

La

Salle
IDENTITY

(v3)

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Europe Méditerranée

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LASALLIAN IDENTITY

(v3)

Preamble

The Lasallian Educational Mission is of great necessity for our world and the youth of today in our rapidly changing context in rapid evolution marked, in different countries, by secularization, de-Christianization, the rise of religious fundamentalism and the other immense challenges facing humanity. It is our responsibility to contribute to the dynamism of the Lasallian network with a view to allowing all the establishments in RELEM to live the spirit of John Baptist de La Salle. While some Districts find themselves in situations of great fragility, the strengthening of the Lasallian identity of each of our educational works is a priority challenge for the work of the RELEM MEL Assembly in October 2018.

Reflections on this issue of identity during 2017 by the Districts of RELEM, have allowed us to highlight nine areas through which it is possible to express what constitutes our identity and to offer a number of proposals for action.

Areas that give expression to Lasallian identity

1. The first area refers to the way **we act daily**, in the way **we enter into relationships** with a humble, considerate, patient and welcoming attitude that John Baptist de La Salle expects of any educator and which must also be expressed in our professional relations. It also refers to our way of working collaboratively, of sharing the mission, of living the association of Brothers-partners, of making community.
2. Then there are the widely shared **pedagogical, educational, pastoral and managerial or administrative practices** of which the "Conduct of Schools" is the original version. In a fast-changing, secularized, and globalized world where multiple religions and cultures coexist, our practices evolve. However, they must be the product of shared reflections, including with families, of contrasting views, of the reinforcing of ideas, of evaluations, of assimilating ideas so that they remain coherent with each other and respectful of the original spirit: the Lasallian charism. This has two inseparable dimensions: the Educational Mission and spiritual experience.
3. This **charism** is inspired by the Founder and the living example of the Brothers and Lasallian partners. To be **the source and inspiration** of the first two points, **this charism** must be explained to all engaged in the mission. A reference text¹, describing the project of the Lasallian educational mission, must be disseminated, presented and serve as a guide and a discernment tool to lead to action. It explicitly mentions:

¹ It seems appropriate that a reference text be developed at the District level (to reflect the same politico-cultural reality) from common source materials. These reference texts must highlight the 4 levels of expression of Lasallian life: global, regional (RELEM), district / delegation, school.

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- The attention that must be paid to the most vulnerable²; to peace and social justice;
 - The collaborative nature of education;
 - The need to innovate, to evolve, to seek to respond continually to the educational needs of our time;
 - The desire to enable the young person to grow in all his/her dimensions: body, mind and spirit.
4. To appropriate the charism also involves the acquisition of knowledge and a progressive assimilation: that is - information - formation - transformation. The charism is alive because it is the expression of the founding intuition for the world of today. Its appropriation thus comes from a search, the fruit of the confrontation of knowledge and experimentation at the local level. It fosters a **collaborative formation approach**, which favours the interchange of ideas and places the participants as co-actors of their own formation.
 5. In order that the charism permeates and abundantly nourishes those engaged in the mission, individually and as a community, there must be **opportunities for the spirit of God to be nourished**. Prayer time, Gospel sharing, or sharing of the texts of the Founder, retreat times and moments of recollection, or opportunities to question personal practices are essential to generate creative responses. While it is important for Christians to come together to nourish their Gospel faith and mission, care must also be taken to involve non-believers or those professing other religions.
 6. The Lasallian network, as the collective component of the Lasallian identity, is therefore essential in order to be able to question, discern and search together. But a network exists only for people who know each other, who share significant experiences, who find themselves focused on common values, who cultivate a sense of belonging, participate in joint projects, and demonstrate a form of solidarity and family spirit. Consequently, **the animation and the life of the Lasallian network** are therefore essential.
 7. It is important to demonstrate this identity to all by **developing communication plans** with appropriate tools:

7.1 At the level of the different networks:

- Those responsible for the Lasallian networks at District and Regional level, fully aware of the principles and values of the Lasallian charism, must be clearly identified and widely known. They must endeavour to maintain personal and digital connection with those engaged in the mission.
- News of the life of the network must be widely shared.
- Marketing tools must be offered to make the "La Salle" brand visible and dynamic.

7.2 **At the level of the establishments** which must demonstrate their identification with the network and their link to John Baptist de La Salle in order to reinforce the effect of the network and publicise it as much as possible. The "brand" effect around names, logos, and common images (including the new iconography), should be given special attention. Similarly, the placing of the portrait of John Baptist de La Salle in the

² « vulnérabilité » is a changing reality always in need of definition. This must be done from the local context so as to be able to respond to it. One can make use of the book by Br. Bruno Alpago (Lasallian studies n°7 – « l'institut et le service des pauvres ») + other textes eg. The handicap centers in Poland.

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classrooms, as well as other prominent local Lasallian historical figures, can have an impact on the minds of the younger students.

7.3 **At the level of educators.** Communication aims as much to make the Lasallian identity known from the outside as from the inside, to help people understand and live their mission.

7.4 **At the youth level,** Lasallian identity must make sense to their lives. It must stimulate their sense of belonging and challenge them to their own vocation in the contemporary context of association and shared mission. It goes hand in hand with the idea of entering "to learn, to leave to serve."



Propositions

In the light of these 9 areas that give expression to Lasallian identity, here are a number of propositions to be implemented in RELEM before next Assembly:

PROPOSITION 1

Encourage each District to involve its establishments in an evaluation process (self-evaluation and / or external evaluation) using a tool inspired by the Lasallian criteria currently being developed by CIAMEL. The analysis of the results will allow each District to define an action plan to help the institutions strengthen its Lasallian identity. These District action plans will be shared in the Region (RELEM) as a means of sharing best practices, pooling possible tools, and supporting any District that expresses a need.

PROPOSITION 2

Develop international exchanges more proactively by proposing experiences that might meet the specific needs of institutions and promote the Lasallian spirit.

PROPOSITION 3

In order that RELEM can be better known, it must collaborate with the Districts to develop propose some activities, connected with the international theme. Each District will keep these in mind when elaborating their animation plans. This would allow all institutions in the RELEM network, over a particular period of time, to develop projects of the same nature that can be widely publicized. These can be occasions to promote interdistrict collaboration.

PROPOSITION 4

At Regional level, to promote Lasallian Identity among School Principals who have the main responsibility for the Lasallian mission. For this purpose, the formation of RELEM Directors and the RELEM Directors' Congress (currently the ASSEDIL Congress) are two essential components that must be part of a wider process of promoting this identity. In addition, RELEM must promote sessions between those who exercise the same responsibilities in different institutions in order to develop their understanding of Lasallian identity and their knowledge of Lasallian criteria.

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PROPOSITION 5

Design a RELEM communication plan, in conjunction with the Districts, so that the Europe-Mediterranean network can be clearly visible. The leaders of RELEM must be invited to the Districts for major events to be recognized and become better known to a greater number of people.

PROPOSITION 6

In line with the innovative character of the Lasallian mission, those responsible for this mission will lead a profound reflection on the impact of religious evolutions and global transformations on the Lasallian Educational Mission. This is necessary in order to develop a pastoral ministry adapted to the religious, social and cultural challenges and to the spiritual needs of our time. This reflection will keep in mind the social context, the realities of the local Church, and the realities of other religious denominations, non-believers and those who are indifferent.

PROPOSITION 7

To appoint a person/or persons at Regional level to steer the proposals emanating from the Assembly and in particular:

- To promote international exchanges and link those responsible in each District for these exchanges
- To monitor and support communication plans
- To promote research and development on Lasallian identity in the context of RELEM
- Encourage those Districts that do not have a reference text to develop one

PROPOSITION 8

Recognise that the work with the most vulnerable as an important part of the Lasallian charism and put it into practice:

- At District level
- At the level of RELEM in supporting initiatives such as the Lasallian community in Molenbeek, Scapia, South Sudan, Fratelli and similar projects.