

## **Summary of the PAD of 18 July 2021**

During these 2 hours of exchanges, 4 main points were retained by the continental leaders:

- Covid 19 and its consequences
- Natural disasters
- Political facts
- Education

We will keep the points on the Church and the Teaching Teams for the next PAD.

### **I Covid 19**

Everywhere Covid has caused death, illness, paralysis, fear, loss of work, personal and collective drama...

In Latin America, almost everyone has been paralysed by the fear of being infected, many people without work, sick people without medication, many countries looking for the anti-virus, the vaccine to counter the pandemic, others fighting for life, to survival, spiritual and mental-well-being, and sometimes anguish inside homes.

In India, the presence of new variants triggered a national crisis. There was a shortage of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, medicines and even space in mortuaries and crematoria. We have lost loved ones, we have seen their suffering, whether they were family or friends.

Senegal is currently experiencing a third and more severe wave of the coronavirus. In Togo, out-of-town travel has been reduced, as well as gatherings of more than 15 people since March 2021.

In Europe, the most culturally and socio-economically fragile "the second line, the unemployed" are suffering more than others despite state aid, as in France.

"We are divided between fear and confidence".

However, in Latin America, many others, without feeling fear, have participated in massive events, outings, parties, celebrations, creating large waves of contagion.

### **II Natural disasters**

Natural disasters, during this pandemic period, made people's lives even more difficult. Disasters are more frequent in Asia, especially in the Philippines.

In other continents, climate change is being felt more or less violently.

In Europe, climate change is occurring with storms, mudslides, and mountain collapses, even though Europe was known for its temperate climate. Its inhabitants were protected without being fully aware of it. The 2015 Paris agreements are not all being met.

Hondurans experienced the hurricane that devastated the country, but they still receive solidarity from brigades of doctors, mainly Cuban.

In Burundi, the rain caused damage, Lake Tanganyika and the Rusizi River overflowed to the point of covering some neighbourhoods. Houses have been demolished, the inhabitants of one neighbourhood have all moved out. They are living in camps in another locality and still today because the water is still stagnant in the neighbourhood.

In the Philippines, the year started with the sudden eruption of the Taal volcano in Batangas province on 12 January, which caused large deposits of ash in neighbouring provinces including the megacity of Manila. This caused the displacement of more than 500,000 people living in the 14km danger zone. Then in March, the pandemic hit the country. A 3-month total containment was imposed from March to June followed by several changes in the quarantines applied to various communities. This was followed by further calamities and disasters such as

earthquakes, tropical cyclones causing floods and landslides. The pandemic has made it even more difficult for people affected by these natural disasters to bounce back and recover.

### **III Political developments**

In various countries, especially in Latin America and Africa, elections were disrupted by Covid 19, in particular, there were significant abstentions.

Both negative and positive events can be observed.

#### **A. Negative points**

##### **1/ In Latin America**

Death of many young people: Several events marked the life and history of Latin American countries in which they were shocked by the death of many young people.

Criminal policies: President Bolsonaro in Brazil, bold and ill-intentioned, has not protected the Amazon, the lung of the world. His ultra-right government regime and criminal policies have further hurt and discriminated against indigenous peoples. It devalues the poorest.

Deaths and disappearances: Greater Colombia has "split the heart" of America with daily events. The people marched for miles because of the many deaths and disappearances. The government of President Uribe wanted to silence the patriotic voices that seek better living conditions, inclusion and equity. There have been months of confrontations, people killed every day for demonstrating, even peacefully.

In Haiti, the long-suffering nation has suffered interference from outsiders. Priests and nuns have been killed. Recently its president was assassinated.

American blockade: In Haiti, with the problem of the American blockade, the conditions of the country are more complicated. What can we do as EDOS of the world since the US does not even respect the United Nations to lift the blockade on this island?

Lack of democracy: For Bolivia and Ecuador, in the election of the President, the lack of democracy is obvious. The citizens' vote is not respected. The results are experienced with dismay. The winners are not accepted by the majority of citizens. In Ecuador, the right wing won, but the opposition claims that the representatives of the indigenous peoples voted for them.

Mafia: In Mexico, in elections in some parts of the country, there are also surprises as the party of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has lost several places. The mafia, invading villages day after day, killed more than 60 people, many of them candidates for elective positions.

Those who invaded Haiti are Colombians paid by the mafias.

##### **2/ In Africa**

Terrorism: Burkina Faso has been under threat from terrorists for some time, with regular attacks.

In Guinea, the constitutional referendum, although contested by the opposition, allowed President Alpha Condé to run for a third term at the head of the country. It is hoped that a frank and sincere dialogue will take place and lead to a successful outcome.

Re-elections of Presidents of the Republic after several terms

Violence: following a complaint against the opponent Ousmane Sonko by a woman from a massage parlour, Senegal experienced a week of violence and the ransacking of other people's property and public buildings.

## B. Positive points

Many people, including team members, are involved in defending democracy or encouraging its advent.

### 1/ In Latin America

Defence of indigenous peoples: Many leaders and defenders of indigenous peoples, trade unionists, philosophers, teachers, sociologists and people fighting to protect the planet have been killed.

The Continental Team has participated in several municipal councils on public education in which they have expressed their proposals for free, inclusive, equitable and quality education, so that no one is left behind. They include indigenous peoples, their struggle for respect for life, culture and participation, especially the Mapuche. Now, with the surprise of a Mapuche woman representing them in the different organisations, the struggle will continue to ensure the survival of these peoples.

Change of constitution in Chile: Chile made history by seeking to change its constitution. The team members have been involved in educational dialogues to make proposals. In October 2021, a discussion will be held on these participations for all Team Members on the continent.

Change of President in Peru: Several members of the Teaching Teams participated in the change of President, which should lead to real changes for a society that wants to be democratic, inclusive, with better living conditions, education and care for the environment, and that protects the lives of indigenous peoples.

### 2/ In Asia

- ✓ Release of Khaloda Zia: After more than 2 years in prison, BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) chairperson Khaleda Zia has been released, following a government decision to reduce her sentence and release her on humanitarian grounds, given her age. Khaleda Zia had been imprisoned for 17 years on two corruption charges.
- ✓ Death penalty in Bangladesh: On 12 October 2020, the government of Bangladesh approved the death penalty as the highest penalty for rape, amid waves of anti-rape protests across the country.
- ✓ Ceasefire in Pakistan: The India-Pakistan ceasefire has helped create a sense of peace, a first step towards long roads of normalisation of relations between the 2 countries. This "Ceasefire Agreement" of 25 February has since been respected by both sides in spirit and to the letter.

## IV Education

In all continents, the long period of the pandemic has caused changes in the work of teachers who have acquired new skills. A big difference was felt between rural and urban areas. The use of digital equipment has been massive. The most important change is the use of digital or technological tools, which, because of the needs of teachers, have had to implement many strategies to maintain communication with pupils.

Each country evaluates progress, proposes solutions to achieve effective learning, and provides free technological means, including radio, television and online digital tools for teachers and for the few students who had internet and could connect.

Parents were heavily involved. Parents do what they can. Students need motivation and respect to stay in the institutions.

They do what they can. Parents, in their desire to get their child high grades or diplomas are the ones doing the work that their child should have done, so this becomes a challenge for all teachers.

In some countries, classes are still closed.

It should be noted that for students (universities, colleges, etc.) the period of the pandemic has been particularly difficult, especially on a moral and psychological level.

#### A. Education

The crisis situation has shown that teaching can be continued despite everything. In Europe, the first thing to notice is that, even in a crisis situation, it is possible to continue teaching.

Secondly, in contrast, the advantages of traditional teaching, in the presence of each other, with the whole being oriented towards learning, self-construction through the interaction between teachers and students, and among the students themselves, are more clearly seen.

In Latin America, the great Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire, a master of liberation education, is increasingly being talked about. Education should be getting better and better.

However, because of the closure of schools, students in Latin America are still affected by the partial or total closure of schools, and millions of children will not reach the minimum level of comprehension and reading skills because of the health crisis. Prioritising education recovery is essential to avoid a generational catastrophe.

Countries are making efforts to mitigate the impact of school closures, address learning losses and adapt their education systems, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

In several Latin American countries, work is being done with television and/or radio programmes, whatsapp groups of parents have been formed for communication and to send evidence of work. Teachers receive and focus the information, so they review the work and send suggestions for corrections or improvement of the work. Workbooks were provided for students who did not have mobile phones or televisions.

Many schools did not start the new school year because of minimal conditions to take care of the hygiene of the students, especially in the poorest populations. School headmasters were asked not to demand financial cooperation from parents as many had lost their jobs. Through agreements with UNESCO, education is supposed to be free and secular in public education. However, in all these countries, many students in many public schools have dropped out because they cannot afford to pay.

In Africa, schooling has been little changed: the 2020-2021 school year opened in most countries in November. It has gone well and exams are well scheduled and starting to be organised. No major disruptions have been noted.

In Burundi, primary and secondary schools and universities remained functional.

In Guinea, the school, which opened for the 2020-2021 school year on 1 December 2020, is progressing normally. National examinations will take place in June-July.

In Senegal, the year has not seen many disruptions. The school year (elementary, middle and secondary) opened on 5 November 2020 for teachers and on 12 November for students. It is scheduled to end on 14 August 2021. But it is difficult to meet the barrier measures.

#### B. The students

Although schooling in Africa has not been greatly disrupted, it should be noted that distancing has been difficult to achieve in classes of more than 60 pupils. In the cities, pupils are seated 2 to a bench instead of the previous 3, where the number of pupils is very high. Pupils are also divided into two streams. Others wait to come at noon.

For students, registration fees for the various exams, from the CEPD to the BTS, have been cancelled by the government. Universities have also resumed classes, either online or in person.

In Mexico, a lot of work remains to be done to advance the programmes in order to reintegrate and bring back the students with whom there has been no communication.

In Ecuador, for example, 60% of children and young people in the countryside do not have access to the Internet, and there has been little effort to communicate programmes on television or radio.

In Asia, students have lost interest in learning.

There are questions about how to make students get interested in learning online.

### C. Teachers

In Europe, all countries mark the change in teachers' work. In several countries, during the holidays, courses were offered to young people who did not have good digital conditions at home during the lock-in. "At home it was actually totally boring", said one student on the first day.

In Latin America, virtual meetings are scheduled between teachers to organise and evaluate the results. These are the main changes. Using mostly technology: internet and telephones, many students were left behind or lagged behind as well as the education system. Despite the efforts of teachers, society is agitated and annoyed by teachers who do not attend schools.

In some Latin American countries, teachers are very tired because of the time spent on learning, on assessments, on focusing on students. We have worked on the socio-emotional aspects for the students and teachers, the teachers are engaged, interested and very attentive to the students so that they are not worried about being locked in. There was also a lot of advice for students on health care, protocols are done when students go to school. In some countries they don't go back to class until further instructions are given.

In Africa, teachers are busier because, in addition to what they were doing, they have to use computers, do distance learning with all their peers. Indeed, this way of doing things does not fully take care of social inequalities. It can allow parents to follow their children if they are involved. Many platforms are being developed to enable students to take charge of themselves.

Teachers everywhere are engaged in learning. In Latin America, we have seen the socio-emotional aspect of students. They have empathy for the context in which they live. They are creative. They invent activities for the students to learn.

In Europe, the material difficulties (computer, place to work) have accentuated the differences between students. School is no longer in the school but in the home. In some countries, courses have been organised during the summer holidays to compensate somewhat for the dropout of young people already in difficulty. The difficulties were even greater for students entering university for the first time

If the work of teachers and students has changed a lot during this period of the pandemic, new teaching methods may be proposed. But distance learning does not fully address social inequalities. There are advantages, but there are also disadvantages.

The teachers are busier than usual. There was a 3-day teachers' strike. They demand an improvement in their working conditions.

Pupils are not only taught by teachers, but also by their peers. The pedagogical act goes beyond the simple transmission of knowledge.