

INTRODUCTION

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), founded in 1703 by Claude Poullart des Places (1679-1709) and later on renewed by Francis Libermann (1802-1852), is a worldwide Catholic religious institution of religious brothers and priests. The Founders' spirit has manifested itself through successive generations of Spiritans, who in different times, contexts and in varied forms have been involved in educational works¹ as part of an overall strategy of evangelisation. Across the world Spiritans are involved in a broad spectrum of social and educational works both formal and informal (Maynooth 2.12). Formal education includes institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, whereas informal education works attend to the social, pastoral and community development needs of adults, youth, adolescents and children. The inspiration for the Spiritan presence in all these educational endeavours can be found in our tradition and the values we hold, which have been passed on in the Congregation through the living heritage of the Founders.

The 2012 General Chapter in Bagamoyo emphasised education as a constitutive element of our Spiritan mission and mandated the General Council to “*elaborate a Guide for Spiritan Education for the whole Congregation*” (1.28). This guide aims at articulating fundamental elements of the Spiritan education ministry in fidelity to the intuition of the Founders and our rich experience in pastoral, social and educational works. As a guide it also seeks to provide guidelines and criteria for the formulation of education policies relevant to each circumscrip-

¹ For the sake of clarity, the phrase *educational works* is used throughout this document in the broad sense to signify Spiritan involvement in schools, colleges and universities as well as pastoral, social, human and development programmes with an education component, whether or not the Congregation is the owner of the project.

tion. We recognise that the elaboration of any education policy document must be adapted to the local reality, taking into account the diverse cultural, ecclesial, social, governmental and legal requirements of each country as well as the particular reality of the Spiritan circumscription.

We gratefully recognise and thank the many Spiritans and lay colleagues who have written and shared from their wealth of experience and knowledge of Spiritan education over many years. We also wish to recognise and commend the work already done in some circumscriptions in producing policy and other documents so as to help shape the future of Spiritan involvement in education in their locality. In an effort to build a common vision, this guide draws upon these resources and has brought together many of the reflections and ideas shared by Spiritans involved in educational works.