Sa-Fa Schools for the World



Identity criteria for the vitality of the Sa-Fa Family Educational Centres

Sa-Fa Schools

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Summary

	In th	e Sa-Fa Schools,	5			
II.	fron	our charismatic intuitions	8			
III.	and	and as Sa-Fa Family,				
IV.	we d	care for people,	16			
V.	we d	count on families	19			
VI.	and a) b) c) d)	we propose a quality school that takes care of the teaching-learning process offers processes of initiation and deepening of faith, is organised and managed on the basis of charismatic values and takes care of the internal spaces and the relationship with the near and distant environment.	s,21 24 25			
VII.		ch educates for a civilisation of universal	32			

l. In the Sa-Fa Schools

The revitalisation of life and mission is at the heart of the "Reorganisation of the Institute", promoted by the XXXVIII General Chapter. "It should be understood as an opportunity to update the charism of the Institute with creative fidelity" in all its areas (XXXVIII G.C. Or. 11).

While the mission of the Institute remains open to "all kinds of good works", its "principal mission" (Cf. C. FSF 16) remains linked to the education of children and young people in various ways and places. In keeping with the Institute's revitalisation project called "Sa-Fa Family for the World", we call this document "Sa-Fa Schools for the World".

This document should be understood as an update of the Educational Project of the Institute (2011) for the whole Sa-Fa Family, which "is made up of the Institute of the Brothers of the Holy Family and the persons and associations that share its spirituality and mission in varying degrees of participation and commitment" (Doc. Sa-Fa Family). We make this update in view of the calls and needs of society and of the Church, especially the invitation of the Pope: "To unite efforts to achieve a broad educational alliance, with a view to forming mature people, capable of rebuilding the fabric of relationships and creating a more fraternal, equitable and supportive humanity" (15-10-2020).

The spirit of synodality that the Church asks of us, as an expression of the participation of the whole people of God, has been adopted as a methodological principle of reflection. The drafting of this new document has been carried out taking into account the diverse realities of the Institute and with the contributions of a large group of Brothers and lay people. In this way, the proposal has been enriched by the diversity and variety of outlooks, traditions and cultures where the Sa-Fa Family is inserted.

In this way, we understand ourselves to be faithful to the legacy of Brother Gabriel and to what the Church proposes to us today, considering that "the Catholic school continues to be essential as a space for the evangelisation of young people" (ChV 222).

On the other hand, in a society that is experiencing a growing secularisation, especially in cultures with Christian roots, the Catholic school can be defined as a "frontier" mission. For many children and young people our school institutions will be the only place to hear the first and perhaps only proclamation of the Good News that Jesus brings to the world, inviting us to take an active part in the building of the Kingdom.

The subtitle given to this document, "Identity criteria for the vitality of the Educational Centres of the Sa-Fa Family", suggests that the focus has been on defining the elements of identity that are proper to our charism and to our educational tradition. Our educational proposal has its own identity, well characterised in the Educational Project of the Institute.

We offer this new proposal inviting everyone to internalise and follow these criteria of identity. Its application will help to bring the whole educational community into harmony with the Educational Project and the expressions of the Sa-Fa charism, integrating the potential of each person.

We are grateful for the collaboration of all those who, in one way or another, have participated in this project of reflection, updating and renewal of our educational mission as Sa-Fa Family.

We encourage everyone to take up our humanising mission, "with piety and zeal", as Brother Gabriel Taborin used to say. Let us be guided by these criteria of identity and let us discover and enjoy the beauty of our vocation. This will allow us to experience the "joy of the Gospel" and to make real the vitality of our educational works today and in the future.

II. From our charismatic intuitions

1. All our schools are Catholic Church schools

The Sa-Fa Family Centres are centres of the Catholic Church, committed to faith formation in dialogue with culture, with other religions and worldviews and in constant service to the Church and to all people, regardless of class, race, gender or religion.

The Institute of the Brothers of the Holy Family assumes, by virtue of the mission entrusted to it by the Church, the obligation to safeguard in the establishments of the Sa-Fa Family the Catholic identity in accordance with the Gospel, the teachings of the Church and the charism of Brother Gabriel Taborin as expressed in the *Educational Project of the Institute* and in the orientations of the Chapters. This responsibility is assumed in each country by the Provincial Council or by the Teams, Councils or persons to whom the Provincial Council delegates this responsibility.

2. Schools for all, universal

The educational offer of the Sa-Fa Family is by its nature catholic, universal. Those who profess the Catholic religion and those who belong to other religious denominations or none at all can benefit from it. We encourage the integral growth of each person, respecting their beliefs and proposing the Gospel in a climate of dialogue and mutual enrichment that fosters mutual understanding, coexistence and peace. "For believers, the world derives neither from blind chance nor from strict necessity, but from God's plan. This is what gives rise to the duty of believers to unite their efforts with those of all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers, so that this world of ours may effectively correspond to the divine plan: living as a family under the Creator's watchful eye" (Benedict XVI, Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, 57).

3. We propose an education in the footsteps of Vble. Br. Gabriel

The Educational Community and each educator in particular, see in Brother Gabriel Taborin an example to follow for his commitment to the education of children and young people. We are inspired by him through the knowledge of his life, his writings and by updating his memory with formative meetings, pedagogical activities, religious celebrations and other moments of conviviality. We feel that we are continuing his charism and his pedagogy and we want to have him as a point of reference as we look to the future.

4. With a charismatic identity that has its source in the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth

The Centres of the Sa-Fa Family propose, through their Educational Project, their own style of being and organising themselves. The Holy Family inspires, with its communion of love and listening to the Word of God, the educational task and the human relationships between the members of the educational community. The "family spirit", a vital nucleus which strengthens the bonds of unity and solidarity, is the spirit which characterises the Sa-Fa School. This spirit –our DNA– makes Sa-Fa School a place of humanisation. Activities and relationships are always approached from the point of view of our motto: "In prayer, work and love: peace". This "look" at Nazareth is cultivated in everyday life and in special moments of formation, prayer and other celebrations.

5. We build an Educational Community in every school

The educational task of our Sa-Fa Schools is a choral work in which everyone is valued and everyone is counted on.

"Holy Family School, and the different areas where educational activity is carried out, are the meeting place of a group of people who, although from different perspectives, have a common mission: the integral education of children and young people. This is what we call the Educational Community. Its core of cohesion is the acceptance and responsible participation in the realisation of the Educational Project" (Educational Project).

6. We take care of the formation in the charism and make the symbols of identity visible

The Sa-Fa Family, with creative fidelity to the charism received, is concerned to generate processes to get to know the spiritual, human and pedagogical elements that characterise it. In their reflection and action they try to maintain it, and to guarantee charismatic continuity over time. In all the Centres of the Sa-Fa Family the presence of the symbols of identity is ensured: Crucifix, Holy Family and Vble. Br. Gabriel, as well as other symbols and slogans of our own. Creative care is taken to adapt these symbols to local circumstances and to the age of the recipients. A proper explanation of the symbols will allow a better understanding of their meaning.

III. And as Sa-Fa Family

7. We feel called to walk together

As Sa-Fa Family we feel the call to walk together in a participative and co-responsible ("synodal") style, according to our charism (General Chapter 2019). This implies standing side by side with others, connecting with others and creating bonds that make it possible to create common projects by joining forces. In response to this call, we encourage teamwork in the Centres, we create networks of collaboration between the Centres of each religious Province and each country, and together we build a global network called "Sa-Fa Family".

Educators, administrators, students, families and Brothers of the whole international school community are aware that "No one can fight life in isolation... dreams are built together" (Fratelli tutti 8).

8. In an open and welcoming school, animated by the "family spirit"

The Sa-Fa Family Centres, located in a specific human and cultural reality, are open to all people, value the local culture and contribute to the creation of the great human family. They create an environment animated by the "family spirit" which inspires and animates the relationships between its members. They make family spirit

characterise the educational and pastoral style of the school and enrich it with expressions of their own culture. This family spirit is the strongest charismatic feature that the Sa-Fa Family can offer in its relationships.

The experience of community life of the Family of Nazareth, source of inspiration of Brother Gabriel, is a key and a way to get involved in the care of the life of each person who is a member of the Sa-Fa Educational Communities.

As an expression of "family spirit", means are established to celebrate the events of people's lives, so that they feel the closeness of the rest of the Educational Community.

9. Growing in a sense of belonging

Belonging to and promoting the Sa-Fa Family, as the main network of relationships, is encouraged through the organisation of local activities and meetings and participation in those organised at the level of religious Provinces, nationally or internationally. Other means are also promoted: the sharing of news, the elaboration of common slogans, the presence on social networks, etc.

10. Committed to teamwork

All Sa-Fa educators feel responsible and committed to the educational work, actively participating in their work teams and seeking common objectives that allow them to generate transformative educational experiences. They assume the orientations taken by the different teams as a common commitment.

11. Creating networks that bind us together

The Sa-Fa Family Schools, for the better fulfilment of their aims and the development of their activity, collaborate with the local Church, especially with organisations representing Catholic Education, and with other religious or secular educational entities. They promote a special network cooperation with other Centres through the exchange of educational and charismatic materials and experiences. They care for the membership of the International Holy Family Association (AISF) in order to increase the sense of belonging through participation in its activities.

(See: https://www.fsfbelley.net/fr/statuts-de-lassociation-internationale-de-la-sainte-famille/)

12. We present ourselves with our own corporate image and we take care of communication

The Sa-Fa Family develops its own corporate image so that its identity is known and promoted in a unified way. It uses the logo or common corporate image as a distinctive sign. In all its Centres it ensures that the logo is used appropriately, both in internal activities and when participating in activities in the surrounding area. Likewise, it takes care of its image in the style of its messages and publications, as well as in its presence on the web, social networks and relations with the media.

IV. We care for people

13. The Sa-Fa School, an organisation for the people

The Sa-Fa Family believes that education is primarily a relationship between people. The quality of education is achieved by welcoming educators, families and students, favouring a good climate of relations between the Educational Community.

14. That assumes and educates in the culture of care

The Sa-Fa School cultivates and promotes a culture of care for the people who belong to the Educational Community, taking care of them in their diversity and paying attention to the most needy and vulnerable.

It makes it a priority and commitment to create a safe and healthy school environment for all; it creates safe and green environments in which students, parents and educators are involved against any kind of abuse and/or discrimination.

15. With a comprehensive education project

The Sa-Fa Family Educational Project aims at the integral formation of the person: "the ability to integrate the knowledge of the head, the heart and the hands" (ChV 222). Every moment of the day and every meeting with the students becomes a didactic, pedagogical and pastoral opportunity. In coherence with our own charism, we take care to develop emotional intelligence and interiority in all the members of the educational community.

16. We take care of the selection, accompaniment and training processes for educators

In the Sa-Fa Family Centres, all the people who work with the students in one way or another are educators. They are chosen according to the Educational Project. They are given a progressive and continuous formation that allows them to know and grow in the values of our charism and the Educational Project, emphasising personal accompaniment and appreciating the richness of diversity in each one. We value and care for the educational contribution of all non-teaching staff. Together we try to "accompany those who accompany us", with an empathetic attitude towards their work.

17. We want committed educators who live their profession with passion

Sa-Fa Educators live their vocation in the School, nourishing the deepest motivations of their being educators and guiding and helping students to find their own vocation. They value the complementarity of vocations (religious and laypeople) present in the school and understand educational work as a vocation of service. They carry out their mission with "educational passion" and know that "To raise the child to where one is, one must descend to where he is" (Br. Gabriel. Introduction to French Grammar).

18. Educators learning and updating

The Sa-Fa Educator is willing to learn and update himself/herself on a permanent basis. This attitude allows him/her to empathise with the students and to collaborate in learning. He/she is aware that education is an interaction and thus each educator educates others and at the same time is educated by those he/she educates. He/she adopts a positive disposition to change and to discover and experiment with methods that provide creative and adapted responses to the diverse and changing situations of learners.

V. We count on families

19. We know that the family is the "first and indispensable educator" (Pope Francis)

We defend that the family has the right to choose the education they want to give their child and therefore we support freedom in the choice of school. As Sa-Fa School we take on the challenge of accompanying families in the task of educating their children. We take care of good communication that generates reciprocal trust and we encourage moments of training for and with families that respond to their current challenges.

20. We encourage their participation in the development of the Educational Project

The Sa-Fa Educational Community encourages active collaboration with families in the educational task. This is done, above all, by sharing the principles and the educational-evangelical action, through the Parents' Association and other channels established in the Centres in coordination with the School Management.

21. The families of the Sa-Fa Family are agents and recipients of pastoral ministry

The Sa-Fa Family Centres have among their priorities "to promote family pastoral ministry in order to respond to the specific challenges posed by families today" (G.C. 2019). They promote and facilitate spaces and moments of relationship and count on the families in the pastoral processes, aimed at the families themselves and the other members of the Educational Community.

22. Relationship between parents' associations

The Parents' Association of each Centre, as part of the Sa-Fa Family, establishes channels of relationship and federation with the Associations of the other Centres of the Sa-Fa Family. It promotes and participates in activities that favour the realisation of the Educational Project and help to grow in the feeling of belonging to the Sa-Fa Family, mainly through the International Holy Family Association.

In the case where there is no formal Association, efforts will be made to encourage the participation of parents in the life of the Centre and in the relationship with the Sa-Fa Family.

VI. And we propose a quality school

a) That takes care of the teachinglearning process

23. We are committed to a quality school

The Sa-Fa School, as an educational establishment, offers society a privileged place for the promotion of the person and as a Catholic school "remains essential as a space for the evangelisation of young people" (ChV 222).

It strives for educational excellence through the development of the curriculum in the different areas, with interdisciplinary work and other teaching methods. It integrates religious education into the curriculum and promotes faith-culture dialogue in all areas. It offers and cares for religious education* in order to make it meaningful in the lives of the students.

It fulfils its mission by educating students and preparing them to be competent in today's society and providing them with the possibility of acquiring skills and abilities for the needs of the future in accordance with Gospel values.

(*) In line with the Educational Project of the Institute, it is understood that it is Catholic Religious Education, with the denomination that the legislation allows.

24. That puts the learner at the centre of the teaching-learning process

Sa-Fa School educates through a teaching-learning process that essentially involves students and educators. We place the pupil at the centre of the process and motivate them to promote their own learning, research and work in collaboration with their peers. The educators are the ones who provide the methods and tools to achieve this.

25. We promote a vocational culture at the service of the growth of the students

Sa-Fa School helps pupils to become free and responsible people capable of discovering their human and Christian vocation and of assuming their own project of life as "being for others". It takes care of the education in values in order to favour the formation of the student's personalities. Throughout the whole educational process, it fosters a vocational culture through tutorship, activities, meetings and other means that help the students to channel and respond to their deepest aspirations.

26. We are a learning organisation

The Sa-Fa School is an organisation that holds as a principle of its educational quality the capacity to analyse reality, to give adequate responses and to transform it. It encourages educators to engage in processes that stimulate creativity and updating in educational, pastoral and management practices, as well as a constant evaluation that allows them to rectify what is necessary and to continue learning.

27 And it fosters a culture of innovation and transformation for up-to-date and relevant didactics

The Sa-Fa Family promotes a culture of innovation and openness to the use of new technologies that allows us to discover the educational needs of our students and to be able to apply up-to-date and relevant teaching methods, focused on experiential learning.

Encourages collaboration with other organisations that promote educational research and updating.

b) It offers processes of initiation and deepening of faith,

28. The school, a place of evangelisation

Sa-Fa School educates through the teaching-learning process, the activities, the relationships, the spaces and the culture of the organisation that are developed in accordance with the Educational Project.

It offers explicit processes of initiation and deepening in the faith by joyfully living the values of the Gospel. It encourages the formation of groups (of students, teachers or parents) to deepen their faith, prayer life and Christian commitment. Their formation and spiritual experience enables them to become Communities open to new members.

The Sa-Fa School cares for and develops "implicit pastoral ministry" through actions that promote solidarity, altruism, personal accompaniment, service-learning activities, welcoming students with special educational needs...

29. It proposes moments of reflection, prayer and celebration for all

The Sa-Fa Family Centres, according to the customs and uses of each place, schedule times for prayer, reflection and celebration of feasts, religious or civic anniversaries in which all students can participate. They also try to offer moments, practices and spaces for the cultivation of interiority.

c) It is organised and managed on the basis of charismatic values

30. A school organised and managed on the basis of charismatic values

The Sa-Fa School is organised and managed according to charismatic values. The General Council approving the Educational Project of the Institute and promoting the orientations of the Chapters on the mission and the Provincial Councils with their competences are ultimately responsible for guaranteeing it. The Provincial Council in its Province establishes the organisms and teams and appoints the persons responsible.

The Community of Brothers is the guarantor and promoter of the charismatic tradition and values. In centres where there is no Community of Brothers, the charismatic reference point will be the Province with its organisms and animation teams.

31. Promoting participation and collegial bodies

The Sa-Fa School has, in its organisation as a Centre, participatory bodies that allow all members of the Educational Community to be heard, listened to and taken into account. Constant dialogue, valuing and respecting everyone's opinion, favours a sense of co-responsibility and belongingness. It fosters an organisational culture in which the values, experiences, customs, norms and

modes of management and leadership reflect the values of our Nazarene-Taborinian charism: fraternity and "family spirit".

32. With shared and co-responsible leadership at the service of the educational community

The people who have responsibility in the Sa-Fa School are representative members of the Sa-Fa Family and follow the orientations of the Teams or organisms that direct and coordinate the educational work in the religious Province or in the country.

The governing bodies ensure the participation of all in the processes of reflection and decision-making, as well as being attentive to favouring personal gifts that can enrich the teaching-learning processes.

Following the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth, they are at the service of the community, they know how to listen to and respect the pace of each person, they encourage the sharing of ideas, they are assertive and empathetic. They seek consensus in the Educational Community, assume responsibility and encourage solidarity within the School and with other Centres.

33. The managers build networks and communicate efficiently

Those responsible for Sa-Fa Schools have a clear vision of their mission to build networks as a form of management, listening to and involving everyone. At the same time, they maintain transparent and serene communication, which has a positive influence on people and serves to promote an effective and participatory strategy in the School.

34. Foresight and ability to adapt to new needs

The Sa-Fa School, as an organisation focused on educating, must always be ready to learn and renew its capacity to anticipate the educational needs of its students. The ability to analyse, discern, anticipate, respond to new needs and be open to new areas of education is a guarantee for the future in a rapidly changing world.

35. Sustainable schools with ethical and supportive management

The financial resources of the Centres, which are the property of the Church, as well as the buildings, spaces and time, are managed with ethical and sustainable criteria that allow the Sa-Fa School to continue to develop its educational mission. The members of the Educational Community are cared for in solidarity in case of need by means of appropriate assistance.

In the financial management of each Centre, account is taken of the contributions to be made to the various "common funds" or "solidarity funds" established by the competent authorities in the Provinces or in the Institute in the spirit of "communication of goods" (Cf. General Plan for the Administration of Goods, no. 58-62).

d) and takes care of the internal spaces and the relationship with the near and distant environment.

36. At Sa-Fa School the spaces educate

In the Sa-Fa Family we believe that the spaces of the School are also educating elements: they must favour the educational and evangelising task of the Centre in a welcoming and familiar atmosphere.

It takes care that its academic spaces are cheerful, welcoming and luminous, in tune with the current imaginary and language. The chapel, or other places used for prayer, must be especially well cared for so that they favour the encounter with God and community celebrations.

In the different liturgical seasons, campaigns and events that the school experiences, care is taken to create spaces that raise awareness and motivate people to meet, dialogue, celebrate or work in a communal atmosphere, depending on the circumstances.

37. Places and activities for a culture of encounter

In the Sa-Fa Family Centres, the culture of encounter between people is encouraged and activities and spaces are promoted for students and families that help integral formation and are accessible to all.

In a particular way we feel the call to offer this possibility to young people: "Encourage special moments of encounters close to them –sporting, musical, recreational..." (G.C. 2019).

Retreat houses (for coexistence activities) and sports facilities are an added value in our Centres.

38. A school open to the immediate environment and to the whole world

The Sa-Fa School is a school open to the neighbourhood, the town and the world. It works in a network with the different organisations in the surrounding area, joining forces, sharing projects and ideas and bearing witness to the Gospel. It promotes among its students knowledge of the environment and local culture and traditions, as well as universal fraternity and solidarity.

It is involved, with social and Christian responsibility, in networking with associations (NGOs, parishes) to carry out projects and with organisations that defend human rights, evangelical values and solidarity, also offering its projects and ideas.

39. Called to care for life, the environment and nature

The Sa-Fa School works to "create an integral ecological awareness and care for human life" (GC 2019). It includes in its planning programmes for the care and defence of life and to educate in "environmental responsibility through daily actions" (LS 211).

It facilitates experiences of contact with nature, of practical knowledge and awareness that help to understand the environment as the common home and humanity as the human family.

40. We take care of our presence in space and digital media

The Sa-Fa Family Schools recognise the educational and evangelising potential of social networks and virtual platforms. We take care of them as means at the service of the mission, educating for a responsible and coordinated use.

41. And we value time as an element of education

The Sa-Fa Family Centres schedule school time so that the quality and quantity of school time is an indicator of the value we place on people and activities.

VII. Which educates for a new civilisation of universal fraternity and care for the "common home"

In conclusion to the presentation of these "Identity criteria for the vitality of the Educational Centres of the Sa-Fa Family", it seems appropriate to underline the primordial importance of the person of the Sa-Fa educator, Brother or Layperson. Whatever position they occupy in the Educational Community, they are all educators through their presence and the witness of their lives. The General Chapter (2019) invites us to discover the value of this vocation, to awaken, cultivate and keep alive this mystique and awareness of the call: "I have chosen you as a covenant of the people" (Is 42:6).

It is a "sublime" and "noble" vocation because of its mission, as Brother Gabriel underlines in his writings: "To devote oneself to forming good citizens for society and intelligences worthy of God, as a famous author has said, is a **sublime mission**. Whoever devotes himself to it responsibly is the greatest man in the country and the noblest in the eyes of God, religion and humanity" (NG 637). "There **is** no **nobler mission** here on earth than that of acting on the human spirit by transmitting to it light, truth and virtue" (NG 637).

The Educational Project reaffirms the validity of the Institute's mission and invites us to move forward with enthusiasm and prophetic hope. In referring to "new horizons and challenges for the school" it proposes:

- to commit to the "prophecy of hope" by exploring the human tendencies that bring hope for the future;
- to commit to the "prophecy of life" in all its strength and fragility, as the primary task of Christian education;
- to commit to the "prophecy of fraternity", with the value of the links between people in order to build habitable and humanising environments.

These commitments lead us to give our "Sa-Fa Schools" an identity of their own. On entering one of our schools, the educator, the family, the student... must feel "at home". A feeling of home that allows people to share their lives with others and to make the journey together. A "Sa-Fa School" must have a characteristic fragrance —style— that evokes the aroma —spirit—of the Holy Family. It is in this sense that we wanted to describe its mission in this document.

We join the "Global Compact on Education" that challenges us to "look forward with courage and hope", convinced that "in education lies the seed of hope for peace and justice for today's world" (Pope Francis 15/10/2020).

We walk together, with hope, in a fraternal and synodal style, as children of the same Father, taking care of our common home, a gift of God's love for humanity.

And in the realisation of all these dreams, the action of the Sa-Fa Family takes on a new importance in its educational mis-

sion and as an agent of change, a builder of the new civilisation of fraternity and peace desired by society and the Church.

The call to live the charism "going forth", committed to the existential and geographical peripheries, challenges us to grow in the missionary spirit so that this proposal reaches those who need it most, those who live farthest away and have fewer possibilities (cf. G.C. *Document Laity-Brothers*, 4).

It will be the best response to the challenge to "live and share the joy of the Gospel" because God "loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

Adopted by the General Council in Sâaba (Burkina Faso) on 11 January 2022.

Content

I. In the Sa-Fa Schools,

II. from our charismatic intuitions

- 1. All our schools are Catholic Church schools,
- 2. Schools for all, universal.
- 3. We propose an education in the footsteps of Brother Gabriel,
- 4. With a charismatic identity that has its source in the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth.
- 5. We build in every school an educational community that celebrates life.
- 6. We take care of the formation in the charism and make the symbols of identity visible.

III. and as Sa-Fa Family,

- 7. We feel called to walk together
- 8. In an open and welcoming school, animated by the "family spirit",
- 9. Growing in a sense of belonging,
- 10. Committed to teamwork and
- 11. Creating networks that bind us together.
- 12. We present ourselves with our own corporate image and we take care of communication.

IV. we care for people,

- 13. The Sa-Fa School, an organisation for the people
- 14. That assumes and educates in the culture of encounter
- 15. With a comprehensive education project.
- 16. We take care of the selection, accompaniment and training processes for educators.
- 17. We want committed educators who live their profession with passion,
- 18. Educators who learn and update themselves.

V. we count on families

- 19. We know that the family is the "first and indispensable educator" (Pope Francis) and
- 20. We encourage their participation in the development of the Educational Project.
- 21. The families of the Sa-Fa Family are agents and recipients of pastoral ministry.
- 22. Relationship between parents' associations.

VI. and we propose a quality school

- a) that takes care of the teaching-learning process,
 - 23. We are committed to a quality school
 - 24. That puts the learner at the centre of the teaching-learning process.
 - 25. We promote a vocational culture at the service of the growth of the students.
 - 26. We are a learning organisation
 - 27. Which fosters a culture of innovation and transformation for up-to-date and relevant didactics.

- b) offers processes of initiation and deepening of faith,
 - 28. The school, a place of evangelisation,
 - 29. It proposes moments of reflection and prayer for all.
- c) is organised and managed on the basis of charismatic values
 - 30. A school organised and managed on the basis of charismatic values
 - 31. Promoting participation and collegial bodies
 - 32. With shared and co-responsible leadership at the service of the Educational Community.
 - 33. The managers build networks and communicate efficiently
 - 34. Foresight and ability to adapt to new needs.
 - 35. Sustainable schools with ethical and supportive management
- d) and takes care of the internal spaces and the relationship with the near and distant environment.
 - 36. At the Sa-Fa School the spaces educate,
 - 37. Places and activities for a culture of encounter.
 - 38. A school open to the immediate environment and the whole world.
 - 39. Called to care for life, the environment and nature,
 - 40. We take care of our presence in space and digital media
 - 41. And we value time as an element of education.

VII. which educates for a civilisation of universal fraternity and care for the "common home".



"To raise the child to where one is, one must descend to where he is"

(V.Br. Gabriel)

