**THE FORMATION SECTOR: STRUCTURES FOR ANIMATION AND COORDINATION**

***Notes in fieri***

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*Ivo Coelho, SDB*

The Regional Formation Commission (CRF) with the figure of the Regional Formation Coordinator is a relatively new structure of animation in the congregation. It is not mentioned, for example, in the Constitutions, though the Regulations have a section entitled “regional structures” (R 135-142), where the “provincial conferences” are authorized “to provide for the coordination… of the formation, qualification and updating of confreres” and “to… decide upon eventual interprovincial secretariates, structures and offices for animation and coordination.” (R 142)

The FSDB itself speaks abundantly about the provincial formation delegate and the provincial formation commission, but it does not envisage a regional formation commission and coordinator. It makes reference to the regional councillors (250, 286, 551, 561-562), mostly in relation to interprovincial initiatives regarding ongoing formation and regional formation centres.

The CRF and the regional coordinator are organs of animation belonging to the evolving praxis of the congregation,[[1]](#footnote-1) born of the need for intermediate structures in the animation of the provinces. References to them are found most clearly in the latest edition (2014) of the *Vademecum* of the General Council,[[2]](#footnote-2) and also in the Regulations of various CRFs.

In the present context, the General Councillor for Formation carries out his work of animation with the help of his Team (the “Central Formation Team”), and of the CRFs with their coordinators. The Regional Formation Coordinators are considered members of the Formation Sector, and meet every two years (the Consulta Mondiale). Since the CRFs themselves are composed of the Provincial Formation Delegates and usually meet at least once every year, we have a network of animation and coordination that reaches down to the provinces.

**1. The roles and functions of the CRF**

The CRFs are organs for reflection on and dialogue about the formation processes in each region, as well as coordination and animation of these processes.

The members of the CRF are:

* The Regional Formation Coordinator
* The provincial formation delegates of the region
* A Salesian Brother and one other confrere proposed by the CRF and appointed by the provincial conference
* The formation councillor and/or one of the members of his Team.

**2. The roles and functions of the Regional Formation Coordinator**

The Regional Formation Coordinator is proposed by the CRF, appointed by the Provincial Conference and approved by the Formation Councillor.

The coordinator forms part of the formation sector and contributes to the reflection, coordination and animation of the formation sector. He participates in the “consulta mondiale”.

He convokes the annual meetings of the CRF, preparing the agenda in dialogue with the delegates, the provincial conference and the formation sector. He presents the proposals of the CRF to the provincial conference for approval.

He promotes and organizes various initiatives for the ongoing formation of directors of communities and of formators or groups of formators. Such initiatives are planned by the CRF.

He is also usually the director of the regional / interregional formation centre where it exists.

**3. The “consulta mondiale” for formation**

The “consulta mondiale” is convoked every two years by the General Councillor for Formation. The participants are

* The regional formation coordinators
* The directors of the regional / national formation centres
* A Salesian Brother
* The members of the Central Formation Team.

The chief task of the Consulta is

* To evaluate the implementation of the formation section of the Project of the Rector Major and his council for the sessennium
* To reflect on emerging challenges in formation
* To program the further implementation of the Project

**4. The Regional Formation Centre**

GC27 67.8 committed itself to “suitably preparing a Centre for Ongoing Formation at Regional level or making use of those in other Regions.” The formation section of the Project of the Rector Major and his council (2.1.1.2) indicates as objective of the sessennium the institution of ongoing formation centres at the regional or interprovincial level to serve Salesians, lay people and members of the Salesian Family.

At the present moment we have two centres and a mobile team:

1. Centro Salesiano de Formación Permanente America (CSFPA) Quito – Ecuador, for the Interamerica and America Conosud regions
2. Don Bosco Renewal Centre, Bangalore – India, for the South Asia region
3. Mobile Formation Team of the East Asia – Oceania region.

The two centres have their own statutes. The Quito centre is governed by a Curatorium (the Equipo Ampleado that meets every November, with a member of the Central Team participating). The relationship of the Bangalore centre with the formation sector needs to be defined better.

The provincials of the two regions of Europe have asked that a Centre be set up for the two regions.

For various reasons the centre for the Africa-Madagascar region has not yet taken off.

We need to mention here also two other initiatives in the area of ongoing formation of Salesians, laity, young people and members of the Salesian Family:

1. The “Salesian Holy Places” Project (Valdocco, Colle don Bosco)
2. The “Salesian Holy Land Project” or simply “Formative Experiences in the Holy Land.”

**5. The Central Formation Team**

The councillor for formation is assisted at the moment by two full time and two part time collaborators; the latter reside in their own provinces, while the former reside at the Pisana.

The collaborators participate in the drawing up of the program of the sessennium and that of every year. One of their principal tasks is that of study and reflection on formation. Besides the tasks assigned to them as members of the formation sector, they also accompany two or three regions each. At the present moment, Cleofas Murguia follows the regions of America (Interamerica and Conosud), Silvio Roggia the regions of Africa and Asia (Africa-Madagascar, South Asia, East Asia – Oceania), with the help of Jose Kuttianimatthil who has special charge of South Asia, and Francisco Santos Montero the regions of Europe (Central & Northern Europe, Mediterranean).

With respect to the regions

* They maintain contact with the Regional coordinators and provincial delegates
* They keep themselves informed about the formation communities and centres of study
* They participate in the CRFs and other interprovincial formation meetings such as the Congresses for Salesian Brothers
* They are available, within limits, for the service of animation in the field of formation.

As far as the accompaniment of the regions and the provinces is concerned, a few notes:

A very useful and even necessary tool is a formation database containing the names and electronic addresses of the regional and provincial formation delegates, the various initial formation communities with the names of the directors and their ids, useful information about the study centres (whether Salesian or not) and the kinds of qualifications conferred, along with the duration of studies, numbers of formees with province of origin, the existence, functioning and usual dates of meetings of the Curatorium; statistics of entries and departures in the context of the overall statistics of the provinces and regions; etc.

An accompaniment of the individual provinces would involve visits, knowledge of the formation needs, levels of perseverance and fragility, qualified formation personnel, the qualification plan (especially w.r.t. formation of formators and in the key areas of the charism).

Ongoing contact with the Salesian students in Rome and in Italy, to encourage their self-formation not only as professors but also as formators.

Special follow up of the Salesian Brothers in initial formation, and especially of the specific formation of the Salesian Brother.

Accompaniment of the dimension of ongoing formation: continued insistence on the primacy of God in Christ and the Salesian consecrated identity; special attention to the Salesian directors.

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1. They were the initiative of F. Cereda and his team in the sessennium 2002-2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The 2008 edition of the Vademecum makes no mention of the CRF and of the Regional Formation Coordinator. The *Vademecum* itself – along with the Project for the sessennium – probably dates back to the sessennium 1996-2002, or the rectorate of Juan Vecchi. These tools of animation and governance are mentioned in GC25 (2002) 110 as part of the effort to achieve coordination between the sector councillors “in the last sessennium.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)