



Fe y Alegría, a transformation movement

Impact Evaluation of
Fe y Alegría's educational
proposal in primary and
secondary schools in
Bolivia, Colombia,
Guatemala, Peru,
Dominican Republic and
Venezuela (2017-2020)





This document is based on the Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría's educational proposal in primary and secondary schools in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela (2017-2020). It has been compiled by the Impact Assessment and Measurement initiative of the Fe y Alegría International Federation (FIFyA) and carried out by the Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, with funding from the Porticus organisation.

International Federation of Fe y Alegría Team

General Coordinator
Carlos Fritzen, S.J.

Executive Office Team
Gerardo Lombardi (Coordinator),
Somarrick Roca,
Robby Ospina,
P. Marco Tulio Gómez, S.J.

Executive Coordination Team
Gehiomara Cedeño, Popular Education Axis
P. Carlos Fritzen, S.J., New Frontier Axis
Gabriel Vélez, Sustainability Axis,
Gerardo Lombardi, Public Action Axis

Participants of the Impact Assessment and Measurement initiative
Lucía Rodríguez Donate and Belén Rodríguez Navas, Entreculturas Fe y Alegría in Spain
Sergio Von Vacano, Fe y Alegría in Bolivia
Elizabeth Riveros, Fe y Alegría in Colombia
Blanca Gutiérrez, Fe y Alegría in Guatemala
Sonia Adames Fe y Alegría in the Dominican Republic
Hisela Culqui, Fe y Alegría in Peru
Noelbis Aguilar, Fe y Alegría in Venezuela
Marlene Villegas, Fe y Alegría in Ecuador
Sebastián Zapana, Fe y Alegría in Argentina
Florencia Sienra, Fe y Alegría in Uruguay

International Team of Evaluators
Georgina M. Gómez, Alex Ríos Céspedes, Nériida Urcia Harlet, Silvia Espinal Meza,
Blas Regnault, Gustavo Briceño, Mey-Ling Rivero, Claudia Rodríguez Gilly,
Guillermo Andrés Uzín Pacheco, Edgar Cadima Garzón, Karen Marriner,
Daniel Abreu Mejía, Natividad Pantaleón, Silvio Casagrande,
Claudia X. Herrera, María A. Saleme.

Edition
Alejandro Fernández Ludeña

Coordination of the publication
Eleonora Tortorelli

Design and diagrams
María Fernanda Vinuesa, Fe y Alegría in Colombia

Distribution:
Fe y Alegría International Federation
Carrera 5 No34-39, Barrio La Merced, Bogotá Colombia
Digital publication in Madrid, Spain, October 2021
Website: www.feyalegria.org
Facebook: Federación Internacional Fe y Alegría
Youtube: Federación Internacional Fe y Alegría
Twitter: feyalegriafi
Instagram: feyalegriafi

Photographic archives
Fe y Alegría International Federation and
Fe y Alegría in different countries

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Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Peru





Presentation

Fe y Alegría was created in Venezuela in 1955. José María Vélaz, a Jesuit priest responsible for training young people at the Catholic University of Caracas, wanted his university students to know how people lived in the city's marginal neighbourhoods and what their needs were. At that time, educational coverage in Latin America barely reached 50%; the right to education was a illusion. Then, a humble couple, Abraham Reyes and Patricia García, offered a space to start an educational project. This was the beginning of Fe y Alegría.

Today marks more than 60 years of the Movement in the world. Thanks to Porticus support, we developed the Impact Assessment and Measurement initiative to validate the results of our work and share them with the educational community; render accounts to all those people, institutions and public bodies that we consider allies and collaborators in our mission of educating for change, and above all, as a fundamental discipline for learning and continuous improvement.

This Impact Evaluation is crucial due to its global reach as well as for its rich contributions to decision-making. It gives us three levels of analysis in how Fe y Alegría's work contributed to social transformation in the six Latin American countries evaluated: in the lives of the student body and their families, in the communities in which the schools are placed, and in the educational administration and public policies. It has been developed by an international team led by the Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in the Netherlands and allows us to draw overall conclusions to learn from our good practices, to redirect our planning and to strengthen our ability to develop innovative proposals to continue providing quality education to those most in need.

At Fe y Alegría we have a clear political intention to **educate for personal and social transformation**. We work for an inclusive and quality universal public education, to achieve social justice for all people, focusing especially on impoverished and excluded people and contexts. We add our experience and work to public education systems, generating synergies with players at the local, national and global levels.

Unfortunately, defending the right to education continues to be a challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic widens the inequality gaps and poses the urgent need to redouble our efforts in guaranteeing quality education as a fundamental and reinforces our duty in safeguarding this right. We hope that the learnings and challenges raised in this Impact Evaluation will guide and help us continue on the path with more enthusiasm and with the same force that ignited that spark in a district of Caracas back in 1955.

Fe y Alegría around the World

MISSION

Fe y Alegría is an International Popular Education and Social Promotion Movement, promoted by the Company of Jesus in collaboration with various people and institutions committed to building a more humane and just world. It endorses comprehensive and inclusive educational processes from, with and for the communities in which it works, promoting and defending the universality of the right to quality education as a public good. Fe y Alegría is committed to the transformation of people and sponsors global citizenship for the construction of democratic social systems.

VISION

Fe y Alegría is a benchmark for comprehensive, inclusive and quality popular education, which works on the borders of greatest exclusion and affects the promotion and defence of the universal right to quality education, in a context of educational emergency.



It is a **“movement”** because it brings people together in an attitude of growth, self-criticism and search for answers to the challenges of human needs.



It is **“education”** because it believes and invests in it as a fundamental strategy to achieve a fair, equitable and inclusive society.



It is **“social promotion”** because, faced with situations of injustice and need, it is committed to overcoming them, building a more fair, democratic and participatory society.



It is **“popular”** because it assumes education as a pedagogical and political proposal for the transformation of reality from and with the communities.



It is **“comprehensive”** because it understands that education encompasses the person in all its dimensions, taking into account the diverse stages of growth that they go throughout life.



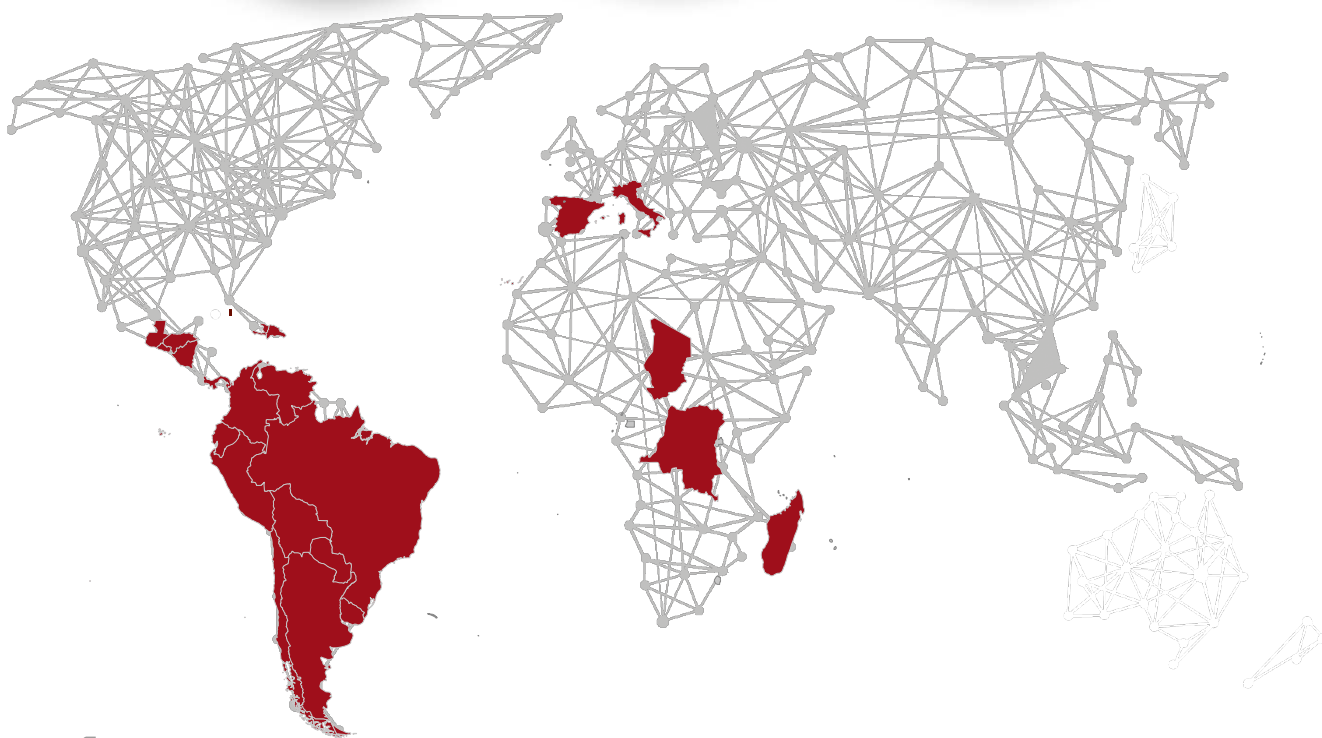
PARTICIPANTS
+935.844



WORKERS
+40.000



EDUCATIONAL
CENTRES
(GEOGRAPHIC
POINTS)
+1.592



The Fe y Alegría International
Federation (FIFyA) is a non-profit
association present in more than

22 countries



Website
<https://www.feyalegria.org/>

A photograph of a person wearing a pink shirt, sitting at a dark wooden table. In the foreground, there is a piece of fried food, possibly a chicken drumstick, on the table. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

1

Evaluation



Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Bolivia

Why did we evaluate?

Throughout its history, Fe y Alegría has carried out countless evaluations of its processes, projects and programmes. Some for accountability before society; and others, to understand how certain schools are working and prove means to improve processes. In all of them, the Movement has included key actors from its educational centers in the process, to continue building a culture of evaluation.

This has been understood as an opportunity for improvement and learning, rather than a weighted assessment.

Fe y Alegría needed to have a more ambitious impact evaluation that would allow it to demonstrate to what degree, in vulnerable contexts, its formal education model is successful in relation to the parameters of educational quality, equity/access and participation.

This is about gaining solid evidence on the role that Fe y Alegría has played throughout these first six decades, allowing it to identify what pedagogical practices it must strengthen and what must change to learn, improve its contribution to public educational systems and be true to its transformative mission.



The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Improve decision-making, planning and projects.
- Be accountable to citizens and donors.
- Strengthen the proposal to national public educational systems and to the international educational community.
- Install capacities to improve the culture of evaluation and knowledge management.

How did we evaluate?

The *Impact Assessment and Measurement initiative* launched in 2017 with the aim of improving the evaluation and knowledge management processes expressed by various Fe y Alegría. Through **participation** and **networking**, the objectives of the work, the hypotheses and the questions to be asked in this evaluation were defined.

In alliance with the **Porticus** organisation and after a public tender process, the Fe y Alegría International Federation contacted the **Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University**

of Rotterdam in the Netherlands —ISS— to conduct the research. Since 1952, this Institute has been one of the most important development studies centres in Europe, with recognised experience and extensive knowledge of Latin American countries.

For the first stage of the Impact Evaluation, an effort was made to choose six Fe y Alegría whose evaluation would allow useful results to be obtained for the entire Movement. For this, certain criteria were considered. The most important were the broad historical trajectory of the selected countries and the broadness and variety of their interventions. And so it was decided that the **Fe y Alegría in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela** constituted a representative sample of the Movement to date. Although their realities and contexts differ, this representation allows the results to be extrapolated to other Fe y Alegría and provides valuable **global contributions**.

Once the countries had been chosen, teams at Fe y Alegría and the ISS began a process to define the research and development hypotheses for the Impact Evaluation methodology.

Bolivia was the first country where the methodology was applied, it served as a pilot to adjust and improve in the rest of the countries, where the field work was carried out between July and October 2019.

At the end of the evaluation, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to innovate to carry out the remaining activities.

The evaluation was made in 6 countries



What did we evaluate?

Hypothesis 1

Fe y Alegria works with the poorest and most vulnerable students, generating opportunities for access, permanence and completion.

Does Fe y Alegria serve the students with greatest needs (socio-economic situation, over-age, special needs, etc.)?

Does Fe y Alegria reduce drop-outs and repeats, promote permanence and help students complete their studies?

Does Fe y Alegria manage to alleviate the social risks (violence, pregnancy, discrimination, and others) that affect the achievement of satisfactory educational results?

MICRO LEVEL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Hypothesis 2

Fe y Alegria contributes to the construction of dignified life projects for graduates and students.

To what extent has Fe y Alegria contributed to students' social mobility?

What level of social labour insertion do graduates from the Fe y Alegria centres achieve? University access?

Hypothesis 3

Fe y Alegria trains citizens with critical awareness and social commitment.

Can Fe y Alegria train citizens who think critically, with leadership skills and who are committed to social transformation?

Does the "educational model" of Fe y Alegria help students develop capacities to analyse, understand and face the challenges of the context?

Hypothesis 4

Fe y Alegria develops its educational proposal based on the context and characteristics of the territory.

In what way is the educational practice of Fe y Alegria relevant to the context (does it respond to the needs of the context or community problems and contribute to its transformation)?



Educa
syst





Hypothesis 8

Fe y Alegría's Popular Education management model and pedagogical proposal should the quality of public education

What experiences from the Fe y Alegría management model and pedagogical proposal have been replicated by other educational institutions?

Hypothesis 7

Fe y Alegría mobilizes with other actors to influence Public Policies.

What is the level of positioning of Fe y Alegría to convene and influence issues regarding the right to education?

Hypothesis 6

Based on educational practice and the referential framework of Popular Education, Fe y Alegría raises proposals that affect the construction and improvement of Public Policies

What aspects (intended or not) of the Fe y Alegría model have been incorporated or implemented in national, regional or local Public Policy?

MACRO LEVEL EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

MESO LEVEL COMMUNITY

Hypothesis 5

Fe y Alegría contributes to the local development of the community

How does the school relate with the families and achieve their participation in the school governance?

How does Fe y Alegría contribute to the development of the local community?



Fe y Alegría's impact
**on students and
their families**

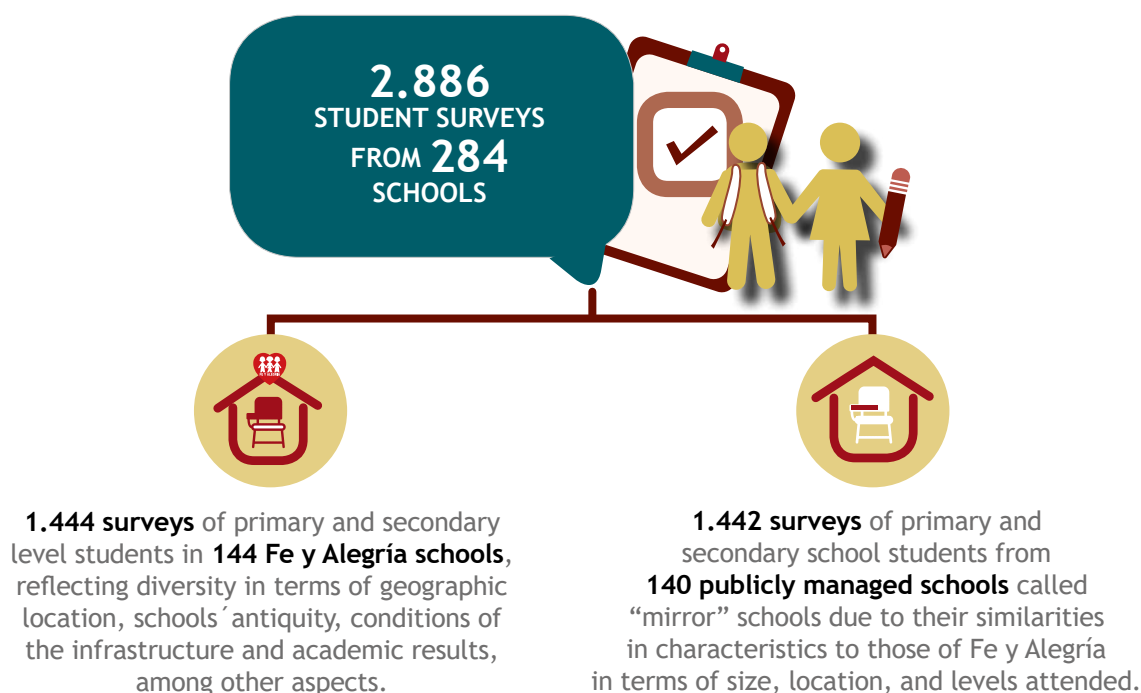


Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Colombia

Methodology

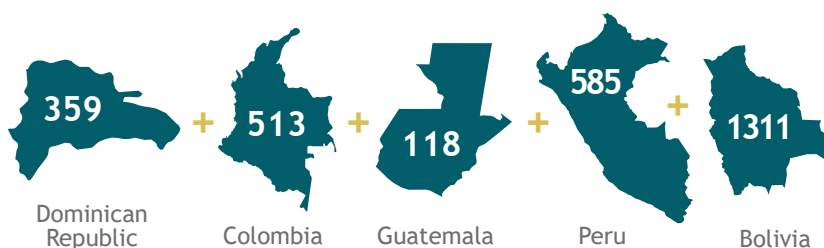
Through the application of surveys (primary data), the analysis of public information from the national systems of the countries and the Fe y Alegría Quality Improvement System (secondary data), students were evaluated for their socio-economic characteristics, their academic performance and their perception of the contributions of Fe y Alegría in the construction of their life projects, critical awareness, leadership and social commitment.

A representative sample was built with a statistical reliability of 95%:



Additionally, a sample of **2.839 young graduates** from Fe y Alegría were analyzed.

Number of surveys per country



Venezuela was excluded from this level of the evaluation as public schools in this country were closed at the time the study was made.



For more information,
scan the QR code or visit the website
<https://impacto.feyalegria.org/introduccion-a-la-metodologia/>

Hypothesis I:

Fe y Alegría works with the poorest and most vulnerable students, generating opportunities for access, permanence and completion

Fe y Alegría's commitment has always been with the most impoverished and marginalized. In the early years, the commitment to educate those who had been left out of the system was unequivocal. Over the years, education systems have expanded in Latin America and the Caribbean, coverage in almost all Latin American countries (with the exception of Haiti) has increased significantly. Although there are still problems in coverage, it is clear that the efforts of the international community

and the different national administrations have meant that children who are left out of primary school today are in the minority. Still, challenges associated with unequal opportunities remain enormous and have become more complex.

In this new context, the Impact Evaluation shows that Fe y Alegría **remains faithful to its initial mission**, facilitating access to quality and inclusive education to the most vulnerable.

Access to education for the marginalized and social integration

Fe y Alegría educational centres are located in contexts that are almost always impoverished and excluded. Usually, these have multiple social problems and the population has a low purchasing power. In some countries, even in rural areas, Fe y Alegría is still the only option.

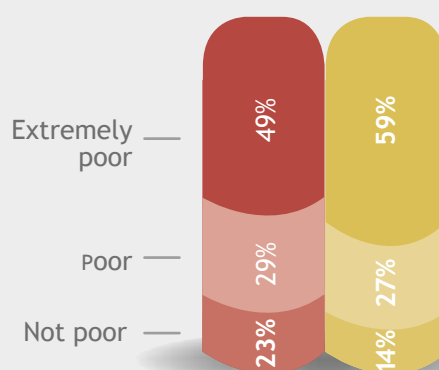
77.5% of the families that educate their children in Fe y Alegría schools in the countries evaluated are in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty. The mirror schools analyzed also serve the poorest.



Fe y Alegría



Escuelas espejo



“...households with the highest relative income in the area prefer Fe y Alegría, as well as households in extreme poverty. Due to this, Fe y Alegría schools are more mixed places...”

“Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría, Students and graduates report (Micro)”, 2020



In countries where it is possible to choose where to send children to school (three of the five evaluated in this phase), the Impact Evaluation has revealed a dual situation:

- The small local elites (small merchants, professionals, civil servants) see Fe y Alegría as a better option for their sons and daughters.
- Those who were educated in the Fe y Alegría centres want what they found in their classrooms for their sons and daughters.

Thus, Fe y Alegría has gone from distinguishing itself primarily by reaching “where the asphalt ends” to being a Movement that integrates students from different socio-economic conditions, within an impoverished sector of the population.

The Impact Evaluation has shown that one of the most significant differences between the Fe y Alegría schools and the mirror schools is the inclusion of a more heterogeneous population in the former.

In such unequal societies, making it possible for different socio-economic groups to coexist or mix peacefully and to share the same identity of values is a significant milestone. It allows for productive work on social integration based on differences and contributes to promoting social cohesion.

This in itself is an achievement of popular education that affects and generates substantial changes beyond the classroom.



The education of the poor cannot be a poor education

Guatemala is the country evaluated where the impact is greatest in terms of improving the school pass rates. The difference between mirror schools and those of Fe y Alegría is 10 points in favour of the latter. What circumstances have made this possible?

We can highlight: the guaranteed presence of educators throughout the school year and their involvement in the students' well-being; the positioning of the person at the centre of the learning process; the adaptation of the curricula to the needs of the students and their environment, the involvement of families and the community in the co-management of schools, etc.

All of these are included in the so-called Plenitude Method implemented by Fe y Alegría in this country since the beginning of this century.

Passing and school retention

It is recognized that the drop-out rate and rate of students being held back are largely a direct consequence of conditions of poverty and social vulnerability, as well as an inadequate educational offer. Those who start in worse conditions stumble or drop out more easily.

In addition, when the school fails to offer an education that meets the students' needs, they commonly become discouraged and withdraw or fail to move forward. **Fe y Alegría has successfully circumvented this difficulty.**

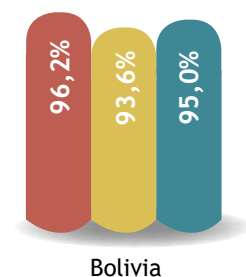
Greater pass rate, repetition and retention

The pass rate indicators of the Fe y Alegría schools analyzed are, on average, more than 4 points higher than mirror schools.

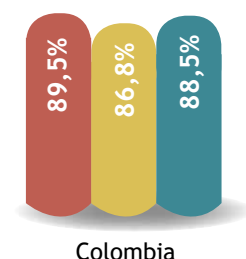
School repetition is slightly lower in Fe y Alegría schools compared to mirror schools.

In the cases of retention and passing, data show Fe y Alegría are also mostly better than the national average.

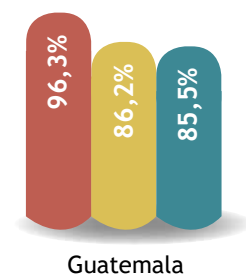
Pass



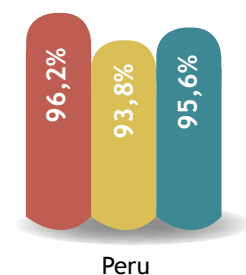
Bolivia



Colombia



Guatemala

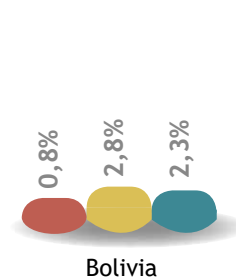


Peru

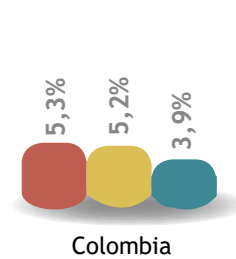


Dominican Republic

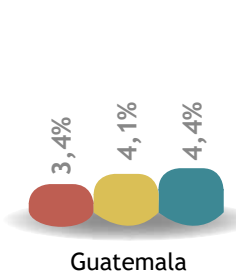
Drop-out



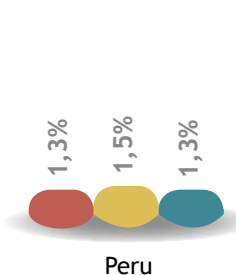
Bolivia



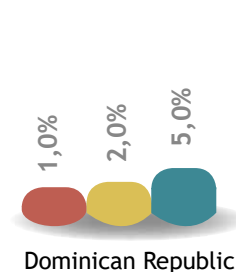
Colombia



Guatemala



Peru



Dominican Republic

Source: country data collection

Fe y Alegría
 Mirror schools
 National average



Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Colombia



In practice, some of the elements that allow these passing and retention goals to be achieved are:

- **The commitment of the Fe y Alegría teachers**, perceived by the children and which motivates them to continue studying and feel good at school, especially since it's a "safe place" for many who live in areas of high violence.
- **Fulfilment of the school calendar**: Fe y Alegría centres tend to miss few school days.
- **An adequate and well-preserved infrastructure**. The physical conditions of the centres help student retention.
- **Comprehensive education adapted to diversity**. Many boys and girls who, in other educational contexts, become frustrated because of the learning difficulties they face, in Fe y Alegría find an academic and pedagogical itinerary that suits their needs.
- **Extracurricular activities** that make it easier for boys and girls to voluntarily stay longer in schools.



Within the basics of the flexible and comprehensive pedagogical project in adequate facilities and in maintaining a stable school calendar lie some measures that Fe y Alegría has promoted and that the Impact Evaluation has reinforced:

- **Educational innovation processes** from all angles of the learning system.
- **The involvement** of families and proximity to the needs of the communities.
- **Appropriate selection of teachers and managers** (in countries where this is possible).
- **The support** of the national offices of Fe y Alegría to the teachers and their constant training.
- **The processes of evaluation and improvement of the quality of education**.

“

“The commitment of the Fe y Alegría teachers is an important point to making students stay on at school. When analyzing testimonies, that “going further” is perceived, since there have been moments in which teachers have intervened in situations of violence to save the lives and dignity of their students.”

Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría, Students and graduates report (Micro), 2020

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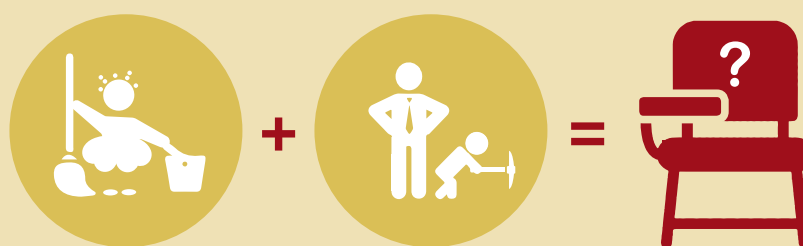
Intervention in the face of social risk

“Although there are no official data on social risks (violence, pregnancy, discrimination, among others) that affects school performance, it is known that (...) these generate short, medium and long-term emotional and cognitive problems that can have effects on the physical, mental and emotional health.”

Methodology of the Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría, 2019

The Evaluation has explored some of the social risks that affect students:

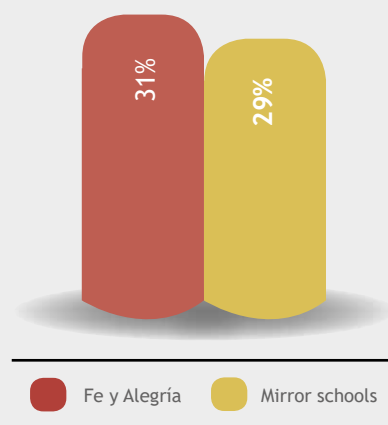
Child labour



The risk of dropping out of school to go to work and help support the family has always been a threat to students from the most disadvantaged sectors. According to the joint ILO and UNICEF report, *Child Labour: 2020 global estimates, trends and the way forward*, after two decades of a significant decline in child labour worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a new spike in numbers that translates into a substantial increase in the number of children between 5 and 11 years of age in child labour.

The evaluation has verified that almost a third of Fe y Alegría students and a similar percentage in the control group do some kind of paid work, although they continue to attend class.

The **group most exposed to dropping out of school** are girls from mirror schools, as 2.4% do jobs that compromise their education. However, in Fe y Alegría, this percentage is zero. Such an indicator makes it possible to affirm that the Movement is advancing in the right to education on equal terms.



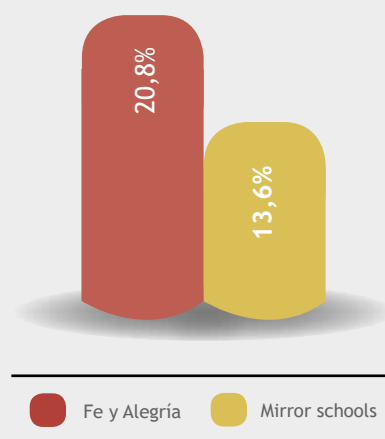
It is also found that gender roles remain strongly established in relation to child labour, with no significant differences between the two types of schools. Men tend to work more outside the home, while women's child labour is more related to household or family tasks and is worse in pay. Likewise, men carry out more activities outside the home (sports and recreation) than women.

Delinquency and organised crime



Violence is one of the great scourges that has plagued Latin America in recent decades. Undoubtedly, it affects school life. **Fe y Alegría students, like the rest of the schools in their environment, perceive insecurity as a constant feeling of being under a threat that may well affect them or people around them. In comparison with the mirror schools, Fe y Alegría students are more aware of the seriousness of this situation, and more often point to it as the main risk to their lives, although both groups share the same habitat with similar real problems.**

The proportion of Fe y Alegría students who feel that insecurity is the greatest threat both to their lives and to living in a healthy society is 20.8%, compared to 13.6% of students of mirror schools.



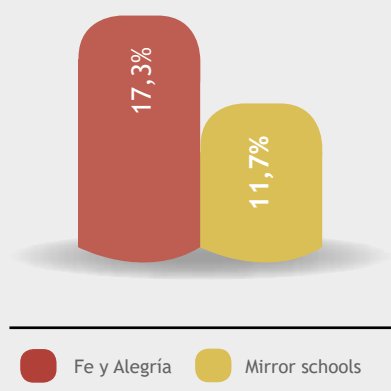
After investigating this circumstance, the evaluation team attributes it to a consequence of the education in values received:

“

Since the area of residence is the same, the difference in perceptions must be explained by different ways of understanding life and seeing social reality as it is, compared to a collectively-built image of how that social reality should be. That second component is what sociologists call social morality. *“Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría, Students and graduates report (Micro)”, 2020*

”

The Fe y Alegría school population made specific reference to kidnapping, physical harm and robbery.



Specifically, 17.3% of Fe y Alegría students have been exposed to gang recruitment, compared to 11.7% of mirror schools students.

However, the students' perception differs from one country to another. In Colombia, Fe y Alegría students are more aware of the presence of gangs in the neighbourhood and in their school than those of the centres used as control. Nonetheless, the exact opposite happens in Bolivia or the Dominican Republic. In Guatemala, male and female students identified the physical and emotional consequences they may experience for not joining a gang as factors of insecurity. What does seem to be a constant generalization, is that gangs are a phenomenon that mainly affects students in urban areas.

Despite all these problems, it can be said that schools offer students a **safe framework** in which to learn and develop their potential. **The most favourable school settings that make the difference are those with a management team sensitized to the problem and prepared to intervene and, above all, with teachers committed to offering students a safe environment.**

Abuse and gender violence



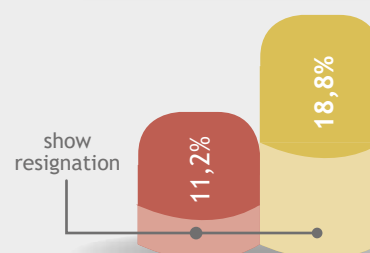
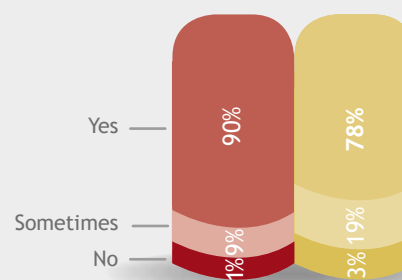
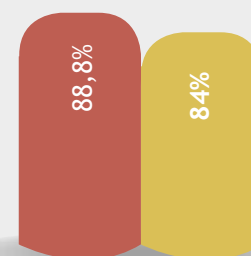
In 2019, UNESCO published a report, *Behind the Numbers*, which offered quantitative and qualitative data from 144 countries which showed, among other things, how prevalent bullying is among students at school.

An additional element that reveals the weight of values based education and greater critical awareness developed by Fe y Alegría students is their **attitude towards abuse**. The Impact Evaluation found that Fe y Alegría students present a profile similar to that of mirror schools. 88.8% of Fe y Alegría students and **84% of mirror school students are aware of the negative effects of abuse**. And, in both cases, male and female students recognize that those who abuse the most are schoolmates, followed by parents and other family members.

However, there is a substantial difference: **awareness of the negative consequences of abuse is stronger in Fe y Alegría students and in urban areas**; it is lower among men in mirror schools, especially in rural areas. It is striking that male students from mirror schools believe, much more than their Fe y Alegría peers, that abuse “does not have” or “only sometimes has” negative consequences (22% compared to 10%). In other words, **the male students in Fe y Alegría are more aware of the negative effects of abuse**.

Furthermore, it is very interesting to note the **greater protection and self-protection of the Fe y Alegría female students against gender violence**. The evaluation observes that they suffered less gender violence (11.2%) than the students at mirror schools (18.8%). Even more, it highlights their greater confidence and motivation to contribute to avoid it.

Fe y Alegría Mirror schools



Hypothesis 2:

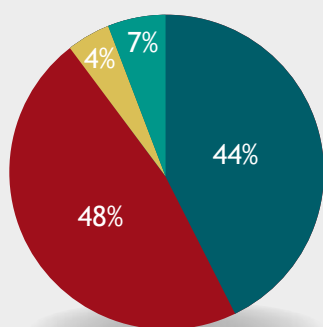
Fe y Alegría contributes to the construction of dignified life projects for graduates and students

Social mobility is one of the great challenges of education in any geographical area and time in history. By *social mobility*, we understand the possibilities that the members of a society have to access better material living conditions and enjoy greater opportunities to develop their human capacities in all areas.

The evaluation team encountered difficulties in establishing solid theses on the social mobility of Fe y Alegría students in the countries analyzed, due to the scarce systematized information on graduates. However, a projection has been made based on the data collected among students in recent years.

Better living conditions

On average, **80.2%** of Fe y Alegría graduates **believe that their living conditions are better than those of their parents**. In general, they have more opportunities to continue learning and building vital projects in which to develop their capacities, as well as better socio-economic conditions.



Young people's expectations at the end of their secondary studies at Fe y Alegría are, for the most part, those of continuing to study (92%); although, for this they have to reconcile their studies with some type of work.



“

In general terms, it is obvious that Fe y Alegría, with its offer of popular education, contributes to its students' social mobility in an upward way and contributes to the construction of life projects that, when compared with those of the previous generation, have improved significantly.

“Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría, Students and graduates report (Micro)”, 2020

”



An education that paves new paths

In the Dominican Republic, youth unemployment is the highest in the entire region (55.3%). Many young people stop studying at an early age but find no place in the working world.

In such an unfavourable context, Fe y Alegría is making it easier for students to attend university and graduate, reaching higher levels of well-being than their parents.

This greater social mobility of the Fe y Alegría graduate student body is strikingly explicit. It is true that they are seriously affected by unemployment, but even so, the percentage of students who graduated from Fe y Alegría schools who neither study nor work is half the national figure (9% and 19% respectively).

Hypothesis 3:

Fe y Alegría empowers citizens with critical awareness and social commitment

One of the most relevant aspects of Fe y Alegría's educational offer and its conception of **quality**, which responds to its identity as a popular education movement, is the nurturing of critical awareness among its students.

In the countries analyzed, the results of the Impact Evaluation revealed **a high sense of responsibility and discipline** that is typical of Fe y Alegría educational centres.

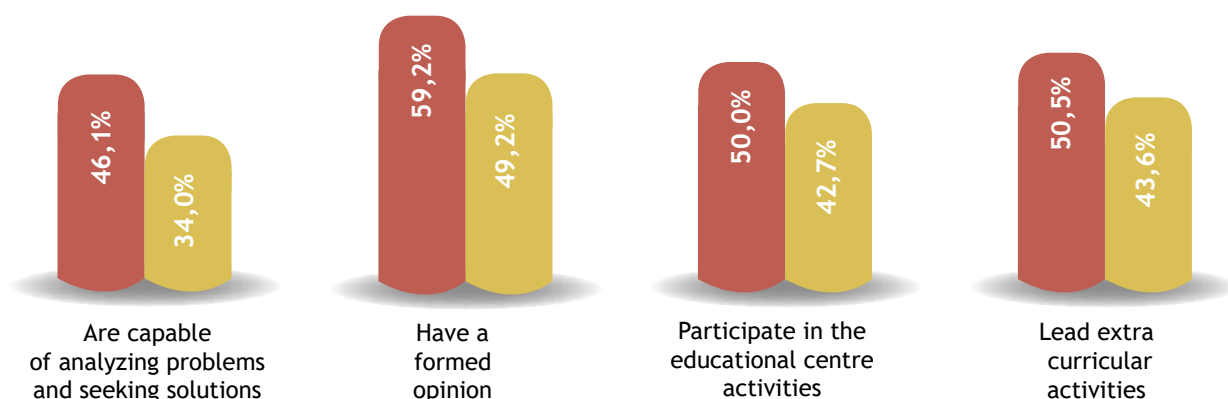
One of the most relevant and differentiative elements of Fe y Alegría schools in the countries evaluated is that they collectively build an image of how to see life and what values to aspire to. This clearly translates into **a greater awareness of the students of their environment** and, consequently, **a greater commitment to their transformation**. Consequently, the Fe y Alegría schools are characterized **by opening spaces for debate**, analysis and the exploration of solutions to social problems.



The study reflects that the Fe y Alegría educational system provides more tools for the citizen life project than mirror schools, which has allowed students to analyze and seek solutions to possible problems, generate spaces for participation and have greater leadership capacity. *Evaluation Report on the Incidence of Fe y Alegría in six Latin American countries - Consolidated Document and Lines of Action, 2020*



This commitment to training citizens in values translates into individuals who are reflective and have a greater leadership capacity. The study shows that Fe y Alegría students are more capable than those of mirror schools of analyzing problems and seeking solutions, more often having a formed opinion and participating more in the educational centre activities:



Participating for empowerment; empowerment for change

In Bolivia, the participation of boys and girls in school governments and, consequently, their perception of co-responsibility over school management is 42.1%, 10 points higher than in mirror schools.

The number of male and female students who believe they can form an opinion on current issues that affect them is also significantly higher (46.7%). In the case of girls, the difference in favour reaches 13 points.

Fe y Alegría
 Mirror schools

One of the aspects that the Impact Evaluation inquired about was whether the education provided in both institutions (Fe y Alegría and mirror schools) contributed to the development of opinion and leadership, by generating the necessary capacities to problem solve. The responses of the Fe y Alegría students showed greater empowerment.

The case of Guatemala stands out, where the positive responses of the students in reference to the practice of analyzing the environment's social problems surpass the mirror schools by 30 percentage points.



Fe y Alegría's impact
on the community



Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Guatemala

Methodology

In this ethnographic study, the Fe y Alegría schools' relationship with the educational community and with their neighbourhood was investigated; how participation in school governance is built; how Fe y Alegría contributes to the development of the local community; the different ways in which the educational practice of Fe y Alegría is relevant to the context and supports its transformation.

The following were evaluated:



24 Communities with Fe y Alegría schools.

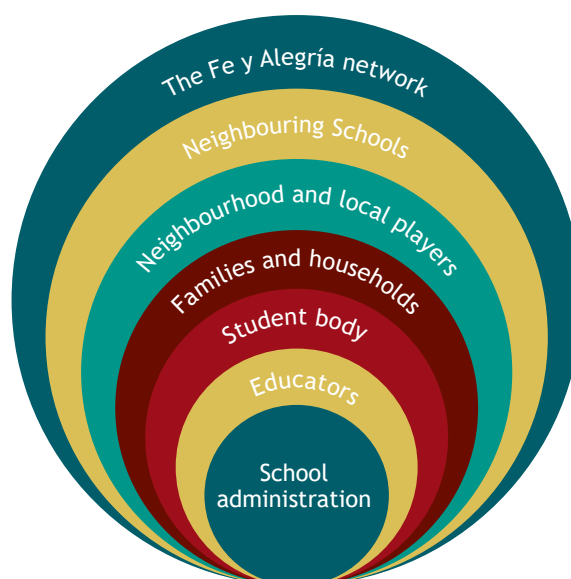
A careful selection was made of **four educational centres per country** (two with difficulties and two with achievements). It was analyzed how they relate to the educational community and to their neighbourhood.

Number of communities evaluated per country:



Social interactions

An in-depth study of local networks was carried out in which multiple dimensions, actors and levels of influence were considered, enabling representative conclusions.



For more information,
scan the QR code or visit the website
<https://impacto.feyalegria.org/introduccion-a-la-metodologia/>

Hypothesis 4:

Fe y Alegría develops its educational proposal based on the context and characteristics of the territory

A culture of belonging

Fe y Alegría believes that a transformative education must be given in a contextualized manner, starting from the characteristics of a territory and the conditions in which its inhabitants live, in order to build a quality educational offer.

One of the practices that is usually followed at Fe y Alegría is the **elaboration of a diagnosis** about the neighbourhood or the community around the school. It has been found that there are diagnoses on all the visited communities which investigate

the history and cultural features of the environment to improve the educational offer.

It is clear that Fe y Alegría has encouraged open **education in the communities** where it operates. In general, a prior process takes place, in which the Movement's representatives meet with the community and work based on its needs. Ultimately, it is about creating a **culture of belonging**.

Co-management and co-responsibility

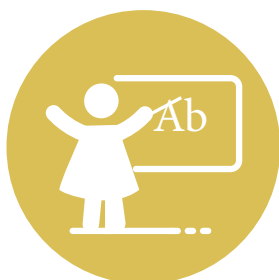
The pedagogical dialogue, understood as continuous learning between the two parties, has been carried out with students and also with parents, involving various players in school administration. **This invitation to parents** to get involved in their children's education is a constant task. It is mothers who mostly respond to this call, following a gender role that assigns women tasks related to their children's education.



All the schools whose operation has been analyzed have a **parents'** association that meets voluntarily in order to seek improvements in the educational centres. People within these associations receive training and are involved, to different degrees of intensity, in aspects such as the relationship with teachers, the school infrastructure or projects that involve the entire community surrounding the educational centre.



Student governments, in which boys, girls and youth are involved, encourage social life skills learning. Here, tolerance, organization and the search for common goals and empathy are cultivated. Ultimately, their participation is part of their education in values.



Educators also organize to meet the needs of the students and their families. The association that arises within the Fe y Alegría schools often has to do with the commitment towards their students. This is the case for those who provide safety to children in dangerous contexts, or those who have woven a network so that no student should lack the essentials to continue studying.



“At Fe y Alegría I see a strong commitment from the teachers. They are also very committed to the communities where they are working. Because of the teachers’ commitment, I would dare to say that students achieve better learning results.”

Mariela Zelada, Universidad del Valle (Guatemala)



The Impact Evaluation showed that Fe y Alegría does not always succeed in creating educational communities, where a participatory and inclusive school governance takes place, but there is widespread conviction that the educational centre is a key social player in the history of the community.

Hypothesis 5:

Fe y Alegría contributes to the local development of the community

Improvements to the context

Fe y Alegría takes local context into account as a starting point for learning. It seeks to improve the material living conditions of the community where the school is located. The Impact Evaluation

allows us to affirm that it does this differently, depending on the country and the circumstances. In some places, this task is constant and the Movement centres have had a direct influence on improving community infrastructures and public services.

In other places, this presence is a specific influence that, for example, has allowed the community transport network to grow. However, in all cases, the school is perceived by the inhabitants as an **important player** in improving the life of the community.

Strengthening the social fabric

The **strengthening of the social** fabric is a fact that positively distinguishes some of the places where Fe y Alegría has settled. It allows us to talk about a *“before and after”* arrival. The Movement’s schools promote the creation of strong ties within families, as well as families towards society.

The contribution of Fe y Alegría to coexistence and social cohesion is also evident in the enhancement of educational facilities for activities that transcend school life. This is particularly valuable in places where insecurity reigns and schools become **“safe havens” or places of safety.**



Everyone sees the school as a sacred place with great respect ... it has become a local sanctuary, a refuge for students and a space to cease the violence that invades Trinidad Pampa.
Director Franz Tamayo (Bolivia)



Citizens’ training is a substantial aspect of social transformation. The Impact Evaluation confirms that it is present in all educational centres, though with different emphasis. In some places, this training is limited to parents, who, for example, are given literacy workshops when their academic training is so limited that they cannot support their children. In others, the themes are defined by the adults themselves. Additionally, Fe y Alegría offers training workshops for the benefit of the educational community and the population. In other cases, some of the workshops are open to anyone who wants to take part. This training contributes to social cohesion.

What’s more, when the school already has a long trajectory in the community, the students educated within it play an important role in overcoming vulnerabilities, inequalities and limitations inherent to their social environment.



A school that walks with its people

In Colombia, the contribution of the Fe y Alegría schools to the community's social cohesion has been built for years into a very significant, and now fundamental, part of inclusive development. To this end, training courses are made available to the community that address issues beyond the school environment. Libraries and infrastructures are also open to the general public. In collaboration with other community players, the educational centres intervene in resolving conflicts related to the possession of weapons or drug use.

At the "Luis Felipe Cabrera" School, the students do social volunteering by joining organized groups in the neighbourhood. In the "Meseta de San Rafael" there are specific workshops to focus on parents' skills and thus aid their support to students and their own job promotion. In "Soacha para vivir mejor", the educational centre is the epicentre of social demands and has, for years, led the

Fe y Alegría's educational proposal is aimed at the integral education of people so that they are active, autonomous and supportive subjects, willing to contribute in the communities to which they belong. Detecting the complexity of the context, such as poor and/or marginal contexts, identifying the needs and listening to the calls that community members make to the school, are fundamental steps in promoting an innovative and reality-transforming education as is the purpose of Fe y Alegría.

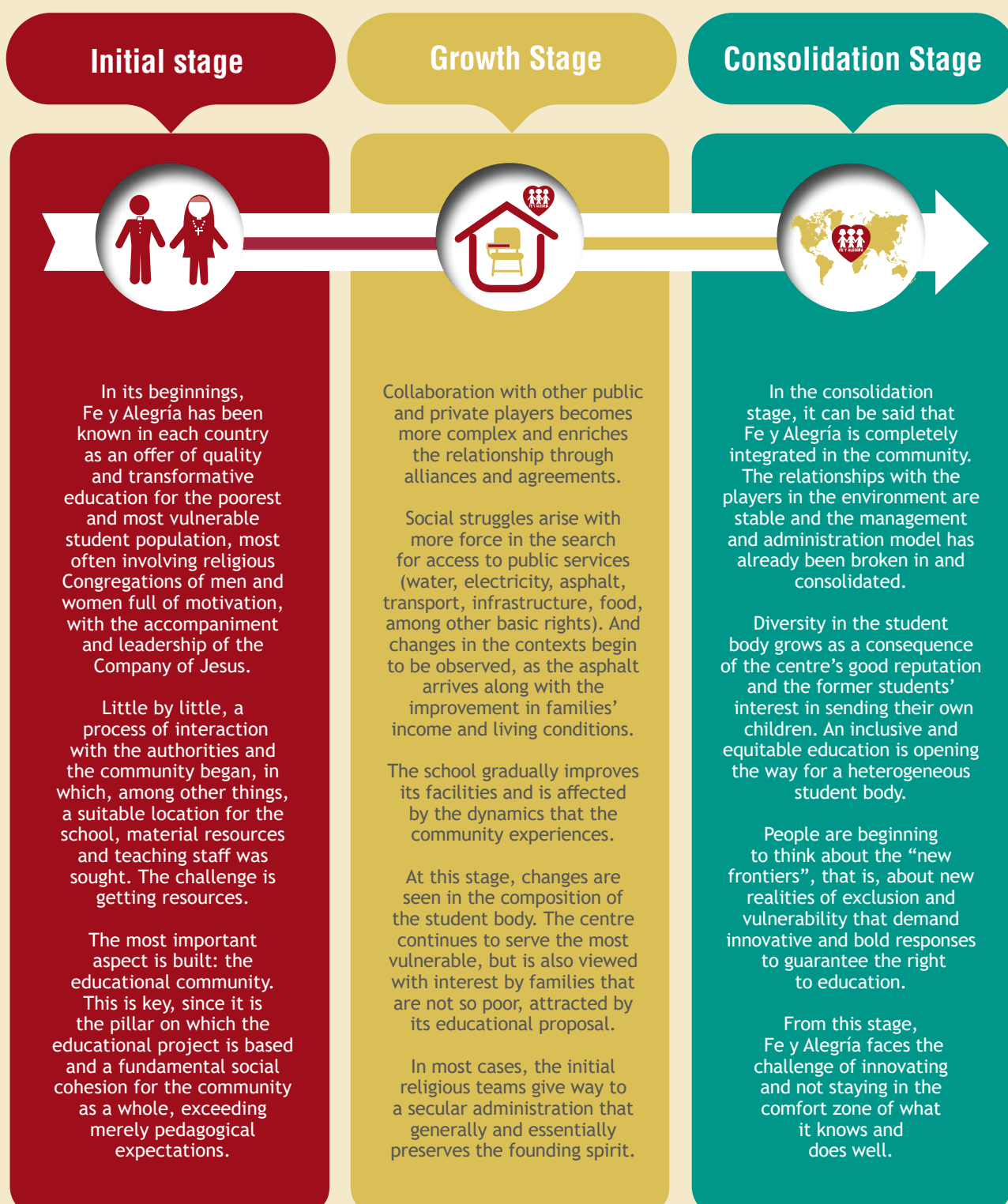
*Jorge Cela S.J. in
"The school beyond its walls"*

improvements that have benefited the community.

The Fe y Alegría schools have "learned" to live with violence, and have become spaces where not only the students feel protected, but also become leading players in the task of building alternatives to improve the community. Educational plans consistently focus on the person and are permeated by the specific problems of each neighbourhood. The teachers' commitment and motivation is key to making all of this possible."

Schools' life cycle

The Evaluation identifies three stages in the life cycle of the relationship that Fe y Alegría has usually maintained with the community where a school is set up:





Fe y Alegría's
impact
**on educational
management
and public
policy**



Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Dominican Republic

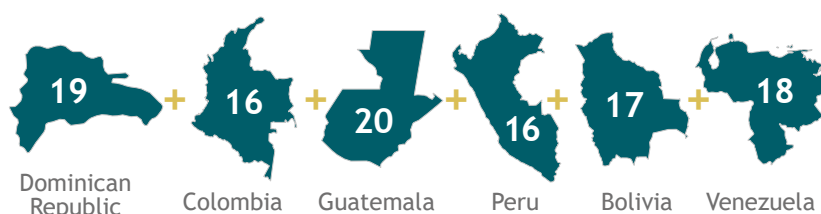
Methodology

This qualitative study based on interviews explores the aspects of the Fe y Alegría model that have been incorporated into the national, regional and local public policy of each country. The level of positioning of Fe y Alegría to convene and influence issues on the right to education and what experiences of the Fe y Alegría pedagogical proposal model have been replicated by other educational institutions.

The following was carried out:



106 semi-structured interviews with key players in the education sector: civil society, the research community, those responsible for public policies and Fe y Alegría.



From the education sector

- Management of an educational NGO, representative for its activities, research and publications.
- Public or private university. Career direction or teaching staff, training in teaching or educational research.
- Independent educational research, with extensive knowledge in formal education and, if possible, Fe y Alegría, with published research papers.
- Public or private entity for evaluating the quality of the education.

From the public sector

- Ministry, vice-ministry or line management of the ministry of education or equivalent institution in each country.
- Departmental or regional direction of public education, wherever there is a greater presence of Fe y Alegría.
- Address of a primary school in a community or local area where a Fe y Alegría school is located.
- Address of a public secondary school, community or local area where a Fe y Alegría school is located.

From civil society

- National teachers' union leadership.
- National representation of the parents' association.
- Members of the council, forum or society linked to education issues.
- Representative of the private sector or journalism/communication related to education issues.

From Fe y Alegría

- National Directorate of Fe y Alegría, formerly and/or currently in office.
- Direction, advisory, national academic or pedagogical head of Fe y Alegría.
- Direction of a Fe y Alegría urban secondary school.



For more information,
 ✿ scan the QR code or visit the website
<https://impacto.feyalegria.org/introduccion-a-la-metodologia/>

Hypothesis 6 and 7:

Based on its educational practice and the referential framework of Popular Education, Fe y Alegría raises proposals and mobilizes with other players that affect the construction and improvement of public policies

The evaluators have verified that Fe y Alegría's objective has not been limited to giving the best possible education to the students enrolled in their schools. According to the study, Fe y Alegría has been a key player that has positioned itself on the **demand for the right to quality education** for the entire population. The evaluation investigates how the Movement helps to strengthen public education systems in the countries where it is present.

Different procedures and a common goal

Since its inception, Fe y Alegría has defended the right to education, demanding the inclusion of the most impoverished sectors on equal terms. Access is the first step. The right to education also means defending ethnic minorities, respecting their culture, gender equality, access to secondary education or the universalization of basic education. Ultimately, it is about defending the right to quality, inclusive and equitable education.

Consequently, in each country the Movement has, in dialogue and practice, built its ideological proposals and has taken **a position in pedagogical debates**. Over the years and through the work done, it **has gained legitimacy** to influence the public policies of the countries of the region. This incidence is

far from homogeneous, neither geographically nor chronologically.

The ways of proceeding are also diverse. Fe y Alegría's positioning has occasionally led to **reporting**. Other times it has brought **cooperation with the authorities** to allow a recognized right to be exercised. In some places the public presence is a **permanent influence** (Peru), while in others it was strengthened at **a certain stage with the accompaniment** of social sectors (Bolivia). At times, **the relationship with the State has become much closer** in its organic functioning (Dominican Republic) and in others, **alliances with private sectors** have allowed it to act as a counterweight and play a role of social oversight of the State (Guatemala).

Popular education has been understood by Fe y Alegría as a proposal that is not only educational but also ethical and political, leading to a real transformation.”

Methodology of the Impact Evaluation of Fe y Alegría's proposal, 2019

The Impact Evaluation recognizes that the Movement has a very relevant potential that is far from being fully developed. It supposes the possibility that a good practice or a Fe y Alegría proposal could be applied in broader public spheres. However, **advocacy is an ongoing process**, which is developed in different ways:

- The Fe y Alegría Movement has consciously sought its **public presence** in the media, pedagogical and academic forums, civil associations and different government entities, in order to defend its postulates and promote public policies.
- In some countries, Fe y Alegría has become an entity that administrations **consult on certain specific issues**, which allows it to gradually introduce improvements in the educational system. Among the countries evaluated, Peru, with its “Office of Political Advocacy”, is a clear example of how the Movement, in some cases, collaborates directly in the planning of the educational system.
- It is perhaps the **“showcase effect”** that has had the most influence in these first 65 years of history. Even though the influence of Fe y Alegría is not always accredited, there is a clear perception that the Movement **has been and continues to be a pioneer in methodologies** that have later been consolidated in educational environments, making its good practices a model to be replicated. Some are broader in scope and can be easily replicated; others result from particular situations but are very relevant for those who have to deal with these problems.



A silent influence

In Peru, Fe y Alegría has more than earned itself a place as an influential player in national education policy. Despite not having designed an strict advocacy process, its influence is more than evident. It is seen, especially, through multiple successful practices that are periodically picked up by the Ministry.

It is also important to point out that, for years, there has been no educational reform in Peru in which Fe y Alegría has not been consulted. Not forgetting that several people who have been trained as Fe y Alegría cadres have later become part of State institutions. The priest Jesús Herrero was an essential figure in this regard, eventually presiding over the National Education Council.

Fe y Alegría Peru understands advocacy not so much as a one-off process to change the country’s educational policies, but as a long-term path to train the actors of change that are expected to contribute to transforming society in the long run.

Fe y Alegría teachers as role models

Fe y Alegría teachers as a role model

A recurring finding in the Impact Evaluation is the good image that Fe y Alegría teachers project.

Some of the most significant characteristics attributed to them are continuity in learning, their reflective nature and their relations and integration with the community. This is a clear indicator of how the Movement carries out extensive innovation work.

In most of the countries where Fe y Alegría works, teachers are forced to hold several jobs. This situation, which is by no means ideal, does allow a tacit and diffuse replicability of the Movement's pedagogical innovations.

The Evaluation has verified that the training of Fe y Alegría educators is constant in all the countries evaluated. These learnings are then shared with public school teachers in regional conferences or forums and they are finally put into practice by Fe y Alegría teachers when they work in public schools, **sharing the Fe y Alegría experience with official schools.** In this way, Fe y Alegría becomes a great educational laboratory where the protagonists and agents of change are its educators.



Agents of transformation

In **Venezuela**, the charisma of Fe y Alegría is based especially on the training and dignity of the teaching profession. Agreements are signed with universities to be able to offer teachers more training so that they can develop their capacity for innovation. Educators feel appreciated and stimulated, which guarantees the improvement of educational quality.

In 1991 the creation of the Father Joaquín Training and Research Centre provided permanent support for training both within the Movement and within the entire national teaching body.

In times of deprivation and special needs, as now, Fe y Alegría teachers have assumed roles that show their commitment to those who need it most. This is the case of the Paraguaipoa schools, with a high percentage of indigenous population, where teachers are voluntarily engaged in strengthening literacy among first and second grade students.

Hypothesis 8:

Fe y Alegría's Popular Education management model and pedagogical proposal should strengthen the quality of public education.

Elements of replicability

There are some characteristics of Fe y Alegría and its educational work, which especially cause those responsible for the educational policy of public administrations to look at what it does and want to replicate it:

Institutional frugality and efficiency in precarious contexts

The Impact Evaluation has found that, in all the countries evaluated, Fe y Alegría has been characterized as a **frugal institution**. That is, it has sought to extend coverage and improve educational quality based on a precarious availability of means, summoning the community's will and installing an innovative capacity in the very way of mobilizing available resources (volunteering, external aid, etc.).

Fe y Alegría has demanded more funding for public education. However, such a requirement, according to the findings of the Impact Evaluation, go hand in hand with a careful and transparent use of the material and immaterial means at its disposal, making a notable **effort to be efficient** and make good use of the assets of the State, funders and individual contributors.

Frugality and efficiency are a particular way of mobilizing resources and seeking sustainability that can be useful for replication. We speak, for example, of the participatory organization of the community to cooperate jointly in mobilizing resources that guarantee the continuity of the Fe y Alegría educational project.

The management model

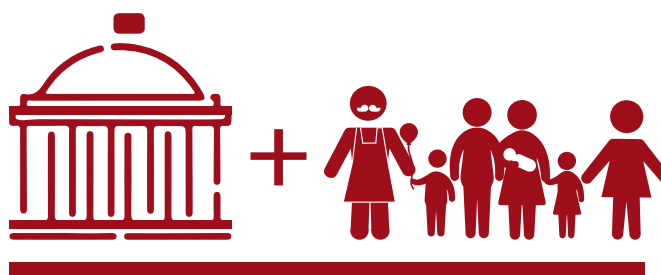
One of the most genuine aspects of Fe y Alegría's educational commitment is the **participation of the community itself in its administration**, from the conviction that education is everyone's problem.

Furthermore, Fe y Alegría's management model is associated with the so-called **functional autonomy**, which seeks not to depend on bureaucratic centrality. Such autonomy makes it possible to replicate innovations more easily than if they had to be planned from above. The changes are generated in the bases and then spread horizontally. These experiences, so attached to specific schools, make the model attractive.



Education as a public good

Fe y Alegría's vocation has been to contribute to public education, both in quantitative (increasing its coverage) and, above all, qualitative (influencing its quality) terms. However, to introduce transformations that decisively influence the public system, Fe y Alegría opts for co-management. Hence, it is essential to establish lasting and concrete agreements with whoever has the ultimate responsibility for education as a public good. In one way or another, all the Fe y Alegría evaluated have reached agreements with their respective public administrations.



Fe y Alegría, as an explicit feature of its identity, has always maintained a commitment to the public education systems of which it is a part of. The Movement recognizes that the State is ultimately responsible, but it also affirms that public education is a matter that concerns us all.

Efficacy, transparency and a culture of evaluation

Over the years, the Movement has shown the professional capacity to manage donations linked to evaluations and audits that show good results. On one hand, the Impact Evaluation confirms that Fe y Alegría has an institutional strength that allows it to account for public spending on education in a transparent and reliable manner. On the other hand, it shows the extensive experience accumulated by the institution in matters of evaluation and measurement of results, especially since the creation and development of the Fe y Alegría Education Quality Improvement System.

The Impact Evaluation affirms that Fe y Alegría is not only a benchmark for continued public investment in education, but its contribution is very significant to a culture of evaluation, which ideally should govern all educational systems.

Some good Fe y Alegría practices replicated by the educational system

Yachay wasi and humanistic technical education (Bolivia)

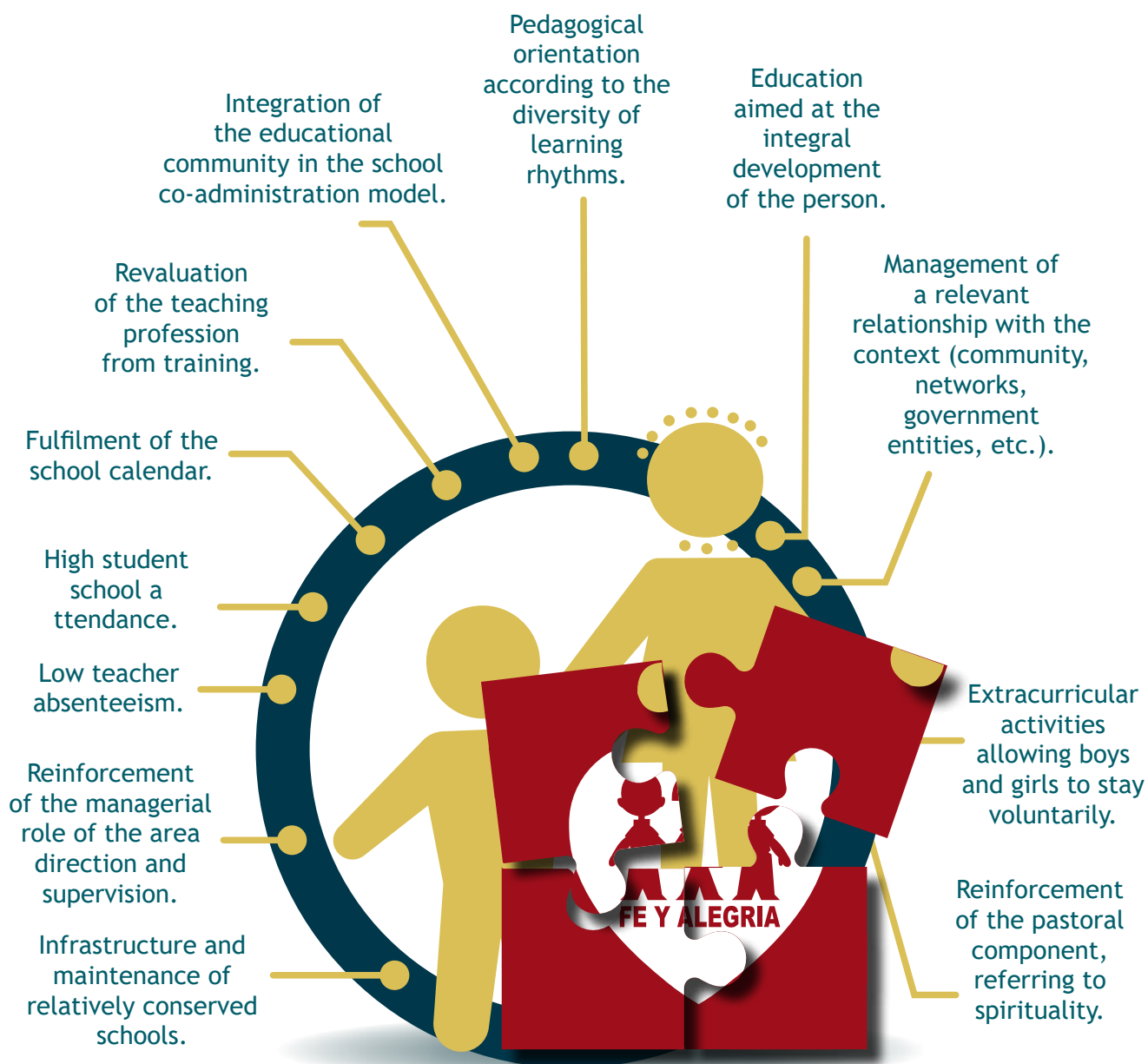
Educational co-management model (Guatemala)

Visits to families to integrate them into resilient management (Venezuela)

Life Skills –Inclusion– (Colombia)

The quality of education

The Impact Evaluation clearly shows that there are a series of elements that the interviewees point out which account for the quality of the Fe y Alegría education, making them attractive for their replication.



A young girl with dark hair and a bright smile is the central figure on the left side of the image. She is wearing a white school uniform with a pink V-neck collar. On her left chest, there is a school crest that reads 'COLEGIO KEY ALLEGRA' and 'SAN FRANCISCO' with a small illustration of three children. The background is a vibrant, hand-painted mural featuring large, stylized flowers in yellow, red, and blue, along with green foliage and a blue sky. The overall mood is positive and educational.

2

Challenges and recommendations



Photograph: Fe y Alegría in Venezuela

This Impact Evaluation gives us a very favourable image of the contribution that Fe y Alegría has made to the three levels analyzed. But it also reveals many challenges that the Movement faces. Often recommendations and challenges go hand in hand.

Challenges

1. To preserve the best of the identity of the Popular Education Movement amid institutionalization

Fe y Alegría, as an explicit feature of its identity, has always maintained the central goal of driving social transformation by strengthening public education systems of which it is part.

Its relationship with the State has been regulated in a particular way in each country and has generated different tensions. Some school administrators and teachers recognize that, while this institutionalization is desirable, regulation carries a cost: there is a danger of ceasing to be innovative.

It seems clear that, insofar as the State signs agreements with Fe y Alegría, it may lose autonomy and part of the Movement's mystique, raising questions that are serious challenges for the future:

- How to continue being creative within the institution?
- How to respond to the new demands of reality while preserving the identity of the Movement?
- How to preserve the Movement's own drive, regardless of the Governments' ideology?

2. To reconcile the growth of Fe y Alegría with educational goals and efficient management

The accelerated growth that Fe y Alegría has experienced for decades comes with drawbacks as the administrative teams, with their technical capabilities, find it difficult to keep up. Thus, the management of Fe y Alegría, which the Impact Evaluation illustrates as transparent, reliable and efficient, suffers from work overloads and occupies institutional energies in matters that distract from the pedagogical objectives.

3. To make gender equality a reality

The Impact Evaluation shows that awareness of gender equality is growing in Fe y Alegría schools more dynamically than in the mirror public schools. But it is clear that the main challenge continues to be to help break with the traditional gender roles that are still very present in the educational community, in the students and in their families, and that reproduce the patriarchal context that surrounds them.

Audacity and determination are needed for schools to be spaces in which men and women have the same opportunities and responsibilities.

4. New strategies of research and communication

The evaluation has found that the overload of work in the teams has caused “institutional forgetfulness” about innovations and educational, academic, social and administrative solutions, which have not been sufficiently well systematised and documented. Along with this, the current communication policy gives greater prominence to the communities, students and their families, and less publication of the pedagogical innovations of Fe y Alegría in the interests of public action and advocacy. Consequently, knowledge is lost and valuable experience is wasted.

Likewise, the Impact Evaluation shows that Fe y Alegría would need to develop tools to generate opportunities for contacting graduates.

The challenge of COVID-19: from threat to hope

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our plans and threatened to generate unpredictable consequences. As expected, its effect has been greater among the most vulnerable students and communities.

The Impact Evaluation also took into account the effects of the coronavirus on education. The fieldwork ended just prior to the closure of some schools and the digital divide began to reveal important differences among those who continued to study from a distance and those who were forced to leave school prematurely and potentially turn to child labour.

In this crisis scenario, the evaluators have recommended carrying out specific studies that help measure the consequences of the crisis, adjusting the tools and taking advantage of some of the strengths of the education provided by Fe y Alegría that are especially encouraging in the current situation:

- Educational innovation and content redesign, to create environments that promote learning through distance platforms, such as the Fe y Alegría Radio Institute (IRFA).
- Teacher training to promote autonomy and motivation towards students.





Recommendations

1. Permanently adapt Fe y Alegría's response to the "New Frontiers" of exclusion

Fe y Alegría has been reflecting on the "new frontiers of exclusion" for some years now. The Impact Evaluation assures that the Movement has much to contribute through its experience and recognition it has earned.

Fe y Alegría schools today educate a more diverse student body than in the beginning.

Likewise, the current context is complex and raises new scenarios that challenge a global Fe y Alegría: migrations, humanitarian crises, failed states, consequences of COVID-19.

The evaluation team advises reviewing the following areas of influence:

- the school frontiers, specifically to extend early childhood care and secondary education coverage in impoverished rural or urban areas, as well as job training.
- the frontiers by gender or ethnic origin and even those that are a consequence of the lack of technology and digital access.
- the exclusion and inequality generated by COVID-19 and other humanitarian crises.
- the frontiers of social promotion, to serve adults, to provide greater training in citizenship and to promote community development, among others.



Learn more about our new frontiers at:
<https://congreso2018.feyalegria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DECLARACION-DE-GUATEMALA-FINAL.pdf>

2. Research, generate proposals and disseminate them

Fe y Alegría, in these six long decades of experience, has served as a laboratory for many of the most important innovations that have occurred in the educational systems of the countries where it has germinated. These innovative ideas have influenced their environment, although they do not carry the credit of Fe y Alegría. However, it is also found that there are experiences that

have not been systematized or picked up on and which may have been lost forever. Hence, the evaluation team is emphatic in the need for a well-defined strategy to generate knowledge from experience, systematization and dissemination in the public sphere.

The evaluation team points out the opportunity to create an educational observatory, pedagogical research centres in the different countries and teacher training centres. These initiatives, while contributing to the public system in improving learning, the quality of the teachers and efficient management, could also be a source of economic income for Fe y Alegría.

3. Strategically plan political advocacy

The evaluation reveals that Fe y Alegría has had a vital impact on the educational policy of each of the countries studied. However, its capacity for influence has not been properly used and, on occasions, it has been achieved spontaneously. It has not been homogeneous between countries nor within them and also lacks a strategic purpose.

The evaluation team recommends developing a public action plan that defines and guides Fe y Alegría's educational policies, utilizing proper management and tools that prioritize actions based on agreed goals and strategies.

4. Appreciate the degree of efficiency achieved

Today, most of the Movement's educational centres are linked to their countries' state education networks, thanks to the co-management model and the agreements signed with the different States. The conditions in which the agreements were signed and their express orientation towards the accountability and efficiency of public spending are a very relevant contribution to the culture of evaluation.

Considering the drop in investment in public education that can be expected in the coming years in the States where Fe y Alegría is present, the evaluation recommends redoubling efforts to establish collaborative alliances with other educational actors and further diversify its mechanisms of financing, by enhancing donations from private sources which helps guarantee sustainability in times of economic recession.



We have come to the end of this Impact Evaluation led by the Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam.

We are especially grateful for the participation of the Fe y Alegría schools, the publicly managed schools (“mirror”) in the areas of influence, the members of the educational and neighbourhood communities, all the interviewees and the technical evaluation team, who made this research possible in 6 Latin American countries.

Many are the lessons left with us and challenges to take on. We want to share them with all those who are our extended family: our educators, former students, school communities, the Company of Jesus with its leadership, the religious orders that have embarked on this Movement, the personnel responsible for public administrations, our large and small, anonymous and well-known funders. With all of these too, we want you to join us on this transformational journey...



Fe y Alegría International Federation

Carrera 5 #34-39,
Barrio La Merced Bogotá, Colombia
Telephone: +57 1 7712362
Website: www.feyalegria.org

 Facebook: feyalegriafi
 Youtube: feyalegriafi
 Twitter: feyalegriafi
 Instagram: feyalegriafi
<https://impacto.feyalegria.org/>

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