

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEARNING FORUM 1 – 10 JUNE 2020

Learning Forums are a key part of the two-year Capacity Development Program which aims at transforming the impact of the global Lasallian network through enhanced collaboration. The Learning Forums have three aims:

- To focus on an area of relevant learning
- To create peer-to-peer exchanges to maximise understanding and collaboration
- To generate significant points to tackle challenges faced by the network

The first of the planned nine Learning Forums took place online on 10 June, attended by 43 participants as well as facilitators. These included five from Caplor Horizons, the not-for-profit specialists in organizational effectiveness who are supporting the programme.

This note is a record of key points from the work of eight groups, summarized in the Appendix. The full output from each group in the original languages of English, French and Spanish is recorded separately. Ideas from all the groups are integrated below within the structure of the main elements of a strategy for collaboration. This structure will be the focus of the Program Development Activity on 24 June, developing a “Strategy On A Page”.

In many cases, several different groups contributed material relating to each element of the strategy. This is shown by the groups named next to the heading of each element, for example the Whale, Compass and Birds groups all contributed to the Lasallian Story below.

### The Lasallian Story (Whale, Compass and Birds groups)

- St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle was an innovator in his approach to teachers and teaching and his focus on poor children. He challenged the organizational structures of his day.
- Encounters in the global Lasallian network and the awareness they create are supported by individual virtues of courage, integrity and generosity to others.
- Recent examples of successful collaboration include building a school in South Sudan and responding to the humanitarian crisis in Mozambique.
- Regional communications people in some parts of the world meet online every month to share learning, developments and messages. They build understanding of each other’s projects and avoid having to repeat the same work in different places.

### Vision (Compass group)

Visions of what successful collaboration could achieve include:

- Sharing the message that Jesus is always with us
- Creating unique places and experiences where people can encounter God
- Inspiring people to want to make the world a better place
- *“We are all under the same storm, but we are all in different boats. Some boats are big and some boats are small. How can we collaborate together so that we don’t sink? How can the big boats help the small boats and vice versa?”* Brother Antone Oloo

## Mission (Compass group)

Ideas for the Mission for collaboration in the network include:

- Enabling flexible, inclusive, and sustainable collaboration across the Lasallian network through faith, service and community
- Promoting acceptance, experimentation and integration as Lasallians without limits

## Values (Dancers and Birds groups)

Values at the heart of the network include:

- Faith – in the Triune God who creates, loves and forgives
- Service -- Serving freely for justice, viewing each other in a sense of justice and making ourselves available for the service of others
- Community -- Association among Partners, with students, and for the betterment of humankind, respectful of creation

## Beliefs (Dancers group)

Beliefs held by the network include:

- Human dignity – all are born free and equal, and equally responsible because God wants each person to be a co-creator
- Solidarity – being connected within and beyond the Lasallian family
- Justice – for a more just and peaceful world

## Envisaged Future for the Network in 2022 (Crocodile, Diver and Birds groups)

Key features of the network in 2022 should include:

- A culture for improved collaboration: mutual trust and respect, empowering all people in the network, keeping hierarchical structures to a minimum, listening to all voices, sharing and taking ownership of tasks and personal accountability, keeping people informed through two-way communication of ideas and knowledge.
- Distributed and participative leadership, reflecting social change
- Strong sense of inclusive relationships within a team of everyone that includes lay partners – both women and men – who are not Brothers
- Collaboration that is voluntary, helping others as well as me with loyalty to the Lasallian network as a whole, giving full weight to collective objectives
- Awareness of the contexts, cultures, strengths and real needs of others within and beyond the network, listening carefully and recognising that not all have the same resources or can work at the same pace
- Disappearance of unclear objectives, vague communication and rigid structures
- Using resources bravely and creatively, accepting the risk of failure and the need for change and willing to hold uncomfortable conversations
- Deploying technology that allows freedom of access to the knowledge that the network holds through translations, interactions across languages, sharing of people's time and skills and access to new ideas and strategies.
- Embracing external strategic alliances and partnerships for funding, influence, advocacy and impact and to share resources, knowledge and information.

## Strategic Goals (Birds, Treasure and Diver groups)

Potential strategic goals to enhance collaboration in the network emerged as follows:

- Improved communication
  - Communication is more than speaking or sending a message
  - Communication designed to be practically useful for the receiver
  - Including external connections and partnerships
- Strengthened innovation
  - Building on the innovative stance of the Founder
  - Seeking new organizational structures
  - Deploying technology to support collaboration

- Greater common stewardship
  - Building the collective will for a stronger Lasallian network
  - Starting with collaboration among a few, then increasing in scale
  - Pooling and sharing knowledge
- Increased fundraising
  - Priorities as a network as a whole, seeing all as fundraisers
  - Thinking beyond traditional sources
  - Clarity about needs, direction and approaches
  - The covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to develop and expand collaboration
- A more collaborative culture
  - Mutual trust and respect, sharing, supporting and listening to all
  - Taking ownership of tasks with minimum hierarchy
  - Reciprocal exchange of ideas and knowledge

## Practical Actions to Support the Strategic Goals

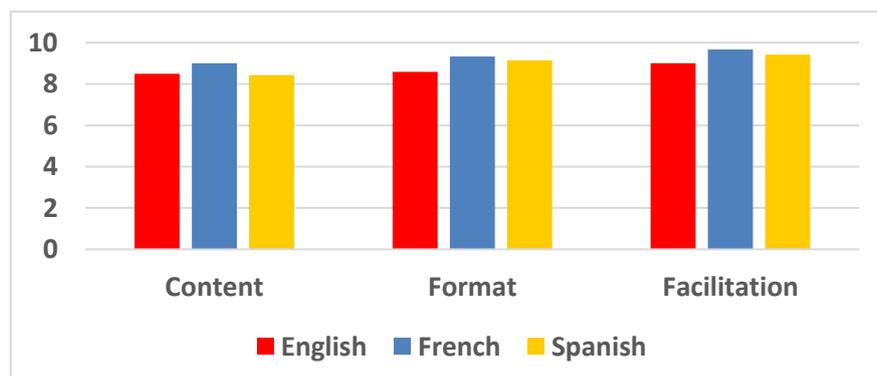
(Diver, Whale, Birds, Crocodile and Treasure groups)

Potential practical actions that were mentioned included:

- Regional communications people meet online and, at times, in person to share learning, developments, messaging etc. This collaboration works really well and the idea of doing this across the Lasallian network seems very attractive.
- Share information about what all the organizations in the network are doing, how they are structured and who does what in each region so that everyone knows whom to contact and where strengths lie.
- Encourage networking to share best practices and interests, to find common points and to increase communication for deeper understanding.
- Empower people through improved communication skills and training in languages and cultural differences. Provide access to higher education for leadership skills.
- Identify and share what the real needs are.
- Institutionalize the network with clear goals, plans, responsibilities, indicators, deadlines and possibly staff.
- Encourage international volunteering and people exchanges for mutual understanding. Meeting physically builds trust, understanding and collaboration.
- The network has a very impressive global alumni base which could be mobilized to support financial and human resource needs.
- Develop a strategy for collaboration and then select technology to support it.

## Feedback

A feedback survey showed the Learning Forum was seen as very successful, with content, format and facilitation rated respectively 8.5, 8.8 and 9.2 out of 10. Comments were focused on the group work including ideas for gaining more time by sending materials or questions in advance. Results are below, from 22 responses in English, 3 in French and 7 in Spanish:



## SUMMARIES OF GROUP OUTPUTS

Key outputs of the eight groups were as follows, responding to the questions shown and referring to the summaries given in the main text above:

- A. **Whale: The Lasallian story:** What inspirational examples of positive change from the Lasallian story in the past, or now, relate to enabling increased collaboration?  
Outputs are included above under Lasallian Story and Practical Actions, including successful collaboration among regional communications people.
- B. **Compass: Vision and Mission:** What words or phrases would you use to inform the creation of a guiding vision, purpose or mission to enable greater collaboration?  
Outputs form the basis for the Vision and Mission summaries above.
- C. **Dancers: Values and Beliefs:** Consistent with the Lasallian tradition, what are the most significant values and beliefs that will enable collaboration to increase?  
Outputs form the basis for the Values and Beliefs summaries above.
- D. **Diver: Strategic goals:** What would be the overarching strategic goals to enable greater collaboration?  
Outputs included a strong emphasis on the need for a Strategic Goal of culture change, related contributions to the Envisaged Future and Practical Actions concerning exchanging knowledge and technology.
- E. **Treasure: Fundraising:** What significant collaborative initiatives can we take to increase progress on fundraising?  
Outputs formed the basis of a key Strategic Goal around fundraising and a Practical Action.
- F. **Crocodile: Obstacles:** What important obstacles do we need to deal with that hinder collaboration?  
Outputs, with the resulting challenges, contributed especially to the Envisaged Future, such as seeing the bigger picture, and Practical Actions, such as sharing real needs.
- G. **Birds (first group): Practical actions:** What important priorities do we need to focus on to support collaboration?  
Outputs contributed to the picture of the Envisaged Future of collaboration and Practical Actions such as sharing information about what all the organizations in the network are doing.
- H. **Birds (second group): Practical actions:** What important priorities do we need to focus on to support collaboration?  
Outputs formed the basis of the Strategic Goals around communication, innovation and common stewardship and contributed to the Envisaged Future concerning holding uncomfortable conversations and building mutual awareness.