

Br. Armin Luistro: “We should inculturate the Institute in Africa and Madagascar”

“We should inculturate the Institute in Africa and Madagascar, we should to be in touch with reality, with humanity”.

With this invitation, Br. Armin Luistro, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, began his address during the meeting with the Lasallian Region of Africa-Madagascar (RELAF), which is taking place in Abidjan — one of the main cities of Ivory Coast — from 13 to 17 November, with the participation of the Brother Visitors, Auxiliary Visitors, Bursars and those responsible for the Lasallian Educational Mission of the five Districts and the Delegation which compose the Region, as well as the members of the General Council of the Institute.

In touch with reality

In his reflection, Br Armin evoked the gesture of Moses in the Exodus, when he took off his sandals before the burning bush - the subject of meditation in the prayer on the first day of the meeting - and asked himself: “What are the obstacles that prevent us from being in touch with reality? **“As leaders, we have to be able to take off our sandals”**”, the Superior General added.



Acknowledging the importance of Africa and Madagascar in the present and future of the Institute, Br Armin referred to the huge potential of the *Leavening Project* in a continent where “women have great leadership in the Church and

young people have great value". In this regard, **"our schools should not be exclusive, but inclusive"**, the Superior General underlined, urging Lasallians in Africa-Madagascar to continue to join forces in the Global Compact on Education convened by Pope Francis.

The Lasallian religious also stressed that **while "in the past we used to train our Brothers to serve in the Districts, today we need to train them to serve in the whole Institute"**. So, we need to ask ourselves: "Are we training our young Brothers to be leaders of the Institute? Are we training the laity to work as equals with the Brothers?"

Liberating education



Another approach presented by Br Armin, with regard to the necessary inculturation of the Institute in Africa, has to do with the growing awareness that the Lasallian educational mission must be liberating, that is to say, **"it must take us out of poverty, it must change people's lives, it must transform society"**.

"In Africa we have to ask ourselves whether our education systems, our schools and our curricula, are responding to this challenge: Are we lifting our graduates, our children, out of poverty? **Are they leading better lives? Are they more developed as a society?"** the Superior General emphasised.



A new way of looking at development

With regard to development, Br Armin raised a critical question on development: “How do we define development? **“Perhaps our definition of development is too closely linked to money and infrastructure”**, he continued, proposing, in contrast, the view of development derived from the Pope’s Magisterium in *Laudato Sí* and *Laudate Deum*, also “from the point of view of happiness, in terms of people’s aspirations”.

“Perhaps we have forgotten that a truly liberating education must nourish the soul, must educate the mind so that we can be better human beings,” the Superior General said, suggesting that “the Church and the Institute can learn from the African experience”. **“Perhaps in the African and Malagasy experience there are new ways of looking at development that will enable people to be truly better human beings”**, he concluded.