Update from Madagascar: Cyclone Gezani destroyed two La Salle schools

Roofs torn off, buildings damaged, classrooms filled with mud, trees felled and students' families displaced. This is the dramatic scene at our **Stella Maris** and **St. Joseph** schools in Toamasina, Madagascar, after Cyclone Gezani struck.

The cyclone struck the east coast of Madagascar, Africa's largest island, causing more than 60 deaths and displacing 6,000 people to date. Among them, the families of our students have lost everything, while the school, which has always been a point of reference for them, is now in great difficulty and unable to help them.

The buildings are currently unusable: fallen trees are blocking the passageways and have broken through the roofs of the classrooms, allowing mud and water to destroy furniture and teaching materials.

After the cyclone passed, the leadership of the Institute and the *La Salle Foundation* remained in regular contact with the Brothers in Madagascar. The District is already drawing up plans for reconstruction, while the management of both schools is working to find solutions that will ensure the least possible disruption to lessons during the recovery period.

A team is being set up, made up of staff from the District, the Region and the Institute, to ensure that the reconstruction process is accompanied as comprehensively as possible, including the need for co-responsibility and solidarity among the Lasallian Family in the country.

In addition to the Brothers' schools, two schools run by the Guadalupana Sisters of La Salle have also suffered damage. The Brothers in Madagascar, together with the Institute and the La Salle Foundation, remain attentive to the support they will need.

Given the impact of the cyclone and the current conditions in the country, which affect any possibility of starting the reconstruction process, the Institute and the

La Salle Foundation are working with the District on an initial funding plan. In this spirit and to promote global solidarity, the La Salle Foundation has set up an emergency fund.

Managed by our non-profit organisation, the ***La Salle Foundation***, this fund allows us to respond as quickly as possible to global crises, as we have already done for:

- The floods in Brazil (2024)
- The earthquake in Turkey and Syria (2023)
- Assistance to Ukrainian refugees (2022)
- The reconstruction of our schools in Lebanon after the port explosion (2020)

These experiences give us confidence that we can once again count on the generosity of the international Lasallian community and rebuild the schools as soon as possible, so that we can continue to guarantee the future of thousands of young people in Toamasina.

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