



Transforming Educational Leadership for Marist Africa



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New Horizons Leadership project in Marist Africa: **An Overview**



Brother Okolo Mark Omede,
*Project Manager on behalf of
the Secretariat for Education
and Evangelisation.*

The New Horizons program for Marist Africa was initiated to assist in the formation of Marist School leaders across Africa. An initiative of the African Mission Commission in consultation with the Institute's Secretariat for Education and Evangelization (Mission Secretariat then) had the help of professionals from the Marist Australian Province in its building and facilitation. The framework of this great initiative includes six themes. Under each comes a list of topics that assist in the development of the area or focus.

Centred on a transformative educational model, it deals with issues on Leadership that is attentive to the signs of the times, the aspirations and reality of children and young people in Africa.

Again, it looks at leadership that builds role models and witnesses: here the topics centred on building horizontal relationships and

collective strength, leadership as subsidiarity, promoting the 'civilization of love' and attending to health and wellbeing that connects with the inner self.

Another area focuses on leadership; social justice and solidarity: this aspect deals with respect for the dignity of every human being, the rights of the child – implications for Marist schools, building a culture of solidarity and social justice characterized by forgiveness and reconciliation. How to treat the poor and marginalized in Marist schools and communities, collaborating and networking to overcome social injustice.

Since we want to see the future of leadership in serving humanity renewed, we then sought to create a different future. Our objective here were to Create a new narrative from our collective memories and experience, develop critical and confident creative thinkers who are responsible citizens, inspire a grounded hope around common aspirations, look at the collective Marist stories and how the inform future educational leadership, developing schools that are at the service of humanity, especially children and young people, attending particularly to the issue of gender equity.

Other area was on leadership that embraces a new paradigm with an understanding of authority as joyful service and the empowerment in listening and being attentive to people, especially the young, in self-determining a future in common with others.

The last but not the list was on leadership skills for sustaining a more entrepreneurial mission.

The New Horizons' overall goal is to develop school leaders who will contribute to the realization of authentic, transformative leadership in a new Africa.

The initial project was realized in three (3) different regions of Marist Africa i.e., West Africa, East Africa and Madagascar,

southern Africa.

To further develop the project, the second phase was narrowed down to the Marist Province of Southern Africa beginning from the pilot phase in Malawi. Funded by Misesan Cara through the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity, the project has impacted so much on the teachers, school heads, parents, non-Marist schools and the students.

It's important to point out that this project is a result oriented one and as such its progressive indicators are visible and measurable. The coordination of the project been a collaborative one between the project manager, the regional coordinator and the country coordinators facilitated its success recorded so far.



Insights from the Malawi Pilot Project and Voices: Managing the New Horizons Project



Brother Francis Jumbe,
Regional Coordinator for New Horizons Project

Big, multi-million Dollar projects call for proper feasibility studies before rolling out such projects. Feasibility studies provide opportunities to see if the project is executable; to test the project's ability to address existing challenges and gain confidence in the project's ability to attain the expected outcomes.

It was not surprising, therefore, that when the Province of Southern Africa got the golden

opportunity to run a three-year multi-country project, the funder; Misesan Cara requested for a pilot project in Malawi so as to provide some proof in the region's capacity to successfully carry out this big project and bring out the intended change in the lives of the project's participants.

First and foremost, a pilot phase was extremely necessary before rolling out the project to the rest of the other five countries of the Province because the nature of the New Horizons II Project was on capacity building, and it was the first of its kind in the

region. It illustrated novelty; a paradigm shift in the way we (traditionally) understood projects. For years, projects have often concentrated on construction and provision of equipment. The New Horizons was about capacity building; empowering people, changing attitudes and managing people and structures differently in order to achieve the desired changes..

The pilot phase of the project gave an opportunity to the different project stakeholders to extensively understand and appreciate the project's core concepts, refine key activities,



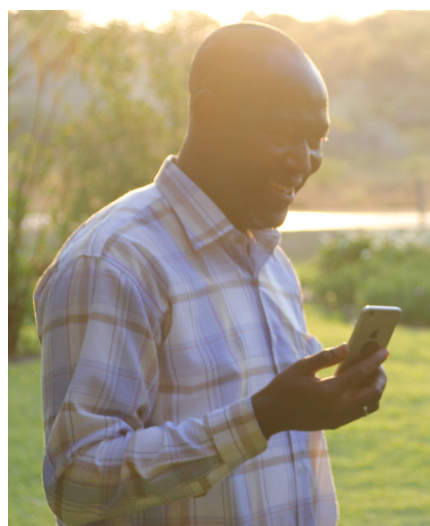
align them to the intended outcomes and review potential benefits of the project among participants. This stage proved very important as it provided insights to customize some of the activities in order to address local realities in their context. Additionally, possible risks were identified and addressed accordingly.



The people and teams behind the drafting of the New Horizons II project deserve a credit for such work of great ingenuity. The New Horizons II project was well-conceived and well-knit. Nonetheless, the pilot phase affirmed the fact that young people grapple with a host of challenges, and that no single solution would realistically attempt to mitigate them all at once. That made us to be alert that, in the implementation of the entire project, attention should be given so as not ignore or diminish any voices that needed to be heard and provide the basis for future interventions.



The opportunity to pilot the project in one of the countries of the project implementation sites ensured that implementers understood the project deliverables as well as expectations of the funders of the project. The pilot phase raised our confidence level that the project would be very executable. In the final analysis, the pilot phase of the project enabled the entire implementing block take a walk before a run.



Promoting access to quality education

Finbar O'Brien is a consultant who provides mentorship support to Misean Cara members in Southern Africa

Misean Cara supports missionary organisations (including the Marist Brothers) to empower those left furthest behind. Misean Cara recognises the importance of quality education for sustainable development and sees education as a human right and a gateway out of poverty. A missionary approach to education goes beyond academic achievement and adopts a more holistic approach, it has a focus on personal values, the dignity of each individual and on leadership development.

In recent years, there have been improvements in access to basic education, but many children are still out of school and marginalised children are being left behind. In many places the quality of education is low for those attending school and education outcomes are poor.

It is in this context that Misean Cara is supporting the New Horizons project spanning six countries in Africa as it seeks



to increase access to quality education for children from poor and marginalised families.

In upholding the right to quality education, Misean Cara promotes access, quality, and equity, and tries to leverage progressive reforms of the education system. The New Horizons project seeks to address all these aspects.

To increase equity of access we need to look at who is being left behind in each specific situation. In many contexts it will be girls, persons with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced people, and children from the poorest families. We also need to address the issue of retention to ensure that children are not dropping out of school. The New

Horizons project has a strong focus on marginalised children and is taking concrete steps to address the issue of children dropping out of schools. It recognises the importance of involving parents and the wider community to address underlying issues such as early marriages and to identify children in danger of dropping out so that remedial action can be taken.

Misean Cara also supports initiatives that directly improve the quality of education and learning outcomes.

There is a focus on the resources that are needed for teaching and learning to improve the classroom environment. Hygiene and sanitation are also supported as these are key to a

healthy school environment.

Many of the initiatives will be focused on improving the quality of teaching, through the supply and retention of qualified and skilled teachers and through in-service training. The New Horizons project recognises the importance of supporting teachers and it builds the capacity of school leaders and teachers to drive improvements towards quality standards of education.

The New Horizons project has also been innovative in addressing sustainability through income generating

activities. These activities raise income that can be used to subsidise poorer students. This approach could be helpful for other schools working with poor communities and it will be important for the project to capture the lessons learnt from supporting income generating activities in schools.

In all the work it supports, Misesan Cara promotes child protection and safeguarding. This has been an important focus of the New Horizons project as it seeks to strengthen the capacity of schools to uproot violence and discrimination against children in both school

and community environments.

Misesan Cara hopes that the support it gives will have an impact beyond the local school and will help strengthen the education system in line with national priorities. This will often involve the engagement of local communities and the local education authorities. Many of the initiatives that New Horizons has taken in areas such as school management and governance, in-service training, child protection, and income generation are already having an influence beyond the Marist schools involved in the project.

The four cardinal perspectives of New Horizons II and the role of FMSI in the implementation of the project as a support to capacity building for Marist Africa

Andrea Rossi, Director of FMSI

When designing the project, several needs analysis were carried out in the 6 countries involved, with clear common challenges: they strive to ensure equity, excellence and to recognize that improving educational attainment and key competences for all are crucial for both economic growth and competitiveness. They also struggle to reduce poverty and fostering social inclusion. Despite increasing the student enrolment in primary school, the 6 educational systems struggle

to keep students in schools, especially after completing the compulsory cycle.

It was clear to all stakeholders involved that it was important not just to implement some awareness raising activities on equity, social justice and inclusion: although these are important issues, it was clear to everybody that what we were aiming at, was really pursuing improvement of school in terms of its capacity to become a place for the safeguarding and empowerment of children.

New Horizons has been therefore drafted starting

from its 4 pillars:

1. **Increased access to quality education for children**, especially for girls from poor and marginalized families
2. **Child safeguarding** - Strengthened capacity of Marist Schools to uproot violence and discrimination against children in school and community environments so to ensure children well-being
3. **Quality of education** - Increased capacity of school leaders and teachers to drive improvement towards quality standards of education and

sustainability

4. Child Rights - Reinforced the Education system at institutional level in terms of its capacity to advocate children rights

It was key not to consider these 4 pillars as activities to be implemented, but as results to be achieved.

A result-oriented approach implied, for instance, schemes for keeping school fees affordable for low income Families, plans for supporting second-chance, free-of-charge, learning opportunities for dropout children and young adults (for example by keeping school facilities opened to after normal school hours).

When addressing Child Safeguarding, we improved the Child Protection Policies in

all 21 schools and empowering teachers and staff to be active players in preventing violence.

In order to strengthen the governance and ownership at both school and community levels, the program build capacities in school leaders and staff for designing investments in education services, schemes for operating and financially managing the community learning environment as well as the implementation of income generating projects.

As better quality standards of education were required, the level of capacity of the teacher staff to deliver curricula which are relevant and responsive to vulnerable children's needs has been raised in all countries.

Finally, in the domain of child rights, Advocacy initiatives has been carried out on institutional and

governmental actors for the defence of child rights, including the submission of 3 UPR for Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa. With an effective stakeholder engagement campaign, it has been possible to extend the school policies and practices to other non-Marist schools, sharing advocacy schemes and tools produced (community participation in school management, sustainability and financing, planning, gender equality, child rights). This has further enlarged the impact of the action, promoting quality education and equity of access to education for vulnerable children to a larger number of beneficiaries, as well as contributing to the reinforcement of the educational system in terms of its capacity of redressing inequities.



Child Rights and Stakeholder Report

Brother Fortune Francis Chakasara

1. The New Horizons (NH) Project was very instrumental in making sure that the Rights of Children and Safeguarding their space was implemented and respected. According to Ruggiero and Hanson (2020), Children's Rights and Protection are practiced and implemented on the ground and not in meetings and hallways. The NH project witnessed the implementation of Child Safeguarding to a greater extent in the countries where the project operated.



2. During the duration of this project we managed to submit 3 UPR-Universal Periodic Reviews for Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. The UPR for South Africa centered on the right to education. UNCRC Art. 28. The UPR strongly recommended that South Africa should strive to make its education accessible to all. It also recommended South Africa to have equal access of education to children with disabilities.

The UPR of Zambia- The focus was on the quality of education

The UPR of Mozambique focused on quality of education and teacher training.

3. In response to the UNCRC Art. 3 the NH Project put children at its Centre and had the best interests of the Child in its implementation phases in all the countries.

4. The NH project put Children at the center of all its activities and the majority of the people who benefited were children. There was fairly a great awareness and consciousness of Child Safeguarding in the project even where there was no safeguarding policies, there were protocols and guidelines in place to make sure that children were protected from all forms of abuse and harm.

5. The NH Project also challenged the local customary beliefs of disciplining children by proposing alternative disciplinary measures other than corporal punishment.

6. The challenge which remain is to continue cultivating and creating the culture of safeguarding that protection of children become embedded in the day to day life of the beneficiaries of the project.

7. Much more needs to be done in all our Marist and non Marist Apostolic works to further the protection of children.

Stakeholder Engagement

1. The child rights and protection section of the NH project engaged a good number of stakeholders. There was interaction of the training of parents, students and families at large.

2. The NH child rights and protection also engaged and worked closely with organizations like Edmund Rice Foundation in collaborative efforts, information sharing and sharing best practices.

3. In some parts there was an involvement of the police, school counselors and village heads in bringing them on board.

NEW HORIZONS PROJECT –

AN EXPERIENCE THAT CHANGED THE LIFE OF PEOPLE

Brother José Francisco

Since last year when the project was implemented in Angola, there have been significant changes in the life of many young and marginalized people. The project was accepted and launched in seven schools, among them three Marist schools, namely: Marist school of Luanda, Ndalatando and Kuito-Bié. All the brothers involved in these schools are strongly committed to the project, and more than 4 thousand people have been enrolled and benefited from the project, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents, experts, religious from different congregations, and government actors. More than a hundred pupils have benefited from the income generating activities, in terms of school fees, school materials,

transport fares, food, in order to prevent them from dropping out of school. The reality is that the majority of people are from poor families and with no capacity to support the education of their children.

Apart from that, more than three thousand people have been empowered with some knowledge on child safeguarding, the role of parents in the life of their children as well as human right. The influence of these people empowered has spread through many places, which makes other people request for some sharing in matters of children's rights. In fact, people who attended the workshops and conferences appreciated the trainings and expressed eagerness to go and bear witness to the value of the project. On the

“ more than three thousand people have been empowered with some knowledge on child safeguarding, the role of parents in the life of their children as well as human right. ”

other hand, more than three hundred teachers from the three Marist schools in Angola have benefited through an enriching workshop on new teaching methods as well as education inclusion strategies. It was an enriching experience for the Marist school network; to give them a new option on improving our learning strategy, based on other Marist schools' experiences around the world.

The New Horizons Project came at the opportune time, and although it has not yet reached its end, its enriching fruits have been seen already. Through the project, schools have adopted better ways of dealing with some issues related to children in the schools, such as: policies on dealing with bullying; how to deal with children with special needs – inclusive education; opportunities for children with low learning capacity; families and children with financial upheaval, etc.





INCREASING ENROLMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MARIST AND NON-MARIST SCHOOLS

Brother Patrick Banda

In most of the countries, there are set standards for learner-teacher ratio in a classroom. This enables the teacher to attend to most to each learner with ease and the learners as well are accorded their attention as deserved for their better understanding. However, this is not the case in many of the schools both the Marist and non- Marist. What is seen and observed in most of the schools is the highest rate of enrolment of the children and young people. The questions

immediately pop up, why?!!! What impact does this have on both learners' and teachers' performance and the quality of education? What could be done to control such situation?

Trying to deeply investigate the reasons that are leading into this trend of high enrolment in schools, some factors come in. These include good performance of the students due to the presence of hard working teachers in some schools, distance between schools, lack of enough school infrastructure in the schools,

the effects of increased population growth of the children and young people, urban migration, high cost of school fees in some schools like private and grant aided schools. Lack of qualified teachers, readmission of dropouts and those learners who happened to return to school with the aim of improving their previous grades, Presence of teaching and learning resources like laboratories in schools, presence of school cultures like good discipline for both teachers and students as well as the quality of education offered

in a particular institution.

Focusing on the above reasons or factors, the increasing enrolments for children and young people in Marist and non-Marist schools pose a great negative impact on the quality of education. It is a difficult and hard task for the teachers to master the needs of such a big number of students and address them, the teacher faces difficulties in giving class exercises or assignments as he or she may not manage to mark them. Class management is jeopardized, and discipline of the students become compromised. This affects the quality delivery of the content of the lesson, hence poor performance of the teacher. On the part of students, it is pitiful situation to see students overcrowded in classrooms, sometimes quarrels and fights over space arise. This hinders the students from acquiring

the desired best quality of education. Regarding Covid 19 Pandemic and any other airborne related infections, this situation would put the lives of majority in danger.

What can be done question and by who to lessen the situation comes here! As it appears, this shows not to be one man's show! It calls for the collaborative and joint effort from various stakeholders. The governments, churches, well-wishers (NGOs) and other private sectors all have their own roles to play in addressing this situation. Joint effort and collaborative work would alleviate this situation. Government has to see to it through the Ministry of Education that teachers are well trained and more infrastructure construction projects are continuous, teaching and learning resources are available in

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It calls for the collaborative and joint effort from various stakeholders.
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schools. Churches, well-wishers (NGOs) and other private sectors too have upper hand in the reduction of this situation.

All in all there are more root causes of increasing enrolment of children and young people in both Marist and non-Marist schools, They affect the quality of education and these can be alleviated through the collaborative and joint effort of different stakeholders! Together, much can be attained!



The Small Income Generating Activities – the way to go for continuity of the New Horizons Project ideals

Brother John Bwanali

The implementation of the New Horizons Project attracted attention of many stakeholders. The main beneficiaries who are the pupils received whole heartedly and participated with enthusiasm in all the activities that were planned. The immediate issue that arose was how would the New Horizons ideals be continued after the project period.

Inherent to the planning of the project was the idea to develop strategies and means that will ensure continuity of the ideals being propagated by the New Horizons Project. The implementation of the project included sustainability of the activities beyond the period of the project.

Income generating activities designed to be relevant to the learning institution as

the learners participate in identifying how they can assist other learners to access education, remain in school and be part of the transformative education model were done. The children and their mentors identified activities that would bring some income to the school that would be used to assist needy students who are lacking in school fees and other requirement to remain in school. They also used the activities so that they develop skills that they would use wherever they will be after school.

The IGAs ranged from agricultural activities like growing vegetables at St. Charles Lwanga in Balaka where the learners produced vegetables that were supplied to the boarding school ensuring very good meals for the school while at the same time earning money to assist needy learners. They also started an empowerment club that was learning how to use sewing machines with the intention to be doing their uniforms. At Champagnat Secondary School, they had a construction of an accommodation facility that the school charges the boarders and use the proceeds to keep needy learners in school, while at Bilene, they started the





rearing of chickens and running of a tuckshop. A rare example was at Nyanga High school where they purchased a dairy cow, getting milk and supplying to the boarding school and the proceeds were used to pay school fees for needy children at a nearby primary school.

The implementation of the IGAs needs thorough process of identifying and searching for activities that will be relevant to a place. The activities should also be profitable, that the learners should participate so that they appreciate their contribution toward the welfare of others. These small

income generating activities provided an opportunity for the learners to acquire skills in trading, farming, accounting with the intention to assist other needy pupils.

As a lesson for the projects that have been implemented, the funds allocated to IGAs were indeed small and in some cases it was so difficult to reach the break-even as fast as possible because of initial expenses. It will be good for the schools that intend to do this, to also budget some money in relation to these projects. The IGAs also need a considerable support

especially as initial customer to the project and provision of services like accounting, marketing of produce and proper use of the proceeds from the activities.

With time, the beneficiaries were able to realize the objectives of the project that access to education, sustaining learners in school, provision of conducive learning environment where rights of children are respected and advocated for are the cornerstones of the transformative education model that New Horizons was propagating.

THE USE OF AGRICULTURE IN FUND RAISING FOR MARIST AND NON-MARIST SCHOOLS: THE EXPERIENCE OF ZIMBABWE



Brother Leonard Brito

Traditionally, agriculture is known as the backbone of many economies in many African countries and comparatively agriculture has been a backbone of our ability to fund raise for the needy children, orphans, and disadvantaged children in accessing equitable access to education in our Marist schools and in other non-Marist schools.

New Horizons Zimbabwe after receiving the opportunity to

start a small Income Generating Activity we opted for an agricultural activity. We have been growing a wide range of vegetables namely, cabbages, tomatoes, onions, butternuts, carrots, potatoes, peppers, water melons, beetroots, etc. After growing the vegetables, we were selling them to our Marist Brothers High School and from the proceeds of the sales we would then use them to pay school fees to the students. Some of the vegetables were selling to the outside market at the nearest town.

At Maereka Primary School which has roughly an enrolment of 300 students we managed to pay at least for about 40 students and at Nyatate High School we paid for 10 students who were also disadvantaged. We also assisted some students with stationery, uniforms and other necessary basics to enable them to continue accessing education. Without doubt the families of the beneficiaries will remain forever grateful for the impact we have had New Horizons to their children.

Beside growing vegetables and selling them we also bought a dairy cow which from the milk production we sold and used some of the money to pay fees for students. In all cases we always ensured that we used some of the money to buy the stock feeds, or to buy seeds and cultivate the garden as well as to pay two casual workers who oversaw the activities in the garden.

It was aptly noted that without the intervention of New Horizons, through the agricultural initiative of growing crops and using the profit from sells to pay fees for students some learners especially at Maereka Primary School and Nyatate Primary School would have long time ago dropped out from the school. In selecting students who can benefit from this initiative in terms of fees assistance, we have noted that in saying yes to one student may also mean saying no to other 10 students who are equally desperate.

Due to the demand of the assistance required we have taken it upon ourselves to embark on more production in the horticulture area. We are now targeting growing vegetables which are grown in Zimbabwe throughout the year such as cabbages and tomatoes. We have also engaged experts in agriculture who advise us on the proper management of these vegetables since they are

fast selling vegetables on the market.

We are very grateful to New Horizons and it is our sincere hope that we will continue reaching out to many vulnerable students and enable them to access quality equitable

education. "Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." John Dewey. As New Horizons we will continue impacting many students in accessing education in the years ahead.





FMSI - New Horizons II

Brother Ken McDonald,
Member of the GC and FMSI
President

Through its various development projects and by advocating for the rights of the child, FMSI's mission is to respond to the emerging global challenges faced by the most vulnerable children, those living on the margins of society and who have no voice. The New Horizons II project has been a significant development project that supports the Marist mission in the Province of Southern Africa. Supported by FMSI and the Marist Institute's Secretariat of Education and

Evangelisation, the project strove to improve the quality of education offered by the Marist schools in the six countries of the Province: South Africa, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. In particular, the New Horizons II project sought to respond to the needs of children most in need and because of this had an impact in four key areas in the Province's educational mission.

Equity in Education and Increased Access to Quality Education

It has been shown that the highest performing education

systems are those that combine equity with quality. They give all children opportunities for a good quality education. The New Horizons project helped in the development of strategies to ensure equity in education and increased access to quality education for all children, especially girls. The project emphasised the advocacy for and the respect of the rights of the child to have access to education.

Practical Approach in Providing Quality Education

Practical in its approach to situations rather than theoretical, the project

concentrated on the development of quality education offered in Marist schools and the emphasized support of children and young people from poorer circumstances by promoting schemes such as developing income support so that school fees could be kept affordable for low-income families. By doing this, the project bolstered the sustainability of those educational institutions. It also provided opportunities for those who had dropped out of school or were not able to engage in education by providing spaces for after-school education programmes.

Capacity-building of School Leadership

The project also concentrated on the development of quality education offered in Marist schools by supporting processes that built the

capacity of school leadership to improve the management of the schools. Teachers were offered the opportunity to engage in in-service programmes aimed at delivering a curriculum that was both relevant and responsive to the needs of the students.

Child Safeguarding & Advocacy for Child Rights

Child safeguarding and the advocacy for child rights were central to the project. It strengthened the capacity of the Province's educational institutions to provide a safe environment for all students in Marist schools and advanced this critical area by supporting the implementation of sound child safeguarding practices in the Province's various educational institutions. Child Safeguarding policies and protocols were developed and implemented in each of the

schools of the Province.

Initiatives also were developed that engaged all stake holders in the advocacy for child rights. In particular, the experience of the children was central to this work of advocacy, giving a voice to the children themselves who are often the voiceless of the societies.

Its Impact

The impact of New Horizons on the educational institutions of the Province of Southern Africa has been substantial. It has supported the inclusion of girls and children from low-income families in quality education giving hope to those children and young people on the margins. The charism of the Marist Brothers to educate children and young people, particularly the most neglected, continues to be lived out through projects such as New Horizons II.



A Word of Thanks

All this could not have been possible without the continuous support of our donors, in particular, Misesan Cara, who has partnered with us to respond to the emerging global challenges. True to its mission, Misesan Cara has worked to empower those left furthest behind. We are grateful to them for empowering our mission to provide access to quality education for those least favoured children and young people.

Looking forward to the future:

FMSI is committed to the best interest of the child

Andrea Rossi, *Director of FMSI*

FMSI is committed to support the Marist Missions around the world with those development and solidarity projects to help children and young people relegated to the margins of the societies in which they live.

This principle is in coherence with FMSI's Mission, Vision and Values and the need to respond to the emerging global challenges for the "most vulnerable" children "living on the margins of society" and who "have no voice" (Message of the XXII General Chapter - Institute of the Marist Brothers, Rionegro - Colombia September 8th – October 20th, 2017) as stated in FMSI's solidarity Policy approved on 6th October 2021, which also describes the Compliance with internationally identified standards as eligibility criteria for all its initiatives (see "FMSI'S SOLIDARITY POLICY AND PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA" 2021-2025 Approved by the Board of Directors on October 6th, 2021).

Therefore, FMSI intends to promote and be proactive in



supporting and enhancing all projects that:

- Promote, support and defend the rights of children.
- Involve children and families with a special focus on those in a condition of vulnerability: the poor, the displaced, the neglected, the invisible and those living on the margins of society.

The best interest of the child is not just a random expression: The principle of "the best interest of the child" is implemented in Article 3 (1) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which provides that "in all actions concerning

children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, a court of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

The child's view, identity, situation of vulnerability, right to health, right to education are some of the considerations applicable: as the principle is flexible by nature and requires states to assess the necessary considerations on a case-by-case basis but its importance is paramount for FMSI commitment, in all its intervention now and in the future.