

QUO VADIS CENTAL EUROPE? ASSESSMENT AND CLARION CALL

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is based on an assessment of the future development to be expected of our province La Salle Central Europe (LAACCE), where it is conceivable that, in due course, Lasallian sites may be operated without associated communities of Brothers. It is my aim to describe the resulting challenges, some of which already exist, for laymen and partners of the Brothers to maintain the Lasallian identity. I would also like to introduce proposals and concepts of how to develop and improve programs and offerings within the existing education platform of our province, which raise awareness for Lasallian traditions and values, as well as for the need to disseminate these among members at the various locations.

Keywords: Lasallian Charisma, Lasallian Tradition, Lasallian Heritage, Formation, Laypeople, Lasallian Mindset, Lasallian Academy; Lasallian Responsibility; Lasallian Identity; Lasallian Future.

*Introduction*¹

“The future of the Institute in Central Europe will have to take account of the [future] situation... we must neither perpetuate the past nor leave changes to chance or disaster.”² This warning by Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC related to the upcoming millennium and was addressed to a “Lasallian family” back in 1990, which already included laymen back then.³ Br. Erhard was making specific reference to the declining number of Brothers since 1945 and called for new ways of thinking that went beyond the framework of old traditions.⁴

¹ *Declaration:* For readability purposes, I only use the male gender in this study, refraining from making any distinction between genders. In cases where it is not evident, I am always referring to both men and women equally.

² Br. Erhard ... “Historical Spotlights – Gathering of ideas according to our districts history” (1990), register N° 3, p. 130; Pub. Archive of the District of Central Europe, Anton-Böck-Gasse 20, 1210 Wien.

³ Circular N° 435, p. 11 and 18; Circular N° 422, p. 13f. : „L’expression ‘Famille Lasallienne’ désigne tous ceux qui paticipent au projet éducatif lasallien, spécialement ceux qui entrent dans une démarche de partage de l’esprit et de la mission de saint John Baptiste-Baptiste de La Salle ...”; further Rapport de la commission, page 11: N°7: „La Mission Partagée“ and page 18: „The Lasallian Family“. Cf. „Botschaft des 41. Generalkapitels an die Lasallianische Familie vom 3. Juli 1986, page 13 resp. Cirkular N° 422 (July 1st 1986, page 13 f. (Proposition N°6) and „Lasallian Family“ refered by Cirkular N° 461 (Associated for the Lasallian Mission ... an act of Hope).

⁴ Circular N° 461, p. 129f.

Coming to Germany in 1850 from Belgium, the Brothers of the Christian Schools expanded their sphere of influence to Austria⁵, particularly Vienna. Both in Germany and Austria, the Brothers faced a situation characterised by the 1848 revolution, in which various educational reforms took hold. In Austria, for instance, the *Thun'sche Schulreform*⁶ set out new rules for both organisation and learning content that still largely applies today. Class teachers were replaced by subject teachers and these were subject to standardised training including a teaching exam. Lessons were conducted in the mother tongue from this time forth. Not only did this mean that one of the core competencies of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was “nationalised”, which initially proved to be obstructive to their activities in primary schools. As a result, they began to take over orphanages in Germany and Vienna. Thanks to their commitment, the Brothers were soon able to settle in other places in Austria, trying to acquire new members of the Institute. By 1934, as much as sixteen sites had been opened, comprising orphanages, schools and teacher seminars.⁷ The congregation was able to establish itself through the entire Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The number of Brothers increased from 100 in 1858 to 470 at 30 different locations in 1914.⁸

In 1910, Austria became its own province, which reflected the rising number of Brothers but also of pupils. The two wars and their political consequences drastically reduced the options for the congregation and the members of the Institute. Although the Institute gradually recovered within the newly drawn boundaries of Austria (the number of pupils rose), there was a continual decline in the number of Brothers. (While there were still 228 Brothers immediately after the end of the war, only 45 were left in Austria in 1993.⁹) Lay workers were allowed (and had to) help the Brothers with the pedagogical work and the management of sites. This marked the beginning of the Lasallian family. The monastic community shrank, which led to specific considerations with regard to combining the provinces of Germany and Austria in 1993.¹⁰ This eventually happened on 16 March 1994, when the new province of Central Europe (with communities in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, based in Vienna) was created. However, this move was unable to solve the problem of finding new members of the Institute. The establishments in Hungary and the Czech Republic were integrated into the Austrian sector for organisational purposes and, in 2006 the Netherlands became part of the province as an individual sector, while Germany was abandoned as a sector. The trend has continued. Today, the province has just 53 Brothers in four sectors with an average age of 67.7 years.¹¹

⁵ Br. Erhard ... “The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria” (1993); „Witnesses of Fate at Schools – Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria” (1983); „John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools”; Br. Matthew J. Plattensteiner, FSC in „Monastic Fathers and Founders of Institutes” (Josef Weismayer, Ed.), 1991 and var. Circulars (1991/2, 1992/1, 1992/2); Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC, Ed.; Archive of the District of Central Europe, Anton Böck-Gasse 20, 1210 Vienna.

⁶ Peter Strachel, „The Austrian Education System from 1749 until 1918”, 2002; p. 8ff.

⁷ Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC; „The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria – This was the 20th Century”; Archive of the District of Central Europe, Anton-Böck-Gasse 20, 1210 Vienna.

⁸ Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC; „The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria” (1993), p. 2.

⁹ Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC; „Historical Spotlights” (1990), p. 129.

¹⁰ Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC; „The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria” (1993), p. 3.

¹¹ Board of directorate 2016 (District of Central Europe, Ed.), p. 18.

Since the 42nd General Chapter in 1993, the Institute has set store by involving an increasing number of laymen and partners in the Brothers' missions. Here they speak of "split missions."¹² We may assume that the Brothers know exactly what they mean by this. The warning issued by Brother Erhard in 1990 and quoted at the beginning can be found under the heading of "Identity." He was mainly appealing to the Brothers to find their way in the new situation. 25 years later, the General Council (also responsible for the province of Central Europe), Br. Aidan Kilty, FSC, addressed the laymen, imploring them to handle the Lasallian heritage preserved up to now by the Brothers with care in his speech entitled "Lasallian Identity in schools without Brothers' communities" during ASSEDIL in Dublin 2015.¹³

Given the fact that the issue of successors appears to be problem extending well beyond provincial bInstitutes, this paper intends to make a contribution by shedding light on a sub-area, namely that of German-speaking communities and schools. To this end, I consider it expedient to present the situation at locations where lay workers are able to evaluate their integration into the Lasallian family using standardised, monolingual questions. Although the former sector of Germany is no longer part of the province for organisational purposes, however, there are still two traditional De La Salle schools being run in Illertissen (although not by the congregation), it must therefore still be considered, not least because leading employees from college and secondary school are indispensable members of the Lasallian education platform LAACCE.¹⁴ The province headquarters established in Strebersdorf, Vienna naturally means that a focus on Austria is unavoidable for systemic reasons. It is not allowed to apply the findings to the other sectors as this research paper lacks a standardised evaluation basis to explain the shrinking number of Institute members and their ageing.¹⁵

If we envision that we will have to do without the personal involvement of Brothers in De La Salle establishments in our regions in the not-too-distant future, the question must be asked as to how ready the lay workers are to continue carrying the torch. The Institute's central office has taken considerable interest in this fact since it has been realised that the decline in Institute successors will ultimately lead to its halt.¹⁶ Since this time, there have been continued appeals from Rome calling on the Brothers to help set up an association, a family and a mission based on the heritage of De La Salle¹⁷. We as laymen can also feel the emphasis on a subsequent obligation. We, the staff members at a De La Salle educational institution, are called upon to go beyond the classic role of teacher and educator. We must be aware of the fact that the school in which we may perform our work is more than an educational institution for children and youths, more than a place where facts are taught and daily routines practised. Upon hearing that, at "our" De La Salle schools, *the focus is on the child*, a Lasallian lay worker should be able to explain what the difference here is to other – primarily state-run – schools, which also make such a

¹² Circular N° 461 with ref. to „Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, 2000“

¹³ KILTY, Br. Aidan FSC; „Lasallian Identity in schools without Brothers' communities“, Powerpoint Presentation at ASSEDIL, Dublin 2015.

¹⁴ cf. Chapter 4.2.1.

¹⁵ Board of directorate 2016 (District of Central Europe, Ed.), p. 13 to 15, 18 (cf. The Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia: no schools located and numbers of Brothers: 8 resp. 5 at rel. young ages).

¹⁶ Statistics from the HR office of the Generalate in Rome; provided October 2015 (q.v. Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC: „Historical Spotlights“, p. 129).

¹⁷ Circular N° 469, November 30th, 2014 „The Documents of the 45. General Chapter – The Work of God is also our Work“, esp. Chap. 2 and 3, pages 15 - 31.

claim. Teachers and educators at De La Salle schools are more than *just* teachers and *just* educators, they are “*Lasallian* teachers and educators” – or at least they should be. They should know, however, what it means to work and have an impact in the Lasallian way. The invitation to occupy oneself with Lasallian traditions¹⁸ presumes that one is familiar with them or is prepared to learn them. The present paper aims to investigate if this is currently the case, whether existing structures and strategies are sufficient or should perhaps be changed and improved, if possible. The aim is to preserve the heritage of the Brothers after they have gone – potentially adjusted to current developments but never distorted. Anything else would condemn a Lasallian institution to archaic standstill and turn the words “De La Salle” at the entrance to the school into a mere name. We, the colleagues, are called upon to take action, “...because now is the time!”¹⁹

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1. The Lasallian attitude

1.1. Definition

Commitment²⁰ to something, a thing, a task or an idea depends on the readiness to take action. It does not really matter, to begin with, what you would like to commit to; the important thing is that you “want to do something” or even, with the proper personal motivation, “have to do something”.

While the word “commitment” represents an obligation, it also includes a reference to intense personal dedication. This dedication, seen as “effort”, is the intentional increase in normal activity to achieve a defined goal.²¹ It is precisely this “additional” readiness to perform over and above what is normal which represents a key aspect of the Lasallian attitude. A general definition of what makes this attitude “Lasallian” is, however, futile because the essence of Lasallian proximity stems from the individual readiness to be part of this Lasallian community. To put it in more exaggerated tones, there are as many definitions of the Lasallian attitude as there are people who consider themselves Lasallian.²² The German-language dictionary Duden states that the shared attachment (to a world view) as a motivation for personal dedication is a precondition out of which a sense of affinity is then achieved.²³

However, this sense of affinity among and between Lasallians is based on generally ascertainable and objective factors. The joint focus of all Lasallians – whether they know they are Lasallian or not – is on the child and the affected community in service for the child. (The obligation to serve the poor needs to be subject to a new assessment of what “poor” means today, particularly in our regions). John Baptiste Baptiste de La Salle was not, however, born with his commitment. Only later on in his life, on his way to higher church office, did he again hear God calling to take

¹⁸ 150 Years of Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria – History of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria from 1857 until 2007“, Anniversary Publication, 22.4.2009 (<http://jubilaum.delasalle.at/geschichte.htm> - inoperative); Archive of the District of Central Europe, Anton-Böck-Gasse 20, 1210 Vienna.

¹⁹ Br. Erhard Tietze, FSC; „Historical Spotlights“ (1990), p. 130.

²⁰ Hans-Jürgen Wirth: „Motives for Social Commitment“, 1995 .

²¹ <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Engagement#Bedeutung1a>: accessed on January 20th 2016; cf. Burow: „Esteeming School Administration - The Way to Commitment, Welfare and Efficiency. How schools become sustainable“.

²² cf. Chapter 3 „Lasallian Tradition“ (3.1. Definition), p. 20.

²³ Duden-online: <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Engagement>; accessed on January 20th 2016.

another direction. Back in the late 17th century, De La Salle had no institutional educational or theoretical “basis” that could have explained this change of direction to him. He was not born a Lasallian. He trod new paths, so to speak²⁴ We have an advantage today. We know the long path he and his followers travelled and can look back on a proud past of the resulting institution. A wealth of experience built up by the Brothers of the Christian Schools (as the teachers under de La Salle soon came to be known), is preserved as the historic heritage of the congregation of the past, which serves as a guide for us, as a basis for scientific studies and to adapt to current trends – at any rate, this is what it should do! We, that is everyone following the example of De la Salle who wants to help shape this community. We that is people who feel committed to the tradition of De la Salle and try to continue his work in the manner he believed in and yet as an answer to the challenges of our time. We ...that is no longer just the Brothers of the Christian Schools. “We” are a cross-section of committed staff members dedicated to a shared task rooted in the work of John Baptiste Baptiste de La Salle that continues to be based thereon today. We are the support, the complement and – in a way – the successors of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. We are the Lay workers, we are ...partners. In the not-too-distant future, we will be the “company” of De La Salle schools. And this does not necessarily mean an improvement in quality. The focus on the entrepreneurial component does contain hidden dangers, as we will see later. In any case, the essence of a school shall become the ability to measure its economic return. A resulting added value for pupils will be, in the best case, be gladly accepted as a bonus but shall not itself be a target of the company – because it cannot be quantified in numbers.

Many references, particularly from knowledge management literature, highlight the considerable effect the general mood of the company has on the readiness of individuals to handle “knowledge” in terms of knowledge of the company’s targets. These exogenous constructs focus on issues such as corporate culture, sense of crisis, “us” feelings, error culture, and they represent the beginning of the chain of effects in this model.²⁵ The first task is to determine and assess this mood.

1.2. Differentiating the protagonists

1.2.1. Brothers – Laymen

When we speak of Brothers, many people (in connection with this topic) immediately think of members of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and also limit this definition to them. The Brothers themselves now have a much broader understanding of the term “Brothers”. Today, we increasingly understand “Brothers” as “family”, i.e. everyone who feels called to the work and the mission of de La Salle.²⁶ This feeling of belonging, which itself can still be very vague, generally suffices to be considered Lasallian. The desire for shared work on behalf of de La Salle is already considered Lasallian. As friendly this definition may be intended and as flattering it is for many staff members, it is far too broad when considered using objective criteria.

²⁴ cf. Luke Salm, „The Work is Yours – The life of Saint John Baptiste de La Salle“, p. 97 ff., 150 f.

²⁵ H.P. Liebmann, J. Kraigher-Kraimer: „The Coherence of Cognitions, emotions and dispositions for knowledge management“, p. 24 (available: osiv.telesis.eu/download/54).

²⁶ cf. Chapter: „Introduction“

It is right, of course, that not every Lasallian has to be a member of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to be considered Lasallian (and conversely some critic's claims that not every "Brother" is necessarily Lasallian just because they belong to the Institute). It is therefore clear that there needs to be certain factors that make it possible to determine what may be considered Lasallian and what not. Obviously, Brothers will have to comply with a larger number of such criteria than laymen, i.e. non-Brothers. The motive for cementing one's membership by means of a vow generally represents a sufficiently defined attitude and proximity. However, such an assignment says very little about the work that can be seen by others. The decision to join the Alpine association because you would like to climb a mountain one day does not mean that you have conquered the mountain. The comparison is misleading and not meant disrespectfully. However, it shows that motivation alone, even if it results in fundamental decisions, does not always mean reaching the target. 86

Obedience and Institute robes are therefore not sufficiently sure indicators for a Lasallian attitude even though we must acknowledge that the degree of Lasallian proximity among Brothers is consequently greater.

In case of laymen in the service of the Lasallian mission, we have to scrutinise more carefully the motives and reasons behind this involvement and how these are manifested in a certain type of behaviour. The issue is less pertinent when it comes to pedagogical activities than it is for "system-relevant" work that cannot be any less Lasallian. It goes without saying that traditional pedagogical activities are based on the historical roots of teaching, instructing. Can teachers at De La Salle schools therefore automatically be considered Lasallian? – Certainly not! I am going to demonstrate later how I arrive at this negation.

In as much as Brothers are or were active as teachers, we may, however, assume that the motivation, conviction and design of lessons are characterised by Lasallian values. In any case, it is not our position to question their motives. However, in their Lasallian zeal, Brothers, too, reach the limits of what is possible in daily lessons, as we will subsequently.

At this juncture, I would like to make a distinction that is not always considered in the debate on Lasallian identity and which has its origins in today's private school.

[Confesional] private schools²⁷:

- They are schools that are set up and maintained by people other than the statutory (state) school providers. (Art. 2 paragraph 2)
- They should re-establish Christian values in the education system.²⁸
- It is necessary to provide the same number of teaching positions as is the case in comparable state schools (Art. 18 paragraph 1), the costs of which are to be covered by the state (Art. 19 paragraph 2)²⁹

²⁷ education act considering private schools (PSG) from July 25th 1962 (idF 11.4.2016); StF: BGBl. Nr. 244/1962, ... BGBl I Nr. 48/2014.

²⁸ Law for the regulations of the legal relationships between the Church and School Administration of 1868 (so-called „Maigesetze“) - [*Gesetze zur Regelung der Rechtsverhältnisse der katholischen Kirche vom 25. Mai 1868, XIX Stück, Gesetz Nr. 48.*]

Legally speaking, the relationship to private school providers is one of “contract work”. In this context, teachers at private schools are employees appointed or contracted after completing a statutory teaching qualification course. They must fulfill the duties of the ...school. The state remains the employer of private school teachers.³⁰

1.2.2. Teachers and educators

De la Salle himself did not make a distinction between teachers and educators, and neither did the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Generally speaking, teachers were automatically educators, and vice versa. And “Education” did not just take place in the classroom, but also³¹ comprised every aspect of life of the pupils. The aim was to convey values achieved through recognition, knowledge and practice. Subject teaching was usually coupled with practical exercises and this normally turned into a type of vocational training. At many locations, the system resembled today’s combination of whole-day schools and vocational schools. In addition, Christian schools also regularly held (sometimes every day) church services and mass that were accompanied by preparatory catechism. The function of the teacher from the ancient times until the Middle Age was more comprehensive than what it is today, even if only pupils from wealthy homes were able to benefit there from.³² Monastery schools later took over the role of providing education in accordance with ancient traditions.³³

When the trend towards secularisation began as a consequence of the Enlightenment, subject-based education was increasingly separated from character and personality education. “Ideologisation” took hold.³⁴ The aim of education was no longer to arrive at moral values that were justified by ancient philosophy and religion of the Middle Age. Education was increasingly used to disseminate knowledge and started to specialise in a rising number of subjects. It was often the case that more than one teacher was responsible for this dissemination of knowledge, with different specialists teaching their respective subjects. This meant that the teachers increasingly believed that they were no longer solely responsible for the education of the children. Personalities as a source of education were therefore pushed further into the background, with the institution of the “school” using a historical personality as its name in the best case. The function of education was soon neglected in favour of imparting knowledge.³⁵ People became graduates of a specific school, such as Vienna’s Albertus-Magnus-Gymnasium or the Lessing Schule, Augustinerschule or Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Gymnasium in Germany.

²⁹ cf. Helmut Engelbrecht, „Private school – relic or future model?“, 2000 and Peter Dinzelbacher Peter, Cultural-History of the Christian Institutes“, 1997.

³⁰ Educational Law (SchUG) from March 1st 1997 (idF 18.4.2016); StF: BGBl. I Nr. 33/1997, ... BGBl. I Nr. 97/2015.

³¹ „School has to contribute to the development of the Youth in accordance of common values (moral, religious, social, truthful, nice and true), it has to provide knowledge and abilities for helping the young people to persist with the economical and cultural conditions of life (§ 2 Law of the school’s organisation [SchOG], from July 25th1962).; StF: BGBl. Nr. 242/1962 (idF 18.4.2016).

³² W. Klafki; „Aspects of crucial-constructive education“ (in „History of Pedagogy“, Fees), p. 53 f.

³³ K. Fees; „History of Pedagogy“, esp. Chapter 7.2. (The Monastic School).

³⁴ Klafki, p. 55.

³⁵ *ibid*, p. 144 ff.

Of course this is an abridged depiction and completely ignores “state schools”, which have existed in different forms since ancient times. However, the digression should help to highlight the development according to which the function of the teacher and the educator gradually separated. As already mentioned, De La Salle did not make a distinction between both terms, and even today the term “pedagogue” is used synonymously for teacher and educator. This is often the case especially in Lasallian settings. As long as Brothers were or became Brothers who taught, this “mix-up” is justified. However, there is an increasingly noticeable difference in modern-day schools, particularly at De La Salle schools, where there are no Brothers teaching any more. 88

This makes it necessary to subsequently distinguish between teachers and educators in terms of their functions, in Institute to be able to describe the limitations and, above all, the possibilities faced by Lasallian education and development. It should also be mentioned that teachers at private schools are not automatically private teachers or private employees.

Teachers at Austrian De La Salle schools are allocated as so-called “living subsidies”³⁶ by the federal state or the respective *land*. The personnel costs are covered by the federal state or the *land* (The allocation or transfer of costs do not equally apply to all private schools, and is primarily linked to public-law status.³⁷ As per the subject of this research paper, reference below is only made to denominational Catholic private schools and to De La Salle schools with public-law status in particular).

This means that, for organisational purposes, teachers at private schools are also “public” teachers *de jure*. It is not possible here to go into greater detail as regards problems arising from the two-pronged approach regarding the position of employer and superior. Conflicts may arise here between service and labour laws out of the special position of teachers who are assigned to the federal state or *land* in organisational terms, but to the school provider in functional terms. Functional assignment is based on the content of their activity and any hierarchy of command having an influence over this. The requirements for being allowed to teach at private Austrian schools with public-law status are governed by law and equal to those applying to public teachers. It must be sufficient for our purposes here that teachers in Central European Private Schools have two “masters”, the “master of the house” and the “financial donor”. Consequently, there is also a difference in the requirements regarding official duties.

Confessional private schools have a natural interest in ensuring that the philosophical attitude of their respective confessions makes up a core element of the lessons at their schools. If these have public-law status, this wish conflicts with an interest of the (secular) public – i.e. the state – according to which allegedly ideologically free “state” schools (primarily financed by the state using taxes) should primarily impart knowledge and not pursue any kind of indoctrination. It is clear that the bInstitutes are not always clearly defined here. School legislation characterised by party politics and ideological thinking defines the “public Institute of values” in educational issues just as much as the worldview held by religions. Sometimes there is at least agreement in

³⁶ § 19 Abs. 1 PSG.

³⁷ In granting the public status school certifications achieve the same validity like certifications of public schools have. (cf. § 13 PSG).

the terminology used when people use the terms “moral”³⁸ or “pedagogical fundamentals”.³⁹ What the state and the church mean by that is not always the same. In the case of De La Salle schools, it is much easier with regard to pedagogical principles. These are known to be based on the Christian life philosophy of De La Salle on the one hand, and the experiences and knowledge of the young community of Brothers on the other. 89

Teachers today do not have the same amount of scope to define the need for pedagogical influence themselves and to develop suitable methods as they did in the time of De La Salle. Both content and means, as well as purpose and method, are defined by law today. Confessional private schools are unable to change this if their teachers are under the organisational responsibility of the state. The “legal mandate” conferred as part of the “general educational goal” from the 2012 curriculum regulation for the New Secondary School (*Neue Mittelschule*) does not appear to have changed anything in this respect:

It is the task of the New Secondary School to enable pupils to enter upper secondary schools or colleges and to prepare them for occupational life in line with their interests, inclinations, talents and skills.

The New Secondary School must ... have an influence on the education of the young people, i.e. in the acquisition of knowledge, development of competencies and conferring of values. Particular emphasis is to be placed on encouraging pupils to think independently and conduct critical reflection. The pupils must be given support in their development process so as to achieve a socially oriented and positive outlook on life.⁴⁰

Even the liberties granted to teachers by way of precaution in the sections entitled “General didactic principles” and “Syllabus” merely constitutes intentions and undefined targets. Even assuming that a private confessional school provider – in this case the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools – makes clear statements regarding what is to be understood under Lasallian pedagogy and Lasallian values, and how they intend to implement these values, teachers would still have very little room for manoeuvre in practice. The reason for this lies not so much in the legal straitjacket regarding content, but rather in the organisational set-up. Teachers simply do not have the time. Even if we assume only good intentions, the greatest possible level of understanding and a high degree of identification, teachers generally have no more than 50 minutes (i.e. one teaching unit) a day to teach a class with an average of 20 to 25 pupils.

The dilemma is plain to see. If there is no space in the timetable to confer Lasallian fundamentals and values, confessional philosophies will not be addressed outside of religious education. Religious education is largely removed from the influence of state authorities in respect of its objectives and how the syllabus is designed – said authorities, however, have the legally stipulated right to monitor the goings-on from an organisational and disciplinary point of view.⁴¹

³⁸ cf. § 4 PSchG.

³⁹ cf. § 6 PSchG.

⁴⁰ Decree of the Federal Ministry of Education, regulating the curricula for secondary schools and the religious education (StF: BGBl. II Nr. 185/2012; BGBl. II Nr. 174/2015).

⁴¹ Federal Law from July 13th 1949 concerning the religious education at schools (Religionsunterrichtsgesetz), § 2; StF: BGBl. Nr. 190/1949 (RUG).

(And let us not forget that there is an ongoing debate to replace religious education at schools by vaguely defined “ethics education”).⁴²

Educators differ from the teachers “restricted” by legal constraints in as much as the former are private employees of the school provider and not employees salaried by the state. In terms of employment, they are only subject to the provisions of the school and not of the state. This has consequences, starting with the appointment, in which the employer has complete freedom to combine job specifications with personality requirements without being limited in their choice of personnel by minimum standards usually set out in legal provisions (Private employment relationships are only bound by general bans on discrimination).

The defined job description is then specified through instructions. And this is the key thing: when it comes to content, the school provider has no (or only very restricted) influence over the activities of the teachers. Educators, on the other hand, are entirely at the disposition of the employer in terms of their duties.

This means that only educators can be obliged to implement Lasallian-based content, projects and events at De La Salle schools. In this context, it does sound a little strange to speak of obligations under labour law for a Lasallian school community. However, attention must be drawn to the fact that there have been “strike-like” boycotts by the teachers for various De La Salle events at our school, the reason for which being “unjustified” and subsequently “non-Lasallian” influence on the personnel structure of the school. Nevertheless, despite faculty constraints, there is a majority of teachers who can certainly be called “Lasallian”.

Conversely, not all educators are automatically Lasallian due to the fact that they choose to work at a De La Salle school. Lasallian attachment is all-too often understood as the rash use of the term “Lasallian” in-group dynamics. People normally find it difficult to relate to the underlying meaning of this term.

Nevertheless, both teachers and educators are united by a thoroughly Lasallian element, i.e. the requirement to provide *quality teaching* or *education*. We have already been familiarised with the legal constraints surrounding teachers in respect of this requirement. In contrast, there are more possibilities for educators to influence the content and design of their work.

1.2.3. Job description of educators

“Learning supervision” and “leisure activities” are the first two keywords used to explain the tasks of educators. On closer inspection, the two terms turn out to be too narrowly defined and are also in need of explanation. As part of supervision by the educator and as an addition to the lessons, the teacher rightly expects the educator to “check” the tasks given by the teacher to the pupils, such as homework, preparatory work for lessons or targeted learning and “quizzing” with regard to tests and exams. This is also what the educator strives to achieve if he takes his job seriously, making him therefore the first point of contact for teachers and parents alike in school matters.

⁴² cf. Peter Mayer resp. Lisa Nimmervoll „Der Standard“ December 12 2014 res. February 18th 2015; Parvin Sardigh in „Zeit Online“ April 16th 2014; and many more.

These are two of the functions that generally characterise an educator. He is like an “organisation coach” for the pupils and, at the same time, a “mediator” between teachers, pupils and parents. This means he has the possibility to have a lasting impact on the development of children and young people. Experience has shown that pupils in a group (and depending on age and development) often demonstrate unstructured patterns of behaviour and have little interest in Institutely impulses. Educators are normally better informed than teachers about personal circumstances in conversations with parents, which is a consequence of the possibility to deal more intensively with things that currently affect the development of the pupil. This is also exactly the challenge for the educator, although Lasallian educators are not bound to strict pedagogical requirements. Being Lasallian offers a wide range of possibilities to “participate” without facing too much of a risk of influence and manipulation. The educator thus becomes a person of trust at school, an interface between obligations and freedom, the first point of call for (not only school-related) concerns and needs, but also for sharing joy and success.

Providing support to young people, taking into account their age-specific and development-related patterns of behaviour is becoming the most important duty of Lasallian-based pedagogy. This does not mean that a specific programme and individual measures have been ultimately defined and thus that implementation continues to remain dependent on the personal approach of the respective educator, but the framework of what is possible has been sufficiently defined. “Support”, however, requires available time to be spent with the young people. Knowledge is also required in terms of what specifically counts as Lasallian.

This knowledge should be equally available to the entire staff, and not differ in terms of concepts or content. However, mere access to this knowledge and the availability of sources are not enough. They must also be properly disseminated. I shall come back to the importance of education platforms later on. Suffice it to say here that knowledge of Lasallian values, their origins and, above all, the range of suitable application methods are keys to ensuring the quality of a Lasallian school. Only when staff members identify with the resulting Lasallian charism does a school become a Lasallian school.

However, the degree of this identification is also partly determined by the possibilities that support the implementation of one's own beliefs in everyday working life. Only together with a fundamental knowledge of the work of De La Salle, its importance and effect, as well as its impact on today's education systems can a view of the essence of a Lasallian educational institution be revealed. Basically, however, a Lasallian character only appears in the interaction with the pupils and youths. De La Salle schools must measure their quality in terms of the effect of their staff for these schools to be able to call themselves “Lasallian”. How such an approach can be ensured in an environment in which ever fewer Brothers are available to provide direction on what is to be considered “Lasallian” is to be examined below.

1.3. Attempt to classify the “Lasallian attitude”

In his work⁴³ as part of SIEL 2012/13, Mag. Kurt Langthaler (aFSC) describes the attempt to identify and measure a Lasallian attitude (in terms of “habitus” according to Brother Paulo Dullius⁴⁴) among staff members at Lasallian educational institutions. Langthaler identifies three core elements of a Lasallian attitude: faith, zeal (or passion) for the mission and Brotherly (or sisterly) communion.⁴⁵ This typology is, however, neither complete nor exhaustive. As regards the “communion”, Langthaler provides as an example the usual practice in the community as “identity-building” according to George Caspar Homans’ “Theory of social groups”.⁴⁶ Others, such as Brother Claude Reinhardt, highlight the importance of the Group as a forum to discover and deepen your *own* calling⁴⁷.

Regardless of the source we draw on, the criteria for Lasallian behaviour or a Lasallian attitude primarily relate to a person’s own inner beliefs. This means that the definition of “Lasallian” runs the risk of having its roots in these personal beliefs and thus becoming equally diverse, undefined and random.

Unfortunately we have no original, “authentic” definition available because De La Salle himself did obviously not use his name as a seal of quality (such as “Lasallian”). Only when reflecting on the exemplary life of De La Salle did this become commonplace, referring since then to the characteristics of people or even institutions that describe the original features of De La Salle himself. It is therefore clear that the men who created today’s Institution of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as a successor to the first brotherly communities, automatically somehow attached the attribute “Lasallian”. A degree of identification with the ideas and (content-based) values bequeathed by De La Salle that is greater than that of the Brothers who came together as a congregation for precisely this purpose, is barely conceivable. The respective personal motives for joining the Institute life of the Brothers are not to be questioned in the course of this study. However, they may be used as a benchmark for Lasallian convictions if we want to examine what the attitude should be of staff members, who are not Brothers, to participate in the Lasallian mission.

For this reason, this research paper also makes a distinction between Brothers and Laymen (non-Brothers) when it comes to the “Lasallian attitude.” In the case of laymen, different parameters are needed to access the respective “proximity” to the Lasallian philosophy. The consideration of how to find out about and thereby measure, the personal attitude among lay workers led to me choosing three criteria which I believe I can use to make an evaluation.

⁴³ Kurt Langthaler; „Lay People and their ‘Lasallian Attitude’ – An Attempt to develop simple measuring instruments“; Digital Journal of Lasallian Research (7) 2013: 162-172.

⁴⁴ Dullius, Paulo, SIEL 2012-2013 DL 02 – en, The body in the pedagogy of St. John Baptist De La Salle: A Christian Habitus, Seite 2 ff.

⁴⁵ „Lay People and their ‘Lasallian Attitude’“, S. 164.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 165 (with references to Homans, G.C.; „Theory of the Social Group“, 1972.), Opladen 1972.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* p. 165.

1.3.1. Determining a Lasallian attitude

As I already explained in the introduction, my surveys and subsequent investigation focus on the spheres of action of Lasallian schools in Austria and Vienna. This should in no way minimise the significance of other institutions in the province of Central Europe. The tendency towards a shrinking number of Brothers in the province gives rise to the need to take proper stock of this development. I have therefore collected data from the two remaining De La Salle schools in Illertissen (Germany) too, and included the findings in my observations so as to be able to potentially explain any differences by the fact that there are no more Brothers alive in Germany and the formerly important, independent province (and then sector) of Germany is no longer an organisational part of the province of Central Europe. The *Österreichisch-Ungarische Europaschule Budapest* based in Hungary is also considered in the survey and analysis.

The data acquired from 220 staff members at six sites are intended to provide an insight into the extent to which the staff of De La Salle schools feels obliged and connected to the content requirements of their places of work. In other words, it should be determined how “close” teachers and educators are to the Lasallian charism.

For reasons already set out above, the description of the situation is limited to lay workers and does not include the situation of the Brothers. I chose the format of a questionnaire to capture the data I will explain in the following chapter as this made it easier to collect, compare and present the data.

Without wanting to define a specific Institute, I am convinced that what is required is knowledge about the origins of Lasallian work and its content as well as an emotional affinity to the values and, ultimately, behaviour that be identified as such. I believe that emotional proximity is based on knowing what you feel close to. Only knowledge about the facts can generate clear affinity. Otherwise emotions (positive and negative attitudes to social phenomena) would just be “moods.”⁴⁸

In Institute to determine *habitus lasallianus*, we therefore must first find out whether the people surveyed believe that they know enough about John Baptiste Baptiste de La Salle himself and his work, and about the history of his institution. At the same time, the degree of emotional affinity to Lasallian content and values should be made visible, and the results used to investigate associated *Lasallian behaviour* or the willingness to pursue such behaviour. It seems to me to be of key importance to know the degree of *Lasallian affinity* or *Lasallian proximity* so as to be able to develop strategies and programmes that are suitable to disseminate Lasallian charism in terms of a *corporate identity* within a community of educators and teachers, without forgetting the roots that define such a community as *Lasallian* at all.

If a province, sector or an individual establishment makes it its task to keep alive the Lasallian traditions conserved in the Brotherly communities for De La Salle schools even after the disappearance of the Brothers, corresponding measures must be taken to be able to confer these traditions. Only once that has been ensured may it be irrelevant whether the owner or operator of a De La Salle school is the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools or not. According to

⁴⁸ Boris Wyssusek (Pub.); „Complex Knowledge Management“, Berlin 2004, ISBN 3-503-07822-3.

chapter 5 of the 45th General Chapter “Formation and accompaniment to be disciples and apostles”, such a task is supported by deciding that it is the duty of every province to ensure the existence of “training programmes” that enable (lay) workers (as well as Brothers) to be effectively prepared and supported in their respective tasks within the Lasallian mission.⁴⁹ I hold the view that this “duty” also extends to locations that – due to lack of Brotherly communities – are not (or no longer) part of a province or run the risk of leaving the organisational association of the institution. For if the content-based requirements of the Lasallian mission are transported by the essence of a shared attitude (or approach), it needs do not make a difference whether the schools are run by the Institute or not. If a material influence (originating from the Lasallian surroundings) is ensured on the philosophical approach of the work performed in this school, it is even conceivable that schools are founded and managed completely independently of a Brotherly community – and still be Lasallian. An educational platform set up at one school or for several schools should connect to the General Council in the Generalate (Rome) and provide coordination in terms of operational measures.

However, it remains the case in our Regions that schools founded and run by Brothers are gradually losing the presence of Brothers. In places where Brothers are still living, they soon will stop teaching due to their old age nor will they take part in daily school life in other ways any longer. The Brothers are absolutely crucial as a guarantee of a living Lasallian conscience in the places where they are (still) living. Just with their presence and the knowledge of their presence are they able to have a positive impact on the attitude to the shared mission. We shall see further down just how much this can be the case. Nevertheless, the mere presence of Brothers is not a clear criterion by which to determine or even measure the personal emotional proximity or attitude to this Lasallian mission. After all, all you have to do is look at the example of Germany to see that Lasallian principles are (to a greater or lesser extent) applied at “Brotherless” schools.⁵⁰

1.3.2. Significance of determining a “Lasallian attitude”

In Institute to be able to seriously forge ahead with Lasallian identity-building, it is first necessary to determine if there is even fertile ground for this. After all, not everything that is called *Lasallian* is based on de La Salle. Do planned and organised Lasallian programmes offered effectively reach the target groups? What should the content of a Lasallian programme be? In which form can you offer it to staff members? And, above all, how can you explain to staff members the need for fundamental Lasallian education?

First of all, it is absolutely clear that the desire for De La Salle schools to be identified with Lasallian ideas and values is huge among the Institute as well. In places where Brothers influence this due to their presence and integration in school processes, it is easier to fulfil this wish than in places without a community of Brothers. However, it is precisely in places where this possibility of direct influence does not exist (any more) that it is absolutely essential to make it clear to all staff members what it means to be a teacher or an educator at a De La Salle school.

⁴⁹ Circular N° 469, November 30th, 2014 „The Documents of the 45. General Chapter – The Work of God is also our Work“; General Council, Via Aurelia, Rome – Italy, Proposition 28, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Bertele, Stephanie: „Marchtaler Plan“ (SIEL 2012-2013); Digital Journal of Lasallian Research (7) 2013: 118-139.

(Of course the objective to build a Lasallian conscience also extends to all other staff members. However, in the case of the pedagogical staff, the child is the focus of their activities, which is why only the former will be considered in further observations).

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But why should it be determined if and how much employees are characterised by Lasallian ideas and values in their attitude to their professional work? The current debate surrounding educational reform, there has been a tendency to standardisation for a number of years (if not decades). Different types of school should ultimately lead to the same or similar entitlements. People are increasingly speaking of “comprehensive schools.” PISA studies swear by the international comparability of competencies that, however, on closer inspection do not provide any indication of the educational standard that these tests purport to give.⁵¹ In society’s debate on education and the need for its reform, it may be easier for private schools to establish themselves as effective alternatives to “competence-oriented” methods in favour of “educationally relevant” weighting in addition to state schools that focus on standardisation.⁵² Lessons imbued with a specific ideology and philosophy⁵³ are aimed at the pupil as the centre of efforts, particularly at De La Salle schools. In this context, it is certainly permitted – without calling into question the work of state schools – to claim that teachers and educators at private schools have greater scope for school-internal further training measures.

2. The method

In my view, developing and analysing a questionnaire seemed expedient as a method to seriously assess the willingness of staff members to engage with Lasallian issues. Based on a representative survey, the entirety of a community of interests can be objectively presented and the statements contained therein assessed. I believed it worthwhile to question staff members of one linguistic group, which is why I obviously limited the survey to locations in Austria (four schools in Vienna), Germany (two schools in Illertissen) and Hungary (*Europaschule* in Budapest). Including the sectors of Slovakia, Romania and the Netherlands (where no more schools are being run) was not a consideration due to the “blurriness” caused by translation and, on the other, because the influence of the Brothers in Slovakia and Romania is still very tangible due to the age structures.⁵⁴

2.1. The questionnaire

In the course of his survey, Kurt Langthaler developed “valid” questions that searched for a “Lasallian attitude.” In addition, he explained the need to try and describe certain expectation and patterns of behaviour as “Lasallian”.⁵⁵ I chose 30 questions from his results, dividing these into three parts according to the issues of *knowledge – emotional proximity – behaviour* and used

⁵¹ Konrad Paul Lissmann, “Witching Hour – Realization of Illiteracy”; p. 12 f., 45 f., 133 ff. and Jochen Krautz “The Commodity „Education“, p. 78 f., 155 ff.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Education in the broadest sense includes the teaching the own schools philosophy. cf. Ulrich ...“Kants Idea of Providence in the Light of the German School-Philosophy and –theology“ (1976), Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden – Boston, 2007; ISBN13: 978-90-04-15607-4.

⁵⁴ <http://orden.dls21.at/uploads/3/1/0/5/31050373/diagrammbr%C3%BCderalter.pdf>, introduction p. 2.

⁵⁵ Kurt Langthaler: Appendix zu „Lay People and their ‘Lasallian Attitude’ – An Attempt to develop simple measuring instruments“; table 12, Digital Journal of Lasallian Research (7) 2013: 162-172.

these to put together my own questionnaire that I sent to the staff of the aforementioned sites to be completed.⁵⁶ At the same time, I compiled a second questionnaire aimed at the principals and department heads of individual schools, also comprising thirty, albeit slightly different, questions.⁵⁷ When assessing the question on which basis of knowledge and, where applicable, how Lasallian further training programmes could be best implemented at schools, it was important to be able to distinguish between those who can enable and promote participation from an organisational point of view (principals and department heads) and the remaining staff. This is why I did not strictly divide the questions into the areas of *knowledge – emotional proximity – behaviour* when preparing the questionnaire for principals, but rather assumed that senior individuals had a greater affinity to the school's philosophy. The weighting of *emotional proximity* and *behaviour* is therefore greater than for *knowledge of the fundamentals* with 12 : 11 : 7. Similarly, the control questions that read the same (question 8 and 28 for employees, and 9 and 15 for principals and department heads) take account of this weighting. The identical formulation of the control questions are supposed to make it possible to find out whether the questionnaire had been casually completed, which is then considered in the analysis of the questionnaire. I would like to express my appreciation for the active participation of all staff members, principals and department heads, which was very high.

I received 220 responses from staff members (corresponding to around 46% of the total number of teachers and educators). With a total of 80 employee questionnaires, the largest site in Strebersdorf, Vienna, returned nearly half as many as all other sites combined (140). All 20 principals and department heads took part in the questionnaire. (I deliberately did not stipulate a guideline for deciding who is a department head so as to give school principals the greatest possible scope to decide for themselves who on their staff has influence over whether members take part in education programmes and also to enable the highest possible degree of anonymity). Finally, it will also remain the responsibility of the principals to accept offers regarding Lasallian further education and to implement these in daily school life. The possibility to take part in events to disseminate Lasallian content must of course remain voluntary so as to be able to ensure the highest degree of identification with this content, which is the self-defined goal.

2.2. Findings

Let us first consider the analysis of the staff questionnaire. In the section that was intended to be a personal evaluation of the staff members' own knowledge of the facts, I tried to use questions 1, 4, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 21, 22 and 25 to define an indicator that should depict the connections between the organisational goals, the relevant processes and the intellectual capital, just like an "Intellectual Capital Report"⁵⁸. As a baseline for further training strategies, it seemed necessary to me to be able to estimate the need, demand and availability, irrespective of the content requirements for specific further training measures.

Do I know about the life of John Baptiste de La Salle? Do I know the name of the Superior General, the Visitor or do I know about the basic structures of the Congregation? Do I know

⁵⁶ See appendix (questionnaire – staff).

⁵⁷ See appendix (questionnaire – heads).

⁵⁸ Melanie Rüttenbude, „Formen der Wissensbewertung: Die Wissensbilanz“(Studienarbeit) [*Shapes of evaluation of knowledge: Balance of Knowledge. (Seminarpaper)*], Grin Verlag GmbH 2013, ISBN 10: 3656393664.

about the current further training possibilities or LAACCE? These and other questions were intended to give an impression as to the extent to which the working environment of the respondents is perceived by them to be fed by Lasallian roots or, put another way, if there is the impression that the respective school is an active part of the Lasallian mission. 97

Questions 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16, 20, 23, 26 and 28 were aimed to measure the emotional affinity to these Lasallian roots. Do I feel Lasallian? Is the community with the Brothers important to me? Or: Is a Lasallian attitude important for my work? These and other questions try to highlight the readiness to make a personal commitment through which the respondents feel part of a certain community of values, although is of secondary importance if he knows the exact content or terms used to define this community.

Do staff members at a Lasallian educational institution act in accordance with its principles? It is of course not absolutely necessary to know all “Lasallian” principles so as to do justice to them. On the other hand, it cannot be expected for teachers and educators to act in accordance with Lasallian principles just because they are aware of the situation that they are working at a De La Salle school. The statements to questions 2, 6, 9, 14, 17, 19, 24, 27, 29 and 30 are therefore aimed at assessing the respondents’ own behaviour, on the one hand in consideration of the fact that Lasallian is explicitly required and, on the other, if the respondent’s own behaviour is determined to (potentially) be Lasallian. Statements such as *I talk to my pupils about de La Salle; I talk to my pupils about God; I ensure contact with the Brothers* and *I have already read a biography about John Baptiste de La Salle* enable the respondents to assess their own conduct from the perspective of a self-defined “Lasallian attitude.”

2.3. A preliminary classification⁵⁹

2.3.1. Staff members

If you now compare individual connections in consideration of the three above-mentioned aspects (knowledge – emotion – behaviour), interesting results are produced when combining questions and statements.

It can be determined, for instance, that 92% of the respondents state that they know about the life of John Baptiste de La Salle, but only half (44%) have read his biography. Of course, knowledge about a historical person cannot be procured from biographies alone, but 43% admit that they do not any works of De La Salle himself either. Nevertheless, more than three quarters (79%) claim to work in accordance with the principles of John Baptiste de La Salle and as many as 87% (!) claim to know the focal areas of Lasallian teaching. In the control question⁶⁰, 69% and 70% of the respondents believed that having a Lasallian attitude is important to their work.

88% (1) considered themselves part of a Christian-based values community; almost half of the respondents (48%) felt they are Lasallian, whereas 27% definitely or tendentially do not.

⁵⁹ See appendix.

⁶⁰ A question which reveals the seriosity of answering properly to a questionnaire. It clarifies evasive or willful false informations. Comparing questions of control with all the others systematic errors of the data can be realized. Wrong conclusions are to be prevented by that way.

However, only 37% talk about Lasallian topics outside the school, with around half (49%) not seeing any need for this. 69% talk to their pupils about God and at least 54% also about De La Salle. 49% are of the opinion that the Institute's motto "Together and through unity" is not just important for Brothers. One third (32%) know the name of the current Superior General, and more than half (54%) that of our Provincial Superior, which a majority of the respondents (68%) can attribute to the general knowledge of the Institute's structures.

69% do not maintain contact with the Brothers, 60% of which stating the reason for this being the lack of Brothers living or working at their school. However, at the same time, 44% express the wish to get know Brothers and 82% already personally know Brothers. Community with the Brothers is important to 35%, with 38% seeing no need for this.

An average of 40% takes the opportunity to find out more about De La Salle and his Institute. Correspondingly, 42% have already taken part in further training measures held by LAACCE⁶¹, the offerings of which are, after all, known by 56% of staff members. 20% more (i.e. 76%) know where they can find out more about Lasallian subjects. However, "only" 39% use the Internet or the De La Salle website to this end. Nearly just as many people (38%) would also attend LAACCE events in their leisure time, while an impressive 60% express an interest in wanting to visit areas where John Baptiste de La Salle was active off the beaten tourist track as part of a journey to France.

56% of the respondents are of the opinion that Brothers should live or teach at Lasallian schools, while just as many (56%) want a Lasallian school to be run by the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as the school provider.

Generally speaking, a personal relation to a Lasallian identity is largely assumed and supposed here by virtue of working in a Lasallian institution bearing that name. Only a handful of respondents are able to explain what is meant by this *Lasallian* identity. If, for instance, almost all (87%) respondents' state that they feel part of a Christian-based values community, while only 49% feel Lasallian, this is primarily due to the lack of knowledge of the connections and the associated fundamentals. [It does not make any difference here if the are Brother Communities at the schools of the respondents or not]. If LAACCE sees itself as a platform to disseminate fundamentals and connections, it must make more of an effort to raise awareness of its offerings. Around one third of employees state that they do not know what LAACCE is. (Budapest, which traditionally does not have the chance to take part in events due to its specific structures, is not considered in this question, with 72% not knowing about LAACCE.) However, basically, the interest of respondents in "Lasallian" further training appears to be rather large at around 45%, while a similar percentage (46%) states that, on the whole, they have a sufficient level of Lasallian knowledge.⁶²

There is little than can be said about a difference according to gender, whereas the length of service plays a major role in the understanding and acceptance of Lasallian issues.

⁶¹ See Chapter 4.2.1. "LAACCE" , p. 27 f.

⁶² These perceptions are the result of evaluating a combination of the questions 17, 23, 30, 10 on the one hand and 4, 13, 21, 22, 24 and 29 on the other, where motivations can be assessed as well as knowledge.

2.3.2. Principals and department heads

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As already stated, the questionnaires sent to principals and department heads saw a change in the weighing of the three subjects *knowledge – emotion – behaviour* in favour of emotion and behaviour with a ratio of 7 : 12 : 11. This is due to the higher level of affinity to knowing about Lasallian facts that I expect from this group due to their organisational involvement in implementing Institute-relevant content in daily school life.

In this context, it is important that two thirds of the respondents (65%) do not (or no longer) have any Brothers at the school and thus must themselves actively establish a connection to Lasallian values and, as it has shown, want to do so. After all, 89% believe that the contribution of their school to the Lasallian mission is important and 70% believe that the Lasallian identity of their school would be greater with the presence of Brothers. 80% even call for Brothers to live or teach at their schools, although “only” just over half (56%) see an advantage for their pupils in a partnership with the Brothers, but 86% want to see the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as the provider of De La Salle schools. None of the respondents are explicitly against this. However, 10% of senior executives state that a partnership with the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools does not make their everyday work easier. Nevertheless, a community with the Brothers is important for 95% of respondents.

85% say that they feel Lasallian, with just as many seeing a reason to talk about Lasallian issues outside the school, and even more (90%) talk with their staff about John Baptiste de La Salle. A similar number (80%) believe that it is important for them to have a Lasallian attitude for their (own) work. Interestingly, many more (95) place emphasis of the importance of their staff having a Lasallian attitude.

The control question requiring a statement regarding the knowledge of the focal points of Lasallian teaching was, unsurprisingly, answered positively by 100% or 95%. 80% have already read works by John Baptiste de La Salle, 90% believe they know enough about his life and 75% regularly visit the De La Salle website.

A similar number regularly talk to their staff members about Lasallian issues (85%), are of the opinion that there is ample opportunity at their schools to act in accordance with Lasallian principles (80%) and state that they do in fact act in accordance therewith (90%). (5% think there are not enough opportunities to do so!).

95% know about LAACCE and its offerings, 80% state that they have participated in at least one LAACCE event, and 89% would like to participate (again). 79% inform their staff regularly about LAACCE events, 89% motivate their staff members to participate and 53% state that they have been asked by their employees if the latter may take part in such events. 37% would also like to bring their own topics to LAACCE events. Pleasingly, 95% would welcome regular LAACCE events at their schools.

2.3.3. Locations

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33% of the questionnaires sent out were returned by the location in Strebersdorf, Vienna, I received 68% back from Fünfhaus, Vienna, 42% from Währing, Vienna, 39% from Marianum and 43% from Hungary. 52% of the questionnaires sent to Illertissen were returned to me.⁶³ If we separate the locations according to where Brothers (still) live and work, the following picture arises. Only in Vienna Strebersdorf, the seat of the Provincial office, is there still a community of Brothers, currently comprising 18 Brothers⁶⁴, of which only one is left who actually still teaches. Almost all staff members (an average of 91%) know whether Brothers are still living or working at their locations or not. Nevertheless, nearly three quarters still know Brothers personally at schools without any Brothers.

Interestingly, it seems that in Strebersdorf, with 18 Brothers still living and working there, only less than half of the staff members (46%) seek to maintain regular contact with them, any only 39% believe spending time with them is important. Understandably, only 16% of the staff members interact with Brothers at schools where there are no Brothers. Nevertheless, interacting with Brothers is important for 35% of respondents, as in Strebersdorf. The desire to get to know Brothers (better) is the same at 44% (or 40% at Brotherless schools). Comparatively high is the belief that Brothers should live or teach at Lasallian schools (62% and 54%). At the same time, around half of all respondents believe the presence of Brothers at Lasallian schools and their involvement in everyday school life is conducive to the school's mission. As can almost be expected, schools where the school provider is still the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools today mainly want this situation to remain as it is. In Germany, where the two schools in Illertissen are now run by the dioceses, 40% still believe that Lasallian schools should be run by the Institute. Nevertheless, most employees there believe that having a Lasallian attitude is important for their work (69%) – compared with only 58% in Strebersdorf. Paradoxically, a smaller proportion of respondents in Germany (44%) feel Lasallian than is the case in Strebersdorf (53%). The argument that this is due to a lack of Brothers is refuted by around 30%. It can therefore be determined that setting up a community of Brothers at a school alone does not necessarily lead to the school seeing itself as “Lasallian.” This is also the view of the General Council for RELEM, Brother Aidan Kilty, FSC, when he says that schools do not necessarily have a “Lasallian identity” as a result of their community of Brothers.⁶⁵

However, when the data are compared, you are forced to come to the conclusion that it seems easier to impart Lasallian values when this takes place in the operating language of the schools, namely German. Paradoxically, there is significantly greater interest for this at the non-German speaking site in Budapest. There, only 14% of staff members (by far the smallest proportion) have taken part in LAACCE events, yet 52% (much more than the average of all other locations [36%]⁶⁶) would be happy to sacrifice some of their free time for this.

⁶³ Vienna/Strebersdorf: 80 of 243 forms; Vienna/Fünfhaus: 32/47; Vienna/Währing: 15/36; Vienna/Marianum: 27/69; Hungary/Budapest: 21/47; Germany/Illertissen (College and Highschool together): 45/86.

⁶⁴ Board of directorate 2016 (District of Central Europe, Ed.), p. 18:

<http://orden.dls21.at/uploads/3/1/0/5/31050373/lasdir-2016.pdf> - accessed March 30th 2016.

⁶⁵ Presentation by Br. Aidan Kilty, FSC (General Council RELEM) at ASSEDIL in Dublin, 2015; („Lasallian Identity in Schools without Brother's communities“), page 3, paragraph 3.

⁶⁶ 27% Illertissen, 45% Wien-Fünfhaus, 40% Wien-Schopenhauerstraße, 43% Wien-Strebersdorf, 26% Wien-Marianum.

2.3.4. Assessment of the Brothers

As a guide and benchmark to evaluate the possibilities for meaningful measures to impart Lasallian topics, I wanted to obtain and consider the views of Brothers in senior positions in the province and Institute community. By way of supplementing the staff survey, I was able to address the Brother Provincial Superior, his two Vice-Provincial Superiors and the Principal of the Institute community at Vienna Strebersdorf, as these management levels are also responsible for the implementation of the decisions made in the 45th General Chapter⁶⁷ – to the extent that they are relevant to this study.

It is not surprising that all respondents believe that the province of Central Europe will cease to exist in its present-day form. The responsibilities of Brothers will be found wherever Brothers will then still be alive. However, senior members of the province believe it is their duty to ensure that a solid foundation is created which an increasing number of lay workers will use to dedicate themselves to Lasallian traditions and thus to the Lasallian mission. The Brothers believe that the infrastructure required for this lies in connecting existing Lasallian organisations such as CIAMEL, MEL and CMEL, ASSEDIL and other programmes at the Generalate in Rome. No less important is LAACCE believed to be, although this will only fully come to bear in ten to fifteen years in their view. Until then, LAACCE must, with suitable programmes, win over teachers and educators who are properly trained and ready to commit to the Lasallian mission. It is the opinion of the Brothers that the Congregation will be on hand to provide support in any way it can. And until the schools in the German-speaking world are entirely Brotherless, the province management promises institutional and material (and where possible personnel) resources. Ultimately, the staff members at the schools will have to carry forth the Lasallian charisma. In addition to enthusiasm and good will, this also requires the conviction of the staff members to see the life of de La Salle and the history of the Institute as the source of this charisma and the focus of the mission. The Brothers agree that it will be the responsibility of the respective school provider to ensure that the presence of a Lasallian influence is not dependent on their presence. Principals and staff members are called upon in equal measure to ensure the motivation of the lay workers. De La Salle schools that are able to prevent the cord between the Institute and its offers for laymen and partners from being severed will also be home to de La Salle forever. In the future, the Lasallian charisma will be less defined by “Association and consecration”⁶⁸ than by association and personal commitment in the sense described above.

2.4. Conclusions

When we consider the individual results of the survey, we must state that any form of Lasallian education must start by not only inviting staff members to follow this path, but “collecting” them to some extent. There will be no way around taking the time to go to the individual locations for this purpose. Setting up an education platform such as LAACCE represents a first step in this direction, but is not enough by itself. If we staff members (have to) define ourselves as Lasallian without referring to any Brothers present and should perform our duties and impart our calling as per Lasallian values to the pupils, this must be based on the knowledge and acceptance of the

⁶⁷ Documents of the 45th General Chapter; Circular N° 469, November 30th 2014.

⁶⁸ cf. „How Lasallians understand their personal experience what Association really means“, p 52 f.

specific content of these values (and the Lasallian identity in general). However, this can only be achieved if staff members show a fundamental willingness to take an interest in what this all means – and ultimately what it means to them! 102

When the fifth chapter of Circular 461 (United for the Lasallian Mission) talks about a “Lasallian family”⁶⁹, the interpretations used there must be contradicted insofar as the feeling of “belonging” [to a family] can only be “encouraged”. I would like to decisively counter the view expressed here that there are different levels of depth.⁷⁰ You either belong to it or you don’t. In the best case, a distinction is made to the general term for family when the focus is on “voluntariness.” You are born into conventional families, you cannot choose them. It goes without saying that there is no “Lasallian birth right”, but there is a “call to partake” and thus the possibility to follow your own “calling”. At the very least, such a calling requires the person to deal with Lasallian issues. It is not even necessary to know the reason for this. However, personal development in this special family requires knowledge of the “family history” to which you feel called to be part of. The lay workers called to be Lasallian therefore have a (moral) obligation to know the sources of their calling and “educate themselves” to this extent.

The results of the survey provide sufficient cause to assume that the Institute’s efforts to ensure unified and shared Lasallian further training will bear fruit. Staff members largely appear to be motivated and interested. Researching the motives for individuals could provide an insight into why some sites have a higher willingness to participate in such programmes than others (which could also determine their content). However, this would have to be the subject of a separate study. In our case, it must suffice to say that, although setting up Lasallian education programmes is the only option, it is necessary to overhaul their content and format. In the Institute for us to be able to reach the “hearts of the children” as it states in the Christian mission of de La Salle⁷¹, we must first allow our own to be touched.

This is why we first need an authentic definition of what “Lasallian” is. We can see from the survey conducted that many staff members identify with Lasallian values but, at the same time, do not consider themselves Lasallian. That points to a discrepancy in the understanding of what is to be understood as “Lasallian”. Only through a general understanding of what this term means can individual behaviour and personal attitudes be attributed to a meaningful basis. Of course, this should not play down the importance of individual efforts, which define themselves as “Lasallian” thanks to the power of their own experiences and attitude. However, this does not, in itself, represent a sufficient basis to form a separate “Lasallian” tradition. There is already a *Lasallian tradition*, which is gradually being handed over to the laymen by the “departing” Brothers. In the Institute to be able to interpret these in a contemporary way, it is first necessary to clarify their content, and to raise awareness thereof. This is the challenge we are facing today. The Brothers have pledged to help and support us to overcome this challenge.

⁶⁹ Circular N° 461, September 2010, (Associated for the Lasallian Mission ... an act of HOPE“), p 49 f.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ „Touching Hearts of Students: Characteristics of a Lasallian School“.

3. The Lasallian tradition

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3.1. Definition

“This and that is Lasallian..., the Lasallian teacher teaches in a Lasallian manner, at Lasallian schools we can find a Lasallian community..., we feel Lasallian ... and thus part of the Lasallian family...” But oddly enough, what the term *Lasallian* actually means is barely known by those who use this adjective a lot.

Tradition is defined as a handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice.⁷² These statements, beliefs, etc. have preferably been developed by a certain group and deemed to be worth keeping for the future.

From a Lasallian standpoint, this is clearly the effect had by John Baptiste de La Salle, which can still be felt today. When it comes to determining the start of the “Lasallian tradition”, it matters if we take the example set by him while alive, his personal decisions and the subsequent actions bases thereon, or the organisational structures which were created only after his death. When De La Salle was alive, his disciples followed his example. Later-on, their decisions were also largely based on joint decisions.⁷³ The young community also had to gradually set rules as well as develop and adjust methods. When De La Salle was alive, it would have been too much to speak of “Lasallian” traditions. De La Salle never described himself as the source of meaningful community life. If he named a source for this, then it was God alone. Consequently, it would not be fundamentally wrong to recall Christian values and, of course, Christian traditions as being a Lasallian tradition. However, this would be too narrow from today’s perspective, and would not differ materially from other Christian communities, and ultimately the church as a whole. It therefore makes sense to start from the death of De La Salle, and define the start of the “Lasallian tradition” no earlier than 1724 after receiving papal approbation.⁷⁴

If we take value-based behaviour or ideas that are attributable to De La Salle as the basis for the Lasallian tradition and, using the definition parameters chosen at the beginning, derive from this the wish of a group, namely his disciples, to live and pass on these values, then we must first understand and described these values and their original content. It is of course allowed to adapt these values to an ever-changing reality, if for no other reason than to counter any accusation of “conservatism.” This should not, however, lead to a change in the content-based determination of the values contained therein. A tradition only becomes credible if it is carried by the awareness of an identity-creating belief. This means that bringing a tradition to life always involves imparting personal insights that are in tune with the values being imparted. Without this conviction, it is not tradition that is created by merely standard-free convention. *Value-based* behaviour thereby leads to a *value-based* tradition. And only in this can the sense of an identity-searching community exists, which does not want to run the risk of having to continuously

⁷² Duden online: <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Tradition>; accessed May 3rd 2016.

⁷³ cf. Propositions and Decisions at the General Chapters (listed and declared in Father Josef Alois Krebs: „Life of the venerable servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle” – Appendix.

⁷⁴ Approbation-Bull by His Holiness Pope Benedict XII from February 7th 1724 (Original at the Archives of the Generalate of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christians Schools, Via Aurelia 476, 00165 Rome, Italy.

reinvent itself. Fundamental values of Lasallian self-perception include community, faith, zeal and spirituality.⁷⁵

Lasallian tradition is subsequently understood as the passing on of value-based content that is being exemplified through belief so as to meet the challenges of everyday school life as defined by John Baptiste de La Salle. Following De La Salle's own understanding that these challenges can only be met if faced together as a community, and that this will only succeed if it is possible to use Christian beliefs to draw on God's influence, we are able to meet the requirements of our own work at the schools in a Lasallian way.

3.2. *Need to continue the tradition*

The condition that a tradition must be "passed on" is basically self-explanatory; otherwise it would not be a tradition as defined. The particular thing about the "Lasallian tradition" is, as explained above, in the "challenges" and "school-based requirements", which we see as being part of the definition. However, both terms contain a dynamic element, as they both change in the course of time and social reality. Lasallian tradition is subject to constant evolution. For instance, De La Salle's efforts were focused on the economic poverty of the children he looked after. The challenges were in maintaining the ability of the Institute to survive in the face of its own existential needs and deprivation.⁷⁶ Today, we seldom find cases of existential need in Central Europe, which means that Catholic private schools were able to establish themselves as "elite schools" for the upper class. Even though it was and has never been the sole intention of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to open their gates especially for the paying elite of the country, it is and has been the intention of a Lasallian school to have graduates who are taught in a comprehensive manner and whose education is of special quality.⁷⁷

The development from free educational institutions to comparatively cost-intensive schools is explained by the need to adapt. Confessional private schools were increasingly in competition with state-run education facilities. The legal framework in which private schools were able to distinguish themselves from state schools grew ever smaller.⁷⁸ In contrast, the number of state schools available grew bigger and bigger thanks to public funds for social programmes.⁷⁹ The question of what you got for your money at De La Salle schools could soon only be answered with the quality of the education. And this quality is not so much in the content of the subjects being taught which, as already explained, have largely been standardised by law. The quality of a Lasallian school stems from the values rooted in its traditions. Disseminating learning content is more or less the same everywhere. Developing a unique personality by means of encouraging the respective skills and talents of pupils is the claim of a modern Lasallian school. As a result, imparting values that have proven to be durable, despite the need to be adapted to social changes and essential to the success of the school plays a key role in the teaching of young people. The pupils stand to gain particularly from having these values lived and demonstrated for them in a

⁷⁵ cf. „The twelve virtues of a good shepherd“ (1785).

⁷⁶ Br. Luke Salm, FSC; *The Work is Yours*; p. 81, 112 f., 124-130, 136 f., 167-183 et al..

⁷⁷ Br. Ambrosius Dobbelaar, FSC; „Characteristics of a Lasallian School“.

⁷⁸ cf. Chapter 1.2.1.

⁷⁹ The „Socio-Economical School“ in Zohlnhöfer; „The Welfare State“, p. 29-39.

world of (growing) information overland and virtual relationships. The success of a Lasallian school can only be found in values founded in tradition and accepted by the community.

3.2.1. *Prerequisites for a continuation*

If you take tradition-based responsibility within a Lasallian community serious, you need to ask the question if the content and origins of this tradition are even known. There is hardly any information in the foyer of a De La Salle school that tells people about its fundamental values and philosophy. It is just as unlikely that all principals and department heads have enough time (or even the knowledge) to provide information about the philosophical background of the school during interviews with prospective pupils and parents. It is often the case that reference is merely made to the school's website. Unsurprisingly, we read here that the “focus is on the child” and the school is “committed to De La Salle's principles of tolerance, constructive cooperation and mutual respect.”⁸⁰

Now, it is crucial for the self-perception of any community based on a philosophy that this community knows about its basic approaches. You have to be able to impart these. As experience has shown, it may be assumed that young adults perceive exemplary behaviour to impart values gradually and in a playful way. In Institute to reach this stage, however, the pupil must first become a pupil of such a school. This generally requires so-called school admission contracts, which are regularly preceded by an informative meeting between the principal, parents and pupils. It would be desirable if this included sound and consistent answers regarding the identity of the school and its values. This does not mean to suggest that principals are not even aware of what is “Lasallian” at their own De La Salle School. On the contrary: principals should be able to rely on the fact that their teachers, educators and – more generally – staff members are able to convey what they are telling the parents. A values-based tradition and the perpetuation thereof require the willingness of all participants, as well as the infrastructure and means.

3.2.2. *Conditions for a continuation*

By determining that the Lasallian tradition is a “practised tradition”, i.e. one that is subject to ongoing development and adaptation to the respective requirements of the time, the need for specific requirements for such a development and adjustment is also stated. Drawing on certain (pre)defined values and understanding this to be the essence of a Lasallian attitude would be a narrow-minded approach. Without a fundamental knowledge of the sources, focusing on certain definitions is merely of historic academic interest.

Consequently, a key condition must be to “train” all staff members to ensure long-term perpetuation. Such “Lasallian demonstration” must also be based on theory for it to be credible among pupils and colleagues. Anyone who behaves in a “Lasallian” way without knowing what this description is based on can rarely provide any information as to what makes up his Lasallian stand. In conversations, I was often able to find out that *Lasallian* basically was thought to mean nothing more than *Christian*. Of course, this is essentially correct; however, such a classification says nothing about the features of the attitude described this way. “Christian” is the basis of Lasallian spirituality. Catholicism is the key to De La Salle in his beliefs based on loyalty to the

⁸⁰ www.dls21.at - accessed on February 23rd 2016.

Pope.⁸¹ What has developed from his teachings and later influences is the subject of many studies and extensive research. As a result, it is only possible to achieve a standardised definition of what is generally to be understood as “Lasallian” using known sources and, moreover, depends on the conditions of the respective individual locations and schools. The communities of Brothers around the world are, as an Institute, subject to a standardised and unifying set of rules. Schools that try to perpetuate the Lasallian spirit “alone”, without communities of Brothers, face the major challenge of having to create a network for themselves so as to find something like a “Lasallian line”. Geo-social conditions are often the reason for completely different approaches to wide-ranging problems. Rome would be a natural choice as a hub to provide uniform Lasallian impulses, but there is a lack of suitable contact persons in many places, due to the non-existence of a community of Brothers. This is why local (further) training platforms are needed to be able to help raise awareness of Lasallian thinking in coordination with the Institute’s central office. 106

3.2.3. *Implementation and opportunities*

The facilities that already provide Lasallian sources at some schools run websites or organise information events normally work at an isolated or regional level. Various decisions from the 45th General Chapter⁸² state that the Brothers accompany encourage and support the Laymen or Partners in their mission. An interface with the Generalate in Rome was envisaged to provide support, offer general orientation and serve as a framework from a financial point of view as well.⁸³

The **LA**sallian **AC**ademy of **C**entral **E**urope was set up for the province of Central Europe in 2008. Events are offered on a regular basis with the generous support of the Provincialate and the Institute to “make staff members familiar with the Lasallian tradition and interpret Lasallian teachings for everyday school life.”⁸⁴ According to senior Brothers, the aim is to develop this further in the future.

However, the infrastructure at the various sites must be changed to enable efforts to develop and sharpen Lasallian awareness for staff members to be accessible in the long term.⁸⁵

3.3. *Access to sources*

If it has been sufficiently ensured that suitable measures have been taken not only to maintain and conserve the Lasallian tradition but also to develop it further, the providers and users of these measures must have appropriate access to their sources. It is not enough to refer to archives and bibliographies where you can certainly find satisfactory answers if you are interested and spend enough time looking. There is an obligation to transport these to the staff members – just as we would do for our pupils. Conversely, the job should not be deemed done simply by providing options. Staff members, in particular “new” colleagues must be “collected”. The same must apply to the idea of “collecting” the pupils and providing them with support in a Lasallian

⁸¹ see Luke Salm, FSC p. 228-230, 263 f., 307 f.

⁸² e.g. Proposition 4 (45th General Chapter), p. 18.

⁸³ *ibid.* Proposition 6 und 7, S. 19.

⁸⁴ <http://www.laacce.net/absichten.html>, accesses on February 3rd 2016.

⁸⁵ cf. Chapter 4.3.1.m p. 28 f.

way. Consequently, it cannot be enough to simply draw attention to the wealth of existing archives and online sources. Key sources must be available in German, which renders the need for a considerable amount of translation work. 107

Efforts here are still in their infancy. However, the LAACCE education platform⁸⁶ has been trying for some time now to not only systematically organise a suitable offering but also make this available to the German-speaking region. These undertakings appear almost insurmountable in view of the plethora of Lasallian archives and libraries, which is why members of the academy have taken it upon themselves to find a representative selection of fundamentals. To this end, staff members must be given access to these sources – to begin with at least – by means of presentations and introductions by “experts”. The existing Lasallian education platform is introduced in the next chapter as a way to access this concept, and attempts to develop and present approaches for future courses.

3.3.1. Networks

In the case of a globally active institute such as that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, it is necessary for it to act on the basis of united faith. The education, teaching and support methods adapted to the various social and political realities should reflect the shared values based on a consistent definition of these values. Only through defining and naming these fundamentals is it possible to create a corporate identity. The same applies analogously to institutions that are not primarily business-oriented in their approach. It is just as important to see a “unified concept” within the Institute and to assert its position in the surrounding environment (particularly in the face of competitors). Regardless of where you attend a De La Salle educational institution, you should be able to see that the same values, content and concepts are being imparted here as they would be anywhere else in the world.

To this end, it is also necessary and helpful to connect the individual locations with each other as well as to establish and make use of a flow of information between these. In this way, locations can harness synergies from a centralised coordinating interface that they would not have had access to as individual units. The essence of the Lasallian values community is founded on Brotherly interaction. Therefore, an appropriate form of communication should not represent an obstacle. This begins with a school, leads to a location that is home to more than just a school, and ultimately ends in the utilisation of the global Lasallian range offered. The only thing is: we should know what we are communicating about. The Lasallian voice can be heard and read in many languages, but it means the same all over the world. De La Salle must not only be perceived as a brand, so to speak, by our “clients” and “customers” – the pupils and their parents, competing schools and school authorities. De La Salle must, above all, be internalised by its own staff. The self-perception of a company such as that of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools must be clearly classified externally and agreed internally⁸⁷ when it claims to be unique in a qualitative sense. This can be ensured by accredited and coordinated staff training!

⁸⁶ cf. Chapter 4.2.1.m p. 27 f.

⁸⁷ Prof. Dr. Franz-Rudolf Esch, dictionary of economics: Corporate Identity at general business administration (essentials and objectives of business management) – online: <http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/Definition/corporate-identity.html> - accessed on March 15th 2016.

4. Lasallian training

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By training, we mean the presentation and clarification of Lasallian content in its broadest sense. This ranges from the literary principles and historical connections on the one hand and, on the other, the spiritual and teaching consequences. It should also convey a broad understanding of the organisation of the associated Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, its inner workings and structures, and its mission, presenting and practising clear processes in accordance with the Lasallian philosophy.

4.1. Strategies

Basically, it needs to be highlighted that any form of Lasallian education must be voluntary. Staff members of Lasallian-run establishments may, to a certain extent, be contractually obliged to take part in company-related training. However, imparting Lasallian values is always aimed at the inner attitude of the individual and can therefore only bear fruit in the face of personal grudges. Furthermore, we have already highlighted the rather limited possibilities in respect of (state-employed) teachers being able to attend additional training events as part of their duties. It is necessary to implement corresponding methods in addition to any way of individually designing Lasallian content (and programmes to impart this). On the one hand, there are “specific” location-related strategies for this. On the other, it seems appropriate to adapt approaches to the respective target groups.

In Institute to be able to ensure the most effective transfer of knowledge and experience, this should ideally be “unified” or standardised. Milieu-specific education units, agreed for kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and grammar school, can combine topics for the individual location in a meaningful way. Building on this, cross-topic presentations and/or events are then organised. These take place at the respective schools more or less on a regular basis depending on the range offered. In this way, the individual schools first establish a network of Lasallian training offers among themselves, without disrupting their individual, location-related routines and processes.⁸⁸ Content and dates are coordinated with the respective principals and department heads in person. In the same way, it is possible to integrate “socially structured” and “integrative” (here: based on work experience) offerings and to implement these into everyday school life.⁸⁹

Exactly how the content should be transported to the target groups is the task and focus of current discussions in the steering group of LAACCE. Currently, so-called forums are offered every year that are dealt with in chapter 4.3.2. However, in Institute to be able to create a theoretical basis for Lasallian [self-]understanding, I believe the current programme is not enough, particularly when you consider that there will be no Brothers left to provide support in the foreseeable future. This is why the internationalisation of Lasallian training is in many ways inevitable so as to be able to safeguard certain quality standards. A “consultation process” coordinated with Rome is needed in the absence of “intermediary” communities of Brothers. Important Lasallian content, as well as the methodological requirements (events, presentations,

⁸⁸ cf. „Specific strategies for education in the environment of families and same-aged” (M. Grundmann et al.); Journal of educational science, March 2003; p. 25-45.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

etc.) need to be implemented in coordination with the Generalate so as to ultimately meet the requirements of proper occupational training.⁹⁰

4.2. Offerings

Since 2008, the Strebersdorf site has accommodated what may be called the “nerve centre” of the aforementioned Lasallian Academy for Central Europe (LAACE). Members from the sectors of Austria, Slovakia and Romania, as well as from the former sector of Germany, act as a so-called steering group⁹¹ to advise on topics, content and processes regarding events that are offered (annually at the moment) to the staff of the individual locations.

4.2.1. LAACCE⁹²

The academy intends to maintain the spirituality of Saint John Baptiste de La Salle for staff members and partners and to convey this to them. Furthermore, it offers to those responsible at the individual locations support, in Institute to help them set up and organise suitable training measures. However, these location-specific structures have only just become the subject of discussion within the steering group, which on the one hand is due to the need to realign the body responsible for the school as a result of the continuous decline in the number of Brothers and, on the other hand, represents an entirely new concept.

As a platform, the academy wants to introduce new members in particular to Lasallian traditions and values. Together with senior school staff, it should develop ideas on how to interpret Lasallian teaching for modern-day use and implement this in the respective schools. In cooperation with the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and with their generous support, the academy provides a place to meet staff members of other locations, seeing itself as the centre of mutual networking within the province, as well as within the region or the Institute as a whole.

Together with the province’s archives, the academy attempts to put together a subject-relevant and representative range of Lasallian literature, and to make this available in German.⁹³

4.3. Implementation

Given that the academy does not have its own headquarters, its own budget or its own “personnel”, it is currently based at the site of the Provincialate office for “logistical purposes”. It owes its existence to the commitment of the Provincial Superior, individual Brothers and motivated staff members and partners. Since being established, its spiritual father and “founder”, Kurt Langthaler, aFSC (himself long-standing principal of the primary school in Strebersdorf and member of the board of directors of the “De La Salle” School Association), has coordinated various dates and organised events, presentations and cooperation with individual De La Salle

⁹⁰ „Internationalizing of vocational training: strategies – concepts – experiences – proposals for action“ (H. Borch, et al.).

⁹¹ s. www.laacce.net/steuergruppe.html - accessed on March 9th 2016.

⁹² see Chapter 3.2.3.

⁹³ s. www.laacce.net/absichten.html und www.laacce.net/leitbild.html - accessed on March 9th 2016.

schools and the Catholic pedagogical university as the unofficial chairman of the steering group.⁹⁴

The current options describing the current programme of LAACCE will be briefly presented below. Subsequently, I will attempt to add new aspects to this offering which I believe to be necessary in Institute to be able to master the challenges that (will) arise not least as a result of the pending “Brotherless” school sites.

4.3.1. Location

The respective school locations offer the space and the opportunity to take specific measures regarding the implementation and practice of practical content. It should be explained here what the term “Lasallian” actually means and how you can find your way as a (new) staff member within the “company structure” and maybe even in the Institute’s organisation. By the same token, the possibilities for personal prospects and individual development of their own ideas should help to motivate staff members. In this way, the respective location serves to reinforce the general Lasallian training content and, at the same time, these can be specified for local needs.

There is currently no dedicated programme for the respective school locations or the individual schools. It may be the core purpose of LAACCE to see that the content developed is integrated into practice, but we are still far away from being able to offer specific concepts for such implementation. Without these location-related concepts, any attempt will get stuck in the theory of applying well-intentioned memorandums. In Institute to create impetus that brings “De La Salle” closer to the staff members and, by extension, to the pupils and partners, it is of paramount importance to keep the barrier as low as possible for the target groups. With this in mind, I believe that the academy is obliged to approach people as a result of its Lasallian self-perception. Invitations here will not be enough. The readiness of staff members to take on more by themselves – even if this is limited to “official duties” as part of their everyday working life – should not be overestimated with all due respect to basic interest in the subject.

The results of the survey (see chapter 2) indicate that the fundamental willingness to commitment in a Lasallian sense is largely linked to the professional environment. Whether a deeper understanding of what is to be considered Lasallian may be required to justify personal commitment cannot easily be verified, but nor should it be necessarily assumed. Given the lack of alternatives, it is not even possible for staff members today to find out more about Lasallian topics without having to travel to a different location (to the respective conference location). LAACCE events are regularly held in Salzburg and Ottenstein (Lower Austria). This makes it all the more necessary to go with basic coordinated programmes directly to the school locations. Three focal areas would need to be set here (history, spirituality and teaching), which make the qualitative uniqueness of Lasallian educational institutions understandable and tangible using Lasallian perspectives.

⁹⁴ see: <http://www.laacce.net/>.

4.3.2. Forums

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Since 2009, LAACCE has been offering a training event for staff members once a year (regularly in November). In these meetings, known as “forums”, various topics with a Lasallian origin or context are prepared, presented and discussed. In addition to joint discussions, reflection and prayers, the focus is also on social togetherness. This is often the first chance staff members get to meet colleagues from other locations or even from other sectors. A particularly impressive aspect is the meetings with various Brothers, who support the events and enrich them with special contributions.

The strengths of these forums in their present form can be found in the emotional moment of sociability, i.e. the positive feedback on the social aspect, as well as the international framework spanning the province. The impression of “We Lasallians are more than the sum of the staff members at our own sites or schools” is sustained, generating an enormous benefit for the self-perception of the institution and the “De La Salle” brand. And this completely independent of the presence of Brothers - although personal interaction with the Brothers - it is mostly felt to be informal and largely uncomplicated. This is regularly demonstrated particularly when individual Brothers – who cannot immediately be identified as such as they are not wearing a habit – are “sniffed at” in a friendly way in larger discussion groups. Put another way: The desire for De La Salle or “Lasallian” is not only recognisable, but readily tangible.

However, this also addresses one of the greatest weaknesses of the forums. The joy of the Lasallian impetus of this meeting normally comes as a surprise to those attending and only once they are there. The shortcoming is precisely the unexpectedness of this joy, I think. Maybe this result would be pleasant enough as a side effect of measures within a quasi-therapeutic self-discovery group. However, as a résumé of some participants after a forum, this does not appear to be enough in my opinion, for an occupational training event. Especially, if there were no other “take-away”.

In the previous section, it was discussed how to give this phenomenon some substance at the individual locations if you offer certain “education modules” in advance that prepare for the respective topics at the forum. This would potentially have the positive side effect that more staff members may take an interest in the forums, which sometimes extend into weekends that are usually “work-free” for practical reasons and thus represent a rather uncertain “leisure time gain” for some people. The personal gain at a forum would probably be more specific and greater if participants had the chance to prepare. Particularly if it takes place at the staff members’ own school location, meaning less effort for the participants, who would then take part in forums with more motivation and fewer inhibitions, and could therefore get more involved themselves.

The issues dealt with in the forums might reach a larger circle of Lasallians if the content structure were documented and made available. This does happen sometimes before or after various contributions, which are mainly prepared and presented by (prominent) Brothers. These are, however, often thematically isolated and have no direct connection to the respective forum. (In fact, it is rather the other way those forums are adjusted to such opportunities, with the respective presentation ultimately defining the topic of the forum). The forum instrument could serve to scientifically enrich Lasallian research and, at the same time, serve as a source for

further studies if it would be recorded. This would make an evaluation sustainable. The possibilities appear to be manifold. The discussion in the LAACCE has already begun. Well-considered yet swift results and corresponding implementation would be desirable. 112

The same applies to so-called “idea workshops” (LAACCE event for leaders: principals, department heads, etc.).

4.3.3. *(Provincial / sector) conferences*

So-called provincial conferences normally are held once a year within the sphere of the Congregation. The venue traditional rotates between the different sectors. The former sector of Germany is also included, with the next provincial conference being held in Illertissen, Bavaria, in 2016. The conference is “open”, which means that any interested staff members may attend. (It goes without saying that only the delegates have the right to take part in formal votes).

In these conferences, reports are made by the respective sectors, trends highlighted and the resulting consequences explained. Similarly, any measures to implement decisions made by senior Institute members are documented. In this way, participating Laymen and Partners gain further insights into Institute realities and are able to gain a better understanding of the connections between the decisions taken there and their own reality in school.

A supporting programme is normally offered alongside such conferences where – as in the context of the aforementioned forums – historical and spiritual principles are presented and interpreted. However, as not too much time is allocated to such programmes, they cannot be expected to deal with issues in greater detail. On the other hand, the group of participating Laymen can also be described as manageable. They usually attend these events on a repeat basis, which is why it is not necessary to make longer introductions to the material. This is also the source of the greatest weakness of this meeting, to which I also add, with certain limitations, the sector conferences (set up one “level” below). Both are rather unsuitable as education platforms, because they have not even been designed as such. For want of other opportunities, Lasallian “educational topics” have been somewhat scattered in and were intended to provide information rather than expand or deepen knowledge. However, given that these events regularly include reports on topics that are not directly relevant to the Institute, they should not go without a mention here. They are not intended to be educational or even training platforms, and nor are they suited to this purpose.

4.3.4. *Presentations*

It is much too rare that experienced and senior Brothers visit the Province, and even rarer that they get the chance to pass on their knowledge and experience to individual schools. However, once such rare meetings do take place, such presentations represent a true treasure for creating Lasallian awareness.

For instance, Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, talked about certain topics that were prepared for an interested audience in the run-up to his visit. Insights can be given into Lasallian spirituality and history that are certainly suited to having an influence on everyday work. In any case, this

enabled the participants to gain a direct and personal insight into the structure of the Institute, which was barely possible before. The significance and the biography of the presenter were briefly explained to the audience by way of introduction. Consequently, many of the participants found out for the first time that the Institute's structure is broken down into regions and that Brother Gerard was responsible for the Province of Central Europe and was actively involved in its establishment as part of the former Central Council for RELEM. Even if many topics potentially delve deeply into specialist materials, these presentations provide a sense of direct participation in a values community, the origins and significance of which one might actually like to know more about. Put another way, the content of these presentations takes somewhat of a back seat to the community feeling conveyed by the personality of the presenters. Those attending get the feeling of belonging here! This often creates an interest to know why this is the case. 113

Given that these presentations, as mentioned, are only offered on rare occasions, they can only rarely have an effect, too. The “introductions” that accompany them are exhaustive in presenting the topic and the presenter. The “topic” is not the subject of subsequent discussion as part of an institutional education programme, and thereby loses its effect over time. It remains a selective experience in the course of everyday working life. This phenomenon becomes particularly evident when Institute dignitaries visit, such as the Brother Superior during a training event for leaders in April 2013.⁹⁵

Such specialist presentations make up part of the current education offering as a regular addition to LAACCE events. Here the academy tries to ensure a certain degree of content diversity and is therefore necessarily subject to a limitation of presenters with a Lasallian background. Experts, who are not Brothers, talk about certain topics, which make it necessary from a programme perspective to establish a Lasallian connection. Understandably, there is little scope in the presentation for this. As a result, the academy must create opportunities to make this connection effective in actual day-to-day realities of school life for all staff members, and not just for the people attending the presentation. However, this can only happen on the site itself, where both preparation and implementation needs to be take place.⁹⁶

4.3.5. Other possibilities

In the following section, I would like to make some proposals regarding how to make oneself familiar with Lasallian content without having to participate in the aforementioned events. The following list does not claim to be exhaustive and is limited to presenting existing means and planned projects.

German is not one of the official languages of the Institute. Consequently, all education-relevant sources are only available in French, Spanish and English. It is a stated objective of LAACCE to view, Institute and gradually make accessible in German a representative catalogue of key sources on Lasallian topics in the areas of “history”, “spirituality” and “teaching”. It must be a concern of the academy to keep the barrier to dealing with Lasallian writings as low as possible.

⁹⁵ <http://www.laacce.net/chronik.html> - accessed on March 14th 2016.

⁹⁶ cf. Chapter 4.3.1.; p. 28 f.

This is the only way to enable a broad knowledge base for a lively discussion that also promises to bear fruit in the future.

Following up LAACCE events in writing is still something to be discussed, but this appears to me to be unavoidable as a genuine source for the province. An institutional archive for the academy also enables future participants to access experiences and content. The cooperation with the province archives and others must be expanded to achieve this.

Creating a system for presentations that have already been held and others that have not (yet) been held for various reasons is a project that is yet to be started in cooperation with the respective authors and presenters. Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, is again to be mentioned here, who has provided his entire collection of fundamental materials to this end. Contributions by Brother Ambrosius Dobbelaar, FSC, Brother Paul Kaiser, FSC, Brother Walter Hillen FSC and others will also begin included, as well as the comprehensive works of Brother Erhard Tietze, FSC.

Expert groups may be helpful to ensure systematic categorisation according to thematic focal areas in line with the template for “cooperative learning” in places where it will be necessary to coordinate controversial author views.⁹⁷

Multimedia projects such as PowerPoint presentations and DVDs are being planned for use in schools. Existing presentation materials are already being adapted for age-appropriate use in some areas, while others need to be compiled first. Work is currently under way to create a film biography about John Baptiste de La Salle, which is based on film material taken from original settings in France. There are places to follow this up by different versions of different thematic focal areas in varying lengths, which may be used during lessons, among others.

During a trip to France that took place in summer 2014 as a result of the filming, I also had the idea of writing a kind of “Lasallian travel guide”. This should enable people to experience the life of the John Baptiste de La Salle through the special places mentioned in his biography during a holiday to France, for instance. People often walk past places without realising that these have a very special tie to the life and works of John Baptiste de La Salle. Now and then, hidden plaques can be discovered (you only have to think of the rather uninteresting *Rue Princesses* in Paris or *Rue Saint Laurent* in Grenoble), where the founder both lived and worked. Based on my own experience, I can report that the connection to De La Salle at these places has its own flair. From Calais to Marseilles, you only have to take a few steps off the beaten track to really touch Lasallian history. For travellers who are interested, local signs to this effect may have a reinforcing or awareness-raising influence. Following a spirited exchange of ideas with Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, and this idea rested on the existing video biography “In the Footsteps of De La Salle”.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ cf. John Baptiste Piagetin „cf. „Cooperative Constructions of Knowledge“; ref. to „Learners-Communities“ (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999).

⁹⁸ <http://www.dlsfootsteps.org> – accessed on March 14th 2016 and DVD Guide Book: „in the FOOTSTEPS of De La Salle – A Vocation Journey“; German Translation available on: <http://www.laacce.net/downloads.html>.

5. The Lasallian identity

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In the final analysis, Lasallian staff members who impart the specific, shared – i.e. Lasallian – values to De La Salle educational institutions operated around the world on a daily basis create an ever-evolving reality that breathes life into, enriches and ultimately makes up the Institute. By ensuring that these staff members know where their fundamental principles are rooted, namely in the heritage and living memory of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, they come together with these to form the identity of the Institute. With the decision of the 44th General Chapter 2007, the mission was formally split between the Brothers and Laymen in equal measure with this in mind⁹⁹. Since this time, Brothers, staff members and partners have been working together on the history of the Institute.

Different geographical, historical, social, ethical and religious backgrounds enrich the Lasallian building, the foundations of which are anchored in one cornerstone, John Baptiste de La Salle. However, he gave no authentic definition of what was to be considered Lasallian in the future. His criteria are demonstrative, not exhaustive. While this situation means that efforts being pursued in close cooperation with Lasallian institutions are automatically deemed “Lasallian”, it does not make it easier to find a useful definition for this term. However, we are going to try anyway.

5.1. Definition

There is a wide range of different contributions available dealing with the attributes of people or institutions that are described as Lasallian by one or the other. The Lasallian teacher¹⁰⁰, the Lasallian school¹⁰¹ are, as core elements of scholastic influence, just two examples that can be expanded as desired: pedagogy, general education, association, research, history and future, mission, spirituality and charisma are other terms that – furnished with the attribute “Lasallian” – bring the underlying idea and essence to the centre of attention: the pupils. Significantly, I have not been able to find a description of the “Lasallian pupil”. Of course, much has changed since the days of De La Salle. The Founder would not have dared dream of the many things that have become standard today. This ranges from the general obligation to attend school – without any costs arising for the parents – to standardised teacher training.

So, when we want to describe something as being “Lasallian” and give it a specific meaning, then more is needed than a statement of acting with certain, i.e. Lasallian, intentions. Ironically, even the Generalate in Rome does not offer a conclusive definition of what “Lasallian” actually means. Motives declared in the programme (*inspired by our living memory ...*), general intentions (*...supporting young people, particularly the poor, with human and Christian education...*) and according to the motto “*Live our joyful mission together*” provide orientation as the core elements of repeated keywords “*faith – service – together in the mission*”, but do not

⁹⁹ Circular N° 461 (Sept. 2010) and Bulletin N° 250-2005, p. 17 f. (esp. Items 3 resp. 6) with ref. from the 44th General Chapter.

¹⁰⁰ e.g. Br. Gerard Rummary, FSC „The Lasallian Teacher“ or Oscar Velázquez Herrera von der Universität Bajío „Strategies for lasallian Teacher-Student Mentoring“ (Digital Journal of Lasallian Research (7) 2013: 100-117) or Br. John Johnston, FSC „Lasallians ... without Frontiers - our challenge“.

¹⁰¹ e.g. Br. Patricio Bolton, FSC „El Signo de la Escuela Lasallana“ (Digital Journal of Lasallian Research (7) 2014: 123-147).

meet the criteria of a definition, as the heading may suggest (*Identity and mission*).¹⁰² So what can be used as a definition to explain the essence of a “Lasallian” institution or school to colleagues, staff members, partners, and ultimately the pupils, while at the same time describing the specific standards of conduct to be part of this “special” institute? In the end, the ideas of what is to be understood by the term “Lasallian” must concur so as to avoid running the risk of the “De La Salle” brand and the associated feature “Lasallian” becoming arbitrary. 116

When Br. Aidan Kilty, FSC explains in the aforementioned presentation at ASSEDIL_2015¹⁰³ that it is “something initially indefinable...” that distinguishes “an authentic Lasallian institution”¹⁰⁴ at any rate, this is still not something tangible. Brother Aidan then develops a thought from the following three descriptive elements (community – calling – pupils) that seem meaningful and useful as an approach to find a usable definition for “Lasallian identity”: *methods and procedures*. Only when answering the questions *What do we do? – How do we do it? – Why do we do it?* Can it be explained WHO we are as Lasallians?¹⁰⁵ If you supplement these three elements with the last of the “*Seven features of a Lasallian school*” by Brother John Johnston (focus on De La Salle as a historical mission)¹⁰⁶, it can be said – in his words – that a Lasallian identity only begins to be authentic when it is based on its historical origins. “Nothing is more suited to showing us the right way than the knowledge of the past.”¹⁰⁷ Without a focus on the historical core, there would even be a “risk of confusion” with other religious institutions. *We define our identity on the basis of who we are, not who we are not.*¹⁰⁸

5.2. Conclusions and consequences

Based on the findings uncovered herein, it is unavoidable that laymen have to base their work as teachers and educators on the historical standard of the Brothers (*Who are we? What do we do? How and why do we do it?*). A definition of “Lasallian” formulated solely by laymen and not originating from the roots of the Institute’s history inevitably leads to the significance and value of the term becoming arbitrary, and which will soon only be based on personal ideas. Lasallian is then what each individual chooses to understand, if at all. If we take seriously our calling as teachers and role models for our pupils at a Lasallian school, we cannot rely on a vague understanding of a term that does not provide any indication of how to act. We must rely on history foundations, but to do so we must first know what they are.

¹⁰² Circular N° 470 March 24th 2016, „Towards the Year 2021: Living together our joyful Mission“; p. 24 f. Brothers of the Christian Schools, General Council, Via Aurelia – Rome, Italy.

¹⁰³ Presentation by Br. Kilty, FSC at the ASSEDIL in Dublin, 2015; („Lasallian Identity in Schools without Brother’s communities“.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.. [cit.] „There is something tangible,(3) initially unidentifiable, about a functioning Lasallian educational community. A visitor can sense it almost as soon as she/he walks through the door as I have experienced in a number of Lasallian Centres. I do not claim that this is exclusive to a Lasallian educational community but I suggest it is something, which is clearly identifiable in a Centre that is authentically Lasallian.“

¹⁰⁵ ibid. p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Br. John Johnston, FSC (General Superior 1986 – 2000): „Lasallians ... without Frontiers - our challenge“; Second lasallian european congress 4th to 6th march 1994, Strasbourg, France.

¹⁰⁷ Polybius (2nd century, BC) „Polybius and his Histories“; p. 87 (J. Deininger: „Tyche in the pragmatic Historiography of Polibius“, et al..

¹⁰⁸ „Lasallians ... without Frontiers - our challenge“ (German Translation, p. 14 f.).

What this means is that we Laymen must necessarily get to grips with the Lasallian heritage. Organisationally speaking, this task can be delegated and LAACCE presents itself as ideal for this purpose, both strategically and structurally, as we have already seen. However, if a De La Salle School claims specific content as typical and characteristic of its school, the mere claim is not enough to prove that this is so. We must *take part* ourselves in the development of fundamental principles. Based on the survey described in chapter 2, it can be concluded that there is a sufficient level of willingness among the staff at our De La Salle Schools to educate and raise awareness of what it means to be Lasallian. However, the organisational framework to ensure representative participation in educational events will require even more suitable strategies to implement these in everyday school life in the future. 117

The Institute and LAACCE need to create possibilities that harness the potential of the staff in mutual consideration of the respective requirements and targets. Participation gains substance where it becomes *involvement*. As we have seen, Lasallian tradition is enriched by associated Laymen and Partners – even in the view of key figures in the Institute. However, only participation in the dissemination of knowledge is able to channel its involvement. As a result of the study underpinning this work (see chapter 2), I have gained the impression that a relatively high number of staff members believe that the term “Lasallian” is relevant for their work, but at the same time they know very little about it. On the one hand, the term is deemed to have occupational relevance, yet on the other it seems to carry little significance for their own philosophical work. Paradoxically, most of the respondents (particularly educators) understand that the need to personally commit to maintaining the Lasallian tradition is unavoidable when it comes to the ability of De La Salle School to survive economically *without Brothers*. Generally speaking, this constitutes a key quality of the school. And people want to share and be part of this. We will have to work harder to ensure this in the future.

After all, only the well-founded involvement of Laymen and Partners in education standards can lead to the *layout* desired by all sides. Only this way can we ultimately safeguard the living tradition of the Lasallian set of values, as intended. “I *want* to understand what I *have to do*”¹⁰⁹ and I am prepared to go beyond what is required by my job because I feel part of a community that is more than just a team of co-workers.” Even if everyday school life does not always demonstrate this, being at the service of the pupils becomes a calling in the understanding and appreciation of the staff member. This is ultimately the special feature of the “operating added value” of a Lasallian setting. If a Lasallian school wants to hold its own, economically speaking, in the face of its competitors, it is primarily not so important how it is assessed by the latter. What is more important – in terms of a Lasallian corporate identity – is motivated and trained staff members who are able to impart the value of their school on pupils and parents through conviction and knowledge thereof.

6. The Lasallian future

6.1. Evaluation

In light of the preceding chapter, it must be admitted that there is still not enough awareness of the connections between Lasallian self-perception and its roots among staff members who are

¹⁰⁹ cf. Chapter 1.

Laymen. Without the willingness of individuals to deal with the sources, to help make them understandable today and to pass on the resulting findings, it will be difficult to ensure a development that secures the future of the Institute. If we are unable to understand that the existence of De La Salle School depends on its description as being as “Lasallian” School, and we do not understand what that means for us as individuals, no kind of business administration management will ensure the “survival” of the respective institution. To put it clearly: De La Salle School stops being one when it loses the attribute of being “Lasallian”. 118

Many staff members are well aware of the fact that this title does not necessarily result from making reference to the Founder. Sometimes the opinion is putting forward that it is a kind of operating attribute that largely corresponds to the pedagogical understanding and behaviour of teachers and educators, particularly as they are aware that they work at a confessional private school. People of the Institute represent the schools philosophy and in places where there are no longer any Brothers, the term “Lasallian” is used historically and in a way that is “generally understood to be Christian”. Unfortunately, this shows a lack of knowledge of the history of the Institute and its underlying philosophy and – as can be seen in the survey – not every staff member feels obliged to change something here. Referring to Leo Tolstoy¹¹⁰ (who also built village schools for the poor population!), the conclusion can only be to stimulate individual motivation. First and foremost, this relates to the platforms and initiatives that already run Lasallian educational and training courses. They must transfer the impetus to the staff members. However, the Institute should steer the impetus itself, both in terms of strength and frequency. We must not forget that these are schools that started out as Institute schools and – if we can all agree – should remain so, even if there are no members of the Institute left there.

6.2. Forecast

If we assume – and according to the findings here we have to – that “worldly” layman will be responsible for continuing the mission ascribed to by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the future, the question remains how the individual schools can bring these issues to life. There is a basic willingness of the “worldly” staff members to do this. The organisational structures created by the Institute are largely in place and may already be used. However, only the school provider can require and, subsequently, make it possible to create a binding “obligation” to make a “Lasallian” commitment in the future. Losing the Institute brings considerable uncertainty for this term, which could call into question all efforts and achievements made in this direction up to now.

The resulting “Lasallian” heritage stems – as described above – from the historical understanding, which inspires the everyday pedagogical life of laymen and confers meaning to the individual’s call to work. Once the connection to the Brothers is lost, then there will be no connection to the Lasallian origin and the meaningful sources. Consequently, most staff members view the presence of the Brothers as something of a guarantee for the continued existence of Lasallian values – but also for the individual schools themselves. If staff members sense occupational and potentially existential uncertainties surrounding a change in the school management, these are real concerns that may have an effect on the quality and attractiveness of the school. It must be clear to us staff members that occupational security may primarily be

¹¹⁰ Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910): “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

created by ensuring the ability of our school to set itself apart in terms of quality. The De La Salle School must remain something special and also be a benchmark for other schools in the future. 119

People “are getting used to” the idea of a “Brotherless” School. This becomes evident in how the school is described, where the original “The Brothers’ school and home” (*Heimschulen der Schulbrüder*) have become De La Salle schools. Lasallian works will then become a personal and individual matter for Laymen, as we can see with Germany’s example. Teachers and educators act in the spirit of De La Salle in the Institute and, moreover, take part in various Lasallian events (see LAACCE). However this is normally in the face of latent resistance or indifference on the part of colleagues, the school provider or school authorities.

We may wonder if emphasising the Lasallian school day is recognised as a benefit by its management (potentially over commercial competitors), or if Lasallian commitment will be dependent on private initiatives that develop principles during leisure time and, in the best case, are tolerated during school hours. It is up to us staff members to explain and show school managers who are unfamiliar with De La Salle what the added value is of a Lasallian attitude and a real Lasallian community. We must ensure the necessary theoretical basis for these ourselves by rolling up our sleeves and acquiring them. The preliminary work has already been done thanks to those responsible in the province. Let us build on this and go down this path together.

... “*Because now is the time...*”¹¹¹

Annex

- I. Questionnaire – Heads of Schools
- II. Questionnaire _Staff
- III. Graphs_ Heads of Schools
- IV. Graphs_Staff

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