

GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS (SALESIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT)

“The group is the setting where educative and religious proposals become personalized; it is the place for expression and responsibility; it is the place for interpersonal communication and the planning of initiatives. Frequently it is the only structural element that offers the young the occasion for access to human values and education to the faith.” (GC 23, no.274.)

WHAT IS SYM?

“Youth groups and associations which, while maintaining their organizational autonomy, share the same salesian spirituality and pedagogical principles, form explicitly or implicitly the *Salesian Youth Movement (SYM)*.” (GC23, no.275)

“In the SYM all the groups live the values of Salesian Youth Spirituality (SYS) at different levels.

“The SYM is an open reality, in the form of concentric circles, which unites many young people: from those farthest away, for whom the spirituality is something only dimly perceived through an environment in which they feel welcome, to those who consciously and explicitly make their own the salesian ethic. These latter constitute the animating nucleus of the whole movement, which is therefore an original educative movement.” (GC23, no.276)

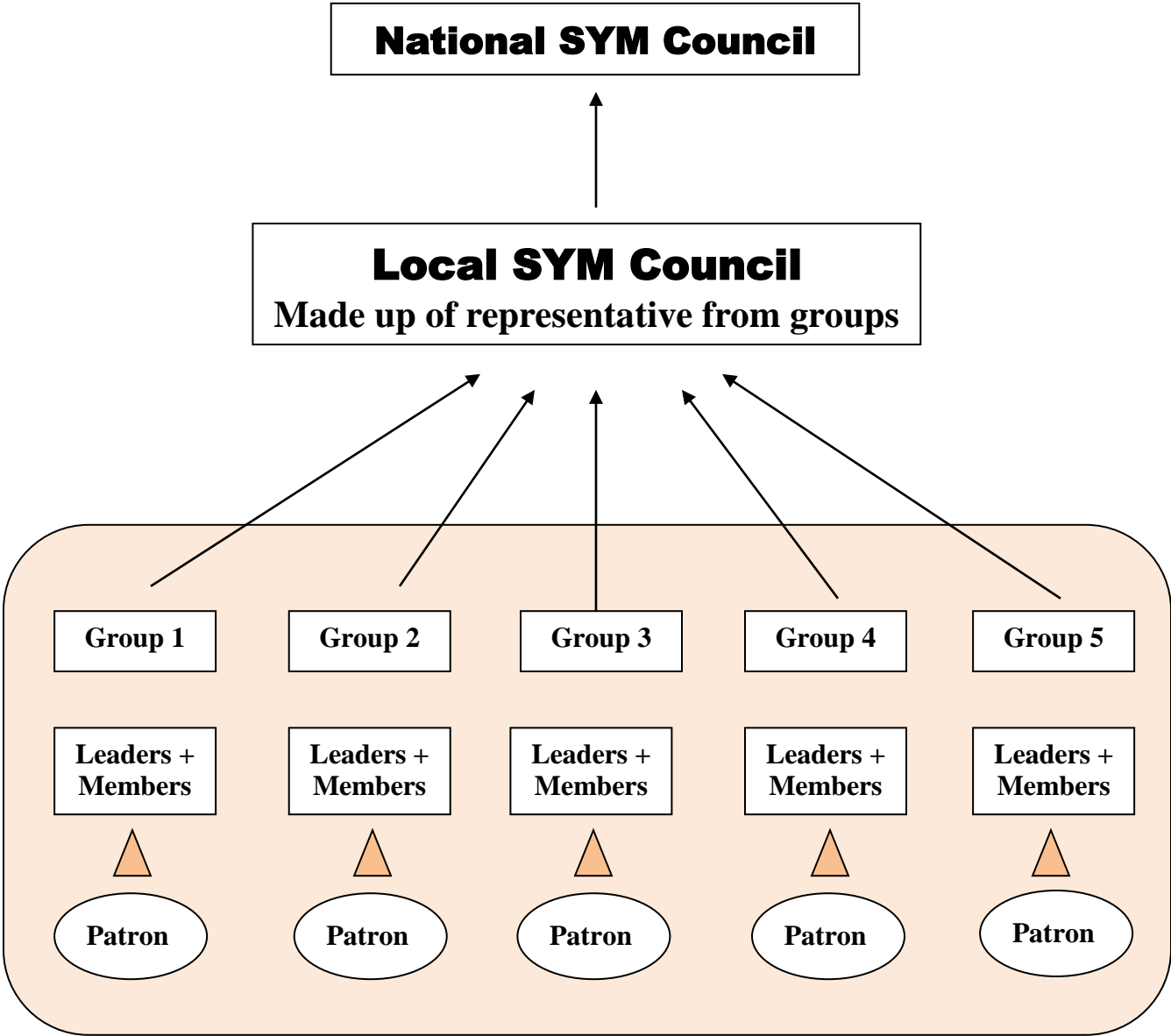
SYM is not... But...

- ❖ It is not just one group, like a club or a sodality. But it comprises of all the groups that exist in the local community.
- ❖ It does not comprise of all the students in a Salesian school or members of a youth centre. The large masses of young people in our settings are invited to join freely one or two groups. The groups can be Apostolic Groups (Sodalities or *Vyama vya Kiutume*), Interest Groups – clubs (music, sports, drama, etc.), or other established groups (ycs, scouts, etc.)
- ❖ It is not an administrative structure (like house system and student council), but it is a free movement for faith formation, where an explicit proposal is made towards holiness

Three levels of formation in groups:

1. Basic Christian Formation
2. Formation in Salesian Youth Spirituality (SYS)
3. Specific Formation for the group & group activities

STRUCTURE OF SYM



Guidelines for Local SYM Unit

1. Definition

Salesian Youth Movement is the umbrella animation structure that consists of all the groups (clubs or sodalities, or international movements like YCS, Scouts, etc.) that exist at a local community of the Salesian Family.

2. Objectives

- To offer the members a group experience
- To educate and to evangelize members
- To accompany the young people towards holiness following the Salesian Youth Spirituality

3. Membership

- ❖ Any recognized member of a group at the local community, that is accepted into the local SYM unit, automatically becomes the member of the SYM.
- ❖ In other words, to become a member of the SYM, a young person has to be a member of an existing group at the local Salesian (family) institution.
- ❖ A young person is understood as one who has finished primary school and not yet married. A married young person may be a member of the SYM by virtue of their role as a patron of a group.
- ❖ Non-Catholics and Non-Christians may become members of the SYM provided they accept to be part of a journey towards holiness, proper to their sect or religion. However, let them also understand that SYM basically operates on Catholic principles.

4. Local SYM Council

- ✚ The local SYM council is made up of 2 or 3 representatives from each of the existing groups. They may or may not be leaders in their groups. Once a group sends its representatives to the Council, they will be in the council at least for one year.
- ✚ The Local SYM council is to be understood as an animation structure. Complications of the roles of this council is to be avoided.
- ✚ It is the duty of this council to plan and execute all common programmes of animation.
- ✚ They will be directed by a Salesian patron.

5. Privileges and Obligations of member groups

- A member group is an existing group that is recognized by the Salesian Community and thus has become part of the local SYM unit.
- Every group will maintain its autonomy by way of its own structures and objectives.
- Every member group will be represented in the Local SYM Council.

- Every member group is recommended to have its members, leaders and an adult patron, approved by the Community leadership.
- Members of the groups are expected to understand and live the Salesian Youth Spirituality in their daily lives. For this purpose, every group is obliged to spend one session in a month to reflect on the aspects of SYS. They will also participate in all common programmes.
- Only members of the groups will be able to participate in the SYM forums at the national or provincial level.

6. Leadership & Roles

- The leadership at the local SYM Council will consist of a Co-ordinator and a Secretary. The two once elected to this post will relinquish their posts in their particular groups while maintaining their membership.
- The two will act hand in hand with the patron for the purpose of animation all member groups.
- Collection of funds will always be with the explicit permission of the Salesian SYM patron, for a specific purpose. Usually such funds are kept under the custody of the Salesian.

7. Patrons

- Every individual group in the local SYM unit will have an adult (or young adult) patron. The SYM unit will have a Salesian patron.
- The patron's duty is to guide the group towards achieving their set objectives.
- The patron will have power to veto when a particular decision of the group is seen to be detrimental to the objectives of the group. However, this power is to be used rarely and only when strictly necessary, in consultation with the Salesian community.

8. Conclusion

- These guidelines are binding on member groups of the SYM. The local communities may adapt them according to their particular circumstances.

SALESIAN YOUTH SPIRITUALITY

A SYNTHETIC PRESENTATION

1. Spirituality of Ordinary Daily Life.

Daily life inspired by Jesus of Nazareth (cf. C.12) is the setting in which the youngster recognizes the presence of God who is at work, and lives out his personal realization of the fact.

2. Spirituality of Joy and Optimism.

Daily life is lived in joy and optimism, without prejudice to commitment and responsibility (cf. C 17, 18)

3. Spirituality of Friendship with the Lord Jesus.

Daily life is re-created by the Risen Christ (cf. C 34) who gives reasons for hope and leads to a life that finds its fullest sense in Him.

4. Spirituality of Communion in the Church.

Daily life is experienced in the Church (cf. C 13, 35), as the natural setting for growth in faith through the sacraments. In the Church we find Mary (cf. C 20, 34) who goes in front, accompanies and inspires.

5. Spirituality of Responsible Service.

Daily life is presented to the young as a setting for service (cf. C 32), both ordinary and extraordinary.

(See, GC 23, no. 161)