



Fe y Alegría

XLVIII International Congress of Fe y Alegría

Educator's role for the 21st century new popular education frontiers

It is indisputable the accelerated changes at the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental levels, as well as the events to which we have been exposed as humanity due to the Covid 19 pandemic, call us to reflect on the purpose of this new school that must be rethought and remade in order not to continue exacerbating inequalities and gaps in terms of equity; and of course, a call also to reimagine the place of the educator in this new school.

The reconstruction of the role that we as educators have in the face of the challenges posed to popular education in the new frontiers of the 21st century was initially motivated by a base document prepared by the congress commission, followed by the reflections made by Victor Murillo, Marco Raúl Mejía, Carmen Pellicer, Montserrat del Pozo and Pepe Menendez in the virtual forum last April, and enriched by the reflection, debate and work of hundreds of educators from many Fe y Alegría in the framework of the activities carried out during the pre-congress phase.

The following are the guidelines provided by the commission to reconstruct the role of the educator around four components, the role in the new frontiers that are presented as a challenge in Fe y Alegría, the role in the framework of the spirituality and identity of the Movement, the role in the configuration of a new society and finally, the role in the configuration of new pedagogical practices in the different educational spaces.





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Reference document for the educators work

I. Educator's role for the 21st century new popular education frontiers.

In the 21st century, the context is undergoing profound transformations which affect, among other factors, the economy, politics, science, technology, health care, the environment and education, as highlighted in the document that it has guided the reflection on the “Challenges and new frontiers of popular education”. This transformation process exacerbates inequalities and gaps in terms of equity and represents a challenge for the popular educator: education must be reconfigured to give new responses to the new frontiers of inequity, exclusion and injustice and with it the role of the educator.

The popular educator must, therefore, play a new role defining the commitment that they must assume in their task of promoting social transformation. Ideally, they should do so assuming an ethical, political, pedagogical and spiritual approach, assumptions on which popular education is based. They should also work from and with the demands of local and global communities to train citizens who are agents of social change and protagonists of their own development.

Víctor Murillo, quoting José Antonio Fernández Bravo, expresses in his “Palabras para educar. Alimentando el espíritu de Fe y Alegría en la cuarentena (2020)” (Words to educate, Feeding the spirit of Fe y Alegría in quarantine (2020): “The challenge is clear, [because the main mission of educators] is to teach, it is only reliable when learning takes place” (p. 5), therefore, achieving social transformation in these new frontiers of exclusion will only be possible if we first manage to “guarantee the right to education and the right to learn to all the students that we have enrolled in schools. , without excluding anyone, without anyone getting lost along the way ”(Murillo, 2020, p. 5).





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Consequently, the 21st century challenges Fe y Alegría educators to ask themselves:

- Education, where? It implies recognising what are the new frontiers of popular education, which affect society globally and locally;
- Education, from where and how? It involves the reflection and incorporation of innovative educational practices in popular education adjusted to the new challenges to produce real learning, and
- Education, what is it for? It recognises the need to ensure the ethical dimension, as well as the political and spiritual dimension of popular education in educational practice, in order to favor the interests of the most vulnerable groups.

The scenario takes us to a deep reflection about the new frontiers that have recently appeared and affect the whole society and our students and educators. Assuming this challenge, the XLVII International Congress of Fe y Alegría, held in Madrid in 2018, called on each country that makes up the Federation to move towards the new frontiers of exclusion and take root alongside the invisible and discarded people by the system. The countries made an analysis of the reality from which new challenges and fields of action were identified in order to rethink Fe y Alegría's mission.

The work carried out allowed us to recognise that the countries, despite their cultural, historical and geographical differences, face similar challenges which turn out to be a consequence of the social, political, economic and ethical crisis. Poverty, violence, social instability and socio-environmental crisis lead millions of people to be forced to leave their homes and migrate. Likewise, xenophobia and discrimination are growing, deepening social fragmentation and polarisation. Corruption weakens democratic systems and produces the crisis of the public system. And thus, education loses weight in social policies and gradually becomes a market product only accessible to those who can afford it.





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In order to look to the possible future, in the Declaration of Guatemala (2020, March 11), Fe y Alegría undertakes to respond to new challenges in subsequent years and, in that sense, it must do so through concrete planning actions that address the following challenges:

- **Pedagogical frontiers:** implies the permanent training of teachers in pedagogies that improve their practice, in order to achieve an improvement in the education quality. It is also necessary that the technical training proposal be reformulated. In this way, it is hoped education will respond to the needs of learners, society and workplace.
- **Population frontiers:** this implies attending to the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, people discriminated because of gender, people with functional diversity, people who must undertake forced migration, native people and African descent or children who suffer from abuse or various types of violence. Likewise, it presumes the training and accompaniment of young people so they recognise themselves as citizens involved in the global world.
- **Geographical frontiers:** implies renewing the mission of being present in the places of greatest marginalisation and exclusion, which implies: a) expanding the international presence to new countries and b) undertaking new socio-educational experiences in the most impoverished and difficult-to-access areas in those countries where there is already a current presence.
- **Urgency frontiers:** implies the need to act as a movement to respond to global issues, such as the climate emergency, food, education and health crises and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The presence of new frontiers should not lead to paralysis, frustration and much less to assume pedagogical practices which legitimise inequalities. On the contrary, they must be seen as new challenges to which we must respond creatively without losing the





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ideals that have inspired popular education. In other words, it is necessary to nurture hope and have big dreams to build the world that we believe is possible and necessary. In the following sections, some of the criteria that can inspire reflection are mentioned to take on the new challenges that the 21st century gives us and the current educational emergency demands.

II. Fe y Alegría educator's Spirituality: discernment criteria for action

Kyrilo and Boyd (2017) point out that, in its most elementary sense, spirituality enables human beings to be aware of their inner life, people around them and the general state of the world. Consequently, this capacity allows people to recognise their identity and personal meaning in order to become more fully humans, at the same time that it helps to improve the life quality of those who suffer in this world. Consequently, spirituality refers to the personal and relational consciousness of human beings which promotes a particular behaviour mode in the society through their personal care, human bonds and the transcendent. Spirituality is a natural ability of human beings. Throughout the millennia it has manifested itself in rites, cults, moral principles, religions. But also in the contemplation of nature, in cultural expressions —music, dance, sculpture, etc.— and in the cultivation of deep relationships with oneself and with others. Consequently, even when there is no religious practice, the human being has the means to develop this natural aptitude, which will allow him to recognise who he is and where he wants to project his life.

Paulo Freire (1997) pointed out that his life project found inspiration in his spirituality. On various occasions he recognises that the historical presence of God constitutes, for him, not only an invitation to commit himself to reality, but rather something that forces him to aspire to the transformation of the world to restore the humanity of the exploited and excluded. The Brazilian pedagogue finds in the: "Word of God an invitation to recreate the world to liberate the dominated and not to reproduce systems of domination" (Freire, 1972, p. 11. Own translation). From this it is possible to conclude that





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his pedagogy and, even more, his whole life are a consequence of his personal conscience that makes him be-in-the-world in a particular, unique way and in the key of service to the excluded.

All people develop a spirituality with their own characteristics, that is, a particular awareness of their being-in-the-world and their life project. In turn, this spirituality finds its own channels of expression that have been transmitted through time and space. Thus, one of the expressions of this spirituality, and perhaps the most characteristic of Fe y Alegría educators, is the particular relationship that the educator has with the context and with the members of the community in which he / she works. Indeed, in a recent virtual meeting of educators with pastoralists from several countries who constitute Fe y Alegría –November 2020–, teachers expressed the pain, suffering, exclusion and violence suffered by their students and how it impacts them and how many of them need to commit to that reality that has affected them. Ideally, following the principles of popular education and Christian spirituality, the educator will take a distance to look critically at reality, identifying signs of life and death to stimulate the former and transform the latter. This would allow the context does not lead him to resignation, but, on the contrary, that reality challenges him and gives him a purpose, a vital commitment, which is, at the same time, personal and community.

Another feature that expresses the spirituality of the Fe y Alegría educator is the awareness that they acquire of human fragility and its limits. At the same meeting, educators –November 2020– have expressed that they recognise finite creatures, incapable on their own to face the difficult reality that they must assume and, therefore, they point out that they need other interlocutors to achieve social and personal transformation they aspire. Their consciousness of finitude leads them to open themselves to transcendence, from which they feed to embody values of peace, justice and equity. Consequently, his own life becomes an embodied pedagogical proposal and a living invitation for personal and social transformation.





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In conclusion, Fe y Alegría educators would have acquired a particular being-in-the-world, different from the one proposed by the consumer market and which is manifested in the aforementioned features. But he would also find expression in the way in which he relates to himself, to his co-workers, to children, adolescents and young people, and even to the transcendent. Working in community they communicate a message of opportunities and hopes which travels in time and space. Therefore, the commitment of Fe y Alegría educators to social transformation is not born from a theory or an ideology, but from a mystique made explicit in concrete values.

Facing what has been exposed so far, the following questions are appropriate: is it possible to transmit this spirituality, that is, this particular way of understanding reality, of relating to it while being, at the same time, awareness of one's own capacities and of the future project? And, in your case, how to do it? Because, although it is possible to verify that the mystique of Fe y Alegría has been transmitted through the years, the options, the borders and the educational proposals that enable social transformation in the contexts in which it operates, its survival cannot be taken for granted.

The prevailing social models threaten the popular educator's spirituality. The model leads us to think commitment is useless and it is impossible to get out of the consumption mindset. And, consequently, this inclination could lead educators to adapt to the rules of the system. The model tries to ridicule utopias and the ability to critically contemplate reality, to discern possible paths and to build alternative life projects. Hence the need to:

1. Recognise the traits of the mystique or spirituality that Fe y Alegría has built over time.
2. Think pedagogical practices to transmit their essential elements and it consist, basically, in the relationship with the context, their critical gaze, the ability to discern and propose life alternatives.





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3. Assume that Fe y Alegría cannot stop betting on the human dignity of its educators and its students.

Authors such as Apple (2013) argue that transformative education must also ensure the care of affectivity and spirituality, being a factor of social justice. It is about promoting the subjects and the communities recognise their dignity, their value, their capacity to build life projects, personal and communal; that achieve a real transformation of society and the people who constitute it. The care and promotion of Fe y Alegría's mystique must become a criterion for discerning the pedagogical options and actions that are assumed in the future, as well as the contexts in which they seek to intervene. Therefore it is necessary to let the contexts nurture the spirituality of Fe y Alegría educators. It is necessary to look at the communities and, finally, it is necessary to consider how we can intervene pedagogically to strengthen the transformation processes, making explicit this rich spirituality.

III. Popular educator's role in the construction of a new society

The new social borders decisively affect the community context in which Fe y Alegría is or wants to be present. According to Vygotsky (2016), this complex social reality has a profound impact on people: both in the system of social relationships and communication and in the collective activity of the subjects who are the source of the person's psychic development. Later, the children will internalise what they have experienced externally. Therefore, the sociocultural context will condition subjectivity, the way of thinking, being, feeling, acting and projecting oneself in the world. The paradigm of Vygotsky (2016) could put the popular educator before this challenge: to enable the centres to be social community models.

From the perspective of popular education, the educational institution is not reduced to the place of knowledge transmission, but, on the contrary, it is the space in which transformative social learning is possible. Thus, in Suissa's words (2010) it is possible to





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conceive educational centres as prefigurative spaces, that is, places where a new social order based on horizontal ethical relationships is experienced.

Based on this idea and recalling the statement attributed to Freire, according to which: liberating education does not change the world; changes the people who change the world, the need arises for Fe y Alegría educators to make a deep teleological reflection about the society that is expected to be built, as well as the experiences and learning that contribute to educational institutions being real alternative models of society. This reflection cannot forget ethical and political aspects.

By ethics is understood something more than agreements on norms of coexistence and conformation of social identity guidelines: it implies the “affirmation, support, construction, explanation and communication of principles and values” (Jara Holliday, 2018, p. 230), therefore: “They mean a human creation who sustains and makes life in common as a human race possible” (Jara Holliday, 2018, p. 230). Consequently, new frontiers require not only that Fe y Alegría have a current presence, but also its educators must recognise what principles and values are the basis for pedagogical practices and contents. Ultimately, the ethical goals pursued “aim to give meaning to our life and the history that we have to build individually and collectively” (Jara Holliday, 2018, p. 231).

Politics, for its part, can be experienced as an expression of the freedom exercise and coexistence among people. Its proper practice will allow, according to Jara Holliday (2018), the exercise of ethical principles such as responsibility, autonomy, awareness of common needs and goods, search for coherence, justice, equity.

In this way, it could be concluded that the popular educator is not only assisted by the task of working on established content, but also of generating the conditions and provisions that mobilise community and social transformative capacities:





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The ability to learn, the ability to communicate, the ability to listen, the ability to work in a team, the ability to feel deep indignation in the face of injustice, the ability to foresee, plan and project, the ability to get excited and enjoy beauty, the ability to express oneself in multiple languages, ability to analyse and synthesise, to abstract and specify, to investigate and mobilise. And the practice of all this, as well as critical reflection on that practice, will be the main way of educating themselves, as subjects of transformation and creation of the new. (Jara Holliday, 2018, p. 240)

However, it is necessary to recognise that even if Fe y Alegría centres become those prefigurative community and social models, some other forces are affecting learners' lives. Hence the fact that Freire recognised the transformative potential of education, but also the limits that it has. In *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (1997) he will affirm that educators must understand that education is not “an unbeatable force at the service of the society transformation” (p. 106). It would therefore be desirable for the mediator and facilitator role which Freire recognises in educators to be exercised not only within institutions, but also with other social actors.

IV. Popular educator's role from a pedagogical perspective

Popular education aspires to social transformation through the empowerment of learners. Consequently, it has historically opted for a pedagogy and a methodology which encourages transformation and not adaptation, critical questioning and not the pre-established answer. It is a pedagogy based on dialogue and the knowledge confrontation, which allows subjects to discover themselves and become aware of the world around them.

Social transformations and the presence of new frontiers challenge the pedagogical models that Fe y Alegría has traditionally cultivated, but not the ultimate objectives of popular education. Indeed, it is still hoped that the most vulnerable sectors of the





population have better opportunities to develop themselves in all areas of life, that is, in personal, social, academic and professional development. In Pérez's words (2003), popular education must "help the man or woman that we all carry inside to be born: help them to know, understand and value themselves in order to fully develop all their talents" (p. 31. Italics added).

Based on these noble objectives, it is necessary to reflect on the pedagogical and methodological proposal under questions that can be formulated in these terms: Do the educational practices of our centres allow us to take on the new challenges the new frontiers offer us? And, do they lead to the ends we seek as a transforming institution? In order to seriously answer these questions, it is important to take into consideration some postulates –7– of popular education derived from those proposed by Mejía (2020), which challenge and question the pedagogical practices in force in Fe y Alegría:

- Popular education starts from reality and supposes its critical reading: therefore, it is necessary that again and again, educators recognise and incorporate into their practice the scenarios that have arisen in this beginning of the millennium with the problems that exacerbate inequalities –some of them mentioned in point 2 of this writing—. It should be remembered that in Words to Educate. Feeding the spirit of Fe y Alegría in quarantine (2020), Víctor Murillo stated, quoting Edgar Morín:
- The role of teaching is, above all, to problematise reality and, through a method based on questions, to stimulate the critical and self-critical spirit of the student body. From childhood, students have to unleash their curiosity, cultivating critical reflection. (p. 2)
- The ultimate popular education goal is the transformation of the conditions that produce oppression, injustice, exploitation, domination and exclusion: consequently, it will be necessary for educators to consider the social changes that have taken place in the 21st century - technological, ways of production and





employment, information management, use of natural resources, etc.— and by doing a previous critical reading, they could incorporate new pedagogical models that prepare students to assume contemporary needs without ignoring that, within the framework of their teachings, the needs of human beings must prevail.

- Popular education demands an ethical-political option in, from and for the interests of excluded groups: with the COVID-19 pandemic and with the excuse of allowing access to distance education, educational projects that legitimise a social system based on social differences have come to light. While recognising some of its advantages, popular educators cannot ignore a critical gaze to reveal the interests behind such initiatives.
- Popular education aspires to achieve the empowerment of the excluded and discriminated: our pedagogies and methodologies must promote the organisation and participation of human groups so that all members of society are involved in their transformation. Ideally, popular educators should promote basic respect and diversity recognition, as well as self-care and caring for the other. In this sense, educators must know, recognise and respect the presence of different cultures, religions and political views. It is not meant to say that anything goes, it insists on affirming a basic and reasonable respect which promotes cultural negotiation, through the dialogue of knowledge, between different actors in society and the institution.
- Popular education is understood as a process, a practical-theoretical knowledge that is built from resistance and the searching for alternatives to the different dynamics of control in these societies: thus, educators should not only limit themselves to educate subjects capable of interpreting the world theoretically but, fundamentally; training people capable of reflecting, creating strategies and answering questions. In this sense, Jara Holliday (2001) has pointed out that:





- In educational processes, we must always start from the practice of the participants, follow a whole process of theorising that allows us to understand that practice within a historical and total vision to finally return to practice, and thanks to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding into the processes and their contradictions, we must consciously orient it in a transformative perspective. (p. 91)
- La Popular education builds educational mediations with a pedagogical proposal based on processes of cultural negotiation, confrontation and dialogue of knowledge: a perspective that invites the popular educator to recognise that the school or the learning space should be a setting for interaction between people, knowledge, critical analyses, experiences, reflections and transformative actions that respond to the changing dynamics of society, which implies the walls of the classroom and the institution are broken to enter into permanent dialogue with the interests of students and teachers, with the complex and dynamic reality that surrounds them to generate systemic and contextualised curricula from there.
- Popular education must empower subjects with all abilities and competencies to achieve a full life: according to Eduardo Gudynas - quoted in the Educational Proposal of Fe y Alegría Colombia - (Bravo and Vega, 2015), human plenitude It can only be achieved if affective, emotional and spiritual aspects are integrated together with the material ones. Consequently, the educator's gaze will not be to reproduce the market system, which presents happiness as the possibility of consuming and possessing.

Final synthesis

To conclude, educators should promote certain traits or qualities so that they can truly be agents of social transformation and promoters of a better world. Some that could be cited are:





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- Intellectual educators and connoisseurs of local and global problems who manage to integrate their educational proposals in contact with the environment;
- People who live the values moved by a spirituality which makes them capable of showing solidarity, compassion and living at the others service and of the service of a better world;
- Educators with Faith, Faith in building together the hope of God, Faith in all people and in their human dignity as the only possibility to build that better future;
- Identity not as something that is declared but as something with which it is communed, that inspires us and allows us to tune in our life projects with the purpose of Fe y Alegría and, in turn, be an example for students;
- Educators capable of assuming the pedagogy of dialogue and confrontation which allow people to critically read reality and seek social transformation.

Educators' contributions to the new role of the educated

For three months (April-May and June 2021) and in light of the four components mentioned in the base document, people from different countries reflected on it and reconstructed the new role of the popular educator. The questions analysed for present construction were:

- What are these new frontiers that Fe y Alegría has chosen in your country? And what implications do these new frontiers have for your role as a popular educator?
- What do we need in order to deepen our spirituality and the other's as a way of understanding reality and how to get closer to it? And what practices would let the spirituality of Fe y Alegría to be transmitted while respecting the different religious expressions that coexist in the Movement?





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- What practices would allow educators to contribute to the construction of a new society in their local environment? And what tools and capacities does the popular educator require to educate in the construction of that new society?
- Select three of the seven postulates that challenge the pedagogical practices in Fe y Alegría and tell us the possible tensions that may arise in light of the official educational proposals of your country.
- What does it mean for you to promote a pedagogy and a methodology for transformation and not adaptation, from the critical question and not from the pre-established answer?

I Educator's role for the 21st century new popular education frontiers

The reflection of the countries around the theme of the new borders confirms that borders are the epistemological place of the presence and mission of Fe y Alegría. At present, the "where the asphalt ends" takes different forms and translates: where there is injustice, where there is a lack of internet, where there is no support, where life is meaningless ... Guarantee the right to quality education and guarantee learning, is a current frontier.

The new frontiers must not frustrate us, we must assume this moment as a new challenge and above all nurture Hope. Thus, the calls for attention around borders are presented by educators as themes, challenges and commitments that must be deepened by the Movement, and installed in people's culture:

Themes to deepen as Movement:

- The context of the families, due to the precarious economic and emotional situations "Borders are barriers, limitations which stop us from reaching the goal, but the work of the popular educator must be learning how to overcome these barriers





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- Currently, in a field in which we recognise weakness: digital frontiers. Reflecting on this will allow us to update ourselves and expand our vision in the context that we live in today framed by the multiple uses of technology in our daily lives, where education is not an exception.
- Build a citizenship based on ethics because the rights and protection of children and adolescents are violated; caring for the environment, sustainable development
- Be more aware about we educate citizens for the world from a local culture; it means breaking the logic of national geographic borders, communication and distances; this great challenge will involve creating, promoting and / or strengthening a culture of networks which connects us with the world, but with such urgent tasks within the country that the issue of networks can also be applied here as a policy of inclusion and invitation to the co-responsibility with different actors.
- Generate new proposals, beyond the walls of schools, to serve children, youth and adults so they have greater possibilities to face current society and the challenges that it implies.
- Improve the teachers' conditions so they are "motivated to motivate", are "hopeful" and can provide "hope", having the full certainty that we are capable of transforming or modifying the future of students and participants, who are the generation of replacement and ultimately end up being the ones that change societies.

Challenges and commitments:

As educators and popular educators we must possess some attributes or work on them in order to achieve our transforming mission and help those who need it most. These attributes are:





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- Open ourselves to the new understanding ways of the world in order to welcome the great concerns and searches of our children, adolescents and young people, as well as identify their realities, what they are exposed to and what situations they live with on a daily basis.
- An open, flexible and understanding mind that accepts differences as something innate to human beings, avoiding stereotypical generalisations which hide the specific individual.
- Bear in mind that the goal cannot be other than to contribute to the real, comprehensive transformation of the different realities of injustice and our work must be framed in the social, human, spiritual, for families and the entire community, without exclusions or preferences.
- We must educate taking into account the needs, interests, tastes of the learner, comprehensive education at the service of curiosity, creativity, charm, magic and learning, envisioning with it their perspectives of society and a dignified life.
- Incorporate practices adjusted to new challenges to produce real learning, generate networking, and be managers of hope and dreams in students.
- Have courage and commitment to combat hopelessness and mediocrity.
- Be fair and optimistic to maintain a sustained effort, full of boldness and creativity.
- Be reflective about our teaching work permanently and take these reflections as a basis for innovative actions in education.
- Encourage communication between the members of the educational community who are involved in the students training, because this improves school processes and the learning advancement.
- Make our personal project coincide with the aspirations of popular education.
- Not resigning oneself, being outraged at situations of exclusion and injustice, committing oneself to one or more causes, giving meaning to life from a life project that is translated into pedagogical actions





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- The biggest challenge is and will be not to lose track of the latest technology and use it at the service of education, which leads the educator to leave the comfort zone and face the challenge of using and mastering virtual platforms. In order to respond to educational quality, the educator must commit more to his work as a guide, mediator in order to promote meaningful learning with children and adolescents.
- Listen to reality, listen to ourselves in order to try new landscapes and new capacities for social transformation.
- The educator is assuming a new role. Impossible to continue with the previous models. It is necessary to dedicate time to train and update themselves. It is time to innovate, to meet the educational communities demands taking into account “times, ways and people”.

II Fe y Alegría educator’s spirituality: discernment criteria for action

Based on the countries. contributions, it is possible to conclude that the cultivation of spirituality - be it personal, collective or institutional - presupposes a balance of different elements which complement, enrich and need each other, that is to say:

1. Self-knowledge, which implies the recognition of potentialities and their limits.
2. Openness to the transcendent: the other’s reality, the world and the divinity.
3. Methodology, pedagogy, rites or practices that allow, at the same time, self-knowledge, recognition of the other and openness to the transcendent.

Regarding the first point, we insist on the need for educators to know their inner life and recognise their emotions, their feelings, their desires, what guides their lives and gives meaning to their actions (purpose or meaning of life) . This, however, is not limited to people, but appears as a duty and an institutional need.





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By recognising their potential, educators and the institution -Fe y Alegría- become aware of their transforming possibility, their qualities, what is distinctive and unique. Likewise, awareness of the limits will allow actions and decisions to be adjusted to reality and will allow other actors to be invited to collaborate in a common transformative project.

These actors can be individuals, associations, and even divinity.

Self-knowledge allows answering existential questions - who am I? Where am I going? - and implies the recognition of personal, collective and institutional identity.

The second point, for its part, implies openness to the other, to the context, to the environment and to the divinity to allow oneself to be affected. This supposes a fundamental attitude of openness to the other, to things, to divinity. It is about receiving the different, close or distant ones, with all their baggage. Ultimately, it is about accepting that the others, the other and the Other have something to say in my life and their action affects me.

For this, it is necessary to promote meeting spaces that allow us to recognise the mystery of the other, of the world, of divinity. The need for these spaces for mutual recognition, dialogue and the possibility of openness is frequently expressed in the documents and it is also pointed out that all this should be transformed into a daily, frequent and intentional practice. In this way, respect, listening and openness would not be reserved for some significant but sporadic moments, but would be part of the institutional living culture.

The meaningful encounter should lead children, adolescents, youth and adults to allow ourselves to be affected by the life of the other, by the reality of the world and by divinity. This implies that reality and context invite me to come out of my own will and interest, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola points out, to respond to an existential call and put my potential at the service of others, the environment and the divinity.

All this supposes the context knowledge of what surrounds me. It implies rejoicing with the the world joys, hoping with the hope of the world, suffering with the sufferings of





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the world, hurting myself with the pains of the world. From this invitation will be born commitment, solidarity, the desire to care, to protect, to give life.

Practices, moral values, ethics are, in this way, a response to the invitation that the lives of other human beings, the reality of the world and the divinity make us. They are not decalogues, a law or a letter written to be transmitted, but they are born from a deeper inspiration that is specified in facts, that is embodied in history.

Jesus of Nazareth appears as a follow-up model at this point. He was affected by reality. The pain of men and women of the time when he remained in this world led him to commitment and the desire to transform his environment.

Finally, the need to reflect on the methodology, pedagogy, rites, practices and any instance that may favor the cultivation of inner life and deep and meaningful relationships between people have been highlighted through the insights. Thus, it is pointed out the need to have physical and temporary spaces which boost these dynamics of search for meaning, self-knowledge, encounter and sharing the word and life.

Ignatian spirituality is mentioned repeatedly as a possibility that facilitates discernment, the search for meaning and a life project. It should be noted, however, that Saint Ignatius proposes discernment as a practice that allows choosing the means that allow man to reach their end, which is, from his perspective, the praise, reverence and service of God. There is no coincidence between the countries on this point: while some consider that the religious and spiritual identity of Fe y Alegría is the horizon towards which it must walk, others believe that it is the institutional ideology that should be taken as a point of reference. Whatever the case, it is considered that Ignatian discernment can only be practiced around a defined limit or, in this case, to be defined. The countries set as a common criterion that educators practice dynamics of self-knowledge, self-worth, knowledge of their emotional and spiritual world through various techniques -mindfulness, Ignatian pause, silence, prayer, etc.- in order to recognise personal strengths and limits. They consider that only in this way will they be





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able to welcome and promote the spirituality of students, making life fully possible. The practice of personal accompaniment and caring for people could facilitate this process. Likewise, it is important to insist on the need to facilitate planned, periodic, meaningful spaces that favor a deep encounter between educators, learners, with the community, the environment and the divine. Different possibilities have been mentioned:

- Religious spaces
- Non-religious spaces
- Activities which favor the searching for the world needs and the solidary response
- Encounters promoting and practicing respect for differences
- Recreational possibilities
- Work on values
- Spiritual Exercises

It should be ensured that all these practices have a pedagogy intention which allows a relationship with the context, a critical view, the ability to discern and propose life alternatives.

III Popular educator's role in the construction of a new society

From the countries contributions, it is possible to make visible that the construction of a new society requires educational institutions be configured as alternative models of that dreamed society and according to this the educators group has identified that it is necessary to incorporate in their role at least 4 elements, 14 practices and 6 tools that make it possible to generate institutional experiences which model this new social order. The elements mentioned are:





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1. **Competent educators:** Educators should be human beings with ethical principles, coherent, academically prepared, able to read the context critically and be creative at the same time. They must respect human dignity as the highest value, as well as have a strong sense of justice.
2. **Close educator-student relationship:** Educators should know the reality of their students and be empathetic. This implies that they must be committed, they need the ability to listen, know how to follow personal processes and be able to create a climate of trust within the classroom. Likewise, they must believe in the capacities of their students and know how to recognise the knowledge and interests that children and adolescents have in order to accompany the process growth.
3. **Curricular and pedagogical aspects:** The educational proposal should ensure that all aspects of the students' lives get developed. Educators should encourage dialogue and participatory decision-making. The curriculum should encourage a critical reading of reality. Likewise, the pedagogical proposal should promote intercultural dialogue and dialogue between different knowledges, as well as critical sense and creativity in students for which, proposals that promote research and production would seem the most appropriate. Finally, the educational proposal could also stimulate the service learning strategy and the creation of productive enterprises for the the local economy development.
4. **Keeping on the horizon that education is a political act and in Fe y Alegría this intention is important,** since in addition to competent people, we need citizens in the world in order to transform it; for them mobilise social capacities, promote values, unlearn to learn, promote reflective dialogue, the culture of thought; that helps to have a contemplative look at the changing reality, the injustices and inequities that students and their communities experience, in order to generate actions to transform them.





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Among the identified practices, the following ones stand out:

1. Develop skills, enhance our capabilities, mediate and / or facilitate learning, which allow us to train empowered citizens, building justice and equitable societies.
2. Mastering not only our subject, but also how knowledge can be applied in local and global contexts to solve both technical and social problems.
3. Teachers need to be conscious guides of our students, for a coexistence in diversity, with respect, equity and justice, promoting a culture of peace based on the defence and fulfilment of Human Rights.
4. Breaking paradigms, fostering positive, creative, humanising critical thinking that allows sharpness in reading situations and in proposing solutions to their problems.
5. Be aware that the world is changing daily, they need good teamwork, mutual collaboration, dreamy people, committed people, people with spirit and vocation.
6. Connect with the students, build learning about memory without this being the most important thing in the assessment, promote collaborative work, project-based learning or service-based learning.
7. Accompaniment, inclusion in all senses in these practices is essential.
8. First, educators must have an attitude that allows them to understand the crisis and also see it as an opportunity, as a reality that is there, present, that needs to be analysed in detail to be better understood and from that understanding, act on it.
9. Become aware that the educational issue is not only the teachers responsibility, but the responsibility of society in general, therefore, make efforts in order to unite us around the right to education, so they can raise awareness about having





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classrooms in poor condition, lack of teaching materials, etc; this is something we can demand and demand as a right that is being vetoed from our population; all of this, in order to promote the best conditions which allow us to provide quality education.

10. Generate accompaniment processes for mothers and fathers
11. Faced the context the pandemic has given us, design a strategy that favours access to blended education, with virtual methodological strategies through technology, to guarantee that girls, boys and young people effectively develop the necessary learning, which entails the demand for access to virtuality and technology for girls, boys and young people as a human right.
12. Generate processes of connection between the different social actors to raise the demand for the right to quality education, improving the current conditions in which educational processes are developed.
13. Identify concrete ways that allow us verifying that the right to education is effectively being fulfilled in our communities, especially now that a border to educate is the simple fact of not having a cell phone, and going further, which is currently important to consider that for The family granting resources so that the boy, girl, young person can participate in the class, supposes to remove the right to food for those who are not in the educational center.
14. Recognise that there are borders that are outside the education sector, for example, biotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence, automation in the workplace, new skills requirements, lifelong learning arising from the work field, which involves dialogue with other actors who are not in education: environmentalists, scientists, philosophers, artists, politicians, etc. To make education move to new frontiers.

In the same way, the following tools are mentioned:





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1. Participation, dialogue, awareness and the education of individual and collective beings continue being useful to contribute to popular empowerment, which consists of learning how to read reality in order to write or rewrite history,
2. To be a person who can become learning communities, who is capable of getting to work, of understanding, that is capable of working in a network, with an inner life, and to be someone who can give example; able to work from schizophrenia to look at the medium term.
3. Be able to transmit the mission and vision of the institution.
4. Educators must not resign themselves, but must challenge reality, commit themselves on a personal and communal level.
5. Capacity for dialogue, debate and confrontation of ideas with actors not related to education, as well as among peers, which allows them to gain knowledge of the realities that affect the educational processes of the school.
6. Capacities that favor the analysis and understanding of the country reality, in order to propose curricular adjustments which adapt the educational processes to the local and national context.

IV Popular educator's role from a pedagogical perspective

From the reading of the popular education postulates, two situations have been stood out by the teams as the most challenging and made them question their educational practices in the 21st century, they are: popular education must enhance all abilities in the subjects and competences to achieve a life in fullness and that education must start from reality and suppose its critical reading. In the light of these postulates, a series of social tensions have been identified which generate anguish and affect their daily practice as a popular educator, but also, the interest of committing themselves to a series of bets that they consider should be incorporated in their pedagogical work.





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1. First tension: Between betting on the requirements of a more comprehensive training versus the demands of an official curriculum: Entre apostar por los requerimientos de una formación más integral frente a las exigencias de un currículo oficial: For the educators community, it is clear that beyond the foundation of knowledge and concepts which are important for the development of the country, Fe y Alegría educational centres must bet high on the construction of humanity, humanity committed to the other, which favours the empowerment of the being in a global citizenship attentive to care about life in general. This first tension demands from the educators an ethical-political commitment to demand that in the school the capacities and competencies for a full life and responsible citizenship have the same specific weight as the academic competencies demanded in the official curriculum.
2. Second tension: Between betting on an educational quality based on academic performance and obtaining good performances around standardised tests of certain disciplines and continue betting on an education that enhances all dimensions, and trains to improve the quality of life of the person and the community and commits the student body to the construction of a more just society: Around this second tension, although there are some positions that visualise that standardised tests represent proposals that focus a traditional hegemonic perspective, which ignores associated factors and the adverse context of people and which is also incoherent with the postulates of popular education, there is also a good harmony in the community of educators with what was expressed in the XXXIV International Congress of FIFYA 2008, (p. 269 - 271), in which it is necessary to avoid the confrontation between an approach that privileges a supposed objectivity knowledge and another that, in the name of disadvantageous conditions, denies the possibility of measuring performance and academic rigor. Of course, it represents a clear challenge for everyone to organise more comprehensive evaluation processes, which show that those other





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dimensions that are addressed in the Fe y Alegría institutions are also an added value of great impact on the educational centers' graduates.

3. Third tension: Between the imperative need to join a digital paradigm and the lack of resources and training to incorporate new technologies in educational spaces. tensión: The pandemic and learning at home forced non-face-to-face interactions mediated by ICT to take on a high importance, almost by force, it revealed a paradigm shift from an industrial-type model to a digital one. Although for many girls, boys, adolescents and young people the synchrony has been scarce due to the availability of devices and the absence of data for remote connections, it is clear that technology gave us the possibility of studying focusing the school attention on development, access capacities, search and analysis of information that is configured as a high competence to develop in the XXI century students.

Nowadays, little by little people are returning to schools in person, however, the digital age has revolutionised our lives and of course education and it is here to stay. It is highly visible that classroom work, the development of pedagogical projects and the methodological change from memorisation to the ability to search and analyse information will be much easier with the existence of technology. However, it also entails the responsibility of having systematic training proposals for educators for their incorporation and use in educational spaces.

4. Fourth tension: Between continuing with a traditional educational model promoted by educational systems and creating routines in the face of new innovative teaching and learning proposals that are to be generated in educational centres: The 21st century is a dynamic time, of constant changes, which means accepting a reality open to the unknown. In popular sectors schools they are continually coexisting with increasing levels of school failure, violence, aggressiveness, repetition, school dropout and despair of educators, it is evident





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that an educational model based on lessons with subsequent standardised tests to verify what has been learned has timed out. However, educational systems do not change at the rate of social needs and transformations, but, if today, competent, conscious, compassionate, committed, creative, coherent, celebrate, supportive people are sought; people capable of adapting to new situations, to solve problems, search and analyse information. The need to innovate in education and transcend the schemes of a traditional academic-style education is evident. The great challenge is to make learning and teaching attractive. This tension demands from the educators the decision not to continue doing the same and to break the brakes that hide behind the routine that prevent them from seeing and exploring other possibilities.

In the same way, in light of the question, if Fe y Alegría chooses and promotes a pedagogy and a methodology for transformation and not adaptation, what would be the role of the educator in educational spaces to be consistent with that option? There is consensus among educators who consider that from the pedagogical component they should:

- 1) Have passion, love for the profession, a vocation for service, the ability to listen, empathy, creativity, solidarity and strengthen spirituality and mysticism in their educational work.
- 2) Have a good command of emotions, as this will help them to accompany and guide learners in an integral way.
- 3) Have the ability to include in the curriculum topics related to the new frontiers such as: violence, gender equality, rights violation, common home caring, among others.
- 4) To work on the awareness and empowerment of all the reached people, through participatory techniques, because a pedagogy that is not based on





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active and permanent participation does not succeed in educating critical people who are aware of the world around them.

- 5) To promote horizontal spaces, where the word circulates and knowledge is built together.
- 6) Ability to read reality, to start from the context in order to generate learning, to gather the important elements of this context in order to generate transformations.
- 7) Incorporate into their pedagogical practice methodologies which allow us to contextualise the curriculum, help to problematise reality and the dialogue of knowledge.
- 8) Propose problematic situations in the classroom to provoke reflection and different alternative solutions.
- 9) Contribute to the construction of knowledge through the promotion of research to provide feasible solutions to problems which affect the immediate environment.
- 10) Take into account popular knowledge. What is taken from the context must be returned to it, but in such a way that its knowledge is effectively used as a learning source and social transformation.
- 11) Have students build reflective critical thinking and generate strategies seeking the applicability of scientific knowledge to real life.
- 12) Learn to develop and enhance in students the ability to communicate, listen, work as a team, feel deep indignation in the face of injustice, anticipate, plan and project, get excited and enjoy beauty, express themselves in multiple languages, ability to analyse and synthesise, to abstract and specify, to investigate and mobilise.
- 13) Motivate and exercise students in the original production of thought and ideas, in the different search for alternative solutions to problems, creation of techniques and materials, projects, messages, texts, tool objects. Generate a





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culture of requesting jobs that represent or materialise what has been learned in a specific product.

14) Create their own materials, produce new knowledge, (guides, modules, planners, workshops, evaluations, projects, PEI, curriculum, etc.) in light of the needs and conditions of the students, families and the people.

15) Promote the interdisciplinary of knowledge in the classroom. Interdisciplinary makes children and young people see life in a more global and complex way. This implies that the disciplines or knowledge areas enter into dialogue with each other and with the unstructured knowledge of the people in the communities where Fe y Alegría carries out its action.

16) Develop the ability to unlearn, starting from the premise that if you always do the same thing, you will not change much. Also, be open to best practices. Not be afraid to find others who do better than me and learn from them

17) Recognise that not everything knows and can; who needs to learn from others, can allow himself to be contrasted, asked and generate channels and spaces for dialogue and participation.

18) Learn to use and rely on the use of digital tools combined with the implementation of active methodologies to ensure the quality of education.

19) Reflect on the practice. Teaching-learning practices are systematised to build popular pedagogical knowledge and for this reason a sustained action of teachers is required in participant-action research processes and in continuous exercises of reflection on their actions.

20) Learn how to organise with family mothers/fathers to give continuity to the educational process and focus on teamwork, from virtuality, respecting the weaknesses and enhancing the strengths of all educational actors, generating empathy and solidarity, which are situations of vulnerability commonly find in this new reality





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