

Research Themes of the IALU Research Agenda

The IALU shall promote and foster research collaboration among Lasallian researchers in a few, focused research themes. These strategic research themes certainly must not preclude the pursuit of other lines of research according to the individual missions and visions of the IALU member institutions. For the period 2013 to 2018, these are the following:

1. ***Food, Nutrition and Health*** (e.g. biochemistry of food products, science and engineering of potable water, cancer risks and cure from food, economic impact studies of nutrition programs in schools)
2. ***Sustainability and the Environment*** (e.g. dealing with climate change, eco-design of houses and urban centers, industrial ecology, air and water quality monitoring in mega-cities)

3. ***Educational and Social Learning Environments***

needed to explore, analyze, and elucidate the dynamics and

(e.g. groups of persons, ecosystems, organizations,

work, method, or scientific approach; as physical contraptions, gadgets, apparatus, and even infrastructural elements;

5. *creative work in various forms, such as film and documentaries, literary work, and visual art, that celebrate humanity, reflect society, or ponder into what is left unsaid, unstudied, and unattended; and*

6. policy recommendations that may improve governance in government and non-government institutions.

Call for Collaborative Research projects

The IALU seeks to jumpstart research collaboration among IALU member schools by encouraging proposals for large external grants from funding institutions such as the USAID, IDRC, GTZ, FAO, and JICA. As a first step, there will be a Call for Collaborative Research Projects along one *focus area* for each of the three research themes of the IALU Research Agenda.

1 IALU Research Theme: *Food, Nutrition and Health*

Focus Area: *Food Safety and Security*

According to FAO, 842 million people are affected by undernourishment in 2013 (or 1 in 8

- d. *Governance*. Public structures in many poor countries do not ensure access to basic foodstuffs without discrimination. Furthermore, the lack of structure in the agricultural industry, combined with market mechanisms and geopolitical issues can lead to speculation on commodity prices, exacerbate inequalities, and finally cause conflict and political instability.

All scientific disciplines can contribute to address these issues, e.g. the social sciences, medical sciences, engineering sciences, agricultural sciences. Attention is drawn to the fact that the proposed research projects must demonstrate how they are particularly relevant to populations in precarious situations.

2 IALU Research Theme : *Sustainability and the Environ*

Freshwater only represents 3% of global water reserve. Water is a precious resource, especially as it is not evenly distributed. In 2030, nearly half the world's population could face water scarcity, and demand could exceed supply by 40%. Solutions must be found to this matter of accessibility and the unsustainable use of water. Water managemescsst(d)-6(d)ung(d)-1(f)-sh(p)-1(u)-1erve. W

3 IALU Research Theme : *Education and Learning Innovations*

Focus Area: *Access to Education - Innovative Alternatives to Promote Inclusion*

Background

According to Humanium (2014), access to education is a challenge for millions of children around the world. Humanium stated that “more than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate and do not have the awareness necessary to improve both their living conditions and those of their children”. The United Nations global education initiative called education “the basic building block of every society (that is) a fundamental human right, not the privilege of the few (and is) the single best investment . . . towards building prosperity” (Ki-moon, 2012, p. 4). Clearly access to quality education is a societal issue of grave significance for children and adults across the world.

From the founding of the Brothers of the Christian Schools over three centuries ago, access to quality education has been critical to the Lasallian Mission. However, the financial burden imposed by the costs of providing a Lasallian education creates serious impediments to access. Although education may be expensive, thus limiting access for poorer sectors of society, Lasallians around the world have creatively sought to bring educational opportunities to those marginalized by society.

Since access to quality education is considered to be a universal right, Lasallian efforts have not been limited only to making it possible for children from marginalized sectors of society to enter Lasallian schools as regular, fulltime students. Historically, students from diverse segments of society have been welcomed into Lasallian schools. Creating diverse, inclusive learning communities, Lasallians focus on creating transformative educational opportunities for students across social strata to enrich student development and promote social justice. Indeed, as noted in Circular 461 (2010), “association exists *for* the educational advancement of the young, especially those who are poor” (p. 59), so access for the poor remains central to the Lasallian Mission.

Exploring Innovative Alternatives

Given our Lasallian Mission and this background, the exploration of innovative alternatives to promote access to education, especially among the marginalized, has been identified as one of three areas for focus of upcoming Lasallian research. Researching innovative alternatives to enhance access for the poor and/or marginalized to Lasallian schools and to promote inclusion in Lasallian education are critical to the future of the Lasallian Mission and to society.

Possible mechanisms for increasing accessibility of Lasallian education for the poor and marginalized might include:

- a. Learning materials (e.g. textbooks, reference materials, laboratory sheets, films and documentary videos, modules for iPads/tablets) that would be accessible and distributed for free or at subsidized prices;
- b. Lasallian teachers, and even university students, teaching in educational venues outside of Lasallian schools, such as public schools or in venues of non-formal education;
- c. Alternative delivery models including use of E-learning materials (web-based learning modules, CD-based learning modules) in distance learning or blended learning modes or in alternative models such as an open-university;
- d.

