

Fr. Marcelo Farfán, sdb
Editor

SALESIAN CHARISM AND HIGHER EDUCATION



Instituciones Salesianas de Educación Superior
Universidad Politécnica Salesiana

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AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

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Instituciones
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de Educación
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Presentation

It is with great joy that I write the following lines as an introduction to the present volume. In these last years that the Congregation has called me in this ministry of accompanying and animating the Department for Youth Ministry, I discovered that one of the central sectors that deserved dedication and close accompaniment is that of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS). In many ways, together with the qualified help of so many collaborators, we did our best to sustain the process through continued reflection and planning. This journey still benefits from the initial vision and encouragement of the late Rector Major, Fr. Juan Edmundo Vecchi sdb and the tireless commitment of Fr Carlos Garulo sdb. The continuing process has also seen the valid and qualified contribution of Bro. Mario Olmos and, at present, thanks to Fr Marcelo Farfán, both of whom have further enhanced and still are contributing to this journey, consolidating the basis for future development and growth of the mission.

As the titles of the various contributions witness, we are at a stage of a process which is alive and forward looking, since this journey is constantly growing in its educative and pastoral intent. Within the Salesian mission, the university and higher institutes of education offer a privileged space where young people are accompanied to achieve their full potential.

The Salesian Congregation, looking to the young as the “theological place”, remains committed all over the world to ac-

company them so as through the experience of higher education they achieve their desire for a better future.

Higher education is a privileged place which coincides with that period of the life of the youth when fundamental decisions are made. It is that period of their life where more than ever the need for adult and mature educators is felt. It is a period of their life where the young are expecting us to journey with them towards destinations of human, spiritual and professional growth and fulfilment.

All this can be done if we as Salesians of Don Bosco continue to strengthen our desire and determination towards a clearer and more pronounced identity: educators with the heart of the good shepherd. This is our educative and pastoral heritage, it is our DNA: a clear option for young people from the working classes, accompanying them, educating them because we acknowledge that they have every right to benefit from people, experiences and institutions that clearly express the Salesian charism for their own growth.

Salesian higher education, being a home that welcomes the young, is also a place animated by a dedicated academic community, committed to achieving professional goals. It is an environment where the young person remains an active agent and not a number in a system.

The present volume is clear testimony that this experience is an on-going one. Education is a constant process that needs to be examined in a continuous manner. It is a process that needs to read the signs of the times, and through a process of study, reflection and discernment is called to give answers and proposals that facilitate young people's integral growth.

This constant and continuous commitment is one of the main areas of attention of the IUS, both on a world level, but also on a regional level. The various IUS institutions are continuously

consolidating a process of evaluation of their policies and projects. They are engaged in a process that evaluates not only the quantitative and qualitative growth of institutions, but also the full accomplishment of the educational-pastoral purpose, according to the characteristics of Salesian pedagogy and spirituality.

Along with this charismatic emphasis, professional and prophetic, educational and pastoral, particular attention is also being dedicated to the context and culture in which young people find themselves both during their learning experience as much as the challenges they will face in the future. Interacting with one's cultural identity, social challenges and future scenarios is a call to render education much more of teaching and information, but a process of integral growth within a holistic vision of time and space.

I conclude with a phrase by Pope Francis in one of his speeches on education:

To educate is an act of love, it is to give life. And love is demanding, it calls for the best resources, for a reawakening of the passion to begin this path patiently with young people. The educator in Catholic schools must be, first and foremost, competent and qualified but, at the same time, someone who is rich in humanity and capable of being with young people in a style of pedagogy that helps promote their human and spiritual growth. Youth are in need of quality teaching along with values that are not only articulated but witnessed to. Consistency is an indispensable factor in the education of young people! Consistency! We cannot grow and we cannot educate without consistency: consistency and witness! (February 13, 2014).

May these words be an encouragement and strength to move on in this journey.

Fr. Fabio Attard, sdb
Councillor for Youth Ministry

Introduction

The Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) are an important part of the presence of the Salesians of Don Bosco among the young people in the university world. Its mission is to “promote the integral development of the young person by means of the assimilation and the critical elaboration of the culture and through the education in the faith, with a view to the Christian transformation of the society” (Regulation, 13).

The IUS as an organic sector of the Salesian mission, articulated in a network organized worldwide, was created in the year 1997 by Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi, Rector Major of the Salesians (1996-2002). These twenty years have offered us the opportunity to reflect the process lived in an educational area that is recent for the children of Don Bosco.

The VII IUS General Assembly held in Rome from July 04 to July 9, 2016, identified a triple challenge for our institutions: to ensure the quality of their formative and cultural proposal; to guarantee the fulfillment of the educational pastoral purpose according to the Salesian charismatic identity; and to achieve an economic and financial sustainability that ensures their continuity in the time.

In summary, it identified the need to “define a model of being present in higher education” (Policies, 10), reason for which one of the policies calls for “ensuring continuous reflection and

deepening of the identity and mission of the Salesian presence in higher education” (Policy I, 22).

In these two decades, there has been a constant concern to strengthen the Catholic and Salesian identity of IUS. For the same reason, this experience, although short, has allowed us to have something to say about how we have developed our charismatic identity, challenged by university institutionalality. However, there are more questions than certainties.

On the other hand, we recognize that we still do not have a Salesian tradition in the university world, but because of this, the responsibility of these first generations of Salesians and laymen committed to higher education is very important. We need to generate a Salesian university culture that is the result not only of experience, but especially on analyzing how we are doing higher education. The main aspect of this challenge is to think about the important relationship of Salesian Charism and the university world.

IUS want to be an educational project inspired by the values of the gospel and in the Salesian pedagogy born of the preventive system lived by Don Bosco. IUS pretend to be characterized by academic communities that educate and unified around a clearly defined institutional project to the service of the young people, especially of popular sectors, with a clear educational-pastoral and animated purpose and accompanied by pastoral ministry.

From these motivations presented, the initiative arises to show in a text the reflection, the experiences and the challenges to which the Salesian higher education is responding at this historical moment.

Thus, this publication aims to contribute to the reflection and deepening of the identity and mission of the Salesian presence in

higher education from the process developed in the IUS during the last two decades.

The priority audience is the Salesian congregation and especially the Salesian academic communities that make higher education. It is a “motivation” to continue thinking about the identity and the Salesian mission in the university world.

The contributions reflect the diversity of geographical, cultural, social, political, religious and linguistic contexts in which Salesian higher education is developed.

The content of the text presents a tripartite structure:

- Historical context of IUS.
- Identity and mission of Salesian Higher Education
- Salesian Higher Education in the various contexts.

In the first part Dr. Mario Olmos, sdb offers a systematic account of the rich itinerary through which the IUS have gone through in these two decades. The article gives a broad look at the historical process: origin, development, critical aspects and opportunities for the future of the IUS network.

The second part is a set of articles in which some of the most challenging nuclei that characterize our institutions are addressed.

Fr. Juan Pablo Zavala, opens this part with the topic: academic community and co-responsibility in the mission of the Salesian institutions of higher education. The author deepens on the meaning of the Educative Pastoral Community (EPC) from several questions made: Why community experience is important to be the subject of education and evangelization? What challenges and problems does the academic community face when it comes to assuming a management model? What academic community for these times of ethical pluralism?

Fr. Michal Vojtáš, in preventive system and higher education, develops this relationship taking into account the varied history of the IUS and makes it from the educational-pastoral needs of the young adults of the popular classes and the demands of formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco. These two sources allow it to raise a Salesian anthropology as a criterion for a Salesian higher education.

Fr. Francis Fernandez develops the theme of the centrality of the young people of the popular classes in the Salesian higher education. His reflection is the benchmark of the experience of higher education in the Indian context and seeks to respond to the challenge of how to serve the poorest young people and, at the same time, to be higher quality and self-sustaining institutions.

The issue is very important because from the origin of our IUS, the willingness was present to offer an opportunity to access higher education to those young people from popular classes and the world of work. It is mostly because the choice for young people of the popular classes is an element of the identity and mission of our institutions. In fact, the vast majority of our IUS are located in regions and countries called Third World, underdeveloped or dependent. Many of our students come from the middle and low socio-economic class and a lot of the offers and academic institutions are aimed at training professionals for a job.

Fr. Pascual Chávez in his article *The Salesian Higher education*. Its educational and cultural impact leads us to locate in the broadest scenario of thinking about education in today's culture. The educational task is presented as a real emergency that demands to be recovered from the logic of the market to place it in the dynamics of the person and the culture. In response to this challenge, Salesian Higher Education plays its meaning and its social impact.

Fr. Antonio Caño develops a systematic discourse around the understanding of pastoralism in Salesian higher education. From

the beginning, the author restores the thought of the magisterium of the church around a pastoral in the higher education, and then he delves into the meaning and scope of a pastoral with Salesian identity conceived in the specific context of higher education. He mentions the purposes, the traits, the subject, the dimensions and the people responsible for that pastoral. He concludes by pointing out the challenges that IUS must face in order to become institutions “in pastoral” and not only that they make pastoral.

This second chapter ends with the contribution of Fr. Ricardo Carlos about the subject of leadership and management in the Salesian institutions of higher education. The aim of the author is to identify those elements of leadership and management that can be found in the Salesian Charism and that can be especially valid when thinking about the management of higher education institutions.

The management and animation of an institution of higher education today is a great challenge for social, political and cultural contexts, either because of the growing institutional complexity in which it is developed, as well as the importance of securing an identity in its whole. For all this, it is important to reflect on the characteristics of a leader Salesian educator on the competencies, conditions, styles, options that require a Salesian management of institutions of higher education.

The third part of the book is particularly interesting given that the objective is to have an updated panorama of the Salesian presence in the higher education world. The historical motivations of its origins, the national legal frameworks, the institutional diversity and the cultural, social, religious contexts in which they are developed make the IUS have a multicolored, complex and varied panorama. Hence, they are an inspired and animated presence from the same spirit of Don Bosco. They are different expressions born from the same source and sought to serve young people.

The third part, as in the previous ones, have the contributions of those who have been and are witnesses and privileged actors of the process lived by the IUS in the different contexts.

This part starts with the contribution of Fr. Mauro Mantovani: The Pontifical Salesian University (UPS): History, significance and current contribution in the context of the congregation. Dr. Jorge Baeza presents the case of IUS in Latin America; Fr. A. Maria Soosai IUS in the context of South Asia; Andreu Moreno Vendrell and Carles Rubio García address the European experience; Fr. Ariel Macatangay presents the reality of the institutes in Papua New Guinea (Oceania); Fr. Dieudonné Otekpó collects the reality of Salesian higher education in Africa and, finally, the Mgtr. Luis Marques and Fr. Tomohiro Kojima present the experience in Tokyo and the Philippines through the possibilities of collaboration and synergy between the institutions.

Finally, I want to thank various institutions and people who affectively and effectively contributed to this editorial project.

First of all, the Youth Ministry Department in the person of Don Fabio Attard for his conviction to encourage seriously pastoral processes.

To Universidad Politécnica Salesiana (UPS) of Ecuador for assuming the sponsorship of this publication and involving the publishing house in all the publishing work. To the technical Secretariat for securing the institutional identity of the UPS that was the inter-institutional benchmark.

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Rome, October 03, 2018

Fr. Marcelo Farfán, sdb
General Coordinator of the Salesian Institutions
of Higher Education (IUS)

First Part

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Origins and Development of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education A Critical View of Historical Process¹ of IUS

Dr. Mario Olmos, sdb

Rector, Universidad Don Bosco San Salvador

Introduction

The Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) are a broad and consolidated reality in the Salesian Congregation today. Not only has its number increased significantly, but also its relevance and contribution to the Salesian mission.

More than the result of a deliberate policy of the Salesian Congregation, the IUS have been the spontaneous consequence of the confrontation of the Salesian mission with the needs of young people. They are the result of the Salesians interest in continuing to accompany young people in the after-school period as well as the effort to respond to the demand for higher education in those social and cultural contexts where the Salesian Congregation was already present in other educational levels.

Even though some institutions were founded before the 1970s, the largest number of IUS emerged during the 1980s and 1990s as a

¹ This article is an extension of the text originally disclosed in Wardison and Zacharias (2017).

result of the change processes that were taking place in higher education, transformations driven by the development of post-industrial economies and the growth of the services sector. As Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley point out, it is in these years that the highest growth in university enrollment rates took place in Western Europe and Japan, followed by the developed countries of East Asia and Latin America (2009, p. 6). It is precisely in these last regions where the IUS have developed the most.

After the IUS first twenty years of life, it is necessary to look at their past to think and draw some conclusions about the elements that have favored their development, those that demand greater attention and others that represent signs or opportunities for their future.

Origins and IUS Historical Development

IUS Background

The beginning of the IUS, understood as a network of Salesian Higher Education Institutions, can be tracked back to 1997, with Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi's idea of creating the service of a General Direction for the existing Salesian university institutions. This moment, however, was preceded by a series of meetings or initiatives that already reflected the Congregation's concern due to its presence among the young people of the university world.

In April 1988, a European-level conference entitled "Salesian and pastoral among university students" was organized by the Youth Ministry Department (YMD) by its name in Spanish, Dicasterio de Pastoral Juvenil) and the Vice Province of Salesian Pontifical University (UPS by its name in Spanish, Universidad Pontificia Salesiana). The meeting counted with the presence of some Salesians who were in contact with the university reality in several European countries.

As indicated in the volume published by the Dicastery and edited by Carlo Nanni, the objective of the meeting was to “discuss the Salesian presence among young university students and produce some material for the evaluation and qualification of the educational-pastoral proposals addressed to them” (1988, p. 6). The conference was prepared through a survey that identified the services offered by the Salesians to European university students. The data indicated that there were four different types of services or structures: assistance to groups of university students, chaplaincies, residences for university students and academic institutions at the university level. The text pointed out the difficulties involved in reflecting on Salesian University Ministry care, indicating two main reasons: because it lacked of a consolidated tradition and due to proper guidance in this field; also, because there was no precise information on the effective presence of the Congregation in the university sphere. The document stated that the pensioner or university residence was the structure that prevailed at that time and consequently, the reflection on the Salesian University Ministry should refer above all to this type of presence, even if other structures or forms of service existed (chaplaincies, accompaniment of university groups, etc.).

In the mid-90s it was already evident that the presence of the Congregation in the tertiary level of education was undergoing a profound change due to the creation of numerous institutions of higher education scattered throughout the world. Among the motivations that justified this expansion was the need to ensure the formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco, but also the desire to face the new juvenile-adult condition and to respond to the continuation of the educational process after high school. With the aim of reflecting on this type of presence and with the desire to set in motion a greater collaboration among the existing institutions, the First Meeting of Heads of Universities and University Institutes administered by the Salesian Congregation was convened. This meeting took place in Brasilia from August 12 to 14, 1995, and it was promoted by

the Department of Youth Ministry and the Dicastery of Formation, with the collaboration of the Salesian Pontifical University of Rome (UPS.) 18 centers were invited to this event, including universities and university institutes. As indicated in the published Acts (Dicastery of Youth Ministry, YMD, 1995) the proposal to establish the Salesian Association of Universities (ASU) was launched at the end of the meeting with the aim to ensure the continuation of these meetings and the connection among the institutions.

The meeting held in Brasilia was important for three reasons: a growing presence in the university sphere was confirmed, especially due to the increase in the number of higher education institutions managed by the Salesian Congregation; the need to continue reflecting on that reality and to have a policy of the Congregation for higher education became clear; and the opportunity to favor the development of this field and to take advantage of its strategic potential was foreseen in order to promote other educational-pastoral sectors unique to the Salesian mission. The idea of associating the institutions and continuing to deepen the Salesian presence in this educational level would be the basis that would favor the initiative launched by the General Directorate of the Congregation two years later.

The animation service of the General Directorate

The 1988 Conference about university pastoral care in Europe was promoted by the Department of Youth Ministry of the Salesian Congregation. At that time, it was under the responsibility of Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi. For this reason, it is not surprising that just one year after his election as Rector Major of the Salesians (1996), he showed interest in continuing to deepen on the situation of the Salesian presence in the university world and to ensure an animation and accompanying service by the General Directorate to higher education institutions under the responsibility of the Salesian Congregation.

Don Vecchi's concern for this new sector of the Salesian presence became effective in 1997 by the circular letter dated December 8 with the creation of the General Coordination of Salesian University Institutions (IUS). This letter was addressed to all Salesians Provinces, their respective Councils, and the brothers of the Salesian university institutions (Acts of the General Council 362, 1998, pp. 87-89) The implementation of such a service was entrusted to Don Carlos Garulo, who at that time was acting as a Central Delegate for social communication in the General Directorate of the Salesian Congregation (1990-1997).

The main task of the new position entrusted to Don Carlos Garulo was to carry out a data survey of the existing institutions in order to have a better knowledge of the real situation in the area. However, this initial approach originated a broader work plan through which it was sought not only to know the existing reality but, above all, to provide guidance for the entire Congregation and draw common lines of work for the development of institutions in this educational level. The idea of organizing the institutions and providing them with a Common Program was born as a technical instrument for managing joint work actions among the IUS.

Identity of the IUS and network constitution (1998-2003)

As I have pointed out, the first task assigned to the IUS General Coordinator was to know what situation each institution was in. However, it was soon clear that this goal would not be sufficient and that it was necessary to define the new scenario in which the IUS would move. This was how a more far-reaching objective was established. This objective was to define the identity of the IUS and to understand the way in which the Salesian mission could act within this identity. This concern was expressed in an action plan, the so-called Common Program 1, 1998-2002, proposed by

the General Coordinator and approved, after study and debate, by the participants at the II General Assembly of the IUS (IUS, Rome, 1998).² Since then, the work dynamics of the IUS will be organized around the so-called Common Programs, plans drawn up and approved by the General Assembly and executed by all the institutions under the direction of the General Coordinator.

From the work developed around the Common Program 1, 1998-2002, the concept of the IUS Network was configured in a practical way. This allowed to acquire a higher level of organization by holding a series of meetings at a continental level promoted by the General Coordinator. The practice of the IUS Continental Conferences was inaugurated aimed at promoting the realization of the Common Programs within the regional or continental context in which the institutions operated. The first Continental Conferences were held in the year 2000: in Quito, Ecuador, for the IUS of America; in Benediktbeuern, Germany, for Europe; and in Bangkok, Thailand, for Asia. During these meetings, a concern was detected regarding the training of personnel and the need to ensure their identification with the institutions' project. The reflection on these challenges led later to the organization of the IUS Virtual Course (CVI by its name in Spanish), which began to be developed in 2001 to benefit the IUS of America and Spain.

The Common Program 1 allowed the achievement of three objectives: to know the situation of higher education institutions belonging to the Congregation or under their responsibility to define their identity and to propose guidelines for their development. The first of the three objectives was reached through the preparation of the so-called IUS 2001 Report which was the subject of analysis during the III General Assembly held in Rome (2001). From the report and

2 Although the Brasilia Meeting (1995) was not part of the new initiative for the Salesian university institutions promoted by the Rector Major, Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi, it was considered as the I General Assembly IUS.

the diagnosis that followed it, the urgency to define the ideal of the Salesian University that was desired to reach was even more clearly perceived. The identity and the theme of the formation would become the nuclei that would occupy the reflection and the work of the IUS in the following years, as it is revealed in the reflections held at the end of 2001 in the Continental Conferences of Asia (Hyderabad, India) and of America (Campo Grande, Brazil). During this same period, we tried to promote relationships and work among sectoral groups, i.e., IUS groups working on issues of common interest. The first initiative was the proposal to create an IUS Group in the field of education (Proposal São Paulo 2002). However, such an initiative, as well as the implementation of other sectoral groups, would be accomplished only in the period following the Common Program 1.

The other two objectives of the first Common Program were addressed through the preparation and approval of two documents: Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS, Rome, 2003) and Policies for the Salesian presence in Higher Education 2003-2008 IUS, Rome, 2003).³ The Common Program 1 was closed with the presentation of both documents during the IV General Assembly IUS (Rome, 2003). In this meeting, a new action plan was also designed, the Common Program 2, 2004-2007 (IUS, Rome, 2003). In the letter with which the Rector Major communicated to the Provinces and the IUS the promulgation of both documents (12/02/2013) it was also indicated the relocation of the IUS General Coordination within the Salesian Juvenile Pastoral Ministry, action that allowed the IUS to be organically integrated to the other sectors of the Salesian mission.

3 These two instruments have become the specific reference framework for the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education. The policies have been updated twice, during the General Assemblies of 2012 and 2016. The current Policy document is in force for the period 2016 - 2021.

Institutional strengthening and global network development (2004-2012)

The Common Program 2 sought to make the identification of the IUS operative with the ideal of a Salesian university set out in the documents *Identity* and *Policies* that accompanied it.

Salesian identity and institutional development

The main purpose of the Common Program 2, 2004-2007, as well as the Common Program 3, 2007-2011 which continued the former, was to strengthen the Salesian identity and consolidate the development of the institutions. For this reason, it focused its objectives on three levels or strategic action axes: people, institutions and the network. It defined three objectives around these axes: to ensure the identification of people with the Salesian charisma and with the institutional project of each center; to ensure the foundations of institutions through the strengthening of their governance structures, the efficient management of the personnel and economic-financial resources; and to continue strengthening the development of the network worldwide and at the sector level.

The first of the three objectives was carried out through a re-launch of the IUS virtual course Cooperative Learning and Educational Technology in Salesian Style (CVI), which was already operating since 2001 and was aimed at the training of teachers and students and leaders of the IUS. Its aim was to create in each institution a nucleus of people capable of elaborating and animating the Navigation Charter that would be required by the Programs' second strategic axis. Given the development and success that the CVI had had between the IUS of America and Europe, it was decided to launch an implementation operation in Asia, for which a meeting was held in Chennai, India, at the end of September 2008. Such an operation meant not only the translation of the course into English,

but also its adaptation to the Asian context and the preparation of the teachers-tutors to ensure its development. From November 2001 to May 2010, 19 IUS of America, 2 of Europe and 8 of Asia participated in the CVI. Approximately 1 700 people enrolled in the program, and 1369 successfully completed the course (IUS Distance Learning Group, 2010).

The CVI not only favored the achievement of the strategic objectives for which it was designed, i.e., strengthening the Salesian identity of the people working within the institutions, and favoring their involvement in the drafting of the Navigation Charter, but it also promoted a renewal of the educational model through a confrontation of the Preventive System with various pedagogical theories, the application of new technologies in the classroom and a renewal of the figure of the Salesian educator both in the classroom and in the virtual environment. Lastly, for the first time, the course promoted the interaction of the IUS with another of the Salesian mission sectors by adapting to and offering the formation of the professors of the Salesian schools (CVI-E).

The second strategic axis of the Common Program 2 was developed through the plan: Ensuring the Foundations of the Institutions composed by three elements: the Program for drafting the Navigation Letter, which was developed between 2003-2008; the Integrated Human Resources Management Program (IHRM,) developed from 2009 to 2011; and the Program referred to the economic-financial resources, which was not executed. The high level of planning and development of this plan was possible thanks to the introduction of an external consultant figure, who guided the preparation and implementation of the corresponding programs.⁴

4 The Navigation Letter Program was developed with the advice and accompaniment of Prof. Luis Enrique Orozco, tenure professor at Universidad de los Andes and Director of the UNESCO Chair of Higher Education for Latin America; while the Integrated Human Resources Management Program

The Navigation Letter Program included the preparation of three guidance-management instruments (the Institutional Project, the Strategic Plan and the Annual Operating Plan) and the adoption of two management instruments (evaluation and accreditation). The drafting process of the Navigation Charter not only endowed the participating institutions with adequate governance and management resources, but also promoted the formation in each institution of a dynamic university community committed to the Institutional Project.

The Integrated Human Resources Management Program (IHRM,) on the other hand, was characterized by promoting the assimilation of the concept of competences as well as the valorization of the institution's intellectual capital. The Program was developed from June 2009 to December 2011 with the participation of 386 people, including managers, administrators and teachers of 17 IUS in America and Europe. The IHRM not only promoted training in a new model of human resources management, but it also encouraged the experimentation of a new model of shared learning among academic communities located in different countries and continents, making the concept of learning communities effective.

Development of the IUS Network at various levels

The Common Program 2 in its third strategic axis aimed to continue strengthening the network concept through which the IUS were operating. This became effective on two levels: the global IUS network, made up of all the institutions; and sectoral networks, i.e., smaller groups working on specific issues. The global IUS network was strengthened by the establishment, during the IV General Assembly (2003) of the Board of Directors of the IUS, a body made up

was led by Dr. Luciano Fiorese, an expert in this field and with extensive work experience in various companies at European level

of a group of rectors coming from different continents, who should act with the General Coordinator IUS as the Executive Committee of the General Assembly and were immediately responsible for the coordination of the Common Programs. The world network continued with its strengthening process through the celebration of the V General Assembly (Rome, 2007), in which Common Program 3, 2007-2011 was approved, as well as the holding of various Continental Conferences in support to the development of the three strategic axes defined in Common Programs 2 and 3. America and Europe jointly developed the Continental Conferences of Santiago (2004) Guatemala (2006), and Porto Alegre (2009); while Asia organized a single Continental Conference in Chennai, India (2008) in those years. During this same period, several seminars were held at a regional level in order to support the institutions in the application of the contents of the second strategic axis; particularly, the topics of the Navigation Charter and the Integrated Human Resources Management System.

If the global level of the network had the dynamic points of its work agenda in the General Assemblies and the Continental Conferences, the sectoral level of the network began to operate around a model of academic networks. For this, a small group of IUS (Promoter Group) elaborated an organizational and work proposal to which the institutions could freely adhere through the appointment of a delegate. These delegates had to meet periodically to approve and evaluate the group's joint work plans. The first IUS Group, later called UNIVERS-IUS, was formed in a practical way in 2001 around the proposal of the IUS Virtual Course. Other groups were created in the following years around the topics of engineering (IUS Engineering Group, 2005), education (IUS Education Group, 2007) and pastoral (Group IUS formation-pastoral, 2009).

As a result of the training processes promoted by Common Programs 2 and 3, the IUS Network was consolidated through the

strengthening of each IUS, but above all by the dynamic of collaboration and synergy that was established among the institutions as a whole.

The IUS cultural project and the regional consolidation of the network (2012-2016)

The IUS VI General Assembly was held in Rome in 2012. This Assembly marks a step forward for two main reasons: the first, the advances in the understanding of the educational and cultural mission that the IUS are called to develop within the Salesian Congregation and in the countries in which they are present; the second, a further step is taken in the consolidation of the network through the creation of continental animation bodies.

The IUS educational and cultural project

The deepening of the IUS mission was motivated by Rector Major, Don Pascual Chávez Villanueva, who in his speech during the General Assembly urged the IUS to develop a clear cultural project capable of having an impact on the societies in which they find themselves located. In this regard, he confirmed:

The IUS are more necessary today than they were twelve years ago when this network of university centers was created [...] Today, the IUS are more necessary precisely because there is a need to contribute at a cultural level, not simply to transfer knowledge, develop skills or teach the use of technologies. All this is positive, but not enough (Rome, 2012).

Taking into consideration the appeal of the Rector Major and regarding the document Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education, the VI General Assembly ratified the will of the IUS to have an educational and cultural impact, affirming with it that the effort and commitment that characterizes this type of presence

must ensure not only an impact on the lives of students, but also to promote a transformation of the societies in which they operate, this through the functions of teaching, research and cultural service to society of higher education institutions (IUS, Policies, Rome, 2012, p.13). Therefore, the new document of Policies for the Salesian presence in higher education 2012-2016, prepared by the participants to the Assembly, not only sought to give continuity to the work of consolidation of the institutions that had been carried out since 2003, but it also stressed the need to face two major challenges to the mission: to ensure the quality of the training offered to students and to promote an impact in the societies where the IUS are located.

A new level of network development

The reflection on the Salesian mission in higher education led to deepening into the challenge of developing the mission of the IUS within various social and cultural contexts. This meant preserving a series of common development lines which then had to be developed by paying attention to the particularities of each region.

This option required to abandon the idea of a single Common Worldwide Program and promote the development of a series of programs adapted to the particular situation and the needs of each continent. Thus, the VI General Assembly promoted a new level of network development by entrusting the institutions of the same continent with the task of applying the policies prepared for the period 2012-2016 to the regional reality. This task demanded a new level of organization of the IUS, which became concrete with the creation of the continental coordination, i.e., the creation of work teams of rectors or directors of the IUS conformed by a coordinator and a team of two or three people for each continent. The continental coordination, which would be chosen for a period of four years by the participants from each continent to the General

Assembly, would henceforth be responsible for encouraging the elaboration of the Common Program and for coordinating the joint work of the IUS of the same continent.

In line with this work perspective, between 2012 and 2016, four continental conferences were held in Asia (Kolkata, 2012, Panjim, 2013, Hyderabad, 2014, New Delhi, 2015,) three in Europe (Madrid, 2013, Prague, 2014, Barcelona, 2015), two in America (Campo Grande, 2013, San Salvador, 2015), and one in Africa (Maputo, 2015). The times and working methods responded to the needs of the IUS of each continent and to the diverse development level in which the institutions were. The synergy that was created between the institutions favored not only the development of common works at a continental level, but also the increase of bilateral exchanges or collaboration between IUS groups around common issues or points of interest.

The educational-pastoral purpose of the IUS (2016-2021)

The VII General Assembly of the IUS was held in 2016. It ratified the guidelines of the previous period and prioritized some lines of work in view of greater clarity of the educational-pastoral purpose of the institutions. These lines are particularly related to university pastoral care and to the preparation and insertion of new IUS, Salesians and secular.

The document called “Policies for the Salesian presence in higher education 2016-2021”, approved by the VII General assembly, it was evident the concern for the university pastoral by having included two specific policies on this field: the first is related to the implementation of the Salesian University Ministry model in each IUS; the second focuses in the need to promote a greater qualification of pastoral animators in the institutions (Policies 2016-2021,

pp. 27-28). The General Coordination and the IUS Member Boards have the commitment to accompany the process of elaboration and approval of the guidelines on Salesian University Ministry, document that will provide criteria and guidelines for the practice of a pastoral ministry with Salesian style in all IUS. On the other hand, the IUS of each continent or region have committed in the application of these orientations and in the effective formation of the animators of university pastoral through the initiatives that can be introduced in the common programs of each continent or region

The VII General Assembly also ratified the urgency to develop the second line of policy related to the identity and mission of the IUS, i.e., “to guarantee a significant Salesian presence in each institution, quantitatively and qualitatively, constituted by religious and secular people capable of guiding and animating a cultural, scientific and educational-pastoral project” (Políticas 2016-2021, p. 23). To this end, the General Coordination and the Board of Directors was entrusted with the implementation of a training initiative for the senior managers of the IUS, particularly, for the new rectors, directors or vice-rectors, who each year join the university communities of the IUS in the different continents. This initiative will become true in the short term, with a training program of two modules in which the university management and the animation of the Catholic and Salesian identity of the IUS will be addressed. The program will be developed initially in America and later it will be taught in other continents or regions of the Salesian world.

In order to apply these lines of action, as well as all those contained in the Policies document 2016-2021, since 2016 Continental or Regional Conferences have been held in Olmué, Chile (September 2017), for the IUS of America; in Venice, Italy (May 2017), and Bratislava, Slovakia (May 2018), for the IUS of Europe; in Lomé, Togo (November 2017), for the IUS of Africa; in Tokyo, Japan (April 2017), for the IUS of the East Asia-Oceania region; in

Shillong, India (November 2016) and Kurla, India (November 2017) for the IUS of the South Asia region.

The next IUS General Assembly will be held in the year 2021, due to the celebration of the General Chapter XXVIII of the Salesians of Don Bosco in the year 2020. This will give the General Assembly the opportunity to respond to the orientations and new impulses that may arise from the General Chapter in view of a better attention to the needs of the young people to whom the IUS are called to accompany.

Some critical points in the development of the IUS

The historical process of the IUS highlights a series of challenges and dynamics that have marked not only the development of the institutions themselves, but also the path of the Salesian Congregation in the understanding of its mission among the young people of the university world.

Some of these dynamics or challenges will be briefly mentioned. They deserve greater attention because of the role they have played in the development of IUS, or because they constitute challenges or opportunities for a better service to young people and future development of the institutions.

The IUS: a university network based on the Salesian charism

The most characteristic element of the IUS, as a university network, has not been only the institutional or academic strengthening that each institution has obtained as a result of the joint work but, above all, by having been endowed with a common identity that allowed them to distinguish themselves with respect to other university institutions.

Along with the various strategies and programs adopted to strengthen the university character of the IUS, a necessary action especially in the early stages of development of many of the institutions, the main contribution provided by the network has been to develop a path of reflection and joint training that has endowed the institutions of a greater conscience on his charismatic patrimony and on the value that this generates when applying it to the university scope.

In this way, the joint reflection that was initially developed has played a key role. It gave rise to the *Identity document of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education*. This has been extended with the reflection promoted by the governing bodies of the Congregation and which it has had a specific space in the General Assemblies. As a result of this journey, the IUS are today a clear and distinctive mark in the panorama of higher education in many countries and in various regions of the world.

A greater awareness of the implications of the Salesian mission in the university world

The process of reflection on the mission of the IUS, especially manifests the desire to have an educational and cultural impact on society, ratified by the VI General Assembly (2012), meant an extension of the reasons why the Salesians are present in the university environment. This option has favored the passage of a privileged assessment of the university teaching function to a better understanding and integration of the other functions of the university institution, i.e., the research and service to society.

This awareness gives account of the work dynamics and areas of action developed by the IUS, making them different from other works or sectors of youth ministry, both in the way and in the scope in which they project the Salesian mission. Among them we

can mention: the effort to promote a better knowledge of reality and to generate solutions to the challenges it poses; attention to the entire youth world, through research and the development of initiatives aimed at young people, especially those in difficulty; a greater commitment towards the territory through the involvement in projects that benefit the communities and the most vulnerable sectors; a wide network of relationships with local or national governments, as well as with organizations that operate in the educational, cultural or economic areas of society.

However, it is necessary to reflect even more on the implications and opportunities derived from the presence of the IUS in the societies in which they are located, as well as in the positive impact they can have for the development of the Salesian mission in the provinces to which they belong.

The IUS with other forms of Salesian presence in higher education

Although the IUS represent the most consolidated form of Salesian presence in the university world today, they are not the only way in which the Salesians have been present at this educational level. In fact, the IUS, as a network of Salesian higher education institutions, was created only at the end of the nineties, while the Salesian presence in higher education began to develop in its various forms since the first half of the last century, as it is the case of the San Juan Bosco University College of Seville, founded in 1945. Since then, numerous experiences and forms of presence have been developed. They have not always been recognized as part of the mission among young people, though.

Today, not only that the presence in higher education is part of the Salesian mission, but also the diversity with which this presence manifests itself in practice are recognized. As indicated in

the Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry, the Salesian presence in the university sphere includes today the work developed:

Through the management and promotion of academic centers, the management and animation of colleges and student housing for university students, and the presence of numerous Salesians responsible for directing, teaching, researching or animating the university pastoral, in institutions of Salesian Superior Instruction, ecclesial or public (YMD, Rome, 2004, p. 205).

However, it is necessary to recognize that until a few years ago, the process of the IUS was disarticulated from the growth of the Salesian presence in these other areas of the university world, particularly from student housing or university colleges. A greater reflection and accompaniment of these other forms of presence is needed as well as a greater articulation between them and the existing IUS.

The university world, field of the Salesian mission

The Salesian Congregation has recognized, through a modification of paragraph 13 of its Regulations, that the presence among young people in the university world is part of its mission. The path followed to achieve this has not been easy nor immediate. The main difficulty has derived from the long-term perspective of higher education, i.e., an educational level aimed at the elites of society and separated from the preferential mission over the impoverished youth.

The expansion of access to higher education and the demand for a higher level of qualification of the new generations by employers and society in general, convinced the Salesians in various regions of the world, about the need to continue educationally accompanying young people in this new stage of their lives. This, as previously stated, has been made effective through various types of

presence and structures at the service of young university students. The different ways in which we are present and currently existing in the provinces, as it was already mentioned, require greater coordination among them. In most cases, guidelines or a provincial policy on presence in this educational sector are lacking.

The responsibility of the provinces with regard to the reality of the university world should not be limited to those that already have some form of presence in this area, but to all the Provinces of the Congregation. If attention to the young people of the university world is part of the Salesian mission, it cannot continue to be considered as an option of some provinces. Each province should consider, within its Provincial Plan, how it will develop care for young people in the university world, not as an optional presence, but as part of the charism and mission that they are called to develop.

The role of the Salesian Congregation government in the network development

When observing the historical development of the IUS, one of the most evident findings is the mutual correspondence between the way of understanding the Salesian mission in the field of higher education and the IUS network development.

The IUS network creation and development was the result of a reflection process on the Salesian presence among young university students and a response to the need to continue deepening in the specific Salesian mission at this educational level. This process started as an initiative of the General Directorate of the Salesian Congregation, which has received an active and responsible response from the same higher education institutions and, in many cases, from the government and animation bodies at the provincial level. Without the service instituted by the General Directorate of the Congregation in 1997, the network would have hardly been

able to develop in such a short time and achieve the results achieved in some key areas of great complexity.

The development of the Salesian Institutions network of Higher Education (IUS) is the result of a successful process of reflection on the Salesian identity and mission in higher education. This process constitutes a unique experience of government and animation within the Salesian educational-pastoral model, which must be deepened and valued in view of its application in other new and traditional sectors that characterize the Salesian youth ministry today.

Articulation with the other sectors of the Salesian educational-pastoral presence

The full potential of the IUS Network lies in its articulation with other sectors of the Salesian educational and pastoral presence. The IUS will find a new dynamic element in the collaboration that can be established with the other Salesian educational sectors and structures (schools, vocational training centers, works for at-risk youth, oratories and youth centers, etc). This relationship can provide the IUS with a wide field of presence, reflection, research, action and development that other university networks do not possess, at the same time that it will allow the IUS to contribute to the development of the Salesian educational mission at the local, provincial and world level.

In this interaction, the structures of the government and the provincial animation have an important role which, as stated, are called to capture the importance that the presence of an IUS has for the Province and to promote it through its appropriate inclusion in the Provincial Salesian Educative Pastoral Project, knowing how to integrate the characteristics of each type of presence in a unitary

vision of service to the young people and to the societies where the Salesians are.

Future Perspectives

The experience of the IUS Network reveals itself an excellent example of the application of a new form of government and animation within the Salesian Congregation, but also as a good example of collaborative work at the university level.

Even when the results have been positive, the process has not been free of difficulties. Leaving a self-referential and isolated perspective and moving to a dynamic of participation and collaboration is not an easy process for any institution, since it requires a change of mentality and the development of actions that promote positive changes and generate trust. The gradual and strategic development with which the objectives have been set and new management and animation instruments have been introduced is believed to be the factor that created the space for participation, collaboration and full involvement of the institutions in a process that, without losing sight of the whole of the IUS, has been decentralized, generating greater responsibility of the institutions in the achievement of common objectives.

The network must still generate a greater level of collaboration and synergy among the institutions, allowing their greater development and the achievement of objectives superior to what each one can do individually. This collaboration is already taking place among those institutions that have reached a higher level of development and project objectives of greater strategic scope. It is to be expected that the change of perspective that is taking place in the institutions and the higher organizational level of the network generate new levels and collaboration and synergy between IUS groups working in specific areas or facing common challenges in

different parts of the world. This will be the best sign of the level of maturity and development reached by the network in the coming years.

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Second Part

**IDENTITY AND MISSION
OF THE SALESIAN HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Academic community and co-responsibility in the mission of Salesian Universities-IUS

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Introduction

The educational work, as a new presence of the Salesian Youth Ministry in favor of the young and the less favored adults, in the field of the higher education has good results because it follows a rigorous, systematic and well-accompanied path in the formation, involvement and co-responsibility between Salesians and lays for the educational-pastoral mission (Chávez, 2010).

Twenty years after the formation of the IUS network, it appears as a broad and consolidated reality in the Salesian congregation and in the university, and it is the result of a reflective process on the Salesian presence among young university students and the need to continue deepening its specific Salesian mission in this educational and pastoral field (Olmos, 2017).

The current policies and guidelines of the IUS consider the motivation and management of the universities, because they pose a great challenge to the management systems by the changes in different social, political and cultural contexts, and also by the growing complexity of the systems and models of higher education, and by the importance of strengthening the identity and specific mission of the universities.

IUS have an identity and a mission of clear Catholic inspiration and Salesian inspiration. This reflection tries to deepen about how such components of Catholic and Salesian identity are explicit in the university academic community in order to better understand the Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project (SEPP) and its implications when it comes to thinking and performing the structures of government, leadership and management in the academic community.

The study of M. Vojtás, *Progettare and Discernere* (2015) provides us the historical vision of the SEPP and its relationship with the Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC); the beginnings of the Salesian Youth Ministry that in its different moments and through the general chapters from the year 1965 to the present, has developed lines of action and readings with their achievements and limitations. It must be said that one of the challenges of the pastoral lies on the methodological field of the educational-pastoral planning by the desire of administering the processes and the internalization of responsible individuals with a future vision of the mission.

I believe that such mentality is generated and established in a co-responsibility dynamic and in the specific educational community of the responsible individuals, in this case educational-pastoral-academic that educates and evangelizes. In this area, I am trying to answer these questions: Why is the community experience important to be the subject of education and evangelization? What challenges and problems does the academic community face when it comes to assuming a management model? What is the meaning of academic community for these times of ethical pluralism?

The reading of *Salesian Youth Ministry: Frame of Reference* (2014) [FoR] was used, as well as the document “*ad experimentum*” on *guidelines for Pastoral in IUS* (2018-2020) [OP] and other contributions related to the educational-Salesian community (Tonelli, 1982; Vecchi, 2009; Calavia 2009), and in academic innovation and

Salesian management (Garcia do Reis, 2017), and reflections linked to the experiences of Universidad Salesiana de Bolivia (Chambi, 2016).

Importance of the Christian and Salesian community experience

From the Gospel, the Christian life is a call for communion. The community expresses, above all, a diverse family that is born from the spirit and constitutes the family of God. This is the prophecy to a world lacerated by selfishness and divisions. A family-community church of this kind is a support to the fidelity of the call and mission; but it is also the ferment capable of transforming a society, precisely for embodying in the world an alternative model of life.

The church is not an organization to administer Jesus's gospel. It is true that it has an institutional element, i.e., based on what Jesus has received and is indispensable: the announcement of the Kingdom of God. The church has the presence of the Holy Spirit who recreates it permanently. The spirit has primacy over any other legal principle of organization. Why? "No one can say Jesus is the Lord — a confession that constitutes the Christian community — if it is not under the action of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12, 3). The Holy Spirit allows the confession of faith in Jesus and helps understanding what happened to him.

In addition, the Holy Spirit grants the diversity of gifts, the Charism for the good of the whole community that does not break the unity of the confession. The church needs that diversity of services and functions, as the body demands many members who are part and create a single living organism. But there is no gift of the spirit which recreates the new man and his new community environment if there is not a task, a horizon, a mission. "As the father hath sent me also I send them" (Jn 20,21). The Christian commu-

nity is sent to announce the good news of the Kingdom of God and the salvation in Jesus Christ.

The appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ to his disciples occurred in a community context in which he desires and communicates his peace. Man and community in the spirit of the resurrected are reconciled with themselves, with one another and with God. The mission to which they have been sent is also transformed into a mission of peace. For a world in crisis fraught with violence, the spirit never builds peace but on truth, justice, solidarity, planetary coexistence with cultures and the people.

When peace is not a divine gift is considered as a harmony condition that is usually the result of overcoming a conflict. It is not to speak of peace as a set of “knowledge” but as a diverse “relationship” with the other; important service that the Christian community must make to the today’s world with the communion testimony of Christ. This is also the invitation that a Salesian community receives in its educational task: to be opened to the values of the world, to be attentive to the cultural context, with solidarity to the human group and the environment, and above all, to maintain good relations with all.

In the previous context, it is understood that:

The first essential element to perform the Salesian Youth Ministry is the community that includes the family, youth and adults, parents and educators, until becoming a church experience: a communion that lives the various gifts and services as complementary realities of mutual reciprocity and at the service of the same mission (CR, p. 108).

Don Bosco wanted to provide home and family to those who lacked it and raised the “family spirit” to host each one of its members and make them feel at home, with the possibility of a true affection, with the joy of living and working together. There, the

community is fraternal because what is considered is the relationships, the reciprocal help, the valorization of each one, the convergence of objectives.

In short, the importance of the Christian and Salesian experience is to be a community of believers to whom a mission has been entrusted; but not only subject of the mission, but also its first content, scope of the educational-pastoral action: “The first educational service that young people expect from us is the testimony of a fraternal life that responds to their deep need for communication, proposal of humanization, prophecy of the Kingdom and invitation to receive the Gift of God” (Chávez, 2010).

Therefore, if the academic community in IUS is the translation of the EPC (OP, n. 15), it is understood that:

It is not a new structure that is added to other management and participation agencies existing in the various pastoral works or environments; nor it is just a work organization or participation technique. It is the group of people (young and adults, parents and educators, religious and secular, representatives of other ecclesial and civil institutions and belonging to other religions, men and women of goodwill) who work together for the education and evangelization of young people, especially the poorest, according to Don Bosco’s style (CR, pp. 302-303).

University challenges for the academic community

The Salesian congregation and the IUS took the challenge of the scientific and academic tradition of the university structure by being part of the church they want to be “a Christian presence in the world University against the huge problems of society and culture” (*Ex corde Ecclesiae* 13). The university has a long history with its characteristics of teaching, experiences and contributions to the science and the research in diverse contexts of the world, as they

pose problems and challenges typical of the time and in the essential relation between the university and the society, and among the university and the church.

The University: community or academic society?

There are some people who consider the university as an “academic community” and others as a “university society”; in both cases they emit such opposition interchangeably. For the sociologist M. Weber, the concept of community is an ideal type of relationship based on the entirely subjective feeling of mutual belonging of the parties, case of a family, a neighborhood, a parish, a union, etc.

On the other hand, the concept of society lies on an adjustment of interests based on rationality, rather than on an emotional identification, i.e., it would be an “open society”. The philosopher K. Popper thinks that an open society is one in which individuals feel the need to make personal decisions, unlike tribal communities, dominated by kinship, friendship and family relationships. These do not differentiate between traditional norms or natural habits, and laws created by citizens on the basis of creative responsibility and justice, coupled with the need to respond morally to one’s own behavior, as is the case in a university because of its essence.

These perspectives may indicate that the idea of community presupposes the existence of common goods or values to its members; thus, their linkage is existential. On the contrary, the idea of society belongs to that of the social contract, to the extent that it is limited to the prescribed by the legal norms. Thus, the concept of society is related to the idea of civilized and progressive humanity (enlightening thought), and the concept of community has to do

with the organic and natural union of man with his homeland, with his own natural roots (vitalist thought).

When the practical solution tends to nullify one of the community-society poles, and divides its realization times, a kind of “labor restriction” is established with the logic of a social system. In other words, the university is working to produce culture and information and nothing else. There are no spaces for co-responsibility: whoever has information transmits it to those who do not; there is no “community” without participation, and this becomes an empty label and covers a depersonalized management, motivated by the strict logic of calendars, schedules and productive rhythms that only have to be fulfilled.

On the other hand, there are institutions with a lot of “free time”, triggering another type of participation: educators who are in the courtyard to be “equal” with the students, with a lot of party to recover the “hard times” destined to work, and in which untrained gratification prevails; there is a “community” with the apparent “mask” of participation, but with a professional detachment resigned to be into an unfinished improvisation and spontaneity.

The tension among the “community” and “society” can lead to extreme or reductive interpretations, to rhetorical amplifications and instrumental uses. When distinctions are extreme, there is a contrast in the dimensions, which make them unstable and difficult to balance: between functional needs and expressive needs, between efficiency and satisfaction, between the development of technical tasks and personal growth; but these should not be different but instead should be complementary distinctions.

In the IUS universities, the work of these years has been to balance and harmonize “community” and “society” with clear policies and proposals to ensure quality management, or at least it has been its goal and is a permanent challenge. In any case, a serious

academic community rejects alienation, anomie, rootlessness, isolation or depersonalization and distance from the social organization, which tends towards a formal technocratic rationality that only concerns about the organization and the bureaucracy that exclusively looks at the “productive” ends.

The university with a clear Ecclesial-Catholic identity

The university is constituted by a significant number of people intellectually qualified, who carry out research and teaching work and have communication channels that allow them to exchange knowledge and dialogue and interact with society. The church, in defining the Catholic University, points out that “it is an academic community that in a rigorous and critical way contributes to the guardianship and development of human dignity and cultural heritage through the research, teaching and the various services offered to local, national and international communities” (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* 12). The IUS still mentions the presence of the academic community recognizing the special responsibility of the University on the Life Frontiers: “The source of its unity derives from its common consecration to the truth, from the identical vision of human dignity and, in the last analysis, of the person and the message of Christ that provides the institution its distinctive characteristic” (OP, n. 6).

The activities of a Catholic university “must be linked and harmonized with the evangelizing mission of the Church” (OP, n. 7), represented by believers who work, study and live with an adequate spirituality in the university reality. It is the academic community who encourages and supports the identity of young believers to the educational-pastoral structure, favoring a better understanding of faith and opening up spaces to activate the educational mediation.

However, the academic community can live this experience in a passive way by making a pastoral operation of activities as “instruments” related to the Christian formation. Religious values and educational assets would be considered defined and closed, regardless the existence concerns of students who constitute a lively university community. Thus, for example, teachers of Human-Christian formation have a task to present these values to the young people and to support their inner, but their service is almost as technical “mediators”, because it is established in the structure of the university. The motivation of the academic community would be “occasional” for activities that remain constitutively individual and deductive for those who “knows and offers” to those who “does not know and receive”.

It has been said that the Catholic University is “the church that thinks”, so at least it should be observed through the formation of critical attitudes to the economic-social, ecological-political reality, etc., to be an announcement that also provides alternative actions. A church that thinks must also be a church that acts by seeking the truth in the good of justice, which cannot be exercised if it has the same domination and exploitation scheme on its members, and the sin structure that it denounces.

The Latin American Episcopal Conference, held in Aparecida, remembers that “the Catholic University provides an important aid to the church in its evangelizing mission. It is a vital testimony of the institutional order of Christ and his message that is necessary and important for cultures impregnated by secularism” (DA 341). In this sense, a pastoral action of quality, education and evangelization for a Catholic academic community means “to develop faithfully their Christian beliefs and actions, because they possess evangelical responsibilities that institutions of other kind are not obliged to pursuit” (DA 342); i.e., to live a Christian life that inevitably causes any possible Christian humanism to be born.

An academic community in times of ethical pluralism

If the academic community is essential for the educational-pastoral action of the IUS and a reference for the formation in processes and the maturation of Human-Christian attitudes, then these aspects are carried out in times and contexts of religious, cultural and ethical pluralism. Even though pluralism is an expression of maturity and responsibility, it is also full of ambiguities, secularisms and relativisms. The academic community by being the subject of the mission should try to have a balance between two extreme positions: the totalitarian and intolerant monism, and the relativism and permissiveness.

We are facing another challenge that can fragment the academic community. The existence of normative values or absolute truths is rejected in the pluralistic and relativistic perspective, therefore, the role of specialized authority of the educators. The subjective and opinion are considered values, “substantive proposals” are discarded, the educational dialogue will always be “at the same level” without opening up to the transcendent. There will be many “experts” and “consultants” in the task of searching the information that they have; their roles will never be proactive, and especially they cannot pretend to offer a “better” possibility in training processes. The result of this model is the agnostic subjectivism of values and a call to the autonomous creativity without proper foundations to support it.

In this case, the management of the training processes is based on the structured pressures and escapes from the personal responsibility, because the truth can be expressed only within a personal and social realization, otherwise it is camouflaged repetition of heteronomous orientations and instinctive inductions. When the subjectivism occurs without any norm, it allows a free path to all the structural pressure that involves all. In this educational approach,

it is not difficult to see the product of a conformist and ideologized society which always favors the most favored, and marginalizes the excluded. In any case, there is no academic community, because it does not know how to get the place of an integral educational-pastoral promotion: place in which each one experiences being accepted unconditionally, precisely because it is called to confront with a greater project that surpasses and judges it.

An academic community: participatory and co-responsible?

It is said that many attempts have already been done to form and create communities, because the topics of participation and co-responsibility have always been sensitive; but the academic models remain in construction and unfinished phases, causing disappointment and disenchantment, being the result of a diffuse cultural and ideal crisis.

The participation crisis leads the educators to a dichotomy: teachers-principals-pastoralists, two fields facing at each other: a practicable and governable on one side, and the use of all their enthusiasm in the other side. They dedicate their professional life to the institution, but with a rigid “give-have” relationship. Their hopes, educational creativity and participation are reserved to the family, in which predominate the most vital references. The real educative community will be more reduced to the extent of the man, more open to produce a new quality of life. The other represents only the condition of a fulfillment in order to be able to devote more authentically to the first one.

The co-responsibility crisis is a consequence of the latter. The educational relationship does not reach all people with the same intensity. For some people, it is a formal and necessary relationship, and they do not ask for co-responsibility but only for information,

and conform with little. Others educate elite of young people, particularly sensitive and culturally refined, enjoying a participatory and privileged attention. They work to produce and obtain something new and original, passively gratifying in the human and ecclesial fields. It is true that the reasons for these educational-pastoral orientations are primarily structural; but in this perspective, can we still look for co-responsibility in the academic community?

In the educational-pastoral processes, the ultimate orientation is towards the idea that Jesus Christ proposes, that goal is not possible to compromise. But, can we talk about full co-responsibility when young people ask other questions regarding their education and their faith? Co-responsibility is about the means and not the ends; is it enough to build the academic community? The responsibility is also empty if the decision of those ends is entrusted to a religious manager and the collaborators remain without participating and only have an instrumental presence or if the project is left behind to respect a single formal responsibility. At this point, there is a difficult relationship between education and evangelization, among civil objectives and pastoral tasks, between academic ability and religious competences.

The problem is very complex due to the fact that the academic community becomes a laboratory in which, without losing sight of the ends and the correspondence of means, different activities are done, new values are experienced and other ways of relating between people and groups with different characteristics, responsibilities and life experiences are tried” (Vecchi, 2009). Therefore, I believe that achieving the participation and co-responsibility of the various strata of the academic community requires a committed leadership that assumes the challenge of cultivating the sense of social and religious belonging of its members.

The sense of social and religious belonging constitutes a stable structuring of the perception, motivational and emotional pro-

cesses through which the person joins the insertion group. It is a minimum interaction of the individual with the group or community which generates a feeling, a preference, an interest, a not only juridical and theological attitude (for Catholics, baptism and profession of faith), but also psycho-sociological that is hardly quantified but necessary and not reducible to sporadic and occasional contacts. In other words, the acceptance of a value system, the beliefs and the models of the group proposed and lived by the university academic community is required.

What model of academic community?

The management of an educational institution is in the culture and is made up of attitudes (Vojtäs, 2015); it plays the art of managing a co-responsible academic community; shoring up and clarifying its identity and mission makes no one to excuse on participating and responding at all levels and responsibilities; otherwise, we enter into a normative and formal planning to a long non-efficient planning. Therefore, it is necessary that the model of academic community chooses a style of relationship that involves the university community with articulation, orientation and evaluation in their management system, because these are criteria as well as the educational-pastoral options.

The planning of a model in the academic community

In academic innovation and Salesian management (García dos Reis, 2017), a model of academic community assumes its strategies corporately, its pragmatic requirements developed to the pastoral, administrative and academic levels with non-arbitrary decisions, which determine and explain seeking the quality and excellence of their educational-pastoral actions. In this way, planning has a strong impact on the institutional culture with its presence;

in its realization, the important thing is that it is not “logically true” and “really false”, i.e., a strategic institutional planning that does not influence it simply does not work (Chambi, 2016).

From the planning perspective, generating participation and co-responsibility in the people of the academic community is “having an insight” to take into account and analyze the truths that are considered absolute and on which sometimes no questions are asked, those are “truths” or myths that are not discussed in the “tribe” to return to the prevailing attitudes, aspirations and expectations, the mental behavior models and the basic values on which the institution bases in its daily functioning.

Being in a continuous change process implies to have a clear image of who we are and where we are headed. There are points that strengthen the change vision, affect attitudes, and form the behavior, and the essence of every organization, such as the academic community, depends on the thought and interaction between the people who integrate it. Therefore, the main approach for strategic institutional planning is not an exclusive dependence on standards, budgets or organizational charts, but on people’s participation and responsibility.

An image of a differentiated model of participation and co-responsibility is inspired by R. Tonelli (1982), model which is applied to the academic community that is constructed as a “spiral” in concentric circles (cf. CR, p. 110), whose central nucleus elongates the sensitivity and co-responsibility towards the most extreme peripheries. This is important so that co-responsibility is not formally void, destroying communication and nulling the educational-pastoral responsibility, thus depriving the academic community of its constituent reason.

The academic community is seen with a proactive participation, also in its extreme nuclei of the spiral, participation with

differential intensity in the measure of the proximity or distance of the spiral center. Differentiation is not discriminatory and by its central axis it tends to lengthen those peripherals through motivation process, because the relationship between the center and the periphery is never in one direction, but it always acts with reciprocity, i.e. to give and receive at the same time.

The logic of motivation in the academic community

Teachers, students, administrative and the rest of the personnel are the ones who articulate the academic community into “concentric circles” with their animator leaders; naming them seems easy, but it is difficult by their conformation and real organization because it is not a matter of establishing a chart of a productive complex, much less to distribute responsible people to divide the tasks of management or better control of the communication channels, but to define the main orientations of animation in relation to the educational-pastoral processes. The center of this “spiral” is the priority for young people, as people and condition that we all serve.

The IUS with their academic community are called to accompany and to grow together with the young university students through an educational and evangelizing proposal. In such an environment, the academic community encourages and educates young people in order to be the protagonists of these evangelizing and educational processes. At this point, the synthesis and enlightenment is given in this text:

The academic community is made up of various Salesian and secular members who co-operate responsibly in achieving the institutional objectives. For its purpose, the academic community demands each of its members: the identification with Charism and the Salesian educational method, the attention to the reality of youth and the relationship capacity with young university

students; identification and commitment in relation to the institutional project; the necessary competencies for the development of university functions; the respect of the corresponding roles entrusted to each member of the educational community; the care and promotion of an environment in which the human is the center and whose dialogue and collaboration are the basis of the educational method (CR, 207-208).

The motivation of the academic community is carried out and developed in an environment where the community role is the one of a “believing community”, animated by the spirit and the Salesian Charism that manifest to be witnesses of God and the inspiration of Don Bosco. Those who have particular educational responsibilities and are part of “concentric circles” do not abdicate their role, but build and animate the training processes, serving existential contact with educational and evangelical values. The adult educator and the academic community, by its particular evangelizing function, based their authority not on the institutional relationship but on the competence and the life coherence, a testimony that assures a value that is culturally meaningful and existential.

In this perspective, the dialogue and the relationship between teachers and students, and between religious educators and other collaborators is an effective search; none uses the difference to oppress or abuse their power, but to share in a reciprocal encounter and dialogue. This presence can be expressed by the word “courage!”; is to choose encouragement as a model of educational-pastoral relationship. Encouragement means empowering each person to become an active and critical participant in their educational process that pervades their existence; through the global formative method each person is seen as an indivisible system and that vital unit stimulates the person to find transcendence. Encouragement is a style to which the academic community acts in a responsible way with the institutional project.

In encouragement, all IUS:

Must conduct research, coordinate teaching, disseminate knowledge and culture. But each one does it in an appropriate institutional project –with a cultural, scientific, pedagogical-educational and pastoral, organizational and normative nature– which responding to the demands of local and university reality, reflects the Salesian identity (CR, 209).

Criteria of the educational-pastoral process of the academic community

The academic community should develop in the dynamic convergence, around the values that support the educational-pastoral process; there comes the availability of the search, the attitude of reception and service that determine the minimum nucleus in which the community originates. It is not seen from a perspective of the quantity but of conscience of its members; at the same time there is a growing in humanity due to the joyful decision to welcome and follow God, who already possesses us and fills us with his love.

Assuming an educational-pastoral process means to be in contact with different proposals, challenges and problems with regard to their experiences. The encounter involves everyone in a relationship of giving and receiving. It is thought of “process” because all this happens at the time of the real existence of the human group to whom it is directed; and it is “formative” process because it is thought in a promotional operation of growth and maturation in the faith of those receiving it. It is not something abstract, but the transformation of an environment in which relationships between people enrich the educational-pastoral proposal (cf. CR, p. 112-113).

From the educational vision of evangelization, the nucleus of our Charism and pastoral pedagogy, an academic community subjected to the mission needs criteria and options that preside and help in the service and fidelity of the ones receiving it, i.e., the construction, articulation, orientation and evaluation of the educational-evangelizing action. It is pertinent the contribution of the Salesian Calavia (2009) who provides three criteria for the quality of the educational-pastoral action: 1) built on the reception and personal relationship; 2) articulated on the ability to raise questions and search processes in agents and young people; 3) oriented and evaluated from the life and hope that we provoke in the mission's recipients.

Creating based on personal relationship carries with it the recognition of the dignity of young people, not because of generosity, philanthropy or altruist reasons or to ensure sympathy and acceptance; to the example of Jesus, it is thought that the children, poor and sinful live with the dignity of sons and daughters that the father recognizes on them. It means attunement to their daily languages and experiences, which are vehicles to express their demands and desires, their unconformity and even despair; embracing those languages is to discover their most immediate needs, deeper desires and even the sense they want for their lives. The criterion provides what is a community of people and what it requires in the interpersonal relationship: a constant knowledge and empowerment of each one's life; it avoids a generic pastoral and offers a union model between being-know-living, because it sees the young person in need of the global and progressive development of all the dimensions (rationality, emotiveness, sociability, spirituality, etc). It means that given the situation of pluralism and ethical relativism, all those engaged in the educational-evangelizing project participate in the same conception or sense of life, the opposite leads to dispersion and fragmentation with negative impact on the recipients.

Articulating the ability to raise questions and search processes recognizes that it is not enough for young people to express their own needs and desires; the experience has shown that these are placed many times in peripheral levels of the person; and, in order to feed the faith, it is essential that young people also stand in the face of the most radical questions of human existence. To this end, it will be necessary to promote contact with people and situations that are sign and testimony of a joyful and committed experience of the faith and raise questions about the meaning of one's life. Therefore, a criterion that revolves around the conviction that the educational-evangelizing content is at the service of happiness and satisfaction of living. And in this task the road is never entirely done. Thus, the knowledge and values offered are based on life and its mystery, and none have the exclusive of life; this avoids rigid postures: both the posture of always staying in the question, without assuming any answer (common of the person who questions everything); and the posture of remaining in the answers, giving up new questions (showing lack of critical sense). It is important to have young people in touch with new realities, situations and environments, as something objective that is there and cannot be manipulated. To accompany in the personalization of the new experiences lived, allowing them to "alter" the criteria that govern their mentality and their feelings, and to favor communication moments of what was lived and experienced with a suitable language.

Orienting and evaluating from the life and the hope offered to the youth. There are more or less immediate processes inviting the simple "wait", such as finishing a career, getting married, obtaining a good job; and others that are identified with a "state of hope," which overcomes disappointments and failures exposed to the simple expectation of each day, and opens the way for the new and unsuspected. "Christian hope" arises and is optimistic in the Resurrection of Christ. It is the announcement that *life lived by love has a future*. In the risen Christ, Christians experience that all desi-

res and projects make sense and are worth addressing; the story with everything that happens on it is not “lie”, but it is not all the “truth”; instead, is a salvation story presented as a *promise*, with the strength and dynamism of the Kingdom of God towards “the New Heaven and earth” that we want thanks to him, who is able to make all things new (cf. Ap 21, 5), and that all that is done or ceased contributes to this history of salvation (cf. Mt 25). The consequences for pastoral action have life meaning. The options that preside over this orientation and evaluation remain in the usefulness and the immediate results; it is necessary to orient and evaluate from the life and the hope provoked in young people; it is the same academic community that lives and works with this hopeful profile, expressed in concrete details: the vision and more global assessment of what happens without falling into reductionisms; the positive view of oneself and others, avoiding deterministic or fatalistic life postures; it is to overcome the mere logical-scientific-utilitarian-immediate vision of life for the benefit of admiration, gratuitousness and trust. And it is to know the education of faith as the horizon and summit the *education for the full life*, reflected in its turn, in the participation and active co-responsibility that one lives in the academic community.

Conclusion

The academic community as the subject of the IUS mission accepts the own, agile or slow rhythms of a planning, which seeks the substantial consensus of all; it means committing the time and the energies to activate the relationship, the dialogue, the confrontation, debate and creating from its identity the educational-pastoral processes, a structure of responsibility to the new challenges.

The ethical and cultural pluralism not only affects the academic communities but it crosses it, marked deeply in its constitution and in all its operative expressions, with actions on the educational and pastoral processes, which if fragmented would make manage-

ment becomes individualistic and sectoral, with the risk of authoritarianism, manipulation and practical inefficiency.

At higher education level, IUS want to be academic communities that research, teach and project socially; moreover, communities that educate and evangelize with an impact on the management and governance of university works; thus, the solution is an academic community with a co-responsible and operational strategic pastoral planning.

Higher education and education to the faith is radically a personal process, also if it occurs in the “maternal” field of a university community, and therefore, with structural and collective resonances. However, the academic community believing in its identity is Christian centered; therefore, the starting point is not only that of the story of God, but also of its concrete manifestation in Christ, who is at the same time a concrete anthropological model.

Dialogue and interpersonal relations ensure dynamism and growth in areas with conflicts, giving them liveliness and making them open to change and research. In this vision, the academic community must guarantee a continuous counterweight of personal experiences: those who are launched by the evangelization processes and those who ask for a path of human progressive promotion.

IUS have a continuous renewal commitment in the project conception, i.e., to generate co-responsibility in the management, projects and processes, a communitarian sharing that discerns and accompanies, which is the objective of pastoral and academic educational communities. Deepening the Salesian pastoral model requires knowing it more and assuming it to launch an authentic “cultural revolution” in the congregation and society, which at the same time would be a true “conversion” to young people” (Chávez, 2010).

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Preventive system and Higher Education

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Ideal inspirations around the origin of Salesian higher education

Each Salesian higher education institution has its own particular history that characterizes it and gives the typical traits to a planning framework for the basic elements. Without an attempt to stereotype the institutions, I will try to summarize, not so much the founding histories, but instead the reflection nuclei and the situation typologies that have stimulated the origin of the IUS. Given the history of foundations and ideas, it seems convincing to mention two scenarios. The first part of the educational-pastoral needs the youth world, the second in contrast, responds rather to the demands of the formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco. The two are inspired, in a consistent way, in reflections that have different characteristics.

Higher education for young adults who are poor

In the west, the last decades of the last century were characterized by the possibility of poor young people to have access to higher education. The university was no longer seen as a sector for privileged students but as an environment of ordinary preparation to the life of a good part of the youth. In addition, it also shows an extension of youth and introduces the term “young adult” that

describes the young legally adults who are in the process of maturity and training from the gap between 18 to 28 years (Vecchi, 1998).¹ Especially in the European context, the Salesians of Don Bosco develop, in the first place, some reflections on the pastoral work of young university students from the years 80 onwards and only at the end of the millenium a reflection on the Salesian institutions of higher education begins that emerged in other contexts. In this process, a typical Salesian aspect is recognized — it responds to the needs of young people, different programs and projects are experienced, and at the end the institutional solutions are clarified.²

Juan Edmundo Vecchi, as Councillor for Youth Ministry and later as Rector Major, is one of the main figures of animation and thought about Salesian Higher Education. In 1988, he manages for the first time and in an organic way the theme “The Salesians and the pastoral among the university students”, by organizing a meeting in Europe (Vecchi, 1988). It is verified that:

The attention is completely focused on the pastoral for university students. Such pastoral action finds its performance in the residences for university students (beyond the ages, in some chaplaincies, not in the clubs or university groups. None importance seems to be given to the university world in the Youth Ministry (Nanni, 1988, pp. 162-163).

The most highlighted conclusions of the meeting in 1988 record some syntheses and motivations for the Salesian Pastoral in the “University World”:

- 1 General Chapter 22 in 1984 states that “it is important not to stop in adolescence... But to go further towards the youth, where at this moment interesting cultural and religious phenomena are checked” (Capitolo Generale 22, n. 71).
- 2 The foundation of Valdocco Oratory provides a series of “itinerant” activities, the extension process of its activities, the progressive logic of the foundation of the Salesian congregation and the approval of the constitutions are “founding” experiences of the Salesians (Braido, 2003, vol. 1, pp. 299-320).

- Juvenile age has spread.
- University studies have become more accessible to young people in the popular classes.
- University students are always in situations of abandonment and risk.
- College education is required from the need for continuity.
- The university world is a privileged place for the formation of leaders.

Among the forms of dissatisfaction or new poverty of the university students, two types of problems arise. The first is relational character: the abandonment to oneself, the individualism, the uprootedness, the anonymity of the university environments, the organization crisis of participation. Another aspect focuses around the problematic aspects of the university, such as: instrumental economic reduction of culture, strong competitiveness that induces fear of failure, uncertain future of workforce (Nanni 1988, pp. 40-41). In response to the situation, the authors of the meeting indicate the pedagogy promotion of personal accompaniment. In this context is also located the proposal of orientation with psychological bases elaborated by Umberto Fontana in the first years of the 90s (Fontana and Piccolboni, 1993; Fontana, 1994). Nanni (1988, p. 45) in his proposal has exceeded the pure mentality reactive to the needs, and proactively raises the pastoralism among the university as a privileged field for the pastoral vocation.

As a sociological reason, it seems to prevail in Europe the pastoral model of university students, rather, in Latin America universities or Salesian institutions of higher education are developed. The context, legislation and opportunities have favored the emergence of universities that have approached the popular classes in the application for a greater professionalization. Regarding the IUS J.E. Vecchi affirms that “the organization of the service is especially cared to create opportunities of higher education in the

popular sector and to occupy available cultural spaces” (1997, p. 43). Since it has started as an structured academic proposal at the environmental level, Vecchi pointed out the training of qualified professional teams, Pastoral and Salesian who know how to create alternative proposals regarding the dominant mindset: “Fulfilled the first organizational effort required by these initiatives, it is time to face, decisively and jointly, the cultural and Pastoral qualification, starting from the preparation of brothers and laymen”(Vecchi, 1997, pp. 43-44). A line of similar proposals and attentions moves the recent development of colleges in South Asia (India), conceived as higher education structures dedicated to the professionalization of young people coming from rural and popular sectors.

Observing the two differences in the accentuation of more instruction-tertiary popular education connected to an IUS and a pastoral of young university students through the chaplaincies or residences for the university students, the strengths and particular challenges of each of them are observed. Later, I would also like to analyze the approach to higher education with the formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Formation of Salesians that inspires and requires higher education

A diverse source of inspiration that links higher education to the preventive system is the tradition, theories and practices about the formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco. I think that this source is not only on the level of ideas, but on the level of mentality that structures projects, curricula and educational models applied, especially if an IUS is created with more or less continuity, from a philosophical or theological student who is (or was) directed to the formation of the Salesians. The following paragraphs summarize two lines of thought: one tries to conceptualize the preventive system in

the framework of the higher pedagogical studies, the other is offered by J.E. Vecchi in the context of the origin of the IUS network.

The Salesians of Don Bosco have realized the need to broaden the training with scientific pedagogy studies. First signs were recorded in the 30s of the twentieth century in the General Council: "Someone asks that theologians be offered general ideas of pedagogy from a scientific perspective" (Prellezo, 2016, p. 215). Later, during the rectory of Don Pedro Ricaldone, a project of a Salesian Higher Institute of Pedagogical Studies was concretized in 1940 in Turin under the name of Higher Institute of Pedagogy. The aforementioned Rector has highlighted its importance by stating: "the emergence of this new career is a necessity for us; it is a necessity for the Salesian Society, religious society of educators" (Prellezo, 2016, p. 216). It is interesting the motivations that the promoters of the ISP confer by their canonical recognition realized only in 1956. The authors talk about the incidence of the youth problem in the world of major transformations, economic, social and cultural; insufficient preparation of educators; the urgency of confronting the contemporary pedagogical world; the intensification of scientific production (Prellezo, 2016, pp. 218-219).

The idea of the need for higher studies for the formation of Salesians, which has begun with the sensitivity of some visionaries and visionary superiors, has been widely disseminated in the period of Vatican Council II and has aroused the theme of the necessary "qualification" of the Salesians. The General Chapter 19 that took place in 1965 in the new campus of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum in Rome, vehemently states that "every manifestation of our activity demands qualified people in the theological, liturgical, philosophical, pedagogical, scientific, technical, school, artistic, recreational, administrative, etc., field". The qualification is an "essential question for the congregation" which for the Chapter implies a reduction of the works and the multitude of work (Gene-

ral Chapter 19, pp. 5-10). Despite the insistence, many decisions of that period remain undo. Twenty five years later, Juan Edmundo Vecchi honestly evaluates the application of the General Chapter 19: “The reflection of the CG19 did not have a satisfactory operative translation [...]; the reading of reality and praxis did not experience significant changes in the base of the congregation” (Vecchi, 1991, p. 10).

The evolution of the need to qualify the Salesians with higher studies has its importance in the letter mentioned above, “I study for you” of 1997, refers to the institution of IUS (Vecchi, 1998). IUS are explicitly located in the formation context of a “new type of Salesian” that corresponds to the demands of “new evangelization” and “New Education”. The Salesian is part of a new operative model: the pastoral guiding, responsible for the Salesian identity of the initiatives and works, animators of other educators in a “driving nucleus”. It is necessary to be able to creatively interpret the culture to encourage a wide educational environment, to accompany with other educators processes of maturity and growth, to orient people and to interact in the social context. This implies updating the competencies (Vecchi, 1997, pp. 17-18).

From these ideal references, the IUS are not exclusively conceived for the formation of the Salesian religious, rather in the service of the younger generations, they have a potential for irradiation of thought and of a broad action and “must define its orientations according to the Catholic character and its educational philosophies in harmony with the Salesian criteria, becoming formation centers of people and elaboration of Christian-inspired culture”, surpassing the attempt to homologation of human minds under the directives of dominant thought. From this arises the need and urgency to “confront, with decision and community, the cultural and pastoral qualification from a high cultural and pastoral preparation of brothers and laymen” (Vecchi, 1997, pp. 40-44).

Salesian Anthropology as a criterion for a Salesian higher education

In the first paragraph it was considered important the synthetic study of the stimuli and the inspirations that have accompanied the creation of the IUS. The valorization of the common ideas arising in the historical process, although with particular achievements by each institution, allows to summarize a first draft of the Salesian University model:

- Popular feature of higher education accessible to the *masses*, which responds to a request for greater *professionalization*.
- The overcrowding of university environments is an occasion to develop a model that values the *accompaniment* and creation of a holistic atmosphere.
- Higher education is a time to give continuity to the formation of adolescents and to accompany them in the young adult age, in which their *personalities* are defined and they can face the *choices of life*.
- Higher education is a privileged place in the *formation of leaders* and has a potential to disseminate Christian-inspired *cultural models*.
- Higher education has an important dimension *ad intra*: The *formation of a new type of Salesian* called to be a qualified counselor, an animator and trainer of lay teams that interact with a wider cultural and social context than the single institution.

In the following paragraphs, these stimuli will be extended with the permanent intuitions of the preventive system delineating the main traits for a Salesian anthropology, taking into account Vecchi's recommendation that perceives "the urgency to create programs suitable to the situation and insert our pedagogical methodology, surpassing the simple transposition of contents and methods thought for other areas" (Vecchi, 1997, p. 15).

A culturally stimulating Christianity and citizenship

Higher education provides a particular perspective in the reading of the classic binomial of Don Bosco that expresses part of the Salesian educational objectives: “Good Christian and honest citizen.” I think that cultural significance can be the paradigm that illuminates the typically Salesian relationship between Christian faith and citizenship. This is also due to the fact that IUS are primarily institutions serving the truth. If thought that institutions of higher education are a tool to have access to the masses of students to be able to train them according to social change, it would be an instrumentalization with many negative implications.

Don Bosco’s idea of the relationship between Christian faith and citizenship is not radical. He is neither a modern thinker who proposes the education of a “new man” in view of an ideal³ society, nor a restorer of the “traditional man” of the best times of the *ancien régime catholique*. Don Bosco does not think the Christian faith and the citizenship in a dichotomous logic, he does not focus in the protest, but educates according to the construction of a Christian man who lives the authentic values of the believer of the tradition and the citizen of the new-current order. Therefore, it is rather a thinker and actor of educational synthesis at the level of practical wisdom, directed to the scope of the same old and new purposes.

The vision of a Don Bosco who lived a traditional Catholicism and was pushed forward only by the pressures of the innovative

3 The education of a “new man” according to a “new society” is typical of the currents of modern pedagogy: The enlightened people think the Society of Equality and Rationality (J.J. Rousseau); on the other hand, pragmatic industrialists see it as a production and free market society (F.W. Taylor); communists posed the hypothesis of a society of equality and of the planned collectivity (A.S. Makarenko) and nationalist ideologues see it as a strong centralist state around the idea of nation (G. Gentile).

society would be reductive. Instead, his educational model leads young people to embrace fidelity to the permanent Christian novelty and the ability to insert into a society that was in a transition phase from the old regime to industrialization and political unification (Braido, 2006, pp. 229-232). Don Bosco, male, educator has a vision that enhances the humanistic aspects of Christianity, promotes all that is positive in creation and in society and, in the meantime, evangelizes civilization showing that it can only be developed in an authentic way.

If Christianity becomes enclosed in itself, in the reflections of the past with an archaic language, it becomes culturally insignificant and also loses the aspect of the constant novelty of the gospel. Therefore, higher education should not see Christian faith and citizenship as areas for reconciling or balancing. This model of conciliation is “embodied” in the planning by dimensions (dimension of education in the faith highlighted by the educational dimension-culture). The challenges, potentials, and cultural and social tendencies of a society are stimulating opportunities for the Christian faith to rethink, apply, and become meaningful. At the same time, the healthy tradition of the “Catholic cultures” present in different historical epochs and different parts of the world stimulates in a synergistic way the culture of a society to go beyond, to rethink, to christianize contributing to the *Weltanschauung* Open Universal Catholic.⁴

4 I consider stimulating the reflections of Romano Guardini who taught at the State University of Berlin, when proposing the *Weltanschauung Cattolica* not as a “type” with others, but as a look of Christ on the world: “Essential Catholicism is not a type [...] It has been tempted to compare a ‘Catholic man’ with a Protestant, Buddhist, classical Greco-Latin, capitalist. This juxtaposition, and any other, is false. The Catholic man is not a type [...] he embraces all the typical possibilities, as he embraces life itself” (Guardini, 1994, p. 91).

It is still updated what Vecchi (1997) said, referring to the apostolic exhortation consecrated life:

The evangelical lifestyle is an important source for the proposal of a new cultural model. How many founders and foundresses, in capturing some of the demands of their times, despite the limitations recognized by themselves, have given an answer that has become an innovative cultural proposal. [...] The way of thinking and acting of the one who follows Christ gives rise to a true and own culture of reference (*Consecrated Life*, 1996, n. 80).

Recently Pope Francis has proposed again the ideas of Pope Montini who goes to the same line stating that:

The mission of Evangelization, which is typical of the church, requires not only that the gospel be preached in ever-larger geographical areas and to ever larger human multitudes, but be permeated with the virtue of the gospel itself, the way of thinking, the criteria of judgement, the rules of action; in a word, it is necessary that the whole culture of man be penetrated by the gospel (Pope Francis, 2018, No. 2).

At the present time, once concluded the great narratives that supported the modern *Weltanschauungen*, we could positively re-value the practical tenderness of Don Bosco that offers us an attitude of permanent validity. In the post-modern culture, strong and deductive thinking has shown its limitations, which can be occasions of development of a rationality that is integrative, practical, wise, ethical and believer. Catholic universities are called to be “a Christian presence in the university world in the face of the great problems of society and culture” (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, 1990, n. 13). In secularized or post-secularized societies, it is not a question of entering a sort of radicalized *Kulturkampf* but of being a Christian alternative that illuminates social and cultural problems by creating innovative synthesis more propositive than critical or polarizing.

Starting from the historical analyses of Braido (2006) and the Principles delineated by Vecchi (1997) we can characterize the Sa-

lesian way of living the intelligence of faith as follows. The point of departure is the will to see and value the positive aspects of reality. The objective of salesian thinking an integral synthesis is more a synergistic tension than an ideology that combines everything in a system. This intelligence of the faith demands some competences among which are: a capacity of intelligent reading is of the tradition as of the current situation; the ability to capture the phenomena that influence daily and collective life; openness to ever-wider future horizons based on Christian hope; the creative fidelity that lies in tradition and sees innovations in a logic of continuity; finding answers about the challenges of time and their traditions in operational projects; reflection on the educational experience with an attitude of lifelong learning; a rationality that enhances the theological thought, the “reasons of the faith”, and the “modalities of the faith” such as discernment, prayer, meditation, contemplation, wisdom of a good life, the three ecstasy of Saint Francis (reason, feelings, action, etc.).

A differentiated and realistic pedagogy between “honesty” and “leadership of excellence”

It is necessary to accept the situation in the origin of the Salesian higher education which, on the one hand, wanted to respond to the masses of the popular classes with a professional training offer and, on the other hand, aspired to form leaders for a meaningful social change .

Braido (2003, pp. 680-683) concludes his extensive biography of Don Bosco with a characteristic of Salesian work: the sense of the concrete. The fascination of the optimal and the *avant-garde* did not make Don Bosco forget the grandeur of the problems, the diversity of the starting points of individuals and the inadequacy of the media. A characteristic of the preventive system is to implement the “good” to an “optimal” virtual assumption that is planned

at a hypothetical distance. In Don Bosco we can find a differentiated pedagogy: there are the “Domingo Savio” but also the rebels, the undisciplined, the difficult ones.

The binomial between citizenship and Christian faith is not only culturally stimulating, but it outlines a practical perspective of the objectives of education: the working professionalism with the practice of the virtues inspired by the Christian vision of the world. The base of the Salesian proposal does not include the perfect Christian, rather the good citizen, the honest worker, the man of the people responsible for morality and civic sense. However, the Salesian ideal bets higher and wants to educate professional and ethical excellence to train the leaders in their professions and actively dedicated saints in the mission of the sanctification of World (Christian “man of eternity”). By connecting the studies and intuitions of Braido (2006) and Chávez (2007) with the pedagogical models of change, five levels of growth can be found in the preventive system based on an honest subsistence to an excellent holiness:

- The starting point is to help young people find the most basic reason to live. It means to make them experience the desire and the joy of living in a serene environment with the educational intention of offering the instruments for a sufficient development of the profession. Here, we are still in a transmission phase with the need to establish a minimum of training requirements that allow acquiring the basic knowledge for a profession and a human and “honest” life.
- The following transactional type proposal requires work with cognitive and operational schemas. Don Bosco referred from the earliest moments of his educational action of the paradigm of “enlightening the mind to return the good heart” (Bosco, 1847, p. 7). Education that takes into account the development of intellectual and operational capacities must

interact with the notions with the experiences to overcome the basic obstacles of ignorance and cognitive prejudices, as well as dysfunctional habits.

- The quality leap from transactional education to a transformative one does not depend so much on the educator's ability or the training activities proposed. The key is in the typical *family atmosphere* of the Salesian houses that creates an atmosphere and a rich network of paternal/maternal, fraternal and friendly relationships, able to instill confidence and openness so the young person is the protagonist of his own training. The goal of trust requires sufficient reliability from the educational community in which the explicit educational project is substantially confirmed by the non-visible project.
- A *transformative* education occurs at the highest and richest level corresponding to the affection, the tenderness lived, received and regenerated tends to integrate and to interact with passion in the search of the truth (reason), the good and the spiritual beauty (religion). In the transformative proposal of the preventive system, the synergistic reason-religion-love triad is an indication of purposes, contents, means and methods.
- At the summit of the Don Bosco integral salvation path is explicitly stated the educational objective of excellence: *holiness*. It is not only a message given to a privileged group but a horizon for all, as San Francis de Sales recalls and also the recent apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* of Pope Francis (2018). Unlike a transformative education in which the young person is the protagonist of his formation, on the horizon of holiness the implicit gnosticism and pelagianism are surpassed, and the young man is given to God following his vocation. In this sense holiness is an original work of the grace of God and the answer of the man.

The familiar and profound environment for a mission in the world

The aim of educating young adults as leaders of excellence for a society is already a successful conviction: “Through our higher education centers, we are able to offer society a cultural proposal of quality, enriching with human people, competent professionals and active citizens” (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 206). The latter for the following three reasons: listening to young people, psychological balance within the preventive system and deep transforming planning. Listening to young people and their expectations often reveals their sense of loneliness, the need for belonging, the lack of vision of the future and the difficulty of planning their own lives. Symptomatic and important is the message of the young people gathered in March 2018 in the pre-synod on the subject *Young people, faith and vocational discernment*. The message becomes the voice of many young people from the need to have a strong sense of belonging: “Young people seek their sense in communities that are supportive, edifying, authentic and accessible, or communities capable of valueing them”. They mention various factors, such as social exclusion as a factor contributing to the loss of self-esteem and identity experienced by many. The first paragraph on personality formation ends with the following words: “Occupied with these challenges, we need inclusion, welcome, mercy and tenderness on the part of the church as an institution and as a community of faith” (Synod of Bishops, 2018, Paragraph. 1).

These are symptoms of the fragility of the post-millennium, of the generation of the 70s occupied in the transformation of the world with a protesting modality. The observation may be pertinent to some extent, but it seems to me that young people express a voice of reality that makes us rediscover a lost balance. To engage in the world requires a “safe base”, a continuity of belonging. In addition, young people who experience their own identity, taking distance from their families, need a good educational environment and

not overcrowded and anonymous, rather of family type (Burggraeve and Schepens, 1999; Nanni, 1988). The balance is between a pedagogy of a cozy family atmosphere that favors the development of solid personalities who in the future can be agents of change. In this sense, the “Amorevolezza” of Don Bosco is not only the sympathy of being with the young and not only indiscriminate acceptance of their worlds. It is a strong love (inspired by the love of God), personal (directed to the specific person), participatory (liberates the internal energies), free (accepts the decisions, the autonomy of the other and the times of growth), disciplined (by the reality and by the values) and formative (it proposes high goals and horizons).

Therefore, the Salesian higher education creates an environment with the purpose of the reception and the social formation. There is a need to create an organisational culture of IUS in which Christian values, civil, social doctrine of the church are merged into an institutional project, standards and participatory processes in the academic community, education activities to values, training, volunteering, discernment and personal accompaniment (Cuadro de Referencia, 2014, pp. 207-212). Thus, in the preventive system of Don Bosco it is a priority to act especially in community. Braido (2006, p. 305) states: “The preventive system is valid for a personalized education and for an education of the “masses”. However, the community is the ‘place’ where the most clearly has been experienced and the preventive system has been set up, resulting in a long community measure. Here is the community balance of Salesian education that does not create anonymous spaces, but it does not fall into the intimal temptation of selective relationships that favor a closed narcissism in itself (Vojtáš, 2017b).

In this way, the ideal of Don Bosco can be relived: The man we educate in view of his active insertion in civil society is, before all and predominantly, the competent and honest Christian in the exercise of his profession. The vocation of all is charity and apos-

tolate. In the Salesian vision and according to the corresponding possibilities and responsibilities, all are called to a diversely expressed charitable and apostolic presence. Some contribute resources, others are dedicated to catechetical and educational action, others are called to create associations of “militant” Christians with the logic of “*vis unita fortior*”, others to answer, if God calls, to the most daring perspectives of commitment (Braido, 2006, pp. 245-248).

The ideal of the educator as a trainer-animator-companion of teams

As Vecchi (1997) states and also the “Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry” (2014, p. 206) IUS were born for the preparation of a new type of educator, religious or secular, who is configured as a trainer, witness, companion, animator of the community, leader and project manager. The various characteristics create a new polyhedral figure that is the result of the postreconciling development of the Salesian Charism and the specific demands of the educational world.

The post-conciliate organizational decentralization, the lack of restructuring of the works, the logic and the exigencies of the planning carried out in the educational-pastoral communities, co-responsibility of laymen, a required and not always given change of mentality and also the lack of Salesian staff are the reasons that the need to mature is summarized in the postcouncil under the title a “new evangelization” on the eve of a new millennium (Vojtáš, 2017A, chap. 1). In short, in the Vecchi’s indications we discover a series of competencies required by the Salesian educator of the new millennium:

- Capable of an *open, intelligent and propositive confrontation* with new phenomena to understand cultural tendencies, to try the announcement in the heart of life, to interpret new languages and codes of meaning.

- It has a believer's identity, a *spiritual strength and is able to dialogue* with others in a climate of freedom. This requires that faith and the reasons of our hope be understood and lived with foundation and transparency.
- It is a *pastoral counselor, animator of other educators*, “nucleus of conduction” and training of adults who are responsible for the educational work, which goes beyond the simple friendship.
- It has a *clear Salesian identity* in that it is the first person responsible for the Salesian identity of the initiatives and works. It has a more theoretical and practical knowledge of youth problems and education and knows how to propose goals and educational itineraries.

I think that Salesian higher education has a double relationship with the ideal of the new educator. IUS need such educators and at the same time should prepare them. The duplicity of such a relationship does not create two independent planning lines, but it is an opportunity for synergy within the pedagogical or training institutes, as well as for the creation of a specific Salesian formative method. Here I offer only some valid principles, at universal level, inspired in the formation model that is part of the Salesian identity (Schaumont and Loots, 2015).

Identity is not a static data, rather it is dynamic: it is presented as a process that does not form from one day to another. It is constituted in a vital network that is continuously modified by internal and external factors. Dynamism does not imply generalization — a clear identity is important in the way of addressing the outside world but also for the educators of the IUS. The clear vision of the institutional project strengthens the union with the work, it offers meanings for educational actions and increases satisfaction in a joyful experience. Based on the aforementioned model, I pro-

pose some principles: the history, the criteria, the language, the management, the practice and the environment.⁵

The relationship of an institution with its tradition may vary: sometimes there is a very strong relationship, almost dependency, sometimes a formal relationship with the inspirations of the principle. A work that moves away from the roots loses the identity of origin. For a Salesian institution that wants to remain 'Salesian', the effort to cultivate a dynamic relationship with the traditional and current contents of the Salesian educational-pastoral model that offers a set of criteria is essential. The tradition is not only the Salesian in general but also the local Salesian, the history of the institution is different if it arose in a school, in a higher school, in a house of formation for Salesians, etc. Local traditions are often the strongest interpretation keys than the set of theoretical criteria.

The criteria of the Salesian educational-pastoral model are not unambiguous words with an immediate comprehension and applicability. They need a language that reveals and forms their understanding and interconnection. The term 'language' is broader than lexical. Images, symbols, gestures, applications and narration of good practices are forms of language, and the person who enters an institution perceives, also without words, multiple, eloquent and interpretative messages about the identity.

Each organization based on a specific identity should be able to formulate clearly the mission and objectives wanted to achieve by following the road strategies and considering the criteria of Sale-

5 Each training model is implemented by specific people. In this sense, on July 6, 2016 in the General assembly of the IUS, the Rector Major, Ángel Fernandez Artie has asked for more presence of the Salesians in the IUS: "Few Salesians are not a wealth. If we want to collaborate with laymen, they want our presence [...] The Charism has its visibility also with the real people, present. Universities are a privileged field, so it is not enough to be part-time in college".

sian education. This formulation serves as guidance for the management, decision-making processes and the training of collaborators. The Salesian identity of a IUS is especially the way the project is made. For example, it is easy to write in the program or in the objectives of the institution in which the young people are. But, if such a thing is not recorded in the daily action and there are no standards, structures and resources for the accompaniment (youth to the center of the educational attention) or to the organizations of student participation (young people at the center of the educational activity), the reality contradicts what the project claims and becomes a necessary formality. In this sense, the organisational culture is a set of norms, values, rules of written and unwritten conduct, organization chart, calendar, organisational systems, motivational and communicative. The more harmonious and synergistic the organisational culture of an IUS, the more convincing, incisive and formative in the Salesian identity it will be.

Ideas and applied processes

The Salesian Charism is essentially educational and since the beginning it has been developed in experiences and reflections. The experiential part is not only a phase that comes “after” a deductive modality, but is fundamental and characterizing. In this sense, Salesian anthropology not only “applies” but is understood, specified and characterized by the application modalities. Later I would like to propose some ideas, theories and/or good practices that concretize the most reflective inspirations of the preceding paragraph.

The model of Salesian rationality as a didactic criterion

In a context of fragmentation of knowledge and of scientific disciplines, there is the danger that the areas and the educational dimensions are separated. In the postreconciling context,

the human sciences have been perceived relatively autonomous of theology (*Gaudium et spes*, N. 36; *Gravissimus Educationis*, n. 10 and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 7) and they have proposed various approaches in the methodological field. Following this logic, also education and Salesian pastoral could not have “a” methodology and has introduced the logic of education by dimensions (Dicastero per PG, 1979). *Ex-post* statements about the need to integrate dimensions are often a sign of separation of dimensions in non-communicating areas and activities. Also, in the reflection on education “pedagogy” is put aside, and “education sciences” are preferred as a multidisciplinary concept that often conceived interdisciplinarity as an ideal reference.

Considering the idea of the trans-disciplinarity proposed by Pope Francis in the *Constitution Veritatis Gaudium* precisely to overcome the “lack of wisdom, reflection and thought capable of operating an indicative synthesis” (*Veritatis Gaudium*, N. 4c) designated by Paul VI onwards, and continuing the line of thought of the Pope, and also the typical Salesian proceeding, we do not propose a new epistemological theory but didactics that embody and concretize Salesian anthropology in learning processes and personal training. Therefore, the strategy is not to propose new courses (like the courses of “Catholic doctrine” in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, part 2, art. 4 § 5 and CIC 811 § 2) but a Salesian way of educating, teaching and integrating the different didactic paradigms. Here I would like to exemplify some possibilities.

Cooperative learning is a teaching methodology that balances the aspect of the content education with the requirements of the training of the soft skills necessary for the interaction in the group. Besides being an innovative instruction modality, it has the advantage of implementing a Salesian discursive and narrative rationality (Pellerey, 2015). In addition, it has already been experienced as a Salesian education paradigm in IUS through the course

“Curso de Aprendizagem Cooperativa e Tecnologia Educacional na Universidade-Em Estilo Salesiano” (Botelho and Vicari, 2009).

On the other hand, other educational Salesians aspects (Christian faith-citizenship) can be driven by a service learning. The practical synthesis between Christian and civil values experienced in projects and activities of service or volunteering are not occasional and closed in themselves, but they become the motor of learning. Based on real problematic situations and making students an active part of the learning process, the clear separation between “volunteering” and “school” is overcome, embodying and reflecting Salesian anthropology. In addition, there are possibilities to link learning from service with interculturality and other contemporary challenges (O’Grady, 2012).

A didactic of the character education (or the virtues or values) in Catholic key has the potential to educate the citizenship and it is “possible to retake some educational intuitions of Don Bosco, included in the ideal of the honest citizen, and to present them in the most recent perspective, considering the current state of knowledge on the character of man and on modern societies”(Grz dzieł, 2015, p. 118. Cfr. Also the articles in Young Mission, 2018). Typical modalities of the virtue education denote some Salesian traits: a pedagogy of the community environment that embodies a tradition; experiential learning that makes it complementary to the moral dimension (moral character) and the performative dimension (performance character); a narrative pedagogy that has potentialities including the new digital natives and the new “digital continent” (Grządziel, 2015).

Multi-level isomorphic accompaniment

A proposal of differentiated pedagogy, if it does not want to remain only in the theoretical principles, necessarily implies a per-

sonal accompaniment. Also the more or less different innovative didactics are not methodologies that work “automatically”; they give ideas, stimulate, open horizons, but an interiorization in the life of people is given in the context of an educational relationship that must have times and spaces dedicated to the person. The attention to the person is a fundamental characteristic of the preventive system, in fact the Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry affirms it in relation to the IUS:

The integral human development offered in the formative proposal requires pastoral attention and the accompaniment of each person [...] This implies the development of a formation and pastoral model that guarantees the orientation and the follow-up of the person in the integration of the diverse dimensions of human, Christian, professional and social development; the explicit announcement of Jesus Christ and his gospel, accompanying those who freely wish to follow a path of growth and Christian maturation with itineraries of education in the Faith (Dicastery for P, 2014, pp. 213-214).

The problems of the recent and rich follow-up theming are different. On the one hand, the differentiation of the accompaniment styles and methodologies has not helped the expected integration of the growth dimensions, but has created a multiplicity of specific references (accompaniment, confession, therapy, coaching, mentoring, tutoring, counselling, etc.). On the other hand, the production of many texts on the accompaniment has multiplied the “requirements” for those who accompany, resulting that always fewer (honest) people think to be companions. A third complication comes from an idealized conception of freedom, in which the (false) respect of the person implies the impossibility of any follow-up at the organisational structure level. In this direction go the signs of Gesing (2004) comparing the abandonment of the classic dialogue (“colloquium”) with the director in the Salesian world, and the ever stronger supervision practice in the business field.

Considering this context, I think it is necessary to propose in the IUS a follow-up model in three complementary logics: isomorphic, diversified and generative. It is necessary that the follow-up becomes a “form” of the organisational culture of the IUS that structures in different levels the process organization and the educational environments. The institution defines some basic criteria (ethical, pedagogical, Salesian) for all types of follow-up, reason for which we can talk about an isomorphic organizational style —and there are different concretizaciones— but also a form of follow-up recognizable in all.

The *diversification* of the follow-up establishes different types of accompaniment. On the one hand, it is necessary a supervision between different organization levels, and it is an accompaniment of the educators in a Salesian leadership/discipleship (Rodríguez, 2018). On the other hand, other follow-up modalities will be developed by professional teams with a specific preparation aimed primarily at students: center of psychological listening, center of pastoral counselling, team of pastoral University for the confessions and spiritual follow-up, etc.

In contrast, the third logic *generative* in line with the Salesian tradition of the “Guardian angel” (Braido, 2006, pp. 310-311), implies that each one is potentially a companion, follower/leader, disciple/teacher. It could include the most informal and contextual accompaniment modalities such as mentoring, tutoring, peer coaching etc. One consequence of isomorphic follow-up is the need to establish standards and prepare training courses for companions at different levels.

The innovative planning of IUS as “a whole”

The curricular, extracurricular, methodological, didactic and also different levels of accompaniment are not sufficient for a good functioning of an IUS. These elements contribute to the formative

offer, but they can be fragmented, isolated and/or counterposed proposals without an institutional project. Since the years 70, it is reflected in the congregation, but is only exceptionally practiced the educational-pastoral planning as a modality to find harmony and intentionality in the different educational proposals. If the affirmation “the institutional project is a real constitutional charter that orients in an integral way to the life of the institution” wants to be authentic (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 210) the modality and planning processes should be more “integral” and less “fragmented”. Integrity is more understood as a systemic logic of convergent interconnections (Nanni, 2006; Vojtáš, 2017a; Rodríguez, 2018) more than integralism that emerges and applies it in a deductive and hierarchical way. It is obvious that this is not a new ideology — it is rather the harmonization of autonomy and a positive valorization of the relationship between hierarchies and collegiate forms of leadership (Kühl, 2002).

If education is understood integrally, and not only as a technical method, it becomes fundamental not only to know the situation and to react by defining the desired “product” (product paradigm) but also the processes that guide the itinerary that takes the work to its compliance (process paradigm). Finally, it is essential to overcome indifference with respect to individual people, to observe educators, their inner worlds, their pasts, their motivations, spirituality and vocation (identity paradigm). I am convinced that this passage is not due to the desire to “spiritualize” higher education by force, but it is a consequence of the evolution of leadership models (Rodríguez, 2018, pp. 53-83), of the limits of planning by dimensions in the Salesian field and the opportunity to establish methodologies that are really training and virtuous and not only techniques to achieve the desired results (Vojtáš, 2017, pp. 110-125).

The modalities of a “complete” design exceeds management by industrial-modern objectives with some passages that are more suitable to the world VUCA: volatile, uncertain, complex and am-

biguous. Respecting the specificities and the history of each institution, I think, it is advisable to value the *systemic-integral* and not exclusively linear thinking (cf. authors such as Deming or Senge); *transformative* and not only transactional change (Tichy, Devanna, Mezirow, Scharmer); participatory and community leadership (Schein, de Geuss, Wenger); excellence in change of efficiency (Pree, Bennis, Covey, Gardner); the *multiplicities of the "intelligences"* (Polanyi, Agor, Mintzberg, Argyris, Gardner) and *spirituality in the planning* (Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, Benefiel).

The institutional project balances the need for clarity of identity talking about the Salesian *vision* and *mission* that creates an organisational culture (Schein, 2017) and works in a differentiated university pastoral or "concentric circles". Thus, a Salesian tradition of "genial modernity" is preserved, announced by Felipe Rinaldi, third successor Don Bosco. He affirmed about the genial modernity which conserves "rigidly the substantial spirit in its educational method", and prevents us "of being fossilized in the incidental things and subject to changes with the time" (Rinaldi, 1927, p. 573). An institutional planning of this type maintains in a creative tension the constancy of the spirit, i.e., the balance between the fidelity to the fundamental principles and the creativity of the pastoral, organisational and didactic applications. Therefore, an institutional project is a flexible mediation that clearly defines the "Salesian aspect" of the institution accepting the "rules of the game" of a specific cultural, social and legal context.

In conclusion: the strategic position of the IUS in the Salesian Provincial

The fact of linking the proposal of Salesian higher education with the formation of the Salesians is not just one of the initial inspirations. I believe that this is also a potential for the future and for the Salesian identity of a Salesian academic center. The relationship

between the province and an IUS can vary from the positions of a distance through a simple respect and acceptance to a synergistic collaboration. In the last option, IUS could become a center of gravity for the “Salesian” scholars who will find other realization spaces for their competencies. At the same time, they can become irradiation centres of pedagogical, sociological, communicative and editorial innovation. The areas of possible synergy may include:

- Initial and permanent formation of Salesians.
- Pedagogical and Salesian formation of laymen who work or create volunteers in the province.
- Collaboration with the Youth Pastoral Team of the province.
- Research projects on youth, communication, new social trends, etc.
- Editorial projects or media communication at the provincial level.
- Irradiation and positioning in the educational and social networks (State, NGO, associations, etc.)

Such an election would imply investment in a career/Institute/center of Pedagogy or Training Science with the presence of Salesians (or representatives of the provincial) and a coordinated planning with the areas of Youth Ministry , training and/or social communication. The desired advantage would be an enriching relationship among the academic reflection, the liveliness of the youth world, the needs of the context and the concrete of the educational-pastoral proposals of the provincial.

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The centrality of the option in favour of young people from the popular classes in Salesian Higher Education

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Introduction

In laying the foundations for the Assam Don Bosco University (ADBU), India, the question in the minds of many Salesians was “how will the university reach out to the poor young people?”, “how will the university reach out to the Catholics who are mainly on the lower economic level of society?” Not only did the others make me these questions, but I asked myself the same questions. Launching a university is totally different from opening a school or training center, since the investment that goes into launching a university and making it self-sustainable in course of time requires a strategy that could gradually take us away from the needy and poor young people. However, there are perspectives that must be analyzed.

The very nature of a university requires a vision that embraces research, specialization, empirical and exploratory studies, field research, etc., all of which need professionally qualified faculty members, labs and hands-on training facilities suited to the needs of the times, all these needing prudent investment and a balanced-fee structure. “Self-sustainable” is not only at the back of the mind in such an enterprise, but it is in the forefront too, since

the question is in people's mind; and it is precisely in this context that I would like to present my thoughts on keeping the poor and needy youth in our focus.

Young people prefer to study with us

It has been ten years since the foundation of ADBU, and I rejoice to say that the university has indeed catered to the choice groups that we Salesians have always in mind: the poor, the uneducated, the Christians and the Catholics. This has been done, not through a systematic preferential option on our part, but an option that these youngsters have made. Why so? Because a vast majority of them have lived under the welcome banner of our Don Bosco institutions (schools, technical school and colleges, youth centers, skill-building centers, etc) Hence, choosing to enroll in ADBU came as a natural choice to them. It is to the credit of the Salesians that Don Bosco has become a brand name. Thus, St. Anthony's college, established in 1934, has become the first college in this northeastern part of India, a college that has set a benchmark in higher education in northeast India. The innumerable higher secondary and high schools that the Salesians run in northeast India have earned the confidence and loyalty of the young of yesterday and of today, and certainly of tomorrow too.

Does this mean that we have reversed the meaning of the Salesian mission? Not at all. My opinion is that not all our institutions can or should claim to be principally meant for the poor and the needy, nor does this imply that the poor and the needy youngsters are excluded from such enterprises; thus, one way of understanding such thinking is to situate a university within the educative process. Living in the vicinity of the Himalayas with regular stories of various categories of people conquering the Himalaya mountains makes it natural for me to state the percentage of those who reach the summit appears to be insignificantly small. Yet, the conquest is there, and those who are part of this conquest matter. Thus, the

small number of poor and needy youth who get admitted to a Salesian university matter. As mentioned before, our young students, those who are poor and needy, have gradually come through the preferences that we have made for them, to that stage and status of life where they are able to and determined to opt for our university, where they continue to experience that preference from our side.

A different perspective from higher up

The smaller number to whom we give the opportunities that they seek for, the opportunities which will become an opportunity to success, are the Himalayan climbers among the hundreds that are found in the base camp of our schools, youth centers and training centers, and it cannot but be so, since reaching the level of climbing the Himalayas is meant for a select few. Therefore, would not it be true to say that we cannot expect the huge crowd that are found in the base camps and at the higher levels, but only those who have, through dint of effort, reached that stage of higher education where they can finally hope to be on equal terms with the others who find themselves at the university level of studies.

Research studies have shown that the dropouts at the secondary school level are pretty high, and slightly less at the higher secondary level. The numbers fall drastically at the undergraduate level and only a small percentage make it to the post-graduate level. From this perspective, would not it be realistic to affirm that if we are able to spot a few of the needy and poor youth at the level of higher education, we have already been effective in the preference that we have given them at the lower level of education?

A different category of poor and needy

The human situation is the same in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The levels of human poverty and deprivation may appear

to be different in various contexts, but they continue to maintain their proportion. Thus, economic poverty, lack of opportunities, discrimination, intellectual inequality, physical and mental challenges continue to affect groups of individuals and families in all the continents; consequently, a clarification will have to be done when speaking of the poor and needy youth. A Salesian institute of higher education could really be catering to the poor and needy youth, and not necessarily economically poor; they would be catering to a section of the population who are deprived of opportunities due to the social strata in which they find themselves, due to the presence of elitist institutions and lack of sufficient institutions meant for those of the upper middle and lower middle classes.

The very nature of an institute of higher education requires a minimum standard of intellectual ability and promise, especially in the earlier years of its existence. It certainly is difficult to include those below a certain intellectual standard in the early years of such an institute which has to establish itself as a credible one, and once such a credibility has been achieved, including a certain percentage of those of lower intellectual performance it will not present much of a problem. Nonetheless, it remains a fact that the basic Salesian preference for those with less opportunities can be carried out and followed through effectively depending on the commitment of individual Salesians. I have come across Salesians who have a particularly strategy to ensure that quality and effectiveness are not compromised while giving this preference to the young people who need our constant support and encouragement, whether at the economic, social or intellectual levels.

The practical dilemma

Let me begin with a practical example. In the developing and non-developed countries, having a driver is not a luxury but a necessity, therefore, we might try to choose from among the Christians

or from among the poor youth, ultimately what counts is the capacity of that prospective driver to transport us safely at all times, and this capacity is not dependent on his background, but the practical skill of being a reliable driver. To me, this simile best exemplifies the criteria that should guide our decision in giving admission to a poor youth. Certainly, the simile is not perfect in its application; nevertheless, there are a minimum number of criteria that cannot be overlooked while admitting a needy youth to a course of higher education. Overlooking these criteria will ultimately result in both the young people and the institution being disappointed.

Having lived through years of higher education, I would propose that the Salesians look at these instances with a certain degree of detachment, in which emotions and sympathy cannot block the realistic decision that has to be made; and promises and good will on the part of the young people are not guarantee enough. Looking at the scenario from a scientific perspective, and applying the rules of scientific research, the Salesian in an institute of higher education will be able to draw up a set of criteria and measuring tools, and a personal and heart to heart colloquy with the young who fail to come up to the measure will not only enable us to make an objective decision, but will also enable the young to receive well the negative decision that we will have made in his/her regard. Here is where “reason”, as per the preventive system of education, has its role. It is not a justification for our inability to admit a youth to higher education, but a means to “educate” that young person to realistic goals and expectations.

Focusing on the primary, without neglecting the others

Higher education means education that has a different set of goals, target groups, perspectives and collaborators. This is truer of a university which has a more clarified set of goals. Research,

publications, seminars, workshops, conferences, consultations, entrepreneurship, etc., are the constituent components of the life and mission of a university. The road from elementary to university education immediately grasps the gradual process of elimination and purification, a process that strains out those not qualified. This is not a process of discrimination or preferential treatment, but a process that more or less naturally and gradually shifts its focus from generalities to specifics, from specifics to yet finer divisions. The ultimate goal in this process is not the individual, but knowledge and skills that will make their own unique and specific contributions to society.

Having still fresh the events of the football world cup games let me bring in elements of the football team of a country in connection with the topic at hand. The selection of the team manager, the coach, the captain and the players will all follow particular criteria aimed at bringing the country's team to the highest level possible, of being capable of maintaining a standard that will ultimately stand the chance of going in for the world cup. If the focus is as it should be in connection with the world cup, there is no room for any other criteria, whether political, social or personal; at the same time, no one in that country will feel left out or cheated of his/her due share, since it is their team, the national team, that will bring them the glory of the world cup.

Higher education, and more specifically university education, will have to be looked at from such a perspective of the formation of a national football team. The criteria, goals and standards for higher (university) education are not framed by the Salesians; on the contrary, in establishing institutes of higher education and universities, the Salesians are accepting to abide by and achieve the goals and standards set by the national and international bodies of higher education. The establishment of these institutions is the decision of a province, or a provincial conference, with the approval

of the general council; this, is an implicit acceptance of the goals, focus, and the criteria which may be quite distinct from the Salesian focus and criteria. Nevertheless, such an acceptance, similar to the formation of a national football team, will finally redound to the satisfaction and joy of the province and the congregation, and nothing would seem to be out of tune, on the contrary, with the Salesian mission and ethos.

Therefore, the question “where is the centrality of the needy young in these situations” will not easily come up for discussion, precisely because the context is different, exceptional and unique, and this context has been accepted by not a Salesian individual or even a group of Salesians, but by a Salesian province, or provincial conference, and with the blessings of the general council, as mentioned before. Making the argument more specific, let me speak of the establishment of the Assam Don Bosco University (ADBU) in Northeast India in 2008; the Salesians accepted the famous “Assam Missions” in 1922 (we are preparing to celebrate the centenary of this event) and since then it has been an untiring, valiant and focused mission of primary evangelization, education and development. Currently, Northeast India is dotted with Don Bosco schools (elementary, middle, secondary, higher secondary) and colleges, so much so that Don Bosco is the brand in education, and the password in all unforeseen eventualities. When the province of Guwahati (currently the provinces of Guwahati and Shillong) decided to open a university, it was seen as the culmination of nearly a century of contribution in the field of education, and such was also the understanding of the Rector Major, Fr. Chavez. Without seeming to boast, ADBU could be considered as the jewel in the crown, reason for which the statement in the first sentence of this paragraph must be understood, that the question of centrality will not only be not discussed, but might even seem to be irrelevant.

Conclusion

More than a century and half have passed since Don Bosco began his ministry on behalf of the young who were helpless and in direct need of a father, friend and educator. Contextualizing the ministry to the young in the context of the twenty first century could be compared to the efforts of the Church during and after Vatican II – an effort to be faithful to the gospel and relevant to the times, and this is what Salesians need to emphasize – fidelity to Don Bosco’s mission and style of functioning concretized in the various contexts of the developed, developing and under-developed countries. The option that the congregation made for Africa a few decades ago and similar options that continue to be made in favor of the less fortunate people is a clear indication of our fidelity to the mission of Don Bosco, being there where the youth need us. Nevertheless, the congregation continues to serve the youth in all its former centers, and in this way Salesians maintain a proper balance of the centrality of the option for the poor and needy youth in the various ministries that are carried out, even though certain centers might evidently lack the presence of this category of youth.

Salesian Higher Education: Its cultural and educative incidence

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“Only a truly open-minded person can handle crisis and comprehend where the world is directing, and how the most complex and urgent crisis are faced”¹ (Pope Francis, 2013, p. 51).

Introduction

In the culture we live, education in all its levels is undergoing a serious crisis, making Pope Benedict XVI to talk about ‘educative emergency’.² The cause of this situation lies in the profound mutation of values that are eroding the moral and natural principles. The man of the 21st century –and especially young people of the Western world– has lost hope in utopias, and is unable to undertake serious and long-term commitments by being lost in pessimism and skepticism, the reality and future of the world, by a sense of fatigue, immersed in the culture of the great emptiness characterized by the

1 Open thinking is a flexible thought that sees situations as they happen and knows how to evaluate the meaning and consequences even beyond.

2 “Today, in fact, every work of education seems to be increasingly difficult and precarious. Therefore, we talk about an ‘educative emergency’, and the increasing difficulty encountered in transmitting the basic existence values and proper behavior to future generations, as well as the difficulties involving the school and the family, and any other agency that pursues educational purposes. It can be said that this is an inevitable emergency” (Speech to the Diocese of Rome, June 2007).

absence of values, the lack of ideologies and ideals, giving rise to a weak thought. In turn, this engenders an ethic of pure and simple co-existence and an acute moral relativism; the collapse of stable makes the prevailing culture a fashionable slavery that is always transient; once the foundations of faith are eroded, people live in great confusion: it is the culture of the fragment where the “great tales” have no meaning, without more horizon than the immediate moment.

Seeking to respond to this ‘educational emergency’, Pope Francis in his speech to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile on January 17, 2018, was speaking about the “accelerated pace and the almost dizzying implementation of some processes and changes imposed in our society, which are causing fragmentation in people’s lives and social rupture, and he invited to launch an “integrative literacy that encompasses the transformation processes that are occurring in our societies.” He says, “It is an education –literacy– that integrates and harmonizes the intellect –the head–, the affections – the heart –, and the action – the hands. This will provide and enable students to grow not only harmoniously on a personal level, but simultaneously at the social level. It is urgent to generate spaces where fragmentation is not the dominant scheme; to do this it is necessary to teach to think about what it is felt and done; to feel what it is thought and done; to do what it is thought and felt, dynamism of capacities for the person and the society. Without it, students will not be prepared for the challenges that the near future will present to them, and the society³ shall enjoy the positive influence of transformation agents.

In his speech to the Plenary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, he had already spoken about the contribution of universities following the mission of the church in three aspects: to humanize education, to dialogue and provide hope; to grow and work

3 Pope Francis, speech at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Santiago, 17.01.2018

in humanity by helping young people to build a more solidary and peaceful world and offering horizons open to transcendence with a training that looks at the ultimate end and the good of societies in which today's students will have responsibilities; to grow in dialogue by teaching cultural and religious values without obfuscating or attenuating the own identity of the inspiration of the Gospel. A dialogue with respect, esteem, sincerity in listening, with the desire to build bridges, taking seriously the reasons of the listener and striving to understand them; to grow in hope, because training is to grow, is to have a life that searches the beautiful, the good, the truth, the encounter with others and to grow together. Hope is not superficial optimism or the ability to look at things benevolently, but it is to make risk.⁴

Gravissimum Educationis recalls that the teaching is at the service of an integral humanism and that the church, as a guide and educator, always looks to the younger generations in “the formation of the human for its ultimate end and to the good of a number of societies, from which man is a member with responsibilities” (n. 1).

This introduction has already provided the scenario in which Salesian higher education is performed today, as the rest of all education at its various levels, the challenges it must face and also the answers that it is called to offer to be faithful to its identity, vocation and mission. It is to overcome the risk of making the university simply an institution at the service of the market and to reduce its task to the fulfillment of an academic curriculum, to simple transfer the knowledge and development of skills; in other words, a simple training of the new generations to better establish themselves in society, particularly in the work, but without any preparation to answer the great questions of human existence in order to face life

4 Cf. <https://goo.gl/fh9p4i>

with lucidity and responsibility, and to collaborate in the transformation of the world.

Salesian Higher Education must ensure a comprehensive education that enables the mind, heart and hands, and educates men and women with a clear awareness of what is happening in the world, with professional competence according to the reality, with commitment to all who believe in a more human and fraternal world, and with deep compassion towards those who are marginalized and excluded. And more specifically, in a historical moment we are living, characterized by the tendency to nationalism, fundamentalism, the conflict of civilizations and religions and indifference, our mission is to demolish all the walls that separate us to build bridges to communicate, to promote a culture of the diversity integration, to make prevail the encounter on the clash, and, therefore, to generate solidarity to overcome the indifference. As can be seen, the big challenge is to return the education to its original base and to update its mission.

Education in culture and history

The history of people, the culture and the roots of the civilizations developed by them have originated deep roots. The “*paideia*” of the greeks, the “*humanitas*” of Rome, the “*divinitas*” of Christian civilization are some examples, and within its history and its cultures is present the secret, the courage and the dignity of the man; humanity and education have grown together. Certain human figures sculpted in the marble are still “a memory” that crosses the centuries and a conquest of the humanity. Trying to deny it involves reducing the history to images that cancels the time. But in that case it would be the end of man.

This is the drama of humanity nowadays: the split between education and society, which intensifies the ever-widening diver-

gence between school and citizenship. This paraphrase of a famous phrase mentioned by Paulo VI⁵, allows us to appropriately raise the serious problem facing education today and to outline a solution by integrating education into culture –its own and universal – and classrooms in the education to values. Only in this way can the school become a promoter and creator of responsible citizenship.

Education and Civilization

No society can survive without a form of education, at least rudimentary, because it is in education in which are transmitted to the young generations the richness of the scientific and technological development that has reached humanity over the centuries, the values on which it has been built, making it mature in humanity and the perception of a common destiny.⁶

Informal education – historically, the first educational model – is first taught in the family and then in the progressive initiation into community activities: kinship and neighborhood relations, different learning, and participation at work, at parties, in celebrations, in religious worship. Thus, the child acquires its language and knowledge, customs, beliefs, traditions, behaviors and social rules indispensable for its integration into the group; the educational body is always the society or the family.

With the progress of societies, education has developed with a specific function, entrusted to particular groups or institutions: elementary and high school, humanistic or scientific, and the uni-

5 Paul VI, Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “the rupture between the gospel and the culture is the drama of our time, as it was also of others. Therefore, it is necessary to make every effort in view of a generous evangelization of culture, more precisely of cultures” (n. 20), Vatican city, 08.12.75

6 Cf. L. Kroeber, one of the most famous culture anthropologist, cited by G.P. Murdoch (1987, p. 72).

versity that needed to continue this civil enculturation process, i.e., the integration of the individuals in their corresponding society at the time they assimilated the progress of the humanity. Formal education, linked to the educational systems of different nations, has the task of preserving the precious heritage of the past to meet the challenges of the present and prepare for the future.

The classical Paideia

The educational model of modern societies has its origins in the Greco-Latin and Jewish-Christian culture⁷. This school model has marked the West, as well as all countries that have embraced scientific, technical, economic, political, social and educational modernization.

The Greek ideal of education proposed 'citizen' humanism, i.e., a way of living in the city to the extent of man. This original pedagogy called '*paideia*' aimed at the formation of the integral man: body, soul, imagination, reason, character, spirit. The young person developed with gymnastics, music, dance, mathematics, grammar, reading, letters, science, rhetoric, art and philosophy. The familiarity with the greatest authors offered models of courage and nobility, and the young person began imitating the heroes. It should be noted that the Hellenistic genius created the intellectual, practical and artistic disciplines, many of which remain in the educational systems (grammar, mathematics, geometry, history, theatre, sculpture, music, law, rhetoric, philosophy, political science, medicine and physics).

Following the Greeks, the Romans became propagators of a humanistic pedagogy linked to classical culture. Cicero translated '*pai-*

7 It is true that the cultural traditions of China, India and Egypt have also produced admirable pedagogical forms in which our world can still be inspired, but their educational methods have not known the systematization nor the universal irradiation of Greco-Roman model diffused in the west.

deia’ as ‘*humanitas*’, thus moving the goal of education, focused not so much on the accompaniment but oriented to become a fully man.

The Christian teaching

Christianity caused in the Roman Empire a new cultural synthesis, in which the classical values were integrated and enriched with an evangelical vision of the world and the human destiny. These values focus on a vision of the human being and his transcendent destiny, in an ideal of family and the common good, in a conception of the work and the relation with the nature, in a vision of economics and politics, an idea of their own nation and their relations with others. This is the context in which human rights, democracy, modern science, representative state, exploration and exploitation of the Earth and universal law were born.

If we would like to briefly describe the typical values provided by this education model to the culture of the modern man, we should bear in mind the following elements: the vision of man’s happiness seen in the divine economy, the respect for the spirit and the freedom, the taste of creation and overcoming, the rationality of a universe to know and seize, the need to undertake and to distinguish, the search for excellence, the sense of competition and emulation, the concern for the city and human rights, the ability to serve the common good through competent work, a conception of the person created in the image of God and called to an eternal destiny. Classical education achieved its goal when young people were convinced, as Pascal says, “man surpasses man infinitely”.

Towards a new cultural and educational model

Paradoxically, the success of the classical education has led to its disorientation, because this pedagogy favored the prodigious development of knowledge that originated the technological revo-

lution and the modern spirit. Today, it is difficult for education to define itself in a marked culture by the pluralism of the convictions and the behaviors, by the relapse and by the rapid substitution of knowledge, by the socialization of the cultural goods, by the generalized schooling and the overcrowded universities, by the dominant role of the social media in modern culture, and the development of the quaternary sector that privileges constant innovation and investigation.

Therefore, it is not unusual that traditional educational institutions, school or university are really in crisis in a world with accelerated and profound change.

In the current state of pedagogical and philosophical reflections, it is worthwhile to underline some fundamental guidelines:

- It is important to re-define the objectives of education. The millenary tradition of classical and Christian education offers a valid answer, stating that the objective of education is the formation of a spirit capable of judging freely and integrating into a society with responsibility. It is a pedagogical contradiction to reduce the school to simple means of ideological reproduction, to a political indoctrination, to military-type training, or simply to the technical training required by the economic system. Even without denying the practical objectives of education, its highest purpose is humanistic; collaborating with the young man in the difficult art of learning to be a person.
- A delicate balance must be pursued among personal student training and encyclopedic information. The prodigious development of knowledge in all fields makes it impossible for a synthetic assimilation of all knowing. In modern culture, it is necessary to learn to live with an immense margin of non-knowledge: these broad sectors of sciences reserved to the experts of more and more specialized disciplines. Therefore, a common effort is required to perceive and affirm the

humanist and ethical purpose of the knowledge that is being taught. On the other hand, the school will strive to make understand and understand that knowledge must lead to moral responsibility and wisdom.

- *The family, as the first educational environment, and professional teachers have a place in modern society.* Under the pretext of a political, economic rationalization, the school cannot be moved to make of it an instrument of power, economic manipulation, social reproduction and ideologies. Experience shows that no educational project can succeed without the participation of the families, the competent teachers and the living forces of a culture. In one nation, education policy is primarily called to promote equal opportunities for instruction at all levels, putting state resources at the service of the education system. The role of stimulating, encouraging and coordinating the educational tasks corresponds to the state, but the mission of educating and instructing belongs to the human community, to the families, to the school, to the universities, to all the cultural institutions that form the educative environment.
- Although it is necessary to defend the humanistic perspective of education, it must be said that the old school has been able to favor an individualism that little cared about teachers and students in the social change. A review is imposed on cultures which now value solidarity and aspiration of all to the development and justice. If the humanistic education of people retains all its validity, it is necessary to deepen the social function of education. One of the deepest changes of our times is the conviction that societies can effectively be changed by means of a human effort. This requires an education to social responsibility, in a civic and political sense, understood in the broadest sense of the word, builders of the city. This educative aspect becomes especially urgent in a world searching for justice and universal participation in culture. Education is

conceived as a service to the individual, but also with a factor of development and promotion for the whole of society.

- Therefore, the capacity for social and cultural analysis is an integral part of all human formation. This does not mean that each of the students should specialize in sociology, but that they all need to discern in a context of pluralistic values and contradictory ideologies in a culture with accelerated change. *The formation of social discernment is a necessity if wanting to avoid the ethical indetermination and the loss of identity.* At other times, the environment and stable institutions helped individuals to place themselves at the heart of a culture but now, the responsibility has become personal. Classical education should aim to analyze the great literary works of the past; modern education must prepare students to analyze living cultures, their dominant values, their evolutions, their impact on mentalities and behaviors. Today, educating means teaching the person to self-educate them in an environment that is constantly evolving societies. This is the need for life-long learning, which has become an inescapable demand.
- In modern society, cultural pluralism has new and difficult problems to those responsible for education. A solution of false rationality induces certain governments to an educational policy that simply ignores the religious and moral convictions of the families, relegating these values to the sphere of the private. This means forgetting the primary right that families have to provide their children their own spiritual beliefs⁸ and inheritance. An educational policy that is respectful of

8 John Paul II, speaking to the members of the Pontifical Council for Culture said: “Often the conceptions of man present in modern society have become systems of thought that tend to move away from the truth and to exclude God, thinking that in this way they affirm the primacy of man, in the name of the supposed freedom and the full and free realization. In this way, these ideologies deprive man from his constituent dimension of person created in the image and likeness of God; this deep mutilation is now

cultural pluralism will reserve a legitimate place for religious education and moral formation. This is one of the most perfect results of 'education freedom'.

As seen, the management of a modern educational system will provide the society very complex administrative problems; but the greatest challenge is the moral and cultural order.

Culture in these times

Culture nowadays has been interpreted by the words of the last three popes, faithful interpreters of history. Both John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis invite to be aware, to enlighten our destiny, to give quality to life and to humanize relations, since there is no doubt that there are some deep gaps in the present culture.

One is certainly what is created between freedom and conscience. A great space of personal decision does not have equal clarity on values and meanings. It is enough to think of the drift taken by the conception of love, the exercise of sexuality, the constitution of the family (ideology of the 'gender') and the economic imperialism. The transgression is exalted. The West has a pending account with life and its multiple questions.

Another gap occurs between the conception of life and truth: this is not sought to inspire at the first time. We are in time of weak thought, pluralism and fragmentation, relativism and nihilism, definition by statistics: it is the problem of the foundation in which the private life and the society suffer.

And we cannot forget the gap between individual profit and fulfillment, and solidarity or common good: possession and distribution of goods.

transformed into a real threat to man, because it leads to conceiving him without any relation to transcendence" (November 19, 1999).

The first two gaps have been analyzed by two letters from John Paul the Second: “The Splendor of Truth” and “Faith and Reason”. The third was the object of a series of documents, from which the last ones are the “*Centesimus Annus*” and “*Caritas in Veritate*”.

The effort to solve them has led to the minting of some expressions that are already familiar to us: the dialogue between gospel and culture, the Christian fermentation of the mentality, a Christian inspired culture; they look like problems of intellectuals; however, their consequences are diffused and penetrate into consciousness through social communication and institutions that act in the educational field. In each of the options that are made with regard to what these gaps represent is the quality of life and human coexistence.

In *Evangelii gaudium*, Francis says:

The dialogue between science and faith is also part of the evangelizing action that is peaceful. The scientism and positivism refuse to ‘admit as valid the different forms of knowledge of the positive sciences’. The church proposes another way, which requires a synthesis between a responsible use of the methodologies of the empirical sciences and other knowledge such as philosophy, theology, and the faith that elevates the human being to the mystery that transcends nature and the human intelligence. Faith is not afraid of reason; on the contrary, faith seeks for reason and trusts it, because ‘the light of reason and faith come from God’, and they cannot contradict at each other. Evangelization is attentive to scientific advances to enlighten them with the light of faith and natural law, in order to ensure that they always respect the centrality and the supreme value of the human person at all stages of their existence. The whole society can be enriched by this dialogue that opens new horizons to thoughts and expands the possibilities of reason. This is also a path of harmony and peace.

The church does not intend to stop the admirable progress of science. On the contrary, it rejoices and even enjoys recognizing the

enormous potential that God has given to the human mind. When the development of sciences evidences a conclusion that the reason cannot deny, the faith does not contradict it. Believers cannot pretend that a scientific opinion that they like and that has not even been sufficiently proven acquires the weight of a faith dogma. But sometimes some scientists go beyond the formal object of their discipline and are overstretched with statements or conclusions that exceed the field of science. In that case, it is not the reason that is proposed, but a certain ideology that closes the way to an authentic, peaceful and important dialogue (EG 242-243)

The origin of 'new cultures' is a phenomenon that has been repeated throughout history, marking all major historical changes. A new culture is always difficult to interpret, because it is a reality '*in fieri*', a phenomenon in development. But our time has tried to understand the moods that characterize the generations that are going on. The expression 'new cultures' has been coined precisely to capture the values and also the counter-values that shape the spirit of our time.

The novelty of the expression does not indicate the creation of absolutely original values, but rather a different accentuation of hope, the yearnings and the anxieties that distinguish our society from those that preceded it. The advent of a new culture is often accompanied by the advancement of a *counter-culture*, which goes so far as to put in crisis the values and institutions received up to that moment in a group.

Typical trends

A first glimpse of global observation reveals a curious configuration of relatively new and contrasting tendencies, many of which are presented as motions of vindication: ecologist, pacifist, feminist, popular movements and religious awakening. And in the face of many generous commitments, attitudes that concern:

gnoseologic relativism, moral permissiveness, dominant individualism, rampant consumerism, drug diffusion, cultural colonialism, among others, are also disseminated. Analysts hesitate to indicate the fundamental trends, and their interpretations will vary according to each point of view.

Five main traits

I would like to point out five traits that seem particularly suited to characterize new mindsets. These are guidelines that seem to be generalized and lasting, and that are proposed to shape our future. These are the following: a general concern for the future, a universal need for justice and peace, an emergence of new values, a new type of man-woman relationship, an aspiration to consciously construct the future. Some brief indications allow us to clarify our point of view.

- In almost every society, a sense of fear and anguish has developed gradually, causing a dull fear of the destruction of nature and the environment (see the various ‘summits’ of the United Nations, in view of the greenhouse gas reduction and the alarm that tries to save the world before it is late, or the encyclical *Laudato si* of Papa Francis). People fear the unpredictable consequences of biological experimentation over the future of the human family against the unbearable risks of a nuclear apocalypse, on which Francis has alerted again when he speaks of a “Third World War in Pieces”. A sense of existential distress in all of us provokes an elemental reaction, a radical search for survival of the human race. Today’s culture shows not only a crisis of customs or the crisis of atheism, but it is the very being of the man in question. The religious hardship, stated by Marx, is not only that of the proletarians. Spiritual hardship now affects all the classes that form modern society. The great temptation of our days

is the fatalism and the feeling of helplessness in the face of the extremely complex problems that surpass us all. Despite this, the best spirits reject this temptation of cowardly abandonment, this tragic determinism that paralyzes too many of our contemporaries, blinding their moral responsibility. We have to provide hope.

- The universal search for justice and peace is rigorously expressed in recent times. Being supportive among them, our contemporaries consider increasingly intolerable the fact that misery cohabits with opulence and the reaction to the current economic and financial crisis is eloquent. Although, being aware of the non-naivety of some movements, I think that the “social forum” or the “anti-global” or the popular movements can be counted among some of those reactions. There is a universal aspiration in the world for a beginning of unity, justice and stewardship in the freedom and respect of all men; a kind of cultural universalism is in gestation. The defense of human rights appears as a demand and a sign of liberation. There are crowds who find it unbearable for the modern world to deny the fundamental freedom, the right to development and their full freedom. Therefore, John Paul II invited to grant globalization its most human face, globalizing human rights, solidarity and peace.
- The rise of new values proposes new tasks to the educator. It is necessary to understand the importance of values that are affirmed with energy, as for example the effort of humanity to achieve a continuous integral progress that allows to live in a more human environment, at the service of all people; the radical rejection of all kinds of totalitarianism, dogmatism or fanaticism that do not facilitate comfortable access to the political democracy system. Respect for the rights of people and the exercise of freedom; aggression against imperialism and the unjustified privileges of certain sectors or social classes; the aspiration towards a system of more egalitarian

and more solidarity relations; appreciation for pacifism and ecology, which results in the valuation of dialogue, peaceful coexistence and new ways of relating to nature.

- The new male-female relationships are also cultural/historical shift; i.e., it is not a mere movement of vindication which has been recognized by many. We are facing the search for a new condition of women in modern society, especially in those nations or cultures that continue to deny all voice and all kinds of social role. A new balance for women is sought in humanity. This cultural fact is now better captured in all its complexity and implications. If the woman gains freedom and a responsibility equal to those of man in the collectivity, she will have better access to humanity; and this will benefit humanity. In this perspective, it is understood how both men and women are called to be subject and agent of the change of female role. In other words, both men and women are called to grow together in their necessary and irreducible complementarity. It is an evolution that affects all humanity as such, and it is one of the most profound changes that modern culture has ever known. We are only at the beginning of a cultural evolution that requires, especially in politicians and educators, to provide an indispensable service to the human being.
- The whole human family aspires to consciously build the future, because never before the human beings have been aware of their unity and interdependence. For the first time in history, humanity as a whole is called upon to take its own future in its hands and consciously build a new world worthy of all. This is a vision of culture that goes beyond a simple accommodation to the dominant values of a society aimed primarily at economic levels. The culture of the future will be that for which man will build himself from his convictions and his noblest representations. Culture appears essentially as a mean of creation and freedom. It is precisely the affirmation of this ideal that young generations and new nations expect

from their educators and intellectual, political, and spiritual leaders; but we are all responsible for the creation of a new humanism, which integrates, dialogues and generates hope and life⁹.

The Catholic school: creator of education

For centuries, the school was identified with a certain idea of civilization recognizing that it developed a civilizing role of its own. However, this postulate seems to have collapsed because – as we just described – it is a new culture that is now created and transmitted through powerful rivals who have invaded the field of teaching, research, documentation and information. And schools must now discover how to move from competitiveness to cooperation with these new agents of cultural production, considering social media, cultural industries, data banks, satellite communications, teachings and studies linked to private industry and the state.

The main challenge for the school will be to define its own role in the effort to make up economic, technical and scientific growth with humanism. It is important to mention Francis Fukuyama, the theorist of neoliberalism, and his thesis of the *End of history*¹⁰, when saying that the cold rationality of pragmatism, profitability, competitiveness is not easily harmonized with the logic of knowledge or the gratuitousness of solidarity. As can be seen, the basic question -a moral issue- is the cultural role that corresponds to the school itself.

9 Cfr. Spadaro (2018, pp. 57-61).

10 Cf. F. Fukuyama, "The West may crumble," an article in which is even asked if "the West" is really a coherent concept' states: "The terrorist attacks of 9/11 have meant a major shift, but at the end, the modernization and globalization will continue to be the principles that fundamentally structure the world politics" (El País, Internet edition, 08/17/2002).

In today's society, in which all ideologies and utopias face crisis and in which pure pragmatism manifests all the dramatic inadequacy and destabilizing effects, education must be affirmed as a reserve of ethical values and a generator of motivation, given to the search for meaning as a center of free reflection and socialization, essential to the development of a nation.

Facing these challenges, it is natural that the school, at least in the Western world, should try to adapt plans and programs as shown by the educational reforms that have been made or that continue to be carried out in almost all countries. According to Hannah Arendt education is placed "between the past and the future", between stability and change, between tradition and innovation. In spite of that, it seems that more importantly is the *global change of the school*, especially determined by the modification of two relations: the relationship between school and education and the relationship between school and society; and if we think of confessional school, the relationship between school and evangelization.

School and education

In the past years, the family and the school covered the course of all the education of a young man. There was no room for other educational or diseducative influences. Today, there are other educational agencies, sometimes with more weight than the family or the school.

- *The social media*, which have moved from information chains to educational networks, creators of new culture with all it implies: source of models, diffusion of values, way of organizing life, interpreting reality, etc. For their efficiency and continuity, although they are not presented with formal educational purposes, they exert a considerable percentage of influence.

- *Free time environments* and freely chosen activities, which have been multiplied, and which are not determined by a school program, but which also exert an influence in the construction of the person and contribute to translate it.
- *The socialization environments* typical of youth, in which we meet with adults and partners, these places become a kind of “University of Life”, in which is developed a way to see the existence and behavior rules.

This is the first change: the new distribution of educational institutions. The school and the family continue to develop an important role, but they are no longer the only ones involved in the educational process. They must recognize that today we live in a world of pluralism of proposals and that they must assume the task of converging influxes proposals and stimuli that are parallel or divergent. Hence, the new need that the school experiences: not simply being a provider of information or data transmission, but granting strength to the testimony of values and the elaboration of those values, which serve as a critical filter to the multiple influxes that beset all people, especially young people.

School and society

The second change refers to the relationship between the school and the human community in which it works. The school is no longer owned by a group of educators – religious and/or state – and families are not simply clients of an educational company they entrust to their children, requiring a specific service that is paid directly (private school) or indirectly (public school).

Nowadays, the school is increasingly integrated into the dynamics of the community and it participates – must participate – with responsibility in programming and management. In some places, community management of the law-sanctioned school is

observed. The relationship between *school and community* is determined by a reality called ‘participation’. Both society and families are not placed – or should not – outside the school, they are not satisfied with supplying students. They now claim their right to participate in the elaboration of the educational project and the rules that guide education.

School and evangelization

Another element of change: the school-evangelization relationship (or school-Christian formation). The change points mainly to the type of presentation of the Christian formation: based not so much on a curricular requirement but in a life proposal made to the young people who must assume it in an atmosphere of freedom and free choice, without impositions.

Evangelization, as a proposed offer in the school, should be aware of the plural environment within the school: teachers, families and students who are not believers or who belong to other religions. Moreover, educating the openness to the ethical and religious dimension contributes to the consolidation of integral humanism.

This reality challenges the Catholic school to rediscover its identity as an environment of evangelization and to examine how this is done in respect of the way and the religious search of all the members of its educational community.

Because of the latter, it is deduced that Catholic school at its various levels:

- Should privilege the testimony of the faith on the theoretical explanation of the truths of faith. And this can only be done knowing that there is a personal experience of God in the members of the educational community.

- Provides more importance to the life witness of the educational community. The kindness of some teachers is no longer enough, but it takes a community experience to make this alternative of facing life.
- Testimony is not all. It is necessary to develop in the Catholic school a culture inspired in the faith and steeped in evangelical values that translate into options, criteria, methodology and organization. Only in this way can the anthropological and humanizing dimension of the faith and its contribution to the construction of civilization appear.
- Promotes the synthesis between culture and life, which requires another synthesis, between faith and life that must be represented by the educators. “The educational project of the Catholic school does not exist; there is not a separation between moments of learning and moments of education, between theoretical or technical moments and moments of wisdom. Disciplines do not present only knowledge to acquire, but also values to assume and truths to discover.”¹¹

The current proposal of the Salesian Higher Education

In this process of change that is epochal and cyclical, it is essential that the Salesian High school knows how to preserve its identity and its mission, considering Don Bosco’s pedagogical genius and facing the challenges of our society.

Don Bosco synthesized the goal of education with a simple and comprehensible phrase: to make the young person becomes “an honest citizen and a good Christian”. With this phrase he wanted to express the integrity of his ideal: to form city builders and

11 The Catholic school at the threshold of the third millennium. Congregation for Catholic Education, December 28, 1997.

faithful men. In this way, all the dimensions of the personality are taken into account.

The *honored citizen* of the third millennium was understood by Don Bosco as someone who did not conceive an ‘active policy’ for everyone, but a policy promoted by a wealthy and privileged minority to which teenagers, poor or middle-class teenagers would hardly belong to. Nor is it the result of analyses and evaluations of social unrest that seek, like Don Bosco, the causes only in the moral and religious responsibilities of individuals and not in the conditions of economic, political or social determinism. Neither is the passive person who obeys the laws, who does not cause problems to justice and who is egocentric. The passage of monarchic absolutism to liberal parliamentary before democracy, the explosion of the “social issue” with socialism, Marxism, trade unionism, the social doctrine of the Church, the universal demand for active citizenship and democratic, among others, have had important results, as well as the current impact of the incessant advancement of pluralism, globalization, modern computer, technologies and diffuse multiculturalism.

In that same perspective, it is also evident that the good Christian nowadays is no longer the type in which Don Bosco thought: a minimum of religious formation, habitual reception of the sacraments, devotion to the Saints as models and ideals of Christian life, exclusive reading of “good” books, absolute obedience to the legitimate ecclesiastical authorities of the one and only true church that is the Catholic, a life of progress in the virtues that would then be concluded happily with a virtuous death. A century of theological reflection and a Vatican Council II would have passed in vain and the multireligiousness and multiconfessionalism of today’s world would say nothing.

We must take good note that the well-known formula of “honest citizens and good Christians” today must be refunded in the

anthropological and theological level and must be reinterpreted historically and politically.

A renewed anthropology should identify, among the tradition values, those to be emphasized in postmodern society and the new values to be proposed; a renewed theological reflection shall specify the relations between faith and politics, among the different beliefs; a renewed historical-political analysis will involve education and politics, education and social commitment, politics and civil society.

The revival of the “Honored Citizen”

In a world different from the one of the nineteenth century, being charitable according to the narrow, local and pragmatic criteria – Don Bosco was certainly not in a position to do more than he did – is a serious gap that is not only sociological but also theological, forgetting the broader dimensions of the common good (national and global). The ethical maturation of contemporary consciousness has found the limits of an assistentialism, which forgetting the political dimension of underdevelopment, fails to influence the causes of poverty, the structures of sin from which flows the State of oppressive things denounced by all. Conceiving charity as alms and emergency aid means running the risk of moving in the samaritanism that sometimes ends up being worse because it favors development models that point to the well-being of others.

Even though the words “Poverty of the Church” and “Church of the Poor” have had many meanings in the post-council, it remains a fact that the gospel has not been invented by ourselves, as well as we have not invented its tragic impact with politics and the economy. Faith touches history, even if it is not reduced to it. If love for others is not the whole Christian message, can you deny that it is central and essential?

It has been said that the church does no longer have the space for intervention in terms of charity and assistance of the protection and social welfare of modern state citizens, but the reality that we live today denies this hypothesis sustained by the secularists and statist ideologies. The church continues to be a landmark in the welfare state, especially now that there is a risk of its disappearance. For many years we have heard that charity and assistance were old and useless instruments that could no longer be used in modern societies and in a democratic state. Today, even in secular circles, the social function of Christian volunteers is recognized as the so-called third non-profit sector of initiatives that depart from parishes, associations, institutions, churches.

However, due to the fact that billions of people live in conditions distant from the “Civilization of Love” sponsored by Pope Paul VI, or the “culture of Solidarity” promoted by Francis, would it mean that they can find in us a response in the generic use of Don Bosco’s formula of “honest citizen and good Christian”?

Deep reflection at both the theoretical level is required, given the topic of human promotion, youth, popular, and the different philosophical, anthropological, theological, scientific, historical and methodological considerations, as in terms of experience and practical reflection of individuals and communities. In the Salesian context and the GC G23 (203-210-212-214) it was referred to “social dimension of charity” and “education of young people to the commitment and participation in politics”, “field that is a little sloppy and unknown to us”.

Therefore, if we can legitimately ask whether our system has changed “our Father’s policy”, we must also ask ourselves whether the initial option “for education” by Don Bosco and the consequent personal purpose of educators to exclude from their lives the “politics” has not conditioned and limited the important socio-political dimension of the young people’s formation. In addition to the diffi-

culties created by the disparate political regimes that Don Bosco had to live with, have not they also contributed to have educators inclined to conformity, isolation, with insufficient and scarce culture knowledge of the historical and social context?

It is necessary to work and to confirm an updated “socio-political-educational option” of Don Bosco in favor of a coherent practical action. In other words, the reconsideration of the social quality education, which is immanent, although imperfectly created in the basic youth option and essential from the statements and formulas, should encourage the creation of experiences with explicit social commitment; but this also presupposes a theoretical and vital commitment inspired by a broader view of education with realism and concreteness. Proclamations and manifests are not enough. Theoretical concepts and specific operational projects are also needed to translate into well-defined and articulated programs.

Therefore, is the Salesian High school doing its utmost in this direction? Its solidarity with youth, is it just an act of affection, gesture of surrender, or a contribution of awareness, competence, commitment and compassion as a rational response that is appropriate and relevant to the needs of young people and the weaker social classes?

The revival of the “good Christian”

Don Bosco, understood the ambiguity and endangerment of the social and moral situation from which he questioned his principles and found new ways to oppose evil with the scarce cultural resources available to him.

For us, education is inseparable from evangelization, because we are called to offer an integral formation proposal, and this one is more necessary in the high school, precisely by the dialogue of faith and culture, the commitment to evangelize the culture and

the gospel. It is about revealing and helping to live consciously the vocation of man, the truth of the person.

Because of the faith, we learn that the self and the relationships of the person are defined by their creature status, which does not indicate inferiority or dependence, but free and creative love by God. Man owes his own existence to a gift and this relationship with God must be given in return. His life does not make sense out of this relationship. The “hereafter”, which he perceives and desires vaguely, is absolute, not a strange and abstract absolute, but the source of his life that calls him.

The truth of the person, i.e., the reason, finds its total enlightenment in Christ. He, with his words, but above all by virtue of his human-divine existence, in which the consciousness of the Son of God is manifested, opens the person to the full understanding and his own destiny.

In Christ we are constituted children and are called to live as such in history. It is a reality and a gift, whose sense must progressively penetrate man. The vocation to be children of God is not a luxury addition, an extrinsic fulfillment for the realization of man. Instead, it is its pure and simple fulfillment, the indispensable condition of authenticity and fulfillment, and the satisfaction of the most radical demands, those from which the creature structure is substantiated.

The one who educates keeps alive the conscience that Christ is witness and companion in this revelation of the life’s possibilities, which binds the conscience with its source and with its end, which develops the life, but above, the educator prepares an interlocutor and a sign of the presence of God.

There is a mysterious dialogue between every young man and what comes to him from the outside, what arises in him and

what he discovers as imperative, grace or sense. Little by little he is acquiring full self-awareness, and is elaborating an image of the existence in which he bets his forces and has possibilities.

Educators, professionals and non-professionals are called to offer everything they think is suitable, living with hope the unknowns of the future. They are sincerely interested in the uncertain human growing. God will be welcomed and will manifest himself with increasing luminosity. If things take the best way, they will have contributed to preserve in history the “lineage of God”, those who feel in filial relationship with him, and have created living places of his presence.

Therefore, how to improve Don Bosco’s “good Christian”? How to safeguard the Human-Christian society of the project in formal or mainly religious and pastoral initiatives against the dangers of old and new integralisms and exclusivism? How to transform traditional religious education into an education to live with one’s own identity in a pluri-religious, multicultural, ethnic world? Faced with the current overcoming of the traditional obedience pedagogy that is appropriate to a certain type of ecclesiology, how to proceed according to a pedagogy of freedom and responsibility, oriented to the construction of a strong subject, capable of making free and mature decisions, open to interpersonal communication, actively inserted in social structures, in a non-conformist attitude but constructively critical?

Conclusion

Nowadays, our problems are not just political, they are moral (and cultural) and have to do with the meaning of life. We have taken for granted that as long as economic growth continues, we could relegate everything else to the private sphere. Now that economic growth is beginning to break down and that moral ecology is out of order, we are beginning to understand that our common life

requires more than just an exclusive concern for material accumulation (Bellah *et al.*, 1989, p. 374).

Current societies have a fundamental and unextendable task: who and how to prepare men to be more human? The concern is not new: Socrates was amazed that there were schools that prepared knights, sailors, soldiers for the exercise of their future profession, but there were no schools that prepared to be men. Education is carried out in a context whose service is on the process of humanizing people. The school must take into account the socio-cultural reality of students and be opened to the total humanity¹².

The goal of education should be creating a more dignified human future for all young people. If education is limited to only achieving economic objectives or accumulating material goods, pointed out by the current cultural model, it betrays its same mission. A profound moral and cultural reform is imposed if our world wants to remain the owner of its common destiny.

The education of man of the 21st century is threatened by two abysses: on the one hand the dogmatisms, militancy and proselytism; on the other hand, the pure, cold and hard modernization, which follows the disappearance of sense, discouragement and demoralization. We are facing this crossroads, which can lead to a more complex, diverse and hospitable citizenship, enriched by other horizons that have cultivated different aspects of the human, arousing a new symphony of values and hopes. But all this requires an effort to rediscover the common human, the transcendent universal and the sacred dimensions. Otherwise, there will be a shock and then the willingness to exclude.

The results and achievements cause new problems, challenges and responsibilities. Eliminating the old models, opening the

12 Cfr. O. González de Cardenal, 2004.

whole world to the immediate perception of each individual, making possible the movement of people in the world, creating all the possibilities of offer and demand of an ideological and commercial pluralism are all multiple and unthinkable tasks for education.

Theoretical tasks. To educate in a society filled by customs and ideas different from those that had been set up by the national morals and determined by a radical individualism, where the seduction principle replaces that of the conviction; where each subject is elevated to the absolute with distance or indifference towards the neighbor, with the overcrowding and depersonalization of means and messages; where the commercial narcissism and cynicism, and violence and lack of solidarity, largely shape public life. The sociologist G. Lipovetsky has described this society with the titles: “The era of emptiness” and “The twilight of duty”. Therefore, committed to offering truth, creating meaning, engendering hope, arousing moral enthusiasm and the duty, providing spiritual energy to serve the social good and the justice.

Historical missions. To educate in a society determined by the ideological, religious and cultural pluralism, result of unstoppable globalization process. To educate the respectful coexistence and collaboration for the justice and solidarity, in which are the respect to the values and ideals that constitute the national community, and the integration of the complementary values, typical of the minorities. To educate personally when television and the Internet have become the first educational agencies, and almost no institution has the courage to go beyond technical knowledge or strict legal information to offer values, meaning and hope to those who open up to life and integrate society. To be committed to the truth, acceptance and understanding of others, cultivating freedom and reciprocal respect, since the truth can never be proposed in detriment or by exercising violence against others.

Civic missions. In order to achieve a comprehensive training of the person in respect of the democratic coexistence principles and fundamental rights and freedom, education will encompass training and information, technique and values, so as to forge men, citizens and professionals. These three objectives are sacred to all schools, those belonging to the state and the individual: humanity, citizenship, profession. No school, ideological or religious group can exclude or neglect the service of these three orders of reality or subject them to other purposes. Education must integrate the two dimensions of the person: the particular, original and national, and the universal, historical cosmopolitan; the nature carried with it, but specially the culture, ethics, religion, human, friendship between the men, fraternity, ends and human rights that are required from us. Therefore, an education of citizenship, convergent brotherhood, and search for human dignity with the elimination of obstacles – social, economic, religious – that exclude or make them impossible.

This complexity of the new historical situation and the scholastic conflict that result from it, as well as the inhibition of the previous instances, from the family to the state, in face of certain necessities and demands of the education have made of the education one of the most hit profession by psychological crises and discouragement. The problems of the school are problems of the family, the society, the governments and the culture. Education is the responsibility of the whole society and then the educational policy is much more extensive and complex than school politics. Problems in schools will not be solved without moral responsibility, change of attitude and new prominence of these personal and social instances.

C. Lévi-Strauss, a famous person in the scientific world and close in terms of origin to Sartre or Foucault, and today more in tune with R. Aron, P. Ricoeur and E. Lévinas said: “the values of

Western civilization are threatened”, and threatened or careless by Westerners and not just by ideas or external powers.

These events pose new challenges for teachers, educators and politicians. How to educate if there is not a shared anthropological culture? How to guide new generations, helping them to be men and women with joy, if they do not have clear ideas that are directed to the goals of humanity, whose light can discern the true from the false, the righteous from the unjust, what dignifies and degrades the human of the unhuman? hence, the importance of the institutional project.

Cultivating and defending human rights, the sense of citizenship, the ethical, aesthetic and religious dimension, the realization of common projects: all this is the moral imperative of our historical moment. But the action must be assisted by the reflection that investigates the anthropological basis of existence. Peace is established where consensus and agreements is reached, where problems are faced, and where convictions and ideals are shared. Every man is on a sacred foundation to be discovered, because it comes from beyond man and carries to God.

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The understanding of Ministry in Salesian Higher Education

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“Let us listen to Jesus again, with all the love and respect that he deserves. Let us allow him to hit us with his words, to defy us, to challenge us to a real change of life” (Pope Francis, 2018).

The Ministry in Higher Education

To ask ourselves about the Pastoral in Higher Education is to question ourselves about the presence and role of the Church in the university world. In the performance of its evangelizing work, the Church is present in Higher Education considering it as an appropriate field to carry out the mission of Jesus to bring the Kingdom of God to all corners.

This has been a concern to the Christian community from immemorial times, on their behalf, the popes who directly or through the various ecclesial institutions have pronounced on the nature of their presence in these educational levels (Congregation for Catholic Education. Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1994).

The purpose of the Church’s presence in the university is:

To be a public, stable and universal presence of Christian thought with the desire of promoting the superior culture and, also, to train all students so that they become prestigious people in knowledge, ready to perform responsibilities in the society and to be witnesses of their faith in the world (Vatican Council II, 1966.)

Therefore, the invitation of the Hierarchy to any university, faculty or institution of higher education of the Church is to carry out the mission of making the encounter of the Christian community with the development of the sciences and cultures of our time so that an authentic faith-culture dialogue happens (John Paul II, 1990, no. 10).

This encounter and dialogue between faith and culture is not easy due to the diversity of contexts in which the Church is present, through the multiple centers and institutions that, following the mission of the Church, develop their activity in the Higher Education field and overcome the difficulties arising from the cultural, geographical, religious or linguistic environment. These difficulties do not prevent the scope of the university or Higher Education from being evangelized, i.e., it is not a space to carry the Good News.

Our centers of Higher Education, as members of what is understood as a Catholic university in the ecclesial sphere, must be centers of clear Christian inspiration, offering society a reflection on human knowledge in the light of the Catholic faith, being faithful to the Christian message placed at the service of the people of God and of the human community (John Paul II, 1990, no. 13).

What can be asked for and what can pastoral care provide at the university level? To permeate the different disciplines and methodologies developed in the academic life and to impregnate the multiple relationships and actions experienced in the day to day of the Higher Education Center of an “evangelical mood”. It is the air that oxygenates, purifies and fills the lungs of those who are part of the academic community and that makes them live in an environment full of evangelical values. “The pastoral should be a transversal axis that encompasses the totality of the institution, the set of its activities and the people who compose it” (Frame of Reference, 2018, no. 8).

If the fundamental mission of the Church is the announcement of the Good News, our higher education centers should help in this announcement and mission in a very particular way. In the first place, with the courageous testimony of the whole institution from the management and educational proposals that are a faithful reflection of the message of Jesus. Also, cooperating in the mission of the Church with the development of its activities, such as the research done in the light of the Christian message, the formation of the critical conscience of its students, the recognition of the transcendental dignity of the person and the professional training of its graduates that puts them at the service of people and society (Juan Pablo II, 1990, no. 49).

The deep rupture that has occurred and continues to occur between the values of the Gospel and culture makes it urgent, more than ever, to evangelize that culture from the university level. The higher education centers' mission is, among others, to spread the Gospel seeds throughout the educational community that with the time and by the action of the Spirit will bear fruits. Every effort to carry out this task will be little, and without waiting for the immediate fruits, because our mission will always be that of the sower, who knows that Other will make them grow (1 Cor 3, 7).

In fidelity to Jesus' command to carry out the mission of bringing the Good News to the whole world, it is vital for the Church to go out and proclaim the Gospel to all people, in all places and at all times, without delay and without fears. "The joy of the gospel is for all the people and cannot exclude anyone" (Francis, 2013, no. 23).

The Salesian Pastoral Care in Higher Education

As Salesians committed to the evangelization and education with our presence in Higher Education, we must respond to the responsibility of making our university centers pastoral centers, where

new generations of university students are educated in a Christian humanism committed to building a more solidary, fair and inclusive society. An education and evangelization capable of proposing human and evangelical paths facing the social, economic and anthropological challenges of today's society. This commitment to be present in Higher Education makes us a full part of the Salesian mission, contributing with the charism and characteristics of Salesian pedagogy (Salesian Institutions of Higher Education, IUS, 2003, 19-24).

From the Salesian point of view, we understand the pastoral action as the way to carry out the evangelizing mission according to Don Bosco's style. This mission basically consists of proposing Jesus as a model of life and favoring the encounter with him, to be protagonists and co-responsible in the construction of the Kingdom of God in the world. The Salesian pastoral is not different from the pastoral of the whole Church, which is an evangelizing pastoral, although it has the particular contribution of being based on mediation and educational experience (Frame of Reference, 2014, p.30).

Guided by the strength of the Salesian charism, we commit ourselves to educating the young people of our Higher Education centers in such a way that they live in communion with the Church as they grow and strengthen in their own maturity in order to be honest citizens and good Christians with the educational interventions help.

In his foundational intuition, D. Bosco did not think about the specific pastoral work in the university. But the charismatic potential and the great dynamism that it generates, makes its presence possible in those scenarios where the attention, care and projection of the education and evangelization of youth is played. Hence, the most recent presence of the Salesian charism in the Higher Education field is well justified and supported by the concern of Don Bosco de Valdocco, who always sought, through his concrete pastoral action with the boys from the suburbs of the city of Turin,

the transformation of society from the education and evangelization of what will be that future society, children and young people.

Don Bosco's strong conviction of working for the good of the youth made him be creative to unsuspected limits and be there where he saw the possibility, however difficult, of working to provide the best means to carry out his pastoral mission.

In a world where communicating the message of Jesus is so difficult because little spiritual experience is so prevalent and where the value of the material prevails, it is necessary to look for new ways of evangelization that will undermine the rupture in the chain of moral and religious values transmission among generations. The pastoral in our Higher Education centers can play an important role in the search of the great vital questions that young people continue to pose, and in turn propose references to them for their moral and spiritual life. Deepening the culture of the moment can help us to better reach the encounter with the person, with their concerns, doubts and needs. Our way of doing pastoral work close to the young people of the moment and place, includes the intuition and practice of Don Bosco to reach the heart of the youth in all of its expression.¹

The Purpose of the Ministry

As the Identity document of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education says, the institutional project of each IUS center must be guided by a clear educational-pastoral purpose, according to the characteristics of the Salesian spirituality and pedagogy (Salesian Institutions of Higher Education, IUS, 2003, no. 24). This makes us worry about being an educational community that discovers the love of God and transmits the Gospel message in its daily work.

1 Pope Francis to the members of the Pontifical Council for Culture. Retrieved from: <https://goo.gl/6mhBqd> (22.04.2018).

The intentionality of our pastoral in an IUS center is to develop the capacity of “doing through the visible, the invisible”. By visible we understand, in the first place, all those academic and extra academic activities that we can organize in the center and which are directed to the whole educational community, especially to the students; but, it is also the relationships that we establish among the members of that educational community; everything that belongs to the physical structure (spaces distribution, walls colors, meeting spaces adaptation, posters designs, corporate image, social networks presence, etc.) And for the invisible, as you can understand, it is all the Christian and Salesian values that we want to transmit. It is the seasoning that makes the food taste delicious and tasty. It helps in the contribution to the personal enrichment of our recipients of the educational-pastoral action. It is the blood that runs through the veins of the body of the human community that makes up our IUS center. In this educational and evangelizing intentionality in our centers, we must all be engaged, because we all are and do the pastoral in each center.

The proclamation of the Gospel to the cultural world in Higher Education Institutions, which is a fundamental goal, requires the encounter between faith, reason and sciences, developing a credible discourse, and giving room to Gospel by hosting and listening everyone. This requires from our center and its staff, not only a demand for educational quality of reference for the environment but also a concern to offer a meaningful pastoral proposal. In this way, the field of Higher Education becomes a privileged field of evangelization (Francis, 2013, pp. 132-134).

Traits that define the Pastoral

The gift of the Spirit to the Church that constitutes the Salesian charism also applies to how we think and live our pastoral care in Higher Education. We develop pastoral action according to the

educational-pastoral model that characterizes us, in which there is an inseparable relationship between the educational and the pastoral according to the educational and spiritual experience of Don Bosco, whose synthesis is the Preventive System. This educational-pastoral model of Don Bosco inspires all our educational and evangelizing action in any field of action, also in Higher Education. But it will be necessary to delve into the features that characterize it in order to know how to apply them, with the opportunity required in the field that concerns to us. This reflection is essential if we want the Salesian proposal in Higher Education to be different and complementary to other offers and take its rightful place. We are talking about what constitutes the environment, the relationships style, the pedagogical model, in short, the spirituality that surrounds us and identifies us. The Preventive System becomes a concrete practice in the following characteristic features:

The centrality of young people. The first feature that should distinguish us in our way of carrying out the educational-pastoral experience should be to have young people at the center of our educational-pastoral action. The youth represent our reason for existing, our fundamental concern and the reason for our existence as a charism in the Church, and among young people, the option for those who need it most, the poorest and the people of the popular classes. In Higher Education centers this option for the poorest can be translated into the effort to make them the protagonists of their own formation and into a commitment of solidarity that makes them evangelizers of other young people. Also in being, in the future, agents of social change where attention, care and responsibility towards the most disadvantaged predominates. This feature should not be a theoretical principle only, but must have its translation in the major decisions of the institution that command the character and educational style of that center. Since entering our institution, the young person becomes the center of concern and interest, carrying out this centrality of educational action, always seeking, with

all the means at our disposal, the best educational-pastoral proposal to make him perform as a person in an integral way.

The educational environment. This is a key element in Salesian pedagogy; hence the importance of its care and attention, reason for which it is taken into account in our educational action. We take care of the educational environment when we are concerned about the existence of a family atmosphere, where unconditional acceptance and personal encounter, respect and dialogue take place. It is to put into practice the “amorevolezza” in personal relationships and in the style of the institutional organization. An adequate educational environment seeks to promote personal growth, participation and commitment. It concerns that the same spaces and physical structures favor encounter, communication and personal relationships (Frame of Reference, 2014, page 212).

The personal accompaniment. When the young is in the center of our educational action, we do it concretely with each other young in our centers, looking for the way to make the educative-pastoral action more effective in their lives. Each young person needs a personalized proposal that responds to the vital worries arisen in that period of his/her life. This worry to respond to their concerns leads us to make proposals for personal accompaniment.

Personal accompaniment has many levels and requires training in companions. But it is a great service that we can and must provide in our IUS centers, both for the professional and personal approaches that our young people question at these ages.

The great vocational questions that our students can ask themselves must be accompanied by the educational community, fundamentally from a believing testimony of the adults, that leads them to seek a personal encounter with Jesus and to discover the various vocations present in the Christian community.

We would go against our institutional project if we did not offer this qualified accompaniment service to all people in the educational community, especially young people, through which they can integrate the various areas of human, Christian, professional and social growth (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 213).

The active presence among the youth

Our educational passion takes us to a way of being and also being in the midst of the young people that we have to characterize. It is a manner of being in a meaningful way and adapted to the characteristics of this educational level. It is to look for the physical and virtual spaces where young people are to know and understand them, and with that to be able to establish personal relationships, through which they can make liberating and alternative proposals to those they receive from other areas of society. It is to take care of the distance and the intensity of that presence, in which they feel the closeness and the climate of adequate trust, but not the oppression and pressure of someone who coerces their space and freedom.

In higher education environments, the presence among young people will be different from what can be understood in other environments or levels. This forces us to be trained in new physical and virtual presences and to be very attentive to the spaces and forums where they are, both formally and informally. In the words of Pope Francis, it is to be “Church on the way out” (Francis, 2013, no. 20-24), worried about looking for the needs and concerns of the youth.

The motivation. Encouraging something is giving life to it. Pastoral motivation is to provide soul and life to the people and structures of our centers. Motivating goes beyond good management, good governance or good organization. It is to be above the

center's government structures efficiency to endow it with the vitality that produces an action that is at the same time, spiritual, apostolic and pedagogical. For a good pastoral motivation in our IUS centers, various aspects must prevail, such as: The Announcement of Jesus and his message; provide different itineraries of education in the faith; liturgical celebrations adapted to the moment, the place, and the people, that look for a later insertion in the Christian community; the proposal of experiences of Christian commitment and solidarity; the personal encounter that seeks the individual's growth and maturity; and to unite synergies around the values, criteria, objectives and processes proposed by the center.

The motivation in our Higher Education centers, to turn them into spaces with life, is the way to contemplate, think, feel, live and act with the passion that should characterize us who have assumed the charismatic model of D. Bosco in favor of the young.

Co-responsibility. The co-responsibility of educators and young people is a characteristic element of Salesian pedagogy (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 237). In the educational community, all people are necessary and important. Therefore, we must guarantee that in the organization, the coordination, the educational orientation, the people formation and the charismatic identity is everybody's task. This demands the implication and the co-responsibility of all the people that are part of the educative community for the achievement of the proposed objectives (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 117).

This co-responsibility is carried out through reflection, dialogue, programming and review of the various actions carried out.

For people to feel and live this co-responsibility, it is necessary that they know our pastoral proposal and also want to deepen on it. Also, to deepen into the current youth situation and the pastoral praxis to work with them. The institution will take great

care in the communication channels between the members of the educational community, a key element in the achievement of a real involvement in the life of the center, the search for collaboration in educational tasks, the promotion of creativity in ways such as to achieve involvement and thereby grow in the sense of belonging to the institution (Frame of Reference, 2014, p.117).

Members of the Ministry

The members of the Salesian Pastoral in Higher Education are the entire Educational-Pastoral Community. All the people that make up the university center are members and agents of the pastoral action, but depending on their belonging to one group or another, their degree of responsibility and commitment will be diverse. In the educational community we can distinguish on the one hand, the group of students and on the other, the teaching, administrative and service staff. All of its members must strive, in a co-responsible manner, in an integral educational proposal in favor of young people, and must be capable of responding to the needs and expectations of the social context in which they find themselves (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 117).

The students. The group of students is the main member of the pastoral. This requires us to know very well who and how our main recipients are, because pastoral practice is not done in the abstract, but it is done considering the “here” and “now”; i.e., the temporal and geographical context, and also considering the specific recipients.

We are all aware of the social situation in which our young people live. Just by taking a look at any report on current youth and we will realize the characteristics of current generations and what their most important concerns are. Even so, we must be optimistic about the potential of young people today and all their values.

It is true that in general, the youth is more distant from religion and, especially, from the Church as an institution. In fact, religion occupies one of the last places in the assessment made by young people, and the Church is one of the institutions with the least influence in young people's life and therefore with little impact. We could say that they feel far from religious practice, understood as the one proposed by the institutional religion, but they are not alien to a certain openness to the faith in general, manifested in a plurality of forms. This gap of hunger for spirituality experienced by young people should be a reason for the institution to study how to respond to this concern and its openness to transcendence.

The fact that the Church is an institution that is not valued very much, or that young people recognize themselves indifferent towards religion does not have to lead us to draw the conclusion that little or nothing can be done pastorally with our students, who are not oblivious to these characteristics that we refer to. And it is good to know them so as not to fall into naive approaches, far from feeling defeated or unable to make pastoral proposals; this circumstance has to motivate us more so that our center is courageous and bold in making an innovative and concrete pastoral proposal. A proposal that is capable of connecting with their interest and give rise to experiences that develop their capacity to relate to transcendence to a social, community and Christian commitment. Young people can say that they are less religious, but they will continue to seek the meaning of life. They will ask themselves in depth. They will be attracted to examples of unconditional love... In short, they remain religious, in a more or less broad sense; therefore, they will need people to listen to them and accompany them (Rojano, 2009, pp. 42-47, 2010, pp. 52-57).

Teaching, administrative and service staff. All the personnel that works in an IUS center, regardless their creed, must accept the Institutional Project of the center, based on the values of Christian

humanism and the Salesian style (IUS, 2003, no. 20.) This acceptance supposes, among other commitments, the identification with the Charism and the Salesian educational style, contained in Don Bosco's Preventive System. The knowledge of this Preventive System leads them to be ethically and professionally coherent with their values and to give an individual and communal testimony (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 209).

If we want a pastoral center, in which all the educative and pastoral community is responsible, the basis on which it is asserted, among others, will be that of having a community of teachers, administrative, and service staff committed to the ideals and the institution's educational-pastoral project. The center's management will ensure that all the people who make up this community receive enough training, accompaniment and assistance so that this involvement is from the knowledge and experience of Christian and Salesian values. It may be the case, in fact it happens, that some or many of these people may belong to other Churches, Ecclesial Communities or religions, or that they do not profess any religious creed. Nevertheless, they are obliged to recognize and respect the Catholic character of the Salesian Higher Education Center, and not to endanger the Catholic and Salesian identity of it. The management will take special care that the hiring process considers this particular detail, which, without being exclusive, does not cause serious damage to the charismatic identity of the center (John Paul II, 1990, Part II, article 4, paragraphs 3 and 4).

In co-responsibility with the charisma, we will have to recognize degrees and levels of involvement. For this, it is necessary for our staff to grow in a special sensitivity for young people and the youth situation, especially for those who suffer the most from social inequalities, in openness and knowledge of the Christian and Salesian values that characterize the center for a renewed vocational motivation. Also, their competence and professional expertise

can contribute to building a more just and fraternal society, and, thereby, contribute to the integral education of young people (IUS, 2003, no. 30).

All the personnel of our centers, each one from the professional situation in which they carry out their work, must be convinced that the human must prevail over objects, the spirit over matter, the ethical over the technical. From research to teaching, from personal reception to bureaucratic functions. In each and every one of the actions we must be concerned to contribute to the development of a humanity that grows in a sense of transcendence (John Paul II, 1990, no. 21).

Dimensions of the Ministry

The dimensions of pastoral care in the IUS are those of growth and the process of human maturity in the people who want to engage in a dialogue between faith and culture as well as in the transformation of society. These dimensions, although analyzed separately, are transversal and complement and relate to each other.

Dimension of education to the faith. A fundamental concern in an IUS center is the proposal of Jesus message and Jesus as a person. Don Bosco always had that passion to take young people to God, adapting to the circumstances and those around him. Following that passion, we must take care and encourage the encounter with Jesus and the transformation of life according to the Gospel. This requires taking great care of personal and communal testimony as the first announcement of the Christian message. Efforts must be made to create various itineraries of education in the faith to adapt to the demand of the various recipients located above all in the students, but not only in them. We offer celebration of faith adapted to the environment and youth language in which their religious experiences are expressed. A good offer and a bet-

ter performance of these celebratory and catechetical actions will break down many barriers of prejudice on the religious theme. The proposals of this dimension will have to harmonize the parts of the academic areas as extra-academic.

Educational-cultural dimension. Our centers must promote an inspired culture in Christian humanism in such a way that the proposal of faith can be harmonized with education, culture and human maturity. Our commitment to teaching, research and service to society leads us to carry out in a coherent way the faith-culture dialogue. Our concern in the formation of the people of our centers must bet for the human dignity, the promotion of the human rights and the common good, the formation of a critical conscience, the respect to the diversity and the plurality and the construction of a fair society and in peace. The CVs of any of our higher education degrees must pose specific training of Christian ethical content, related to the degree, offered to all students, and with the same scientific and academic competence than other classes. The purpose of this proposal is to offer a Christian vision of the person, society and the world and knowledge and dialogue about Christian culture.

Social experience Dimension. This dimension is in the founding intuition of Don Bosco as a highly important one as well as perfectly assumed by the current Salesian ministry (Frame of Reference, 2014, p. 149). With the development of this dimension, we will be encouraging positive relationships among all members of the educational community, capable of generating a quality and significant educational environment discussed above. It can develop multiple group experiences of various kinds, among which can be the dialogue and debate groups, groups that encourage representation among students, sports or leisure groups, study and research groups, and of course, pastoral and faith education groups. With all of them we want to contribute to the development of interpersonal skills, education in leadership and social skills, along with the forma-

tion of a student participation network in the same institution. With this dimension, we want to promote the “culture of encounter”, developed by citizens with an awareness of active and communal participation, so important in these times in society and of which Pope Francis speaks in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (Francis, 2013, no. 220).

Vocational Dimension and Social Commitment. All the dimensions would have to come together in the youth invitation to discover their own vocation as the ultimate goal of our pastoral proposal, and with it the elaboration of their life project. Getting to this means that throughout the formation process, the young has matured to reach personal, social, professional and faith choices, in light of the Christian ethical values that have been proposed from the Salesian style. To favor this decision making of life choices, it is necessary to accompany the students through a training that prepares them for a responsible insertion into the society, for a social transformation based on justice, peace and solidarity. This training can be carried out through the offer of social service activities, volunteering in its different versions and missionary experiences (Frame of Reference, 2018, no. 41).

Nowadays, discerning has become very necessary because of the rhythm of life itself that makes the person to be continually exposed to multiple stimuli that are very difficult to survive. For this reason, without a good practical orientation in vocational discernment, students can be seen as puppets, at the mercy of selfish interests from specific sectors of our society (Francis, 2018, no. 167).

Education in our centers must ensure growth in all the person’s dimensions. The specific configuration of the harmonious development will lead to a specific educational model of each institution to ensure comprehensive education from the educational proposals and educational resources (IUS, 2003, no. 31). Each cen-

ter should consider the great privilege of training the professionals of tomorrow, a privilege that also translates into the great responsibility regarding the society.

The Responsible

Those responsible for carrying out this pastoral task, as we have already hinted, embrace the entire educational community. But in order for the actions to be carried out in the design, development and evaluation, we must establish responsibility channels so not to leave this exciting task to improvisation.

In the first place, the head of the pastoral should be the utmost responsible also for the institution, not in an honorary way, but in a real and committed way. Therefore, the rector or director of the institution must assume the maximum responsibility in the pastoral.

And that commitment and responsibility is delegated to a pastoral coordinator at the center level, who cares, values, designs and ensures that the pastoral environment of the center is appropriate according to the guidelines of the Congregation and the Church. The institution will appoint the right person for this responsibility, providing him with those necessary resources for performing this work.

But the work of pastoral responsibility should not fall exclusively on a coordinator, but should always be supported by a team, in which all the areas, departments, services or estates in which the center is organized are present. The entire education community must feel represented among the members of the pastoral team, in turn, whenever possible, the pastoral must be represented in all governing bodies of the institution.

If we are convinced that the pastoral is not exclusively for a few, nor for some specialists, but for the entire educational commu-

nity, the pastoral task in the center must gather the concerns and needs that spring from the same center, hence, the presence in the team of those to whom this pastoral offer is addressed is essential. Only from the teamwork and a good coordination we will come to approaches and good proposals. This cooperative methodology will lead to projects and action plans with their corresponding application in determined phases and evaluation. From a serious evaluation, well organized and open to the entire educational community, we can successively improve in the various aspects of pastoral work.

Ensuring this structure of people and work method is the key to an effective and continuous pastoral operation, which in a short time will produce the desired results. If everyone feels co-responsible of the pastoral, each one its mission will also be benefited and enriched of that pastoral.

Ministry challenges in the IUS

The figure of the Good Shepherd inspires Don Bosco in the configuration of the fundamental principles of his educational style. These principles contained in the Preventive System inspire or should inspire all our educational-pastoral action. Based on this conviction, we propose challenges that will help us move forward on this path of converting our IUS centers into pastoral centers.

The first challenge is aimed at the *centrality of the young* in our pastoral action, as it could not be otherwise. Attentive and continuous listening to young people will lead us to give them the prominence they demand and that our institutions need. If our look towards the young is the look made with the eyes of Jesus, we will see them as beloved children of God, called to full happiness and with capacities that will be developed little by little. With this listening, we will know about their worries, their wounds, their doubts,

their way of thinking and acting. The listening, in the background, implies obedience to the Gospel and open to the Spirit to discover the depth of reality with all its nuances (Francis, 2018, no. 173). By loving what they love we can get closer and closer to their heart, their reasons and their questions about the meaning of life. Our pastoral work to be closer and more effective must start with the questions and concerns of the young, because that is the Gospel. It responds to the deepest needs of people, which is the friendship with Jesus and fraternal love (Francis, 2013, no. 265). We must meet the young, wherever they are, and discover with them, in the heart of their own lives, the traces of the Risen One who always precedes us (Mk 16: 5-7). The first ability of the pastor must be to enter into a relationship with the youth of his time, interested in what worries them and to let themselves be interrogated by everything that constitutes the human existence (Moral, 2014, p. 57).

The second challenge refers to the *faith-culture dialogue*. Our dialogue between culture and the Christian faith must be multidisciplinary. Today, more than ever, the youth of our higher education centers must know how to make a synthesis between Christian faith and culture, and this will be possible if the young have truly been educated for it. This institutional responsibility is transferred to educators who must be coherent and permanently well-formed people, capable of humbly offering the Gospel². Our capacity for dialogue must be permanently under review so as not to fall into a self-referential view that forgets the multiple cultural interlocutors that emerge in our time, that without losing our identity we can be enlightened in the dialogue with today's society. A dialogue based on respect for the freedom of each interlocutor in his or her non-believer or believer status; in the courage to face the most controversial issues and that most concern our students in this pluricultural society, and opening the heart and mind of one who gives his/

2 Available at: <https://goo.gl/AWTfsp> (23.04.2018).

her life a bit a day, but that also lets him/herself to be enriched with the contribution of others.

The third challenge responds to the need to transform our centers into what is pastoral, to be “*pastoral centers*.” The pastoral task cannot be a matter of a few, a coordinator and a team of people, for example, but it is the task of the entire educational community. Becoming a pastoral center is not achieved overnight, but it requires a process of awareness, training and involvement of the entire school staff, everyone from the station and mission that they perform. It is the transversal axis that crosses and permeates everything and everyone. Going from doing pastoral things to making everything pastoral may sound very nice and utopian, but it is the biggest challenge we face at this moment in the field of Higher Education. If we want to be meaningful and differentiating, our IUS brand must offer a quality education also from the pastoral point of view.

The fourth challenge is set in the *proposals* of explicit evangelization that we make. Today we cannot go with very general proposals and for all. From the contact with young people and the reality of our environment, the offers will have to be flexible, adapted to the rich variety of options, and looking for the essentials of the Gospel message, without remaining in the unimportant matter that sometimes blurs that announcement. A proposal for evangelization must be attractive and exciting, not because of the need to attract more people, but because the proposal itself drags people down by being committed to the young person’s life and giving him/her wishful thinking and hope in following Jesus. In this sense we have to take care of the mind with reasoned and logical proposals for this world; the heart, attending to the emotions and feelings that pulsate in young lives; and hands, landing on action projects with social volunteers and commitment for justice. We cannot be satisfied with “more of the same,” but we must sense where we have to open new paths of evangelization in tune with what young people live.

And the fifth challenge wants to look at the people who feel co-responsible in this pastoral in Higher Education Centers, and refers to the need to teamwork. Today, more than ever, we cannot carry out a task in an individualistic way, and the pastoral task demands coordination and a joint effort so that the implication of all is really achieved. This teamwork can involve a patient listening, a confrontation of ideas, an agreement on the proposals that perhaps supposes a greater effort and an apparent “waste of time”, but later it will have a multiplying effect and it will manage to create a community fabric of greater implication in the educational community. Teamwork involves the methodology of a serious planning and development of projects that reflects the feelings and needs of the educational community members, and overcomes improvisation and spontaneous actions, resulting from personal intuitions that seeming right may be a “patching” in the pastoral task. The involvement of more members in the pastoral task requires specific ongoing formation in this area, so that all can share the meanings of our pastoral identity.

To end this brief reflection about the comprehension of the pastoral care in our centers IUS, I want to refer to an idea that appears in the document *Guidance for Pastoral in IUS* and refers to the look we have to do at contexts in which we are inserted:

The pastoral action cannot be developed without a careful look at the reality of places and economic, political, social, cultural, religious and educational contexts where it takes place as well as without considering the diversity that characterizes the Higher Education and the diverse types of institutions (*Frame of Reference*, 2018, no. 9).

It is a clear invitation for all those who are committed to pastoral care in the IUS and as individuals or as educative-pastoral communities to make a serious and deep reflection, and then continue walking with more energy, enthusiasm and hope.

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Leadership and management in the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education

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Introduction

This article is not aimed at making a compilation of the most relevant theories on leadership and university management, abstracting concepts of the most renowned universities, and combination with their academic practices of excellence. It is not also a question of creating new concepts that serve as models for all the Salesian institutions of higher education (IUS). The objective is to recover and point out some elements of leadership and management derived from what is typical of the Salesian Charism and identity. The Salesian charisma, identity, the preventive system, the history of our Father Don Bosco and his educational and ministry practices are rich sources that can guide the management of higher education in our IUS, continually forming new leaderships that follow the Salesian mission. In other words, what does it mean to lead and do management in institutions of higher education with the Salesian brand and style, i.e., with the Salesian identity in the face of the challenges of the information age and of more profound transformations than those of the Industrial revolution?

This article is divided into two parts. The first attempts to identify some characteristics of a leader in the status of a Salesian

educator. Every Salesian educator is invited to exercise leadership, and he needs to have some elements that support him and give him meaning. What would be the differences, for example, of a Salesian leader educator and a Franciscan or Jesuit? Undoubtedly it would be the Salesian being. It is about abstracting some elements for the exercise of leadership in IUS. The second part of this work is intended to combine some general aspects of the management of IUS with that which is absolutely Salesian, emphasizing the aspect of commitment, responsibility and training in all the actors of IUS.

Characteristics of a Salesian Educator leader

One of the main and first characteristics of a Salesian leader is to know who is the detainer and precursor of all the Salesian charisma: Our Father Don Bosco. He was the one who, from an early age, knew how to group his companions, exercising their natural abilities as a means to captivate, entertain and create a cheerful, festive, educational and healthy environment. He was always aware of the good of his friends and the conviction that his presence could preserve them from the atrocities imposed by the social conditions of a time when many migrated to the emerging city seeking an opportunity of life; others encouraged by their parents to leave home, and even obliged to do so, since they did not want their children to live that situation.¹

The ability to influence people towards the common good is another characteristic of a leader. People who are influenced by their leaders do not do their job only because they have received an order, because it was planned in the weekly planning or because they could suffer some penalty if they do not comply with the requested, but they do it, first of all, to perform their work by con-

1 A situation of extreme poverty is understood as the situation lived in the rural Italy of the late nineteenth century (note of the translator).

viction bearing in mind their share of contribution in the fulfillment of the mission of the institution and, consequently, in their professional and personal fulfillment. We know that any collaborator who realizes his attributions needs to have a leader who accompanies him, who evaluates his performance and knows how to recognize his successes, that verifies the fulfillment of the requested tasks and, above all, he realizes if he or she is happy in the function.

A leader is one who motivates and engages people not only in their competence, with their determination and mastery of their powers but is one who commits to the work routine of their peers and does the hard work if necessary. A leader certainly proactive, which is important in any leadership and management exercise. Knowing how to anticipate is essential to avoid any kind of unwanted consequence, besides encouraging among those involved the same practice of not becoming simple executors but collaborating in the sense of thinking the actions, i.e., to know the reason for such action, its beginning, its means and its end; and if possible, even optimize it. In short, the leader inspires each person involved to think in relation to their own actions and processes, contributing to the sustainability, agility, efficiency and efficiency of the institution. This involvement may also occur in the sense that the leader knows the antecedents of his peers even though such knowledge does not give him the right to judge him by his past, nor to avail himself of any information for personal purposes. But above all, the leader needs to keep in mind that behind every administrative or teaching partner of our IUS, there is a human being, a family.

The willingness to generate healthy and educational relationships, in which respect, admiration and reference stand out, is another characteristic of the Salesian educator. Respect is understood as the educator's ability to recognize that, behind that education, there is a history of life, a curiosity to be oriented, a dream to be realized, a project of love and happiness. According to Hunter

(2006, p. 56), respect is not something earned when you become a leader, respect is conquered when you are a leader⁴.

The true leader is that capable of coordinating all the inherent potentials. It should be remembered that for Don Bosco, there was no bad child, lost and therefore impossible to involve him in an educational proposal. On the contrary, the Salesian leader needs to discover that good side in the interior of its recipients so that the natural development of an educational and evangelizing action is facilitated, because “the leader gives respect — he chooses to treat all the people as important, even when they behave badly or “do nothing to deserve” (Hunter, 2006, p. 56). A great act of respect of a Salesian educator is just not to thwart the dreams of his students but to help them to realize them. There is a lot of knowledge that is no longer generated by the lack of an opportunity, of a stimulus.

Admiration refers to the natural charm that the educator has in the students. It is very common to remember the first professors, who, despite their limits, caused a natural admiration, and many of their students, by such admiration, imitated them when they played to “be teachers” with other classmates. Perhaps being a teacher, an example of the first teachers, became one of the first professional desires of any student. The leader who is allowed to admire does not create a dependency of his learners, but instead, he uses that admiration, which must be reciprocal, to encourage them to undertake the different paths of life, making them aware of the long process that a comprehensive training requires, but with a good dose of optimism and perseverance. The Salesian educator leader does not need to be another person to be admired by his learners because the exercise with competence of his own magisterium, his originality, his identity and his Salesian Charism will guarantee a natural admiration capable of generating empathy, cordiality and consequently, all the educational dynamics.

It is understood the power that the Salesian educator has to impact lives. If each educator knew the immanent force he posses-

ses to positively influence his students, he would think with more in his educational practices. The opposite is also true. A bad deed or even an anti-testimony can damage a whole pedagogical proposal. St. Augustine said, “the words convince, but the testimonies drag”. It happened to me a reference situation that caught my attention. Once I went to visit a public university and there I realized that the cell phone number of the Catholic chaplain of the university, who is also a university professor, was fixed in receiving the immediate relief units of the public Health network near the university campus. I had the opportunity to ask the Chaplain the reason of that initiative. He responded that, around the university, there are several student residences. Some come from the interior of the state, or even from other regions of the country, live in student residences with their peers. On weekends they organize parties and sometimes exaggerate the consumption of alcoholic beverages; unfortunately, drugs too. Some of them end up in that immediate help unit and then, friends disappear. In that situation I realized that there was no one to take care of them. It was an atypical circumstance in which I could help in some way, recounted the chaplain. Many call me often, early in the morning, at dawn, asking for help. Some find me later in the university halls and express their gratitude by telling me that if it were not for my presence, perhaps they would no longer be here in this world. I became a reference for them and I make an opportunity for the apostolate, the chaplain concluded.

Another characteristic of the Salesian leader is his passion for life. Don Bosco, when eternalizing his expression *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle* (“Give me souls and take away the rest”), showed his indomitable passion for those people who ran behind him in search of a help, a piece of bread, a dish of soup, some attention, a hug, a space to be and feel protected and safe. The Salesian educator and leader is passionate about life in two respects. The first is that being an educator is not a mere profession but, above all, a vocation. He needs to feel that he is called by God to perform with mastery that responsibility, as mentioned by Pope Francis:

I encourage you to renew your passion for the person – you cannot teach without passion!', in his training process and to be witnesses of life and hope never, never close the doors; on the contrary, open them all wide for students to have hope.

Thus, he becomes aware that educating is not an act of teaching a series of endless content, but it is the act of entering the world of education so that, from there the teacher can accompany the student step by step. This is the origin of the Salesian professor who is able to provide a training capable of making the learners become good Christians, honest citizens and competent professionals. The second aspect is that the Salesian educator intervenes in everything that can put at risk the life of the student. Today, in the midst of information and the virtual world, young people are establishing different forms of relationships in which physical presence is the least important. That physical distance from people makes social isolation an irreparable consequence. Some disorders quite common among young people, such as anxiety, phobias, stress, obsession-compulsive and depression, are due to a new modality of contact with others. The most challenging thing in the midst of all this is the growing rate of suicide among young people. It is estimated that, in Brazil, nearly twelve thousand cases of suicide occur every year, in other words, thirty-two cases per day. Brazil ranks eighth in the ranking of countries with the highest incidence of suicide. Among young people, this increase has been 30%². It is because of this situation that the Salesian educator, as the prophet of the Youth, needs to act in a particular way in relation to the preventive practices that inhibit the actions that endanger the integrity of the life.

The courtyard of our institutions was always for Salesian pedagogy a laboratory of life. The Salesian leader cannot, in any way, underestimate the strength that space has and how it questions and

2 Data obtained from the Brazilian Association of Psychiatry-Federal Council of Medicine.

challenges us every day. What are the main questions that our students are doing us today? Is it that they are simply interested in learning the academic content so well assimilated and dominated by our educators? Is it perhaps that they are looking for something that we do not even dare to know what it is? As Salesian educators, we are challenged by the sense of how, having the total understanding of the educational space which is the courtyard of the institution, may this be more interesting than the student's smartphone, since many digital natives³ use the interval of the classrooms to consult their own devices and interact with the digital world. The same exhortation made by Pope Francis (2013, p. 1) to young university students applies very well to any educator. "Please do not look at life from the balcony! Mix there, where the challenges are, where people is asking for help, the development, the struggle for the dignity of people, the fight against poverty, the struggle for the values and so many other struggles that are presented to us every day."

Educational activities cannot be reduced to the act of teaching, conferences, symposia, workshops, accompanying students in their work practices and supervising their qualifications. These activities consist mainly in discovering the mysticism of the Salesian courtyard, that space to know that hidden dimension that most of the times is not revealed during the academic activities. And it is there, in the most hidden of that dimension, that resides the integrity of our students; it is a place of the reasons of the joys, emotions, feelings, grudges, hatreds, and mainly, of the deepest experience of God, in the case that they have the courage to open up to that transcendental dimension⁴. In addition, it is in that inner space that our students make the most important decisions of their

3 Term coined by the North American Marc Prensky in the year 2001.

4 According to Pope Francis, in the speech addressed to the participants of the World Congress for Catholic Education held in the year 2015, the biggest crisis of Catholic education is the lack of transcendence, the close of that dimension.

lives, regardless of the consequences. Happy the Salesian educator who, in the exercise of his leadership, helps them to make the best choices.

This attitude of the Salesian leader to relate as a young educator, whether in the classroom or even in the same Salesian Areopagus, which are the courtyards of our institutions, can help the student in his vocational discernment in the broad sense, i.e., in relation to the most diverse fields of actions in his future professional life or, as an accompaniment of a religious vocational awakening, as indicated by the Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry (2014, p. 152):

To establish communities [...] that are friendly, close, deep, committed and open to all young people who seek their course in life. The path of Christian life requires a living, compromising community context (ecclesial) capable of sustaining the option of faith and helping to interpret it in relation to everyday life: Therefore, an educational environment of meaningful witnesses that lives life as a vocation.

In short, the Salesian courtyard, before even being complete with the interaction between educator and educating, is a physical environment that needs a whole care, starting from the budget that spaces in an IUS are educational. We do not want to give ostensive care to the structures in a way that would blur our spirit and the exercise of our leadership, because we prefer a simpler environment with cheerful people than ostentatious environments with sad people.

We have to guarantee the beauty in our spaces and environments according to the concept of beauty drawn by the French philosopher Nancy (2012, p. 12), “Whenever we find a beautiful image, we are finding an image whose beauty transports us beyond the image... “ It is precisely that experience that we want to offer our students with the beauty of our environments, that they can be brought to other levels of experience that go beyond the spaces itself.

Undoubtedly, the Salesian leader stands out for his academic and professional training, and that causes certain admiration in the academic community. This training that makes him part of the team of educators of an IUS, can no distance from the students, especially those who have more difficulties in learning, relationships, behavior, environment, etc. Therefore, the importance of a Salesian leader is to be a welcoming person; i.e., that the students can find in our teachers what they often do not find in their parents, someone who listen to them and understand them. The reception is a Salesian trait that is very present in our work. We hardly heard any speeches against the reception. On the contrary, we are always praised for the attention granted, offered with kindness and courtesy. Reception is always the attitude of responding to a questioning. The bad habit of not wanting to give an answer cannot be practiced, because in some situations, by not giving an answer that will not please, the answer is avoided and that is not educational. Let us remember the recommendation of Jesus in the Sermon on the mountain: “Be Your “yes” “yes”, and your “no” “no” (Mt. 5, 37a). The act of hosting does not mean solving all the problems that students may eventually present, nor is it possible for a Salesian leader. However, the Salesian leader can orient the students on how to proceed or who to resort to in certain situations. Welcoming means that the Salesian educator accepts his students, with their life story, powerless in any way to separate the wheat from the tares; i.e., as if the problematic aspect, or the problem itself that has been presented to the student is not of interest to the educator. Here is what was described by Pope John Paul II, who is reminded with longing and now is St. John Paul II, in the letter called “*Juvenum Patris*”⁵, on the occasion of the centenary of the death of San Juan Bosco:

Therefore, the real educator participates in the lives of young people, cares about their problems, tries to realize how they see

5 Latin term that means father of the young.

things, takes part in their sporting and cultural activities, in their conversations, as a mature and responsible friend, He shows ways and goals, is ready to intervene in order to clarify problems, to point out criteria, to correct with careful and affectionate firmness, appraisals and reprehensible behaviors. In this climate of 'pedagogical presence', the educator is not considered a 'superior' but a father, brother and friend.

Precisely, the characteristics that drive the leadership of the Salesian educator are their capacity to be interested in young people and for the youth affairs. Don Bosco said: "I study for you, for you work, for you live, for you I am willing even to give life" (Salesian Constitutions, 14). It is with a little of that spirit of total dedication and interest for the young people that salesian educators must orient. Not because he is a student and recorded in a certain course or class, the teacher has to pay special attention because of his physical presence, but above all, the student is there because is looking for something that goes beyond the diploma, which exceeds the fact of failing or failing, which transcends friendship with classmates. To lead is to discover the deepest interests of the students, their dreams and life projects, and being with them, helping them to achieve them.

Additionally, the Salesian educator needs to be attentive to the youth reality with the most diverse topics that are part of the daily life of the young person. The modern educator, warned by Pope John Paul II (1998, p. 7):

Must be able to read carefully the signs of time to recognize the emerging values that attract young people: peace, freedom, justice, communion and participation, the promotion of women, solidarity, development, ecological emergencies.

The great role of the educator is to attract, to know and to generate spaces of discussions with the young people so that they can carry out a critical analysis of the own world in which they live, as well as their setbacks. This implies issues such as the concept

of youth⁶, the exclusion process of young people, the affirmative participation of young people in contemporary life, the religious expressions of youth and their religiosities, youth and Society of violence, sexuality as an integral growth of the human being, the young man and his future in the world of work. These and other topics such as the young man and the use of new technologies, make the Salesian educator leader not only interested in such matters, mastering some data and concepts with mastery, but can help the students to understand and know how to deal with such situations that sometimes affect them, causing certain disorientation.

I believe that any IUS, by its nature and identity, carries in its DNA the fact that all its educational activities in the fields of research, extension, teaching, art, culture and religion, and have as main objective to offer certain elements to make the juvenile condition better known. The IUS certainly need, as their own vocation, to deepen the research on youth, involving as much as possible their professors and researchers. An example of this is what is being done by the coordination of the IUS America, in the sense of having established, at its last Continental Conference⁷, an area of action to deal exclusively with the topic of “Research on youth”.

Having just as reference the educational model implanted by our Father Don Bosco and although that model had not been systematized in his time, the scholars of Don Bosco, making a critical reading of his biography, perceive in him a considerable courage and daring to face the world⁸ and the youthful reality⁹ that was pre-

6 Term to express the different ways in which youth are socially seen.

7 VII Conference of IUS America held in Santiago-Olmué (Chile) from September 12 to September 15, 2017.

8 Italia went through the unification of its territories, in which the Piedmont was initially the place of the abode, formation and action of Don Bosco.

9 With the beginning of the Industrial revolution in Italy, the young people abandoned the rural areas in mass and migrated to the cities in search of work, among them, Turin, place of the first reception house for young people.

sented to him. Don Bosco's courage is perceived in some episodes of his life in a particular way, in the determination to find some means of protecting the innumerable young people coming from the most different surrounding regions in search of work, employment, a chance of life. Along with this challenge, the confrontation before the established ecclesiastical and civil authorities who did not always see with good eyes the work outside of the "sacred spaces", and even less with young people in need and impoverished. Another gesture of courage and boldness made by Don Bosco was when Pope Leo XIII, in the year of 1880 invited him to build the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome, obviously with the resources collected by Don Bosco. He accepted the challenge, but on one condition, as Lemoyne by (1927, p. 250), that of having next to it "a big reception house in order to receive, instruct and orient in arts and crafts poor young people, of which there were so many especially in that district"; here is the example of his constant concern for doing something for the youth.

It is precisely from Don Bosco's courage and boldness that we perceive that the Salesian educator needs to be related to. The courage to know and apply in their pedagogical practices so many modern tools that the world of education offers; not in the sense of applying them as a kind of fashion, but for them to guarantee that effective means to reach the main purpose of an educational action, the integral formation of the student. It is known that breaking paradigms in the world of education is always a great challenge. Inflexible and amorphous educational systems, whether in the public power with the laws governing education, or in the IUS have lasted for years and are not even subjected to critical analysis. In the face of the question of why that method or that action, the answer will be most of the times: because it has always been done that way. The new pedagogical models, for example: Inverted room, active methodology, innovation, entrepreneurship, new technologies, etc., constantly challenging the Salesian leader. The

choice for this or that method is an act of courage, as any option in life. In the meantime, the greatest courage is to ensure that the option made is the best for the education of our students and that these methodological practices are the best described in the pedagogical proposal and the planning of the institution. Audacity and courage need to walk *pari passu* and be present in the Salesian leader. It is not audacity in the sense of a stubbornness without purpose, of a primary impetuous questioning, of only being the against without any foundation, but in the sense of presenting great ideas, of socializing the own acquired knowledge, of contributing with the personal growth and therefore of the institution, of inducing students to think and create, away from the habit of being repeaters.

Creativity is something inherent among students. In some situations, it influences the pedagogical activities programmed according to the curricular components. Because of that, the Salesian leader needs to have a receptive attitude above all to positively see the creation capacity and to keep in mind how the learning happens with the current generations. The true leader cannot, in any way, inhibit the creativity of his students, with a certain fear of losing authority and even going through a vexatious situation. On the contrary, the power of the student's creativity also serves as a stimulus to the Salesian educator, who has to be continually looking for new ways in the teaching-learning process.

The Salesian leader must certainly rejoice with the student's creative power and orient him to use his own potential. All academic creativity is a great opportunity for the Salesian leader to think that the world is in continual transformation, and remaining passive and steady in surpassed educational models can compromise an institution's educational proposal.

Management principles in IUS

Just as the exercise of the leadership of a Salesian educator needs to be permeated by Don Bosco's charisma, the exercise of management is no different. The good manager of the IUS is someone able to conjugate all the Salesian educational proposal with the main strategies and necessary tools, and the willingness to make management in an institution of higher education (IUS). In other words, how to guarantee the Salesian identity and Charism in all the management of an IUS, once, for example, the practices marketing in some IES, in Brazil amaze us every day, since they move in unfair competition, taking advantage of the current economic-financial recession that the country is going through?

Without a doubt, good strategic planning¹⁰ is the basis for a minimum organization of the higher education institution. This was stated by the Anglican Reverend Lewis Carroll, "If you do not know where you want to go, any road will work". The Act of meeting to establish a plan is eminently Salesian. In the Salesian houses, particularly from the initial training stages in the seminars, the meetings are frequent to organize the dynamics of the House and the activities inherent of a Salesian life. The act of meeting brings with it many learnings. First of all, that we are not alone and that we live in community, in society. We certainly have our own opinion and this must be shown, socialized. On the other hand, it is not always going to be preponderant about the others, sometimes it can even be totally rejected. The group is the collective and participative idea, but the conclusion, the deliberation, will be those tools that better serve the demands in terms of a whole, or on the part of those who have full powers for it. Secondly, the meeting shows the designated people that they should analyze on a particular matter. The commitment degree of peers is essential so that ideas and solutions

10 In some IUS, strategic planning is called the navigation chart.

emerge in the dialogue, ideas capable of responding to the different problems and questions that are common in higher education. It is known that a person not involved and not committed will not only stop contributing, but may also disturb some processes. Finally, the meeting reveals a socialization area of the main issues of IES, mainly in terms of internal communication since it is always a challenge for institutions, because of its complexity. We are surprised when we know an event will be held and we have the information not by the internal media of the institution of the IES but in other places.

Returning to the topic of internal planning, we highlight the importance of the commitment of the entire educational community in this process. Commitment is understood as the whole methodological process adopted to ensure the effective participation of representatives of the teaching, student and administrative bodies. The lack of one may cause strategic planning to be deficit, with gaps, i.e., without full coverage of the sectors and areas that make up a IES. This participation expresses the commitment of the IES stakeholders and corroborates that strategic planning is not a document coming from the high levels of management from the top down to be fulfilled, but it was elaborated by several hands, showing the direction where you want to go. The involvement of the educational community in the planning monitoring makes that document not remain archived, i.e., placed separately or even occupying space on the shelves of the offices, but has a periodic and systematic accompaniment. This monitoring becomes even more important in the case of multiannual planning and there are so many other concerns, plans and activities that remain on the agendas of university managers, which can easily be forgotten. Finally, in the timetable for the implementation of strategic planning, it is necessary to designate those people responsible for the actions. As in the procedure manual of each Salesian educator they have their attributions and responsibilities, and the strategic planning indicates who are the leaders of the corresponding actions, thus avoiding

possible negligence or even a “guilt game”. The actions that have been carried out need to be celebrated, i.e., that the educational community actually knows what was established and recognizes its good results.

In this proposal of the need of involvement of the representative in the elaboration and execution process of the strategic planning of the IUS, there is also a challenge in the sense of engaging the teaching staff in that process. The teacher who has exclusive dedication in the IUS, in principle, would have no difficulty getting involved in the established plans. On the other hand, we have teachers who work for hours, those who have few classes in the IUS and, therefore, little presence and commitment; it can be even because they have another job link in another IES, or they have other professional activities that take part of their time. Another difficulty is when teachers do not have a manager profile, as discussed by Kana and Zanelli (2011):

[...] They do not feel sufficiently prepared for course management activities. It is much more by means of personal efforts that they develop the necessary skills to confront the complex situations of the administrative context faced daily. Some say that coordinating a graduation course is being willing to be constantly challenged, is investing in overcoming its limitations.

In spite of this feeling of not being prepared, it is essential the involvement of the teaching staff, especially if together with the exercise of the teaching it has an administrative charge, for example, the coordination of a graduation course, or even of a postgraduate program in the management of IUS. He needs to be involved and to make a systematic accompaniment of the progress of the activities of his course, such as the academic aspects; for example, the validation of the course according to the indicators of quality at national and international level; the number of teachers and their corresponding qualifications, the specialists, the averages of the

course grades in relation to the averages of the other IUS courses; the number of students in the course and their percentage in relation to all the students in the institution; the number of teachers in the course and their percentage in relation to the total of teachers in the institution; the number of teachers in the course and their percentage in relation to the total of teachers in the institution; the most approved curricular components; the most proven curricular components; the number of accesses or retreats of books in the institution's library; the number of students in the scientific initiation, in the projects of linkage¹¹ and in the tutoring.

The teacher-manager must have a clear idea of what is his concern and responsibility, mainly in relation to the impact of the course on society and its self-sustainability. In no way this is an exclusive responsibility of the high management, i.e., the Vice-rectors and the rector.

Strategic planning in an IUS reveals the organizational culture or as Gomes (2004) says, the organizational sense¹² implanted in an institution. The organizational culture is the way, the means, the style of a certain institution to organize in order to provide a service or to produce a quality product. The great challenge to implant a culture of organization is the change of mentality of the people involved in the different sectors of the institution. In the face of a new strategy, the following questions often arise in organizations: "I have always done so! So I have done it years ago why do I have to do it another way now?" Some people have difficulty understanding, and therefore, perceiving and accepting the added value of a

11 They are also known as University extension, social projection or community service (N. of the T.).

12 According to Gomes (2004, p. 67), the organizational sense "constitutes a set of concepts, information and principles relatively vague, but of great impact, that help to model behaviors, attitudes and decisions in a desired direction for the businesses".

possible change of procedure or methodology. Not always the collaborator, teacher or not, is the main responsible for the difficulty in dealing with a change. He may never have been instructed to do a self-critique of his own procedures and that his boss has never given him a feedback of his work and results. However, the commitment of the entire pair, in any aspect established in the planning, is necessary to achieve the goals and objectives proposed.

The organizational culture is not an inflexibility of the processes that sometimes cause some suspicion in the educational community, inhibiting and preventing any creative action that is not planned. This inflexibility of processes is, in a way, due to the system of total quality¹³, which when misunderstood and applied can have that consequence. On the contrary, the organizational culture is the minimum guarantee for each Salesian educator to be certain that he has a wide and open field for his educational actions, using different means and tools in view of the integral education of the student.

In addition to the mission and vision, there are elements that reveal the philosophy and identity of an IUS, as well as its future prospecting, respectively, values that indicate the actions carried out in the educational spaces of an IUS. As the name itself says, values are valuable and precious in an organization. Therefore, they need to be known and perceived in all educational practices. However, according to Gomes (2004, p. 74), the application is not easy.

Creating a value means giving legitimacy to it, and that is not an easy task. It requires a large and consistent management

13 According to Gomes (2004, p. 79), "Total quality (TC) is a Japanese-origin management philosophy that brings together beliefs and principles about how work in a company should be done, while chasing the best quality at the lowest cost and optimizing human potential. It is *total* because it seeks quality in all areas of the organization, and not only those linked to the direct production process in which quality control or assured quality was already practiced.

effort through its dissemination and acting by the main executives, for example. The transmission of a concept is easy, and it is solved with a good communication campaign. However, when their acceptance implies a change of attitudes, the task becomes more difficult, demanding more investment of time and energy for its implantation. It is easier to convince people about a certain value than to make them behave accordingly.

IUS need to define their values, for example, optimism, coherence, honesty, solidarity, love, balance, justice, among others, and work with the academic community, so that such values can permeate the Academic, cultural and ministry activities planned in strategic planning. Measuring the effectiveness of values is a challenge particularly with graduates. However, it is necessary. How to be sure that our graduates take into account, in their very varied fields of professional activity, the values declared by our IUS? From that challenge arises a previous concern that is just the work with the graduates. We know the appreciation and esteem that our graduates have for our IUS; however, working with them is still incipient, in the sense of engaging them in our activities with society. There would even be no obstacle to financially collaborating with IUS projects, as is the case, in some American universities, for example.

The good results desired by any organization depend a lot on the commitment of their peers in the knowledge and implementation of the proposal. To do this, working in synergy is essential. For Covey (2005, p. 316), synergy is:

It is the essence of principle-based leadership. It catalyzes, unifies and liberates existing powers in people. All the habits that we deal with prepare us to create the miracle of the synergy [...] it means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and also a part. It is not just a part, but it is the most catalytic, most powerful, unifying and exciting part.

The formation of a competent management is one of the efficient means in the performance of the tasks in synergy. Nevertheless, the individuality of each Salesian educator, and that is a richness that must be explored and valued, everyone needs to focus on the objectives to be achieved. The dispersion of forces, in some cases caused by the urgency of a certain demand of the institution, when it is not well administered, can lead to a certain delay in the fulfillment of the previously planned activities. We know that our IUS daily reveals surprises and, consequently, necessary immediate reactionary and necessary actions are made.

The formation (management) of the people, either administrative collaborators or professors, is something necessary in any IUS. At the end of the day, they are, together with the young students, the greatest patrimony that a IUS can have, i.e., human capital in the corporate world. It should be remembered that one of the fundamental operative options of IUS, endorsed by the identity document of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (2003), is precisely the training maintained with constant investments, “as the only way to guarantee and continually develop their professional, educational and Salesian competencies” (2003, p. 15).

With regard to the continuous training of the people in our IUS, one cannot have the following reasoning: One cannot form, in our institutions, the professional excellence in our collaborators because later they receive a better proposal of another institution and leave us. Having that thought is something petty. We regret, certainly, when a Salesian educator leaves us, particularly if it was someone who contributed much to the institution. However, we will train many others so that they are equal or better than the one who has left us.

The work in conjunction with the laymen, i.e., those who are not consecrated, particularly the Salesians, was a desire expressed by the Salesian congregation since the General Chapter 24, carried out in the year of 1996, i.e., more than 20 years ago, whose theme

was “Salesians and laymen: Sharing in communion the spirit and mission of Don Bosco”. It is necessary to guarantee a good qualification of our lay collaborators, either as an admission requirement or in continuous training. In the case of lifelong, continuous training, all IUS need to guarantee the formation in the Salesian aspect¹⁴ of all the educators. After all, they are most of the time those who are in constant contact with young students, particularly in classrooms. The great challenge today, especially for teachers, is how to translate the entire history, pedagogy and spirituality¹⁵ of Don Bosco into pedagogical practices. In other words, how can a Salesian educator be imbued with that Salesian heritage and make his master’s actions effectively contribute to the human, Christian, citizen, and professional formation of the student?

Certainly, in the question of training, the success of IUS depends a lot on the implementation of a high-performance management, i.e., to have in the team proactive, creative, enterprising, innovative, resilient people that know how to work in teams. Several of our IUS were created in the Salesian schools of basic education and, therefore, with that model of family management in which even many of the parents of the students were available to do any work voluntarily. That contribution with their respective management models is not considered as bad in the emergence of IUS, but these are already overcome. Today, new university management

14 Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva, 9th successor of Don Bosco, in the year 2011 and in view of the celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of San Juan Bosco, proposed a preparation with the following themes to be deepened each year: knowledge of the history of Don Bosco (16/08/2011-15/08/2012); Pedagogy of Don Bosco (16/08/2012 – 15/08/2013); Spirituality of Don Bosco (16/08/2013-15/08/2014). These three themes are a good formative course for the administrative collaborators and professors of the IUS.

15 According to Siquera (2009, p. 563), “Spirituality has influenced several organizational contexts and, in a general way, is linked to the revaluation of human capital, especially in terms of the search for a greater sense of work and a greater relationship with the other (pairs, headquarters, community, etc.)”.

tools are constantly emerging in the market and are extremely useful for optimizing educational processes and services. However, it should be mentioned how all ICTs are just tools and do not have an end in themselves. This means that the dominance of an educational technological tool does not always guarantee a good result. But these are already overcome. Today, new university management tools are constantly emerging in the market and are extremely useful for optimizing educational processes and services. However, it should be mentioned how all ICTs are just tools and do not have an end in themselves. This means that the dominance of an educational technological tool does not always guarantee a good result. In some IUS, there is a team of its own, linked to the Department of Technology and Information, responsible for the creation and development of programs capable of assisting the activities of the institution, whether administrative or pedagogical.

As stated earlier, the whole environment in a IUS is educational, and the high management needs to have that concern, and the care of the work environments of our collaborators needs to be in the guideline of the campus administration. The question is simple: do we take care all the spaces of our IUS? Is the care of the spaces designated to our teachers the same as for example with the spaces for the maintenance personnel? The salary, due to the work history of each country, cannot limit the model of treatment in our IUS, because it is considered independent the position that is occupied that all are Salesian educators. The human development group of each IUS needs to guarantee more and more that approximation of the administrative body with the teaching body, despite the characteristic of each function. Commemorations, events, spaces for fellowship, among other activities, are effective means to reduce distances and generate proximity. Walking through the halls of the university a young lady of service, all happy, approached me and said: "I am doing the course of pedagogy and my dream is to become a professor here in the UCDB". It is gratifying to perceive

that dreams are not only in our students but also in many other administrative collaborators who assume, even in their anonymity, the mission of Educating. Taking care of the environments does not mean taking care of the physical spaces, but, above all, of the whole atmosphere that permeates the different relations between the work colleagues, turning the environment pleasant and conducive to the realization of the happiness of people.

As an example of the youthful subjects that constantly disturb the Salesian educators and that were mentioned in the first part of this article, the IUS, particularly here in Brazil and I believe that also in other countries and continents, need to be in constant harmony with some topics and to discuss them for the management, sustainability and development of the institution. Topics such as education financing, educational policies, teaching methodologies, teacher training, research, innovation, accreditation, evaluation and regulation, university management, among others, are some of the topics that occupy the agenda of high management, and it cannot be any other way. IUS need to discover, above all at regional and national level, the representative associations of higher education institutions dealing with these issues¹⁶. In addition to being the institutions of exchange and cooperation of the universities, they are the representations in front of the government policy bodies dealing with the higher education sector. The lack of participation in these instances could isolate the IUS from some current discussions in the educational field and, on the other hand, deprive them of the opportunity to work in networking with other institutions.

Taking into consideration the legislation of each country in which the IUS are inserted, they cannot forget to contemplate in

16 In Brazil, the main representative institutions of our IUS are: the CRUB (Council of Rectors of the Brazilian Universities), the ANEC (National Association of Catholic Education) and the ABRUC (Brazilian Association of Community Universities).

their planning and educational proposals, their option to favor the concrete means for the young people of popular classes¹⁷ to have an opportunity study. We know that government policies do not always favor the admission of these young people to universities. Segregation, gentrification, allied with world poverty, continue to leave a considerable plot outside of one of the fundamental rights of humanity, which is the access to education¹⁸. The scholarship policy, very common in our IUS, is a concrete means to encourage the entry of young people in a situation of vulnerability. In addition, other actions such as paid internships, whether in the educational institution or outside, the tutoring work involving students with facilities or potential in the studies and those who have availability in the practice of teaching and the cooperation agreements with different institutions, are some of the actions that can be part of the dynamics of the management of IUS for that purpose.

Even though it is not the subject of our discussion, it is worth mentioning the interest and concern that an IUS has in relation to the work of the University Pastoral. The management of an IUS needs to contemplate in its strategic planning, actions that can respond to the current policies of the Salesian Congregation concerning the Salesian University Ministry. These actions correspond necessarily to the human, physical and financial resources, and go through the pedagogical practices of the curricular components until reaching the objective of a University Ministry, understood according to Oliveira (2011, p. 8), as:

The institution of higher education in a direction that strengthens its educational identity, which is maximized through a dialogue

17 It should be mentioned that the work of IUS with young people of popular classes is one of the options signed in the identity document of the Salesian Institutions of higher Education (2003, p. 7).

18 In Brazil, the proportion of young people (18 to 24 years) in higher education is only 17.2%. The Adult universe (25 years or older) with complete higher education is even less than 13%. Data available at <https://goo.gl/yPy2A6> (12/05/2018).

between the diversity of knowledge, communication between the different forms of citizenship exercise and an interaction with a multiplicity of professional options.

The management team of any IUS needs to be imbued and involved in this current understanding of pastoral, i.e., that the pastoral in an IUS is not reduced to sacramental, liturgical and celebratory activities, but rather a solidarity action, a class that stimulates the knowledge, an unexpected attention, a help in a moment of difficulty of a student, among other actions, all these constitute pastoral actions.

Final considerations

The reflections contained in this article can be seen as “partial” and even “limited” notes on what may be the main references for the exercise of leadership and management in a Salesian institution of higher education. Sometimes we strive to seek in other sources the necessary and effective means to better manage our IUS, which certainly has its value. However, we have at our disposal a treasure that still needs to be discovered and applied in our action plans. That treasure has a name: Don Bosco, and from it, a whole educational system started, tested and proven throughout these two hundred years. This system is able to give a positive response to the world today in the face of the most diverse human and educational challenges.

Don Bosco’s School is a school of leaders, capable of forming, maintaining and delivering people to become agents of transformation. This is necessary since the society today lacks leaders capable of placing themselves in the forefront of a single person, or even a group, and becoming a reference for what they are and do, rather than their speeches, which can sometimes become empty.

Leadership, rather than a concept, is an action in the face of a common good that necessarily involves the leader and the lead. This is not a unilateral relationship, nor the exercise of power, despite its legitimacy, but above all, the authority capable of creating a relationship of respect, trust and admiration.

The management carried out with competence, responsibility, sustainability, taking into account the religious, Salesian, moral and ethical values in view of the integral education of our students and the care of the “common house”, is the basis of the motivation and management of our IUS. The involvement in the management of the various actors, such as students, teachers and administrative collaborators, guarantees a relationship in the university diversity.

To conclude, leadership and management in our IUS can only be an expression of identity, Charism and mission of the institution, from the moment that Salesian authenticity gets to all processes, plans and strategies.

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Third Part

**SALESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE DIFFERENT CONTEXTS**

The Pontifical Salesian University (UPS): history, relevance and current contribution in the global context of the congregation

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The UPS inside and at the service of the Salesian mission

The mission of the Salesian Congregation finds its deepest meaning in nature, in the identity of the Don Bosco Salesians and in the apostolic project of the Founder, of “representing in the church the signs and bearers of the love of God to young people, especially the poorest” (Constitutions, art. 2). For this reason, the Congregation is characterized by the service in the *education and evangelization* “according to a project of integral promotion of the man, oriented towards Christ, the perfect man” (*Costituzioni*, art. 31), seeking to create “honest citizens and good christians” (G. Bosco, 1854).

Thus, the particular features of the salesian mission: the *personal promotion* of young people; *social and collective promotion*; *evangelization and catechesis*; initiation into ecclesial life and liturgical life; the *practice of the Preventive System*; the *social communication* sector; the study and deepening of *Don Bosco*, the *Preventive System* and the *youth world*.¹ Salesian apostolic action “is carried out with a plurality of forms, determined in the first place by the exigencies of those to

whom we dedicate ourselves” (*Constituzioni*, art. 41), through activities and works in which “it is possible to promote human education and christian youth”, and also by means of offering” our pedagogical and catechetical service in the youth field through specialized centers”, and in each circumstance always having “an attention towards the salvation of the youth” (*Constituzioni*, art. 42).

The presence in the field of higher education and the university is recent in the history of the Salesian Congregation,¹ and in these last decades “the awareness of the importance of this educational level and the development of the Salesian presence on it “has grown” quantitatively and qualitatively”, as well as it is manifested in a clear way by the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS).²

The specific identity and mission of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) based in Rome lies in this panorama, which since its beginnings plays a particular service to the entire Congregation, in “direct correspondence” — as the Statutes — “with the specific mission of the Salesians of Don Bosco”³. The UPS, as a roman ecclesiastical academic institution, naturally has an institutional relationship with the Magisterium (and the corresponding regulations)

1 It originated in 1934 with the beginning of St. Anthony College di Shillong, in India.

2 Cf. Dicaster per la pastorale Giovanile Salesiana, *La Pastorale Giovanile Salesiana. Quadro di Riferimento*, Rome 2014, pp. 204-220. With the modification of article 13 of the *General Regulations* that the General Chapter XVI has acted in the year 2008, the Salesian Congregation wanted to recognize that the presence in the field of higher education is part of its mission: It is stated that “the school at its different levels, the professional centers and the institutions of higher education promote the integral development of the youth through the assimilation and the critical reworking of the culture and the education to the faith in view of the Christian transformation of society”. Capitolo Generale XXVI dei Salesiani di Don Bosco, *Documenti Capitolari*, Roma 2008, p. 86.

3 Università Pontificia Salesiana, *Statuti*, Roma 2000, art. 1 § 2

of the Church given its direct dependence on the Holy See, and as the “University of the Congregation”, its own Nature and its purposes, is placed in fidelity to the tradition and the current guidelines of the same Salesian Congregation.

In the Institutional and Strategic Project (PleS) 2016-2021 of the UPS, where the identity of this institution is delineated, it is stated that since it is “Pontifical” the University is committed “to a solid and constant collaboration with the Church, with the Magisterium of the Holy Father through a competent reflection on the theological, philosophical, pedagogical, juridical, humanistic and communicative aspects; as “Salesian”, the orientation of our research prefers attention to evangelization, education and all that pertains to the world of young people, deepening the originality of Charism and the salesian mission” (Università Pontificia Salesiana, 2017, p. 12).

The Statutes and the Regulations of the University, published in 2000 (Università Pontificia Salesiana, 2000) and currently submitted to a phase of revision and updating that is expected to be completed in autumn of 2019, in art. 2 § 2 are presented UPS *specifics purposes*:

1. Cultivate and promote, through scientific research, the study and progress of theological sciences, education sciences, philosophical, canonical sciences, christian and classical letters and the sciences of social communication; and above all to deepen the knowledge of christian revelation and what is linked with it, to systematically elucidate the truth contained in it, considering the new problems that arise, and to present them to the men of our times in way suitable to the different cultures;
2. To educate, in a deep way, the students in the corresponding fields and scientific sectors, in sincere and coherent adherence to the catholic doctrine, favoring continuous or permanent training, to make them suitable in scientific research directed according to the own method of each of the sciences, to the teaching in the various Institutes,

also university, and to the development of specific different tasks, so that the faithful transmission and the organic development and application of the doctrine and the pedagogical practice inherited by San Juan Bosco are guaranteed and promoted; 3. To offer a qualified service, in close union with the hierarchy, both with the universal Church as with the particular churches, in the work of evangelization and of education; 4. cultivate forms of presence and participation, according to the nature of the University, particularly where there are problems related to the rights and the formation of young people, 'especially the poorest' (UPS, 2000, art. 2 § 2).

We can then consider the UPS as a University Institution serving the Congregation and the salesian Family, the Church and human society, *for deepening, research and the formative proposal oriented to the areas of interests and activities (world of youth, education and evangelization) of the Salesians of Don Bosco and those who share his charisma*, it may be interesting to reflect — and is the objective of this contribution — on the fact about today's meaning of the presence of the UPS for the entire Salesian Congregation. I will do this first by presenting the UPS's historical process of academic and institutional development, to then address the current situation and challenges to the future, concluding with some considerations.

First of all, it may be interesting to take into account the data that in the last 18 months the UPS has always had, during each academic year, at least 200 Salesian students, and in the last thirty years the members of the Congregation (without considering the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and other realities of the Salesian Family) who have obtained the BA and PHD in the UPS, have been 936 and 204, respectively.

This service offered by the University for the qualification of salesian staff, has emerged in a particular way on the occasion of the development of the General Chapter XXVII, when — during the visit of the capitulant members to the UPS on March 22, 2014 — it

was recognized that more than 70 % of the capitulant Salesians had formed in our institution.

During that visit, Rector Major Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva, among other things, said:

The UPS originated thanks to the will of Don Bosco's fourth successor, Don Pedro Ricaldone, who is the presence of the Congregation and the Congregation. That means that in itself it has no meaning if it is not in the service of the Congregation. Among the services provided by this University of the Congregation to the Congregation, I would like to highlight the critical and historical study of Don Bosco. [...] In addition, another motivation to thank the UPS on the part of the Congregation is in the formation of our students, as demonstrated by the presence among our capitulars of more than 90 alumni. This is the most authentic testimony of the service given by the University to the Congregation, from the Second Vatican Council, a central role in favor of the renewal of our Salesian Family and charisma. [...] The UPS is the University of the Congregation and it is loved, supported and appreciated. [...] I wish [...] a new phase in the history of the Congregation and our University, because we are experiencing a change of time and we need proper change from the Congregation and the UPS (Chávez, 2014, pp. 4-5).

The institutional and academic development of UPS

The UPS, founded and sponsored directly by the Society of San Francis de Sales⁴, was created in Turin as the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum on May 3, 1940 with the three "classical" ecclesiastical Faculties (Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law) at the service of the formation of members of the Salesian Congregation from various parts of the world. This *main purpose* has been preserved until the

4 Cf. UPS, 2000, art. 1 § 1 and art. 2 § 1. Can also be consulted: Capitolo generale XX dei Salesiani di Don Bosco, Roma 1971, nn. 702-705 (*Il Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum*).

Statutes that are currently in force, which — on the admission of students — states: “the members of the San Francis de Sales Society and the Salesian family are the beneficiaries of the UPS, as well as the ecclesiastics, the religious and the laymen who accept the programs with their specific characters, in relation to the aims and the qualification of the University” (UPS, 2000, art. 33 § 1).

In 1956, with the approval of the Higher Institute of Pedagogy of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum, it gave way to the original project concerning the pedagogical studies, which led to the creation of the Faculty of Education Sciences, which is currently the largest and most articulated.

In September 1965, the Ateneo moved to the new headquarters of Rome, and in the same place originated the *Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis*, which today is identified as the Faculty of Christian and Classical Letters.

On May 24, 1973, with the motu proprio “*Magisterium Vitae*” of Pope Paolo VI, the Ateneo was elevated to the rank of Pontifical University, and on the occasion of the first centenary of the death of San Juan Bosco, in 1988, the Institute of Sciences of Social communication started, which is now a Faculty.

From the outset, the UPS, as a University, or through its departments or its teachers, has always done — and continues to do — “advisory and research initiatives at the Congregational level” (UPS, 2017, p. 22). This service, in different cases, has also been extended for years to various ecclesial realities such as: Dicasteries, Offices, Congregations and Councils of the Holy See of the Italian Episcopal Conference, with the Vicariate and in various pastoral areas of Rome.

In 1978, during the General chapter XXI, , the Salesian Congregation produced an *extended and organic document on the development of the Pontifical Salesian University*, in which it was explicitly

stated that the UPS is “placed at the service of the Congregation as qualified expression of his mission in the church, with his specific cultural and formative potential”⁵. By submitting this document to the UPS on May 3, 1978, recalling the specific end of the university, the necessary unitary reorganization and the importance of scientific research, Rector major Don Egidio Viganó concluded his speech by declaring:

Our Salesian vocation already has 100 years of existence. We could not be today good disciples of Don Bosco without an intellectual development that helps us to think, and deepen, to evaluate and to program our mission with competence. The UPS cannot do without this requirement; rather, it must be a bit the ‘brain’. [...] Here is a great purpose that we must take together: let us with all good will, fraternally, help at each other according to our strengths, renew the UPS or, if you want, to refound it! (Università Pontificia Salesiano, 1996, pp. 64-65).

Also, in the important letter of Juan Edmundo Vecchi of 1997, “I study for you”, in paragraph 8 is expressly spoken of the Pontifical Salesian University saying that:

It has been established among the Roman universities an *educational and pastoral orientation* as well as a family style of the university community. In the last time, it has given life to interesting pastoral initiatives in the service of the students. In addition to the work of teaching, research, cultural extension and services to the Church, it provides assistance to various sectors of the Salesian mission, at the regional and global levels in particular training. Its irreplaceable function must be reaffirmed at the service of the congregation and as a qualified expression of its mission in the church. *It expresses at its highest levels the dialogue between Salesian Charism and cultural instances and fulfils, in this sense, a frontier mission.* [...] Regarding the nature, the operating criteria

5 Cf. Capitolo Generale XXI dei Salesiani di Don Bosco, *Documenti Capitolari*, Roma 1978, pp. 343-370 (Documento 4: *L’Opera PAS e l’Università Pontificia Salesiana*). The quote is on p. 346.

and the intervention levels of a university institution, which is pontifical, ecclesiastical, the identity of our university must be sustained as well as the quality of its contribution in the cultural and Salesian field. Its development must be ensured according to an *organic project*, periodically checked, which corresponds to the numerical and qualitative consistency of the academic body. The participation of the laymen is already considerable. But it would be a waste to do so only because a sufficient number of Salesians are not prepared to operate at this level. Attention to relevance, Salesian character, capacity for cultural and religious dialogue, unity and organization of the project, promotion of a style of academic community are aspects that must be considered in the highest center of study of the congregation. [...] Because of this, it is a decisive investment on the part of the congregation in terms of staff. The current geography of the congregation requires an ever more international university. The application to the provinces of qualified personnel or to qualify for a service on the UPS should be considered normal, and the availability of the siblings who were invited to move to Rome. On the other hand, such a criterion is already maturing in the congregation. It shows the generosity with which the provincial and brothers have responded to the last requests (Vecchi, 1997, pp. 40-42).

Currently, the UPS represents one of the main, among the seven pontifical universities, which constitute the most significant part of the 23 ecclesiastical academic institutions present today in Rome. The total number of students of their six faculties for the 2017/2018 academic year, is 1920, from 98 different nations (1 184 Italian students and 736 non-Italian students; 1323 Europeans, 265 Africans, 170 Asians, 100 South Americans, 54 from Central Americans, 8 from North America. In 2017/2018 male students are 956, and women 964, 242 diocesan priests (from 205 diocese), 577 (30%) religious men and women (out of which 273 are Salesians).

The UPS performs a fundamental service, either from an institutional point of view or in the cultural field for the numerous study centers, Salesian or not, linked to: 2 sections of the Faculty

of Theology (Turin and Jerusalem) and several added centers, affiliates, associates and sponsors, who thanks to our university can have academic degrees and diplomas for their curricula. In total, the institutes linked to the UPS are currently 35: 8 aggregates, 20 affiliates, 4 Associates and 3 sponsors. In particular, the Faculty of Theology has added institutes in India (Shillong, Bangalore), Italy (Messina) and Venezuela (Caracas); Affiliated Institutes in Argentina (Buenos Aires), Brazil (Belo Horizonte, São Paulo), Democratic Republic of Congo (Lubumbashi), Philippines (Manila), Guatemala, India (Kavarapettai), Kenya (Nairobi), Mexico (Tlaquepaque), Senegal (Dakar), Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh); Institutes sponsored in Italy (Messina) and Spain (Barcelona). The study centres linked to the faculty of Philosophy are: Institutes added in Cameroon (Yaoundé) and in India (Nasik); Affiliated Institutes in Brazil (Caieiras), Cameroon (Yaoundé), Italy (Nave), Nigeria (Ibadan), Senegal (Dakar) and Venezuela (Caracas); Partner Institutes in Haiti (Port-au-Prince), Slovakia (Žilina), Sri Lanka (Chinthanaloka) and East Timor (Dili). The study centres linked to the school of Education Sciences, all in Italy, are 6: The ESF has added institutes in Turin and in Venice; Affiliated Institutes in Florence, Corvera and Vitorchiano; an institute sponsored in Rome for training and research for educators and psychotherapists (IFREP-93). In the academic year 2016/2017 students enrolled in the centers linked to the UPS are 3521.

This highlights the important role of the UPS and its formative responsibility at various levels towards the Salesian and ecclesial “world”, even more so if one thinks that a center of studies should not be only a place of formation but of “integral formation”.

The challenges of today and tomorrow

The UPS’s Institutional and Strategic Project points to the current challenges of the world, particularly young people; ethical training, the respect and construction of the common house, the

consolidation of dialogue and peace, fraternity among people, the solidarity of a sustainable economy, the “most intense and persuasive use of network applications in the personal management of knowledge”, the “affective-sexual life”, “the family”, the “quality of life”... (UPS, 2017, pp. 12-15).

In the face of all this, as a “scientific and formative community”, the UPS wants to be “a place of projection and experimentation on the knots and causes of cultural and social processes, suggesting innovative lines through the convergence and contribution of all its components” (UPS, 2017, p. 15), cultivating “an integrated and organic vision of knowledge in the perspective of new humanism” (p. 17). At a time when “the world suffers from lack of thought”⁶, it takes a moment towards a new phase of thought. “This enormous and unpostponed task” — stated in the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis *Veritatis Gaudium* — “requests, on the cultural level of academic education and scientific research, a generous and convergent dedication towards a radical change of paradigm, rather [...] towards a courageous cultural revolution”⁷ (Francis, Costituzione Apostolica *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, N. 3).

Therefore, the task of the UPS is to offer to the whole congregation a cultural elaboration and a critical reflective reflection against the current great challenges of our society, to be a true and authentic “cultural laboratory” at the service of the whole congregation.

At a time when the investment in the culture is generally weaker, the qualification policy and the dedication for the intellectual formation of the Salesians, also in a university context, is stra-

6 Benedetto XVI, encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Città del Vaticano, 29 Giugno 2009, N. 53, taking the same expression of Paolo VI in the encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio*.

7 The expression “courageous cultural revolution”, as it is known, appears in the encyclical letter of Pope Francesco *Laudato si'* (2015) n. 114.

tegic and fundamental, and in this sense the UPS role assumes strategic importance.

With regard to the service of the UPS to the congregation, in a specific way to the formation (initial and permanent) and the qualification of the Salesians, Don Juan Vecchi still noted in the text of 1997, that:

The appropriate and recognised competencies are also demanded today by the diversification and complexity of educational interventions, which entail a more complete and practical knowledge. A weak professional quality impoverishes the educational proposal, decreases the incidence of our work and could isolate us from the field of education. We feel this risk, especially in some areas where new developments seem more evident, such as social communication, The university world, the areas of 'youthful discomfort'. [...] Even knowing that sometimes we have to respond to realistically emergencies and we are always willing to do it, it is right to say that our future possibilities in the educational field will be played with quality. [...] This also applies to the more strictly pastoral area. It implies greater mastery of specific knowledge acquired sufficiently, revised and continually expanded, and a more professional fulfillment of the ministerial tasks (Vecchi, 1997, p. 15).

The congregation's investment is essential in order to have an excellent and appropriate staff that operates on the UPS as a core animator⁸. In the search and identification of new personnel,

8 To this end, they are essential in the Salesians for the authenticity of their university service, to take care of their vocation of the consecrated persons, to the religious discipline and the observance of the Evangelical Councillors, the quality of the charismatic references, Pastoral and spiritual within academic behavior, dedication to mission, study ethics and research, participation and collegiality, correction in professional ethics, the seriousness of research and publications, the obligation to update, exchange and attitude, to work as a team, to build good and sincere relationships with colleagues, the contribution to the administration of the university, a worthy composi-

always more international and more numerous, the processes of insertion and follow-up of the new teachers always require more specialized tasks and competencies, and at the same time, the attitudes of inter-and trans-disciplinarity, and the availability of dialogue and “teamwork”, become ever more indispensable.

The service of the UPS to the qualification of the Salesian staff, also thanks to the recent (2018) decision of the Rector Major Don Ángel Fernandez Arti and the General Council of the Congregation to locate definitively in the headquarters the Salesian Historical Institute and the Central Salesian Archive, shows the particular value sought to give to the deepening field of the Salesians. The minutes of the General chapter XXIV stated:

The General Council promotes and sustains in the UPS and other Salesian University centers or of spirituality, studies, experiences and schools for the formation of the trainers, in which SDB and laymen are trained together (preserving the norms of the C.I.C. and of the Holy See). Particular attention is reserved to the spirituality of S. Francis de Sales and the preventive system of Don Bosco.⁹

Its location in Rome and by being a point of convergence for the entire congregation, gives the UPS a particular physiognomy and attributes an “added value” to other study centers. Regarding the formation and deepening of the Salesian aspect, it can offer a peculiar service to all the Salesian university institutions located around the world.

Rector Major Don Ángel Fernandez Artie, in his intervention in the academic Senate of the UPS on December 3, 2014, has stated that:

tion among the Academic commitments, community life and individual needs, generosity, but also the order of priority and measure in the course of commitments of academic, religious, pastoral and ecclesial service.

9 Capitolo Generale XXIV dei Salesiani di Don Bosco, *Documento Capitolare*, Roma 1996, part III, n. 148, p. 119.

After the 27 ° General chapter of the Salesian Congregation, UPS will also have to achieve global and specific indications. The three nuclei of the GC27 lead to a single radicality of the evangelical, spiritual and communitarian Salesian spirit: It is the evangelical radicalism of the '*da mihi animas coethera tolle*'. This 'radical' election expresses the supreme interest of Don Bosco. In the same way, it must be for us, the children of the 'Salesian Family' (Fernandez Artime, 2014).

The professors of the university, met on June 5, 2015, were told several programmatic points to always keep in mind:

To strengthen the unit character of the UPS. It means walking towards the university unit. Our university is not a group of 'small universities', rather 'a university', with all its strength in unity and the richness of the faculty. [...] The UPS, as a Pontifical University, must be a center of excellence within the academic institutions of the congregation. [...] We must work to develop all the possibilities and potentials that we have, until we become or recover the unquestionable reference in what the university offers, especially if it refers to our charismatic identity. [...] I think we should give a serious impetus to the investigation.¹⁰

On the occasion of the meeting of the Academic Senate of the UPS on December 2, 2015 Don Ángel Fernández Artime has reminded, among other things, some fundamental needs for the future of the university:

a) We are not one more university among the others. We must differentiate ourselves by the specificity of our charisma, and that is true for the university in general and for each one of our

10 A. Fernández Artime, (5 Giugno 2015). Articles. 1 § 2 and art. 2 § 3 of the statutes underline "the organic unity" of the university "understood as a whole, through the coordination, not purely horizontal and almost sectorial, but functional-dynamic and hierarchical of the Faculties, Departments, Institutes and Centers", and "the interdisciplinary needs" of research and teaching. Cf. UPS, 2000 art. 1 § 2 and article 2 § 3.

faculties and institutes. b) We must not forget that we are waiting for an effort to review plans of study, coordination to avoid repetitions, a commitment that we must return less heavy where the lucid gaze and the objectives indicate it; the number of institutes or certain structures that run the risk of being 'heavy and complex'. C) We must not neglect the need for an impulse to research, both in the personal field of some teachers and in the common research in the different faculties (Fernández Artime, 2015).

In the homily on the occasion of the inauguration of the new academic year 2016/17, the great Chancellor has also spoken about a “dream-invitation” on the UPS:

I hope that each of the members of the UPS will feel really *co-responsible* for the evolution of the university life and of *doing it together*. Although no one is eternal, nobody is a simple *guest passenger*. As can be seen, I do not mean the time of permanence but the quality of the presence. The time that begins when we arrive as students, as teachers, as auxiliaries, as administrative, etc., until our departure — that sooner or later will pass — is called to be an intense, full, creative time lived with co-responsibility (Fernandez Artime, 2016).

At the end of the text titled “The University of Don Bosco for the new humanism” presented on January 31, 2017 by the Grand Chancellor of the UPS, he indicated the new institutional and strategic project 2016-2021 of the University:

All of you are aware of the importance that these documents have to the university and that each faculty has shared, discussed, welcomed and approved. Now we must deal with an intelligent, progressive, constant concretization of the various operating lines. They need to take into account a careful evaluation of their realization. For this reason, I invite you to consider the whole project, and the Plan as a '*charter of Navigation*' for the University and Faculties. Its application is not a task that affects only the authorities and it is not a purely formal question, because each one is called to get involved until the whole educational and academic community of the UPS

can grow in the fundamental objective that worries us: *Excellence in Service* (Fernandez Artme, 2017, pp. 5-7).

Precisely the effort to develop this “excellence” is accompanying the renewal process of the academic itineraries that are in process as an expression of the revision of the Statutes and Regulations of the University. Creativity and proposals are required to deal with new situations and to integrate new aspects, in particular those relating to Youth ministry, Education Sciences, Catechetical and Communication.

In recent years, in addition to the process of renovation and internationalization of the teaching Salesian staff, it is evident the insertion of new teachers and lay collaborators into all the faculties. “Quality culture”¹¹ expresses itself also through the attitude and practice of accreditation and evaluation. . The UPS has been endowed in the recent years with an Office for the Promotion of the Quality and the University Evaluation (UPS-Q) and has acted for a long time in the evaluation of active courses. The same institutional and strategic project 2016-2021 is the result of the internal and external evaluation process that the UPS has made, and there is also the most punctual checks on the initiatives and the monitoring of the activities.

Regarding the other pontifical universities, at a time when it is being questioned how to start processes of optimization and reorganization, it is necessary “to form a culture of synergy, surpassing the defense of isolationist particularisms that do not respond to the current challenges” (Versaldi, 2017, n. 15), the UPS “brings into play” its specific identity related to the educational transversality that characterizes it.

The Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* affirms that the ecclesiastical Faculties are called to do a service to the truth, and

11 Cf. Congregazione per l’Educazione Cattolica, 2011.

to its deepest application in the life of people and the society, and to the dialogue with the different sciences: “The shared and convergent research between specialists of different disciplines constitutes a qualified service to the people of God, in particular to the Magisterium, as well as a support of the mission of the Church” (Francis, Costituzione Apostolica *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, n. 5).

To respond to the crisis, which is specially cultural, anthropological and ethical, “the problem is that we still do not have the necessary culture to confront this crisis and we need to build leaderships that indicate ways”. It can certainly be a fundamental *opportunity* also for the UPS.

At the level of the university’s “third mission” (i.e., the propo-
sitive presence on the territory based on didactics and research), the cultural contribution of the UPS to society, rather than through qualification —in an environment of international character— of priests, and religious men and women, lay people who carry out their study, is also fulfilled through the vast network of research, publications and activities carried forward not only by Salesian teachers, but also by lay teachers, collaborators of the technical-administrative staff and librarian.

For this reason, the Pontifical Salesian University is called to become more and more aware of the “indicative reference” present in its institutional and strategic project 2016-2021: “The responsibility to produce and disseminate culture, quality of life and experience of sense, through an attentive and courageous ‘projection towards the social’ of the same university, of each teacher and of the formative project of the students” (UPS, 2017, p. 35).

If we consider the territory in which the UPS is located, it is very significant the contribution of some of its resources, in particular the library “Don Bosco”, but also other centers and services like the Psychopedagogical Center that offer a specific cultural and service contribution of an educational and pastoral nature.

A “providential cultural laboratory”

Twenty years ago in the letter “I study for you” Don Juan Vecchi pointed out to the entire congregation that:

It should be valued [...] the service of the UPS for the qualification of the Salesian staff. In it, competence and Salesian perspective are offered in a singular synthesis that comes from the whole of the experience, rather than the choice and organization of the contents. So it's not 'equal' to other universities. Once verified again the results observable in the congregation, I repeat the evaluation given to the CG24: 'Besides small observations, often excessively repeated (and of which one is willing to take into account), the balance of the frequency of the students to these centers is highly positive for the people, for the provincials and for the Congregation' (Vecchi, 1997, pp. 42-43).

Therefore, the Pontifical Salesian University continues its service to the congregation, and the Salesians who for years have achieved their degrees in our university are usually their main promotion agents.

In January 1991, in a speech for the Jubilee celebration of the 50 years of the foundation of the UPS, Pope St. John Paul II affirmed:

The past five decades [...] stand out as the genius of holiness, and the unlimited pastoral charity for the youth of Don Bosco has been the inspiration that has qualified the entire mission of the Pontifical Salesian University [...] ‘as a tree sown along the river’ (Sal 1, 2), the Pontifical Salesian University, inserted in the furrow of the fruitful Salesian spiritual tradition and faithful to the directives of the church, has testified in this time of promising vitality, and developed in an admirable way. [...] Open to the problems of modern man, in particular the youthful world, its training structures aim to cultivate the essential harmony with the Magisterium of the church and to value, at the same time with creative intelligence, the many contributions of the theological, philosophical, pedagogical and globally human sciences. Its dedi-

cation is recognized and esteemed both in the ecclesiastical world and in the civil world. [...] At the heart of the university identity is the Charism of Don Bosco... *It has been and must remain being 'the University of Don Bosco for young people'*: This is its original feature in the whole of the Pontifical Roman Universities. [...] The youth need certainty and hope, they seek life teachers and coherent witnesses. It is the young people who are the protagonists of the coming years and the third Christian millennium that looks at the horizon of history. They look with confidence and trepidation at the church: he loves them deeply with the same Love of Christ and adheres to his spirit, thirsting for truth and understanding, the Redeemer of Man, who is 'Way, Truth and Life' (Gv 14, 6). *Continue, dear brothers and sisters, in this arduous, but fascinating mission* (Giovanni Paolo II, 1991).

The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis *Veritatis Gaudium* on the universities and the ecclesiastical faculties affirms, on the point of the *ecclesiastical studies*, that:

They constitute a kind of providential cultural laboratory in which the church exercises the performative interpretation of reality that arises from the event of Jesus Christ and feeds on the gifts of wisdom and science to which the Holy Spirit enriches in various ways all the people of God (Francis, *Costituzione Apostolica Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, n. 3).

Therefore, it is said of a *providential cultural laboratory*, to be able to respond to the “great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge” that “today arises before our eyes” and that “will imply long regeneration processes”¹². For this reason, “the promotion at all levels of a relaunch of the ecclesiastical studies in the context of the new stage of the Church mission”, “a new evangelization stage”, “and the “wise and courageous renewal required by the missionary transformation of a church in exit”, are expressions of this imposing

12 Cf. Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, N. 6; reference is also made to the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, n. 202.

and deferred task at the cultural level of academic education and scientific research to elaborate “a radical paradigm shift”, rather, the *courageous cultural revolution* to which Pope Francis addresses the whole church. The UPS is called today to locate its identity and its service within this laborious but fascinating horizon.

Pope Francis always recalls in *Veritatis Gaudium* that “the World Network of Universities and ecclesiastical Faculties is called upon to bring the contribution of yeast, salt and light from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and from the living tradition of the church always open to new scenarios and new proposals” (Francis, *Costituzione Apostolica Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, n. 3), hence, our university must assume this perspective today. Four are the fundamental criteria set out in the Apostolic Constitution for the renewal and relaunch of ecclesiastical studies.

First, the “priority and permanent criterion of contemplation and the spiritual, intellectual and existential introduction in the heart of the *Kerygma*, from which comes the ecclesiality of the mysticism of the US, the yeast of universal fraternity, the listening of the poor and the Earth, and the discovery of the Trinitarian footprint of creation can “broaden the horizons” to rationality and to the research, which is liberated from the limited temptations to “fly higher” and to insert in a plot of relationships the disciplines and the people. To think about organizing cooperation and research in a unitary and organic vision of knowledge is a “quality” contribution that ecclesiastical faculties can offer within the university panorama. The UPS in this perspective experiences the catholicity through the international provenance of teachers and students, and the unique opportunity offered by the closeness and the direct contact with the Ministry of the Pope and of various organizations of the Roman Curia.

The second criterion, the *dialogue at all levels*, highlights the need for mutual exchange of their gifts. In this sense, the ongoing rearrangement of the formative proposal, from the whole of the

Roman ecclesiastical university institutions in general and specifically from the UPS, can be configured as a reciprocal concentration of the offer, on the part of each reality of those who find it more specific to one's own identity for the good of all. Following the footsteps of the invitation of Vatican II and *Sapientia Christiana*, the *Veritatis Gaudium* calls for dialogue with Christians belonging to other churches and ecclesial communities, as well as those with other convictions religious or humanistic, and also to maintain a relationship “with those who cultivate other disciplines, believers or non-believers”, trying to “value and interpret their claims and judge them in the light of revealed truth” (Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, n. 4)¹³. Due to the disciplines that belong to it, the UPS can be a permanently active laboratory in this “good practice”.

The third criterion, which points to inter-and *trans-disciplinarity* (in its “strong” way), reiterates the vital and intellectual principle of the unity of knowledge in the distinction and respect of its *manifold, related and convergent expressions*. This element should be considered as a fundamental and discriminating aspect for the approval of new research projects and new curricula, considering — in this case — also the content descriptors and the methodologies envisaged.

The fourth criterion is formulated as: the urgent need to “network” between the various institutions that, in every part of the world, cultivate and promote ecclesiastical studies, activating with decision the opportune synergies with the academic institutions in the various countries and with those that are inspired by the diverse cultural and religious traditions. At the same time, originating specialized research centers to study the problems of epochal di-

13 Cf. Vatican Council II, *Costituzione Apostolica Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965), N. 62; Giovanni Paolo II, *Costituzione apostolica Sapientia Christiana* (April 15, 1979), Proemio, III.

mension that affect humanity today, seeking to propose timely and realistic resolution clues (Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2017, n. 4).

The growing awareness of interdependence at the global level forces us to think of “one World”, to “ever more common projects”, reason for which the “networking” is required; starting with the UPS, and in positive connection and interrelation with all the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS).

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Salesian Institutes of Higher Education (IUS) in Latin America

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The reality of Latin American studies of higher education is as diverse as the Latin American region, and the reality of IUS is as diverse as the region; except that all IUS, have common options and a potential for unlimited networking, being parts of the same Congregation.

The presence of the Catholic Church in universities started since its conception. Many of the most ancient universities in the world and also in Latin America were created based on the church's foundation; as *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* recalls, "born from the church, the Catholic University is inserted in the tradition that goes back to the origin of the university as an institution" (N° 1). There are several congregations and religious orders with an old presence in this area. The Catholic University adds *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* "the encounter between the unfathomable richness of the saving message of the gospel and the plurality and infinity of fields of knowledge in which it embodies it, allows the church to establish a dialogue with all men of any culture" (N° 6).

The Salesians, with belated origins compared to many of the congregations that have already been in the university areas, have

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recently entered this field. Although its presence in the continent has more than one hundred and forty years old, very close to the educational work, the creation of institutions of higher education started booming at the end of the 80s and much of the 90s, and is still in a founding stage. As an example, on April 9, 2018, the Salesian University Foundation, UNISAL of Colombia, has been approved by the Ministry of National Education, with the recognition of legal personality as an institution of higher education with the characteristic of a University institution.

Despite this brief history, the Salesians have 22 higher education centers, distributed in 9 countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. A total of ten of these centers are recognized universities in their countries.² In most of the cases, there is a university by country and in two of them, Argentina and Brazil, a group of institutions

2 If only the ten institutions with a university rank are considered, taking the data recorded on their web pages, it is clearly demonstrated the new presence of Salesians in the university world: the Salesian University of Mexico was founded in 1972; Don Bosco University of El Salvador was created on March 5, 1984, on January 14, 1986 the classes started; the Mesoamerican University was approved on October 1, 1999 by the Council of the upper private education of Guatemala and in the 2000 started its function; Universidad Politécnica Salesiana of Ecuador was created by Law No. 63 issued by the National Congress and published in the official Register No. 499 of August 4, 1994; The Salesian University of Bolivia operates from 1998; the current Catholic University Silva Henríquez in Chile began as an educational work of higher education in 1982 and since 1990 is authorized as a university; the UNISAL of Argentina, by a presidential decree, began its activities in April 2014; the Catholic University Don Bosco of Campo Grande in Brazil, holds university recognition on October 27, 1993; the Catholic University of Brasilia, began in 1973 and fifteen years later – 1988 – it was recognized as a university by the Ministry of Education (this university, corresponds to a joint work with other religious congregations under the figure of the Brazilian Union of Catholic Education-UBEC-). Finally, as indicated above, Fundación Universitaria Salesiana, UNISAL, of Colombia, achieved its legal status as a university on April 9, 2018.

are added to the universities – autonomous among them –located in a category other than the university according to the legislation of these countries: centers, institutes and faculties.

Salesians institutions of higher education in Latin America, in terms of complexity and coverage of care areas, tend to present a homogeneity: most of them are focused in teaching tasks and only a few have some development in the field of research; additionally, most of these prefer the formation of undergraduate and a few have postgraduates *in stricto sensu*. Finally, most of the institutions have humanist programs, and others, in fewer amounts, are focused on the technical training, and a small number are opened to the field of the hardest sciences.

This is a brief reality of IUS in the Latin American context. In the intention of deepening it, it is now necessary to pay attention to at least two important aspects: what are the challenges that universities in Latin America face today? And from which aspects IUS should respond to the challenges of the Latin American context?

Challenges facing universities in Latin America

2018 is a date full of significant commemorations for the universities, several of them from Latin America. We celebrate 100 years of the university movement of Cordoba, 50 years of that May in 1968, but also 50 years of the II Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín, Colombia, which is preceded- in the field of higher education- by the so-called Buga³ meeting in 1967. Without stopping largely in each of these events and by rescuing the main

3 Expert Seminar on “The mission of the Catholic University in Latin America” and the Episcopal meeting on “The presence of the church in the university World of Latin America”, held in Buga, Colombia, from 12 to 18 and from 19 to 25 February, 1967, under the responsibility of the Education Departments (DEC) and the University Pastoral (DPU) of the CELAM, respectively.

elements of these facts, we can achieve a broad historical perspective to better understand the current university moment.

Since 100 years ago the students at Universidad Nacional de Córdoba claim that their university institution is stopped in time, while sciences have advanced quickly, the universities incorporate new areas of knowledge extremely slowly, “in the mid-nineteenth century at Universidad de Cordoba only theology and law were studied; later, in 1868, mathematics and medicine were introduced” (Acevedo, 2010, p. 2). It is a university that is closed on itself (without contact with social changes and without access to it) and administered in an authoritarian logic, which does not give room for the freedom of ideas⁴. In the so-called Manifiesto of 1918, written by the students, it is stated:

Universities have hitherto been the secular refuge of mediocre people, the income of the ignorant, the safe hospitalization of the disabled and –even worse– the place where all forms of tyranny and numbing found the subject that dictated them. Thus, universities have become the faithful reflection of these decadent societies that strive to offer the sad spectacle of a senile immobility (...). Our university regime – even the most recent – is anachronistic. It is founded on a kind of divine right: the divine right of university professors. It creates itself (...) and is self-centered. The worn-out springs of the authority emanating from the force are not consent with what is claimed in the belief and modern concept of universities. The crack of the whip can only stimulate the silence of the

4 Acevedo (2010) summarizes the demands: “The student movement of Córdoba sought to achieve a full participation of the student as a citizen of the University Republic, able to choose and be elected; also, to suppress the prevailing dogmatism by establishing free teaching to ensure the existence of parallel or new subjects. The reform sought to raise issues of Latin American projection in which the workers and the general public were not formally enrolled in the university. Students denounced the university’s scientific backwardness and, above all, the “archaic and elitist character of the government system in the institution” (p. 8).

unconscious or the cowards. The only silent attitude, which fits in an institute of science, is that of the one who hears a truth or the one who experiences it to create it or prove it. Therefore, we want to root out in the university organism the archaic and barbaric concept of authority that is a bulwark of absurd tyranny and only serves to protect criminally false-dignity and false-competition (Manifiesto, 1918).⁵

The reform of Cordoba by Tünnermann (2008), is a contribution to the autonomy and social projection of the university:

Undoubtedly, university autonomy is its most precious result. Its conquest has been for the development of universities and the emergence of critical awareness, fundamental for the progress of society. The autonomous regime is essential for the exercise of this role. For this reason, retrograde dictatorships and the governments bent on maintaining the *status quo* against it (Tünnermann, 2008, p. 99).

As a consequence of the reform, the university extension and the cultural diffusion were incorporated to the normal tasks of the Latin American University (...). The reform had the merit of opening this new field to the action of our universities, taking them out from their cloister and putting them more in contact with its environment (...). It cannot be denied that the reform, by emphasizing this task, achieved its incorporation to the missionary statement of the Latin American University as one of its defining characteristics (Tünnermann, 2008, p. 106).

Cordoba movement has many more achievements, perhaps less forceful than those already mentioned, such as the student participation, co-government, changes in teaching methods and the way in which academics can access the subjects; but it is undeniable, as Tünnermann argues (2008, p. 106), that another of its main achievements is to place the universities in motion:

5 It can be found in the webpage of Universidad Nacional de Córdoba: <https://goo.gl/iyHsiL>

Cordoba represents the starting point of the reform process in progress of the Latin American University, conceived like a continuous phenomenon (*universitas semper reformada*), destined to structure an original university scheme and adapted to the necessities of our continent and the socialization process that will inevitably transform its current structures. In this sense, the university reform is not a goal but a long walk that begun in 1918, with its ups and downs, setbacks and detours, and that goes together with the social and liberating transformation that Latin America needs.

As Stubrin argues (2018), “It would be wrong to believe that the reformist model was projected on the twentieth century in a linear way. In real life, the modern university system was modeled in a very rustic way, through the numerous changes of political regime and the fateful institutional instability” (p. 12). Fifty years after the student movement in Córdoba, the second General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate (1968) states:

There are many studies on the situation of Latin American citizens. All of them describe the misery that marginalizes collective groups. That misery, as a collective fact, is an injustice that cries out to heaven. Perhaps it has not been sufficiently said that the efforts carried out have not been enough to ensure the respect and the realization of justice in all sectors of the national communities. Families often do not find specific educational opportunities for their children. Youth claim their right to enter the university or higher centers of intellectual or technical improvement... (CELAM 1968, *Document of Medellín*, Justice, point 1).

The democratization of education is a utopia that is still far from being achieved at all levels, especially at the university, since our universities have not taken into account the characteristics of Latin America, and have not given enough response to the particular problems of our continent. The university has frequently retained traditional studies, almost without intermediate-duration careers suitable for our socio-economic situation. It has not been always opened to research or interdisciplinary dialogue that is essential

for the progress of the culture and the development of the society (CELAM 1968, Document of Medellín, Education, point 6).

At the end of the 60s, as the conclusive document of Medellín points out, there were many young people claiming admission to higher education, as there was a lot of pressure for universities to have access and offer intermediate careers. In the 70s, when the neoliberal model is installed by dictatorship in many Latin American countries, these demands were not confronted by the state, but they were handled through the granting of facilities to the creation of private universities, which installs the demand in the market (the field of supply and demand). In this respect, according to Claudio Rama (2006), Latin America has had three reforms at the higher education level:

Latin America had its first reform on higher education at the beginning of the twentieth century (...), marked by the reform of Cordoba in 1918, which was expanding and installing throughout the region by promoting autonomy and university co-government, which contributed decidedly to broaden the coverage of public universities, surpassing the elite models and democratizing access to higher education to new urban contingents, agreeing to a significant social mobility due to vocational training. Such a monopoly educational university model, also public, secular, free, co-governed and autonomous, had long and outstanding validity and was progressively imposed in each of the countries of the region until the early seventies, when the crisis of the economic models hit higher education institutions and laid the foundations for a new university transformation (p. 14).

The second reform was characterized by the establishment of a complex binary-public and private model with high and low quality, university and non-university as a result of the commercial and heterogeneous context, and which promoted quality models, prices and differentiated financing. This facilitated the significant expansion of the private sector, measured in terms of coverage, enrolment and institutions, on the basis of a small sector of qua-

lity, and a larger one aimed at the absorption of unmet demand and with lower demands of quality. Notable differentiated private expansion was associated in its beginnings with the absence of quality regulation mechanisms of the higher education and created a structural mismatch in the framework of a system totally heterogeneous, uncontrolled and repetitive. This new scenario allowed the expansion of social and regional coverage, but promoted differentiated quality circuits that resulted in the creation of new iniquity, linked to the quality of higher education at the tertiary level (p. 16).

The third reform, in Rama's Opinion (2006), is the current moment marked by internationalization, new technologies, overcrowding and the demands of the knowledge society:

A real shock is in Latin America higher education systems, because of the internationalization of higher education, new technologies of communication and information, new demands for access of the population, including sectors strongly marginalized, such as indigenous groups or other minorities, such as people with disabilities or migrants, and the growing presence of knowledge societies that promote education throughout life, the commodification of knowledge and the permanent renewal of wisdom (p. 17).

In the characteristics of what Rama calls the "third reform", following some of the most recent diagnoses on the subject, the work of María Marta Ferreyra et al. published by the World Bank (2017), in which it is stated that we are in a "decisive moment"⁶:

At present, higher education is at a decisive juncture. The great expansion experienced since the beginning of 2000 has created a new and complex panorama. Policy makers, concerned about access and social mobility, expanded the system into a period of economic growth, fiscal abundance, and middle-class growth.

6 Taken from: <https://goo.gl/jZcJdD>. The authors of this manuscript are: María Marta Ferreyra, Ciro Avitabile, Javier Botero Álvarez, Francisco Haimovich Paz and Sergio Urzúa.

As a result, the access increased for all students, but especially for those coming from low and middle socioeconomic classes. These “new” students, who were previously represented in higher education, are a crucial element of the new panorama, as are the institutions of higher education (IES) and the programs in which they study. (...). At this decisive moment, Latin America and the Caribbean have an opportunity that should not be wasted. Policy decisions taken ten or fifteen years ago have had profound consequences on the current situation and, the decisions taken today will have long-term and scope implications for the future of the region (World Bank, 2017, p. 2).

If we follow this diagnosis and using this last text (although not necessarily in all its aspects, given its economic-financial bias; nor necessarily in the same order as it is presented), a first finding of the data is that from 2000 onwards, there is an overcrowding process of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the information published by the World Bank, the gross enrolment rate between 2000 and 2013 doubled. The percentage of young people between 18 and 24 years old, who entered a higher education institution, increased from 21 % to 43 %. Currently, there are approximately 20 million students in higher education.

A second data from this text published by the World Bank and linked to the previous one indicates that higher education becomes more egalitarian, the percentage of students of 50% poorer, rises from 16% in 2000 to 25% in 2013. However, it adds the same report: “Despite greater access equity, young people in the upper quintile of income distribution still have a probability of 45 percentage points higher to access to higher education than young people from the lower quintile” (World Bank, 2017, p. 10). Situation that is mostly related to the low number of graduated from high school, rather than to other aspects.

According to this report, a third characteristic of the region is that the expansion of the system is mainly associated with the increase of the offer. From 2000 onwards, approximately 2 300 ins-

titutions of higher education have been originated, and “a quarter of the current IES and half of the up-to-date programs were created since the beginning of 2000” (World Bank, 2017, p. 8). One aspect to consider on this last data is the increase on the presence of private IES and the number of academic programs that they offer. According to the report that is being used, the percentage of private IES in the system goes from 43% in 2000 to 50% in 2013 and they are the ones that tend to create new programs. The complexity of this is the following, quoting the text published by the World Bank (2017):

Private IES offer new programs for a number of reasons. They sometimes open a non-selective version of a selective program offered by another institution (this is the case of non-selective law programs for students who would not be admitted to the selective). At other times, they offer a more attractive (if more specific) version of a program already provided by another institution (an example would be the creation of a sports journalism program when a competing IES already offers a social communication program that promotes some similar skills. And in other cases they offer a structured and predictable environment that is better suited to some students than the public IES, or that makes students and IES more responsible for their actions⁷ (World Bank, 2017, p. 13).

A fourth aspect from the diagnosis presented in the World Bank publication refers to results, which are really terrifying.

Judging by the results, the system’s performance is disappointing. On average, about half of the population aging 25-29 and who started higher education at some point did not finish their studies,

7 With regard to this last point, as a note at the end of the text is indicated: “In some countries, class schedules and exams are often altered by the strikes of students or professors in public IES, so private IES often offer a quieter and predictable environment. Parents who want their children to explain their performance feel that the structured environment of a private university is useful in this regard. Because private IES have incentives to withhold students for financial reasons, they are often more responsive to the concerns of students and their parents” (World Bank, 2017, p. 40).

either because they are still studying or because they abandoned” (World Bank, 2017, p. 14).

Taking data from countries that have figures on the subject, the report states that there is a high percentage of dropout (for example, 37% in Colombia) and low-income students are the most likely to abandon. Desertion in the region at the end of the first year is twice compared to the United States (36% in Colombia v/s 15% in the USA). Additionally, the time to graduate is 36% more of the expected.

A fifth diagnostic aspect refers to that in Latin America and the Caribbean, and quote:

A large number of students with little academic preparation have been absorbed by the work involved in higher education, and any conclusions regarding the deterioration of the results should take into account this ‘deterioration of inputs’ (World Bank, 2017, p. 16).

Apart from the unfortunate expression and qualification of the student as input, there is no doubt that there is a fact to consider in the diagnosis: the work with students with less academic preparation requires more attention if it is sought to develop their full potential. Moreover, when the publication points out that “on average, expenditure per student is lower than in the developed world or in countries in East Asia and the Pacific, although it is similar to that of central European countries and the East” (World Bank, 2017, p. 17). The difficulty in the universities of Latin America and the Caribbean to retain good teachers and equip quality laboratories is another problem. The latter has led to the closure of institutions even in countries with an accreditation system.

A sixth and final aspect at the diagnosis level is what refers to the low diversification of knowledge areas. Although the university offers have diversified as the number of institutions, training programs, schedules and educational space, the range of knowledge sectors covered is still restricted:

On average, in Latin America and the Caribbean a smaller percentage of scientists and a higher percentage of teachers are graduating compared to the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries with which the comparison has been made, as well as a higher percentage of individuals with a degree in Business Administration, Law or Social Sciences in the United States and the United Kingdom. Some of these trends may have been strengthened over the time, as newest programs have been opened in business administration, Law and Social Sciences (World Bank, 2017, p. 20).

According to Rama (2006), there are three main features of the third reform, “student overcrowding has been the protagonist of this process, given that this has been the cause and effect of the differentiation. Such a process of enrollment expansion occurred since the late 1980s, and accelerated from the mid-1990s” (p. 18). In Rama’s opinion, there are two other aspects not very deeply discussed by the text published by the World Bank (2017). First, a major change at the level of the system regulation: “In the framework of the new reform, the regulatory axis of higher education is radically moved – typical of the first reform – and the market – characteristic of the second reform – towards the state” (Rama, 2016, p. 20); second, there is also a significant change at the level of new frontiers: “globalization is generating new scenarios of knowledge from new data and information, and thus promotes the creation of transnational spaces of production and transmission of knowledge towards the societies of knowledge” (Rama, 2016, p. 22).

In relation to the first issue, it must be recognized that the mechanisms of quality assurance in Latin America present a very differentiated reality. The report of 2016 about the Interuniversity Center for the Development (CINDA)⁸ indicates:

8 The editor/Coordinator of this report is José Joaquín Brunner and the deputy editor, Daniel Andrés Miranda, and includes a large number of academics responsible for countries or regions. This report contains a balance of trends and national changes in 21 Latin American countries.

Indeed, it is now possible to observe that there are some that have been consolidated, with a high degree of legitimacy and acceptance. Others have had to be reformulated and some countries remain, which have not been able to settle, giving the institutions the responsibility to solve the demands of quality through various private or international mechanisms (CINDA, 2016, p. 202).

What is true, agreeing with Rama, is that:

Practically all the processes of AC [quality assurance] in Latin America have a State initiative. However, the bodies responsible obey a variety of models. There are government agencies (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay), public but autonomous (Colombia, Chile, Peru), Private (Chile, Panama) or linked to universities (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay). In several cases, there are different types of agencies in the same country. In most countries, the main purpose is to offer quality public guarantee through the installation of accreditation mechanisms for undergraduate and in some cases also for postgraduate courses. However, without prejudice to this priority emphasis, more prescriptive and supervising control mechanisms have arisen for the new institutions or to certain programs, defined as ‘of public interest’ (CINDA, 2016, p. 202).

With regard to the second issue, the CINDA report (2016) indicates that, increasingly, internationalization is going to play an essential role:

For example, it is thought that access to this formative level will be widened and altered in various ways in the near future due to the online courses of mass access (MOOCs). At the same time, although still slowly as seen in Latin America, student and academic mobility is growing and returning to the university, just as it had at its origin an international character. Academic research – in all disciplines and specialties – has also received a new impetus as a result of the combination of the digital revolution and the globalization of science. Access to knowledge is broader than ever

before, as well as intercommunication between researchers and these with governments, businesses and civil society communities. There is a search and a real competition for talents that do not recognize frontiers. And an increasing pressure to lead the production of knowledge transnationally within the multitude of networks of specialists that are emerging as a result of an ever-thinner international division and organization of academic work. All this raises new challenges for the government and the management of the IES that must manage with more organizational complexity, higher number of demands and contacts with the society and the state, a more intense competition on the '*glonacalidad*' and a turbulent and hostile environment (CINDA, 2016, p. 18).

Perhaps as a good way to close this section, it is appropriate to remember a milestone in the world of higher education that is on anniversary. Twenty years ago, the World Conference on Higher Education was held in Paris at UNESCO (1998). On that occasion, with the presence of 130 ministers and more than 4 000 participants, the "World Declaration on Higher Education in the 21st Century: vision and action" was issued, as well as the "priority action framework for Change, Development of Higher Education". In Latin America, in the framework of this anniversary, it will be held in Cordoba, Argentina (coinciding with the 100 years of the student movement) the III Regional Conference on Higher Education, CRES (2018)⁹, organized by the International Institute of UNESCO for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC); and it is interesting to consider in this diagnosis the topics chosen for this occasion:

- Higher education as part of the education system in Latin America and the Caribbean.

9 The first Regional Higher Education Conference was held in La Habana in 1996, as a preparation for the meeting in Paris in 1998. Currently, the III CRES 2018 corresponds to the regional meeting previous to the one in Paris in 2019.

- Higher education, cultural diversity and interculturalism in Latin America.
- Higher education, internationalization and regional integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The role of higher education in the social challenges of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Scientific and technological research and innovation as the engine of human, social and economic development for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The strategic role of higher education in the sustainable development of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- A hundred years of the university reform of Córdoba. Towards a new manifesto of Latin American higher education.

As can be seen, it is a historical look with emphasis on the present but with a lot of future perspective. It highlights the issue of higher education as part of the educational system; the work of universities on the topic of cultural and intercultural diversity, both in their center and in the face of the country and the region; the role of the university and its contribution to the social challenges, innovation for human, social, economic and sustainable development.

The IUS facing the challenges of the universities in Latin America

Universities in Latin America are indeed at a decisive moment. In a “third reform” that requires a look at the universities, in this case the Salesian universities, rather from a challenging point of view and not on a self-indulgent or flagellating reading about the university reality of the present, which could immobilize at a time when urgent and fundamental decisions are required.

Based on diagnosis presented before, it is possible to formulate three questions set out in the logic of challenge, regarding

the state and possible future of the Salesian Universities in Latin America:

- In this moment of overcrowding of university studies, must the Salesians be present creating universities when there are so many founded – by others – recently?
- What differentiates IUS from other private universities, to which people enroll because they are motivated and because these universities are very calm they (hardly have student or teacher strikes); lack of a social concern; only offer low-investment study programs that are of low concern for quality?
- At a time when internationalization processes are accelerated, what is the IUS's reality in terms of participation in international networks and networking among themselves?

The attention of new students in the university world: a field conducive to the preventive method

As indicated, the current universities are overcrowded and one of the today characteristics is the arrival of students who are “first generation in the university World”; in other words, neither their mother nor their father had university studies. One of the reiterated criticisms of the private universities is that the overcrowding is due to a strategy of generating higher income via payment of the students and/or their family (often with an onerous debt), without caring if they have the skills for the university world. At the bottom, private universities do not care about the students, nor less their training, they are interested in capturing the resources they pay to study and, of course, generate the least possible spending, thereby increasing their earnings.

Unfortunately, this approach cannot be ruled out very easily, because in almost all Latin American countries, some universities were created with a sense of business (the highest possible income

with the least possible expense), well above the interest of being a proper university educational space. Universities are not only interested in profit, which in some countries is legal, but there are institutions without any interest in the quality of their processes: teachers work only for hours and without permanent contract, insufficient laboratories and/or without equipment, infrastructure of rooms, among others. However, this reality cannot fail to recognize that there are many other private universities that are interested in providing good service to students and the culture in general.

If there were not IUS in America today, we would have to create them. Just as the children and young people arrived from the fields to Turin at the time of Don Bosco, today the young people of the popular sectors of the periphery are coming to the universities; therefore, the university world becomes a compulsory space of Salesian presence if wanting to serve the young people who are now entering higher education. Not to do so is not to recognize that the dynamics of history always presents new challenges, and that poverty evolves in new poverty, where the marginalization of the past is overcome, but other fields are born where the poor are ruled out.

Today, equity in higher education is no longer just a matter of coverage, opening the doors to enter the university those who could not do it before; fairness, today in the university world, is also a topic of relevance, of knowing how to welcome and accompany those who –are first generation in their families – are coming to the university. It is here, where the Salesian educational tradition finds a fundamental meaning to be present in the current university world.

In this sense, the Salesian universities are challenged to a double task: to open where there are no Salesian universities, or to keep the doors opened where they are already present, so that young people can have access to higher education to the universities; additionally, a second task (which would even be maintained if young people of first generation were in the university) would be

to welcome and accompany them until their graduation, to make them good Christians and honest citizens.

Regarding the first challenge: coverage; there are places in Latin America that still have a lot to move on in this area. The facilities for entering the University of those who live in the city are not the same as for those who live in the country; those who study at a private school of good quality, paid by their wealthy family from the one who is educated in a poor part of the city, in a school financed by the state and poorly trained. They also have no equal income possibilities: women, Indians and people with special needs. Moreover, while it is true that not all countries in the region use selective tests to enter university, those who use them tend to confuse – erroneously or intentionally – that the non-entry to the university of the previous groups shows lesser capacity for the study, demonstrated by the low scores achieved in these tests.

They seem to forget that these tests tend to measure cultural capital rather than talent for the university world. Authors such as Jaumet Bachs and Marcelo Martínez (2009, p. 76), argue:

The general belief that the selection by merit is a modern value that orients the equality of opportunities is ideological, because it hides the fact that it is a more complex phenomenon, closely associated with the socioeconomic variables, reason for which we should not miss the discomfort of the population in the access mechanisms which are only inclusive as long as the financial capacity is guaranteed. This inequality of access to a high quality university education, complexity and profitable, is a hindrance to the social cohesion, because, if the cultivation of the social value is not effective, it infringes the recognition and adherence to a way of making common social life, at the same time, explaining the uncertainty of the majority of the population that does not have the assets that guarantee it to be and feel part of the social order.

It is not true that the talents for the university life are mostly concentrated in the most favored sectors of society and are ab-

sent in the most infringed. As stated by Francisco Javier Gil, former rector of the Salesian University of Chile, the Catholic University Silva Henríquez:

We must highlight our conviction that talents – including academics – are equally distributed among rich and poor in all ethnicities and cultures. Young people with academic talents regardless the category of their executives or academics study in all establishments. However, for the university selection in Chile the PAA [Academic Aptitude Test] has been applied (since 1967) and the PSU [Academic selection Test] (since the beginning of the 21st century), whose biggest problem is that they reflect the differences in learning opportunities that surround students in their corresponding contexts. For example, this year the average difference in PSU (language and mathematics), among establishments with educational vulnerability index (IVE-SINAE1) 90% and 10% was 179 points. In other words: 179 points is the PSU gap between rich and poor. This happens because the curricular coverage is lower in the high vulnerable schools (Gil, 2018, p. 47).

The truth is that the talents for the university were distributed equally in all the social groups; its non-consideration is openly a violation of human rights: “Everyone has the right to education...; access to higher education will be the same for all, depending on the merits “(article 26° of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

This is where a task and an important derivative are born. The document “Identity of the Salesian institutions of Higher Education”, 2003, clearly established the task. IUS have “a priority option for young people, especially those of the popular classes” (N° 17, letter a), to which it adds: “The IUS make a preferential option in favor of young people of the popular classes, surpassing all elitist approach (...) this implies some options: a) to favor the access to the University of young people coming from popular environments” (N° 19). Its derivative, given the foregoing, is that the Salesians should not only open the doors to the first generation of

young people in the university world who can enter it, but the Salesians must also go out and look for young people with academic talents to enter the university. Today the latter is reinforced by the call of Pope Francis to build a “church in exit”, in this sense, the Salesian universities must be “universities in exit”.

For a university in exit, experiences like the propaedeutic are proven formulas to help young people from less favored or rightly violated sectors, but talented for the study (who were the best students of their courses in high school, although low-scoring in college entrance tests can have satisfactory results in their future academic performance. With the support of UNESCO, several Chilean universities, including Silva Henríquez Catholic University, have good practices in the field.¹⁰

The second challenge in this area, as mentioned above, states that it is related to equity, not as a cover but as a relevant person, understanding the latter as an appropriate attention to the student who enters the university, especially those who are first generation. Here the task is not only to integrate him, but to include him effectively in the university¹¹. It requires a concern for the curricula and teaching/learning processes, so that they recognize the characteristics of these new students and can overcome their deficiencies of entry. It is also necessary to be concerned about the retention and timely success rates of these students; in other words, that they do not abandon the university and do not take an excessive amount of time to finish their studies.

The important thing in this topic is not that they are only in the university, but are protagonists on it; this is a prerequisite

10 See, UNESCO (s. f.) in: <https://goo.gl/Ei45e9> and UNESCO (2015) on: <https://goo.gl/qM2Ca4>

11 On this matter I will not extend much, since there is an article of my authorship entitled “Higher Education and Social inclusion: A Perspective from the Salesian University Institutions” (2013, pp. 201-222). Available at: <https://goo.gl/pHpuxR>

for achieving the above objectives: retention and timely success. It is in this field, where the rich Salesian educational tradition finds its greatest value as an offer. They are the Salesians (consecrated and secular working together, under the same spirituality) who can, should and are called to be a fundamental part of those who attend these new university young people.

Students and their culture are required to be the center of the university's work, where the actions and concerns of the students should not only be embraced and integrated into the educational community, but stimulated and strengthened. There must be concrete expressions of a willingness to share the lives of young people to welcome them – unconditionally – in a tireless dialogue and a conviction that good is present in every young person. In this way, the preventive method plays an essential role: a) valuing the reason as an understanding mechanism among people, expressed in fair requests and norms; b) being convinced that religion is a constituent part of the human being, which should be expressed in the certainty that the meaning of God is enrolled in each person and that it operates, even if it is not visible and c) with confidence that goodness, expressed as an educational love (as a loving dialogue) makes it grows and creates correspondence.

A university that by principle opts for the poor must not be a poor university

There is a strong criticism of many private universities, which unfortunately, an important set of indicators show that in several cases it is true what they are questioned: they are universities with a low concern for quality.

Some private universities, concerned about achieving the maximum possible income, enroll without any selectivity degree to a significant number of students; but in this case, they do not do

so by a choice of values but by a purely economic interest. Moreover, they are universities that when the student is already enrolled, they do not become central subjects of the formative process, so in a short time they abandon the university without any title and with a great financial debt. The slightest selectivity is not a low-quality indicator, the responsible concern for those who enter university or the opposite, irresponsible carelessness, is an indicator of quality.

But, there is a second criticism along with this questioning, it is that private universities concentrate those students and mainly the families of those students, who select the university by being calm and tidy, without student and/or teacher strikes. What is certainly not an incorrect decision, but behind it is possible to enclose a situation that is also attentive to the quality of university work: Social unconcern.

The university, in the words of a Chilean Salesian, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, is nothing else but the critical conscience of society. The university and the training of its students cannot be turned back to what happens in the reality of the country where it is located:

... universities cannot provide the country their specific service if in their longing for commitment to the national reality they become a simple instrument for the realization of certain political, economic or social objectives. The way to serve more lucidly and effectively to those same objectives – and in a typically university way – is to enlighten them and offer them concrete answers from a higher level, based on a global view of human problems and with the necessary internal independence to be able to become critically aware of society. It is not a question of being a timeless conscience, but, precisely of situating oneself in a perspective of amplitude that allows being aware of the temporal and of the concrete (Cardinal Silva Henríquez, 1971, p. 4).

The universities and especially the Salesian universities are called to form very good professionals, surpassing — by their option to

enter talented young people, but with a precarious formation— each and every one of their deficiencies, but even more, they are called to form “good Christians and honest citizens”. A Salesian University must be distinguished by giving the nation professionals motivated by their Christian and committed values, in placing their profession at the service of their nation and especially for the poorest within it. In this sense, IUS should be able to develop identity indicators and continually evaluate their compliance with these subjects.

In the aforementioned document, “Identity of the Salesian Institutions of higher Education (IUS)”, 2003, now completing the aforementioned number 19, this regard should be taken into consideration:

The IUS make a preferential choice in favor of young people belonging to popular classes, surpassing any elitist approach not only with respect to the recipients but also to the orientation of the research and the development of the different university services. This involves some options: a) to encourage access to the University of young people from popular environments; b) to guide research, teaching, study and cultural services in order to provide a better knowledge of the young condition, in society especially of the less favored sectors, and to produce a positive transformation of it; c) to train people who are committed to justice in order to make a more solidarity and humane society; d) to promote training proposals that influence educational processes and youth strategies and policies (N° 19).

By asking, who are our graduated students working for? has now more relevance than a few decades ago. Individualism and exclusion have been installed in the world and also in our region. Undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges of current education is to educate towards fraternity. We live in an increasingly globalized society, but paradoxically with less concern for the others. Today, people are in more contact with the others (via technological devices), but not necessarily more communicated.

The recent text of the Congregation for Catholic Education (2017), in connection with the 50 years of the encyclical *populorum progressio*, entitled “Educating the solidarity humanism to build a ‘civilization of love’ 50 years after the *Populorum Progressio*”, updates the approaches of half a century ago and shows possible ways in the current scenarios for educational institutions in the path of solidarity and fraternity:

- It is necessary to humanize education by “putting the person at the center of Education, in a framework of relationships that constitute a living, interdependent community, together with a common destiny” (EHS N° 8).¹²
- It is essential to install a culture of dialogue in education. Education is required to have “the capacity to build the basis for peaceful dialogue and to allow the encounter between differences, with the main objective of building a better World” (EHS N° 15).
- We need to globalize hope. It is necessary “the construction of educational and pedagogical relations that teach Christian love, that generate groups based on solidarity, where the common good is virtuously connected to the good of each one of its components” (EHS N° 18).
- We must move towards a true inclusion, until we reach the whole human family. “Today’s citizen, in fact, must be in solidarity with his contemporaries wherever they are, but also with the future citizens of the planet” (EHS N° 21).
- Cooperation networks need to be built, this “means to activate inclusive dynamics, in constant search for new opportunities to introduce different subjects in the own teaching and learning circuit” (EHS N° 24).

12 The EHS abbreviation corresponds to “educate the solidarity humanism to build a ‘civilization of the love’ 50 years after the *populorum progressio*”, and the number that is identified is the one offered in the ordering of the text itself. This text can be found on the Vatican page: <https://goo.gl/xZvRV8>

In the most recent IUS guidance document worldwide, “policies for the Salesian presence in higher education, 2016-2021”, indicated that it should “ensure the quality and relevance of the proposed training to students guided by Don Bosco’s Preventive System Principles to guarantee his personal, professional growth and the exercise of citizenship” (N° 25). Today, shaping solidarity and fraternity is ultimately to train active citizenship (which would be largely an update to the task of forming “Honest Citizen”), which necessarily happens by a student role and all members of the University communities in areas that are truly important to the university. The reference table for the Salesian Youth Ministry (2013) indicates in this regard to young people:

It is compulsory to ensure training for professionalism, where the young person is involved in a complex education process in which, in addition to the competencies related to the work, he learns the rights and duties of active citizenship; he experiences social behaviors modeled in collaboration, individual responsibility and solidarity; he increases the own cultural knowledge; he structures the identity in an appropriate way to integrate into the social and civil life (p. 195).

Education happens in active citizenship, with an active practice of citizen responsibility. Justice, equality, freedom, participation and the fraternity that one wants for society must be first lived actively in the university space. In this field, the IUS of America have still a long way to go. Several of the IUS of America do not have participation mechanisms of the community in transferring fields, such as for example, being consulted for the position of Rector or to participate in the construction of the Institutional Development Plan. Practices known to the laity, who are widely experienced by the Salesians enshrined in their government spheres.

The IUS must attend with more community conception some topics that are in the agenda of the university discussion, such as, the separation of powers and the necessary counterweight balan-

ce between unipersonal authorities and collegiate organs. There is evidence of progress in the IUS, but also of setbacks. The Salesian congregation must know that the guiding function and respect for the institutional identity is under its responsibility, but it should not be confused, believing that the property of the university grants rights to it over the necessary academic autonomy that the university community must possess. In the name of autonomy, the institutional, Catholic and Salesian identity cannot be denied in this case; but the name of the institutional identity cannot injure the necessary autonomy of the university work, distorting the identity of the university.

In this regards, it is appropriate to keep in mind, as indicated by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* 12:

The Catholic University is an academic community which in a rigorous and critical way contributes to the guardianship and development of human dignity and cultural heritage through research, teaching and the various services offered to local, national and international communities [14]. It has the institutional autonomy that is necessary to fulfill its functions effectively and guarantees its members the academic freedom, safeguarding the rights of the person and the community within the exigencies of the truth and the common good [15].

Note Number [15], indicates: Cf. Vatican Council II, Pastoral constitution on the church in the contemporary world *Gaudium et spes*, n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080; *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737. “Institutional autonomy” means that the government of an academic institution is and remains in the institution. “Academic freedom” is the guarantee given to those who are in charge of teaching and research, in the scope of the specific field of knowledge and according to the methods of that area, and being able to teach and publish the results of such research, bearing in mind the criteria mentioned, i.e., the safeguarding of the

rights of the individual and of the community in the exigencies of the truth and the common good.

It is not difficult to predict that in the search for a full citizenship¹³ there will be more concern for the transparency, the possibility of participation in the management and the respect to quotas of gender in the managerial areas. The IUS should enter into a genuine discussion on their ways of governance. This, as we have also said, if occurs with a participatory method will be highly formative for all members of the university community.

There is a third criticism of some private universities, which are preferably teaching institutions and with a very limited offer of training programs (also chosen for their low cost and a high return on their investment). This is also an undeniable reality, but this questioning can be lessened, if the breadth of the training offer and the complexity of its academic structure are discussed from the mission, vision and strategic plan of the institution, which would be clearly the case of IUS.¹⁴

13 The Council of Europe indicates that in the relationship between the individual and the society [the organizations can be added], can be distinguished “four dimensions that correspond with the four subsystems that can be recognized in a society, and that are essential for the existence: The political/legal dimension, the social dimension, the cultural dimension and the economic dimension and these four dimensions, They are like the four legs of a chair, where each person should be able to exercise the four dimensions in a balanced and equitable way, otherwise full citizenship will not be balanced”. Available at: <https://goo.gl/o5EF5u>. These four dimensions of citizenship were developed by Ruud Veldhuis, in “Education for Democratic citizenship: the dimensions of citizenship, basic competencies, variables and international activities”, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1997, Document DECS/CIT (97) 23.

14 It should not be forgotten that the document “policies for the Salesian presence in higher education 2003-2008, indicates that as far as scientific fields are concerned, generally those more related to education and training work of young people and, in particular, the sciences for knowledge and transformation of the Youth World (Sociology, Politics, Law), the sciences of the

In America, several of the Salesian universities have a formative task with a very incipient research and an offer of formative programs concentrated in a low number of disciplines. This can certainly be understood from the aforementioned parameters: there is a mission and vision that makes it concentrate on a particular field; as there is also a very recent creation story, which makes it difficult to present a wide range of academic offerings. However, this possible explanation does not waive two other obligations: to research in the areas where students are formed and to provide comprehensive training, even if there are no academic programs in all areas.

Research in American IUS is something that in most universities is in its initial stage. Not only do not have stable teams of researchers, but there is a very scarce academic staff, that is hired and prepared for this work. This is perhaps the qualitative aspect that requires more attention in the present and immediate future. It is certainly not possible to think of an instantaneous growth in all areas of the university, but the American IUS require specific development plans in this field, including the corresponding budgets that will make possible this qualitative step.

A way to walk in this field is to advance from “teaching university” to “university with research”, which is a stage prior to the “research university”. For this, it is essential to define in each of the IUS, which are the areas in which it is hoped to provide the society the academic results with highest level. Evidently, these areas that are expected to be a contribution should be based on the identity of IUS. A concrete example is what has been used in the line of training professionals at the doctorate level in the youth, to consti-

Education and related sciences, the religious sciences and for the evangelization and the Pastoral, the sciences of the communication, the Technical and technological sciences (N° 26). In summary, IUS are invited to a broad proposal, but with clear areas of choice.

tute a contribution to research and public policies on youth in each country where there is presence of Salesians Universities.¹⁵

As far as integral training is concerned, something that is also essential are the institutionalized actions of dialogue between faith and reason, as well as between science and humanities, although the Salesian university institutions by choice or by historical development do not have in a broad set of formative programs. All the students of the Salesian universities as well as all members of their community must feel summoned and even questioned, at least, in relation to their faith or absence of faith, as well as the necessary humanist dimension for a good scientific training and vice versa.

This is another field, as well as a previous one (individualism and exclusion), which achieves an increasing relevance in this historical time. Pope Francis in his recent visit to Chile (2018) says that we live in the encounter with the university world, in a “liquid or light society, as called by some thinkers, in which the reference points are disappearing, from where people can build individually and socially. It seems that today the ‘cloud’ is the new meeting point”.¹⁶

In this reality of liquidity and lightness,¹⁷ the meaning of life is also liquefied or does not achieve the necessary weight; for this reason, the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean had already pointed out, more than 10 years ago, at the 5th General Conference of the CELAM (2007) held at Aparecida, which:

15 We refer to scope 4: Research in youth, of the Common Program 5 (2017-2021) of American IUS.

16 Discourse of the Pope in his visit to Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (17/01/2018). Available on: <https://goo.gl/8UnJ3C> Speech of the Holy Father in a visit to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (17/01/2018). Available from: <https://goo.gl/8UnJ3C>

17 We can assume that the Holy Father is referring to Zygmunt Bauman and Gilles Lipovetsky. In particular, to the work of Bauman, Z. (2004), and the text of Lipovetsky, G. (2016).

The social reality is a lot for a conscience which, taking into account its lack of knowledge and information, is easily believed to be insignificant, without any interference in the events, even when it draws its voice to other voices seeking to help itself reciprocally. This is why many scholars of our time have argued that reality has brought about a crisis of meaning. They do not refer to the multiple partial senses that each one can find in the daily actions they performs, but to the sense that gives unity to everything that exists and happens to us in the experience (Document of Aparecida n° 36-37).

Nowadays, young people are asked the fundamental questions of life, once past the 18 or 20 years, since youth has lengthened (in many countries it is already considered until the 29 years) and it is there where the Salesian universities must be an integral formative response, and Don Bosco's methodology a fundamental instrument for the students to find a meaning to their lives and a unity among the multitude of fragments that offers them their existence. All the members of a Salesian university community should find on it the possibility of obtaining the mechanisms to achieve an adequate relationship with God, with others, with nature and with oneself. Undoubtedly, this is another reason for the Salesians to be present in the current university world.

In this field, while there are hopeful signs about the Pastoral work in the American IUS, which has been working for some time in this matter, it must be recognized that the challenges are numerous: young people who enter Catholic universities do not do it necessarily by a religious identification; many of those who have a religious identity, have a syncretism that at times it is complex to address¹⁸ and many others, as stated in the text of "preparation to the synod on youth, faith and vocation discernment" (2017), are not against, but point out that they have learned to live without God and without the church.

18 Consult the research of FIUC (2014) to know more on this matter.

We are facing a double situation that must be confronted by the pastoral university (especially for the students, but also for all the other members of the community): a self that expands unlimited and a retraction to the intimacy. There is a tendency to a primacy of the self, standing back to the others and even back to those who are offered as a path, truth and life. A self who falls into pride and indicates that does not require God to guide the life, or does not count on his help in the tasks he undertakes. But we also have to recognize that in the reality lived nowadays the spirituality that prevails is rather “eyes closed” rather than “open eyes.” That is, the search for Jesus inside oneself, more than in the midst of the people, and among the poorest (Aporophobia concept was recently created: a phobia of poor or disadvantaged people)¹⁹; what is further enhanced by the idea that making faith public is an act that is attentive to the freedom of others (in a misguided respect for others). There is no turning inward to strengthen and then go out to others. Of course, an unlimited expansion of the self and a retraction to intimacy are contrary to the call of the CELAM in Aparecida, to form disciples and missionaries of men and women who are with Jesus, but who do not stay with him, but come out from him to go and announce the good news.

The fourth criticism of private universities is their low concern to ensure quality through objective mechanisms and independent bodies. It is noted that by being more concerned with earnings, rather than the training of their students and being a real service to their country, universities do not introduce in their processes quality assurance mechanisms, which have high cost to install, do not make the improvement plans that are derived from the quality assessments. Avoiding this action is increasing in those

19 The Royal Academy of the Spanish language in 2017 incorporated into its dictionary the word coined by the philosopher Adela Cortina: Aporofobia. See: Cortina, Adela (2017).

countries where there are no formal requirements for accreditation or are not compulsory.

The experience of the American IUS is diverse, as it is different the reality of the accreditation in America. Nevertheless, IUS that are consequential with the intention of providing a service of quality have established in their “policies for the Salesian presence in the higher Education 2003-2008” that for the constant improvement of the institution, IUS must use procedures such as:

Accreditation, which is a public recognition of the institution according to the quality standards elaborated by an external body of recognized national and/or international prestige; academic excellence is pursued by assuring quality levels. In addition to prestige and credibility, accreditation serves to confirm the institution options and to guide the decision-making on new goals (n. 32).

Even if it is not a requirement of the country, accreditation should be part of the task of all IUS. Moreover, accreditation in the case of IUS should not refer to the two classical areas of review: academics and financial management. IUS are invited to a third area, to accredit the fulfillment of their identity. The document “Policies for the Salesian presence in higher education, 2016-2021”, indicates that:

IUS face a triple challenge: to ensure the quality of their formative and cultural proposal; to guarantee the fulfillment of its educational pastoral purpose according to the Salesian charismatic identity; and to achieve an economic and financial sustainability that ensures its continuity in the time. These challenges propose the IUS the need to advance in the process of defining a model of being present in higher education and of exercising the functions of teaching, research and service to society (n. 10).

IUS must certify their quality through specialized bodies in the academics and in management; and they also must work on establishing indicators of compliance with their identity. No minor

task compared to the objective stated in the newly quoted document and considering that today in the accreditation processes not evidence of processes are sought, but of results:

The Salesian congregation affirms that its presence in the field of higher education is part of its mission, and that institutions of higher education along with schools and vocational training centers “promote the integral development of students through the assimilation and critical elaboration of the culture and through the education in the faith, with a view to the Christian transformation of the society” (policies for the Salesian presence in higher education, 2016-2021, N° 1).

The accreditation task is high-cost as well as the improvement plans derived from it. In this field, in a time that can still be described as a foundation, where there are minimal infrastructure costs necessary for the academic work, it would be very useful that the Salesian congregation has spaces for the university service. This would reduce costs, which could be used in other areas as necessary as infrastructure, for example, the process of attracting, retaining and allowing the development of a significant body of scholars²⁰. As in the beginning, schools and colleges were installed in order to attend primary and secondary schools in a work undertaken by all the inspectors and/or the congregation as a whole, IUS cannot have the total cost of the infrastructure required to provide good service²¹, moreover, if it is demanded by mission to attend

20 IUS need to make significant efforts to expand the number of full-time scholars, which also implies generating appropriate conditions for their work and academic development. It is required – to attract and retain – remunerations adequate to the market; as well as possibilities of improvement and attendance to events, necessary for their academic development.

21 It should not be forgotten that IUS unlike other university institutions, require for the implementation of the Salesian educational methodology not only space for teaching, but also patio, areas for the creative expression of the students and the distended encounter of the educator and the student, making infrastructure costs even more expensive.

young people of more infringed sectors (as it is known, it is of higher cost than one of rich sectors).

It is also essential to have Salesian religious in the university to ensure a good accreditation and especially a relation with the identity. The data of IUS in America realize that the number of Salesians working on them is very low, and even worse if only considering those who have full time. The task is enormous and long-term, as an adequate destination must come preceded by correct preparation for the university world. It is not enough for them to be religious with a university degree, it requires people with academic lives who can establish peer relations with other scholars, and who are prepared to confront religious skepticism and syncretism of the world of current university students. The same occurs for academic management fees; it is not enough to be a Salesian to exercise it, or to have the experience of school management, since they are truly different universes (perhaps not in the form, but in the background).

IUS and internationalization: a field of unlimited projections with an initial present

The knowledge society is necessarily a networked society. Today, universities around the world, increasingly look at their present work and much more their future action, closely linked to international networking.

The reality of the American IUS in this field is at a very early stage. There are many IUS who participate in networks and are even absent in the networks of the Catholic Church, such as the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) or its expression for the region, the Organization of Catholic Universities of Latin America (ODUCAL). It is even less the participation in other networks, such as those organized by UNESCO or OEI, and much less in more specialized academic networks, such as the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO).

What is the cause of this absence? It is worth analyzing it... but surely, the participation in a network is not seen as a necessity, since it is not very significant (with regard to the possible potential) the network work that is supported between the own Salesian Universities of America. Scope 5 of the *American IUS Common 5 program*, 2017-2021, is still an incipient work. In these matters, it can even be argued that there are Salesian universities that see common work programs, not as part of their own plan of action, but as something external that can be left out. It is extraordinary the atmosphere of cooperation while there is a IUS meeting, but it is extraordinarily difficult to maintain permanent and continuous contact among IUS.

IUS, having common objectives, a similar formative option and the experience of common work programs, are in an unbeatable position to have an active network. Only as an example, in topics such as:

- Broaden and institutionalize existing work in the field of student, academic and administrative exchanges.
- Continue expanding the construction of a virtual library common to all American IUS.
- Form shared research groups and apply jointly to research funding.
- Establish the possibility of online courses of massive access (MOOCs), where in virtual terms a subject is taught by a university, which can be coursed by students of any IUS in their formative program (otherwise, it is a mechanism to decrease – or share – costs).
- Generate a flow of exchange, mainly in the field of post-graduate, to facilitate academics between IUS to integrate the cloisters of Magister and Doctorate (academic visiting professors).

- There are even more practical and clearly cost-reducing aspects, like the possibility of doing larger scale purchases, such as: software, computer equipment, books or laboratory supplies or didactic equipment.

IUS in general do not have a high development of research and postgraduate, two areas that go closely together, given that a postgraduate that is not linked to the lines of research of the scholars who teaches it is not a postgraduate of quality (also if it is a master's degree that is located in the category of professional and non-investigative). Here network can be a privileged instrument for the qualitative leap that is required in these two areas. Examples like the aforementioned: common libraries, academic exchange and research can be a great help in advancing research and postgraduate studies.

As a way of concluding

Within 100 years of Cordoba, and to 50 years of May of 1968 in France, it is clear that the university world has changed: the number of students has increased; the presence of private universities has grown significantly; the quality control of the University work tends to be no longer internal but external, accrediting agencies and the internationalization and virtualization of academic work is increasingly empowered by the university. On the other hand, the data -in relation to the students- are not very optimistic to levels of achievement: many young people who quit and do not conclude their university studies and others who conclude it, but with a significant number of years more than the expected duration of their career. Additionally, something that has not been mentioned, those who finish their stu-

dies often have serious difficulties to find a work in the field of their formation and even more, a contract and a fair salary.²²

This is the context of the American IUS, a set of institutions in a time when first generation students enroll in higher education and where the rich experience of the Salesian educational method has a lot to contribute; a context that defies IUS in a world of private universities to show that they have a genuine interest in students, in service to the country and a continuous concern for quality; where the daily practice of an active citizenship should make the IUS a space of announcement and demonstration to prove that it is possible to have a better life in conjunction with others, freer but not less fraternal; finally, a context that also invites to develop the maximum the internationalization potentialities and a network among all IUS.

Latin America in the University field is in “a decisive moment”. The IUS are in a position to make a qualitative leap, but they will only do it by deepen their identity and increasing their concern for quality; but this will not be possible if they do not it in conjunction with others.

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Salesian Higher Education in the South Asian Context

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Introduction

The Salesian South Asia region (SPCSA) consists of the Provinces of India (11) and Vice Province of Sri Lanka (1). The Provinces are: Mumbai (earlier known as Bombay), Kolkata (earlier known as Calcutta), Dimapur, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Bangalore (Kerala - Karnataka), Chennai (earlier known as Madras), New Delhi, Panjim-Goa, Shillong (earlier known as Silchar), Trichy and Vice Province of Sri Lanka. Except the province of New Delhi, all other provinces have one or more higher education institutions. There are also Salesian houses in Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan which belongs to the SPCSA region, but no higher education institutions there. Since, 11 out of 12 belong to the Indian Provinces, it is unavoidable that a National identity in Higher Education emerges.

Monarchy in India has controlled spoken languages, religious practices, ethnic groups and cultural diversities. As per 2011 Indian Census, it has a population of 1 350 million. Male population is made up of 700 million and female population is made up of 650 million. The youth from 15-24, is around 18%. It is closely followed by the age between 25-35, which make up 20%. Putting together, youth between the ages of 15-35, make up of 38% (Census 2018). Among the world average, working Indian youth population is the highest, corresponding to 48%.

There are 29 states and 7 territories in India. Likewise, there are different religions: 75% Hindu, 14% Muslims, 5% Christian to mention the top 3 religious groups. There are other groups like Sikhs, Parsis, Jains, Buddhists, and non-believers.

There are 19 official languages, which have separate scripts, age old literature background, and there are more than 6000 dialects.

There are 101 scheduled castes, 50 scheduled tribes (mostly illiterate). India is the ninth largest economy in the world, and is in the 145th position in term of GDP *per capita* income. Indian GDP is 7 times lower than the world average, figure that is 69 times lower than the richest country of the world and only 6.5 times greater than the poorest country of the world. India is also at 34th position in the list of Asian countries.

The meaning of Higher Education

Higher education is understood as “all studies after the schooling of 10 + 2 years (12 years)”. Higher education means an integrated development of personality which should be taught through the right development of knowledge, skill and attitude. The students will be 17 years old or older, and some of them stop studying after 10th std, and take up to Polytechnic, which may lead them to job or engineering degree.

Indian Higher Education: some statistics

In India, there are two types of Higher Education institutions that offer degrees. The under graduate degree programs are often offered by colleges mostly affiliated to State Universities. The post graduate and research studies (M.Phil, Ph.D, and Post Doctoral Degrees) are offered by Universities. In earlier days, well established and older a colleges were allowed to conduct such courses, but of late, the affiliating Universities have allowed newer colleges to conduct post graduate courses.

Growth in Universities and Colleges in India (2008-2016)				
Institutions	2008	2016	Increase (#)	Increase (%)
Central Universities	25	47	22	88%
State Universities	228	345	117	51%
States Private Universities	14	235	221	1579%
Institutions Deemed to be Universities	103	123	20	19%
Total	370	750	380	103%
Colleges	23,206	41,435	18,229	79%

Source: UGC India | Analyzed by DrEducation.com

Growth in Student Enrollment by Level of Education and Fields of Study in India (2008-2016)				
Level of Education	2008	2016	Increase (#)	Increase (%)
Bachelor's (Graduate)	11,908,151	24,593,321	12,685,170	107%
Master's (Post-graduate)	1,489,685	2,764,886	1,275,201	86%
Doctorate	95,872	180,957	85,085	89%
Others	148,100	945,582	797,482	538%
Total	13,641,808	28,484,746	14,842,938	109%

Field of Study	2008	2016	Increase (#)	Increase (%)
Arts	5,875,532	10,271,296	4,395,764	75%
Engineering/Technology	1,313,706	4,885,134	3,571,428	272%
Science	2,612,406	5,417,464	2,805,058	107%
Commerce/Management	2,486,901	4,637,317	2,150,416	86%
Education	286,478	1,085,876	799,398	279%
Medicine	446,087	1,118,178	672,091	151%
Others	620,698	1,069,481	448,783	72%
Total	13,641,808	28,484,746	14,842,938	109%

Source: UGC India | Analyzed by DrEducation.com

The Higher Education institutions are of varied types. India has the third largest higher education system in the world, since it has more than 750 Universities and 42 000 colleges with more than 28 million of students.

The types of higher education institutions

Higher Education Institutions include studies in the field of Arts and Science, Commerce and Business management, Engineering, Medicine, Law, Agriculture, Forestry etc.

The current situation of higher education system in India is complex and challenging. With the increase in population, there has been a surge in the number of students seeking admission in these institutions of higher education. Looking at the two tables above, both by number of institutions (103%), enrollment of students (109%) and field of study (109%) there is more than 100% increase; trend that is essential to promote higher education.

During the last few years, the number of universities have increased manifold and colleges have mushroomed all over the country. Opening of a large number of private medical colleges, engineering colleges and poly-techniques has become an attractive financial transaction, but on the other hand, it also affected the quality of education. Almost two third of the Universities and 90% of colleges are rated below average in quality parameters (Current Status of Indian Higher Education, 2018) and enrollment rates in higher education institutions have gone up to 17%, but are still well below the world average.

Indian Society and Higher Education

The Indian Society has the hierarchical order which is embedded in the caste system. The society was divided into four ma-

for groups of people. Although it has its roots in the Vedic literature, still the changes are very slow.

The four major caste groups are: The Brahmins (the priestly class and teachers), who are considered to be born out of the head of the Creator God, Brahman; the Shatriyaas (the king and warriors), who were born out of the shoulder of the Brahman; the Vyshiyas (the merchants), who were born out of the hip of the Brahman; the Sudhras were outcasts, they were born out of the feet of the Brahman. The lower three castes were subjected to the Brahmins. The status comes by birth and not by education.

Each caste group was assigned duties on day-to-day basis. The temple priests were in charge of worship and teaching sacred scriptures, Vedas and rituals. The Prayer and teaching were in Sanskrit (a dead language today, and no one speaks it at home). The Shatriyas were in charge of solving disputes, and were engaged in safeguarding the country. The Vyshiyas did business, they distributed food, and other articles needed for everyone. They were the business class people. The Sudhras were the servants of all the above three, and were the most affected people. This religious hierarchy is based on the four Vedas of Hindu religion, and following the hierarchy it becomes sacred and a duty bound. It is this hierarchy that kept the three lower groups out of education for many centuries. As the hierarchy descends, the status also goes down.

It is only the education that brought a major change in the society by making them all equal or at least make the lower groups to come up in life. Christian and Catholic Higher Education in India changed the life and social status of the three lower categories. It was European colonization that democratized education in India and Sri Lanka. All the earlier Christian Colleges were started by European missionaries in big cities. For example, Xavier's College Mumbai, St. Stephen's College New Delhi, Xavier's College Kolkata, Loyola College Chennai, St. Joseph's College Bangalore and Trichy,

American College, Lady Doak College in Madurai, Xavier's College in Palayamkottai, Holy Cross College, Nagarcoil, St. Mary's College Tuticorin, St. Aloysius College Mangalore, St. Antony's College Shillong, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, just to mention a few.

Some challenges in Indian Higher Education

- The higher education sector is plagued by a shortage of well-trained faculty, poor infrastructure and outdated and irrelevant curricula.
- The use of technology remains limited and standards of research and teaching at Indian universities are far below international standard
- Indian higher education system continues to be afflicted with the three problems of access, equity and quality (not all ethnic groups and the poor are able to have a decent higher education degree).
- Higher Education System in India compared to developing/developed countries needs substantial improvement. So reform is needed in the higher education system.
- The reform in higher education system will require a comprehensive and collective effort of the government, private sector, academia and civil society so that the three objectives of access and expansion, equity and inclusion, and quality and excellence can be achieved in a time bound manner (Manish Sharma, 2018).
- Higher Education in India does not have a separate Ministry of the Central Government, but it functions under the Human Resources Development Ministry.

Self-financing institutions

The Government has stopped giving aid to Higher Education institutions from the year 1994. Thus, all the institutions that were

started by individuals or managements after 1994 are all self-financing institutions.

At one time, there were not enough colleges to accommodate all the students who want to study; therefore, it was necessary the emergence of new self-financing colleges. In these colleges, quality service is rendered, good teaching and learning taking place, lot of practical skills imparted in English, computer, soft skills, managerial skills, leadership skills are taught by the self-financing managements.

In self-financing colleges, the fees are much higher; hence, they become highly competitive. Services are offered to those who can pay. The gap between the rich and the poor is widened due to privatization of education. The Government does not take up responsibility for the education of its people, it is up to the parents to educate their children.

On the other hand, subsidized education offered by the Government institutions is sub-standard. There is no commitment on the part of the Government staff, and there is widespread bribery among the Government officials. It is subsidized education, many go there; but if they were given the chance, they would prefer to study in a Christian and Salesian Institution, which care for them more.

History of Salesian Higher Education

St. Antony's College, Shillong, Meghalaya, was established on 13th June 1934, and it was the first college of Arts, Science & Commerce in the whole Salesian Congregation, and in India. Earlier colleges started in the congregation have been mostly for religious studies of Philosophy, Theology and Scripture only. St. Antony's College was founded by Fr. Joseph Bacchiarello, in the Province of Guwahati.

The present Province of Guwahati can also boast of having the first Catholic/Private University in India, known as the Assam Don Bosco University and inaugurated on 29th March 2008. Assam and the neighboring states are predominantly tribal in culture and Christians as well.

Similarly, in 1951, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, started with grant-in-aid for the payment of the salary of the staff. It was founded by Fr. José Carreno, who was a Spaniard missionary and Provincial of the Salesian Chennai Province.

Today, both universities are leading universities with autonomy, accreditation and enjoy being religious minority institutions that admit Catholic and Christian students. Minority status is assured by the Indian Constitution, article no. 30.

Salesian uniqueness

All that goes with the Salesian Youth pastoral input and animation, the preventive system philosophy, the importance given to study and prayer, spiritual activities, sacraments, being honest citizens of one's country, the devotion to the Church, Mary and the Eucharist, sports and games, talent development training, are all part of our educational system. All the institutions train Salesians and lay people to carry out the above activities and create a conducive climate of study.

The Educative Pastoral Community is formed and the Salesian Educative Pastoral Project are planned, revised, implemented, evaluated. People in general prefer to enroll their children and youth in our institutions, because of the close follow up of our system, the inbuilt mechanism, the activities oriented training, personality development training, group experiences, informal learning moments, sports, games and recreational facilities, stage performances, music and dance, spiritual exercises of morning and good night

talks, monthly recollections, confession, annual retreats for staff and students, transparency and openness in dealing with problematic issues, low fees, concession to the poor, free education for orphans, semi orphans and children out of their homes. Team work by Salesians make our Salesian higher education unique and attractive.

In the South Asian Region, during the past 16 years, the number of Higher Education institutions has increased. The Higher education ministry has been established as a vibrant ministry. Many Salesians have qualified themselves to teach and to administer these institutions.

Most institutions have adapted to fulfil the requirements of the Universities, and have their Vision and Mission statements well defined. The aim and objectives lines of action budget allotment are also defined. There is generally a planning mentality in place but it has to be little more specific.

Recent growth of Salesian Higher Education

The present scenario is that the new Salesian Colleges are being started in district headquarters, smaller towns, villages, tribal areas etc. Shudras (scheduled castes and tribes) are poorer and deprived of education; they do not have any backing as they do not own land; they are the working class people and they are in need of Christian charity. It is noteworthy to make that these are the target groups of our institutions, and they often get preference in admission, since there is a real social change taking place when educating these lower classes. All the Indian Provinces are consciously working for the upliftment of the lower classes of people. The quota system, religious aid, both by Government and private management are very helpful to these students.

We are youth workers committed to the education of the youth. It was thought that we were engaged for long more in school

education than Higher Education from the time of Don Bosco. It was Rev. Fr. Juan Vecchi, the then Rector Major, who shifted the focus from children to youth. The college students are above 17 years old, and they are the real youth for whom we have to work. It is this critical stage which needs guidance and assistance. It is also the stage, during which the youngster have to be prepared for job and for life, and therefore they need lot of guidance.

Contrary to the European and American situation, the youngsters are not sent out of their homes until they get a decent job which fetches him money for survival and the ability to handle life's problems. And so, normally our young adults remain with their parents until they get married. Only after marriage they move out and make a separate family.

Organization of the Regional Network “Don Bosco Higher Education – India” (DBHEI)

After the direction given by our then Rector Major, Rev. Fr. Juan Vecchi, Fr. Carlos Garulo was in charge of organizing all the higher education institutions of the Congregation in the year 2002. He visited all the regions and came to India to make a balance of the situation. From then on, the institutions in the SPCSA region decided to come together, once in two years; later on, it was decided to be every year.

At present the Rector, or Principal or Vice Principal or anyone teaching attends the annual meeting of Salesian Institution Conferences. Every year they organize a National Conference on a relevant theme and the annual general body meeting of all institutions in the region is held. They have formed a body called “Don Bosco Higher Education –India (DBHEI)” to address issues of common concern as eleven out of 12 Provinces have universities or colleges. Effort has been made to register it as a society, and the process is

on. The statutes of this society may not be directly applicable to Sri Lanka, but can take guidance from it.

Rev. Bro. Maria Olmos, General Coordinator of the IUS (2010-2016), made a couple of visits to this region, and provided assistance especially with regard to forming an institutional project for each of the IUS institution, as it is envisaged in the IUS documents. In the year 2013, all the four Southern province representatives came together to attend a two-day workshop on institutions planning, organized by the Dicastery of Youth Pastoral. The workshop was held in Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, and was very useful.

Rev. Fr. Fabio Attard, the General Councillor for Youth Pastoral has also animated a number of people through annual meetings and general meetings of the IUS body.

The annual meeting of members of these institutions has helped them a lot, because most institutions are in the establishing stage, sharing experience and information, difference in day-to-day management of issues, directions given by affiliating Universities and the internal contradictions the Universities have, sharing good practices, knowing each other as Salesians working in different regions and Provinces, networking and inspiring and helping each other etc. Through these meetings, a National–Regional identity of Salesian Higher Education is built.

Some of themes of the National Conferences held so far have strengthened and reinforced the journey of the Higher Education. They are the following: Forming of the National Network, definition of roles and functions, improvement of employability skills of our graduates, Register of DBHEI society and its statutes, creation and use of a website for DBHEI Society, Campus Culture, Campus Ministry, Link to the Ministry, dissemination of Salesian Youth Ministry Manual – frame of reference, training and involvement of lay people in our mission, Salesian best practices, publishing of Direc-

tory for Don Bosco India – Higher Education Network, by Assam Don Bosco University Publication of research journals by some of the institutions, etc.

From the year 2012 onwards regular conference and AGM meetings have been organized in Bangalore, Goa, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Shillong, Mumbai and the next one will be in Dimapur.

The office bearers

The President of DBHEI society is the Provincial of INM Province, Rev.Fr. Jose Kochamkunnel; the Secretary is Fr. Maria Soosai of INM Province; and the executive body members are the following: Rev. Dr. Maria Charles – Director DBYA – Vice President, Fr. Wilfred Fernandez – Joint Secretary INP, Dr. Joby Joseph – Treasurer ING, Dr. Thaddeus Gregory – INM member, Dr. Joy Ullatil – INK-member, Dr. Sebastian Karotopuram – IND – member, Dr. Stephen Mavely – Vice Chancellor, ADBU, Ex. Officio member,

The Governing Body of DBHEI is made up of all the Province level coordinators. They are eleven in number.

Organization at the provincial level

Imbibing the Salesian charism, each institution and each province organizes its activities throughout the year. Each Province has its higher education commission which forms part of the Youth Pastoral of the Province, and each Province has its higher education delegate who will be the member of the governing body of DBHEI. The Rectors, Principals come together and they are members of provincial higher education commission. The province level policy programs, the requirements of personnel, budget, finance, future plans are discussed and shared with the commission members and forwarded to the Provincial/Councillor.

Colleges differ in organizing their activities. However, general direction from the Youth Pastoral department is kept in mind. Likewise, in our institutions are conducted the identification of our target groups, the performance of courses for the new students who come from non-English medium schools, blending of Institutions and industry link,

The institutions differ in the organization of their activities. However, the General Office of the Youth Ministry Department is taken into account. Likewise, in our institutions the identification of our target groups is carried out satisfactorily, the conduction of courses for the new students who come from high schools that do not speak English, the integration of Institutions with the industry, courses and certificates apart from the academic hours, research, extension and education service, social impact, staff and student training plan, research and publication, psychological counseling, online educational program, scholarships Students, professional guidance, training in technical and computer skills, make-up programs for student who require them, clubs and interest groups. The Salesian identity and Charism are maintained and the student strength of our institutions continues to grow year after year, being a good sign of growth.

Some challenges the IUS institutions face

- The IUS institutions in this region are of recent origin and so good traditions have to be set up following Salesian educative principles
- Staffing by Salesians to teach, animate, inspire, conduct, administer and manage IUS institutions etc. is very much needed. It is the goal of provinces,
- There are too many monitoring bodies in the country, in the field of higher education, such as affiliating universities, the State Government Directorate of Higher Education

Department, the UGC (University Grants Commission by part of the Central Government), the AICTE for technical education, the NAAC for quality assessment, the NCTE for colleges of education, the council for autonomy etc., causing that the institutions are pulled from pillar to post. Often, affiliating State Universities hold different views and give independent directions. The University statutes are different from one to another.

- The high cost of education and services.
- The various permissions required to start an institution.
- The interreligious context.

Some significant achievements

- The Salesian schools in this region are appreciated.
- St. Antony's College, Shillong and Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur (in the South) have done yeomen service to the Catholics and have educated the entire North East and South India.
- Imparting quality education with affordable fees is what we are trying to do.
- Rendering our quality service to the youth in the periphery of the society.
- Universal, human, rational and the Gospel values through the Salesian approach are being considered.

Conclusion

The challenges are many in establishing a Higher Education institution in India. There are many regulatory bodies that dictate rules and regulations at various levels. From the village Panchayat (the lowest civil administrative body) to the Ministry of Human Resource Management (the top most body to decide on policies on education), the management has to go through lot of challenges.

No one is genuinely interested in educating the laborer and lower classes. They want the status quo. Bribery is rampant all over the country. No file will move unless money is involved; therefore, higher education expenses are bound to go up year after year. The gap among rich and poor is surprising, and unless poor people do not start higher education, they cannot think of improving their incomes.

Salesian Colleges are attractive to the public as youth friendly campuses, talent development – performance oriented training, imparting of various skills, group experience, transparent administration, team work of Salesians and lay people etc. It is up to the Salesians in charge, in a particular institution, to make it more attractive!

Since, most institutions are established in India, a National identity has become invaluable for many. Once the neighboring countries also establish such institutions, a unique regional Salesian Asian identity will emerge.

The present socio-economic situation, meticulous planning and systematic administration will make the Salesians serve the India youth and that of the Asian region, and make them agents of social change. It is the bounden duty of the Salesian higher education sector to serve the excluded from the mainstream society and help them to live as committed Christians and honest citizens.

Salesian Institutions of Higher Education in the European Context

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The presence of Salesians in higher education is recent. The importance of this educational level and the development of the Salesian presence occurred especially in the last decades of the last century, as a result of the massive access of the middle and popular classes to higher education.¹ In Europe, the origins of the Salesian presence in the University are diverse, divided in the Salesian training centers, in the training of teachers or social workers or in vocational training.

IUS's common work plans have been valuable instruments through which the joint action of the institutions has been promoted in a series of strategic axes, objectives and well-defined operations. The work experience achieved by their implementation has shown the potential of this type of instrument to arouse collaboration and synergy between institutions. However, the difficulties encountered for its follow-up by the European IUS have shown the limitations of this approach, given the diversity of situations and development degree of each one.

1 Reference table of Salesian Youth Ministry. Salesian Youth Ministry Department

The juridical and legal figures that define IUS in Europe can be grouped into three typologies: University centers attached to public universities, university centers affiliated to the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome or centers affiliated to private universities. The following is a more detailed approximation of each of the IUS of Europe, presenting the motivations, the fields of knowledge in which they have developed, how the historical identity has been captured, the most important historical landmarks, the current situation and the main challenges of the future.

IUSVE – Salesian University Institute Venezia, Italy

The origins of the IUSVE date back to 1990 when the *Istituto superiore internazionale salesiano di Ricerca Educativa* (ISRE) was founded in Venice, an association created in 1994 by the *Scuola Superiore Internazionale di Scienze della education* (SISF) as a center affiliated to the *Facoltà di Scienze dell'Educazione* (ESF) of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS).

The headquarters was on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, a place with a recognized trajectory where the Salesians had received the commission in 1953 from Senator Conde Vittorio Cini to direct and manage the *Arti e Mestieri-Fondazione Giorgio Cini* Center to teach the poor boys of Venice a trade according to the professional training in mechanics, composition and graphic printing, carpentry and sewing. The Center also offered the possibility of accommodating 120 students with room and dining facilities.

As a result of the demographic crisis, the Salesians in 1988 decided to transfer their own vocational training center to the Mestre area, in a new, wider and better-communicated facility.

The founding members were the *Facoltà di Scienze dell'Educazione* (ESF) of the UPS, the *Ispettorica Salesiana Veneto Est*

“*San Marco*”, and the regional Salesian professional training body. The main motivation in the creation of the center, with the support of the former Rector Egidio Viganó and confirmed by his successor Juan Edmundo Vecchi, was the desire to qualify the Salesian service to young people from the regions of northeastern Italy and neighboring regions, especially Slovakia, by creating an international research and training center designed to train new educators and study the major changes in the field of education.

The fields of action were initially the higher education of the leaders, educators and trainers, not only Salesians, the activities of study and research on young people, educational and training innovation, the development of new models and services for the education and professional orientation of young people.

At the beginning, many research activities were developed at the international, national and regional levels, in particular on the world of young people in collaboration with the UPS’s “Youth Observatory”, especially from educational Salesian realities, lecturers, schools and vocational training centers. The initiative was supported by the Veneto region, which also financed the launching of *Centro polo per l’orientamento professionale* aimed at promoting the development of new models and services inspired by the Salesian tradition and the new orientations of the European Union. Then, numerous courses of specialization and improvement were launched, recognized by the UPS and directed to educators in the field of the tutoring and the educational orientation, in which participated more than 250 students. The Salesian identity has been promoted mainly through the coordination and animation of different activities of the Salesians in the province, the teaching is carried out by many professors of the UPS, as well as the attention to the pastoral dimension and the formative service to the local churches.

In 2004, the ISRE Center moved from the historic center of Venice to Mestre in the new San Marco Salesian Center. In 2005,

the SISF obtained the status of center added to the FSE of the UPS, which allowed to organize first and second cycle university studies recognized by the UPS in the field of the education, psychology and pedagogy. In 2007, studies were added in the field of communication sciences. Meanwhile, the number of students grew very quickly and in 2009 it exceeded to 1 000. In 2012, the SISF was transformed into the *Istituto Universitario Salesiano Venezia* (IUSVE) and the new Mestre campus was built, later the one in Verona. Since 2014, “IUSVELAB” was launched, an incubator for the creation of youth companies in the communication sector. In the last five years (2012-2017) students who completed the various grade study cycles have reached the figure of 2 500.

Currently, the IUSVE is structured by three departments, pedagogy, psychology and communication, led by Salesians; these departments provide eight academic itineraries with various degrees studied in three years and master’s degrees in two years and distributed in two campuses, Mestre and Verona, and recognized by the Italian Government.

All itineraries incorporate more than 600 hours of learning in social or utility companies or public bodies. The total number of students is approximately 2 000, and the number of teaching staff is 240. Since 2015, the number of students in IUSVE has been limited, because the spaces of the two campuses are also limited, and the province wants to guarantee the highest quality of the educational offer. Today, the IUSVE is managed as an ecclesiastical body of Italian law (IUS) whose presidency is entrusted to the Salesian Province in the northeast. The government of IUSVE resides in the community of the Salesian University, supporting the academic authorities: the President and the Council of the Institute.

The main challenges of the IUSVE are the development of the academic community in a human and Salesian conception, also through university pastoral initiatives and the training of professors

and students; the continuous improvement of the scientific quality of the university offer at the educational and scientific level, which includes research activities in collaboration with other universities in Italy and abroad (especially in Europe); the promotion of the “third mission” of the University with initiatives in the territory for the training of teachers of high school and the vocational training, educators of Salesian and Catholic works, associations with companies, nonprofit associations and Institutions to improve the employability opportunities of young people.

IUSTO- Salesian University Institute di Torino, Italy

The *Facoltà di Filosofia* of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum was created during the postwar period in the Salesian work in the Rebaudengo district of Turin. In 1958, it was transferred to Rome, but some Salesians stayed to organize a series of activities aimed at young people: counseling and psycho-pedagogical advice; for those who started the consecrated or priestly life: psychodiagnosis and psychological support; for teachers and counsellors: professional training with a degree recognized by the *Ministero del Lavoro*.

In the 90s a group of psychologists was formed around the Cospes of the Rebaudengo of Turin. Most of them were very young but had a long trajectory of personal, professional and Salesian training, which included the state exam internship. On the other hand, some were already experienced professionals, involved in the training of their younger colleagues. The training offer was directed to an increasingly wide range of professionals: psychologists, doctors, professors, social workers, educators, parents. The first option was directed to professions that worked in contact with many other people to spread the Salesian spirit in a formative chain. The second option was that of the youth: the categories of professionals

who worked most in contact with them. However, the courses offered did not have formal recognition.

Thus, in 2000, a group of Christian-inspired educational institutions originated an association that asked the UPS for the recognition (“sponsorship”) of courses aimed at training professionals. Taking note of the request, the Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences suggested the affiliation of the Faculty of Education Sciences to provide a bachelor’s degree in communication psychology. The suggestion was well received, and in 2006 with initial financial support from the Salesian Province, the *Scuola Superiore di Formazione Rebaudengo*, was created with a slow but steady growth of students.

Meanwhile, the main vocation for the training of professionals was not abandoned and resulted in the accreditation of the *Piemonte* region for higher education, which allowed providing some free first and second level University master’s degrees.

In 2010, in conjunction with the new general manager it was worked to have the status of center added to the UPS, which was obtained in 2014. Thus, the *Istituto Universitario Salesiano di Torino* (IUSTO) was created, which collects the patrimony and activities of the association founded in the 2000 of the *Scuola Superiore di Formazione*, and extended its educational offer with three master’s degrees in developmental psychology and education, clinical and community psychology and work psychology, organizations and communication. Along with the three-year title in psychology, in 2016 a degree was also created in sociopedagogy. The spirit is always the same: to train the trainers.

But they did not stop in the training of high-profile professionals. Through the financing of the *Piemonte* region, sports courses and sport technicians (TAMS) have been launched for cultural mediators (MC) and health and social operators (OSS), and are completely free of charge. These are professions currently requested

and sought especially by foreigners residing in Italy. In addition to these, IUSTO's offer includes 16 other courses for which the region subsidizes most of the cost (FCI).

Students come from all over Piemonte, there is also a university mission directed more to the surrounding area, a cultural and support mission that translates into different activities: the *cultural tuesday* conferences, conferences, events and training initiatives linked to the academic year; free and equal counseling games for university students from all Turin universities; the activity of the psychology: different professors develop the profession through the own degree of the psychology taught in the institute.

The inspiring basis of the work was clear from the beginning and was expressed in the motto of IUSTO: "Auget dum docet": while teaching, make the person grow. There is no reason to open a university institute if the person who attends it does not grow, because the pure teaching (*in-signum* = to leave a mark in the people), as beautiful and valid as it is in itself, is not enough. Our Salesian purpose goes far beyond: students must make their way by talking with others, they must find deeper and more valid inner support, they must be more satisfied with the person he/she is and has become, his/her life, his/her existence. And this is true regardless the religious affiliations: there are students from different Christian beliefs (especially Orthodox) and also from different religions (Muslims and Buddhists) and also without religion. But everyone must be encouraged to grow, and do so from the belief that when a person grows, he/she grows to God: there are no other directions for growing, there is no other good for each person. And the person who perceives this growth is satisfied with himself/herself and with those who have supported this path. Even before the origin of the *AVEPRO* (*Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione delle Università e Facoltà Ecclesiastiche*) in 2010, IUSTO has reached and maintained the ISO 9001 quality, only to verify

and to direct itself firmly to its educational purpose. Therefore, training and education form an inseparable whole.

Honestly, it must be recognized that all the work done would not have gone far without the support of the providence. They are in a province that has always believed and supported IUSTO, along with the historical Faculty of Theology affiliated to the UPS in Turin. In addition, IUSTO is located in a very cozy community (in Rebaudengo dozens of different activities have been initiated and organized according to the need of the moment), which now joins six other apostolic activities: vocational training center, parish, oratory, daycare, university for retirees or associate study of psychology. In addition, the building built in 1929 by a Salesian architect, Giulio Valotti, allowed organizing easily eight main classrooms with 80 to 100 seats. But the list of people who made possible IUSTO is long.

The future? It is a matter of continuing on the road: to carry out structural works that lead to new classrooms, including a new auditorium bigger than the current one, extending the offer of academic and professional training, increasing the number of students especially during the course for educators; strengthening the settlement in the territory with an increase in training areas; enhancing international relations in particular by strengthening ties with other European and global IUS, and developing international exchanges for teachers and students. Don Bosco said: "Work and temperance will make the congregation flourish". Thus, work and temperance will make IUSTO flourish.

CES-Center for Higher Education in Humanities and Education Sciences Don Bosco. Madrid, Spain

The mission of the Salesian Congregation and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help is the service of youth through education. In order to the complete and qualitative realization, they

have had the need to make an offer of university and professional training, mainly of educational conception with a humanist and Christian base and in the Salesian style in the service of people, preferably of young people, who are trained for a contribution to the satisfaction of the changing needs of the society. CES Don Bosco intends to train Christian educators inspired by the principles and methodology of the Salesian style. Taking into account the objectives of first stages of education, the degrees of child education, primary education, social education and pedagogy are taught.

The formation of educators with a Salesian vision is carried out transmitting the elements that constitute their identity; this requires that the training staff, in addition to competent university professionals, be in knowledge and identify with the Salesian Charism along with the Christian and university character. The identity is guaranteed through the presence of a Salesian community associated with the institution and a group of SDB Salesians who are willing to commit the attention of the needs required in the time.

The Center for Higher Education in Humanities and Education Sciences Don Bosco, Madrid (CES-Madrid), current designation, has its origin in 2000. Its original designation was San Juan Bosco University School in 1974 that emerged from the combination of two schools of San Juan Bosco, the Salesians (FMA) and School of the Salesians (SDB), with a headquartered in Madrid and Guadalajara, respectively, both founded at the end of the 50s and the beginning of the 60s as “normal schools of the church”. With the educational reform of the 70s, both schools joined by becoming a university school attached to Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and with a shared ownership of FMA and SDB of Madrid and León. In 2000, with the purpose of teaching the degree in Psychopedagogy, second cycle qualification of the University for which the universities were not authorized, because there were only first qualification, it is transformed into a higher education center with the current denomination.

The designations of the qualifications change according to the different educational systems of the moment. At the end of the 90s and the beginning of the 2000, the range of qualifications to teach social education and psychopedagogy was extended. From 2010, education (children, primary, social education) is taught, in which the reformulation of qualifications of the European Higher Education area is carried out.

The changes of designation have obviously not been reduced to that, but they have been accompanied by the changes demanded to the needs of the moment. Its purpose has always remained, i.e., the training of competent education professionals with a Christian life vision and inspired in the Salesian style of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

CES Don Bosco prepares to obtain the DECA (Ecclesiastical Declaration of Academic Competency), which trains as a teacher of Catholic religion at school, both in kindergarten and in primary education. The study of DECA is integrated in the studies of degree throughout the four years, as an option of the Formation Center of Christian Educators. DECA is a qualification recognized by the Spanish Episcopal Conference.

At present, it continues with the same juridical status of center attached to Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and linked to Maria Auxiliadora with headquarters in Madrid of the FMA, and Inspectoría Santiago el Mayor of the SDB based in Madrid, granting the qualifications that enable for the activity in the educational field, teacher degree in children education, master degree in primary education, social education degree and pedagogy degree.

The changes of the Spanish society in recent years along with those in the field of higher education have obviously had their impact in their organization with their functioning.

The challenges that must be faced are likely to come from adaptation to the above mentioned changes. The fact that the training of education professionals is in most of the universities results in high competitiveness with repercussions in other particular fields, such as the qualification of teachers or endowment of resources of all kinds and even economics.

EUSS - Escola Universitària Salesiana de Sarrià. Barcelona, Spain

The *Escola Universitària Salesiana de Sarrià* (EUSS) was created in Barcelona as a result of the Salesians' experience in the world of professional training, and it offers studies in the field of industrial engineering. Through teaching, research and continuing education, the EUSS promotes the integral development of young people as it is typical of the Salesian Charism and the enrichment of the industrial and cultural aspect; thus, collaborating in the construction of a fairer and more human world. The EUSS is a university project that forms professionals in engineering, but above all, it educates people who know how to be, and who will be professionals with feelings, values and attitudes consistent with the Salesian charisma.

The main entity of the EUSS is the private foundation Rinaldi, charitable teaching foundation with the purpose of ensuring the correct functioning of the school and granting scholarships and distinctions to students and entities. The sponsorship of the Foundation is made up by Salesians of the Province Maria Auxiliadora of Seville, and by recognized academics and professionals of the industry.

The academic offer is integrated by the degree in Industrial Organization Engineering, the degree of Mechanical Engineering, the degree of Industrial and Automatic Electronic Engineering, the

degree of Electrical Engineering, the master in Industrial Engineering, and the master in Management of Industrial Companies.

The EUSS has been endowed with its own pedagogical style, called *Engineering by doing*, focused on the development of professional competencies. It consists on the combination of academic teaching with the practice, where the student is the protagonist in the classroom and the laboratory. The main educational methodology is project-based learning (ABP). Students invest up to 920 hours of internships in companies in the sector, promoting practical training and similar to the real world. The student completes the program with the elaboration of the final work (GFR) in the company. The professional transversal competencies are structured into four pillars: knowing how to be, knowing how to stay, knowing how to do and knowing how to know.

Inspired by the principle: people and engineers accompany the student to grow as a person, as being better people help to be better professionals. This humanist dimension is based on Don Bosco's Salesian preventive system, a fundamental element of the Salesian style, which in the EUSS is adapted through three pillars: familiarity, wit and sense, to develop transversal professional competencies, the know how to be in the *Engineering by Doing* style. The teaching staff of the EUSS with a true vocation for teaching accompanies the young people throughout their studies, not only as transmitters of knowledge, but as a constant reference in values and constructive formation that leaves no student behind.

The first pillar is familiarity, based on the fact that EUSS is a house and a space that teaches to develop respectful relationships and friendship. Being a family has a very positive impact on the growth as people and professionals in engineering. It offers a close and human treatment with constant availability and active presence of teachers. The teachers accompany the student, who is the authentic protagonist of the growth with the Plan of Tutorial and

Orientation Action (PATIO), and encourage the associative activity of the student, especially in the field of the Student Committee.

The second pillar is *ingenuity*, which is observed in being a school that prepares to be, to have values, attitudes and high and noble feelings, in order to reach the challenges of their future and that the members of this family become professionals that would know to interpret the environment that surrounds us and that would provide solutions working with ingenuity, and it is done through reading, dialogue, critical spirit, active listening and participation. The idea is to teach to think beyond a syllabus and content, guided by a commitment in the search for truth.

And the third pillar is *meaning*. It consists in the fact that the members of the academic community have a full life, a life with meaning, and therefore they are opened to the great riddles of the human person, and to the transcendence by developing the know-how. They introduce the practice of silence as a tool for personal growth and inner, seeking to promote self-knowledge and awaken spirituality.

The EUSS is part of an educational tradition that dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. The Salesian Professional Schools of Sarrià (EPSS) have created in the district of Sarrià, Barcelona, from 1884 the best professionals in graphic arts, tailoring, footwear and carpentry and, more recently, in areas such as mechanics, electronics and electricity, to mention just a few examples.

In 1992, the private foundation Rinaldi is constituted, and in February of 1994 the collaboration agreement with Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) is established, which will govern the academic life of the school as affiliated center. They begin to teach Industrial Technical Engineering in the specialty of Industrial Electronics. Then, Electricity and Mechanics specialties are added. In

2008, the Master in industrial business management started, the first Master's degree adapted to the EEES taught by EUSS.

In 2009, the EUSS transforms all its degrees of technical industrial engineering to engineering degree with the same professional attributions. In 2012, the *Engineering by doing* started with the sponsorship of the Rinaldi foundation after a deep reflection on the engineering studies in the current society, and supported by interviews with active professionals in the different industrial and production sector of Cataluña.

Finally, in 2017 the EUSS performed the accreditation qualifications process with the Agency for the Quality of the University System of Cataluña (AQU). The overall valuation was positive with the accreditation of the University degrees. It highlights a progress assessment towards excellence in the sections: coordination mechanisms, relevance of public information, effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system, and the system of tutoring and professional guidance, which has been considered by the AQU as a good practice of the Catalan university system. This process has been followed by all the centers of Cataluña, and once the results are made public, it can be observed that the EUSS has achieved the best valuation in all its degrees.

EUSS is a solid project with a well-defined and consolidated identity, with more than twenty years of existence, constituted by a community of 70 teachers, 15 PAS and 650 students, and in which 1 800 students have graduated; and that poses as future challenges to reinforce the own model of the EUSS in the university system where autonomy prioritizes the comprehensive training of students to achieve a full life and become transforming agents of the society; strengthen the relationship with the business world; keep training programs up to date; make the university project known to future students, in the company and in the society; and consolidate

the research activity so that it contributes with value to the mission of the EUSS.

Jabok - Academy of Social Education and Theology. Prague, Czech Republic

In 1939, the Salesians started in Czechoslovakia forming brothers in their philosophical and theological studies. But in the 50s they were forced to hide because of political persecution by the Communist Party and the police. Consequently, many Salesians studied philosophy and theology clandestinely since 1960. Some brothers studied at the seminar as diocesan candidates hiding their Salesian identity. In the 80s the theological formation of laymen began, even in clandestinity. The political change of 1989 was supposed to formalize this formation. The brothers studied until 1995 in Prague at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Carolina; from 1995 in the new Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in Ceske Budejovice. In 1993, the Academy of Social Education and JABOK theology was founded in Prague for the formation of lay professionals (educators, social workers) in the spirit of Don Bosco, and from 1993 to 2011 a Salesian community is directing the academy. But finally the post-novitiate was closed in Ceske Budejovice and only two brothers remained at the University of South Bohemia. The post-novices went on to study Philosophy in Zilina (Slovakia) and Theology in Turin.

In 2013-2018 there was a rethinking process about the future of the Jabok Academy. A first transformation project of the Academy was carried out in a private university and in 2013 it was presented to the Provincial Council, but it was not accepted due to the lack of financial guarantees. From 2015 to 2017, a provincial commission prepared a new project as a private university, but it was not accepted because of the lack of Salesians ready to be part of a Salesian university.

Currently the JABOK academy is integrated into a Salesian community of 3 Salesians along with three other Salesian members from other communities. The Salesian identity is carried out not only through the Salesians, but also through the laity.

The university framework of the Czech Republic implies that a private university institution does not receive any form of state support. For this reason, it is necessary to create a private university, a fact that poses a challenge for the financial support of the institution.

There are three teaching pillars at the Jabok Academy: Philosophy-Theology, Pedagogy and Social Work. Philosophy with the foundations of biblical, systematic and pastoral theology constitutes an anthropological basis for study. Social pedagogy offers a very important foundation for the pedagogical dimension of social work, which is the core of the study.

The development of professionals in the social work is very important for the future of the province. There are some specificities of the Salesian approach in the social context. Only well-trained professionals can develop as protagonists of this holistic model of social work. Youth centers are open spaces for believers and non-believers. The public offering is social work with young people and free time education. For the Salesian identity in the youth centers, a social and pedagogical formation is an essential condition for the future. For this specific training, an institution specialized in the research and teaching of social pedagogy for social work is needed.

San Juan Bosco Institute. Žilina, Slovakia

The origins started in the Salesian House in Žilina, which initiated its activity in the year 1936 and maintained until the “Dark Night” from 13 to 14 April 1950, when all the Salesians of Slovakia were arrested and detained in a concentration camp. Later, it was

reopened after the fall of communism in 1990, and in the academic year 1991-1992 a philosophical-pedagogical Institute was created for the formation of young Salesians (post-novitiate). In the following years it extended the admission to young university students from all over Slovakia to propose the educational system of Don Bosco, and to make known the Salesian charisma. Finally, the Provincial decided that all post-novices should also study the first stage of the social work program with children and young people.

The first intention was to create a program of Social Pedagogy, but because no university was found to be affiliated and the private University of Santa Isabel was ready to start collaborating, it was finally decided to create an affiliated office managed by the Salesians in Žilina. This occurred in 2006, time when a department of social work was established for children and young people. This program was chosen because social work in Slovakia focuses mainly on secondary and tertiary prevention, giving priority to social work with adults. There was a gap in social work with children and young people. Currently in Slovak society, many socio-pathological phenomena are affecting children and young people. These phenomena impose new needs and challenges and need to look for creative ways to prevent their negative impacts, helping young people find their way into difficult life situations. For this reason, San Juan Bosco Institute offers a unique social work program in Slovakia focused on children and young people, as a response to the situation of Slovak youth in the context of the development of democratic society. A specific characteristic of the Institute is a broad concept of primary prevention of the child and the young population.

In September 2014, two more programs were incorporated from the University of Santa Isabel: Social Work with a general approach and Nursing Sciences. This has constituted an academic offer that reaches three degrees in three years and three masters in five years, and has caused a great increment in the students.

The number of teachers of the Salesian family has increased, and subjects have been taught with clear Salesian and Christian content in general.

The areas where graduates can work are mainly in the education field: youth centers, foster homes, diagnostic centers, rehabilitation and correction services, homeless children and youth, social work schools, recreation centers for children and young people, prisons and accompaniment when they are free, in the Gypsy community, among others. They can also work in crisis centers, nursing homes, workplaces with addicts, unemployed, homeless, immigrants, ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged children and their families, nursing homes, assisted homes for families and children at all government levels in care centers.

Training in social work for children and young people creates the conditions for responding to the needs of today's society. In addition to the theoretical and professional courses carried out in various specialized institutions (free time centers for children and young people, Salesian oratories, juvenile homes, children's residences, diagnostic centers, centers of rehabilitation and prisons, first reception centers, etc.), a key component of student training is the direct experience mediation of the Salesian preventive system through animation and socio-psychological training (self-knowledge, communication, counseling, supervision, etc.) and the Salesian education system, through which students, under the guidance of expert tutors acquire basic skills.

The center is currently facing a rethinking of its orientation, motivated by a significant reduction in the amount of students, and is threatening the main strategic option, i.e., the loss of the social work program for young people. Overcoming this situation is the most important challenge, and the decrease in Slovakia's interest in Social Work is not conducive to finding new ways to develop the Salesian mission of higher education in Žilina.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the European IUS face very important challenges in their future. A key issue in this future is the development of the academic community in a human, Christian and Salesian point of view; also, to ensure the charismatic identity of the staff and their care through the processes of selection, training and professional development and accompaniment, which have been and will continue being a strategic line.

The Salesian presence in the university lies on its construction approach of university pastoral projects, in generating spaces and times where the Salesian Charism can be transmitted among young people. This challenge must be combined with the improvement of the quality university offer, elaborating proposals that are diversified, attractive and sustainable at the educational and scientific and professional level.

The privileged recipient is the young man. The commitment is to enable him to face the challenges that society and the world offer. This is not an obstacle to mark a consolidation horizon of the research activity taking into account the double will of the Salesian Congregation to offer young people a comprehensive training service: scientific, human and Christian; but also to carry out rigorous research.² It is decisive to weave collaboration and exchange relationships with other universities through educational and scientific projects, and offer promotion and growth alternatives for young people, relations with the world and with the society must be strengthened. Therefore, the promotion of the “third mission” of the University through initiatives in the territory is fundamental. IUS must aspire to be training references that contribute to strengthen the organic projects.

2 Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS), Direzione generale Opere Don Bosco.

Nevertheless, in order to define a hopeful future for Salesian presences in higher education, it must not be forgotten the need to guarantee sustainability at the economic level and in the identity of European IUS, which is a particularly critical aspect of IUS that are in a more initial phase.

The European IUS are aware that the presence in the field of Higher Education responds to the mission of the Salesian congregation,³ reason for which the academic community is especially cared, and an educational-pastoral proposal is addressed to all its members and it is endowed with an institutional project.

3 Reg. 13 Cfr. CG26, N. 122 “The school, the professional centers and the institutions of higher education promote the integral development of the young person by means of the assimilation and critical elaboration of the culture and through the education in the faith, with a view to the Christian transformation society”.

Salesian Institutions of Higher Education in Oceania context

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Historical Background: Reasons why Salesians have entered higher education in PNG (Papua New Guinea)

As of 2018, Don Bosco Technological Institute (DBTI) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea is the only official IUS (Salesian Institutions of Higher Education) member among educational institutions in Oceania. For this reason, the present article focuses on the background, development, situation and future of DBTI. Similar to the development of higher education in the whole Salesian congregation, the growth of higher education within the Salesian apostolate in Papua New Guinea is a late development.

The Salesians arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1980 in response to the insistent invitation of the Bishop of Kerema, the late Archbishop Virgil Kopas, MSC. It took 19 years for the Salesians to open the first tertiary institution in the country; and in the meantime, the Salesians would establish educational presences, most of which in high schools, and which would eventually develop into secondary schools. The Salesian missionaries opened four high schools during this period: Don Bosco High School in Araimiri, Gulf Province in 1980; Don Bosco Technical School in Gabutu, Port Moresby in 1985; Vunabosco Agro-Technical School in Kokopo, East New Britain Province in 1990; and Don Bosco Technical High

School in Vanimo, West Sepik Province in 1995. In 1996, the Salesians established Don Bosco Kumgi in Simbu Province as a vocational training centre (Marvilla, 2017, pp. 1-3).

Although officially opened only in 1999, the first Salesian college in PNG was conceived much earlier, because the idea of starting a higher education institution run by Salesians in PNG most probably started as early as 1987, when Fr. Francesco Panfilo, who was the Salesian Provincial of the Philippine Province until 1993, received such request from some bishops in PNG (Panfilo, Messenger chat with Archbishop Panfilo, 2018). At that time, the Salesian presences in Papua New Guinea were still directly under the Salesian Philippine Province; besides Bishop Virgil Kopas of Kerema, who was instrumental in bringing the Salesians in PNG, Archbishop William Joseph Kurtz SVD, then Bishop of Kundiawa and Bishop in-charge of Education, were particularly insistent that “the Salesians start a school to train teachers for vocational and technical schools, but ”these insistent requests were always conveyed orally and not in the written forms”. The first official written request to start an institute for training of technical instructors in PNG was drafted during the 3rd Mini Chapter of the PNG Salesian Delegation, held in Araimiri on January 14-15, 1992. Under the heading of Education and Culture, the Assembly of Confreres made this proposal: “To aim a setting up a training centre for technical instructors to answer the needs of the country and its localization directives” (Panfilo, 2015, p. 12).

The Provincial Council in Manila received these proposals from PNG and approved them, soon after the Provincial in the Philippines, Fr. Panfilo, who was in contact with Archbishop Peter Kurongku of Port Moresby, notified the Salesians in PNG that the Archbishop of Port Moresby has offered the Salesians 13 hectares of land at East Boroko in Port Moresby as the site for a possible training centre for instructors. The Archbishop, desiring to justify befo-

re the government the acquisition of so much land, was expecting the Salesians to set up something as soon as possible on the East Boroko site. The Provincial Council in Manila accepted this land offer from the Archbishop; however, the Council had to consider two other important issues.

The Council had recently decided to accept the land in Kumgi, offered by the then Bishop William Kurtz of Kundiawa to build a vocational training centre, and has prioritized this as the first in line for future presences in PNG. Secondly, there was the long-standing problem of lack of Salesian personnel for PNG, making it difficult to open new Salesian presences both in Kundiawa and in Port Moresby. A solution to this seemingly impasse came through the Caritas Sisters, who wanted to set up a technical school for girls also in the nation's capital; the Salesians in PNG have initially suggested the diocesan land in front of the Don Bosco Technical School at Gabutu to be entrusted to the Caritas Sisters, but the Provincial at Manila, Fr. Panfilo proposed that the Gabutu land offered to the Caritas Sisters be used instead to set up the training centre for instructors, while a portion of the East Boroko land be used for the girls' school requested by the Caritas Sisters. In this way, the East Boroko land might be utilized as soon as possible, while the Gabutu diocesan land would be maximized as a future training centre for instructors (Ibid.).

The Caritas Sisters established the Caritas Technical School for girls at East Boroko, while plans for the training centre for instructors shifted from the Gabutu diocesan land to the other portions of the land at East Boroko alongside the Caritas school (Ibid.).

In 1994, the Salesian presences in Papua New Guinea were constituted as a Salesian Delegation of the Philippine North Province with Fr. Valeriano Barbero as the first Superior Delegation. While Fr. Panfilo paved the way for the first Salesian higher education institute in the Pacific, it was Fr. Barbero who can be credited as the founder of the Don Bosco Technological Institute.

In the portion of land given to the Salesians at East Boroko, Fr. Barbero set up first in 1995 the Delegation House as the headquarters of the budding Salesian circumscription, as well as the Savio Haus aspirantate to provide local vocations to the delegation. In 1996, Fr. Barbero began the first phase of the construction of facilities and workshops for the envisioned training centre for instructors with enormous assistance from the European Union and other European funding agencies (Ibid). The institute was originally named the Don Bosco Technical Teachers' College (DBTI, 2017). Nineteen years have passed after the opening of the first Salesian presence in PNG and twelve years after conceiving about an institution for technical instructors, the Salesian Delegation of Papua New Guinea officially opened its first higher education institution in 1999, offering a 4-year degree course, which was later to be called Bachelor of Education – Technical. The pioneer group of Don Bosco Technological Institute, constituted by 75 young men, mostly new 12 graduates from various secondary schools around the country, took up degree programs with specializations in Electrical Technology, Electronics Technology, Maintenance Fitting and Machining Technology and Technical Drawing Technology. The following year, the institute introduced two more degree programs in Computer Technology and Motor Vehicle Technology (Ibid).

Development of Salesian Higher Education in PNG: motivations for maintaining their presence

The opening of DBTI as the first institution in PNG, offering both teaching qualifications at secondary level and technical competencies in various trade areas, was like a seed that was planted and that grew and blossomed into numerous fruits for the country, church and the Salesian congregation. Five reasons may be advanced for this progressive growth and development in DBTI, as well as for the Salesians' continued presence in higher education in this part of the Pacific.

Continued and increasing demand for qualified technical instructors

The teaching of vocational and technical skills started early in Papua New Guinea thanks to the Catholic missionaries. Archbishop Alain de Boismenu, bishop of Yule Island from 1900 – 1945 and who was considered as the great pioneer of church and education in PNG, envisioned education as a way to prepare children not only for literacy and numeracy, but more importantly, for the world of work. The Australian Dictionary of Biography credits him the flourishing of primary and technical education, such that “pupils increased from 800 in 1898 to 7,000 in 1945” (Jennings, 2015, p. 29).

Fr. Paul Jennings MSC, who held significant responsibilities in Catholic education, shares that up to the early 1970’s in parts of PNG where the missionaries served, there were many people engaged in technical and vocational occupations. The long-time missionary priest in PNG adds “Many villages had a drum oven for baking bread and some young women made it a condition of marriage that their husband-to-be could build them a drum oven” (Ibid).

Once PNG got its independence in 1975, there was a big shift in the focus of education to a more academic orientation. More people were educated for government public service, medicine, law and other professions, rather than for technical fields, “vocational and technical education was seen as the least important area of education in terms of financial support, planning, resource allocation, teacher education” (Jennings, 2015, p. 29).

During those years, the education process became highly selective, resulting in the dropping out of many students after Grade 6, Grade 8 and Grade 10. To cater to the large number of “non-selected” students, the Catholic Church developed many vocational schools, which flourished in the 1980’s and 1990’s (Jennings, 2015, p. 29).

After 2010, the PNG government realized the importance of technical education and training, especially for the economic progress and modernization of the nation. The PNG Vision 2050 drafted in 2011 highlighted the need for a skilled workforce in order to implement the nation's vision objectives. In particular, PNG Vision 2050 asserted that "skills development and lack of employment opportunities have been setbacks to human resource development; an affordable and quality education can assist in knowledge and skills development and augment our productive human resource" (National Strategic Plan Taskforce, 2011).

In order to implement the goals of PNG Vision 2050 regarding skills development and training, the Education Department encouraged and supported vocational, technical and secondary technical schools. Part of the educational aims of the government was to set up vocational schools in all districts, technical colleges in all provinces and a polytechnic in each of its four regions. In order to achieve this aim, PNG needs to produce a huge supply of qualified and competent technical instructors; this is an area, where DBTI has assisted the government in nation building since 2001 by producing graduates, who are qualified teachers and skilled technicians.

Affiliation agreements with DWU

Merely giving access to students at tertiary level is not sufficient for DBTI to help drive the nation's progress in the future. These students need to receive quality knowledge and competitive skills to enable them to survive and be engaged in the tough world of work and modern living. DBTI needs to form in these students as well as in all educators a drive for excellence, reason for which the Salesians continue to maintain and develop DBTI. In the process, DBTI, like other educational institutions, abides by the quality standards set by the government, where DBTI is categorized as a permitted technical institution; i.e., a private institution permitted

by the government to run its programs following approved standards. For DBTI to offer degree and diploma programs, the government requires it to be accredited with a university or a recognized higher education institution; thus, DBTI, needs to pursue its quest for excellence by affiliating with an existing university, and at that time, the best university for DBTI to affiliate with is the Divine Word University (DWU), the only Catholic university in PNG.

DBTI entered into an official affiliation agreement with the Divine Word University in Madang, PNG on 1 August 2003. This was followed by two other successful affiliation renewals in 2006 and 2011, and the last affiliation agreement would expire on 25th November 2016. During this entire period of more than thirteen years of affiliation agreement with DWU, DBTI learned and benefited much from its mentoring university especially in two aspects: 1) the strengthening of academic standards, in particular through the upgrading of the curriculum spelt out in detail through Program Specification Documents for all its program, and 2) the successful granting of Higher Education Contribution Assistance Scheme (HE-CAS) from the government for DBTI. DBTI would eventually discontinue this affiliation agreement with DWU, while continuing to develop quality and excellence as a higher education institution through some other partnership agreement.

Besides responding to the continuing need of technical training and education, as well as the drive for quality and excellence, other factors collaborated in pushing the Salesians of PNG to maintain and improve its presence in higher education in the country. Three factors are cited which refer to developments in the government, the congregation and the church.

Achievements with the Department of Higher Education Research Science and Technology

The Office of Higher Education was established in Papua New Guinea in the late 1970's, but more as a scholarship clearing

house that selected high school graduates into available higher education institutions with varying forms of scholarship. In the 1990's the office evolved into a Higher Education Sector, giving rise to the Commission of Higher Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. At this time, a National Higher Education Plan I, called the "White Paper" was drafted; subsequently, the National Higher Education Plan II followed (2000-2010) (Karani, 2015).

In 2009, the Commission for Higher Education developed the first PNG National Qualifications Framework, based mainly on the Australian Qualification Framework. However, this was approved only by the National Executive Council for the implementation in all educational institutions in PNG in 2012 (National Higher and Technical Education Board, 2017).

In October 2014, a new Higher Education (General Provisions) Act (HEGPA) was legislated. This act abolished the Office of Higher Education and the Commission of Higher Education and established the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) as the lead government agency implementing decisions on higher education under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (Ibid.) Soon after, as mandated by the Higher Education Act, DHERST produced the National Higher and Technical Education Plan (NHTEP) 2015-2024, as "a home-grown sector-wide plan that maps the best ways forward over the next ten years for the development of PNG's higher and technical education" (DHERST, 2015). With the vision "to provide higher skills, knowledge and innovation needed for PNG's sustainable development," NHTEP developed "a comprehensive and coordinated set of nine priority goal areas and clear guidelines on proposed action for all stakeholders" (DHERST, 2015), and many of these priority goal areas have significant value for DBTI in terms of future development, and perhaps the most important of these areas is the seventh priority goal area on Technical Education

aiming to ensure TVET colleges provided with sufficient targeted support to deliver well-organized and quality post-secondary technical education in accordance with PNG's future needs (DHERST, 2015, p. 38).

During the 1st DBTI Stakeholders' Conference held in July 2015, John Karani, representing DHERST in the Conference, expressed that "as a Higher Education Institution, which is a key stakeholder for the Higher and Technical Education sector, DBTI has a role to play in realizing NHTEP 2015-2024" (Karani, 2015). During the Conference, Karani offered 18 strategies where DBTI can partner with the government in realizing the NHTEP goals; and 12 of these strategies refer to proposals where DBTI can participate as a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and as a stakeholder in the Higher and Technical Education (H&TE) sector of the government; 6 of the strategies refer directly to DBTI as a HEI; these are the following: 1) encourage participation in the sector by women, diverse cultural groups, those living with disability, and those from remote areas, 2) ensure gender and diverse cultural perspectives are integrated in the curriculum, 3) encourage engagement of local industry with regard to program delivery, 4) ensure that the requirements and issues of TVET colleges have an appropriate audience, 5) support the development of an international dimension into H&TE programs, 6) ensure academic programs are recognized internationally (Karani, 2015).

All these proposed strategies challenge DBTI to further develop and give better service to the youth and the nation.

Achievements with the Salesian Congregation

DBTI is not only a Higher Education Institution, but also a Salesian institution. The Salesian character of DBTI gives its specific difference in the way it runs its educational programs, using a style of governance and animation inspired by the teachings and

examples of St. John Bosco. In this aspect, DBTI joins other similar institutions around the world under the association of Salesian Institutions of Higher Education, which was originally named in Italian as “Institutioni Universitarie Salesiane,” from where the current acronym “IUS” has been derived. DBTI became a member of IUS only in 2012, when the acting Principal, Emmanuel Guillermo, represented the institution in the VI IUS General Assembly in Rome, and that Assembly drafted a second policy document, entitled *Policies for the Salesian Presence in Higher Education, 2012–2016*. This document contributed in the deepening and development of the Salesian character of DBTI as a member of the IUS. In particular, the IUS document helped DBTI in two ways. 1) It clearly enumerated the peculiar Salesian characteristics that make up the “Identity of Salesian Institutions for Higher Education” and 2) It strengthened DBTI in its intent to form productive citizens within the bounds of the cultural context (IUS, 2012). Beside the Policies, the 6th IUS General Assembly also drafted the IUS Common Program 4, which for the first time included the holding of continental conferences and the creation of a Board of Directors coming from coordinators of the continental conferences. At that time, DBTI belonged to the Asia continental group.

In between the IUS general assemblies, the Salesian Congregation gave new emphasis to its institutions of higher education through the publication of the Salesian Youth Ministry Frame of Reference (SYMFOR) in 2014 by the Youth Ministry Department. This document officially affirmed and underlined that the presence of Salesians in higher education is part of the mission of the Salesian congregation (SDB Youth Ministry Department, 2014, p. 213), and already part of the Youth Ministry Department from 2002, the IUS solidified its place in Youth Ministry Department as a valid and important Salesian apostolate. Quoting the amended Article 13 of the Regulations of the Salesian Congregation, the document states

The school, vocational training centers and institutions of higher education promote the integral development of the young through the assimilation and critical revision of the culture and education of the faith in the Christian transformation of society (SDB Youth Ministry Department, 2014, p. 213).

A unique contribution of the SYMFoR for DBTI as well as other IUS members is the further elaboration of the “Institutional Project” as “a true constitutional charter that guides the life of the whole institute” (Ibid., p. 218). Through the Institutional Project, DBTI hopes to “carry out research, coordinate teaching, and disseminate knowledge and culture” in a way that “addresses the needs of the local situation” and applies and gives shape to its Salesian Identity (p. 217).

Achievements with the Catholic Church

Besides being a tertiary educational and technical institution, DBTI is also a Catholic institution, and seeking to be faithful to the magisterium of the Catholic Church, DBTI has benefited much from Church documents pertaining to higher education, in particular, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990). More recently, the church has written a document closer to home, i.e., *Ecclesia in Oceania* (2001). Coming after the Synod of Bishops for Oceania in 1998, this document not only highlights the essential characteristics included in the identity of a Catholic school (art. 33), but also has an important message for DBTI as a Catholic tertiary institution. Acknowledging that “tertiary education is in its early stages in Oceania,” the document indicates

The identity and success of Catholic education is linked inseparably to the witness of life given by teaching staff ... School staff who truly live their faith will be agents of a new evangelization in creating a positive climate for the Christian faith to grow and in spiritually nourishing the students entrusted to their care; they will be especially effective when they are active practising

Catholics, committed to their parish community and loyal to the Church and her teaching (John Paul II, 2001).

During the 2015 DBTI Stakeholders' Conference, Archbishop Francesco Panfilo cited this statement from *Ecclesia in Oceania* and made this helpful comment and advice:

It is very obvious, from the above statements, that what makes a tertiary institution that is truly Catholic and successful are not only the highest standards of academic research and teachings, but above all its capacity to be a witnessing community; in other word: a family of witnesses. Therefore, if DBTI wants to be a successful Catholic tertiary institution in the years to come, it should aim at the highest standards of academic and technical research and teachings, but above all it should strive to preserve "the family spirit" between students and staff and among students and staff members (Panfilo, 2015, p. 15).

Current situation

This third section refers to developments in DBTI as a Salesian Higher Education Institution from the end of 2014 until the present. It also includes other recent documents in the Catholic Church among the Salesians, and from the government's higher education department.

Membership in an international federation of Catholic Universities (FIUC)

In today's globalized world, it is important for educational institutions to establish linkages with various agencies to be up-to-date in their educational service for the over-all development of their students. This is true even among Catholic institutions such as DBTI, which seek to spread the Gospel of Christ in a relevant way in today's society. For this reason, DBTI was not satisfied merely with being a member of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education

(IUS), but sought other coordinating bodies such as the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). The possibility of membership into such a federation was caused by the influence of a Salesian priest, Fr. Barnabe De Souza, who continues to serve as Deputy Secretary General of the federation. Fr. Ariel Macatangay, DBTI Principal from 2014 – 2016, applied on behalf of DBTI to be an IFCU affiliate member in September 2014. The requested approval was not long in coming, and by the following month, October 2014, the IFCU, through the General Secretary, Prof. Msgr. Guy-Real Thivierge, officially announced DBTI as an IFCU affiliate, being an Associate classified under Category A, referring to institutions having less than 1 000 students. With that membership, DBTI could participate in activities organized by IFCU and would receive weekly e-mail communications, as they paid the yearly membership fee dues.

Through this affiliate membership with IFCU, DBTI was represented by Fr. Macatangay, Principal, in the 25th IFCU General Assembly, with the theme “Times Change, Values Endure,” on September 2015. Held in the Australian Catholic University (ACU) in Melbourne, this Assembly helped to boost DBTI’s status as a higher education institution, being the only institution beside ACU and Notre Dame University to represent Oceania in the Assembly.

Engaging with stakeholders for the DBTI’s future

According to this author, the most significant recent development for DBTI is the holding of the 1st DBTI Stakeholders’ Conference on 9-11 July 2015, aimed at giving strategic directions for DBTI to take in the future; the theme of the Conference was “Thinking Together for Future Directions.” The Conference managed to assemble 39 participants for three days, and was composed of Salesians from PNG and abroad, and representatives from PNG Catholic Church and government and educational agencies from

universities, industries, alumni, other institutions and from among the DBTI staff.

Fr. Macatangay, Conference Chairman, sent invitations to IUS and IFCU to send their own representative for the Conference. Although the two educational bodies were not able to send key officers from their organizations, it was arranged that Fr. George Thadathil SDB, Principal of Salesian College, Sonada in India, which was also a member of both the IUS and the IFCU, would represent the two bodies for the DBTI Stakeholders' Conference. The Chairman also invited the Vice Chancellors of the University of Papua New Guinea and of the University of Technology, the latter initially expressed willingness to attend, but only the Vice President of Divine Word University managed to represent universities of PNG in the Conference.

The Conference was effectively moderated by Fr. Mario Baclig SDB, from the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), South Philippine Province. Fr. Peter Baquero SDB, the SDB Superior for the Delegation of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, as well as the DBTI President, gave the opening address, while Hon. Malachi Tabar, the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology gave the key-note address. A total of 16 speakers presented their papers at the Conference, notable among them were: Archbishop Francesco Panfilo SDB, then Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG/SI Bishop Deputy for Education, Fr. Paul Jennings, PNG National Catholic Education Board Chairman, Fr. Onofre Inocencio SDB, SDB Philippine North Province In-charge of Schools and Training Centers, Mr. John Karani, Executive Strategic Division Manager at DHERST, Mr. Samson Wangihomie, Commissioner of the PNG Teaching Service Commission, Mr. Geoffrey Kinsella, Director of the PNG National Training Council, Dr. Cecilia Nembou, DWU Vice-President, and Mr. Simon Kenehe, Former Chairman of the PNG Office of Higher Education. Unique among the presenters were DBTI's own alumni, who have then become successful in various fields,

and who added a flavor of credibility to the Conference. These were Mr. Jeremy Goro, Lecturer at University of Goroka, Mr. Godfrey Morisa, CEO of his own thriving privately-owned company, GMT Automation, and Mr. Alex Tausem, Training Coordinator at Newcrest Mining. These speakers presented their papers for the first two days of the conference, with possibilities for discussions and open forum; the third and last day was dedicated for discussions on possible future scenarios for DBTI and finally for resolutions and recommendations.

DBTI's Future Directions can be summarized into 5 statements: 1) DBTI's preferred clientele continues to come from both poor and rich students, 2) The preferred graduates envisioned for DBTI are a mix of "Technicians, Technology Instructors, Engineers, Religion Teachers", 3) In 2050, the type of higher education institution DBTI is envisioned to be either an Institute of Technology (17 votes) or a University (8 votes), 4) In 2050, the scope of influence of DBTI is the Pacific Region, 5) In 2050, the outstanding feature of DBTI is to be a "Benchmark of Public-Private Partnership" (17 votes) or "A Hub of Hubs for other TVET Institutions" (10 votes) (DBTI, 2015, pp. 80-81).

The Conference participants agreed on 3 resolutions: 1) That representatives of the stakeholders revisit and revise the DBTI Vision-Mission Statement within this year 2015. 2) That representatives of the 1st DBTI Stakeholders' Conference monitor and record the implementation of these resolutions within the period of 2015-2016. 3) That participants of the 1st DBTI Stakeholders' Conference treasure and share the discoveries, feelings, and recommendations of this common experience (DBTI, 2015, pp. 82, 90).

Obviously, the most significant and practical among these resolutions was the first one, pertaining to a new Vision Mission for DBTI. However, on this resolution the Conference participants voted on 13 recommendations that would help achieve the upda-

ted Vision Mission, recommendations that were based on the 13 Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation as an Institute of Higher Education given by DHERST to DBTI.

The main outputs of the Stakeholders' Conference, which include the directions, resolutions and recommendations for the future of DBTI, went through a series of discussions and approvals at various levels. They were discussed and endorsed by the Board of Studies in August 2015; and in the same month, the DBTI Council made a final endorsement and the DBTI Governing Board gave its approval to the Conference outputs. Then at the beginning of September 2015, the Delegation Council of the Salesians of PNG/SI gave its final approval to the Conference Directions, Resolutions and Recommendations.

With the final approval of the Stakeholders' Conference main proceedings, it continued the implementation of resolutions and recommendations. Soon after, the 13 recommendations of the Conference were acted on through 13 DBTI staff members, who served as point persons for the implementation of each recommendation. At the same time, plans were made for the process of Re-envisioning DBTI's Vision Mission by September 2015.

On October 10, 2015, the DBTI Educative Pastoral Community (EPC) held a whole day meeting for the Re-envisioning of DBTI's vision-mission at Bluff Inn, 17 Mile, Port Moresby. The EPC was made up of representatives from the administration, staff students and graduates of DBTI, as well as parents of students. The original plan was to make a first draft of the revised vision-mission, however, the Bluff Inn meeting managed only to propose 10 different proposals for a revised Vision for DBTI. The process of re-envisioning was continued with a series of meetings involving the DBTI administration and staff with the participation of student representatives. In November, a final proposal was made by the DBTI staff, which was endorsed by the DBTI Council and finally approved by

the DBTI Governing Board on November 16, 2015. This is how the Vision-Mission is expressed:

Vision

We, a Don Bosco community in a Catholic institute of higher learning, are passionate about the young becoming committed and highly qualified in integral education and innovative technology.

Mission

Incarnating the Preventive System of Don Bosco, we accompany each other, specially the marginalized youth, in a family atmosphere of life-long learning and through an open network of relationships to be servant leaders for social transformation.

Independence of the “Divine Word University”

One year before the expiration of its last affiliation agreement with DWU on 25th November 2016, DBTI decided not to renew its affiliation with the university. Instead, DBTI applied for institutional and program accreditation directly under the Department of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (DHERST) in accordance with the new Higher Education General Provisions Act (HEGPA) of PNG. DHERST granted DBTI its official yet provisional approval as an institution of higher education on 25th November 2016, the last day of DBTI’s affiliation status under DWU. DBTI has continued to work on official comments and observations given by DHERST to enable it to attain full registration as a higher education institution with approved programs.

The decision of DBTI to discontinue its affiliation agreement with DWU was already being expressed in some sectors both within and outside DBTI, especially during the last affiliation re-

newal. However, the impetus of severing ties with the Catholic university came strongly during the DBTI Stakeholders' Conference, in which DWU's Vice President, Dr. Cecilia Nembou presented a paper entitled "DWU and DBTI Partnership into the Future." There, Dr. Nembou expressed the University's desire of continuing its partnership with DBTI through the new Model 2 Affiliation Partnership, whereby

DWU would be willing to coach/mentor an affiliated institution which seeks accreditation of academic or professional development programs and benchmarking for quality assurance practice consistent with the thirteen standards set by DHERST; this period could be for up to ten years (Nembou, 2015).

On the other hand, DWU's second highest ranking official also emphasized the "Implications of DBTI's Severance from DWU", in which she warned DBTI and Conference participants that if DBTI proceeds to sever ties with DWU, "effective January 2017, DWU will not accredit and give awards to programs offered by DBTI," stressing that "DBTI will not have the legal basis to offer degree programs (Bachelor of Education – Technical in five technologies)" (Nembou, 2015). Thus, in the mind of DWU, the only way that DBTI could offer degree programs in its own right was by being a university; and the best way of reaching this goal was by its continual affiliation with DWU. Some Conference participants and DBTI officials thought that this was the only option. Others, however, felt that there must be other options for DBTI to continue as a higher education institution besides affiliating with DWU. Future events will favor the latter alternative.

DBTI seriously considered DWU's new Model 2 affiliation proposal through the dialogue between Dr. Nembou and DBTI Principal, as well as through discussions in various levels of DBTI meetings. There was a growing consensus among DBTI officials and many of its stakeholders that the new affiliation partnership offered

by DWU would not be for the best interest of DBTI. This can be summarized into two main reasons:

1) Thanks to the affiliation guidance and mentoring offered by DWU, DBTI developed norms, structures and practices to maintain quality academic standards. Towards the end of 2015, a few months after the Stakeholders' Conference and after 12 years of being under a Catholic university, DBTI believed that it was now ready to move forward on its own. DBTI could continue seeking assistance and guidance from other educational and government institutions willing to do so, but there was no need to enter into another term of five to ten years under DWU in order to maintain academic standards and chart its own future. Besides, the new Model 2 affiliation partnership did not seem to consider the past 12 years of 3 successive affiliation agreements DBTI made with DWU.

2) One of the main directions of the Stakeholders' Conference for DBTI's future was to improve its technology offerings to such a point that DBTI can also offer engineering courses as an Institute of Technology. Before aiming to be a university, this was the agreed intermediate goal according to DBTI and to most of its stakeholders. DBTI believed that it could achieve this goal by seeking professional partnership with other technological institutes both here and abroad, rather than by the Model 2 affiliation offered by DWU.

If DBTI were not to renew its affiliation agreement with DWU, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement, it must make an official notice letter to the University of this intention by November 25, 2015, a year before the last day of the current affiliation agreement, and what followed were a series of meetings with relevant stakeholders and meetings of DBTI's executive bodies to make a definitive decision on the matter of DBTI's affiliation with DWU.

On November 16, 2015, the DBTI Governing Board, upon the endorsement of the DBTI Council, decided to terminate its affilia-

tion agreement with DWU through an official letter to be submitted to DWU not later than 25 November 2015. The Board also decided to seek registration and programs accreditation under DHERST as soon as possible, starting with an official Expression of Interest for registration with DHERST.

The Chairman of DBTI's Governing Board, Fr. Peter Baquero SDB sent the letter to DWU on November 20, 2015. On November 25, Fr. Jan Czuba, President of DWU sent an official response to DBTI, regretting the decision made by DBTI to discontinue its affiliation with DWU, and yet respecting his decision.

Starting the registration and accreditation with DHERST

At the beginning of 2016, DBTI hired Dr. Catherin Nongkas for a full-time position of Strategic Partnerships and Quality Assurance Officer, and Br. Alfred Tivinarlik for a part-time position as Higher Education Consultant. These two were long-time academic personnel in PNG's higher education institutions, with both of them last serving at DWU. They would offer their valuable experiences and contributions, among others, to help facilitate DBTI's registration and accreditation with DHERST.

In order to involve as many as possible in the process of registration and accreditation, the DBTI Principal, Fr. Macatangay with the help of Dr. Catherine and Br. Tivinarlik, organized a whole-day meeting with Salesians, staff, students, alumni and parents again at Bluff Inn on March 12, 2016. The meeting had 4 main agenda: 1) Explanation of the detailed steps in the process of institutional registration and programs accreditation of DBTI with DHERST (Fr. Macatangay), 2) Requirements for registration and accreditation presented in the form of check-list (Dr. Nongkas), 3) Proposal for new Bachelor of Technology programs (Fr. Macatangay), and 4) Concept Paper for a new Master's program (H. Tivinarlik).

The first two agenda were the more urgent ones in view of registering with DHERST as soon as possible. Since DBTI's affiliation agreement ends on November 2016, it needs DHERST approval for DBTI to continue taking in new students at the start of 2017 for all its programs. After sending an Expression of Interest and receiving a response from DHERST, DBTI would need to register first as a higher education institution. After that, DBTI would submit requirements for accreditation of its programs, and regarding accreditation of programs with DHERST, DBTI had two options: the usual accreditation as a higher education institution under DHERST or accreditation as a self-accrediting authority, and when presented to the Bluff Inn Assembly, all the groups were in favor of seeking accreditation as a self-accrediting authority.

The third and fourth agenda were introduced as possibilities for DBTI as it undergoes the process of registration and accreditation with DHERST. Since DBTI would submit proposals for all its existing programs to DHERST, DBTI might as well take the opportunity to introduce new programs that may be integrated in the process of registration and accreditation.

The main reason for the Principal to propose a Bachelor of Technology (BTech) program was to provide an alternative option to the existing Bachelor of Education – Technical (BEd-Tech) program already offered at DBTI. It was observed that many students who enrolled at DBTI preferred to take a degree in a technical course rather than an education degree, but were restricted in their choice because BEd-Tech was the only offered degree program. The original intention of the BTech program was to provide individuals who were practically oriented with strong technical expertise combined with other professional skills to enable them to become effective industrial supervisors, entrepreneurs or managers. The process of developing the program would make use of the existing technical diploma programs already being offered at

DBTI. The BTech program was envisioned also to further develop into bachelor degrees in engineering, thus, starting the realization of one of the future directions expressed and approved at the DBTI Stakeholders' Conference.

The participants at the Bluff Inn Meeting received the proposal warmly but with caution. Although it generated much interest among the students, some groups expressed the need of making more research on the actual needs of the industry and the possible integration of trade testing into the curriculum. Others raised the concern of more urgent matters such as registration and accreditation with DHERST, and of the financial burdens that a new program would bring in terms of personnel, learning resources and infrastructure, and no final recommendations were made by the assembly regarding the proposals for new BTech program and new Master program. The assembly wanted to focus more their attention and efforts on applying to DHERST for registration and accreditation. However, future events would favor the adoption of the new technical degree programs in the near future.

DBTI initiatives- and technical and professional formation and training

One of the Future Directions proposed for DBTI at the Stakeholders' Conference was for DBTI to become a "Hub of hubs for other TVET institutions." This idea was fueled by the talk of Peter Cradock, representative for the Voluntary Service Overseas, an international volunteer organization also present in PNG. Cradock has done extensive teaching and training in TVET institutions in England and in PNG, and has visited some Don Bosco centers in the country and was convinced that DBTI can assume a leading role in assisting TVET institutions especially to help perform PNG Vision 2050 in terms of technical training for the envisioned "educated, healthy appropriately skilled, and honest work force" (National Strategic Plan Taskforce, 2011).

Even before the Stakeholders' Conference, DBTI has already started to promote TVET through the offering of short courses both for the marginalized sectors of the locality and for industrial workers in need of further training. From May to July of 2015, DBTI organized 8-week short courses in Electrical and Motor Vehicle Technologies for 11 poor youths from the nearby Vada-vada settlement and City Mission, a juvenile home at the city's outskirts. From September to November 2015, another 8-week course was organized, this time for 7 national workers from Exxon Mobil LNG, who needed to upgrade their knowledge and skills in Electrical technology in order to take the PNG electrical licensing examination. These initiatives, although putting heavier loads on some DBTI instructors, served as relevant extension services of DBTI for the locality as well as concrete expression of the DBTI community's sharing in St. John Bosco's passion for the poor and working youths; it is important to mention that these initiatives continued to be organized in the succeeding years.

Another platform for DBTI to share and develop TVET resources was through the existing network of Don Bosco schools in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, most of which have TVET centers. From 2015 to 2016, the DBTI Principal, Fr. Macatangay, was also nominated by the Salesian superior to be the Coordinator for Don Bosco schools in the Salesian Delegation of PNG/SI. A longstanding need of these schools was to unify the different curricula and learning modules used in the technical trades of different schools, and align them with the national standards set forth by the Papua New Guinea National Qualifications Framework; thus, the main collaborative initiative for Don Bosco schools for 2015 was geared towards responding to this need. The group of Principals from different Don Bosco schools in PNG/SI came up with this common objective: to produce student textbooks and teachers' guide for Electrical and Automotive modules at National Certificate 1 & 2 levels through the cooperation of Don Bosco instructors and others

from technical colleges and industries, in order to have standard instructional materials in all Don Bosco schools in PNG/SI and as a contribution to TVET in PNG. The venue for this Educational Resource Workshop was at DBTI and it took place on November 30 to December 11, 2015.

In preparation for the Workshop, the DBTI Principal and some technology staff met with the technical team of Mrs. Rossa Apelis, Director the PNG government's Curriculum Division at TVET, at the beginning of October 2015 in order to ask about available technical education materials. The meeting was open and cordial, with the government's TVET willing to share all their technical materials in terms of standards, modules and assessments.

Ten technical instructors from four Don Bosco technical centers in PNG participated in the workshop, bringing with them and sharing their technical resources. Mrs. Rossa Apelis with some of her staff, facilitated in drafting a common Competency-Based Learning Module for Electrical and Automotive technologies, and at a certain point, two industry trainers from nearby technical companies and two instructors from the Port Moresby Technical College came to share their expertise. The results of this first workshop on drafting common technical learning modules were quite modest; the participating instructors were able to finalize one common module for the National Certificate 1 (NC 1) level of the Electrical Technology, and the same output was made in the Automotive Technology. As part of their workshop evaluation, the participants recommended that they and other Don Bosco technical instructors need to undergo first a Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) seminar, which would enable them to align their existing trade learning materials according to the standards of PNG's NC1 and NC2. A communication network among the instructors of different Don Bosco schools needed to be established, as well as a committee to supervise and finalize more complete technical modules in various

trade areas. The government's TVET Division was willing to assist the Don Bosco schools as well as other TVET centers in conducting CBT&A seminars all over the country.

This project for unified technical modules for all Don Bosco schools in PNG and SI was continued on December 2016 by Fr. Robinson Parappilly, Rector of Don Bosco Simbu Technical College (DBSTC) and who succeeded Fr. Macatangay as Coordinator for Don Bosco Schools in PNG/SI. After a two-week workshop at DBSTC, participants from different Don Bosco schools managed to end all required modules for NC1 and NC2 levels in the following technologies: Electrical, Electronics, Machine Fitting and Maintenance, Automotive, Metal Fabrication and Welding and Carpentry.

A second collaborative initiative undertaken by the group of Don Bosco schools in PNG/SI was a common staff development exposure for their Maintenance Fitter & Machining (MFM) instructors in India. From November 15, 2015 to January 15, 2016, Don Bosco Technical Institute, Okhla, New Delhi, hosted the "Train the Trainer Program on Industrial Technical Training in Mechanical Shop Floor Management" for 8 MFM instructors from 4 Don Bosco schools in PNG. The participants underwent training for six weeks in technical teaching pedagogy, in actual use of MFM machineries, and in Machine Shop Floor Management at Don Bosco Okhla, and also received training in Life Skills and Entrepreneurship for 3 weeks in two accredited training providers in New Delhi, designed mainly to assist graduating students in finding alternative jobs. This training package afforded the participants much knowledge, skills and experience, which they could share and develop in their respective contexts in PNG.

Another venue where DBTI can contribute to the development of TVET institutions is through its engagement with Catholic TVET centers. DBTI has for some years been asked to represent the TVET sector in the National Catholic Education Board (NCEB),

and by having attended the Board meetings three times a year, the DBTI Principal usually reported technical developments happening mainly within DBTI. In 2015, DBTI Principal, Fr. Macatangay, became more involved in representing the concerns of other Catholic TVET institutions around PNG, and he did this by attending the Catholic TVET Managers Conference that used to take place towards the end of every year. From such meetings, he was able to give out survey information forms regarding important details, needs and suggestions from different Catholic TVET Centers, and the results of this survey were shared in the June NCEB meeting of 2015. In the 2015 November Catholic TVET Managers Conference, Fr. Macatangay presented possible future pathways for TVET graduates by presenting the PNG National Qualifications Framework, and he also discussed the results of the survey that was gathered, especially concerning the urgent needs and proposals of various Catholic TVET centers. In that meeting, the Catholic TVET Managers proposed that a committee be formed from among the Catholic TVET centers in Port Moresby that will regularly meet to coordinate proposals from other centers around PNG for consideration and possible implementation. This committee could then bring the concerns of TVET centers to the NCEB through its TVET representative.

At the beginning of 2016, the DBTI Principal invited some Catholic TVET centers around Port Moresby to join the proposed TVET committee. Two technical secondary schools and 3 vocational centers joined DBTI to form the committee; the first TVET committee meeting was held at DBTI on February 16, 2016, which included the National Catholic Education Secretary. The committee agreed on three main responsibilities: 1) to receive concerns from Catholic TVET centers throughout PNG and respond to them where possible, 2) to propose contents for the annual TVET Managers Conference, and 3) to link Catholic TVET institutions with government TVET institutions. All the proposals in this first TVET Committee meeting were forwarded during the NCEB meeting on

26-27th February 2016. The Board in turn warmly welcomed and approved all the Committee's proposals and constituted it as an official committee within the NCEB.

The TVET Committee met four times throughout 2016. Its most significant output was the proposal of the topic and preparations for the Catholic TVET Managers' Conference in November 2016. The committee proposed that the topic for the Conference would be the training in Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) for promising managers in the TVET centers, and arranged with the government's TVET Department through Mrs. Rossa Apelis for the conducting of the TVET Conference for 40 Catholic TVET officers coming from different provinces and meeting at Port Moresby. The NCEB found sponsorship for the Conference from Australian Aid, and with this CBT&A workshop, it was hoped that key persons in the Catholic TVET centers could continue the process of preparing learning modules in accordance with NC1 and NC2 government standards.

A final avenue where DBTI made partnerships regarding TVET initiatives was with the government, in particular, through the Conservation & Environment Protection Authority (CEPA). In August 2016, CEPA and DBTI signed a Memorandum of Understanding for conducting training courses for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) technicians and training of students in RAC on the use of hydrocarbons and natural refrigerants for environmental conservation. Courses would be held at DBTI and financed by CEPA's implementing agency, the German organization GIZ Proklima; and under this agreement, DBTI would be organizing two technician training courses every year until the end of 2018.

Partnering with other universities in PNG and abroad

For the Stakeholders Conference participants and for the DBTI community, the most exciting among the Future Directions

for DBTI was the prospect of becoming an Institute of Technology offering engineering courses, leading to the dream of being a Catholic University. Although the process to achieve this goal might be a long one, DBTI was making steps to prepare for this eventuality by continuing to strike up partnerships with other universities both in PNG and abroad.

In preparation for the DBTI Stakeholders Conference in July 2015, the DBTI Principal was in contact with the University of Technology (Unitech or UOT) in PNG Vice Chancellor Dr. Albert Schram; and even though he was not able to attend the conference, communications continued between DBTI Principal and UOT Vice Chancellor continued. In one such private meeting at a hotel in Port Moresby, Dr. Schram expressed Fr. Macatangay his willingness to allow the best of DBTI diploma graduates to continue into second year at UOT, since they meet the academic requirements, and soon after the DBTI together with other technical institutions offering diploma programs in PNG received invitation for a meeting at UOT on August 28, 2015 to explore the possibility of creating “pathways for diploma graduates from the technical colleges to enter into degree programs at Unitech”. One of the resolutions of that meeting was for colleges to review their curricula “with a view to making their diploma graduates eligible for admission into the second or third year of study at Unitech by 2018” (Moshi, 2015).

In order for interested DBTI diploma graduates to be eligible for admission into the second year of study at UOT by 2018, the DBTI Principal proposed Saturday Advance Classes starting on 2016. Interested students would take up units not offered at DBTI, like Engineering Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry on the Saturdays of 2016 until 2017. This proposal was approved by the DBTI Governing Board on November 2015. A huge number of interested DBTI students, filling up the whole library space, came for an invitational meeting to those who were seeking pathways

to other universities through the Advance classes. Most of these intending students were interested to take the following courses at UOT: Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering, Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Applied Physics with Electronics and Instrumentation, and Bachelor of Computer Science. When the Saturday Advance Classes started on March 19, 2016, there was an overflowing number of students who have applied and have been screened for foundational engineering courses: around 160 for Physics, around 140 for Engineering Mathematics, and around 120 for Chemistry; and with the assistance of Mr. Vincent Malaibe, Pro-Vice Chancellor Planning at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), DBTI was able to recruit the services of lecturers and tutors from UPNG.

The plan was that at the end of the Saturday Advance Classes in 2016, the remaining students would be given UOT's end of semester examinations in First Year Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, and the students who would pass these examinations might proceed with other Saturday Advance Classes in 2017 to complete the needed foundational engineering units required at UOT.

Unfortunately, the number of students dwindled so much towards the end of the Saturday classes that it became impractical to continue with the classes, much less to administer the UOT examinations. Although this initiative did not turn out as expected, DBTI had the valuable opportunity of collaborating with the administration and staff of the two leading universities in PNG.

From the contacts he has made from the Salesian Higher Education Institutions (IUS) and from the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the DBTI Principal was able to visit some higher educational institutions in India from 18 to 25 September, 2016; these institutions were: Christ University in Bangalore, Don Bosco Institution of Technology in Mumbai, Assam Don Bosco University in Guahati, and the Salesian College in Sonada. These higher

education institutions, which were willing to assist DBTI, provided possible rich resources for DBTI in terms of staff upgrading, curriculum development, exchange programs and further studies both for students and teachers, technical skills upgrade, experiences in industrial relations and entrepreneurship, online and distance education, and many others. Partnership and collaboration with these institutions in India can assist DBTI to upgrade its status as a higher education institution, leading to becoming a university.

A more significant role in IUS

The Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) had their VII IUS General Assembly in Rome from 4th to 9th July, 2016. Fr. Ariel Macatangay, DBTI Principal and Dr. Catherine Nongkas, DBTI Strategic Partnerships and Quality Assurance Officer, represented DBTI for that General Assembly. Both first-timers to an IUS meeting, the two DBTI officers appreciated the wide network of Salesian Higher Education in the world, and it was a precious opportunity for establishing contacts and friendships that would lead to strategic partnerships for the future of DBTI. The main fruits of this General Assembly, as indicated in the Common Program 5, 2016-2021, focused on three objectives: 1) Defining and implementing “a Salesian university ministry model”, 2) Fostering “communication and collaboration through improved knowledge of the institutions of the network”, and 3) training of “new managers of the IUS, Salesians and lay people”.

In this General Assembly, the structure and membership of the IUS Board of Directors was changed, which in some way would affect DBTI. Previously, there was only a single Continental Conference for all the IUS in Asia; most of these institutions come from India, which account for the most number of IUS in one country throughout the Salesian congregation. In order to address the different needs and concerns of IUS outside of India, it was deci-

ded to form a new Regional Conference covering IUS in East-Asia Oceania (EAO), and have a separate Coordinator for this region. Fr. Ariel Macatangay was appointed as new Coordinator for IUS in EAO. Although the new regional conference only covered the three countries of Japan, Philippines and Papua New Guinea, this appointment could be considered a recognition and appreciation of the developments in Salesian Higher Education taking place especially at DBTI, the only IUS in Oceania. Before the end of the meeting in Rome, the Assembly finalized the dates and venues of the next continental conferences; and the First East Asia Oceania IUS Regional Conference would be held in Tokyo, Japan on 22-26 April 2017.

Continuous process of registration and accreditation under DHERST

After the Bluff Inn meeting of the Educative Pastoral Community of DBTI on March 2016, the DBTI Rector Fr. Louie Castaneda with the advice and encouragement of Dr. Catherine Nongkas and Br. Alfred Tivinarlik worked for the inclusion of the newly proposed technical degree programs, and the preparations for the submission of the new Bachelor of Technology programs were then integrated with accomplishing requirements for the DHERST registration and accreditation. Fr. Macatangay, as Principal, preferred to put this proposal for new degree programs in abeyance, pending more research and greater consultations with industries and technical institutions, in accordance with the recommendations at the Bluff Inn meeting. In the middle of 2016, because of the urgent need for the formation sector of the new Salesian Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Fr. Macatangay received a new assignment as Provincial Delegate for Formation and at the same time formation guide to the aspirants of the Vice-Province; he left his post as DBTI Principal, yet continued his responsibilities as IUS Coordinator for EAO. By September 2016, Dr. Catherine Nongkas

took over as Principal at DBTI, and besides the usual responsibilities of running the college, Dr. Nongkas focused on the submission of requirements for DBTI's institutional registration with DHERST, as well as the huge preparations for the new programs that DBTI was planning to offer at the beginning of 2017.

Since the early years of DBTI and during the affiliation period with DWU, DBTI was offering 10 approved programs, 5 for the degree of Bachelors in Education – Technical and 5 for Diploma in Technology in various areas. Both degree and diploma programs covered 5 technology areas, namely, Computer Technology, Electrical Technology, Electronics Technology, Maintenance Fitting and Machining Technology, and Motor Vehicle Mechanics Technology; all these programs were then being reviewed for the DHERST submission, and at the same time, programs in the 5 existing technologies were being developed for the new Bachelor of Technology programs and in addition to the 5 Technology areas, 2 other areas were introduced, Instrumentation Technology and Metal Fabrication and Welding Technology. Therefore, there were a total of 21 programs prepared for DHERST submission, 7 for the Bachelors in Education – Technical degree programs, 7 for the Diploma in Technology programs, and 7 for the newly introduced Bachelor of Technology degree programs. Through the cooperation and hard work of the administration and staff of DBTI, all the needed submissions were prepared on time. By July 2016, after having received all the requirements for registration and accreditation, the DHERST Secretary, Prof. David Kavanamur, informed DBTI that he has assembled a panel, which will soon make an institutional site visit to DBTI.

The visit of the DHERST panel took place on August 19, 2016, the panel consisted of 2 academic officers from the universities - Mr. Ponnusamy Manohar from UPNG, who served as head of the panel, and Prof. John Pumwa from UOT – and two officers from DHERST – Ms. Wilma Paka, Quality Assurance Executive Manager

and Mr. Russell Pasikila for secretarial support. The panel made a whole-day series of meetings with the Salesians, staff and students of DBTI, who were generally satisfied with what they found during their visit, such that on September 26, 2016, the DHERST Secretary signed the Certificate of Institutional Registration, acknowledging DBTI as a government approved Institute of Higher Education, and being given registration for a period of three years, and within these three years, DHERST expects DBTI to work on the given recommendations. However, the official announcement of the approved institutional registration came only during the DBTI graduation on November 26, 2016, when it was announced by the new Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Hon. Francis Marus.

Other DBTI concerns

Having obtained institutional registration from DHERST towards the end of 2016, DBTI continued to work on other issues and concerns in advancing as a higher education institution. This section lists important DBTI concerns from 2017 onwards.

The DHERST panel that visited DBTI made recommendations in a written report and focused on by DBTI were these challenges: a) revision of the organizational structure of DBTI to answer to the needs of the new programs and to avoid overlaps, b) drafting of a Strategic Plan with the involvement of the whole of DBTI and its stakeholders, c) revision of Assessment Policies, especially for technical units, in order to give importance to their practical components, d) staff recruitment that aims to have staff with minimum qualification of Masters degrees forming the majority, e) provision of infrastructure and equipment for the full implementation of technical programs (Nongkas, 2018). However, despite its quick action on DBTI's application for institutional registration, DHERST was not included when it came to the programs accreditation that DBTI applied for.

Although DBTI submitted requirements for programs accreditation together with those for institutional registration, DHERST has not yet to date (August 2018) made a satisfactory official response to accreditation submissions, and even though DHERST gave feedback to DBTI's proposed programs, but they were returned to the government agency for being substandard. The new DHERST Secretary, Fr. Jan Czuba, former DWU President, acknowledged that the report made from DHERST was not up to standards (Ibid.), and obviously, the difficulty of DHERST was to find competent experts that could give adequate and reliable comments on DBTI's program submissions; additionally, DHERST had the burden of forming the National Higher and Technical Education Board, which would make the official recommendation for the approval of DBTI's submitted programs. Since July 2016 (until August 2018), DHERST has not yet able to form this Board to act on DBTI's proposed programs, and this delay on the government's part is critical for DBTI, especially for students enrolling into the new programs, who from 2017 have not received any form of government scholarship because the programs have not yet been approved by DHERST.

Recent documents¹

Part of the current situation that continued to influence DBTI as a higher education institution are recent documents coming from the church, the Salesian Congregation, the Salesian Vice Province of PNG/SI and from the government. These documents challenge DBTI to continue striving for quality standards in its educational and pastoral service to youths in the higher education levels.

1 Conference Pastoral Plan of PNG/SI, "Educating Today and Tomorrow", University Ministry, PGS Assembly of Confreres II, National Frame of Qualifications Papua New Guinea (PNGNQF) and Plan of Strategic Implementation of Higher Education and Technical Education (HTESIP).

The first of these documents is the Conference Pastoral Plan of PNG & SI 2015 – 2020, which included the section on “Christian Education” under the third main area of “We are Church Serving.” Archbishop Panfilo cited this document during the DBTI’s Stakeholders’ Conference and offered the following areas of action applicable for DBTI: 1) Professional and spiritual formation of those who serve in Catholic Education agencies; 2) Catholic Identity: strengthening Catholic Identity while implementing policies of the NDoE; 3) Access & Inclusion: collaborating with all partners to make education inclusive and accessible to all especially: the poor, the disabled and the educationally disadvantaged; 4) Quality: Aiming for quality education, whereby all our schools are schools of excellence; 5) Witness: Living with greater compassion and concern and continually seeking ways to live more justly the reign of God so that all may share “fullness of life” (Panfilo, 2015, p. 15).

A significant church event organized in recent years that would have great impact for Catholic education is the World Congress “Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion,” held in Rome from 18 to 21 November, 2015. The main aim of the World Congress was “to relaunch the Church’s commitment in the field of education” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2015), and the four principal themes of the Congress could be reflected and applied by the DBTI community to be faithful as a Catholic educational institution: 1) Identity and mission of Catholic institutions, 2) Educational stakeholders that form a community, 3) Formation of formators, 4) Major educational challenges.

In the Common Program 5, 2016-2021, approved in the VII IUS Assembly on July 2016, the main objective was “to define and to implement the Salesian university ministry model.” This Salesian Campus Ministry document, first presented during the 2016 IUS Assembly and revised by a Commission at the beginning of 2017 studied at the various continental and regional conferences

throughout 2017, and was approved by the Board of Directors on January 2018. In the English-speaking parts of the world, the document was entitled, “Orientations for Campus Ministry in Salesian Institutions of Higher Education” (IUS, 2018), and it will be a document “ad experimentum” until 2021, when it will be studied and approved in the 2021 IUS General Assembly, and will eventually receive definitive approval from the Rector Major. Even as a transitional document, all IUS are invited to apply its principles and guidelines in order to assure the Salesian identity of all Salesian Higher Education Institutions throughout the world. DBTI in particular can look into the directives of the document to assure its Salesian identity even as it aims to be a Catholic university.

Towards the end of 2017, the Salesian Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS) had an Assembly of Confreres, which among others discussed and finalized the PGS Over-all Province Plan 2018-2022. The Assembly gave clear directions for the future of DBTI in the eighth point of the fourth main area of Operative Criteria, entitled “Educational Development”, and the directive stated

Working for DBTI to obtain the University status which could serve as a coordinating institution for the educational apostolate of the Province. DBTI is envisioned to have in the future faculties that reflect our Salesian Charism: Technical Education, Engineering, Management and Business Studies, Youth Ministry and Catechesis, Humanities (Social Work, Social Communication) (PGS Vice-Province, 2018).

This clear direction from the Vice Province serves to guide DBTI regarding faculties or areas to develop in its future plan to be a university.

In 2017, the PNG government, through the Department of Higher Education Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) approved two new documents that give clear directions to all Higher

Education Institutions in the country and will assist DBTI in realizing its future plans. The first is the Papua New Guinea National Qualification Framework (PNGNQF), Second Edition, which is an update of the PNGNQF developed in 2009. In the words of DHERST Secretary, Fr. Czuba, the main reason for the current revision is to provide “answers to hopes and aspirations of many people who wanted in the past to continue their studies but the system of education did not have a structure in place to facilitate such an academic progress” (National Higher and Technical Education Board, 2017). The new edition brings improvement in terms of: international comparability, greater clarity on volume of learning and credit points, easier pathways between TVET and Higher Education qualifications and re-integration of the 2013 TVET descriptors for Private Training Organizations (National Higher and Technical Education Board, 2017, pp. 10-11).

The second recent document from DHERST is the Higher and Technical Education Strategic Implementation Plan (2017-2038) (DHERST, 2017) which is an amendment of the former National Higher and Technical Education Plan (2015-2024) brought about by the need to achieve the new Twelve Standards for Quality Assurance and the PNGNQF Second Edition; these two recent documents are important reference points for DBTI to chart its future course with the assistance and partnership of the national government. In a meeting of the DBTI Principal with the DHERST Secretary towards the end of 2017, Fr. Jan Czuba asked Dr. Catherine Nongkas to apply to the government to be one of the PNG Centers of Excellence, that DHERST can promote and assist for 2018. The proposal for national and regional Centers of Excellence among the higher education institutions in PNG is an important element in the implementation of DHERST’s strategic plan, but unfortunately, only little time was given to prepare for such submission that DBTI was not able to grab this opportunity. However, other opportunities, as explained in the two recent Higher Education documents, can

be considered by DBTI in the future, but DBTI needs to be more knowledgeable and updated of the contents of these documents.

Challenges and possibilities for the future

Marginalized youth: Access to Education, a challenge for DBTI

During the DBTI Stakeholders' Conference, Archbishop Panfilo raised the alarm concerning the youth of PNG as described in some sectors as "a walking time-bomb", brought about by a very competitive and restrictive system of education that sees every year an increasing number of graduates being pushed out of the educational system at the end of Grade 8, 10 and 12. "Many of them", mentioned by the Bishop-Deputy for Education, "return to the village and settle down as farmers or fishermen, but many other roam the street of urban areas; some of them manage to enrol in various training centres that operate on their own, but many more are unemployed and without a bright future in front of them". The revered Archbishop continued with these challenging questions, "Could something be done for them? Can DBTI do something too? The two years Diploma Course can be an answer, but in view of employment, can something more be done?" (Panfilo, 2015, p. 16).

The Stakeholders' Conference itself has proposed a response to this challenge of the Archbishop, and Fr. Onofre Inocencio in his presentation offered a possible scenario for DBTI "as a national benchmark for technical vocational education and training in the development of technical and vocational skills for employment". In this way, the multi-awarded educationist from the Philippines muses, DBTI can provide "the widest possible access to quality education to its preferred clientele – the poor and marginalized youth" (Inocencio, 2015). DBTI's upgrading of its Diploma in Technology programs to 3 years and its opening of new programs in the 4-year degree course

of Bachelors in Technology are in the right direction of increasing access to Grade 12 graduates to continue higher studies in various technical fields, however, this is not enough. DBTI can continue to assist many other drop-outs in the primary and secondary levels of education by offering more spaces in Short Courses and institutionalizing these initiatives into a TVET center integrated within the institutions' mission and structures, and such TVET center may be added within the existing DBTI compound or can be situated in another campus. By opening DBTI not only for Grade 12 school-leavers, but also for school-leavers after Grade 10 and even Grade 8 for technical skills training, it can significantly assist the PNG government in greater access to training and employment; in this regards, Fr. Inocencio is convinced about "the importance of TVET in the formation of a highly effective labor force and as a probable and achievable strategy for poverty alleviation" (Inocencio, 2015.).

While DBTI prepares its students for future employment, realistically speaking not all its graduates will find jobs in existing industries or companies. Fr. George Thadathil, IUS Representative in the Stakeholders' Conference points out to a possible resource of DBTI to answer this reality, and he believes that DBTI has "entrepreneurship potential" that can be tapped for the development of the region (Thadathil, 2015). In its short-course offerings, as well as in its diploma and degree programs, DBTI can integrate entrepreneurship topics or modules to assist all graduates in starting their own businesses as a source of employment or alternative for not finding a job. Entrepreneurship can even be a possible degree program that can be developed in the future.

Challenge of "incomplete education"

By "incomplete education," the author refers to that type of education which addresses only a part or some parts of the total human person. Some educators in their desire to obtain high rating

for their school in comparison to other schools only focus on the intellectual abilities of the students, in particular, in their abilities to get the right answers in exams; others focus only on the practical applications of their subject or what can lead to more economic gain. Some educational institutions do not allow students to mention anything about God or make references to the Scriptures, with the excuse of claiming to respect all forms of religion. Pope Francis, in answering questions during the recent Congress on Catholic Education, emphasizes the “complete value of education”, and quotes a great thinker as saying

Education means introducing people into the whole truth, and emphasizes that “to educate in a Christian manner is to lead young people and children forward in those human values present in all that is real, and one of these realities is transcendence...” The greatest crisis in education, from the Christian point of view, is this closing off from the transcendent.... (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2015, p. 8).

In PNG, where there is a great problem of youths missing out on education and growing rate of unemployment, there is a challenge of an education that can promote skills for gainful employment. Similarly, in front of the endemic problem of corruption, rascalism and violence, there is a clamor for an education that includes religious values and character formation, i.e., for a “complete education” for PNG youths, Archbishop Panfilo points to a relevant contribution that DBTI can provide. He exhorts

DBTI should continue to provide an integral development of its students to become ‘honest citizens and good Christians’, and with a high level of competency and expertise, it should contribute to nation building by providing skilled and competent workers for industries and technician-educators for schools in Papua New Guinea (Panfilo, 2015, pp. 15-16).

Archbishop Panfilo also insists that part of integral education is character formation or the education to virtuous living. He con-

tinues to challenge DBTI; thus “The task of DBTI is to continue to instill good habits to help young people to change those attitudes that hinder integral development” (Panfilo, 2015, pp. 15-16).

Integral education in the educational system of St. John Bosco is applied through the Preventive System, which in a Salesian Higher Education Institution like DBTI is “the criterion that inspires all educative action” (IUS, 2018). Therefore, it is essential that the Preventive System, which is specifically included in DBTI’s Vision Mission, be well understood, studied and loved so that it may be incarnated into all activities, relationships and structures of DBTI. The PGS Vice-Province has made concrete proposals for a deeper appreciation of Don Bosco’s spirit through its Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan (SEPP) 2018-2021, and since the PGS Vice Province desires to “move from basic knowledge of Don Bosco to a deeper assimilation of the Salesian charism” he proposed the following lines of action (2-2-2.3): “a) organize and institutionalize the Salesian Orientation Program for new lay mission partners, b) organize and institutionalize Ongoing Salesian Formation for lay mission partners, and c) institutionalize Salesian studies in the curriculum of DBTI” (PGS Vice Province, 2018). Holistic education is also assured by offering varied fields of learning and not only focusing on technical skills. Pope Francis reminds Catholic educators that education travels along the three pathways of “language of the head, language of the heart, and language of the hands”, and encourages the movement from strictly formal education to an “informal education,” where “art and sports” are essential means of educating (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2015, p. 9). To this end, Fr. Thadathil, proposed the following for DBTI as an IUS: “Holistic and Integral Education through Arts, Humanities, Sciences and Technology”, and DBTI Education needs to be complimented with serious cultivation of Arts and Humanities. An evidence of integral education present in educational institutions is the emphasis given to religious education as compared to other contents of the

curriculum. In Salesian settings, this refers to the education to the faith dimension that includes catechesis, understood as a path of growth and education in faith for those who, knowing the Gospel and the person of Jesus, wish to deepen their faith and reach a level of religious formation comparable to the other dimensions of their formation process: scientific, professional, social and cultural” (IUS, 2018). There is an urgent need for catechesis in schools in PNG, especially in secondary schools, and Archbishop Panfilo explains this situation as caused by a lack of qualified teachers to teach Religion in secondary schools, and he asks whether “in the future of DBTI is the possibility of adding in the four-year degree program a new specialization in Religious Studies?” (Panfilo, 2015, p. 17). Although DBTI now offers Religious Education as a minor in its Bachelor of Education – Technical, this proposal can be more seriously considered to address the big demand for Religion teachers for secondary schools. A possible way-forward for DBTI in this regard is to offer a new program of Bachelor of Secondary Education with Major in Religious Education, but coupled with another field of learning that can be also applied to non-Catholic institutions. For example, it can be a Major in Religious and Values Education, or Major in Religious Education and Pastoral Communication.

Challenge of lack of coordination in the TVET sector. DBTI as a center for TVET Institutions

In Papua New Guinea, there is no single authority that governs or oversees the different TVET activities and institutions. The DHERST Secretary, Fr. Jan Czuba paints a colorful yet disorganized spectrum of institutions and agencies under the banner of technical and higher education, and considers the situation as “unwieldy”, and calls for the immediate transfer of these scattered institutions under DHERST (DHERST, 2017, p. 9).

Fr. Paul Jennings has headed for many years the National Catholic Education Board and has heard the concerns of the many Catholic TVET institutions all over PNG. He has scathing remarks for the TVET Division of the government's Department of Education, that "has destroyed the curriculum, ... suffers from political interference, ... and fails to consult with education agencies..." (Jennings, 2015, p. 30).

Despite this gloomy outlook, Fr. Jennings proposes a way forward through the active intervention of DBTI and invites DBTI to greater involvement with Catholic TVET through these words, "There is an opportunity and a need for Catholic TVET to also be strengthened and engage with the Department of Education on the future growth of TVET. Perhaps DBTI can become the lead agent in this process?" (Jennings, 2015, p. 30).

It is in this context that the Future Directions of the Stakeholders' Conference can be viewed as particularly relevant and the Conference has envisioned DBTI to be "a hub of hubs for other TVET institutions." The recent involvement of DBTI with Catholic TVET institutions in Papua New Guinea can be continued and strengthened, and DBTI, through the TVET Committee in Port Moresby, can assist other Catholic TVET centers in capacity building of their administrative and technical staff and facilitate dialogues and discussions with other technical institutions and government agencies for the implementation of recent policies and directives regarding TVET.

Challenge of insufficient number of TVET trainers to meet the targets of PNG Vision 2050

Although there are no definite statistics, it is evident that there is a great shortage of technical and vocational teachers to staff the technical colleges and polytechnics proposed by the govern-

ment in order to conduct PNG's Vision 2050 of a productive and skilled workforce, and this is where DBTI can exert its competitive edge over all other Technical and Higher Education Institutions. So far, DBTI is the only institution in PNG offering bachelor degree program that prepares graduates to teach technical subjects in secondary schools, technical colleges and vocational centers. This was the original intention of the bishops of PNG in requesting the Salesians to start a technical teacher training college, and DBTI has done this since 1999; thus, DBTI is in the right position to collaborate as a partner with DHERST. This was already voiced out by Fr. Inocencio in the Stakeholders' Conference, he looks forward in the future to DBTI as "a respected and preferred institution of higher education in the training of teachers in technical-vocational education and training" (Inocencio, 2015, p. 27). DBTI can pursue its communication with DHERST in order to forge a strategic partnership by making DBTI as a Center of Excellence for the Training of Technical Teachers, and this strategy will also create another Future Direction envisioned for DBTI, which is to be a "Benchmark of Public-Private Partnership (PPP)" (DBTI, 2015, p. 81).

Fr. Inocencio, the brainchild of this future scenario, goes further by extending this PPP not only with DBTI as a private institution and DHERST as a government agency, but also with industrial and business establishments. DBTI has accumulated much experiences in liaising with industrial companies through its In-Plant Training (IPT) program for all its students; also, DBTI is also a member of the Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2015 and 2016, DBTI successfully hosted a Dinner for Industry Representatives, where it appreciated the contribution of the industries to the skills-training of its students, and where DBTI obtained helpful feedback regarding the technical curriculum and IPT program.

DBTI can continue and amplify these partnerships with DHERST and the industries in order to constantly improve and de-

velop its technical curriculum to get feedback about its graduates in the industries and in other educational institutions, and to develop innovative technologies. On this last point of innovative technologies, there is much to hope for in the newly introduced program of Instrumentation Technology, which can further develop into the areas of Mechatronics and Robotics.

Fr. Inocencio has yet another proposed future for DBTI: “DBTI harness the power of technology to facilitate the effective and efficient delivery of education and training” (Inocencio, 2015), and this is a challenge for DBTI also to shine in the field of Educational Technology. This can be developed by DBTI’s technology area of Information Technology as a course unit, which may even be developed later as a separate program.

DBTI as a Leading Catholic University of Technology in the Asia-Pacific.

All the above future prospects for DBTI converge at this last goal of being a university. In the Stakeholders Conference, the first presenter to explicitly mention DBTI as a “Technical University in Papua New Guinea” was Fr. George Thadathil, and under that heading, he enumerated the following sub-points, which can guide DBTI in its quest for university status

- a) the absorption of the graduates and post-graduates, b) the industry linkage with PNG and other neighboring countries, c) the overseas students and other migrant populations (diaspora), d) the rationale for strengthening the Salesian presence in Higher Education (Thadathil, 2015, p. 21).

Considering the faculties proposed for DBTI as a university by the PGS Over-all Province Plan and also the proposals made by Dr. Alfred Tivinarlik during the Stakeholders’ Conference, the author makes his own proposed faculties and possible areas of specializa-

tion for the Catholic University of Technology in Papua New Guinea: 1) Faculty of Education (Secondary Education, Technical or TVET Education, Religious Education, Educational Technology), 2) Faculty of Engineering and Technology (Information Technology and Computer, Electrical, Electronics and Communications, Mechanical, Automotive, Instrumentation, Robotics), 3) Faculty of Leadership and Management (Educational Leadership and Management, Entrepreneurship, Business Studies), 4) Faculty of Humanities (Language and Arts, Music and Sports, Social Work, Social Communication), 5) Faculty of Theology (Catechetics and Youth Ministry, Canon Law, Salesianity, Spirituality). Another possibility for DBTI as a university is the establishment of satellite campuses, proposing that the current Don Bosco Simbu Technical College in Kumgi, Simbu Province and Don Bosco Technical Institute in Honiara, Solomon Islands can become campuses of a single university system. The Kumgi campus can specialize in Technology and Business Studies, while Honiara can specialize in Education and Social Work.

Final reflections: What does it mean to do Salesian Higher education in the context of PNG?

As the first and only Salesian Institution of Higher Education in Oceania, DBTI carries a heavy responsibility of answering the needs and expectations of many young people in this region seeking higher education in the Salesian style. At the same time, despite the available guidance and assistance coming from the church, the congregation, the government and other stakeholders, DBTI eventually will have to trail-blaze its own unique path based on the people it serves and the groups it works with in order to journey towards the full development of integral education in this part of the world. The author now intends to share his summary reflections on what he considers as possible signposts in DBTI's onward path to a bright future, and he bases his reflections on almost fifteen years as a Salesian missionary priest and educator in PNG

and shares five points, the first two refer to the local situation in PNG, and the remaining three refer to his thoughts and convictions as a Salesian priest, educator and formation guide.

Highest Melanesian value of “gutpela sindaun.” Every education ministry, even at the level of higher education, needs to take into account the culture of the people being served. PNG, renowned in the world for its diversity of languages and cultural expressions, belong to the wider group of societies and cultures called Melanesia (Whiteman, 1984). Ennio Mantovani, a long-time SVD missionary in PNG and scholar on Melanesian culture proposes “gutpela sindaun” (literally, “good sitting down together”) as the highest value in Melanesian culture; it is a Pidgin term that can be used to describe the concept of life, understood not only as biological existence, but as “health, wealth, well-being, good relationships, security, prestige, strength, etc” (Mantovani, 1984, p. 201), and this can perhaps be equivalent to the Gospel value of “fullness of life” or even the theological notion of “shalom” among the Jews, i.e., “gutpela sindaun” as a nation is the dream of being a “smart, wise, fair and happy society by 2050,” enshrined in the PNG Vision 2050. According to Mantovani, the traditional way of achieving “gutpela sindaun” is through the community, network of relationships and exchange as a symbol of restored relationship (Mantovani, 1984, pp. 199-205).

DBTI needs to bear in mind this prime value of *gutpela sindaun* as it tries to find its niche among higher education institutions in Oceania. There are institutional practices in DBTI that encourage and enhance the application of *gutpela sindaun* in the learning institution, some of which are: the Educative Pastoral Community with its typical style of “family spirit” that permeates relationship among Salesians, staff, students and their parents, alumni and other members of the wider community, and with its celebrations of feasts and memorable community gatherings; the yearly revi-

sion and evaluation of the Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan that seeks a participatory form of consensus-building and decision making; the various levels of collegial bodies like Student Representative Councils, Staff Meetings, Board of Studies, DBTI Council and DBTI Governing Board, that make communal proposals, endorsements and decisions for the common good of the institution.

As DBTI continues to upgrade its status as a higher education institute, there is greater exigency for making broad range of consultations and discussions, avoiding even the impression of novel activities or decisions as being “one-man decision,” which PNG youth decry against so much. Such initiatives as Stakeholders’ Conference, Dinner with Industry Representatives, collaborative alliances with higher education bodies, government and non-government agencies are most welcome and attractive ways of strategic partnerships that readily lead to fuller educational experience for the whole institution and beyond, and DBTI’s administration will inevitably have to deal with high ranking officers in the church, government and industry. In order to achieve successful negotiations in Public-Private-Partnerships, DBTI leaders and administrators can apply the value of *gutpela sindaun* through a style of relating with significant persons, which is characterized by congeniality, warmth and confidence. In Papua New Guinea, it is not brilliant minds, professional management, or mere hard work that brings about institutional development, but instead the capacity of its leaders to win friends and warm hearts despite difficulties and differences to convince diverse stakeholders to collaborate in worthwhile projects.

PNG as the “Land of the Unexpected”. Anything can change so fast in PNG that it is dubbed as the “Land of the Unexpected.” From the weather to the time table, from natural calamities to corruption in all sectors, from the attendance of students to the duty rosters of teachers, from educational policies to educational leaders, from the number of flora and fauna to the number of ruling

party and opposition, from tribal wars to threats of civil war, from pickpockets to rascal attacks, unexpected events can happen almost at any time, and it would seem improbable to plan out any fruitful and lasting initiative for development. Yet, clearly, at least one thing will never change – the relevance of education and of higher education, since Education can even be the key for changing minds, attitudes and behaviors, such that PNG can be more known as the “Land of the Anticipated.” This type of education needs transformative leadership – leaders who do not merely react to changing events, but leaders who have wisdom, patience and perseverance and who can inject visionary thinking into a projected future shared by various stakeholders and responding to the increasing needs of the youths of this generation and of the next. In this way, despite the unstoppable flow of unexpected events, there will always be enduring values, prophetic visions, and selfless servant leaders, assuring DBTI constant growth for all its members in “competence and character” (DBTI motto).

Preventive System as key for success in education. Being a Catholic priest, the author follows the teachings and examples of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ in giving a pastoral (from the word “pastor” meaning shepherd) sense to his educational service. Only the Good Shepherd can fulfill his promise of fullness of life as written in the Gospel, “I came that they may have life, life to the full.” (John 10:10) Thus, the Melanesian value of *gutpela sindaun* can best be performed by reflecting on the teachings and living the examples of Christ. However, the Gospel is not an educational handbook and may not be easily translated into the concrete concerns and activities of an educational institution. There is, however, another Catholic priest from Italy, who faithfully followed Christ’s love for young people and has left an effective educational system that can lead young people through education and evangelization to the fullness of life. This is St. John Bosco (or Don Bosco), “Father and Friend of the young,” who lived with young people of the nine-

teenth century “a spiritual and educational experience which he called the ‘Preventive System’” (Salesians of Don Bosco, 2009, p. art. 20). Don Bosco has passed on to the Salesians of Don Bosco, a congregation of priests and brothers which he founded, this system “as a way of living and of handing on the gospel message, and of working with and through the young for their salvation” (Salesians of Don Bosco, 2009). “This system is based entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness. Instead of constraint, it appeals to the resources of intelligence, love and the desire for God, which everyone has in the depths of his being” (Salesians of Don Bosco, 2009, p. art. 38). The author believes that the three elements of the Preventive System have special significance and appeal for the PNG youth. Against the unreasonable demands and selfish interests of many of their elders, reason is used by Salesian educators to convince them of the power of truth in enlightening their minds and guiding their conduct to a righteous way of life. Against the youth’s prevalent experiences of violence, vices, negative peer influences and primitive superstitions, religion inspires them to open themselves to transcendence and to partake of the joy and acceptance within a community of believers. Against the backgrounds of various forms of abuses, neglect and rejections, loving kindness can attract the young to meaningful encounters with caring adults and peers and can transform them to be protagonists of a hopeful future and to be committed youth servants among their fellow youths.

This Salesian educator believes that the application of the Preventive System in educational institutions is the best way of implementing what Pope Francis calls the “emergency education” in response to the “educational crisis” experienced in our present times (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2015). Furthermore, the author is convinced that the Preventive System of St. John Bosco, with its three pillars of reason, religion and loving kindness is the most effective means of counteracting the “learning crisis in global education” (The World Bank, 2017).

In Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, where Salesians are active in the service of education, the Preventive System can be introduced to the government's education system as a workable strategy for improving educational processes and performance at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Religious Education and Technical Training. Throughout the whole world, Don Bosco schools are known mainly for excellence in two fields, religious education and technical training. The same may be said in Papua New Guinea, where the five Don Bosco institutions are highly appreciated and admired for their emphasis in character formation and technical skills. In its quest for higher levels of standards and development as a higher education institution, DBTI needs to emphasize and not lose sight of religious education and technical training for all its students and staff, as an expression of fidelity to Don Bosco's educational aim of providing church and society with "good Christians and honest citizens".

Prospects for Salesian and religious vocations. The author's last reflection flows from his current assignment as a formation guide to aspirants to the Salesian life in PNG/SI. In the Salesian Vice-Province of PNG/SI, the aspirants used to do their college courses at DBTI, and it has been observed that for the past fifteen years or so, many of the aspirants leave after they have finished their degree program at DBTI. It is a challenge for vocation promoters and formation guides to screen well the intentions of the aspirants, so that they do not join the aspirantate primarily to obtain a tertiary education. However, the sad truth is that many aspirants apply to be an aspirant more for the reason of further studies rather than for a desire for a religious life. The primary reason is because of the limited access and opportunity for higher education in PNG and SI. This formation guide believes that if DBTI will be able to offer more diverse programs in education, engineering, social work, management, catechetics and youth ministry, etc., the Salesians can

recruit and accompany more candidates to the Salesian life from among students of DBTI. Vocation prospects from DBTI would be more preferred candidates because of their experience and exposure with the Salesians and with Don Bosco's educational system, and the same may be said for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), who can also recruit more female candidates to join their congregation.

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Africa, Youth and Higher Education

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Introduction

The higher education sector has not yet been reformed in Africa. Higher education in this continent has undergone an evolution characterized by an exponential growth of students, at the time that there are insufficient public financial resources necessary to respond adequately to the demands of this growth. This situation is at the base of the current crisis of the sector, exacerbated by the mutations of the economic and social environment characterized specifically by the globalization of the economy and trade and the rapid evolution of knowledge and technologies. This situation generates new challenges in terms of quality, relevance, management, financing, access, equity, gender and university cooperation, and it also opens new perspectives for the development of Higher Education in Africa (UNESCO, 1998).

The collectively and individually mission that the different States assign to their higher education system is to “train competent human resources capable of contributing effectively to the fight against poverty, and to the integral development of the country in the cultural, economic and social plans” (UNESCO, 1998). Under this perspective, higher education appears as an indispensable tool for the socio-economic development. Therefore, it must contribute

to the improvement of the quality of life of citizens, fighting against poverty and its causes (illiteracy, low schooling, etc.). On the other hand, higher education will also allow the proper development of human resources. In other words, it is important that universities contribute to the collective realization by forming responsible and competent men and women. This responsibility of university graduates will allow them to serve the whole society. Working in this way, they will guarantee this individual and collective realization.

In order to offer a satisfactory answer to these challenges, the Salesians of Don Bosco have contributed for the construction of this objective. Having come to Lomé and Luanda within the framework of the Africa project, and to Maputo much earlier, its objective is the same: to provide the possibility to young people of popular classes the access to higher education and quality training, so that they can be integrated easier to the world of work.

This article is intended to restore the different strategies to be implemented by each of the IUS of Africa. We know that the contexts of each country are not the same. The variants observed characterize each IUS. In addition, through this article, our readers will be able to know these institutions as well as their corresponding functioning and organization.

Our article will be focused on three axes: the first is related to Don Bosco Higher Institute of Mozambique. We will see how this IUS was created, the different agreements that have led to its establishment, some strategies of its functioning and the challenges it has. The second axis will be dedicated to Don Bosco High Institute of Angola (ISDB). With regard to this IUS, we will observe the modalities of its opening, the process that has led to the ISDB denomination, the different objectives, the values, some activities and the challenges it faces. The third axis will be about Don Bosco Higher Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences of Togo. We will start from its origin to analyze the different types of training that it pro-

vides, the quality, the goals as well as its strengths and weaknesses, and we will end up with the challenges it faces.

Don Bosco Higher Institute of Mozambique (Maputo)

The Salesians of Don Bosco arrived in Mozambique in 1907 to work at the School of Arts and Crafts in Mozambique. The Republican revolution of October 1910 in Portugal marked the beginning of the definitive withdrawal of the Salesians from Mozambique at the end of 1913 (Anjos and Viera 2008). The Salesians returned to Mozambique in 1952 to take care of the Mouzinho Institute of Albuquerque in Namaacha (Anjos and Viera, 2008, pp. 51-52). With the signing of the Rome agreements on October 4, 1992, New Horizons opened for Don Bosco's Charism in the Mozambican country. The new political and economic reality that was given way in this country after the signing of these agreements has led the Salesians to consider again their presence in this nation. After several moments of reflection and sharing in 1998, the directory of the Salesian delegation of Mozambique was approved. In presenting these documents to the Salesians, Father Valentín de Pablo, Superior of the Salesian delegation of Mozambique, writes:

This is the renewed text of the delegation's repertoire. It is the result of the sharing and the contribution of all the communities. It has been submitted to the provincial Chapter '98 and later sent to Rome for its approval. In the letter, dated July 18, the vicar of the Rector Major communicates to the Provincial that our Board of Directors has been approved by the Rector Major and his council during the meeting of July 17 (Prot. 98/1322).

"There are guidelines and practical rules elaborated from our concrete reality. They should help us in fidelity to our own vocation and to the Salesian mission we conduct" (Ibid., p. 3). In this document, in chapter V which refers to activities and work, number 10.4 indicates: Vocational training centers are currently in the cou-

ntry as an immediate and necessary response to the situation of so many young people who, having completed their primary education, need specific training to enable them to be active in society” (Ibid. p. 14). The option made by the Salesians in Mozambique and expressed in the Repertoire of 1998, needed certain strategies. I present some of them from my point of view:

Agreements with the Ministry of Education

The Salesian Society, in order to serve the first and foremost recipients of its mission, states: Adolescents and young people in need had to find the means to accomplish this mission. The dialogue with the national government resulted in the signing of several intent agreements. The first was signed on October 1, 2001 by the Minister of Education of the time: Dr. Alcídio Eduardo Nguenha and the delegate of the Salesian Society, Father Valentin of Paul. The agreement was scheduled for a period of ten years. Within this agreement of intentions, the Salesian society committed itself:

- To collaborate with their network of vocational training centers to extend training to as many young people as possible.
- To make available the two intensive vocational training centers of Matola and Lhanguene to provide vocational training courses for general education students.
- To open two new technical teaching schools in Tete-Matundo (already completed and started in 2001) and in Inharrie-Inhambane (under construction).
- To create, in the medium term, a school of teachers of primary education.
- To open a new school of commerce in the primary school in Lhanguene-Center (Maputo).¹

1 Cfr. Agreement of intentions between the Ministry of Education and Culture of Mozambique and the Salesian Society of Mozambique to improve the quality of professional education, 2001.

In the interest of both parties to continue this cooperation and to be aware of the changes introduced in vocational technical education, it was considered appropriate not to wait for the conclusion of the preceding agreement to sign a new intention document on May 2, 2006. This second agreement was planned for a three-year period. The Salesian Society, among other obligations, will open a new institute for the training of teachers and managers of professional technical education, in accordance with the integrated training program. Vocational education Reform (PIREP) will be inaugurated in 2016.²

Partnership with cooperation agencies

Another important strategic line that has been assumed by the Salesian societies is the assistance received by the cooperation agencies, mainly the Spanish one, through the NGO Salesian Youth and Development. It is also worth mentioning the Flamenca Agency for International Cooperation and GIZ. The Salesian Society has been able to build and equip existing schools and training centers with the collaboration of these cooperation agencies.

Network cooperation

The work in the field of vocational training has always been done in the network. For this purpose, the Salesian vocational training network has been implemented in the Salesian vice-province. The network's strategic plan has been developed thanks to the help of our partners. The school-enterprise departments and the gender department have been developed. Schools have been monitored

2 Cf. agreement of intentions between the Ministry of Education and Culture of Mozambique and the Salesian Society of Mozambique, to improve the quality of professional education, 2006.

for the implementation of the reform of professional schools³. It is also the training of teachers, both in schools and in vocational training centers.

The collaboration of other vocational training Salesian schools

The Salesians present in Mozambique, at the time of the establishment of the vocational training network, did not possess the knowledge or skills necessary to carry out such a big project, hence, we needed to find the necessary practical experience in other countries. The Salesians of Spain, known by their excellent professional tradition, helped us to fulfill this dream from the first moment. With a constant presence after twenty years, the Spanish volunteers, led by F. Ángel Miranda, have contributed with their important technical contribution to the functioning of the schools and vocational training centers of the Salesian network of professional training.

When celebrating the ten years of the ISDB, it is important to remember some relevant dates:

- ISDB was originated in the context of vocational education reform. The Salesian network was represented in the discussion of this reform with the World Bank (funder of this project), the National Government (in particular, the Ministries of Education and Culture, Ministry of Work, the Cooperation Agencies, the Representatives of the CTA, Trade unions and some members). It is in this context of the reform that the Ministry of Education entrusted to the Salesian Society, the creation of an institute for the training of teachers for professional education (taking into account the first agreement in

3 This first reform consists of transforming schools of arts and crafts into professional schools.

which the Salesian society committed itself to create a school of primary teachers).

- During the next phase, the objective was to think on how this institution of teacher training would be like. The preparation of the statutes, the eventual structure of the programs and other issues related to the installation of a higher education institution for the training of teachers in the vocational training area started in 2005 with the help of a professional (Mr. Javier Arrigebaria), in the headquarters of the Salesian delegation of Mozambique, located at Rua (street) Joao Mulungo.
- In 2006, the first professionals of each area to be taught (pedagogy, hospitality and tourism, industrial maintenance and administrative sciences, priority areas of professional reform), began to be selected to prepare programs and teaching material.
- The Council of Ministers, in its regular session held on October 17, 2006, approved the statutes of the Don Bosco Higher Institution (ISDB). On December 26, 2006, the Decree No. 51/2006, which authorized the Catholic organization Don Bosco-Association of Salesians of Mozambique to create the Higher Institute of Vocational Education and training and professional education management, was published in *Boletim da República*. This center is also called Instituto Superior Don Bosco, and abbreviated, ISDB.
- In 2007, ISDB launches the approved courses, under the online learning modality for the teachers in the different institutions of professional education distributed throughout Mozambique.
- In 2008, we have started the classroom-based modality.
- On November 18, 2011, the first (and only) graduation took place.
- By order of the Ministry of Education of April 26, 2013, the first cycle courses started in 2012 were approved, according to the new Law N° 27/2009 on higher education.

- It should be noted that we were not in a position to play our role.

Since then, several challenges have taken place to the Don Bosco Higher Institute of Mozambique. Indeed, for the next ten years, the goals have to do with:

- Improve the quality of our services.
- Offer new courses.
- Specialize in the field of professional training offering bachelor's degree courses in various fields (with competency-based study plans, competency assessment, market research preparation, etc.).
- Involve the academic community in the development of the ISDB (there is still much to be done with the Student Association).
- Be self-sufficient.
- Work with the environment.

Don Bosco Higher Institute of Angola (Luanda)

Inauguration of Don Bosco Higher Institute in 2004

Don Bosco Institute for Higher Education-IDBES is a pedagogical project of the Salesian Vice-province in Angola-Mama Mu-xima. Initially, the Institute had been thought to cover the training needs of religious congregations especially dedicated to the field of education, such as the Salesians of Don Bosco. However, having been carefully questioned by the national reality of the education sector, the owning entity concluded that the Institute should be open not only to the needs of religious congregations, but also to the formation of lay people who want a cultural, humanist and Christian formation which can allow them to work in this strategic sector.

Thus, the Institute opened in 2004, with the first group composed of 63 students (religious and laymen).

- From February 2 to 6, 2004: subscriptions for the entrance test, which consisted of an interpretative analysis of a text, adapted to an intermediate-level reader in Portuguese.
- February 9: Tests.
- February 12: Delivery of test results. Registration begins until February 17th
- February 18: 09h00 opening Mass on the part of Father Piccoli. The celebrant commented on the passage of the “grain thrown on the earth”. The 67 students registered were present.
- February 19 and 20: Introductory lectures (on intellectual training, CEDBES objectives, etc.).
- February 23: Official start of the courses in the CEDBES (center of Higher Studies Don Bosco) with the inaugural conference of Introduction to the Philosophy, in the rooms of Don Bosco’s House.

In 2005, the second group of sixty students was incorporated. Throughout this tour, the owning entity as well as the management of the Institute have realized that it was time to make it official. The Christian and Catholic identity of the CEDBES, its nature, its objectives and its fidelity to the tradition of the Salesian congregation that promotes it, creates a positive, loyal and special relationship with the church. It is expressed in communion with its pastors and the ecclesial Magisterium. On the other hand, the Catholic University of Angola – UCAN-, the first ecclesial institution of higher education, with recognized quality and vast experience, is the other institution that we can share the same objectives with. We have been able, with His Excellency the Great Rector, to express our intention to establish an alliance between the UCAN and the CEDBES, whose terms will be studied by both parties. Knowing

that our request deserves more attention, we have been approved in very respectful terms (Luanda, August 25 2005).

From 2004 to 2011, the Institute offered a Technical Degree in Pedagogy and Philosophy, and in 2011 with the approval of the Institute, a Bachelor Degree in Philosophy and Pedagogy. All the students who have obtained this baccalaureate in this institution are presented for the equivalence of subjects required for the degree. In 2011 the Institute and its courses is approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, and it begins to offer degrees from 2012. It is on this date that the institution stopped to be called CEDBES and was renamed “Instituto Superior Don Bosco” (ISDB). At the time of the ISDB’s approval, according to the Law of Higher education in force at the moment, the universities in Angola are divided into academic regions in which no employer should have two higher education establishments. The Ministry of Higher Education, knowing that ISDB belongs to the Catholic Church by the Salesian Congregation of Don Bosco, also considers that the UCAN has its patronal entity that is the Episcopal Conference, and the ISDB was also considered as an Entity of the Catholic Church, which extinguished its permission to remain as Catholic University from 2011.

In the newspaper da República 1st series N° 164 of 26 August; Executive Decree N° 128/11, it is published that the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Sciences and Technologies create at the Catholic University of Angola, the course of Philosophy that grants the diploma and approves the plan of studies of the created course. Thus, from 2013 to 2017, we already had 5 groups of diplomas in Philosophy and Education.

The Don Bosco Institute (ISDB) is an institution that belongs to the Salesian Vice-province “Mama Muxima”, legally recognized by the Ministry of Justice of Angola as “Don Bosco Salesian Association” and registered in folio 003 of book A of the year 2009, under the number 005/2009. The Salesians of Don Bosco are a religious

congregation belonging to the Catholic Church. From an academic point of view, the ISDB is an organic unit of the Catholic University of Angola (UCAN), in its pedagogical and scientific aspect, is in charge of the management of the faculties of Philosophy and Education.

The ISDB's registered office is located in Luanda, in the municipality of Kilamba Kiaxi-Bairro Palanka, Rua do Sanatorium, Av. Pedro Van-Dunem Loy, in which the activities are performed.

The ISDB has well defined objectives within its operation. In fact, the main objective of the ISDB is to educate "good Christians and honest citizens", applying the Salesian preventive trilogy: reason, religion and affection. The specific objectives are:

- To offer the academic degree of Bachelor Degree.
- To promote extracurricular activities of teaching and vocational and technological training in order to integrate interns into the labor market.
- To provide services to communities in the fields of education and scientific research, in view of the extent of university and mutual appreciation, taking into account the community development.
- To offer a higher education in human sciences since these are instruments of integral promotion of the man and woman, inspired by the Christian values and the Salesian spirituality, and more particularly, by Don Bosco's preventive system.
- To prepare the Civil life charts through a modern scientific and professional formation within a community environment conducive to the harmonious development of the personality of students.
- To ensure the full integration of students in the cultural environment of the country in order to preserve their cultural identity.
- To promote favorable actions to the development of the institution.

The mission of the ISDB is defined as follows: The ISDB is at the service of the Church and the Angolan society and has as mission:

- To offer a higher education, in the human sciences sector as a tool for the integral promotion of man, inspired by Christian values.
- To prepare the tables of the civil life providing a scientific and professional training updated in a community environment conducive to the harmonious development of the personality of the students.
- To ensure the full integration in the cultural environment of the country in order to preserve its cultural identity.

For this mission, the ISDB within its educational activity proposes to transmit the following values: to be good Christians, to be honest citizens, punctuality, seriousness and responsibility.

Methodology

The ISDB, since it is an institute related to the Salesian concretization, transmits the cultural values of its congregation to the new generations by means of the education; for this reason, ISDB proposes to use for its educational activities the method Don Bosco preventive system, based on reason, religion and affection.

Activities in the ISDB

The Institute, beyond the training of its students, carries out the following activities: Since 2011, training of teachers from different Catholic schools and private schools by means of seminars. In the same year, ISDB and UCAN started pastoral activities with catechism and volunteering at the university.

In 2012, the institute taught the pedagogical aggregation course to the professors of the Catholic University of Angola (UCAN) and the Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations (CIS).

Between 2013 and 2017, the institute started with the Quenguela project (set of seven schools created by this project in an area explored for the first time). An agreement was established with the Society of Producers, Total Associates and Sonangol with the following activities: Training of teachers, training of directors, computer courses, sports, interior design courses, baking, electricity and locksmith. For this project, ISDB sends its teachers and students to help in the activities of this rural community.

- In 2013, the first Samanhonga Philosophy-Educative journal was published.
- In 2015, the second Samanhonga Philosophy-Educative journal.
- In 2015, we sent five Master 2 students (Masters) to Portugal for the Philosophy course and 3 for the Educative course.
- In 2016, we built the new main hall and opened a new library.
- In 2017, we began the Educative courses of the late period, and in the same year, we began the short duration ISDB courses of: pedagogical aggregation and children teachers.
- In 2018, we sent 3 teachers to Portugal to do a doctorate in education in the spatiality of school management.

Despite all these strengths and opportunities, several challenges are presented to the ISDB of Angola. These are:

- To create new offerings such as the Psychology of Education and Teaching of Portuguese language.
- To improve the quality of our services.
- To have more autonomy.
- To improve the service to our students and the educational community in general.
- To define more clearly the institute's strategic plan for a better institutional development.

Don Bosco Higher Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences (ISPSH) of Togo (Lomé)

Don Bosco Higher Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences (ISPSH) is a Salesian Institution of higher education. It belongs to the Salesian Province of Our Lady of the Peace of Francophone West Africa (AFO). It is founded following the Salesian initiative of the Iberian Conference (Spain-Portugal) to form candidates for the Salesian life (clerics and assistants) according to the agreement of October 29, 1986, ratified by the Rector of the Salesian Congregation of Don Bosco on 2 January 1987 (Rome), and according to the approval of the agreement signed by the Archbishop of Lomé, Mgr. R.C. Messen Dosseh-Anyron and the regional Superior (Africa-Madagascar) of the Salesians on June 29, 1987. Since February 8, 1998, the ISPSH Don Bosco has the authorization of evidentiary opening through Decree No. 020/nrsf/SG of the National Ministry of Education and Investigation. On June 10, 1999, the ISPSH obtains the definitive opening authorization by means of the Decree N° 096/NSRF/SG of the National Ministry of Education and Investigation, following the competence report (N ° 159/98/UBR/DAAS of September 17, 1998) of the Directorate of Academic and School Affairs of the University of Benin, which proposed the Ministry to grant the full equivalence to the degree diplomas issued by the Institute. On April 29 2010, on the basis of a new competition report, the Ministry of Higher Education and Investigation by Decree No. 062/MESR/SG renewed the authorization to open the ISPSH Don Bosco (GgA, 2016), for a period of five years.

Originally, the training offered programs of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Education granted by the DEUG (Diploma of General University studies) in Philosophy and Social Sciences, the degree in Philosophy and in Education Sciences, diplomas recognized by the Togolese State. At the same time, respecting the formative dimension of the candidates for the priesthood and opening up to

other categories of students (religious and laymen). A formula has been sought to achieve a balance of the CAMES demands (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education), the orientations for the intellectual formation of the Salesian Magisterium and, at the same time, to respond to the reform of ecclesiastical studies of Philosophy of the Congregation for Catholic education. To this purpose, a common program of four semesters has been established to create the study program of the ISPSH, in relation to the programs proposed by these two magisterial documents. Thus, candidates for clerics are allowed to validate the maximum of teaching units which enable them to apply later to theological studies. In this way, they also have the opportunity to choose between a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and another one in Education Sciences by the time they reach the 5th and 6th semesters. The ISPSH Don Bosco is in good terms with the accreditation and recognition of diploma institutions in Togo and throughout the sub-region. Thus, in the 21st Colloquium on Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas held at the Gaston Berger University of San Luis, from December 08 to 12 2003, CAMES awarded the recognition and equivalence of the DEUG of Philosophy and Social Sciences to the ISPSH Don Bosco. At the 22nd Colloquium on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas, held in Abidjan, from December 05 to 10 2005, CAMES awarded the Recognition and Equivalence of the Diploma of Fundamental Degree in Philosophy and the Diploma of Fundamental Degree in Education Sciences to the ISPSH Don Bosco. About a decade of training that reaches degree, there is the need for training at a higher level (mastery). The demand arises from both religious and lay communities.

Because of this, on the report of the academic director of the Institute, the LIII meeting of the Provincial Council, held from January 8 to 11, 2007, in Gbodjomé (Togo), was approved the creation of a master's degree in Philosophy and another in Education Sciences.

Since the academic period 2006-2007 (starts in October), the ISPSH Don Bosco inaugurated the professional master in Education Sciences and Training, with a specialization in Education Sciences, Design, Management and Evaluation of Educational Projects for developing countries.

In the period 2007-2008, the ISPSH Don Bosco opened the master's degree in SHS Research, Philosophy, with a specialization in Philosophy of Development.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Investigation of Togo granted its recognition to both masters by means of two decrees:

- Decree N° 063/MESR/SG of April 29, 2010 “that grants the recognition of the Master in Research in Philosophy of the Development to the ISPSH Don Bosco”.
- Decree N° 064/MESR/SG of April 29, 2010 “that grants the recognition of the professional master in Education Sciences to the ISPSH Don Bosco”.

In May 2012, CAMES issued a favorable new for the recognition of both diplomas.

According to the research carried out by the Board of Directors and the Scientific and Pedagogical Council, there is the need to expand our offers in view of diversifying them. From the needs on the ground, the offer is the Social Communication. In the letter of May 7, 2014, addressed to the Board of Directors and the Scientific and Pedagogical Council, following the demand made in the sense of creating a new specialization, the Provincial Council of the AFO authorized the creation of the career of Sciences and Communication Techniques. After three years, this offer, in its double specialty (production and multimedia/creation and multimedia production, and communication and public relations), is in the experimental phase.

Since the 2015-2016 academic period, there were meetings with director of the career to finish doing the programming and assign the teachers, especially as regards the 5th and 6th semesters. After these works, the file was constituted and was sent to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Togo, for the corresponding recognition. Several reflections are underway to continue the diversification of the educational offer and to take advantage of the infrastructures built after three years.

As an institution of higher education, the ISPSH is an academic community composed of teachers, students, administrative and maintenance personnel, inserted in a common institutional project. By its Salesian University identity, the ISPSH Don Bosco has the duty to promote, with the Salesian style and spirit, in a rigorous and critical way the development of the human person and the cultural heritage of the Togolese society and the sub-region, the teaching, research and services offered to the local, national and international community.

ISPSH, like IUS, serves the community by generating knowledge and resources for scientific, social, professional and cultural development; in the same way, by following its statutes, it contributes to the welfare of the society, guaranteeing a better living standard through the dialogic search for the truth.

According to the IUS identity document, ISPSH “is an institution of Christian inspiration, with a Catholic and Salesian nature” (N° 14), with an educational-pastoral purpose in “harmony with the church and its evangelizing mission”. As an institution of higher education, it produces and promotes a Catholic culture, open to social dialogue in a pluralistic, ecumenical and interfaith manner.

The ISPSH strives to promote the integration of knowledge, the relationship between faith and reason, as well as ethical/moral concern. By its Christian inspiration, it represents a vision of the

world and of the human being rooted in the Gospel of Christ and in tune with it. It must be expressed in a reflective, systematic and critical way in education, research and the social project.

The values of the Salesian spirit and pedagogy, originated on the preventive system lived by Don Bosco, define and differentiate the practical life of our institute by the priority option in favor of young people of any social class; an integrated relationship between culture, science, education and evangelization, professionalism and integrality of life (reason and religion); a community experience based on the presence with a spirit of family, along with teachers and administrative staff for the students with an educational style marked by the *amorevolezza* (Identity No. 17).

From the management of the ISPSH Don Bosco, some important points are detached and can be summarized as follows:

- There is the necessary institutional documentation: institutional project, strategic plan, operational plan, management guide, etc.
- Team of teachers and qualified administrative personnel. There are seven full-time teachers.
- The quality of the institute is recognized in the Lomé context.
- Diplomas are recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education and CAMES (African and Malagasy Congress for Higher Education).
- The Institute is the only establishment that offers a training in philosophy for the religious in the country.
- The diversity of students: cultural, linguistic, charismatic and different nationalities. There are 22 institutes of religious life that send their candidates to the ISPSH.
- The environment is familiar. Interpersonal relationships are positive.
- Registration fees are accessible.
- Infrastructure is sufficient.

- The Institute maintains a periodic publication: “Mosaïque” (Mosaic) as well as the publication of the students: “Itinéraire” (Itinerary).

Despite these strengths, it must be stressed that several challenges are presented to the ISPSH Don Bosco. They are synthesized in these terms:

- Economic autonomy. Although the institute becomes autonomous on the basis of operational income, it must seek the financial resources in other sources for the academic development: update of the library, access to digital media, technological improvement, support for teacher training and research projects. In the present context, the Institute depends financially on the contribution of the religious communities that study there (Philosophy).
- Development of the Institute. We aspire to a serious study that takes into account the demand of the professional market, the possible fields of professional insertion, the sectors of the population with possibility of payment, the policies of the State, the accessibility to the Institute, the analysis of the academic offers from other institutes. This study should be carried out from an educational-pastoral perspective to find as Salesians in which fields we can contribute with our contribution to the training of professionals for the country and the region.
- Teachers. We must motivate and provide training spaces for part-time teachers to undertake the institute’s formative project. Thus, the high number of teachers who provide an hourly service will be able to personalize the Salesian style, values and spirit. In addition, the possibility of having fewer teachers and having more hours of courses is being studied.
- As an academic community We are left to reflect and develop the formative model of the Institute. The elaboration of the

educational model is an important component of our proposal of integral formation that explains and inspires the principles of humanist, Christian and Salesian vision, the learning theories and methods, the methodologies and necessary didactic resources (CdR, 213).

The educational model grants the pedagogical identity of an institution and defines its specific and formative contribution (“Salesian education”).

Conclusion

We can conclude by saying that this article has allowed us to explore the possibilities of the IUS of Africa. The Catholic character, the Christian inspiration and the charitable dimension define the IUS, and the IUS of Africa are not apart from these characteristics. Therefore, we have been able to know the opening process of every IUS in Africa. If Luanda and Tomé have undertaken their installation processes in the framework of the Africa project in order to respond to certain needs of the time among young people, Maputo has arrived earlier. In either case, what can be noted is that the Salesians have taken seriously the juvenile issue and have taken steps to respond to some of their concerns involved in training. Being in its beginnings, the IUS of Africa develop offers of quality and impregnate, in its organization and operation, African values inspired by the preventive system of Don Bosco.

We can see that the IUS make great efforts to root themselves, but it is no less true that they are facing several challenges, and some of them are common to the three IUS of Africa; these include financial autonomy, IUS development and teacher training. The permanence or not of the IUS of Africa depends on these three common challenges because if they cannot become self-sufficient, they cannot be developed either, and the permanence of the IUS

will be questioned. Other challenges are specific, such as institutional consolidation, specialization in certain offers, greater openness to the laymen, improved services for students and the entire academic community, etc. If the IUS of Africa want to support themselves like the IUS of other continents, it will be necessary to work much and above all, to commit themselves to work on the charismatic identity of the non Salesian teachers, to involve the Salesians in Higher education and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

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Salesian Polytechnic (Salesio) Tokyo (Japan) and the IUS-EAO Project of partnership with Don Bosco Technical College Mandaluyong (Philippines)

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Introduction

In the short but significant 20-year history of the IUS, it can easily be seen that there has been sustained improvement in the world of Salesian Higher Education. In fact, during this period, the number of Salesian Higher Education Institutions across the globe, has really exploded. New Institutions are regularly bursting into life in various countries. It was in 1934 that the first Salesian institute for higher education was founded. But it has only been in the last two decades that the number of those institutions, and the number of students has increased along with the ever increasing complexity of the organization. This was due to the impact caused by a gigantic launch that relies in all on the Charism of Don Bosco in Higher Education as applied to the 21st century. However, even though all these institutions were faithful to and aligned with the fidelity in the Charism there was no combined path for dealing

with the difficulties which in reality, all institutions encounter in the often unfriendly environment provided by Higher Education in the modern world. IUS, in the most highly and worthwhile way, brought the Salesian Higher Education Institutions around the globe together to share their weaknesses and strengths and join forces, not only in the most spiritual way following the Charism, but also in the most concrete way by operating with qualified human resources throughout its policies and action plans.

The IUS-Engineering group which was admitted to the IUS in the General Assembly of 2003, was one of the first three groups together with the Education Group and the Pastoral Ministry Group.

Salesian Polytechnic, during the course of its history, has revealed in the stability of its Educational Principles, Objectives and Targets along with efforts to achieve the objectives of the IUS network.

IUS-Engineering Group held its conference at Salesian Polytechnic in Tokyo in 2005. The established prominent common program was revised at that conference, it was what inspired the synergy of the IUS operations, systematized in the Action Plan. The most prominent and concrete result of that synergy was a “Study Tour Exchange Program” organized between the Salesian Polytechnic in Tokyo and Don Bosco Technical College Mandaluyong in Manila. Throughout the early years of IUS-EAO development, this program has effectively built on the foundations of our successful cooperation, which has now been in existence for twelve years.

In the General assembly of 2016 it was officially decided that the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Japan would form a new group within the IUS organization termed the IUS-EAO. Following that decision, a first conference of the IUS-EAO was held at the Tokyo Salesian Polytechnic in April of 2017.

A summary of the History of Salesian Polytechnic

1933	Venerable Fr. Cimatti, began preparations for the school's founding
1934	The Salesian Society founded the Tokyo Imperial-Metropolitan Trade School, with permission to set up a Printing Department
1935	Opening of the school.
1938	Woodcraft Department was established
1940	The institution was renamed as the Imperial-Metropolitan Ikuei School
1942	Classified as a first class industrial school, and renamed as Imperial-Metropolitan Ikuei Industrial School
1947	Succeeded changes into the Japanese school system Establishment of the Imperial-Metropolitan Ikuei Middle School
1948	Imperial-Metropolitan Ikuei Industrial High School was established
1949	Electrical Department was established
1951	Renamed as Educational Corporation "Teito Ikuei Gakuin"
1955	Destruction of the main building by a fire
1956	Reconstruction of the main building
1960	The institution was renamed as the Ikuei Industrial High School and Ikuei Junior High School
1962	Ikuei Technical College was authorized for establishment
1963	Renamed as Educational Corporation 'Ikuei Gakuin' Opening of Ikuei Technical College, composing three departments: Printing, Electrical Engineering and Industrial Design
1965	The Technical High School was closed
1967	Renamed the Industrial Design Department
1975	The Printing Department was renamed as the Graphic Communication Engineering Department
1978	The Graphic research building was completed
1985	Pre-technical studies building and new library were completed The 50th anniversary was celebrated
1988	A Computer Center was established The College became a co-educational institution
1990	Electronics & Communication and Computer Science and Technology Departments were established Salesian Polytechnic accomplished the number of five departments
1993	First female students graduated
1994	Post-graduate program for Graphic and Design begun

1995	Department Combined Class System for 1st and 2nd year students was introduced
1997	Changes on the Department names: Graphic Communication Engineering was renamed as the Visual Information Department Engineering and Industrial Design was renamed as the Art and Design Engineering
1998	Salesian Intercultural and Technological Center (SITEC) was completed
2001	The Advanced Course in Production System Engineering was established
2003	First students from the Advanced Course graduate
2005	Ikuei Technical College was renamed as Salesian Polytechnic (Salesio) The Visual Information Engineering Department was closed Salesian Polytechnic relocated from Suginami to the new Machida Campus. IUS Engineering Group Conference was held in Tokyo Salesian Polytechnic First overseas study trip (to KOREA) for the 4th year students was conducted
2006	An agreement for Academic exchange of credits with Tama Art University, Soka University, and Tokyo University of Technology was established A Fund Raising Project to support basic educational research programs was started The 7 th and Former President Fr. Hendrix (sdb) received "The Order of the Sacred Treasure" from the Emperor for recognition of his achievements in the field of education
2007	Machida City assigned Salesian Polytechnic as an area for evacuation in case of natural disaster Salesian Polytechnic signed an exchange agreement with Don Bosco Technical College, Mandaluyong (Philippines), as an IUS project The Salesian team received an award at the 20 th NHK (Japan Broad Casting Corporation) Robot Contest Grand Prix
2008	The Electronics Department was renamed as the Machine and Electronics Department Salesian Polytechnic underwent the assessment as a Higher Professional School by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation
2009	Salesian Polytechnic was accredited as a Technical College by National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation The Art & Design Engineering Department was renamed as the Art & Design Department
2010	75 th anniversary celebration of the founding of Ikuei Gakuen (Salesian Polytechnic) took place The relic of Don Bosco arrived in Japan and was brought to Salesian Polytechnic After March 11 th , the Great East Japan Earthquake, a Crisis Management System was established in the institution
2012	A memorial service remembering the late principal Father Hendrickx took place
2013	An external evaluation was held under the command of the headquarters of self-evaluations in Japan Successfully approved in a propriety examination for the implementation status of the institution's advanced courses program
2015	Salesian Polytechnic was accredited with an Evaluation and Accreditation - The Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE)
2016	Salesian Polytechnic hosted the first IUS-EAO conference in Tokyo.

Salesian Polytechnic (Salesio) Departments

- (AC) Department of Advanced Course
- (AD) Department of Art and Design
- (EE) Department of Electrical Engineering
- (ME) Department of Mechanical and Electronic Engineering
- (CS) Department of Computer Science and Technology

Salesian Polytechnic Educational Principle, Objectives and Targets

Educational Principles

In 1985, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Ikuei Technical College, the institution

seized the opportunity to define and summarize its educational principles with the following three mottoes.

Loving Kindness

An education based on the Christian spirit and the Catholic Mission; God, through His eternal love, planned and created the existence of each one of us. And even now, with unchanged love, He watches over and guides us during each unique and irreplaceable day of our lives. From day to day, we are called to carry out the noble mission of realizing God's loving plan. It is what indeed gives true meaning to our lives.

Human Technology

A fully-rounded education that covers cultural as well as technical subjects. Our God-given mission can be achieved especially by acquiring a higher level of technology. Technology, whether it

becomes an instrument for good or evil, truly depends on our personalities. We learn technology to bring many people happiness, not for waging war or to pollute the environment. Our goal, as people blessed by God's divine love, is to make use of technology to contribute to the happiness of our fellow Japanese, the people of Asia and all the inhabitants on earth.

Living Truth

A practical and theoretical education that nurtures creative and inquiring minds. In order to realize our love of others through technology, we also need to acquire a broad, culturally deep education. Only then we can use our skills in a truly productive way. School is a place of learning the truth, and truth, for a student who seeks it humbly, is the pathway to an infinitely profound and rich life. Teachers and students should humbly help and encourage one another on the road that leads to truth. This is why our aim is always to build a better learning community, to help us all rise together in humanity.

Descriptions of Principles

Principles 1 and 3 are quoted directly from the New Testament. Principle 1 is grounded on the phrase in John 4, 7: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." As we aim at "Technologies which bring happiness to the human race" we have a faith that as God loves everyone, we are able to bring happiness to mankind by exploiting technologies provided by God.

Principle 2 is based on the words of Niwa Yasujiro (1893-1975), the Japanese inventor of (photo-telegraphic transmission), who believed that technology should be employed to influence the

furtherance of the lives of the people who used it. This is in accordance with Christianity's most important teaching, expressed in Matthew 22.39 as "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Thus a prodigious pioneering engineer tells us that we who study and create technology must use it sincerely for the benefit of our fellow human beings - to love our neighbors, as the Bible instructs us. This is also our faith that we base our Principles on in order to obtain "Technologies which bring happiness to mankind."

Principle 3 is based on the phrase in John 3.21: "But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God's name." God shows the path for those who explore the truth through education. Based on the faith that exploring the truth will enhance the human race intellectually and spirituality, we acquire "technologies which bring happiness to human beings" and we honor the spirit of improvement.

Educational Objectives

Spiritual Foundation:

In order to train and develop skilled technicians, who will have a moral, humanistic outlook based on Christian spirituality, Salesian Polytechnic applies the following educational objectives:

- Provide technical training to an advanced level in arts and science specialties
- Train and develop talented people able to be active in the international community
- Encourage students to develop creative personalities, and be eager to take on the challenges of society

Our main objective is that of our founder St. John Bosco - to provide wholesome and practical vocational training for young people that will enable them to become worthwhile members of

society. We train our students to contribute to society through technology. They do this, not in the public eye, but by working in all the many essential but unseen technical roles needed to support society. The Bible speaks of “the salt of the earth”- our contribution is like that of rock salt, hidden but working to support and enrich the land. As well as a practical technical education, we give our students an international outlook based in the concepts and policies of IUS. Our educational policy is what St. John Bosco described as “assistenza”- to work and live closely with our students, to see the world from their point of view in order to give proper advice and assistance.

Educational Aims for the Technical College

The educational goals of a technical college are to educate practical engineers, which is achieved after 5 years of technical courses, and also to produce I + D engineers which is achieved after a further 2 years of advanced courses. In order to conduct our educational objectives, of producing practical engineers, the Salesian Polytechnic has the following organizational and educational aims:

- Fundamental technical knowledge and skills relevant to their specialty
- Practical development of skills in order to realize their ideas
- Written and spoken communication skills to logically and effectively express themselves
- Individuals able to contribute to society through technology based on a moral and ethical outlook
- Individuals who can act as members of the international community

Educational Aims for the Advanced Courses

In advanced courses, based on the fundamental skills obtained as practical engineers, we aim to deepen those fundamental

skills, as well as to train engineers with I + D capabilities, based on their experiences applied directly to special areas of research and I + D. The following are the essential qualities required for such engineers:

- Ability of creative knowledge upon fundamental technical knowledge through special research activities
- Ability of creative R&D skills, through advanced R&D activities in areas of higher specialties levels
- Ability of practical communication skills, through writing articles, presenting reports, and conducting presentations with QAs, at academic meetings
- Cultivate humanities through education
- Acquire internationalism through presenting R&D reports at international academic meetings

Salesian Polytechnic Symbols, Logo, Seal and Emblem

The symbol of the Salesian Polytechnic is based on three elements: the cross, light and stars. The cross symbolizes our position as a Catholic mission college in Japan, providing an education based on the “Preventive System of Education” of Don Bosco.

Light comes from the description of creation in Genesis: “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw it and it was good.” Light is the first thing that God created, a magnificent thing indeed. What comes to mind when you hear the word “light”? Brightness, hope, dreams, love, future, warmth, the sun, happiness, youth, life.... God saw the light and said that it was good. Our hope and prayer is that all Salesian Polytechnic graduates will go on to become shining beacons of light in society, living lives that are worthy in the eyes of God and of society.

The three stars symbolize our three mottos: Loving Kindness, Human Technology and Living Truth. They are shown rising into the endless sky, just as our students and staff constantly look upward, facing challenges, growing and developing. Stars delight the eye, guide the voyager across desert or sea, and comfort the sorrowing. Starlight, unlike the burning light of the sun, is something we can all aspire to. We pray that our instructors, our students and our graduates will all place great importance on their personal development, striving to become stars that illuminate society.

The school color, blue, is the blue of youth. As well as studying, we hope our students will enjoy the precious years of their youth, participating in the many sports programs, extra-curricular activities and events like the School Festival and the Robot Contest and club activities. This is the distinctive feature of youth - a delight in tackling each challenge as it presents itself.

Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

Stimulated by the synergy of the IUS Frame of Reference and the Common Program, Salesian Polytechnic in 2007 took a step forward, and applied for Evaluations and Accreditations.

Of enormous significance is the Evaluation and Accreditation of Colleges of technology set by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE). NIAD-QE is certified as an evaluation and accreditation organization of universities, colleges of technology and graduate law schools by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). NIAD-QE establishes different standards and methodologies for universities, colleges of technology and graduate law schools, based upon how it conducts evaluations.

Additionally, in 2015 Salesian Polytechnic was accredited with an exceptionally relevant Evaluation and Accreditation which is the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE). JABEE implements evaluation, in cooperation with members from academic societies of engineering, agriculture and science, for professional education programs in higher education institutions. JABEE accredits education programs with JABEE Accreditation Criteria in accordance with the concept of international frameworks such as the Washington Accord to ensure international equivalency. JABEE respects the originality of education programs and avoids imposing prototype educational methods. Each education program submits self-review report with benchmark required by the society, defining the profile of professionals to be fostered and demonstrating that the learning outcomes have been achieved. Based on its self-review report documented by the education programs, JABEE evaluates in accordance with publicized Accreditation Criteria. The improvement of education through PDCA cycle is evaluated as it is required for education institution to be continuously improving.

The Polytechnic conformed with the Standards for the Establishment of Colleges of technology as well other relevant laws and regulations and was successful in achieving the approval.

Most of the relevant aspects and some of the good practices required by the review committee were identified with IUS Policies and the Common Program already applied in the Institution. For instance, evaluation of educational activities of our individual academic staff by annually quantifying in the 3 items, “List of work achievements”, “List of character evaluation”, and “Action plan report”.

The teaching of problem-extraction and problem-solving methods in “Engineering Design I-II” in the first year of the diploma courses, and especially, teaching Value Engineering methods in problem-solving, which not only encourages the creativity students have, but also enhances that creativity, therefore they can naturally

generate innovative solutions by conducting activities based on the different methods.

Assessment as high employment rate (the number of students employed divided by the number of students seeking employment after graduation) for both the associate and diploma courses, with students employed in work places matching the profile of engineers, the College fosters for example, manufacturing, information and communication, and the service to industry.

Also, an extremely high rate of students advancing to further education (the number of students advancing to further education divided by the number of students wishing to advance to further education) for both the associate and diploma courses. With students advancing to the diploma courses at colleges of technology or undergraduate and graduate courses in the fields at universities that are related to their courses or majors. Consequently, this has seen the development of Substantial Career Education Programs organized by the institution Career Center, such as summer seminars for all grades, various guidance seminars throughout the academic year, as well as Interviews concerning career development.

Continuous efforts on class improvement implemented at the individual academic staff level, operating the Salesian Polytechnic Management System, based on results of class evaluation surveys by students, and also continuous improvement performed in each department, have been successful tools.

With the determinative application of IUS network, an extremely positive point is the distinctive effort to cultivate “Internationalism”, which is the Salesian Polytechnic educational objective, through exchange of students by executing educational and academic exchange with Don Bosco Technical College Mandaluyong in the Philippines and the participation of faculties in organizational conferences to maintain the IUS network.

IUS-EAO Study Tour Exchange Program, its origins, aims and development

As previously mentioned, in 2005 the IUS Engineering group conference was held in Tokyo Salesian Polytechnic. Succeeding the progress of the frame of reference and common program enhanced in the conference, in September of 2006, Tokyo Salesian Polytechnic and Don Bosco Technical College, Mandaluyong after having considered the potential and having developed the idea for a physical development started a first joint project. The core of the project consisted of giving a contribution in the form of qualified technical formation with an international expansion. Furthermore, to students' personal development as citizens and professionals, anticipating that their future involvement in society would be responsible in order to respond to the demands and needs of the market, to produce changes and development in society itself.

There would be many reasons for electing DBTC, Mandaluyong as a partner for the project. Predominantly, was the difficulty of communication with other member institutions. By that time most IUS colleges and universities used as tool of communication Spanish or Portuguese Language. For Salesio the domain of those languages was close to unmanageable. Therefore, to develop a program with an institution which communicates through Spanish or Portuguese would be unviable for most of our faculty members or students. Additionally, with the variety of languages in Asia, English would be a common language to the countries in the Continent. Followed by a detailed preparation a program having English language as a base was born among Salesio and DBTC.

As a secondary matter, the geographical distance between Japan and the Philippines would be a major factor which could facilitate the program. Among the IUS members the Philippine is the nearest country to Japan. It takes about 4 hours by air plane to travel between those two countries. In the case of any inconve-

nience with any student or faculty, it would be possible to reach the country and give the necessary support. The distance would also be viable to the concretely development of the project. Having in mind that Japan culturally would have the project prepared in the minimum details and with all the assurances to success, that element would be an important factor to facilitate the expansion of the project.

Thirdly, relating with the other IUS members, despite the fact of many cultural and historical differences the Philippines was deemed the most appropriate member to start a cooperative project with. That was a paramount factor in facilitating the expansion of the project.

In October of 2006 the first group of DBTC visited Salesian Polytechnic. This first group was formed by 5 students and 2 faculties. From the second year we were able to increase the number of students to 10 and faculty members to 3.

A common interest among the two institutions was the solar car project, which through many years was well settled and developed in Salesio. The solar car project had its starts in 1992. In 1996, Salesio had for the first time its solar car participating in the “world solar challenge in Australia”. In 2004 Salesio participated in the “Athens Solar Car Race” for the first time. Ensuring this common interest and Salesio having the experience and technology on the subject, faculties and students of DBTC, expressed their interest in obtaining knowledge concerning Salesio’s solar car project. In 2007, Salesio entered the “World Solar Challenge in Australia” once more. That fact provided the two institutions IUS project with a possibility to make an evolution to a more practical and experimental dimension. Salesio invited two faculties of DBTC to participate as members of the team on the “World Solar Challenge in Australia”. As members of an international team, Don Bosco Technical College were provided with the possibility of sharing a great experience

in Australia, acquiring the necessary knowledge to perhaps start a similar project in Don Bosco Technical College.

The first step on the occasion of DBTC's visit to Japan or on the occasion of Salesio's visit to the Philippines, was to organize short lectures on technical fields and to approach themes such as solar power system, engine, battery, as well as other matters concerning solar energy. For this project Salesio faculties and students were forced to go out of their comfort zone and introduce their research papers in English. Thus it was possible to observe that the Educational System even if having its base in two different cultures there was a common plug, the Preventive System of Don Bosco. Through this experience the System was proven to be more than we hoped for the formation of the youth of modern times.

On the occasion of the visit from the Philippines, working out a win-win system, students from the Philippines participated in English classes, giving Japanese students the possibility of practicing the English language. As well on the visit from Japan DBTC would have provided English classes for the Japanese students. The classes are based on the students centered method. Japanese students would have the requirement of doing some preparation, for English is not their native language. Nevertheless, in class both Japanese and Filipino students would introduce themselves, their culture and their field of study.

The program includes visits to industrial factories, research facilities and a cultural experience with cultural and historical tours in both countries. For the program in the school other than the technical and English or Japanese classes, students can experience for example in Japan, flower arrangement (Ikebana), dressing in a Kimono and Kyogen (a Japanese traditional comical theater). Filipino students are furnished with a certificate of accomplishment of a training, cultural exchange program in Japan. It actually makes an enormous difference in their hunt for jobs after concluding the cour-

se. For the Japanese students an extremely positive point would be the fact of through the spirituality in a catholic country, they could possibly have a deep and concrete contact with Christianity.

Regarding the faculties, in the case of the DBTC faculties, they would have the opportunity to approach different fields of research technology development. In the case of the Salesio faculties, they would have the opportunity and at the same time the challenge of presenting their research field in English to faculties and students on the occasion of Salesio’s visit to the Philippines. It was a possibility to open the horizon of the faculties, a factor which could have an affect towards expanding their personal teaching methods.

DBTC Students and Faculties – Participants in the Project

	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	
Students	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	5	104
Faculties	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	25

Salesian Polytechnic Students and Faculties – Participants in the Project

	12	1	1	10	9	78	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	
AC	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	8
AD	0	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	4	26
EE	0	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	24
ME/EC	0	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	22
CS	0	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	2	4	3	2	29
	0	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	109
Faculties	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	39

Salesian Faculties Presentations at DBTC

2014 (Academic year of 2013)

Dr. Noriko HYODO, Associate Professor: “Computer Algebra”

2015 (Academic year of 2014)

Dr. Tetsuya SHIMIZU, Assistant Professor: “Quantum Cryptography as well as Media Art”

2016 (Academic year of 2015)

Dr. Toma MIYATA, Associate Professor: “A Study on Design Method of Variable Digital Filters”

Dr. Tatsuki Otsubo, Associate Professor: “Accuracy of Three-Dimensional shape Measurement using a Triangulation Method Sensor with Optical Skid”

Professor Luis MARQUES, Associate Professor: “Theoretical foundations of Vocational and Technical Education and the Part Played in the Process of State Building”

2017 (Academic year of 2016)

Dr. Harumi KAWAMURA, Associate Professor:” Estimating illuminant colors in an image based on Gray World Assumption”

Professor Luis MARQUES, Nitobe Inazo “Bushido: The Soul of Japan” and its Revelation for Western Society”

Throughout these twelve years of project a hundred and nine students from each country could participate in the project and potentially those students had a life changing experience, and could

enrich their curriculum vitae. Many DBTC students by having participated in an exchange program in Japan could find job placement in Japanese companies in the Philippines. Many Salesio students getting to experience a different social situation affirm they increased social knowledge and horizons have widened towards openness to a more international society.

It would be possible to affirm that these twelve years of continuity with the project brought students, faculties and both institutions many positive outcomes in countless aspects. Those positive results enriched not only the technical and professional level, but also the personal level giving strengths to their future work environment.

We could correspondingly observe that with the project all the institution's Principals and Objectives are perfectly taken to their realization.

Considering the future there is the aspiration of both institutions to achieve a more academic exchange development. As well as include other IUS-EAO institutions in the project. Considering objectively, a first step towards that new objective, we are looking forwards the accomplishment of the Solar Energy Seminar, which is programed to be held at Salesian Polytechnic in March of 2019.

First East-Asia Oceania Regional Conference (EAO)

During the occasion of the General assembly of 2016 it was officially decided that the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Japan would form a new group within the IUS organization entitled the IUS-EAO. Following that decision, the first East-Asia Oceania Regional Conference was organized under the care of Salesian Polytechnic in Tokyo in April of 2017.

Configuration of the IUS-EAO Conference and its participants

In that first conference with the presence of the General Coordinator of IUS, Fr. Marcelo Farfán, we have deepened our acquaintances personally and among institutions. We have also shared what could be our strengths and weaknesses, nevertheless not misplacing the focus on the IUS Policies and the Youth Ministry Frame of Reference worldwide.

The IUS Policies are constituted in lines of government for the animation of IUS for the next years, and are the fundamental reference to ensure the identity and mission of our institutions. Therefore, we have reviewed and reflected those policies as well the implementation of the ministry model indicated in the Frame of Reference of the Salesian Youth Ministry. Each of the IUS members within its own Institutional Project or operational plans was entrusted to work out those policies that they consider to be priorities according to their own stated objectives.

As a Regional Conference we reflected and defined a specific Common Program and strategic lines of work. Centered on those reflections, we hoped to be engaging in the common program which creatively envisioned the future possible directions of IUS-EAO. It was also an opportunity of meeting different faculties with diverse fields of research and establishing or deepening contacts.

IUS-EAO Proposals for the Document on University Ministry

It was necessary to include a Glossary of Terms and meaning of acronyms used of different concepts such as: University, pastoral, institutes of Higher Education, institutional project and pedagogy.

In our perspective, it is vital that the document underlines that the Salesian model of youth ministry should permeate the entire university. It must be taken into account that in many universities the pastoral only works with spiritual topics.

It is worthy that the document emphasizes groups within the university. It is indicated as an important strategy under a social experience dimension.

IUS-EAO Common Program (2017-2019)

Salesian Polytechnic, Tokyo. 25 April 2017 Objectives	Lines of Action	In-charge
1. To assure ownership and involvement of IUS at Provincial level	1.1. Bring IUS and IUS-EAO documents, policies and programs to the level of the Provincial and his Council	IUS-EAO Coordinator IUS members in every institution
2. To institutionalize processes in our IUS's	2.1. Work on making an Institutional Project for each IUS and share existing studies and institutional projects made 2.2. Monitoring of the progress of the Institutional Project	Management Team for each IUS in coordination with Provincial and Youth Ministry Delegate of the Province IUS-EAO Coordinator
3. To initiate exchange programs among IUS in EAO	3.1. Short Course on Solar Energy by Salesio 3.2. Extend student exchange programs made by Salesio with other IUS.	Salesio, Tokyo Salesio, Tokyo IUS-EAO Coordinator

Solar Energy Seminar

Salesian Polytechnic has acquired a large length of research in many aspects regarding the field of Solar Energy. Taking in consideration that element, it has been proposed as part of the Common Program which was defined during the First East-Asia Oceania Re-

gional Conference to entrust the organization of a short course on the topic of Solar Energy for all IUS-EAO member institutions.

For the realization of this proposal, a committee from Salesian Polytechnic made a trip to the Philippines to visit DBTC Mandaluyong and DBTC Cebu, in order to acquire knowledge of the expectations and needs of those institutions regarding Solar Energy. It was also in program a trip to Papua as well, however it was not possible to be realized. Therefore, as regards Papua institutions was made an enquiry throughout e-mail.

As members of that committee together with the Salesian Polytechnic Principal and a member of the International Exchange Center, went as well to the Philippines two professors whose field of research is applied to Solar Energy: Dr. Hironobu Yonemori and Dr. Yasutaka Ikumi.

The Solar Energy Seminar is planned to be held at Salesian Polytechnic during the period between 6th and 9th of March, 2019.

Following on from the Solar Energy Seminar, one the first approaches will be to work towards the academic development among IUS-EAO. For this proposal each member institution will be tasked with carrying out research concerning the reality of solar energy in their specific countries. Taking in consideration their strengths and weaknesses a second approach will be writing an academic paper applying the findings from their research.

The following step would be to gather all the research papers and use them to write a more complete paper concerning all the countries and their solar energy matters. Salesian Polytechnic has all the means to achieve a positive outcome for research and publication. Moreover, links with other researchers and companies, which are active with solar energy. A joint research paper among IUS-EAO Institutions, other universities and companies already

has created the base for the realization process and development. Such a project would be started with academics; however, the final outcome would be to involve the youth of our institutions in order to develop the formation of the youth as well the expansion of the project itself for a greater future.

Finally, IUS-EAO group, based on the fidelity in the Charism of Don Bosco, within only few years of history has acquired and developed its practices with inspirations and motivations towards the future and the formation of the youth aiming the formation of the person as a whole.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Members of the IUS

	PAÍS	INSPECTORÍA	IUS	PÁGINA WEB
AMÉRICA	ARGENTINA	ARN	Instituto Superior Don Bosco, Profesorado en Filosofía (Rosario) Tecnatura Superior en Electrónica	www.donboscosarios.com.ar/
		ARN	Facultad Don Bosco de Enología y ciencias de la alimentación, (Rodeo del Medio- Maipú-Mendoza) Tecnatura Superior Escuela Vitivinícola Don Bosco	www.donboscorodeo.edu.ar
		ARN	Instituto Salesiano Pio X - Nivel Superior (Córdoba)	www.piox.edu.ar
		ARS	Instituto Superior Juan XXIII, (Bahía Blanca)	www.juan23.edu.ar
		ARS	Universidad Salesiana Argentina UNISAL (Bahía Blanca)	www.unisal.edu.ar
		ARS	Instituto Superior de Estudios Teológicos (ISET) (Almagro-Buenos Aires)	https://www.facebook.com/ISET.SalesianosArgentina
		ARS	Profesorado Don Bosco (Almagro-Buenos Aires)	http://profesorado.piox.edu.ar/
		ARS	Profesorado Santa Catalina, (Buenos Aires)	https://www.facebook.com/Profesorado-de-Educaci%C3%B3n-Inicial-y-Primaria-Santa-Catalina-462957167078106/
		ARS	Instituto Salesiano de Estudios Superiores P. Miguel Bonucelli (Río Grande)	secretariasiseg@gmail.com
		ARS	Instituto Salesiano de Estudios Superiores (Río Gallegos)	https://www.salesiano.edu.ar/presentacion/ Facebook ISES Río Gallegos @ISESRG
		BOLIVIA	Universidad Salesiana de Bolivia (La Paz)	http://www.salesiana.edu.bo/
		BRASIL	BBH	Centro Universitario Católico de Vitória
BBH	Universidade Católica de Brasília (UCB) –UBEC-		www.ucb.br	
BBH	Centro Universitário do Leste de Minas Gerais – UNILESTE (Campus Ipatinga y Coronel Fabriciano) -UBEC-		https://www.unileste.edu.br/	
BBH	Faculdade Católica do Tocantins (FACTO) –UBEC-		http://www.catalica-to.edu.br/portal/	

			Universidade Católica Dom Bosco (UCDB) (Campo Grande)	www.ucdb.br
	BCG		Centro Universitario Católico Salesiano Auxilium – UniSalesiano (Araçatuba e Lins)	www.unisalesiano.edu.br
	BCG		Faculdade Salesiana de Santa Teresa (Corumbá)	http://www.fsst.com.br/SII/ptj/portal/index.php
	BMA		Faculdade Salesiana Dom Bosco (FSDB) (Manaus)	www.fsd.edu.br
	BPA		Faculdade Dom Bosco (Porto Alegre)	www.faculdaadedombosco.net
	BSP		Centro Universitario Salesiano de Sao Paulo (UNISAL) (Lapa, Sta Terezinha, Lorena, Campinas (campus Liceo y San José), Americana (Campus Ma. Auxiliadora y Don Bosco), Piracicaba.	www.unisal.br
	BRE		Faculdade Salesiana do Nordeste (FASNE) (Recife)	www.faculdaadesalesianarecife.edu.br
	COB	COLOMBIA	Fundación Universitaria Salesiana (Bogotá)	
	CAM	EL SALVADOR	Universidad Don Bosco (UDB) (San Salvador)	www.uodb.edu.sv
	CAM	GUATEMALA	Universidad Mesoamericana (UMA) (Ciudad de Guatemala, Quetzaltenango)	www.umes.edu.gt
	CIL	CHILE	Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez (UCSH) (Santiago)	www.ucsh.cl
	ECU	ECUADOR	Universidad Politécnica Salesiana (UPS) (Cuenca, Quitto, Guayaquil)	www.ups.edu.ec
	MEM	MEXICO	Universidad Salesiana (UNISAL) (Ciudad de México)	www.universidadsalesiana.edu.mx www.unisal.edu.mx
	MOZ	MOZAMBIQUE	Instituto Superior Dom Bosco (ISDB) (Maputo)	www.isdb.ac.mz
	AFO	TOGO	Institut Supérieur de Philosophie et de Sciences Humaines "Don Bosco" (ISPISH) (Lomé)	www.ispshblome.com
	ANG	ANGOLA	Instituto Superior Dom Bosco (ISDB) (Luanda)	isdb.secretaria.angola@gmail.com
	CEC	REP. CHECA	Vyšší odborná škola sociálně pedagogická a teologická JABOK (Praga)	http://www.jabok.cz
	INE	ITALIA	Istituto Universitario Salesiano Venezia - IUSVE, (Messina, Verona)	http://www.iusve.it/
		ÁFRICA		
		EUROPA		

INDIA	Don Bosco College of Teacher Education (Dimapur)	www.scdimapuri.org
INDIA	Don Bosco College-Arts, Commerce & Science- (Maram)	http://www.dbcmaram.com/
INDIA	Don Bosco College -Arts & Science- (Itanagar)	www.dbcitanagar.com
INDIA	Bosco Institute, Jorhat - MSW Course- (Jorhat)	www.boscoinstitute.org
INDIA	Don Bosco College –Arts-(Kohima)	www.dbckohima.ac.in
INDIA	Don Bosco College -Arts & Commerce- (Golaghat)	www.dbcgolaghat.com
INDIA	SIGA Polytechnic College, (Chennai)	www.sigaindia.com
INDIA	Don Bosco College of Arts and Science (Karailal)	www.dbckarailal.org
INDIA	Don Bosco Polytechnic College (Thirukazhukundram)	www.donboscopolytechnic.com
INDIA	Don Bosco College (Yelagiri Hills)	www.dbcyelagiri.edu.in
INDIA	Don Bosco Agriculture Diploma and Degree College (Sageyathottam)	www.dbcasagayathottam.org
INDIA	Sacred Heart College (Tirupattur)	www.shctpr.edu
INDIA	Don Bosco College (Dharmapuri)	http://www.dbcdharmapuri.com/
INDIA	Don Bosco College of Education (Dharmapuri)	http://dbcedharmapuri.com/
INDIA	St.Mary's College of Education, (Vellore)	www.stmarysbedkatpadi.com
INDIA	Don Bosco Polytechnic College (Basin Bridge)	www.dbtechcampus.ac.in
INDIA	Don Bosco Arts and Design (Kilpauk)	www.dbcad.edu.in https://www.facebook.com/pg/DBCADchemai/about/?ref=page_internal
INDIA	Don Bosco College of Engineering (Fatorda)	www.dbcegoa.ac.in
INDIA	Don Bosco College (Panjim)	www.donbosco.goa.ac.in
INDIA	Don Bosco College of Agriculture (Suborna-Goa)	www.donboscocollegeofagriculture.com

Abbreviations

CdR	(Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry)
EPC	(Educative and Pastoral Community)
CVI	(Online course IUS)
YMD	(Youth Ministry Department)
GIRH	(Integral Management of Human Resources)
IUS	(Salesian Institutions of Higher Education) ¹
OP	(Recommendations for the Pastoral in the IUS)
SEPP	(Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project)

1 Initially the acronym IUS was used to signify “Salesian University Institutions”. Since the VII General Assembly of the IUS (2016) it was decided to keep the same acronym, but it means “Salesian Institutions of Higher Education”.

The Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) need to generate a university culture that is the result not only of the experience, but especially of the analysis about how to do higher education. The main point of this challenge is to deepen on the relationship between the Salesian charisma and the university world. The IUS want to be an educational project inspired by the values of the gospel and by the Salesian pedagogy originated from the Preventive System lived by Don Bosco. IUS pretend to be characterized by being academic communities that educate, unified around an institutional project defined to the service of young people, especially of popular classes, with a clear educational-pastoral purpose. We recognize that we still do not have a Salesian tradition in the university world, but because of that, the responsibility of these first generations of Salesians and laymen committed to higher education is very important. Therefore, this publication aims to contribute to the reflection and deepening of the identity and mission of the Salesian presence in higher education, from experiences in different parts of the world and from the process developed in the IUS during these last two decades.

