

Introduction to PDO

I. The Planning and Development Office (PDO) at the service of the Salesian charism in the Province

A. Introduction

Planning and Development Office (PDO) is an entity, instituted and owned by the Salesian Provincial Community, fully at the service of the Salesian Charism in the province. It participates in the restructuring, re-shaping and redimensioning of the Salesian works. It serves as a link, a bridge between the consecrated Salesians and civil society in the work of promoting youth, development and empowerment, justice, and holistic human development. It is recognized in the province's Directory with due approval of the Provincial Chapter.

This booklet, based on the materials from the second PDO seminar in Hyderabad 2011, aims to provide basic information about PDO especially to the Salesians in the initial formation.

B. Background of Salesian PDO

About 20 years ago due to the initiative of different Salesian Mission Offices and some NGO-related Missions in some various provinces "Project Offices" were started as a point of reference for the projects submitted to various agencies. At first they were very simple project cycle executing tools, but 10 years later some of them turned into complex tools for the planning and overall systematic development of the Salesian provinces. The first Seminar of "Planning and Development Offices" (Rome, April 2005) was the most visible event of this process, which gave the impetus to the Salesian provinces to start or develop the Planning Development Offices.

26 General Chapter of the Congregation (Rome 2008) is asking Salesians to make poverty more credible through personal and community testimony, solidarity with the poor and responsible management of resources in a spirit of solidarity. Also in the area of *New Frontiers* we find many indications for a more systematic and professional management of resources. GC 26 also assumes that the *Overall Provincial Plan* should be used as an ordinary strategic tool for the development of each Province. Although there is not mention of the PDO as a specific 'structure' for the planning, coordination and training at the provincial level, many of the processes wanted by GC 26 are pointing in this direction.

In this context we find in the Six-year-plan of the Rector Major for the sessenium 2008-2014 two very concrete lines of action for the whole Congregation: (ACG 402, 2008) "*Promoting and consolidating Planning and Development Offices in the Provinces*" and "*Helping Provinces and accompanying PDOs with clear Salesian criteria for the development of the Salesian Mission*".

The second Seminar on the PDO was held in Hyderabad, India (5-10 November 2011). The large number of attendees taking part, coming from 35 Provinces in the five continents and 62 countries

in which Planning and Development Offices are operating, showed an increase of sensitivity in the Provinces regarding PDO. Some 10 different Salesian agencies (Mission Offices, NGOs, Don Bosco Network) involved in missions/development work enriched the Seminar with their 20 year-long experience of PDO capacity building. Published *Proceedings of the Second Seminar on the PDO* provide materials, exchange of experience, and good practice in this area. Presented in the document *Road Map 2015* encourages further development of existing PDOs and establishment of new ones in the provinces where there is no PDO.

C. Different models of PDO's

During the preparation process for the second seminar on the PDO in Hyderabad it became clearer that there are many different models of the PDO's in the Provinces. Five models were described to better understand real situation and suggest the stages of growth and development.

Model '0'

Province is still struggling with 'individualized' management of some works. The projects carried on with some foreign agencies are depending just on the rector of the single community concerned. There were some attempts at a more integral approach in the province with a help of one 'office', but so far there is no provincial coordination in this field, or the Province needs to start or re-start their PDO after some difficulties.

Model '1'

Project Office (PO) stage/model; there is a point of reference for all development projects in the Province, but at a very low key. The PO is staffed only by one lay person, writing projects on behalf of the local communities and works; there is a small impact of the office on the provincial animation. There are some different versions of this model:

- Project office with some fundraising activities (local or foreign benefactors network) or looking for other necessary personnel or financial resources
- Project office involved also in the formation of SDB or lay staff in the houses (usually in the field of management, accountability, helping the communities to understand the project cycle)
- Project office facilitates the contact with the donor agencies, facilitates the network of different kinds of similar work within the Province

Model '2'

Planning – Project Office (PPO) stage/model; beyond the Project Office model 1, this model is more involved within the provincial animation structures. The office does contribute to the provincial planning and animation, at times helps also to work out the OPP (Overall Provincial Plan) or the Provincial Strategic Plan together with the Youth Ministry Delegate (or commission). There are some different versions of this model:

- PPO works with a larger (ad hoc) commission composed of SDB and lay mission partners.
- PPO director participates in the Youth Ministry commission; the Youth Ministry delegate takes part in the PPO board.
- PPO serves as a real 'catalyst' in the provincial animation and discernment.

Model '3'

Planning and Development Office (PDO) stage/model; after 2005 Rome seminar some provinces have reached this stage of growth. PDO helps the local communities to develop their mission according to a plan. PDO is also involved in the formation of our Lay Mission Partners. PDO helps the Salesians to move from the 'charity' or 'institution' mentality towards the 'systematic development work' in the mission.

Model '4'

PDO contributes to the planned and participatory development of Salesian Mission. PDO is also involved in the territory, in the local society: through the empowerment of processes on behalf of the youth or the poor people. PDO networks with nearby Province PDOs and other non Salesian agencies or government agencies in the country. PDO is also involved in lobbying and advocacy, working in the field of social justice and peace (reconciliation).

D. Challenges facing PDOs today

Challenges facing PDOs extracted from the result of the surveys in preparation of the Hyderabad PDO seminar:

- Understanding of Development in secular and Christian perspective
- Understanding of what PDO is and what is its best model for the particular province
- How to change the present stage of the PDO to a desired model
- Fragmentation in the animation of the province
- Capacity building. Continuity/stability
- Developing a planning mentality in confreres, institutions and province.
- Finding resources
- Human Rights and advocacy approach to youth pastoral work
- Networking and partnership of the PDO with the diocese, the government, other congregations, NGOs, corporations.

II. PDO Capacity Building

A. Role and tasks of a PDO in the Provincial community

1. PDO values and principles

The PDO, in its work of helping to realize the two-fold Salesian mission of education and evangelization is guided by gospel values, the social teaching of the Catholic Church, the Salesian



preventive system, the Salesian Constitutions, the universal declaration of human rights, as well as by the needs of local Church and of the young people.

The PDO serves the youth, especially those in need, helping to realize the gradual and far-reaching process of making them good Christians and honest citizens. It also serves the youth movements, Salesian communities, Salesian Family, local Church, local territory/community especially building up their empowerment for self-determination in their respective realms of development.

2. Position of the PDO in the Province

The PDO works under the guidance and supervision of the Provincial Council. It works with the provincial Economist, Youth Ministry and Social Communication delegates in an atmosphere of team work, mutual respect and support. It takes part in discussions with provincial and local organs of animation on matters relevant to its mandate.

The PDO brings awareness of strategic planning approach that leads to project processes and project cycle management to the local Salesian communities while maintaining a keen awareness of the realities on the ground. The PDO gains the trust of the Salesian communities by delivering concrete results for the advancement of the Salesian mission, in a spirit of collaboration, synergy, dialogue and transparency with provincial and local structures and processes. The PDO achieves credibility with its partners by delivering concrete results, in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

The PDO is to be managed by well qualified Salesians and lay mission partners. They in turn, should encourage a planning mentality among Salesians from early years of their formation, develop their technical capacities and inculcate the Salesian charism among lay collaborators. This will contribute to the continuity, stability and Salesian identity of the PDO and of the Province.

3. The PDO – programs and services

The PDO assists in the process of the drafting, elaborating, implementing and evaluating of the Overall Provincial Plan (OPP) and the Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan (SEPP) ensuring its sustainability. It undertakes research in the field of children and youth to continuously make relevant the plans and programs of the province.

The PDO assists in the capacity building of its target groups enabling them to be deeply and proactively attuned to social justice, thus becoming main players of development.

The PDO meaningfully and proactively intervenes in socio-civic realities and influences local and national policies on education, children and youth, especially the poor.

The PDO carries out its programs and operations in relation to the Overall Provincial Plan and the Educative Pastoral Plan in an ethical, transparent, efficient, effective, and impact oriented manner which inculcates the Salesian charism in the respective context.

The PDO aims for self-sufficiency through Salesian solidarity (provincial and congregational) and local, national and international fundraising efforts

B. Formation and training of PDO personnel

1. Some basic definitions

Suggested definitions by VIA Don Bosco (Salesian NGO from Belgium) at the PDO seminar in Hyderabad 2011

Capacity development

- A deliberate process whereby the PDO creates, strengthens and maintains capacity over time – planning is a key
- An internal process that involves main actor(s) of the PDO taking primary responsibility for the change process that their organisation goes through – ownership is a key

Capacity building

- A purposeful, external intervention to strengthen capacity over time.
- Provided by a range of different players – donors; NGOs and specialist capacity building service providers based in the North and South; academic institutions and individual organizational development advisers and facilitators.

Formation and training

- A means to improve specific competences (skills, knowledge, attitudes) of PDO personnel, both at the level of leadership (Provincial Economist/PDO Director/PDO Coordinator) and staff
- A means for capacity development at individual level, not a guarantee for capacity development at organizational or institutional level.

Capacity

VIA Don Bosco uses a broad definition of “capacity” that was originally developed by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). This definition has a number of advantages vis-a-vis other definitions:

- It was formulated with input from organization in developing countries.
- It expands the focus to “soft skills” – capacity is not just a technical matter

According to ECDPM, capacity is the balance and synergy between five core capabilities:

- Capability to engage and commit
- Capability to perform core tasks and achieve results
- Capability to relate and network; to attract resources and support
- Capability to change and self-renew
- Capability to balance coherence and diversity; to ensure continuity

2. Practical options for capacity development

Formation and Training - Options

- Training in “the South” – provided by specialist capacity building service providers, academic institutions, individual advisers and facilitators
- Training in “the North” – if training is not locally or regionally available
- Online training – access from the office, in the field or at home; avoids absence from PDO; can be combined with monitoring visits – no travel costs, more affordable

Peer-to-Peer Interaction and Learning - Options

- Look-and-learn visits and personnel exchanges: between PDOs; between PDOs and other similar organizations (PDOs of other congregations, Southern NGOs...)
- Peer meetings – at global seminars, Continental, Regional and Technical Meetings
- Peer reviews - between PDOs; between PDOs and other, similar organizations

Participation in networks - Options

- Knowledge exchange networks and online forums
- Action networks – around issues of importance to the PDO (M&E; PCM; knowledge management; ...); around issues of importance to different sectors of the Province (TVET/skills development; education; social communication,...)

Do it yourself...”Yes, you can!” - Options

- Develop clarity about roles – clear roles help assess capacity development needs at individual level
- Invest in a culture of listening and questioning – use regular group of team meetings as a time to reflect on and learn from events and actions undertaken; encourage PDO staff to express themselves on issues that matter
- Encourage self-study

C. Support from Salesian NGOs (Don Bosco Network) and Salesian Mission Offices in PDO capacity building

Salesian NGOs, members of Don Bosco Network support PDO capacity building in many Salesian provinces for over 20 years. Salesian NGOs support PDO capacity building through:

- Sending expatriate professional volunteers to work with PDOs staff on the ground
- Organising regional PDO meetings to exchange good practice and peer learning. Training of local PDO staff and providing resources for PDO staff training
- Providing capacity building materials and tools, on line data base and exchange of information

- Providing technical support and partnership in project application to large donors (EU, USAID, governments...)
- Indirect support to PDOs through development cooperation projects (PDOs can apply directly to Salesian NGOs for assistance)

D. Human Rights Based Approach in youth work/advocacy

1. Human Rights Based Approach

Traditionally, Development Cooperation has been oriented towards covering needs. If children need education, then we provide education to cover that need. Since several years ago, at international level, Cooperation is shifting gradually from a Covering Needs Approach to a Human Rights Based Approach.

- With the HRBA we don't just cover needs, we make Human Rights effective.
- With HRBA, children and youth are not seen as beneficiaries anymore, now they are seen as rights holders.
- With HRBA, youngsters are not mere passive receivers of education. They are now empowered to exercise, claim and seek their rights with a proactive approach; participation is the key of success.
- In HRBA we work not only with Right Holders but also with Duty Bearers (governments, public institutions) they have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil Human Rights for everyone. We work as well with Bearers of Responsibilities: the civil society which includes the parents of children, Salesians, Past Pupil association...We work with them as partners to effect positive change on issues, laws and policies to promote and protect Rights of Children and young people.

2. Human Rights/Advocacy work

Salesians, Salesian Sisters, lay workers and volunteers practicing preventive system of education directly with young people in various countries are most capable to identify issues affecting young people in need. Taking example from St John Bosco, it is our duty to be their voice in particular countries and internationally. Speaking with one voice Salesian Family present in more than 130 countries has a great opportunity to defend human rights of young people in need and influence local and international laws and policies to empower young people in their positive human and Christian growth. Salesian Family institutions working closely with United Nations and European Union institutions (Salesian office at UN Assembly in New York, Salesian Sisters Human Rights Office in Geneva, Don Bosco International based in Brussels) are of great help to present Salesian Family position on international level. Don Bosco Network working closely with SDB General House is committed to improve communication between Salesian Family, Salesian organisations



and to contribute to common strategy in Human Rights and Advocacy fields. Capable PDO engages in the local Human-Children Rights/Advocacy work.

E. Fundraising and charity

In the current situation of the global economy, both in the secular world and in the Salesian Congregation, each provincial PDO looks for resources in the form of know-how, skills, cash or kind in their own local situation, from the government at all levels, from private and public corporations, from non-Salesian trust and foundations, from communities and groups, and from all individuals of good will. In this effort to become self-reliant, the PDO takes care that all its partners hold values that are compatible with Christian and Salesian identity.

The Salesian PDO strongly believes that acts of charity are to be limited only to short periods and in situations of emergencies and disasters, and for young people who, for some exceptional needs, are in almost helpless situations. We work with a human rights-based approach, enabling individual and communities to become self-reliant and capable of making their own choices.