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Lasallian Educational  
Innovation

## Introduction

It will soon be three centuries since the Conduct of Christian Schools was published. This text had a very great influence on the Institute. In fact, it gave it a trademark easily recognisable from the traditional images we have of the Brothers: dedicated schoolmasters, serious pedagogues, organisers of schools where all was ordered in the smallest detail, where time and space were allocated on a rational basis. And there was a lot of truth in this.

However, the image of the Institute cannot be reduced to these few clichés indicative of a good reputation. All the more so as, for the last forty years, we have tried to understand ourselves better by studying the origins of the Institute and the thinking of the Founder more thoroughly. We have done this in a spirit of creative fidelity and openness to new educational needs.

It was in this same spirit that the Secretariat for the Lasallian Educational Mission, responding to the call of the General Chapter of 2000, decided to concentrate its attention on Lasallian Educational Innovation in the year 2003. Its intention is not primarily to accelerate the pace of making innovations in the Districts, but rather to assess what has been done in this connection over the last 10 or 15 years in the Institute as a whole. Its intention is also to help Partners, Brothers and communities evaluate what they have done and what they could do, by offering a number of documents to help reflection.

In this connection, the Secretariat for the Lasallian Educational Mission has taken a number of practical steps:

1. In June 2002, it asked Brother Visitors for a list of new educational initiatives undertaken in the District in the previous 10 to 15 years, and which the District recognised as truly reflecting the Lasallian spirit for the present age. Forty Districts from 5 continents responded to this

appeal.

2. Next, 190 places where there were initiatives were contacted through the Institute. They were sent a qualitative questionnaire prepared by a team of educational researchers.

3. Eighty usable answers were sent in to us in September 2002. They constitute the "data-base" – a term that will be used in the rest of this text.

4. This database was passed on to 2 experts at the National Institute of Pedagogical Research in Paris who were asked to undertake a comparative scientific analysis of the material. These experts work mostly for the OCDE. At the end of 2003, they will turn in the results of their analysis, and their work will be the object of a Lasallian Educational Mission Bulletin.

At the same time, some educational teams have been asked to prepare long articles for future issues of the MEL Bulletins. The articles will deal in particular with the following topics: the children's emergency telephone line in Australia; the mobile classrooms for gypsy children in France; the San Miguel School system in the USA; the "Perla" educational project in the Lasallian Region of Latin America.

It is within the framework of Lasallian innovation that the MEL Secretariat gives its support.

## A great vitality

The material in the database describing the initiatives that have been undertaken in the last few years can be listed under 6 headings. Clearly this will not be a complete list of what has been done, but we can include only what has been sent to us:

### 1. Accompaniment and formation of young people

- Centres for street children (Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, Pakistan, Great Britain, Thailand...)
- Local centres in town districts (Brazil, Spain, France, USA, Sri Lanka...)
- Tutoring centres (USA, Spain...)
- Handicapped (Malta, Rwanda, France, India, Egypt, Poland...)
- Help for families, teenage mothers (India, Australia, Ireland...)
- Accompaniment of young delinquents (USA, France, Italy, Australia...)
- Accompaniment of drug addicts (Spain, Italy, Quebec, Colombia...)
- Study and Leisure centres (Quebec, France...)
- Service for migrants (Spain, Quebec, France, Belgium, Italy, USA, New Zealand...)
- Development of international relations (Mexico, Spain, France, Philippines, Colombia, Great Britain...)
- Formation in affective life (Cameroon, Malta, Colombia...)
- Centres for the promotion of justice (USA, Sri Lanka, Spain...)

### 2. Creation of

- Educational centres for children who have abandoned

school (Ivory Coast, Conakry, Togo, Brazil, France, Great Britain, Eritrea...)

- Primary and middle schools (Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Argentina, Egypt, Turkey...)

- Technical training centres for young people (Vietnam, Brazil, Argentine, Guinea, Kenya, Portugal, Camerouns, Chad, Niger, Djibouti, Congo-Kinshasa, Spain...)

- Technical training centres for adults (Togo, Madagascar, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Eritrea...)

- Educational networks (USA, Panama, Argentina, Togo, Nicaragua...)

- Universities (Spain, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, USA, Indonesia, Philippines, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Palestine...)

- Evening courses (Colombia, Mexico, Italy, Haiti, Ecuador, Peru...)

### **3. Diffusion of**

- Teaching methods (Colombia, Spain, France, Argentina, Mexico)

- Works, didactic materials (USA, Spain, Peru, Argentina, Camerouns, Colombia...)

### **4. Adult training**

- Training of catechists (Guinea, Sudan, Argentina, Haiti, Cuba, Pakistan...)

- Training of teachers (Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Kenya, Rwanda, Colombia, Mexico, Peru...)

- Training prison teaching staff (Brazil...)

- Running base communities (Argentina, Brazil...)

- Training headmasters and educational board members (USA, Spain, France, Argentina...)

- Lasallian formation (Italy, France, Argentina, Spain, USA, Australia, Philippines, Colombia, Belgium, Egypt, Lebanon...)

- Training of young teachers (France, Spain, USA...)
- Training of Lasallian volunteers (Mexico, Philippines, USA, France...)

### **5. Promotion of spirituality**

- Spirituality centres (Ireland, Great Britain, Spain, Quebec, France, Sri Lanka, Australia, Switzerland, Brazil, Venezuela...)

### **6. Promotion and preservation of culture**

- Training and promotional centres (Panama, Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Australia, Camerouns, Turkey, Palestine, France...)

This list of initiatives is far from being exhaustive. There are others which have not been indicated. They exist in particular in educational establishments and, using them as a base, they serve the community as a whole over a wide area.

The study of this database enables us to offer a number of ideas regarding Lasallian educational innovation and its present-day characteristics. This study is based on the database received, but the ideas that follow can be of great help also to the initiatives undertaken within more traditional structures which are also characterised by great dynamism. This study can help to create a means of self-assessment of innovation, which can be used both in normal and in special educational conditions.

## **Two approaches**

The database shows that two approaches are adopted in creating Lasallian initiatives: an institutional approach and a personal approach.

- Institutional. These initiatives are usually the implementation of Chapter propositions, chosen by the District Council or by an ad hoc committee. Conse-

quently, the approach here is to try to set something up which will be in line with the chapter proposition, whose aims are known, in the light of which means and structures are chosen, and the effects and results of which are foreseen. Normally all this takes place in a context of what is known and predictable: a pre-established educational policy is implemented.

- Personal. These initiatives are the result of a personal wish and have as their priority the service of others. A need has been perceived as a result of a meeting, or of some circumstance. A subsequent discussion with another, leads to the conclusion that it is possible to do something together. This marks the beginning of a process of which the probable stages and possible results are foreseen, but they are not certain. The relations of the partners are more important than the establishment of structures.

Evidently, with time, the two approaches merge but without ever ceasing to be distinct. In fact, the origin of the initiative continues to be important and to play a preponderant role in the subsequent way in which things are done, because the initial insights contain the seeds of future life. In this connection, experience teaches us that an initiative has a better chance of becoming an innovation if it originates in persons rather than in the planning of an institutional body, whether a Chapter or a District Council. We shall see later why.

### The two areas in which initiatives take place

The database reveals also that the two usual areas in which Lasallian initiatives take place are: accompaniment and formation of young people and adults, providing cultural promotion on the human, spiritual and Christian level.

It is instructive, in fact, to run through the descriptive titles and the texts, because it soon becomes clear that the

Institute is more concerned with people than with structures. It is persons who are targeted in their concrete cultural situations through structures. They are the inspiration of the initiative which perhaps may become an innovation. This is important. Contrary to the image conveyed by our imagination and that of our close friends (the Brothers, schoolmasters, teachers exemplifying order, discipline, conscientiousness...), it is not above all concern for a priori goals such as knowledge, culture, civic duties, etc., which inspire us, but the precise needs of people we meet and live with. It is persons in need which inspire us to act. An analysis of the database shows that the aims we set ourselves are the following, in order of importance:

1. The knowledge of young people/adults, their family cultural and religious background.
2. their human, spiritual, Christian promotion.
3. then knowledge, concern with teaching approaches and methodology.
4. lastly, the establishment of service structures.

## Concern with structures

Obviously, it's not that simple.

Especially as our Institute has a very marked character trait: concern with structures. There's nothing we can do about it: it's like that. We need to remember that it was born in France in a century marked by analysis, debate, the search for rules. Moreover, our function as teachers –we contributed greatly to giving it status– has given rise in our social group to a certain proclivity to analysis, to the establishment of structures, to rapid and ready-made educational responses because they have been tested, and are trusted and effective.

The database as it stands does not reveal much hesitation in the search and implementation of responses to needs.



Everything works as if our collective experience of 300 years had taught us to respond with already known educational and methodological structures. It is perhaps only the new school networks concerned with education for poorer people and local social centres, that avoid more easily the risk of resorting to what is already known.

## Partners

In addition, we have such a characteristic educational approach that it is sometimes difficult for us to adjust to structures we did not organise ourselves. We can, of course, but it calls for a special effort. In fact we have a need to organise relations, space, time, programmes, processes in terms of our educational vision - a vision characterised by a permanent desire to respond to two needs:

- those of the young person/adult in the here and now, as he is, with his culture, his environment, his values, his desire to live his life now...
- and those of the young person/adult as he will be in 5 or 10 years' time, active in society by his relational, professional and religious involvement.

Our desire to respond is always directed to these two moments: today and tomorrow, and our structures also try to respond to their needs. In the case of conflicting interests, we always opt for tomorrow. Our educational vision is projective: it helps young people/adults imagine a future and to set in motion a process to attain it.

That is perhaps why it is sometimes difficult for us to work in local or social centres which quite legitimately adopt different educational approaches. But when we agree to do so, we come into contact with a different set of needs, different ways of establishing contact, different ways of understanding expectations. We find ourselves back in school, but we are no longer teaching. At this point, we become true part-

ners in a reciprocity of approaches and means.

The database teaches us also that when the promoters of the initiative decide to take as their starting point unusual educational presuppositions (for example: service for State school teachers, the principles of popular education, the promotion of local culture, bilingualism, inter-religious dialogue, children rejected by the educational system, awareness of the ethnic mixture of a population...) we are capable of regenerating ourselves. Through dialogue with new partners who throw us off balance, and with their help, we can think of different educational approaches which will also renew us.

## Mobility

When we are faced with an educational need, and we see a possibility of human, cultural, Christian promotion, our first reaction is to imagine a remedy, a structure. It's the way we think. It has its value, of course, but it sometimes cuts down dialogue, deep understanding, shared research, a negotiated choice of methods and means.

This can be seen in the database: there is little analysis of searching around, few errors or key moments of the initiative; and yet it is the analysis of these things that can reveal the true intentions of the promoters, and confirms the real need, expressed initially in approximate terms.

We are justified in asking ourselves whether, as Brothers and Partners, we study sufficiently the needs of those we meet, whether we understand them essentially. This takes time, patience, and always a certain cultural mobility if we are to put at risk mentally and spiritually something of ourselves.

The most significant innovations all come as a result of mental, and sometimes, physical mobility; from mobility towards a population, a culture, another way of seeing, of

reacting, of functioning. Mobility which respects others, their differences; a mobility which disorientates. John Baptist de La Salle understood this; and the Lasallian founding act lies there, first of all and in great part: it is at the origin of all the rest of our sacred history.

A reading of the whole database is very revealing in this respect.

Some database accounts go directly from the analysed need to the setting up of operational structures. Others, on the contrary, give a glimpse of the searching around during the analysis, and of the hesitation in choosing an option to follow: they spend time describing the initial bubbling of the melting-pot of ideas. On the one hand, we see an almost mechanical process, a little cold; on the other, a more personal attitude, a commitment. The difference is radical: it has to do with passion-inspired involvement and risk-taking.

Here, we touch on the profound meaning of Lasallian innovation which has marked our Institute history.

## **Innovating in a Lasallian way**

While initiatives seek to respond to problems perceived and analysed as part of a planning process whose results are foreseeable, innovations commit different persons to a process in which they are prepared to put themselves at risk without being able to define all the factors in advance. The keyword is not control. What is involved is setting out with others, confronting other value systems on the way, coming into contact, in ourselves and in others, with what is essential, to the point that we accept to reorder our reasons for living, our attitudes in our contact with others who are different socially, culturally and religiously. Innovation implies a risk of being altered and changed. It calls for openness, time, an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Where innovation comes about in new surroundings, or

finds its way into a traditional educational structure, the results are never the same.

Innovation, therefore, is an initiative which produces something new in terms of relations, procedures, understanding and, in the last resort, of structures. It is not simply an adaptation to a new situation, but a different way of seeing reality, of relating to it, of allowing oneself to be transformed by this new relationship. In a word, innovation alters as much people as their way of creating society.

An examination of the database shows this clearly. This is particularly true of certain accounts which touch on the sensitivity and emotions of the people concerned. And then one can see how much of themselves they have invested in the innovation; that they have put themselves at risk, that they have risked their own credibility; that they have rethought –at no little cost– their commitments as human beings, Christians, religious and as Brothers. For them, the experience was not an experiment, or a way of testing the validity of an educational or pedagogical insight. For them, it meant answering an interior call, a call to a deep personal coherence, requiring them to confront their beliefs, to confront their desire to live, their personal liberty, in the light of their lives and of their model, the Institute.

## **Innovation that breaks down barriers**

This is particularly noticeable in innovations resulting from encounters with the poor. In these cases contact occurs at a very intimate level. A great interior awakening takes place, and a new founding impetus is generated. Database accounts express this experience in excited and jubilant language. At that point one understands that the innovators have discovered the original source of the Lasallian charism and that they are drawing on it. And suddenly, everything becomes clear: it's as if the innovators discover they are contemporaries of John Baptist de La Salle; his texts are re-

vealed in all their brilliance (the Conduct, ministry, spirit of faith, spirit of zeal, association for service); his practices take on meaning (presence of God, being present from morning till night, vigilance); the dual thrust of human and Christian promotion no longer calls for laborious justification; the three elements of the Lasallian vocation (mission, consecration, community) fall into place as a necessary and natural association.

But you need to have felt the full impact of the shock and the hurt caused by the sight of the poor children left to themselves; or of the distress of the parents incapable of exercising their role as educators; or of the discouragement of the teachers trapped in a profession without meaning; or of the cultural poverty of young people or adults who have got off to a false start in life; or of the loss of a reason for living by ethnic or social groups which are slowly dying.

The database shows clearly that it is these 5 types of situations that shake people most, that break down barriers, and capture the attention of Lasallians and stimulate new expressions of the evangelical charism which is our own.

## **The impact of innovation**

When an initiative becomes an innovation –something you can never predict– it always challenges without wanting to, the educational and ecclesial scene and positions adopted by the District. It is always accompanied by argument and disturbance, because everyone's personal view of life is once again called into question. And the same old well-known pairs of words constantly return:

persons/structures; rich/poor; create/administer; creation/heritage; raised hopes/means to be found; work with our own means/offer our services to other organisations; assume leadership/participate in a general project; have our own houses/work in other people's houses; organise the whole

of the system/make available one or two of our skills...

Innovation always awakens good arguments but also old fears that have never died out. Once again, people are called upon to assess their own values, to assess their human, Christian and religious lives and try, each one at his own level, to open themselves to something new, to new ways of being faithful.

Everywhere we note that innovation is an opportunity for a District. It gives rise to a salutary kind of questioning, which can be irritating, of course, but which cuts across administrative reasoning, necessary for a social body like our own, and makes room for "providential" novelty. I use the word "providential" advisedly, because promoters of innovation, and very often, in their wake, the District Council, thinking prayerfully about how the innovation began and how it gradually got off the ground, and trying to work out the sequence of events, see in them, prudently, the conduct of God. Time is needed, of course, to see things in this light; but our social body is always careful to see things in the light of faith. This is a practice which is in no way fundamentalist: our safeguard has always been community discussion.

Given all this, after a number of years, innovations reveal a typology which is difficult to predict a priori: are they a founding myth or a system that duplicates itself.

- founding myth

In this case, the innovation is seen as a source of inspiration. Brothers, educators come to visit it, ask questions, try to understand. Each one comes and compares his own life and work with the innovation, and looks for new reasons and ways of thinking and acting. It is in this sense that innovation works like a founding myth, enabling people to rediscover their deep motivations and recreate the meaning of their commitment. Those who come into contact with the innovation are inspired by it and go away with new images

in their minds, which will inspire them to try new things in their own schools.

- system

Here, what is striking after a few years is the power of innovation which has become duplicated and turned into a system which has its characteristics and which seems to respond, in different places, to the same problems and concerns.

Sometimes, the system is clearly visible (in the San Miguel Schools in the USA, in the mobile classrooms for gypsies in France, in the teacher-training networks in Togo, Nicaragua, Panama...)

At other times, it is not identifiable (in local school help centres for migrants, in centres for street children...); but observation of the clientele, working hours, organisation, pedagogical practices, style of relations, ways of working with local partners, all this is so similar that one feels that, in fact, these centres follow a system.

There's nothing strange about that.

In fact, educational innovation is inspired in our congregation –as in most educational congregations– on some common presuppositions:

Present day educational researchers say normally that educational innovation depends in 80% of cases on the needs of a place and of the social environment. So much so that they go so far as to think that innovation cannot be duplicated. You can be inspired by it, but it's increasingly difficult to organise it into a system. This is probably true when you see the complexities of situations and of cultural differences.

And yet in the social bodies that educational congregations are, it seems that things do not actually work like that, despite the variety of situations that we encounter. Why is

this so? Because the first reality which concerns us is not where we are, the precise place, the kind of place. The first reality is in ourselves: it lives in us, it moulds us; it is that of a founder, of a sacred history, founding texts, common mythology which influence the way we look, listen, relate to others. And this mythology is a Christian anthropology which gives meaning to the human and cosmic reality which surrounds us.

This is probably the most important patrimony of educational congregations. It enables them to go to the heart of the great educational questions, as long as these congregations remain close to their source. And that is what they have to transmit as a priority to the lay people that join them.

And in this connection, observation of what goes on in several areas of the Institute makes me affirm the following: if we want the Lasallian charism to be understood better and be diffused today, it seems that we have to associate and set in motion several complementary approaches:

- offering biblical studies to nourish a Christian anthropology
- offering a Lasallian formation which establishes direct contact with John Baptist de La Salle
- suggesting a change of mentality to undertake direct educational service of the poor
- encouraging Brothers and/or partners to undertake significant and flexible innovations
- encouraging a fraternal life among the Brothers and/or partners in a variety of new ways.

One could affirm that the renewal and the use of persons and the established presence of the Lasallian movement will take place on the basis more or less of these 5 criteria.

## **Innovation and Institute**

By its history, its tradition and its achievements, the Institute



is a "sociological object" of considerable weight. It is a machine driven by strong convictions with a set of gears which enable the work of the individual to be integrated in the general movement and serve one aim: human, religious and Christian promotion through knowledge and thanks to the preferred means of the school, in whatever form, however.

An outside observer, for example, who reads in succession the texts of our various General and District Chapters could quite safely propose the thesis that the Institute was a "sociological object", heavy, all-inclusive, prudent in the face of change, slow to transform, encumbered by an impressive series of councils which function as so many filters for analysis and decision-making... In fact, this description would not be completely incorrect.

A more refined study made from inside the Institute would reveal another sort of reality more in line with the particular nature of this "sociological object." And this reality is revealed by the process of innovation.

The Institute offers to those who work in it an overall framework which defines the main characteristics of its educational work and its particular thrust. By its permanence in time and its recognised efficacy, this framework functions as a model which provides assurance and makes innovation possible. In fact, for innovation to happen, to dare to happen, it needs to be backed by a context that is sufficiently trustworthy and solid for contradictory debate to take place, and for new initiatives to be compared with others which have been tested. In other words, the "sociological object" must allow as part of the way it functions a certain amount of "leeway" so that new attitudes and behaviour can find their place and modify the system a little. The Institute has this possibility of giving "leeway."

We are, of course, very much aware that, by its nature, the "sociological object" tends to seek permanence and repetition; its nature is to nourish itself on what is known and

foreseeable; this is the law it follows. The Institute, however, is not to be confused with this "sociological object": it is made up of persons personally inspired by their professional and spiritual commitment: they move, evolve, change. And we are made conscious of this in particular by the numerous initiatives taken by Districts, the meetings of the various councils which more or less everywhere examine in detail projects and budgets. Reports on these council meetings are most instructive regarding the capacity of a District to be open to innovation, regarding its spiritual sensitivity in interpreting the signs of the times, and to the renewal of its fidelity. The concern for all this is clearly present in the Institute.

And so Districts, while maintaining an overall, clear and reassuring framework, have to find the right balance which encourages innovation and stimulates a founding spirit: a founding spirit which is essential for the life of the Institute and its mission in the Church.

Why essential?

Because the life of the Brother or of the lay associate is not that of an administrator of education, or of a social worker who quite rightfully earns his living. It is instead the response to a personal call made to a specific person who, within an institutionalised structure has to find his own vocation within the general vocation of the Institute. This point is very important, because it has to do with identity and the building up of a person. We have to become a Brother in our own, particular and unique way. The Institute is a place which can authorise the personal behaviour of an individual who discovers in it a cause which captivates him totally and truly "founds" him. That is why the Institute, like the Church, is not only a "sociological object," but, more profoundly, is a place where identity "which is the source of everything for us" is discovered. It is usually the act of innovation which permits this identification.

## Innovation is founding

Innovation stimulates movement and dialogue: it brings out into the open interests, desires, urgent needs, impatience; it brings to the surface the multiple facets of people's personality, their beliefs, their freedom, their life force, their capacity to risk their lives and to turn their choices into concrete acts. It is a good time for working at a very intimate level –through debate, contradictions, progressive choices– a process which reveals the particular nature of the Brother.

It is a time in which relations, influences, origins, family traditions, formation, professional commitments, spiritual journeys are all thrown into a psycho-spiritual melting-pot out of which will emerge a new synthesis, a clearer commitment, a more solid belonging, fidelity that is at the same time constructed and received.

This founding act creating the person is as essential for the Brother as it is for the body of the Institute. It is the vitality of its members which constitutes the vitality of the Institute. And the Brother who is "founded" refounds in his own way the Institute. It is always very instructive to listen to Brothers (and nowadays, to Lasallian partners) who have "put their life on the line" as well as their identity in a founding innovation. They express always clearly and humbly, and as something evident, their profound conviction that they are reliving the foundation of the Institute today.

All this must induce us to question what our Districts do regarding the formation of both young Brothers and lay persons: how do we cope with their innovations? Between the ages of 28 and 35, have the Brothers been able to develop a personal project which has given consistence and body to their image as a Brother? At least in part, the future of the Institute is at stake here. It is refounded identities which constitute the strength of the Institute: more than organisations and structures, they are today the true image of our presence in the world.

## In conclusion

And so, the database of 80 educational initiatives teaches us:

- The Institute is a place where numerous initiatives take place both within and outside the traditional educational framework.
- Its inventiveness is, as a priority, in the service of the cultural and human promotion of persons, with increasing insistence on social transformation.
- The initiative normally develops along one of two lines:
  - it develops from a Chapter or District Council decision. The danger here is to work towards a known goal, on the basis of known procedures (aims, actions, means, partners).
  - it comes as an inspiration from the meeting of persons who allow themselves to be moved, let their hearts be touched; a process of maturation ensues whose results cannot be predicted.
- In the latter case, there can be the seed of innovation. This will be so if it is genuinely concerned with ways of thinking and the promotion of persons; with the evolution of micro-societies, with their construction of values and their choice of means for collective promotion.
- In this case the risk to cope with is greater, because nothing is sure, and goodwill is not enough: the results of what is done will be seen along the way. Moreover, very often the value of an innovation is not realised: it's not realised as being an innovation.
- This risk lies only at the level of the renewal of persons and the appearance of an emerging new identity.
- Time is essential for the development of a person but also for the integration of the necessary institutional dimension.

- Innovation involves a constant admixture of the vital commitment of persons and the setting up of appropriate structures. The quality of this admixture allows innovation to bear fruit. When the balance is upset, innovation loses its vitality, dies, leaving in its place an outmoded and cumbersome structure, or a new dogmatism.
- The results of innovation must always be re-assessed in the light of the tension between its founding dynamism and newly encountered reality.
- Innovation is necessary for our Institute and for the lay people associated with it. It is at the same time the source of the “foundation” of persons, and of the refoundation of the social body we form. It is innovation which nourishes and diversifies our fidelity.
- The role of those in charge and of structures is to encourage, support, discern. It is also to build up trust.
- The initiators of innovation are always in the field, in contact with reality, at grips with specific people... because one calls to life and “invents through relationship.”

## For sharing

### Working with an educational team

With your educational team you find yourself in a process of innovation:

- Are you able to trace in your daily practice the characteristics described in this text?
- Have you, otherwise, experienced similar characteristics?

### Living in a lasallian community

John Baptist de La Salle went through a “sociological uprooting” in order to fulfill his mission.

- Did your community already go through any sort of uprooting to fulfill its mission? In favor of whom?
- What personal and community improvements derived from such commitment?
- In your opinion, do we need other “uprootings” today?  
Why? Who is to be favored with it? How?

### For personal thinking

Looking over my personal practice as an educator:

- What makes the “foundation” of my identity as a Brother or a Lasallian?
- What personal features of my identity as a Brother or a Lasallian have been enhanced and developed from it?

As I open myself in prayer to the call of God and to the call of the youth in need:

- Do I know my current inner feelings?
- Who is helping me to discern them?
- To be faithful again to whom and why?