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BRAZIL'S VISIT TO SPAIN: THE VALUE OF MARIST HOSPITALITY

Suzana Diemer – educational counsellor at Colegio Marista Rosario || 6 November 2024

The visit to Colegio Champagnat de Chamberi (Madrid, Spain) was one of the most significant activities of the exchange programme. I can illustrate it with the following words of the students: 'We were well received at Colegio Aristos, but we felt even more welcomed at Colegio Champagnat de Chamberi', 'We recognised many similar characteristics to our school in their way of being, even though they speak a different language'.

I would like to highlight here the recognition by our group of the value of welcome, so characteristic of the Marists, which was very present in the way the school organised itself to welcome us.

Before our visit, Rafael contacted the school to arrange a date and time for the visit. Shortly afterwards, the teacher Marta, who works with the music component, contacted us to organise the meeting, as, according to her, she is 'passionate about Brazilian culture and speaks Portuguese'. Based on her suggestions, we organised the activities.

We were welcomed by the pedagogical coordinator, the music teacher Marta and a group of pupils. As soon as we arrived, we noticed the similarities, which is very significant when you are in a foreign country.

The group showed us around the school, including the pastoral room, which contains images very similar to those we have in the Rosary. We were welcomed with the offer of a 'breakfast' in the school dining room, with something very typical of the Spanish, churros with hot chocolate.

The exchange students participated in the school playground, and the students from the school approached them with great interest and curiosity, trying to chat and exchange. The teachers there even found it difficult to lead their groups back to class when the break was over, which made for a very interesting connection.

After the break, our exchange students and we, the leaders, together with some of teacher Marta's students, went to the music room to participate in the planned activities. There were exchanges about expressions of the different languages, similar words with very different meanings, which provoked a lot of laughter and connection between everyone. Music was also an instrument of exchange, even to discover the power and importance of Brazilian music in Spain.

It was a very interesting experience of identification. The students left in high spirits, and even found it hard to say goodbye, as they would like to continue this rapprochement.

Recognising ourselves as part of this big Marist family was very special for all of us, and I am sure that we will carry this experience in our hearts forever.



VALENCIA #COUNTSONME: THE EFFECTS OF THE DANA THAT CAN'T BE SEEN ON THE MOBILE PHONE

Pablo José García Guerrero – Volunteer in the DANA with Maristas Mediterránea - Maristas Murcia || 12 November 2024



How to write, in six or seven paragraphs, what has been happening in Valencia since the last days of October? Being direct and knowing that if you are going to continue reading this article it is because you want to know a direct testimony and not just what we have been receiving day after day in RRSS, which in some cases you no longer know if the message is more or less faithful to reality or has more intentions.

We can use all the adjectives we can think of that are synonymous with 'terrible', but if there is one idea that must be conveyed, it is that beyond the 15x7 centimetre screens that we have in our hands almost all day long, there is an environment that cannot be seen through them. Mud, destruction and despair do not fit on our mobiles. They can neither be smelled nor stepped on.

The testimony you are reading is from Algemésí, a municipality with more than 25,000 inhabitants, where everyone, without exception, has been affected by the DANA. Directly or through relatives, through their homes, their vehicles or their jobs. And like Algemésí, up to a total of 75 municipalities in which the situation is identical.

And what have we found ten days after the flooding? Streets that are still muddy and where you can't distinguish the pavement from the road. Furniture on the doorsteps of houses where water is still being drained away. Shops that you wonder whether they will be able to reopen or not and that are absolutely necessary for life, such as pharmacies or grocery shops. You encounter strong smells and slippery footsteps. You find people who have been sleeping in the municipal pavilion for days and spend the rest of the day, from dawn to dusk, cleaning their houses and those of their neighbours.

And what else do you find? Solidarity, gratitude. Volunteers come to help and to give of themselves, but they also carry in their hearts the illusion and hope of those who today only have each other, whose priorities and plans in life have changed in the blink of an eye. And you find yourself in the most absurd paradox of a volunteer: you go to bring illusion and hope and you return home more comforted than you have been able to give.

They do ask one very important thing of us: that we don't forget them. Life, today, changes very fast on the screens we mentioned at the beginning. What is fashionable today is no longer fashionable next week. Valencia will take months to begin to recover normality. Not all of it, but to begin to recover it. And the Valencians will also have to get on with their lives, their jobs, their studies (oh, how the kids are eager to go back to school now that they can't. How different from when they could go to school all the time, when they could go to school all the time). How different from when they could go every day). And volunteers will continue to be necessary.



So, if you have read this far, THANK YOU: THANK YOU and stay with this last message: LET'S NOT FORGET THEM, winter is coming, Christmas is coming... let's not forget them and let's continue to show solidarity in any way we can.

I don't want to finish without mentioning the DANA Valencia Emergency Aid Centralisation team (Provincial Solidarity Team of Maristas Mediterránea) for the service they are providing. Ignacio, José Antonio, Brothers Chano and Javier Grajera and the rest of the team, I can't name them all, but they were there all day long with the best of smiles. Of course, in them it is true that the measure of love is to love without measure, given all that they have done so far.



EXTRANSFORMING EXPERIENCES: INNOVATION AT COLEGIO ZORRILLA (URUGUAY)

Inés May - education referent - Cruz del Sur province, Ximena Alvariño - Director of Initial and Primary Education at Zorrilla School and Ana Elena Gutiérrez - Deputy Director of Initial and Primary Education at Zorrilla School || 20 November 2024

In the second semester, at [Colegio Zorrilla](#) (Mdeo. Uruguay), we carried out the second edition of the year of the Exploration Laboratories in 3rd and 4th year of primary school.

This is an innovative experience that favours an active role of the student and interlevel learning. Some of the key elements that underpin the proposal are problem solving and enquiry in the construction of learning; cooperative work that promotes peer learning; self-knowledge and self-regulation that strengthen autonomy; metacognition processes; interest and motivation.

The children are offered five proposals that are designed around a dimension or area of knowledge, in dialogue with the curricular design; and they are given the opportunity to decide and choose based on their interests which one they will work on for five full days.

During these sessions, each teacher transforms the classroom, designing different simultaneous spaces with a pedagogical intention, using different materials and proposing challenges that invite exploration, dialogue and action.

Each laboratory day has an initial meeting in which previous ideas, expectations and hypotheses are gathered and the available spaces are presented. Then comes the time for exploration, manipulation and exchange between peers. At the end, there is another meeting to bring the experience to a metacognitive close, to institutionalise ideas, to visualise conceptual progression, progress and pending aspects.

To close the cycle, on the one hand, a collective instance is generated in which boys and girls from each laboratory communicate and share with the rest of their peers what the significant aspects of the process were: progression of ideas, triggering questions, ideas achieved, discoveries, products produced, etc. On the other hand, an evaluation proposal is presented within each laboratory, where evidence of each member's learning experience is collected.



From this experience, the school transforms its times and spaces, offering new scenarios that place students at the centre, giving them a leading role and connecting us with the motivation, interest and motivation to learn.



MARIST AFRICAN MISSION COMMISSION (AMC) MEETS IN MALAWI

Br. Roland Léonard Herinirina, FMS / Br. Paul Angulu, FMS || 26 November 2024

From 7-12 November, the African Mission Commission (AMC) held its regular meeting in Malawi, bringing together representatives from each administrative unit to discuss, strategise and share ideas for advancing Marist mission throughout the African region. The meeting highlighted the Marist mission's dedication to upholding its values and commitments, particularly in education and evangelisation, in the midst of Africa's unique social and cultural landscape.

In attendance were representatives from each of the five Marist Provinces of Africa: Br Jumbe Francis from the Province of Southern Africa, Br Michel Longena from the Province of PACE, Br Roland Leonard Herinirina from the Province of Madagascar, Br Isaac Frimpong from the Province of West Africa, and Br Paul Angulu from the Province of Nigeria.



Each of the participants had the opportunity to present updates on their respective administrative units, sharing both successes and challenges, and discussing ways to support each other in strengthening Marist initiatives.

Highlights from the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization

Br Niño, Deputy Director of Marist Education and Evangelisation, joined the meeting to present the latest developments in the Secretariat. His presentation highlighted the role of the Secretariat in guiding and strengthening Marist education and evangelisation around the world, with special attention to the needs of Africa. He underlined the importance of the Marist International Mission Assembly and its seven key priorities, which serve as guiding pillars for Marist institutions around the world. He also highlighted the Marist Global Network, which connects Marist ministries, fostering a spirit of unity and collaboration on a global scale.

FMSI's key recommendations

The director of the Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale (FMSI), Mr Andrea, provided valuable insights during the meeting. His presentation included an update on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) submissions of several African countries and offered specific recommendations for upcoming provincial strategic plans. These recommendations focused on improving advocacy, children's rights and community development projects, underlining FMSI's commitment to the Marist mission and its role in improving vulnerable communities across Africa.

Strengthening Marist Mission in Africa


The AMC meeting in Malawi proved to be a pivotal moment for Marist mission in Africa, with members exploring ways of fostering community, resilience and servant leadership in Marist schools and programmes. Addressing regional challenges was a priority, and discussions revolved around solutions to support sustainable growth and greater impact of Marist initiatives.

The AMC members also visited Marist schools and the International Community near Lilongwe, where they witnessed first-hand the positive influence of Marist education in Malawi. These visits brought encouragement and solidarity to the brothers and partners, reminding them of the continued support of the wider Marist family. Encounters such as these foster a sense of unity and inspiration, strengthening the impact of the Marist mission throughout the region.

PROJECT BASED LEARNING: PUPILS AT SAN JOSÉ DEL PARQUE SCHOOL (SPAIN)

Ana Álvarez de Rementería - head of communications at San José del Parque School || 27 November 2024

For years, lecture classes in which students were limited to listening to the teacher and then studying, memorising and repeating in the exam have been replaced by active methodologies where the protagonist is the student, such as project-based learning (PBL).



Thanks to this project-based methodology, our students at Colegio San José del Parque (Madrid, Spain) participate in learning through curiosity and enquiry with the intention that the children do not memorise, but internalise the content.

In addition, we ensure that throughout their school years they acquire important and necessary skills for their future, such as teamwork, emotional management, public speaking, leadership and entrepreneurship.

We want them to be interested in their surroundings, to question the reasons behind things and, with the help of adults, to be able to discover, understand and explain them to their classmates.

If we achieve this, the explanation of a concept among them, we ensure that they have understood it, that they have it firmly established and are able to transfer it to everyday life.



At San José del Parque we have been working on projects for years as part of our pedagogical innovation and the results have been extraordinary. We started in Infants and have continued in upper grades.

Our experience with this methodology is very positive and we have found that it favours the motivation of our students by involving them in the classroom and dealing with topics that are close to their reality and of interest to them.

How do we carry out the PBA?

The projects last approximately six weeks. They begin with several motivational sessions on the topic to be worked on where the tutor establishes the cognitive basis of the project and encourages curiosity.

The starting point is always the child's own knowledge and each pupil continues with the research at home together with their family or in working groups.

Once they have done their research, they present it and explain it to their friends with the help of their tutor. From infancy, a fundamental area of every child's development is language and communication. By presenting what they have researched and learnt in class, as well as reinforcing their knowledge, they are learning to speak in public and to present their ideas.

In this way, with the different lines of research during two or three weeks, the children expand their knowledge and vocabulary in a dynamic and natural way, favouring the integral development of our pupils.

Finally, they carry out a week of project closure with very special complementary activities all related to the centre of interest that we have worked on.

In these videos, we show you some of the activities that the 5 year old students have been working on.



In this one we show you the work on the five continents project in primary school.

