



SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY

ANIMATION STRUCTURES

CHAPTER

VIII

*“I am among you as
one who serves”*

(Lk 22:27)



The apostolic mandate which the Church entrusts to us is taken up and put into effect in the first place by the provincial and local communities. The members have complementary functions and each one of their tasks is important. They are aware that pastoral objectives are achieved through unity and joint brotherly responsibility. The provincial and the rector as promoters of dialogue and teamwork, guide the community in pastoral discernment, so that it may accomplish its apostolic plan in unity and fidelity”

[C. 44]



This little Rule brought this notable advantage: Everybody knew what was expected of him, and since I used to let each one be responsible for his own charge, each took care to know and to perform his appointed duties”

[Memoirs of the Oratory, third decade 1846-185, no.6]

The animation

and coordination of pastoral work are carried out on different levels: local, provincial, interprovincial and international. In drawing up the pastoral plan which gives details of its intended commitments, the EPC needs to select the necessary means and determine the concrete steps to be taken to avoid going ahead without due, thoughtful consideration. We are suggesting a practical method for drawing up the SEPP.

1

A structured and well-organised youth ministry

Pastoral activity is the Church at work and is carried out as an act of communion: “the apostolic mandate which the Church entrusts to us is taken up and put into effect in the first place by the provincial and local communities” (C. 44). It is through the Province that, in a given area, the Congregation organises and animates the life of communion and the carrying out of the mission. It is through the **Province community that the union of the local communities among themselves, with other Provinces, with the world community and with the Church is achieved.**

The pastoral activity of each local community has its origin in this arrangement, and is organised in the context of the life and apostolic project of the Province (cf. C. 157). *The pastoral activity of each local community is related to a threefold concrete reality: the life and action of the local Church, the circumstances and options of the Province and the situation of the young and people in general in the area in which it is located.*

Any guidelines and pastoral decisions resulting from a careful assessment of the concrete situation are the means chosen to *respond with ardent love and pastoral intelligence* to the challenges and expectations of the young.

1 1

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH MINISTRY

A *Province level structures for government and animation*

With due regard to what is laid down in the *Constitutions of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales* concerning the organisation of the Provinces and the functions assigned to the Provincial and his Council (cf. C. 161-169), **each Province makes its own arrangements for its mission in a given territory.**

The ever-increasing *complexity of situations* in which people are living, and the *great variety of areas* in which we are asked to offer our contribution make

us aware of the need to be ever more attentive to God's specific call in these various different situations. The province community, together with the communities, individual confreres and lay collaborators, are called on to face up to the situation of the young people to whom God is sending us. As we accompany them in pastoral and educational ways, our reflection and discernment will lead us to identify some key challenges; these will force us to concentrate on some fundamental options and encourage us to plan our pastoral activity.

As we shall see later, the choices and guidelines depending on the circumstances and development of the Province are determined and indicated in the first place in the **Overall Province Plan (OPP)**, the fixed point of reference for the government and animation of the Province. Other things which concern, for example, the life and activity of the people involved in pastoral work are matters regarding the formation of the Salesians and lay people who collaborate in the mission. Local communities need to take the OPP into account in organising their life and the carrying out their mission.

Reference to the choices made by the Province as expressed in the **Salesian Educative-Pastoral Plan of the Province (Province SEPP)** is fundamental for carrying out pastoral work. The SEPP indicates the major choices and provides guidelines for carrying out youth ministry *in all the centres of the Province*, irrespective of the sector and pastoral animation setting (cf. *Glossary*: Pastoral Animation Setting) being animated.

The Provincial with his Council has *the prime responsibility for the animation and the pastoral government of the Province* (cf. C. 161). On him and his Council rests the fundamental task of governing the life and pastoral activity of the Province as defined in the SEPP: indicating according to the situation, the objectives to be attained, the priorities to be pursued, the strategies to be adopted and the available resources. Therefore, the Provincial Council is *a body engaged in reflection and pastoral decision making*. The Youth Ministry Delegate, through his involvement with the Provincial Council, has a more specific role entrusted to him in so far as he is directly engaged as animator and promoter of province decisions and guidelines.

The choices and guidelines of the Province are directed towards the development and organisation of a series of structures for animation and service which support and accompany the activity of the local communities.

These structures for animation and service provide a focus and means of support for the ordinary pastoral activity of the communities and local works, as well as for their constant updating. Continual pastoral reflection is necessary in all sectors and pastoral animation settings.

B *Salesian communities and works at local level*

At local level communities and works ought to respond to two major challenges: in the first place, the *increasing multiplicity of situations and needs which we are being called upon to address*; secondly, the complexity of procedures, which *requires a better prepared and essential educational and pastoral focus on individuals*. Both of these situations can produce a tendency in communities and works towards breaking things down into sectors and a lack of an ordered structure. In the face of these dangers, **a change of mentality and way of working** in pastoral activities is needed in the Salesian communities and in members of the local EPC.

Just like the Province community, the local community is called upon to live and act with a *clear planning mentality*, a mentality that leads it to identifying the priority areas it should pay attention to and making the fundamental choices that should guide peoples' lives and activities in various sectors of the work.

Pastoral work finds its principal point of reference in the **local SEPP**. The SEPP indicates *the guidelines for carrying out youth ministry* in all the sectors and areas of the work. The SEPP provides for the cohesion and the articulation of the four dimensions which characterise the Salesian educative and pastoral project (see Chapter 6). The Rector and his Council have *primary responsibility for the government and pastoral animation of the work*. In their hands lies the fundamental responsibility for the coordination and organisation of youth ministry. They should foster procedures leading to involving people, identifying priorities, allocating resources and initiating reflection.

It is the primary responsibility of the Rector and his Council to organise reflection and pastoral praxis. The local coordinator is the first and direct animator, which involves coordinating youth ministry as he promotes its systematic nature and formulation through local structures and organisation.

1 2

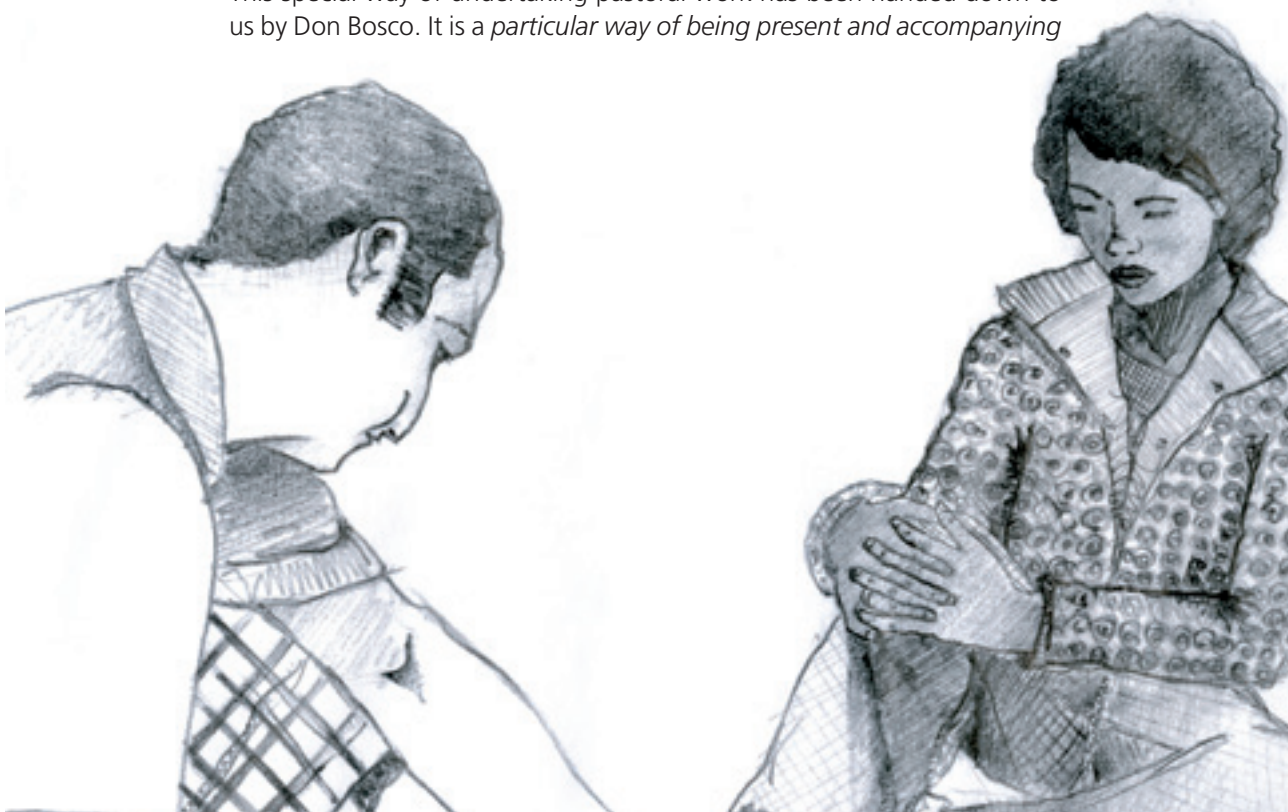
A SPECIAL WAY OF CARRYING OUT APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY: PASTORAL ANIMATION

A particular feature of Salesian Youth Ministry is animation, in the deepest sense of the word: “giving a spirit, a soul” to things. Salesian animation, therefore, is not only something technical and functional: **it is spiritual, apostolic, pedagogical** and finds its source in pastoral charity. *Animating is more than managing, running and organising works and sectors.* The necessary human abilities and skills for the task are not neglected but are preconditions. However it is important that pastoral sensitivity comes before the efficiency of the organisation in the order of priorities.

Animation is a form of contemplating, thinking, feeling and acting which is characteristic of someone who has taken on a particular responsibility for government, and who, independently of that role, is involved in pastoral activity on behalf of the young.

A *Characteristics of Salesian animation*

This special way of undertaking pastoral work has been handed down to us by Don Bosco. It is a *particular way of being present and accompanying*



the young and his closest helpers that he had practised as he lived out the mission entrusted to him by God. This particular style is practised and developed as it is applied in various contexts and settings.

Animation in Salesian Youth Ministry implies first of all the **involvement of people, relationships and procedures**. This presupposes:

- involvement of as many people as possible, of Salesians in the first instance but also of everyone involved in pastoral and educative activities;
- motivation and a deeper sense of identification with the values, criteria and objectives of the Salesian pastoral project;
- continuous accompaniment, so as to achieve the uninterrupted and overall unity of the Salesian pastoral project;
- planning and implementation of processes which have an influence on the lives and development of the young;
- unity and communion in a shared project;
- taking care to foster exchange of information and communication, promotion of collaboration, creativity and a sense of belonging;
- the urgent need for constant reflection on the situation of the young, and on pastoral praxis so that it corresponds to their expectations.

B *Principles and criteria for animating procedures and structures*

» *Links with Province governing and coordinating bodies*

In order to foster **close collaboration among the different works and services** in view of unity, it is necessary to:

- ▮ ensure that there is convergence and clear expression in the OPP of *choices made regarding animation and government in the Province*;
- ▮ maintain clarity of vision regarding the *all-permeating nature of Salesian pastoral activity* in the SEPP, through its four dimensions

articulated in the different sectors which are mutually integrated and complementary;

- ▮ *ensure coordination and collaboration* among the various sectors of the Province animation process (Formation, Salesian Family, Economy, the various sectors of Youth Ministry, Communication) to guarantee unity in pastoral activity according to the objectives of the SEPP;
- ▮ implement a process of systematic *reflection* and consideration of the differences between the real situation and the determined objectives: a continuous process of study, reflection, decision making, planning and assessment;
- ▮ give support to the activities of the Salesian religious communities and the EPC rather than to be directly involved in organising matters. This encourages wide-ranging participation *and shared responsibility* (a sense of community, team work, appropriate and sufficient provision of information).

» ***Involving communities, confreres and the EPC***

The purpose of animation is to promote and maintain active shared responsibility. **All confreres, together with lay people in the EPC, are involved in studying and drawing up criteria and making pastoral decisions, as well as implementing them.** This is why, rather than undertaking a large number of activities, priority needs to be given to the guidelines, proposals and information provided for the benefit of communities in carrying out their responsibilities. The following become strategic factors:

- ▮ ensuring consistency of local communities *in number and quality* (cf. GC24, nos.173-174);
- ▮ *accompanying* communities and those responsible for the different pastoral areas at first hand and systematically, above all where they find greater difficulty in their mission of animation;
- ▮ giving due attention to *communication and sharing* between communities and pastoral operators;

- ▶ promoting a *sense of belonging*, the assimilation of common criteria and objectives, collaboration and mutual improvement;
- ▶ following up *especially significant opportunities* in pastoral animation with particular care, such as the process of drawing up and evaluating the local SEPP, specifying pastoral roles and responsibilities in educational and pastoral animation teams, planning training sessions for pastoral workers, etc.

» **Formation for the mission**

The response to God's call in the service of the young implies fidelity to the process of formation in order to strengthen the mentality and pastoral approach in the light of the Salesian charism. Pastoral formation requires **Salesians and lay people to be accompanied in order to give greater depth to their educational vocation and to update them in their practical skills**. For this reason, as well as the study of the model of Salesian Youth Ministry as presented in the *Frame of Reference* for Salesian Youth Ministry, it is necessary to offer procedures for pastoral reflection and pastoral *mentoring*.

The current situation demands that there be **common formative experiences: for Salesians, lay people, young co-workers and members of the Salesian Family** (cf. GC24, nos.138-146). Here are some important areas::

- ▶ there needs to be a systematic and sound formative project in the *initial stages of Salesian formation* through a systematic and gradual study of the model of Salesian Youth Ministry, as well as guidance in practical pastoral experiences which help young confreres to adopt the mindset of a unified ministry and style of animation and planning methodology. It is necessary to ensure a gradual initiation into Salesian Youth Ministry "on the ground", with good practices, and with a sound accompaniment. Formation ought help combine reflection with pastoral activity and avoid improvisation, superficiality, compartmentalisation and a generic approach;
- ▶ *specific formation* should be offered to teachers, leaders, coaches, social assistants and catechists to qualify them as educators and pastors; specific preparation should be provided for personnel engaged in the various sectors of Salesian Youth Ministry (a provincial formation plan for personnel as envisaged in the OPP);

special care should be given to the area of pastoral and educational studies with theoretical, practical and experiential specialisation;

- attention should be given to *spiritual accompaniment*, an increasingly vital issue for the young. This recognised need requires from us that we ensure the provision of formation courses that will prepare Salesians and lay co-workers to become pastors and educators capable of discernment and guidance;
- processes of *ongoing formation should be re-enforced*, making good use of the cultural and pastoral talents of Salesians and lay people in a renewed commitment to culture, study and a professional approach, studying Salesian Youth Spirituality in depth, in order to live it, present it and share it (GC24, nos.239-241; 257); taking advantage of moments of community life which constitute the ordinary way for its ongoing formation on a daily basis.

2

Local animation and coordination

2 1

A SALESIAN COMMUNITY AS THE ANIMATING NUCLEUS OF A SALESIAN WORK

The effective role the Salesians play varies according to the number of confreres and their functions. It is up to the Provincial and his Council to decide which precise model of the EPC should be implemented (cf. GC24, no.169). The following are some of the essential forms of animation:

A *The SDB community*

The religious community (SDB) which lives, safeguards, reflects on and constantly develops the charism of Don Bosco, performs a specific animating role with regard to the EPC. The spiritual heritage of the

religious community, its pedagogical practice, its fraternal relationships and spirit of shared responsibility in every situation represent *the guiding model for the pastoral identity of the animating nucleus* (cf. C. 47; R. 5). Therefore the Salesian community is called upon:

- ▶ *to provide the witness of religious life*, demonstrating: the primacy of God in life; total dedication to the mission of education and evangelisation; the joyful testimony of one's life and attention given to developing the Salesian vocation in young people and co-workers; the apostolic contribution of so many young Salesians, since being "closer to the rising generations, they can provide inspiration and enthusiasm; they are ready to try new solutions" (C. 46). The life of someone who has reached an elderly age becomes, through his living fidelity to God, a gift and revelation of the more mature aspects of a vocation. The elderly or sick Salesian is always more conscious of still having a future role to play, not yet having fully completed his missionary task. He continues to bear witness to the fact that without Christ nothing has value nor gives joy to a person's life nor to living with others;
- ▶ *to safeguard the Salesian charismatic identity* through a close and significant presence among the young, and a readiness to make personal contacts; taking care of the genuine nature of the SEPP in all its activities; providing the overall view of the Salesian presence, promoting inter-personal relationships and collaboration between the various works involved in it;
- ▶ *to be a centre of communion and participation* which brings lay people together to share the spirit and the mission of Don Bosco, and collaborate with the different groups already in existence in a faithful manner;
- ▶ *to take the primary responsibility for spiritual, Salesian and vocational formation* (cf. GC24, no.159), actively participating in the processes of formation.



"The type we are dealing with here which ought to lead to the implementation of provincial plans for re-location and re-dimensioning is one in which the Salesian community is present in sufficient numbers and in quality to animate, together with some lay people, an educative community and project"

(FR JUAN VECCHI, AGC 363, "EXPERTS, WITNESSES AND CRAFTSMEN OF COMMUNION")

Taking on this task of animation means that the Salesian community has to give further consideration to its own position, and its **role as a religious community within the EPC and to the educative-pastoral process**. In the past, the Salesian community assumed responsibility almost exclusively for the educational work and the surrounding environment, helped by lay people when they were needed; today it is called upon to invite lay people to join in, share responsibility with the community, and carry out its specific role within the EPC.

The cultural background of people (lay and youth), their sensitivities, their way of thinking and approach to life, provide the vital potential and essential approach for a new interpretation of the Gospel.

The Salesian community, becoming more and more aware of this new working model, assumes its own specific responsibility as a significant part of the animating nucleus of the EPC.

B *The SDB Rector*

Responsibility for the pastoral animation of works and activities through which the Salesian mission is carried out in any given place is particularly that of the local Salesian community and primarily that of the **Rector and the local Council**.

As the one responsible in the first place for the EPC the SDB Rector *animates the animators and safeguards the over-all unity of the project*:

- ▮ in agreement with the Provincial and in harmony with the province plan he cultivates the charismatic identity of the SEPP;
- ▮ he promotes formation programmes;
- ▮ he sees to it that the integrity and unity of Salesian pastoral ministry are assured in all the activities and works;



“The Christian lay person is therefore a member of the Church in the heart of the world and a member of the world community in the heart of the Church”

[PUEBLA CONFERENCE, NO.103]

- he implements the criteria for bringing together and training the lay people, involving them and especially the Council of the EPC and/or of the work, helping them to share responsibility; he maintains links between the Salesian community and the EPC (cf. *GC24*, no.172).

C *The local community Council*

The House Council assists and collaborates with the SDB Rector in his responsibilities as the one primarily responsible for the EPC. In clarifying the necessary link between the House Council and the other bodies playing their part in the EPC, it would be well to follow certain particular criteria, in addition to those provided by the *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis of Sales*:

- taking part as members of the Council of the EPC, collaborating directly and actively in the processes of reflection and decision making;
- following up the decisions regarding things that directly concern Salesian identity, the formation and bringing together of lay people;
- always encouraging the appropriate sharing of ideas between the community and the various bodies of the EPC; discussion and respect for the exercise of responsibility of the members.

D *The Council of the EPC and/or of the work*

The Council of the EPC and/or of the work is the **body which animates and coordinates the Salesian work** through *reflection, discussion, planning and reviewing educative and pastoral activities* (cf. *GC24*, nos.160-161, 171). Its function is to foster coordination in the service of unity of the Salesian project where there is a Salesian work, or where the EPC of the various sectors operate in more complex works. If there is just a single EPC there will be just one EPC Council which coincides with the Council of the work. If, on the other hand, there are as many EPCs as there are sectors of the work, each one will have its own Council, and the Council of the work will be made up of representatives of the EPC Councils. The EPC Council does not take the place of the various bodies

of the EPC nor over-rule them with decisions in matters for which it is not competent, but rather it should help them to:

- ▮ ensure the integrity of the project as the practical expression of the planning process and of the activities of the various sectors;
- ▮ feel a shared sense of responsibility for its being drawn up, implemented and assessed;
- ▮ have a clear desire for communion and service of common needs;
- ▮ be attentive to the needs and overall demands of the youth scene;
- ▮ foster links and mutual collaboration, especially in the more wide-ranging services such as formation of educators;
- ▮ maintain communion and collaboration with the various groups of the Salesian Family working in the same territory.

It is for the Provincial and his Council to determine the criteria for the EPC's composition and set out its competencies, levels of responsibility and links with the Council of the local Salesian community (cf. *GC24*, no.171).

E *The local Youth Ministry coordinator and team*

It is possible, where it is seen to be necessary, to have a Coordinator of Salesian Youth Ministry with a team, for local pastoral animation, as well as individuals responsible for the different sectors and pastoral animation settings which make up the work. It is also possible, where the complexity of the work requires it, to have a Pastoral Coordinator for each sector and setting of the work.

The **local coordinator with his team, plans, organises and coordinates the pastoral activity of the work**, according to the objectives set out by the local SEPP and the guidelines and criteria of the Council of the EPC and/or of the work, always working closely with the Rector. This role demands ability in human relationships and in coordination. In practice it involves the following tasks:

- ▮ collaborating with the EPC Council in order that *the fundamental features of Salesian Youth Ministry* form part of the local SEPP, are put into practice and evaluated;
- ▮ he coordinates *the implementation of the local SEPP* through practical planning for the different sectors of the pastoral activity of the work for which he is responsible;
- ▮ he takes care of the *coordination and integration* of the different educative and pastoral activities, ensuring that they are complementary and are directed towards education to the faith;
- ▮ he promotes initiatives for the *formation of those engaged* in the pastoral work according to the guidelines of the province plan;
- ▮ he ensures good relationships and the *collaboration of the Salesian work with the pastoral work of the local Church* and with other educational bodies in the locality.

It is for the Provincial or the Rector, according to the practice of the Province, to appoint the local coordinator, Salesian or lay person, and in the case of the latter, to determine the nature of the relationship with the Salesian community.

F *Other bodies and roles of animation and government in the EPC*

Participation and shared responsibility require various bodies for animation, government and coordination in the EPC: **teams that are set up in conformity with the SEPP and available resources**. In defining their profile it is necessary that on the part of the Salesians and people the following are ensured:

- ▮ the complementary nature of different roles and functions in the EPC;
- ▮ their relationship with the SEPP, whose human and religious perspectives they need to adopt, together with their educational view of the situation, the style of their presence in working with the young, the objectives, methods and strategies needed to attain all this; the advice for their development as Salesian educators (human maturity, educational competence, Salesian

identity, the witness that inspires them in Christian values) through an ongoing process of personal and communitarian formation;

- an active presence among the young to help them to form a group, accompanying them in the process of human and Christian development, and fostering an openness to the educational, cultural and ecclesial context.

In agreement with the Provincial and his Council, the areas entrusted to the responsibility of lay people in each work should be specified; so too the areas of their competence in taking decisions, the relationships of the various bodies and the forms of shared responsibility with the Salesian community and with the Province (GC24, nos.125; 169).

2 2

OTHER ANIMATION MODELS FOR THE EPC IN SALESIAN WORKS

A *Salesian works managed by lay people with a community presence*

In those works in which the main responsibilities are undertaken by lay people, the Salesian community, when it is greatly reduced in numbers, ensures the Salesian identity and coordination within the Province with the assistance of the Province itself (GC26, no.120); a Salesian can be involved in roles of pastoral animation, formation and accompaniment of the staff; bringing together and providing for the training of lay co-workers according to the criteria proposed by GC24, no.164, as far as possible involving members of the Salesian Family.

B *Works managed by lay people as part of the Salesian Province Plan*

For an activity or a work managed by lay people to be considered as forming part of the project of a Province two essential conditions need to be fulfilled: criteria of identity, communion and significance of Salesian activity need to be achieved, and it needs to be accompanied by the Provincial and his Council (GC24, no.180; GC26, no.120).

Therefore, in carrying out its responsibility, the Province offers animation and government opportunities to these works and their EPC, similar to those for the EPC in which a Salesian community is present:

- a Provincial visitation;
- an evaluation of the local project (SEPP);
- contact between the lay Director of the work and the Provincial;
- a delegate of the Provincial takes part from time to time in the EPC Council;
- an EPC Council is set up;
- a serious process of formation in Salesian identity is organised, involving the lay people concerned;
- assistance is given to lay people who have roles of animation and responsibility in the EPC;
- stable links with a neighbouring Salesian community or with the Province animation centre, especially with regard to charismatic and pastoral service (cf. GC24, no.181).

3

Animation and coordination at province level

3 1

THE PROVINCIAL AND HIS COUNCIL

Three distinct but inseparable levels of responsibility can be identified in the Province service of pastoral animation:

- **the level of government:** the Provincial with his Council takes the fundamental decisions as the one primarily responsible for animation and for the pastoral government of the Province (cf. C. 161);

- **the level of pastoral unity and guidance:** the Provincial Delegate with his team cultivates the organic unity of pastoral activity in the Province and its direction according to the Province SEPP (cf. GC23, no.244);

- **the level of practical coordination:** Commissions, Provincial Offices and Consultative Committees see to the coordination of pastoral activities in the various sectors and pastoral animation settings, according to the different dimensions of the SEPP (cf. GC26, no.113).

There is interaction between these three levels, which complement each other. Ensured in a special way in the second level, the Salesian identity of pastoral activity is determined and coordinated in the other two.

3 2

THE PROVINCE YOUTH MINISTRY DELEGATE AND TEAM

A

The Youth Ministry Delegate

The Provincial “will appoint a delegate for the youth pastoral sector, who will coordinate the work of a team which will ensure the convergence of all activities on the objective of education to the faith, and render possible practical communication between the provinces” (GC23, no.244).

He is the Provincial’s delegate and works in agreement with him and with the Provincial Council. His first contacts are the confreres, the Salesian communities and the EPC. He is not the one in charge of the initiatives nor of a single area, but the one who ensures a structured pastoral operation in the Province and pays attention to all aspects. Normally he dedicates himself full-time to Province pastoral animation. It is convenient for him to be a member of the Provincial Council, where he normally represents pastoral issues and concerns. In his role:

- he helps the Provincial and his Council *in the formulation of the SEPP* and of common pastoral directives and guidelines;

- he coordinates the *functioning of the Provincial youth ministry team in collaborative fashion* and helps each member to carry out his task;
- he *supports the local communities* in their pastoral planning, implementation and assessment, attending to the development of the four dimensions of the SEPP in their various sectors;
- he keeps in contact with the those who have roles of responsibility for *guiding their activities* according to the unified plan of the SEPP;
- he directs the joint community projects proposed in the SEPP;
- he sees to the realisation of a *structured educative and pastoral formation plan* for confreres, lay collaborators and young leaders;
- he keeps in *close contact with members of the Salesian Family* who are working in the Province, with the *local church*, and with the *Salesian Youth Ministry Department*.

B *The Province Youth Ministry Team*

The Provincial Youth Ministry Team collaborates directly with the delegate as he carries out his tasks. **It is important that those in the Province responsible for the various sectors, and eventually pastoral animation settings, are in the team**, so that together they can ensure that the various pastoral programmes and procedures in the Province and communities are animated in a well-balanced and united manner. It is important that those responsible in the Province for Vocations, the Missions and Social Communication also play their part in the team. Among its tasks are:

- *to collaborate* with the Delegate in his responsibilities;
- *to foster* the presence and interconnection of the dimensions of the SEPP in the different works, sectors and pastoral animation settings of the Province;
- *to lead* communities towards an interdisciplinary view of pastoral problems and a combined effort to resolve them.

This requires that team members have specific theoretical and practical training, time for reflection and discussion, competence in making contacts and coordination, with the ability to motivate and a specific plan of work based on the SEPP, following the priorities laid down by the Provincial and his Council.

C *Those responsible at Province level for sectors and pastoral animation settings and their teams*

For the guidance and animation of the different sectors and settings of Youth Ministry in the Province the Provincial appoints **a representative usually assisted by a group**.

It is the responsibility of those responsible for a sector:

- ▮ *to help the EPC* of these sectors and pastoral animation settings to customize the Province guidelines for youth ministry in line with the SEPP and the working plan of the Youth Ministry Delegate and his team,
- ▮ *to study and reflect* on their educational and pastoral aims, on the real situation, problems and forward planning.

It is important that those responsible for the different sectors and pastoral animation settings of the Province *work together systematically* in collaboration with the Provincial Youth Ministry Delegate; that the members of his team in order to have a shared vision undertake a coordinated implementation of the SEPP and of Province Planning; that they ensure structured unity in the Youth Ministry of the whole Province.



4

Inter-Province animation and coordination

There are **organisations for contacts and for coordination** at the service of the pastoral planning and animation of a group of Provinces: interprovincial teams for Youth Ministry, national or regional Youth Ministry delegations, national centres for Youth Ministry. These organisations or teams are set up and directed by the respective Provincials in a group of Provinces or a region, counting on the close collaboration of the Youth Ministry Department.

The actual situations vary but the following should be considered common criteria:

- ▮ to offer a form of coordination at this level that responds to the problem areas of a youth situation which is becoming much more extensive and complex;
- ▮ to develop a more open and commonly held mentality in the Provinces, fostering solidarity and an exchange of gifts in the context of Youth Ministry, facilitating the circulation of pastoral experiences and models;
- ▮ being a service of support, animation and subsidiary coordination, it should not take on tasks which others in the planning process can and should undertake;
- ▮ the priority of education to the faith expressed through educational programmes and activities is also reflected in the organisation of structures of animation (cf. GC23, no.245);
- ▮ all coordinating bodies should be structured in a convergent, integrated and organic manner, avoiding both undue focus on sectors and bureaucratic centralisation.

The Provincial Youth Ministry Delegates of the various Provinces in a Region or group of Provinces (*National or Regional Delegation, interprovince team for Youth Ministry*) should meet regularly so as:

- ▮ to reflect together on the youth situation and the challenges present in the context of the provinces with a view to *formulating joint criteria and guidelines* for the pastoral animation of the nation or region;
- ▮ to coordinate *joint collaboration between the Provinces* on common issues such as the formation of educators and animators;
- ▮ to foster the sharing of experiences, materials, initiatives and projects;
- ▮ to provide a type of *combined and unified presence and action* in the Church and in the national and regional territory.

National or Regional Centres for Youth Ministry are to be found alongside National or Regional Delegations or interprovincial Youth Ministry teams, that is, bodies for reflection and animation created by a provincial conference or group of provinces at the service of Youth Ministry in the Region or Nation in order to:

- ▮ foster and develop *studies and research* on current Youth Ministry problems;
- ▮ collect and compare the more important *Salesian and Church experiences* in the area of Youth Ministry;
- ▮ *make known and disseminate* these reflections and experiences;
- ▮ put itself *at the service of the provinces and the local church* to animate the process of planning and programming, especially for the training of Youth Ministry practitioners;
- ▮ to operate according to the *priorities of the Congregation* and the Youth Ministry Department, of the Provincials' Conference and the Province Delegates.

5

Animation and coordination at world level

Services, activities, initiatives and works aimed at the education and evangelisation of youth find a unifying focal point in the **Youth Ministry Department**, with the General Councillor for Youth Ministry and his team.

According to the *Constitutions of the Society of St Francis of Sales* (C. 136), his role is to animate and give direction to educational activity and to assist the Provinces. In practice:

- he offers encouragement in taking things forward, provides motivation, presents an overall view, pays attention to cultural awareness and spiritual depth, fosters an educational dimension in the aims and programmes and technical support, promotes reflection on the criteria and pressing issues, and an exchange of experiences;
- he also tries to encourage Salesian Youth Ministry to be involved in the Church, following up its proposals and directives and offering our specific contribution;
- within the General Council he provides a pastoral and youth viewpoint, following up and specifying the orientation of the general programming of the Rector Major and his Council: maintaining working relationships of support and cooperation with other sectors especially Formation, the Missions, Social Communications and the Salesian Family;
- he collaborates with the Regionals in unifying and organising activities in the different Provinces according to their situations and needs.

His animating role is addressed to the following individuals or groups as a priority:

- Provincials and their Councils;
- Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry, their teams and those responsible for particular sectors;
- other animation groups at regional level.



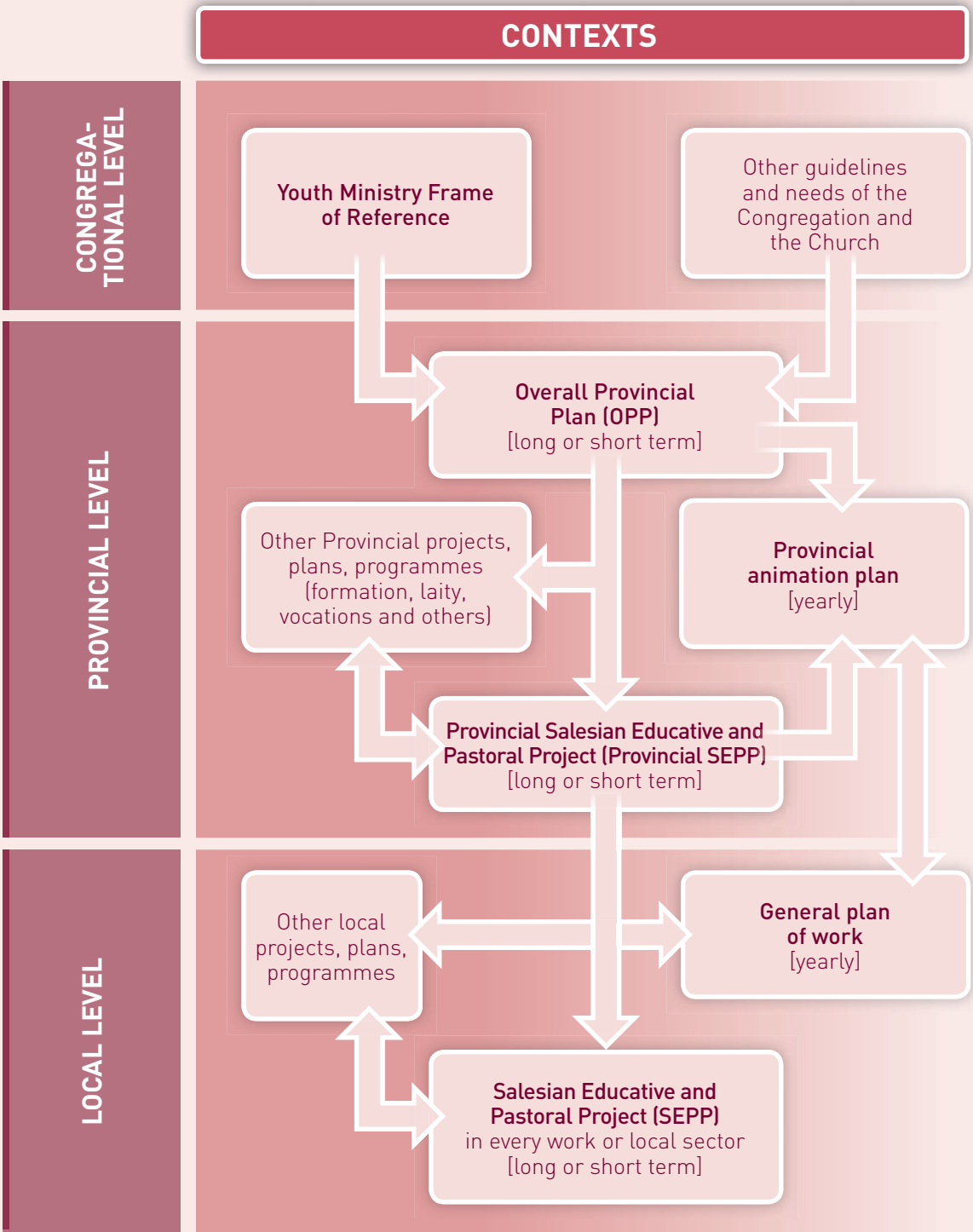
6

Pastoral Planning

6 1

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL PLANNING

Pastoral planning involves different practical levels with a variety of procedures and documents. Ours is meant to be a **methodological proposal offering means for the planning process of youth ministry**. They are means which result from the reasoned choices made.



The various documents indicate **some theoretical and practical differences**, even though they can be employed in an overlapping way. They are not simply alternatives, but constantly influence and support each other in practical ways.

The Salesian Youth Ministry Frame of Reference, with other documents of the Congregation and of the Church, indicates the collection of directives, guidelines and the wide-ranging basic background according to which pastoral activity of the Salesians and the Church operates.

They are texts which provide inspiration for the whole Congregation, propose points of reference for a very varied range of pastoral action in different times and places.

Provincial plans such as the *Overall Province Plan* and the *Province Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan*, and those at local level such as the *local Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan* are more practical and contextualised, even though they are still concerned with general principles. These documents point out the guidelines of the Congregation and Church, giving them a more practical aspect. It is up to the *Planning Programme* to draw up detailed and more specific practical applications.

It seems appropriate to draw attention to the simplicity of the projects and planning procedures: texts which are *simple, clearly expressed and practical in their application*. It is to be hoped that they contain few pages and have a practical tone, and that they correspond to real priorities. We need to be careful that these documents do not become a “rag-bag” collection of copious reflections or voluminous references. Clarity of expression means that the structure of the document is immediately understood.

Quality in planning is not a response to demands that are solely organisational and project-related. Quality in planning is **an expression of discernment** and shows that one is listening, observing and examining the signs of the times through God's eyes. In fact we are convinced that pastoral planning is not thought up in a theoretical situation but is nurtured by a profound and serious discernment process in the Spirit who is the soul and inspirational source of every mission in the Church. Therefore these two processes of discerning and planning need to be kept in mind.

There are different ways of carrying out personal and community discernment, (“see, judge, act”, “God's call, situations and action plans”, “review of life”), which require well-prepared conditions and attitudes. These are some of

the procedures that help in seeing and interpreting the pastoral situation in the light of the Word of God. The way they are used should be evaluated according to circumstances and contexts.

6 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR DETERMINING THE TYPES OF DOCUMENTS TO BE PREPARED

A *The Salesian Youth Ministry Frame of Reference*

This is a systematic synthesis of Salesian Youth Ministry: a guide-book for reflection, planning, programming and evaluating Salesian Youth Ministry. It provides an overall view of all the characteristics which identify the Congregation's Salesian pastoral activity. It points out the direction to be followed in carrying out the Salesian mission. It answers the questions: Who are we? What do we want? Where do we want to get to? What do we propose?

The *Frame of Reference* sets out, for Church and society, the essential features of the Congregation's pastoral activity.

Known and shared in the EPC, it is a basic point of reference that establishes the nature of belonging, determines the common commitment, draws out the best from people by providing appropriate formation, promotes an atmosphere of collaboration and co-responsibility.

B *The Overall Provincial Plan*

This is a **strategic plan of animation and government which regulates development and continuity of the decisions of the Province** (cf. GC25, no.82). It is a practical means with the scope of coordinating and directing the educational and pastoral resources in the Province towards a given end. It is not presented as a rigid scheme. The OPP is concerned with fundamental aspects: *a careful observation of the situation* in which one is called to act; *the central options* that ought guide the development of the Province; *the priority fields of work* over the next few years; *the operating criteria* that ought guide the different projects; the general lines to be followed in the *preparation of personnel* and for *economic and structural development*.

GC25 indicated who are responsible for the production of the OPP: "In the next three years the provincial community, through its various organisms will

study, draw up and evaluate the Organic Provincial Plan” (GC25, no.82). The Provincial and his Council with the help of a working party (GC25, no.84), will guide and direct a process of study, of drawing up and of evaluation of the OPP, involving the communities and in a special way the Rectors. In the light of C. 1, 2, 171, and of R. 3, 167, it would be appropriate for the directives and the fundamental choices of the OPP to be studied and approved by the Provincial Chapter.

These official elements (long or medium term) ought to take practical shape in the various *plans or projects*, according to the important sectors in the life of the Province: the formation project; the lay project; the annual financial budget and income and expenditure accounts; local community plans. **Among these projects, the one needing the greatest development from the point of view of the mission is the SEPP, in connection with the sector for educative and pastoral activity.** The afore-mentioned projects are not procedures added to the SEPP but contribute to and carry out important aspects of it.

On account of their nature, the functions of the OPP and of the Province SEPP are distinct from every other document, in particular from the *Province Directory*, a normative text entrusted to the Provincial Chapter (cf. C. 171). This set of regulations contains special norms as required in issues at Province level. The *OPP* and the *Province SEPP* in their nature, purpose and contents are distinct from the *Province Directory*. They are concerned with planning and programming; they are independent documents and do not form part of the *Province Directory*.



C *The Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project*

This is a the general action plan which guides the carrying out of the educative and pastoral process in a specific province and local context and directs each initiative and resource towards evangelisation (cf. *R.* 4; cf. *GC26*, no.39). It is a response to the question: What needs to be done and how do we arrive at the proposed objective?

A SEPP, being more concrete than the *Frame of Reference*, is operative for a fixed period of time, “long or medium term” with regard to the situation in which the Province or the Salesian work finds itself. The goals or purposes proposed, the areas of activity indicated, the working guidelines it selects, indicate the practical process to be pursued.

The *Constitutions of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales* refer to this apostolic project in broad terms (cf. *C.* 31; 44), to which also various articles of the Regulations refer (cf. *R.* 4-10; 184). Therefore there is a correlation between the Provincial SEPP and the SEPP of a particular work:

- ▮ *the Provincial SEPP* sets out the Province’s programme for 3–5 years. It indicates the objectives, strategies and common practical educative and pastoral aims that will guide the pastoral activities of all the communities and works. It serves as a point of reference for their planning and as an educative and pastoral yardstick during this period. It is the starting point for the drawing up of the SEPP for every local work or sector;
- ▮ *the SEPP of every local work or sector* applies the guidelines of the Provincial SEPP to the local situation. It is the project that is directly put into operation in each work (with just one sector) and in every sector (in a complex work). In this latter case the SEPP of the Salesian work which has **two or more different sectors** is an important element for bringing together and unifying the objectives and shared practical guidelines in the work. It responds to two fundamental factors:

 - *the coordination of all the sectors and, eventually, pastoral animation settings of the work* with the corresponding series of criteria, methodological options, organisational and structural arrangements;

- the summoning, the constitution, the formation and the functioning of the *EPC of the different sectors*.

All the structural elements (facilities, educational and pastoral programmes, time tables, calendar) and the personnel (individual or collective groups) are organised so as to achieve the objectives, for a period of about three years. Joint responsibility for this task is taken on by all the members of each of the EPC (cf. GC23, no.243), but is especially followed up by its Council.

GC23 proposed that in its revision of the Provincial SEPP, among other things, every Province should translate the faith journey into a **practical process suited to those for whom we are working and the contexts in which we are operating** (cf. GC23, no.230): faith journeys, educational, vocational and Christian initiation projects for the young. The practical process is a well-ordered series of stages or educational steps (each with its own style and time-scale, with methods to be employed and people or groups to be directly involved) through which the objectives set out in the SEPP are achieved. The practical process means that the project becomes operative in a given period of time, and that it is adapted to the different individuals to whom it is addressed. In this process the objectives become progressive steps, the means adopted being a well-ordered series of opportunities and experiences (see Chapter 4, 3.2).

D *The different practical expressions of the SEPP*

We are called to translate and develop the SEPP into practical processes, plans and programmes. Among these we can mention: the *Province animation plan and the General plan of the work*. Some Provinces use these terms or others to express the same things.

The Provincial animation plan is the annual application of the Overall Provincial Plan (OPP) and the Provincial SEPP, according to the following scheme (in general terms):

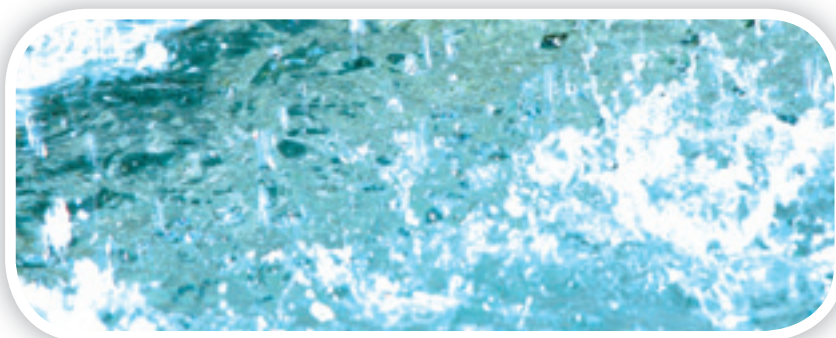
- ▮ the general objective for the year, as the basic framework within which the animation programme of the Provincial Council is developed;
- ▮ the specific objectives for each pastoral sector and provincial animation setting: these represent the application of the general

objective as aims, targets to be reached, arrival points on which all efforts during the year should be focused;

- D procedures and activities for the animation and the coordination of the pastoral sectors and provincial animation settings, specifying those involved, their specific tasks and a time scale:
 - Community and Formation,
 - Educative and Pastoral Mission,
 - Salesian Family,
 - Social Communication,
 - Economy,
 - Others;
- D an evaluation scheme for an effective assessment of the real achievement of the aims proposed;
- D organisational chart of the Province, meaning the graphic representation of the general organisational structure of the Province;
- D Provincial calendar with all the Province engagements for the year.

A gradual process is proposed through these annual planning arrangements which put the OPP and the Provincial SEPP into effect, with a systematic

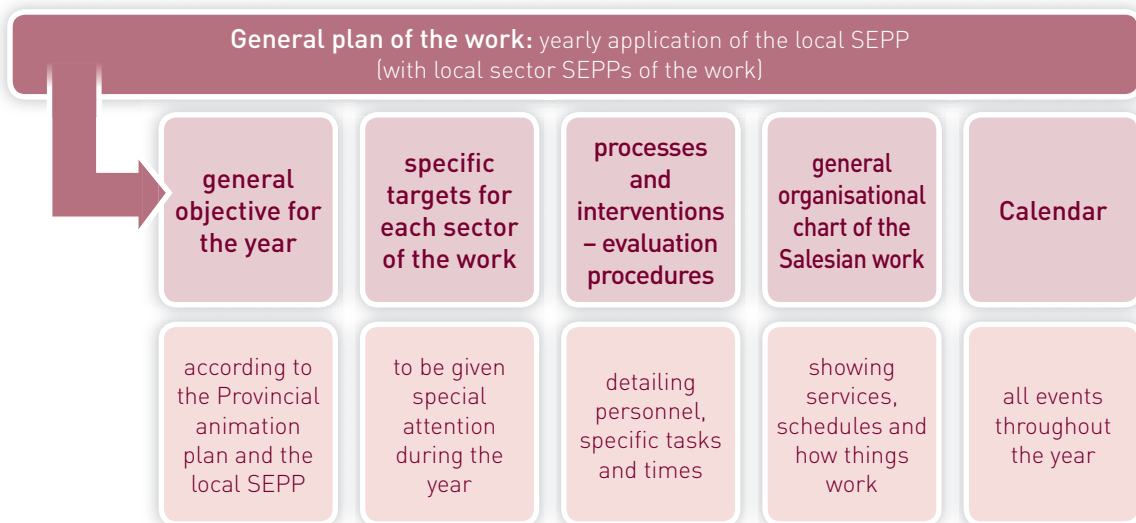




assessment carried out by the EPC of each of the works. The programme is drawn up each year. It is used in all the works of the Province as a point of reference in the drawing up of the General Programme for each work.

The General plan of the work is the annual application of the SEPP of the work (or in some cases the individual SEPP of the different sectors and pastoral animation settings within the work). In general terms it follows this pattern:

- ▮ general objective for the year, as the basic framework within which the animation programme of the Provincial operates;
- ▮ specific objectives for each sector and, eventually, pastoral animation setting of the work: these represent the application of the general objective as aims, targets to be reached, arrival points on which all efforts during the year should be focused;
- ▮ procedures and activities of the EPC of the various sectors and, eventually, pastoral animation settings according to the dimensions of the SEPP, specifying those involved, their specific tasks and a time scale;
- ▮ an evaluation method for an effective assessment of the real achievement of the aims proposed;
- ▮ organisational chart of the work, that is the graphic representation of the various bodies of animation and government, with some indication of the services, time scale and functioning:
 - common to the whole work,
 - specific for each sector and, eventually, pastoral animation setting;
 - calendar with all the engagements for the year.



6 3

GUIDELINES FOR DRAWING UP AND ASSESSING THE SEPP

A *Stages in drawing up the SEPP: a dynamic proposal*

It is a project aimed at being realistic and effective, with a continuous process. Starting from an initial situation it moves towards the aim it sets itself through objectives to be attained. It should be drawn up in a gradual way. **The SEPP lays down a process in three stages which are successively reconsidered, developed and improved.** The possibility remains for adapting the educational plans to the changing situations in which the work is taking place.

In the process of drawing up the plan the *EPC should constantly refer to the Frame of Reference*, both for an enlightened analysis of the situation and for discerning the main challenges. It does so especially to identify the objectives which ought to guide pastoral activities in the direction of the aims indicated in the *Frame of Reference*.

» *Analysis stage*

- 1 *Careful observation and knowledge of the situation in the locality and of the "type" of young people living there: people, situations, resources,*

problems, tendencies, possibilities. This cannot be done on a once for all basis. It requires the ability to use previous as well as newly acquired information. It is necessary to employ communication, acquired experience, educational networks, a sense of shared responsibility.

- 2 *Educative and pastoral interpretation of the situation*: trying to understand the reality on a deeper level, with the desire to bring about improvements. The situation needs to be seen for what it is, while avoiding making hasty judgements either positive or, more often, negative ones. The interpretation takes place in the light of the fundamental elements of the Salesian mission and the Preventive System.
- 3 Identifying a vision for the future with *precise options* (four or five at the most); in the case of the *Provincial SEPP*, *the options apply to all the works and to all the sectors*; in the case of the *local SEPP*, to the local sectors. In both cases it is important that these specific options arise from the analysis of the situation and its educative-pastoral needs.

» **The planning stage**

- 1 Translation of the precise options into *general objectives* that are considered the most important, urgent and possible. These objectives lead on to clear proposals taking into account the people in the EPC and the innate effectiveness of the *four dimensions* of youth ministry.
- 2 Proposal of some *procedures* through which the general objectives can be put into practice and become operative.
- 3 Setting out practical courses of action, that is *activities that are precise, gradual and verifiable*. In these the following are clarified: the group aimed at (*for whom?*); the responsibilities of the different individuals or teams (*by whom?*); the employment of the resources available and the time scale (*how and when?*).

» **Assessment of the project and any change of plan**

Assessment of the project makes it possible to objectively measure its impact on the real situation. It evaluates the results in the light of the proposed objectives. It uncovers new possibilities or the needs that emerge and determines the new steps to be taken.

For an overall assessment of the SEPP, there are some aspects not to be overlooked:

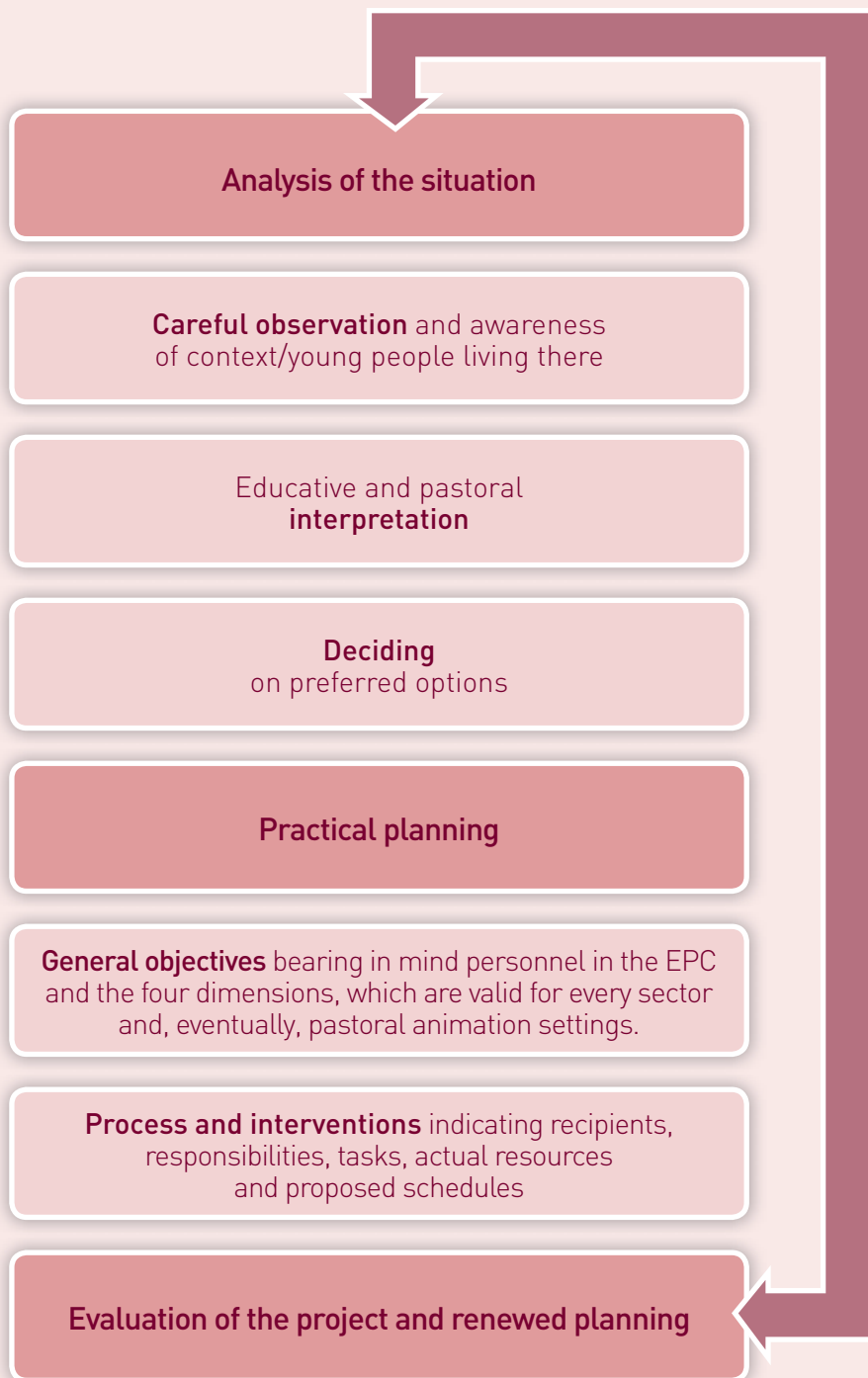
- ▮ involvement of the various interested parties - *individuals, groups and teams*. Those making the assessment of the Province SEPP are the Provincial Chapter, the Provincial with his Council and the Provincial Youth Ministry team;
- ▮ the creation of a *real* educative and pastoral *process*. It should not be limited to examining the results, but rather to reawakening the individual and community maturing processes, encouraging, improving and providing motivation for better results;
- ▮ the use of *precise and measurable indicators* in the light of which it will be possible to assess the results obtained and see how they have been achieved. Trial and error are part of the process: it is possible to learn from the examination of a mistake but an unexamined error can lead to discouragement and lack of progress;
- ▮ the carrying out of an *analysis of the causes* – *personal, structural, organisational* – that have helped or hindered the process, and the adaptation of the objectives to new situations and possibilities.

B *Fundamental Criteria in the drawing up or revising the SEPP*

As has already been pointed out, the purpose of formulating a SEPP is not the production of a new document to put into the hands of workers so that they may know it and put it into practice, but rather to help the EPC to operate with a shared mindset and clarity of vision regarding objectives and criteria: a planning mentality of shared responsibility.

Rather than being a document, the SEPP is a **community thinking process which concerns involvement, clarification and identification**: it is aimed at creating a working consensus in the EPC, in this way avoiding fragmentation of activities.

Of fundamental importance is *the progress made together and the methodology behind it*. Three criteria need to be pointed out:



- a) A constant process of discernment with a genuine and courageous prophetic quality.** Pastoral planning is not a merely technical undertaking, nor is it a simple spiritual activity, but mediation. Those who are drawing up, implementing and assessing a SEPP need to do so in a constant attitude of discernment and listening to God's plan. It is the Lord who indicates the path to be followed and provides us with points of reference: *focus on the practical reality of the times and of history* (avoiding proposals that are abstract or unrelated to the situation); *the centrality of the young person*; close attention to the *universal outreach of the Salesian educative and pastoral project* (understood in terms of the four dimensions) the ever present aspects of our *educative and pastoral praxis* – the Preventive System and Salesian Youth Spirituality.

Therefore in the face of educative and pastoral challenges it is necessary to avoid two attitudes which could jeopardise the Salesian mission: first, becoming constrained by a plan that is static, rigid and anonymous and second, treating the youth ministry project as though it were like commercial, economic or political projects and thereby betraying the educative and pastoral spirit of the SEPP and its evangelical nature in offering salvation to the young in Christ.

- b) Collegiality** i.e. the combined involvement of all the members of the EPC engaged in the project. The motivations, objectives and process should be clearly expressed. An open, ongoing discussion should be encouraged in examining the problems and the situations. The contribution made by each one should always be given due consideration. A real working team is thus created which is able to provide animation for lengthy and complex procedures.

Every true Educative and Pastoral Project is *a communitarian effort, the result of collaboration*. The Provincial SEPP involves all the communities and works of the Province. The local SEPP engages the EPC in carrying out the construction, implementation and assessment.

It is necessary to involve in special way *the members of the Salesian Family* who are working in the same territory (cf. GC24, no.125): at Province level by means of meetings of the Provincial bodies (Provincial Youth Ministry team and/or the Provincial Council) with representatives of the various groups of the Salesian Family in the

Province; at local level through dialogue among the local consultative committee of the Salesian Family, the SDB community and the EPC Council.

To create the interest and involvement of all the EPC in this process it is useful to set up an *animating group* which challenges and motivates, and helps to overcome difficulties. It also points out the methodological procedures which foster the participation of all the groups and organisations of the EPC according to their responsibilities and possibilities. It offers the opportunity and the materials needed for reflection and study. It comes to and formulates conclusions to be presented to the group. At Province level, this group could be the Provincial Youth Ministry team – expanded with extra skilled and qualified members; at local level it could be the EPC Council or the pastoral team.

- c) **Communication;** through the sharing in the planned procedures on the part of those engaged in the youth project as both providers and recipients. Together with this open attitude, there is an urgent need right from the start to be clear about the *various levels of participation* (discussion, decision-making, and implementation) and *those with the responsibility* for them. In this process the SDBs and the laity have an experience of communion and sharing in the spirit of Don Bosco in his mission. All those taking part in the EPC follow a process of discernment taking an active part in the search for the objectives and the procedures of the SEPP (GC24 nos.119-120).

The complexity of the organisation should not overshadow the educative and pastoral spirit which underpins it. Every activity is a part contributing to making the whole clear and evident: the education of the young for life and for an encounter with the God of life.

Setting to work to produce a plan, implementing it and being capable of revising and changing it is not a sign of superficiality nor of complicating matters. Rather it is a sign of maturity in educational affairs, of a specialised service constantly ready to change in order to promote life in a constantly changing society. It shows a capacity for being realistic, for love and respect for the young. It is being consistent with the educational decisions taken and which they expect and deserve. **It is the successful achievement of a process of educational cooperation which is the result of a pedagogical journey, in the long run the most fruitful of all human endeavours.**