts and governance practices have a profound impact on access to education, the quality of teaching and the opportunities offered to students and teachers. The key points related to this context are developed below.

#### **3.2.1. Armed conflicts and political instability.**

These are factors that seriously disrupt education systems. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad, violent clashes and civil wars have destroyed many schools. This violence forces students and teachers to flee their homes, disrupting the education of thousands of children. Schools, often attacked or requisitioned for military use, become dangerous places, discouraging families from sending their children to school. This widespread insecurity creates a climate of fear and stress that is especially harmful to children, affecting their ability to concentrate and learn.

15. OXFAM (2024) Transforming Education Financing in Africa. Link: [Over 18 million girls missing school in Africa as continent loses USD29 billion in education funding through flawed taxation](#).

16. Hassani, U. (2024) A Critical time to prioritize girls' secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa. Link: [A Critical Moment to Prioritize Girls' Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa](#).

### **3.2.2. Corruption.**

Corruption and mismanagement of public funds allocated to education are endemic problems in several African countries, such as Kenya, Angola and Nigeria. The practices of diversion of funds, nepotism and political favoritism compromise the equitable allocation of educational resources. Funds that should be used to improve school infrastructure, buy teaching materials and pay teachers are often diverted by corrupt officials. As a result, schools lack essential resources, which seriously affects the quality of education. Children in poor and marginalized regions suffer particularly badly, as they are deprived of the educational opportunities needed to lift themselves out of poverty.

### **3.3. Social and cultural disintegration**

The need for social integration in the face of educational systems that are exclusionary, vertical and separated from reality, which are the result of colonial educational systems; in the face of the diversity of cultures and religions; in the face of the migration of youth from communities to the city, of the population of African countries to other continents. Cultural and religious values have varied impacts on education. In some regions, they limit access to education, especially for girls, by assigning them traditional roles. However, in other contexts, religious institutions make up for the shortcomings of the state by providing essential educational services, especially in rural areas. There is a dream of an inclusive society that integrates the population and does not exclude it; a society with autonomy and its own identity in the face of decolonization processes and new “commercial colonizations”; a society open to development and globalization based on the recognition of its own identity.

In summary, the socio-political context in Africa and Madagascar is characterized by a combination of armed conflict, political instability and corruption that severely hinder the development of education systems. These challenges require coordinated and sustained interventions to restore security, promote good governance and ensure that all children, regardless of their place of residence or gender, have access to quality education. To achieve significant progress, it is essential that education policies are accompanied by measures to stabilize conflict regions, combat corruption and promote inclusive cultural norms.

### 3.4. Contexte socio-économique

The socio-economic context is fundamental to understanding the challenges and dynamics that influence access to and quality of education in Africa and Madagascar. Economic and social conditions determine not only who can access education, but also its quality and relevance. Key points related to this context are developed below:

#### 3.4.1. Poverty

Widespread poverty in many regions of Africa and Madagascar is a major barrier to access to education, recent data indicate that by 2024, about 429 million people in Africa will be living below the poverty line on US\$2.15 a day<sup>17</sup>. Families living in poverty are often unable to cover the costs associated with their children's schooling, such as tuition, uniforms and school supplies. This inability to cover basic costs excludes many children from the education system. In addition, poverty often forces children to work to help meet family needs, which reduces their available time for school and affects their academic performance. Without significant intervention to reduce poverty, many families will continue to view education as an unaffordable luxury.

#### 3.4.2. Unemployment

A high unemployment rate among graduates is a major concern in many African countries and Madagascar, according to data presented by the ILO<sup>18</sup> estimates that about 13 million young Africans (15-24 years) are unemployed. In addition, they point out that there are nearly 60 million other young people who are neither employed nor studying, most of whom would like to work, but face obstacles in seeking and/or obtaining employment. It is a discouraging context, according to the ILO<sup>19</sup> in Africa the unemployment rate is 6.3%, the rate of employment in the informal sector is 83.1%; the Rate of employed people living below the poverty line: 29.0%. Current education systems produce graduates whose skills do not match the needs of the local labor market. This discrepancy between education and the demands of the labor market leads many young people to work in the informal sector, where working conditions are often precarious and incomes insufficient to ensure economic stability.

17. Galal, S (2024) Extreme poverty as a percentage of the world population in Africa in 2024, by country. Link: [Africa: share of global poverty by country 2024 | Statista](#).

18. Karkee, V. and O'Higgins Niall (2024) African youth face pressing challenges in the transition from school to work link: [African youth face pressing challenges in the transition from school to work - ILOSTAT](#)

19. ILO (2024) Statistics in Africa. link: [Statistics in Africa - ILOSTAT](#)

Graduate unemployment not only wastes human potential but also perpetuates the cycle of poverty, as young people fail to use the skills learned in the school system to improve their economic situation.

#### **3.4.3. School infrastructure**

The lack of adequate infrastructure in schools is a widespread problem that hinders learning. Many schools lack essential resources such as teaching materials, libraries and laboratories. School infrastructures, where they exist, are often inadequate, with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient furniture and lack of basic amenities such as potable water and electricity.

These unfavorable conditions create an environment that is not conducive to learning, negatively affecting the quality of education and student achievement. Without substantial investments in school infrastructure, it will be difficult to improve the quality of education.

#### **3.4.4. Climate change.**

Extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and cyclones affect educational infrastructures and resources, directly undermining access to education. These climatic events not only compromise learning conditions, but also the availability of essential resources for schools and communities, exacerbating existing difficulties.

In summary, the socio-economic context in Africa and Madagascar is marked by complex challenges that require specific and coordinated interventions. Reducing poverty, improving educational infrastructures, aligning education systems with the needs of the labor market and integrating cultural and religious values in a positive way are essential to improve access and quality of education. Inclusive and adaptive education policies are needed to respond to the specific needs of different communities and ensure quality education for all.

### **3.5. The Educational Context**

No country in Africa ignores the importance of education. All countries give it a place of honor in their fundamental law, organize it in the form of a system and link it to a clear policy.

As mentioned in the first section of the historical-cultural context, education has a history on African soil. Education played a fundamental role in the daily life of

the people, it was the expression of a particular culture, a way of thinking and living specific to a people.

In our present day, education in Africa and Madagascar is marked by a multitude of complex challenges. Glaring inequalities in access and quality, high unemployment rates among graduates, unstable socio-political contexts, and varied cultural and religious influences create an educational landscape that is difficult to navigate.

However, reform efforts and community initiatives are attempting to alleviate these problems. This section explores in depth the educational reality and common concerns we have as countries.

### **3.5.1. Education Policy and Reform**

Almost all African countries have an education policy, defined as “a set of ideas or values about what education should be as a social institution and as a set of practices”. In other words, an education policy says what education should be like in a country. However, most of these education policies do not struggle to meet people’s expectations due to lack of realism, substantial resources and appropriate mechanisms. As a result, African education policies weaken and lose competitiveness, leaving Africa with an educational deficit on the international scene.

There is an urgent need to reform education systems to align them with local realities and labor market needs, especially in agriculture, technology and commodity processing. As an example of this, many local initiatives, often supported by NGOs and international organizations, seek to strengthen education through innovative projects and participatory approaches.

### **3.5.2. Access to Education**

Difficulty of access to education refers to the correlation between demand and supply. On African soil, there are staggering disparities/inequalities in access to education, with sub-Saharan Africa, for example, recording the highest rates of educational exclusion. More than one-fifth of children between the ages of 6 and

11 are out of school, followed by one-third of young people between the ages of 12 and 14.

These disparities are notable in urban and rural areas, in peripheral regions and in fairly modernized environments. Educational infrastructures are better developed in urban areas, while rural and suburban areas often lack schools and infrastructure. There are also large disparities in terms of age, gender and tribe. For example, preschool education is very underdeveloped in Africa, with UNICEF data estimating that only 25% of children between the ages of 3 and 5 are enrolled in preschool education<sup>20</sup> ; primary education faces internal constraints that are difficult to manage and there is greater difficulty in access to education for girls and ethnic minorities , illiteracy among young people and adults, according to UIS data<sup>21</sup>, almost 60% of young people between 15 and 17 years of age are not enrolled in school. In Madagascar, for example, children in rural areas suffer from limited access to educational infrastructure compared to those in urban areas. Rural schools often lack essential resources, and distances to school are longer, discouraging school attendance.

### 3.5.3. Quality of Education

The quality of education is often compromised by school programs that are not adapted to local realities. Schools lack essential resources such as teaching materials, libraries and laboratories. Teachers, often poorly trained and poorly paid, are unable to provide quality education.

School infrastructures are inadequate, lacking adequate classrooms, furniture and basic amenities such as drinking water and electricity. Recent data from UNESCO<sup>22</sup>, shows that learning levels are particularly low in Africa. At most, one in five children who reach the end of elementary school on the continent reaches the minimum level of proficiency. When completion and learning statistics are combined, children in Africa are about one-fifth as likely as those in the rest of the world to be prepared for the future. The minimum conditions for learning are not being met. Only one in three primary school students receives a meal at school. Only one in five is taught in his or her mother tongue. Each textbook is shared by

20. Unicef. (2024). Educación De La Primera Infancia. Enlace: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/early-childhood-development/early-childhood-education/>

21. UN (2016) Link: [263 million children out of school in sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO warns | UN News](#)

22. UNESCO. (2022) Blueprint for basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa, 2022: born to learn. Digital library. Link: [Spotlight on basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa, 2022: born to learn.](#)

an average of three students. Against this backdrop, thinking about the quality of education requires a comprehensive approach and a great deal of investment in education.

#### **3.5.4. Holistic approach to education**

Most African education policies pay special attention to formal education and consider the potential of non-formal education to be less beneficial. However, a one-sided approach in the African context means refusing to respond adequately to the growing demand faced by governments in this social sector.

Many NGOs, realizing this policy mistake by governments, have invested in non-formal programs to complement the work of the state and enable all populations to have access to education.

Education in Africa and Madagascar faces numerous challenges. Educational solutions adapted to local contexts are essential to promote quality education, reduce inequalities and ensure successful socio-economic integration for young people. To effectively respond to these challenges, it is crucial to implement education policies that emphasize quality, equity and relevance of education, considering local specificities.

#### **3.6. Common concerns**

With regard to education, a number of issues have remained unanswered for decades, including the establishment of effective systems, universal access to quality education, empowerment of beneficiaries and the ability to respond effectively to increasing demand.

These key issues Fe y Alegría is fighting for in the African context: education policy, access to education, empowerment through education and holistic approach to education.

From what has been explained in the previous sections, during the workshop some educational concerns were identified that are common to all countries and how socioeconomic problems affect the guarantee of the universal right to education:



Common educational problems
Unschooling and dropping out of school
Devaluation of the importance of the universal right to education.
Lack of educational policies
Curriculum not contextualized-disconnected to culture
Illiteracy and low schooling of girls
Lack of professional technical training
Lack of education that promotes integration and social coexistence among diverse cultures.

### Chapter Summary

In summary, we noted in Chapter 3 that education in Africa and Madagascar is at a crossroads, facing complex challenges inherited from colonial history, cultural tensions, socio-political instability, corruption and socio-economic inequalities.

Despite these obstacles, education remains an essential lever for human development, reducing inequalities and building a sustainable future.

To make real progress, it is imperative to adopt integrated approaches that consider the historical and cultural specificities of local communities, it is crucial to value local cultures by integrating them into education systems, while promoting standards of social integration that respect diversity and the rights of all, particularly those of girls and marginalized groups.

At the same time, concerted efforts must be made to strengthen educational infrastructures, train teachers and support families living in extreme poverty.

Only by collectively responding to these challenges, with a long-term vision and sustained commitment, can education fully play its transformative role as a driver of human development, peace and empowerment for future generations.

## 4. Education in Fe y Alegría

Faced with these problems discussed during the Workshop on Popular Education (Nairobi, 2024), Fe y Alegría, from the prophetic approach of its Mission, seeks to respond effectively to the educational needs expressed by marginalized populations and communities in the countries through the promotion of the following actions: Social transformation, educational justice and right to education, quality education, equitable and inclusive education, culture as the basis of education, promotion of mixed modalities of education, professional technical training and strengthening inclusive and collaborative pedagogy with the community.

### 4.1. Social transformation, educational justice and the right to education

We dream of an inclusive society that integrates the population and does not exclude it; a society with autonomy and its own identity in the face of the processes of decolonization and the new “commercial colonizations”; a society open to development and globalization based on the recognition of its own identity. Given the large number of illiterate and unschooled people in disadvantaged populations, our efforts should be directed to expand school coverage, especially in disadvantaged sectors. And in the face of the indifference of the States to this reality, the FyA are positioned in the defense of the Universal Right to Education and the right to Learning, opting for educational equity, attending to the most marginalized communities (Reaching where others do not reach).





This requires networking in several areas:

- The exchange between countries - the different themes were the pre-text (mediation) to talk about their own contexts and experiences; to dialogue and listen from the local level and to broaden the gaze in the encounter with the other towards inter-national dialogue; the definition of one's own, taking up what is part of the African identity and that of other latitudes. Mise en réseau avec d'autres organisations en Afrique et à Madagascar au-delà de Foi et Joie.
- Networking with other organizations in Africa and Madagascar beyond Faith and Joy.
- To influence the public as a network of national FyA's with different objectives: (a) to agree on common priorities; (b) to be stronger when advocating and dialoguing with national, regional and international organizations for the defense of quality education for all; (c) to denounce injustices and violations. of the right to education.

#### **4.2. Quality education**

Quality is the workhorse of all Fe y Alegría in Africa. The primary concern in this vision of education is to have the resources necessary to ensure quality education for marginalized individuals and communities. This work begins with infrastructure provision, staff training, teacher training and community support.

In particular, Africa needs qualified teachers; moreover, improving the quality of the education provided requires training teachers in both pedagogical and methodological skills so that they are able to educate in a "different" way from the traditional one, in line with the principles of Fe y Alegría's popular education, placing the students at the center of learning and eradicating the harmful effects of "severe discipline" by teachers. The task of teacher training has always been the key to Fe y Alegría's work.

Quality implies investing in research and innovation, so we are thinking of three areas in which research proposals could be developed:

- Educational and social research is a challenge in African FyA's since promoting educational changes, changes in society, including care for the environment, involves research to find out the best solutions, but above all, it involves having a global frame of reference on the model of sustainable development to which we aspire.
- Community-based social research - the community being the focal point of social transformation, the epistemological place from which knowledge is

constructed and the pedagogical place from which academic disciplines are learned.

- Action research from the formative spaces - to reflect from one's own practice in order to transform it.

#### **4.3. Inclusion and educational equity**

Inclusion contributes to eliminating disparities. This can be seen, for example, in the efforts made to resolve the differences between rural and urban areas. Inclusion is also about categories of people. It means taking into account the needs of people who are politically excluded from this fundamental right and acting from an equity approach to contribute effectively to those needs.

The great inequalities found in rural areas have led countries to focus firstly on rural areas and secondly on the peripheries of large cities. This option implies, from this point of view of educational equity, integrating into the educational work educational programs that respond to the needs of the communities in terms of agricultural production in order to improve the economic capacities of parents, which results in the financial autonomy of schools.

#### **4.4. Culture as the basis of education**

The African experts agreed in questioning the school model in Africa. Education in Africa is strongly westernized and therefore decontextualized (Mayemba would say: "disembodied", Ludovic: "separated from life"). As a result of this westernization of culture and education, the context is little studied; moreover, it is little appreciated.

An important point in the African question is anthropological poverty: the history of slavery, of colonization, of Western domination in Africa has denied our humanity, has reduced it, has annulled it, has made it poor; a poverty that touches our being as Africans.

During the workshop, this aspect was discussed in depth: a liberating education has a double task: on the one hand, to teach in depth the African context (its history, its culture, etc.) and, on the other hand, to value one's own identity. This is a novelty in the educational field, it is not classic.

In addition, there is great confidence in the role that schools should play in societies where great cultural and religious diversity coexists. In Africa there are between 2,000 and 3,000 ethnic groups speaking more than 2,138 languages<sup>23</sup>. There is an urgent need for social integration in education: in the face of exclusionary, vertical and detached from reality educational systems that are the result of colonial educational systems; in the face of the diversity of cultures and religions; in the face of the migration of youth from the communities to the city, of the population of African countries to other continents, etc. A shared culture that favors social integration should be promoted in schools, avoiding the negative effects of tribalism that some countries try to impose.

As a popular education movement, Fe y Alegría advocates that all other local cultures be considered in all educational efforts. In Africa, the educational programs offered by Fe y Alegría consider this important dimension of the communities. Cultural values are considered and respect for them is encouraged. These values are combined with religious values. In some countries, for example, Fe y Alegría is an important tool for interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

#### **4.5. Technical vocational training**

In the work prior to the workshop, the lack of technical training was identified as a sensitive need for education, “there are unique programs that do not respond to market demand, as well as the high number of unemployed young graduates”. For Fe y Alegría, developing programs focused on learning for the acquisition of basic skills is fundamental, thus contributing to the empowerment of individuals and communities. Most of these programs open the door to entrepreneurship so that the beneficiaries become true actors in sustainable development. The main beneficiaries of these programs are unemployed youth and adults.

#### **4.6. Mixed approaches**

The complexity of the demand for education in Africa requires the adoption of mixed approaches to make the offer of governments and their partners more effective. This is why Fe y Alegría develops mixed approaches, linking formal education

23. Tsayem, S (2024) Challenges and opportunities of popular education in the current context, from a human rights approach: the case of Africa. Paper presented at the XLIX Congress of Fe y Alegría.

with non-formal and informal education, in order to respond adequately to the demands of particularly marginalized populations. This vision of education makes it easy to guarantee all populations their right to education, which has led Fe y Alegría to promote educational programs aimed at adult literacy and job training for out-of-school youth.

#### **4.7. Collaborative and inclusive pedagogy with the community**

The idea of community is present in Fe y Alegría from different angles: (a) to contribute to the development of marginalized communities; (b) for the population to become actors in their own history; (c) to integrate their knowledge in the teaching-learning process; (d) to generate awareness processes and make them aware of their own situation; (e) to recognize them as active agents of learning; (f) for the involvement of parents in the management of the school which broadens the educational role that the school must fulfill beyond the interest in the pedagogical and didactic. The opinion of one of the workshop participants sums up this intention: “By involving the community at large, it emphasizes that education is not limited to the classroom but extends to the social fabric of the community. This collaborative approach strengthens community ties and promotes a collective responsibility for education.”

#### **Chapter summary**

In conclusion, in this chapter of Education, by integrating a prophetic approach into its educational mission, Fe y Alegría is positioning itself as a key player in the social transformation and emancipation of marginalized communities in Africa. Through its initiatives to ensure quality, inclusive and equitable education, Fe y Alegría strongly defends the universal right to education for all, while ensuring that the cultural and social specificities of communities are considered. By valuing local culture, promoting participatory education and supporting appropriate technical and vocational training, Fe y Alegría strives to respond to the complex challenges of the continent and actively contribute to the construction of a more just and caring society. This educational model, centered on the right to learn, focuses on the needs and protagonism of individuals and on the involvement of communities in their right to learn; it embodies a vision of education as a lever for change, in which each individual, regardless of his or her context, can become the protagonist of his or her own future.



## 5. Challenges and opportunities in terms of popular education

This chapter arises from the reflections made during the workshop, challenges are posed in the form of questions that serve as a framework of discernment for reflection and deepening that lead to the identification of opportunities at the common level (continent) and particular (each country).

### 5.1. Educational justice, the central axis of Popular Education

How to understand educational justice in terms of rights and not in terms of charity? What would be the tasks to carry out this promotion of the universal right to education and the focus on the right to learn? To expand school coverage within FyA? To establish alliances with the State or with civil society organizations to strengthen existing schools? To implement massive literacy and/or school reinsertion programs? What scenarios and actions can we develop to access educational justice?

### 5.2. Strong concern about the urban-rural divide

In economic terms, giving priority to rural areas implies greater investment in travel and in the construction of solid infrastructures, as well as a diversity of non-formal educational programs aimed at families. How to adapt the curriculum to each cultural context? How to deal with the shortage of properly trained teachers? How to manage resources in places distant from urban areas better equipped with services?

### 5.3. Reflections on the school model and vocational technical education

During the workshop, working on technical professional training was a common interest in all the countries. Some questions that can help to deepen this path are: What does an education based on local realities imply? What strategies are the most adequate to appreciate the richness of the cultural context when they are





unknown to the majority of students and educators? In each country, schools must respond obediently to official curricula; in this sense, it is necessary to go deeper into how would that model of school or education be in terms of curriculum, management, teacher profile that can adapt to the challenges posed?

#### **5.4. The school as a laboratory for social and intercultural integration**

To have a deeper understanding of these cultural and religious differences in order to reach agreements on how to build and manage this common culture according to the reality of each country. From the pedagogical point of view, in what strategies and methodologies can the teaching staff be trained so that they can manage a teaching of integration and social coexistence? How can the classroom climate be a micro-space of the society we dream of without exclusions?

#### **5.5. Collaborative and inclusive pedagogy with the community**

Promote the exchange of experiences among African Fe y Alegría organizations with a focus on the community level, as well as the inclusion of community development projects in their budgets.

#### **5.6. Schooling of girls**

Girls, in particular, are at a disadvantage due to cultural norms and increased domestic responsibilities, which reduces their schooling rate and increases their risk of dropping out of school. What strategies are the most relevant to promote girls' schooling? Have those that have been implemented so far been evaluated? How to develop reflections and studies from a gender perspective in education on the social representations that are culturally held about women?

#### **5.7. Ongoing teacher training**

Search for resources for this training, seek to partner with the State or universities or organizations that can support this training aware that it must be carried out within the framework of the principles of popular M&A education. Specific training is required, e.g.:

- Contextualize the curriculum from community perspectives, how to integrate and link their own with scientific content for the development of their localities.
- As opposed to a banking and vertical education, to be trained in an education based on participation, dialogue and empowerment; social skills such

as learning to listen and recognize their voices (individual, group, family, community), their understanding of the world that gives sense and meaning to disciplinary knowledge in order to transform their personal and community life.

### 5.8. Networking

Continue generating spaces for face-to-face and/or virtual exchange; how can we strengthen common pedagogical lines to influence transformation?

Training on the right to education and quality, training on networking and partnerships with different sectors; proposing debates to help identify issues for the public agenda in the African context.

#### Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter highlights the challenges and opportunities facing Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar in promoting transformative and inclusive popular education. Whether it is ensuring educational justice, reducing disparities between urban and rural areas, or prioritizing girls' schooling, each issue calls for in-depth reflection and concrete action.

The adaptation of educational models to local realities, continuous teacher training and inclusive pedagogical methods are other means of guaranteeing quality education that responds to the needs and aspirations of communities in their right to learn.

Finally, strengthening local and global networks and partnerships is a cornerstone for sustaining these efforts and amplifying their impact. Taken together, these lines of action outline a vision in which popular education becomes a powerful tool for social transformation and the promotion of human dignity.

## 6. Lines of Action for Education and Social Promotion

Chapter 4 presented seven major actions to work on education and social promotion in the coming years. In this section they are organized as lines of action and with their respective activities as work input for the Africa-Madagascar Commission. An eighth line of action related to the Socialization of the Popular Education document of Fe y Alegría in Africa Madagascar is added. It is recommended that each of them be linked to a priority axis of the Global Plan of Federative Priorities (Popular Education, New Frontiers, Sustainability and Public Action).

- I. Social transformation, educational justice and the right to education.
  - a. Expansion of school coverage in the most marginalized and underprivileged sectors of the population.
  - b. Attention to illiterate and unschooled persons
  - c. Position the universal right to education, especially for the most marginalized communities.
    - Networking among countries to agree on common priorities.
    - Networking for national, regional, international dialogues.
    - Networking with other organizations.



## II. Quality education.

- a. Availability of the necessary resources for infrastructure, staff training, community support, etc.
- b. Teacher training in pedagogical and methodological competencies
- c. Research.
  - Educational and social research.
  - Community social research.
  - Action research for teacher training.

## III. Equitable and inclusive education.

- a. Development of technical programs in agroecology, agricultural production with communities/families.
- b. Educational proposals for rural education.
- c. Early childhood care.
- d. Strategies for promoting girls' schooling.

## IV. Culture as the basis of education.

- a. Dialogue of knowledge among countries on cultural and religious differences.
- b. Design of school and pedagogical strategies for social integration and coexistence.
- c. Contextualization of curricula from a cultural and community perspective (Contextualizing the curriculum from a community perspective, how to integrate and link their own with scientific content for the development of their localities).

## V. Mixed modalities of education.

- a. School model based on local realities (management, curriculum, teacher training).
- b. Non-formal and community education model
- c. Other models

## VI. Professional technical training.

- a. Technical vocational education - basic skills program.
- b. Strategies to expand the coverage of professional-technical centers.

## VII. Inclusive and collaborative pedagogy with the community

- a. Working with parents for school management.
- b. Leadership and empowerment program for different stakeholders.
- c. Spaces for dialogue and reflection school community.

## VIII. Socialization and implementation of the popular education document Africa Madagascar.

- a. Definition of training meetings on popular education during the year.  
Presentations are available. To create synergies with the International Federation's Pedagogical Framework for Popular Education..
- b. Definition of the Route/plan at the country level, based on the Lines of Action
- c. Exchange between coordination offices and educators on the experience of integrating the Popular Education document.

## 7. Annexes

### 7.1 General Data

The General Coordinator of the International Federation Fe y Alegría, Daniel Villanueva S.J., made official the holding of the Workshop on Popular Education in Africa and Madagascar on April 21, 2023 and requested the formation of a Preparatory Commission for the workshop:

Workshop Commission Coordinator: Tsayem Saturnin S.J.

Methodological Team: Alfred Kiteso SJ, Beatriz Borjas y Lucila Cerrillo

Logistics Team: Robby Ospina, María Laiglesia Ortiz, James Mugwe SJ

The Workshop was held at the Mwangaza Spirituality House, Nairobi Kenya from April 22-26, 2024. The participants were:

- Three Federated Fe y Alegría: Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar.
- Three emerging Fe y Alegría: Kenya, Angola and Guinea.
- Guests from Jesuit Works of Nigeria, Rwanda/Burundi.
- Delegates for Education of the Conferences of the Society of Jesus in East and Northwest Africa.

The Board of Directors supported and was present at several key moments of the Workshop

Daniel Villanueva SJ President of the Board of Directors Robby Ospina Executive Secretary	Alfred Kiteso SJ Gehiomara Cedeño Ramón Almansa Marco Tulio Gómez SJ Sr. Nancy Fretes, ODN
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## 7.2. List of Participants

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Nationality</b>
1	Saturnin Tsayem Dongmo SJ	FyA. Tchad	Director	Cameroon
2	Minitaknde Casimir Ralongar	FyA. Tchad	Project Manager	Chad
3	Innocent Nodjigoto	FyA. Tchad	Administrator	Chad
4	Alfred Kiteso SJ	FyA. RDC	Director	DRC
5	Micheline Kwango	FyA. RDC	Pedagogue	DRC
6	Arvie Vangu Muayi	FyA. RDC	Project Manager	DRC
7	Jean Guy Tahina SJ	FyA. Madagascar	Director	Madagascar
8	Anselme Rahaolahy	FyA. Madagascar	Project Manager	Madagascar
9	Claude Michel Randrianarison SJ	FyA. Madagascar	Head of Pedagogy	Madagascar
9	André Herculano Salamambo SJ	FyA. Angola -Emergent	Director	Angola
10	Etienne Senyuy Mborong SJ	FyA. Guinea-Emergent	Director	Cameroon
11	James Mugwe SJ	FyA. Kenya	Director St Joseph	Kenya
12	Mary Ndinda Kamonde	St. Joseph Technical Sec.	Director	Kenya
13	Alfred Munyao Nzioki	St. Joseph Technical Sec .	Deputy Director	Kenya
14	Joseph Kinuthia Njoroge	St. Joseph Technical Sec.	Dean of Studies	Kenya
15	Verah Masenge	St Joseph Upendo	Program Coordinator	Kenya
16	Cynthia Mirenja Odanga	St Joseph Uzima	Program Coordinator	Kenya
17	John Gathoni	St Joseph Development Progr.	Head of Programs	Kenya
18	Fancy Chepngetich	St Joseph Development Progr.	Accountant	Kenya
19	Dcn. Francis Kyalo SJ	SJDP	Communication	Kenya
20	Urbanus Kioko	SJDP	Driver	Kenya
21	Osaretin Thaddeus Jonah SJ	Province Northeast Africa	Provincial Education Assistant	Nigeria
22	Irene Chinaegbomkpa Ugwoegbu	Sisters of Charity	Principal Nazareth School	Nigeria
23	Innocent Kamanzi SJ	Rwanda Burundi Region	Education Delegate	Rwanda
24	Fr. Odamaro Mubangizi SJ	Hekima University	Vice Rector	Kenya
25	Fr. Allan Ggita SJ	Jesuit Development Office	Director	Kenya
26	Sergon Pascalia	AJAN (African Jesuits Aids)	Capacity building	Kenya


27	Beatrice Munezero	JRS - Education	Coordinator	Burundi
28	Lucila Cerrillo López	FIFYA -FyA Nicaragua	Popular Education Axis Coordinator	Mexico
29	Beatriz del Consuelo Borjas Borjas	FIFYA	Pedagogical Training Initiative	Venezuela
30	María Laiglesia Ortiz de Viñaspre	FIFYA -Entreculturas	Internationalization Team	Spain
31	Pablo Funes Herrera	FIFYA - Entreculturas	Internationalization Team Coordinator	Spain


	Board of Directors	Organization	Role	Nationality
1	Daniel Villanueva SJ	FIFYA	General Coordinator	Spain
2	Alfred Kiteso SJ	FyA. DRC	Director	DRC
3	Gehiomara Cedeño	FyA. Ecuador	Deputy Director	Ecuador
4	Ramón Almansa	FyA. Spain	Director	Spain
5	Marco Tulio Gómez SJ	FyA. Panama	Director	Guatemala
6	Hmna. Nancy Fretes ODN	FyA. Paraguay	Director	Paraguay
7	Robby Ospina	FIFYA	Executive Secretary	Colombia


## 7.3 Presentations


<b>Name</b>	Carlos Enrique Angarita and Bienvenu Mayemba S.J.	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	Spirituality and Liberation Theology in Latin America and Africa	
<b>Overarching themes of the presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reflections and insights on liberation spirituality.</li> <li>-Milestones Liberation Theology in Latin America/Africa</li> <li>- Main thinkers / Actors</li> <li>-What were the orientations</li> <li>-Reference to the texts of the Bishops' Conferences in LA/Africa</li> </ul>	





<b>Name</b>	Lola Cendales Santiago Gómez	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	Trajectory of the evolution of Freire's thought "From the pedagogy of the oppressed to the pedagogy of hope."	
<b>Prompt questions for the presentation</b>	Keys to Paulo Freire's thought What the figure of Paulo Freire has meant for Popular Education in Latin America. Opening horizons in Fe y Alegría Africa from Paulo Freire's thinking. What is the validity of Freire's thought? What are Freire's thought tracks that can guide us in our educational context African? From what we know and our experiences, What are some referents of popular education? in Africa?	

<b>Name</b>	KALUBI Augustin, SJ	
<b>Name of lecture</b>	A critical look at education systems in Africa and Madagascar.	
<b>Presentation topics</b>	Historical evolution Current status and future prospects International Organizations - Statistics Reflections for Fe y Alegría in Africa and Madagascar	

<b>Name</b>	Ludovic LADO SJ	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	What challenges does culture pose to education in Africa and Madagascar?	
<b>Summary of presentation</b>	Cultural mosaic in Africa and Madagascar African cultural anthropology Communitarianism/Multilingualism/Interculturality Colonialism/Postcolonialism	

<b>Name</b>	Beatriz Borjas	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	Vélaz's markers in Fe y Alegría	
<b>Summary of presentation</b>	The roots of Fe y Alegría Characteristics of the Fe y Alegría model in its beginnings	

<b>Name</b>	Lucila Cerrillo López	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	The pillars of popular education at Fe y Alegría	
<b>Summary of presentation</b>	Fe y Alegría's transforming intentionality What are the pillars of popular education in Fe y Alegría? What kind of questions arise from each pillar?	
<b>Name of presentation</b>	Social promotion in Fe y Alegría	
<b>Summary of presentation</b>	The relationship between social promotion and transforming intentionality Social promotion and the pedagogical process The training of the social subject for transformation	





**Do you want to know how to say Fe  
y Alegría in indigenous languages?**

Find out here



**Scan the QR and enjoy the musical  
sample (Jambo song, Hakuna Matata /  
Kiswahili language) of the students of  
St. Joseph's school in Nairobi, Kenya.**

Their voices reflect the power of education, the  
joy of learning and the hope for a better future.



**Fe y Alegría**  
INTERNACIONAL

**70**  
years  
Educating  
hearts