



# **EMBRACING THE MARIST WAY**

## **GLOBAL STATEMENTS ABOUT MARIST EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY**



**MESSAGE FROM THE MARIST  
INTERNATIONAL MISSION COMMISSION**

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In the heart of our educational community, we find ourselves deeply rooted in a shared passion – our love for being Marists. Here, we do more than just impart knowledge; we cultivate our Marist identity, involving every member of our community in this remarkable journey. We recognize that in the 21st century, we are more than just educators; we are evangelizers, spreading the values of compassion and faith in an ever-changing world.

Our approach to education is unique. We don't simply teach; we evangelize through education and educate through evangelization. It's a beautiful cycle where each act of learning becomes an opportunity for spiritual growth. We believe that education is the key to powering meaningful and purposeful lives.

Quality is at the core of our mission. We are steadfastly committed to providing quality Marist education. It's not just about academic excellence; it's about nurturing deeply human education that considers every facet of a person's being. We believe in educating the whole person, a holistic approach that ensures intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth.

In our classrooms, learning is personalized and adaptable. We develop a participatory and collaborative education where every student's voice is valued. We engage in immersive and active teaching methods, fostering a vibrant and interactive learning environment. We implement integrative and current curricular models, preparing our students for the challenges of the modern world.

But education goes beyond the classroom. We extend formation with transformative competencies, instilling a passion for lifelong learning. We've created an evaluative culture that is both formative and authentic, ensuring continuous improvement and growth in our educational mission.





Our commitment extends far beyond our classrooms and campuses. We are defenders and promoters of a distinct world, walking hand in hand with children and young people in situations of poverty and on the periphery. Inclusive education is our mantra, especially in today's open society where we foster a culture of non-violence and communication which is mutually respectful.

Ethics and a culture of care are our guiding principles, with transformational (critical) and constructive approaches. We are deeply committed to ecological awareness and our planet's sustainability. We respect rights and diversity of all, understanding that our children, adolescents, and young people are at the center and are the protagonists of our mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

Solidarity is ingrained in our Marist DNA. We don't just teach it; we live it. We deepen the service-learning approach, ensuring our students understand the power of giving back.

Our global conscience is awakened. We educate global citizens who take responsibility for the dilemmas and challenges of our societies. Interconnected and networked education has become our reality, and we develop digital competence and citizenship in our students.

As leaders within our mission, we recognize that education is a driving force behind change. We promote servant leadership, setting the example for others, and aligning ourselves with contemporary tools, processes, and methods. We encourage a flexible and learning-centered approach to intelligence and management, fostering innovation and creativity to address the ever-evolving world around us.

In the end, our journey is a testament to our unwavering commitment to education and the values we hold dear. We are Marists, and our love for being Marists, drives us to inspire, educate, and transform lives every day.

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission,  
Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco

If you wish to share your ideas, reflections or experiences with the Commission as a result of these messages, you can write to the email [fms.cimm@fms.it](mailto:fms.cimm@fms.it)

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# THE GLOBAL FUNDAMENTALS OF MARIST EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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*Marist educational ministries offer society an innovative and inclusive approach to education that helps young people grow as “good Christians and good citizens”. This approach draws faith, culture and life into harmony, proposing knowledge as a duty to service and culture as a way of bringing people together.*

*Our educational ministries, open to any family that accepts our educational approach, encourage dialogue between people of different cultures and faiths.*

*(Constitutions, 58)*



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During the Pandemic and the years following, the Marist International Mission Commission compiled and published reflections on various topics. The format was simple and non-academic and the writing of the topics was rotated around the members of the Commission. With this message, we end a systematic cycle of publications on specific topics that show the richness and the “many-sided” (Pope Francis) diversity of the Marist mission, which, we recognise, still has many more aspects to develop. It is not our intention to aim at such breadth.

On this occasion, we asked ourselves: What would be the fundamentals of Marist education in the 21st century? We used the methodology of appreciative enquiry (Cees Hoogendijk, et al., 2015) and together with other external specialists we talked about what we were doing really well, what we dreamed of continuing to do and what we wished to do differently. The brainstorming and input was extraordinary and the number of topics was wide-ranging. This text puts into systematic form what we discovered as possible ways forward as Marists during this first part of the 21st century. We hope it will inspire you and serve you in your personal reflection or in the training of your work- and mission- teams.

## INTRODUCTION

**Education is an act of hope.** With its potential for transformation, it offers children, adolescents and young people<sup>1</sup> the chance to grow, develop and bring new value and meaning to their lives and to the world. In the process of learning and developing, they undertake a personal journey and, at the same time, influence their peers, families and local communities. It is a virtuous cycle.

**Education is a response.** It contains, in its different forms and expressions, a response to a real world and also to a possible world. Throughout history, in different social, political, cultural and religious situations, education emerges as a constant civilising force that responds to and transforms environments and culture itself. Education is a way of transforming the concrete problems as well as the great challenges and issues of our contemporary world. We Marists believe in this extraordinary possibility and capacity contained in our schools, colleges, social centres and universities. Moreover, we add the extraordinary value of the Gospel to education.

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<sup>1</sup> We make a linguistic license.



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**Marist education is entering the 21st century**, a century that never ceases to surprise us all. It began with the great promise of development and integration and changed radically during its first two decades. Pandemics, international conflicts, the new division of political blocs, the dramatic situation of millions of people, the radical change in lifestyles, new cultural and political currents, ... are leaving a deep sense of crisis in the collective consciousness. This scenario, mixed with conservative and progressive tensions, is shaping very different social, political and religious environments which challenge us all. Responses must be swift, yet discerning; they must be given in situations as they emerge, yet grounded in the important values that sustain us.

For a **global Institute** like ours, this means a constant renewal of commitment to people, constant compassionate action for children and young people (especially those who are marginalised, segregated, excluded or impoverished), greater flexibility and adaptability in mission to local and global contexts, relevant creativity and innovation, and a shared journey with all the agents of mission - brothers, laity, young people, families - that includes different vocational and spiritual responses. In our Marist ministries we are committed to a focus which integrates the various dimensions of the human person and his or her development. To do this, we need a better understanding of the emerging environments facing young people today, such as employment problems, educational opportunities in the labour market, diversity, tensions in cultural and socio-political integration, difficulties of access due to race or gender, etc. For this reason, we regularly update our educational projects so that they respond to current needs, educational trends and the emerging challenges of society and the world.

**Sustainability of our charism** compels us to put in place all the necessary means to ensure that Marist life, vocation, leadership and mission are always nurtured and forward-looking. In turbulent times such as the ones we may be living in, it is of utmost importance to reaffirm our mission to evangelise and educate, enabling present and future generations to contribute to an inclusive, sustainable and healthy society.

For this reason, we offer the following guidelines and reflections that might be a help in renewing and adapting the practice of education and evangelisation. These statements highlight the need for a more flexible, adaptive education, oriented towards the integral development of people in the 21st century.

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# WE LOVE BEING MARIST

## 1. WE CULTIVATE OUR MARIST IDENTITY BY INVOLVING THE WHOLE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

We build, care for and cultivate our Marist identity by involving the whole educational community. Our educational style conveys simplicity and welcome. We create a dynamic “normality”, based on the example of life and its explicit message. We are attentive to updating and proposing our values to today’s society, reading the current contexts and giving new meaning to these values and fundamental pillars in the 21st century. We promote the formation of the whole educational community in Marist identity.

We reaffirm the central mission of Marists as Christian educators. We are known for this and we try to do it well. We devote our energy to ensuring that this continues in the present and into the future. We know that, whatever the social and economic contexts, education is key for all children and young people.

We have to make sure that we keep our mission at the centre. We strive daily to develop an **authentic Catholic education, as Champagnat wished**, with characteristic values such as humility, simplicity, modesty, industriousness, fraternity, family spirit, and love of Mary. **We live with these and other Marist characteristics** in various places: schools, social centres and universities. Through them we seek the ongoing renewal of **the educational principle of forming “good Christians and virtuous citizens”**, paying special attention to what this means today.

In our works, the students or recipients feel part of a family, both locally and globally, cultivating their Marist vocation through integral formation, in the classroom and beyond.

## 2. WE ARE EVANGELISERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**Our faith in Jesus is central to our whole educational project.** We develop a contemporary evangelisation, centred on the knowledge and love of Jesus and his Gospel (MEM, 1998), based on our Marist, Catholic tradition. We understand evangelisation as the impulse to grow towards the vision of human life and the good of creation that God has revealed to us in Christ. We bring the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospel closer to the lives of young people and their families. From the mission of “**making Jesus Christ known and loved**”, we create an inspiring academic and co-curricular environment (Sammon, 2006).



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**The Gospel defines us and is central to all that we do. It influences the** way we work with young people, the way we relate to one another, the way we attend to God's presence in our lives, work, family and relationships. Through the Gospel, we make known the message of the **love of the God of Jesus from a perspective of freedom and freeing-up, of meaning and of vocation** (Sanchez, 2020). We transmit this message in an updated form (Pope Francis, 2013). Within our spirituality, Mary occupies a special and unique place, which helps us to live the Gospel through her attitudes. Together with her, Marcellin shows us a path of discipleship that we wish to re-create in our lives.

We strengthen **educational settings of evangelisation** and open our doors to exchange and interaction with the environment. We promote the dimension of transcendence in order to have a purposeful life. We encourage pastoral initiatives in various areas of the school (inside and outside the classroom). We promote a contemplative approach to life. We strengthen support networks between students, families and educators to bring about opportunities for reflection on the meaning of life and its purpose.

**We re-invent the processes of evangelisation and religious formation** with modern approaches and renewed methodologies. We recognise the sensitivities of different generations. We accompany children and young people in their developmental journey in life. We contribute to primary evangelisation and the development of this, including in families. We are active in the development of the vocational dimension and in proposing vocational life choices (Sanchez, 2020).

**A Marist school or social ministry involves the family, not only the student.** Marist educational ministries accompany the educational community (children, educators and families) in their journey of human growth and faith, each in their own particular circumstances which may require intense cultural, interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

**We offer opportunities for spiritual growth** (retreats, accompaniment, counselling, shared Christian life,...). These elements are imbued with the basics of our Marist tradition and the social doctrine of the Church.

### **3. WE EVANGELISE BY EDUCATING AND WE EDUCATE BY EVANGELISING**

We are committed to a high standard of education that evangelises by educating and educates by evangelising. Through the various formative processes, we educate not only via content but also via values to create honest, upright, civic-minded and committed people.

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The integration of culture, faith and life is a constant task. In the education of children and young people we instil the Good News of the Gospel explicitly and implicitly in all subjects and through the cross-cutting values of the curriculum. From the point of view of Christian anthropology, we invite them to live a full life in every sense of the word and offer support to grow as persons and as believers.

The opportunities for explicit evangelisation (catechesis and sacramental life, liturgical life, prayers and celebrations, groups for developing Christian spirituality, vocations ministry, etc.) offer us appropriate spaces, which we tend with care and to which we dedicate adequate effort and passion. We evangelise through various means and forms. All means help us to induct into a spirituality that is appropriate for today's world; a spirituality that unites rather than divides.

Where conditions do not allow for direct evangelisation, we offer the witness of a life enlightened by our faith and the coherence and openness of our being.

#### **4. WE HELP TO DEVELOP MEANINGFUL AND PURPOSEFUL LIVES**

**The culture of love, freedom and compassion**, based on God's own love for us, enables each person to develop inner autonomy (learning to love oneself), self-discipline and self-direction. In this way he or she can also love God and others. The individual learns to respect the rights, freedom and intrinsic value of all others. The moral principles that derive from these values support right reason and are applied in everyday life.

**Transcendence, for a meaningful life**, helps children and young people find the purpose of their life beyond immediate, material issues (Frankl, 1991). We want them to be able to "enlarge upon" their lives for the greater good, from a spiritual and caring vision, and to avoid a short-term view. For those who wish to do so, we offer a vocational plan that can help them make a life-commitment (Sanchez, 2020).

Our works promote **autonomy for a full life** (emancipatory education). This leads us to: 1) proceed with methods and processes that develop autonomy; 2) facilitate periods of listening and discussion about life, decisions and the future; 3) participate in different situational contexts to become aware of the world around us; and 4) work with families so that together we can create a generation that is capable of making decisions and taking responsibility for their actions.



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# WE HAVE HIGH STANDARDS IN OUR MINISTRIES

## 5. WE ARE COMMITTED TO MARIST EDUCATION OF A HIGH STANDARD

A good Marist education is a broad concept and it is central to serving our target-groups, their families and communities well. Through it, we offer a set of experiences and opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values (in general, skills) in an effective and meaningful way (Berger, T. and Frey, B., 2015). To this end, we encourage effective learning in our schools so that sound knowledge, and critical and problem-solving skills are acquired. Regardless of socio-economic, gender, race or other characteristics, we promote equity, fair and appropriate treatment (Feijoó, 2002). We make learning an integral and holistic process, where academic knowledge, emotional well-being, social skills, mental health, values and spirituality are effectively integrated. We seek to make educational processes relevant and pertinent to the specific needs and contexts of our learners and our societies and cultures, with an eye to their application in everyday life and their future. We develop appropriate and authentic evaluative practices from a perspective of continuous improvement. We place adequate, available resources, within our means, at the service of our mission (materials, facilities, training, personnel, physical spaces...). We understand that a good education implies innovation and adaptability to social, technological, cultural, religious and economic changes which require us to incorporate innovative methods. We are attentive to the new needs, sensitivities and opportunities of today's world in order to help our children and young people be well prepared to live in the world that is and will be theirs. A good education cannot take place without the involvement of the community working together and this helps to involve everyone in the development and improvement of our works. In mission areas where the limitations and shortages are at their greatest, our high standard of education is a response to the serious problems faced by children and young people in precarious conditions and has a particularly relevant moral meaning.

We work for **a high standard of education** as a right for all children and young people. Through relevant and meaningful programmes: academic, athletic, pastoral, artistic, solidarity... we try to educate for life, for a good life. **We update our educational processes** based on current national and international standards, which help us to have relevant, effective and deeply human and meaningful learning-outcomes. **We regularly update our educational project** so that it responds to the needs, educational trends and emerging challenges of society

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and the world. We are mindful of the principle of “**educating today**” for the “**children and young people of today**”, without losing sight of the tomorrow they will inhabit. We favour spaces and times for the collective construction of contextualised practices, with the active commitment of the entire educational community.

We understand that an authentic Marist education of a high standard is built on an authentic quality of evangelisation, supported by the best possible pastoral approach.

## 6. WE OPT FOR A DEEPLY HUMANE EDUCATION

We educate with a deep sense of forming a human being. Like Pope Francis, we believe that to educate is not to “fill one’s head with ideas” since that builds “automatons”, but to walk together with people in a “tension between risk and security”, in an educational practice that “looks beyond” (Pope Francis, 2022). We help develop life skills alongside academic knowledge and open the door for young people to explore their spirituality. We also foster social-emotional skills such as: a) Self-awareness to understand one’s strengths and limitations; b) Self-management to develop skills in managing one’s emotions, decisions and actions; c) Social awareness to be conscious of the world and to serve others, d) Relationship- and solidarity- skills to recognise that we are all brothers and sisters, e) Responsible decision-making based on Gospel values. With all this, we place our lives and resources, as Marists, at the service of an education that examines the centre and the horizons of people so that they can realise their own life-project in the world. We educate with the conviction of the inherent value of each human life. We educate to transform and to serve.

## 7. WE EDUCATE THE WHOLE PERSON

We offer, from our charism, a **holistic, inclusive and integral** (comprehensive) **educational model** that is socially, religiously and culturally relevant, as well as realistic and practical, in order to develop people with a life-project at the service of society and the Church. We do this within the conditions that the context and the environment of the Marist mission allow. **We educate the whole person**, in his or her different dimensions, such as spiritual, social, academic, cultural, artistic, sporting, and solidarity (Nussbaum, 1997).

From a **holistic vision**, we succeed in integrating heart, mind, conscience and spirituality as constitutive parts of the person (Zubiri, 2004; Hendricks, 2017; Pope Francis, 2022). From a competency-based approach, we seek to make the learning experience a progressive process, one that awakens curiosity and challenge, that helps imagination and entrepreneurship. Our curricula, adapted



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to our situations and Marist identity, have cross-cutting themes, which include dimensions such as health, spirituality, solidarity, ecology, ... We recognise that the education of children and young people should integrate their overall well-being and development, addressing cognitive, social and emotional needs. To make this possible, we seek academic excellence, character education, health and wellness, social-emotional learning, cultural awareness, diversity, integration of the arts, creativity and co-curricular activities, engagement and relationship with the local community, positive relationships between educators and students, individualised learning and authentic assessment.

## 8. WE COMMIT TO MAKING LEARNING PERSONAL AND ADAPTABLE

We recognise that students have different needs, learning styles and rates of development. Within our means, we seek to adapt to meet these differences by **making learning personal** and providing specific support where necessary. This may include individual diagnosis, personalised pacing, formative assessment and flexible planning. When students can develop some level of autonomy, it enables them be committed to their learning and have a sense of control.

## 9. DEVELOPING PARTICIPATORY AND COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

We promote **participatory methodologies** that encourage the involvement of all members of the educational community (students, families, educators, managers, professionals...). This allows us to develop greater collaboration, greater commitment and an exercise in social transformation.

We generate **processes of analysis, listening and dialogue** for decision-making, enriching mutual knowledge and interaction, being empathetic, and recognising, caring for and building along with the other. We recognise the voice and right of children to participate in their own educational processes (cfr. Document “Stand up, speak out and participate”, 2023).

## 10. AN IMMERSIVE AND ACTIVE PEDAGOGY

We provide students with a learning process that allows them to actively experience and apply content and skills. Engagement, motivation and discovery are the dynamics of this teaching-learning model. We help our students to develop and experience an immersive and active methodology that seeks: active participation, experiential and collaborative learning, the use of technology and diverse multimedia resources, problem-solving and decision-making, the connection of learning with real life, the development of autonomy and



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self-direction, and progressive and authentic evaluation. We implement active methodologies to develop critical thinking, problem solving and achieve trans-disciplinary and meaningful learning.

## **11. WE IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE AND UP-TO-DATE CURRICULAR MODELS**

Curriculum models allow us to integrate various components of the teaching and learning process from particular approaches. Although they are very varied, we can use several of them in our processes, such as: the constructivist and socio-cognitive model (Román and Díez, 2008), the competency-based curriculum model, project-based learning, problem-based learning, the personalised curriculum, the STEM model (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), the STEAM model (STEM+A=Arts), the socio-participatory and values model (CMU, acc. 2023), among others. These models also incorporate components arising from psychological or brain research, such as, for example, the multiple intelligences model (Gardner, 2008), which includes emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1999), or models based on advances in neuroscience (Mora, 2013).

According to the needs of the students, the educational community, the objectives and purposes of our works, the educational legislation of the countries and the trends in education, we can use one or several integrated models (Perkins, 1995; Ramírez, 2020). In any of them, as Marists we incorporate the values of our identity and of the Gospel, as well as core themes and concepts proper to our tradition: Catholic identity, the social doctrine of the Church and other relevant sources.

We incorporate the key competences and skills for the 21st century. Significant elements include: critical thinking; problem solving; effective communication; collaboration; interpersonal skills (positive relationships, empathy, working ethically and respectfully with others), digital and media literacy; self-directed learning; adaptability and flexibility; creativity and innovation; global and intercultural awareness and citizenship; financial skills; ethical thinking; emotional resilience; systems thinking; entrepreneurship and positive action; service learning; emotional intelligence; leadership skills; spirituality and a contemplative approach to life.

## **12. WE BROADEN EDUCATION WITH TRANSFORMATIVE SKILLS**

Beyond the usual competencies (*e.g. linguistic communication, mathematics - science - technology, digital competence, “learning to learn”, social and civic, personal autonomy and initiative, cultural awareness and expressions, religious-spir-*



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itual), we offer alternatives and additional skills that enhance the options for our students.

Students acquire **three transformative skills** (cf. OECD, 2018; Bentley, 2017; Grayling, 2017, Steinberg, 2017): creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility. We understand this as:

- *When students create new value, they ask questions, collaborate with others and try to think “outside the box” to find innovative solutions. This combines a sense of purpose with critical thinking and creativity.*
- *In an interdependent world, students must be able to balance conflicting or seemingly incompatible logics and demands, and be comfortable with complexity and ambiguity. This requires empathy and respect.*
- *Students who have the ability to take responsibility for their actions have a strong moral compass that enables them to reflect, work with others and respect the planet (OECD, 2018, p. 1).*

### **13. WE ENCOURAGE LIFELONG LEARNING**

**In our work, we promote “lifelong learning”.** Beyond formal periods of education, we foster a vision among ourselves and our students that learning is a constant process. New skills, knowledge and experiences can be acquired at every moment of life. In a world of constant change, it is particularly relevant for everyone to keep up to date and to be able to live by actively participating in the contemporary world. This means seizing opportunities, having a mindset of continuous improvement and growth. Although it is particularly relevant in the adult world, it is a skill that is taught from an early age.

### **14. WE CREATE A CULTURE WHICH OFFERS FORMATIVE AND AUTHENTIC VALUES**

We incorporate different types of learning-assessment (knowledge, attitudes, skills, competencies...). We make use of formative and comprehensive assessment methods that include the richness of our different educational and skills-building approaches. Through formative assessment, we provide constant and progressive feedback during learning. With authentic assessment, we focus on measuring understanding and the application of skills and knowledge in authentic, real-world contexts.

By creating a culture of evaluation in our schools, we help to ensure that all of us - target groups, students, educators and managers - are in a constant process of feedback and improvement.

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## WE DEFEND AND PROMOTE A DIFFERENT WORLD

### 15. WE ACCOMPANY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY AND ON THE PERIPHERIES

Because of our compassion and mission, **we educate children and young people who are in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation, exclusion or on existential or geographical peripheries** (Marist Brothers, XXII General Chapter). Our preference for the least favoured impels us to offer, as far as we possibly can, initiatives of support and direct help, special programmes, social centres and schools particularly oriented to seeking the best for those with fewer opportunities who are on the margins of society. We make an effort to adapt our educational projects and offer options and conditions which help to overcome social disadvantages and make it possible to eliminate the cycles of poverty, violence and social segregation.

We are committed to the support, care and development of **children and young people in situations of greater personal, social and economic vulnerability**. We offer support and long-term programmes for students in vulnerable situations, and continue an active policy of incorporating new students by offering something new. We promote individual programmes that meet the particular needs of our students.

As communities, educational leaders and teachers, **we also take on our share of generosity** to support those who are in debilitating conditions. We accompany people in their situations of need, fragility or segregation, with a pastoral and compassionate outlook. We promote times and spaces that facilitate a meaningful encounter and we open up formal and informal experiences for this. We give witness to our call by being present in the social peripheries. We look beyond our social circle and open up our minds. We promote good practices aimed at reflecting on how to respond to geographical and/or existential peripheries (segregation, immigration, cultural minorities, mental health problems, various disabilities, ...).

**Social ministries allow access to spaces, experiences and educational processes of a high standard, with Marist values.** Care in the training of educators, attention to the real-life situations of recipients and their surrounding communities, care for the infrastructure, ... are important elements in our desire to serve all those who live on existential or geographical peripheries. The presence and actions of our international missionary communities help us ex-



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perience real frontiers. In them, we take care that experience of community and mission remain relevant internally and externally.

We promote **justice in education, bringing the** permanent right to education to existential **peripheries**, emphasising liberation and transformation. This implies setting up opportunities to address the inter- and the multi-: interdisciplinary, intercultural, multifaceted and multi-vocal. Democratising knowledge because of solidarity with other human beings makes for equality.

## **16. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY ON THE PERIPHERIES**

We believe in an **inclusive education**, regardless of race, culture, religion or sexual identity, as an expression of an active “culture of encounter”. We recognise and value the enriching aspect of the diversity of our students and our communities. We provide education that promotes gender equality and, in line with the Global Compact for Education, improves the educational conditions and leadership of girls and other disadvantaged groups. We promote the role of our ministries as active agents in the prevention of all forms of violence and discrimination. Openness and a sense of the dignity of all people allows us to offer the gospel which permeates all our actions. We foster participatory environments in our ministries’ activities. We integrate collaborative learning. Where necessary, we remove physical, social and cultural barriers.

## **17. WE PROMOTE NON-VIOLENT CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION**

The culture and techniques of non-violent communication in everyday life in education are useful skills both in and out of school. Discussion brings different points of view and helps in the understanding of existing, important differences. By means of non-violent communication, we improve dialogue, empathy and mutual understanding, and seek to solve problems through constructive conversation. In this way we develop mediation, negotiation, attentive and constructive listening and mutual understanding (Cf. Rosenberg, M. B. (2015). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. PuddleDancer Press).

## **18. WE OFFER TRANSFORMATIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTS**

We offer our students and **our** target groups **constructive and critical environments that enable them to grow as individuals, to develop their commitment and solidarity, and to come to terms with their faith**. We are socially responsible and help them to take responsibility for the world around them, for ecology, for other people, and particularly for the poor and marginalised. We

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help them develop social responsibility in their own lives and in their life-project. We create structures that encourage our children and young people to serve. We facilitate solidarity programmes that help direct contact with situations of vulnerability. Through these programmes and experiences (mission trips, work camps, volunteering, community social service...) we strengthen the value of global citizenship. We are sensitive to, and promoters of, the “inter” and the “eco”, in response to our contemporary era. We promote critical awareness, in-depth analysis of reality and a transformative outlook for the benefit of the individual and his or her society. We start from the conviction that “another world is possible” and we hold firm to the value and virtue of hope: to be educated and trained to be part of a better reality.

We are particularly interested in cultivating a critical and transformative spirit, which results in a commitment to those most in need and to social transformation.

## 19. WE ARE PROMOTERS OF ETHICS AND A CULTURE OF CARE

**Care** is a central value in education. From it, educational processes that are life-forming and favour integral and sustainable social development are implemented.

Marist ministries are spaces for **the care and respect of life and creation**, based on an integral ecology and on the sustainability of life on the planet. To this end, we promote awareness of social justice. Furthermore, we are committed to education for solidarity, peace, ecology, mental health and a full spiritual life. We encourage the care of one’s own body in terms of physical, mental and emotional health.

## 20. WE ARE COMMITTED TO PLANETARY SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

**Integral ecology represents a new form of social and planetary justice**, which is at the heart of a pastoral ministry of “care” and a “culture of encounter”. Our works are committed to educational processes and actions that allow an integral and sustainable development, and a clear awareness of the care of the planet and of creation.

We are all **guardians of our common home**. We design projects to make this world more humane, imbued with love, generating a peaceful, supportive and fraternal humanity. We advocate processes that support permacultural awareness and experiences in both individuals and society. We establish action plans to accompany the “*Laudato Si*” (and similar) initiatives (Pope Francis, 2015), and to concretise them in specific projects in each ministry, with the involve-

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ment of students and their families. We develop skills and a caring mentality with technical and humanistic foundations.

## 21. WE RESPECT RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

We consider children and young people as **active subjects of rights**. We work to ensure that they are aware of these rights. Respecting the dignity of each person, we value and respect the diversity of our societies. Diversity is a richness for educational experience and for society. We encourage this diversity in order to strengthen the social fabric; to promote the construction of a society that respects the rights of each person; to promote dialogue and consensus. One desired consequence is the creation of safe and respectful environments where there is no room for exclusion, discrimination and harassment.

Marist educational ministries have training programmes for **education in inclusion and for peace** from a human rights approach which favours **positive, safe and healthy spaces** within the work, in collaboration with families and with an external social impact.

We create a culture of child protection and promotion of **children's rights**. We strengthen **protection policies, protocols and processes** at all levels of education.

Our works are committed to the **support, care and development of children and young people in situations of greater personal, social and economic vulnerability**.

## 22. WE FOCUS ON OUR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS PROTAGONISTS

In our ministries, the student or recipient is the centre of the teaching/learning process. He/she is the **active protagonist** of this process (cf. Institute of the Marist Brothers, *Stand Up, Speak Out and Participate*, 2023).

In order to encourage their protagonism, we implement constant training and self-evaluation of the conditions for coexistence, safety and family spirit in our ministries. We make our **teaching and learning environments** student-friendly. This pastoral care of students is a specific quality of our schools, based on Marcellin's convictions.

Putting the lives of our students at the centre of our mission is sacred ground for us. With them, we seek to build close, family-like, inclusive educational communities.

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## 23. SOLIDARITY IS IN OUR MARIST DNA

**Solidarity is in our educational DNA.** In 21st century education, we translate solidarity in many different ways, in concrete action and real educational transformation. Through it, we seek to develop social awareness, civic responsibility and solidarity initiatives in favour of others, especially the poor and marginalised. These initiatives foster the development of the values of justice, equality, equity, tolerance and respect (López, 2004). In addition, they offer a valuable spiritual experience when lived out in faith and the Gospel.

**Solidarity** is the new name for peace and we Marists are personally and institutionally committed to promoting it.

## 24. WE DEEPEN THE SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACH

Service-learning is part of many of our educational communities as a way of integrating academic learning with service to local communities. Students focus on needs in concrete situations for which they seek a solution through the knowledge they have acquired. This develops their personal skills and attitudes. Social awareness, civic participation and commitment to the local environment are increased. Through this learning, participants develop integration of the curriculum, relevance and authenticity of content, collaboration with the community, active participation, learning and putting into practice skills and competencies (critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication and teamwork), civic responsibility and critical thinking to which the social environment contributes (cfr. Holland, B. A., & Gelmon, S. B., (2015).

# WE HAVE A GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

## 25. WE EDUCATE GLOBAL CITIZENS WHO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF OUR SOCIETIES

Interculturality is fundamental to our reality as **Marists of Champagnat** in the world, with all the nuances and facets that allow us to be a global charismatic family.

We believe that **our education must be global and “inter”**. This “inter” dimension enables us to develop a responsible global awareness and to



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foster a culture of encounter. Through this “inter” perspective, we promote a culture of peace and non-violence, solidarity, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. To make this “inter” effective, we are attentive to **the needs that arise in our environment and beyond**, and we try to respond to them by collaborating with other people or organisations.

Our ministries are committed to the **development of global citizens**. We provide opportunities to interact with people from diverse cultures (e.g. student-exchange programmes, benchmarking activities, online classes and forums with peers from different countries or environments, internationalisation, etc.). This provides a better understanding of the different situations and polarities in our world today. In this way, values, skills and competencies are developed, such as: global awareness, respect for diversity, global civic responsibility, global solidarity, commitment to the just causes of humanity. It also helps us to educate from a model of open education and to develop communication skills and the learning of other languages.

## 26. INTERCONNECTED AND NETWORKED EDUCATION

**Marist works are committed to networking and collaboration.** We develop **networking** that allows us to pool efforts and resources around the world. This helps us to reach more people. By strengthening the “global” or “worldwide” awareness of our educational approach, we weave networks of collaboration, exchange and learning. We share what strengthens us, and, in particular, we support those more limited mission areas. Networking prevents us from falling into isolation and lack of creativity. It gives us greater significance and relevance in contributing to solutions in this world. We grow in social impact. It gives us opportunities to learn from each other how to make our educational mission contemporary. Therefore, it is important that we grow as a network, that we take advantage of our combined energy and strengths, and that we generate times and spaces for sharing. This will help us to open our frontiers to respond to the great calls of the Institute, the Church and the world.

Among the possibilities, we include inter-centre projects. We share successful projects and carry out joint initiatives. We include the Institute’s Networks (Champagnat Global, Solidarity, Volunteering, Universities, Publishers, ...) in our normal ways of working. We get involved in global discussion groups or in global Marist initiatives.

As educators we want to continue learning. Therefore we commit to networking among ourselves and **with other organisations**. We build and witness to



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the Kingdom by welcoming and strengthening intercultural dialogue and exchange. We identify with the principles, vision and values of the **Global Education Pact** proposed by Pope Francis. We collaborate with **local, national and international institutions** (civil or religious) to promote the fundamentals of Marist mission in the 21st century. We foster our mission networks and inter-congregational and other partnerships.

## 27. DEVELOPING DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND CITIZENSHIP

**Technologies and artificial intelligence offer extraordinary opportunities for education and we use them with openness and responsibility** (Laukonen, Biddel and Gallagher, 2018). We include digital citizenship as one of our cross-cutting themes. We promote **digital and media literacy as well as digital awareness** (Artopoulos, 2011). We offer courses and practical sessions on the use of technologies. We are open to technological innovation and know how to incorporate it into the educational and social environments in which we find ourselves. We use criteria of responsibility and ethics for using it and we give the best possible assistance in the use of these technologies. We pay attention to **digital security** (exposure, cybercrime, ...) and **data protection** (privacy). We inform minors and protect them from all risk. Literacy and technological competence are part of our educational programmes. Technological inclusion is part of our solidarity initiative.

## WE TAKE ON LEADERSHIP

### 28. WE ARE LEADERS IN MISSION

We nurture and strengthen *Marist leadership, qualified for mission*. We invite all leaders to be deeply formed in Marist identity and in their areas of competence. We encourage them to be innovative. We expect them to work as a team and collegially. We help them with ongoing training that enables them to respond there and then to the demands and needs of our local and national environments. We support their continuous development so that they are well trained and informed, feel at ease and confident in their role (Rodríguez, Ordóñez and López, 2020).



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## 29. TRAINING IS A KEY DYNAMIC IN EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

We make a clear option for the formation of all Marists in their various roles and activities. Formation enables us to be authentic educators and, also, to discover our vocation as apostles in our works: Marist people with identity, self-understanding and a sense of community. This marks who we are socially, professionally, apostolically, spiritually and ecclesially.

**Training (professional and vocational development) is intentional, structured, continuous and strategic.** We incorporate the management of knowledge and we foster practices that support continuous lifelong learning. Through thoughtful programmes and initiatives, we update and improve our service in mission. We help people to find their path of personal fulfilment and to witness to a fulfilling professional and personal life. We offer accompaniment to people involved in educational ministries with comprehensive and holistic programmes. Through plans and structures, with specific objectives and at different stages, we create a strategic scenario that supports our mission and the leadership within it (Fullan, 2011).

We support initiatives and policies for **formation, training, updating and professional and spiritual improvement**, in various areas and interests, so that everyone is qualified and feels committed to their mission. The professional and vocational commitment of all of us enables us to develop effective educational processes and maintain the best expectations. We recognise that **formation/training is a key dynamic and an investment in the future for the vitality of Marist life and mission.**

We organise and manage as learning organisations (Senge, 1990/2006, 2015), with people at the centre.

## 30. WE DEVELOP SERVANT LEADERSHIP

From whatever work, position or mission, we develop servant leadership, following the example of Jesus, Mary, Marcellin and so many other Marists throughout history.

This fundamental way of leadership is both a philosophy and a spirituality. It integrates skills, abilities and competencies focused on serving, empowering and guiding others in the service of the goals and visions of our institutions and works, and beyond. It develops specific qualities and competencies (*empathy and compassion, collaboration, self-awareness, humility, shared vision, people development, honest and open communication, inclusion and diversity, ethical and just decisions, leading by example, continuous learning, transcendence, patience and persistence, and, in all things, service*) (cf. Institute of the Marist Brothers, Marist Voices, 2022).

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This vision of leadership transforms our outlook, our lives and our organisational and institutional approach. It is effective. It drives profound change in people's well-being. It builds trust and collaboration. It places the fundamental priority on service to others, particularly those who need help most. It is rooted in our Christian spiritual tradition (Jesus, the servant) and in the example of Mary and Marcellin.

## WE ORGANISE OURSELVES WITH UP-TO-DATE TOOLS, PROCESSES AND METHODS

### 31. WE DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE AND MANAGEMENT THAT LEARNS IN A CHANGING WORLD

We are vigilant that **our policies and practices, as well as structures of management and governance**, are aligned and properly evaluated. These structures and strategies promote genuine co-responsibility and a living communion. We prudently distinguish levels of management from levels of governance.

Our **models of management and governance** of Marist schools reflect a human rights-based approach to management, where respect, transparency and the participation of all are a reflection of what we seek to teach and live by. We use resources, processes and internal culture to facilitate up-to-date management.

**We create a culture of learning.** We value the acquisition of new competencies to be better prepared for the mission in a changing world. We provide and seek out opportunities for lifelong learning. We create learning communities to share knowledge and experience; and, if we can, we network.

**We value leadership** that promotes learning, training and continuous development.

**We develop a culture of constant improvement.** We review our processes. We praise innovation and creativity. We objectively evaluate the development of our initiatives, projects, programmes and institutions.

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## 32. WE ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

**Innovation, boldness and creativity are and must be constant values and dynamics in our mission in this 21st century.** Like Saint Marcellin, a man of vision and action, we work in harmony in the search for and application of **the best methods, forms and processes in our mission.** We move forward in continual renewal and updating. We do this from a deeply human and spiritual, reflective and transcendent base. Through processes of enquiry, research, training and updating we are in line with social, cultural, educational, religious and ecclesial advances. The Secretariats of the Institute, the Regional and Provincial Teams, as well as different initiatives of formation, updating, analysis and shared experiences are a sign of this institutional option.

*We educate in today's world without losing sight of the world we will inhabit tomorrow.* We update our educational proposals in the light of new paradigms and we are continuously improving our formal and socio-community educational practices (Severin, 2017). We offer our students the necessary skills and competencies to deal with today's world.

**We are enterprising, we act with courage and responsibility,** attentive to the context into which we are placed and we discern the decisions we make in favour of our mission. We explore in new ways the possibilities that the world presents us in order to contribute to the promotion of life. Aware of the different political and economic agendas, we have a critical and reflective sense to turn our education into a contemporary and innovative space and, above all, into an “art” rather than a “technique”. We make our schools a reference point for innovation. They prepare **people for the future**, giving birth to pathways that respond to the demands of society and the Church.

**We promote research and innovation** from our universities and formal and informal study centres. Through forums, conferences, training and refresher courses, we keep abreast of social, educational and religious trends. Permanent and committed study helps us to generate useful lines of action and ways of life.

**We are committed to active adaptability to respond to emerging best practices and contemporary situations in all aspects of the mission.** We are in a continuous process of exploration, experimentation and discovery.

*In all things, we know that our contribution is a humble participation in the great mission, which is God's mission in the world. With a trusting heart, we place in the*

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*Lord's hands and in Mary's protection, our Marist journey of life and mission in this 21st century.*

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission,  
Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco



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