

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PLANS AND INTRODUCTORY MEETING OF 19 MAY 2020

We are starting a two-year Capacity Development Program aimed at transforming the impact of our global Lasallian network. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the potential of our global Lasallian network to form a coordinated international response. We aim to learn from this experience to make dramatic improvements in how our global network collaborates. This note summarizes our plans and describes the Introductory Meeting of the Program, held online on 19 May.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The objectives of the Program are:

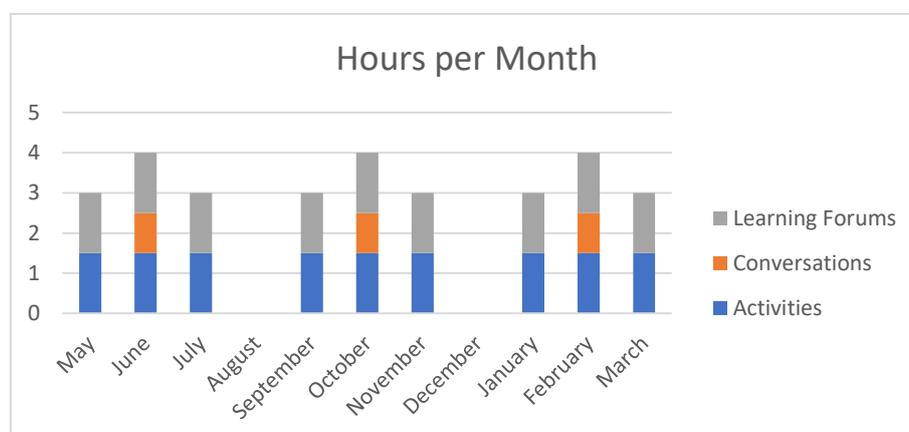
- ✓ To transform collaboration throughout the Lasallian network
- ✓ To offer useful skills and practical insights which capacitate all participants
- ✓ to step up the Lasallian network’s fundraising efforts
- ✓ so that the overall scale of development activities is increased and sustained over time
- ✓ and impact is improved substantially.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Our Program to address these objectives is supported by Caplor Horizons, a non-profit which specializes in organizational effectiveness. The main elements of the Program in the first year, which ends March 2021, are:

1. Activities that address our challenges to develop a shared strategy for network collaboration
2. One-to-one conversations with Caplor Horizons on how we can improve (three in total)
3. Learning Forums on key aspects of collaboration such as fundraising mind-set or teamwork

Participants in the Program contribute their ideas and experience, gain insights and skills and help to strengthen our global Lasallian network. Their involvement in the three elements of the Program is shown in the diagram below:



Note: Conversations are held over 3 months; an indicative month is shown.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING – 19 MAY 2020

40 members of the Lasallian network took part in the Introductory Meeting of the Capacity Development Program, held online on 19 May. The objectives of the meeting were:

1. To develop relationships
2. To increase understanding about the Program
3. To explore the present state of collaboration across the network

In **summary**, very positive feedback after the meeting showed that it met these objectives. Group work developed rich understanding of the meaning of collaboration around a core of “working together for a common goal”. Besides its practical benefits, collaboration provides motivation, offers solidarity and is rooted in the Lasallian tradition. It is aided by leadership, clear structures and the valuing of diversity but hampered by organizational silos, lack of time and insufficient encouragement.

At the start of the meeting, Br Amilcare Boccuccia, Ms Angela Matulli, Br Craig Franz and Mr Peter Stemp introduced the Capacity Development Program, the plans up to March 2021 and the team from Caplor Horizons which is supporting the Program.

Participants worked in eight separate groups to discuss the meaning of collaboration and the present state of collaboration across the Lasallian network. Each group reported back on their work before the meeting ended. Key messages were as follows:

The main **meaning of “collaboration”**, coming from almost every group, was *working together for a common goal*. This meaning was enriched by other insights such as:

- Doing together what cannot be done locally – especially for urgent action
- Helping each other for mutual benefit
- Sharing ideas, strategies, learning, training, resources and volunteers
- Learning about each other, meeting each other, gaining awareness of each other
- An attitude of openness and availability
- Collaboration resonates deeply as it is within the Lasallian DNA.
- It is manifested by making sure that no one gets left behind.

The **benefits** of collaboration emerged as follows:

- Ability to respond better to urgent needs – such as responding to the pandemic
- Access to people, talents, ideas, new perspectives
- Sharing limited resources and avoiding duplication
- Motivation and solidarity
- Facilitating necessary change
- Being true to the Lasallian tradition

Collaboration is vital as a response to the need for action – and changes such as tackling bureaucracy are needed to enhance collaboration. Part of this is changing old ways of doing things, moving towards more inclusive approaches. If everyone feels included, collaboration becomes easier and new ideas are more likely to be welcomed.

What would success look like?

- Greater impact through people working together for common goals
- Greater innovation from ideas and information from around the network
- Added solidarity and motivation from working more strongly as a team across the network, grounded in Lasallian values
- Deeper awareness and appreciation of the perspectives of others in the network

What helps collaboration?

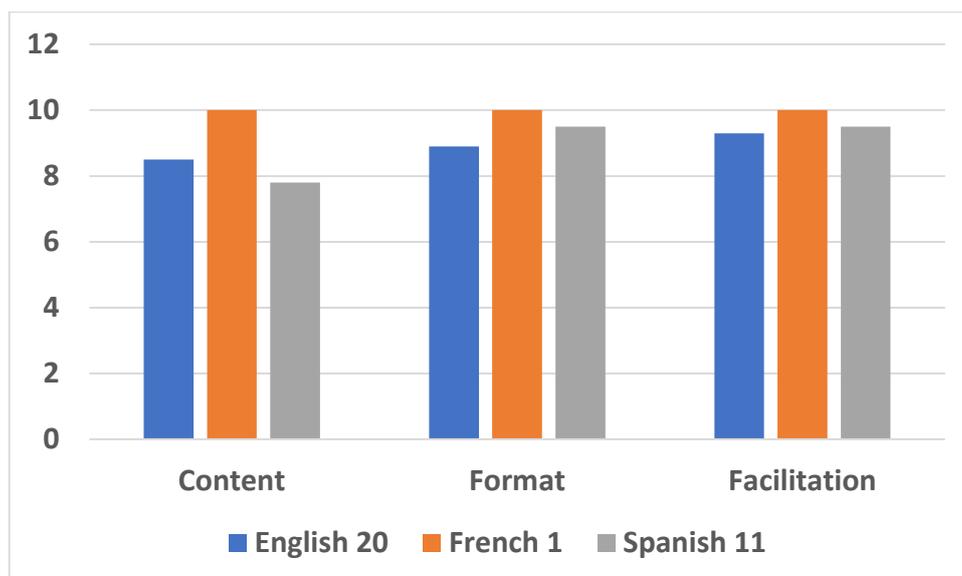
- The Lasallian tradition
- Leadership
- Clear organization
- Networking
- Valuing diversity and inclusion, reaching out across differences, notably gender

What hinders collaboration?

- Organizational silos
- Lack of time
- Lack of encouragement for collaboration

In **conclusion**, with some 20 specific examples recorded from all over the network, there is already much collaboration in evidence: as one person said, it is important to build on what we have and know. There is desire and need, to enhance impact, and collaboration offers clear benefits as well as being deeply rooted in the Lasallian tradition. This capacity-building endeavour has been undertaken to improve operations of a rather resilient boat; one which, through rough waters and calm, has shown its seaworthiness.

A **feedback survey** showed the meeting was a great success, with content, format and facilitation rated respectively 8.3, 9.2 and 9.4 out of 10. Results for feedback from three language groups were as follows, where numbers indicate the number of responses:



There were 13 comments about the meeting being important, well organized or motivating. Four people would have liked more content or time in the introduction or group work and four mention problems of audibility.