

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### LEARNING FORUM: CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

#### 10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

#### Introduction

The Capacity Development Programme aims to transform the impact of the global Lasallian network through enhanced collaboration. The focus of the Learning Forum session held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 was fourfold:

- To enthuse and explain about how the emerging strategy complements other initiatives across the Lasallian network
- To recap on learning related to developing a *‘gender balanced mindset’*
- To develop a greater understanding of how to improve *‘cross-cultural communication’*
- To enable discussion, reflection and learning about a gender balanced mindset and cross-cultural communication; notably, (a) how these issues are being addressed now, and (b) how the Lasallian network could do better in the future.

In advance of the session participants were reminded of two papers titled [‘Cross-Cultural Communication’](#) and [‘Developing a Gender Balanced Mindset’](#). They also received a summary report from the 21st October Programme Development Activity which contained progress statements in relation to developing the 9 practical actions.

#### Process

44 people logged into and participated in the zoom session, of which 33 were Lasallian network participants, 4 were acting as translators and the remaining 7 were from Caplor Horizons.

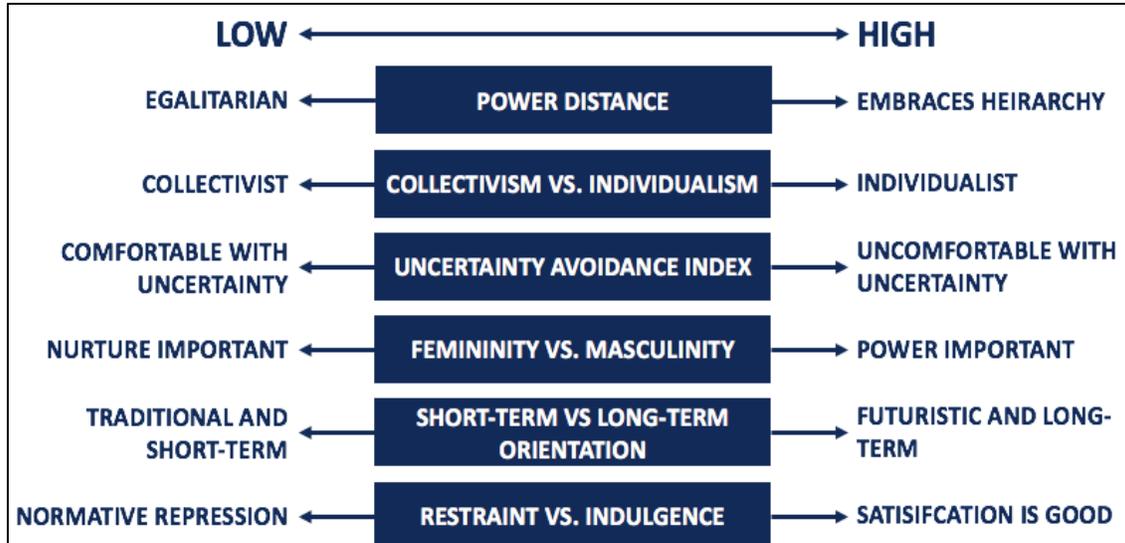
Br Amilcare Boccucia welcomed the group and introduced some new members to the Learning Forum, which included Br Jorge Gallardo, Rose Dala Nanema, and Jane Wambui Mainah.

Peter Stemp outlined, through the presentation of several slides, how this initiative of ‘making collaboration common’ fits with other initiatives across the Lasallian Network and how the 5 new Practical Action Groups have been developed and formed.

Lorna Pearcey provided a recap on the learning related to developing a gender balanced mindset from the previous Learning Forum, presented by Julia Mayer and Heather Ruple-Gilson – focusing on the 9 feminist principles and making reference to the previously circulated thought leadership paper titled ‘Developing a Gender Balanced Mindset’.

 <p>Consistently challenge our assumptions and inequalities</p>	 <p>Share leadership and power</p>	 <p>Create inclusive and participatory spaces</p>
 <p>Take a strengths-based approach</p>	 <p>Be an authentic leader</p>	 <p>Care for yourself and others</p>
 <p>Learn and reflect</p>	 <p>Have courage</p>	 <p>Zero tolerance</p>

Peter Moore highlighted some key aspects in relation to cross-cultural communication, mentioning Hofstede’s model (see below) and its 6 dimensions and providing some general principles and tips to guide people when communicating cross-culturally.



The rationale for discussing both the learning from the gender balanced mindset and cross-cultural communication presentations was as follows:

In the context of achieving strategic change, people across the Lasallian Network need on the one hand to build on strengths and positive developments or drivers, whilst on the other hand deal with barriers and obstacles for change, sometimes involving difficult conversations.

### Feedback from the Group Discussion

In the context of developing and having a gender balanced mindset and cross-cultural learning and communication, people were asked “How are these issues being addressed now and how could we do better?”

### Gender balanced mindset

- A gender balanced mindset is on people’s minds more and more. Lots of work is being done but more needs to happen, such as **developing a leadership programme** that has gender balance as a core element.
- There is potential to develop a **new formal organizational structure** that enables participation from a gender balance standpoint along with ongoing and meaningful opportunities for people to contribute to the strategic change progress.
- The most significant challenge and opportunity will relate to **strengthening the organizational culture**; so that it becomes more diverse and inclusive within the Lasallian Network. Whilst strengthening organizational culture is at the heart of the emerging strategy, it is important to recognise that change in culture is often times the paramount consideration for any organization and it typically takes much longer than other elements, especially given the backdrop of patriarchal society at local, national and international levels.

### Cross cultural learning

- Cross cultural learning is **particularly important** in the Lasallian network as there are many different cultures. “We pay a lot of attention to language and what words mean in different cultures. A member of the Development Secretariat team helps to advise on this matter, and we consult people in different countries to help improve our awareness around language.”
- There is **strength in diversity**. We should celebrate the multitude of cultures that we work with and in.
- We can use music and artistic interventions to bring people from different cultures together and feel like One La Salle – this was done successfully at the ‘Days of Peace’ event.
- There is a need to **raise consciousness** around representation of race and nationality to same level as that around gender.

## Feedback

Based on the analysis of feedback received after the event, the Learning Forum was positively received with an average score of **8.4** with respect to session content and facilitation.

Via the survey, participants have indicated their preferences for working with the 5 new merged **practical actions**:

- **GROWING THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION**
- **TELLING OUR STORY**
- **UNDERSTANDING THE NETWORK**
- **FORMALISING OUR COLLABORATION**
- **DEVELOPING OUR LEADERS**

