



SALESIAN EDUCATIVE AND PASTORAL PROJECT: OPERATIONAL TOOL

CHAPTER

VI

*“Put on the new nature
created in the likeness
of God”*

(Eph 4:24)



Don Bosco has handed on to us his Preventive System as a means for carrying out our educational and pastoral service. "This system is based entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness." Instead of constraint, it appeals to the resources of intelligence, love, and the desire for God that everyone has in the depths of his being. It brings together educators and youngsters in a family experience of trust and dialogue. Imitating God's patience we encounter the young at their present stage of freedom. We then accompany them so that they may develop solid convictions and gradually assume the responsibility for the delicate process of their growth as human beings and as men of faith"

[C. 38]



When we got firmly settled at Valdocco, I gave my full attention to promoting the things that could work to preserve our unity of spirit, discipline, and administration... what was being done at the Oratory"

[Memoirs of the Oratory, third decade 1846-1856, no.6]

We believe in education and we challenge ourselves to plan our procedures in its regard; youth ministry comes into being when education is translated into concrete educational processes. The effort to plan, by means of the SEPP, keeps alive our willingness to be actively present amongst the young. By following the four dimensions we are helped in developing the personality of the young Christian through a systematic variety of proposals and a broad understanding of youth ministry which is open to everyone. In the end there are certain choices which run through all of Salesian ministry.

1

A planning mentality

In a constantly changing world where society becomes ever more complex, theological and ecclesiological reflection endeavours to accompany the various educational models in different contexts and ever more diverse pastoral experiences. “Pastoral charity” is part of this complexity and “pedagogical intelligence” never ceases to urge on and animate what we do each day. The Christian community grows in its desire to exercise its educational responsibility for the young in a convinced manner. The world of the young demands a renewed commitment to constancy, continuity and where we act in consort. It requires that everyone think in terms of intervention but around a unified proposition which is neither individualistic nor fragmented. This makes it essential that there be a project capable of continuing the “tradition” while at the same time blending in what is new so that we are not constantly starting from zero every time there are new people responsible for events or new members in the team. **It becomes essential for us to understand the contribution of reflection and pastoral planning.** Don Bosco himself understood the need in his own time to give order and system to every pedagogical activity.

Those engaging in the youth ministry field should be aware of the journey they are undertaking, where they are to begin from and the goal they are aiming at. They should acquire familiarity with the entire process of education that comes into play in concrete terms. **Planning is an attitude of mind and heart before being something we do concretely.** Planning is a process more than a result; planning is an aspect of ministry more than one of its activities along the way; planning is a process of involving and unifying strengths.

To do otherwise is to risk introducing superficial and ineffective interventions. Drawing up a plan sounds like just “one more thing to do”, a preliminary theoretical activity we have to suffer, a tribute we must pay to current guidelines.

On the contrary: our plan has the merit of being a “map” and *reference* which codifies our departure and arrival points. A project or plan is not

just technical planning nor some vague collection of ideas. It is a map which guides our passion for education and our service to those who are the most delicate. It will be important to keep it in mind in developing the various processes. Drawing up a plan does not mean burying creativity nor does it mean we have the solution to every problem; it means valuing our resources and being open to likely solutions.

2

The Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project

2 1

SEPP AS A SALESIAN APOSTOLIC PROJECT

A

The SEPP is already part of our history and an operational tool

The SEPP is planning mentality made concrete, something that should guide the unfolding of the mission through various works. The SEPP is part of our history and operational tool that guides how Salesian Youth Ministry is carried out (cf. *R.* 4), and the factor of inculturation of the charism (cf. *GC24*, no.5). **It is what guides the process of growth of the provincial community and the various EPCs within it in their efforts to incarnate the Salesian mission in a particular context.** The SEPP is equivalent to a practical manual offering direction and continuity to ministry and ensures that works have unified aims and directions.

If the primary purpose of the SEPP is to lead the Province and local communities to work with a *shared mindset and with clear criteria and objectives*, it also makes shared management of pastoral processes possible. The project or plan is codified in a text which must be understood and acted upon.

B Basic characteristics

Since the SEPP is an operational expression of Salesian Youth Ministry, it ought to respond to its basic characteristics which should specify all the aspects and elements which make it up, common **themes running through it which ensure that it is Salesian**.

» ***The core of the SEPP is the young person as an individual, especially if he or she is poor***

The principle focus of attention for all the dynamics of Salesian Youth Ministry is **the young person in all of his or her dimensions** (the body, intelligence, feelings, will), **relationships** (with self, others, the world and God), **from the twofold perspective of the individual who plays an active role in history** (collective promotion of and involvement in transforming society). It has an eye to *the unified nature of the existential energy which is human growth* to the point of encounter with Jesus Christ, the perfect man, seen as the supreme meaning of our existence (see Chapter 3).

The SEPP *orients and guides an educational process* in which the many interventions, resources and actions are intertwined and organised in service of the gradual, holistic development of the young person. The SEPP realises the values and attitudes both of the Christian proposition of Salesian Youth Spirituality and the methodological principles of Salesian pedagogy, that is, of the Preventive System: which pays *prior attention to the poorest young people and those in greatest difficulty*.

Contact with the real situation of young people needs to be constantly born in mind: a situation forever in flux in an ever-shifting culture. The SEPP should always view it not in terms of simple end or aim but as a theological 'locus'. Such is the common thread running through all dimensions and aspects of pastoral activity and the SEPP.

» ***Its community nature***

The SEPP, before being a text, is **a community process which tends to generate a real confluence of criteria, objectives and common guidelines in the EPC**. Given that it is a process of mind and heart it avoids scattered activities and instead gathers them up in a synthesis

and at a point of educational convergence. It creates and strengthens the awareness of the common mission in the EPC and creates deeper understanding of the educational and pastoral vocation which needs to be shared and constantly evaluated. The SEPP, then, is an identifying and planning aspect of the EPC which in turn centres on educational and pastoral activity (cf. R. 5).

Planning not only helps to orient and constantly evaluate pastoral activity so that it can be even more inculturated and conscious of the challenges; **planning also becomes a process of community identification**, an even more urgent task given that we are called to educate to the faith in the circumstances of the New Evangelisation. The EPC is asked to reflect on its own identity and its operational plan. A new scenario implicates it in a particularly challenging task: proposing pathways appropriate to the specific circumstances in which young people find themselves.

» ***Openness to the area in which the Salesian work is located, and its impact on it***

We cannot consider the SEPP today merely in reference to what is going on inside the Salesian work; all institutions, especially educational ones, are part of a much broader system of relationships they must deal with and interact with. Consideration needs to be given to the repercussions Salesian activity has outside the work considered as **a centre of aggregation and an agent of educational transformation**.

The need for effective evangelisation challenges the EPC to run smoothly, following the **logic of an educational alliance** open to support from the local area. Focusing on this service of coordination and blending of activity implies being seriously committed to moving beyond pure management of our own works and services: it requires a shift from the simple but careful implementation of activities which have been developed internally to a communicative, engaging capacity where typical values of Salesian mission and spirituality are concerned. It means extending dialogue to other educational, social and religious institutions at work in the same area, opening up through modern technologies which can help us build relationships and establish an effective dialogue with a broad range of spokespersons for thinking that has an impact on the lives of the young.

2 2

THE SEPP AS A DYNAMIC AND HOLISTIC PROCESS

A *An articulated understanding of Salesian Youth Ministry*

The SEPP is the focal point around which the doctrinal and operational strategies of the Preventive System converge. The Salesian apostolic project in all its dimensions finds its roots and most accurate description in the *Constitutions of the Society of St Francis of Sales*, nos.31-39: "Our pastoral educational service."

Salesian pastoral and educational activity is **a dynamic process that unfolds in certain fundamental dimensions** as integrating and complementary aspects. It is an anthropological, pedagogical and coherent spiritual frame of reference for accompanying young people in the delicate process of their growth as human beings in the faith.

The SEPP, in its organic unity, integrates these different aspects and elements of Salesian ministry in a unique process aimed at a well-identified goal. This process has **four fundamental aspects to it which are mutually linked and complementary to one another. We call them "dimensions"** (cf. C. 32-37; R. 6-9). These are the vital and dynamic content of Salesian Youth Ministry and they point to its end purpose. Each of them has a specific objective that distinguishes it while being at the same time intimately connected to the others. They are not stages organised in rigorous succession, but are integrated in the unified dynamic of a young person's growth.

There are precise anthropological, educational and theological reference points underlying this arrangement: growth implies an intertwining of human maturity and the Christian meaning of life in the logic of the journey. The dimensions **are referred to in every activity, work and service**. This is why we consider them as running through all of the SEPP.

B *The meaning of the four dimensions*

These dimensions can be understood as inter-communicating **vessels that not only refer to one another ideally but nurture one another**. Although in any description they seem to follow one after the other it is worth noting that they form a whole, a unity: each lends its own specific

nature to the whole but also receives direction and certain original features from the others. They are inseparable and present themselves in reciprocal manner such that one cannot develop without explicit reference to the others. The logic behind them is that of *system*, where the dynamics of one element provokes adaptation in all the others.

This unity and correlation needs to become explicit through the objectives and strategies of the SEPP in every work in the Province, with the assurance that the individual steps and interventions are part of a unified process of human and Christian development which respond to the question: **what kind of young person should we be promoting** for him or her to become an “adult in the faith”? Keeping in mind cultural and local diversity which conditions the Christian model and requires important integrations, the dimensions aim at defining the young person’s Christian identity in the Church and in contemporary society.

The way the dimensions are spelt out comes from a *notion which respects the complexity of personal development* and a plan that looks to the individual’s salvation in all respects, concerned with the divine and human dynamics that are in fact intertwined in the history of the world.

This systematic synthesis expressed through the dimensions is what gives Salesian Youth Ministry its specific character:

the dimension of education to the faith (cf. C. 22, 33, 34, 36; R. 7, 13): implicitly or explicitly, every pastoral plan sees to guiding young people towards an encounter with Jesus Christ and transforming their lives in the light of the Gospel;

the educational and cultural dimension (cf. C. 31, 32; R. 4, 6): we encounter young people where they are at, encouraging the development of all their human resources and opening them up to the meaning of life;

the dimension of group and social experience (cf. C. 35; R. 8): we make possible a developing experience of being in a group to the point where young people discover the Church as the communion of believers in Christ, so they can develop an intense sense of belonging to the Church;

the vocational dimension (cf. C. 34, 35, 37; R. 9): we accompany the discovery of the individual’s vocation and life plan or project in view of a commitment to transforming the world according to God’s design.

These four dimensions taken together constitute the internal dynamics of Salesian Youth Ministry: they are a framework of specific choices that can help us to develop appropriate educational proposals with young people in their concrete circumstances.

These four dimensions, all in balance, allow us to put forward a systematic variety of proposals and have a broad understanding of youth ministry open to everyone. Ministry to the adolescent and older youth unfolds in practice through multiple but *holistic interventions* (due to the diverse circumstances of youth, but always aimed at the whole person). When young people are strongly influenced by their social and cultural circumstances and we are functioning within educational institutions which have specific ends, we need to develop approaches that take on board the concrete situations (young workers, young school students, young people who are marginalised in some particular way) but always from the point of view that the young person and his or her experience of life are at the centre.

Having defined the meaning and substance of the SEPP it will be possible to give broader attention to how it can be developed (see Chapter 8).

2 3

THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF EACH DIMENSION AND THE ESSENTIAL CHOICES IT REQUIRES

A *The dimension of education to the faith*

» *Its specific nature*

Evangelising the young is the first and fundamental purpose of our mission (cf. *R.* 7, 13). Our project is aimed decisively at young people reaching full maturity in Christ (cf. *C.* 31) and their growth in the Church, ensuring that **education of the religious dimension is central to personal development** (cf. *GC23*, no. 160).

Evangelisation brings the Good News of Christ to every level of humankind so as to renew people from within (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 18). Right from the moment of first proclamation of Jesus we aim to accompany young people so they can pass through the door of faith so that, during their

life, they may acquire “a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the Gospel” (*Porta Fidei* 8) and discover the intrinsic joy of faith.

The development of a mature faith often requires more time today and a community involvement that goes beyond a strictly catechetical one. To accompany the Christian journey and adherence to faith, we speak in terms of *initiation*.

Don Bosco passed on a passion for salvation of the young through **his constant involvement in simple, essential catechesis adapted** to the circumstances, age and culture of the young and linked with other educational and recreational offerings by the Oratory. Salesian catechesis does not happen as the end-point of a preparatory course but is implicitly at the heart of initial encounters and explicitly part of everything we offer. Don Bosco did not make a distinction between first proclamation and catechesis, but when he met a boy he immediately found a convenient moment to invite him to embark on a journey of Christian life. If catechesis is not tackled as an integral part of young peoples’ lives it remains foreign and incomprehensible to them. They put up with it but then abandon it in the future.

» **Some specific choices**

- 1 Fostering the **development of the people’s religious dimension**, be they Christian or belong to other religions. The aim is to give this dimension deep roots, purify it and open it up to a desire for a further journey of faith. We help young people through the various things we offer them, to experience the typical attitudes of religious experience: wonder, contemplation, being open to mystery, doing things without asking for something in return. The first challenge is to instigate the desire for further research and little by little show the reasonableness of the act of faith.

Play, dialogue, discussion, encounter *are what life*, its problems, hopes, expectations, is grounded in. This is the good soil of experience. Here we need to be companions on the journey with young people, sharing their laborious development as they measure the depths of their experience in life. For them this soil or grounding is necessarily their development, what they need to do in order to build their identity. They are not lacking in enthusiasm for this.

- 2 Arousing, accompanying and plumbing **the experience of faith** as personal attachment to Christ which leads to viewing life through Jesus' eyes. It is important to develop a systematic **approach to education to faith**. Those who understand the process of human development of the teenager and youth are aware that to integrate faith and life requires considerable educational attention.

We try to approach young peoples' experience especially by *getting started on a rethinking of the content of proclamation and catechesis*. Experiential or anthropological catechesis, which features tackling the range of human problems as its content and dimension, is expressed by a twofold and complementary idea:

- ▮ proclaiming faith in a *meaningful way*, through all the experiential wealth of the Christian message;
- ▮ helping faith to mature as an attitude capable of inspiring and organising the entire process of *human development, strengthening* our attachment to the Lord through personal encounter with the educator and spiritual direction (cf. GC23, nos.173-175).

- 3 Getting young people to **begin participating actively and consciously in liturgy** especially by **celebrating** the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist,

- ▮ helping to prepare them by means of a welcoming environment and friendship that encourages them to open their hearts;
- ▮ seeing that celebrations lead to a real personal relationship with Christ for the beauty and depth they communicate;
- ▮ fostering personal commitment to living out what has been celebrated in everyday life;

- 4 In a world dominated by haste, the seeking of immediate pleasure and pragmatic efficiency, it is urgent that we create appropriate settings for the young that encourage an encounter with God through **practices that lead to inwardness**: *personal and community prayer, being open to mystery, contemplation and silence, active encounter with the shared and lived Word*. This approach to the Word and formation activity aimed

at integration through daily community prayer are extremely important. Young people are always more sensitive to a prayerful reading of the Word of God in the form of *Lectio divina* when the biblical text is broken down into appropriate language strictly connected with their life and by talking about who God is so that who they are can also be revealed.

- 5 Offering young people gradual experiences of **service and apostolic involvement** that help them to personally bring about an integration of faith and life for them, so that according to their possibilities they become witnesses for and evangelisers of their peers. We are talking about a faith that encourages and examines the processes whereby people and groups grow and develop in a more human way following the model of Jesus Christ.

The social dimension of charity belongs to the education of individuals to be socially and politically committed to justice, to building up a more human and just society by discovering the fully evangelical inspiration for doing so (cf. C. 32; R. 22). An increasingly mature adherence in faith becomes sincere service of mankind. Proposing and witnessing to solidarity gives credibility to Gospel proclamation because it is an expression of human potential; this is already proclaiming the new life in Christ, and showing that the Gospel is meant for human beings, that the Church has something crucial to say about life, dignity, hope and the future of mankind. Don Bosco educated young people to the moral virtues of the upright citizen.

B *The educational and cultural dimension*

» *Its specific nature*

The educational and cultural dimension is intimately related to the dimension of education to the faith. **Education is the place and also the means for offering the Good News of the Gospel**, the message which takes flesh in real culture and calls for gradual processes of absorption which are in harmony with the young person's capacity for growth to maturity (cf. C. 31). Education requires that we begin from where young people are really at and then develop strategies that guide them towards holistic development.

The pastoral outlook is not directed exclusively by the religious question and relationship with faith and the Church. It is open to all of experience: it taps into all the hopes and efforts of growth, building our lives together

with others, fitting into society, work. The invitation to faith, on the other hand, is linked to human growth to maturity and its purpose, because that is where it makes sense to believe. The pastoral outlook, therefore, is overflowing with educational focus, **with the exercise of an educational wisdom guided by faith.**

» *Some specific choices*

Seeing to the educational and cultural dimension of pastoral activity means giving pride of place to certain precise practical matters:

1 Helping young people build a strong identity. In a fragmented world bent on what is immediate, marked by relativism and lack of principle, we Salesians believe that the Pastoral and Educative Project can help young people form strong personalities (cf. Mt 7:24-27). We help them to overcome their difficulties. We need to see that *there is a convergence of all educational activities aimed at forming a unified personality: an operational choice where all contributions come together to strengthen one another, in harmony with aspirations and properly ordered educational dimensions.*

We see young people through Jesus' eyes and we help them to:

- ▮ form a moral conscience and a capacity for ethical discernment so they can make responsible and properly motivated judgements;
- ▮ grow in autonomy so they can tackle life in a coherent and responsible way;
- ▮ acquire a rich legacy of values/virtues shaped by the Gospel (cf. C. 32).
- ▮ look to credible reference models recognisable in educators who take Jesus the Good Shepherd and Don Bosco as their primary reference (cf. C. 11, 21). The quality of these real life models has a strong impact on the journey of adherence to Christ.

2 Accompanying young people in development and growth to maturity in their **emotional and affective world.** This is a world that finds it difficult at times to express itself, despite the fundamental role it plays. Affections and feelings are criteria and guide for relationships

We look after this aspect of things:

- 3 Promoting a culture inspired by Christian humanism.** This rich legacy offers a different view of the world and mankind. We encourage the positive development of our culture in unity of faith and life:

- ▮ by creating a culture of solidarity and involvement which leads to overcoming difficult situations by struggling against any kind of injustice;
- ▮ by fashioning an educational proposition out of the many social communication programmes, aimed at developing a Gospel mentality.

4 Working for human development and professional competence as human beings, so that young people can fit into the working world as well-qualified citizens. Being professional means that a person's work is done with greater competence and real satisfaction, while being aware of limitations and respectful of what others do. It means being aware of one's own contribution to social development.

There is also a need to form stable *attitudes and structures in young personalities* (self-esteem, socialisation, participation, autonomy, solidarity, responsibility, willingness), which allow them to act as free individuals with a leaning to critical understanding of the situation and supportive communion with others.

5 Helping them reflect on the reasonableness of their faith and on the contribution Christianity has made to building up the society in which we live, by nurturing an intelligent interpretation of the Christian message:

- ▮ an education to attitudes which underpin openness to God (knowing how to be recollected; greater and better awareness of personal limitations and possibilities; having a sense of wonder, appreciating the good, the great and the beautiful that can be found in and around oneself);
- ▮ a critical and appropriate religious formation which enlightens the mind and strengthens the heart;
- ▮ an attitude of openness, respect and dialogue amongst the various Christian confessions and for the plurality of religious expression;



C *The social experience dimension*

» *Its specific nature*

One of the most important pedagogical insights of Salesian Youth Ministry is to be found in social experience. Don Bosco saw the group as an educational presence capable of increasing the range of things we can do. As a young man he himself had grown up in the *Society for a Good Time* while he was attending school at Chieri, and this was a group experience for him. Sodalities, societies, conferences, each in their own way and given the interests their members had and what they wanted to achieve, came into being at the outset of the Oratory and, from 1860-1870 became part of the boarding schools and other residential arrangements.

This dimension is a fundamental feature of Salesian education and evangelisation (see Chapter 5, 1.3/b).

The Preventive System demands an intense and lively setting of participation and friendly relationships enlivened by the animating presence of the educators. It encourages all kinds of constructive and group activities which are a concrete initiation into community, civic and ecclesial involvement (cf. C. 35; R. 8).

» *Some specific choices*

The development of this dimension in the circumstances described above requires certain choices:

- 1 Building up a **family environment** by means of appropriate and strategically planned activities, where there is an experience of a sympathetic pedagogy, display of relationships and affection: an atmosphere of confidence in which what is being offered as education and evangelisation is credible and can be assimilated because of the intensity of personal relationships and the atmosphere of shared joy.
- 2 Opting for the **group** as the privileged setting in which the Salesian idea of the group can be offered: the variety of groups open to all young people who are the real key players, and which express the diversity of pedagogical directions our ministry can take. This criterion implies further things to focus on:

- creating many possibilities and open and welcoming settings according to the diversity of interests of the young people and their different stages in life, beginning from the circumstances in which we find them, and respecting the rhythm of development possible for them;
- looking particularly to formation groups and groups intent on Christian commitment. This is the crowning achievement of group experience;
- constantly preparing and forming educators and leaders;
- offering strong experiences of shared life and living (retreats, camps, special days) which confirm and relaunch the idea of coming together for the Christian and social value of being in a group;
- getting the Educative and Pastoral Community to reflect on and review the running, educational effectiveness and activities involved in youth groups.

3 Educating with the heart and style of animation. The style of animation means:

- a way of thinking about the human being that recognises him or her as being capable because of inner resources of being committed and responsible for processes which concern the human individual;
- a method that looks at what is positive, at the wealth and potential every young person carries within, and proposes some activity to develop that;
- a style of journeying with the young that suggests, motivates, helps them grow in daily life through a relationship which is liberating and also genuine;
- the final and overall aim of ensuring that each one is fully restored to his or her *joie de vivre* and the courage to hope.

Animation has a real human face: **the animator or leader**. This person has a precise and fundamental role. Although the role varies in

particular situations according to the type of group, we can spell it out this way. The animator/leader:

- ▮ encourages the formation of groups and their ongoing research, reflection, activities and ideals;
- ▮ helps the group, through his or her competence and experience, to overcome crises and develop personal relationships in its midst;
- ▮ offers the youngsters a critical point of view and helps them explore further, enabling them to express their ideas, desires and what they have discovered;
- ▮ facilitates communication and connections amongst groups in the local Educative and Pastoral Community;
- ▮ accompanies individuals in their process of human and Christian development.

4 The youth group should lean towards **being part of society and the Church** according to each one's vocational choice. Seen this way Salesian group experience should foster:

- ▮ preparation and accompaniment that helps a young person take part in social life assuming moral, professional and social responsibilities, and cooperating with whoever is working to build a society more worthy of the human being;
- ▮ being an active part of civil life by promoting the various associations which are at the service of the common good in society;
- ▮ playing an active part in the church community by helping young people to have a sincere love for it as a communion of all believers in Christ and the universal sacrament of salvation.

Local groups take their bearings from the *Salesian Youth Movement (SYM)*: individuals, youth groups and associations who retain their autonomy but see themselves as part of Salesian spirituality and pedagogy, either implicitly or explicitly make up the SYM (see Chapter 6, 2.5).

- 5 Creating a **community of young adults** which allows them to look after their Christian life and sharing. They are places in which life is shared, God's will is discerned in listening to the Word, where they celebrate, pray and take on pastoral involvement in the various ecclesial contexts that the members are part of.

Youth communities are a special place for vocational discernment and offer young adults a valuable aid for discovering, day by day, the faith they have professed, celebrated, lived and prayed (cf. *Porta Fidei* 9).

D *The vocational dimension*

» *Its specific nature*

Inviting young people to consider their vocation should be part of the entire process of education and evangelisation. **The three earlier dimensions converge on this one, the ultimate horizon, reference point for our ministry.** The aim is to accompany each young person as they go about discovering their vocation, which is the place where the individual responds to the free and unconditional love that God has for him or her. The vocational dimension shapes the first and ultimate objective of Salesian Youth Ministry.

» *Some specific choices*

- 1 Generating attitudes of availability and generosity, that prepare young people to hear God's voice, and accompanying them as they formulate their **plan of life**. Taking care of vocations means a true and proper journey of accompaniment as they make fundamental choices in life, helping them to deal with their own story as a gift and to accept that there is a vocational perspective to life.
- 2 Building up a **community of believers where the experience of faith is visible and credible**: communities that are warm, sympathetic, profound, committed and open to all young people who are seeking their destiny in life. The Christian life journey requires a community context (ecclesial) which is lively, attractive, able to support the choice of faith and help interpret it in relationship to daily life: an educational setting then, involving significant witnesses who live their lives as vocation.
- 3 Opting for **personal accompaniment** which allows for the mature growth of young peoples' vocational choices in a personalised way, and

tries to reach out to individuals in a differentiated way, relevant to their inner experience, their situation and the community's just requirements. Therefore it is essential for the EPC and SEPP to have concrete proposals of place and time for accompaniment, encounter and personal dialogue with groups and families to bring about internalisation and personalisation (recollections, retreats etc.) and for systematic spiritual direction (see Chapter 5, 1.3/c).

- 4 Finally, there is a strong need for the invitation to consider vocation to be **part of the overall process of education to faith**, as the point of convergence for all educational and evangelising efforts. Our ministry can be revitalised to the extent that it makes the vocational dimension explicit: where life is rediscovered as gift, a "being for" in a liberating and fascinating perspective when viewed against the surprising and magnificent designs God has for us. This process supposes:
 - ▮ a vocational discernment offered every young person according to age and circumstance, that helps them discover God's gift, their personal resources and exploit these God-given gifts as part of the generous response to the call;
 - ▮ exploring vocation as an issue through the various stages along the journey of education to the faith, especially in teenage and early adulthood years while at the same time offering experiences of freely given service to the needy;



"All ministry, and especially youth ministry, is radically vocational in nature: the vocational dimension is what naturally inspires it and is its natural outcome. Therefore we need to abandon the reductive notion of vocational ministry which is only concerned with looking for candidates for religious or priestly life. On the contrary, as said before, vocation ministry should create appropriate circumstances for every young person to discover, take up and responsibly follow his or her vocation. The first condition, following Don Bosco's example, consists in creating an environment which experiences and passes on a true "culture of vocation", that is, a way of conceiving of and tackling life as a freely received gift; a gift to be shared in the service of the fullness of life for everyone, overcoming an individualistic, consumeristic, relativist mentality and a culture of self-fulfilment"

(FR PASCUAL CHÁVEZ, AGC 409, "COME AND SEE")

- a clear and explicit invitation via meetings, testimonies, experiences, information on the various vocations in so many areas of life (engagement, marriage, ministerial priesthood, consecrated life);
- a deep spiritual formation through initiation to prayer, listening to God's Word, frequenting the sacraments, liturgy, devotion to Our Lady; active participation in the life of the ecclesial community through apostolic groups and movements considered as special places for growth in vocation and as a Christian; the possibility of direct contact with some religious communities and experiences of explicit vocational discernment.
- the personal invitation to follow a vocation, providing a well-focused and gradual discernment; looking after vocations to the Salesian charism in a special way, in its many forms through *discernment, and cultivating the seeds of a Salesian vocation* to consecrated or lay life that are found in the young.

Let us sum up the four dimensions of Salesian Youth Ministry in the following scheme:

education to faith (1) not possible unless it becomes an educational and cultural process (2) involving the relational and social dimensions of the individual (3) who only at this moment can discover and orient his life towards its fulfilment (4);

the educational process (2) will not come to maturity, meaning it will be without a true anthropological point of reference, unless inspired by a notion of man enlightened by evangelisation (1); nor will it achieve its proper objective unless the individual is involved, taking account of all his or her relationships (3) and the aim of fulfilling one's life through a precise plan which gives it direction (4);

the personal and group relationships in which we live (3) are mere physical contiguity unless incorporated into full personal and cultural development (2), or unless they are part of a plan of life and seen as essential to self-fulfilment, (4) or unless they are loving relationships as defined in evangelisation(1);

the vocational dimension that guides the whole process (4) is incomprehensible without reference to Christ (1), unless it impacts on the relationships in each one's life (3) and unless it becomes the meaning and end of our cultural and educational formation (2).

24

CHOICES CUTTING ACROSS ALL OF SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY

The SEPP fosters development of an active faith through educational and pastoral tasks that are found throughout and are anchored in our charism:

A *Animating apostolic vocations*

In continuity with issues indicated in the vocational dimension, vocational animation finds its undeniable place in accompaniment of the choice of apostolic vocation.

Educational guidelines help in discovering one's identity, and facilitate the decisional process through a plan of life based and built upon Gospel values.

» *Living in a culture of vocation*

The continuity of the process of animating apostolic vocations is accomplished through a specific vocational programme. Within this we focus on listening, discernment, real world evaluation of personal suitability for a possible call to special consecration.

The differentiated approaches we take in guiding someone in his or her vocation should be done on the basis of the **vocational signs that seem to be showing up as part of the person's development.** When a young person begins to identify what his personal vocation is, this should not be understood as a point of arrival but as a point of departure for ongoing development in this vocational choice. The value of a vocational culture is that it understands



“The contents of a vocational culture concern three areas: anthropological, educational and pastoral. The first refers to the way of conceiving of and presenting the human being as vocation; the second looks to facilitating how we offer values that are conducive to vocation; the third focuses on the relationship between vocation and objective culture and draws conclusions from it for our vocation work!”

[FR PASCUAL CHÁVEZ, AGC 409, “COME AND SEE”]

vocation in its broad sense as a call to life, dignified work, various services and involvement: it is a culture that then leads some people to reflect on the possibilities of opting for the priestly or consecrated state of life.

» *Called to life and faith*

“Vocation” begins with a call to life, continues through a call to faith, and arrives, through various responses, at a call to consecrated life. In this sense, we accompany those who, in a good process of development to maturity in their individual vocational dimension, consider the possibility of God calling them to a life of special consecration. We give particular attention to the nature of the call: **a spiritual journey configured as a gradual growth in awareness of the demands of a vocation that requires conversion and gift of oneself in a life of loving dedication to God.**

The EPC, accompanying all young people in their human, Christian and Salesian development, also offers occasions and appropriate forms of serious reflection on the possibility of one giving one’s life over totally to the service of God.

The spiritual guide who is needed for any vocational process, helps apostolic vocations particularly to discern their motivations and the requirements of this vocation. This process allows a young person to make a **calm, personal, free and well-motivated decision** while having experience in a community where he is formed according to the charism to which he is called, growing in understanding and gradual conformation to it.

» *Vocational animation is at the heart of the SEPP*

The SEPP should be decisive in offering pastoral activity which is able to give rise to and identify apostolic vocations to special consecration. **Every SEPP should respond appropriately to young people who are seriously asking themselves about the possibility of a Salesian apostolic vocation.**

In inviting people to discernment, those who animate apostolic vocations are careful to see that aims and methods are approached gradually.

The pre-adolescent and adolescent stages are a preparation for decision-making at an older stage. These are opportunities for building identity as

a human being and a Christian and they prepare people for discovering and holding to their vocation. It is a good opportunity for youngsters to discover how they can play an active role through some specific calling in the Church, Congregation or world: a **discovery that can come about through an explicit invitation.**

This gradual approach allows them to *tackle life as a call and then translate that into a personal plan of life.* By going back over insights and vocational aspirations hidden in earlier stages of life they can shift from a general availability to a more specific one where they are ready to give of themselves.

In these various processes – to making more mature decisions in life, guidance in spiritual life and discernment of a vocation – we need to guarantee the inner freedom that assists people in their growth to a fully mature vocational decision. Attention ought to be given to freeing them from all the likely cultural, emotional, social factors which might condition them so they can genuinely accept responsibility for a radical life commitment.



“Fostering consecrated vocations demands certain fundamental choices: constant prayer, explicit proclamation, a courageous invitation, careful discernment, personalised accompaniment. We should be committed to daily prayer in our communities and should and involve young people, families, lay people, Salesian Family Groups. Proclamation entails making good use of the many opportunities which present themselves over the liturgical year. Inviting and discerning require a warm closeness which gives rise to confidence and allows us to recognise the signs of a vocation which a young person can show. Accompaniment requires us to help the young intensify their spiritual life, take part in suitable forms of apostolate, have an experience of community, get to know the Congregation, assess their motives and take the necessary steps which lead to a decision”

[GC26, NO.54]

B *Mission animation and various kinds of volunteer activity*

The dimension of education to the faith finds continuity in mission animation and various kinds of voluntary activity, and should be maintained and developed. **An openness to a missionary vocation and charitable**



“At Don Bosco’s Oratory the young people and adult collaborators had an experience of living and working together with him for the education and salvation of youth. This charismatic and community lived experience, the nucleus of Salesian spirituality, throws light on the project of Salesian Voluntary service”

(THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT
IN THE SALESIAN MISSION, NO.33)

social involvement through the volunteer movement are mature expressions of education to faith and evangelisation of the young.

Mission animation does not happen as an isolated factor, but in continuity with the identity of every Christian and community, as their natural ‘flourishing’. On the other hand, it is presented as a radical and clear expression of an identity which is *capable of motivating the community* towards apostolic activity. Common characteristic

and significant event are two things to highlight: missionary animation that strengthens faith, and faith that leads to missionary commitment towards everyone especially those in most need. This is why we need to think of missionary animation as an element that enriches the various dimensions in the SEPP: human and personal development, mature faith development, the process of deciding on a vocation.

» **Don Bosco’s missionary heart**

Don Bosco understood the enormous *spiritual energy* and extraordinary *apostolic impetus* that the missionary ideal gave rise to in his boys. He understood this and employed it zealously and intelligently. He spoke to his boys about the mission and missionaries, kept them informed about their various activities, their needs, got them to pray for them, encouraged them to play their part in his dream for the missions.

Mission animation and voluntary service today encourage the missionary to share and the volunteer to adopt a vocational view of life: *as a gift freely received, to be shared as service to all.*

Mission culture becomes a lived reality when fundamental attitudes and values of the Salesian charism are acquired. They are values that Don Bosco inculcated in his boys and his Salesians: a preferential love for very poor young people, the desire to participate in Christ’s redeeming mission and renewal of the world.

» *Ours is a missionary Congregation*

The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* in general presents three kinds of evangelising activity: “specific missionary activity” amongst people who do not yet know Christ; “pastoral care” of the Christian faithful; and “offering the Gospel once again” in countries with an ancient Christian tradition by which have become secularised.

The boundaries between these three are not clearly definable; certainly these activities are not exactly the same, but nor do they mutually exclude one another. On the contrary they are intercommunicating; and specifically missionary activity (*ad gentes*) also means the first and specific expression of all evangelisation: “Without [the mission *ad gentes*], the Church’s very missionary dimension would be deprived of its essential meaning and of the very activity that exemplifies it” (*Redemptoris Missio* 33-34).

The missionary commitment *ad gentes* is an integral part of the Salesian charism. Vocations to the missions have been cultivated in the Congregation from the very beginning, as the keenest and most generous expressions of the Salesian vocation. Today too, mission animation and the Salesian missionary volunteer are expressions of a missionary spirit and the spirituality of the Salesian Congregation.

The Salesian missionary and volunteer are involved in a project of life based on Gospel values, serving people in difficulty: they promote proclamation of the Gospel, human rights, solidarity, justice and peace.

The values that mission animation and voluntary service defend and promote are values that are part of the Salesian spirit: disinterested service; community spirit and oratorian style; interculturality; solidarity, and a clear and preferential option for the least, especially the poor and those on the fringes of society; critical and responsible involvement in society in order to build up the Kingdom.

» *Zeal for the missions comes from the mystery of God*

For the mission and volunteer service it is essential **to cultivate a spiritually solid interior life.** This allows us to discover God’s presence and action in ourselves and others, and proclaim it: a spiritual life that strengthens awareness of our responsibility to evangelise, and is involved in activity for the good of others. Spiritual life generates attitudes of

service and freely giving of oneself, and it gives us the courage to dream, and strongly desire the good of others.

The Church's missionary dimension is *rooted in God's Trinitarian existence*: the Word sent by the Father, through the mystery of his Death and Resurrection, gives us the fullness of life as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Sharing this message of fullness, this good news, this *euanghèlion*, with all peoples is the Church's mission.

Mission animation and voluntary service offer people the possibility of involvement and work for the **coming of God's Kingdom in the various contexts of the Salesian mission**.

Missionary activity is not primarily based on human abilities, even though their role is important. *The Holy Spirit is the active agent in the Church's mission*: He calls, enlightens, guides, gives value and effectiveness. The missionary and volunteer live out their vocation when they are obedient to the action of the Spirit.

» **Voluntary service and missionary activity**

The Salesian missionary volunteer movement proposes Gospel values through the witness of disinterested and supportive service in education and socio-political involvement that reaches out to family, work, culture.

Salesian voluntary service emerges from daily experience substantially embracing important areas: culture, social welfare, free time, development cooperation, group leadership, education to faith, formation of catechists and pastoral agents.

Voluntary service in its various forms, more than being an act of spontaneous and passing generosity, is a mindset that accepts the significance of testimony that has the highest moral and social value. It is specified by certain critical elements: apostolic interiority which features the spirit of the *da mihi animas*; the central role of Christ the Good Shepherd, who demands that the missionary volunteer have a pedagogical and pastoral attitude in relating to those to whom he or she is sent; a commitment to education, a characteristic feature of our Salesian charism; a sense of belonging to the Church; joyful work; the Marian dimension which sees missionary and voluntary activity as participation in the ecclesial motherhood of Mary Help of Christians.



Finally, it is important to recognise **the manifold initiatives and diversity of experiences** which identify with or make reference to the missionary spirit of the Salesian Family: direct contact and meeting up with missionaries; information concerning the numerous missionary activities (news, publications, audiovisuals, opportunities to finance small projects); mission animation material prepared with pedagogical intent and didactic criteria; mission groups; formation topics for various groups and Christian communities; knowledge and study of Church documents relating to the missions; taking part of the Church's various mission days.

C *Social Communication*

» *Social communication flows through all Salesian presences*

Social communication fills the world and determines the way human beings coexist. It is therefore of close interest to the vocation of the Salesian educator working in promotion and evangelisation. and it is, therefore, *a specific dimension of the Salesian charism* (cf. C. 43). **It was something essential for Don Bosco; his appeal to every educator, and something fundamental to the Church and world today.**

Don Bosco made his tireless activity in social communication a constitutive element of what it means to be an educator and apostle of the young and of all people. We have learned from Salesian tradition that social communication is not simply a collection of tools or material means to use; instead it is *part and parcel of any Salesian presence* involved in educating and evangelising be it through specific activities or through the various kinds of activity that influence popular culture and promotion of appropriate social forms. And harking back to Don Bosco:

I ask and beseech you then not to neglect this most important part of our mission [CIRCULAR LETTER ON SPREADING GOOD BOOKS, 19 MARCH 1885].

» *Communicators by vocation and mission*

As Salesian educators today we should, in all of our multifaceted apostolic and educational activity, express our firm resolve to be genuine communicators. Communicators, then, *by intimate vocation and by our mission as educators*.

Our quality as educators and evangelisers demands that we be qualified communicators. Communication fosters charismatic communion and mobilisation of the mission. We are especially interested in *interpersonal communication* between adult and young person, laity and religious, those well endowed with experience and those who are taking their first steps in life, and amongst all those who have gifts to share. The Preventive System entrusts the effectiveness of our education principally to direct face-to-face encounter: encounter in confidence, friendship, lending an attentive and interested ear. So we need to cultivate *the ability to manage relational dynamics*: the quality of interactions can negatively or positively condition the formation of personality; educational attitudes and styles have an influence on emotional states and very often determine behaviour.

The Congregation's reflection reveals a consolidation of beliefs concerning communication as it is understood in broad terms and opens up to **a new and more systematic praxis in the field of social communication** (cf. *The Salesian Social Communication System*). From this view of communication we can understand its primary purpose: communion and progress of human society (cf. Fr Egidio Viganò, AGC 302, "The challenge of the media").

We are passing through a phase, a period of profound technological and cultural revolution; information and our way of making use of it is being digitalised. Everything is now happening on the Web and the younger generations ("digital natives", "cyberkids", "click generation") have gained a high capacity to access technology and to use it competently.

Technology is a *liberating tool, one of empowerment* for young people; but it poses a question for education: the approach to technology is an important step in *the growth process and for affirming one's identity*. The media influence the development of young peoples' personalities, their choice of basic values, their attitudes to God and man. They invite us to

reflect on what is aesthetically and morally excellent in forming the young and on the impact media have on education.

» ***Social communication in the SEPP and at the service of evangelisation***

Promotion of communication occurs also through projects aimed at creating communicative processes which are part of the SEPP. We avoid focusing only on activities and isolated works. We need practical guidelines in our Pastoral and Educative Projects and communication planning on how to act in this sector:

- **formation to the critical and educational use of Social Communication media** (cf. GC24, no.129) and **new technologies**. Educators and young people need to understand the changes that are taking place, how media and cultural industries function. Critical sense, strategic spirit, self-control, secure and effective use, sense of where the limits lie, and respect, civic sense, autonomy and *problem solving* abilities are not necessarily abilities that teenagers or older youth have simply because they were born and grew up amidst monitors and keyboards or by the fact that they know how to use them. It takes serious competence to know how to use media in the “digital continent”: offering clear objectives for appreciating creativity; acquiring an emancipated and critical attitude to messages, and being aware of their influence, to then be able to express themselves through them by a command over the languages and technologies. The significance of media communication goes directly back to what media express in words and images, to the question of why we use them and the aims of transmitters and receivers involved in the process of communication. There is a need then for a critical exploration of the conceptual elements contained in the signs that media use;
- **involvement in production of messages and content aimed specifically at the young**, using all the means available to us. Social Communication is increasingly an educational presence, shaping ways of thinking and creating culture. The challenge for the future will be educating to new media, but also carrying out *educational and pastoral activity by means of new media* especially where new generations are concerned. Its

sharp effectiveness and ever more massive presence make Social Communication a true and authentic alternative school for very large sectors of the world's population, especially youth and ordinary people (cf. *GC21*, no.148). The relationship between *Social Communication and evangelisation* or, more practically, between the use of languages and Social Communication media for the Gospel and our apostolic style of "evangelising by educating", has a profound impact on Salesian activity. It means not only educating to media, that is to a critical interpretation of media messages, but also evangelising through media. Thus we open up a vast field of initiatives for our teaching, educational and cultural activities, for Christian animation of youth groups, for catechesis, for prayer;

- appreciation of social communication as a **new vital setting for young people to come together** (cf. *GC25*, no.47). Technologies of communication alter our sense of belonging and the way we come together inasmuch as they create more communities that users are part of, using devices that are ever more connected to the lives of young people. The activities offered and requested are those of *listening, recognising, responding, being with and acting with*, in a situation that points to the possibility of experiences (maybe new or different ones) that offer mutual trust as an antidote to improvisation by the consumer. These new 'vital settings' like *social networks* encourage focus on the stories of young peoples' lives which we find in their own accounts of themselves and in the way they rework their experiences, with the possibility of helping them to orient themselves and make choices;
- **promotion and appreciation of all forms and expressions of communication** (cf. *GC24*, no.129), like music, theatre, cinema, television, photography, comics, multimedia and other artistic expressions with clear educational and evangelising scope. We need to provide leadership in these situations of communication so that they are not just ever broader settings for free expression and creativity, but also encourage *a taste for beauty* in all expressions (visual arts, music, poetry, literature, dance, theatre). Educating to beauty means involving the entire sphere of sensitivity and emotion, imagination and creativity, ability to express one's sensations and feelings and understand

how others express them: we put in place a gradual enrichment of our own legacy in this regard and in the emotional area. Education to beauty also means forming to the understanding and use of various languages like icon, music and poetry.

25

THE SALESIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

Movements are made up of those who, **in the great and unique “movement” of the Church**, live out their Christian, ecclesial, missionary experience ... by taking part in a particular charism. Young people from the SYM live their ecclesial vocation and mission according to the charism of Don Bosco. In fact since 2004, the SYM has been included in the *List of International Associations of the faithful* (Pontifical Council for the laity).

The SYM is not an association but is made up of young people who belong to various associations or groups animated by Salesian Youth Ministry. Not being an association its doors are open to everyone, since its service is directed to the Church and all young people. This does not stop us from witnessing to Christ, sharing the Mystery with other young people who share the same faith, a joyfully proclaiming it to whoever has not yet heard it. The SYM shares in the Salesian charism and is an expression of it amongst young lay people.

Social activity, group activity, the community-based activity of Sodalities were an almost spontaneous experience in Don Bosco's life, **given his natural leanings as a very social being and to friendship**. Don Bosco, guided by his insight into the soul of the young person, discovered the great opportunity that groups and associations offered: so adapting himself to the various needs of his boys he created a whole range of social opportunities for them.

Group activity for the young was essential to Don Bosco's preventive and popular approach. It was an absolutely important opportunity for education and ministry and for young people to be active in their own right. Groups and associations of various kinds, then, are “what young people can do”, though backed by adults who encourage the young group members to come to the fore and take up responsibility for how things are run.

Through all the many kinds of group and youth associations there are, we aim to ensure a quality educational presence in new areas where young people band together and lead them in the direction of a significant experience of ecclesial life.

A *The identity and nature of the SYM*

The SYM is identified by two elements in particular: on the one hand, **reference to Salesian Youth Spirituality and Salesian pedagogy**; on the other, **the links between groups and associations** so that they can mutually cooperate in the task of formation according to what is laid down by the Salesian educational and pastoral approach:

- ▮ the SYM unites young people from very different groups, associations and sectors animated by Salesian Youth Spirituality, following Don Bosco's proposition regarding education and evangelisation: it is a youth movement inspired by Don Bosco, conceived of *not just as an "organisation", but as a kind of spiritual energy with a common nucleus of Gospel values* that gives rise to apostolic initiative and enthusiasm for life. Therefore the identity of the SYM is Salesian Youth Spirituality (see Chapter 4), *invitation to holiness in ordinary daily life*. This is the kind of holiness achieved by Dominic Savio, Laura Vicuña and so many others in the Salesian Family;
- ▮ *groups are the primary element of the SYM*, where young people meet and help on another as they grow. We should bring already existing groups together in a Provincial network and include new ones coming into being. So the first focus is not on the kind of group it is. The SYM sees the value of any kind of group: from sports groups to artistic ones; from those that are simply about coming together to those that prefer some specific activity; from service groups to prayer groups or those that take up an explicit response to the Church and the Christian message; from those focused on things that are of most interest to teenagers to those ready to tackle the demands of faith; from those who are on the fringes of the Christian community to those whose sense of belonging to the Church is very much stronger. Since they communicate with one another, they are a network where they all

share a common educational value. This bond between groups comes into play in the sharing of Salesian values and where there is some coordination of common initiatives, significant occasions for dialogue, discussion, Christian formation and youthful expression (cf. *GC23*, nos.275-277). So we are talking about a *reference Movement* where each group retains its own specific character but is united with the others by a range of common elements.

The SYM is a youthful, educational world movement:

youthful, because young people are the true leaders in the educational development of the movement, accompanied by their educators, in their own responsibility as part of the unique pastoral plan for the local area;

educational because it is offered to all young people so they can play their distinctive part in their human and Christian growth, with a missionary outlook which also looks far afield, with a willingness to make an impact in their local area and in society and be part of and supportive of the local Church;

world because, beyond each individual group, it can be found all around the world in very different cultural contexts.

So the reference point for the SYM is all young people active in or living in places where there is a Salesian presence, at a whole range of levels of involvement. The “heart” of the movement is undoubtedly the young *leaders, the youth leaders* who have clearly and decisively accepted the Salesian educational and evangelising invitation and whose life is a witness to other young people. The task of animation has been presented in this chapter (point 2.3. “The dimension of social experience”). The young SYM leaders are the focus of special attention by the SDB, FMA, the Cooperators and other adult members of the Salesian Family who guide and accompany them.

B *Preferential fields of activity for the SYM*

The SYM activities are all based on the young person and has a preference for the following fields of activity:

- ▮ education and evangelisation, accompanying young people to the fullness of Christian life through positive and supportive settings (concrete alternative models of Christian living), which breathe confidence and familiarity;
- ▮ social and ecclesial life, encouraging young people to become actively involved in the Church's life;
- ▮ personal and/or community apostolic involvement, voluntary service to others and offering a Salesian interpretation of daily life in the light of the Gospel;
- ▮ socio-political involvement, especially in civil institutions that promote youth initiatives;
- ▮ communication and sharing processes (information, news, experiences) and also common gatherings at various levels, as possibilities exist.

C *The visibility of the SYM and how it is run*

Although the range of groups is so different, the following are essential issues for animation:

- ▮ the SYM is made visible through *the various* local, provincial, national and intercontinental (depending on the level and degree of development and make-up of networks) coordination teams; through *community participation in various Church gatherings* be they diocesan, national or world, such as World Youth Day for example; through *meaningful representation in civil institutions* which draw up policies affecting the young. this is why it is important to set up an information and linking network amongst the various groups and associations in the SYM and also between them and other groups or associations in the Church and the local area;
- ▮ besides the meetings and other activities of individual groups in the MGS, the Movement sees that certain other opportunities are powerful moments for young people to come together:

provincial, national, international and world meetings, liturgical opportunities and celebrating Salesian feasts, leadership formation. *Youth gatherings are characteristic feature of the SYM*, as significant occasions for communication between groups and for spreading messages and values regarding Salesian Youth Spirituality.

- though levels differ and each one has its own specific character, SYM members identify in a special way with Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. *Therefore there is a need to plan a Salesian invitation to formation* which can be offered the various groups and associations as a point of reference for their own formation plan, and within the overall context of the Salesian Family;
- the Province, in coordination with other Salesian Family presences in its area, will see the *Movement is considered within the general context of the SEPP*, in which the Youth Ministry Delegate and team are seen as the promoters of the SYM as a youthful expression of the Province's ministry.

