

ANALYSIS OF LASALLIAN PROJECTS FROM 25 DISTRICTS OF THE INSTITUTE¹

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ABSTRACT

Request of the MEL Responsible, in 2004 two researchers at Institut National de la Recherche Pédagogique conducted a study on 59 Lasallian educational projects from 25 districts of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. With support in the Alceste program, analyzed the texts for searching convergences, divergences and teaching theories, trying to unveil a Lasallian identity in the space of ten years. Analyzing the texts, we get the impression of being in the presence of traditional project, somewhat static, stable, perhaps too busy themselves, devoid of inspiration and profound. Compared with studies conducted in 2002, proves that the common bond of the Lasallian identity is the fidelity to the Founder.

Key-words: project, lasallian, identity, pedagogy, community, school, innovation, La Salle.

Introduction

Context of the study and the questions it asks

Everyone recognises that John Baptist de La Salle played an historic role in the movement to promote schooling, which began in the 17th century. The extraordinary success of Lasallian pedagogy, its rapid expansion, and the role played since by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the world needs no further proof.

In 1965, there were 16,824 Brothers, living in 1,557 communities in a hundred or so countries, and teaching 737,112 pupils. There was a great revival of influence after the great turmoil of the two World Wars, and it was certainly not by chance that in 1966

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there was an international General Chapter which has remained engraved in the memory of the Congregation as a Chapter which marked a return to the founding texts: it was a re-foundation of sorts!

1966 can be seen therefore as an important date in a process of increasing awareness of the Brothers' local roots and of an identity that was no longer uniform but multicultural. It was important also because, for the Brothers as well as for other religious congregations and orders, the final years of the 60s marked the visible beginning of a decline in vocations. The 1,171 novices of 1964 had become 963 in 1965 [1]. It was the beginning of a period of religious disaffection, disaffection more or less serious depending on the continent. It continues to this day to raise the problem of the identity of religious congregations, of the evolution of their activities, of relations with lay people, of the sharing of power with lay colleagues, and of dialogue with members of other communities working in society. In fact, the texts consulted by the authors of this report show clearly that the Brothers have not ceased to reaffirm their identity, without always readjusting their identity when dealing with others, without always willing to question their own identity through dialogue and confrontation with other identities and with a different set of circumstances.

In 1976, a new General Chapter decided to work on the basis of District projects, given that Districts are the hierarchical and organisational units of the Congregation. Working on projects was very much the fashion at the time. In the 70s, the idea of a project came to dominate first of all English-speaking educational circles, then in France and, a little later, in Latin countries. Initially, the idea of a project seemed revolutionary in the measure that the project advocated a shift of emphasis from the teacher (superior, father) to the pupil (project where the pupil has the major role). It was not long before the project took on a multiplicity of forms, but also it often veered off course by often becoming institutional, compulsory, spurred on by a central and hierarchical power [2]. Lasallian District projects certainly do not escape this change of course since they have the force of law and obligation. We can see here a contradiction between the very notion of a project which implies flexible, adaptable, progressive types of action which often dovetail with one another like Russian dolls, and sometimes are even contradictory.

In this sense, it is difficult to put on the same footing district projects, community projects, educational establishment projects and personal projects. This is one of the difficulties in the analysis of the dossier of this study which lacks homogeneity in the levels and types of projects assembled. We shall return to this point later.

If one thinks that, in 2000, there were only 6,325 Brothers and 117 novices, and that the average age was 62.9, the decision to work on the projects was an important one for the Brothers, given their search for an identity taking into account local implantation. At present, 61% of the Brothers are over 60 years of age. Seven Districts have an average age of more than 70 (1,794 Brothers in all) and 8 Districts have an average age below 45 years (375 Brothers) [3]. In fact what is special about this project is its overall view and the cooperation of different categories of staff doing the same work and for the same objectives, and this facilitates the integration of lay people.

The decision to work on a project on an identity implanted in local contexts and of different geographical and cultural origins cannot, however, obscure the fact that the

Brothers of the Christian Schools are a congregation and have to compromise between unity and diversity; respect for personal cultures and the common culture; compromise in their use of language, given the multiplicity of languages, in theory equal, but in practice varying in status, since some speak in their native language, others in a national language, and others still in a vernacular or foreign language.

But more than simple differences of culture, context and language, what is at stake is very fundamental: it is dialogue between Brothers' communities, dialogue with lay people, and dialogue with people working for society as a whole. The vocation of the Brothers is evidently not to form a large and happy family turned in on itself and able to communicate only with its own rapidly decreasing members. It is rather to be open to the world and to its changes, to be a part of society, and even more, to seek to guide it, to form citizens...whom the Brothers would like to be Christians and committed, if possible.

The Secretary responsible⁴ for Lasallian educational and school activities, and for the Lasallian Educational Mission (MEL), asked for a thorough study to be undertaken of the pedagogical, linguistic and ideological contents of District projects which, let us remember, have the force of law once they are voted in. These projects could also centre on educational establishments and have a shorter or longer time frame, from one year to more than 5, and even 10 years.

What this study seeks to do, therefore, is to identify, at the same time, characteristics which represent Lasallian specificity, distinguishing it from that of other congregations, and to highlight possible particularities of different communities. One can suppose, for example, those English-speaking North American communities do not have exactly the same characteristics nor the same way of expressing them, as communities living in India and speaking English affected by the local language. One can also suppose that the style of teaching in US communities is different from that to be found in French-speaking Canada. The study seeks also to gauge if the texts of the projects included in the dossier give signs of this openness to the world, and a capacity to engage in dialogue which, while firmly attached to the local situation, transcends it in order to respond to the mission of the Church and of the Founder.

In other words, the central question around which research work on Lasallian activities gravitates can be summed up in the definition of the present-day identity of the Congregation, and of the desirable identity in the context of the modern world. The concept of identity (even more so than that of project) "should be used in relation to a practice, an affective or mental phenomenon: production of identity, mobilisation of identity, transformation of identity, formation of an identity image, identity suffering. This production can have no meaning apart from the practice or process which gives it its social reality" (Barbier, 1996). This means that even collective identity is never fixed: it is rather "identity dynamics" (Kaddouri, 1996), in motion, difficult to understand simply through words. We need, therefore, to be prudent in our attempts to flesh out the notion.

Three researchers are responsible for this study. None of the three belongs to the Brothers of the Christian Schools' movement. All three are qualified as researchers to

⁴ Br. Nicolas Capelle kindly has supplied us this report to our Digital Journal of Lasallian Research. For more information, his e-mail is ncapelle@gmail.com

undertake a semantic study in the most object way possible. It is useful to point out here that the projects the study deals with are all written projects. In other words, the researchers had access only to a discursive dossier (and a discourse does not necessarily give the true picture of what is described in writing). Writing, as a social act is highly coloured by ethical, strategic and political references, by the projection of a picture of the institution for outsiders, etc. These projects are already part of written culture, of second-hand communication which does not always describe accurately the people with whom Lasallians work.

One of the researchers is a university graduate, working for a public organisation and a specialist in studies on values, about which she has written numerous articles and presented papers abroad. She is also a statistician [4]. The second has a doctorate. She has written books and articles on the educational systems of European countries and on the training of teachers. The third is a university professor, the author of many books on school, in particular on innovation and formation, and the professionalisation of adults through writing. These last two persons have already completed a study on Lasallian initiatives in the last few years [5].

The Dossier

As has already been said, since 1976 and particularly under North American influence, Districts have been invited to evaluate their life and decide future action at District Chapters taking place every 3 or 4 years. These Districts entrust their projects - usually annual - to communities or educational establishments. Sometimes even, these projects are given a life-span of 10 years quite simply because they are addressed to a wider public and go beyond school and organisational concerns. Each of the analysed projects can belong only either to a District level, or also to an educational establishment level, or community level, or even be part of much larger inspirational projects which recall fundamental Lasallian values. This heterogeneity highlights the mingling of levels but also the difficulty of analysing projects as if they were identical linguistically and the eventual readers of these performative projects (= which invite action) were homogeneous.

The dossier of the study is composed of 59 written projects. Instructions sent to those due to submit projects for analysis asked for District projects or official reports of District Chapters.

The response did not entirely correspond to the request since, out of the 59 projects received, some are simply official District reports, others are reports concerning both District educational establishments; others are broadly inspirational projects. And so, we have the following:

- 12 projects solely on District reports (3 years);
- 22 projects solely on educational establishments (1 year);
- 22 projects solely broadly inspirational (10 years);
- 1 project both broadly inspirational & District report, and
- 2 projects both broadly inspirational and for an educational establishment [6].

Of these 59 projects, 17 are written in French, 8 in English and 34 in Spanish. 25 Districts out of 60 responded (45%), which is relatively a good number and sufficiently representative, geographically speaking, except where Africa is concerned. 66

This heterogeneity poses a problem for the researchers for a number of very different factors have to be taken into account: the level of the project (District, educ. est., inspirational, combination of both); the language (native English, non-native English, native Spanish, non-native Spanish, native French, non-native French); size of the project (a few pages, a whole book); not to mention illustrations, which were not taken into account. Such a study no doubt would have required some projects to be rewritten so as to give them equal weight in the light of what was submitted by others.

But the conditions of this study did not stipulate that the researchers had to write their dossier. They took, therefore, what they were given. The overriding reason for this was that their knowledge of the projects, of their impact, of the manner of their construction, was not sufficient for them to make a choice that was judicious and suited to the situation under examination. Let us make it clear, then, that it was not the researchers who wrote the dossier of texts: it was given to them fully prepared in the form of a text prepared by a word processor.

All the same, the researchers submitted a questionnaire to the person who had commissioned this study in order to know for whom these projects were intended, how they had been drawn up, and information about idiosyncrasies in the use of language and words.

One could say that these projects serve as a background for all that has been undertaken at the various levels; it is a sort of authoritative reference to be consulted when there is disagreement. The dossier is composed only of projects written over the last dozen years. This was one of the conditions specified when the study was commissioned: its intention was “to see what the recent Lasallian projects said about the new identity, and how they took into account the various contributions of the last 10 to 15 years, realising at the same time that District projects are greatly influenced by General Chapters”.

Methodology

What can be done given such heterogeneity of texts, given a global brief calling for a search for a “new” identity, and given an obligation to conform with the decisions of a central authority? The researchers then are faced with a paradoxical demand: to point to originality and innovation in a world in which conformity is very strong! A conventional study taking each project and studying its linguistic forms, its auxiliaries or other semantic categories would, it was thought, either lose its way, or be bound to fail in fulfilling its brief.

There was only one solution: not to start off with a hypothesis, but to take the texts in their entirety and submit them to a text analysis computer programme. We then thought that it would be useful to introduce some differentiation and a brief typology of the projects according to criteria such as country of origin, language, District, type of project, duration, size, etc. We had at our disposal several methods of computer based analysis of text (lexicometric, socio-semantic, based on networks of associated words,

propositional and predicative analysis, a textual study, or several other expert systems and equivalent arrangements. We chose to use the ALCESTE programme.

This is an “automatic method”, that is, it precludes the insertion of hypotheses. In fact, the use of an automatic method such as the one provided by ALCESTE gives the guarantee, at least initially, of neutralising the issues underlying any interpretation of the texts. At the start, intervention is limited to purely utilitarian “formalities” (preparation of the dossier), no presupposition is allowed to influence the results of the analysis. The programme sets in motion the mechanism of analysis independent of meaning. The aim is to obtain a preliminary statistical classification of the “simple statements” of the dossier under examination according to the distribution of words in these “statements”. This classification makes it possible to identify the most characteristic words, and is called “lexical group” access.

The groups resulting from this classification are polarities in the use of words, which can be called “raw material”. They make it possible, in the course of reading the results, to attempt an interpretation, guided by the pre-constructs of the researcher, and make it possible to pick out unexpected junctures and oppositions.

The method used by ALCESTE is that of a statistical analysis of textual data which originates in the approach promoted by Lebart and Salem (1994) and originating in the school of Benzecri. The analysis of data was created for an inductive and qualitative approach to textual data, as opposed to probabilistic models considered “rich in hypotheses which will never be satisfied” (Benzecri, 1973). “The analysis of data gives an initial schematic representation of formal relations in a table of data. It does not describe any object in itself, but visualises a form already registered in the table, as a microscope or a telescope does in the case of a physical form (at the price of some distortion), the analyst being free to interpret this form according to a semiotic system of his choice”.

Often “the analysis of thematic contents seeks its justification in relentless methodology and loses sight of its subject” (Giglione, 1995). According to this author, the analysis of discourse makes it “the plaything of a game of which the rules have been fixed somewhere else”. Reinert (2001) thinks that “in discourse, world and subject co-construct each other, without presupposing one or the other, these two aspects being two dual aspects of the semiosis. The sign designates the subject as much as the object. And this is what Bachelard says in the following warning: “it is sufficient for us to speak of an object to believe we are objective. But by our initial choice, the object designates us more than we designate it, and what we believe are our fundamental thoughts about the world, are often indications of the youth of our mind”.

To sum up, in the lexical analysis proposed, the distinction between “statement groups” lies in the choice of vocabulary, in opposition between their lexical backgrounds, that is, lexical groups. A lexical group at the same time reflects a point of reference and indicates a connection with a specific activity of the subject of the statement (here the Lasallian group that wrote the project).

The construction is based on the principle of opposition between categories; the ALCESTE programme uses statistical procedures for this purpose (the chi2 of association and the factorial analysis of correspondences). Physically, the dossier

analysed (all the written texts of the projects) is presented in the form of u.c.i. (initial context units). These (each project) are the natural divisions of the dossier. They are the first indications of a structure given to the programme. The u.c.i. cut up into u.c.e. (elementary context units) correspond to sentences calibrated according to their length (assessed according to the number of words analysed) and punctuation. It is on the basis of words in the dossier belonging to these u.c.e. that the programme establishes the matrices according to which the work of classification is carried out.

The analysed dossier appears in the form of “elementary statements”, the aim being to classify these statements according to their similarities and their dissimilarity (using the factor χ^2). The programme makes a statistical classification according to the distribution of words in the u.c.e. In this way, a classification is obtained of the dissimilarities and similarities.

In an initial stage, the programme reduces the vocabulary, that is, it identifies the morphology by recognising tool words which have a modal dimension (articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, etc) and full words, that is, nouns, verbs, adjectives, certain adverbs. These full words are reduced to their root (“lemmatised”), which makes it possible to work on a more reduced number of forms.

That was our approach in dealing separately with the 3 dossiers: the dossier with the projects in French, the dossier with the projects in Spanish, and the dossier with the projects in English.

The length and the number of projects in each dossier varies greatly. In the analysis we made we used the same criteria, namely:

- the number of the project (arbitrary order which however makes it possible to return to the original project),
- the country,
- the continent,
- the District,
- the region,
- the year of publication of the project (reducing this to 3 categories: 1. 1990 -1993; 2. 1994 - 2000; 3. 2001 – 2004,
- the time frame of the project: 1, 3 or 10 years, and
- the size of the project according to the number of typed characters.

The plan of the study

Our method leads us next to make interpretations on the basis of the classifications, the closeness of words and the syntagms related to other words.

This interpretation is the most delicate part of the study because often, one tends to project what one knows of situations. That is why we tried not to follow too much the insight of the local people but, having examined them, to make our own interpretation regarding categories.

In each dossier, therefore, evaluations are made and are classified in categories according to the characteristics which distinguish the dossier, and we have attempted a

first interpretation of each dossier. It is only in the second stage that we brought together the separate interpretations of the 3 dossiers and tried to identify in them divergences and convergences, as well as trends which are growing or fading, by applying to them the criteria we have introduced (factorial analysis of correspondence). This constitutes the first three parts of the report.

The last part contains the interpretation in response to the initial question of the one who commissioned the study, namely, what identity is revealed by this dossier. The conclusion will open the debate by trying to create a bridge between the first report written on Lasallian initiatives and the present one containing the written projects covering the last ten years.

1. THE RESULTS OF THE DOSSIER OF PROJECTS IN FRENCH

Overall character of the of the dossier in French according to three main tendencies

Category 1 and 3

The words and semantic contents of these two categories are grouped first of all around school and pedagogy. The pedagogy referred to in the educational establishment is not neutral. It is based on didacticism, knowledge, information, method and discipline. This pedagogy is efficacious, based on study, attention, listening and makes it possible to overcome difficulties. It is also subject to a certain pace and timetable. The pedagogy used is attached to certain human and moral values: responsibility, fraternity, solidarity and mutual help.

School organisation attaches much importance to the headmaster and teachers. It works within a network, through boards, promotes implantation. It works within the Lasallian network, contributes to the diocese on the ecclesial and pastoral level.

We are speaking of District projects here which have the force of commitment and obligation. The educational vision that is revealed is the serious, traditional and classic pedagogy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, without any surprises. We should not generalise. The number of projects is small, and the dossier is far from being homogeneous. But side by side with the terms used, there are also those that are absent, or so rarely used that the programme ignored them. The pedagogical point of view appears to be concerned only with ideal pupils and not pupils in their changing circumstances subject to outside influences. It appears to offer pupils instead a road that is already well signposted. The organisation of the establishment does not refer to partners or dialogue. At no time does there appear a dimension which is very much to the fore in present-day educational circles, namely, the learning society: an option which has the support of educational experts today. Pedagogy seems directed to defensive values, while at the same time analysing which would be the most efficacious pedagogical (methodological) techniques in view rather of aims to be attained than of the pupils involved in the process. Category 3 is characterised more by this adoption of strategies in order to attain fixed aims.

First tendency

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We give here examples of sentences picked out by the programme [7] illustrating characteristics of categories 1 and 3.

Category 1 :

A tous les niveaux, les enfants et les jeunes sont rendus attentifs aux réalités de la société qui crée de profondes inégalités ; ils sont initiés au sens de la justice et au devoir de solidarité. Les élèves qui rencontrent des difficultés ou qui sont en situation d'échec scolaire sont l'objet d'une attention particulière pour éviter qu'ils ne soient exclus.

Développer la fraternité, la convivialité et la solidarité entre tous ; se soutenir dans les moments de découragement, d'usure et de lassitude, chercher et appliquer des solutions efficaces aux difficultés rencontrées ; améliorer les compétences personnelles, diversifier les pédagogies et innover.

Faciliter l'inscription par des conditions favorables, bourses d'étude, primes, pour les familles en difficulté, adopter des méthodologies didactiques favorables : pédagogie par objectifs, rythmes personnalisés, observation attentive du progrès.

Category 3 :

Les responsables se réunissent régulièrement pour organiser, accompagner, évaluer la mise en œuvre du projet éducatif de l'œuvre du conseil de direction. Des comités éducatifs existent dans chaque projet d'établissement pour assurer la mise en œuvre du projet éducatif et établir les liaisons avec les diverses instances de formation, particulièrement les instances lasalliennes.

Les responsables et éducateurs sont invités à considérer comme un devoir professionnel de suivre des programmes de formation initiale ou permanente. Modalités de mise en œuvre : chaque école ou œuvre organise des réunions de formation et de concertation pour assurer le renouvellement et l'adaptation permanente de son projet éducatif et de sa pédagogie.

Un réseau d'établissements : ils nouent des liens spécifiques avec les autres établissements du réseau lasallien. Celui-ci met en place des structures de gouvernement et d'animation, telles que l'association Jean Baptiste de La Salle, le conseil de délégation et le conseil local d'animation lasallienne.

Second tendency

Categories 2 and 4

The words and the semantic contents of these two categories are grouped around the Christian faith, and more especially around the Lasallian specificity of this faith.

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Christian commitment naturally refers to Jesus, God and the Gospel. It is directed to a God of love, which is very important in characterising the type of belief, attachment, and manner of announcing the message. A message of love; it is not of fear. The values attached to this message make possible sharing, availability, dynamism, freedom. This vision of faith seems less school-centered than the preceding pedagogical view. As the Christian commitment is that of the Brothers, it refers also to the Founder and mentions fidelity to this founder. The link between faith and man is made through the charism for the educational work of category 2 and the service of the poor in category 4.

Illustration by the most characteristic sentences in the dossier:

Category 2

La foi ; on éduque à la foi en Dieu, en l'homme, en soi-même. C'est dans sa logique d'éducation humaine intégrale qu'elle transmet le message de la foi.

Le respect de la dignité de toute personne, un des désirs les plus forts de tout être humain, et de se voir reconnu pour lui-même dans l'ensemble de sa personne avec toute son histoire, son originalité, jusque dans ses souffrances et ses insuffisances.

Saint Irénée ne disait-il pas que la gloire de Dieu, c'est la vie de l'homme ? Mais nous présentons aussi un message de salut, nous annonçons une bonne nouvelle.

Il veut être reconnu comme personne unique. Il est en recherche de son identité. Sa foi est celle de ses parents, sa reconnaissance de Jésus vient de la catéchèse reçue à l'école.

Category 4

Notre fidélité au fondateur ne peut exister sans une recherche conduite dans un esprit filial. La déclaration des trois propositions délimite l'essentiel de cette fidélité : procurer aux jeunes, particulièrement défavorisés, une éducation humaine et chrétienne selon le ministère confié par l'Eglise.

Comment les Frères et les Laïcs qui s'inspirent de Jean Baptiste de La Salle conçoivent-ils l'éducation chrétienne, en fidélité au fondateur ? La fidélité n'est pas une répétition du passé, mais une recherche conduite dans un esprit filial.

Au temps de Jean Baptiste de La Salle, ce fut la conduite des écoles. Plus près de nous, en 1990, ce fut le texte des Frères et des Laïcs ensemble. En 1997, les Frères et les Laïcs présents à l'Assemblée générale du district de France, ont souhaité que l'ouvrage soit remis sur le métier afin

d'actualiser et de rendre encore plus accessible à tous les acteurs du réseau lasallien.

Third tendency

Category 5

The words and semantic contents of the category refer above all to all the organisational aspects and the style of work of the Brothers. Christian and human values are not absent from this organisation, but they appear as being in the service of a very structured and hierarchised congregation. The projects from French-speaking Canada and Benin (Africa) are most attached to this vocabulary.

The hierarchical and organisational organisation of the Brothers is stressed by the whole gamut of terms proper to religious hierarchies or characteristics (provincial, general, chapter, house), or to the organisational hierarchy proper to the Brothers (visitor, district), or to hierarchies in general (president, director, commission, mandate).

This organisation is based on religious values and practices, connected with Christianity and has temporal dimensions.

This organisation is connected quite naturally with the evaluation that the type of life led by the Brothers, especially their community life, is one characterised by team work. Consequently, we find some more or less bureaucratic terms, such as document, dossier, files, theme, drawing up, conclusion.

Among the religious values and practices, we should mention the apostolic, pastoral and liturgical dimensions, as well as the importance of prayer nourished by religious services such as the Mass and celebrations, but also retreats, recollections and sessions. This invitation to religious practices makes possible renewal, dynamism, authenticity and hope.

It should be noted that projects are strongly characterised by a temporal dimension through the use of terms such as year, present-day, during, following, periodical, term, etc., as also by pronouns and verbs which denote belonging and community voluntarism (we, ours and yours), (are, have, want, require, wish, can, will continue, etc).

Illustrative sentences in this category from the dossiers

Deuxième objectif: revigorer notre présence auprès des jeunes et des démunis. Premier sous-objectif: fortifier et soutenir nos équipes éducatives, maintenir des œuvres actuelles du district qui tentera de maintenir toutes les œuvres apostoliques actuelles.

Revigorer notre présence auprès des jeunes et des démunis, fortifier et soutenir nos équipes éducatives, nous donner des appuis de qualité par les échanges communautaires, le questionnement sain de nos approches.

Il est demandé aux communautés de faire figurer dans leur projet, les moyens apostoliques et financiers, pour le camp des vocations et sorties, etc. Retenus pour être plus près des jeunes sentant l'appel du Christ. Mettre l'accent sur l'accompagnement personnel des aspirants à partir des fiches déjà élaborées.

If we play “opposites”, we will notice the absence of some words: those to do with dialogue, sharing, scope for negotiation, adaptation. From the temporal point of view, there is no call for looking ahead or a long-term view. The Brothers’ community seems to have its feet firmly on the ground, is in touch with reality, respects traditions; is not necessarily interested in change.

The programme made it possible to distinguish clearly between the vocabulary used by some and by others. It is interesting to note that all the Canadian projects belong to the same frame of mind and, unless they were all written by the same person, we can deduce that a dominant factor in Canadian communities is organisation and hierarchy. This remark does not apply to French-speaking Africa, but we have only two projects from Africa, both from Benin.

2. RESULTS OF THE DOSSIER OF PROJECTS IN SPANISH

Projects from Andalusia and Latin America (Categories 1 and 5)

They are very much concerned with pedagogy. Their framework is above all that of the school, and the dominant concern is educational. The school framework is Lasallian, but the words selected make no reference to the organisation of the Brothers, the Christian faith, the Church. The educational concern is primary and is based on the learning and acquisition of knowledge.

What dominates in the semantic study of these projects is the type of pedagogy in place and the intellectual qualities required and, it follows, the type of student the school wishes to form. The pedagogy is participative; much importance is given to methodology, research, media and technological resources. It is based on mediation, motivation, development of skills. The large number of tool words picked out by the programme point probably to a willingness to discuss.

The type of citizen envisioned is open to philosophy, sensitive to ethics, interested in relations, used to analysing and doing things methodically.

A few sentences picked out by ALCESTE illustrate what was said above

Category 1

La mejora de los aprendizajes. También es verdad que la post-asimilación se realizará mejor, ya que si los alumnos están más motivados, el profesor insistirá más en la mediación.

También es verdad que este buen clima de relación puede resquebrajarse fácilmente si existen personas o grupos que actúan contra los demás y no se sabe cómo integrarlos de forma correcta.

No se trata de exigir valoraciones, sino de crear hábitos de valoración para que surja la motivación. Estamos valorando cuando decimos en clase: lo que vais a aprender es importantísimo porque os servirá en determinadas situaciones de la vida y os ayudará a encontrar soluciones.

Category 5

Desarrollamos progresivamente el sentido crítico de los educandos respecto a la realidad social, cultural y científica. Vamos más allá de la actividad académica y desarrollamos el empleo formativo del tiempo libre, la práctica del deporte, la organización de grupos y asociaciones y encauzamos las inquietudes religiosas y sociales.

Anclamos la participación en la capacidad de cada quien y fomentamos la cooperación de acuerdo con las posibilidades personales y capacidades con el objetivo del desarrollo común. Compartir los mismos criterios educativos, garantiza la unidad y coherencia primordiales de la comunidad educativa y la participación responsable de de cuantos la formamos.

Líneas de acción: proyectos comunes de investigación y desarrollo. Elaboración e intercambio de conceptos pedagógicos lasalianos. Intercambio de programas de formación. Imperativo de comunicación: faltan procedimientos para consolidar la comunicación entre las personas, servicios y bienes entre los diferentes distritos, entre las obras y las personas comprometidas en ellas.

The Valladolid projects

As opposed to those of Andalusia, these stress pedagogy less. The framework of activity is solely Lasallian and the Lasallian community seems to hold sway with the values of prayer, recollection and religious life in a dominant position. If the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Andalusia concentrate on schools, those of Valladolid do so a little less, giving priority to Lasallian values, including their promotion outside of the school.

The Lasallian structure shown is hierarchical and organisational. The word *community* in all its forms is present, providing at the same time a framework for life and constituting a primary value of this framework. The Lasallian community functions on the basis of a project which is principally community-based and requires involvement. This community is led, fraternal and productive.

Such a difference in the same country and with the same type of work is astonishing. It poses questions about the understanding of the nature of the work and, more precisely, on the level of the project. It seems that the projects which have a time frame of 10 years and whose aim is to guarantee or recall general Lasallian values, speak less of

educational and scholastic activity. It is not their role. And so we have before us this Spanish dossier, more in opposition to two project levels (general inspiration as opposed to local), than to two different semantic groups. This may explain the fact that projects from the same country, even the same town, seem to fix their attention on different worlds.

A few key sentences chosen by Alceste illustrate what has been said:

A la hora de realizar el proyecto comunitario, se recogen en este apartado aquellas propuestas del último Capítulo distrital que tratan de la comunidad.

Incluyen programas para la renovación de nuestra vida de oración, específicamente la oración mental. Este año, el proyecto personal y comunitario anual dará prioridad al tema de la oración que se encuentra en la propuesta sexta del Capítulo general.

Cada hermano debe concretar en su proyecto personal la duración y la organización de las dos horas mínimas de oración diaria que señala la Regla. Cada hermano tratará de asistir a los ejercicios de oración y a la eucaristía diaria y pondrá especial interés en la revitalizar la oración de la tarde.

Projects from Latin America

In their priorities they are quite close to those of Valladolid, in the sense they give priority to the religious framework, but they are different in their approach. The global framework is Christian before being Lasallian and the reference to Christ and the Gospel comes first. There is no reference to the hierarchy or the organisational structures proper to the Brothers. The community is clearly important, but it is more rooted in its local rather than in its Lasallian environment. In this society-based environment, the school, education, the family and culture have their place. The essential values are more broadly human before being Christian, and are based on conscience, dignity, law, justice, but maintaining the ideas of promotion and initiation. The projects from Latin America take care to state clearly the need for evaluation of all projects and the respect of criteria when making them.

A few key sentences picked out by Alceste illustrate what is said above:

Esta educación moral, enraizada en el Evangelio, está orientada a promover la fraternidad, la solidaridad y la justicia. Nuestra escuela fomenta la responsabilidad personal y colectiva, la toma de conciencia frente a las injusticias sociales y el compromiso en favor de una sociedad más justa y fraterna, especialmente en el entorno social donde vive.

Participa activamente en la vida de la iglesia católica. Es una persona que transmite a sus alumnos/as las verdades del evangelio. La fe y el celo intenso guían su labor en beneficio de todos, en especial de los más necesitados. Por principio, el educador lasaliano es una persona íntegra,

que vive su vocación en actitud de amor y servicio hacia los niños, niñas y jóvenes.

Afirmamos que la familia, fundada en el amor, es la primera educadora de la persona en cuanto a su desarrollo humano y cristiano. Creemos que la comunidad educativa lasaliana coopera con Jesucristo en la misión de educar adecuadamente a niños, niñas y jóvenes, integrando en ellos fe, cultura y vida.

Category 3 projects

In Category 3 there are 4 projects: 2 from Latin America, which border on category 2 and therefore on the other Latin American projects; and 2 projects from Andalusia. As one might have expected, this category centres on the Christian framework, but not on the Lasallian framework of category 2. Social implantation relies on associates of Lasallian communities. The value system promotes community life, meetings and sharing. This is the most original aspect of this category.

A few key sentences picked out by Alceste illustrate what is said above.

Estamos llamados a ser fecundos en nuestra misión gracias a la vitalidad en que vivimos nuestra relación fraterna en el seno de nuestra comunidad, y por la relación constante con el Señor que nos llama, y que se hace presente en nuestro ministerio.

Necesitamos reforzar aquello que nos identifica como hermanos de La Salle, destacando lo que nos estructura, para asumirlo y reforzar así nuestra identidad. Esto lo viviremos dentro de un nuevo contexto, donde hermanos y asociados caminaremos juntos, valorando las riquezas propias de cada identidad.

Programa dos: identidad dentro del carisma de hermano de La Salle para vivir con creatividad y sentido nuestra vida consagrada. Justificación: nos encontramos hoy ante una nueva exigencia, cada vez más acuciante, debemos aclarar quienes somos en el nuevo contexto eclesial.

Propuesta de acción educativa y pastoral: entre todos los que formamos la comunidad educativa, intensificar el deseo de renovar nuestra vida y nuestras estructuras para responder de modo creativo y esperanzado a todos los retos que nos plantea el momento actual.

Category 4 projects

Category 4 contains only 2 Spanish projects: 1 from Valladolid and 1 from Andalusia (probably the only projects of this type lasting 10 years). In the measure that the projects from these regions come from quite different areas, it might be interesting to see if the forms representative of this category make it possible to bridge the gap between them. In fact, the two projects are centred on the District whose work they plan according to fixed aims. These inspirational projects take into account the first degree of operationalisation of all projects: the District.

The vocabulary of category 4 is close to that of categories 2 and 5. It places value on schools and pedagogy especially in its organisational aspects, but does not touch on the values connected with this organisation. This category proves finally to be poorer than the others despite the wealth of terms relating to pedagogical, but not educational, organisation which are more numerous here than in the other categories.

A few key sentences picked up by Alceste illustrate what is said above:

El equipo local de pastoral ha explicado a tutores, profesores de religión, animadores de grupos, etc. los ámbitos elegidos y ha recabado su colaboración para poder llevar a buen término el análisis.

C.P. de los centros La Salle, total de hermanos: el equipo directivo ha organizado las jornadas de planificación partiendo del material que le ha proporcionado el equipo de animación distrital, de modo que se ha trabajado sobre los aspectos que se quieren potenciar durante este curso.

Propuesta: el equipo distrital de pastoral elabora los materiales para mentalizar y programar a lo largo del curso las diferentes actividades solidarias. Finalmente, los Hermanos del equipo distrital de pastoral han elaborado materiales para la mentalización y programación de las diferentes actividades solidarias con el fin de ser utilizados en las jornadas de planificación.

3. RESULTS OF THE DOSSIER OF PROJECTS IN ENGLISH

Category 1

It is difficult to give an interpretation of this Class 1 because it really seems only to concern one project: that of Baltimore. The latter cites the Philippines project to which it seems close. Did one of the two serve as model for the other? Was there an exchange of projects in the search for harmonisation of presentations? Such an attitude would lead us to think that the Lasallians feel themselves isolated and are in need of reference points in order to construct their project, with the Acts of the Chapters not being sufficient. The fact of recalling a story connected with the Philippines is indicative of this identity being constructed turned towards striking events. Is it an indication of a search for a more asserted identity?

Here are the three most illustrative sentences of this category characterising the Baltimore project:

In another sense, we can say that this book has been eighty nine years in the making. One can look at it as the story of the lasallian journey in the Philippines since nineteen eleven.

This book found its first form as the synod working discussed, reflected on and revised during the first lasallian district synod held in ninety nine at the La Salle green hills.

We are called to set the directions for the district, for our schools and communities, and for ourselves as Lasallians. Second, the spirit of the synod calls us to be the protagonists in the continuing story to actualize our plans and make them work.

Category 2

In category 2, one term gives a setting for this category, catholic; while terms defining activities and aims are numerous. What takes priority here is the importance given to the context of activities, the social, cultural and political environment: all that puts the young person in peril and which must be changed or reformed. The values defended are expressed in the fight against evil, poverty, injustice. There are 3 projects in this category. All must come from very poor sectors.

Here are some sentences to illustrate what we say:

The Jean Baptiste de La Salle middle school is a community of compassion that provides an innovative, catholic middle school education in the tradition of Jean Baptiste de La Salle. The Jean Baptiste de La Salle middle school serves to liberate and empower children and families spiritually, academically, socially, physically and emotionally so that children may break out of the cycle of poverty, gangs and violence.

The interrelated problems of poverty ecological imbalance, underdevelopment, and moral decay define the realities and the signs of the modern times and the most at risk are the youth and the poor.

In identifying the situation of the poor who are particular concern to the lasallien mission, the declaration introduces the term poverty as frustration. Poverty as frustration is born of injustice, physical and social evils, or personal insufficiency and failure.

Category 3

In category 3, the overall framework is Lasallian. There is no representative word from the faith dimension. What is strongly depicted in this category is the organisational framework of the Brothers. The activities envisaged are numerous and are directed to a wide public. The values defended of sharing, commitment and effort sound more human than Christian. There are 2 projects in this category. The three most illustrative sentences are:

The possibility of establishing regional lasallian family centers to share resource persons could be explored. Alternatively, an animation formation team composed of Lasallians from different sectors could be tasked to go around the district to offer formation related programs or to reflect with those at the local level on issues related to mission and spirituality.

Groups specifically committed to sharing the lasallian mission for example, the Signum fidei, lasallian volunteers, and the lasallian youth corps be encouraged and given the kind of support, formation.

At the school level, a number of schools have started their own local focus, sometimes as part of a larger structure such as the campus ministry office in order to organize lasallian formation programs and to handle lasallian family related correspondence.

Category 4

As opposed to the preceding category, category 4 which has one project, provides a framework that is much more Christian than Lasallian. The Gospel and Christ are fundamental. This framework is also different from that of category 2 which concerns itself more with the Church and Catholicism. The framework of activities is less detailed and seems traditional. The values are essentially the human values of solidarity, fraternity, justice. The heart and love play a big part, and sentences illustrating these values show clearly an attachment to Christ and to the message of hope which the Gospel brings us.

Contributing to the fulfilment of God's reign of justice, love and peace through their work in the world. Salvation in Christ is progressively realized in the Lasallian School through an educational project that takes into account all aspects of human development in its reorientation towards Christ who is the paradigm of the human person.

And reverence for life in all its forms, stewardship, universal brotherhood, and radical self giving in the spirit of Jesus Christ. The principal virtue and criteria of gospel living is the sacrificial, all inclusive love of Christ, educating towards Christian discipleship involves helping young people realize that real success in life is based on the greatness of one's love.

And, third, because such an education was mediated through the heart of a committed Christian concerned with the salvation of one's students. The cultivation of the human and respect for the secular are demands of an education supportive of an integral evangelization in the world today.

4. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE 3 DOSSIERS

The brief given to the researchers directed them to work:

- On the one hand, on the characterisation of each linguistic dossier according to lexical groups, and their possible coincidence with the criteria introduced. This was done in the first 3 parts of this report.
- On the other hand, on the comparison of the dossiers and this will be done in this fourth part.

Is it possible to discover significant differences/similarities between the answers of the different continents, or even the countries of the same continent?

Is it possible to discover significant differences/similarities in the answers in French, Spanish and English?

Does the specified time frame of the projects make possible comparison between the types of project?

Can one see any visible sign of a “new” identity of the Brothers of the Christian Schools? It is difficult at this point to make a historical comparison. The only factor on which we can base ourselves is what we have in the written texts of John Baptist de La Salle and the interpretations of historians such as Guy Vincent [8]. And does what we glean from the projects make it possible for us to learn something about their implantation in the world of today, and of their openness to the changes of this world?

The framework of the projects

In all the projects of the dossier, the analysis of the data has made it possible to identify a general framework. This framework reveals 3 types of different priorities:

- priority of pedagogy, education, school;
- priority of the Christian faith and Jesus Christ;
- priority of the Brothers, the explicit reference to John Baptist de La Salle, Lasallian organisation.

It is clear that these three dimensions are present in all projects, but with varying degrees of stress. The analysis we have done identifies the promotion of such or such priority and how the consequences of this choice of priority are revealed in the type of work, activities and values it entails.

Table showing categories giving school and education priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F 1	F 3	E-1	E-5	A-2
<u>Priorité à la Pédagogie</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation scolaire</u>	<u>Priorité à la Pédagogie</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation scolaire</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation scolaire et à la pédagogie</u>
élève, discipline, connaissance , pédagogie, observation, information	établissement, chef, professeur , titulaire, professionnel, éducatif, conseil	profesor , alumno , entendimiento aprendizaje, aprender	instituciones , curricular	children , school, catholic

Remarks

When projects promote the pedagogical and school aspect, the words which come naturally are those of pupil, child, teacher, establishment, institution.

Without being strictly identical, the other terms fit well into the same family: knowledge, understanding, learning. Only the English projects fit into this area, including the Catholic dimension as being part of the pedagogical remit. But this is not enough to say that the vision of the projects written in English is fundamentally different from the vision of the projects written in the other languages.

On the other hand, it may be interesting to note that these words form a framework: the pedagogical vision which we shall describe later in our analysis appears at the outset as being traditional. One might have expected to see words such as innovation, reform or even renewal; or words like proficiency, or study options, which are particular favourites at the beginning of this new century. At this very early stage of the analysis we have a common and traditional view of pedagogical and school priority. More pedagogical in the sense that where the bias is to stress the behaviour of the child, and educational approach is a consequence of this behaviour.

Table showing categories giving the Christian faith priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F 2	E-2	A 4
<u>Priorité à la foi Chrétienne</u> Foi, Chrétien, Jésus, Christ, évangile Dieu, annonce	<u>Priorité à la foi Chrétienne</u> Fe, cristiana, Jesucristo, evangélico, iglesia, lasaliano	<u>Priorité à la foi</u> <u>Chrétienne</u> Jesus Christ, christian, evangelization God, Gospel, salvation

Remarks

What is most striking is the almost identical vision in all continents and in all linguistic expressions of the Christian faith. When projects give preference to these terms, they refer to a faith that is first of all Christian (not Catholic, apostolic and Roman) based on Jesus Christ or on Christ, on God and on one book, the Gospel. It is clear, and there are no other terms; no mention of other books or other persons. Only Spanish projects mention "Lasallian". This remark, I think, is important because it shows in our opinion the great unity of the Christian identity of the Brothers.

The words that are absent speak as loudly as those that are present, and we have to say there is no mention of Mary who, however, is often on the lips of religious of congregations founded at the same time as ours, and in particular, of teaching congregations. There is no mention either of any Father of the Church who might have

special importance in one or other part of the world. No mention of any other book apart from the Gospel (not the Bible, not the Acts of the Apostles), only the Gospel of Jesus Christ, basis of the Christian faith, who unites all the Brothers of the whole world. Even if the analysis of the dossier proposes different visions, this point of unity is essential.

Table showing categories giving Lasallian organisation priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F 4	F 5	E-3	E-4- E- 6	A 3
<u>Priorité à JBS</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation lasallienne</u>	<u>Priorité à JBS</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation lasallienne</u>	<u>Priorité à l'organisation lasallienne</u>
Jean Baptiste de la Salle, fondateur, Eglise	frère, district, communautaire chapitre visiteur visite provincial, président, auxiliaire, directeur, maison, mandat	Hermano, instituto, Llamada, misión, reino, Jesús, Dios, consagrado	Hermano, distrital capitulo, comunitaria visitador pastoral, claustro, departamento directivo, jefe	District, lasallian, sector

Remarks

The dispersion here is greater because the analysis of the dossier has separated two distinct categories, the category giving priority to John Baptist de La Salle as Founder, Christian and man of faith, and the category giving priority to Lasallian organisation and its hierarchy. We point out that is not possible for us to identify the relative weight of each of the lexical groups, that is, to say if the reference to the Church takes precedence clearly over John Baptist de La Salle. And even if we could have done so, given that the written project belongs to the Lasallian community, and it is primarily addressed to it, this implicitness undoubtedly attenuates the support of a Lasallian reference.

If we take the image of Russian dolls, the projects seem first of all to refer to John Baptist de La Salle, either as spiritual referent and of the conduct to follow (and here we can speak of a theocratic social vision), but embodied in a larger family which is that of the Church, the Gospel and of Christianity.

This Lasallian organisation merges with the organisation of activities we shall look at together. We should stress, however, that the projects in French give greater priority to hierarchy than the others, and that the word District, chapter and community-based appear essential, and this is not surprising since we are studying the projects of Districts

that are registered in chapter directives , and the organisation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is based on communities.

Characteristics of the projects: activities and values

Table showing categories giving school and education priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F-1 Priorité à la Pédagogie	F-3 Priorité à l'organisation scolaire	E-1 Priorité à la Pédagogie	E-5 Priorité à l'organisation scolaire	A-2 Priorité à l'organisation scolaire et à la Pédagogie
<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u>	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u>	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u>	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u>	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u>
Efficace, difficulté , Responsabilité, Positif , Méthode, méthodologie , individualisée mutuel, Attention, Conduite, écoute, Critique, entraide, fraternité, solidarité,	réseau, lien lasallienne, diocèse, œuvre, ecclésial, pastoral, organiser, collaborer, utiliser, insertion, intermédiaire, complémentar ité	Conseguir, activa, éxito, diagnóstico, difficile , positivo , mediación, mediador, meta, relación	educando, normas, uso, participación, proceso, capacitación, investigación, criterio, estamento, metodología , recurso, tecnología	cultural, politic, economy, social, environment, moral, physical, regulation <i>Lutte contre</i> evil, injustice, poverty

Remarks

First there's something we need to say: few terms appear in several languages, and if the French and Spanish dossiers have points in common, the English dossier is completely different. The activities and values connected with the pedagogical framework are all in the political, socio-economic, cultural and environmental field. They do not include any entries of an intellectual type, but seem to be involved in a context of fighting evil, injustice, poverty. We recall that projects in this group are one from Colombo (Sri Lanka) and two from the USA.

The two columns devoted to the dossiers written in French and Spanish are very close. Without using exactly the same terms, the two have a positive vision and envisage an active pedagogy based on efficacy, success, results. The underlying values include mediation (Spanish dossier) and the human values of solidarity and fraternity (French

dossier). Categories Fr-1 and Sp-5 are most similar, both giving importance to the intellectual aspects of methodology, research and qualifications. It is also category Sp-5 which gives the most complete pedagogical vision, integrating at the same time participation, recourse to technology and intellectual elements, but does not mention human and/or Christian values. We should recall that this category 5 includes projects from Andalusia and Latin America.

Category Fr-3 is different from the others because it proposes a Christian and Lasallian vision which is absent from the other categories. It serves as an interesting bridge between the establishment and the Lasallian organisation of this educational establishment.

As can be seen, it is pointless looking for unity in the activities and values revealed. Globally, and not counting the projects written in English, human or Christian values, social or political commitment are not well represented among the pedagogical priorities. The global vision is classic and reflects a traditional pedagogy. No pedagogy is explicitly designated. Words such as reform, change, innovation are absent from the lists below.

Table showing categories giving the Christian faith priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F-2 Priorité à la foi Chrétienne	E-2 Priorité à la foi Chrétienne	A-4 Priorité à la foi Chrétienne
<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Educateur , éduquer, Homme, humaine, personne , partager, aidant, dynamisme construction, contribution, implication, transmission, adhésion, solitude intelligence, conviction, croyance, désir, vécu, disponibilité, don, amour ,	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Pueblo, hombre , familia+, sociedad , social, escuela , cultura , Valores , conciencia, dignidad	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Educator , persona, human , young people , world , life, live , love

Remarks

The agreement between and English and French text here is quite considerable. The priority given to the Christian faith is in the service of education and of the individual person. This education has as its fundamental value love which unites all the other human values.

The Spanish texts differ from the others because they include the family and society, the social and the cultural fields. These projects are from Latin America and they seem to be well rooted in the local context of the struggle for dignity and the growing awareness of the problems of the continent.

The richer French texts give a classic image of Christian education.

Table showing categories giving Lasallian organisation priority in 3 languages

Words in bold print are those found in at least 2 languages

F 4 Priorité à JBS	F 5 Priorité à l'organisation lasallienne	E-3 Priorité à JBS	E-4- E- 6 Priorité à l'organisation lasallienne	A 3 Priorité à l'organisatio n lasallienne
<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Instruction, fidélité , pauvre, charisme, textes	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Equipe, communautaire, commission, apostolique, pastorale, espérance, pastorale, paroissiale, session, prière, retraite, célébration, liturgique, messe, rite, récollection, cheminement, questionnement, invitation, intention, vocation, motivation, fortifier, interpeller, conscient, consolider, zèle, authentique, démuni, dynamique nourrir, offrir, sensibiliser, rencontrent	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Asociativo, leer, exige recuerda dinamismo, fieles, vida, querer, ofrecer, don, encontramos, compartimos , sentimos	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> Equipo, comisión, comunidad, profesorado, secretariado, tutores, animadores, coordinador, propuesta, proyecto, trimestre, sesión, plan, planificado programado, trabajado, preparado, materiales, oración, retiro, eucaristía,	<u>Activités et valeurs attachées à cette priorité</u> group, formation, training, family, partners, institute, program, strategies, involvement, endeavour, sharing

Remarks

Let us begin with the columns that centre on John Baptist de La Salle rather than on Lasallian organisation. They have in common fidelity which should be understood as fidelity to the Founder, but they have clearly fewer entries than the other columns. This fidelity and the charism connected with it have no more need to be stressed.

On the other hand, the three columns concerning the organisation of the Brothers have many more entries. The three columns have in common team, group and life. The Spanish and French projects are quite close even if the terms are not always identical. In both cases, there is mention of the dimension of spiritual practice, of community organisation, of Lasallian school organisation, and of the principal values pursued.

The spiritual practices of prayer and Eucharistic celebration are highlighted and, in the French dossier, are referred to by such terms as retreat, recollection, liturgy and Mass. Hierarchised community organisation and its presence in scholastic institutions can be found in the three dossiers, but to a greater extent in the Spanish dossier in the form of programmes, planning, plan, temporal organisation in sessions and terms, and the accompaniment of group leaders and tutors. Values shared in common after prayer are sharing and meeting. The English dossier attaches importance to effort and commitment when the Spanish dossier speaks of work. Values are more developed in the French dossier and take off in various directions but as a whole are more interiorised: questioning and journeying, vocation, conscience.

No dossier mentions values attached to citizenship and social implantation. This absence raises perhaps questions about the vision of the ideal society indirectly reflected by these dossiers.

Should the absence of the term democracy go so far as to make us think in terms of a theocracy? Everything in the organisation presented to us is based on precepts, even if they are tailored to current tastes, dictated by the will of God, attributed to Christ, helped in his turn regarding personal conduct, by the writings of John Baptist de La Salle.

No dossier speaks of openness to others. Does this absence mean that we have here a vision in which it is the others who are called forward to adopt Christian precepts and, by preference, those of John Baptist de La Salle?

No dossier mentions a philosophical vision, whether ancient or present-day. We are far from learning and education though Platonic maieutics, discussion based on logic. We are far also from the world of contemporary German philosophers such as Habermas, who advocates “communicational acting”, explaining that it is through discussion, argumentation and the progressive construction of a consensus based on reason that collective social conduct is constructed. Here, however, consensus preexists for the individual, who does not have to construct it, but accept it, if he wishes to benefit from the benefits of the Brothers’ community.

No dossier mentions lay people explicitly. This may seem surprising, given that we know that working with lay people is a prioritised subject for discussion and of crucial importance for the survival of many establishments. For we must not forget, the future of Lasallians lies in the hands of lay people! It is evident, that for present-day Brothers, all this is a risky undertaking, a calculated one, but clearly a very difficult one for a generation made up mostly of elderly men.

Conclusions

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Let us remember that the dossier is not very big and relatively disparate. This makes it impossible to draw any definitive conclusions. What is striking is that, without being identical, the views which appear are not clearly opposing views. The biggest opposition comes from the English dossier regarding school organisation with its more managerial approach, and with undertones that are more political and social (strategically speaking) than in the other linguistic groups.

The dossier as a whole reveals a number of complementary visions redolent of family life. The principal point on which the three dossiers coincide is a completely identical definition of the Christian faith. The pedagogical and educational approaches are not opposed but they do not work together very well. The approach to Lasallian organisation is linked with Christian practices and attitudes. No word attracts special attention because it would break ranks with the traditional vision. No project appears to show any sign of dissidence or revolution. Certain conformity to dogma can be observed. The Lasallian identity is well agreed upon, well defined. Too well, perhaps. It is not certain that it is welcoming to the world which surrounds us, receptive of its changes.

The problem is, that, with society evolving, the relations of Brothers with civil society risk slackening, and Brothers risk being more and more out of synch with this society in the years to come. The number of the Brothers is diminishing, and a study of the District projects does not give the impression that the handing over to lay people is on the rails. Lay people will not be able to have the same type of commitment to Lasallian teachings and practices. Should a relaxation be suggested? Should we go further and suggest rethinking the relations between Lasallian teachings and their true place and implantation in present-day democracies and in those in the process of construction?

Certain semantic absences pose questions: the words to do with opening, innovation, change, negotiation, compromise, evolution would have been welcome in the sense that they would have made it possible to say that the projects show a congregation “on the move”. These words are missing.

Only the word “dynamic” appears in the French dossier and under the heading of Lasallian organisation. On the whole, then, the impression is that projects are somewhat classic, somewhat static, stable, but perhaps too turned in on themselves, lacking inspiration and breadth.. In a word: they’re almost purring.

Comparison of projects according to their time frame

We can try now to compare the projects according to their declared time frame. The projects were split up into three time frame groups: 10 years, 3 years, 1 year. The 1 year projects came from educational establishments, the 3 year projects from Districts, and the 10 year projects were inspirational. The question we should like to ask now is: do the young projects have different characteristics from the old ones?

This calls for the following remarks: The 10 year projects concern all the regions and projects except those of Spain. Regarding the 3 categories we established for the sake of comparison, projects of a pedagogical type are slightly more numerous, but they are

spread out over the 3 categories. Canadian projects are resolutely concerned with Lasallian organisation. The 1 year projects concern especially Spain. It is interesting to note the same orientation from year to year for the region of Valladolid. With the exception of 1997, the Valladolid projects deal first of all with the concerns of the Lasallian community. An almost identical stability characterises the projects from Andalusia, which are primarily pedagogical, but which in 1994 and 1995 concentrate their attention more on Lasallian matters.

Projects with a more Christian bias are in different dossiers from North, South and Central America. The reasons are most certainly different but it's worth pointing out this fact.

The dossier is not sufficiently large nor sufficiently differentiated to give too much weight to the observation that projects which have a time frame of a year have a vision more connected with Lasallian organisation, while those with a time frame of 10 years have a more pedagogical bias. Moreover, the 1 year projects are not centered first of all on the Christian faith, but we have seen that Lasallian organisation generally includes all the religious practices in its range of values and practices.

For us, where the written word is concerned, it has a stronger force than it has in lay groups. Behind all this is the reference to the "Great Book" and the Scriptures. In other words, these projects are written in an agreed form of language, coloured by their own linguistic culture. We will not be surprised at the closeness of the vocabulary and at the shrewd search for differences, since these projects have as their aim to weld the group together under an identifiable and declared identity. Their construction obeys a hierarchical structure with a to and fro of consultations. Their horizon is set by the documents of General Chapters.

These conclusions confirm those of the preceding part. District projects are expressed in stable and relatively identical language. They mirror one another with similar words, in a sort of reassuring way which, no doubt, constructs a solid, even solidified identity, but which makes any transformation more difficult. Does the absence of lay people make it possible perhaps to put forward the hypothesis that if they had been more involved in the presentation of these District projects, the projects would have been different linguistically and semantically? Perhaps they could have stated by their words and their status the meaning of their commitment when they committed themselves to working in a Lasallian community?

DOES THIS STUDY CONFIRM A PREVIOUS STUDY?

In 2002, the person responsible for the educational and scholastic activities of the Lasallian Educational Mission (MEL) commissioned a study on the evolution of the identity of Lasallian activities and pedagogy [9], based on a questionnaire sent out to Lasallian communities involved in educational innovations in particular in the service of the poor. The aim therefore was different from that of the present study: involving hierarchies less and closer to the people working in the field and their concrete problems. The persons who answered the questionnaires were mostly Brothers, but also some lay people involved in an on-going but not future schemes. It is interesting, then, to compare the conclusions and propositions of this first study with those of the second.

The main characteristics of a new identity

The previous study identified six. Let us see if this second study corroborates them or not.

The process of laicisation

The first study had noted a real desire to develop in lay people competence in management, and training for negotiation in a global Christian context. The present study ignores lay people completely. The term is not retained as being significant in any dossier.

A change of direction towards the very poor

The first study stressed that all categories of poor people were the preferred concern of Lasallians. The present study does not confirm this belief. The fight against poverty, the service of the poor are certainly mentioned but they are not really given priority, and are not omnipresent as they were in the previous study.

Discreet and efficacious hierarchy

The first study mentioned a hierarchy presents in the descending infrastructure, made up of visitors, themselves, organised as a hierarchy but relatively flexible because listening to problems encountered locally. The present study stresses perhaps a hierarchy that is very much present, even interfering and very organising.

“Community “life as the construction of shared thinking

The conclusions of the first study on this point are completely supported by the second. Community is seen as a social link which implies that everyone has his place, and in his place acts for the common good. Community is a place for sharing of values. Beyond the local community, we find an all-encompassing common thinking: the link of links: the membership of a group, which we have stressed before. Community life is seen as harmonious and sheltered from conflicts. The system of underlying values is not compromise, but a process of alignment with Lasallian guidelines defined by the Brothers. The consequence of this is natural elimination of opponents or possible dissidents in projects (or at least their absence from the channels of communication).

Taking into account ecumenism in the service of Christianity

The answers to the questionnaire of the first study revealed a concern for tolerance and an ecumenical attitude. The condemnation of proselytism was clearly expressed as was support for the Declaration of the rights of man and the Declaration of the rights of children. We stressed that there could not be any incompatibility between Lasallian

guidelines and these universal declarations, and that the Brothers supported lay models, republican states with separation of Church and State in the government of society. In the present study, the question of dialogue between religions does not arise, neither does the issue of the organisation of society. What remains fundamental is the organisation of Lasallian community life, fidelity to the Founder and the development of school and educational activities.

The place of intellectual and cognitive work

The first study stated that “the contents of teaching seem less important than the fact of being together in a variety of working groups: discussion groups, groups for the exchange of professional knowledge...” [10]. We warned about a risk of “abandoning intellectual rigour and certain kinds of subjects, a slide towards solicitude and commiseration”. The priority given to pedagogy and school organisation is much more sensitive in this second study. School organisation appears with all the traditional aspects of rigour, efficaciousness and methodology, and even research. It concentrates solely on the level of pupils and children. Nothing in the District projects allows believing that continuing formation is a Lasallian pedagogical priority. What is common to these two studies is the absence of intellectual references and pedagogical models.

Do these two studies make it possible for us to draw up a new Lasallian identity card?

This second study confirms that the crux of Lasallian identity is to be found in fidelity to the Founder. Stressed in all the projects of the first study, it is also - and possibly even more so - stressed in the second study also. “What unites the Brothers of the Christian Schools today is their fidelity to and their unbounded incantatory admiration for John Baptist de La Salle... This reference to him is constant and reflects the gradual impregnation of the mind and the illusion that we are following faithfully a line traced out, believing that the ideas of John Baptist de La Salle are adaptable to all times and to all societies, without seeing that the people we are addressing are really not the same as those of the 17th century !” [11].

The 43rd General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools drew attention to “the risk of Brothers (lowering their standards and) adopting middle-class values”. The dossier studied in the first study did not accept this as a risk, on the contrary: it showed rather the withdrawal from teaching as an integral part of the education of children and adolescents from poor backgrounds. On the other hand, if the present study does not allow us to speak of adopting middle class values, one can note that the term “poverty” is very rarely used. The value system of the dossiers promotes rather in general terms ideas such as fraternity and solidarity.

The first study left us with the following question: Should we speak of and search for one Lasallian identity, or should we accept several Lasallian identities according to continents and cultural contexts, or according to the types of activities chosen? This question was asked in the light of a multiplicity of projects addressed to different groups of people in contexts where a very important concern was implantation in the local situation.

The second study led us to a different conclusion: the very great homogeneity of views, actions and values underpinning the views and activities. This second study is concerned with District projects drawn up by a hierarchy whose strong significance we have already stressed. The first study had to do with innovative projects and showed initiatives which were special and stood out from the mass. For this reason, we were able to speak of an evolution and a movement towards the creation of a new identity. The present study presents quite a different reality: that of a relatively fixed and stable identity.

As all large families, the Lasallian family tends to function like a closed circuit. It thinks it has sufficient internal resources not to have to bother looking elsewhere. In our opinion this is a great danger especially at a time of diminution and ageing of Brothers. There is nothing said in this study about the educational practices of other congregations or of State schools. Are the Brothers thinking of continuing their work all by themselves? With Chapters and District projects to guide them? Without the help of lay people? Without outside help? And keeping control of everything?

The projects studied seem to present an identity which is often more defensive than offensive. Why? Probably because the obligatory reminder of Christian foundations and fidelity to the Founder are more important than taking into account the social situation and civil society.

Like all families, this one has its rules and its codes which enable its members - and only its members - to recognise one another. Which means that whoever does not belong to the family is not consulted and, more seriously, risks being excluded. The language of the written projects illustrates the type of speech, sometimes by agreement, used in community. The vocabulary is relatively small, promoting a kind of community building which confuses identical words with seeking a common goal, achieved by different routes and different ways of envisaging - and consequently - of speaking about them. Projects seem to be seeking an ideal and intangible goal. The other side of the project that of operationalisation, at whatever level you are, appears much less. As for evaluation, it is mentioned only in one Spanish dossier.

And so the identity that is revealed in these dossiers is at the same time vague and very coded. Whether one is in Colombo, Canada or Africa, words used are much the same, even if the three languages are quite different. We have here a common language expressed in three different idioms. This form of closeness denotes a search for identity. But is it enough to use the same vocabulary without geographical or social implantation to have the same identity? It is not enough and probably not necessary. It would be more useful for identity to be built on the mobility and typology of thoughts which are different and always part of a network. Whether you're in Timbuktu or Santa Fe, do you have the same people to deal with, in the same context of poverty, due to the same causes, manifested in the same way, dealt with in the same way? Clearly, there is some adaptation, in the measure that Brothers' communities respect the local political regimes, if they have a minimum of democracy compatible with respect for the rights of man and of the child, but the God of the Christians remains omnipresent and superior in the sense that he is claimed to be the only God of love.

More so than the first, the second study leads us to conclude that the leaders of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who have the responsibility for embodying the work of the Founder in society, need to look again at his work and thinking today to see what his choices would be in our society (with its mondialisation). They have to adapt their methods to the people of today, make the “family” evolve as well as the direction taken by this family, to greater freedom, which allows differences, even dissidence and marginalisation which are often the trigger for evolution and reflection in “families” and congregations.

Paris, 2004

Notes

- [1] Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, October 1st 2000, p.42.
- [2] In this connection, read J.P. Boutinet’s book *Anthropologie du projet*, 1987, Paris PUF.
- [3] Information kindly supplied by Brother Nicolas Capelle.
- [4] We thank Monique Wach for her expertise in using the ALCESTE computer programme, and without whom this study could not have been completed.
- [5] F. Cros and F. Vaniscotte: “Initiatives Lasalliennes: Vers une nouvelle identité ?” Final report submitted to MEL, Rome.
- [6] It should be said that the programme analysing the dossier cannot take into account these combinations. We have chosen therefore to keep 3 types of time frame for projects: 1 year, 3 years and 10 years. Mixed projects are allocated to a category on the basis of the tendency highlighted by the analytical programme.
- [7] The sentences quoted come from the dossier belonging to the category concerned. On reading the first sentence, the reader will be tempted to think that this category is preferentially dealing with values. In reality, this is not what characterises this category: no doubt, all the categories have these values, but it is rather the pedagogical aspect which distinguishes this category from the other categories. In any case, the following two sentences confirm this tendency.
- [8] Read in this connection Lelièvre, G (2004), *L’école obligatoire: pour quoi faire?* Paris, Retz, p. 43. This author refers to the works of Guy Vincent who writes: “In the 19th century two pedagogical “methods”: the “simultaneous method” of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the “mutual method” of the Society for Elementary Instruction (“mutual” referring to mutual teaching). The “simultaneous method” of the Brothers of the Christian Schools appeared to its exponents as the method, in its organisation and pedagogy, of a theocratic view of society... Their most important virtue evidently is obedience (“Obedience is a virtue by which one submits one’s mind, humility, modesty. It means disciplining, disciplining oneself. The teacher works all the time with all the pupils (hence the term “simultaneous method”). Absolute silence must be obtained (in order to be heard), the established signals must be used (to be understood), behaviour must be consistent (in order to be respected), etc.
- [9] F. Cros and F. Vaniscotte: *Initiatives lasalliennes: vers une nouvelle identité ?* Final Report, January 2004.
- [10] F. Cros and F. Vaniscotte, op. cit., p.124.
- [11] F. Cros and F. Vaniscotte, op. cit., p.126.