



**MAKING COLLABORATION COMMON**

Our Emerging Strategy

## A Viral-borne Opportunity

When Covid-19 began its ominous journey around the world, it was clear that Lasallian institutions would be ravaged by the virus' ease of transmission, devastated by its effect on human lives, and taxed through its associated economic downturns. Because much of our work occurs in developing nations where healthcare facilities are inadequate, many of our institution's staff, students, and Brothers would be vulnerable.

As a response to the emerging pandemic, the Solidarity and Development Secretariat mounted a global campaign to coordinate humanitarian and emergency Covid-19 relief to the fragile sectors of our Institute. Donor response to that appeal was amazingly impressive. Equally impressive was the development of compassionate, effective collaboration across the network. People on many different levels offered generous assistance to the home-bound, food to the most vulnerable, remote teaching to students, financial help to the unemployed, support to medical front-liners, residences for the homeless, and even hand-made signs of encouragement from children. It was a unifying moment of Lasallian solidarity.

As these events unfolded, it was important to consider whether this phenomenal success could be extended and integrated more fully. Would it be possible to enculturate this positive and successful global collaboration in our Lasallian ethos? The answer is, "yes."

To pursue this aspiration, a highly diverse group of 40 Lasallian leaders from across our Institute have been hosting virtual meetings to foster enhanced collaboration. Their deliberations, across five continents and 15 different time zones, have helped the Institute to envision how our values of faith, service, and community might be advanced. An initial two-year-long project, they continue those creative fortnightly conversations, even as I write to you today.

Thanks to virtual conferencing and online simultaneous interpretation, their frank discussions permit a close and valued engagement among participants that transcends the geographic, linguistic, and cultural differences which might otherwise separate them. They are passionately united in the work of a human and Christian education of youth, particularly those living in marginalised communities. They manifest a vision of a world transformed for the better through Lasallian education.

The reflections which follow offer an exciting and early glimpse into how this group creatively imagines an energising collaboration which emerges from the inspirational legacy of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century visionary, Saint John Baptist de la Salle.

This publication is the group's first opportunity to engage a larger Lasallian family by sharing notes created by this "orchestra" of talented leaders from communications groups, NGOs, and Lasallian administrations.

Much work remains, and we would envisage more and more people from across the Lasallian network joining the orchestra over time. We welcome more voices and look forward to this initiative expanding.

In the pages which follow, one can hear the leitmotifs of an emerging collective vision, purpose, goals, and actions. In many ways, the hopeful music of this group is shared by all Lasallians.

*Brother Amilcare Boccuccia*

Executive Director, Secretariat Solidarity and Development

# Our Emerging Strategy: Making Collaboration Common

This document presents the status of an ongoing, evolving project to promote collaboration across the Institute.

## Our Scope

This project involves the contributions of dedicated, talented people who are working at different levels, in different departments, with different responsibilities. Because we all want our work to be as effective as possible, we want to work together more collaboratively. Working together more seamlessly, smoothly, and harmoniously will result in greater effectiveness and efficiency, reduced friction, and better results.

At the start of an organisation's life, often such positive attributes can be achieved relatively easily because of an engaged camaraderie within a workable team size. Roadblocks are quickly removed. Changes are easily applied. People work together to keep everything moving forward. As a result, progress can be made quickly.

As organisations grow, however, they become increasingly challenged to stay fleet-of-foot and integrated on all levels.

Our current engagement in this project is a sign of our commitment to promoting effective, efficient, and integrated functioning across the Lasallian network. We are taking this time together to assess our situation and explore how the work of the Institute can be taken forward as dynamically as possible; to nurture the collaborative energy that can often be easier to achieve at the start of an organisation's journey. We are examining our interactions, systems, and processes to develop an emerging strategy.

In summary...

- The scope of this ambitious project is to help offices, departments, and administrations on local, regional, national, and international levels to collaborate in more effective, efficient, and integrated ways.
- The participants are intentionally diverse because we want collaboration to flow effusively throughout the Institute, not be constrained to the linearity of vertical silos or horizontal bureaucracies.
- The project welcomes creative responses, and more and more voices over time, to make effective collaboration more common across the Lasallian network.
- It involves participants sharing materials, discussions, understandings with colleagues, thus distributing leadership and the positive capacity building effects to workplaces throughout the Institute.

## Our Process

Through the talents of a professional non-profit organisation, Caplor Horizons, the Institute assembled key constituencies to learn and share together about relevant topics; also, to examine possible additional ways to build collaboration and develop a strategy.

The effort started with discussions between Caplor Horizons and the Solidarity and Development Secretariat in 2019, resulting in the engagement of an initial two-year network-wide capacity building programme.

In the spring of 2020, a diverse group of approximately 40 people were invited to participate. Lasallian partners one and all, they include university presidents, Brothers Visitor, MEL Directors, NGO teams, Young Lasallians, communications officers, and Secretariat staff.

Everyone invited to this initiative accepted a willingness to devote their time. The 100% response rate indicates great enthusiasm and support for the capacity building programme.

The group has met every two weeks, and succinct overviews of all discussions were provided for the public to view. A separate document distilling the process to date will be circulated at the same time as this emerging strategy.

In short, there have been six 90-minute group meetings and breakout sessions, as well as 40 different one-on-one conversations and surveys with the Caplor Horizons team.

Everyone is interested in developing a shared understanding of where we are and where we need to go to achieve the collaboration that would make our Institute more effective, efficient, and integrated.

## Our Understandings

As a result of the process so far, we have discerned the essence of an emerging strategy. This is currently called: *'Making Collaboration Common'*.

The essence of the strategy includes everything that is set out in the rest of this paper, including the two high-level summary pages at the end.

We begin with our vision, purpose, and mission:

**OUR VISION:** A world transformed for the better through Lasallian education

**OUR PURPOSE:** To collaborate to transform lives through Lasallian education

**OUR MISSION:** To be an effective, efficient, and integrated Lasallian network

The discussions which birthed these understandings showed remarkable enthusiasm about working together. Around the world, Lasallians resonate with the call to provide a human and Christian education to youth, particularly those living in marginalised communities.

## Our Values and Beliefs that inspire this project

As dedicated, caring professionals across the Institute, we see important meaning in helping to build collaboration to strengthen our global network. If we are going to be more effective, efficient, and integrated, we need to keep living out the values and beliefs that inspire this project.

### OUR VALUES

As we offer our services for the good of others. We are co-authors of exciting new chapters that build on the spiritual legacy of St. John Baptist De La Salle. The chapter which we write each day with our fellow Lasallians is *a story of faith, a story of service, and a story of community.*



**Faith** – *Jesus lives in our hearts*



**Service** – *Addressing needs*



**Community** – *Stronger together*

### OUR BELIEFS

- **We believe in justice and dignity for all**

People join the Lasallian network not because it offers them a job, but because it provides them with a vocation in which, little by little, they can promote positive change in the world. They feel spiritually connected to the good work which they, and others, are doing to help people, especially the most marginalised, have the human dignity and justice they deserve.

- **We believe that collaboration helps us achieve greater impact**

We accept the responsibilities of Gospel stewardship in making a better world for the next generation. For us, it is a deeply personal and spiritual decision to use our talents together and by association. Our work is an energised commitment to change the world through education, and we do that best when we work together.

- **We believe in honouring the past and moving courageously forwards**

We strive to make the Institute stronger by honouring the past, building productively on it, and moving courageously forward. Our Founder helps us to realise that our dedicated work on behalf of those entrusted to our care is much more than just caring for those entrusted to us, it is a sacred act. We will remain inspired and motivated by our past, and take it forwards through bold, innovative action.

## Our Envisaged Future

Motivated and inspired by La Salle's history, we dedicate ourselves to *maximise the unrealised potential* of the global Lasallian network through collaborative responses to transform lives through education. To promote that change, we envision a future in which we are:

- **Deepening a supportive culture**
  - A supportive culture of mutual trust and respect, enabled by listening to all, inspiring and enabling all, accepting the risk of failure, and the need for change.
  - We are willing to be courageous; to hold conversations, some of which may be uncomfortable; to strengthen our actions in pursuit of our vision, purpose and mission; and welcoming diverse perspectives.
- **Advancing participative leadership**
  - A participative leadership in which everyone can have a voice, enabled by a dynamic strategy that changes over time to keep relevant; and by evolving structures that provide an opportunity for our unrealised potential to be maximised.
  - We are willing to be courageous; to keep hierarchical structures to a minimum and to streamline procedures and protocols; to constantly engage new people in the enterprise; to welcome everyone's leadership in advancing the mission; to advance collective endeavours; to ensure equity in our deliberations.
- **Embracing beneficial partnerships**
  - An embracing of beneficial partnerships that welcomes external strategic alliances and different forms of collaborative relationships for funding, influence, advocacy, and impact.
  - We are willing to be courageous; to share resources, knowledge, and information; to create partnerships which strengthen the network; to value actions which are inclusive.

## Our Strategic Goals and Practical Actions

Across the spectrum of activities, from sports fields to corporate boardrooms, goals are created to stimulate action. To achieve our strategic goals, we must identify their component practical applications and follow-through successfully on them.

Through nine hours of Zoom conversations and forty one-on-one personal conversations and surveys, common goals and actions surfaced for the group.

There was amazing alignment of the conversations and agreement regarding how to move forward. We thoughtfully considered what strategic goals and practical actions must be pursued to be successful. In doing so, we determined key elements which we believe are necessary for success. These are the latest iterations of the goals and actions. We look forward to working with everyone to improve these, and the rest of the emerging strategy.

# 1

## CREATE A MORE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more *integrated* in our approach and actions across the Lasallian network and to do this...

- We will create a ***dynamic, energised group*** that is working productively in support of global action; more and more people will become practically engaged over time
- We will create a ***working environment and culture*** in which trust, respect, sharing, supporting, and listening to all is highly valued
- We will create a culture of ***peer-to-peer exchange, learning, and sharing*** to provide quality education

### PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR CREATING A MORE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

- Create ***an overarching global initiative***, focused on collaborative culture, that will generate new support professionally, educationally, and financially.
- Proactively arrange the network to participate in promoting and engaging three ***institute-wide campaigns each year***; this will provide practical opportunities for meaningful action and enable a collaborative culture to take root (E.g. Beirut, Mozambique, Rumbek, SDG#4, SDG#5, Covid-19).
- Establish new ways to ***share learning, good practice, and ideas*** across the network, as part of a capacity development programme; this will practically help strengthen what we do whilst deepening collaboration.
- Circulate ***leadership statements*** on a regular basis that nurture and reinforce collaborative intent; these will provide an update on progress on our strategy, including the opportunities and challenges involved

# 2

## CREATE SUPERLATIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHS

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more *efficient* across the Lasallian network and to do this...

- We will create a ***dynamic strategy and structure***, supported by a capacity development programme, that encourages and enables participative and distributed leadership throughout the network; this will lead to everyone having a greater voice and to unrealised potential being maximised.
- We will create a ***strengthened brand and approach to communications***; this will improve the way we engage with internal and external audiences.
- We will create more ***streamlined processes, policies and systems, including information flows and metrics that enable us to understand and increase the impact we are making***. This will involve welcoming the participation of many people plus finding ways to better leverage tools and technology to improve our efficiency and reach new horizons.

## PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR CREATING SUPERLATIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHS

- Take a **strengths-based approach to generating a dynamic strategy and structure**, from which we will be able to develop clear global criteria (e.g. on relevance, impact, sustainability) about priorities for action; this will inform future initiatives (such as when, where, and how to launch new projects). As part of this, promote at least one flagship project in a different region each year.
- Develop an **overarching brand and communications strategy** which more efficiently networks the Institute and its Secretariats, Districts, NGOs and other constituencies (e.g. Young Lasallians, UMAEL, IALU, etc.)
- Develop **processes, policies and systems, including for sharing and collaborating about network-wide information** (e.g., database, Misesan Cara).
- Develop **shared global metrics** which document our engagement with people (e.g. Facebook diagnostics, website hits, etc.) and that capture the difference we make; this will allow us to strengthen our impact over time, including by setting metric targets and sharing good practices.

### 3

## CREATE A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more **effective** across and beyond the Lasallian network and to do this...

- We will create different forms of **internal and external collaborative relationships**, including strategic alliances, to increase funding and through this strengthen our influence, advocacy, and impact
- We will create opportunities for **diverse voices and understandings** to be heard and welcomed from within and beyond the network (e.g., women, youth, voices from Africa, understandings from Asia, insights from diverse faiths, etc.)
- We will create **capacity building opportunities** to ensure current and future leaders have the skills needed to advance the network effectively

## PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR CREATING A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK

- Develop enduring internal and external collaborative relationships, including alliances, in **funding initiatives** (e.g. engaging our alumni and their links).
- Work with **two new partners** on a Lasallian project during the year, thus practically building our ability to forge strategic relationships.
- Through developing innovative partnerships, generate a **global scholarship fund** that enables diverse voices and understandings to benefit, be heard and welcomed from within and beyond the network
- **Engage leadership** at all levels to be able to form strategic partnerships, as part of the capacity development programme, to ensure we provide relevant responses to contemporary issues



## Our Future

During the weeks and months ahead, we will be validating these understandings, identifying the details which go into each section, establishing appropriate and measurable metrics, and working together on achieving these and freshly identified new action items.

Through that process, we will be moving towards success in building a more collaborative culture, creating superlative organisational strengths, and forming a more connected network.

Each of us appreciate both the personal and professional Lasallian friendships which we are establishing through this process. It is bringing talented people from around the world together to create a better La Salle.

We thank all fellow participants for their commitment, energy, and insights. We look forward to being vital players in this orchestra of talented and capable people, working together to make collaboration common across the Institute.

# MAKING COLLABORATION COMMON

## Our Emerging Strategy on a Page

### COLLABORATION HELPS US ACHIEVE GREATER IMPACT

Motivated by the inspirational legacy of John Baptist de la Salle, we are passionately united to transform lives through Lasallian education. To achieve our vision, we need to maximise the unrealised potential of the global Lasallian network.

As a result, in 2020 a highly diverse group of 40 Lasallian leaders from across our Institute came together in solidarity to enhance collaboration across the Lasallian network

### OUR VISION

A world transformed for the better through Lasallian education

### OUR PURPOSE

To collaborate to transform lives through Lasallian education

### OUR MISSION

To be an effective, efficient, and integrated Lasallian network

### OUR VALUES AND BELIEFS THAT INSPIRE THIS PROJECT



**FAITH** | Jesus lives in our hearts



**SERVICE** | Addressing needs



**COMMUNITY** | Stronger together

- We believe in justice and dignity for all
- We believe that collaboration helps us achieve greater impact
- We believe in honouring the past and moving courageously forwards

### OUR ENVISAGED FUTURE

*We envision a future in which we are:*

**DEEPENING A SUPPORTIVE CULTURE**

**ADVANCING PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP**

**EMBRACING BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

### OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

*To bring this about we will:*

**1. CREATE A MORE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE**

**2. CREATE SUPERLATIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHS**

**3. CREATE A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK**

# MAKING COLLABORATION COMMON

## Our Emerging Strategic Goals and Practical Actions

### CREATE A MORE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more **integrated** in our approach and actions across the Lasallian network and to do this...

- We will create a **dynamic, energised group** that is working productively in support of global action
- We will create a **working environment and culture** in which trust, respect, sharing, supporting, and listening to all is highly valued
- We will create a culture of **peer-to-peer exchange, learning, and sharing** to provide quality education

1

#### PRACTICAL ACTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- Create an **overarching global initiative**, focused on collaborative culture, that will generate new support professionally, educationally, and financially
- Proactively arrange the network to participate in promoting and engaging three **institute-wide campaigns each year**
- Establish new ways to **share learning, good practice, and ideas** across the network
- Circulate **leadership statements** on a regular basis that nurture and reinforce collaborative intent

#### PRACTICAL ACTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- Take a **strengths-based approach to generating a dynamic strategy and structure**, from which we will be able to develop clear global criteria about priorities for action. Promote one project in a different region each year.
- Develop an **overarching brand and communications strategy** which more efficiently networks the Institute and its Secretariats, Districts, NGOs etc.
- Develop **processes, policies, and systems**, including for sharing and collaborating about network-wide information
- Develop **shared global metrics** which document our engagement with people and that capture the difference we make

2

### CREATE SUPERLATIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHS

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more **efficient** across the Lasallian network and to do this...

- We will create a **dynamic strategy and structure**, supported by a capacity development programme, that encourages and enables participative and distributed leadership throughout the network
- We will create a **strengthened brand and approach to communications**
- We will create more **streamlined processes, policies, and systems, including information flows and metrics**

### CREATE A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK

To achieve our collaborative aspirations, we need to be more **effective** across and beyond the Lasallian network, to do this...

- We will create different forms of **internal and external collaborative relationships**, including strategic alliances, to increase funding
- We will create opportunities for **diverse voices and understandings** to be heard and welcomed
- We will create **capacity building opportunities** to ensure current and future leaders have the skills needed to advance the network effectively

3

#### PRACTICAL ACTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- Develop enduring internal and external collaborative relationships, including alliances, in **funding initiatives**
- Work with **two new partners** on a Lasallian project during the year, thus practically building our ability to forge strategic relationships
- Through developing innovative partnerships, generate a **global scholarship fund** that enables diverse voices and understandings to benefit, be heard and welcomed from within and beyond the network
- **Engage leadership** at all levels to be able to form strategic partnerships as part of the capacity development programme