

educational
INNOVATIONS



Lasallian Educational Innovations

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Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

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Introduction

It will soon be three centuries since the Conduct of Christian Schools was published. This text had a very great influence on the Institute. In fact, it gave it a trade-mark easily recognisable from the traditional images we have of the Brothers: dedicated schoolmasters, serious pedagogues, organisers of schools where all was ordered in the smallest detail, where time and space were allocated on a rational basis. And there was a lot of truth in this.

However, the image of the Institute cannot be reduced to these few clichés indicative of a good reputation. All the more so as, for the last forty years, we have tried to understand ourselves better by studying the origins of the Institute and the thinking of the Founder more thoroughly. We have done this in a spirit of creative fidelity and openness to new educational needs.

It was in this same spirit that the Secretariat for the Lasallian Educational Mission, responding to the call of the General Chapter of 2000, decided to concentrate its attention on Lasallian Educational Innovation in the year 2003. Its intention is not primarily to accelerate the pace of making innovations in the Districts, but rather to assess what has been done in this connection over the last 10 or 15 years in the Institute as a whole. Its intention is also to help Partners, Brothers and communities evaluate what they have done and what they could do, by offering a number of documents to help reflection.



In this connection, the Secretariat for the Lasallian Educational Mission has taken a number of practical steps:

1. In June 2002, it asked Brothers Visitors for a list of new educational initiatives undertaken in the District in the previous 10 to 15 years, and which the District recognised as truly reflecting the Lasallian spirit for the present age. Forty Districts from 5 continents responded to this appeal.
2. Next, 190 places where there were initiatives were contacted through the Institute. They were sent a qualitative questionnaire prepared by a team of educational researchers.
3. 80 usable answers were sent in to us in September 2002. They constitute the “data-base” – a term that will be used in the rest of this text.
4. This data-base was passed on to 2 experts at the National Institute of Pedagogical Research in Paris who were asked to undertake a comparative scientific analysis of the material. These experts work mostly for the OCDE. At the end of 2003, they will turn in the results of their analysis, and their work will be the object of a Lasallian Educational Mission Bulletin-

At the same time, some educational teams have been asked to prepare long articles for future issues of the MEL Bulletins. The articles will deal in particular with the following topics: the children's emergency telephone line in Australia; the mobile classrooms for gipsy children in France; the San Miguel School system in the USA; the “PERLA” educational project in the Lasallian Region of Latin America.

The Institute Bulletin for 2003 also is concerned with Lasallian innovation.

The material we publish comes from the data-base already mentioned. Br **Nicolas Capelle** and Mr **Alain Damiani**, a Lasallian Partner, read all the material submitted, analysed it, and proceeded to choose texts that fitted in with the main thrust of the publication, and which covered equitably the 5 continents.

In this issue of the Bulletin you will find:

- a list of the names of the initiatives indicated by Districts
- an article on innovation to stimulate thought
- a description of 27 initiatives in the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia

A great vitality

The material in the data-base describing the initiatives that have been undertaken in the last few years can be listed under 6 headings. Clearly this will not be a complete list of what has been done, but we can include only what has been sent to us:

1. Accompaniment and formation of young people

- Centres for street children (Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, Pakistan, Great Britain, Thailand...)
- local centres in town districts (Brazil, Spain, France, USA, Sri Lanka...)
- tutoring centres (USA, Spain...)
 - handicapped (Malta, Rwanda, France, India, Egypt, Poland...)
 - help for families, teenage mothers (India, Australia, Ireland...)
 - accompaniment of young delinquents (USA, France, Italy, Australia...)
 - accompaniment of drug addicts (Spain, Italy, Quebec, Colombia...)
 - Study and Leisure centres (Quebec, France...)
 - service for migrants (Spain, Quebec, France, Belgium, Italy USA, New Zealand...)
 - development of international relations (Mexico, Spain, France, Philippines, Colombia, Great Britain...)
 - formation in affective life (Cameroons, Malta, Colombia...)
 - centres for the promotion of justice (USA, Sri Lanka, Spain...)

2. Creation of

- educational centres for children who have abandoned school (Ivory Coast, Conakry, Togo, Brazil, France, Great Britain, Antilles, Eritrea...)
- primary and middle schools (Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Argentine, Egypt, Turkey...)
- technical training centres for young people (Vietnam, Brazil, Argentine, Guinea, Kenya, Portugal, Cameroons, Chad, Niger, Djibouti, Congo-Kinshasa, Spain...)
- technical training centres for adults (Togo, Madagascar, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Eritrea...)
- educational networks (USA, Panama, Argentine, Togo, Nicaragua...)
- universities (Spain, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, USA, Indonesia, Philippines, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Palestine...)
- evening courses (Colombia, Mexico, Italy, Haiti, Ecuador, Antilles, Peru...)



3. Diffusion of

- teaching methods (Colombia, Spain, France, Argentine, Mexico)
- works, didactic materials (USA, Spain, Peru, Argentine, Cameroons, Colombia...)

4. Adult training

- training of catechists (Guinea, Sudan, Argentine, Haiti, Cuba, Pakistan...)
- training of teachers (Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Kenya, Rwanda, Colombia, Mexico, Peru...)
- training prison teaching staff (Brazil...)
- running base communities (Argentine, Brazil...)
- training headmasters and members of educational board members (USA, Spain, France, Argentine...)
- Lasallian formation (Italy, France, Argentine, Spain, USA, Australia, Philippines, Medellin, Belgium, Egypt, Lebanon...)
- training of young teachers (France, Spain, USA...)
- training of Lasallian volunteers (Mexico, Philippines, USA, France...)

5. Promotion of spirituality

- Spirituality centres (Ireland, Great Britain, Spain, Quebec, France, Sri Lanka, Australia, Switzerland, Brazil, Venezuela...)

6. Promotion and preservation of culture

- training and promotional centres (Panama, Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico, New Guinea, Papua, New Zealand, Australia, Cameroon, Turkey, Palestine, France...)

This list of initiatives is far from being exhaustive. There are others which have not been indicated. They exist in particular in educational establishments and, using them as a base, they serve the community as a whole over a wide area.

The study of this data-base enables us to offer a number of ideas regarding Lasallian educational innovation and its present-day characteristics. This study is based on the data-base received, but the ideas that follow can be of great help also to the initiatives undertaken within more traditional structures which are also characterised by great dynamism. This study can help to create a means of self-assessment of innovation, which can be used both in normal and in special educational conditions.

Two approaches

The data-base shows that two approaches are adopted in creating Lasallian initiatives: an institutional approach and a personal approach.

- **Institutional.** These initiatives are usually the implementation of Chapter propositions, chosen by the District Council or by an ad hoc committee. Consequently, the approach here is to try to set something up which will be in line with the Chapter proposition, whose aims are known, in the light of which means and structures are chosen, and the effects and results of which are foreseen. Normally all this takes place in a context of what is known and predictable: a pre-established educational policy is implemented.



– **Personal.** These initiatives are the result of a personal wish and have as their priority the service of others. A need has been perceived as a result of a meeting, or of some circumstance. A subsequent discussion with another, leads to the conclusion that it is possible to do something together. This marks the beginning of a process of which the probable stages and possible results are foreseen, but they are not certain. The relations of the partners are more important than the establishment of structures.

Evidently, with time, the two approaches merge but without ever ceasing to be distinct. In fact, the origin of the initiative continues to be important and to play a preponderant role in the subsequent way in which things are done, because the initial insights contain the seeds of future life. In this connection, experience teaches us that an initiative has a better chance of becoming an innovation if it originates in persons rather than in the planning of an institutional body, whether a Chapter or a District Council. We shall see later why.

The two areas in which initiatives take place

The data-base reveals also that the two usual areas in which Lasallian initiatives take place are: accompaniment and formation of young people and adults, providing cultural promotion on the human, spiritual and Christian level.

It is instructive, in fact, to run through the descriptive titles and the texts, because it soon becomes clear that the Institute is more concerned with people than with structures. It is persons who are targeted in their concrete cultural situations through structures. They are the inspiration of the initiative which perhaps may become an innovation. This is important. Contrary to the image conveyed by our imagination and that of our close friends (the Brothers, schoolmasters, teachers, exemplifying order, discipline, conscientiousness...), it is not above all concern for a priori goals such as knowledge, culture, civic duties, etc which inspires us, but the precise needs of people we meet and live with. It is persons in need which inspire us to act. An analysis of the data-base shows that the aims we set ourselves are the following, in order of importance:

1. The knowledge of young people/adults, their family cultural and religious background
2. Their human, spiritual, Christian promotion
3. Then knowledge, concern with teaching approaches and methodology
4. Lastly, the establishment of service structures.

Concern with structures

Obviously, it's not that simple.

Especially as our Institute has a very marked character trait: concern with structures. There's nothing we can do about it: it's like that. We need to remember that it was born in France in a century marked by analysis, debate, the search for rules.

Moreover, our function as teachers - we contributed greatly to giving it status - has given rise in our social group to a certain proclivity to analysis, to the establishment of structures, to rapid and ready-made educational responses because they have been tested, and are trusted and effective.

The data-base as it stands does not reveal much hesitation in the search and implementation of responses to needs. Everything



works as if our collective experience of 300 years had taught us to respond with already known educational and methodological structures. It is perhaps only the new school networks concerned with education for poorer people and local social centres, that avoid more easily the risk of resorting to what is already known.

Partners

In addition, we have such a characteristic educational approach that it is sometimes difficult for us to adjust to structures we did not organise ourselves. We can, of course, but it calls for a special effort. In fact we have a need to organise relations, space, time, programmes, processes in terms of our educational vision - a vision characterised by a permanent desire to respond to two needs:

– those of the young person/adult in the here and now, as he is, with his culture, his environment, his values, his desire to live his life now...

– and those of the young person/adult as he will be in 5 or 10 years' time, active in society by his relational, professional and religious involvement.

Our desire to respond is always directed to these two moments: today and tomorrow, and our structures also try to respond to their needs. In the case of conflicting interests, we always opt for tomorrow. Our educational vision is projective: it helps young people/adults imagine a future and to set in motion a process to attain it.

That is perhaps why it is sometimes difficult for us to work in local or social centres which quite legitimately adopt different educational approaches. But when we agree to do so, we come into contact with a different set of needs, different ways of establishing contact, different ways of understanding expectations. We find ourselves back in school, but we are no longer teaching. At this point, we become true partners in a reciprocity of approaches and means.

The data-base teaches us also that when the promoters of the initiative decide to take as their starting point unusual educational presuppositions (for example: service for State school teachers, the principles of popular education, the promotion of local culture, bilingualism, inter-religious dialogue, children rejected by the educational system, awareness of the ethnic mixture of a population...) we are capable of regenerating ourselves. Through dialogue with new partners who throw us off balance, and with their help, we can think of different educational approaches which will also renew us.

Mobility

When we are faced with an educational need, and we see a possibility of human, cultural, Christian promotion, our first reaction is to imagine a remedy, a structure. It's the way we think. It has its value, of course, but it sometimes cuts down dia-



logue, deep understanding, shared research, a negotiated choice of methods and means.

This can be seen in the data-base: there is little analysis of searching around, few errors or key-moments of the initiative; and yet it is the analysis of these things that can reveal the true intentions of the promoters, and confirms the real need, expressed initially in approximate terms.

We are justified in asking ourselves whether, as Brothers and Partners, we study sufficiently the needs of those we meet, whether we understand them essentially. This takes time, patience, and always a certain cultural mobility if we are to put at risk mentally and spiritually something of ourselves.

The most significant innovations all come as a result of mental, and sometimes, physical mobility; from mobility towards a population, a culture, another way of seeing, of reacting, of functioning. Mobility which respects others, their differences; a mobility which disorientates. John Baptist de La Salle understood this; and the Lasallian founding act lies there, first of all and in great part: it is at the origin of all the rest of our sacred history.

A reading of the whole data-base is very revealing in this respect.

Some data-base accounts go directly from the analysed need to the setting up of operational structures. Others, on the contrary, give a glimpse of the searching around during the analysis, and of the hesitation in choosing an option to follow: they spend time describing the initial bubbling of the melting-pot of ideas. On the one hand, we see an almost mechanical process, a little cold; on the other, a more personal attitude, a commitment. The difference is radical: it has to do with passion-inspired involvement and risk-taking.

Here, we touch on the profound meaning of Lasallian innovation which has marked our Institute history.

Innovating in a Lasallian way

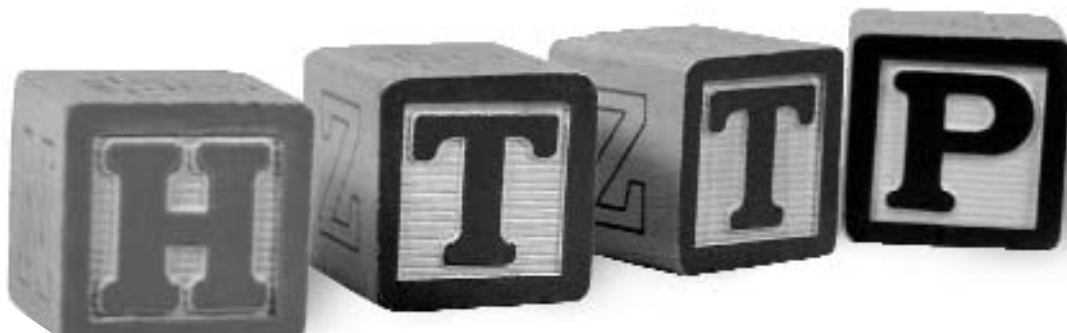
While initiatives seek to respond to problems perceived and analysed as part of a planning process whose results are foreseeable; innovations commit different persons to a process in which they are prepared to put themselves at risk without being able to define all the factors in advance. The key-word is not control. What is involved is setting out with others, confronting other value systems on the way, coming into contact, in ourselves and in others, with what is essential, to the point that we agree to reorder our reasons for living, our attitudes in our contact with others who are different socially, culturally and religiously. Innovation implies a risk of being altered and changed. It calls for openness, time, an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Where innovation comes about in new surroundings, or finds its way into a traditional educational structure, the results are never the same.

Innovation, therefore, is an initiative which produces something new in terms of relations, procedures, understanding and, in the last resort, of structures. It is not simply an adaptation to a new situation, but a different way of seeing reality, of relating to it, of allowing oneself to be transformed by this new relationship. In a word, innovation alters people as much as it alters their way of creating society.

An examination of the data-base shows this clearly. This is particularly true of certain accounts which touch on the sensitivity and emotions of the people concerned. And then one can see how much of themselves they have invested in the innovation; that they have put themselves at risk, that they have risked their own

credibility; that they have rethought – at no little cost – their commitments as human beings, Christians, religious and as Brothers. For them, the experience was not an experiment, or a way of testing the



validity of an educational or pedagogical insight. For them, it meant answering an interior call, a call to a deep personal coherence, requiring them to confront their beliefs, to confront their desire to live, their personal liberty, in the light of their lives and of their model, the Institute.

Innovation that breaks down barriers

This is particularly noticeable in innovations resulting from encounters with the poor. In these cases contact occurs at a very intimate level. A great interior awakening takes place, and a new founding impetus is generated. Data-base accounts express this experience in excited and jubilant language. At that point one understands that the innovators have discovered the original source of the Lasallian charism and that they are drawing on it. And suddenly, everything becomes clear: it's as if the innovators discover they are contemporaries of John Baptist de La Salle; his texts are revealed in all their brilliance (the Conduct, ministry, spirit of faith, spirit of zeal, association for service); his practices take on meaning (presence of God, being present from morning till night, vigilance); the dual thrust of human and Christian promotion no longer calls for laborious justification; the three elements of the Lasallian vocation (mission, consecration, community) fall into place as a necessary and natural association.

But you need to have felt the full impact of the shock and the hurt caused by the sight of the poor children left to themselves; or of the distress of the parents incapable of exercising their role as educators; or of the discouragement of the teachers trapped in a profession without meaning; or of the cultural poverty of young people or adults who have got off to a false start in life; or of the loss of a reason for living by ethnic or social groups which are slowly dying.

The data-base shows clearly that it is these 5 types of situation that shake people most, that break down barriers, and capture the attention of Lasallians and stimulate new expressions of the evangelical charism which is our own.

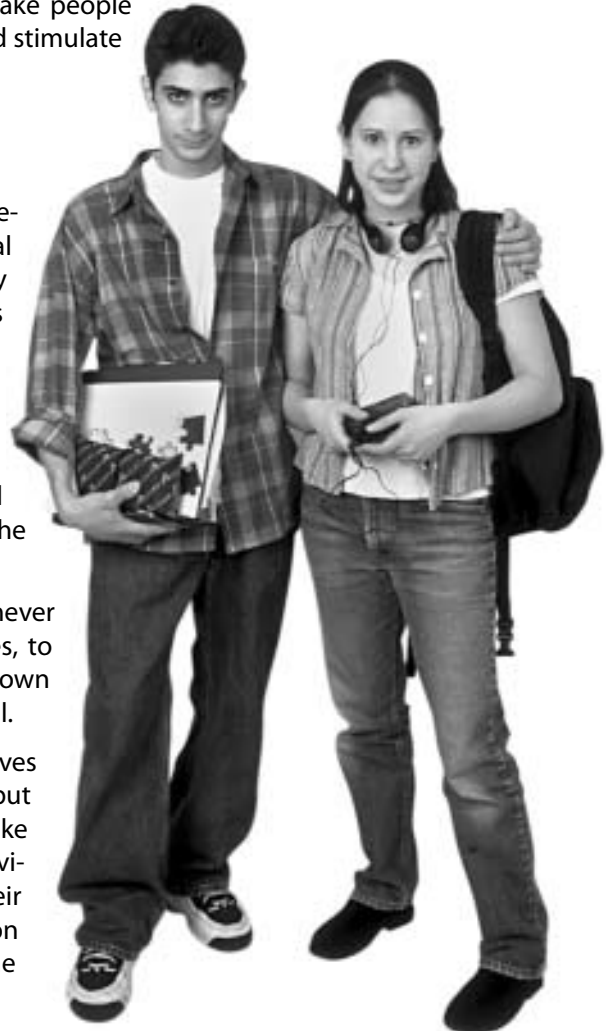
The impact of innovation

When an initiative becomes an innovation - something you can never predict - it always challenges without wanting to, the educational and ecclesial scene and positions adopted by the District. It is always accompanied by argument and disturbance, because everyone's personal view of life is once again called into question. And the same old well-known pairs of words constantly return:

persons/structures; rich/poor; create/administer; creation/heritage; raised hopes/means to be found; work with our own means/offer our services to other organisations; assume leadership/participate in a general project; have our own houses/work in other people's houses; organise the whole of the system/ make available one or two of our skills...

Innovation always awakens good arguments but also old fears that have never died out. Once again, people are called upon to assess their own values, to assess their human, Christian and religious lives and try, each one at his own level, to open themselves to something new, to new ways of being faithful.

Everywhere we note that innovation is an opportunity for a District. It gives rise to a salutary kind of questioning, which can be irritating, of course, but which cuts across administrative reasoning, necessary for a social body like our own, and makes room for "providential" novelty. I use the word "providential" advisedly, because promoters of innovation, and very often, in their wake, the District Council, thinking prayerfully about how the innovation began and how it gradually got off the ground, and trying to work out the



sequence of events, see in them, prudently, the conduct of God. Time is needed, of course, to see things in this light; but our social body is always careful to see things in the light of faith. This is a practice which is in no way fundamentalist: our safeguard has always been community discussion.

Given all this, after a number of years, innovations reveal a typology which is difficult to predict a priori: are they a founding myth or a system that duplicates itself?

Founding myth

In this case, the innovation is seen as a source of inspiration. Brothers, educators, come to visit it, ask questions, try to understand. Each one comes and compares his own life and work with the innovation, and looks for new reasons and ways of thinking and acting. It is in this sense that innovation works like a founding myth, enabling people to rediscover their deep motivations and recreate the meaning of their commitment. Those who come into contact with the innovation are inspired by it and go away with new images in their minds, which will inspire them to try new things in their own schools.

System

Here, what is striking after a few years is the power of innovation which has become duplicated and turned into a system which has its characteristics and which seems to respond, in different places, to the same problems and concerns.

Sometimes, the system is clearly visible (in the San Miguel Schools in the USA, in the mobile classrooms for gypsies in France, in the teacher-training networks in Togo, Nicaragua, Panama...)

At other times, it is not identifiable (in local school-help centres for migrants, in centres for street children...); but observation of the clientele, working hours, organisation, pedagogical practices, style of relations, ways of working with local partners, all this is so similar that one feels that, in fact, these centres follow a system.

There's nothing strange about that.

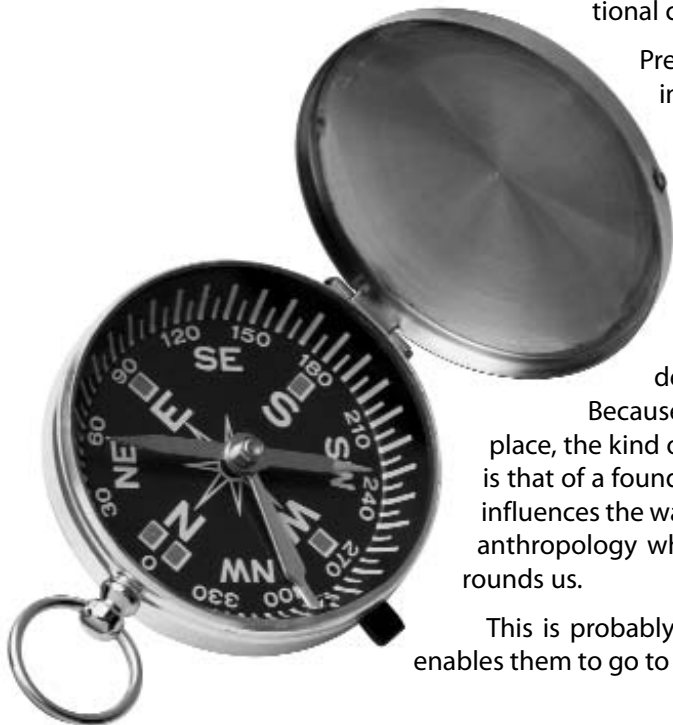
In fact, educational innovation is inspired in our congregation - as in most educational congregations - on some common presuppositions. That is ?

Present day educational researchers say normally that educational innovation depends in 80% of cases on the needs of a place and of the social environment. So much so that they go so far as to think that innovation cannot be duplicated. You can be inspired by it, but it's increasingly difficult to organise it into a system. This is probably true when you see the complexities of situations and of cultural differences.

And yet in the social bodies that educational congregations are, it seems that things do not actually work like that, despite the variety of situations that we encounter. Why is this so ?

Because the first reality which concerns us is not where we are, the precise place, the kind of place. The first reality is in ourselves: it lives in us, it moulds us; it is that of a founder, of a sacred history, founding texts, common mythology which influences the way we look, listen, relate to others. And this mythology is a Christian anthropology which gives meaning to the human and cosmic reality which surrounds us.

This is probably the most important patrimony of educational congregations. It enables them to go to the heart of the great educational questions, as long as these con-



gregations remain close to their source. And that is what they have to transmit as a priority to the lay people that join them.

And in this connection, observation of what goes on in several areas of the Institute makes me affirm the following: if we want the Lasallian charism to be understood better and be diffused today, it seems that we have to associate and set in motion several complementary approaches:

- offering biblical studies to nourish a Christian anthropology
- offering a Lasallian formation which establishes direct contact with John Baptist de La Salle
- suggesting a change of mentality to undertake direct educational service of the poor
- encouraging Brothers and/or partners to undertake significant and flexible innovations
- encouraging a fraternal life among the Brothers and/or partners in a variety of new ways.

One could affirm that the renewal and the use of persons and the established presence of the Lasallian movement will take place on the basis more or less of these 5 criteria.

Innovation and institute

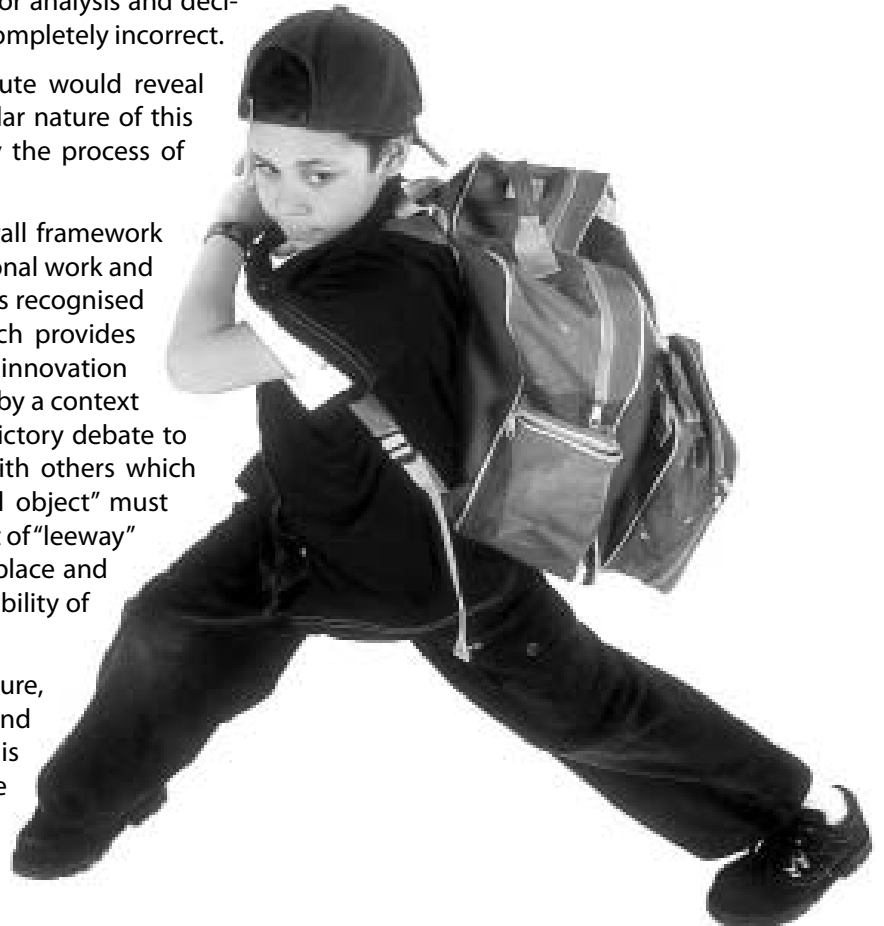
By its history, its tradition and its achievements, the Institute is a “sociological object” of considerable weight. It is a machine driven by strong convictions with a set of gears which enable the work of the individual to be integrated in the general movement and serve one aim: human, religious and Christian promotion through knowledge and thanks to the preferred means of the school, in whatever form, however.

An outside observer, for example, who reads in succession the texts of our various General and District Chapters could quite safely propose the thesis that the Institute was a “sociological object”, heavy, all-inclusive, prudent in the face of change, slow to transform, encumbered by an impressive series of councils which function as so many filters for analysis and decision-making...In fact, this description would not be completely incorrect.

A more refined study made from inside the Institute would reveal another sort of reality more in line with the particular nature of this “sociological object”. And this reality is revealed by the process of innovation.

The Institute offers to those who work in it an overall framework which defines the main characteristics of its educational work and its particular thrust. By its permanence in time and its recognised efficacy, this framework functions as a model which provides assurance and makes innovation possible. In fact, for innovation to happen, to dare to happen, it needs to be backed by a context that is sufficiently trustworthy and solid for contradictory debate to take place, and for new initiatives be compared with others which have been tested. In other words, the “sociological object” must allow as part of the way it functions, a certain amount of “leeway” so that new attitudes and behaviour can find their place and modify the system a little. The Institute has this possibility of giving “leeway”.

We are, of course, very much aware that, by its nature, the “sociological object” tends to seek permanence and repetition; its nature is to nourish itself on what is known and foreseeable; this is the law it follows. The Institute, however, is not to be confused with this “sociological object”: it is made up of persons per-



sonally inspired by their professional and spiritual commitment: they move, evolve, change. And we are made conscious of this in particular by the numerous initiatives taken by Districts, the meetings of the various councils which more or less everywhere examine in detail projects and budgets. Reports on these council meetings are most instructive regarding the capacity of a District to be open to innovation, regarding its spiritual sensitivity in interpreting the signs of the times, and to the renewal of its fidelity. The concern for all this is clearly present in the Institute.

And so Districts, while maintaining an overall, clear and re-assuring framework, have to find the right balance which encourages innovation and stimulates a founding spirit: a founding spirit which is essential for the life of the Institute and its mission in the Church.

Aims of this Study:

- To find out the extent of New Lasallian Initiatives
- To publicize the working process of such schemes
- To draw up models for teaching, education in its broadest sense and pastoral work from examples given
- To be aware of the factors that necessitate changes in such projects

Questionnaire for assessment (prepared by the ongoing General Council subcommittee for MEL)

1. Name, initial date of the scheme, details of people involved
2. Aims and objectives
3. How it came about
4. The precise role of Lasallian educators
5. An account of how it developed and its key points
6. Its impact on those working on the scheme and on the Lasallian network
7. Its impact on the social, educational, political, cultural and ecclesiastical affairs of the region
8. Minimal conditions to make it work
9. Dangers to be avoided in this type of undertaking

For practical reasons and through lack of space it is not possible to present all the responses received. Also to avoid repetition, Br. Nicolas Capelle made some selections without changing the original texts.

Should somebody be interested in a given innovation, please contact the MEL Secretariat directly.

Why essential ?

Because the life of the Brother or of the lay associate is not that of an administrator of education, or of a social worker who quite rightfully earns his living. It is instead the response to a personal call made to a specific person who, within an institutionalised structure has to find his own vocation within the general vocation of the Institute. This point is very important, because it has to do with identity and the building up of a person. We have to become a Brother in our own, particular and unique way. The Institute is a place which can authorise the personal behaviour of an individual who discovers in it a cause which captivates him totally and truly "founds" him. That is why the Institute, like the Church, is not only a "sociological object", but, more profoundly, is a place where identity "which is the source of everything for us" is discovered. It is usually the act of innovation which permits this identification.

Innovation is founding

Innovation stimulates movement and dialogue: it brings out into the open interests, desires, urgent needs, impatience; it brings to the surface the multiple facets of people's personality, their beliefs, their freedom, their life force, their capacity to risk their lives and to turn their choices into concrete acts. It is a good time for working at a very intimate level - through debate, contradictions, progressive choices - a process which reveals the particular nature of the Brother.

It is a time in which relations, influences, origins, family traditions, formation, professional commitments, spiritual journeys are all thrown into a psycho-spiritual melting-pot out of which will emerge a new synthesis, a clearer commitment, a more solid belonging, fidelity that is at the same time constructed and received.

This founding act creating the person is as essential for the Brother as it is for the body of the Institute. It is the vitality of its members which constitutes the vitality of the Institute. And the Brother who is "founded" refounds in his

own way the Institute. It is always very instructive to listen to Brothers (and nowadays, to Lasallian partners) who have “put their life on the line” as well as their identity in a founding innovation. They express always clearly and humbly, and as something evident, their profound conviction that they are reliving the foundation of the Institute today.

All this must induce us to question what our Districts do regarding the formation of both young Brothers and lay persons: how do we cope with their innovations? Between the ages of 28 and 35, have the Brothers been able to develop a personal project which has given consistence and body to their image as a Brother? At least in part, the future of the Institute is at stake here. It is re-founded identities which constitute the strength of the Institute: more than organisations and structures, they are today the true image of our presence in the world.

In conclusion

And so, the data-base of 80 educational initiatives teaches us:

– The Institute is a place where numerous initiatives take place both within and outside the traditional educational framework.

– Its inventiveness is, as a priority, in the service of the cultural and human promotion of persons, with increasing insistence on social transformation.

– The initiative normally develops along one of two lines:

- it develops from a Chapter or District Council decision. The danger here is to work towards a known goal, on the basis of known procedures (aims, actions, means, partners)
- it comes as an inspiration from the meeting of persons who allow themselves to be moved, let their hearts be touched; a process of maturation ensues whose results cannot be predicted.

– In the latter case, there can be the seed of innovation. This will be so if it is genuinely concerned with ways of thinking and the promotion of persons; with the evolution of micro-societies, with their construction of values and their choice of means for collective promotion.

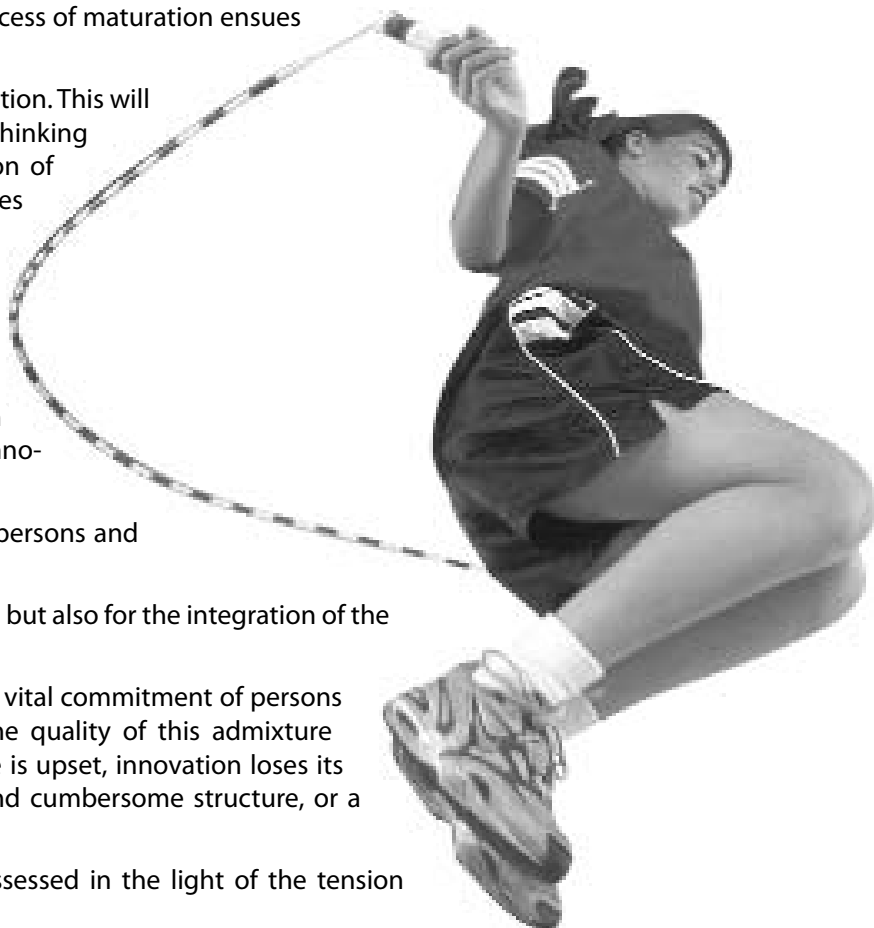
– In this case the risk to cope with is greater, because nothing is sure, and goodwill is not enough: the results of what is done will be seen along the way. Moreover, very often the value of an innovation is not realised: it's not realised it's an innovation.

– This risk lies only at the level of the renewal of persons and the appearance of an emerging new identity.

– Time is essential for the development of a person but also for the integration of the necessary institutional dimension.

– Innovation involves a constant admixture of the vital commitment of persons and the setting up of appropriate structures. The quality of this admixture allows innovation to bear fruit. When the balance is upset, innovation loses its vitality, dies, leaving in its place an outmoded and cumbersome structure, or a new dogmatism.

– The results of innovation must always be re-assessed in the light of the tension



between its founding dynamism and newly encountered reality.

– Innovation is necessary for our Institute and for the lay people associated with it. It is at the same time the source of the “foundation” of persons, and of the refoundation of the social body we form. It is innovation which nourishes and diversifies our fidelity.

– The role of those in charge and of structures is to encourage, support, discern. It is also to build up trust.

– The initiators of innovation are always in the field, in contact with reality, at grips with specific people...because one calls to life and “invents through relationship”.

Br. Nicolas Capelle
Secretary for the Lasallian Educational Mission.

Lasallian Pedagogical Innovations in RELAF

"All men of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education. This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individuals, adapted to their ability, sex and national cultural traditions, and should be conducive to fraternal relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world. True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share."

(Vatican II, *Gravissimum Educationis Momentum*, art. 1)

The Lasallian Region of Africa includes five Districts (Antananarivo, Congo Kinshasa, Douala, Lwanga and West Africa), one Sub-District (Golf of Bénin), one Delegation (Rwanda) and one Sector (Equatorial Guinea).

The Brothers of the Christian Schools, together with their lay collaborators, are fully engaged in creating projects which can respond to the educational needs of the poor and to the evangelization of the young people in general.

The significant pedagogical innovations realized in many Lasallian apostolic activities could be identified under the following four headings:

1. Rural Development Centers
2. Vocational Training Centers
3. Assistance to Children in Difficulty
4. Centers for Religious and Pedagogical Formation

1. Rural development centers

These projects represent a presence of the Church in rural areas with special consideration for people displaced



because of wars and ethnic rivalry. Together with these poor people, the Brothers study, plan and install village life and organize activities of human basic communities. One of the most important initiatives accomplished by this

apostolic service is the recording of

the villagers' needs and trying to satisfy them as soon as possible.

With the assistance of volunteers who are expert in agricultural sciences, the Brothers introduce simple training programs, look for a better quality of seeds, and contact available NGOs in order to finance more ambitious projects such as irrigation systems and various types of machinery. These kinds of activities are carried on in the "Centre de Développement Rurale de Talba" and in the "Centre de Promotion Rurale de Lara" both of them in Cameroun; the "Centre de Formation Rurale de Tami" and "Projet de Développement Rural De La Salle - Kope" both of them in Togo; the "Centre de Promotion Rurale de Ambositra" in Madagascar; and "Centre de Promotion Rurale" de Kisaro.

At a more sophisticated level there exists the "La Salle Agro-Technical Institute of Hagaz" in Eritrea where the Brothers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, administer a pilot project

accommodating 300 young men and women and providing quality formation in Agronomy and Veterinary Science. In addition to these fields, the school has introduced a novelty program of specialization. Thus, students are now able to choose among four options: Agronomy, Agro-mechanics, Animal Husbandry, and Veterinary Science. "La Salle Agro-Technical Institute", which is a boarding school, serves the needs of poor students and it is totally gratuitous. The Center has a modern Computer Lab, and a well-equipped science laboratory where soil, seeds, and drinkable water are faithfully analyzed. The administration has begun offering logistic support to the farmers of the region around Hagaz. It is encouraging to note that the farmers themselves have been requesting the support. This initiative pursues four different goals:

- a. to insert the School in the local reality
- b. to allow the students to practice in a day-to-day context
- c. to have an extra source of income towards the policy of self-reliance
- d. to facilitate understanding and mutual appreciation among different faith-groups

The production of wine and of cheese are two new projects which will assist the center of Hagaz to gradually realize the policy of self-sufficiency.

2. Vocational Training Centers

Most of these projects are organized by Lasallian apostolic services in order to liberate poor people from unemployment and render them autonomous in life. The beneficiaries of these Centers are High School drop-outs and all those who could not afford to continue studying at higher level types of education.

Brothers and their Collaborators are generously dedicated in forming these young men and women in mechanical, electrical and woodwork skills together with secretarial courses, plus training in knitting and sawing. Since the courses are given free of any charge, the apprentices are involved in part-time jobs so that these Centers can become self-sufficient and extend their contribution to others.

The philosophy of Vocational Training Centers in the African



Region is to create employment and help the young people to help themselves. To educate the "whole human being" and promote the culture of fraternal dialogue, the understanding of the other and openness in the interpersonal relationship, form the objectives of these formation programs.

The training process includes introductory courses in management, in the preparation of annual or monthly budgets and in the handling of bills and receipts.

Activities such as sports, inter-religious dialogues, ecumenical meetings, sharing experiences and library facilities are very much appreciated by the beneficiaries.

These kinds of Vocational Training Centers are found in "Centre Technique d'Apprentissage et Perfectionnement de N'djamena" (Chad); "Workshop for Mechanical and Carpentry Training" in Keren (Eritrea); "Youth Development Project" in Jauro Yino (Nigeria); "Mwangaza Center" in Nakuru (Kenya) and the "Escuela Taller La Salle de Bomudi" in Bata (Equatorial Guinea).

3. Assistance to Children in Difficulty

"The Lasallian educational mission should concentrate on children whose rights are not protected" (43rd Gen. Chapter).

Ethnic conflicts, wars, drought and famine in different parts of Africa have created orphans, displaced people and street children who suffer the lack of basic needs.

In April this year, Rwanda observed the 9th Memorial of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Those who marked the festivities include an estimated 400,000 genocide orphans. After most of the adults in their immediate and extended families were killed, young adolescents and children were robbed of their childhood and became breadwinners for their younger brothers and sisters. They ended up living an extremely precarious existence. They cannot get access to food, health, education, and sometimes adults take advantage to exploit them.

To fight this type of poverty and situations of injustice, the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Africa have created special projects for children who live on the streets and who are in difficulty.

These educational projects provide a home for the needy

children who are socially and emotionally wounded. In those centers, the children feel accepted, respected and loved. There they find adults who are points of reference, available to listen and help. They share their stories, they receive human formation, they live normal life and they start to dream of a better future. They live in a family environment, they experience social relationships and they have a chance to develop their affectivity. The children have opportunities to learn a skill so that after some years they can be autonomous.

Projects that provide this type of Lasallian pedagogical service are "Akwaba Street Children Center" in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), "St. Mary's Junior Boys Programme" in Nyeri (Kenya) and "Centre Intiganda" in Butare (Rwanda).

The children come to these Centers freely, and they can go back to the street if they prefer to do so. To deprive a child of his freedom is like amputating a part of his body. Life has transformed them into "adults" too soon; nevertheless they have the right to continue to be children.

"We cannot plan any psychological treatment for children who have been traumatized by war and ethnic conflicts until we have succeeded in assuring their essential needs such as food, shelter and security, clothing and a continuous presence of adults as a point of reference." (Dr Giovanni Galli).

4. Centers for Religious and Pedagogical Formation

In collaboration with other Religious Congregations, the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Africa have created formation centers where Religious educators (Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and lay people) are prepared to provide quality service in the mission of the local Church.

The Conferences of Major Religious Superiors, both in the Anglophone and Francophone countries of Africa, are very cooperative and appreciative of this project because they see in it the realization of their dream

which is an integrated educational facility on African soil and for African Educators.

The academic nature of these initiatives is based on the fundamental aspects of education articulated with Religious sciences. The teaching activities and research efforts in these formation centers are focused on "Education - Faith - Cultures". Many young people are delighted to receive human, theological and pastoral formation.

These Centers are "Centre Lasallien Africain" in Abidjan (Ivory Coast); "Christ the Teacher Institute of Education" in Nairobi (Kenya) and "Groupe Scolaire De La Salle" in Byumba (Rwanda).

Conclusion

"From its foundation, the Institute has defined itself as being called by God to the educational service of the poor. This type of mission is closely tied to social, cultural and economic contexts, which vary greatly from country to country where the Institute is present." (43rd General Chapter)

Lasallian pedagogy helps young people to stand on their own feet. In the educational world, the Brothers play an

essential role: they are "symbols which inspire and incite the society and the Church to resolve educational problems in function of the Kingdom of God." (Br. Álvaro Rodríguez).

Lasallians work hard to reinforce social and educational motivations in order to provide real and concrete contributions to the poor countries in Africa.

They are always open and available for new initiatives that could promote development, favorable environment and quality of life.

*Brothers Yemanu Jehar
and Marc Hofer,
General Councillors*



COTE D'IVOIRE

“La Salle” Professional Formation Center, Daloa (Côte D'Ivoire)

Contact: Br. Pedro Astigarraga (*la.salle@aviso.ci*)

1. Name and date of the beginning and the type of persons served:

– The Center began operations on November 17, 1986.

– Persons served: students outside the traditional school system (boys and girls) over the age of 17, who are trying to find jobs, who have abandoned their studies.

The “La Salle” Professional Formation Center welcomes young men and women over the age of 17 who are burdened by many problems and who have not succeeded within the traditional school system. The Center tries to get them to learn a trade and then aims to help them find a job.

2. The story of the origins - evolution - key moments:

The “La Salle” Professional Training Center in Daloa (city of the antelopes with more than 300,000 inhabitants) is located in the Midwest portion of Ivory Coast. It is a very special school which is very much Christian and Lasallian.

On August 25, 1979, three De La Salle Brothers arrived in Daloa to work in the former school of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, which had then become a modern state high school, the present-day Lycée II of Daloa.

In 1981, seeing the youth situation, they came up with the idea of leaving the secondary school work and devoting themselves to professional training for the poor, for the young people who had abandoned their studies for various reasons.

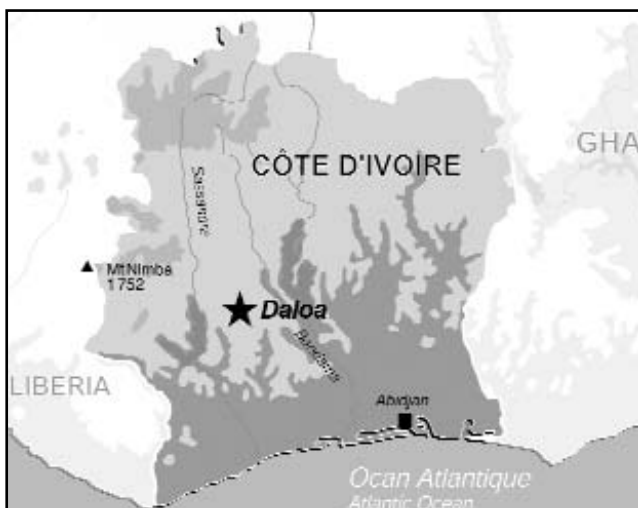
The Brothers, with the approval of competent authority from the Congregation of the De La Salle Brothers, presented to the Bishop of the Diocese a proposal for creating a Professional Formation Center. The proposal was subsequently presented to the government and finally to the German organization, MISEREOR, which decided to provide funding.

The Professional Formation Center began its educational work on November 17, 1986, opening its doors to 21 young apprentices (19 boys and 2 girls) on the premises of the Brothers' community residence in Daloa.

The Center opened in its present location, in Gbokora, some 3 kilometers north of Daloa, on the Daloa-Vavoua main road, in September 1987.

The training which is provided is very practical. There is a three-year program. The first year is for common industrial specialties.

Beginning with the 2nd year the students separate into two specialties: electricity and electronics.



The students in the electricity section receive comprehensive training and practice as they follow modules in industrial electricity, home electricity, engine recycling, heating and air-conditioning, plumbing and welding.

The students in the electronics section also receive practical training in modules dealing with radio, audio, television, video, and computer maintenance.

Besides these practical subjects (many hours spent in workshops), there is also drawing, French, English, training in civics, religious formation, work legislation...all at levels adapted to the special circumstances of the students.

From the very beginning, the choice made by the Brothers was clear: there would be no diplomas nor official titles offered. The most important thing was job training for responsible men and women who were in solidarity with their country and were committed to their nation's development.

To help the last-year students get established in a way in which they themselves are involved, a structure we call AJT (Young Workers Association) was created. It is a type of cooperative. We seek the type of funding we have received for Togo farmers (CFR from Tami) and PDR from "De La Salle-Kope."



3. Impact of the initiative for:

– Those who have gone through the experience (students): This school year 2001 - 2002, the 15th group has gone through. We do not have concrete data on the current work situation of our former students but we are convinced that the majority (perhaps 80%) are working in the specialty for which they trained, either in companies or on their own.

From the relational point of view, we receive many expressions of gratitude, recognition, trust from our former students (letters, visits, telephone calls). We believe that our students are "marked" by a style of education that is different from that of other places: respect, trust, solidarity, freedom, education in Christian values.



4. Impact of the initiative on:

– The social environment: Increase of modern technical means and social promotion of former students who have remained as monitors at the Center.

– The educational environment: Training at the Center has caused some young people to reawaken in themselves a taste for study which they had lost, so that later on they were able to continue their studies at an advanced level.

Our educational responsibility, our formation teams are always well appreciated and considered competent by the government educational authorities. "La Salle" is synonymous with work, responsibility, collaboration...

– The Church environment: Our young people are committed to various parish activities : JOC, choirs, boy scouts, catechetics...

Our Center has been a source of vocations for the priesthood and religious life. In our Institute we have 2 Brothers and a novice (who has just finished his first year of novitiate), all former students from the Center.

5. Minimum conditions to ensure the running of the initiative:

– There needs to be continued assurance of economic support so that the Center can continue to function for the poor (the cost to educate one student is \$623 USD yearly and the family contributes \$107 USD on a yearly basis).

– Young indigenous Brothers need to prepare themselves in technology and get excited about this type of work as well as agricultural work (CFR of Tami and PDR from “De La Salle-Kope.”)

– There needs to be sustained formation of a good team of lay associates which will give continuity to the work.

6. Risks to be avoided in this type of initiative:

– Avoid that the work be of just one person. If the person fails, the work will cease.

– Avoid that there be no prior study of the needs of the area (and specialty training needed)

– Avoid isolation in Church structures (parishes, religious communities) or working in closed circles without good cooperation.

EGYPT

Lasallian Initiative at Bayadeya (Egypt)

Contact: Brother Guy MOUEZY (*freresbayadeya@hotmail.com*)

Parallel School and the beginning of Young Mouvement

16th November 1992: A parallel school was begun in Bayadeya, a village in Upper Egypt by Brother Guy and three monitors for 67 pupils in two classes.

For whom it was envisaged: To accommodate children with no chance of joining any of the three established village schools.

How the scheme began

1. The Parallel School

a) Where is Bayadeya?

Bayadeya is a village in Upper Egypt, 300 km from Cairo, in the government region of Minia. The village is on the edge of the Nile, almost 7 km from Mellawi, and has a population of more than twenty thousand inhabitants. There are only three primary schools. One is a government school and the other two

are run by the AHE (the Association of Upper Egypt for education and development). One of the AHE schools extends beyond primary to do the CEG: a preparatory course for pupils destined to do manual work once their education is over. The three schools, of course, cannot possibly cater for all the village children as there are more than 600 births each year.

b. Before 1992

In 1984 a Brothers' community of two was founded for work in two of the AHE schools, then two primaries and one CEG. Soon one Brother was attempting to teach literacy to children who, because they were needed to do farmwork, did not attend school. Unfortunately this interesting experiment did not last.



c. The Association's work in the village

The Association (AHE) has worked for a long time to help children and adults (aged 15 plus) to become literate, setting up a centre for that purpose, as well as for the purpose of helping young girls from ten onwards to learn skills deemed necessary for womanhood. Literacy programmes are also given in the evening in the government school. Nevertheless, there is still a great need to help the very many boys and girls not attending any of the schools.

d. General agreement between Brother Guy and the Association on his plans for unschooled children

Having come to Bayadeya to respond to this need, I explored with the members of the Association (AHE of Minia) what would be agreeable to all concerned. We examined whether we ought to get the child somehow into a school situation or concentrate on educating that child to the full. Very soon we agreed on the importance of a full education. So we established a programme which would give the pupils ample time to assimilate basic subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, but which would also develop their awareness, observation, creativity and social behaviour.



e. Meeting the children in question. Setting up a favourable time to get them together

To get our work off the ground, we had to go round the village during school time to find out the children who did not attend and to convince their parents to allow them to join our parallel school.

We also had to sort out the best time for the children to return to the fields to round up their cattle and bring them home before nightfall.

f. Literacy and the parallel school

At first we concentrated on getting the pupils literate by using an elementary programme to ensure they passed the Literacy Certificate set by the Government. But very quickly we became convinced we must do more with the children as they did not have the facilities of those attending the three village schools. Hence the name "parallel school" took over that of "literacy programme".

g. Recruitment - Monitors - Time and Place

From the beginning I appealed to people interested to become monitors in my parallel school. The Association took charge of selecting the best and assuring their training in all aspects of the work over different periods of the year.

We tried to bear in mind the farm work our children were obliged to do. So schooling would take place in the afternoon, from 2:15 p.m to 5:15 p.m, five days a week. It would take place in one of the Association's two schools which finished the day at 2:00 p.m.

2. Progress of the Movement for the Young (MIDADE)

a. One aspect I held very dear was that the children manage their own affairs. After spending some time in the school, the children could, if they so wanted, get together, organise themselves and take action. Right from the start there were a good twenty of them, and two monitors agreed to work with me to be with these children and listen to them during their meetings. The movement became known as “the group of friends”.

NB: The movement for children is known worldwide as MIDADE (an international movement for the apostolate of children).

b. Summer 1995: 30 girls from Bayadeya got together to form a group the called “Les Souriantes” (Those who Smile). Several girls were expressing a desire to join the literacy classes.

A camp for 40 children aged 10 to 12 years from Bayadeya was organised at Beni Ebeid, a neighbouring village, which had as theme: The rights of the child.

Self examination was undertaken with a firm resolution to bring about change in all that was detrimental to the village; for example: one oven for baking bread to feed twenty thousand people, was that normal? Steps were taken to open a second plant.

c. Summer 1996: A group of children who had followed the literacy programme from 1992 were now 15 years of age. They could no longer belong to the “Group of friends” however much they wanted. They therefore became known as “The young people of the Nile”, a group that would follow the training of the JOC (young Christian workers).

The Precise Role for Lasallians

1. In the parallel school

a. The weekly meetings for monitors allowed them to become aware of how society actually behaved in the village. Of course many youngsters entered the parallel school but others withdrew, for various reasons:

- boys were taken out to work in the fields, look after the livestock, work to earn their bread.
- girls had to work in the house: do the washing, knead dough for bread, care for the babies or their little brothers and sisters, look after the animals, etc...
- parents didn't see why they should send their children to school, above all the girls.
- the indifference and inconsistency of some children to make the effort was a fairly grave problem.
- the monitor who very quickly lost patience or used the stick.

Faced with these difficulties the monitors discussed these problems with the child or his/her parents.

b. The monitors accompanying the children of the Movement all state how their contact with the children changed their way of seeing them, as also their relationship with them, and, as a consequence, their way of working in the parallel school. This brought about a new spirit: being attentive to the child and the way the child behaves.

For at least five years we as Lasallians have thus been reflecting on our way of acting in our work for edu-

cation. The monitors are delighted to see the children extend horizons, express themselves with confidence and enjoy self development.

When they meet at Lasallian reunions with other teachers of the village, the monitors of our parallel school hold their own and often ask the educators of other schools or similar activities serious questions.

The role of a Lasallian is to encourage serious discussion concerning the work of a teacher or exploring ways of improving one's ability to teach, so that all children are successful. His role also consists of creating a true relationship with his pupils, to win their confidence, especially the confidence of the difficult or recalcitrant. This will ensure discipline without the need of the stick.

2. The Movement

Whilst the monitors continue their training to become teachers of the literacy programme, those engaged in the Movement for the young have been able to convince monitors from other villages of the importance of the Movement in the education of children. Thus the Movement has spread into the villages of Echneine, Beni Ebeid and Badramane.

In 1997 a Lasallian team was formed in Bayadeya, of teachers and those responsible for other educational activities. Our monitors of the parallel school were included. In 2001 two organisers of the Movement for the young, who were in the 1992 group for literacy, joined the Lasallian family: Baha and Malak, both aged 20.



Impact of the work on the social, educational and cultural aspects of the region

The social environment

a) The young members of the JOC (Jeunesse ouvrière Chrétienne) movement saw to it that those working on the land had sufficient water to irrigate their fields. They arranged for them to meet with the engineers responsible for supplying water for this purpose. Following this meeting, a committee of young farm workers was formed

b) A new JOC group: following the initiative of a young JOC member in a remote sector of Bayadeya (Le Khour) a dozen girls and some young women got together in a house and reflected on the life of women in their district as it was lived day by day. They came up with several needs for improvement: to be recognised as people, to be trained in literacy so as not to be passed over, to learn how to raise children and to educate them. They set about remedying the situation: learning to read and write, with two of the women who had completed their education and two girls from the parallel school helping them. They brought in a doctor to explain to the mothers of their district how to bring up their children, to care for them right from birth and deal with any illnesses children might have.

c) A link was formed between the JOC movement of Upper Egypt and that of Cairo. The latter discovered the dynamism of the former, and found an interesting partner in its bid to improve work techniques.

d) Those responsible for teaching literacy to adults asked those with a similar role in the parallel school to share their experience of teaching reading and writing in Arabic.

e) In the same way, the Centre for promoting literacy and femininity was called upon to share its teach-

ing techniques. Several girls at the end of their formation at the age of 16 wanted to do the CEG programme in the same manner as those of the parallel school. But they could not as their general knowledge was not deemed sufficient. A dialogue was set up between the Centre and the parallel school to remedy this problem.

f) A parallel school in Cairo: Brother Michel Fleury came to Bayadeya to gather ideas from our parallel school. This visit resulted in a literacy programme being set up in the suburb of Khoronfish. After careful preparation lasting a year a parallel school was opened in 1997 (16th November) with a dozen monitors working in harmony with Brother Michel.

2. The educational and social environment

A great effort was made to get our students to reflect on the following:- the struggle against ignorance, learning without fully understanding, the “by heart” syndrome, cheating, etc...

a) “The fair hand” or writing skills: We wanted to take our time teaching the child to write, and well at that. A method was thought up that would enable the child to develop his hand systematically, progressing all the time. 58 sheets were drawn up allowing the child to develop an excellent hand..

b) Faced with the difficulty that children have in learning to read in Arabic (reciting by heart is strictly taboo!) we spent many years thinking about what to do to help the child read clearly and with complete understanding. We finally came up with an ideal solution which we called “The art of Reading”. This is a progressive method, starting with a few letters which the child will learn to recognise and pronounce...and so on, using the child's own vocabulary, until we come to short sentences and small paragraphs. We use this method in the first year of the parallel school.

c) A hundred leaflets were made up to help the child to do his sums with ease. This also uses the progressive technique. They are designed to eliminate any difficulties the child may experience in day to day living.

Minimal conditions to make the scheme work

- The initiator of the scheme being able to share it with others who are capable of working together and forming it into a better project.
- That the monitors remain enthusiastic to absorb new teaching methods if these are relevant to improving their teaching.
- That time be allowed for regular ongoing evaluation by the monitors and those accompanying them, of their own performance.
- Above all, to believe in the child. To believe that he has hidden qualities that he can ever improve.
- To be available, to be with the children. Always present. Young people and children need us to be there, even if little is said.
- To be ever welcoming.
- To be ready to come across children of every level of intelligence.
- To be teacher and friend of all irrespective of their behaviour.

Dangers to be avoided in this type of undertaking

- Routine: the monitor must not simply go through the motions
- Organisers must not monopolise the initiative of those accompanying the monitors. Early enthusiasm must be maintained at all costs.
- The leaders of the different movements must not give in to the children's whims: if they simply want to play, for example. The Movement must not simply become a sports club.

The "Catholic Teachers Training College " (C.T.T.C.)

Contact: Brother Michel Fleury (*michel@sudanmail.net*)

This institute for higher education was created in 1992 for the formation of catechists for Catholic and government schools in the archdiocese of Khartoum. It was opened at the request of Mgr Gabriel Zubeir Wako archbishop of Khartoum, by the Combonian Fathers and particularly Father Camillo B. who was its first rector. For the last two years it has been run by a Lebanese sister, Sister Paul Germaine, of the Sisters of Charity of Besancon.

Study lasts 4 years, the school year going from the beginning of August till the end of April of the following year.

The courses run 5 days a week, 2 sessions a day from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm and 5:30 pm till 7:00 pm.

All the teaching is done in Arabic.

The principal subjects are: philosophy, doctrinal theology, biblical theology, the sacraments, church history, African culture, psychology, pedagogy, Arabic and English.

The studies lead to a diploma from the institute. Steps are being taken to obtain recognition for its courses and diploma by the Sudanese Ministry of Education and the St Esprit University in Beyrouth. As yet, no result.

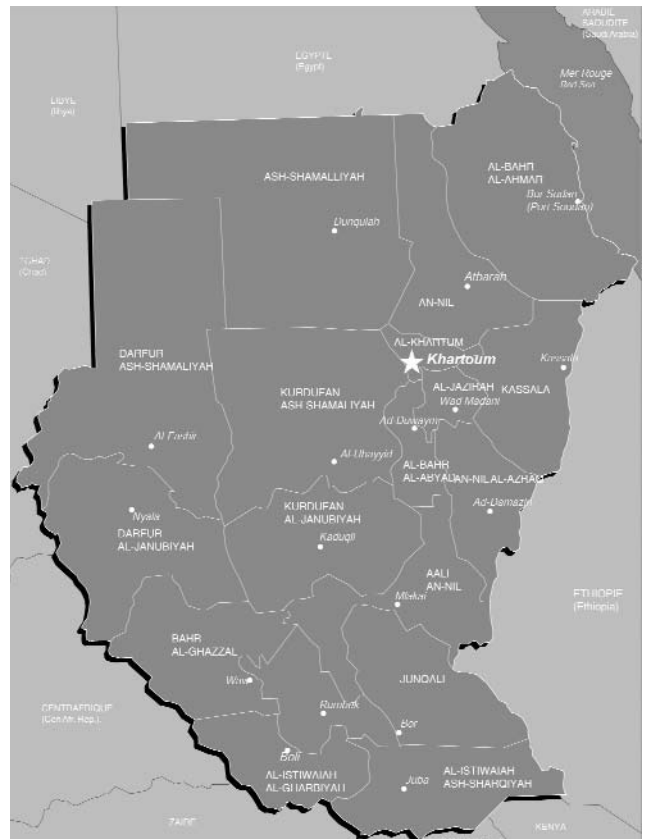
The institute is provisionally situated on land lent by the Comboni College in the centre of Khartoum.

To enrol the students must have achieved a good standard in their secondary school's final exams, and possess a fair understanding of Arabic and ability to write it. They have to find 50 000 Sudanese pounds (\$20 U.S.) a year to pay for their fees, books and documents accompanying the courses. They often find it difficult to pay this sum and certain ask their parish priests for help.

The institute takes 100 students in all, 25 a year. 2/3 are men and 1/3 women.

More than half teach in the morning in Catholic schools. Others are from various professions: being either civil servants, craftsmen, or members of the police force...Some have no work at all. A good number are catechists or animators in their parishes for no money at all. They live in regions on the edge of the town or outside in places with no services at all. They leave them after after a long day's work of teaching in the poorest schools, for example, and go to the institute at the hottest time of the day; they then return home in complete darkness, for these zones have no electricity. This makes study very difficult indeed.

The instructors are priests, religious or a few laymen who lecture in universities. It is often hard to make



up a team of instructors at the institute, for very few religious have a real grasp of Arabic. Seminarians, for example are taught in English.

I am responsible for pastoral formation and I work with Sister Paul Germaine on the pedagogical side.

– Pastoral formation consists of studying the idea of a Christian education that envelops the whole world (a far cry from catechesis as simply teaching catechism); its place in the pastoral care of the Church; the different methods of catechesis; formation of the young to use the Bible, religious symbols, etc...the documents of the Church on pastoral care and education: Redemptoris Missio, Vatican II documents on Christian education, the Directory on Christian education translated into Arabic in 2000 in Lebanon.

– Our formation in teaching consists above all of accompanying the students as they try out their experimental lessons in class, and of evaluating with them their plans and how they performed.

Next year we hope to train a group of Sudanese teachers (who have just finished a year's formation course in Lebanon) to do this work of formation and accompany students as they carry out the experimental lessons we shall begin in the second year.

Following a request from the archbishop to reinforce the spiritual and pastoral formation of our students, I have submitted two projects to the Council of Direction which whilst being in keeping with the mission of the teachers'college will nevertheless have great value beyond it.

1) The creation of a pocket-sized periodical for present and past students of the institute (200 people) and for all the teachers of 90 Catholic schools for the "deplaced" (1200 in all, amongst whom are 350 catechists).

These teachers have chosen this work because they have no other means of survival. They are full of good will but have not been trained. As for the catechists, most are first generation Christians, some are still catechumens awaiting baptism.

2) The creation of teacher groups to enhance spirituality in schools for present and former pupils.

There is a great demand for this, but a drive is needed and practical advice to form a team in each school or in each parish. Even if the parish priests, who are more and more often young Sudanese priests, are convinced of the necessity of schools to preserve the Christian identity and culture of the Sudanese from the south, they are often unaware of the preoccupations and needs of teachers.

Certain demands will be made of these teams: half a day's recollection a month, a weekly prayer session for the teachers in each school, and discussion on priorities to improve education. Those who

Teaching religion in the north of Sudan

As in most Arab countries, the teaching of religion, whether Christian or Muslim, is compulsory in all schools and a prerequisite for exams right up to the end of secondary education.

The programmes are regulated by ministerial commissions and the books printed by the ministry.

For the Christian religion, books are produced by specialist teams, whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant. However, most of our pupils cannot get hold of these books as the people working for the ministry do not take kindly to their distribution. Thus large quantities are deliberately sent to regions where there are no Christians.

In the terms of an agreement between the Churches and the ministry of education, courses are organised in parishes during the evening or in the holidays for Christian pupils of government schools. Their attendance at these courses and their participation in exams are communicated to the school authorities who validate the results. The catechists in these centres are unpaid, whilst teachers giving Christian lessons in schools are paid in the same way as their colleagues for other subjects.

In the regions where there are no parishes all the children must attend Muslim lessons.

In certain Catholic schools opened for the "displaced" from the south, the few pupils that are Muslim are dispensed from attending Christian lessons. In certain other schools, there are no exceptions.

One of the greatest challenges facing the Churches in the Sudan is the complete islamisation of all obligatory teaching programmes. It is true for all material, but especially for books of language and literature. 80% of the text of some of these books is taken directly from the Koran.

wished could pronounce some form of consecration or make a promise.

Here again, I wish to found and train a group of animators that will ensure that the movement shall last.

One of the difficulties is meeting up with the teachers in their schools in the peripheral sections of the town, a long way off and of difficult access. To invite them to the training college in the centre of Khartoun would perhaps be more feasible, if they can get travelling expenses and a meal, were it to be half a day's journey to get there.

KENYA

Child Discovery Center: Street Children Program

Contact: Br. Francis Kamanda (*cdcentre2000@yahoo.com*)

The Goals And Objectives Of The Centre:

First and foremost to shape the children in order to grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially (morally). This is to say that the child at the centre has shown some growth and change of values and attitudes towards life. This change is expected after a child is accepted by the Centre.

Another aim is to eradicate illiteracy and any form of child abuse like child labour. In this case, education/learning is paramount.

The Centre gives hope to street children who are AIDS orphans since such children go to the streets because they don't have parental care and so in order to survive they engaged themselves in begging money and pick-pocketing.

The Centre too has created awareness in the children that they too can pursue educational dreams in life. Besides, skills such as carpentry, hairdressing, welding, driving and tailoring etc. are given to older boys/girls who cannot join primary education.

The founding of this initiative came as a result of an inspiration and long reflective thought on the suffering of unfortunate street children in towns. I do remember when I was a student Brother in Nairobi, Kenya, I experienced different incidents. For example, while walking along the streets of Nairobi city, a street boy would call out at me, "*Bossi Nipe Kobure*" meaning "Boss give me five shillings". But most of the time I did not give them money. Instead I would buy them some food. It was not the boy's expectation to receive food but that is what I did.

During my Scholasticate, my pastoral work was to deal

The Child Discovery Centre is a street children's program based at Nakuru, Kenya The Centre was founded in September 2000 to rehabilitate both boys and girls. Amazingly by the end of October 2000 there were 30 children learning in the Centre. I must say that it was not easy to convince and persuade these children to abandon the street life and embrace educational life in the Centre. But little by little they joined the centre and started learning.

Before starting the Centre, I discussed the matter with the Government Officials to notify them and sensitise them to the need of such a Centre. They were pleased and supported me in all my endeavours. This notification to the Government was necessary for security and to avoid any sort of allegations.



hand with education in order to shape the individual person as a whole person in life.

with the street children in some Centres/ Homes founded by the church or individuals. It happened that I was posted at the Undugu Society of Kenya to work with such children. This Organization was founded by a Catholic Priest belonging to Missionaries for Africa (White Fathers) to cater for the welfare of the street children in Kenya. This situation exposed me to the lives of the street children at different levels and ages.

The project has created an impact on the community around the Centre. Thus the people around the Centre have supported and appreciated it. Also the Government and Church have supported the Centre. So there have been some visits by the Government officials and the Lasallian Family; Brothers and Laity. I must admit that the Centre has financial/moral support from Brothers (FSC) and Lasallians especially from the U.S.A.

The Child Discovery Centre has improved the living standard of the street children in Nakuru Town. That is to say most of these children have changed morally i.e. behavioural change. For example they have stopped taking drugs, picking pockets, glue sniffing and so on.

The Centre has enrolled some children to Primary school for formal education. This has given us hope that these children can lead a normal life after the rehabilitation.

On Christian instruction, almost all have become Christian oriented. For instance, currently we are carrying out Catechetical instruction in order to prepare them for the Sacrament of Baptism.

Thus the Christian instruction must go hand in

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Christ the Teacher Institute for Education

Contact: Br Finbarr Murphy (*Xteach@form-net.com*)

Introduction

To understand Project Busara, a little background knowledge is helpful. The project aims at upgrading untrained primary school teachers who staff the informal schools of Nairobi's slums. Below, these untrained teachers are referred to as UTs.

Millions live in the slums of Nairobi, but it would be almost impossible to hold a reliable census. Thus, the population of the biggest slum, Kibera, is variously calculated at 0.75 million; or 1.0 million; or 1.5 million. Nobody knows: and it would seem that no government wants to know. The slums are crime ridden and are politically explosive.

Education in the slums is described as informal; meaning the schools are unregistered and the teachers untrained. These informal schools receive no help whatever from government, whether municipal or national.

In fact informal schools are private; entrepreneurs found them, and run them as businesses. Thus slum children have to pay school fees. From these fees, unqualified teachers are paid. Their "salaries" would average US\$ 25 monthly.

Since January '03, Kenya's new government is trying to address the vast educational problem. Overnight they declared that primary education would henceforth be free. As a result, about 30% of slum pupils crowded into already crowded public classrooms to avail of free 'education.'

The new government scarcely admits the existence of the slums; officially they don't exist !

This then is Project Busara's locus operandi. We train hundreds of UTs from across Nairobi's slums.

1. The official name is **Project Busara**. This Kiswahili word, **busara**, connotes wisdom, enlightenment, and progress.
2. The exact starting point of this project is difficult to pinpoint.

However, November 2001 was certainly a significant time; this was when Br Robert Smith, FSC, Ph. D as new director of Christ the Teacher Institute for Education, CTIE, adopted Project Busara as an out-reach programme of the college.



CTIE is the Kenyan campus of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, USA.

3. Project Busara's target group is untrained teachers, UTs, who are employed in the informal schools of the slums of Nairobi.

The Aims of the Project

The main aim of the project is the upgrading of the UTs in the slums.

The beginnings

The beginnings are a little complex and personal. They deal with individual motives and are therefore subjective.

This writer, Br Finbarr Murphy, was invited to give an input at an upgrading seminar for Kibera Slum UTs, in May 2000. At the end of the 2 day seminar, the UTs requested that the upgrading course be continued, with a view to obtaining some kind of pedagogical qualification. The organiser of the seminar, Sr Carmel Powell, FMM, was not in a position because of other teaching commitments to engage in further upgrading programmes. She therefore approached me to respond to the UTs request.

It was in answer to this request that Project Busara was ultimately conceived.

Here was an appeal for help coming from the teachers in one of Africa's largest and poorest slums, and I, a De la Salle Brother, could hardly turn a deaf ear !

Throughout the summer of 2000 I held several exploratory meetings attended by members of the FMM community and a representative of Kibera. We settled on our official name, busara, discussed the planned curricula, but spent most of our energy trying to draft a constitution.

We had planned at this early stage, on registering as a Non Government Organisation... Then Br Robert Smith took leadership of CTIE, and adopted Project Busara as an outreach programme of the college.

Thus we were spared all the problems of registration. Moreover, the identity of the project, and above its legal persona were now clarified. Problems of certification and examinations were also solved.

General Impact

The total impact of Project Busara has not, as yet, been researched, and therefore objective evaluation is difficult to establish. Thus the conclusions presented here are no more than impressions based on spontaneous, informal feedback and on general observations.

1. The project enjoys a good reputation among all educational stakeholders. This may be concluded from the number of UTs applying for its courses, and from the invitations from various parishes.

2. Socially and educationally, Busara is impacting on several slums in Nairobi Busara graduates are more readily employed, inside and outside of the informal educational sector.

Lasallian Role

Project Busara, in its vision and mission, is clearly Lasallian. It offers free education to the poorest of the poor "according to the spirit and maxims of the Gospel."

The project falls under the jurisdiction of a Lasallian university, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

Funding in its first year came solely from Lasallian sources, all in the USA.

Three De La Salle Brothers have taught in the programme.

Graduations, usually presided over by Br Robert Smith, are Lasallian celebrations.

The project, from September 2000, has enjoyed the full support of the FSC Council of Charles Lwanga District of Africa.

In May'01, Br Finbarr Murphy was allowed by the Br Visitor to resign his teaching post in Tangaza seminary, in order to devote himself to the project.

3. Politically, at this moment in Kenyan history, the new government is trying to accommodate all pupils for free, in its public schools.

However, the politicians never mention the educational plight of the slums where it is impossible to carry out a reliable census. Hundreds of informal schools still operate in the slums, attended by thousands of pupils. Their existence goes unnoticed by government

Officially, the slums themselves don't exist !

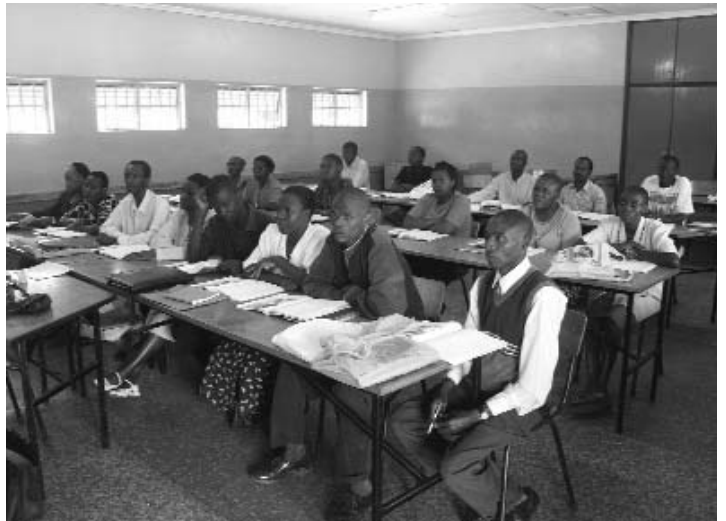
Project Busara's presence therefore is significant for its work, but more importantly, as a Lasallian witness. We insist the poor have the same rights as all other Kenyans.

4. Culturally, the project promotes human rights at a time when Kenya is trying to embrace a new constitution.

5. Ecclesially: Busara's curriculum is Catholic, through and through, but religious denomination is never a condition of access for either UTs or lecturers.

The project operates from catholic premises and engages at different levels, such Religious Orders as the Jesuits, SMA, Comboni Missionaries, Guadalupe Missionaries, Missionaries of Africa, Spiritans, Mariannists, diocesan clergy, Mercy Sisters, Canossian Sisters, as well as lay missionaries.

All of these have affirmed and helped the project in their different ways. However, we must note that the upgrading of untrained primary school teachers is hardly a pastoral priority for any parish priest !



Minimal conditions to make the scheme work.

Firstly, it is understood that all projects answer a real felt need. This must be their only *raison d'etre*.

1. At the human level, projects like Busara probably require a few people with vision (the Spirit of Faith?) and a sense of mission (Zeal?).

This core group must have the basic expertise and capacity to make the dream a reality. They must also have the essential "people skills."

2. Some financial resources are essential. However, in this writer's experience, money is only of very secondary importance. If the vision is right, and if the mission is being fulfilled, the money comes easily.

Risks to Be Avoided

– Take nothing for granted. In the case of Busara , we have learned from experience that quality control is essential.

– Thus, at every level of the project, there must be careful, ongoing evaluation.

– From experience we learned the need:

- to test the level of education of the applicants wishing to study with Busara.
- to evaluate lecturers' performances from semester to semester.

– Working on our own can also pose a risk.

– We have been enriched by liaising with other groups doing similar work.

CAMEROON

Educational Programme for Life and Love

Contact: F Rock Delude
B.P. 1557
Yaoundé, Cameroon.

1. Title of the initiative

Educational Programme for life and love

a. Beginning date of initiative: April 1986 after the National Bishop's Conference of Cameroon (C.E.N.C.).

b. Main Targets:

- Young people between 11 and 20 years old from all the dioceses of Cameroon and of all black Africa, the programme Educational Programme for Life and Love having been adopted at the Pan African conference of Catholic Action in 1990.
- The educators of the young: parents, teachers, priests, aspirants to the priesthood and religious life.

2. Aims of the initiative

1. Principal Objective: to awaken the young to a responsible sexuality.
2. Secondary aims: To develop among the young the ability to love and to be loved; to prepare them for responsible parenthood; to diminish the wastage of students due in many cases to early pregnancies; to take away the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and of Aids, of sterility, of abortion, of early death.
3. Operational aims: to provide the educators with quality documents on sexuality; to make these documents available to the young; to insert Education for Life and Love into the school curriculum.

3. The origins of the programme

In 1986, the C.E.N.C. studied the theme "Pastoral Care of the Young". Some of the teachers in Catholic establishments pointed out to the members of the Conference that pastoral care of the young was not limited to the spiritual aspects but should encompass the whole of their experience and in particular their psychological, affective and sexual development.

A commission of experts was created, charged with taking into account this aspect of the pastoral care of the young. The commission included doctors, psychologists, social workers, teachers at university level, secondary and primary schools, moralists and PFN instructors.

They began their work and came up against a major difficulty: that of the sexual taboo not overcome by the majority of the members of the commission. According to them, sexual education had to be given in speaking openly about human genital sexuality.

The members of the commission (about 25 people) gave themselves the task of preparing lessons on various subjects for the young adolescents in Catholic schools. This was a problem: the health visitors tended to speak above the level of the pupils, others annoyed them with their moralistic approach.

Soon, from the initial group there was only a small group of communicators formed to continue the task.

These “faithful” went to work on two tasks: first to prepare documents for the use of the young people (worksheets, prepared lessons) then to try them out with classes/groups of young people in the parishes of the city of Yaounde.

The success achieved amongst the people of the capital was such that numerous dioceses asked the instructors of Yaounde for first hand sessions: the first were Maroua, Bafia, Ebolowa, Mbalmayo, Doluala, Mkongsamba.

The welcome afforded to the Education for Life and Love Programme showed its pertinence and feasibility. Little by little all the barriers fell with regard to the Church, the Ministry of National Education, Health, Youth and Sport, the family and women's groups. The parents of pupils at Catholic primary and secondary schools asked to be trained and called for the programme to be made part of the curriculum.



4. The exact role of the Lasallians

Brother Rock Delude FSC is considered in Cameroon as the main creator of the Education for Life and Love. He inspired its contents and above all the pedagogy which is 100% Lasallian because it is centred first and foremost on the child.

Brother Delude trained the 550 teachers of the archdiocese of Yaounde and a number of others teachers and instructors of the Education for Life and Love programme in other dioceses in Cameroon.

These people formed in the Lasallian pedagogy were not called “Lasallian” but they taught according to the principles of De La Salle. They knew him and prayed to him as the patron of teachers.

Other FSCs applied the Education for Life and Love programme in the establishments in which they worked: Douala, Talba, Diang, Lara Njamena, Manjo and formerly, Efok.

5. The impact of the initiative on those who have experienced the programme

– The beneficiaries of the formation sessions. These sessions, aimed at primary and secondary school teachers, took place twice a year: they also brought together those responsible for youth associations and movements. They lasted 5 days. The objective was to convey to the participants the syllabus and the methods of teaching as well as the tools necessary to follow with their groups the Education for Life and Love programme. The 600 participants at these sessions underlined the great benefit they derived for the development of their own sexuality, for the equilibrium of their married lives and for their educational work with the young people.

– The instructors who give the Education for Life and Love lessons to the young people in their establishments often underline the broadening and enriching of their relations with the young people to whom they give the lessons: from dispensers of book knowledge they have become counsellors (they say big brothers) to their pupils.



– The parents point, like the teachers, to the enriching of their relationship as much with their partners as with their pupils. They say that it is now possible to hold a dialogue on a topic that was formerly taboo. They indicate the benefits of a common vocabulary for talking about sexual realities, a vocabulary that respects the dignity of the human body, modesty and consecrated love.

– The children who have benefited from the Education for Life and Love programme are more open towards their educators and to their peers. The quality of their interpersonal relationships changes. Respect for the other sex becomes imperative. Boys and girls accept each other in their differences as much in the

physical aspects as in the psychological and social. Certainly, slip-ups continue: love letters, flirting, sexual harassment... but this takes place no longer in pairs but in the gatherings of peer educators, of teachers and of parents. In the primary schools and the Catholic colleges of Yaounde, the number of pregnant girls, abortions, cases of Aids and sexually transmitted diseases has considerably diminished.

– A few figures concerning the primary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Yaounde in the which the author has a role as instructor.

From the 650 teachers of the 58 primary and nursery schools, 123 have followed the course on human sexuality.

– The African man holds sexuality as a taboo. He also considers it as something sacred. Our programme which situates sexuality in the plan of God inspires, first and foremost, confidence in men and women brought up in the traditional beliefs or/and in the Christian faith.

– On the ecclesial level. Called by the C.E.N.C. to put in place the programme of sex education, the “experts” found in most of the bishops a real support in their work. We can't say the same of the clergy in the parishes who showed indifference and sometimes hostility to our first initiatives. The older catechists sometimes tried to put the catechumens off following the programme; the young people on the contrary are in favour of our work.

8. On the psycho-affective and behavioural level. Young people of Cameroon express more and more explicitly their desire to remain virgins until their marriage or all their lives with aspirants to the consecrated life.

6. Minimal conditions for such an initiative to work.

– You need trained personnel with a good understanding of young people, of their hopes, of their psycho-affective and sexual problems; a good understanding of human anatomy, of physiology and of genetics.

– You need people with a good knowledge of God's plan for every man and every woman, of the teaching of the Christian churches on the topic of human sexuality.

– You need people psychologically and sexually well-balanced seeking educational contact with young people and with their parents.

- You need people who are engaged in the fight for a responsible sexuality and role models in their own sexual behaviour.
- You need people who can cope with contradiction and aggression from those who do not share their convictions in the matter of human sexuality.

7. Risks to avoid in these types of initiative.

- To speak of the anatomical and physiological aspects of sexuality in isolation from the family, social, cultural, psycho affective, spiritual realities.
- To launch people into sexual education who have not been approved. There is the risk of sexual exploitation and of paedophilia.
- To confuse information on sexuality and sexual education.
- To follow blindly fashions and ideas on the subject of sexual behaviour.
- To fall into line without a critical spirit behind the “superior” authorities when they popularise practices contrary to universal or Christian morality.

TOGO

A Community Development Program

Contact: Br. Emilio Fernández

1. Date and people concerned in the initiative.

Since the Brothers of the Christian Schools took over the Establishment, at the time of the Training College, of Togoville in 1952 there have been Brothers who were interested in discovering how the people around them lived.

During the time of the Canadian Brothers, Brother Emile Lariviere used to go out on his motorbike to look after the farmers and during the time of the Spanish Brothers, Brothers Jaime Marcos and Manuel Gil tried to help, first of all, the people of the village and secondly the farmers, by paying for the medication for the poor and by offering scholarships for young girls to follow the domestic science courses run by the sisters of Afanyan.

In 1985 Brother Emilio Fernandez arrived with a local Brother, Brother Florent Kudoro and they started the initiative of small projects for the farmers.

In July of 1987 - that date can be considered as the beginning of the initiative - we drilled the three first wells: Modzi-Kope, Eklo-Kope and Mesan-Kope with the help of a group of Spanish volunteers, Brothers and lay persons, who came to build the new chapel of the College.

3. Account of the evolution and the key moments.

a) The first moments:

The approach of the Brothers to the deprived who lived around them began by small projects for them.

2. Aims of the initiative

After the courses in the College, we began to explore the surroundings and there were four things that struck us:

- that the children of school age stayed at home to help their parents in the fields
- that the people worked their fields individually and that they were illiterate
- that they lived in a very poor environment and were living on a subsistence economy
- that they followed the rites and practices of the traditional religion and, moreover, they were fetishists, very taken by evil spirits.

With these observations, we set out an action plan which we submitted to the Director of INADES of Abidjan, an organisation created to set in motion the developmental structures in Africa. These are its objectives:

- a. the initiative is aimed at the well-being of the people.
- b. education of the children of school age and combating illiteracy in adults.
- c. to pass beyond individual work and organise work in groups to improve the economy and achieve the well-being of the family.
- d. gently to announce the Good News of the Gospel

These objectives can still be read on some of the wells because they were engraved on the stonework of the well or on the water basins.

In order to develop these objectives, we created appropriate structures:

- drilling for new wells and renewing the old ones
- construction of channels to irrigate the vegetable gardens
- to develop a fairly large piece of land enclosed by hedges planted with a vegetable-like plant, local senna (*leucaena glauca*).
- organisation of groups of men, women and children to work in the vegetable garden.

We succeeded in creating as many as fifteen groups under the supervision of the Brother responsible, with the aid of a lay technician. They visited them every week to encourage them.

The suggestion of the Major Superiors and of the Delegation of the Missions of Spain to do something in favour of the farmers and village people.

The acceptance by the community of these suggestions.

b) The drilling of the first three wells for the farmers by the volunteers who came to build the College chapel. The names of the farms chosen for the wells were Modzi-Kope, Eklo-Kope and Mesan-Kope.

c) The creation of Agricultural Cooperatives.

In view of the green light given by the Chapter of the sub-District and the nomination of two Brothers to take responsibility for the projects in favour of the villagers, we continued to drill new wells, to construct channels for irrigation, to mark out land for the vegetable gardens, to organise groups of families so that they work together. Thus was born the market-gardening enterprise in the farms of Togoville.

With the support of the families of the Brothers of the Community and above all, the support offered by different NGOs: Manos Unidas, Proyde Madrid, Proide de Catalunya and the Generalitat de Catalunya, we were able to continue the initiative and above all with the support of the groups of volunteers – Brothers and lay people – who came, sent by Proyde and Proide for the holiday camps close to the farmers, continuing the work of digging new wells and the arrangements of different projects already established.

We managed to create 15 groups and we welcomed over a period of 10 years volunteers from all parts of Spain.

d) The voluntary work for the farmers has enabled us to buy about five acres of land to establish what we call at the moment the Rural Project De La Salle-Kope.

e) Evaluation to make improvements

The new Director, Brother Pedro Astigarraga, with the help of Inades-Formation conducted an evaluation.

4. Impact of the initiative

Each group, of which there are fifteen in total, was presided over by an elder of the farms who met together to discuss the development.

Before the Centre was constructed, all these meetings took place in the community house.

I can still remember the intervention of of Atiati. His intervention took the form of a prayer. He thanked God

and the protecting Spirits - the people for whom we are working are Spirit worshippers - for the initiative which was brought to fruition by the community of Brothers at Togoville. The farmers, despised by the others in their villages, felt protected by this great Establishment which they called the little Dakar in reference to the work created in Senegal.

Others appreciated the organising of the vegetable gardens and the new way of working as a group.

Several saw an improvement in their lives: they invested the money which they borrowed from the person in charge of the project to become owners of the land which they had formerly been obliged to rent at arbitrary and exorbitant prices. In more than 15 vegetable gardens, we created more than 20 enclosures for grazing and finally we constructed more than 10 new and modern pig farms financed by the municipality of Sestao (in the Basque country).

And here is the declaration of a young Brother which he made for his final profession.

“ For me - Brother Gilles Denakpo - it was the time that I dedicated to the preparation of my lessons for the illiterate which I gave at night to the farmers after they had worked in the fields, which was the significant experience of my religious choice.

I used to say my evening prayer on my own, then I would take the mobylette and go the De La Salle-Kope Centre to give my lesson from 7pm until 8pm. It was dark but in my heart I could feel the light shine. This experience marked me!”

For me, wrote Brother Emilio, founder of the project with Brother Florent Kudoro, it was and will be a key experience in my life as a Brother of the Christian Schools. I had a good experience of the presence of God amongst the poor. I was able to live the phrase that one reads in theology books “It is the poor that we are evangelising”.

5 Impact of the project on the social, educational, political, cultural and church communities.

The number of villages which benefited from this initiative is 27; that is to say 585 individuals.

According to a census conducted by those responsible for the project in 1996 this is the composition of the population: male 305 and female 280.

We have improved 15 wells and around them we have created vegetable gardens in which we have constructed channels for irrigation. The lands of the vegetable gardens have been enclosed by a hedge with a vegetable type plant, the local senna (*leucaena glauca*).

This local senna provides them with fire-wood and food for the animals as well as enriching the land with fertiliser, thus avoiding the necessity of cutting down trees and shrubs for fire-wood to roast the cassava in order to make gari.

Many people through the loans that the Centre has made to them have bought the land and are raising different types of livestock: pigs in the modern pigsties that the Project has constructed and animals that graze in the pastures we have created.





to have a chapel and a school for them. The children who go to school have to walk 5 kms four times a day. Mr Ayivi Kamekpo and the catechist Master Boniface merit special mention.

Almost all the parents have registered their children of school age in the Catholic or state schools in the surrounding villages. This is one objective that the project has achieved.

Brother Pedro Astigarraga, second Director of the Project, with the collaboration of the OCDI formed groups of the church movement Justice and Peace in different parishes of the Diocese.

This initiative which is already 17 years old, continues in a region which still needs our help and collaboration.

Religious and scholastic sensitisation has been achieved in the area by the Christians of the parish of Togoville with the cooperation of the local Christians.

The latter are in the process of making approaches to the Church and school authorities

1. Educational work in the Lasallian Latin-American Region

Latin America and the Caribbean form an immense geographical Region which is culturally very diverse. Certainly they share many common elements: a history in which the various nations and sub-regions frequently draw closer to one another, processes of independence which are relatively contemporary, similar social situations marked by injustice and inequality, two principal languages which facilitate communication between nations, similar religious concepts which still recognize the Catholic Church as a respected guide with generally accepted influence, although there is a rapid movement towards marked pluralism. Nevertheless, there are also distinct differences between one country and another and between one region and another. The political processes which have been experienced have generated well-differentiated concepts, their processes of integration are very delicate and are often marked by mistrust and prejudice. Mixed races or immigration practices influence ethnic traits which make it possible to distinguish populations within the region and cultural expressions that have evolved so as to produce characteristics which are very typical of each country and even within countries.

It is important to recognize this reality of common elements and significant differences in order to be able to understand this part of the world. The Lasallian Mission, therefore, is placed within this reality and it responds to these differences. Historically, Lasallians began their mission in 1863 in Ecuador. Then came foundations in Chile in 1877, Colombia in 1890 and the rest of the continent in the first decades of the 20th century. The Brothers arrived in Latin America and the Caribbean with a specific assignment from governments: to collaborate in

modernizing education and, in a number of cases, to organize the national educational system. During these years the first works sprung up, generally in the form of a grand private school where methods brought from France were used, with emphasis on the Natural Sciences, Mathematics and technology. Next to these great schools there also appeared popular schools for the education of the poor. Also common were agreements between the Institute and governments for the organization and administration of state schools, especially technical institutes and normal schools.

Nevertheless, the different socio-political processes at play in our countries and the characteristics peculiar to our peoples allowed the Lasallian mission to diversify and many different educational processes were proposed, some of them traditional - the majority - but also there were creative and alternative responses. These last ones we have called "Islands of Creativity" within the Region and they are being proposed today as possible works for Districts within the Region to imitate. We would like to try to group programs to show a reality which is diverse, rich, and encouraging:

Formal education.

There are many educational works of formal education which respond, primarily, to middle-class populations. They exist in all the Districts within the Region and they are the most numerous of the Lasallian works. Although they are known among ourselves as "traditional works" it is necessary to say that the majority of these have made internal innovations, not only to



ensure academic quality, the use of new technology, and extension to include underprivileged populations, but also to create programs for formation in social justice, the defense of the rights of children, and attention to the poor. Within these schools there is great lay participation both within the administration as well as in pastoral ministry and the teaching process itself.

Within this group also can be mentioned works of a popular nature, the majority of which are in marginalized areas that care for very poor populations with formal educational programs, some of them state schools and others financed by Districts, boards, or international organizations. Some of these works are Technical Institutes which prepare students for the world of work such as the Technical Institutes in Nicaragua and Colombia.



Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. Not all of these institutions are of university status. This status depends in some measure on the legislation proper to each country. And so there are Universities proper, university institutions, programs of higher education which are attached to other universities, or educational institutions, and normal schools which in some countries are classified as part of higher or tertiary education.

In this area we should mention the program that is beginning in Guatemala at the La

Salle Mayan University: this is a very innovative, creative and prophetic program. Also there is the La Salle Foundation in Venezuela which is recognized internationally and the new La Salle University of the Caribbean, a novel program of higher education known for its methodology and objectives.

Higher education.

The Lasallian Latin-American Region in recent decades has gone through a very productive time in terms of higher education institutions and educational programs. This is without precedent in the Institute. Lasallian presence in the context of higher education in Latin America is limited to the 20th century, especially the 1960's. Although we find some important incursions into university education on the part of the Brothers at the beginning of the century, it is in 1962 when we had the foundation of the first Lasallian university in Mexico City. Two years later, in 1964, La Salle University in Bogota was founded and later La Salle University - Bajío was founded in Leon, Mexico. These three universities were the pioneers and almost the only Lasallian universities until the 1970's. Today they are the largest, each one having a student population of over 10,000.

Today Lasallians are present in 34 institutions of higher education in 10 countries of Latin America: Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru,

Ethnic education.

These programs are aimed at indigenous and marginalized populations with an emphasis on culture. Some of these programs care for indigenous populations while others serve Afro-Americans. The main programs in this field are in Guatemala which has Mayan populations: Prodesa, the Santiago Institute and the planned Mayan University; in Bolivia, which has Quechuan and Aymaran peoples: there is Radio San Gabriel which reaches nearly two million persons with its educational radio programs and training of community leaders. These programs even reach Ecuador with its own indigenous population. In Colombia and Brazil there are Afro-American people who are served as well as in Chocó in the northeastern part of Brazil.

Popular education programs.

These educational processes within marginalized populations and aimed at the poor, emphasize the methods of popular education, that is, a school which transcends its own physical space and becomes involved in the communi-

ties where it operates. Its pedagogy and curriculum respond to the needs of these communities and they are an alternative for the education of the poor. Three significant programs in this field are the La Salle School of Sapucaia in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Saint Héctor Valdivielso School in the Malvinas Islands, Argentina, and the St. John Baptist de La Salle School in the Dominican Republic.

Teacher formation.

In addition to the university education departments or schools of education, there is a significant number of normal schools which serve, in the majority of cases, people in rural areas in teacher training for those who work especially in the primary education of children from those areas. In Peru there are several programs of this type and progress is being made in consolidating models and innovative pedagogical programs. Also in Colombia, in Chocó, there is one school like this. The San Miguel Network in Panama serves teachers in the most isolated and marginalized areas of the country by advising them, offering them training in catechesis, leadership and pedagogy.

Missionary volunteers.

Within the context of association for the educational service of the poor there have been established within the Region communities of young people and Brothers who share their lives and work for the poor. The District of North Mexico has implemented a community program in the mountains which includes young university students and Brothers who share community life and apostolic work. In the District of Ecuador several programs of this type have been set up that have also become a vocational seedbed and an expression of a youth pas-

toral ministry program with a dimension of apostolic commitment.

Programs for the care of street children.

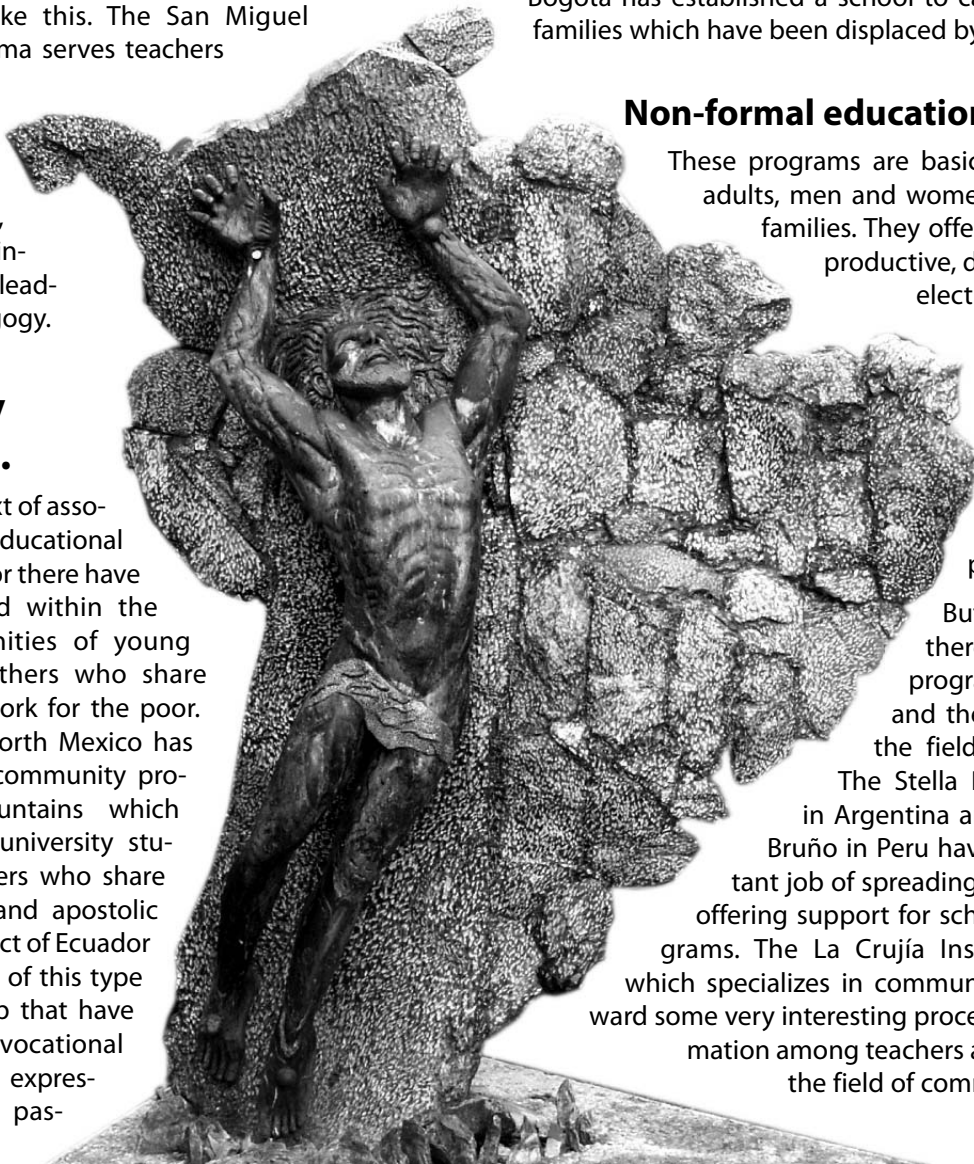
These are educational programs aimed at young people who have already experienced life on the street or who are in imminent danger of doing so. In the District of South Mexico a group of children who are in the process of resocialization are served and they are given a formal education to prepare them for a productive life and to enable them to continue on to higher studies. Also in Bolivia there is a program for orphans to prevent them from becoming street children. Porto Alegre has developed a process called "Cidadania na praça" which looks to rehabilitate children who live in the streets of the great city, and the District of Bogota has established a school to care for children from families which have been displaced by violence.

Non-formal educational programs.

These programs are basically geared towards adults, men and women, who are heads of families. They offer training courses for productive, daily work in bakeries, electricity shops, garages shops, kitchens, nursing stations, etc. The District of Sao Paulo has one program of this type which serves nearly 500 persons.

But within the Region there are also education programs of another type and these mainly deal with the field of communication.

The Stella Publishing Company in Argentina and Bolivia, as well as Bruño in Peru have finished an important job of spreading the word about and offering support for school educational programs. The La Crujía Institute of Argentina, which specializes in communication, has put forward some very interesting processes for ongoing formation among teachers and those involved in the field of communication.





If it is true that in recent years there have appeared in the Region many innovations and alternatives for the educational service of the poor, there is still much more to be done in this area. In fact, Brother Superior, addressing the Region, told us: "Thinking about our Lasallian reality in Latin America, at times I have the impression that we lack the drive to respond to new educational needs and that we easily are satisfied with what we are doing... what is certain is that we should not go very far away from confronting these dehumanizing borders in our reality."

The Perla Program is an attempt to respond to these chal-

lenges. The Perla program is defined as "a personal and community commitment, based on faith, and made real in a systematic proposition of the transformation of the educational and social reality of Latin America and the Caribbean. The program interprets and guides the meaning of the Lasallian mission in light of the spirit of the 43rd General Chapter and of the Regional Assembly as a response to the demands of the world today. It starts from redefining the presence and the participation of the Institute in the historic development of the Continent and overcoming conditions of injustice and inhuman poverty that affect the majority of the population with a strong impact on children and young people and, therefore, on the destabilization of the future of the Continent...The Perla Program is set up as a Latin American and Caribbean Lasallian response to the educational service of the poor and as criteria for the presence of the Brothers and partners in the present context of our Continent as it faces educational urgencies taken on as the explicit proclamation of the Gospel; the democratization of knowledge; the promotion of justice; peace and the defense of life; the defense of the rights of children; and sustained human development."

Br. Carlos G. Gómez Restrepo
Secretary General RELAL

2. Innovational Trends in the Lasallian World in the USA and Toronto Region

Taking our inspiration from the Founder who adapted methods and systems to respond to the needs of the children of the artisans and the poor, the Lasallian institutions in the United States and Toronto Region have historically tried to adapt to the needs of those we serve. In recent years, the entire world has seen the revolution in technology and we Lasallians have seen a renewed focus on the needs of the poor in our Region. This small article will highlight some of the trends in the past ten years in our Region.

The San Miguel Schools

A new group of schools in our Region, named after St. Miguel Febres y Cordero have opened in areas all over the



United States. These schools are small, gratuitous schools, small in population (no more than about 75 students), based in poor neighborhoods. Often these schools serve an immigrant community, African-American or Native American population. Methods are designed for these populations to teach reading, composition, and mathematical skills to prepare the young persons for high school success. Usually these young people come from neighborhoods where many students drop out of school. Based in a nurturing religious and community atmosphere, these schools also focus on family involvement and spiritual growth. They get no financial support from the government and rely on the generosity of volunteers, the Districts and benefactors.

Recently, Lasallians are adapting a Jesuit model called Cristo Rey for secondary schools. These schools provide a Lasallian Education for children of the poor in cooperation with the business world. Corporations join in partnership to provide tuition for these students as well as work experience in the various corporations. These schools are able to create links between the haves and have-not of society and allow Catholic and Lasallian schools to flourish in areas that dioceses have abandoned for economic reasons.

New Educational Centers

In several areas of the United States (California, Kansas City and Chicago) centers to assist young people and adults after school with their school work, literacy and English as a second language have begun to serve a population that may never have had a chance for an educational experience adapted to their needs. These centers are not traditional schools but places where students get individual attention. Adults who dropped out of school years before can complete credits to finish their

education and raise their standard of living.

High Schools

The biggest single group of schools in the Region is secondary schools. In the schools, none of which receive government support, there has been a steady increase in creatively seeking funds from former students and corporations so that children of the poor can attend. Additionally, these schools are making use of the technological advances in their programs including the development of technologically based classrooms in several schools.

The high schools have also become more aware of adolescents with learning problems and have developed special programs and supports within the schools so that these students can learn and succeed on the high school level. Specially prepared teachers and counselors along with appropriate methods and materials help fulfill this aspect of the secondary schools' Lasallian commitment.

All of the high schools have service program in which students volunteer their time to work with the poor in their areas and in places all over the United States. Led by dedicated faculty, these students tutor, visit the elderly, clean up blighted areas, repair buildings and visit the sick. Parts of these programs include a time for discussion and prayer so that students can reflect on the causes of these problems and integrate justice into their own spirituality.

High Schools are also making a renewed effort to include the humanizing aspects of the arts in the curriculum. Schools renovating facilities often include new buildings and areas for drama, graphic arts, dance and music providing a human education and personal growth for young





people. A special Regional Lasallian workshop was held in 2002 for teachers of the arts.

Higher Education

The seven institutions of higher education in the region creatively adapt themselves to the needs of the populations they serve. Many of the universities offer evening and off-campus programs in shopping centers, business complexes

and other non-traditional sites for older students who need to finish education and have to work to support families. Students are educated in business, nursing and other areas in creative short-term and accessible programs to allow for completion of education. Some of the universities have formed cooperative programs with dioceses to train lay ministers and offer degrees in religious studies. Others have formed cooperative networks with the Miguel schools making their education department faculties and education students available. The higher education institutions have also continually adapted their programs to the new technologies and created programs that meet today's needs.

On each of the campuses, like the high schools, there has been an increased interest in volunteering to help the poor in a variety of ways. Frequently, students and faculty give up holiday times to travel to depressed areas to build homes and tutor.

The Lasallian Educational mission is alive and adapting itself to the needs of the time in the tradition of the saint whose name we bear.

*Br. Thomas Johnson
Regional USA / Toronto*

Basic course of distance formation for catechists

Contact: Liliana de Gómez Bidondo (*revelo@fibertel.com.arg*)

1. Name of the Initiative:

Basic course of distance formation for catechists.

It began in 1986 and started with a presentation 'ad experimentum' in the diocese of Rio Negro in the south of the country.

The intention of this proposal was and remains:

to offer a catechetical formation aimed at those persons who, for different reasons, could not carry out systematic training, keeping in mind especially that it be economically accessible.

2. Objectives of the Initiative

General Objectives

1. To contribute to the formation of catechists and pastoral workers who live away from the traditional centres of formation, in such a way that they can respond to the demands of living the gospel in the reality in which they are immersed.
2. To produce a Catechetical-Pastoral formation from, in,with, for and towards the community, starting out from the reality and having the action of the catechist rooted in it, without taking him out of his own environment.
3. Acquiring experiences of communication and group work tending towards living the catechising community.
4. To provide means for the permanent formation of catechists.
5. To make possible continuous self-evaluation in order to improve pastoral practice.

Specific Objectives

1. To develop a methodology which make possible permanent self-formation.
2. To help the catechist in his growth in the faith.
3. To provide elements for the analysis of his/her pastoral reality and group confrontation of this experience.
4. To discover in community form the incarnation of the Faith in the reality in which we have to live.
5. To create links of communion between those who are in pastoral action from the same reality, inciting reflection and confrontation of experiences.



3. The Story of the Origins

Starting from the initiative of the Director of the Pastoral Institute for Adolescents (IPA) in 1986 we began to think of and elaborate a Project for the Formation of Catechists from a Distance.

This method was chosen in view of the scarcity of Diocesan Catechetical Seminaries in most regions of our country, taking into account the number of square miles taken up by each diocese.

So once the Course Plan was rounded off, it was presented to the National Council of Catechesis composed of the Directors of the Council of each Diocese. The Director of the Council of a southern diocese (Rio Negro) called upon the IPA to implement the Course.

The Team of Teachers carried out in the town of Cipolletti, the Presentation of the Course at the First Witness Meeting, offering it later to other Dioceses, with the necessary adaptations arising after an initial period of trying out the Project, making agreements with the Councils of Catechesis and the local Bishops, who committed themselves to naming a person or team as zone coordinators of the Course and in each case in reference to the IPA.

In regard to organisation the IPA drew up two levels of coordination.

1. Zone coordination: the responsibility of the zone team named by the Catechesis Council and the local Bishops, whose function would be the animation of the groups in the zone.
2. General coordination: the responsibility of the Team for the Distance Course of the IPA, carrying forward a management of leadership, coordination, supervision, tutorship/guardianship, and evaluation of the nucleus groups in the geographic regions. (Patagonia, the Centre, Northeast and Northwest Argentina).

In this way it extended through various dioceses of the country, at present covering 22 dioceses out of 63 with a total of 205 groups and 1,200 pupils.

4. The Impact of the Initiative on those who have lived the Lasallian Experience

On those who have lived the experience

- On the personal level it is valued as a strong instance of formation or updating for all those who did not have the possibility of being admitted to a systematic and progressive formation in catechesis and in obtaining a spiritual growth, not only of one's personal faith but of his prayer life, commitment to and greater participation in the life of the Church, through one's participation in its communities, educational or parochial, or in ecclesial movements.
- Many of the students of this course, not having had the experience of following studies much beyond primary level, it gives them the opportunity of gaining admission to training for promotion. For some students of the Course, having received the Certificate of Catechist is to have been able to obtain the first study certificate of their adult life.
- At group level the possibility of living the experience of a community of faith, work and life in the groups to which they belonged for the 3 years of the Course.
- At ecclesial level not only the ecclesial experience in the same groups but that of a greater participation in parish and diocesan activities.
- At training level, being able to develop studies which have allowed them a greater knowledge of the Word of God, of those being catechized, of documents of the Church, of catechetical methodology.
- At a social level, the possibility of getting a job through the official recognition which the Course has obtained in the city of Buenos Aires and at Ministry level in Salta Prov. (where catechesis is compul-

sory in schools)

– At the level of faith it has permitted a greater level of deepening and comparison (confrontación) with other people through the group method which is required in the Course and in the Bearing-witness Meetings which take place three times during the Course together with other diocesan groups, which allows the creation of a communication network which is very difficult in our country thanks to the great distances which separate the different localities of the same diocese, and the impossibility of attending Formation Institutes for the same reason and due to their absence in most dioceses.

–Another very strong impact is the low cost of this course, which is \$40 or 10 dollars per person per year. This is possible thanks to the subsidy which this Project has received from the beginning as a Work subsidized by the Congregation of the De La Salle Brothers in Argentina.

– The help of some foreign foundations such as Adveniat which for many years gave the course the money needed for the production of materials and at present (2002) the Argentina La Salle Foundation which together with the Premia Foundation(Sp.) has given 200 scholarships for students from the poorest dioceses in the country.

At the Lasallian level

– The possibility, by means of the course, of taking charge of the formation of thousands of catechists in all the dioceses of the country.

– That of counting on the respect, recognition and gratitude of the Councils of Catechesis and of the Bishops for the seriousness of the formation offered and for the opportunity presented to the catechists to form themselves and in this manner to assure the implementation of a catechesis renewed and incarnated both in the parishes and in the colleges and Catechetical Centres of the country.

– That of installing the name of the IPA as a Lasallian work as part of the national catechetical task.

– That of making possible for all catechetics teachers of the Lasallian Works to avail of this low-cost formation by means of total or partial scholarships.

6. Minimum conditions for the initiative to function

– The design of a Project which includes a plan of study in accord with the needs of the local Church, which will be a response to the perceived concrete necessities in order to

5. The Impact of the Initiative on the social, educational, political, cultural and ecclesial environment

In the ecclesial

– To put at the service of the Church in Argentina , a course of Formation of Catechists within the reach of all through its low cost , through its distance learning method and through its novelty of being a course which has to be carried out in groups formed of people from the same parochial , diocesan or educational reality.

– To offer this novelty to all the Church in Argentina as being the first Distance -learning Catechists Course which has existed as such for many years , developed and conducted in the country.

– To rely on a course which has as its requisite the approval of the Bishops of each diocese in order to be implemented , thus offering itself as an ecclesial service.

– To offer a catechetical formation renewed by pastoral workers.

Educational Impact

– The approval of the course as a Course of Formation at a Distance , with official approval for teachers , being the First Course of Catechetics which has had this recognition in Buenos Aires.

– The approval of this Distance learning Course as a diploma of competence at the official level in Salta Prov.

– The possibility on the work level of getting new jobs in the official schools of Salta Prov.

In the Social Environment

– The offer of gaining admission to a new opportunity for promotion , for students of this Course who have no chance of admission to higher studies.

– The possible repercussion of transformation of the social environment through a formation based on the gospel principles.

– The possibility of personal promotion arising from the group style of formation.

offer this project in a form that is semi-witness .

- The endorsement of the Bishops or Catechesis Councils of the dioceses for what is being offered.
- An Institution which can count on ecclesiastical recognition as a house or institute of formation and which will back up with its reputation the quality of the certificates which are delivered and the continuity of the Course.
- A seat where the Administration Personnel will function: a secretary who will assume the management of the finances of the Course and of the Secretariat itself.
- A general coordinator for the Project.
- One or two tutors who will form the leadership team and who in turn will evaluate the work of the students and can accompany them in this process.
- Telephone, fax, PC, mail.
- Personnel: one secretary, one or two tutors (who will be catechists), a general coordinator. The coordinator and the tutors ought to be prepared to carry out the Witness meetings in the different zones of the country.
- To develop the project we need to count on teachers of each subject, who have experience in Education at a Distance, to draw up the modules and a chart-designer with experience in producing material for Distance learning.
- To offer very low cost for the students.

7. Risks to be avoided in this type of initiative

- To develop teaching materials which have not been thought out and carried out taking into account the characteristics of a Course involving learning at a distance.
- Not intending to have an experimental trial of the material.
- That the lack of sufficient personnel may put at risk the personalized following and accompaniment necessary in this type of method.
- Not to count on a coordinating team, however small, which meets weekly to plan the running of the Course
- To carry out this course in places where one cannot count on the support of parishes, catechesis councils or Bishops.
- That one lose fidelity to the chosen method - in groups and semi-witness (by it being compulsory to attend Bearing-witness Meetings) and at a distance.
- Not being open to educational, cultural and social changes so as to be able to update the material of the modules with new documents, new experience.
- Not accommodating oneself to the appearance of new technological supports in order to enrich the Course.
- To lose sight of the main beneficiaries, that is the catechists with scant formation, who need material which is clear in its plan and simple in presentation.
- Giving up on witness meetings. Even these enrich people and allow them the possibility of meeting other groups in the same diocese.
- Not giving to this Distance Method all the excellence and seriousness of a Bearing-witness Course.

San Héctor Valdivielso School

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1. Presentation

Since January 2001, the Lasallians of this District began the journey, wishing to open an educational work in poor sectors in the city of Cordoba. When we thought about this work we had in mind a three-fold purpose:

– A sign on behalf of the rights of the child... On the one hand we wanted to offer a concrete sign to celebrate the International Year (this year) of the Rights of the Child.

– We form ourselves as La Salle Brothers in the world of the school for the poor... The second element of this work is the creation of a space for formation for the postulants and scholastics. We want to open an educational work which will provide a space so that those who join us (postulants) as well as those who have been living several years in the association (scholastics) can have a concrete field from where they can draw an experiential, intellectual, affective and religious synthesis. The educational project of the school (formal school and all the projects of the suburbs which flow from this) are the center of the community of formation. They are the reason for discernment, and become material for the progressive living in the association.

– To re-invent the school of the poor beginning from formal “popular education”... The third significant element of this work is to become a pole of pedagogical pastoral renewal for poor sectors. From this work we try to reformulate our pedagogical pastoral project for poor sectors of Argentina and Paraguay. In our District we have 11 works in poor sectors: with this new work we wish to revitalize the pedagogical and pastoral reflection of our works which take care of those poor centers of our city. It is for this reason, that from the framework of Popular Education we have tried to redefine the elements of Formal Basic and Compulsory Education, in such a way that the educational process may be more meaningful and transforming of social and personal reality. In order to be able to carry out this mandate we associate other elements to this school:

- Local dynamics of organisation and research. The educational community meets every week for 4 hours to share, reflect, study and organise.
- Within the school we have set up a group for organisation and research so that it can direct the above mentioned process.
- The District Team of “Popular Education” formed by different persons of the Lasallian milieu, which



Note: Throughout this article, “Popular Education” means education aimed not just at the individual but at his entire local community.

An educational community formed by the religious community of La Salle Brothers and other lay people, is responsible for this project. In the Brothers' community there are 12 persons: 5 religious Brothers, of whom one is with temporary profession and seven postulants. As we mentioned at the beginning, this community meets daily for the work of animation of the educational project of the Héctor Valdivieso School. This educational project is in the center and in the heart of the community.

“Associated in the educational service of the poor”, becomes for us, Brothers, and for those who desire to associate themselves (postulants and eventually young boys who are discerning their vocation) the way of naming this daily act of animating together the educational task, of reflecting, of forming ourselves, of meeting and praying together about this daily educational act, which has been assumed by us as a community.

Besides the religious community which forms the educational community, there are also 8 other persons. All of them have been selected after a teacher's contest.

allows us to reflect, particularly, on this pedagogical project and on the way of beginning the pedagogical reflection in the other 10 Lasallian works which take care of poor populations.

- Within the NOA Region - a Center which animates 5 Lasallian works, we have set up
- A pastoral pedagogical team which articulates the processes of formation, qualification training and pedagogical renewal within these works.
- Networks and links from this school: Since the foundation of this school, we have set up networks which will allow us to reflect, to form ourselves, to initiate criticism and suspicion within the educational center and to help us draw up an alternative project, etc.

This school is called Héctor Valdivieso. Its initial level is a classroom for 4 year olds and one for 5 year olds and it has an Elementary School, with first, second and third grades. This school began to function on March 11th of this year and takes care of 170 boys between the ages of 4 and 10. This refers to the project of Popular Formal Education.

On the other hand processes of non formal education have also begun, especially for adults and young people. These consist in processes of community organization, solidarity services and formation for citizenship.

3. Impact which the initiative has had on those who lived the experience:

- To revalue the role of the teacher: researcher and animator of the educational project.
- To revalue the educational community: animation and heart of the educational project.
- Pedagogical Formation in line with “Popular Education”.
- To re-invent the School according to the criteria of “Popular Education”.

4. Impact which this initiative has had on the Lasallian Network

- Initiate pastoral pedagogical reflection within the works which take care of poor sectors.
- This work has become the place for initial formation in the life of the Brother.

5. Impact which the initiative has had on the social, educational, economical, political, cultural and ecclesiastical milieu;

- This work is gaining importance and meaning in some educational fields (presentation of the experience in workshops, visits to the school by other educational works and NGO's, petition for materials, etc.).
- For the Episcopal See of the city of Cordoba, this has become an institutional space of reference for the creation of a new Parish in the zone where the school is located.
- For the Municipality of Malvinas Argentinas, this work has become a space of reference to attend to the social needs of the Sector.

- For the inhabitants of the Sector, the school has become a space of reference for the formation of diverse groups and communities (groups of librarians, school wardrobe, dining room, glass of milk, etc.).
- For the children of the place, this work has become their school.

6. Minimum conditions so that the experience may be successful:

- A constituted educational community, strengthened by the dynamism of the community administration and by the joint responsibility in the work of animation
- A clear popular educational project, with challenging innovation, with the dynamism of self-criticism, systematization, reflection and formation.
- A mysticism lived by the educational community.
- The necessary financial resources to carry out this project.

7. Risks which should be avoided in this type of initiatives

- Personalistic direction
- The concreteness of the educational project
- The lack of mysticism in those who animate the project
- The lack of resources.

NICARAGUA

Coordination of educational pastoral ministry in the apostolic vicariate of Bluefields

Contact: Br. Manuel Estrada Carpintero (manuelpsc@yahoo.com)

1. History

This experience began in July 1999. The District assumed the responsibility of freeing a Brother so that he can work in the local Church. Brother Manuel Estrada Carpintero is entrusted with this mission. Brother had just returned from Haiti where he participated in the Mission Project 100 +. Therefore, it is only one Brother who is assigned to this new project. Brother has a broad experience in education in Central America. He went there from Spain in 1958. He worked as a High School teacher and on several occasions he was the Director of different schools; besides he has experience in working in rural areas in Guatemala; specialized in Sociology and Anthropology and knows the reality in Nicaragua very well. He possesses excellent qualities to relate with the authorities of the Local Church and of the Government in the country, especially with the Ministry of Education.



2. Two objectives

- To respond to the call of the Bishop of the Vicariate, Mgr. Pablo Schmitz.
- On the part of the District, to make effective, a greater commitment to work with the poor and the excluded, in the field of education, in an especially poor region of Nicaragua.

We must keep in mind that the La Salle Brothers arrived in Nicaragua in 1903 and since then they have constantly remained there. At present they have two big schools, elementary and High School, a big Politechnical Institute and two schools of popular education.

The Catholic Church from the beginning of the Vicariate had manifested a special concern for education, creating and supporting schools with the help of religious men and women. But, because of the armed conflicts during the time of the Sandinista revolution, there were some Sectors under the dominion of the “resistance”; in those places the teachers of the Sandinista Government were not allowed to enter; consequently the schools would be abandoned. Seeing the great need for the education of the children in the mountains, the Church offered to take care of those schools. It was thus that the Vicariate began to occupy itself directly with rural education. Brother Luis Franco, himself, had the opportunity, during the last year that he was in the Vicariate, to draw up a project of rural education which was called “Education for a New People”. When Brother Luis Franco left the Vicariate, the project continued to function with the coordination of the Church of the Vicariate. But they felt more and more the need to have someone who is an “expert” to take care of this work and they thought of a La Salle Brother.

From 1945 to 1989 the Brothers were present in the Apostolic Vicariate of Bluefields in three cities, Waspán, Puerto Cabezas and Bluefields. They left fruits of excellent educational work which still remain today. They had a Government contract to direct the National Institutes in those places; today the good work that they did is still recognized. Political circumstances and lack of personnel obliged the Brothers to withdraw from the territory of the Vicariate. The last work which the Brothers did was to collaborate in the reconstruction of the city of Bluefields, after it was practically destroyed by the hurricane Joan. After the Brothers had left the community of Bluefields, Brother Luis Franco did an excellent work in the Church for one year.

Mgr. Pablo always had an excellent memory of the La Salle Brothers and, on several occasions, he asked the Congregation to send Brothers again to the Vicariate. In 1998 the District asked different countries to present initiatives for new projects of commitment to work for the excluded. The Brothers of Nicaragua knowing the desire of Mgr. Pablo and remembering the presence of the Brothers in the Vicariate, chose this new project for the country.

3. Origin

It was not easy to fulfill all the requirements to obtain a unanimous approval of the project by the District Council. Profiting from the meeting of the annual Retreat in Guatemala, a sufficient number of signatures was obtained so that the project could be presented and then approved by the Council. Brother Visitor had already spoken with Brother Manuel concerning the possibility that he might be the one in charge of beginning this new experience, if the Council approved it.

Once the initiative was approved, the conditions for work were established with the Brother who was going to begin it and with the Bishop, Mgr. Pablo; so that all this would be formal, an agreement was signed between the Vicariate and the District. The Vicariate will assign a “salary” to the Brother, and will offer the proper conditions for his work. Among these conditions it is clear that the Brother, when he visits the Parishes, will be received and live in the Parish house. He will dedicate himself full time to the work of coordinating the Pastoral Educational Ministry in all the Vicariate.

The Vicariate covers half the territory of Nicaragua and it is a territory formed by two geographical regions which have a statute of autonomy, the RAAN (Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic) and the RAAS (Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic). It is a geographical zone where the population is very dispersed forming small groups, in the rural area and a part of the population is concentrated in

urban groups. It is 18% of the total population of the country. It is a region that has very few roads. Some kilometers are dirt roads frequently impassible, especially during the season of heavy rains. Another means to get to the principal cities is the plane, but in the majority of the rural sectors, it is possible to get there only by riding or by a raft or canoe to cross and follow the course of the mighty rivers.

When the District took on the responsibility of this project, it did not know exactly all that it was embracing in accepting to animate it through the Brother assigned to the mission.

We began on July 1, 1999. In the Capital city we were given an office to take care of the Pastoral Educational Ministry. The Vicariate has its own office in Managua, from where urgent needs in Pastoral Ministry are responded to. Consequently the Brother will work in that same office and from there he will travel to the different areas according to need. He will live in his community in the Pedagogical Institute, but will have at his disposal the necessary means to travel to visit the different Parishes.

The first task will be to draw up an inventory with trustworthy statistics of the population under his responsibility (communities, schools, pupils and teachers), both in the rural as well as in the urban area. The first year, Brother Manuel will work alone. He will begin to go out to visit the Parishes so as to meet the teachers and, eventually, he will visit some of the schools. Gradually, he will discover the needs of the schools and of the teachers: lack of preparation of the teachers (the majority have no degree), lack of basic materials in the schools (books, desks, blackboards, etc.) and the pitiful condition of the schools (the majority have a dirt floor, thatched roofs, and the walls of cracked wood). On the other hand the local authority of the Ministry of Education is not concerned about these schools because they say these are "private" schools; they receive a very small aid to help pay the salary to the teachers. The total number of schools is 365 with 12,664 pupils, under the responsibility of 392 teachers. In the rural area this service is given in 7 Parishes: Siuna, Waslala, Ubú-Norte, El Ayote, El Muelle de los Bueyes, el Rama and Nueva Guinea. There is no concrete program of Christian formation for the pupils in any of these schools. The majority of the 12 Schools in the urban area, are under the care of religious Sisters who also receive a small subsidy from the Government to pay the salaries of the teachers.

4. Impact caused by this initiative

At **national** level it is an experience which is known and appreciated, especially in the Vicariate. Everyone acknowledges the great work that is being done as well as its extension. We need to make it known to the Church at national level. And the desire to do this has already been expressed, because it is convenient that it be known at ecclesiastical level as well as in the country in general. It is a great commitment in favour of development which the Church is carrying out and it is good that this be known.

From the **social** point of view our work has had great impact in the areas where we work; I can easily see the great progress that has been accomplished in education, in the attention which the children receive in their homes, the improvement in the houses and in care for the environment. This zone of the country has suffered much because of pitiless deforestation; now we begin to see that people take care of trees and this is the result of campaigns organized in the schools. The local Mayors value the work that we do, they support it and use our infrastructure and organization. Young women now go to school more and thus they get married



older and feel liberated. Many adults, at the same time that they value the education of their children feel the need to study and learn themselves.

On this same aspect, we have already mentioned our influence on the promotion and defense of the rights of the children, boys and girls and adolescents. Nobody else has diffused the knowledge of the Code of the Child and Adolescents more than we have. We have also contributed to the drawing up of the National Policies against sexual exploitation, trade in children, boys and girls and adolescents.

The impact is felt especially at the educational level. We are taking care of people in places where nobody wants to go, and without our work about 20,000 children and young people would remain without schooling, and this only in the rural area. But our influence is not limited only to the extension; we are trying to give education with mysticism and good organization to show the Ministry of Education the way in which one should work with children, with love and responsibility, how teachers should be treated, supporting them in their studies, training them methodologically and making them feel that they are valued, appreciated and stimulated, even in spite of the financial limitations that we have. The present Minister of National Education and the Ministry have a clear idea and are aware of our work and they try to support us as much as possible as far as the budgetary limitations allow. Under various aspects we are a point of reference for the national Magisterium. The presence of Brother Manuel in the important areas of the Ministry of Education allows us to present to the authorities the cry and the needs of the poorest. And we can see that, little by little, they are being cared for.

At **political** level, given the polarization of our society, we limit ourselves to making people aware of the need of participating in the electoral processes, contributing in this way to the election of good local and national authorities and, once they are elected, together with the parents, in an organized way, to know how to demand the fulfillment of the electoral promises; it frequently happens in these places that the candidates promise many things in order to obtain the vote of the people and afterwards they forget those who elected them. We try to insist that people claim their rights energetically. In some Municipalities we obtained a commitment from the Mayor and the Deputies elected, in the presence of the teachers. Then we also exercise pressure so that they keep their promises. In some cases, since we are present in the capital city, we receive the complaints and then we take them to higher authorities. In this way we are creating awareness of the need to participate in order to improve society by the means which democracy places at the service of all.

In the **cultural** level, we insist very much that local culture be discovered, valued and fostered. We have insisted that in each school, the teacher narrates the origin of the community and of the school and collect legends and traditions of the place. We have already collected some material. We have even thought, that in due time, we will print part of this material in reading books for the children of the schools. Lately, we have insisted on training in the national and local folklore and the children in their school celebrations have already begun to celebrate with typical dances of their country and region.

5. Minimum conditions so that the experience will succeed.

I think that it should continue in the same way. It is important that the Brother who is responsible for it, loves education of the poorest very much, that he feels totally Lasallian, has experience in education, sympathy for and knowledge of the rural area, the capacity to work in a team and with submission to other persons and institutions, to a schedule, etc. sense of ecclesiastical pastoral ministry and be capable of integrating himself in that pastoral ministry. It is good to have sufficient formation, psychological and affective maturity, balance and competence to relate himself with authorities of the country with certain "nobility".

It would be good for the District to think of preparing Brothers for this type of experiences, so as to insure their future. Though I believe that one of the characteristics of these should be the temporary

nature of each one concretely. That is why it is good to maintain the renewal of the agreement every three years. If the time comes when we feel that the people with whom we have been working is now capable of carrying on, we could think of leaving it in their hands and we could begin another similar experience. I think that it is good to keep in mind this “itinerant” characteristic for this type of experiences.

But it is fundamental that the District supports this, not only in a formal way, by means of an agreement, but it would be good that in the yearly District meetings, the Brothers should be informed about the experience, its achievements and difficulties; that there may be Brothers who could go and visit it to know it “in situ”.

It is necessary for the Brother who is there to feel that support. Otherwise, there is the risk of being considered as an “adventurer” or like someone who likes “to work on his own”. It is very important that the community to which the Brother belongs be an open and understanding community, leaving him the freedom of action; but at the same time, asking him for reports about his work, about his life of prayer when he has to live outside the community, etc.

GUATEMALA

An option for local development

Contact: Daniel Saquec (direccion@prodeffa.net)

1. Introduction

The initiative became concrete in 1990 and it was called Centro de Apoyo (Support Center) to the RUKUX TINAMIT (Heart of the People) communities, with the purpose of giving support and accompaniment to those coming from the Santiago Indigenous Institute and to rural community groups who were seeking a better self administration. Three important points were taken into account: education, organization and production, by means of local educational and socioeconomical actions on the initiative of those in charge.



For 7 years agricultural initiatives were supported, purchase of lands, projects for different services (tents, mills for corn flour, others), complemented by literacy processes, accompaniment in the form of technical advise and concrete professional training and preparation in technical and political aspects to know the local and national reality.

The experiences were very concrete but in very isolated areas. A great geographical area was covered which made constant and integral accompaniment more difficult.

In 1996, we stopped and saw the need to reconsider and restructure the work of PRODESSA..

Beginning in 1997, as a result of our learning experience, we defined three areas in PRODESSA - Educational, Microregional and Administrative.

The Microregional area, is conceived as a strategy to contribute in a more effective form to the local development of the rural communities, especially the indigenous ones, and is defined as a possibility of



obtaining a more numerous presence and greater impact in the localities from an integral perspective, based on the Maya culture and with the point of view of gender.

2. Objectives of the initiative

The objectives of the area at present in the framework of the strategic objectives of PRODESSA are:

- To favour the auto-administrative capacity and that of proposing of the participants, subjects of their own community and local development.
- To strengthen the community organization by insertion, exchange and conformation of networks with other similar local, departmental and/or national initiatives.
- Encourage political involvement at local level to exercise the rights of citizens and be attentive to public administration for the benefit of the majority.



3. Origin of the microregional initiative

In 1990 the Support Center for the Ru K'ux tinamit communities became a concrete fact as an alternative before the daily economical pressures and in search of ways to attain a self-sustainable growth, through the three principal components of popular education: production, organization and education. A team was set up for accompaniment, monitoring and evaluation of the processes in several zones of the country.

In 1997 the microregional initiative was implemented in the framework of local development on which we focus our work in a determined geographical area, covering the municipality; it seeks to link education, organization and community economy, with greater presence and impact.

The 7 microregions today are the result of the reorientation of the work of PRODESSA, the criteria for which were defined in the strategic planning of 1996, in which we defined the horizon (2004) and the path to be followed in 8 years.



4. Report of the evolution and of the key moments of the initiative

The first phase - 1990 to 1996 - constituted an accurate support to concrete socioeconomical, educational and organizational initiatives, but isolated and dispersed ones concerning themes and geographical location..

The second phase 1997 to 2002 became the area of PRODESSA, through the microregional strategy for local development, as was already mentioned.

We defined our concept of local development as a self-administered and sustained process of the community realization, from the local culture, in harmony with nature and with the point of view of gender.

The criteria applied for the selection of microregions were: work where there is the presence of organi-

zations which carry out the same work which gives impulse to PRODESSA, preferably distant rural, Maya and poor communities, geographically near to one another and bound by common interests.

During the process: together we carried out a diagnosis and a microregional strategic plan - DEM - in each micro region. Then followed the formulation of projects for the implementation of the work.

Teams for local accompaniment were formed with persons who speak the local language, who will facilitate a favourable climate for the participation of the people from the community in socioeconomical initiatives; formation of the children and youth, to develop their qualities, skills and the understanding of their rights; the organization and execution of specific projects with women; the organization of local associations for legal and legitimate autoadministration; technical and political formation for leaders with a multiplying effect, the participation in networks with other similar organizations, and the organized participation for citizens to participate and political involvement at local level.

6. Impact which the initiative has had on the milieu

- Respect and consideration of the Maya Culture and the community life in the proposals and educational processes and those of alternative development.
- To facilitate valid mechanisms (formation, training, means of production) for social and human development.
- The contribution of educational transformation in the country beginning from the concrete experiences and broad proposals for the extension and quality of education in terms of cultural, political and methodological pertinence of the pedagogical action, in the microregional specific case, through (agricultural ecological and political) experts.
- The projection of a progressing Christian vision, from the perspective of promoting integral development with the poor.
- Support to the Conference of Religious of Guatemala - CONFREGUA- and to the National Association of Catholic Schools - ANACC, as well as to different Dioceses of the country.

7. Minimum conditions so that the initiative will succeed

- Take into account community life, discover the potentials and strengthen the capacity for the construction and reconstruction of learning together with those directly involved.

5. Impact of this experience

On those who have lived the experience:

- Greater self-esteem as participants (girls, boys, young people, women and men) in the development of the socioeconomical, educational and organizational initiatives to improve the conditions and quality of life.
- Acknowledgement of the cultural richness, the Maya culture, and its contribution to an alternative development in search of a balance between human beings and nature.
- A greater degree of participation in the family, community and local initiatives, especially of girls, boys, young people and women.
- Appreciation of the contributions and openness of spaces of participation for women, in the community organization and socioeconomical initiatives.
- A higher level of experiences for learning, beginning with the processes of formation and professional training, in agricultural development, Maya culture, gender and citizen participation.
- Strengthening of the communitarian organization and interaction with other local groups, in the definition of strategies and local projects.
- Favourable changes of attitudes, in persons, who have a broader vision of service to the community and the exercise of democracy.

On the Lasallian network

- Acknowledgement by the communities and other groups of the projection that PRODESSA has towards the poor.
- The role of PRODESSA to propose in the authorities of interinstitutional coordination at District level and of the RELAL.
- The exchange of concrete experiences of each one of the areas of PRODESSA.

- Play the role of facilitator of processes without losing sight of the subjective and objective aspects of persons and organizations.
- Give material support and strengthen, in a long term basis, the autoadministrative capacity of persons and city and local organizations.
- Create and recreate the conditions so that the local organizations themselves can exercise some influence on the public local administration.

8. Risks to be avoided in this type of initiatives

- To accelerate or speed up processes without taking into account the rhythm of the organizations and/or of the communities.
- Plan initiatives from the exterior perspective, that is, not to take into account from the beginning, the people involved.
- To continue only with a bilateral relation, community and external organization, without considering the relation and multicultural inter-action, especially at local level.
- To develop processes without the minimum contact or negotiation with the local authorities, especially the local government.
- To center attention only on the leaders, more than on the families or on the broad participation of children and young people and especially women, as potential subjects who at present have very little involvement.

COLOMBIA

"Young people propose... and act"

Contact: Eliana Arroyave (*pastoraleduca@epm.net.co*)

1. Name and date when the initiative began

Project: **"Young people propose... and act"**

Promotion of sexual education and prevention in the area of dependance on drugs.

"From young people to young people"

Date of beginning:

The project as such was formulated in February 2001, but the construction of the methodological proposal began in the month of February 2002, and at present is being implemented.

2. History of the initiative

The experience related with sexuality and dependance on drugs began in February 2001 with a team formed by those responsible for the Departments of Psychopedagogical Orientation of the school of the Metropolitan Area of Medellin, the Counsellors of the Educational Pastoral Ministry, the Procurator or person in charge of the personnel of the La Salle School of Envigado, the Procurator of the La Salle

School of Bello, counting on the accompaniment of Doctor Luis Fernando Escobar Tamayo, specialist in sexuality. His principal contribution to this experience was the drawing up of a document containing theoretical and practical elements concerning this theme.

At the beginning of this year the Psychologist Eliana Marcela Arroyave Cadavid, joined the team, and also the Pastoral Ministry of Human Development. She is counsellor of the Pastoral Ministry of the District and she was the one who proposed this experience "The Young propose... and Act", a methodology which was taken and adapted by the Ministry of Health and Education, which the team agreed to develop in the educational institutions of the metropolitan area of Medellin.

During the first meetings, programmed by the team responsible for the project of sexuality and dependance on drugs, the following questions were asked:

Principal question

– Which is or has been the efficacy of sexual education and on drugs abuse given in the schools of the Metropolitan Area of Medellin?

Specific questions:

– How can the pupils be reached without saturating them with information?

– What do the young need concerning sexuality and dependance on drugs?

– How can we respond to new situations used by mass media like cibersexuality?

– Are the situations in our schools confronted with studies on sexuality and dependance on drugs which are carried out in local, regional and national contexts?

– How can we use new technology such as E-Mail to form pupils on sexuality and dependance on drugs?

In order that this experience of sexuality and dependance on drugs may be efficaciously and practically applied and that it will benefit the entire educational community, especially the students, it was necessary to think about a proposal in which the young person is the protagonist of this proposal, that is: "From young people to young people" in which the directors and the teachers support and orientate the young person so that he can elaborate a creative, attractive and didactic proposal which motivates his peers to reflect, to confront themselves and to assume attitudes, values and healthy habits.

The previous proposal to let the young person participate, facilitates not only the possibility of obtaining information and knowledge concerning the beliefs, imagination and attitudes of the young person concerning sexuality and the problem of dependance on drugs, but also, from his experience and condition he is conscious and makes his peers conscious that what makes persons more vulnerable are unhealthy attitudes and behaviour in the face of his sexual option, in the face of his option of life.

Not only his beliefs and behaviours should be evaluated but also his proposals for prevention and promotion should be considered which are an invaluable alternative to motivate and elaborate an experience in which the result will be an invitation in the first instance from the young people for the young people and



During the time of sensibilization of the teachers, some resistance was perceived concerning the fact that the young people would be the ones to animate this process, because they consider that the young people are not prepared to face these problems, and they said that this is a delicate theme to be handled by them. Therefore, the sensibilization has been centered on the importance that the young people be the ones who, methodologically lead and dynamize the proposal with the constant accompaniment and orientation of the adults (Psychologists and Professors), on the importance of the participation of the young people in this type of process, on the importance of the adults trusting and accompanying the initiatives of the young people and, in the same way, on how significant it is for the young people that one of their peers motivates them and assumes healthy attitudes of life.

Simultaneously, with this process, a profile was defined for the selection of the 20 leaders who animated the project and will integrate the group for promotion of sexual education and prevention of dependance on drugs of each institution keeping in mind the following:

- Capacity for leadership
- Acceptance by the group to which the leader belongs (empathy)
- Committed to what he proposes
- That he has time available
- Creative and dynamic
- That he shows a like for this type of projects and themes
- Academically responsible (It is not necessary that he be the best or more brilliant of the group but that he be reliable and delicate).
- That he possesses skills for communication.

Once the young people have been selected the process of formation begins, and this is based on a program which contains the following themes:

- Prevention and promotion
- My personal reality (Self- knowledge. Image of self)
- Emotional intelligence
- Inter and intra personal communication and affirmation
- Life project
- Decision making
- My sexual history
- Generalities on sexuality
- Sickness transmitted by sexuality and values (Responsibility, Freedom and autonomy)
- Generalities on dependance on drugs
- Factors of risks and factors of protection
- To be transcendent
- Human Ecology
- Technical formation. Elaboration of a project. Workshop for those who direct them.

for the entire educational community, to value oneself, to respect one's own person and to give life and to assume healthy life styles which strengthen personal, spiritual and Christian growth or development.

We must acknowledge that the young person possesses a valuable potential to create, propose and bring about positive changes for himself, his peers and the reality in which he lives and works, that he has his own particular way of living reality and it is from there that accompaniment should be given and also orientation, keeping in mind and listening to his proposals, that is motivating the young person so that he can be the protagonist in the building up of his own history.

3. Minimum conditions so that the experience may succeed

The young leaders in charge of animating the project "THE YOUNG PEOPLE PROPOSE AND ACT", need the support and orientation, accompaniment, motivation and what is more important, the trust of adults in order to be able to invest all their potentiality in the very best development of the project.

An integral formation in the themes contained in the project should be guaranteed in such a way that the leaders - boys and girls - make the project their own and acquire a certain sense of belonging to this project and to the themes contained therein, and so that they can, with conviction, give and be a witness when generating healthy attitudes in their peers.

In conclusion, the project needs a definite and integrated team work, in which all believe in it and motivate it sufficiently to extend it to all the educational community.

PROVIDENCE: Tides Family Services**West Warwick, Rhode Island, USA****Contact:** Br. Michael Reis – Fax: 00 1 401 785 49 76**1. Name, Starting Date and Public Targeted**

Tides Family Services is a private not for profit social service agency under the management of the De La Salle Christian Brothers that has been in operation since 1983. It is the mission of the Brothers and their Lasallian partners to reach out to all youth, even those most marginalized and least accepted by society. As a result, our youth and their families come to us with long histories of domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and substance use and abuse, educational failures, minimal occupational opportunities and fear and distrust of the social service and juvenile justice systems. Many come to us with cultural traditions, languages and expectations that are not well understood by mainstream institutions. The streets are full of drugs and violence and the schools are unwilling to tolerate their unique educational needs. Over 85% of our families come from poverty.

The State of Rhode Island has recently shifted very heavily into Medicaid funding for these youth. As a result, the state can realize a federal reimbursement of \$52 for every \$48 it invests. It is now mandating that all providers need to become accredited as a social service agency by a national organization. Tides is now in the process of pursuing such accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) and hopes to have positive results by the end of 2004.

Our population is very culturally diverse with Latino families (30%), Caucasian (30%), Afro American (20 %), Cape Verdians (10%), Portuguese (5%), other (5%). It is important to realize that in the State of Rhode Island people of color represent less than 8% of the total population. Males make up 68% of our population and females 32%. The common ingredient for all of our youth is either their involvement with or risk of becoming involved with the Juvenile Justice System. We service two major groups of youth: Wayward/Status/Truant and Delinquent. The Wayward/Status/Truant are youth who traditionally disobey their parent(s), runaway, truant from school, get high and are generally out of control. In this segment of our population the average age is 13 to 14 years old with 45% female and 55% males. The Delinquent population has been involved in serious crimes and is considered high risk to re offend and high risk to be victimized. For example, since the inception of the Youth New Futures Program, three youth have been killed in drive by shootings and two youth have been indicted on homicide charges. Their average ages are 17 to 18 years of age with approximately 10% female and 90% male.

2. Precise Role Played by Lasallians

Lasallians play a leadership role in the development and implementation of the following programs that are operated by Tides Family Services:

a. The Tides Youth Diversion Program is an early intervention program for young people who are not yet involved in the juvenile justice system. The focus is on keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system. Referral sources include juvenile offi-





cers, police, school departments, Family Court Diversion, attendance officers, parents and social service agencies. Services include: individual, family, group counseling, parent and peer groups, after-school program, recreation, summer recreation program, school advocacy, multilingual staff, Latino parent groups and Family Court advocacy. Capacity: 70 youth.

b. The Outreach and Tracking Program is an intensive outreach program for youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, with the goal of family preservation and school completion. Staff has face to face contact with clients, three times a day, seven days a week. Referrals are received from the Department of Children, Youth and Families and Juvenile Services of Family Court. Capacity: 70 youth.

c. The three Tides Learning Centers are alternative education programs, including after-school activities, designed to provide at risk students with a combination of individualized educational and counseling services to promote academic attainment and more appropriate social skills. Students are tutored into our programs by the local public school systems. Our capacity in all three programs is a total of 50 youth. The vast majority of these youngsters are high school students. Approximately 35% are female.

d. The Family Outreach and Clinical Services is a program for children, adolescents, and their families in which Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW/ LICSW) provide individual and family counseling on a weekly basis. Services are authorized and funded by The Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Special Education Departments, or the family's Health Coverage (RITECARE).

e. The Latino Outreach Project is a counseling program for children and families specifically designed to meet the needs of the Latino community. The following services are provided: bilingual/Spanish speaking individual, family and group counseling, parent support groups involving parenting adolescent children and loss of a child through homicide, educational advocacy, Family Court advocacy, cultural adjustment, sexual offender/victim counseling. The referral sources are the following: Juvenile Services of Family Court, Juvenile Hearing Boards, Rhode Island State Training School for Youth, Department of Children Youth and Families, Juvenile probation and parole, police departments, schools and churches.

f. Youth New Futures is a collaborative effort between John Hope Settlement House, Tides Family Services and DAWN for Children. This project provides intensive supervision for youth returning home from the Training School or being monitored by juvenile probation. The goal of this program is to help maintain these youth in their community by providing the following services: crisis intervention, daily multiple contacts, educational advocacy, individual, group and family counseling, informal counseling, intensive tracking, career/vocational counseling, job placement recreation and tutorial services. The program's capacity is 110 youth drawn from our core urban areas of Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls. Tides is the lead agency with a total budget for this collaborative of approximately \$750,000. By contract, Youth New Futures accepts all youth referred to it.

3. Impact of the Initiative on Those Involved and for the Lasallian Network

The agency is growing rapidly. We have increased in size from 230 clients annually to over 1000 clients and from fewer than 20 staff to over 75 staff in the past four years. Our Lasallian network is strong. Our clients and staff share in the strong relationships among the schools and outreach activities of our region. Our strong growth is a testament to our important role in the community. Continued growth is necessitated by our attempts to meet the needs of at risk young people in Kent County, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket. Our staff is culturally diverse and we have proficiency in Spanish, Creole, Portuguese, and Southeast Asian languages. We promote a thriving Lasallian community and infuse our mission in all that we do.

4. Impact of the Initiative on the Social and Educational Environment

Tides is a community based, family focused agency. All of our programs work with youth in their community and the emphasis is on maintaining youth within their community and/or supporting them when they return from various placements. The key to our program is the availability of our staff 24 hours a day/7 days a week. This is particularly necessary when dealing with youth that are returning from placements such as the Rhode Island State Training School. Our strength is our availability to meet with our clients and their families in their homes, advocate for them within the community and our desire to help these clients work through their crises when they occur. Independent evaluations of our work indicate that we are more effective than traditional programs and that our recidivism rates are lower than mainstream prevention and intervention programs nationally.



U.S.A., New York, Bronx Highbridge Community Life Centre

The Bronx, the poorest district in the United States, just North of Manhattan, includes a part of Harlem, 800,000 inhabitants just in this part of New York, the most cosmopolitan place in the United States, with its immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Porto Rico, Haiti, but also Blacks from Ghana and Senegal, all more or less legal residents. Blacks also from the South of the United States, from North Carolina.

The common denominator ? Poverty. 15% unemployed (5% for the country as a whole). Figures, however, never really take into account those who have given up in despair looking for work: they're no longer part of statistics.

The Bronx has always had a very bad reputation. Nothing new is ever started there, everything groans, everything drags itself along. No resemblance at all with the Manhattan skyline: it's a world apart, not interested in the fact it's part of New York. To live, or often, as is the case, to survive in the Bronx, you

have to give your whole attention to it.

Two very significant landmarks: the immense circle of the Yankee Stadium, the “temple” of the local baseball team, the torch-carrier of the population of the Bronx, just like Michael Jordan in Chicago and his basketball team the Chicago Bulls; and the high and massive red-brick fortress of the Lincoln Hospital. Nothing more easily identifiable, if not the monotonous rows of buildings, of brick also, cubes



zig-zagged with fire-escapes, parts taken over by small shops, eating places catering for the five continents. Small groups of people gathered for no apparent reason, evidence of the unemployment of the men, the omnipresence of women and children, the only active elements in the Bronx: single mothers and teenage mothers, that is, lonely women, often too young and already mothers - a responsibility these women cannot escape and which gives them roots and makes them determined not to give in. This makes them also the most active part of the population, asking for aid and working at a solution made necessary by so many problems.

Unemployment, alcohol, drugs have rotted away social bonds. And there are deeper factors to do with latent racism, exclusion...And the part played by religion ? There are as many forms as there are ethnic or cultur-

al backgrounds: 60% Christians, two-thirds of whom are Catholics, and a third Baptists. 40 % are Muslims who are all black.

A response: the Highbridge Community Life Centre

Highbridge is the South part of the Bronx, separated from Manhattan by the Harlem river. A radical change occurred there in the 70s, a real degradation. Many old residents left, buildings fell into disrepair, unemployment, illiteracy and the crime linked to this kind of misery. No aid service existed there till the arrival in 1975 of Mary Moynihan and Ann Lovette, two Dominican Sisters from New York who took over a flat in Ogden Avenue.

They immediately became totally involved: they went from door to door trying to convince neighbours of the urgent need for a reception centre in the vestibule of the Church of St Eugene, but they thought the two flights of steps leading up to the church represented too much of a barrier for people off the street. Just then, a disco shop became available in Ogden Avenue. They settled in. Help was quick to come, and from 1980 onwards, the work of the HCLC developed considerably with the help of the Brothers, who started up the first programmes of social aid, aimed above all at making the inhabitants of Highbridge assume responsibility, and enabled them, first of all through study and service, to regain lost dignity and to strengthen community ties.

Their campaign coincided fortunately with a new lease of life for the district resulting from the renovation of hundreds of houses which attracted new families.

Outside St Eugene's Chapel, surrounded by trees and flowerbeds, Pedro Cruz is busy by a grotto where a statue of the Virgin Mary stands. He is making badges he has designed himself and which he seals with the help of a small press. He pays no attention to the dozen or so children that surround him- he calls them his “rug rats”. They are young blacks or Portoricans attracted by his presence. Born in Brooklyn, he arrived in the Bronx at the age of six and has never left. The Centre helped him when he was hardly 8

years old. "Without them, I'd have gone to prison, that's for sure". He is now 22 . Once, he was one of those kids who was too lonely, looking for an adult to admire and love. A Brother was able to fulfil this role, and still remains a real model for Pedro. He is happy to pass on to the kids all he received by his work for VISTA (1) as a volunteer. He takes Kassem, Ramel, Terence, Jose, Willie and the others to play in the nearby "Play Street", closed to traffic, and where the fire hydrant provides a jet of water for various games and cools their excitement...

Being open to the people on the street

A few metres away from St Eugene's Chapel, at 973 Ogden Avenue, there is the Storefront, the Highbridge shop window, a small place giving onto the street, where Rose Marie Jones, of Portorican origin, and Vilma Vicioso, of Italian origin, run a a reception centre. Vilma arrived in the Bronx with her two brothers at the age of 2, but she was so rebellious as an adolescent that her parents sent her to Puerto Rico to a very strict school. She calmed down without losing any of her enthusiasm and, with a diploma in business administration in her pocket, she went to work as a sales assistant at Macy's to cover the costs of her law studies. It was during this period that she met the father of her daughter Jenelle, born in 1992, a man she left after a few months of living together. She then went to live with her daughter in her parents' house. At this point she became one of the VISTA volunteers at the HCLC, where she draws up programmes to help people find jobs. "I'm very proud of what I do here. It's good to help people to become independent of social care and assume responsibility for themselves and their family".

To help is above all to welcome, to listen and to continue listening, dominating one's shame, bitterness, compensating for the bad things about social care, stimulating these people to take themselves in hand, to believe they can still do something to control a destiny marked by tragedy after tragedy: "We used to have serious problems here, but now it's better. It's become less difficult here than in Los Angeles, even if people come here from all over the Bronx, and even from other districts of New York, because of domestic violence problems, sexual abuse, Aids or simply to find a job or even some food".

But South Bronx no longer has its former gangs which terrorised the streets. As for drugs, there's no slow-down. "The shop next to the Storefront has just been closed down because of drug dealing, but "they" have started up again half a mile from here, just at the bottom of the hill...You've always got to be starting all over again, but we won't give up".

The Family Learning Center

In the same district, 1248 Nelson Avenue houses the Family Learning Center in a badly-lit set of rooms. The first room is a shared office where the twelve organisers work side by side, and around a table in the middle of the same room, 10 youngsters normally study English. It gives you some idea of how tight the space is. This, however, does not prevent the Centre, from November to April, from giving shelter to a dozen homeless

Social insertion programmes

There are many programmes. If you stop inventing you run the risk of no longer keeping pace with the constant change, with social variations and political decisions. Poor people, whether they vote or not, remain the cause to serve. Literacy courses, of course, English lessons necessary for new arrivals, cultural stimulation activities, cultural and sports outings for kids abandoned to their own devices, who have never been to Goschen, study groups. But also programmes directly linked with the economic needs of New York, like the United Parcel Service. In connection with this service, three-week courses have been started recently. Each day, 4 hours of courses prepare for the job of courier. In the final week, courses begin at 4 am to accustom the 31 persons following the course, aged between 18 and 45, and including 20 men, to their future working timetable.

A second programme, the Nurse Aid Programme, begun in 1993, trains assistant nurses, 30 or so of them following each of the three 10-week courses. The first 4 weeks bring students up to standard, and the following 6 are devoted to professional formation. Of all the American continuing formation programmes, Nurse Aid Programme has the highest percentage of success in securing professional employment for its students.

persons sent by the City of New York. Helped by volunteers from the parish, these persons have a meal, sleep in one of the classrooms, and then leave at 6 the following morning after a shower.

The thing is they never stop inventing, adapting, diversifying, multiplying initiatives each with its own structures, each more effective than the others. Br Ed Phelan is the driving force behind all this and the omnipresent coordinator. As Executive Director, he is assisted by Br Bill Facticeau, of Canadian origin. As for Br John McMahon, he left Highbridge for Brooklyn the day of our visit, reducing the staff to only 2 Brothers who, however, continue to be helped by 3 Dominican Sisters and 2 Ursulines, one of whom is in charge in particular of Senior Citizens, while the other runs an environmental programme at Goschen. There are also 4 Lasallian Volunteers.

Goschen is the green extension, the haven near New York, where groups of children come to enjoy the joys of nature, benefit from the peace and silence. In this place, there are biological gardens whose produce is sold in the streets of the Bronx every Thursday from 8.30 to 2 pm. This sale has an educational side too: it offers an opportunity to speak, give advice about cooking vegetables, and to exchange recipes.

VISTA: Volunteers in Service to America. A US Government programme equivalent to the Civil Peace Corps. Highbridge has 14 of these Volunteers, recruited for one or two years. They help to start off and to follow up projects..

CANADA, Québec

"Le Transit"

Contact : Br. Jean Bernier (*provincial@delasalle.qc.ca*)

A Network of Relationships

"The Transit" is a place of welcome, always open. It was created for all the destitute of the locality in November 1980

Since its beginning about 10,000 people have been served by the institution.

The Transit is a place and a time where it is essential to come in harmony with others, to learn to find good relational space in interpersonal dealings.

The range of customers we have received

- For 20 years we have been faithful to original mandate: the welcome and accompanying of any person in difficulty. These people experienced, with different degrees of difficulty, a fairly large range of personal and interpersonal problems. We have dealt with

- men, women, children
- new born babies and old people
- travellers and vagrants
- alcoholics, drug addicts and substance abusers
- ex-prisoners, criminals and murderers
- sexual offenders, transvestites, homosexuals, Aids sufferers, prostitutes
- juvenile offenders, handicapped, mentally ill

- battered women and abused children
- escaped prisoners and asylum seekers
- workers, those seeking work, unemployed, and those on social security
- possible suicide victims and depressives
- trouble makers and arsonists
- young mothers and women seeking abortions, mothers who come to give birth
- the sick seeking specialist care
- those without money and those seeking financial aid
- unfortunate tourists and those looking for relatives
- those accompanying people unable to look after themselves
- people who have to appear before a tribunal: divorce, separation, civil or criminal prosecutions
- those seeking simply a time of rest, retreat, silence, calm
- drug traffickers, pushers, informers



- What do they bring? In many different forms: suffering. They live through trials, difficulties, personal and interpersonal dangers. They don't want to carry alone the painful problems that they are experiencing. They need a welcome, help, a sharing of their burdens, a break in their solitude; in brief, a presence, a humble unconditional service, a respect for their present condition, a challenge for the future.

- How can we respond to these expectations, to these cries for help, to sharing of experiences with dignity? First of all, by opening our doors, in offering a welcome without prejudice and without judgement. Our prospectus underlines that our philosophy is inspired by the values of the Gospel. First of all, we welcome people without distinction of status, nationality, race, sex or religion. We remember also the importance of respecting the rights, needs, liberty and conscience of those who come to us. It's a whole programme. We still work with this in mind.

- After twenty years and almost 10,000 requests for help, it is necessary to avoid the traps of routine, closure, déjà vu, lack of imagination. One can only welcome in going out of oneself, in venturing into the territories of others. One can accompany well only through analysing the components of a problem of a life full of burdens but without passing judgement. In brief, we welcome with the heart.

- Basically, people are asking us for time and a secure space, of calm, of rest, of retreat, of reorganisation. We can give them that. They want a balm for their sufferings. They want, not all of them but a good number of them all the same, to find new spaces of freedom, of honest confrontation. They sometimes resist, but more than one ends up by settling for a new deal. Basically, they call upon us, as mediators confronted by more or less bitter sufferings to charitable interference. Some are open to this. They develop a taste for sharing a part of their journey, however short, but which is important in their search.

- Suffering isolates. A welcome opens the way to a better quality of life which is surpassed by the royal path of living with, of a sharing – even temporary, even partial – of one or other aspects of the personal experience of suffering. “Bear one another's burdens” says the Lord.

People come in order to prepare for appearing before a court of law,

People come to prepare to appear in court. What do we notice about this experience? Often they are anxious, sometimes worn out. Depending on the problem, on the amount of time they have been dealing

Principal difficulties

– The house offers help and accompaniment in the short term. It is a question of responding to the reality of the need for a special service. Always, for the people involved in helping, it is important to remember this in the daily activities. We aspire sometimes to offer long term help when the organisation of the daily work will be on another basis, where our philosophy will develop otherwise in time. Lots of visitors ask us the question: "You must find it difficult always starting with new people". This is true. In itself, the administration is of little importance. In every project there are aspects of the work which are less interesting. People who work offering long term help have other constraints, and another form of stress.

– We realise that it is sometimes difficult to adjust our expectations to those of the people we are accompanying. To adapt to the rhythm of others is constricting. It sometimes happens that we want more than those we are helping. This divergence between our desire and their expectations can be heavy to bear, above all in situations where things are beginning to stagnate. For example, the chronic exploiters are not open to change, to what we call "interior movement". They are satisfied. The others take care of their principal needs: food and lodging. Worse still, there are the burners of resources, those professionals of dependence and exploitation. With many years of service, it can be difficult to continue beginning again with people who don't see the need, who don't want to move forward. Sometimes, it is frustrating. However, we must not give up just because of this. By lowering our standards, we risk blocking our way; by reducing our demands, we find ourselves in a weak position.

– Confronted regularly by personal limitations, interpersonal restraints, the staff must keep an overall view to aim for the highest, for what is possible, for what is best. That takes a lot of energy. You need stamina. To see daily the limitations, the weakness, the failure, the relapse can bring about the reflex of self defence, of self protection. It can happen that we start to judge others. After that, how can we continue to inspire? We have to fight against this attitude.

Briefly, we have difficult choices! We have chosen to accompany those in difficulty and those with various sufferings. Their experience and ours interact. "Carry one another's burdens". This is the privileged time and place of our interaction.

with it, they have lived through tension, sometimes serious. They are uneasy. In a situation of having to wait. They will perhaps have to face up to their aggressor. All of this awakens certain feelings. In some cases they will be afraid of violence, of reprisals.

We accompany them. We go with them to the tribunal if necessary. We try to ease the tension. We help them sometimes to accept the verdict.

Others, especially in the cases of separation and divorce, appear before the judge for practical reasons: custody of the children, division of property, visiting rights, living allowances, etc. Many negative experiences come to the surface, tensions build up, forms of manipulation and of blackmail. Our staff are there, welcoming, listening, counselling, reassuring. Confidence is built up. We sometimes organise forms of security. On returning to the house, we deal with emotional outbursts, temporary depression, negative views of the future.

Ex-prisoners come to us.

More and more, ex-prisoners come to us here on their release from prison. Others, after agreement with the prison authorities, come for holidays, for temporary leave from prison. Generally, the ex-prisoners are full of good will. In some rare cases, they have learned nothing. They have done time and begin offending again when they get out. Of course, depending on the length of the sentence, readapting to life outside can be more or less stressful. Some prefer not to return to their old haunts wishing to make a fresh start. This is good but it implies other inconveniences: they find themselves alone, without friends, without close relatives, without a partner. They have to rebuild their lives, to find the funding which will allow them to move into a room or lodging. They have no personal effects, no furniture, no money, no relations. In certain cases, all has to be rebuilt.

Couples with difficulties

Couples come to us with major problems in their relationship. Some are not experiencing problems for the first time. Women in particular flee from physical violence and psychological (verbal) abuse. On their arrival here, the situation is clear in the head of some people. "I want to keep my distance. I've no intention of returning home. I want a separation, a divorce..."

We welcome them, listen to them, inform them of their rights, the procedures, the delays, and the concrete terms and conditions that they can expect. It is not for us to judge nor to emphasise the present problem: "Yes, you're doing the right thing, leave your partner... all men exploit women..." No, we must respect people, their intentions and their wishes. During their stay with us, we take advantage of the time and space to start a dialogue, to offer advice, to suggest an attitude, a reconciliation, a new beginning.

We accompany drug addicts

A good number of those who come to us for help have experienced addiction to drugs. Without going into the detail of such realities, we sum up by saying that such people have, in general, serious personal and interpersonal problems. They also have defects of character more or less serious. Sometimes they are marginalized, disorganised, experience problems in situated in space and time.

They also suffer periods of deprivation: eating little, sleeping badly, heavy perspiration, sometimes shaking and possibly periods of depression.

These people also have character defects, problems of delinquency, bad experiences in their affective life. Several speak non-stop, trying to fill a vacuum, in order to avoid contact and to prevent the other from invading the privacy of their lives.

The contribution which we make takes various forms and different levels. We make whatever space we can, taking the time to dismantle the barriers of defence behind which they hide. In short, these people have enormous problems. Recidivism is frequent as is manipulation.

From where do we get our attitude of welcome, patience, timing. As always, we need norms, frameworks, stability and discipline. Sometimes we prepare a plan of action and precise structures for the staff in the handbooks.

We work as far as we can on the small areas we have conquered. We work on self image, often very poor, negative, guilt-ridden. We try to discourage them from their desire to start their old habits again.



We shelter the young

We never shelter the young without the permission of their parents or of those responsible for Youth Protection. As soon as they come to us, the young people who are running away are interviewed. Following that, we try to contact their parents or the Youth Protection Officer.

– The young people who come to us often have frequent conflicts with authority. They have problems at home sometimes with one or other of their parents. New partners are often the occasion of disputes and misunderstandings. Controls over going out and com-



ing home are often dangerous zones in these cases. This problem arises also in The Transit after a short while because here too these realities exist. The young people have to negotiate with the staff times of going out and of returning, times which take into account their ages.

– In the house, the young people often take a lot of room, lack self control. Occasionally, the staff have to intervene out of consideration for the other residents.

– It happens also that as well as family problems there are problems at school also. When the young person is suspended and rejected by the school, things get very complicated. Normally, the first place to develop is in the home. The second place of social integration is the school. When major problems are experienced in both of these places, we have to ask serious questions about the future of the young person. It is extremely probable that there are very disturbing experiences: gangs, drugs, depression, suicide attempts, precocious love dependence, experiences of sexual exploitation.

– The role of the staff is not easy. They try not to oppose the requests of the family and they try to lead the young person to an awareness of the situation. Nor must they replace the staff of the social services who are already involved in the case. Our work therefore is to welcome, to protect, to guide, to listen (sometimes to aggressive speakers), to be benevolent but firm when the situation demands it.

Lasallian Innovations in the PARC Region

Before describing the kaleidoscope of innovative educational initiatives in favor of the poor found in the PARC Region, it is important to recall that the Region itself is a mosaic of religions, cultures, languages, and educational systems. Kindly note that:

- all the major religions of the world are found in the Region
- in the 15 countries where we have a Lasallian presence, only three (Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines) have a Christian majority; hence the vast majority of those being served in the other countries belong to different faiths
- the levels of economic development vary from the very advanced to the underdeveloped
- the breadth of democracy also spans both extremes; for example, we are forbidden to participate in the domain of formal education in two of the countries
- almost all these countries experienced the positive as well as the adverse effects of colonization, with its long-term impact on political, socio-economic and educational systems.

It is against this backdrop that we can best appreciate the variety of educational initiatives found in the Region. In most instances our Lasallian presence in the countries of the Asia-Pacific Region began with traditional schools. The new initiatives that followed largely sprang from or were made possible by these traditional schools, many of which continue

to thrive, running the gamut from kindergartens to universities.

The description that follows is divided into the following general headings: 1) programs for youth at risk; 2) programs for persons with special needs; 3) adult education and catechetical programs; and, 4) multi-faceted projects. Since we are still in the process of collecting information, the countries identified as being involved in these programs are mentioned only as examples.



Programs for Youth at Risk

The programs for youth at risk include: orphanages, which also cater to children from broken homes (Pakistan, Japan); street children centers, both residential and non-residential (Thailand, Philippines); Boys Towns for poor or academically challenged students (Sri Lanka, India); a residential program for the rehabilitation of minors convicted by the courts (Philippines); a nationwide telephone counselling service (Australia); academic remedial centers or programs (Myanmar, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, New Zealand); nutrition and health programs, especially for mothers and very young children (Sri Lanka, India); boarding houses for poor but academically gifted youngsters (Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand); and vocational skills training programs for out of school youth (Papua New Guinea, Vietnam).

The Lasallian Volunteers (Australia, Philippines) and the Lasallian Youth movements (Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand) that have arisen in recent years

have often been developed as a response to the needs of youth at risk. A good number of those involved in these groups are not Christian, much less Catholic, but their common identity as Lasallians continues to create opportunities for the ongoing inter-religious dialogue that complements what is happening in the areas of formal and non-formal education.

Programs for Persons with Special Needs

Persons with special needs are served through: substance addiction centers (Pakistan, Vietnam); family ministry services, some of which include counselling and providing adequate shelter (Australia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka); skills training programs for handicapped persons (Vietnam, India) and migrants (Thailand); and, educational opportunities for indigenous people (Australia) or people living in remote villages (Malaysia).

Adult Education and Catechetical Programs

Formal schooling and skills training programs that include computer literacy for adults are found in several countries (Myanmar, Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, mainland China). The Catechetical Training Center in Pakistan is dedicated to training catechists for the whole country, while in other countries Catholic children are reached through catechetical programs organized around parishes and public schools (Vietnam, Philippines). Some Lasallian institutions are making a significant contribution to their countries through much-needed teacher training programs (Papua New Guinea, Philippines).

The need to offer more intensive Lasallian formation to our lay partners is being addressed either through the creation of formation centers (Australia) or through formation teams (Philippines) staffed by both Brothers and partners.



Multi-faceted Projects

Several projects have also been developed in the Region that provide a constellation of services, some of which have already been mentioned above. The following come to mind: St. Joseph's Development Trust and Reaching the Unreached, both found in India, and the Lasallian Community Education Services in Sri Lanka.

The multifarious services offered by these projects include: formal and informal schooling; an open-school program for school drop-outs; remedial programs for slow learners; vocational skills training; student hostels; various types of income-generating activities; the provision of safe water and housing for the needy; health care and education including looking after persons with infectious diseases (HIV, TB), lepers, and the aged; feeding programs for children; and advocacy (rights of women, child labor). The above-mentioned Catechetical Center in Pakistan could also fall under this category since it includes a literacy center, a cooking school, and a youth hostel.

Conclusion

Our Lasallian presence in the Asia-Pacific Region began 151 years ago when the first school opened in Singapore. As this quick survey shows, that original ray of light has become a veritable kaleidoscope of educational activities and services kept aglow by the 490 Brothers and the thousands of lay partners who presently work in the PARC Region.

How did this happen? In the same way that John Baptist de La Salle experienced it. By allowing the light of faith and zeal to shine through the prism of the needs of young people and the poor.

*Br. Victor Franco
and Marc Hofer,
General Counselors*

"Lasallian Community Education Services"

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1. Name, starting date of initiative, public targeted

"Lasallian Community Education Services" was begun in 1980. The institution caters to the education of the marginalized and shanty Community of the Colombo North Region.



2. Aims of Initiative.

- The educational service of the poorest of the poor:
- Continuing Education and skills Education for children, youth, dropouts, and adults in low-income groups, slums and shanties, the urban rural poor.
- Community based Pre-School education; primary education; basic education programmes for non-school going children and adults; Home Based Child Care Programmes.
- Mother and Child Care Nutrition Programmes and Community Based Health Education and Environmental Hygiene.
- Nutrition 'back to' indigenous food preparation programmes and indigenous remedies to improve primarily the nutritional status of the child.
- Women- Home Management and Family Support Self - Employment Programmes.
- Hospitality - Cooks and Bakers Programme for men and women.
- Competency based training of Community Educators.
- Exchange Programmes - International Volunteer Group Participation - Educational Tours - Networking with other NGOO.
- Sports, Extra Curricular Cultural and Inter Religious Activities promoting Ethnic - Religious Harmony.

3. How it Began

In 1979, the then Provincial of the District of Colombo, Rev. Bro. Alexander, invited Brother Emmanuel Nicholas, a Sri Lankan, who was serving as a Missionary in Pakistan to return to his country and serve as Director of the Scholasticate to form the young Brothers of Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. It was the time of concerns expressed by the Church and the Institute about the need to renew us by rediscovering our founding charism.. My initial introduction to the shanty community was due to my effort to expose and initiate young religious persons to the world of the poor. A catholic priest strongly discouraged me

from doing so. “Young religious persons,” I was told, “are not to be exposed to a community noted for its violent crime and prostitution.” The Member of Parliament for the District, who was also Cabinet Minister in the country, ordered me not to have any contact or discussion with this community for fear of organized contestation of the established socio-political order. Concern for the preservation of the so called “spiritual” atmosphere of the Religious House, led my Religious Superiors to order that the poor, and persons who as co-workers participated in the programme should not visit me in the Religious

“I have recognized that my own life has progressively entered different phases of involvement and action. I now strongly recognize the need to be directing my commitment more and more to seek ways of helping the staff, volunteers and trainees to deeper involvement with the people to facilitate the process by which the people themselves will enhance the quality of their lives. At first, events and opportunities that led me to a more personal involvement with a particular shanty community began to make me aware of my powerlessness. All my earlier “education” had weaned me away from the life of the people. I was inhibited in many ways; the poverty, the squalor, the garbage, the unrefined manners and behaviour of the people in the shanties was repulsive. Had to form community “culture circles” (Freire, 1970) with persons with a different ideology, different religious beliefs, different ethnic and language background, as well as transcend social norms and cultural patterns of arbitrary divisions of creed, race, language, caste and gender. Anger and frustration in the shanty community bred violence named crime. And both individuals and groups with vested interests looked with suspicion like me coming into the shanties to visit them.”

House where I resided. My participation in establishing a community of Religious and lay persons, to be engaged and involved with the poor of the slum and shanty community, contributed to a process of learning, adaptation, and change that challenged all of us in our own individual and collective life worlds. The initial visit and the encounter with people living in absolute poverty gradually led to an involvement and continual learning.

We began to recognise that 90% of the people in that shanty community were living below the poverty line - i.e.: earning less than one dollar a day. The community called Henamulla comprised of 800 families, mostly Buddhists and Muslims living in a seven-acre property. Infant mortality rate was 90 per thousand and 800 children of school going age were not attending school.

The group of laypersons who followed the Brothers' example and became courageous enough to brave entry into this community therefore targeted this community to respond to their basic educational needs. The community has now expanded to more than 5000 families in the past 21 years. The Brothers and their collaborators have immersed themselves in working with this community of the absolutely poor, and have developed educational programmes for the mothers, pre-school children, non-school going children and the school dropouts.

4. Impact of the Initiative on the Social, educational, political, cultural and ecclesial environment.

The initiative gives one a new perspective on 'Working for the Poor' and could challenge the already held view by society. The whole concept of helping the less fortunate is nothing new, especially

in Christian teaching - but what goes on at LCES and in the Communities in which LCES is involved is much more than helping the poor survive by means of a dole out, or a provision of a meal. Every action is motivated by love, care and concern and is not just helping the poor survive. It's a process of transformation of persons from 'nothing' to 'human', able to live and work in society healthy, and without discrimination. LCES nurtures an individual from the state of 'not being accepted' to a 'state of belonging' To those in society who have seen this transformation, it becomes wonderfully refreshing to see the outcome of every 'lived experience' as persons of diverse backgrounds are challenged in their efforts at being participatory rather than being mere onlookers.

This also calls into question the already approved and established formal education system. Does it cater to the needs of the greater part of the community? There is still a large portion of the school going population - not in schools. Those who have been left out of this system are drawn into the Pre-Schools and the Skills Training Programmes, which equip the youth adequately for life. The training programmes

have helped to arrest to some degree the rising figures in unemployment rates among the poor as well as contributing to a much satisfied youth population who have the means of becoming gainfully employed.

The Pre-School children also look forward to a whole new future due to better health. The initiative has therefore reached beyond what's just obvious. Health and nutrition has become a priority, and this speaks for insight, looking beyond the present, while every moment in the present bettered lifestyles of the poorer community speaks of the involvement in the past.

5. Minimal Conditions for such an initiative to function:

A person could be sustained in involvement in Educational Service to the poor only in relationship with others in sustained participation in social action reflection learning in the life world of the poor.

Formations and those accompanying persons in their journeying in the educational services of the poor must be in the process of learning with and be evangelised by the people's struggles in their life world.

All persons involved need to be recognized, affirmed and challenged so that they continue to grow and develop. They need to be supported by a community that transcends religious, ethnic, racial or gender biases. We need to learn from the poor and let the poor liberate us.

6. Risks to avoid in this type of initiative:

- a. Focusing too much on the risks to be avoided.
- b. Unlike St. De La Salle placing our emphasis on security and sustainability.
- c. As Brothers setting ourselves up as better equipped and especially chosen by God rather than our partners and co-workers.
- d. Not willing to listen to and be challenged by our lay partners.



PHILIPPINES

De La Salle University Catechetical Center, Manila

Contact: Maria Luisa Lacson

1. Name:

De La Salle University Catechetical Center, Manila better known as

Br. Andelino Manuel Castillo, FSC
Religious Educational Foundation, Inc. (BAMCREF)

2. Aims of Initiative:

Mission Statement of De La Salle University Catechetical Center

Preamble

In response to the Mission Statement of the Lasallian Family in the Philippines

Deeply moved, as St. John Baptist de La Salle was, a catechist of the first order, by the plight of the poor and youth at risk in the public schools, we the Catechists of the DLSU Catechetical Center BAMCREF Manila, commit ourselves to the mission of becoming evangelizers of the Good News for pupils entrusted to US.

With the dawning of the new millennium, we draw strength from the De La Salle Brothers and many Filipino Lasallians committed to incarnating our charism, Faith, Zeal, and Service in the world today

Declaration of our Mission Vision

Inspired by God's own Light, the Holy Spirit, we profess our commitment to the following mission vision.

We envision the pupils to be mature and responsible Christians in their family, community and the Church.

We create and live as evangelizing ambassadors animated by faith and zeal, and are committed to promote the WORD of God in the public schools.

We engage in catechetical work, prepare students for the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and Baptism (if necessary).

We conduct adult catechism for parents of first communicants and render services to the parish.

Starting Date: June 1952

Public targeted: Near 50,000 Public Elementary School children in Metro Manila, Philippines

3. How it began

Evangelization in education has always been the thrust of the De La Salle University Catechetical Center for 50 years. In keeping with its Mission, the Center has been extending religious instruction to children in public school since 1952. DLSU has had other outreach programs in other forms to the poor and disadvantaged all these years. Catechetical instruction, an inspiring spiritual activity, was initiated by the De La Salle Brothers. In the words of the University's Senior La Salle Brothers they even offered catechesis during the pre and post war years at campsites of victims of war.

The Center started with 29 student catechists from its High School and College department under the direction of the late Br. Andelino Manuel Castillo, FSC an American Christian Brother. The number of student catechists increased to one hundred. On July 1, 1953 the following were the first batch of Outstanding Student Catechists: P. Castillo, B. Cruz, A. Elezar, A. Pahati, R. Sandejas, A. Tantoco, H. Tuazon, M. Uy, B. Villegas, A. Ysrael and J. Zabarte.

4. Precise role played by Lasallians

Realizing that the services of part time student catechists did not ensure continuity of the catechetical program and instruction, Br. Manuel saw the necessity of recruiting a group of full time Religion teachers. Thus, the idea of "Professional Catechists" was born.

In June 1957, full time teachers of religion with college degrees and an Ecclesiastical Diploma and Certificate of Teaching Religion joined the DLSU Catechetical Center. Br. Manuel, the director of the Center, drew up a systematic plan for training full time Religion teachers, informed parish priests, and solicited the cooperation of public school officials.



Hiring and training teachers to be catechists was not so difficult, but getting the funds to pay them even a minimum monthly salary was quite another story. The solution came from Br. Manuel's own religion confreres at De La Salle College, Manila. To finance this project, various charitable groups concerned with the University raised funds from year to year. The parish priests also contributed their share for the salaries of the catechists assigned in the public schools and the parishes. Initially the Center served 80 public schools under 21 parishes with 154 DLSU Catechists. Through the years there were changes in the parishes, public schools and the Center's concerns. Between the 80's and the year 2002, 17 public schools in 8 parishes remained in the Center's care. To date, the Center is serving almost 50,000 pupils, parents and teachers in these schools.

5. Impact of the initiative on those involved and for the Lasallian network

At present, many innovations are going on at the Center, including the birth of the 17th DLSU Catechists Signum Fidei Chapter, DLSU Catechists Association, Regular Catechetical Formation, Yearly Retreats, Recollections; Spiritual formation and Pilgrimage are also part of the Center's improvement and development activities. The Center offers values formation activities for the teachers in the Public School Affiliates through the Program Director, through the Partnership for Educational Change between DLSU and the Public Schools under the Chairman of BAMCREF and President of the University, Br. Rolando R. Dizon, FSC.

The DLSU Catechetical Center, BAMCREF Manila under the direct supervision of Br. Rolando Dizon, FSC tries to operationalize the institutional commitment of the De La Salle Brothers to extend its type of religious instruction to the children in public schools, thereby giving the Lasallian response in promoting the GOOD NEWS.

AUSTRALIA

Luurnpa Catholic School and Wirrimanu Adult Education Centre



Contact: Br. Bernie Cooper (admin@luurnpa.wa.edu.au)
www.Luurnpa.wa.edu.au

1. Luurnpa Catholic School

Luurnpa Catholic School commenced classes in January 1984 in the premises of the former government Balgo Hills Community School. The Wirrimanu Aboriginal Community at Balgo Hills is some 285 kilometres south of Halls Creek in the remote Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

Luurnpa Catholic School is a Kindergarten to Year 10 School of about 100 plus students with composite primary classes and co-institutional secondary classes. A composite class some 87 kilometres south in sand-hill country at Yaka Yaka was established in 1992.

Wirrimanu Adult Education Centre was commenced in 1981 and is associated with the School through the Catholic Education Office. It caters for all post compulsory students in courses for Technical and Further Education (TAFE), University (UNDA) and Personal Development.



2. Aims of the Centres

Luurnpa is a Catholic School that celebrates the Presence of God in the Kutjungka Region. Luurnpa is the name of the red rumped Kingfisher the dreaming bird that is central to life in the Kutjungka.

The school is both Primary and Secondary. The Adult Centre is post compulsory education. Many students can gain an education without leaving family and land by going to the urban centers which are over 1000 kilometres away.

The school embraces the Kukatja language and culture. The school brings many recreational activities.

Socio economic indicators in the community place it very low on the Australian scene: Limited prospects of permanent employment, overcrowding in housing, poor literacy and numeracy, limited health and education prospects, limited government services, alcohol and substance abuse are endemic, and other issues of the remote communities abound.

3. Origins

The elders of the community and parish, including Bye Bye, Sunfly, Njamme and Tjakamarra had a desire for a Catholic School. Brother Leo Scollen spent 1982 researching a new venture for the De La Salle

Brothers to meet the needs of indigenous people and became convinced of this urgent need. Br Leo commenced at Balgo 30th May 1983 as acting station manager/ community advisor of the Balgo Hills station.

On 6th December 1983, with the approval of the Education Department of Western Australia and John Jobst, the Bishop of Broome, the school was transferred as a Diocesan school within the CEOWA structure. Br Leo Scollen was appointed Principal and joined by Br Doug O'Reilly and Br Justinian Thompson. Two Sisters of Mercy joined the staff and two lay teachers.

4. Key Moments

The decision of the community to request a Catholic School.

The school commenced as a two way school with respect for both the local culture and modern Australian culture.

The development of Kukatja Literacy and Aboriginal Cultural Studies.

The development of the Walkala Literacy Centre has included the production of a wide variety of reading materials. Over two hundred hand painted Kukatja storybooks and associated literacy materials. Now the move into multimedia. Anthropologists and Linguists were employed.

In the early years of the school the parents were taken to review different models of schools at Lajamanu, Yiliyi, Warmun. The Bi lingual emphasis has not been very successful. The two ways school has been more successful.

The efforts to provide adequate teacher housing have been prominent with improvements in most years. In 2001 two transportable houses and a renovation of existing accommodation gave two flats and a visitors unit. In 2002 the Principals House was replaced and the Brothers house was renovated.

The involvement of Aboriginal Teaching Assistants has been prominent in the school.

The development of a Remote Area Package for teachers had been significant. It includes subsidised travel in and out after two years, Christmas holiday travel, rent-free housing, and subsidy for food, electricity and air conditioning. The provision of access for telephone and two way satellite Internet connection.

The reading materials all come with associated activities. The Walkala Centre is currently moving into multi media production of school materials. In 2002 the school had two stories published by Working Title Press. Luurnpa the Magical Kingfisher and The Cocky, the Crow and the Hawke.

6. Impact on those who are targeted.

Social

The school provides work for Aboriginal Teaching Assistants

The school has key resources for community including: a children's playground, green space, tree space,

The school has provided students with exposure to the urban centres on educational tours.

The school has links to boarding schools in the far off urban centres.

Educational

The school has a key focus on literacy, numeracy, and growing up strong.

Physical, emotional and spiritual growth are a key part of the Walytja (Family) Life program.

The school has a swimming program for health, fitness and safety.

WAEC provides some viable and appropriate courses for life for any person in the community. Driver education, Teacher and Secretarial Training.

Political

Aboriginal Teaching Assistants have been recruited for Aboriginal Council leadership. Leo Lee, David Bumblebee, John Lee, Cathy Lee.

Cultural

The development of Kukatja Literacy resources.

Cataloguing and description of Aboriginal Studies.

Preserving art and artifacts.

Ecclesial

The Church leaders are an important resource for the school

The school has full participation in the community liturgy on weekends and other important feast times.

The use of ceremony by Church leaders who are also Cultural people.

5. Impact on those involved and the Lasallian World.

A large group of volunteers have been to the school to assist.

Many teachers have participated in the Lasallian Courses at Narooma.

The Principal has participated in the Lasallian Principals meetings.

Communication throughout the district via the Lasallian Mission Co-ordinator's newsletters and publications.

Visits by Brothers and partners. Promotion of Aboriginal Education throughout the CEOWA and Australian Catholic and Murdoch Universities by video production.

Secondment of teachers.

8. Risks to avoid

There is a great need to be gentle. People need to learn by listening and talking together. It is easy to get a Yes rather than agreement.

It is better to be a facilitator.

Relationships are more important than anything physical or consumable.

AUSTRALIA

Boys Town Link Up

Contact: Br. David Zande (*brdavid@boystown.com.au*)

1. Name, starting date of initiative, public targeted

The agency is called Boystown Link Up

Its first day of operation was 4th. February 1991.

The target group is disadvantaged youth aged from 17 to 21. Because young people in this age group tended to fall between the cracks of the services provided, the intention of BoysTown Link Up was to provide welfare and advocacy services for them.

2. Aims of the initiative

BoysTown Link Up aims to make long-term sustainable change in the lives of young people.

In order to achieve this some of the following practices are important.

In its philosophy BoysTown Link Up makes a careful distinction between the worth of a person and the issues of their behaviour.

Without an effective relationship environment, no program or policy has a chance.

To encourage an effective relationship environment BoysTown Link Up staff have to be non-judgmental.

BoysTown Link Up is accountable to its clients. They come voluntarily to the Centre. If the service deliv-

ery is not relevant then BoysTown Link Up will lose its clientele.

BoysTown Link Up is intended to be a safe place for the young people that attend.

A significant level of trust has developed between the staff and the young person, for example prison visitation is often by request of the inmates; new clients are attracted to the agency by word-of-mouth recruitment.

BoysTown Link Up aims to be a resource and a venue for personal growth.

3. How it began

An already existing agency called Youth and Family Services had some members of staff who were not happy with the way the agency was operating, in particular in the way it was dealing with the young people who composed its client group. One staff member, Anne Freeman had a chance meeting with a De La Salle Brother, Paul Smith at a local hotel. From this meeting and the discussion that took place, originated the idea of establishing a service for disadvantaged youth. Anne wanted to set up an agency that would provide services to young offenders and Br. Paul had the resources through BoysTown Family Care to establish the service.

BoysTown Link Up is located in Kingston, a suburb of Logan City situated in south east Queensland, Australia. In this same suburb is located the Youth and Family Service agency. On the first day that the agency opened it was staffed by former employees of Youth and Family Service, three in total. Anne Freeman was appointed the founding Executive Director of BoysTown Link Up.

The service provided by BoysTown Link Up was for young offenders. Kingston and its neighbouring suburb Woodridge are areas of low income, low levels of education, high levels of offending and dysfunctional families. The location of BoysTown Link Up was deliberately chosen to be in a place that would be easily accessible to its clientele.

On the day it opened BoysTown Link Up attracted clientele and from that day other young people were attracted to the agency mainly by word-of-mouth. In this fashion the client base grew and other staff were employed.

It was always intended that specific programs would be put in place for the young people that attended the agency. The young people that dropped in to the agency were attended to, the response of the staff appropriate to the needs of the young person. For example, young people would often be looking for accommodation, have concerns about their income, want to talk about family matters, have issues connected with drugs, employment and sexuality. While this relationship between the staff and the young person grew they would also have their health needs assessed. At the Centre a billiard table was set up for the use of anyone who wanted to spend some time there. Other more formal programs were adopted in order to reach out to the target group. Staff visited mens' and womens' prisons in south east



To get access to prisons was not a simple matter. Permission to speak to young people in prison had to be negotiated with the Queensland Department of Correctives Services. The liaison established was very successful and just six months after opening BoysTown Link Up had permission to set up accommodation in the community for prisoners serving the last twelve months of their sentence. For women prisoners a house in the suburb of Tarragindi was used. Tarragindi is in Brisbane City in southeast Queensland, Australia and the house was called Tarragindi Lodge. For the women who were sent to Tarragindi Lodge one significant advantage was that they could have their children come and live with them. The neighbours were accepting of these prisoners and in a short time the women prisoners were performing various types of community service for their neighbours. This helped the prisoners in their attempts to reintegrate into society. For the male prisoners a property called Goodspell Park was used in the Biddabbada Valley in the Beaudesert Shire situated in south east Queensland, Australia. While the Queensland Department of Corrective Services was happy with Goodspell Park some of the local people in the Biddabbada Valley were not and BoysTown Link Up was taken to court. After a lengthy court case the charges were dismissed and the service continued.

Queensland. Staff attended law courts, approaching young people and offering them assistance and also visited watch-houses where young people were held before being transferred to prison. In Queensland a young person was eligible to enter an adult prison upon reaching the age of 17, so the target group of 17-21 year old young people was a deliberate choice to try and reach those who are marginalized and without a voice in the community.

Another program established at this early stage of BoysTown Link Up's life was Alice's Restaurant. This was a mobile service that enabled the staff to go out into the community and meet the young people at places where they gather. By offering them free food and drink they would engage them in conversation and in this way offer them assistance if they requested it. This was another successful way of recruiting young people for the programs that were offered at BoysTown Link Up.

In the first year of operation contact with 76% of those attending BoysTown Link Up originated in prison.

4. Impact of the initiative

Impact on the staff

The staff are committed to making a change in the lives of the young people they encounter. There is enough positive feedback from the young people that the staff are encouraged to continue in their efforts. The agency is not going to suit all staff but those that find the work challenging and enjoyable remain with the agency. Over the life of BoysTown Link Up many staff have stayed only a relatively short time and so the current staff group are mostly committed to the work.

Impact on the clients

The clients indicate their approval of the agency by attending on a voluntary basis. They are not compelled to attend at any stage. Similarly the increase in the number of clients is due in many instances to recommendation from their peers.

For many young people that have attended the agency it has been their means of improving their quality of life.

Impact on the local community (Logan City)

The Logan City Council has always supported BoysTown Link Up. Logan City is a relatively young administrative district with many social problems and having an agency dealing specifically with disadvantaged youth has been a great resource for the community. A significant number of young people attend programs at BoysTown Link Up each weekday, in excess of 200, and this assists in reducing the rate of offending. These young people become an asset to the community rather than a burden.

Impact on other agencies

Agencies are not always able to deal with every person that approaches them. In these cases it is valuable to be able to refer such people to another agency. It is of benefit to the community to have a num-

ber of agencies available so that the work that needs to be done can be shared.

Impact on the Lasallian Network

For the Brothers in the District it gives an alternative ministry. Previously the only ministry available was in a school setting. For the people who work with the Brothers it is their first exposure to a Lasallian approach to welfare work thus enlarging the network of those working in Lasallian initiatives.

5. Minimal conditions for such an initiative to function.

For BoysTown Link Up to exist and be purposeful the following would be essential:

1. An unmet need in a community.
2. A staff committed to working for young people.
3. Funding to be able to provide the resources needed to assist the client group.

6. Risks to avoid in this type of initiative.

In serving the disadvantaged there are some pitfalls to avoid.

– Creating dependency

In helping anyone the staff need to be aware of the distinction between assisting a person and creating a dependency. It is not difficult to allow individuals to become dependent on the agency and lose the ability to manage for themselves. There is sometimes a fine line between helping someone and showing them how to help themselves.

– Ownership

When young people gather in a place such as BoysTown Link Up they can form factions within the group and try to establish ownership over the space available. One effective way of doing this is to make it a hostile environment for any newcomers and this results in a lack of new faces. Just as word-of-mouth is a very effective way of increasing the numbers of young people at the agency so it can also be a means of warning off young people who may be thinking of approaching BoysTown Link Up for help.



THAILAND

La Salle House



Contact: Br. Victor Gil
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La Salle House

The documents coming from the center of the Institute in the years 1970-1975 were very much influenced by the Vatican Council and its theology. These documents insisted that the Brothers should go back to their origins. This meant “going back to the poor”. The community of Nakorn Sawan reflected on what we could do to put this into practice and how we could make the school more accessible to the poor.

One of the projects initiated then was La Salle House.

The idea of La Salle House came from the observation the Brothers had made long before that some of the poor free students that we had received and were staying with the normal boarders had a lot of problems in living with their friends; but no practical solution was then found. Another problem was discovered when some kids from other schools were seen, during school time playing in our school. Talking to some of these truant students we came to realize that they did not attend school because they had no parents to look after them.

The Brothers then decided to take the “free boarders” out of the boarding department hire a house for them and bring there those kids known as “street children” to live in the same house. A house was rented near the school and a teacher with his family were accommodated with them. The community provided everything

for them, from clothing to books to the fees; we had to be parents for those without parents.

Within 2 years new recruits were found among the street children and some needy children and the number went to about forty. The community then decided to rent a second house for the girls. Within a few years we had about forty boys and another forty girls in both houses. As the project became more stable and was answering a real need in Nakorn Sawan the Brothers thought that it was time to give it a permanent framework by building a proper house for both groups.

The Center

The full name of the project is “ Center for the development of small children”.

It was started at about the same time as Miguel and La Salle houses i.e. about 20 years ago.

The Inspiration to start this project came from reading the documents coming from the Center of the Institute in the early seventies and study of the reality around us. These documents put great emphasis on our duty to go “back to the poor”.

While visiting the area where the Nakorn Sawan Municipality dumped the rubbish, Brother Victor came to see the living conditions of the families who made a living out of the rubbish dumps. About one hundred such families worked and lived in that area.

The senior students of the La Salle School made a short study on the living conditions of these families.

The two main problems were found to be lack of drinking water and lack of schooling. Most teen-agers living in the area had attended only one or two years of school. It was not only the lack of material means to attend school that was responsible for their short time in school but also the attitude of the kids towards attending school that was to blame for this poor academic record. The teen-agers complained that the teachers did not like them, that they were expelled without reason, that they had fights in school often. From these observations the Brothers came to the conclusion that the main problem was due to a lack of socialization.

The idea then came that if the small kids playing and living in the dirt of the dumps could attend pre-school, then when the time came for them to go to school they would be ready to live with other people and happy to attend lessons.

A small agricultural plot of land was turned into a pre-school.

Teaching, as well as food and books, is provided free by the community of the Brothers. It is open to the children of people who drive the lorries collecting the rubbish and the children of the families living mainly in that area.

A great change could be noticed in the kids after only three months of the opening of the Center. Instead of fighting each other they could play happily at different games and their physique turned into smiling faces.

At present there are about 65 students aged 3-7, all completely free.



PAKISTAN

National Catechists' Training Centre



Contact: Br. Zafar Daud
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Brief history:

The Training Centre has a long history of nearly fifty years. It has been serving the local Church of Pakistan over the last fifty years with great valour and enthusiasm. The vision of the pioneer missionaries can never be forgotten. Even though, many of them may not be in the world their spirits may be rejoicing in Lord God by observing all the progress and development done in the past years and in recent times. The Missionary Work indeed was started during the time of the British Empire in the Subcontinent. During that period of time, along with the British Empire, pastors and priests came to the Subcontinent. Those pastors and priests had the main purpose to be with the armed forces for religious services. Then slowly the priests moved towards common people to make them listen to the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The administration and management of C.T.C. could be divided into four periods.

The First Period

In the first period Brother Juliano (later he became a Focolare priest. Nowadays he is serving in Focolare in Rawalpindi, Pakistan) of La Salle Congregation became the first director of C.T.C. Earlier Brother Caesar was the principal of the School and director of C.T.C. Brother Juliano was a man of dynamic qualities. He took charge of CTC on 1st of September 1963. He emphasised formation rather than just the training of the catechists. The main things he considered essential were growth of faith, strengthening of faith, the conversion, change in attitude and behaviour, spirituality and practical life.

The Second Period

On 31st May in 1968, Brother Baptist Croos was appointed to be the Principal of C.T.C. He was a man of dynamic energies. He was enthusiastic in developing the standard of C.T.C. He could be remembered as a man full of great zeal for Christ. He had a keen interest in literary activities especially, handwriting, calligraphy, poetry, composition and singing. His other interests were to look for knowledge in diverse fields of life. During his time liturgical music became part of the curriculum. A trained music master was hired to teach music to students for liturgical services.

Third Period

This period was started with the arrival of Brother Osmund on 31st May in 1976 and it lasted until 10th March, 1996. This was the longest period in the history of C.T.C. enjoyed by Brother Osmund. He was a man of principles. The principles were very essential for him. There were many changes in the Centre during his long period.

During the directorship of Brother Osmund many kinds of different undertakings were of great value.

There were not enough teachers in CTC so he decided to train some from the laity (particularly the former students of C.T.C.) for higher studies in Europe. First Mr. Mushtaq Asad was

sent to Rome for two year course in Catechetical, pastoral and theological studies. He earlier passed his two years course in C.T.C. He was sent in 1982 and returned to Pakistan in 1984. On his return he started to teach Liturgy, Urdu, and Pastoral Theology. After him Mr. Eric Sylvester was sent initially to Christ the King Seminary and later to Ireland for higher studies. He returned to C.T.C. in 1990, and started to teach Moral Theology. Afterwards Mr. Emmanuel John was sent to Ireland, with two other ladies Miss Almas and Rubina Shaheen. They started their teaching career in 1991 and 1992. Now there were enough staff members in the Centre.

He also took a keen interest in the development of the village people. He was able to get two tube wells for the villagers. These are very useful in those days when the shortage of water occurs especially in Winter Season in Punjab. He helped the villagers in different ways. By financing the start of small scale businesses, by constructing the low cost houses for those who are very poor and needy.

The Fourth Period

This period began on 10th of March, 1996. Brother Zafar Daud was appointed as director of CTC. Before becoming director of C.T.C. he had been serving in charge of a hostel and as a teacher of Christology in the Catechists' Training Centre for three years. After becoming the director, his first priority was to strengthen the inner discipline of C.T.C. He himself wanted to improve things gradually and steadily. There are many new things introduced in the management and curriculum. The construction, renovation and beautification work in the property of C.T.C. is continually going on.

The newness and modern approach towards information, formation and transformation is remarkable and admirable. The re-organisation of library, sharing of responsibilities with staff members, upgrading of studies and facilities in self research activities of students, and the personal attention towards the individuals are all the good things which are extremely important for sound and solid training. These qualities are combined within the La Sallian Spirituality and zeal for the salvation of souls.



PAKISTAN

School of cooking



This is part and parcel of the Benildus Literacy Centre, which is situated in Khushpur.

Why this programme?

It is to rehabilitate the young adults. They have had little schooling or they are school dropouts. Many are illiterate. From 1981 over 450 young men from this school of Cooking have been sent for work from Karachi to Peshawar as cooks in Hotels, Mission Houses, Hospitals, Private Houses, etc. In the whole of Pakistan this kind of apostolate is not seen where the youth who had bleak future due to inability in reading and writing could be enabled to live their lives honorably in society. When some people who are unaware of the advantages and long term fruits of this training hear about it they are surprised and ask us how did we get this strange idea of training these people in this field. The answer is

simple, when God Himself comes down to rescue his people from slavery He arranges everything for them.

This school which was started on a small scale in a very simple way with very limited means has become well known in the whole country. Now we receive requests for admissions not only from the diocese of Faisalabad but also from other dioceses. At present we have students coming from, Faisalabad, Multan, Islamabad, and Lahore dioceses. Last year we had students from Hyderabad and Karachi even.

There are also 24 women who participated in this program. We had separate classes for them. The admissions are open during the whole year. The students who are capable and sharp can learn with in one year, others in one and half years. We have been able to give certificates to Ten students during the past six months.

All of them are working in different parts of the country. We feel proud of that, because this is a systematic way of transforming our society and bringing the Christian youth out of slavery. These students when they come for the training have nothing with them. Even the ordinary toilet articles and clothes are a luxury for them. Some of them have never heard of or tasted the dishes they learn to prepare, but with in a year they are completely changed people. Their life style is improved. They learn how to keep themselves tidy. They learn the etiquette of dealing with people. They learn to read and write and best of all they learn to pray, attend the holy Mass and some of those who have had not received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation are prepared for that.

Benildus literacy centre for family training of women leaders.

The family training programme has existed from the time the training of catechists was formally started in 1962. The candidates who come for training are from all the dioceses of Pakistan. At present there are 24 of them. They bring their families along. The wives are also trained to be women leaders. They go

with the Catechist to visit families, animate women and form youth groups with young girls. The situation of women in Pakistan is not one to be proud of. Women have a very difficult time. Many of them are not educated just because they are girls and are not supposed to go out. They are made to serve their family. Opportunities are offered to women, formally and non-formally to educate themselves and to learn how to read and write. Classes in religion such as Scripture, Catechetics, Liturgy, Theology, Church History and Psychology are regularly given.

Women do map reading, Geography and General Knowledge. They learn to locate places of the whole world. Besides knowing the main products of the world in different countries, they ponder about their cultural values and attitudes. They also come to know how women live in other countries. They are often surprised to hear that segregation is unheard of, that women work on a par with men, and that opportunities are offered to them in every field. In the Pakistan system of education Geography and especially map reading are badly neglected. Women who study at the Literacy Centre find education a social awareness and uplift.



Professional Centre for the Khushpur Village Women

The vocational centre for women was started in 2001 at the request of the people of Khushpur. It is a separate centre only for the village women. The participants are usually not well educated. We have to see to their level of understanding and learning. The teaching is done in a very simple way by examples, pictures, charts and sometimes by audio visual, films etc.

Some Muslim women are already participating in this program. And we consider it a form of an inter religious dialogue. This way they come to know the Christian women and Christian institutions where we treat them equally with respect which they may not find in other institutions. The Muslims in general trust the Christian institutions for good education and formation. The participants for our training and formation course are only women and they are welcome to follow our program. They have to apply on a simple paper requesting the admission.

Catholic Boys' Hostel

Khushpur is situated in the province of Punjab. Punjab is the biggest province of Pakistan. Most of the Christians live in Punjab. They are generally poor and work as Labourers in the fields, cooks, gardeners, teachers, low rank government servants and sweepers.

Over 80% of the people in Pakistan are illiterate. The percentage of illiteracy among the Christians is higher.



Catholic Boys' Hostel caters to the needs of the poor Christian children who are oppressed and get very little encouragement and support. Many of these Christian families are economically unstable therefore they send their children to work in the fields, carpet making centres or brick kilns. The parents find it difficult to pay the Hostel Fee which is only RS. 250 (US\$ 4.37) per month. We have 70 boys enrolled in the Hostel. About half of them are on full or part concession. There are many more poor Christian students who want to join our Hostel and study, but we are finding it difficult to help them.

We consider the Hostel apostolate very important, because it involves the formation of our Christian boys as good citizens and leaders. In the government

schools they don't get an opportunity to study Christianity. We lay a lot of stress on religion, daily mass, confession and prayer in the Hostel. Our main aim is:

- To give deep rooted values among the Christian boys.
- To help them to witness their faith.
- To fight against religious discrimination and social evils.
- To provide them better chances for decent jobs.
- To help them to uplift their way of living.

Lasallian Innovations in Europe

1. A prolific work:

The last General Chapter encouraged us to start educational and pastoral innovations that would serve as a creative response to the new needs of the young. This Bulletin encourages us to work along these lines as it provides examples of these innovations from all over the Institute.

We are delighted to illustrate here some of the innovations that are being carried out in Europe and which we have seen. Some of these innovations are modest and happen without fanfare within already established institutions. Still others have been set up specifically as responses to the new urgencies of the mission. All of them, the more "classic" ones and the more "novel" ones testify to the generous dedication of many Lasallian educators.

2. Can it be innovative today? Should it be?

a. A new internal organization.

We can say that the need to promote educational innovations on this continent is due to the fact that today Europe is in movement and in turmoil.

Ten states agreed to join the European Union as new members when they signed the treaty on April 16, 2003. Among these are Poland, Slovakia and Malta where the Institute is present. There is envisaged a further expansion in the near future with countries like Romania and Turkey where the Lasallian mission is developing also.

This means an intense reorganizing and reshaping for the old continent as regards its ethnic, religious, cultural and social dimensions. Europe is becoming Christian, Muslim, Western, Eastern, rich and poor all at the same time.

b. Contribution from outside.

At the same time as Europe is reorganizing itself from within, recovering its former unity, from outside there is an intense migration movement underway.

Europe has become the end of the road for many people, more than 13 million of them, who were not advancing in their own countries of Latin America, Africa or Asia. They come to Europe to improve their living conditions but also to rejuvenate old Europe and to diversify European culture. And the European Community itself estimates that it will need up to 40 million people of working age so that it can overcome the problem of ageing and regain productive capacity.

All of these events make for intense cultural and social changes that challenge Lasallian schools to welcome these new citizens who are coming, educate them in tolerance and in multi-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

c. A change or era which highlights new educational needs.

At the same time as these human and geo-political changes, Europe is going through what is now known as a "change of era" marked by the absolute value of the individual as opposed to other external references, pluralism in values, secularism, consumerism, development in technology and in means of communication, raising the level of life and at the same time there are appearing new forms of poverty within these levels... Perhaps all these currents are felt more strongly in this era by the sheer



number of cultural changes that have occurred over the course of history.

This change of era and the social factors listed above demand that the Lasallian school know how to respond creatively. We would like to list some points that will require special attention.

– Welcoming immigrants and promoting the integration of these new citizens in the European Union, educating them in tolerance and in multi-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

– Offering an updated language which allows young people to discover God and to experience new values that will help them find meaning in their lives.

– Caring for young people who suffer from the consequences of family disintegration, various addictions, the influence of sects, the failure to adapt socially...

– Supporting in a special way those young people who, within our own educational establishments, are academically challenged, many times brought on by other, more broad-ranging problems which affect the whole person.

– Supporting processes of social and professional formation for those groups or persons who are unrecognized or who suffer from social or labor exclusion, for example, young people who are unemployed, Gypsies...

d. A new type of presence of the Lasallian charism.

To respond to all these challenges we in the European Lasallian Community believe that the following must be taken into consideration:

– The strength that can be derived from European unity. For that to happen, it is necessary to continue working together through channels that already exist, and at the same time continue to set up a new and unique European Lasallian Region.

– The start of the concept of Association for the educational service of the poor. If this is set up well, we Brothers and partners alike will strive to open new roads in educational and evangelizing service of the young, especially those

who live in “poverty and in at-risk situations” (Brother Alvaro, 2002 Pastoral Letter, page 12).

– The memory of Lasallian history in Europe, with its alarms, crises, wars and revolutions, and at the same time with all its prolific educational thinking and pedagogical tradition which has learned to overcome all obstacles.

3. A great diversity of responses.

In the articles that follow you will find some examples taken from what we can call the “great” Lasallian European Regions (due to the large number of works and educators).

But there are also examples from small Districts, but very active and promising ones, that also have learned to get important innovations up and running.

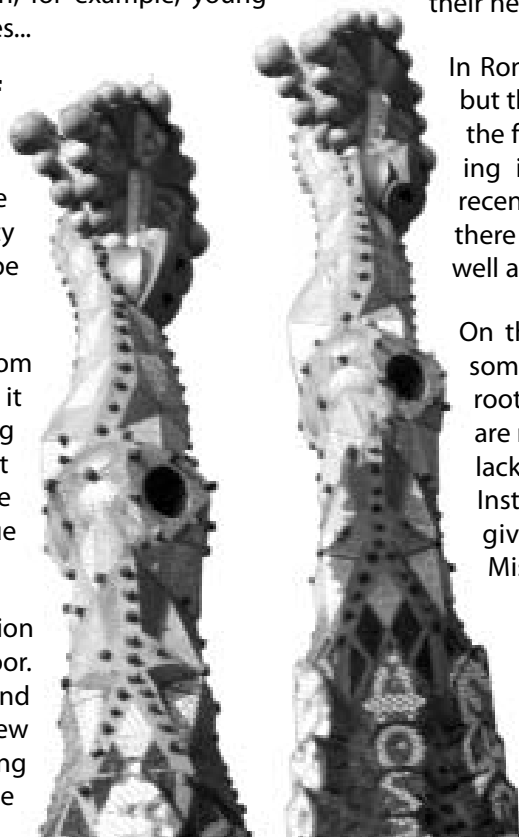
And so we could cite examples from the Centre for Spiritual Exercises in Belfast, which is always very active, or the spiritual leadership training group for young people in Kintbury.

We could travel a bit further and reach out to places that until recently were under Communist control. In Poland Lasallian ministries are basically directed towards children with physical and psychological deficiencies and within these works there is great creativity in caring for their needs.

In Romania there are just two Lasallian works, but they are very creative ones: one of them is the first Catholic school for professional training in the region and the other one, just recently opened, is an establishment in which there is a home for children with problems as well as a pastoral ministry center.

On the following pages you will read about some innovations that have already taken root in the European Lasallian Region. There are many more which cannot be included for lack of space, but which will appear in other Institute communication media. All of them give all of us involved in the Lasallian Mission good reason to hope.

*Br. Claude Reinhardt
and Juan Pablo Martín,
General Counselors*



Association for Dialogue and Student Career Guidance

Contact : Patricia Segura (*ados.lyon@wanadoo.fr*)

1. Date of the beginning of the initiative, people targeted:

Name: A.D.O.S. (Association for Dialogue and Student Career Guidance)

Date of the beginning of the initiative: The Association was officially begun on 6th June 1985 (date of the registering of the Rules of the Association at County Hall).

People: In the 3rd arrondissement of Lyons in the centre of the Moncey/Voltaire district, a district which is renowned for its North African immigrants, A.D.O.S. welcomes young college students, boys and girls, mainly from the arrondissement.



In 2001-2002:

- 250 young people signed on.
- They came from 40 establishments in Lyons, especially from the Raoul Dufy College. (A state school in the area)
- 30 to 60 young people come to the Association every day.
- The Association also takes responsibility for young people who have been excluded from their establishment either temporarily or permanently.

2. How it began:

It was at the "Centre-East" District Chapter of 1982 that the creation of the A.D.O.S. Association by Brother René Bonnetain began. In fact this Chapter marked the desire of the Brothers to return to working with the poor. To this end a survey was made among the Brothers to know who would be the eventual volunteers.

René Bonnetain, who was then Auxiliary Visitor, seemed to be the keenest. He knew Brother Gerard Coudour very well who started out with him on this adventure from the very beginning. Two other Brothers were volunteers, one engaged in Catholic Rescue and the other in theological training. So, from the commitment of these four men and the wish of the Institute, a new community was born in 1984.

After contacting a priest responsible for pastoral ministry of the immigrants, the Guillotière district was chosen. It is the district of Lyons with a history of immigration, most of whom are North Africans, and it is a very poor area where needs are abundant.

We chose to serve there because, for the Brothers of this Community it really was living in the spirit of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, and for René it was in direct line with the call which decided him to enter the Brothers' Institute: service of the young in the world of the working-class.

So the Community settled into the same precarious conditions as the people of the area, in a building marked down for demolition (the new Law Courts of Lyons now stands there). To live at the heart of the area was then the very principle of this undertaking, the choice being to live with the inhabitants and to do things with them and not exclusively for them. René was the Director of the Community.

Gerard Coudour started work in a workshop in the district which accepted young people of 14 to 20 years of age to give them an insight into woodworking. He very soon realised that the young college students needed peace, advice, a sympathetic ear and support in their studies. René got in touch with the Association for Immigrant Families and from January 1985 he quickly began educational support in a building which was also due to be demolished. So in extremely cold conditions in winter, he helped two very motivated girls with their work.

René benefited from the help of the one in charge of ALPIL (Association for the Service of Integration of the Homeless) from the very beginning, which allowed René the use of buildings closed before demolition.

Then word of mouth began to spread the news very quickly and the Association for Immigrant Families aware of what was at stake for the young people's success represented by the help that René was suggesting, asked him to take responsibility for other youngsters. These families were unable to give their youngsters any help with schooling and they entrusted their children to René and empowered him to help with their studies.

By the end of the school year 84/85 René had already helped 30 young people. The official forms were handed in to County Hall on 6th June 1985.

A.D.O.S. is the abbreviation for the **Association for Dialogue and School Careers Guidance**; it is a non-denominational association. Its aim is to further a dialogue between adolescents and adults. The favourite way chosen to further this dialogue is educational support, at Years 12 and 13 level and help with careers guidance.

3. Account of its development and key moments:

The beginnings of the Association:

The discipline:

When the Association was started, it did not seem necessary to draw up any rules, they were taken for granted: respect for one's neighbour and his/her work. The helpers were responsible for their work and for the young people entrusted to them as well as the ambience which existed at their table, even though that had never been spelled out. Everyone worked with the same aims even if each one worked within his capabilities. The only dominant word was Welcome: welcome of the youngster just as he/she was.

When it appeared necessary, the Brother Founder asked for quiet in his deep voice which impressed the young person and the helper alike who became aware that quiet possibly no longer reigned at the table and that the work of others was being hampered...

As a result, André Raphoz, who was then in charge, and the young people, drew up the "Rules of living together". This was the starting point of a regulation which laid down the basis for socialisation and also defined the function of the work.

Parents:

It was decided to leave the parents out. That also answered a strong request from the young people (girls especially) who wanted to escape from ever-present mothers.

So A.D.O.S. was in keeping with the association movement of the time. There was no violence, A.D.O.S.

was the “third place” - as Daniel Thin, a sociologist at Lyons II called it - between the school and the family, where the youngster could socialise, where he could learn about life in society by meeting with adult educators who listened to his needs.

The young people targeted:

A.D.O.S. started out by aiming only at the young people in College. The report was that very often young people from College who were not able to profit from home support, quickly found themselves in difficulty with their studies. The parents who entrusted their youngsters to René, gave him charge of their education. They were aware that he could offer them a chance to get out of this spiral of setbacks.

Sixth Form College students gradually became part of the initial activity but A.D.O.S. soon refocused on its original target in order to benefit those who needed it most, its aim being the independence of the young people received, and not as wide a following as possible.

The team of helpers:

When the Association began, all the helpers had the same role. René was helped by a group of young volunteer students who were with his project from the start and who came to help him by giving their free time. He also called upon all those among his acquaintances who were willing: retired teachers, engineers, neighbours,...

He was very quickly convinced of a certainty that would be the strength of the Association: the necessity of continuing the work by having salaried staff, in order to have a loyal team and to be able to have a certain continuity, a coherence, of the help given to the youngsters.

The partners:

Another certainty drove René. Just as strongly as the continuity of the work was the need to build a network of financial and institutional partnerships without which the Association could not survive.

From the beginning in fact, he worked hard to make it known, and to canvass possible financial backers. He began by asking all his acquaintances, by suggesting they become generous donors for this nascent project. He also collected private funds from Brothers of the Lasallian network as well as former pupils of establishments where René had been Principal.

A.D.O.S. grows:

Little by little the Association developed, and what was valid at the beginning, did not always remain so.

In fact, at the time when A.D.O.S. was started great peace reigned in the sites as well as in the area. Insecurity and incivility did not make the front page of newspapers... Even though A.D.O.S. did not immediately have its first difficulties with regard to the attitude of the young people, even though the structure was spared for a long time, violence did arrive...

The need to reorganise the young people then appeared to be self-evident and the making of regulations a necessity. The director at the time set out to take hold of the reins of the association again and so the following were set up:

- the post of reception of young people upon entering in order to have quality reception and a first filtering which would allow for calming the hyperactivity of certain youngsters on arrival.
- the post of family mediator so that one helper was in charge of meeting the families and their reception.
- the post of psychological mediator so that one person was responsible for managing crisis situations and keeping the link with the youngsters in all circumstances
- the new regulation: set out in three parts (as is always the case), showing first what A.D.O.S. is, what the youngster should do so that everything goes well, and what he agrees to accept if he, for his part, breaks the “contract” in some way.
- from now on the enrolments would be made with the parents present for the children of year seven and meetings with the parents would be developed by meetings and intercultural meals.
- Restructuring of the space with changes to the disposition of the tables on the site. In fact each helper was faced with three youngsters at most and his/her chair was a different colour so that it could be identified and so that the youngster was always aware of the adults place even in his/her (possible) absence (when there are not enough adults for example).

This is how affairs are still conducted at A.D.O.S. The difficulties allowed us to go to the essential and, it seems, have allowed us to find a “formula” which is working well.

If some things have changed in the way the Association

runs, what remains the same and is even strengthened is the Spirit which the founder wanted to give this association.

A.D.O.S. was started to come to the help of, and welcome youngsters in great difficulty. Through the years the Association has striven to reach those in most difficulty, the poorest of the poor. That is why it has accepted, from the beginning of the 90s, to take charge of young students from the neighbouring College who had recently arrived in France, students who were in special classes because they could not speak French.

From this time a dialogue started with the teacher of French, and an enormous amount of work has been done for and with these young people. This step was fulfilled, two years ago, on its becoming official by the signing of an agreement with the Principal of the state school and the teachers of French in the two reception classes of the neighbouring college, on Nicolas Capelle's initiative.

For a few years now, A.D.O.S. has been keen to be at the service of marginalised young people by having a welcome for youngsters temporarily or definitively excluded from the school system. This project was formalised by the signing of a partnership agreement with the neighbouring college.



evenings to life this summer on the two main squares of the area.

Former youngsters of the association are today concerned about the others, and some have tried to start an association to help the youngest. At their request and that of the families, A.D.O.S. took over to ensure help for the youngest as well. (CM and CM2 for the past two years.)

The families, mothers in particular, expect the association to give them time for discussion and conviviality. (Inter-cultural meals take place every year with the families, letting the families have discussions among themselves about their young ones' education).

From the beginning, too, he canvassed potential partners such as the Town Hall, the FAS or the General Council in order to harness the support of all political people who could possibly help in upholding the cause he was championing: young people in great difficulty.

Thanks to this in-depth work, the Association was soon able to profit from the financial support of public grants which allowed it to look into the future more calmly and to add salaried members to the team, to obtain what was needed for the suggested action, to get away from urgency...

4. Impact of the initiative on the social, educational, political, cultural, ecclesial environment

Today A.D.O.S. works in close partnership with the nearest area College and they meet together and exchange information about their activities. The directress of the Association sits on the College Administration Council as a qualified person. Two partnership agreements have been signed between the two undertakings; one concerning the enrolment of youngsters who have recently arrived in France without knowing French (Reception classes, or CLA) and the other concerning the enrolment in our undertaking of youngsters temporarily or definitively excluded from their establishment. The time-tables for the youngsters in the reception classes are made with the partnership agreement in mind so that the youngsters have at least two free afternoons a week to come to the A.D.O.S. Centre.

Because of its stability over a period and its seriousness, the association is often referred to by the political authorities, the backers.

A.D.O.S. joined with three other associations in the district to create a play area in the district which allowed different generations to meet at play. These structures, combined with some others have brought games

5. Minimum conditions for such an initiative to work:

It has, of course, been said above, that first of all, before any step is taken, one must be certain that a real need exists in the district where one is going, but especially that there is a demand. By that I mean that one must not go faster than the inhabitants; they might have other, more urgent problems which would prevent them putting any effort into a new “enterprise”...

People are needed who agree to commit themselves long term. Without a minimum number of people to ensure the continuity of the work, the creation of an association becomes weak. It needs people who are vital links over time, who are the memory of this association, and who are stable reference points for the young people.

A very important need for stability, even if not everyone can be kept from one year to the next, a hard core should be kept. Likewise stability is needed during the week with regard to accepting volunteers. In this way a youngster will know that he will find such and such a helper on Tuesdays for example, or that another one is available every day except Wednesdays. They need landmarks and we must provide them.

The helpers or some helpers from the team, need to be available to be able to respond to the needs of the youngsters in serious difficulty or in great distress, who are not necessarily at the stage of being able to meet at fixed times. This is particularly valid for youngsters in great difficulty by being marginalised.

Work with the associations in the area, which implies taking time to attend meetings and working together. It is very important if one wants the youngsters to feel the consistency of what is in the area and if one wants to know the partners, to continue their activities.

The ideal situation, and almost imperative in my view, for success, is the presence of a community of Brothers in the area, a Community which is at the service of the enterprise and a landmark for each one, helpers as well as youngsters.

The absolute necessity of organising very frequent meetings to exchange views on what is going on and to organise a follow-up to the action.

To create convivial times allowing encounter, whether among the helpers themselves, helpers and families, or among families. These encounters strengthen bonds without one's being aware and strengthen the structure.

6. Risks to avoid in this kind of initiative:

In the history of the association we saw that the founder was anxious to anchor the creation of this structure by living in an area. The important thing is to start off with the reality of an area and to listen to the requests, not to arrive with a “ready-made” plan to fasten on to people and place who did not share in its creation.

From the beginning he created posts to continue the work. Salaried staff must in fact be appointed as quickly as possible for an indeterminate length of time in order to perpetuate the work by continuity. The salaried staff, along with loyal volunteers, must be the pillars and threads of continuity of the work, as well as guardians of its memory.

The founder also built a network of institutional partners and he got the work recognised on a public level. It would be a mistake to try to work within the group without being open to society. One must, instead, let the structure benefit from all the supports which could help and strengthen it.

Great availability is needed on the part of the workers to adapt themselves to the needs of “the enterprise”.

Do not fall into the trap of gradually wanting to answer all requests and wanting to put right all the prob-

lems of the youngsters of a district. One must, instead, remain modest and continue to do well what one knows how to do and co-operate with the other workers in the area.

To lose sight of the role and importance in the area of a community of Brothers who have the concerns of the “undertaking” at heart and are at the service of the youngsters, their families and the area...

France

Community of Young People and Brothers

Contact: Bro. Jean Yves Fiolleau (*fecparje@oreca.com*)

1. Aims

At the beginning, the Association had a quite precise aim and one demanded by the District Council of the time (The District Atlantique): to obtain vocations for the Brothers. If this aim still remains the main one, some setbacks caused the notion of vocation to be looked at. The wider aim is now directed, for the youngster, at the discovery of his human and spiritual vocation, at how to fit into the world as a Christian.

2. History of its origins

It was in 1986 that the project really started. Why then? Simply because it corresponded to the movement of the “Young Lasallians” to join together for the international gathering which was to take place in Quebec a year later in July 1987. The preparation of such a gathering required meetings of groups, and exchanges on accepted topics.

The suggestion was put to the Sixth Formers of St Genevieve and the replies surpassed all expectations since more than 32 students said they were interested. Meetings took place in the community every two weeks; four Brothers of the community had groups of 8-9 students. Activities, organised and accomplished with the young people to finance the journey, bonded the group and let them know the Brothers better. The movement was started, the youngsters knew the place, and it was up to the community now to keep these young people motivated. But for all that we still cannot speak of “*Young Lasallians*”.

However, the year of preparation let the youngsters learn about the life of Saint John Baptist de la Salle and the awareness revealed for them the Lasallian network world-wide, so that at the beginning of the school year 1988, the community and the Brothers in charge of leading the group did not hesitate to use the term “Young Lasallians”.

3. Impact of the initiative

a. On those who have had the experience:

It seems very positive on the young people who have been coming to the Community and the Association for several years, for they gradually put a lot of effort into it and on the level of responsibility it is not without repercussions... to the point that since the beginning of our Association two youngsters alone have failed their A-levels and had to re-sit them. (Remember that the social milieu is heterogeneous).

A second benefit from this participation, always on the human level, touches the question of employ-

ment. some youngsters, in fact, tell the story that their first job was thanks to what they learned and above all what they fulfilled while in the Association.

A third impact mentioned is more educational. Several parents tell of the “change” in their child in behaviour, maturity and the Faith.

The young people themselves bear witness. I still hear several say that, if they had not found the “Brothers and young people association”, they would have “drifted” from Christianity a long time before! They and others say that they learned solidarity, sense of service and tolerance.

For many, I think, attending the Community and the association was a source of human and spiritual maturity. Those who have not experienced commitments during or after, are in a very small minority. One of the best proofs of their “attachment” or “gratitude” is their strong link once they have left...

b. On the Lasallian network

I must mention a regular and quite important participation of young people from the Rennes group in the “young Lasallians” gatherings, which led to a network of relationships and informal meetings of some groups for the rest of the year.

Another Lasallian high spot the young people of Rennes take pleasure in visiting each Easter weekend is, of course, Parménie!

Several times also, and again last August, some young people took part in a working camp there.

All this sharing, this whole life in the network, can only reinforce the young people in their choice. Working like this over the period lets them be well aware of the Brothers in the world and of the network in general.

We have also kept contact with Quebec since 1982. A group of 20 went back there for the 1992 Christmas holidays, staying with the families and leading the Christmas celebrations in the parish. They returned this exchange in July 1994. Since then and under the aegis of the association, two new groups have been formed and have met. The young people want “to give” to the Lasallian network, because they have received a lot.

This year, before the WYD in Montreal and Toronto three youngsters from the Rennes group, out of the six from the French delegation, participated in the International Colloquium on the young Lasallians movement.

Besides that, two young persons hold posts of responsibility at national level: one is responsible for editing the “young Lasallians” review, the other is on the national council.

At regional level, we have a representative at the SEMIL office.

Furthermore, for 2002-2003, an adult member of the association office took charge of SEMIL in the West region during the absence of Brother Bruno Allain in Rome for formation.

For the past two years and with young, available, Lasallian volunteers, we have been to other Establishments of our trusteeship or diocesan trusteeship to tell of our activities, the spirit in which we work or our experiences of solidarity with developing countries!



I believe I can ensure that the young people have taken their place in the working of the Lasallian network.

4. Impact of the initiative on the social, ecclesial environment

An association has aims! The young people who come and share in its working have a certain “influence” on it. It is not always easy to quantify this influence or evaluate the work done!

It is, though, possible to show some results.

a. Social environment

– For the past several years, youngsters have worked hard in the south of the area of the town to help Cambodians who have fled their country, to read and write.

Likewise, some older ones have become a school support for college pupils.

– Area discount markets are quite numerous in Rennes, and we have been taking part in them for several years. We see a triple advantage in it:

First of all it is a way of coming into contact with the population. In fact the attendance is very important in September as well as at the end of the year.

This activity lets the young people of the association get to know one another better, work together for the group and especially for those who are participating in a project of the SEMIL kind.

It is also a way of financing our association projects.

These discount stalls also become a place of awareness and of questioning since the information posters made by the young people mention openly that they belong to the Brothers and Young People association.

b. Ecclesial Environment:

– In this area participation of the group in leading the parish Mass can be mentioned while noting an irregular attendance from one year to the next.

– The young people have also quite regularly agreed to lead wedding Masses: either for young people from the association or because of requests.

– Regularly and in twos or threes, the young Lasallians have taken charge of the preparation for confirmation, a preparation lasting a year and a half. The young Lasallians, in pairs, ensure the following of a group of 7-8 youngsters of years 9 and 10. The preparation is done with the helpers. The input at this level varies from year to year. This year four young Lasallians joined the group of helpers for the confirmation candidates who had already been preparing since the last school year.

– Mention at the ecclesial level should also be made of the participation in some diocesan events.

5. For such an initiative to work:

Minimum conditions

– For reception you need space.

To receive young people in a community or in a common area, it is vital to have several rooms available. These rooms must be fairly comfortable but simple in their furnishing (the poverty aspect!). The essential is that the youngsters should feel at ease.

– For young people to come, there must be a “ call “! The witness of the community is then essential as

much in its life of prayer as in its fraternal life or in its integration in the area. The community can reach out to the people around only if it is recognised. The Brothers must then be engaged in a school establishment, in a parish...

– Young people will commit themselves for the long term only if there are projects...

Long term means one year or even two!

I am thinking of proposals for national and international encounters, SEMIL projects, projects of solidarity with the town along with recognised organisations: CCFD, Catholic Help, SAMU in social work...

In the short term, but based on the responses to vital needs: the Mass, exchanges about their life, their human and spiritual concerns.

– To conclude this passage about the conditions of existence and functioning of such an organisation, I must mention finances. So often it is the key to a certain number of projects... so what ways are there to obtain it? For our Association we could not “survive” without gifts to the De La Salle Foundation. Subscriptions to the Association seem very little.

France

Putting Lay people in posts of responsibility as Representatives of the Trusteeship

Contact: Bro. Jean François Morlier (*fvadjoint@lasalle-fec.org*)

1. The initiative

It began in the 90s and concerned the exercise of the Trusteeship for the 150 or so establishments of the Lasallian network.

It really saw the light of day in a significant way in 1998 following the District of France Chapter.

2. Aims

In the light of a decision of the national Chapter taken in 1998 and confirmed in 2002, to retain the Trusteeship for all the establishments in our network of establishments, a network which had been stable in expansion for several years and taking account of the diminution of the number of Brother Visitors, directly responsible for exercising the Trusteeship over these establishments, it appeared urgent and necessary to entrust a large share of this responsibility to Lay Representatives. They were detached for this purpose, and held their mission by delegation from the Brother Visitor and in conjunction with the Brothers Auxiliary Visitors who had a territorial responsibility for the communities of Brothers and for the establishments in the same geographical sectors.

3. History of its origins

The placing of responsible lay Representatives on the Trusteeship is the final part of a slow evolution. The main stages were:

- 1978, creation of an association recognised by the Brother Visitors, bringing together some lay Heads of establishments who had replaced Brothers Headmasters, the La Salle Association, known as ALS.
- 1986: the La Salle Association brought together all the Heads of establishments of the French Lasallian network, who were entrusted with the Trusteeship for the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Brother Visitor, an ex officio member, had a casting vote on the Administration Council composed equally of Brothers and lay people.
- It should be noted that in conformity with the rules of the association, the President was a serving lay Head of an establishment, and the Secretary General, a lay ex-Head of an establishment of the network, assigned and paid full time. This lay person was in fact the first to share the exercise of this responsibility for the Trusteeship.
- Following the 1990 Chapter, all the Brothers Auxiliary Visitors in the sectors saw to the Trusteeship of the establishments, some of them in a more significant way than others, who were more in charge of the communities of Brothers.

Following the 1994 Chapter, a balance was made between the two areas of responsibility for the different Brother Auxiliary Visitors concerned, the Deputy Brother Visitor, responsible for the Trusteeship continuing to ensure the national co-ordination of this service with the members of the La Salle Association.

Nevertheless, in a proposal of the 1994 Chapter, there had been a request to put lay Members of the Trusteeship in place, so this proposal remained a dead letter. Two Brothers Headmasters, who had recently retired, maintained a voluntary service of Trusteeship Members, thus partially freeing the Brother Auxiliary Visitors of this responsibility.

This formula could have only a temporary character with a fixed date since it could not ensure the maintenance of the exercise of this Trusteeship, especially as the number of Brothers Auxiliary Visitors was decreasing from Chapter to Chapter. In the context of the shared mission, one could not but question the significance of this formula.

The 1998 Chapter gave a significant move forward in this area. It recommended having 3 full-time lay Representatives, with the District and the establishments together finding the finances for this plan.

In 2002, on the occasion of the last Chapter, the following appraisal was available:

- A new Lay Person had taken over, since 1998, the post of first Secretary General of PALS.
- The three lay Trusteeship Representatives, ex-Heads of establishments, have gradually, because 4 years were needed to bring it to fruition, been engaged full-time. The recruitment was linked to a training course, for those interested, in modules of SIEL and propositions of trusteeships of congregations of France.

Stage 2002 - 2006 appears more delicate and even uncertain: we are faced with a triple challenge:

- The number of available Brothers for the service of Trusteeship, Brother Visitors among them, continues to fall and the succession is in question.
- The first Lay people engaged could also want to be replaced at the end of a second mandate and their succession is in question also.
- When we take account of the state of the present network, we must, within a short time, double the number of Lay Representatives of the Trusteeship, going from 3 to 6 full-time members, a number we must maintain.

It has to be said that at this moment the movement seems to be slowing down and even to be running out of steam. Through a lack of available Lay volunteers, the number of Brothers maintaining the

service has reached the limit of our possibilities for the present and the future.

The feasibility, viability and the continuation of this initiative was our priority for 2002. The 2002 Chapter also asked the La Salle Association and the establishments to evaluate the reality of their explicit membership of the Lasallian network and their reference to the educational project.

5. Impact for those who have had the experience and for the Lasallian network

– For the lay Representatives of the Trusteeship who are experiencing this, it means doing a new job, very different from that of Head of establishment with different effects.

– They discover and live in greater proximity to the Brothers responsible for the District with whom they collaborate and are really associated in the educational mission.

– On the other hand, they might feel a certain distance vis-à-vis their ex-colleagues who are heads of establishment.

– The function is very time-consuming, can entail many journeys and a full time-table that has to be reconciled with necessary rest and a balanced family life.

– The work can be exhausting, has a temporary character and the question of a return to work at the end of 1 or 2 mandates is to be thought about.

– On the whole, the lay Representatives consider their experience very enriching but paradoxically this does not seem, in the present conditions of the job, to inspire similar vocations among their colleagues remaining as Heads of establishment.

6. Impact on the social, educational and ecclesial environment

Within the Lasallian network,

– the lay Representatives of the Trusteeship have been fairly well accepted in the establishments by their Heads of establishment colleagues and the members of the educational community.

Outside,

4. Precise role of the Lasallian Lay Representatives of the Trusteeship

We must place ourselves in the context of the very organised French Catholic Education with reference to its Statute granted by the Bishops of France in 1992 which insists on the canonical recognition of the establishments. The bishop of the diocese approved authority of the trusteeship of a congregation, in the event the Brother Visitor of France. He, with the assistance of a Trusteeship Council, delegates the responsibility of the Trusteeship service with regard to the establishments of the Lasallian network to the Brothers Auxiliary Visitors and to Lay or Brother Representatives of the Trusteeship.

The Statute of Catholic Education details what the service of the Trusteeship is. For us, Lasallians, it is defined by three integral and complementary parts:

1. intervention in the institutional area
2. supporting the establishment and the educational community
3. leadership and training.

The Lay Representative of the Trusteeship exercises the full service of Trusteeship. In the institutional area he makes proposals for the appointment of Heads of establishments to the Trusteeship association; he shares in the management on the administration Council; in the supporting role, he periodically visits the establishment as a Trustee; in a leadership and training role he accepts proposals from the different pastoral ministry services, of pedagogical and educational training, and joins in proposing candidates for training at the French Lasallian Centre (CU). A statute for a Representative of the Trusteeship has been formulated which defines these different responsibilities.



- in the French Catholic Teaching network, initial reactions were diverse but the reserve which was felt was gradually cleared. It should be noted that our Congregation was a pioneer in French Catholic Teaching. Those responsible nationally for French Catholic Teaching, and the bishops, have welcomed the initiative very positively, the canonical authority remaining the Brother Visitor, the Major Superior.
- Other religious Congregations are gradually adopting similar measures.

7. Minimum conditions for such an initiative to work

- First of all, the trust of the Brother Visitor
- The logistical support of a strongly structured Trusteeship association
- The necessary financial resources to ensure an appropriate remuneration for these Lay people, coming from the District and the scholastic establishments.
- A prior training or at least an exercise course for the job
- A support and a sharing with Brothers and Lay colleagues fulfilling the same function.
- A real availability, various professional abilities and recognised communication capabilities.
- A spirit of service and a deep sharing of the Lasallian charism

8. Risks to avoid in this kind of initiative

- The first risk is one of loneliness, particularly for a Lay person.
- The second risk is that of putting too much into the task which could cause exhaustion and real discouragement.
- The 3rd risk is a break with the heads of establishments, responsible for their establishments.
- The 4th risk is that in trying to maintain the link with the heads of establishments, he would not be able to manoeuvre differently.

NB: The same description could be given for the experience of Lay people who live the same type of commitment with the Brothers in the fields of service in the pastoral ministry, training, communication, etc...

SPAIN, Valladolid

Formation Plan for New Teachers

Contact: Br. Jesús Miguel Zamora (*secretariadova@lasalle.es*)

1. Beginning date:

This initiative was begun during the 1988 - 1989 school year (February), under the auspices of the District Secretariat for Education (now under control of the Auxiliary Visitor).

2. The type of person affected by this experience: new teachers who are contracted for a term to work in District Lasallian schools. Later on, this was expanded to include school reception personnel because of their important educational role as the “entry point” to the school, the first persons seen by the public.



3. Objectives of this initiative:

- To find the ideal candidate, in accord with the school's needs, so that she or he might exercise better the job for which a contract was offered.
- To free up school leaders (and administrative teams) from pressures they are under from family members, friends, Brothers, etc., to “place” a candidate in an open post.
- To help new teachers, once selected, to continue acquiring basic skills and knowledge required in Lasallian ministry.
- To continue to tailor the involvement of new teachers in the Lasallian plan, progressively, based on their greater knowledge and commitment as educators.
- To train them, intellectually, emotionally, vitally...centered on basic topics for the Lasallian teacher.
- To establish mutual formation channels for meetings, for sharing teaching experiences...that will aid in easing the initial problems of all teachers who begin to work in Lasallian schools.
- To make possible a platform that will allow to be offered, at the end of three years of formation as new teachers, other formative experiences at the District or Regional level in various areas: Lasallian formation, administration, missions, etc.
- To involve, from the beginning, new teachers in a common responsible task within the school, in the need to know better John Baptist de La Salle and Lasallian thinking, in awakening committed responses as regards Christianity, education, teaching, the Lasallian world.

4. The story of the origins:

1. There were more and more lay teachers working in the schools. Because of this fact, a more effective response was needed to deal with issues that were raised by this. Initially all responsibility for hiring was left up to the school headmaster. They sorted things out as best they could but there were no common criteria for all the schools.

It should be noted that in the selection process a fundamental role is played by the school's administrative team which presents and then make the first selection of candidates. Then, the entire process is sent to the team in the Secretariat for Education. First of all, the Brother Auxiliary Visitor, by District statute, is the one in charge of administering the tests, conducting the private interviews, and of drawing up the report and then giving it to the school headmasters, since he is the one who takes care of all things having to do with education and with shared mission within the District.

For that reason, and because the criteria adopted was done by the Auxiliary Visitor, it is much easier when it comes to hiring new teachers since no one else is involved outside of those who work in the Secretariat for Education: we know the schools, we know what the staff is like, what type of students are served in one place or another...and all this makes for a certain type of unity in the criteria for selection.

In some cases the initial task is difficult, because sometimes there are many to be hired (in the past 6 years, 180 persons). That is why there is a need to be present during the month of July and part of August or September, going through the selection process. Again, this is the responsibility of the Brother Auxiliary Visitor.

The whole process helps the candidate to understand the meaning of his belonging to the new school, to understand the seriousness with which we do things as an educational institution and the process is a constant reminder to headmasters to continue their efforts as they administer and monitor their own schools.

In addition, school headmasters were being pressured by interested parties to hire their candidates which put the headmasters in awkward situations.

Therefore, knowing that the quality of a school depended in large measure on its teaching staff, it was thought necessary to change the hiring procedure, given the number of schools in the District (19) with over 11,000 students at the time and with a growing number of new teachers (in tandem with the fewer number of Brothers in the District).

Already back in 1989, criteria were established among all the school boards that permitted the drawing up of a teacher profile for those who were interested in working in a District Lasallian school.

Moreover, a model work application form was made in which all data referring to the candidate was included, not only his/her curriculum vitae, but also as regards other experiences in catechesis, leading youth groups, work in other schools, etc. There was also drawn up an educational questionnaire, required to be completed by each candidate, in which could be seen their professional abilities and their willingness to be involved in matters pertaining to vocations and education.

All of this resulted in the drawing up of a report which included the results of technical exams: personality traits, talents and professional preparation, resources and abilities, suitability for the school teaching faculties, a profile of Lasallian characteristics, a summary and guidelines.

2. Another important element in this story of the origins is that we were finding few former students who were applying to be teachers. Perhaps the reason for this was that they were able to secure an easier job since, having been there as former students, they already had an idea of what the work would be like in the school.

3. There was a need to integrate the new teachers quickly in Lasallian culture not let them just drift and pick things up on their own.

4. It was necessary to include different teaching circles. We found people who came to us that lacked training in pedagogy, methodology, education; even though they had been trained in their area of speciality, they had not gone through – this is the case for the great majority who get a secondary teaching position – teacher training or pedagogical training.

5. We saw that it was important to lessen the initial fear of teachers as they were faced with a new situation. And so if we introduced them to and to prepared them for certain aspects of their teaching situation, perhaps they would not feel so alone at this beginning time.

6. Another problem cropped up: headmasters were under pressure from receiving work requests from family members, friends, Brothers and others which gave rise to a chaotic situation, a real headache, in terms of preferences which, in the end, did not correspond to what was required of a Lasallian teacher (many entered because they were sufficiently prepared in their subject area, but then they did not get

very involved in other educational aspects of the school, even as regards its Christian nature. Furthermore, regard for these Christian topics was so great that in order not to cause trouble they kept silence for which a price was paid later).

7. The formation given to these new teachers was not the best. They were hired and they were given “their space.” Only in the case of encountering some diligent or perceptive head of studies who understood what all this meant and what the future consequences would be for these new teachers, would problems be resolved but there was not much follow-up. In other schools, even this chance encounter did not happen.

8. It was seen as important that whatever could be done at the District level would ensure the future of the school at the local level. Therefore, if an experience of this caliber were to be done at the District level, schools would be pressed not to let a follow-up process go to waste.

9. Finally, it was seen as necessary to continue creating a Lasallian, educational, Christian mentality among new teachers. It was also necessary to change the complexion that events were taking with quite a few union or work demands of the teachers who had entered “under the watch of one headmaster's shift” but who later did not respond to the Lasallian concern that was necessary for this common enterprise.

All these events made it necessary to change the face of the teaching staffs. In some cases the massive influx of new people meant that this change was automatic.

5. Impact of the initiative on those who have gone through it.

To measure this impact quantitatively is difficult. But perhaps it is important to try to do this based on the experiences themselves. And even to ask the question “how is it that this had not been seen or organized before” and why have we functioned in another way, being surprised after a certain period of time?

– The administrative teams were very satisfied with all the work that was done. Many persons helped out, although the most direct responsibility fell on the District Secretariat for Education since that office is the one which makes the most decisions (in frank and open dialogue with headmasters, once the selection process has been completed).

– A great change has been observed among the teaching staffs. In these last twelve years about half have been renewed (of the 530 lay teachers currently in the District, some 350 have been added during this period). And so, this in itself makes for new personnel in the schools. These new people typically contribute more since they are better informed and they are eager to take the reins of Lasallian formation in a more direct way. That is to say, they accept initiatives better, they feel more responsible and they collaborate more since they themselves are more clear as to the objectives the school is trying to achieve.

– There was great appreciation for the efforts that were being made by the institution as regards their formation and updating:

– Relationships formed outside the usual professional ones (personal, affective). Some marriages even





resulted from these encounters between teachers in various schools.

- Very strong professional bonds were created; in the beginning they were all concerned about the same problems and so they sought common solutions. Meetings were held to share what was talked about on prior occasions.

- There was great appreciation for the serious efforts made by the institution which promoted participation in other District formation structures.

- There was help in gaging better people's potential as teachers since there were so many demands made on them at the beginning that when it came time to renew their contracts, their efforts were seen as being needed to be maintained over time.

- These persons accepted better other formation proposals as they entered a common District plan for the formation of teachers.

- A District culture has been created. The Brother Auxiliary Visitor and his team in the Secretariat for Education enjoy great prestige among the teachers for the work they do. In addition, emerging from this is a great amount of trust in the schools' administrative teams as they enjoy strong support in all Secretariat activities in this area. Furthermore, the teachers involved value District efforts and the response that they are "obliged" to give. Very cordial relationships have been established among everyone from the very beginning, with the Secretariat for Education and with those involved in other District structures. Also it is clear, by the insistence made at various meetings, as well as by daily practice, that there does exist relationships that are open, warm and cordial with the more veteran teachers. The veterans are completely devoted to the new teachers, and they help them out as they can. They introduce them to "important people" across the Spanish educational spectrum. Persons they turn to for speakers at these meetings have recognized ability in the field of education. In addition, since they have already participated in many of our meetings in this area of formation, they connect very quickly with the needs of the teachers.

- A change in persons has been noted. From very frightened people who thought it was a "fearful thing" to become part of a recognized institution such as ours, with much educational tradition, with many schools spread out across the nation and belonging to a world Institution... they have become proud of belonging, in the beginning in a "sentimental" way; later on, in a more active way, and very appreciative of all things Lasallian, not only in the District but in other parts of the world as well. They feel much more sure of themselves.

- In those cases where some teachers had to be let go because they were not able to integrate well with the other teachers or because something was left to be desired in their vocation as a Christian educator (not always discernible in the selection process) the administrative team felt confident and was backed up by the Secretariat for Education and vice-versa. And although these types of decisions are always difficult, they presume that those under contract knew what they were getting into, that they knew things had to be done professionally, and that they knew that they could rely on everyone for all possible support. Therefore, it was understood that each new teacher would be observed, accompanied and examined...by persons at the local school and by persons involved with the Secretariat for Education.

- Finally, new ways of living out the Lasallian message were established among the veterans (who, for the most part, very much welcomed this) and the newcomers and these new ways fostered their growth together as an educational community.

Contact: Br. Joan Lluís Casanovas

Introduction

Cintra is a civil association made up of men and women superiors from 31 religious congregations.

Name of the Association:

“Cintra Association For The Promotion Of Social And Civil Programs.”

Currently, the Association has two programs: the Cintra College de *Ciutat Vella* (Old Town) de Barcelona and the Benallar program.

Cintra is an educational center in concert with the Department of Instruction of the autonomous government of Catalonia, providing obligatory secondary education for students who have been playing truant or who have failed. In other words, it is a school for street children.

Benallar is a new program, dedicated to the “welcoming and accompaniment of immigrants” especially as regards providing decent housing.

The History Of Cintra

To relive some of these things brings us back to the year 1992 when there was a dream about a common project, the magic of which was seen only as a hope. There was fear and at the same time there was a dream about what was happening, and which involved a handful of religious who were fed up with what they observed, suffered through and lived in Raval and Ciutat Vella de Barcelona. They prayed over, fought for and suffered in this situation.

I will list here exactly what, in 1995, Br. Jordi Ginestà wrote when our dream was fulfilled and Cintra began to function. Later on I will explain in more detail.

A short history of a dream

One day several men and women religious who worked in a marginalized area came together to dream about a project they had in mind regarding caring for boys and girls who were from marginalized families. Daily life and contact with these children and their families awakened many questions in these religious.

Conversations with some of the directors of the Public Schools and Centers in “*Ciutat Vella*”, information published in newspapers “*els Casals d'Estiu*” (urban summer camps including meals), educational centers outside the school that exist within the neighborhood and are dedicated to children and adolescents, all of these things raised questions for us and made us look for educational answers as we faced these children and adolescents who, because of circumstances involving marginalization and the failure to adapt and with severe learning difficulties, did not have the minimal requirements for “normal schooling” at any school.

“*We ought to do something*” was the normal phrase heard among the teachers. What can we do? What

would an adequate educational process look like for these children? The questions continued to spring up like a fountain which never ran dry. We also were finding some answers that slammed on the brakes due to legal impediments, setting up a team, and how to put all this into practice within the educational reform laws. The questions that came up most often among us were: to bring the children to a “home” outside Barcelona, help them grow up in a “normalized” school where they would be able to learn values proper for their age, bring some kids out of the neighborhood so that they could see other family and environmental realities, look for receiving or adopting families for some kids, for the purpose of their having a suitable education.

In April of 1993 one group began to work together.

The first step: concern

It was during one of these meetings about which I spoke that the topic came up in a serious way.

Several of us, religious from Raval y Gòtic (*Ciutat Vella* de Barcelona), met together monthly to celebrate the Eucharist and share a supper. We worked, along with other religious, at the M. Raval social foundation: La Fundació *Escó*. It was there, based on the knowledge of some children and adolescents in a “*Casal d'estiu*” (summer house) where we accompanied the most broken families of the neighborhood. When certain maltreatment was observed or some deficiencies on the part of some of the children in the house, we contacted the families and, by means of a whole series of strategies, we were able to follow the kid's progress and in many cases, this follow-up turned into true friendship. As I said, several of us from different Congregations were working in this area and that particular evening we had a meeting. One of the religious, concerned about two young brothers, was explaining something about the family and social problems in which they were involved and which were impeding their performance in school. Several others were talking about similar cases. “*What is going to happen now that the ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education) is beginning?*”

School absenteeism was discussed. As much as the administration would strive to ensure that the children in Catalonia attended schools, we knew that this truth was “relative.” It is true that even the Regional Police intervene in cases of kids being on the street during school hours. But for the young kids it was easy enough to evade this security patrol, especially when the majority stayed in their houses sleeping or watching television. Almost all the kids were registered in school, but many of the most disadvantaged due to their family situation and their state of marginalization were not comfortable in school since they were so far behind – sometimes so far behind that they could not read – so they ran away from school, played truant or they simply stopped going almost at the very beginning of the school year. Family vigilance in many such cases was minimal.

The second step: the dream

The dream continued to grow. One other day we began talking about finances. We all agreed that with today's legal and financial difficulties involved in setting up any school, no Congregation could take upon itself a new school or work – even though it was not yet clear what kind – that would help in offering some relief to the situation. On the other hand, we believed that it had been providential that the topic came up during an inter-Congregational meeting.

Why don't we do something all together? And why not do this precisely as a sign of unity among religious? Some, the more skeptical in the crowd, crossed themselves and said: “*Several Congregations agree on the same work? That would be most difficult.*” And I would say that it was precisely this that motivated us to fight more and better. To be signs of unity was something that captivated us from the beginning. And now it was time to leave our small chapels behind and to unite ourselves to create something that would have the strength of unity and communion. I recall these conversations that we had in this regard

as if they were taking place right now.

The third step: from dream to proposal

Three elements were seen now with some clarity:

1. The boys and girls who were growing up in broken environments in our neighborhood: they were suffering from specific difficulties involving social integration in their habitual circles: in the family, in school, with their friends, in the street environment.

The school was almost never a source of satisfaction for them. In reality they were not accepted by the school, not for any lack of good will from their teachers, but because of the impossibility of responding to these different problems.

The atmosphere in the neighborhood streets pushed these kids to fall easily into idleness, fighting, drinking, drugs, delinquent behavior...or it leads them to recall the kind of family life they had as small children.

2. We wanted to respond to this.

There had to be a kind of educational intervention that would permit these boys and girls to gain access to obligatory secondary education (ESO). Therefore, our attention was geared towards children between the ages of 12 and 16 from Raval y Gótic (Ciutat Vella) with serious problems such as those mentioned earlier.

Our intervention would be directed at permitting a greater socialization for these boys and girls, in classrooms and groups suited to their age group; the purpose was to incorporate them, if possible, into middle grade studies or to introduce them to the world of work once they had completed the obligatory instruction.

We wanted – and this was clear from the beginning – to be a bridge, that is to say, to help them overcome their problems and to complete the process of educational and social integration on the part of these pre-adolescents and adolescents, and in this way help them have the necessary balance that would provide them with a good future in their lives and to integrate them into a “normalized” society.

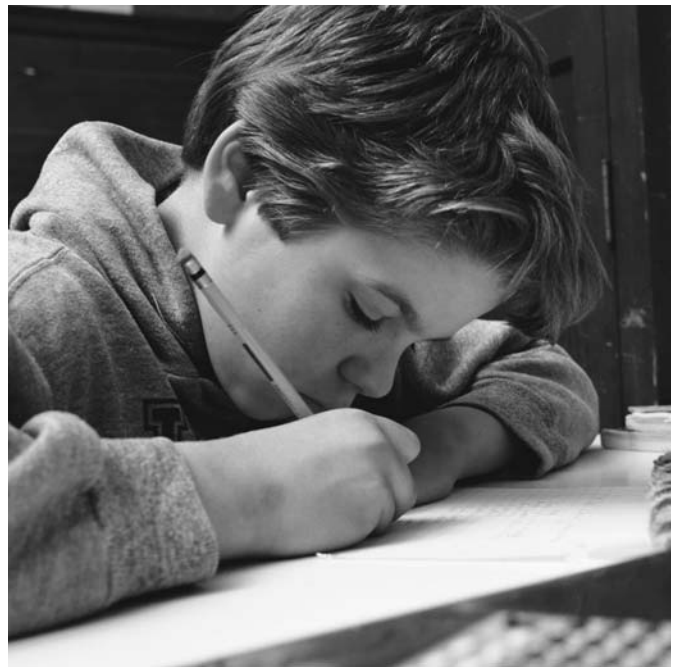
3. We had one clear motive.

We defined it this way: We of the “inter-congregational group” (this is what we called ourselves for the time being and how we presented ourselves) understand that the way to be most faithful to the Mission itself pushes us to collaborate jointly for the good of these boys and girls.

The fact that obligatory schooling had been raised to the age of 16 and the awareness of the difficulties that these boys and girls had in being in compliance with the law, along with their failure in school, brought us, as teachers, by conviction and social responsibility, to the point of uniting ourselves to do a work that is only possible based on more flexible school structures, more personalized guidelines and activities that would keep in mind a global view of their environment.

The fourth step: Management

This was, as is logical, the most complicated part, the longest part, that which brought more suffering...but also that which united us more, that which provided time of joy, prayer, rich and incredible involvement. Those of us from that time will never forget it and there is within all of us a very special



fondness for the work which was not easy to explain. I believe that it is something comparable to being a father or mother, but with the experience of communion in diversity, with different charisms for the same mission.

The first step was to turn to the Union of Religious in Catalonia, the URC, and present our “pre-project,” which by this time we had pretty well worked out.

The next steps were rather bureaucratic so I'll omit them.

It is interesting to note that the URC had a special interest in this project moving forward and we had support from the very beginning. They began to enlist the help of other congregations until the number reached the current one of 31.

Not all of them, of course, were going to work directly in the project, but they did give it their support, real financial support as well as the support of the Provincials who went on to form an Association about which we will speak.

During this period, which was filled with meetings and interviews, we held many conversations with the Administration so that the instruction would be within current regulations, but with the special characteristics that we asked for. This would all mean that there would be a pattern of subsidies.

We also visited other initiatives, not exactly the same but with some semblance of similarity to ours, in other places. They were similar as regards the kind of boys and girls who were being educated, but not in terms of inter-congregational activity.

It was during one of these visits that the current name of Educational Program emerged and of the CINTRA Association. This is a Catalan term used in architecture or engineering and it refers to the wood framework that supports an arch – in a bridge, for example – until the keystone can be placed. When finished, this structure is removed because it is now superfluous. It has fulfilled its mission.

“When the arch” – we said – “the person, is solid and secure in and of itself, the CINTRA will no longer be necessary, or it will be useful in other construction.”

From that moment on, that of naming, the program began to take on a very special life.

We envisaged this as an Association in which many programs would fit. At the present time, it is the educational program because we saw this as the most urgent. In the future, we will see what happens.

The fifth step: The “CINTRA” school

It was in October 1996 – management issues took three years to resolve – when the doors opened at a local provisional school provided by the Jesuits in a residence for priests, which was adapted to our needs. Basement areas were used for classrooms for the first class of the Obligatory Secondary School and that is how the school began. There were two classrooms with 8 students in each one. Workshops were built and there was some space for games. All of this was rather precarious and there was scarcely any space. The difficulties were so great that it was thought that the work could not continue. The kids themselves presented problems that seemed insurmountable for the poor teachers, who lacked experience in such matters.

Once again I believe that it was the union of the sponsoring religious, the love for the work which we saw as necessary, and of course the tenacity and patience of the teachers that allowed the work to continue.

Today Cintra is a reality with several years of experience, three classes of former students who now form part of the work world. There have been some failures, a lot of love, a lot of dreams and...some new places which, with the help of all the congregations they were able to rent to provide other more spacious areas.

And...the restlessness continues. This year another project has begun within the same Association

which, as I said above, was open to include other projects as new needs were faced. It is called BENAL-LAR and it is directed towards one of the new challenges that we religious from the Ciutat Vella have: the integration of various immigrant groups in the neighborhood and the easing of one of the greatest difficulties: that of housing.

But that would be another story in itself.

ITALY

Community "Casa Famiglia"

Contact: Danilo Prandelli (*donato.petti@tin.it*)

1. "Casa Famiglia" – Community Via Santorre di Santarosa N 15 – Turin

Beginning: October 2000

Beneficiaries: adolescents from outside the European community

2. The project of a Welcome Centre – the "Casa famiglia" (Family Home) for foreign adolescents – at the "LA SALLE" Institute was born as a result of some experiences with the complex and motley world of adolescents living alone. These experiences were developed and matured by various associations and religious groups. As the numbers of these youths increased, they triggered a crisis in our way of catering for them. And this became a real challenge to our educational and pastoral charity.

3. Summary of its origins

The Corso Vercelli 11 Centre, which preceded the Casa Famiglia experiment, was born in the month of November 1998, following experiences the ALA Association had within the "low level" plan of the district of Turin. (These experiences were linked to the afternoon activities which took place at the Opera Messa del Povero, with foreign minors from outside the European Community). In January 1998, in response to the urgency of the situation created by the presence in the area of foreign, solitary minors, without any adult mentors or accommodation, a cheap night shelter was opened on Via Tommaso 22/F. From this first response to an essential need for a night's rest, the involvement steadily grew.

Over and above this response to a concrete need, at stake was rapport with young people who, although constrained to develop quickly, were still adolescents with questions, doubts, need for attention and a "friendly presence" in whom they could confide and by whom they could be challenged. The ALA Association decided to answer these needs by banking on the involvement and educational accompaniment of these youths by giving them individual guardians and imposing on them a plan. They worked together with the ASAI Association, the Migrants' Service Caritas of the diocese of Turin, the Opera Messa del Povero and other groups within the orbit, among which was the House of Charity of the Arts and Crafts.

The assessment carried out at the end of the first phase was directed at the following considerations:

– There is little integration of the minors with one another, they are "brothers through force of circumstances"; although sharing their means of existence, it is difficult for them to grasp the importance of mutual respect.



- There is little interest in integrating with others outside their circle, they are satisfied with knowing a few Albanian or Moroccan friends. Certain ones feel no need for any activity other than the TV or music.

- They think of nothing beyond work, some think only of accumulating money, a goal they set themselves on arriving in Italy, and they risk being dazzled by money, without knowing how to manage it.

- They cannot manage to imagine life beyond the community, refusing to consider how important the community experience is as a means of learning to live by themselves.

- There is little respect for and understanding of rules, feeling absolutely no need for them, pretending that they are big enough not to need rules imposed by anyone else.

- There is scant respect for the house, for life together or for themselves, they have difficulty in taking their turn looking after the cleanliness of the house, they let their radios blast out without considering others, they spoil food without considering how important it is.

- They show negligible consideration for the volunteers and other people who keep the house going.

In spite of these problems we have been able to observe amongst the young people a progressive maturity, accompanied by appreciable educational growth as shown by the following:

- Learning to live with others, meaning by this not solely having a roof over their heads at night, but being at grips with their own lives and those of others.

- Being able to count on adult persons, who are always available even when not on duty.

- Making friends with people, at least inside the house, with a view to living together after turning 18.

- Creating a centre which can be a reference point as well for the young people as for the guardians, not with the intention of taking the place of the guardians, but of collaborating with them.

- Acting in such a way that the house is seen not only as a dormitory but as a place of growth, preparing the young people for life in common after reaching 18.

So there came to birth the idea and the necessity of a "Family Home" which would become a time of preparation for life in the wider world. It is important for almost all the boys who are approaching adulthood, or who have just reached that status, to become aware, with the help of the guardians and the volunteers, that they must learn quickly to live with other people in their apartments, and consequently assume responsibility for living together, for the management of the house and the use of money. That can look like a short-term goal, but we consider it essential right from the start of the experience, not to mollycoddle the young people for a few months (or even a few years), without giving them real prospects for the future.

4. Specific task of the Lasallians

- Seek to create friendly, or at least respectful, relations among the young people in the house.

- Help them to an awareness of the importance of the period they are presently living in community, in regard to their lives after turning 18, especially in what concerns life together in the future and the man-

agement of money.

– Develop a relationship with the volunteers, so as not to look upon their role as one of control, nor, at the other extreme, as one of friendship, but as an educational one.

– Respect the rules of the house by assuming responsibility for them.

– Set up opportunities for contact (especially within the area, e.g. create a meeting place for the young people of the area, contribute to the activities already present in the vicinity, etc...)

The intention is to become visible in the neighbourhood, and not to be seen simply “as a place where some boys live”, but as a reference point for the area, a meeting centre which may be able to contribute to what is already going on. That is why thought is being given to activities (courses, visits, exchanges...) within the community, but which could embrace other minors in the district and active participation in projects available in the neighbourhood.



5. By way of conclusion.

The experience lived over a period of two years demonstrates the real possibility of devising, developing and running, with satisfactory results, programmes aimed at assisting the integration of youths coming from outside the European Community.

Making use of the instrument of “co-habitation”, there is the possibility of living a simple experience of “community” life, while positively favouring the path of social, economic and cultural integration of the boys who take on the project. However, there can be no dispute that this kind of operation needs a huge investment not only of money but also of human resources... A well-planned programme and suitable channels of collaboration with local administrations enable economic resources useful for the management of the projects to be obtained. But they are scarcely adequate to ensure the remuneration of personnel at the residence on a full-time or part-time basis. Hence, it is clear that the projects owe much to the benevolent service of the volunteers. This is often very active in the first months of service (euphoria provides the seeds of experience), but it is naturally very hard to maintain and motivate throughout the project. Effectively, it is extremely difficult to be able to count on the collaboration of volunteers for months on end. The members of the Association, volunteers and sympathisers are key figures, but these, by themselves cannot be considered the sole human resources for the management of the projects of the residence. The boys need affection, to feel “loved”, and stable and ever present reference figures. Volunteers can make this kind of response in the short term, but not very well in the long term. That is why it is unavoidable, if this experiment is to be pursued into the future, that there must be questions about how to organise the next plans for residences with a community bias, taking into account, especially, human resources and the indispensable involvement of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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