

SALESIAN, COMMUNICATOR

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK

Department for Social Communication

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Presentation

1 This handbook has a single aim: to help whoever works within Social Communication in the provinces, provincial conferences or regions by offering practical directions, helping to spell out the frame of reference already provided in *The Salesian Social Communication System (SSCS)*. It was first published in 2001, but this current edition is a complete re-writing of that, given that a year or two is a long time in this age of 'Rapid Development' (the title of Pope John Paul's last letter before he died, and, appropriately, on Social Communications), and since so much has happened within the Congregation in this sector, following GC25 and the appointment of a Councillor specifically for Social Communication.

In his Letter 'With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of social communication' (AGC 390), Fr Pascual Chávez called for a change of strategy on the part of confreres in this area – not the creation of new guidelines but practical steps to 'release the life lying dormant in the doctrinal patrimony of the Congregation, and to find ways of embodying it in our educative and pastoral communities and in our localities'. That is as good a statement as one could find to express the intention of this handbook.

Who is the handbook for?

2 The handbook has in mind primarily those with responsibilities at province level: The Provincial and his Council, Province Delegates for social communication. Others who will benefit include those working in social communication at any level, provincial or local (amongst whom Salesian Bulletin editors, writers and publishers of texts of any kind), leaders and animators in social communication, members of commissions and advisory groups. People working in formation – of the young, of young confreres, of confreres generally in the area of social communication will find useful direction from the handbook, along with SSCS and the *Formation to SC - Guidelines*, the latter produced jointly by the Social Communication and Formation Departments.

3 It could be of interest here to mention one other group of possible beneficiaries of this text: *national, conference or regional* Social Communication Delegates and Commissions. Where a nation has more than one province, or provinces have formed a Conference, it has been found useful to organise social communication coordination around a national or conference Delegate. There is even the possibility of an as yet undeveloped regional communication structure.

How is this handbook arranged?

4 The handbook draws from Part II of the *Salesian System of Social Communication (SSCS)*: The functioning of SSCS, with further reference to aspects

of Part III of the same document: organisation of SC. Effectively, the structure of chapters here is as follows:

- **CHAPTER ONE: the province social communication plan** the why, the what and the how; this needs to be read in conjunction with the outline for the plan provided in the relevant appendix at the back of SSCS.
- **CHAPTER TWO: the management and organisation of social communication** within and beyond the Salesian community and Salesian Family;
- **CHAPTER THREE: the delegate and groups or teams involved in social communication** as run by a province, conference, region.
- **CHAPTER FOUR: structures and services** involving public relations but also internal matters such as documentation and archiving.
- **CHAPTER FIVE: coordination** between provinces.

5 In each of the above areas there are responsibilities at every level: the Province Delegate has tasks to carry out in coordination with the Educative and Pastoral Project (EPP) of the Province, and by *delegation from the Provincial*. He avails himself of an advisory team and/or a commission according to local circumstances.

6 Where there is no *Province Plan* it will be difficult, if not impossible, to work effectively with and in social communication in a Salesian way. Without a plan, whatever is done remains isolated and scattered, without impact.

7 Where *delegation from the Provincial* is missing, the Delegate's task often becomes complicated.

8 Since we are dealing with a continually evolving sector, there is a need for guidance and authoritative help: only the Provincial, supported by his Council, can give force to some of the choices involving local communities, and practical activities in education and evangelisation.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROVINCE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication at the service of the Province

7 In the view of social communication built up and developed by the Congregation especially over the past decade, 'our communities, works and activities...become part of a much wider system of communication within which they are compared and interact' (Fr Vecchi, AGC 370). The Salesian Social Communication System, as it is now termed, is a unified and integrated project very much at the service of the shared vision and values identified as the Salesian charism, and seen in practice in a Province, its sectors of activity, its communities.

8 Social Communication is a distinct sector of Salesian activity; this sector is represented at Congregational level by a Councillor with a team known as the Social Communication Department, and assisted by an advisory body drawn from experts around the world. At Province level, this sector is also represented by a Delegate acting in the name of the provincial and with a team, usually known as the Social Communication Commission. There may also be an advisory body. The social communication sector is placed at the service of the entire Salesian project as represented by the Province in all its activity.

Communication Plan basics

9 The Province Social Communication Plan (PSCP) is at the heart of our social communication action at provincial and local level. This plan forms part of the province educative and pastoral project. The Salesian community applies a pedagogical method in its educative and pastoral work: a model which is both gradual and circular.

Gradual: appropriate for the overall development of the young person and adult. It does not offer everything all at once or indiscriminately; nor does it delay with what is needed when it is needed. It pays attention to the path of growth, accompanying it, supporting and encouraging it. It avoids repetition and is not afraid of confronting new situations.

Circular: as opposed to linear, or to a model that sees things in terms of chronological order and which is not interactive. The circular model gathers up the richness of particular moments and experiences, instead of dealing with things according to a rigid time-line. Our concern is that what has been acquired is able to influence steps yet to be accomplished, that it enhances research and response. The process never finishes, but is something constantly in process.

The Social Communication Plan itself

10 A plan is the formulation of a detailed method or design by which a thing is to be done. It is something to be accomplished in a particular reality and which begins from that reality. The Communication Plan responds to needs and to questions arising from a broad frame of reference and as part of the province project.

At this point reference can be made to the appendices to the *Salesian Social Communication System*, the second of which is an outline and 'check-list' of aspects and situations to be included in the PSCP of a province.

In the letter of Fr Chávez referred to above, a reference to these appendices makes it clear that they are in themselves an urgent programme to be read and to be put into action: 'by following the points listed...and accepting the suggested guidelines we are led to diagnose, plan, implement and systematically verify the state of social communications in the provinces'.

The plan is the concrete and final result of a planning process which is 'drawn up and implemented with the greatest and best possible participation at different levels; it should be constantly animated and periodically verified by the animation and government bodies of the province'.

In integrating The Province Social Communication Plan into the Overall Province Plan or OPP, the following elements are central:

The community.

A Province plan is not the fruit of one person's thinking.

The following persons and groups should be in agreement concerning a formation plan for social communication (not listed in a specific order): the Province Delegate /Social Communication Commission / those responsible in the communities for being in touch with the province centre / those responsible for publishing in the province (Salesian Bulletin editor, one in charge of Province Newsletter, editors of magazines and books from the Salesian centre etc), experts in communication in the province / educative communities in the province / the Delegate for Youth Pastoral Ministry and his YPM Commission / the PFC / the Provincial Council / and the Provincial. This list is not exhaustive.

The charism.

Social communication in its various forms and aspects requires a policy outline that ensures its fidelity to the Salesian charism. This outline is broadly stated in SSCS.

An example of contents of an SC Plan could be: Purpose of such a plan, relationship of SC sector with other sectors of province activity, organisational structure at Congregation level, province organisation, the SC Delegate, the SC Commission, the Advisory group, Information or Press office, local organisation and coordination, local delegates or coordinators, areas of activity, formation and information, business ventures.

At least one Province (Mumbai, South Asia) has produced a Social Communication Policy which is worth having a look at. The policy forms part of an overall SC plan. This policy considers a coordinated means of presenting information (Bosco Information Services or BIS), media public relations (PR) processes and media advocacy, who is able to put out a press release and on what kinds of issues, crisis communication – what it is and who it will be handled by.

The Province SC Delegate and the Plan

11 The Province Delegate for social communication, who is a key player in the development, coordination and verification of the PSCP, and in its integration within the Overall Province Plan, forms part of a broader project involving all of Salesian life in the Province. It is important for him to promote contacts, dialogue and understandings with the other sectors in a Province's life. These sectors include:

12 **Formation** and its organisation.

People are the focus and criteria for choices when it comes to Salesian life and activity. Each Salesian Province has a PFC (Provincial Formation Commission).

This organising group is not only for provinces which have formation stages organised within their province. It is something for every province since we need to think primarily of ongoing formation, not only of initial formation. An understanding with the PFC is essential for the formation of young Salesians and confreres working in the communities, for scheduling formation interventions, and organising their content. The *Formation to SC - Guidelines* document (2005-6) produced jointly by the SC and Formation Departments, offers help in this regard.

13 **Youth Ministry** and its organisation.

We can never forget that we are always working in a shared and unified way within the broader areas of Salesian and Church pastoral ministry.

Coming to an understanding with Youth Ministry implies:

- being part of the Provincial Youth Ministry Commission, to give weight to youth ministry projects drawn up at province and local level;
- having the delegate for Youth Ministry or at least a representative, on the Social Communication Commission;
- frequently dealing with interventions and criteria utilised in carrying out projects in the different works and activities: school, technical centre, parish, oratory, publishing, youth-at-risk works etc.

14 **Economer's department** and its organisation.

We all know how much quality communication costs these days, along with the financial resources needed to produce messages and information.

The Province Delegate plans by taking into account, amongst other things, the financial implications of what he intends to do.

Therefore some discussion with the Provincial Economer must occur before finalising a communications activity and presenting it to the Provincial and his Council.

This discussion considers also the possibility of carrying out communications activities which are 'financially autonomous' in the sense of not having implications for the province accounts. For its part, the Economer's office will regard communication work as a pastoral service which occasionally will also need some financial support.

15 **Salesian Family** and its organisation.

The experience of Don Bosco and his Family underlines the importance of working with lay people in the different sectors of our activities.

GC24 has drawn attention to the possible and desired contribution of lay people to Don Bosco's spirit and mission.

In *Christifideles Laici*, the Church indicated the new fields for lay involvement for a new evangelisation, and did not overlook the communications field. Subsequent documents have developed this understanding.

Keeping in touch with the Salesian Family means having a large reservoir of possibilities, either of experts or of co-workers.

Lay groups in the Salesian Family often include in their statutes a call to work within Social Communication.

16 **Missionary dimension and its organisation.**

It is enough to remind the Province Delegate of what the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* has to say in n. 37 to motivate him to link closely with the Province Delegate for Missionary animation.

The missions, especially mission *ad gentes*, are a powerful communications message for our young people and it would not be advantageous for Don Bosco's charism to overlook this area.

Wider contacts to benefit the Plan

17 Along with internal Salesian contacts, other contacts with communication workers in the local area are to be seen to and nurtured.

Journalists, those working in radio and TV, advertising experts, directors of news agencies, managers, song artists, music, theatre etc. are important for us. Contact with them has two purposes:

- to establish good relations for mutual assistance, to learn about communication as an art from those who are living it from within,
- to involve them in animation and formation, requesting their help at key moments and in ways that are appropriate to the objectives being pursued.

18 A practical consequence of the above could be an annual meeting with all those mentioned in the previous paragraph, to understand directions and new developments in the sector.

It used to be part of the Salesian tradition to celebrate the Feast of St Francis de Sales with those who worked in the communications field. The announcement of the World Day for Social Communications is made on the Feast of St Francis de Sales, 24th January. Celebration of this amongst us seems an appropriate tradition, then, to maintain.

CHAPTER TWO: MANAGING COMMUNICATION INTERNALLY, EXTERNALLY

Animation

19 Animation is described in SSCS no.87 as 'management...in educational processes' and as 'internal and external relations'. Animation occurs when there is a person to make it happen. The Delegate acting in the name of the Provincial, the teams who assist him, the local coordinators in communities, all share this task of 'promoting various communicational realities' (GC23, 259), and their accompaniment.

There are at least four essential animation areas with regard to social communication:

- educommunication
- formation
- information
- production

Animation - educommunication

20 The Province Delegate assists people and communities to draw up Media education **curricula**. This handbook is not about offering material for such curricula. For education of the young there is a need to seek out appropriate material to assist with education to media. Confreres, too, require education to and through media. This is taken up below in n.24.

21 *From media education to educommunication:* ' Every community is called upon to improve institutional communication; to plan and bring about in the educative and pastoral communities education to communication and education through the media, *educommunication*, which includes education to the use of 'languages' and of the media; the use of the media for education and evangelisation in schools, parishes, oratories etc.; the promotion of dialogue with communicators, artists and publishers, especially if they are young; helping those afflicted by the new forms of poverty and those excluded by the new communication techniques; and improving the standard of media skills'. (Pascual Chávez, AGC 390, p 39).

22 Curricula dealing with social communication, particularly for young people, need to be flexible since the young are born with computers and television as part of their make-up! Rather than complete curricula for young people, we need to think in terms of units for knowledge and formation, since in many cases today's youngsters are already ahead of their counterparts and adults of earlier times. This way, useless repetition can be avoided; repetition could be off-putting.

23 Help for those working in communication to carry out their work as educators, through the means they are using, goes beyond the possibilities and efforts of a Salesian Delegate and his team. But at least to think about the idea is a sign of wanting to discover what can be done so that communities and people don't just complain about the products or instruments of communication but know how to offer some useful ideas and even some possible changes of direction.

Animation - formation

24 The Province Delegate for social communication is seen, in the overall organisation of the Province, as a *formation person*, in the sense that he has his own specific role to play in initial formation and ongoing formation of Salesians.

25 The Salesian curriculum outline for initial and ongoing formation, *Formation to SC - Guidelines*, is a resource and guide for the Delegate in his task regarding initial and ongoing formation.

26 The formation aspect of the PSCP represents a primary task for the Province Delegate and the Social Communication Commission. Refer to the checklist in SSCS, the appendix outlining the PSCP.

27 Animation which ignores the context is ineffective. Formation requires of formators that they be part of life's context so they can develop according to a plan which enriches the person.

28 **One possible formation activity:** attention is drawn here to an initiative involving the whole Church: - **World Social Communications Day**. This is a propitious formation occasion. The Roman Dicastery prepares reflection and prayer material for the theme of the Day which can be used in communities. Episcopal Conferences and Diocesan offices prepare practical materials for carrying out the Day well.

29 Some **notes** on what is useful when using this material:

- read the *text* of the papal message,
- organise a *community gathering* on the theme chosen by the Pope, giving some depth to the discussion of theme and problems connected with it,
- invite *experts* in the material presented by the message so they can offer a point of view and other perspectives to follow up,
- find time for *prayer* together about social communication, recalling its importance, influence, its possibilities, its risks and challenges in our world,
- suggest the possibility of a *Communication Ministry* for the reflection of the local Church . Given the many ecclesial statements, we could also move to action, recognising the service given by communication in the church. There is a long journey ahead. We can take the first steps!

The reference to celebration of the communication day does not mean we are limited to only an annual remembrance of our Salesian commitment in this sector. Beginning with that day we can draw up other initiatives that bring attention to and promote an area that young people today live with such intensity.

Animation – information

30 Information is both internal to the Salesian Family and external. *External information* is represented by some activities which may also function internally such as the Salesian Bulletin and the Congregational or Province level web sites, but it also assumes activities and relationships which extend to the world at large. By *internal information* we mean what is done:

- for the Salesian community SDB
- for the Salesian Family.

Information internal to the community, then, concerns

- the province,
- the whole Congregation.

Here we cannot take into account all the information products available in different provinces, so we limit ourselves to some of a more general nature:

- The Province Newsletter (1),
- The Salesian Bulletin (2),
- The Province website (3)
- other typical products (4),
- the correspondents' network (5),

(1) The Province Newsletter

31 A Province Newsletter project is a topic worth attentive analysis. Herewith the essential reference points for a meaningful Newsletter project and an effective informational tool.

32 Project outline:

- The Province Newsletter within the Province Social Communication Plan.
- The nature of the Province Newsletter.
- Who the Province Newsletter is for.
- Editorial policy for the Province Newsletter.
- Being in charge of and producing the Province Newsletter.
- The Province Newsletter structure.
- The Province Newsletter frequency.
- The Province Newsletter language and style.

We should not forget that for many provinces the Newsletter is the only information tool they have, internally or externally, meaning that they lack other channels for the flow of information. It is important to be aware of this if we are asking questions about the visibility and meaningfulness of Salesian presence and action in a place and a culture.

33 The Province Newsletter within the Provincial Social Communication Plan.

The first thing to be considered is that if there is no communication plan, the Newsletter risks being shipwrecked in history rather than in what's actually

happening in a province. It will be subject to constant change depending on who has been asked to produce it, or its choices will not respond to the province's real direction. The province communication plan offers the essential coordinates:

- for the province's history, which the Newsletter becomes the custodian and promoter of;
- as part of the history of the Salesian charism: the Newsletter should help with a re-reading of the Salesian charism in the Province's situation, without locking itself into simply telling about celebrations which have happened or will happen; it offers cooperation and vocational commitment (in broad terms) with lay people who share Don Bosco's style.

34 Fr E. Viganò wrote:

"Without substantial information about the origins, the history and the current life of our Congregation and the Salesian Family, there is insufficient circulation of the vital sap in the organism. Lacking proper impulses for identity and a sense of belonging, it atrophies.

Instead, with adequate information (circulation and communication of Salesian values), it grows in vitality, enriches awareness and enthusiasm for our vocation and gives rise to family joy".

35 **The nature of the Province Newsletter.**

Not all province products serving internal communication use the title *Province Newsletter*. All provinces, however, have followed up the indications of the Special General Chapter in giving life to family news. SGC n. 516 puts it as follows:

"Communication in and beyond the Congregation.

...B) AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL promoting abundant information by means of Newsletters which are interested in linking communities and confreres concerning problems regarding the Province and encourage *free initiative*, chances to meet, seeking solutions to problems and giving occasion for *facing up to and revising ideas*, experiments, methods, guidelines."

The Italics are part of the Capitular text. The result is as follows: The Province Newsletter is:

36 **-an instrument of communication.**

This is the first item emphasised by the SGC text: *abundant information*.

An instrument, then, which allows information to circulate: should follow, as far as possible, the criteria typical of any information product.

Current news is a substantial and necessary aspect of information.

37 **- instrument of communion.**

Communion comes from awareness when this becomes a reason for *interest*, that is, affective and effective attraction, and relations created around *common issues* regarding confreres and communities.

The pathway to communion built around the Newsletter is different to that brought about by interpersonal relationships, or by prayer or by common opinion.

38 **- a stimulus to creative renewal.**

The Newsletter is to be thought of and produced as something that tries to arouse creativity and renewal.

In some ways it is a place for *checking out* initiatives taking place, for *experiments* in new things or new ways of intervening, for pastoral creativity in response to needs of the time and place.

It is worth noting that the SGC aimed high where Province Newsletters are concerned.

The risk we can run is to make the Province Newsletter:

- an unrelated collection of stories about events. In some ways substituting the House Chronicle;
- a kind of review of printed items in the Houses and the Province. It can be useful in ensuring we don't forget what has happened and how it was received in terms of Salesian events in the local and national press;
- a kind of official *collection of ecclesial and Salesian documents* at different levels world, national, provincial, local. Certainly a few special numbers containing documentation can be useful if they would otherwise not get to the Confreres. But there should be just a few numbers of this kind, not as a regular style for putting the Newsletter together.

The list of risks could go on. Better to show that each risk has consequences for the practical planning of the Newsletter. The Province Delegate is asked to evaluate the Newsletter in the light of the positives and negatives listed above.

39 **The Province Newsletter: who it is for.**

Choosing the public audience for an information product is important. It is essential to define the target, who to direct contents, language style, priorities to. Broadly speaking the confreres are the recipients of the Newsletter.

The Province Newsletter also goes to some outside the Salesian community.

The Province Newsletter doesn't only deal with life in the religious community. It considers the mission and spirit of a Salesian community which has the Salesian Family, lay partners as part of its horizons and plays a responsible role in Salesian activity.

Guidelines given by GC24 need to be part of the understanding of the Province Newsletter. Animation, a typical service of the SDB community for the CEP also goes by way of a communication product like the Newsletter. The choice, however, should not just remain broad or tacit. It is expressed and defined at different provincial levels.

The expectations of Salesians living in a province should not be lost sight of. They take part in the life of the whole Congregation. The Province Newsletter should respond to these needs.

40 **The Province Newsletter: editorial policy.**

The Newsletter is:

- an instrument of communication,
- an instrument of communion,
- a stimulus for creative renewal.

All this can't be done in improvised fashion or be left to chance.

The Province Newsletter has something institutional about it at the Province level. It should be able to present the Province in its typical contexts of society, church, young people and education. This requires guidelines, criteria, reference points. or, in other words, an editorial policy.

41 The reality has different names in different regions: *editorial policy, frame of reference etc.*

What is important is that the choice is:

a conscious one, founded on the precise nature of the Newsletter. The Provincial and his Council are part of this together with the Province Delegate for social communication, and the editor of the Newsletter;

explicit, such that it is public and well known in the Province; and known especially by those at work today, and those who are asked to help to put the Newsletter together;

consistent with the communication system in place in the Province. An evaluation should be made of information and communication products in the Province to study the relationship and coordination between them;

constant over time. To be honest the editorial policy isn't something rigid, invariable, but nor it should not change for every edition.

42 *The Provincial's letter to the Confreres in the Province.*

Some reflection is in order regarding the best place for the Provincial's letter, if it forms part of the Province Newsletter.

As the *first item* in the Province Newsletter it takes on the role of a *fundamental article* (generally, however, this is not the intention of the letter, even if it could occasionally be this): consequently it would need to be written from this point of view.

In the body of the Newsletter, it could refer to institutional tasks - objectives to be aimed at, taking into account information coming before it and community news. The letter would thus function as *practical guidance*.

If it comes at the conclusion of the Newsletter it could have the function of encouragement, stimulus, review, planning etc.

So - the location of the letter is not a matter of indifference.

Nor is the perspective of the writer an indifferent matter.

43 **The Province Newsletter - its production.**

The Provincial appoints the person who puts the Newsletter together, choosing from available and capable people in the Province.

Generally this is:

- the Vice Provincial, or
- the Provincial Secretary, or
- The Province Delegate for Social Communication, or
- The Editor of The Salesian Bulletin.

Each of these choices has its advantages and disadvantages.

Not to be overlooked:

- the ability (already there or to be acquired beforehand) in working with information,
- availability of time for the job.

The Province Delegate helps the one in charge to coordinate the work:

- a confrere in each community responsible for sending in information,
- other useful matters which ensure a functional and easy production.
- a list of possible outside helpers.

44 **The Province Newsletter – structure.**

Organisational involves:

- *financial* organisation: The financial side of the Province Newsletter is somewhat minor when compared to the finances of other products. Given that it is part of the Province institution, the Provincial Council should include accounting for the Newsletter in its overall financial planning.

- *editorial* organisation: defining what makes up the Newsletter.

The different sectors of educative and pastoral activity in the Province should be referred to:

- formation,
- youth pastoral ministry
- Salesian Family,
- missions,
- social communication
- finance.

Other information relevant to the Salesian world has its place if it hasn't already been mentioned in the above. Similarly for matters referring to communities and works in the Province;

- organising *distribution*: finding out who the recipients are guides the kind of distribution. Consider possibilities for making the Newsletter known, other than to confreres, in the Salesian Family, local Church, people working in communication in the local area especially if it is the only institutional product in the Province.

- organising *graphics and layout*: these are technical elements and it would be helpful to have advice from professionals in matters like layout, headings, readability of text, design, photos for enhancing text and so forth.

45 **The Province Newsletter: frequency.**

What has been outlined above can be applied to any type of information product.

If current news is a characteristic of the information, an infrequent Newsletter (say three or four editions a year) will not carry out its real function. It is preferable to have a Newsletter with fewer pages than a huge product only occasionally.

46 **The growth of on-line Newsletters.**

This is part of a new reality. Facility in using computers and internet has given us new possibilities for sending information to and beyond the Salesian world. Just an observation: it is not enough to put the paper version of the Province Newsletter on the internet. This does not meet the requirements of that process. The Internet has its own processes to be respected in producing information.

(2) The Salesian Bulletin

47 The Province Delegate for social communication in some provinces is also the editor of the Salesian Bulletin. In other provinces, they are not one and the same person. In this latter case the Province Delegate for social communication has some responsibility for animation, since he knows some information coming from the centre, following Council decisions.

What follows is of direct interest to the Province Delegate for social communication as well as, of course, the Salesian Bulletin editor.

The Salesian Bulletin is amongst our oldest and most institutional of Salesian information products.

Art. 41 of the Regulations outlines the broad purpose of the Bulletin.

“The Salesian Bulletin, founded by Don Bosco, spreads knowledge of Salesian spirit and activity, especially in its missionary and educational aspects. It is concerned with the problems of youth, encourages collaboration and tries to foster vocations. It is as well an instrument for formation and a bond of union between the different branches of the Salesian Family. It is edited in accordance with the directives of the Rector Major and his Council in various editions and languages.”

48 Following lengthy preparation by the Department, Fr Vecchi and his Council came to the following **conclusions-decisions**, which continue in force with minor adjustments as the years progress. A number of items then expressed as aims, have now been achieved in practice (e.g. The Congregation web site indicates online Salesian Bulletins):

1. *Giving the Bulletin visibility to make its relevance recognisable.*
 - All Bulletins should appear at least bi-monthly.
2. *Making known and sharing to make people feel responsible.*
 - Setting up a world commission:
3. *Effective organisation. Each edition of the Salesian Bulletin should have:*
 - An editorial group with its own tasks and functions
 - An Administrative body
 - A Constitution
4. *On-line Salesian Bulletins:*
 - The structure of the General Administration Internet site
5. *The linchpin of any practical strategy: people.*
 - Formation of SB editors
 - Constant evaluation of the relaunching process and development

49 The work carried out by the Department at world level was brought together in book form: *The Salesian Bulletin in the world – World Meeting for the SB for the third millennium* – Editrice SDB, extra-commercial edition, Rome, La Pisana 1999.

The proceedings and decisions of the most recent 2005 meeting of editors of the SB from around the world, held in Rome, is available in CD form in provinces where the SB is produced, or from the SC Department in Rome.

At regional level, meetings have taken place for formation of SB Directors and co-workers, to put into practice the General Council’s conclusions.

Salesian literature on the SB is extensive, a sign of the interest by the Congregation, beginning from Rectors Major, in the product.

Circulars, various reflections, timely interventions, research in the field, experiments and creativity have helped this publication to grow.

50 **The Province Delegate for Social Communication and the SB.**

Animation tasks regarding the SB by the Province Delegate could be as follows:

- *re-reading* together with the SB director, conclusions and decisions of the General Council, listed above;

- *planning* together how to carry out these decisions: preparing a calendar of interventions on each point, determining the persons responsible;
- *helping* seek who could be appointed to the editorial board for the SB: remember to involve members from outside the Salesian community, choosing from amongst those qualified from the Salesian Family and other experts from the Friends of Don Bosco;
- *studying* together how to achieve an administrative body in the area in which you are working: Steps to be carried out here should be planned in detailed fashion in agreement with the Provincial and Provincial Council;
- *trying out* formation opportunities specific to the editing of the SB: through training in journalism, training in different aspects relevant to a communication product;
- *establishing* together regular evaluation of products or of the programme;
- *seeing to* the structure of features to appear in the SB, for better presentation of the image of the Province and the Congregation.
- *increasing the address list* of those who receive the SB, studying together with the director ways to reach people, groups, church and civil organisations who could be interested in Salesian news.

(3) Province websites

51 Province websites have become a regular and important feature. They are more than a Province intranet and are accessible to the world at large. In addition to the Province websites, communities and their works have widely adopted the practice of setting up a website. There are a number of fundamental questions which need to be considered for the setting up of a website (quite apart from technical issues not tackled here):

- Who will this site be for? (Salesians? Employees? Students? Young people? The whole world?) Accordingly words, graphics and content would have to be chosen.
- What do we want to communicate to the target group? How can we present the information in a brief and appropriate manner?
- How can we build a site for this group that downloads fast, and is useful and easily navigable?

Province sites should contain a link to the www.sdb.org Congregation site.

52 **The www.sdb.org website:** – adequate communications concerning its use come from the Centre. The Province Delegate should learn from what has been sent out concerning the INTRANET/Reserved area, so he can help province delegates for other sectors, and communities, to use this to good purpose. But one particular issue of importance for the SC Delegate in this regard is to advise the Coordinator of www.sdb.org of changes to information, addresses already present on the site. It is almost impossible for the Coordinator to keep up to date with changes unless adequately informed.

(4) Other communication products

53 Two explanations:

- The reference here is not to all the possible products in a Province but to those which fit the category of 'information'. *Other products*, will be at least partly considered in the third chapter dealing with Salesian business ventures.

The reference here is to parish, school youth group newsletters, or those of other groups inspired by Don Bosco, all part of public opinion tied to the Congregation.

There are, besides, the many weekly, monthly news sheets which are part of local daily life. Radio and Television contributions which make known activities and initiatives of the Salesian community are also considered here.

Obviously we cannot include absolutely everything, since there is so much of it;

The reference is from the point of view of the Province Delegate for social communication, not from the point of view of the editors of these products.

54 *The Province Delegate's role is:*

- to study the kind of coordination possible. This does not necessarily mean material cooperation, but rather the definition of concrete ways to make it happen;
- to offer everyone, generally, some criteria for working in the best and most effective way, so that products have quality;
- to help, when asked, in realising individual products.

The power of animation is no less than the possibility for decision!

The animation proposed regards aspects already dealt with relative to the Province Newsletter.

A small structure needs to be created which takes responsibility for the task of working with quality even in small things.

55 **To ensure the functioning of Salesian information from the local end.**

The Province Delegate should become the point of reference for the local communities.

One very useful item in a Province is a handbook or manual developed at local level and according to local needs – something along the lines of the handbook you currently have in hand, but more detailed in terms of communications needs and responses at community level. There is an excellent example of a handbook of this kind available in Spanish, entitled *Manual de Comunicación para Ambientes Salesianos*, by Jose Luis Calvo Torollo (SSE). Chapters 4-8 of the example cited contain useful practical material on: Salesian information, Communications department, types of communication, the house, protocol, equipment.

Above we indicated the need to have a reference person for information needed for the Province Newsletter.

If each community does this, there is the beginnings of a province network which will bring its own fruits of communion and mission between confreres and communities. At the province centre there will be arrangements to re-transmit information coming from houses and activities. An organisation of this kind produces current information. No need to wait for the Newsletter to be prepared to get news circulating.

56 The Newsletter takes on another role: reflection on daily happenings, re-launching initiatives in Salesian presence, discovering spirituality in life. Concerning external information, two other issues:

- an information office on the life of the Salesian province,
- more direct relationships with local media.

57 **To ensure the functioning of Salesian information from the 'centre'.**

The same networking is demanded of the Congregation.

ANS is an international Salesian information agency in our project.

It should not be confused with products. It is the place where information is organised for Provinces to distribute. It is a clearing house as well as a collection centre. As a collection centre it needs help from all the Provinces: this is the specific help asked of Province Delegates for Social Communication.

The Delegate should see to:

- following up Salesian activities in the Province from the point of view of
- **"constructing"** news,
- **"writing up"** the information,
- **"placing it"** within the media at the interest level of the news being offered (local, if it is about local Salesian activities; national if it involves wider interests stemming from what has happened).
- **"informing"** the Agency so it can continue the information process.

58 It is not enough just to send off news, but to see what effect the news can have locally and universally. The verbs "construct", "draw up", "place", "inform" are technical terms in communication. Here we offer an outline that could help keep in touch with the theme we have been dealing with

(5) Correspondents' network

59 Information is supported by knowledge and with the help of many other efforts. For this to happen we need:

- to create a network for gathering information about everything concerning the Salesian Family.
- to make this a professional network such that the coverage guarantees maximum reception of relevant information.
- to make the technical and professional means available which are needed to guarantee an adequate treatment and distribution of information.

Province and National Delegates, the most natural correspondents for the Agency, can refer to what follows to carry out a service according to the information requirements of the Congregation, and encourage other potential correspondents to do likewise.

60 **Information sources for ANS**

Salesian sources

- General Administration: The Rector Major and General Council; departments and central services, General House in Rome.

- Provinces: The Provincial, Provincial Council, Provincial Secretary, Provincial Services, Planning and Agenda, prominent Salesians.
- Salesian Family, activities and initiatives from Lay Movements.
- Publications: Salesian Bulletins, Province Newsletters, local publications.
Non-Salesian sources
- The Holy See.
- Episcopal Conferences, dioceses.
- Conferences of Religious.
- Organisations belonging to other Faiths.
- International, national and regional organisations.
- Cultural and pedagogical centres.
- International, national and regional youth organisations.
- Other world press agencies at national or international level.

61 **The news: as it is and as it functions**

Concept

- News is text with a basic function: to explain the maximum information about a fact in the least time and space possible, and with greatest communicational effect. It should be able to arouse interest in the public.

- News does not exist if a correspondent does not produce it. An event remains an event; to become news it needs the journalistic effort of the correspondent.

Editorial characteristics

News should be worked up through:

- simple detached, concise and clear language.
- short sentences, one idea per sentence, and with plenty of active verbs and concrete nouns.

- avoiding technical expressions that only a few can understand. Using the language of the common people.

Opinion and information should not be confused.

Sources need to be checked – facts and words.

There are several possible approaches to preparing news: two of those presented here are the 'take' and another less rigid approach which permits those in the ANS office to write up the points the correspondent offers. The reality is that many Salesian 'correspondents' are really volunteer stringers, in journalist terms, with many other tasks to do. They have neither the time nor, sometimes the journalistic training to do more than offer the basics for others to write up on their behalf.

Preparing a news 'take'

For the Agency, news consists in writing one or more 'takes' or pieces of content.

A *take* is brief. Maximum length is usually 10 lines.

The first take must be self-sufficient, that is it should not require additions in order to be understood. Successive *takes* are to add information; but all elements of the news should appear in the first. Writing a news item in one or more *takes*

depends on the importance of the news to be transmitted and on those who will be reading it.

The structure of a take.

The first *take* opens with a *lead*, that is to say with the most important part of the news item.

It remains the case that news is best written according to the classic *five questions* formula of, i.e.: who, what, where, when, and why. And useful, too, 'how'.

Writing headlines

There should always be a headline heading the news item.

The aim of a headline is to identify, announce and summarise the information contained in the news item, as well as to convince and arouse interest.

A key or base word opens the headline (two words at most).

Example: DRUGS: SALESIAN THERAPY COMMUNITIES FROM ITALY MEET.

ANS headlines should be no more than 55 keystrokes.

Narrative text headlines are usually a sentence worth – possibly where the verb remains implicit. Topic texts normally have headlines without a verb.

Another approach to prepare news for transmission to ANS

- (a) Choose a brief title
- (b) As a basis for putting your news points together, have no more than 3 central ideas and 7 details (regard these figures as maximums).
- (c) Indicate sources if possible
- (d) Indicate the province or circumscription of origin
- (e) Indicate the Salesian sector best represented by the news (YM, Formation etc)

To this we can add: aim for a regular rhythm; experience has shown that monthly is a minimum rhythm that works, especially if a province has several persons who are prepared to work on that basis. It is not too demanding on individuals, yet enables a good flow of news to ANS if one considers 90 plus provinces working on that basis!

62 A table demonstrating a worksheet that could be used for a news item,

BASIC NEWS FACTS	
1. FACT	
2. WHERE: PRECISE LOCATION	
3. WHEN: DATE (time)	
4. WHO: PEOPLE, GROUPS...	
5. HOW MANY: GROUPS, PARTICIPANTS...	
6. WHAT	
7. WHY	
8. HOW	
9. IMPORTANT ASPECTS	
10. OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST	
11. PROBLEMS	
12. POSSIBILITIES	
13. COMMENTS	

14. STATISTICS	
15. DOCUMENTS (programmes, texts, speeches etc.)	
16. PHOTOS, VIDEO	
17. SOUND RECORDINGS	

63 *The link between correspondent and the ANS office*

The correspondent's work is not complete if the information does not arrive in the ANS office in good time.

Important or very relevant news should be consigned as soon as is possible.

Standard news items can be consigned together in a single mailing on the first day of each month.

Events for AS agenda, instead, should be consigned before the 20th of each month.

Material should arrive preferably through email, either to the ANS address or to individuals working there.

64 *Using the telephone*

The telephone – cellular or otherwise – is one of the most useful tools used by journalists, particularly agencies. Information can be given and received by phone. The phone is useful when there is urgent need to check details or make immediate contact.

When a journalist makes contact for the first time, he should identify himself, the news organisation for which he is working, and the reason for his call.

Brief statements by phone are possible, as well as brief interviews. To be really faithful, a tape of the call would serve proper journalistic purposes.

Questions should be brief and to the point, and aim at providing everything needed for writing a complete news item.

The phone call should then be transcribed and worked into a statement or interview format.

65 *Using email*

Email is the most common tool used for linking correspondents with the Agency.

Email should be checked daily at least once.

The correspondent should normally write and receive news items 'off-line', i.e. in an attached document – the email makes reference to the kind of document attached.

The attached document is best formatted as RTF (Rich Text Format) or in current versions of Word (i.e. avoid using versions before Word '95).

The subject box indicates in a couple of words the nature of the item despatched.

Using 'urgent' or 'very urgent' mode, when necessary, saves time by speeding up distribution via the server.

66 *photographs*

When email does not permit the transmission of photo-quality images, more traditional methods - airmail post - need to be used.

Photos should be sent in landscape format rather than portrait, preferably 10 x15cm dimensions, in colour and always accompanied by captions which identify subject, date, place, topic or event etc.

Slides are also useful.

NB. Problems tied to **photo transmission**.

This concerns technical and practical problems relating to a photographic news service. Technical advice should be sought on these matters. The ANS office is always ready to respond to questions of this kind.

Organising information from outside the Salesian community

67 Information from outside the Salesian community should also be organised.

Consider the following :

- relations with communications personnel in the local area (1),
- active participation in the local Church's commitment to communication (2),
- setting up several provincial offices for social communication:
 - Salesian information office (3),
 - Public relations office (4),
 - office for promoting the Salesian image (5),
 - Press review office (6).

68 The aim is not to propose heavy and complicated structures. But to indicate some areas that are possible for a province. The distinction between the different areas does not mean that there need to be different persons responsible for each. One person can cover many aspects. On the other hand, perhaps not all Provinces would be in a position to be immediately organising the services shown here. The Province Delegate needs to think, however, of the wide area entrusted to him. It is important that he get responsible assistance from the Social Communication Commission.

69 Our starting conviction is as follows: There is need for a greater presence of our Salesian message in the media.

There is no lack of interesting experiences on the part of some confreres when it comes to being part of the media; but it does not appear that these experiences represent a coordinated or specific effort on the part of communities.

Getting the Salesian message 'out there' is part of the Province Delegate's task. This would be a realistic way for Salesians to meet the challenge of social communication: Social communication is also a way, an important way, to be in touch with the Salesian mission.

Statements alone are insufficient. We need the personnel!

70 **Relations with structures and communications personnel in the local area.**

A mutual understanding between those working in the same sector is the first step to be achieved for effective cooperation. A list of structures, people and media to keep in contact with can be drawn up.

- For personal contact.
- For work contact.
- For contact between institutions.

These are the bridges of understanding over which information can pass beyond the community .

We have already said something about World Communications Day. The same idea is taken up again here, but not just for that Day.

Friendly relations encourage other encounters. These can be listed in the calendar of events. The Province Delegate should remember that he not only *asks* his colleagues for information but also *offers* them information useful to them.

We will return to this again when we speak of Salesian information offices. Here we see the urgency for coordination between province and national levels. The two structures should be of mutual support.

The relationship is not limited to people only. It should also be institutional, for example with the local Church structures tasked with organising along the lines of *Aetatis Novae*. The same can be said, especially in large cities, for civil and radio and TV journalism structures.

71 Participating in the local Church's commitment to social communication.

The Pontifical Council for Social Communications, on 22nd February 1992, promulgated its pastoral instruction celebrating 20 years of *Communio et Progressio*. The final paragraph of the text carries this heading: **The need for pastoral planning**, and examines two points:

- The responsibility of the Bishops
- The need for a pastoral plan for social communication.

An integral part of the text is the appendix: **Elements for a pastoral plan for social communications.**

72 One of the first duties of the Province Delegate is to carefully read what is said in the pastoral instruction. The Bishops' responsibilities are presented in number 20:

"Recognising the value and the urgency of the needs arising from media activity, the Bishops and those whose duty it is to decide how to allocate the Church's limited human and material resources, should act to give it due priority, taking account of the particular situations in their own nation, region and diocese.

This need may be greater than ever today because of, at least in part, the great 'Areopagus' of contemporary media has been more or less overlooked by the Church up until now.

As the Holy Father has noted: "Generally preference has been given to other means of formation and evangelisation, while the mass media have been left to the initiative of individuals or small groups who take only a secondary place in pastoral planning."

This is a situation needing to be corrected.

73 Cooperation from the Salesian Province can occur in many ways:

- through the presence and participation in what is being organised at diocesan level,

- through taking initiative first if the diocese is not yet organised – proposing to help form communicators
- through liturgical animation,
- through youth groups,
- through participation in local radio and TV broadcasts,

74 **Internet**

Two matters are chosen here concerning the internet. Both have different issues attached to them.

The first: Use of the internet.

The second: The usefulness of the internet.

75 *The use of the internet.*

This is not about details but only about what touches on the work of the Province Delegate for social communication, recalling the **social dimension** of the phenomenon.

The Delegate is interested in **educating the navigators**, adults or young people.

There is technical, moral and social education where the internet is concerned. This is an educational area where the Province Delegate needs to be concerned about planning and coordinating. We need to learn how to use the internet to speak about the faith, to teach, pray, educate, inform. Once we have overcome the evil of uncontrolled navigation, it can become a real gift from God. Perhaps it is a goal to be aimed at. The primary factor is education.

As in every other sphere of life and activity the result is assured by timely planning, so here too with the internet – we should not fail this appointment offered to us by new technology.

76 *The usefulness of the internet.*

In making use of the internet for our own purposes we recall the importance of **being professional**. Help from professionals can make our on-line presence visible attractive and effective.

Animation – production

77 The Delegate's role here clusters around three attitudes.

- respect for business processes and the various competencies involved.
- coordinating this aspect together with the rest of the province's part in the communication's field
- guaranteeing the Salesian character of the enterprise.

78 *Respect for business processes and competencies.*

The Province Delegate becomes part of the business side of things taking into account three aspects:

- the explicit delegation he receives from the Provincial in the service of animation of this aspect, so he is clear about where his competence lies in this area.
- the typical organisation each enterprise has for its functioning, with its structures for decision-making and internal tasks;
- its qualified and competent personnel (to avoid interventions that do not correspond to the management of the enterprise).

Respect for competence is a sign of recognising the autonomy of this area.

79 *Coordination*

The Delegate needs to see to this.

A business venture has human resources, structural capacity, a mindset open to reality and to the future.

The province's social communications organisation can take advantage of all this, not to distract the business from its task but to use it to help communities grow in their understanding of communication.

Maintaining personal relations with those working in the enterprise, following the development of initiatives and projects, knowing the annual planning for the enterprise, can help the provincial social communication project.

For the Delegate it is not a matter of coordinating the personnel, but coordinating the projects and approaches.

80 *Guaranteeing the Salesian character of our business ventures.*

This is the fundamental point. This is followed up firstly in discussion with the Provincial and his Council, not directly with those responsible for the venture. Again we recall:

- the promotional and educational dimension of business activity,
- the planning dimension through the business's drawing up of a statement of intent,
- the formation dimension as regards employees, so as to achieve the aims of a Salesian enterprise.

From all of this it is clear that there has to be support from the Provincial and his Council for the person who represents them in his role as Delegate.

One concrete form of support is to see that the Delegate is part of one of the Business management councils.

Some important issues for running a successful business venture

81 Some prejudices to be found in Salesian communities where business is concerned;

Relations to be established between the province and the venture.

82 *Common prejudices.*

Communities, generally speaking, are not in favour of social communication business ventures. A number of factors come into play here.

Some prejudices are practical and others theoretical.

83 *Practical.*

The following, amongst others:

- lack of knowledge about the business sector: few Salesians have had work experience in business, so they see businesses as a distraction from the charism; there are also few Salesians with the special competence required for managing a complex business with its various business regulations.

Often this lack of knowledge gives rise to doubts and suspicion;

- some *financial concerns*: The experience we have of social communications business ventures in some provinces has not been positive. In some cases the financial collapses have put provinces into serious difficulty.

Why unnecessarily run this risk?

- the *religious circumstances* of confreres running business ventures: communities can be concerned about the religious life of those working in a business venture, especially considering aspects touching on religious poverty.

It seems to them that it is difficult to observe poverty when operating within projects, finances, purchases involving huge amounts, public relations expenses and so forth.

And there is occasional evidence of confreres living apart from community, in situations which are not a strong witness to the Salesian charism.

The first task of the Province Delegate is to help Salesian communities to know how to view the business side of communication objectively and sympathetically.

This is not something beyond the ambit of the Salesian charism.

This is not some new choice contrasting with tradition.

This is not an activity for some people, carried out as a personal 'thing', but a provincial and community activity, part of the project for Salesian presence in a Church or civil jurisdiction, and within the broader educative and pastoral project of the province.

If the above prejudices are not overcome it will be very difficult to foresee development and growth in this area.

We believe it is most important to be convincing about the Salesianity of communications work and of the work of a business venture in communications.

84 *Theoretical:*

Theoretical fears include:

- *the easy opposition* that can be created between 'business' and 'ministry'.

A business has power and money. Pastoral ministry is defined rather by service. There is some truth, no doubt, in what has been just pointed out. We cannot and must not, however, make them absolute terms almost as if one is good and the other is bad. There is also 'powerful' pastoral ministry. And there are business ventures which 'serve'. Short circuits only serve to confuse.

If the reality was only in the simplistic terms above, how could we explain such a massive and active presence of the Church in communications and communication ventures?

How could we explain the no less nor secondary part that the experience played in Don Bosco's life?

Today especially the Church is attentive to and concerned with the communications area and communications ventures. These have become vehicles for the Gospel! What has been said about the concerns should make those who work in this area be more attentive and not allow themselves to be taken up by aspects of power.

- *fear of losing personal contact* with people and letting oneself be convinced by the *audience (the public)* in making editorial choices. The fear points to a typical Salesian sensitivity: seeking personal encounter with those we minister to. It indicates also the desire to seek truth in the face of concerns about current fashions. This concern should not be under-estimated. It concerns every Salesian of Don Bosco.

It all indicates that social communication and business ventures cannot be reduced to material things, instruments, structures.

A richness of structures and means does not represent the total commitment of Salesian communities working for the young, especially the most needy and for ordinary poor people.

Structures and means are part of a wider project that always puts the person of the one we work for, and our intention to save that person, at the centre of the Salesian work.

85 *Relations* between province and enterprise.

- It is the province's duty, through its offices responsible for daily life and activity, to organise communication and in particular communications business ventures;

- each type of evasion by the province, that is by the Provincial and his Council, either at the level of ideas or in practice, cannot but cause problems and difficulties in the immediate future;

- the provincial and his Council need proper help in their animation and government of the sector: which explains the function of the Province Delegate for social communication, assisted by a commission of experts in the field;

- the province project should take into account all areas of life and activity, to coordinate, animate and govern the way forward for everyone and everything: structures, people, organisations and perspectives;

- the organisation of business enterprises and ventures, with a definition of roles internal to the work and functions demanded of people, groups and councils, serves to respect each one's competence and ensure the ordered development of the enterprise.

Don Bosco put himself in the vanguard of progress. The Salesians have the strength and possibility of continuing their Father's and Founder's choices.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DELEGATE AND HIS TEAMS

86 There are frequent questions about just who is involved in Social Communication in Salesian communities.

The Delegate

87 GC23 spoke of social communication (cf. Acts nos. 254-260: "The journey of faith of the young demands from the community a new form of communication") in the context of deliberations concerning Salesian activity. It indicated the need for the Provincial to appoint the province person responsible for Social Communication (n. 259).

88 This confrere takes the title of **Province Delegate for Social Communication**. Other delegates exist in the organisation of a Province; they animate the different Salesian community activities.

89 The clarification needed here is as follows:

- Each Delegate receives his delegation directly from his superior. When this does not happen it creates uncertainty about what to do (how much to do, how to do it) and also about any eventual evaluation of the work done. It is worth noting that precise delegation helps guide the one in charge and is an authoritative support for his work in the community.

90 It is convenient, then, for the Delegate to come to an understanding with the Provincial and his Council about the **limits** and **possibilities** of his work, once he has received his obedience to animate and coordinate social communication in the Province.

91 The departure point and basic guide for working in social communication needs to be worked out (by the Provincial, Provincial Council, the Delegate) from indications given in the Constitutions and Regulations, from the Project of Animation and Government of the Rector Major and his Council (for example for the six year period 2002-8) and from the SSCS document..

Social Communication teams: Commission and Advisory group

92 The SC Delegate is essentially a team person. He will normally be assisted by a Commission and at times will also have an advisory group. It depends very much on the situation and needs of the Province as to whether there is a commission and an advisory group, or just a combination of the two. Some provinces call whatever entity it they have by other names, but the functions are clear. The Commission works directly with the Delegate in promoting Social Communication in the Province.

Its role is spelt out clearly in SSCS n- 167 ff. The Advisory group enables him to seek advice, and is available to study aspects that need further exploration, helps accompany the processes and so on.

Social Communication Commission.

93 The commission should be in a position to hold frequent brief meetings. The commission's work covers **various functions**. Without being exhaustive, we can offer the following basic ones:

The commission as a working group.

94 Social Communication planning depends directly on the Provincial and his Council at Province level, on the Rector and his Council at local community level. The Social Communication Commission is a working group in the service of the provincial and local communities. The commission does not impose on, stand aside from, or interfere with the project; it assists by studying the problem/problems arising in the realities of life and action without losing contact with the Salesian reality. To lose contact with Salesian reality would mean losing its precise function of animation. 'Being at the service of' includes providing impetus and pushing on ahead.

Study of the problem of communication in all its forms, and study of the real problems of the Province and communities where communications are concerned (therefore problems of personnel as well as activities): these all form part of the commission's function.

The commission as an experimental group

95 The commission backs the Province Delegate and takes on the task of experimenting with:

- new projects,
- formation courses for young people and adults,
- activities aimed at different areas of Salesian activity (schools, parishes, oratories, activities with the young-at-risk, associations, liturgy etc.) in provincial communities,
- renewal and coordination of traditional activities (drama, community halls, singing, music, etc.)
- links and cooperation with institutions in the local area, be they ecclesiastical or civil

The commission as a planning group

96 The Provincial and his Council are primarily responsible for the planning and execution of the social communication project of the province. They get this done through the Commission. In fact, the Commission is, and functions as, a project office in the social communication sector. There is ample room for action here.

97 As a planning group the Commission extends its services to the local communities as well. The Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC) and the different councils of works run by the community need help in formulating plans and projects, according to the demands of the area, the community, and forces actually present in the field.

The commission as a communications centre

98 The term 'centre' recalls a double need which the commission should keep as part of its agenda:

- The centre is a frame of reference: in terms of organisation.
- The centre is a service: in terms of coordination.

99 *the centre is a frame of reference: in terms of organisation.*

The first task the Province Delegate and Commission must carry out is to organise the Social Communication sector. This is a sector for Salesian presence and action.

To organise means:

- studying the situation,
- noting resources,
- checking on possibilities,
- planning what is to be done,
- seeing to its evaluation,
- starting off with the new project.

100 Provinces are sufficiently accustomed to working to a plan and organising pastoral ministry. Now they need to be ready to be part of this dynamic. [delegate, consulta, commission, local coordinators...]

101 *the centre is a service: in terms of coordination.*

Often what is lacking is coordination. Provinces are not always fully aware of what already exists in communication. Not all the qualified personnel are valued. Not all the instruments are used to their best capacity. Not all communication realities are connected (publishing, Salesian Bulletin, local bulletins, printing, production centres, youth free time activities, libraries, meeting places, various publications and so forth).

The Commission can offer this much-needed coordination and build up a unified and systematic communication.

The Social Communications Advisory Group

102 The delegate and his commission may wish or need to have an advisory group whose role is akin to that of the World Advisory Council. It accompanies, evaluates, researches, guides, studies social communication as it occurs in the Province context. It keeps contact with local communities and the province centre. It assists in the many technical issues at local community level.

The advisory group can be there as a group of experts in the field to help projects succeed, and certainly to advise on the process. Communities should not be left to themselves. Accompaniment ensures two essential things: continuity of projects - when it comes to action, the greater challenge lies in the ability to execute projects planned by others.

Projects need to be monitored constantly to ensure that they are moving in the right direction, and in line with changing situations.

The work of accompaniment offers excellent opportunities for ongoing formation of teachers, leaders and other workers.

The commission responds to communities' needs. It keeps contact with local communities and the province centre. It assists in the many technical issues at local community level.

Local Coordinators

103 Just as there is a delegate at Province level, there needs to be a local coordinator at community level. This is a level of activity not regularly developed thus far in Provinces. Details of the role can be found in SSCS n- 173 ff. One particular task of the local coordinator is to be in regular contact with the Province Delegate for social communication, especially to help ensure that projects at local level can be seen to fit within the overall SC system which is being promoted by the Province. This is not intended to be a restrictive comment, but a guiding one.

If the correspondents' network is to be a reality, it is local coordinators for SC who will be the backbone in that they are often in a position to alert either the Province Delegate, or ANS directly, of initiatives and events.

104 **A Database on personnel resources.** One of the initial concerns of the Delegate will be to discover the talents that are around and to encourage their use. Many young people have both the inclination and the ability to work in communication. The same is true for a number of confreres. The preparation of personnel and qualification for the sectors of Salesian presence are the primary objectives of the work of animation and formation on the part of the Province Delegate.

At the provincial level we have seen that it is more useful than ever to have a **database** with the names and qualifications of those who can help or collaborate in the communication area.

Having some names available could be very useful for certain situations, for example, when the Salesian community

- celebrates some event
- prepares a significant occasion for the young or the poor in a local area
- has to correct misinformation about Salesians or Salesian Family life and activity.
- launches an initiative for involving others in the development field, or in education or evangelisation.

CHAPTER FOUR: STRUCTURES AND SERVICES

105 The ideas presented here do not mean that all provinces have to set up all the structures described. There is no need for discouragement for a province that cannot move ahead in some of the areas suggested here...it doesn't mean to do nothing. Each province chooses what is possible amongst the ideas offered, according to resources and practical means.

Other structures

Information Desk

106 One of the first provincial offices useful for the life and activity of the province, but also helpful beyond the Salesian community could be a Salesian Information Desk. This can be organised simply.

It responds to initial questions about the life and activity of Salesians in the Province, the nation, the region or the world. It should therefore have basic information at hand:

- number of confreres (in total and per province),
- number of communities (in total and per province),
- missionary presence (how many confreres in the missions, how many mission areas etc.),
- new presences,
- how the various works are grouped (with information about education, evangelisation, development),
- particular activities (street children, refugees, etc.),
- experiments that are in place
- and whatever else helps to present the Congregation objectively.

107 This office or desk can be further enhanced through essential reference to the Salesian Family:

- groups,
- what they are doing,
- particular projects

And yet further enhancement through reference to the **Salesian Movement**:

- nature of,
- who belongs, the life of,
- organisation.

It is in the interests of the Province Delegate for social communication to already have ready immediately usable data in the case where information has to be quickly provided.

Public relations office

108 *Aetatis Novae* speaks about public relations thus (n. 31):

“Public relations require active communication on the Church’s part, through both secular and religious media.

Involving readiness to communicate Gospel values and to publicise the ministries and programmes of the Church, it requires that the Church do all in its power to ensure that its own true image reflects Christ.

A pastoral plan for social communication should seek:

- to set up public relations offices with sufficient human and material resources
- - to make effective communication between Church and community possible

109 The Province Delegate for Social Communication should consider the need to be active in communications; not merely waiting for others to ask for information but offering what we think should be known about Salesian life and activity; a **balance between visibility and over-exposure.**

Not to be visible means not being known.

To be over-exposed creates indifference.

The need to have contacts with the other province delegates working in the same Country and Region.

110 The **main tasks** of this office could be:

- *to be in contact* with those responsible for social communication:
- *to present* Congregational policy regarding the various problems or topics being debated and faced in public;.
- *to respond* to questions arising from daily life, or from particular high profile events regarding educational aspects or referring to young people;
- *to prepare* for Congregational event so they do not remain at simply the level of external celebration.
- *to be a place of technical support or reflection* at times when the Congregation is expressing its values.
- *to prepare* official communiqués to be sent to whoever needs to be informed:
- *to point out the truth* of the facts involved;
- *to offer a key* to reading situations which give rise to questions or problems;
- *to guide* public opinion.
- *to be present* in an accredited, official way on behalf of the institution, at meetings and conventions, round-table conferences and debates for all who work in the field.

A formal statement of one of the above items usually comes as a press release. The SC Delegate, in consultation with the Provincial or person(s) delegated by him for this purpose, will see to the preparation and release of such statements.

111 Specifically in reference to **possible** recipients.

In today’s context, for an institution like the Salesians inserted actively into the life of people from so many and different nations around the world (first, second, third or fourth world), it would be useful to have a structure that can help:

- present the objective reality of the Congregation,
- amongst other institutions, civil and religious;

- social communications media often looking for news, positive or negative, about or involving the Congregation in different Countries,
- by becoming an official spokesperson for the institution to the wider public, and
- a recognised filter for news transmitted beyond the institution.
- to build an appropriate image of the Salesian community in the world, in view of a better penetration of the social and ecclesial fabric, and
- for a more visible and transparent dialogue with those parts of the public interested in Salesian experience.
- in knowing, more completely, the reactions around the world to the many Salesian initiatives:
- in education,
- in ministry,
- in being a collator and collector of news coming to the institution from outside.

112 The service to be given demands that the one in charge of this sector be officially known and officially appointed by the Provincial and his Council as a reference person.

Office for promoting the Salesian image

113 The promotions office belongs in spheres of everyday life and offers original and appropriate viewpoints concerning the institution it represents and promotes. This is the most important, and often the most difficult task. Often times it is hidden. But to promote the image of a person and an institution we need to:
capture the image,
manage it and
explain its meaning in terms of quality and quantity through media and press in order to arouse sympathy, attention, agreement for the person or institution, choices made, interventions, values.

From one point of view of communication this is called making news. We need to understand this well in order not to be presenting images without content!

The times and modalities of image-making are dictated by real circumstances in the life of people and the Congregation. We need to be attentive to and adapt to different local situations. The image of the Congregation can and should develop where it is a case of:

- The life of the young,
- The life of ordinary people – cultural renewal,
- The rights of those without a voice,

Press review office

114 A press review office could sound like a secondary task. However, it is the prior condition and context for the two previous tasks of image and public relations. The service is about:

- gathering together whatever forms part of public opinion
- positive or negative, in the media regarding aspects of Salesian life and activity;
- archiving what interests or challenges the Congregation in different spheres of life and Salesian mission;
- updating constantly the data to hand on to those responsible for life and development in the Congregation, concerning reaction from the mass media.

115 The daily work of gathering this sort of information, for an institution as widely spread and as large as the Salesian Congregation, cannot be left solely to the Centre in Rome. Individual Provinces are directly concerned. The Province Delegate should also have an eye to this area. What is of general interest, the Province Delegate sends on to ANS.

Services of particular value to a province and local communities

116 *The House Chronicle*: art 178 of the Regulations indicates that it is the duty of the Rector who should 'compile or see to the compiling of the house chronicle'. That having been said, it is an item of communication which also deserves the attention of the Province Delegate – perhaps in terms of some helpful recommendations for compiling the chronicle in communities. These recommendations could include comments along the following lines:

- chronicle writing as a form should correspond with the classic 5 questions – who, what, when, where, how, and occasionally why!
- include what is valuable in terms of the history of the community. It is more than a list of who went out or who came in.
- the style should be narrative.
- context and atmosphere are important for chronicle writing, so it may be necessary to make reference to national, state, ecclesial, parochial... circumstances.
- people's names are to be quoted precisely for later identification.
- value judgements should be left out ('Scripta manent!').
- an entire range of other material forms part of the chronicle: photos, programmes, invitations, CD and other digital material....
- it is best to date all items for the sake of posterity.
- an appendix can contain the community timetables.

117 *Mortuary letters*: the letter emanating from the community (normally) where a confrere has died, is an important act of communication and one which the Delegate for social communication is in a position to advise communities on in general terms. The advice given would be along the following lines:

- the style of presentation: needs to be legible, and have a certain elegance
- for archiving purposes and wider (Congregational) use it should keep to the dimensions in general use (AGC: 15x21cm)
- a certain balance to be kept from one letter to the other; the province could advise a certain length, for example.

- reminder to Rectors of their duty to produce such a letter.
- as the letter may be the only record of personal data on a confreres, this data should be as complete as possible.
- avoid too much emphasis on the final illness: this letter is more a statement about the life of the confrere.
- focus on what has been distinctive about the life of this confrere in the Congregation.
- if quoting directly, then due thought needs to be given to placing the quote in context.
- before publication the letter should be read and commented on by several others to ensure that it has been well put together.

118 *The archives*: chief responsibility for archives at Province level is given to the Provincial Secretary (R. 159), and the article quoted above for the chronicle at local level also includes reference to the house archives. There is, additionally, a more general comment on archives in R 62. The *Elementi Giuridici e Prassi Amministrativa nel Governo dell'Ispettorato*, last published in 2004, and certainly available also in English and Spanish, is a basic reference also for the SC Delegate, at least for his general awareness of the issue. It contains information on ways to preserve documentation and to set up filing and categorisation.

119 In these days of rapid development in digital technology, some thought should also be given to *conservation of digital materials*: 'text' in its most general understanding (includes photographic, audio etc.) is in danger of being lost if it only exists in digital form. It may in many instances be converted to hard copy, but choices can also be made to ensure adequate backup of digital material especially if there is no hard copy available or desirable.

120 The Delegate for social communication has a role to play, along with his teams, in advising the provincial and local communities of issues pertaining to protocol and procedure for due *secrecy of digital material*. Many sensitive documents these days lie on hard disks in provincial offices and the like. It is possible, using free software (one example amongst others is TrueCrypt) to easily create encrypted material and virtual disks which can only be traced by the individuals who hold the username and password.

121 *A style manual*: while various examples of style manuals exist in the communications world generally, it could be appropriate for a Province to have a style manual which brings together many of the issues contained in this handbook and presents them in terms of a style manual for use in the province – points made above concerning the mortuary letter, are one example. At the General House, there are several examples of this kind of manual – a Vademecum used by members of the General Council and a Style Manual as such in preparation though not, at this point, finally approved. Guides of this kind might include reference to publishing in the Province (also drawing on documentation from the General Councillor for social communication on this matter, cf. AGC 390), adoption and use of a province logo, conventions in use for published materials or for internet materials.

Some issues of particular interest and concern

122 **Open source, the Free Software Movement (FOSS):** One area which has enough global impetus to warrant being monitored and considered both theoretically and practically at all levels of the Congregation, is that of Open Source software and the Free and Open Source Software Movement (FOSS when combined). The Pontifical Council for Social Communication's 2002 'Ethics in Internet' instruction spoke of the fact that 'the Internet requires international cooperation in setting standards and establishing mechanisms to promote and protect [the common good]....Determined action in the private and public sectors is needed to close and eventually eliminate the digital divide'. Fr Pascual Chávez, in his Letter in AGC 390 spoke directly of the matter, commenting that 'Open Source is a way of moving towards the democratisation of information and culture'.

The issue is a prime one for consideration at Province level by an advisory group if not by the Commission itself. It becomes increasingly difficult, especially in some poorer nations and provinces, to sustain proprietary software, and there are ethical issues to consider as well. FOSS deserves consideration as an alternative for reasons pertaining to: legality (avoiding piracy), cost effectiveness, independence from 'lock-in' to a single system, the collaborative and community culture it subscribes to, its flexibility.

123 **Educational and institutional challenges:** Fr Pascual Chávez, in his AGC 390 Letter on Social Communications, lists a range of present day challenges to education under the headings 'A culture of...', then a range of challenges to the Congregation – its communication of the charism, the challenges of technology, of use of time, of media, of formation. These too are issues to be taken up at Province and local level for reflection and, where needed, action.

CHAPTER FIVE: COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROVINCES

Areas for cooperation and coordination

124 The handbook opens up horizons for the work of Delegates at Province, National, Conference and Regional level in social communication. Here we limit ourselves however to a few criteria and areas, and in particular mention the following three:

- co-productions,
- copyright,
- exhibition of Salesian products.

Co-productions

125 From the list offered in preceding pages we can see the possibilities for shared work between those working in the same area. Present as we are with our initiatives, enterprises and activities in every continent, we can build up a network of relationships and achievements. The topic is not an easy one – there are many problems:

- problems of qualified personnel for this kind of work,
- problems of doctrinal interests and practical choices,
- problems of an organisational nature between partners,
- problems of mutual trust including in the finance area,
- problems of civil legislation,
- problems of editorial rights...

126 Commitment and constancy in pursuing the objective can overcome the problems.

Provinces and Inter-provincial Conferences have responsibility in this area. The experience of past years is positive with regard to publishing and radio. One large publisher has helped others which are less strong and economically fragile to plan together a Salesian presence in Catholic and State schools.

It is necessary to follow a path that thinks about both the clarity of relationships and legality of the arrangements. Leaders in a province who want cooperation and a common project are called upon. The Department plays the part of guarantor in stipulated agreements.

Copyright

127 A second area for broad understanding in each province is that of copyright. Given the common experience of different costs of living not every province can count on having people qualified to manage a business.

Consequently, some provinces have the possibility of offering studies, research, training aids, educational, pastoral and evangelisation materials to others.

It would be possible, with bilateral or multilateral agreement, to give the right to reproduce and print materials themselves, avoiding the need to import the finished product at unsustainable costs from elsewhere. Piracy is something we should avoid as morally indefensible.

128 We have some experience already in this area. Many of our publishers (printed materials and audio) with the go-ahead of their province, open their publications to other nations. It would be good for this practice to grow. Evidence of one example of teamwork between provinces was in Brazil, in preparing the Salesian logo.

The Department (DSC) can be a mediator in these kinds of contacts while leaving the contracting parties to work out the details of the agreements.

An exhibition of Salesian products

129 The provinces from two Salesian Regions have tried out the experience of combining forces to mount a book fair for their continent. The province where the exhibition takes place take on the task of coordinating the involvement of other interested provinces, setting up the materials to be displayed, ensuring the necessary publicity for the products, taking eventual orders, creating contacts between publishing houses and buyers.

130 When different countries take turns at mounting the exhibition, the burden of organisation is then shared between all the provinces. We have plenty of potential in this area. Being open to new ways of working together will help the image of Salesian presence.

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