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# PERLA

Lasallian Regional  
Educational Project  
for Latin America



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MEL Bulletin

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Lasallian Regional Educational  
Project for Latin America

English translation: Br. John Blease

Brothers of the Christian Schools  
Via Aurelia 476  
00165 Rome, Italy

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## Presentation

With the Institute's General Chapter decisions from 2007, each of the Lasallian Regions has been strengthening and energizing the Lasallian Educational Mission more and more in terms of administrative and organizational structures demanded by the current moment and epoch.

Each Lasallian Region has its own particularities and reality. In each one of them we find strengths and difficulties which we are called to respond to with creative and effective proposals in our Lasallian Educational Mission.

The Lasallian Educational Mission in each Region has learned how to respond to the challenges and realities of the era, with educational proposals adjusted to the needs and realities of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable socially.

This MEL Bulletin shares the new Lasallian Educational Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (PERLA) with us. This program is a Regional and District effort to offer educational responses that respond to the needs and urgencies of the Region and of each country where the Institute is present.

Br. Jorge Enrique Fonseca Sánchez



## Introduction

In the beginning, PERLA was part of a dream.

Latin American Lasallians and those from the Caribbean area, gathered together for the second session of the Seventh Regional Assembly which was held in Fusagasugá, Colombia in February 2001, dreamed of being a *Region of Hope*. Driven by that desire, they committed themselves to *building a RELAL in educational service of the poor, through the construction and implementation of a Lasallian Regional Educational Project for Latin America – PERLA*. From that time on, many Lasallians have contributed to making this dream a reality.

Sharing their hopes, the members of the assembly agreed in recognizing PERLA as:

- an expression of a way to follow Jesus as an educational community in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- an expression of the vision of the educational ministry of Lasallians in the Region;
- the principal means to live association for the educational service of the poor in these countries;
- a unifying project of criteria for the activities of different Lasallian educational communities;
- a common frame of reference for the development of the Lasallian educational ministry in our Districts;
- a privileged space for interdependence;
- an articulated response to educational urgencies.

Starting at that time, the participatory process of constructing this Project began on the part of many people involved in educational ministry in this Region, inspired by the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Once the project was drawn up, PERLA was officially given to the participants at the *Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor* meeting in Conocoto, Ecuador, which was held from June 27 to July 7, 2002. At that meeting, PERLA was proposed as a commitment for Lasallians with a view to developing their educational mission in a spirit of association.

PERLA received a new thrust at the Ninth RELAL Assembly held in Fusagasugá, Colombia in February 2004. Specifically, this assembly urged Lasallians to look for creative responses to the following challenges:

- to respond to the needs of children and young people who are poor on a continent which is structurally unjust;
- to generate processes and spaces that make association in the mission of educational service to the poor viable;
- to work for the recognition of the teaching profession as dignified work;
- to work in participation on the evangelizing pedagogical horizon in the Region.

Faithful to the previous assembly, this one also reaffirmed that PERLA should not be a finished document; on the contrary, it should be considered as a process that can always be improved, capable of being consolidated through the ongoing reflection of Lasallians in the Region. There are five criteria which, from the beginning, have guided the reflection. They are:

1. *Boldness* in seeking the new face by which we Lasallians from Latin America and the Caribbean wish to be recognized.
2. *Attention in serving excluded groups* that are not served on a normal basis.
3. *Being prophetic* in the creation of projects that transform.
4. *Realistic* in response to needs raised by *the Region we wish to be*, as defined by the Eighth RELAL Assembly.
5. *Being generative of a Latin American and Caribbean movement* from inside and outside.

Today, we reaffirm the dynamic nature of PERLA and, as a result, its capability to put us on the right path; rather than a document, it is a movement:

- that seeks to recover and maintain collective “fire”;
- that articulates multiple reflections and actions that are being carried out today;
- that tries to be the reference axis for activities that are pending.

To recognize the driving force that used to be only a dream reminds us that PERLA is still a dream; it is a collective dream. To make it a reality depends not only on the good will of those who exercise leadership in the Region, but also on the generous and responsible support of all persons committed to the Lasallian Educational Mission.

The referential character of PERLA was reaffirmed by the Tenth RELAL Assembly which took place in October 2007 in Rionegro, Antioquia, Colombia. In the document voted on by the Assembly, we find: *Ensure that PERLA is reference point and articulating axis of the Region, made up as a movement that inspires our lives, generates processes and gives us identity as a Region and energized the mission in all educational works for the service of the poor* (Priority 3, LA 1). To be effective, this requires a project review which comes from Districts under the leadership of those in charge of the mission.

This updated version of PERLA takes a further step in its implementation. If it is true that its structure was adjusted, for example in the incorporation of the Horizon, the result of the participatory process, it is also true that other parts of its central content, such as educational urgencies and the transversal axis, were ratified. The programs, for their part, are no longer a section of the Project, due to the fact that one program reached its objectives as in the case of the Horizon and another program came as a result of the closure of SECOLA. The propositions for the rest of these were incorporated into the educational urgencies. Furthermore, as will be explained later on in the appropriate place, new programs will be generated by the corresponding authority.

We trust that PERLA, as a Regional Project, will constitute the reference point for the Lasallian Educational Mission. We trust that, as an inspiring and motivating element, it will generate creative, innovative and bold educational responses for the countries in our Region.

We ask Our Lady of the Star, Saint Joseph, Patron and Protector of this Institute, and Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Founder, to obtain from God for us, the inspiration and the courage to continue making this project a reality.





# 1. Horizon

***We Lasallians, inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and moved by the spirit of faith and zeal, are committed to building the Kingdom of God through the educational mission in Latin America and the Caribbean.***

## **A LOOK AT REALITY**

### **I. Introduction**

The life of Latin American and Caribbean peoples is played out in light and shadow. These peoples are living today in an epoch marked by great changes that affect their lives profoundly; we usually refer to these changes as the phenomenon of *Globalization*. This phenomenon has had its repercussions, both positive and negative ones, in all areas of life.

Fortunately, we observe in the people of the region cultural traditions and characteristics with sufficient vitality, such as the richness of their world view from the perspective of their ethnic diversity, their philosophical-theological thinking, their popular religion, their solidarity and their respect for life.

In the field of education, Latin America and the Caribbean face great challenges. In facing them, the Lasallian Education Proposal attempts to develop all dimensions of the human being, encourage the search for meaning and recover the value of life; in this way, it collaborates actively in the construction of a society that is more just, fraternal and that it is solidarity with others.

## **THE LEGACY OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE**

### **II. The ideal that inspires our journey**

Moved by the spirit and in fidelity to the Founder, we Lasallians from Latin America and the Caribbean discern in the signs of the times the will of God, we update the legacy of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the first community of Brothers that accompanied

him at that foundational moment, and we are involved in our cultures through our options and educational practices.

Within a social context of vertiginous change, we identify in the faces of children, young people and adults educational demands that question our daily activity. Therefore, we recognize that the purpose of the Institute continues to be as challenging now as it was at the time of the Founder. All Lasallians, as an educational community, are called to be the heart, the memory and the guarantor of the charism that gives us identity as Christians and this commits us to give concrete educational responses in order to fight against poverty which, in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, obstruct a great number of children, young people and adults from reaching their integral human development.

## **THE LASALLIAN DREAM IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

In this context of educational urgencies and opportunities, we want to be a *building Region of hope* (Eighth RELAL Assembly).

To make this dream real, we have built this *Horizon*, which tries to be:

- a proposal that guides, unifies and gives meaning to the overall set of actions that we develop;
- a reference point for our mission;
- a look towards the future
- the foundation of PERLA.

## **HORIZON DIMENSIONS**

### **III. Guiding dimensions and principles**

The dimensions that form this horizon are of an anthropological – pedagogical – sociological – cultural and theological – pastoral nature.

## **THE PERSON AS THE CENTER OF FORMATION**

Starting from the Christian view of the person:

- We believe that children, young people and adults who are accompanied by the overall educational community, are the principal ones in charge of their own formation.

- We opt for education centered on the person, that takes into account the integral and harmonic development of each one, with respect for his or her own identity.
- We propose that the targets of our education be freely, actively and responsibly involved in order to contribute to social construction and transformation, starting with formation for a critical and transcendent conscience.
- We seek to respond, together and by association, with boldness and creativity, to the educational urgencies proposed in this project, in ongoing dialogue with our faith and in the heart of our community which feels sent and committed to the human and Christian promotion of all those who seek a horizon for their lives.

### **EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

Keeping in mind the interest the Founder had for the good running of educational centers, the teaching tradition of the Institute and current educational reality:

- We understand teaching and learning as a process of active construction of knowledge and experience that takes place throughout life;
- We encourage research and innovation for the purpose of increasing the quality of the response to new educational challenges;
- We believe that the teacher, along with others, is part of a dynamic educational community that shares projects, tasks and daily concerns, with a clear idea of improving day by day their competence and their educational actions.
- We design and we use methodologies that generate significant learning.
- We promote ongoing and critical reflection of educational practices in order to adapt them to new student learning styles and also to strengthen the importance of the teaching role.

### **PARTICIPANTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

We understand education as a right and as an intentional, systematic, ongoing and integral process that requires co-responsible participation of the participants who make up the educational community:

- children, young people and adults, at their own level of maturity,
- teaching staff as mediators of the learning process,
- the family as the primary educators,
- other members who contribute in various ways.

We recognize that there are other social participants whose influence in the educational process cannot be ignored, such as social networks and means of communication. These participants represent an opportunity to form the critical judgment of those whom we are called to teach.

## **THE COMMUNITY TEACHES AND LEARNS**

The Lasallian Educational Community:

- sees itself as a place of reflection and dialogue that recognizes diversity and encourages observation and the critical study of reality. It also perceives itself as a space of encounter with God through the integration of a faith and culture dialogue in the formation process;
- contributes to forming persons who are committed to work in overcoming the real needs in Latin America and the Caribbean: overcoming poverty, respect and care for nature and the environment, incorporation of indigenous peoples, migrants and the displaced, promoting justice and peace, democratically living together, among other needs;
- senses itself as a companion on the journey in the great community of educators on the continent, diverse in opinion and horizons, but united in the construction of a new democratic citizenry;
- understands itself as an organization in which responsibilities are shared, where administrative processes, financial management are developed and evaluated in order to take care of current demands of the Lasallian Educational Mission as regards Association.

## **CENTRALITY OF JESUS CHRIST**

Jesus Christ, the human face of God and divine face of humankind, is the center and the point of departure of the Lasallian Educational Mission.

## **THE CHURCH: PEOPLE OF GOD-COMMUNION**

The Church: People of God-Communion calls us today to be disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ, the leading figures of the Good News of the Kingdom through the apostolic ministry of education that allows us to renew history.

## **THE VALUES OF THE LASALLIAN STYLE: FAITH, FRATERNITY AND SERVICE**

Inspired by Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers, in communion with the Church, we bring the means of salvation closer to children, young people and adults, especially the poor and excluded, by creating educational communities of varied types and levels, that foster the construction of a world that is more just, fraternal and in solidarity with all. Moved by the spirit of faith and zeal, we share the Lasallian charism among Brothers and lay persons, in order to live today the apostolic ministry of Christian education, as a response to the signs of the times.

As a result, we embody the appropriate educational style through the practice of the faith, fraternity and service.

By faith we recognize one another as children of God. In Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father, we are called to participate in the building of his Kingdom. To accept the faith as a journey of life and hope means an openness of spirit to recognize in daily events the God who walks with us.

The community dimension is constitutive of the human being because God is community. Therefore, as children of God we are brothers and sisters called to build fraternal relationships that recognize the value and dignity of each person. In this sense, fraternity is one of the characteristic elements of the Lasallian educational style.

Faith in God and in persons, lived out in community, is expressed in service. Service, in evangelical and Lasallian terms, involves promoting peace, justice, fraternity, tolerance and solidarity.

The understanding and the practice of these values are enriched by other cultural and religious views. Therefore, welcoming ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism, through authentic interreli-

gious and ecumenical dialogue, makes for better integration and expression of these values in our cultural reality.

## **TRANSFORMING PARTICIPATION**

### **IV. Invitation and commitment**

This horizon calls us as Lasallians of Latin America and the Caribbean to participate, from our own particular vocation and in association, in the transformation of society, through educational service, inspired by the values of the Gospel and aimed especially at those whose rights are limited by social mechanisms of exclusion and who are far from the opportunities of reaching their full realization and salvation.

## 2. Educational urgencies

*In accord with what is highlighted in the section about the Horizon, stated below, we present five educational urgencies, present in the Latin American and Caribbean reality, and to which we wish to respond. They are organized by: needs, objectives and lines of action.*

### 2.1. Democratization of knowledge

*Saint John Baptist de La Salle renewed the school in order to make it accessible to the poor and to offer it to all as a sign of the Kingdom and as a means of salvation. The Christian school, always in need of renewal, is the privileged instrument of the activity of the Brothers. The Institute is also open to other forms of teaching and education adapted to the needs of the era and to countries. (Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 3)*

In a Region that is characterized by unequal extremes of all types, which diminish the opportunities for access to education for the poor, *we need:*

To give direction to Lasallian works with prophetic, transforming and innovative projects and to attend to an unprotected population (street children, illiterates, indigenous peoples, marginalized, women, migrants...)

To take an in-depth look at Lasallian thinking in Latin American high education, extending their fundamental functions to include more critical areas in order to respond to the needs of society, especially those of the poor.

#### **Objectives and Lines of Action:**

1. To give direction to the institutional educational project, from the educational community and in light of the founding charism, in order to guide it towards innovation and social transformation, taking into consideration the needs of the disadvantaged to assure them access to education.



**Lines of action:**

- a) A re-reading of the founding charism, taking as a reference point the context that John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers lived in, and from which they opted for the education of children of artisans and the poor.
  - b) Knowledge and definition of the needs of the subjects (persons and communities), starting from a pertinent and participatory methodology.
  - c) Development of activities that intend to analyze and recreate the institutional educational project in order to respond to contextual needs.
  - d) Implementation of innovative programs that have to do with access to education.
  - e) Participation and effective involvement in local, national and international organs that formulate and implement educational policy.
2. To innovate and encourage practices of Lasallian pedagogy in order to systematize them, critically review them and build up knowledge about them and to make them known. In addition, to support border experiences so that they continue to respond to the updating of our charism and to the spirit of association for the educational service of the poor.

**Lines of action:**

- a) The design, implementation and evaluation of a Lasallian network of communication, for the purpose of providing feedback about and enriching innovative experiences that already exist.
- b) Development of formal and non-formal educational spaces and programs so that communities that are excluded can improve life conditions and be architects of their own destiny.
- c) Generation of new forms of association for the educational service of the poor in an ongoing dynamic of action and reflection.
- d) Positioning of our educational thinking in local, national and international contexts and organs that formulate and implement educational policy.

3. To make known and integrate the PERLA project in all Lasallian educational institutions so that all of them will be part of this Latin American and Caribbean movement.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Creation of a Lasallian educational continuum, sharing programs and strategies in favor of the educational service of the poor.
  - b) Incorporation of PERLA guidelines in the reflection and decisions of various agencies of the mission in Districts and in the Delegation.
4. To develop policies and activities that concretely guide the five substantive university functions: academics, research, finances, policies and systems management in response to the needs of society, especially the poor.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Review of the founding objectives and mission statements of institutions of higher education in order to adapt them to new functions and to the educational service of the poor.
  - b) Implementation of diverse activities that tend to strengthen new academic dynamics, especially that of research in general and social and pedagogical research in particular.
  - c) Strengthening of critical and innovative teaching and favoring the extension option, including the generation of sustainable development projects.
  - d) Boosting university programs designed to care for the needs of persons who are poor and excluded.
  - e) Establishment of ongoing institutional assessment programs that will reduce the gap that exists between mission statements and their implementation.
  - f) Development of ongoing assessment systems for the purpose of weighing the contribution of higher education programs in solving problems of poverty and exclusion as well as their contribution in building up peaceful living together in society and solidarity.
5. To strengthen academic communities with the Lasallian spirit, as regards Association, and commitment to quality, based on the preferential option for the poor, through academic interchange.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Design and application of academic development programs, in accord with the Lasallian spirit.
  - b) Creation of research and reflection teams regarding the commitment to academic quality and the problems of poverty.
  - c) Programs for development and exchange in teacher training and sustainable leadership aimed at overcoming poverty and exclusion.
  - d) Implementation of common research and development projects.
  - e) Production and exchange of Lasallian pedagogical thinking.
  - f) Development of innovative studies that, in institutions of higher education, contribute to processes of evangelization on the social and educational levels.
  - g) Promote Association starting with reflection, sharing and living experiences raised in the context of the Region.
6. To develop strategies of cooperation so that knowledge is accessible to poorer areas as a fundamental axis of their development.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Search for alternative sources of financing that will support students who lack the financial means to enter and remain in the educational system.
  - b) Development of alternative projects of higher education in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as a powerful resource for the evangelization and education of the poor.
  - c) Establishment of alliance policies and openness to other organizations that are in solidarity with the poor.
7. To develop commitments with institutions of higher education in service of the Lasallian educational movement for mutual enrichment.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Establishment of various ongoing activities that will guide university research and outreach services towards the

needs of PERLA and of the personnel linked to the Lasallian educational continuum.

- b) Boost PERLA as a Lasallian movement which includes the institutions of higher education in the Region.
- c) Socialization of PERLA in institutions of higher education with a view to its development, knowledge and subsidies.
- d) Realization of research that supports the objectives of PERLA: new youth cultures and language in the Region, the situation of the rights of the child and young people, catechetical and evangelizing strategies.
- e) Support for Lasallian institutions through the creation of useful methodologies and materials within the pedagogical process as a result of research projects.
- f) Design and promotion of virtual education for Latin American and Caribbean teachers.

## 2.2. New technology

*The use of computers is becoming increasingly important. Our concern for solidarity and interdependence, in order to provide a better educational service for the poor, should lead us to find practical ways of helping the poor to have access to modern means of communication.*

*In the face of new needs of Districts and Regions, it is necessary to increase solidarity and interdependence within the Institute.*

*The Institute, spread as it is across the world, has the means to develop a communications network which will enable it to publicize its achievements, its initiatives, its values and its formation programs for Brothers, Partners and students. This network should make it possible to exchange knowledge, expertise and research.*

*(Documents of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter, page 69)*

In a Region that has many areas with limited access to information by means of new technology, thus creating a breach that moves the means of integration even further away from those sectors to a society based on knowledge, we need:

To clarify our intentions and the role of technology in an educational project that starts from the poor and incorporates new technology in service of them.

To create processes and agencies to strengthen intercommunication among persons, services and goods between the different Districts and the Delegation, between works and persons who are committed in them, as well as the use of different technological means of communication and information.

**Objectives and Lines of Action:**

1. To develop initiatives for the acquiring of technology tools and expertise in new technology, for the purpose of optimizing their potential.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Selection of different strategies for acquiring new technology, in accord with the possibilities of each District or Delegation.
  - b) Use of new technology in a rational manner, respectful of traditional cultures, critical and humanizing in terms of the new evangelization.
  - c) Enabling personnel in the use of new technology, especially clean technology, using criteria highlighted in the previous line of action.
2. To design quality programs that will allow access to the use of new technology for the poor.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Implementation of quality programs and projects using new technology in service of the needy.
  - b) Formulation of a District or Institutional Educational Program aimed at the use of technology with the participation of a variety of persons, principally the poor.
3. To generate in the Region interactive networks, for the communication of creative experiences and human resources that will enrich the lives of Lasallians, thereby assuring an active and referential presence in the world of education.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Development of programs that generate synergies and promote the implementation of the PERLA project.
- b) Making known significant experiences, through available means in Districts, the Region and the Institute.

- c) Exchange of persons to strengthen association for the educational service of the poor, using various programs.
- d) Active participation in local, national and international agencies related to education, as well as a presence in the means of communication.
- e) Creation of a communications platform that will allow for the exchange of persons in the Lasallian Educational Mission.

### 2.3. Quality education

*The educational policies of Lasallian institutions are centered on the young, adapted to the times in which they live, and designed to prepare them to take their place in society. These institutions are characterized by the determination to make the means of salvation available to young people through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ (Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 13).*

*The Founder understood early on that the spiritual education of the Brothers involved attention to their professional formation: they could not "proclaim the Gospel" through their ministry unless they were competent and qualified ministers. The Founder was concerned, then, about their technical preparation (Sauvage and Campos, Proclaiming the Gospel to the Poor, page 226).*

*In light of the fact that many find themselves excluded, the Church should encourage quality education for all, both formal and non-formal, especially for the very poor. An education that offers to children, young people and adults an encounter with the cultural values of their own country, while discovering or integrating in them the transcendent and religious dimension (Aparecida Document, 334)*

In a Region that has scarcely begun to cover educational service at even the basic level, but without guaranteeing or achieving quality education; and that, with few exceptions, the important social role of the teaching profession is neglected, we need:

To define the criteria to assess the quality of our educational centers in light of Lasallian values and international standards, as well as the possibility of being evaluated by outside organizations.

To recognize teachers as important agents of change and to make their formation a priority.

**Objectives and Lines of Action:**

1. To produce a flexible model of evaluation that takes into account Lasallian criteria, the needs of the poor and international standards of quality.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Study of national and international accreditation systems that will serve as a point of reference.
  - b) Establishment of assessment parameters of academic quality, that will make the promotion of those excluded from society a privileged task.
  - c) Definition of assessment indicators, with Lasallian educational criteria, starting from the review of various teaching practices in our works.
  - d) Evaluation of works, by means of accrediting agencies using international standards.
2. To promote educational quality among Lasallian teachers as regards Association.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Drawing up and implementing formation programs on the District level, open ones or distance ones, for the personnel that work in Lasallian institutions, with the support of institutions of higher education throughout the Region.
  - b) Establishment of communications networks with the District or Delegation and the Region in order to make known educational experiences and pedagogical and didactic tools.
  - c) Promotion of agencies and spaces that will allow teachers to produce and generate pedagogical knowledge.
3. To promote the dignity of the teaching profession.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Strengthening of the Lasallian movement in favor of the dignity of the Latin American and Caribbean teaching profession that will identify us in the Region.

- b) Drawing up of a social, cultural and economic diagnostic tool that will provide a full account of the situation of the teaching profession in our countries.
- c) Raising public awareness and influence concerning educational policy in order to increase the appreciation for the teaching vocation and to improve teaching and working conditions.
- d) Strengthening and development of mechanisms and structures which, along with other institutions and organizations, will contribute to raising the dignity of the teaching profession.

## 2.4. Education in and based on the promotion of sustainable human development

*And how can we remain indifferent to the prospect of an ecological crisis which is making vast areas of our planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity? Or by the problems of peace, so often threatened by the spectre of catastrophic wars? Or by contempt for the fundamental human rights of so many people, especially children? Countless are the emergencies to which every Christian heart must be sensitive (John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte, 51)*

In a Region rich in natural resources, but threatened by the negative impact of abusive and negligent exploitation, *we need:*

To promote processes that have humanizing development as their axis for a sustainable society (financially doable, socially just, respectful of the environment, attentive to the culture of peoples...) that will confront the negative effects of globalization and generate alternatives for development.

### **Objectives and Lines of Action:**

1. To favor educational environments that encourage the living out of the ethical dimension of the Gospel and coherence to personal attitudes so that they translate into a commitment in favor of sustainable human development in all its forms.

### **Lines of action:**

- a) Review of the communication processes used with young people so that they are more meaningful.



- b) Reaching out to youth culture for a deeper understanding of their concerns.
  - c) Encouraging young people to participate in volunteer programs aimed at caring for the environment and protecting life especially benefitting the poor.
  - d) Review of the profile of the graduate in terms of the formation offered in Lasallian educational institutions for the purpose of a commitment to sustainable human development.
  - e) Special attention to new family forms that are emerging in the Region and their integration in the educational process.
2. To promote the emergence of projects that have humanizing development as their axis for a sustainable society.

**Lines of action:**

- a) Generating environments and processes that provide significant practices for a better quality of life and the exercise of democratic citizenry.
- b) Contact with local, national and international organizations that work in favor of sustainable development, starting from concrete projects for mutual support.
- c) Development of activities that integrate the popular wisdom of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of sustainable development for the construction of a new civilization.

## 2.5. Education in and based on respect for Human Rights, especially as regards children and young people

*The Lasallian educational mission should concentrate on children whose rights are not protected (Documents of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter, page 26)*

In a Region characterized by little esteem for the rights of its inhabitants and the growing number and the variety of violations to them, especially in the more vulnerable areas of the population, *we need:*

To encourage processes and projects that have as their axis the defense of the rights of the child and young people, as our contri-

bution to the defense of human rights and the strengthening of families.

### **Objectives and Lines of Action:**

1. To generate processes that will create awareness of the situations of victims of injustice, violence, abuse and exploitation, especially among children and young people, with the objective of promoting a culture of human rights.

#### **Lines of action:**

- a) Studies on pertinent legislation in terms of the rights of children and young people.
  - b) Promotion of the rights of children and young people through seminars, colloquiums, talks, workshops, conferences and publications for teachers, parents and the surrounding community.
  - c) Participation and involvement in organizations that promote and defend human rights, especially of children and young people.
  - d) Development of formation plans, at all levels, that will help to articulate the focus on rights.
  - e) Development, in all Lasallian works, of activities that report injustices, on all levels of social life.
  - f) Review of our mission statements, rules, organizational details, handbooks, in light of human rights, especially those of children and young people.
2. To promote initiatives that provide more and better care for children and young people who are at risk in our Region.

#### **Lines of action:**

- a) Study the situation of children and young people in each country of our Region, with support from our institutions of higher education.
- b) Discernment and a definition of activities and experiences of educational services in favor of children and young people who are at risk.
- c) Search for outreach programs and agreements with other institutions and organizations who have provided service for children and young people who are at risk.

- d) Promotion, on the Regional, District and Delegation levels, of educational observatories for the rights of the child and of the young in Latin America and the Caribbean as a strategy for analysis, managements, intervention, formation and research regarding said rights.

### 3. The proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ PERLA's transversal axis

***With the joy of faith, we are missionaries who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and, in Him, the good news of human dignity, life, the family, work, science and solidarity with creation*** (Aparecida Document, 103).

The proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a fundamental dimension of PERLA and its transversal axis. From the time of our origins, the Founder and the first Brothers made the school a means of salvation, where the proclamation of the Gospel occupied a central place. Today, as Lasallians in Latin American and the Caribbean, we are called to be protagonists of the Good News of the Gospel through our educational mission.

To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the current context of Latin American and the Caribbean means:

- To recognize the “seeds of the Word” present in the traditions and cultures of our people.
- To consider Jesus Christ as the plenitude of God’s revelation, an estimable treasure, the precious pearl (Mark 13: 45-46), the Word of God made flesh, the way, the truth and the life for men and women, for whom a life journey is fully opened.
- To confirm, renew and revitalize the newness of the Gospel rooted in our history, from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, who calls forth disciples and missionaries of his Kingdom, protagonists of new life for Latin American and the Caribbean.
- To promote the relationship between faith and life in personal, community and socio-cultural settings.
- To live in the Church as the good Samaritan, enlightened by Christ (Luke 10: 25-37), through the imperative of becoming neighbors of the poor, migrants and the excluded.

ed, who today are not only “exploited” but “surplus” and “disposable” (Aparecida Document, 65).

- To report situations that are incompatible with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- To appreciate Sacred Scripture as the privileged means of an encounter with Jesus Christ, especially through *Lectio Divina*.
- To plan diversified formative journeys, respectful of personal, community and cultural processes, that are gradual and ongoing.
- To form communities, inspired in the teaching of Jesus, that make visible love and fraternity (John 13: 35), in a reality that is more and more pluralistic, through the promotion of justice, fraternity, reconciliation and solidarity.
- To consider children, the favored of the Kingdom of God, as targets of our priority actions, especially keeping in mind their vulnerability.

To this, the following lines of action are proposed:

- a) Development of policies so that educational agencies will ensure that all institutions are co-responsible for the proclamation of the Gospel and are involved in this important mission.
- b) Exchange of innovative results of evangelization in Districts and the Delegation of the Region.
- c) Forming missionary groups to support needy areas.
- d) Formation of reflection and interiorization teams who, in association, will promote Lasallian spirituality.
- e) Incorporation of the culture of each nation and of youth culture in the various educational programs.
- f) Critical evaluation of pastoral ministry educational activity, in order to be aware of the motivating factors, methodology, achievements, targets and purposes.
- g) Evaluation of all educational and apostolic actions to give them evangelical meaning.
- h) Implementation of programs that make explicit and clear, in an organized and precise way, the process for growth in the faith

on the part of all those who participate in the educational community, keeping in mind:

- Faith education, starting from an awareness of reality, with a critical look at and considering the diversity of the cultures in the Region, the inter-relationship between faith and culture, the integration of faith and life, and faith as a journey.
- Education in ethical values from a Christian perspective.
- Understanding of the Christian mystery.
- Integration of communities.
- Youth pastoral ministry and the pastoral ministry of vocations.
- Commissioning for a mission in the educational service of the poor.
- Celebration of the faith.
- Formation for the transformation and liberation of persons and, therefore, social reality.



## 4. Programs

***New responses for the Mission to new realities. The International Assembly of 2006 has been moved by the new realities that today strongly confront the Lasallian Mission and challenge us to create new responses*** (Report of the 2006 International Assembly, page 34).

The design of programs to respond to the urgencies presented previously is the responsibility of each District and Delegation. This responsibility constitutes an opportunity for local initiatives and creativity. The nature and the outreach of said programs should reflect the appropriate context of the District and the Delegation.

Nevertheless, this does not rule out the possibility that the Regional Mission Assembly, once it has established priorities, may propose some common programs, which could be ratified by the Regional Conference of Visitors.

It is recommended that there be ample communication in the Region to exchange experiences and share the results of best practices.

Two programs are essential to ensure the overall planned process; they are:

### **Ongoing Programs:**

#### **4.1. Communication in service of PERLA**

##### **Objectives:**

1. To make use of existing spaces and agencies and to create other ones for the exchange of the most successful experiences of each District and Delegation in order to facilitate their replication.
2. To organize a regional network for sharing ideas and resources, and to strengthen our identity as teachers in service of the poor.
3. To provide incentives for innovative educational initiatives that best respond to educational urgencies identified by PERLA.



4. To contribute to the development and the spread of Lasallian Latin American educational thinking.

**Lines of Action:**

- a) The use of resources offered today by technology (e-mail, forums, social networks, video conferencing, among others) to facilitate communication between those who work in the mission, in particular persons involved in initiatives that respond directly to educational urgencies as pointed out by PERLA.
- b) Generation of spaces that will allow for the exchange of initiatives, publications and activities starting from PERLA guidelines.

## 4.2. Evaluation of PERLA

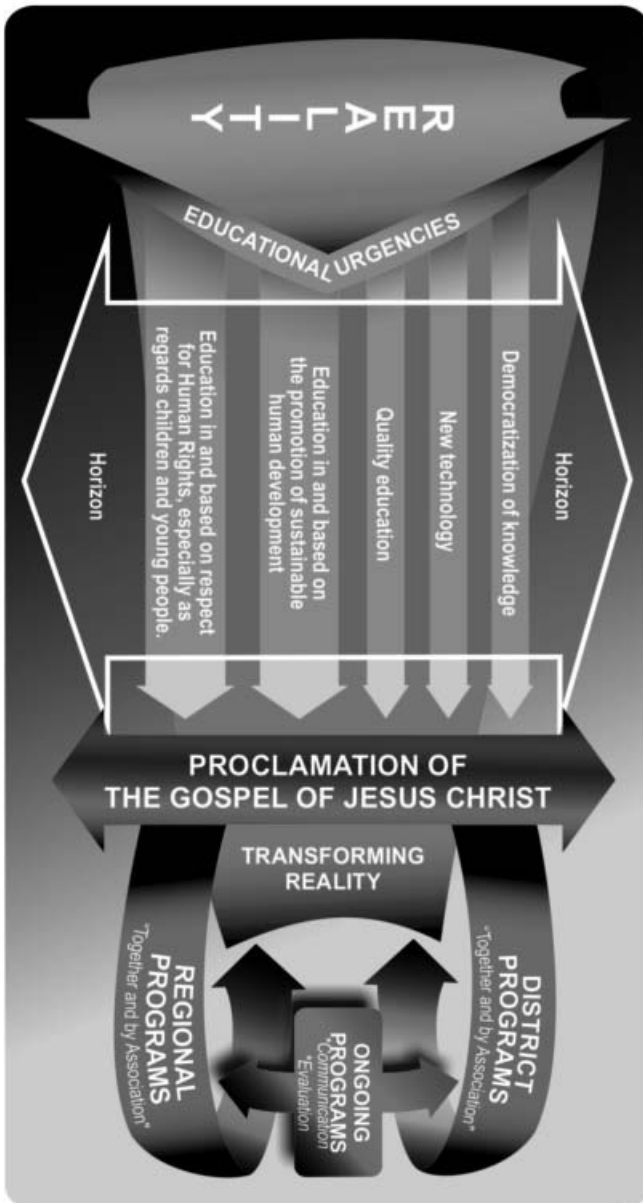
**Objectives:**

1. To increase and ensure the spread of PERLA in Districts and in the Delegation, as well as to see to its compliance and inclusion in District and Delegation educational projects.
2. To keep PERLA updated.
3. To effectively make PERLA the reference point for the Lasallian mission in the Region.

**Lines of Action:**

- a) Creation of spaces for reflection in which representatives of institutions of higher education in the Regions participate, in order to offer constant feedback for PERLA and to offer opinions on the initiatives emerging from PERLA.
- b) Generation of agencies that will provide for the sharing of original initiatives that have emerged from the evaluation of PERLA.
- c) Ongoing evaluation of the level of PERLA implementation in Districts and the Delegation and the publication of the results.
- d) Creation of an award (not monetary) to recognize the capability of the transforming impact of projects that have emerged from PERLA.

## 5. Summary of PERLA





## 6. Glossary

**ABUSE:** By the term abuse is meant the poor or arbitrary use of authority. This can also mean all acts that go beyond limits imposed by reason and justice and which attack, directly or indirectly, the essential rights of a person. With regard to the abuse of children, the most common is sexual abuse, child prostitution, child mistreatment, and family violence. All these manifestations of abuse against children bring devastating and permanent consequences for the victims. Child mistreatment occurs by lack of oversight, abandonment, corporal punishment, food deprivation, absence of affection, since affection forms the basis of all learning. Terrorizing threats, distrust, lack of appreciation, physical blows, etc., have indelible consequences, so that mistreated youth are apt to develop into adulthood with violent personalities due to the aggression that was suffered, and often they themselves become abusers. Abuse is intimately linked to the increase of societal violence and to cruelty and excessive harshness, and victims are forced to do something using these means.

**QUALITY EDUCATION:** The eternal debate about what is understood by quality education is an ongoing one that has become repetitive and dry. Various lists of desired traits have been proposed (about the good school, the good teacher, good instruction, good learning) and these have generated various currents, movements and networks both on the international and regional levels. For some, quality is efficiency; for others, pertinence; for still others, the predominant trait is if education places students front and center (Edwards 1993). The association of quality with efficiency, nourished by multilateral fields, is the position that has dominated in recent years. Beyond theory, the criteria about what makes for a good education varies among countries, cultures, social groups and persons according to variables such as socio-economic level, neighborhood, gender, age and educational level. Even though the average citizen does not participate in these debates, he or she has his or her own perception about what a good school or a good teacher are, and these perceptions do not always agree with those who have specialized knowledge about this and what is desirable from the

point of view of the reformers...” (Rosa María Torres, 12 Tesis para cambio educativo).

**COMPETENCE:** Since the Jomtien conference the idea of basic education as the need to acquire competencies has been brought up. This satisfies the basic learning needs for society and it is pointed out that education is the acquisition of said competencies. These are seen as a product to be achieved and in that sense they need to be monitored and a way to build objective measurements that will allow for the accompaniment of progress and the achievement of these competencies as objectives needs to be sought.

In pointing out the basic school as the most important instrument for acquiring these basic educational competencies, paths have been opened to design instruments that will evaluate the levels of mastery of the different competencies as learning objectives and standard tests have been constructed on the international level which first of all have to do with the ability of logic, math and reading and writing (Marco Raúl Mejía).

Edgar Morin proposes 7 basic competencies: Detecting error and illusion, principles of pertinent knowledge, teaching the human condition, earth identity, confronting uncertainties, understanding each other, and ethics for the human genre (Edgar Morin, 7 complex lessons in education for the future, UNESCO).

**ACADEMIC COMMUNITY:** This is the community made up of academic members of an institution of higher education whose responsibility it is to carry out research activity, teaching and other services proper to intellectual and formative tasks and whose educational practice depends on the nature and quality of the processes of knowledge, ethics, culture and the human, social and transcendent growth of the members of the institution.

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:** This has to do with a view of the long-term processes involved in filtering human assets with greater collaborative possibilities (abilities and attitudes), trying to award similar opportunities for participation to all those interested from within the academic personnel, by means of formation programs and/or updating-enabling courses that run the gamut from institutional courses of interest up to graduate and post-graduate courses, followed by distinct forms of possible weight which

educational institutions can create for the purpose of follow-up and pertinent evaluation around how the subjects plan their activity within the academic community and their distinct processes of production, distribution and evaluation of knowledge, after being part of such a program. (Drawn up starting from KENT, R., W de VRIES, S. DIDOU and R. RAMIREZ (1998) "Assessment policies for higher education," in Kent (editor) "Critical Topics of Higher Education in Latin America," Volume 2 FCE, UAA, FLASCO, Mexico).

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The expression "sustainable development" was used for the first time by the Union of World Conservation in a publication prepared after the 1972 Conference. It gained strength in 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development (CMMAD) of the United Nations, in the Brundtland Report, proposed sustainable development as a means to correct the effects of the global ecological crisis which it defines as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

This report is explicit in giving particular importance to the needs of the impoverished in the world. Redclift says: "Unless the poor are included in the satisfaction of their own aspirations, development can never be appropriately supportable." The expression sustainable development is used then to add other dimensions to ecology. The agreement for Sustainable Development defines it as "a process of progressive change in the quality of human life, that places it as the center and primordial subject of development, through economic growth with social equality and transformation of the methods of production and of the patterns of consumption, and based on ecological equilibrium and vital support of the region. This process implies respect to regional, national and local ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as the strengthening of full citizen participation, in peaceful coexistence and in harmony with nature, without compromising and guaranteeing the quality of life of future generations."

The terms sustainable and supportable are often used as synonyms. Sustainable development or supportable development is accepted as an institutional strategy by member states of the United Nations when it affirmed a series of agreements and com-

mitments contained in Agenda 21, formulated at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

**THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED:** Globalization and its neoliberal policies introduce a new social category: the socially excluded. If before there was a distinction between the rich (those who have more) and the poor (those who have less), privatization means that those who do not participate in the system (health, education, housing, knowledge, information, communication, etc.) remain outside because they cannot obtain these benefits (no access to medical attention, the illiterate, those with no house address, etc.) (cf. CELAM (1999) "El Tercer Milenio como Desafío Pastoral," number 206).

**EXPLOITATION:** A term used to refer to conduct used by a person, aimed at denying an individual right. To use someone's services to obtain immoderate pleasure from a benefit. Generally, in cases of exploitation there is an aggravating factor that comes from the existence of a relationship of superiority between the exploiter and the exploited, creating a notorious disproportion that favor inequality and therefore the violation of the infringed or wounded right. The term "child exploitation" merits special mention due to the number of children who are used for cheap labor or are not paid, those who are forced to beg or for prostitution; also there are victims of violence, illiteracy, psychological damage that is repeated and perpetuated.

**SUBSTANTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY:** The search for knowledge, its transmission and application are the origin of the three basic functions of university institutions: research, teaching and propagation or diffusion. If at determined moments of its development one of these functions was prevalent over others, it is true that the ideal is that there is an integrated balance among all of them, so that the three are always present in all manifestations of the university task. To these functions we can add others that some years ago have gained importance: the systemic function, the financial function and the political function. Ellacuria says that both the research function and the teaching function depend upon outreach. (Cf. TUNNEMANN, C. Aproximación histórica a la universidad y su problemática actual. Universidad de los Andes. Santa Fe de Bogota. August 1997, p 92; DELORS, J. La educación encierra un tesoro. UNESCO report of the

International Commission on Education for the 21st century. Editorial Santillana. UNESCO editions. 1006, p. 149; Castro Silva Eduardo. Reflexiones sobre Educación Superior, RELAL, 2002).

**TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS:** One essential characteristic of human beings is to construct and use tools to complete tasks more rapidly and efficiently. Through the creation and use of tools, man molds his environment, sometimes in a permanent and irreversible way, and he shapes his way of life. On the other hand, the cognitive skills of humans to know, discriminate, order, plan, etc., have led them to develop a systematic study of techniques to produce and make things, which is called technology. Throughout human history we can distinguish diverse technologies which have even given names to complete epochs, such as the metal age, the agricultural age, the industrial age. There are technologies that manage information as well as biotechnology. Based on the above, by technological tools we understand that “something” is used to do a task or is necessary in the practice of one’s vocation or profession, which was created by a systematic study of the techniques to produce and use things in the current era. (Taken from: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2000; Ceruzzi, Paul E., History of Modern Computing, MIT Press, 2000; Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2000).

**HUMANIZING:** The humanizing aspect, whose meaning maintains relationship with doing something more human, the human being and the structures in which the human develops.





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