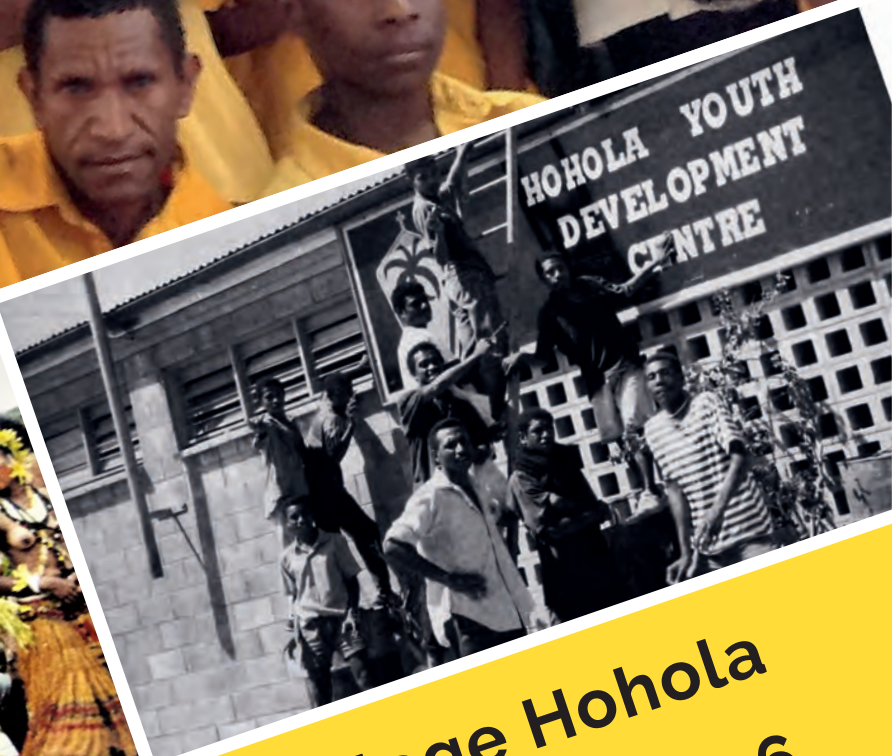




Youth from the Margins



La Salle Technical College Hohola
1973 - 2016

Gary Wilson FSC





La Salle Technical College, recognized by the PNG Department of Education, is administrated and led by the De La Salle Brothers who work in education worldwide. They came to Papua New Guinea in 1946 and have been involved in several provinces since then. The Brothers are a lay (i.e. non-priestly) institute of Catholic religious founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle in France in 1679. The Lasallian Family in Papua New Guinea is a vibrant locally-led association of teachers in small remote and urban schools throughout the nation. It is a part of the District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

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Foreword

A short history of a small non-formal education centre sounds somewhat inconsequential. But the fact that it had morphed into a formally recognised technical high school with seven hundred students deserves note. To date, thousands of youthful lives that have been influenced by the existence of “Hohola Youth Development Centre” or more recently La Salle Technical College. In the words of a past student:

I am someone who could have given up and would have been like millions of children who are school leavers in this country. I struggled with life and thought that this was the end of me. I come from a remote area where there is no decent development set up. My parents are unemployed which is one of the problems with my financial assistance. For myself I refused to be called a dropout, useless or good for nothing, I actually stayed at Hohola Youth Development Centre for three years.

This is a very human story of youth lost and struggling, who had found meaning, skills and knowledge, and -hope. The simple vocational centre was set up for poor youth at Hohola, an inner suburb of Port Moresby, forty-five years ago. The venture continues prospering today. Recording the story promises to help continue that flourishing.

Any re-telling of events comes from a desire to remember, to enlighten, to acknowledge both people and self-identity. When approached by Brother Antony Swamy, past Principal, to write the history I wanted to do just that - to bring to the surface and wider attention feelings of pride, wonder and reflection. But also, to expand understanding and appreciation of the people and events involved. Searching out truth from individuals' memories and interpretations brings to light gaps, failures and disappointments. These are touched upon, if not to the depth that more detailed research could offer.

The numerous interviews embed the perceptions of actual participants in the story. It is very much a presentation of the everyday lived-reality of the Centre. It aims to be as accurate a record as possible of the actors' roles in a very human drama. For this purpose, the text is amply supplemented with many pictures of young people in action. This is to cater for a quite wide audience, be it students or teachers at Hohola, interested members of the Papua New Guinean community, the De La Salle Brothers or people in public life. Wherever possible, I cite sources to way-lay any sense of authorial imagination run riot. The reader can easily forget the endnotes and be transported, as a well-known American historian says, into another time and place, and a realisation that those people are as human and real as we are (David McCullough, quoted in *'The Australian' Review*).

These brief chapters trace a theme of daring and struggle, innovation and tenacity, dreams and fulfilment, of youth and adults alike. What is told and viewed is not solely about prominent adult characters in the drama, but- critically- clear glimpses into the vibrant lives of thousands of young Papua New Guineans who have “had a second go” in furthering themselves. They often found- it was said to me several times- a place, a home at “HYDC”. It was animated by women and men who dedicated committed years in their own or another culture. The school aimed and still endeavours to empower local youth for a better future and for fuller lives in their communities. It is dedicated to these young people.

Chapter One:

Pioneering Women, a Wild Dream

In the face of the clash of so many cultures and traditions, and a struggle for national identity, with all the conflict and poverty this brings, I saw the Brigidines ... working in an "Early Church" atmosphere, to uphold the dignity of the individual through education, job training (and)... integration of local traditions.
(Sr. Carmel Posa, SGS, visiting in 1991)

On 15 January 1966 four Catholic sisters stepped onto Port Moresby soil at Jacksons Airport attired in new white cotton habits for the Tropics. It was a full decade before Papua New Guinea (PNG) gained its independence from the Australian mandate. Welcomed with lays, they had been chosen from a group of eighty volunteers from the New South Wales Province of their Order. These Sisters of St Brigid (C.S.B. - Brigidine) were Mother David Dynan, Casimir Dawson, Margaret Mary Coleman and Clothilde McDonnell. Expanding their work into an Australian mission at Hohola, a new inner suburb of the capital, they were answering the request of Bishop Virgil Copas to lead the parish school. The institution was already functioning with one lay missionary, three National teachers and 336 students.^{1&2} It was the unforeseen prelude to the establishment of Hohola Youth Development Centre (HYDC), now known as La Salle Technical College Hohola.

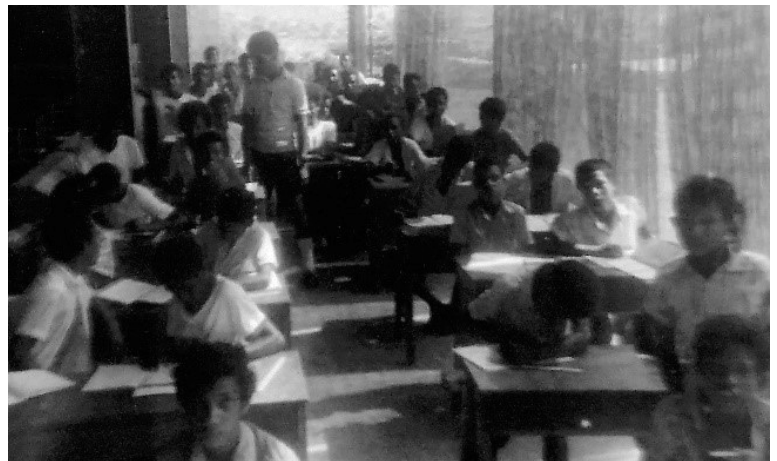
Setting to work quickly, the Sisters as keen pastoral people began by visiting homes after school duties to get to know the parishioners and to gain their confidence. The convent and surrounds were described by a Sister within a few years as "places of welcome, refuge, recreation and development for many, particularly the rejects of society"³. Their mission included visiting the leprosy hospital, operating a health clinic and family planning education. A new community was established soon at near-by Erima. By the early 1970's rural people who were looking for opportunities of a better life were flocking to Port Moresby and setting up illegal "settlements". A lack of water, let alone electricity, led to these squatter residents at times breaking open water pipes to access what is considered a natural right of citizens. Cultural beliefs, adult poverty caused by no land or job, unemployment and lack of shelter were all factors in massive dislocation. Extensive duties at home or living with "Wantok" (village / tribal connections) all exacerbated the plight of city youth.

With the advent of independence in 1975 and the withdrawal of a large number of expatriates, it was clear that the nascent national education system would be struggling. Less than 50% of primary aged students were in school and a smaller percentage of those entered secondary school. The reasons for "at risk" young people and their need for education were understandable in this context. In Hohola, as elsewhere, "raskol" gangs whose members were sometimes homeless had developed in the city as the new nation grappled with huge tasks of lack of elementary education and unemployment. A half of children had no primary schooling, and of these only one-third continued to secondary or high school⁴. Furthermore, a large number of students were expelled from primary schools for non-fee payment, and hence could not even sit secondary entrance exams. Secondary education was the preserve of an elite minority.

Understanding the needs, especially of youth, a group of fifteen concerned people, including Sr. Genevieve Pattermore formed in early 1972 the "Hohola Youth Development Association" (HYDA). It had as its purpose "to provide programmes directed at the spiritual, psychological, social, educational and physical development of young people" ⁵. In mid-1972 a rough structure was added to the Sisters' Convent yard and initial classes for young adolescents were held there. A well-read newspaper helped publicity with a full article on the nascent Centre. The rhetorical headline ran: "*What future is there for Us?*", but an answer was given too in large print: "*HYDA takes up dropout challenge*". ⁶

In January 1973, the Executive Committee announced a "Youth Development Centre" in Hohola. With bulldozers excavating, Sr. Genevieve was in charge when on February 5th the official opening took place in a classroom of the parish primary school. Soon there was a makeshift classroom on a verandah of Sacred Heart Church. There were 36 young 11 to 14-year-olds from local parishes and some from villages now living around Hohola or in settlements ⁷. Activities on the side verandah were far from ideal – intense heat and glare in the mornings, lessened with shade material, and later in the day, gusty winds.

The roll swelled soon to 52 boys and 8 girls who were engaged in a broad program. Gradually some boys were brought in by the St. John of God Brothers from the police, as juvenile thieves. ⁸ The courses had a "General Education" component - lessons in reading and writing of Motu and Pidgin, Current Affairs and History, a First Aid course conducted by the Red Cross, and Christian Living led by three local pastors. There was a vocational component - sewing, cooking, office work, mat weaving, bilum-making for the girls and carpentry and furniture-making for the boys. Cultural experiences were exposure to traditional songs and dance, and indigenous crafts. Two other activities promoted "community-building" - students learned self-help and gave assistance in digging trenches for the building which had been in process since March, and sports added a team-building and health component. ⁹



1: First students - Sacred Heart church verandah

All this took place with bulldozers excavating and builders hammering. By July the building project of a non-formal vocational education centre under the guidance of Br. Braithwaite MSC and the Mission Building Team was completed- a few rooms on the side of the hill overlooking Sacred Heart Church. They comprised classroom/library area, domestic science and needlework room, manual arts room, an office, four storerooms and a bathroom facility. The Executive Committee surmised that their school project would in the following months be taken up by the Minister of Education for the establishment of "Community Secondary Education". ¹⁰

Learning and teaching

Very quickly the formal College of Distance Education (C.O.D.E.) handbooks were introduced and provided an important framework for classroom teaching, supplementing General Education. C.O.D.E. was an avenue for Grade 6 elementary students to work towards certification and entry into secondary school if they passed the C.O.D.E. examinations. But they also demanded strong student motivation and teacher expertise and a strong organisational structure to track student unit completion and storage. In later years Sr. Julia (Chanel) Williams (1985-91) did this sterling work, as did Sr. Peter Doyle later.



2: Early students of the 1970's

Early lay instructors were found haphazardly and bright students later took on the instructor role. They proved very faithful to the project in those initial years. Within two years Mary Koanie was instructing in basic English and mathematics (until 1987), Br. Nathaniel, a St. John of God Brother -cane furniture, Stephen Ure – woodwork, Augustin Kose -art (until 2006) and Albert Roio – “Basic Studies”. Albert later became the Assistant Director and in charge of the secondary education program. Sr. Janice Blyton (on staff from 1974) was the Supervisor of Girls and taught some domestic science and music.¹¹ Some talented ex-students were soon selected as “Youth Leaders” to supplement the general education program.

Search for donors and funding

By 1975 a building was erected on the hill behind the Sacred Heart Church, what has now become the administration centre. The block to the west of this was added by the Lions Club of Australia and the Sisters eventually were able to gain money to build the “Community Recreation Hall” to the east of the main school block in 1977. It cost K.22,000. A Finance Committee of the Association was tasked with raising local funds –only K.4,000 initially- through a fete and raffles. Australian Catholic Relief (now Caritas Australia) and Misereor (German Caritas) had paid for the 1976 staff salaries. Community Aid Abroad (Australia) and some local donors- Jay Cees Club ran a raffle and the Port Moresby City Council paved the driveway. Other finance came from the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (U.S.A.), the American Fund for Overseas Development in London, and the New Zealand Government.

HYDC was governed by the Association with a Board of various “prominent business and educational people interested in the scheme”.¹² They were fully aware that “an increasing problem being faced...is funding staff salaries” – K.20,000 for 1977. The government’s “limited responsibility” was obvious. “If the Centre is to continue its essential work then we must receive financial assistance...Without this aid, before too long the Centre will not be able to function”.¹³ By 1980 K.33,000 was needed for salaries.

With these stressful realities HYDC worked under the Sisters to generate its own income. The carpentry workshop was the “backbone of the school”.¹⁴ Goods produced by the students were being regularly sold at the Ela Beach markets at the weekends, with Sr. Genevieve transporting produce and driving the old truck modernised by Shell Industries. An Australian Catholic magazine advertised the Centre as “a practical self-help institute” but that donors were very much needed.¹⁵

This self-help stance fitted well with community service. In 1975 the Centre became an emergency ambulance base for the Independence celebrations. Students did odd-jobs around the area with carpentry, painting, cleaning around buildings, and hopefully were being paid for such. They visited the Cheshire Home for handicapped children and the children’s ward at Port Moresby Hospital.¹⁶



3: Producing carpentry goods

The Centre was also available for community and parish events, and as an Association entity it was concerned with the plight of unemployed women in the vicinity as well. “Hohola Family Industries” was established. By 1977 about fifty local women had developed under the Sisters a small cottage industry. They became skilled machinists and embroiderers at home with popular local designs producing weekly earnings to supplement family incomes with sales at the Port Moresby Show. It was hoped that eventually it could also assist in helping with the running costs of the Centre. Older local youth formed a Youth Club which met weekly on Sunday nights with up to 100 members. These initiatives for the community were reciprocated: volunteer instructors included from time to time the St. John of God Brothers, Red Cross Officers, Adult Education Officers, university students, Administrative College trainees, Bomana Catholic seminarians and the United Church Pastors.¹⁷

As Sr. Janice noted in the last year of Sr. Genevieve’s directorship in 1979: “the establishment of HYDC was certainly a response to the felt needs of the people”. It always had an Executive Committee from the community...as well as the initiative and insight of Sr. Genevieve. But she pointed out that in the fractured local community there were unresponsive attitudes shown by many as well as parents.¹⁸ In the same year the Brisbane Catholic Leader chronicled that K.60,000 had been invested in buildings since 1973 for the current 160 students who paid fees of K.40 per year.¹⁹ By this stage a local man, John Dominic, had offered work and been charged with a Food Garden Project assisted by a reserve water tank. There was also a sports oval now and a type of security fence around the property. Other developments were attempts to up-grade the skills by short external courses of the five Youth Leaders and three part-time assistants. A Br. Leo SVD from Lae St. Joseph’s Technical School also came to assess programs and offer guidelines. He recommended the upgrading of manual arts. Funding again became a concern. Although the HYDA Progress Report of 1980 mentioned



4: Sr Genevieve and students off to sell at the markets, mid-1970's

a generous donation of \$US 75,000 over 3 years from the (U.S.) Foundation of Peoples of the South Pacific, by 1983 Sr.Noela Leamy OSF, National Christian Education Co-Ordinator of the Diocese was commenting to the Brigidine Provincial in Sydney that missionary religious orders were still "holding things together from their positions of responsibility ...(works) that indigenous people are not ready to take on yet". Few works, she maintained were of the standard of HYDC, whose sisters were "deeply committed" and had "realistic objectives ...The financial state of the Centre is continually a matter of concern

...and a lack of finance could cause the closure of the Centre; it is an 'at risk venture'".²⁰

Continual requests were being made to the Archdiocese for stipends for the Sisters' work. At this somewhat precarious juncture, Sr. Janice Blyton became Sister -in-charge until 1984 when the Centre was given "Permitted School" status by the Department of Education, which provided a minimal subsidy. Salaries were now K.100 per fortnight.²¹ By this date the NSW Sisters had made the decision to withdraw from Hohola so they could open a mission at Kiunga in the highlands. HYDC was taken over by the Victorian Province. Sr. Maureen Utber who had already worked in Papua New Guinea for many years became the new Principal in 1985. She remained as such until 1992.

An extended interview by The National newspaper with Sr. Maureen during her early days as Principal pointed out the key social-educative issues already noted – the aimless drift to the National Capital District (N.C.D.) of unskilled young people, disillusionment and frustration at city life, crime and a poor view of self and society. The vision of the Centre was "the belief that true education creates the ability to choose a quality of life (via)...a learning environment that nurtures the spiritual, social and academic development of young people so they may realise their full potential as adults".²² The article then outlines HYDC's educational offerings including C.O.D.E.,



5: Hohola Brigidine Sisters' Community late 1980s: (lt. to rt.) Srs. Agnes Lyng, Adrienne Kerr, Maureen Utber (Principal), Rose Bourke, Anna Hennesy & Marilyn Chalk, OFM

skills training, on-the-job work experience and general subjects. This emphasised that the mission of the Centre had a strong pastoral and personal developmental goal: "one of the first essential aims (she said) ...is to try to instil into the students ...a firm idea of their true worth and potential, thus allowing them to see that 'all was not lost' even if they did not achieve High School standard. (Here)...we make the students understand that he or she still belongs to the community and is not neglected. It is not the end when they complete community school and can't get a place at high school".²³

Responding to Needs

So, the Centre was answering still a critical personal development and socio-educational need in a situation of great fluidity and social dislocation. At the same time, after ten years of Centre operations, Sr. Maureen was noticing greater expectations of students who wanted more employable skills and re-entry into secondary schools, i.e. achieving "High School standard".²⁴ This meant more emphasis and time incorporating C.O.D.E. in the curriculum and teaching more skill-based subjects that could lead to employment. An important move in this direction was to initiate some work experience for senior students with local employers with whom the Sisters had networked and got to know.

The Sisters spelt out four basic aims:

1. To give students back their self-respect and a sense of personal values.
2. To help students acquire skills and healthy attitudes which would enable them to become useful and happy citizens.
3. To give students an opportunity to continue their studies through the College of Distance Education system.
4. To forge a cooperation with the local community which would create a spirit of goodwill and friendship and would act as a motivation for respectable living and a deterrent against crime²⁵.

Teachers at this stage in the 1980's included Maria Abina - home economics, Peter Maia - woodwork (& currently on staff), Agarda Warmen - craft, and Ibene Fraghi - home economics / sewing (till 2011 with a three-year break). Some had been students who then transitioned to be "Youth Leaders". Peter had been a student from 1978-81 and then worked under an Italian volunteer carpentry teacher. Ibene was a student 1976-79. She and others were given in-service in leadership in Lae and the N.C.D.

A special group from the community was the "Helping Hand Ladies". They were expatriate women, whose husbands worked in government or industry; they offered their acquired skills to the Centre at an early stage after its opening. Their marvellous work with the students included the vocational offerings - cooking, sewing, craft etc.- so important to the young girls.

²⁶



6: Lay teachers and Sisters on staff, late 1980's

The Sisters, especially the first three leaders, were women of vision, initiative, grit and compassion. The Brigidine Sisters Genevieve Pattemore and Janice Blyton have been mentioned above. Sr. Maureen, Principal from 1985 till 1992, was a powerhouse who knew PNG from four years work at Erima. She took over with dynamism with two others. An early account speaks of her spending much time "counselling and coercing, as well as the never-ending search for ways and means to keep the Centre on its feet".²⁷ She told the students the Robert Bruce

story of the persevering spider climbing its web and continually falling back until it finally reaches its goal. The moral of the story was her catch-cry and quickly became a motto which one still sees emblazoned on the school uniform: "Never Give Up"; hang in there - be like the spider! As a pragmatic leader, she gave an initial K.20 pay packet to the first 'teachers', themselves ex-students, including one Mr. Peter Maia,²⁸ still the College's Grounds Manager and an important teacher since 1980.

One essential matter, though, was always prominent. The bogeyman which returned at each stage of HYDC's history was inadequate finance needed to run a charitable institution. In 1984 the expenses were K.55,000, of which K.9,000 was provided by the Government – the non-formal education grant for a Permitted School. "The rest regularly must be found from the sale of goods made at the Centre, grants from Foundations, donations and student fees".²⁹ As the media reported, not mentioning the solid Foundation donors: "The Centre is financially dependent on grant support from the Catholic Church, charity organisations and Government subsidies, all of which are small and very irregular. However, the centre encourages self-help activities and earns at least one-third of its annual budget through fund-raising efforts, such as the successful 'Clean-a-thon' campaign in which students carry out maintenance and repair work in the community... (The Centre) enjoys the goodwill of a large cross-section of the community several employers have stated their preference for (our)... youth...as they know how to work. Those who have not obtained work, at least are more mature and the majority are law-abiding citizens today".³⁰

The friendly relations with the community were promoted by the honesty and hard work of students at their work experience placements, engineered by Sr. Julia. Most graduating students, in some good economic times, got jobs in factories and shops because they were "reliable, respectable and responsible".³¹



7: Sr. Janice and student

Sr. Maureen was also fully involved in the wider Church's mission in the capital – Executive Committee for the Deanery – which offered in-service for parish councillors, youth leadership and liturgy courses, President of the Regional Conference of Women Religious, and member of the Education Standing Committee for the Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development. She returned home to Australia in early 1993 after twenty years of commitment to the Catholic Church in the N.C.D. "The fruit of her work (could be seen) ...in people from all around the area of Moresby (coming)... to wish her well and offer gifts of appreciation. She had been mother and friend to so many, sharing their joys and sorrows and helping them in their needs as well as entertaining them with her many stories (and) humorous anecdotes. To Sr. Maureen, people were the important thing and time meant nothing if someone was in need. Her faith and trust in God (and her mother) together with her great prayerfulness got her out of many a tight corner!".³²

A Catholic community mission

Of course, the HYDC ministry was a corporate affair for the Brigidine Sisters. Other sisters who worked at the Centre over the years were Julia, Rosa Bourke (1990-95), Marie Feiss (1985-90) and Anna Hennessy (from the USA) among others. Another Sr. Marie -Mbigaman- was a Sister of the Handmaids of the Lord, a National order founded by the great Archbishop de Boismenu, himself an ex-student of the De La Salle Brothers in St. Malo France. She taught Home Economics for many years. Sr. Julia, a very competent woman, supervised the C.O.D.E. students, drove the old truck as a Class 6 driver, and taught at the Xavier Institute which formed indigenous religious men and women. For fifteen years John Dominic was the self-appointed security man for the Sisters. He returned to his home at Milne Bay in 1992, lauded for his zeal, foresight and initiative at the Centre where he acted also as handyman.³³ New teachers in the 1980's were Geno Iru- drama and music (till 2005), Bokana Gamara – cane furniture, and Gwaibo Mao- Office and Payroll. Two Indian Sisters were also employed.

The Sisters worked for women's issues, seen in their early support of struggling unemployed young women in their clothes-making group. They took students to a "Women in Education" conference at the University of PNG to raise the consciousness of the discrimination of women; they promoted the "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless". This latter led to a HYDC study of housing in the capital.³⁴ Strong insertion into the life of Port Moresby is illustrated by involvement in many local events of these two decades, in a fast-changing new nation building itself to maturity. One was the annual Port Moresby Show where HYDC had stalls to sell goods for its funding. This involved three days of hectic preparations. Another was a Centre stage production of "Kiko and Bake" – a PNG legend. It was a fine success, performed several times. Interestingly, the Sisters noted that the National people are great performers and extremely creative, as each performance would very often be presented in a different way. Theft was a regular local event and



8: Girls wearing their dress-making work

a danger too. One major incidence of community danger was the rampage at the death of a Chimbu politician, Mr. Okuk which led to tribal vandalism in markets and public places. Later, the Bougainville separation crisis and war also had massive impacts with family breakdown and migration. Families often feared as they negotiated the community, including the teachers at HYDC, with youth attacks and vandalism regular occurrences. There were also natural incidents, e.g. when mudslides swamped the Convent house built below the hillside!

Celebrations

As expatriates, the Sisters and other religious personnel enjoyed Australia Day celebrations at the De La Salle Brothers community at Bomana. For Church members, a fine occasion was the ordination of Roger Mount as a priest in Hohola Parish church: he had been a friend and patron of HYDC from its beginnings. Later there was the ordination of Augustine Pindi. St Patrick's Day was also celebrated by ex-patriates, as well as the significant centenary of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart foundations on Yule Island, where the De La Salle Brothers had worked in partnership for some decades. More specifically for the Centre was the excitement at the arrival of a voluminous 'Air-lift' of goods from Australian Brigidine schools and their friends. Another unexpected but appreciated event was Gwaibo Mao- one of the earliest students & office clerk- being sponsored by Rotary for a Brisbane leadership course.³⁵



9: Raising funds through grass-clearing as community work

Already some motifs that weave through the Hohola story were present. Seeing the plight and urgent educational needs of young people was central, and these resulting in the learning of employable skills mixed with broadly-based formal school subjects. Another emerging feature was that teachers were unqualified and inexperienced, requiring much help initially in learning themselves the discipline of instruction. Of importance was the critical impact of strong, impassioned Directors of the Centre and the creativity of the Sisters and their associates. Other themes that will deserve further mention are a strong strain of self-help from students and staff in selling any products of their learning, and the generous help to and from some in the local community. Finally, there was the disinterest from, or at least lack of any substantial financial help from the education authorities, of Church or state, hence the constant struggle and commitment of those 'at the coalface' to stabilize funding.

A defining event happened at the end of 1992. The Sisters decided to hand over the administration of the Centre to the De La Salle Brothers. The Brigidines had seen that they could not maintain their leadership due to lack of a suitable head and the financing was an additional issue. They continued to work at their other Permitted school at Erima, a smaller operation. Br. Denis Loft would be the new Director and some Brothers would work on the staff of HYDC. His one stipulation was that the Sisters would remain to support him. This they did in the presence on staff, among others, of Srs. Rose, Adrienne, Anna and Agnes.³⁶

As to the impact on participants themselves, Sr. Maureen reflecting back on her involvement pointed to her learning from those she ministered to: "they taught us so much, were so loyal; they protected us if there was trouble around. You began to respect the knowledge or the spirituality they had despite being worse off than we were".³⁷ How this heritage was protected and extended is detailed in the Centre's next stage of development.

"Amid the barred window, bolted door, barbed and razor wire fences...that is Port Moresby...the Centre is a place of activity, growth and development and hence life-giving to the young people...Many ...would gladly stay on for the holidays. It becomes their place, their Centre, a vital place in their lives...They seemed to have bright hungry restless eyes, looking for something...eager to learn and proud of their culture and language...The Sisters try to feed a sense of dignity and value back into at least some of the youth and I sensed real success here in the final year students' confidence and recognition of their own talents."

An Australian Visitor 1991 (Brigidine history Hohola)



10: Building the kuni grass hut- using local skills, making "our place"

Beginnings, 1972 – 1992: The Brigidine Sisters Project



Pictures are from top left to right: 1,2,3: Students in the mid-1970's. 4: Sr. Maureen with Hohola locals. 5: Advertisement for the drama production "Kiko and Bake." 6: A lesson under the trees. 7: Early youth leaders. 8: Youthful learners. 9: Sr. Genevieve and student's work. 10: Garment-making class. 11: "Tradesmen" fixing the Hall roof."

Chapter Two: Lasallian Inventiveness & Drive

The Centre had a vision. (The children on the streets) knew they had a home... (They became) more excited and eager to learn...to be someone else.

(Ibene Fraghi, early Youth Leader /Teacher)

In some sense, the De La Salle Brothers taking over the administration of HYDC as a project for poor youth in 1993 was a natural course of development. Always remembering that they were founded to educate the poor unschooled youth of French society three centuries ago, three De La Salle Brothers, in this very year, had taken up take up positions at a remote primary school at Mun, out of Mount Hagen. Several other Brothers were involved in teacher education at the Catholic Teachers' College in Mt. Hagen. One Brother was a Catholic Education Co-ordinator for thirty-five one or two-teacher remote community schools which needed Mission support. Of course, the Brothers had been administering and staffing well-regarded secondary schools at Kondiu and Bomana and Bereina.

At this time too, two Brothers and several Brothers' candidates with no formal teacher training had become leaders in the work of "Tok Ples" Elementary Schools which involved conducting the first three years of schooling in a language normally used by children in the villages. They taught in 'schools' in squatter settlements and villages on the fringes of the capital. This fitted in with educational reforms of the early nineties, whereby untrained teachers could conduct early primary education in the villages.^{1&2} In addition, the vision of Lasallian Brothers who came to the Territory almost fifty years previously gelled easily with the broad objectives of the Brigidine mission. The Brigidine Sisters had sown fertile seed; in a vibrant and imaginative style they had answered with a daring, sensitive response to lost youth at the margins of N.C.D. society. John Baptist de La Salle's educational work had been with wayward and untutored city youth in Reims, France and with untrained teachers. The linkage of formal academic coursework and technical-vocational units was also quite familiar from the Lasallian heritage in its schools.

Interesting too, is the possibility that the De La Salle Brothers' experience in the much earlier Secondary Schools Community Extension Pilot Project (SSCEPP) in the late 1970's was in the back of some Brothers' minds. This involved De La Salle Mainohana in Bereina with a few other rural schools trialling the learning of technical and agricultural skills to help promote employment and development opportunities in rural areas. Mission schools- as can be attested with the Brothers' pioneering work at Yule Island and even at Bomana in the 1940's- were perhaps some steps ahead of National schools. So, a project for city youth which combined formal school curricula with teaching of employable skills appropriate to Port Moresby would be a modern work in tune with the De La Salle past mission.

Important too were the advantages of taking over a vocational centre as such. The Brothers would be open to engage their untrained candidates in a non-formal vocational centre like HYDC. It would allow them "the opportunity of placing Brothers in work we see as very

suitable for some of (our young trainees) ...and it could provide work where an expatriate Brother could work alongside National Brothers”³. Because these National candidates had no teacher training or personal skills in the vocational area, only the occasional one worked at Hohola in the 1990’s. Several worked as “pre-school teachers” at Sacred Heart Primary School next door ⁴. There had also been the proposal – never coming to fruition- for the Brothers to take over the Maino Heduru Vocational Centre at Erima.

Br. Denis, studying at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1987-88, had been drawn towards helping the Sisters at Hohola, teaching mathematics and religion, and looking to the accounts. With his well-known enthusiasm and energy, he could see that the Centre was in difficulties in terms of finance and that “it was an appropriate work for the Brothers particularly for those with poor formal qualifications”⁵ . In 1991, he was appointed chair of the Brothers’ PNG Area Council at a time when large numbers of untrained young men were associating themselves with the Brothers. At the Brothers’ 1992 regional chapter he had proposed that they take over the HYDC project; he was appointed by the Provincial, Br. Kevin Moloney, to do so. While a promising opening, it was also a sacrifice for the Brothers to open a new work when it became necessary by 1994 to withdraw from their involvement at Tapini Catholic High School, because of over-extension. Br. Denis and Br. Basil Koru started work at the Centre in 1993, while living at Bomana. The Brothers set up their on-site community with Br. Denis in charge, some younger Brothers, and Br. Hilary Walsh in 1996. The last named had been previously a strong supporter and organiser of fund-raising activities in Australia in favour of the Brothers works in PNG and other mission areas. The new venture fired the imagination and support of the local expatriate Brothers.

One early teacher remembered that staff were wondering what the “tall man” as Director would bring. It became apparent that he was “a good man who had bigger projects on his mind”⁶. With typical dynamism Br. Denis set to work. He saw a community, in his own words, “of excellent staff-student relations and a marvellous atmosphere”⁷. This was a testament to Sr. Maureen and the previous regime. He saw his goal as confirming HYDC as a viable Permitted school



11: Br Denis leading Assembly of students, mid-1990’s

Teachers and courses

In terms of the Centre's character it functioned as a non-formal vocational school which offered broad education experiences as well. It was not a Departmental “vocational school” which would have required qualified teachers. The teachers were largely untrained but had been upskilled by the Sisters. Some had practical skills from their trade. Although a fully functioning timetable could not be introduced, due to the staffing issues at times, teacher meetings became more regular⁸. In the first years of the Brothers’ administration Br. Patrick

Mai instructed in religion and music, Br. Hilary taught English and mathematics as well as supervising and documenting the home-study of C.O.D.E. Sr. Marie, A.D. taught sewing, while Br. Basil Koru, with some in-service, taught upholstery skills (later maintenance). Br. Ben Kawan took sports & assisting in the workshop.^{9&10} All the Sisters, including the three continuing Brigidines on staff, were trained teachers. The five lay teachers from the 1980's mentioned above continued with new instructors. There was Karo Andy – screen-printing, Haro Oa Ivaka – drama and arts, Peter Aia– drama and sports, Marave Tau – English, and Anna Peter- English and mathematics¹¹. Sr. Rose also worked with a wheelchair-bound boy. Teachers were receiving about K. 95 a fortnight in salary.

At times, an Education Department officer would give some hours training at the Centre. Some teachers were given brief time off to do in-service. There was the obvious on-the-job learning of the teaching craft as well¹². Garage sales, culture days, Independence Day celebrations and Masses in the local church were all continuing features. Once a week on Fridays, about six expatriate women – the “Helping hands Ladies” would instruct in craft, and on personal hygiene and etiquette. Another volunteer was a Canadian lady, Joan Donaldson who came four days a week, spending two days correcting C.O.D.E., another day teaching two disabled boys the use of the computer, and one day teaching English. An advisor to the Australian Broadcasting Commission in elocution, she also offered K. 100 a month to assist the Centre¹³

These volunteer instructors and continuing committed teachers were crucial because the Brothers who came to live in the local Brothers' community were mainly working in local Catholic primary schools, or had other ministries like vocations promotion. The Principal and Br. Basil, and then Br. Hilary were the stable Brothers on staff in the early 1990's. A teacher was always needed for C.O.D.E. After Br. Hilary's two years' work, a Br. Fidelis came, and supervised and corrected units done at home by the students. In 1999 & 2000 Br. Philip Cahill had it as his domain; he was “always a very good back-up person – very methodical and organised, and would have complemented Denis in his larger roles”¹⁴.



12: The “Helping Hand” Ladies at 25th Anniversary celebration, 1998

Two credentialed teachers were taken on in 1997-98. Mathias Baihu transferred from industry to teach to and supervise metal fabrication. He set up the equipment but as a non-teacher found the classroom very challenging. Br. Denis helped create a teaching plan¹⁵. Sakarias Pal came from a theological background to teach religion and personal development, both on staff until the present. The latter was impressed by the Centre giving young people another chance and at the way the students and teachers worked together.¹⁶ Peter Maia was observed by one later teacher as stalwart and most loyal; and Ibene Fraghi was seen as a



13: Some Staff 1997- (back) Srs. Miriam & Kanti (St. Anne Sisters), Br. Hilary Walsh, Sr Marie Mbigaman, A.D., Ben Miolol, Br. Denis Loft (Principal), Lasang, Br. Ben Kawan; (front) Mathias Baihu, Augustine Kose, Br. Basil Koru, Miriam Regina, Peter Maia, Unknown, Br. Patrick Mai

dynamic presence, "very strong but gentle", who knew the mindset of the young girls and effectively was their point of contact.¹⁷ The presence of three Sisters from other teaching religious orders in the later nineties was obviously a bonus in relationships with young people. In terms of remuneration the Principal early established a two-scale wage system: married and single¹⁸. All the Religious were on the lower level, showing the full insertion into the indigenous society as equal partners in the mission. The "Helping Hand Ladies" continued their sterling volunteer contribution, usually on Fridays. The sense of what the Brothers called "the shared mission" was lived out at Hohola, just as it had been with the Brigidines previously.

Young people learning

The daily program began and ended the day with prayer. While being a Catholic facility, the school was non-denominational in enrolment. The Seventh Day Adventist students wanted to be involved in the religious aspect. An assembly every mid-morning re-organised groupings due to any absences of teachers. Classes were sometimes under the nearby rain trees and as one teacher said, "it worked!"¹⁹ This had been normal in the earliest days. Increasingly learning took place in solid buildings as the construction program increased in the later 1990's. Sports built community spirit and were a good relief from the classroom. However, with the random interruptions to electricity supply, students were sent home when the water stopped being pumped.

The students in two grades were all doing some vocational / trade subjects, and on-the-job training was increasingly introduced. This was innovative: it happened at HYDC before the departmental technical colleges did so.²⁰ For Grade 9 it was two weeks and for Grade 10 at least twice a year for some weeks. Work experience especially the November student

experience left a strong impression on employers: one benchmark was put down in 1994 with 70% of graduating students acquiring full-time employment with Port Moresby firms. Many girls, however, in these years, needed to return home to the villages to care for family. The pull of family was evident in the story of one girl student who would bring a 20-litre bottle to school to take water to her aunt's city house and there fill it up to take home up the hill on the outskirts.²²

Of course, the dynamics and morale of young people was central to HYDC. As one teacher said: "We teach students to live good simple lives...we try to be role-models for them".²³ Many came from close parishes beyond "the settlements", not unruly youth from Hohola alone. There were very few discipline problems as most students as well as their parents saw the Centre as a



14: Craft students with their work & Teacher

'second chance' for them. They were quite self-disciplined as they came to learn – and came punctually; they were keen to listen. They showed their appreciation by the way they studied.

²⁴

The girls, in a teacher's absence, seemed to quieten the enthusiasm of the boys. One could observe girls, too, arriving before classes and taking up the domestic duty voluntarily of sweeping the courtyard. They saw it as their place. By the turn of the millennium there were about 300 students – at capacity, with an equal number of boys and girls. By this stage, educational changes whereby elementary school extended to Grade 8 meant that there were classes of Grade 6 and Grade 8 students pursuing courses to allow them entry to secondary schools or to employment. This was a big challenge, Br. Denis noted, in extending classes to three levels.

Producing the goods

The Sisters had been forced to rely on much of the funding coming from the Sisters in Australia, whereas Br. Denis was able to make the Centre more self-sufficient with money-making projects, as there was little financial support at all from either the Government, the De La Salle Brothers or the Education Department, apart from a small subsidy from the latter. Government gave a small subsidy after the departmental schools were given funds^{25&26}. The stalls of students' work at the Port Moresby Show were continued as a form of money-raising. Raffles were run with HYDC products as prizes. This all dovetailed with the general understanding that the transition to the De La Salle Brothers' control could help the Centre become more self-sufficient and independent financially.

Br. Denis, as a previous Principal of two Lasallian schools, had vibrant contacts around Port Moresby. This helped greatly in a search for funding donors and access to sales. He continued the profitable craft sales at the Ela Beach markets. They became a bigger operation as

students were set to work to make HYDC more proficient as it taught new skills. A visit by Mrs. Pat Gittens, an Australian agent for Print Gocco, had resulted in buying a versatile small screen-printing machine. She ran workshops showing students how to produce cards, stationery and t-shirts. These productions became a source of ongoing income especially at Christmas, Easter and Mothers' Day etc. Craft markets brought in K.2,000 to 3,000 each year.²⁷ This expanded the demands for regular sales by Br. Denis and his students. The Principal had a strong management control of stock needed and products ready for sale; the school business hummed along.²⁸

With his wide contacts in the community and a good eye for business he used advertising to access orders, especially in cane furniture and carpentry but also in screen-printing, which became a profitable operation. There were large contracts for silk screening products including 20,000 T-shirts for the Electoral Commission and hefty sales for "State of Origin" rugby league football shirts and flags. Other orders came from the Youth Council, Woo Enterprises and the Prime Minister's wife who wanted gifts for international visitors.²⁹ Products included coconut scourers, indigenous dolls and stools. There were orders from various schools for desks and cupboards. One contract involved a complete set of cane furniture from a big hotel. This entailed students going to cut the bamboo first, then work on the design and upholstery.³⁰ The craft, art and trade teachers could see that the students learnt a lot from their practical work with orders keeping them to the task.³¹ It also pointed to the Director's acumen and drive, as well as his keen eye for a good opportunity. His "well-attested skills in fund-raising and attracting support from all quarters of the community have ensured that the Centre has been able to grow".³²

For Br. Denis, money was never a major problem, rather a persistent and satisfying activity to raise funds and keep HYDC independent of significant outside support. He described himself as "careful with our money" and that he "was never totally pressed for finance".³³ There was never the call or need for injection of funds from the Australian Brothers, and in his ingenuity "money seemed to come"³⁴. In addition, he could invest funds for short fixed terms, and when he finished his term of principal in 2000 there were funds for the following year. This is not to discount the government's Permitted Schools grant of K.30-60 per student each year and Br. Hilary's "Mission Fund" donations from Australian schools.



15: Br. Denis & Sr. Agnes selling Centre goods at Ela Beach Market

Despite the Centre's increasing viability and independence, the conditions in the outside community impinged on HYDC. This was evident in the lack of consistent water supply to the Centre. This was due to the intermittent electricity supply for the pump. In the early days contacts of the Sisters could persuade the local Council water truck to fill the need on some sort of regular basis. These somewhat primitive conditions which continued into the nineties can be gleaned by the story that in 1994 Ibene Fraghi, a long-standing teacher, ceremoniously flushed the toilets successfully for the first dependable time in seven years,

after critical and long-needed repairs. (Prior to this, students carried buckets of water daily up the hill if the water supply failed). This plumbing triumph was due, said the Brigidine history, to "the ingenuity of Br. Denis and the generous group of fund-raising efforts".³⁵ On the negative side trade stock and plant was very attractive to thieves: that same year saw the erection of a high wire security fence to stave off vandalism and break-ins.³⁶ The barrier lessened Peter Maia's concerns as a live-in care-taker during the nights.

Building together

A major highlight of Br. Denis' years was the presence of the Archbishop of Port Moresby, Sir Peter Kurongku at the Centre on September 15 in 1995. The Saturday Independent newspaper noted a "wave of satisfaction evident on the faces of staff and students" as the Archbishop opened a substantial new building to expand the resources of the Centre. The block had been completed over twelve months with the involvement of a parent, Kapo Nao, acting as supervisor and co-foreman with the Principal. The HYDC student cohort laboured with its staff—"pouring concrete, nailing frames, fixing roofing and painting, combining practical lessons with more normal work", in effect everything except the concrete block-laying, bricklaying and the electrical fitting.³⁷ Br. Hilary remembered how steel girders for the superstructure were deftly lifted by a team of four boys. They also did professional-looking floor tiling, while the finer work painting window frames etc. was handed to the girls.³⁸

The building provided a screen-printing room and computer studies room upstairs and an art-room and upholstery-making room downstairs. As such it extended the facilities for learning. The project's success had Br. Denis resolve and ensure that each succeeding year there was more building! In 1996 a storage room and metalwork workshop were added to the trades block. Astutely, he saw this as part of the curricular planning of learning trade skills and keeping students busy.³⁹ It was also possible because of the dynamic sales program from items produced in classes.



16: Students & Staff pouring concrete for 1995 Building

This experience of working together with one's students and other teachers built strong spirit as in any school. History seemed to be repeating itself for the Brothers. In 1948, they had moved to Yule Island to open a secondary school with the ultimate goal of forming catechists for the PNG mission of the Church. There they worked with their students over four years to build adequate facilities for their educational work. They were supported by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and "Ancilla Domini". Here too, in 1995, it was the philosophy of "Lasallian Association" in practice - community-building and helping each other to stand tall.

Outside funding / community support

As well as support of Centre-produced goods, the local community in the shape of corporate sponsors like National Rice Distributors, Table Bird and National Catering Services also helped by providing food for students who came to school hungry. Locals became aware of the needs and responded. On the other hand, the Saturday Independent had pointed to the mute responses of government to constant requests for substantial funding by HYDC; thus the "helping yourself" stance adopted as a consequence. The essential financial support for the K.80,000 1995 building came from two important sources. The Canadian Government gave generously K.21,500 while K.30,000 was a grant from the South Pacific Bank, both major investments in vocational youth education. ⁴⁰ HYDC depended on this assistance of people in the community, dealing as it was with the apparent indifference displayed by some other authorities. Thankfully, new infrastructure each year was helped by the yearly Government subsidy of K.70,000 – the same as other vocational schools. The continual problem was that the grant could be long delayed or its total quite different to its agreed sum. ⁴¹



17: Students & Teachers on a work project

When Br. Hilary finished his assignment in HYDC his abiding interest was shown by his assiduous work as Mission Secretary for the Brothers in Australia. He could speak with authority and urged the start of "Mission Action Days" in various Lasallian schools, disseminating news and posters. He held this role for twenty-three years! Gradually the Lasallian Foundation (Asia/Pacific), the development and overseas partnership funding arm of the De La Salle Brothers in the region took over the fund-raising for the Centre as well as the Brothers' other works in PNG.

1995-96: a mission ends, a mission celebrated

Another milestone, but a more sombre one, was the decision of the Victorian Brigidine Sisters to close their ministries in PNG in 1995. By year-end, the Sisters finally relinquished the mission they had initiated thirty years before. Two Sisters were still working under the De La Salle Brothers' administration. All the Brigidine women were lovingly farewelled by many deeply appreciative people from Hohola parish and youth from the Centre. There had been the Erima parish silver jubilee of the Sisters' arrival in April, the opening of the new HYDC building in September, and Sr. Maureen unveiling a plaque to honour the three Brigidine Directresses of 1973 to 1992. A moving farewell Eucharist in November was a key event, and another Mass which the Sisters invited the clergy and religious to! Sadly, Sr. Genevieve the first Sister-in-Charge died late in that very year. These strong, vision-filled women had been a significant and influential presence – Community School, Youth Centre, Family Life program, Religious

Education Office, Xavier Institute, home visitation and work with mothers in the settlements. Fr. Roger Mount, a great friend of the Sisters, said in his farewell homily that they had been a positive and influential group in the parish, bringing the love and compassion of Christ to hundreds of individuals and families. They had truly made the Hohola parish "holy ground"!

42

Another important event followed immediately with the 1996 on-site community of Brothers already mentioned. In the same year another journey marker was the De La Salle Brothers celebrating fifty years' ministry in Papua New Guinea on 28-29 June with a Mass, barbeque and guests. This included thirteen Brothers from Australia who had worked in PNG over the last half-century. Br. Kevin Moloney, Provincial of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, and two of the 1946 pioneer Brothers – Patrick Howard and Celsus Maguire were present. Br. Anthony Broderick had died at Goroka in 1980 and was buried at Mainohana, while Br. Lucian Thorpe had returned to Australia and passed away in 2000.

By 1999 the Centre had 350 students, of whom 150 were girls. There was now a third-year level, but with a depressed job market it was more difficult getting graduating students into employment. Br. Philip Cahill joining the community of Brothers that year managed the C.O.D.E. courses. Br. Teddy Lavia as a trained teacher and a National Brother joined the staff as well. Adding to his management of HYDC and getting a new hospitality and mechanics block near to completion, Br. Denis, a "very mobile person",⁴³ was deputy chair of the Archdiocesan Education Board and on the Secondary Education Board of Studies. Other duties were the chair of the PNG Brothers Area Council as well as a member of the Regional Brothers' Council. He also continued his strong networking whether by playing bridge - his partner was Frank McQuoid of Steel Industries – or by teaming up with another Principal, Dave Conn, at auctions.



18: Celebrating the Centre's 25th Anniversary, 1998

This involved putting in group orders for goods and attending Customs auctions for cut-price products for sale in the wider Moresby community. This wider ambit of interest and influence was a characteristic of the Brother who saw any need for the Catholic and wider educational community in the N.C.D. was worth being part of.

So, it was, that another memorable project emerged in his last years at HYDC, another example of Br. Denis' "eye for recognising a good opportunity".⁴⁴ With his keen entrepreneurial skill, he had seen the local abandoned Catholic hospital as a possibility for a Catholic high school when one was well needed. In 1999, the Archdiocesan authorities eventually gave its approval for the use of the site and the Education Department gave its acquiescence. Br. Denis was instrumental in planning and renovating during 1999. At the same time, he had started constructing what was to be the 2001 "Hospitality and Tourism" building.

At the start of 2000 the three staff of Jubilee Catholic Secondary School, rather than five anticipated, who arrived on the first day had their planning, as Br. Denis himself recalled, in his car being driven across Moresby in January. The National person appointed as Principal proved to be far from satisfactory, and as Br. Denis had temporarily replaced a missing Mathematics teacher for the first half year of operation, it was a simple move for him to take over the principalship of the school for the remainder of 2000 - a response in true Lasallian style of answering an urgent need. Of course, this left HYDC in a somewhat serious quandary. While Br. Philip and Br. Teddy filled gaps in later 1999 as the Principal of HYDC became more and more involved in renovating and establishing facilities for the future Jubilee Catholic High School, it could not continue in this manner. Br. Denis' straddling two institutions, according to one observer, may have meant divided attention and incomplete focus.⁴⁵

The two Brothers were both still working at the Centre the following year and managed to keep things moving with support from the Principal, but on top of their normal teaching loads. With the Australian Brothers' broader resource base, the Brother Provincial found a solution in the timely appointment of Br. Leo Scollen as Director of the Centre in mid-2000. He had come originally to write grant submissions to the Australian Government aid body for two other Lasallian schools. His leadership was to become significant.

Br. Denis, in leaving HYDC, left a major impact. As one Brother said: "his heart was with the poor...he would do anything to raise funds to help those young people... (He was) a trail-blazer for a new initiative for the poor- for the Brothers and the Lasallian Family".⁴⁶ He was totally devoted to Hohola but was not a one-man show as noted above: the generous local teachers in the HYDC venture were his ready associates. It was the numerous constant faces at work in HYDC that complemented his febrile energy. He believed strongly in working for the collective - and working together "in Association".

A kindred spirit was Lady Carol Kidu, Member for South Moresby who could see that lack of Government support in her area meant constituents needed to stand up and be independent. Self-help was important and productive. This partnership stance for social justice, was a "driving force for him and what attracted him to HYDC".⁴⁷ Pragmatic, with a quick mind and seeing a clear need, Br. Denis simply acted. Pulled in several directions, he was always enthusiastically on the run.⁴⁸ His vibrant and personable character allowed him to establish solid contacts and standing in the community: he could engage others. Creative and charismatic, he fired enthusiasm in others.⁴⁹



19: Thanking a great supporter, Lady Carol Kidu, M.P

In terms of financial security, building infrastructure and expanding the trades curriculum Br. Denis definitely expanded the Sisters' endeavours. He also raised the Centre's profile. When he was frustrated with the pace of educational bureaucracy or planning he could write letters to newspapers, at times with pseudonyms, and see changes or justifications from the authorities. An entrepreneur and a good salesman, he was

always looking for the next opportunity and jumping at it, but essentially as one of his teachers said: "I was always conscious of (his)... dynamism, foresight and determination and jolly hard work".⁵⁰ These qualities were spent for the progress of the young people of the Centre.

As the century turned and HYDC prospered with purposeful direction it is worthwhile to note the wider social and economic context. By almost any measure, Papua New Guinea in 2000 was one of the most socially and economically disadvantaged countries in the Asia-Pacific region. PNG was facing its third economic crisis in ten years, in the midst of declining living standards and a deterioration of law and order. Corruption was endemic and consumer and business confidence had collapsed.

In 1999, the World Bank reported the following data in relation to key indicators in PNG:

- 37.5% of the population is living at or below the poverty line.
- 93.5% of the poor population live in rural areas.
- 30% of children under the age of 5 are classified as malnourished.
- Despite some gains in recent years, the country still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, and by regional standards high infant mortality and low life expectancy.
- Illiteracy rates are high, particularly for women with 28.6% of males aged 15+ classified as illiterate, compared to 44% of females in the same age group.
- 87% of primary school age boys are enrolled at school, compared with 74% of girls. At least 60% of male's progress to Year 5 at school, along with 58% of girls.
- Earlier data from 1994 reported that enrolment rates for secondary school age girls were 17.4% and boys 21.3%. Overall only 40% of school age girls attended school.

The last figures – elementary schooling rates, especially of girls, very low secondary schooling rates and high illiteracy rates – underlined the massive need of educational centres like HYDC. These factors blended with continuing large movements of people from rural areas to squalid settlements on the edge of the cities and ensuing grinding poverty. In fact, one settlement hovered on the hillside above HYDC, overlooking its operation. The imperatives at the turn of the millennium screamed for attention. The relevance of HYDC could not have been more stark. Yet Br. Denis Loft's directorship which ended in 2000, and the successes of students in finding employment was beginning to give a quiet lustre to the Centre's standing, in the wider Port Moresby community. This light had begun to shine in the earlier years of the Brigidine leadership and had never been lost.



20: Graduating students in Centre-made dresses and shirts, late 1990's



Graduation, Sacred Heart Church late, 1990's.

There are five of us and I'm the only girl in the family. Ever since I left school I've told myself not to give up or to sit back and watch while my school mates who made it to higher education enjoy life. I also wanted to be one of them. So, I left my remote area to live in a town and look for better access to what I was looking for. While living in town with relatives life wasn't easy. I had many difficulties and struggled to survive. My relatives were of no real help to me but I tried my best to hold on through prayer. After a while I heard about this school (HYDC) from some former students. I decided not to ask my parents for any financial assistance, I even kept it a secret from the people I was living with.

(A Past Student)

First Lasallian Years, 1993 - 1999



Pictures are from top left to right: 1: Special help: Sr. Anna Hennessy with student. 2: Centre-made oven in which Sisters taught bread-making, mid-1990's (Lt. to rt.) Srs. Kanti, Marie, Alice, Miriam. 3: Parade of honour by students at 25th Anniversary celebrations, 1998. 4: Ground-breaking ceremony for new building with Archbishop Sir Brian Barnes and Donors, c.1999. 5: Art-work on wall of Assembly Hall. 6. Students in tribal finery at 25th Anniversary celebrations, 1998. 7: Students ready for excursion.

Chapter Three: Building Block by Block

"Our vision for the young people who come out of the educational experience of Hohola Youth Development Centre is that they are able to live a Christian life, be reliable, responsible and cheerful members of the community and that they will be persons with the skills to gain and maintain themselves in employment, in keeping with their cultural values and their potential".

(Br. Leo, c. 2000)

The year 2000 saw the Centre take a new and ultimately vibrant direction with the arrival of Br. Leo Scollen as Director/ Principal. He would take a more measured and planned approach after Br. Denis' spontaneous and energized style. His credentials were remarkable, having led a huge Melbourne co-educational school with a working-class clientele in the 1970's. He then gave seventeen years to a 'lighthouse project' – what the Brothers would call a radical ministry – running a new Catholic school for the Kukatja people of Balgo Hills, a remote indigenous community in Western Australia, where he was founder and animator. He knew what working at the margins with very poor communities was about, and schools were his business. Br. Leo saw the depth of need and put his heart into the enterprise. His period of leadership was punctuated by two major building projects which formed clear growth-points. Significant too was the presence, from 2001, of two more Brothers on the staff, replacing Brs. Philip and Teddy. Both had special skills and had been involved in cross-cultural work previously.



21: Brothers Leo Scollen (lt.) & Robert McLaughlin

Br. Robert McLaughlin arrived in February with a strong background in organization and systems, working previously in remote indigenous areas of Bolivia. He took up the organization of the large cohort of Further and Other Distance Education (F.O.D.E.) courses and the involved task of timetabling. Two months later Br. Joseph Gabel came as a new member of staff. He had been a teacher at the indigenous community school at Balgo Hills, a strong believer in working with the poor and a colleague of Br. Leo there.

In terms of administrative support, Noah Dadai, Br. Denis' sole full-time office personnel, was relied on regularly. His hard-work and efficiency were an asset in these years.

Maintaining the Lasallian vision

In that first term, the precarious nature of the Capital's harmony was shattered with militants and university students protesting privatisation plans of the government. The disruption closed down the Year 12 English examination and virtually the whole city for three days. Rioters raided the local supermarket containers, and with three university students shot, there were police with guns running through the HYDC property ¹. Despite the fractious nature of the local society Br. Leo set to work, emphasizing the clear line of tradition from HYDC's founding days:

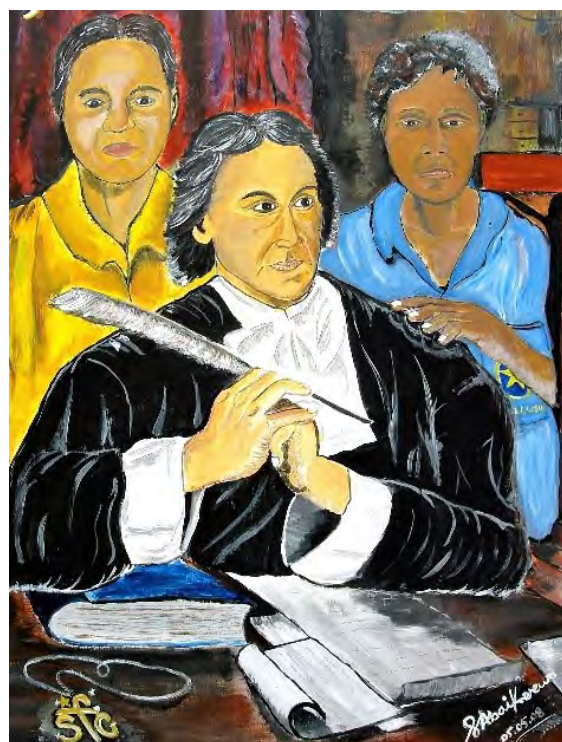
"our basic concerns are exactly the same as when the Centre started. Many thousands of students have passed through the Centre in its thirty years of operation, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to the many teachers who have volunteered to work with them, and to all those who have supported the maintenance and development of the Centre and its activities" ².

More than stressing a long tradition, the new Director homed in on the essence of Lasallian education – the reality of the students' lives and the need for teachers to relate strongly as role models and mentors. In his outline of the Centre's philosophy, its mission, he reflected on the plight of would-be students and the impact the Centre could have:

"At just 13 years of age, half of all PNG students are forced to abandon their education as there are no vacancies in secondary schools. Of those students who gain entry into high school, many can't afford the school fees. So, through the Hohola Youth Development Centre (HYDC), these students are given a second chance at life by furthering their education and skills so they can gain and retain employment once they leave the Centre. The Centre also provides a safe haven for students of all ages from the surrounding threat of street violence. Here they are given protection, care and hope for the future" ³.

The Staff Handbook of 2005, for example, also spelt out that the mission of the staff was- "to give whatever support, direction, nurture and encouragement is required to our students so that they will be men and women who will:

1. confidently take an appropriate place in their world
2. have the motivation to develop all their skills and talents so that they can reach their full human and Christian potential
3. be able to gain and maintain employment or provide adequately for their family
4. be compassionate and supportive members of their community
5. be enabled to live happy and fulfilled lives" ⁴.



22: Student artwork of traditional portrait of St. John Baptist de La Salle with students

In addition, as a school administered by the De La Salle Brothers, it was emphasized that "Hohola Youth Development Centre was a *Lasallian School* in which:

1. The presence of God is regularly recalled.
2. Each student is well known by at least his or her patron teacher; teachers know at least all the students they teach.
3. Concern for the full Human and Christian development of all is foremost.
4. Teachers and students regard each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.
5. The virtues of Faith in God, Service of neighbour and living out Community values are paramount.
6. There are opportunities for faith enrichment and the further understanding of Lasallian values and principles of education.
7. There is the opportunity for staff and students to become part of the Lasallian Family"⁵.

The linkage of formal academic coursework and technical-vocational units was quite familiar, with the goal of full human and Christian growth of each valued young person, so that he or she could attain work and live a full life. In 2000, soon after his arrival, the Centre was the site for a special Lasallian In-Service for all Port Moresby Brothers' school faculties which wished to attend. About fifty did so. There was also a seminar in Mount Hagen. Conducted by Br. John Cleary, who had taught at the training college on Yule Island, it commemorated



23: Students on community service outreach

the century since the canonisation of John Baptist de La Salle and fifty years since the papal proclamation of the saint as the patron of all educators in the Catholic Church. The Lasallian Co-ordinator of teacher formation from Australia, Mary Conlan, also gave input⁶.

The Centre was integral in the push to bring together a nascent "Lasallian Family" movement. The year 2002 saw an initial relaxed meeting of teachers and ex-teachers on-site from regional Lasallian schools. Br. Philip Cahill was instrumental in floating the concept originally. It generated a spirit which led to common Founder's Day celebrations and meetings of Principals and student leaders. In this endeavour, Joan Eoe, a loyal teacher and colleague at Jubilee School and Leo Maia, Principal of Bomana, were prominent⁷. In 2003, Joan with Br. Phillip Elwin, Thomas Yapo and another teacher from Rosary High School, Kondiu made a ten-week study of the *Lasallian Meditations* for the Time of Retreat⁸. These events were all examples of the Brothers' belief in "Association" with their lay Partners, especially as it was important to promote ownership and leadership, wherever possible, by National teachers.

Teacher professionalism

Teacher development was a critical issue not just at Hohola but in the vocational education domain in general. Few teachers had any formal training. In the early days of Hohola, Sr. Julia had worked with staff once a week to assist in writing up their programs in the early days. A sign of changing times in instructional proficiency was the news in April 2003 that the "Helping Hand Ladies", who had offered invaluable experience as voluntary instructors from the 1970's, informed that they were disbanding after thirty years. It had been a pattern of voluntary local assistance in support of teaching and part of the very human story of Hohola ⁹. In 2004, Br. Leo was directing teachers to develop specific weekly and monthly student outcomes in all the subjects taught- for example "how to set up a dining table, how to set up a square to weld, how to solve algebraic equations" ...(this) will give students short-term goals to achieve" and help with assessment ¹⁰. For some months, from late 2005 to mid-2006, Br. Bede French visited and worked with the teachers in the planning and programming of their lessons. However, teachers employed taught their subject area reasonably well despite the lack of qualifications ¹¹.

The 28-page Staff Handbook of 2005 document outlined teacher expectations about Christian faith adherence in the Catholic tradition, professionalism and attendance, general and special teacher duties, and contractual details. (Teachers were required to open bank accounts into which their salaries were transferred). Included in the Handbook were the PNG Teachers' Association code of ethics, outlines of student discipline and aspects of classroom management. The thorough and clear nature of the document for teachers was striking; it programmed a very developed code of practice. The standards for staff were high and comprehensive in their expected behaviour in relations with students, acting as role models, not soliciting gifts, and dressing appropriately. Professional training courses were encouraged, records-keeping outlined, and the articulation of clear contractual and holiday arrangements, students discipline, care of facilities and the use of English in instruction was made:



24: Domestic Science - Sewing class

"Many of our students, especially the boys, are deficient in spoken English. Teachers are encouraged to speak English with them at all times whilst at school, in and out of class time, and to ensure that students speak English at all times whilst at the Centre" ¹². Teachers were to sign in and sign out with their times of attendance.

In his endeavours to develop staff proficiency and fully-functioning practical curricula Br. Leo could count on the two other Brothers. Br. Robert had a good head for computerisation, organisational structure and streamlining method- in timetabling, financing and accounting, always a challenge in these years. He could quietly collaborate without restricting the

Principal's larger plans. The latter had the support of another person in tune with his style – Br. Joseph, who was a clear model of the professional teacher. Other teachers could see his commitment, his methodology and his classroom organisation. Critically, he was also on the wavelength of the students and used his strengths to bring out the best in them ¹³. In addition, Br. Leo had the continuing strength and commitment of the National Sr. Marie Mbigaman, A.D. and some Indian Sisters. A striking testament to the commitment of some teachers was their belief that students “knew they had a home... (they were) more excited and more eager to learn... (There was) more effort to do their best to be someone else...like other schools...a place where you are loved and cared for” ¹⁴. Ibene Fraghi appreciated and engendered HYDC community; Peter Maia was staunchly loyal and supportive as discipline master and teacher. Both, with some others, related well with students. ¹⁵

To date, Br. Leo as Director during his term as Principal had paid for eight to ten teachers to complete their diploma of teaching course, as well as paying their full salaries ¹⁶. One teacher remembered that the Principal believed that continuing to pay the regular salaries as well as paying for training was a means of building the educational capacity of the nation: therefore, he said, “I will stay with the Brothers...they have a heart” ¹⁷. Mathias Baihu in Metalwork, together with Josephine, an Office administrator, and Mary Aihi from Home Economics, were the first trained at TVET. In early 2005, Br. Leo was re-iterating his request for entry into Departmental teacher in-service of key teachers who were “the main ones who have been supervising teachers from the PNG Education Institute over the last couple of years. It would be good for them also to have some official qualification in addition to their expertise and experience in their chosen field of teaching” ¹⁸. He was also aware of the struggle of teachers on their low salaries to make ends meet. He helped out some teachers with money loans ¹⁹.



25: A student's ethnic PNG design from art class

A feature of Lasallian schools has always been the development of student leadership. The work of the Centre's first youth minister (cf. below) encouraged peer ministry. An example was students preparing breakfast for other students on a regular basis. The Principal told teachers to support leaders, not to allow dismissal of them by whim, and to see them as a component of school management. Astutely, he commented: “As in every institution, there are individuals who have difficulty with authority, especially the authority of student leaders. By assisting our student leaders, all staff will find their task of maintaining initiative and discipline much easier”²⁰.

Another Lasallian institutional feature was its close associations with the local parish and neighbourhood. The new Principal supported “We Care” agency founded in 2002 by local Chaplain to the nearby Jubilee Catholic School, Fr. John Glynn ²¹. He provided it an office base on the school site in 2007 below the newly-built technical block. When a shipping

container for the agency arrived from the Lasallian Foundation in Australia it was parked in HYDC grounds. It contained equipment and toys. In a way, this agency prolonged and expanded the Brigidine Sisters' creative work with poor mothers in nearby settlements, and in caring and offering pre-school activities for their children.

A broader curriculum and student needs

Of course, the core of the Hohola experience were the students and the curriculum. The school had a growing reputation as well-disciplined, producing young people with renewed hopes. Sr. Marie remembered it as a place of openness and hospitality where "people (were)...excited to learn" and parents were eager to send their children in view of their better futures. Many students got employment after leaving²². Another staff member recognised the school as promoting good order without excessive rigidity. The motif of serving the youth of the country was strong. Students always presented themselves well. On cultural festival days, great pride was shown in ethnic costume and dance²³.

The highlight of Term 3 2001 had been the opening of the new vocational/technical building - expanding the learning possibilities in hospitality, upholstery, motor mechanics and secretarial studies. Traditional student dances accompanied the event, looked on by parents. Thus, HYDC was proclaiming that the trades and vocational pathway was more and more an equal to the F.O.D.E. correspondence avenue and "developmental subjects" (listed below). Later in the year a reminder of the benefits of enrichment learning was a striking exhibition of art students' work orchestrated by Br. Joseph, which impressed all.

On a less aesthetic level the HYDC vehicle was serviced for the first time by the Motor Mechanics students. However, expanded facilities and subjects attracted more students which compounded the need for more financial support especially for teacher salaries.

In 2002 the curriculum comprised "Basic Studies", "Developmental Subjects" and "Vocational Studies"-

1. Basic Studies- English, Mathematics, Commerce, Computer Studies.
2. Developmental Subjects- Religious Education, Physical Education, Drama, Art and Work Experience.
3. Vocational Studies: Hospitality, Secretarial Studies, and Woodwork, Metalwork, Motor Mechanics, Building Upholstery (males), Craft, Sewing, Cooking (females).



26: Poster of "We Care" welfare agency, for which students did community service. Its founder, Fr. John Glynn, is pictured.

Some students, as well as "Developmental Subjects" were completing their Year 8 certificate by correspondence (the F.O.D.E. pathway) ²⁴ . A summary description of courses, pointed to a more formal and solid growth for the Centre as a regular school:

"HYDC now provides a three to four-year educational program for over 300 students aged 14-20. The curriculum provides a broad-based education as well as more specific vocational training... Work experience is a key part of later year studies, with local firms providing places for students. Much progress has been made, with many students going on to find work in their community, using the essential skills learnt at the school" ²⁵ .

Work Experience was offered in third and fourth years. In the third year this was organised twice for one week; in the fourth year, it was twice for three weeks. This on-the-job learning resulted in about half the students finding employment immediately after the Fourth Year course ²⁶ . After 2005, the policy was introduced that every Grade 9 student, now numbering 200, would have the opportunity to study F.O.D.E., the re-badged C.O.D.E. In their second year there was choice and 75% took up the challenge. This was peculiar to HYDC as most Grade 8 exiting students took up the external C.O.D.E. as a five-year part-time correspondence course: HYDC was doing it full-time over two years only. Of course, an issue was paying for government certification of course completion. In 2006, parents or guardians were being asked for K. 320 for five subjects – a huge expense for many. However, a number of these would drop out or not apply for the actual certification. Still, the numbers studying for the formal education certification for Grade 10 rose from 170 in 2002 to well over 500 by 2012 ²⁷ .

In terms of developing better curricular outcomes for students, teachers were encouraged to carefully supervise trade and craft work of students. Br. Leo gave clear instructions to teachers who were untrained: "They must see good work to know what it is. Talk to them about what students do – point out faults charitably – maybe with someone else's work... Give a group of students a job to do and let them follow it through to the end. Mark it out of ten and accumulate these marks as projects. Skills can be marked individually? They thus follow a job through. Give them the chance to repeat so they see the whole job and improve their skills" ²⁸ .



27: Metal-welding ovens, produced for popular sale

There was a clear philosophy offered of good teacher-student relationships, a search for success, a learning of several skills: "Line up various projects. Maybe a class could do three at a time and follow them through. For example, carpentry could do bottle openers – maybe everyone does three to improve on them and make them more quickly. One group could do patrol box, whilst another does small chairs, and another coconut scrapers, or trays. Then they repeat at least once and then swap to see how they go" ²⁹ . Thus, the teaching of the subjects became more structured within a timetable. The trade / vocational subjects were given equal time

with the generalist subjects. The skills that were not being adequately taught were dropped and more time was spent on skills that were more likely in giving students better job opportunities. Students were tested for I.Q. and assigned to streamed classes, which were single-sex (until 2010). Computers were introduced by 2002 with two new computer rooms constructed. The school facility, as well as the educational program, was becoming more organized and formalized.

Lasallian social outreach and leadership

The richness of the Centre's enterprise can be seen in its belief in sharing resources. In 2002, a devastating fire had destroyed eight classrooms at the adjacent Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School in mid-August. The Hohola Youth Centre offered to help, providing accommodation in its Hall for six classes of Elementary students, and making blackboards, noticeboards and desks for the new classrooms. Another example of integration and involvement in the Catholic educational community was a 2003 combined Mass and sports events celebration in mid-June at Marienville High School, which was voted a great success.

Br Allan Buenavista, vocations director of the Brothers, having led a first De La Salle youth conference for students in 2003, organized a Second Lasallian Youth Conference for July 2005 in which HYDC students took part. Over 140 young students were present; there was input on Corruption in PNG, Transparency in Government and International activities, as well as the Brothers' life as a vocation. There were visits to needy groups in the Capital. Participants were fired up with enthusiasm for helping others and resolved not to let matters lie stillborn, but to take responsibility for their own school groups, and in positively benefitting their neighbours and the nation in general. Jubilee Catholic High School students had spent a great deal of time in organising the event and were thanked for a wonderful job that they did. The Brothers were also thanked for their finance and support and inspiration. De La Salle Bomana would host the next Conference in 2007, led by Joan Eoe and a team of teachers. Those who attended were from Jubilee, University of PNG, HYDC, Bomana, Kondiu, Mainohana and Fatima. Br. Ignatius' colleagues in the Highlands, especially Lambert Lapkit, encouraged a number of youth to come down for this event which was voted most successful ³⁰.

Service in the community and leadership go together. A "Religious Youth Group of De La Salle" was initiated at HYDC in 2000 (later "LaSalle Youth Group"). Pioneered by the teacher, Sakarias Pal, it led Assemblies and school Masses. In the religious domain students participated in various Prayer Days and retreats for Grades 10 and 11, class by class. ³¹ Their wholehearted involvement was noticed by a future teacher in 2003. She saw a school where students had hope despite their disadvantaged backgrounds; their singing at assemblies showed youth "who had all the talents" to succeed.³²



28: *Spreading the faith in the community*

Leadership of students was enhanced in 2006 with the arrival in February of Sio Laumatia, campus minister from De La Salle College Mangere New Zealand. He was a member of the Lasallian youth volunteer program, "Share the Mission" based in Sydney. Fulfilling a youth ministry role principally at HYDC, he also gave some animation to students at Jubilee Catholic High School and De La Salle Bomana. He initiated the HYDC "Breakfast Club", a fine venture. Many students came from families or "Wantok" ³³ who did not provide breakfast and large numbers needed to travel long distances to the school. Sio organized sports carnivals, promoted youth leadership and introduced "PNG Idol" as a singing competition between the schools. He had an occasional radio interview on local media as well. His dynamism was a real asset to HYDC. In July, a Student Leadership Seminar led by Br. Mark from Sydney, Joan Eoe and Sio involved sixty students from the four southern PNG schools.

How to fund?



29: Leadership camp members led by Sio Laumatia (centre), New Zealander youth minister for PNG Lasallian schools, 2006

However, a sombre issue was never far in the background for the Centre. Because HYDC was outside the formal education system it received no regular government revenue. Until 2004, selling any products that the students produced at Ela Beach Saturday markets and selling food at sporting events was a core fund-raising activity initiated by the Sisters and continued by the Brothers ³⁴. This allowed a number of youth to also learn social and commercial skills in their interactions with the public. Another self-help initiative was the monthly cleaning of the Rotary Park at Ela Beach by twenty-five students –an activity of community service

as well ³⁵. Some regular income came from the sale of metal ovens manufactured by the metalwork students. On a regular basis in these years, Br. Leo would write to the Akzo Nobel firm in Gerehu asking for a donation of 200-litre metal drums. The Centre's 3-tonne truck would go to collect them. When regulations changed, a purchase was made- at two kinas per drum. The finished drum ovens were highly sought after by villagers and locals, and were a source of income until at least 2012 ³⁶.

The Principal also set priorities for the Woodwork classes in the production for sale of computer tables and, in one order, 160 school desks ³⁷. Another substantial request was filled by carpentry / upholstery students for the sewing and fitting bus seat covers. Interestingly, though, the teaching and acquisition of skills were not to be hostage to a drive to help funding: "We do not have to rely on the work of outsiders. We need to train our students in skills. Variety is good but we do not have to be driven by money-making or doing jobs for people. Outside work means that we can dispose of goods, but it should not run our schedules" ³⁸.

Despite this stand, the Principal realised the need to approach Government, using contacts he was building up. He pointed out to the Prime Minister's Office the dire conditions of young

people who were attending the Centre, and that the only student funding offered by the government was K.20 subsidy per year per student. This had been granted in Br. Denis' years. There was also a small subsidy of K. 7,000 for maintenance each year. He mentioned that there were twenty-three teachers on the paid staff and fees charged were only K.120 per year.³⁹ In addition, Br. Leo had been approaching the Brothers' welfare arm in Queensland, "BoysTown Family Care". In a letter to Br. William CEO, he requested a subsidy, if agreeable to the Board, of \$AUS 8,000 per month to pay some of the salaries bill, to help poor clientele in PNG.⁴⁰

Another source of funds came from donations by caring groups. After an interaction and offer to assist by the Christian Women's Association in November 2002, Br. Leo put a submission to Nola Davies for financial aid, proposing K1,000 per quarter for students unable to pay fees, or a donation towards payment of student PMV fares. Additionally, the Association might consider, he said, supplementing the graduation ceremony expenses. He pointed out that school fees covered nothing near the full costs of teachers' salaries, maintenance and plant and equipment, or recurrent student expenses, most of which had to come from fund-raising:

"The majority of (these expenses) ...comes from the sale of goods or craft products produced by the children during their class time or from various donations. ...Many families struggle to find ... (the school fees), especially when they have to pay PMV fares which can cost up to K.250 per year"⁴¹. In these years beautiful work by art and craft students under the guidance of Br. Joseph was sold for special occasions at fairs and markets – cards for Christmas and Mothers' Day, coasters, badges and notepaper with tribal designs including issues of justice and health awareness, e.g. HIV awareness.

Other donors were Australian schools of the Brothers and individuals. In 2002, St. Michael's College Henley Beach provided K. 6,200. Similarly, Holy Spirit College Lakemba was thanked for \$AUS 600 which would be used to buy English texts for students rather than using sections from older texts. De La Salle College Malvern provided football jerseys. Some Rotary Clubs gave donations. The Boroko Club gave K. 17,000. Port Moresby and Adelaide clubs also contributed to the Centre. Doug and Karen Tillotson gave a large array of carpentry tools⁴². Many donations came through the Australian Brothers' "Mission Office" assiduously promoted by its very committed secretary, Br. Hilary Walsh, who had been in the first Brothers' community in 1996-97. Another animator for financial help in PNG was Br. Ed Becker who had worked there for many years. Throughout these years and right up to the end of Br. Leo's principalship the strong support of Br. Ambrose Payne, Provincial of the time, was very important. Large sums of money from the Brothers, the school's paramount donor, were channelled yearly and increasingly to maintain and extend HYDC. In addition, Br. Ambrose knew and understood the local commitment, and the Centre's general needs⁴³.



30: Student leaders at Graduation with Brs. Joseph Gabel and Leo Scollen

Thus, strong financial support was still very much needed; teachers' salaries alone totalled K. 250,000 in 2006. The very large grants by the De La Salle Brothers were provided annually to ensure the Centre could continue. The Provincial stated that the Brothers would underwrite the operational costs till 2012, but additional capital funds were to be sought from outside sources including the Lasallian Foundation. But the single most significant outside funding of HYDC in these consolidating years was a massive grant from the Australian Government. By October 2005 Br. Leo, who had applied for funding for more building from the AUSAid Australia Papua New Guinea Incentive Fund (APNGIF) ⁴⁴ was notified of approval; the full submission needed to be submitted by the following April. That year 2006 saw a grant of K.3.5 million. This was a momentous boost in infrastructure, completed in 2008, and one highlight of his principalship.



31: Student Lector at celebratory Mass, Sacred Heart church

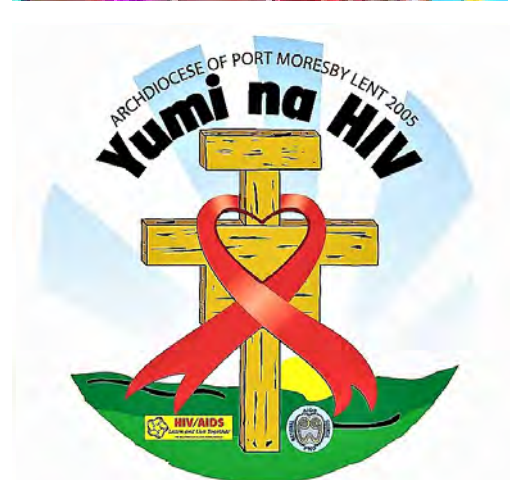
Celebrations!

These years saw some important events that remembered the growth of the last decades. Brothers Denis Loft and Hilary Walsh arrived on Thursday 11th 2003 as special invitees to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of Hohola Youth Development Centre. The day was a wonderful success. The Mass was said in the hall by Archbishop Brian Barnes of Port Moresby and lunch was provided for all. Afterwards students performed traditional dancing. Many ex-teachers and students of the Centre were able to come for the occasion.

Three years later, in May 2006, the Brothers signalled sixty years since the first four Australian Brothers came to Papua to establish a Church mission. It was a great celebration with sports for students from all N.C.D. and Southern Highlands schools on the Friday, and then a cultural day for the students and their families on the Saturday. Sunday saw the celebration of the Eucharist in thanksgiving and various speeches. The work of the Brothers was highlighted and spoken about appreciatively. Members of the Lasallian Family and representatives from the four schools organised the days. Special thanks were given to Mr. Peter Maia from HYDC, and Mrs. Bernadette Ove and Ms. Joan Eoe (from Jubilee School) for their persistence and thoroughness in the organisation of the days to honour the Brothers. The parents, ex-students and current students enjoyed the occasion and turned up in good numbers: 1,500 on the Friday; 5,000 on the Saturday and 500 on the Sunday. Extracts and supplements for the two local newspapers were published, and the old boys had organised a radio talk-back show to publicise the event ⁴⁵.

The broad mission of the Brothers in PNG had begun with a faith-filled endeavor in 1946. They had come to expand the education of a young mandated territory of Australia, continually looking towards its future development, with its discrete tribal and regional character. The large grant from the Australian Incentive Fund in 2006 cemented foundations for the future expansion of this particular enterprise for poor youth of the N.C.D. By this year HYDC had built a strong edifice of which Port Moresby could be proud. In a sense, they were becoming engineers of their own forward planning: the future looked very hopeful.

The Early Millennial Years, 2000 - 2011



Pictures are from top left to right: 1: Raphael Team banner for Sports Carnival. 2: Student in tribal costume 3: Lasallian Community 2006 (lt. to rt.): Sio Laumatia, Br. Gabriel Pabet, Br. Joseph, Thomas Yapo (Aspirant), Br. Paul Toohey, Br. Leo. 4: Student graphic-designed poster for sexual awareness. 5: Girls from the Domestic Science cooking class. 6: Manufacturing metal barbeque ovens for sale.

Chapter Four: Bearing Fruit

Hohola's impact on me was an appreciation for the struggles of the poor, and a sense of purpose which has helped to deepen my spirituality.... I remember a happy and safe school.

(A Brother who worked at HYDC)

As the Centre built itself into a healthy and somewhat standard and formal school, it is worthwhile to consider the overall development and specific education issues that Papua New Guinea faced at this time. They can be gleaned from a report tabled at a Brothers Asia-Pacific Conference in late 2010. The nation still had significant development issues as a Melanesian society. There was a very high population growth yet very low life expectancy, a very low mean-years of schooling (4.3 years) and very low expected years of schooling (5.2 years). It had significant underweight children (26.4%). Urban poverty was likely to become a very important future challenge, threatening national targets and Millennial Development Goals. There was inadequate access to services, vulnerable livelihoods, and a lack of capabilities ¹. This socio-economic background-scan emphasized once more the critical needs of young people in one sector, Port Moresby, which were being squarely answered by the maturing secondary school set-up of HYDC.

Planning growth & new facilities

In what ways was the school maturing? One avenue was a clear 'action plan' in 2007 outlined in a personal memo of Br. Leo ²:

1. **Upskilling of Teachers**
 - a. Two teachers to PNG Education Institute
 - b. Regular teachers' meetings
 - c. In-servicing monthly – subject and professionally
 - d. Use of In-service week

2. **Efficiency of Office staff**
 - a. Regulations issued to give them privacy
 - b. Improvement of skills – access program
 - c. Personal skills development

3. **Curriculum Development**
 - a. Head of curriculum departments: Technical, English, F.O.D.E., Options
 - b. Regular meetings
 - c. Introduction of F.O.D.E. for all 1st years; continuation of F.O.D.E. for some 2nd years

d. Technical subjects to be re-oriented towards Outcome Statements

4. Student Leadership

- a. One student to leadership course in Australia
- b. Regular teacher-student leaders' meetings
- c. Support of local leadership conference

Br. Leo, as an experienced Principal, saw the need for continued development which was result-oriented and measurable over time. One area of concern was teacher development. From 2005 he had made a concerted effort to gain entry for two or three successful and stable teachers to become qualified over a full year with the Department of Vocational Educational Training (DOVET). He fully paid their fees and their wages. By 2011 thirteen staff had thus acquired a diploma to teach in a technical / vocational school ³. Up-skilling was also pursued on-site. Teachers with limited training and weak English competency were monitored as much as possible. Reporting to parents and guardians was encouraged, as was moderation in assessment because the latter were needed to increase performance in the external F.O.D.E. examinations for Grades 9 and 10 ⁴.



32: Art students 2007

gave an injection of K. 3.5 million into the HYDC infrastructure. Prior to that the Centre was hampered by lack of facilities for learning.

The new buildings, paid for by the Fund, were opened on August 4, 2008. The Archbishop of Port Moresby, John Ribat, blessed the buildings and they were officially opened by the Governor- General of Australia, Major-General Michael Jeffrey. The students displayed their tribal finery and a group of boys from Momase danced the guest of honour to the stage. It was a time of great satisfaction for Br. Leo and all at the Centre after years of patient application to the funding quest. Moreover, it was a striking achievement and growth-point in the Director's years of leadership.

As well as these critical areas, administrative management support needed attention. It was recognized by Br. Ambrose, Provincial, in his regular visit, that competent bookkeeping, general administration / supervision, and research skills were needed to support the Principal. Over time the Office staff was greatly increased. But what fired growth most of all and encouraged good teaching was the availability of funding for large infrastructure development. The 2007-08 AUSAid Incentive Fund financing, mentioned above,

In the mean-time the Lasallian identity of the Centre was becoming more obvious. Br. Paul Smith with his team of Tony Smith and Miranda Chow had arrived in July 2007. They led the Lasallian Foundation (Asia-Pacific) and visited Hohola Youth Development Centre before going on to Mt. Hagen Teachers' College, De La Salle College Bomana, Jubilee Catholic Secondary School and De La Salle College Mainohana, places where the Brothers had involvement. This helped them understand the problems that were faced in terms of development, and the needs of the Lasallian enterprises, PNG works which could apply for funding.

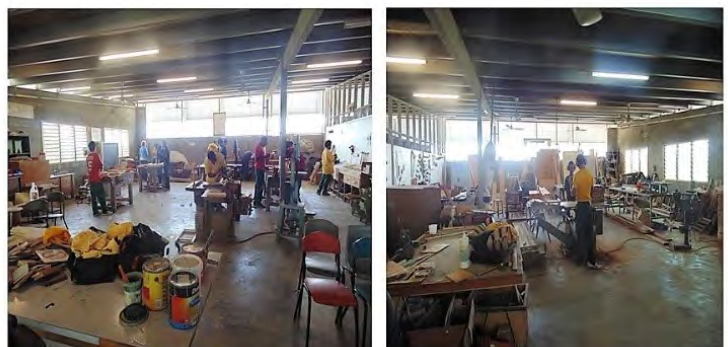
Other assistance in bringing various works to fruition came in the form of Australian volunteers that found association with the De La Salle Brothers. Peter Tate, previously a volunteer construction works supervisor with the Uniting Church, came in March 2010. He worked tirelessly with students to convert two classrooms into a science facility which would help in gaining registration. He returned in 2011 to build volleyball courts for student sports and a vehicle ramp. Once again in 2012 he helped erect the "Kit House" for resident staff accommodation. It was for the use of a HYDC teacher. This involved a stay of ten weeks due to severe weather and the long-delayed delivery of equipment. The following year, tradesman Steven Mackrell and his son came in May for some time ⁵. The expansion of facilities was an important achievement. Br. Leo had explored and fought hard and long for support and funding; the Australian government grant gave, as mentioned above, a sense of vital hope for the future.

Developing curriculum offerings

The AUSAid funding turbo-charged development in several ways. It provided fourteen more classrooms, three tutorial rooms, a library, re-located and increased auto-mechanic, metal and carpentry workshops, offices, as well as water and power up-grading. It allowed the expansion of the curriculum to a third year – Grade 11; this would lead to much better training with superior facilities in the future. The grant made possible access to technical subjects for girls so that the Centre could ensure 50% female enrolment. It would also lead to staff being more aware of the need and more capable of higher delivery of teaching ⁶.

The vocational / trade area at the Centre had been greatly enhanced. It can be noted that all students were now involved in trade or vocational skills subjects. Grade 9's followed an introductory course where they studied four practical subjects one each term from two groups. Group 1 consisted mainly of trade subjects: Carpentry, Welding, Motor Mechanics and Electro-Technology /Computing. Group 2 was mainly vocational: Secretarial Studies, Sewing/Cooking/ Tourism Hospitality, Manual Creativity.

CARPENTRY WORKSHOP



33: Expanded trades complex in 2008 Extension from APNG Incentive Fund

In Grade 10 students could select one or two practical subjects depending on their academic commitment. Each chosen practical subject was taken for eight periods per week ⁷. By 2008 the school could expand its staffing and its enrolment – to 360 students. Grade 11 was introduced at the end of 2008 and the subjects were taught for 26 periods in order to help in specialization. This involvement of all students in trade / vocational subjects showed the school's technical credentials.

The increase in trade subjects and their resultant finished products assisted people in the broader community. In the Brothers' nation-wide Action Plan of 2008, the plight of small remote primary schools was a commitment. The HYDC Brothers focused on Rigo primary schools in 2009. Desks were supplied on two occasions by HYDC to St. Francis village school, an hour's walk from where the road ended. At the request of the parish priest, several local students were enrolled in HYDC with a promise to take more subsequently. Another offer of desks made by the carpentry students was made to the Sacred Heart Brothers who were running the Youth 2000 Centre with 600 students, as they helped "street kids" of Hohola. The expanding facilities of HYDC allowed assistance to various Catholic and other groups. The year 2009, for example, saw "Couples for Christ", "Youth for Christ" and sporting groups welcomed for their meetings. This openness to the Moresby community only reinforced the Centre's growing reputation.⁸

Building the Lasallian Family ⁹



34: Poster advertising the Art Exhibition 2007

These expanded course offerings translated into a need for more quality teaching. Several capacity-building in-service events were offered over these years for teachers to carry the flame as Brothers became fewer in number. In the Highlands a loose and growing association of teachers who had graduated from Holy Trinity Teachers College in Mount Hagen was developing. This "Lasallian Family" movement was inspired by Br. Ignatius Kennedy and gradually took on in the southern Provinces. From 1st to 6th June 2008 a "Narooma Comes to Lae" programme was held for Lasallian teachers

from the PNG Lasallian Schools. It was facilitated by the Australian Formation Team of the De La Salle Brothers and was very well received. Most of the participants were already part of the "Lasallian Family". It was a prayerful and industrious week for all, including Br. Leo with six teachers from HYDC.

Br. Ignatius in Mt. Hagen had also organised a Leadership Seminar for Lasallians from 21st to 26th September 2008 in Lae. The guest lecturer was Br Bernard Cooper who flew up from Australia for this purpose. Br Ambrose, Visitor, attended and asked the members present to begin to organise a formal Lasallian Association or some form of leadership forum which would

fill the roles played by Brothers in the probability that they would not always be present in the way they were at this time. This was taken on board by the participants and plans were initially drawn up which were then to be referred to members in their represented areas.

In June 2009 Trish Carroll and Sally Buick were to be the presenters for the "Heritage Programme" at Mainohana. This "Narooma in PNG" programme was attended by personnel from Mainohana, Bomana, Jubilee, HYDC, Rebiamul Youth Centre Mt. Hagen, Innuabuie Catholic School and a youth group from Inau village. Altogether there were over a hundred participants. The involvement of teachers and staff from all places was commented on and the programme was deemed a great success in progressing the understanding of the Lasallian spirituality of teaching. It was a chance for PNG people to work through issues and new ideas at their own pace and with a group of their peers, both from their own school or village and with other people. The spirit of the group together with their singing left the presenters in great admiration! In November, the PNG Brothers Council decided on a Strategic Plan which included talent identification to fill future leadership positions, as well as twenty teachers to receive opportunity to be upgraded; thirdly, financial support was to be sought from the Lasallian Foundation. The following year 2010 Brs. Brendan, Cletus and Ignatius led a Lasallian Seminar in Lae, at which nine HYDC teachers attended.

By 2009 Hohola teachers were being sent for upgrading through the DOVET in-service programme of the PNG Education Institute. Because of the movement of several staff, not always of their own volition, HYDC had to employ twelve new staff that year, most of whom were qualified teachers. This would lead- it was hoped - to strengthened delivery of skills and increased student competency ¹⁰. It would also support the case for registration being mooted, and to be soon pursued strongly.



35: Barbequing on a retreat day activity

Student Christian life

While the number of Catholic students hovered around one-third of the Centre's population, students overall were open to things spiritual and religious, living as they were in a largely Christian nation. An active faith dimension had always been a strong part of the school. Prayer began all activities and regular sacramental activities took place. The five Lasallian "Guiding Principles" were adhered to. Classes were given the responsibility for running daily prayer and giving brief student announcements ¹¹.

As a Catholic school which promoted a generally-rounded education, HYDC had offered over the years Grade 11 retreats – in September 2003 at Morepore Island ¹². They were

organised by Br. Allan Buenvista, the regional Brothers' campus ministry co-ordinator. The students were very excited about it all and learnt a great deal from it. Br. Allan invited parents to come across by boats for the final Mass. Br. Leo travelled with them and also was very impressed by the event and the effects it had on the students. He also organised retreats - for junior HYDC students - at Canossa School of Life over the following two consecutive weeks. HYDC used a classroom area and stayed over one full day. The retreats were conducted by the Lasallian group from the University of PNG led by Angelyn Paranda. They were attended by teachers, Brs. Joe and Leo providing transport when necessary. These retreats also were well received by the students. The University of PNG students had been trained in running these weekday retreats by Br. Anthony Cummins who ran them with the students and Br. Thomas Mabol Yapo.



36: Lasallian Teachers and Brothers gathered for the 2011 visit of De La Salle Superior-General, Br. Alvaro (5th from left)

Two years later, Br. Mark McKeon, Co-ordinator of Youth Ministry for the Brothers, led retreats for the HYDC students. From 2009, the Sydney-based Youth Ministry Team conducted an annual weekend youth leadership program for captains and prefects of Lasallian schools including Hohola. The Team included Joan Eoe, Lasallian Co-Ordinator in Southern PNG and some ex-students. These energetic programs led students to reflect on their talents and exercise Christian service in their schools and the broader community. One example illustrates this. HYDC was asked to provide students as marshals for the Good Friday Stations of the Cross from Waigani Parish to Don Bosco College at Gabutu in Holy Week 2009. For this they were expected to overnight at Waigani so that they could begin the Stations at 4.00am. The formal Lasallian Group led by the PNG Lasallian Youth Minister Desma Kombe attended too. Br. John Francis Gari, working in HYDC that year as a Postulant, volunteered to stay with the students overnight and to walk the route with the students in the morning. The result was a great night of prayer and collaboration with the students. It also enabled Br. Leo and John Francis to spend some time with the students and to be with them through an hour-and-a-half of adoration time.

In the same year, in July, the fourth PNG Lasallian Youth Congress was held at De La Salle College Mainohana. It was led by James Camden, the Australian Youth Co-ordinator with some other leaders from Australia, the PNG Lasallian Co-ordinator, Joan Eoe, and Youth Minister Desma Kombe. This was an outstanding success due to the well-prepared programme and the enthusiastic commitment of over 230 young people and teachers. The theme was "Go out to serve the poor and needy!" Participants did this by practical work in the rural villages around Mainohana, where they met welcoming people and observed the hardships as well as the freedom of village life. There was not only hospitality for the students but also gratitude for their work in cleaning up the villages, fetching water and bringing new life and a sense of excitement into their routine. The organisation of transport for this was difficult and expensive, but it proved well worthwhile. Schools represented were HYDC, Mainohana, Bomana, Jubilee, Rebiatul Youth Centre, Innuabui Catholic School and a youth group from Inau village. All valued the experience of the Congress.

A previous instance of student initiative, prompted by Br. Joseph, had been suggesting to the HYDC staff to combine the 2007 De La Salle Brothers' Founder's Day celebration with a recognition of Br. Leo's Golden Jubilee as a Brother in that year. The students in traditional dress led him to the celebration in the hall, with dances and the giving of gifts. The school then celebrated with a Mass and sports activities in the afternoon. In 2009 Br. John Francis Gari created a further avenue for student Lasallian involvement. He revived the "Breakfast Club", writing letters to companies asking for sponsorship of food. Student leaders served the food to their fellows three days a week: about 150 students received the free meals ¹³.



37. Student Chimbu design from art class

The tradition of the Biennial Lasallian Youth Congress was now embedded. The 17th to 23rd July 2011 saw it held at De La Salle Bomana. Students and staff from nine schools were involved in this Lasallian event. Organised by HYDC and led by its students, the Congress highlights of a happy and involving time celebrated by the students were the talks on education by Dr. Pagelio and substance abuse by Dr. Ambi, as well as the visits to "We Care" sites, Cheshire homes, and the City Mission farm. All learned and profited from the occasion ¹⁴. In that year too, awareness of the needs of the wider community also saw students participate in the "Cleanathon" around the neighbourhood – a community service begun by the Sisters. In addition, there was the regular "Walk against Corruption". In 2011 Mr Larry Aua offered himself as a "Lasallian Youth Volunteer", with a role to promote ideals and practice of service, community involvement and personal Christian faith. This animating youth ministering role was becoming current in all Lasallian schools. It was obvious that the resources of the Australian Brothers built up the faith-animating capacity of the local leaders at Hohola and other N.C.D. schools.

Finance and Infrastructure

While students were enriching others, and being enriched in their learning, some of the plant was being improved and maintained under Br. Leo's watch. To ensure constant water supply a pump for rubber tapper tanks on the hill behind the school was acquired. Security – often a worry – was enhanced with a full spiked-metal fence built around the perimeter. A private security firm was engaged and later Centre-employed guards took over security roles. School buildings were increasingly well ventilated and floors were polished. These improvements made the environment safer and cleaner for students and staff. They also attracted new teachers and helped the public profile of HYDC. Teachers and students were often made aware that HYDC was a superior environment to many technical or high schools locally ¹⁵. Gone too were the days of teaching a half a day under the trees!



38: Performing tribal dancing in Founder's Week activity

With these advantages, there was always the background issue of finding steady funding for the Centre. As a non-teaching Principal, Br. Leo had many headaches trying to balance budgets. Another Brother noted: "there was always an unpredictable access to (Government) funding... always the fear of questionable Government practices, where legitimate funds would be channelled into various other...avenues ¹⁶. Being now more developed in its vocational /trade educational choices, its facilities and its student population, HYDC applied for registration as a Secondary Technical School in 2009, partly to ensure a regular income. It received approval for this application, though it awaited the next National Education Board meeting in 2010 for it to be formalised. It was anticipated that HYDC would not actually receive funding until 2011. The year 2010 was meant to be a year of preparation for the full implementation of the school's programme. Teachers would also be required to upgrade their qualifications to meet the standards required of the Education Department. In April 2011 Br. Leo was again pursuing registration with a meeting of Catholic Education sector of the Archdiocese, the Secretary of Education in the Department, the Head of TVET, and the Registration Officer for Schools. Still there was little further progress.

In 2010, the Principal had begun trying to source more funding from AUSAid, realizing that the Brothers could not easily supply finance for any capital works: they were offering huge support in terms of teacher salaries and plant maintenance. Furthermore, the increased enrolment that the 2006-08 infrastructure expansion facilitated meant that other facilities were now inadequate. This new process was partly complete when Leo suddenly died in October 2011. No contracts had been signed, so in February 2012 Br. Adrian Watson came from the Sydney headquarters to re-write the submission to AUSAid –the APNG Incentive Fund. The re-writing was required because the funding being offered was about one third of what Br. Leo had originally planned. With Br. Adrian's expertise a submission of a three-storey building at right angles to the present Administration block was made and presented

right on the deadline. It consisted of teaching staff offices and two Electro-Technology work rooms and a full-sized assembly hall to supplement the existing hall.

The importance of this funding submission conclusion can be discerned from the needful decrease of expatriate financial support for the Centre. Some four Brothers, including Brs. Leo and Robert McLaughlin, had attended the Brothers' four-yearly decision-making body ("Chapter") in Sydney in October 2008. It resolved to continue funding PNG enterprises- including HYDC as a large recipient- at present levels, until 2012. The predicament for the Hohola administration was one of numbers versus financial stability.

Br. Leo's strong leaning was to expand the number of students who paid only K.250 fees per year, but keeping school fees unchanged. In 2000 when Br. Denis left fees stood at K.150 per year and remained stable for five years, rising to K.200 (2005-09) and K.300 (2011)¹⁷. In that last year, there were about 100 scholarships being offered while other students struggled to pay fees¹⁸. The result was bigger increases in on-going funding provided by the De La Salle Brothers Order - for more teachers' salaries, plant maintenance and running costs.

Sudden end of an era

Br. Leo's unexpected death on 14 October was a turning point. Not long after, the Community received news of the sad but expected passing of Br. Robert Mc Laughlin who had worked at HYDC tirelessly for six years from 2001 after which he became Principal of De La Salle Mainohana. The passing of these two Brothers was a tragic loss to the Lasallian Mission in Papua New Guinea. Br. Leo, with his hallmark commitment to and empathy with the marginalized, had generously taken over from Br. Denis who had set the institution on some solid foundations. He knew all about finding stable teaching staff, relating to people of another culture and distributing resources, while developing a professional institution. Different staff remember him as a hard-working man, open to everyone. He was an "Office man" from early in the day till late at night, keeping track of the whole apparatus of the Centre's workings. One day, not waiting for an electrician, he was seen re-attaching electrical wires in some classroom. Hands-on, he was focused on creating a safe and productive learning environment. Unflinching in his goals, he led a tight ship with a gentle hand, never appointing a formal full-time deputy. As to leisure, he enjoyed a game of golf in early days, but gave it up as work increased.



39: Br Leo at the office desk

While not a strong networker like Br. Denis, he was a quietly purposeful big-picture thinker. Br. Leo wanted to increase the wages of teachers in the hope of attracting an increase in trained



40: Senior football team 2008

pursued overseas funding submissions, in a measured and methodical way. If secured, as grants were in 2007-8, and ultimately in 2012-13, they would allow expanded facilities and the larger enrolments.

As for his general character, Br. Leo was a very private man. His quietness also meant that he held his own counsel and reserved many issues to himself – a strong independent captain of the ship, rather than a collaborator. Yet, while keeping his own confidences, he had the confidence of the crew around him. He spoke little but then a few words had so much impact. Sober and astute as he was, teachers remember him as wise, kind and gentle, being very generous with those struggling to make ends meet ¹⁹.

In addition to work in the Centre, he was prominent as PNG Area Chairman of the De La Salle Brothers since 2009, influencing the local policy and the status of the Brothers, not least of the Lasallian Family movement on the Papuan side of the nation. Joan Eoe and Bernadette Ove were active colleagues at Jubilee Catholic High School. He gradually established contacts in the Education Department. He was tirelessly on the move, from office to vehicle to aeroplane, meeting deadlines and hosting visitors. He chaired or was a member of several school boards. These important qualities Br. Leo had brought to Hohola over eleven years of its continuing development and consolidation until his untimely death.

In these fruitful years, student enrolment had ballooned from about 300 in 2001 to 570 in 2011. There were 1,000 applications for 260 places in Grade 9 that latter year ²⁰. Brother Joseph Gabel had taught and worked at HYDC with Br. Leo as the cheerful bosun on the bridge; he was effectively second-in-charge over most of this time. He summarized the achievement of the Leo Scollen period as the provision of a strengthened form of schooling that did not exist in any other PNG educational arena; low fees entry for settlement youth gave a formal education with a Grade 10 exit certificate and a vocational course which led to a high probability of employment at its conclusion. In 2011 107 students graduated, with 98 saying they had formal employment ²¹. According to the National Education Board considering HYDC registration in 2013, the reason the AUSAid giving the school K.8.5 million over two funding rounds was “its financial accountability, its focus on disadvantaged youth and its success in enhancing employment opportunities for its students” ²². Due to the unremitting dedication of its Principal of eleven years and a professionalizing staff, Hohola's congenial soil was producing much fruit.

Chapter 5: The Sturdy Palm Tree

The only thought that came to me was to sponsor myself by looking after my cousin's children. Though this was a hard life I accepted it. Eventually I saved up a good amount of money and paid off my school fees. I am so thankful to the Lord for bringing me this far. I chose this school (La Salle) because it provided affordable fees and because it gave students like me who were not eligible to continue on to secondary schooling a second chance. My aim is to move on and strive for the best in the future.

(A Past Student)

The death of a school Principal demands quick action to ensure the institution's well-being. Br. John Pill, an experienced ex-Principal of several Australian schools held things together for a month, and took an overview of the HYDC management until the school closed for holidays in December 2011. In the meantime, Br. Antony Swamy, an Indian Brother, had been appointed suddenly as the new Principal by the De La Salle Brothers in November. He had worked at De La Salle College Mainohana and Holy Trinity Teachers College Mt. Hagen for some years. When Br Douglas O'Reilly had arrived in January that year to work at HYDC, he had found a school with a solid infrastructure and high student and staff morale. Student learning bespoke hard-work and the school environment was safe and clean. There were over thirty staff and 570 students ¹. Time-tabling was clearly structured and the curriculum provided formal and technical / vocational subjects of a substantial character. Like the palm tree on the Centre's insignia, the school's strength was obvious. Yet, with a new Director, it was a critical time.



41: Br. Antony Swamy, Thomas Waburi, Br. Douglas O'Reilly

He saw that in the wider society "less than 50% of students who come through primary school in the National Capital District are able to access a High or Secondary School. Some of these students go to private educational institutions, others to Vocational or Technical Schools; fewer and fewer these days get employment. The majority of school leavers are left to take Further and Other Distance Education (F.O.D.E) courses, return to the village or to remain at home or walk the streets" ... (The Centre offered) "a second chance at education" ². The success of 20% of graduating students gaining selection in high schools in 2011 clearly showed that the school had become a bigger and more confident player in South Moresby education. Of the 600 individual subjects sat by graduating students that year there were but sixteen subject failures. In 2012, there were 600 applicants for 240 places in Year 9.

This year level was required to have classes of maximum forty students for more effective learning by the Archdiocesan Education Office. A year later there were 1,000 applicants for 260 places³. In this year too, HYDC gained first place in the F.O.D.E. National Examinations for Grade 10. The school was popular, producing results and gaining a fine reputation.

Yet, for Br. Antony, the first six months of 2012 was a quite difficult administrative period. He felt the need to terminate three teachers' positions and some of the large Office ancillary staff. Some new protocols for staff were questioned; gradually the Staff settled into a new administration. Br. Joseph, with his strong commitment, continued as an assistant to the Principal and Br. Douglas O'Reilly offered great support to other teachers. In 2013 Ms. Louisa Opu was appointed as Deputy in charge of Academics, including F.O.D.E. This was a significant move – to have



42: Teacher Commitment ceremony, 2013

a young National woman in a high position, just as Ibene Fraghi had held such a position effectively in the early days. Louisa's duties included monitoring of the curricula and teacher performance, as well planning and consulting with heads of subject departments.

Over these first years, the Principal was clear that professional teachers - registered, trained and with experience - were a priority. In this context, it should be noted that leaders like Mathias Baihu, Sakarias Pal, Br. Joseph and Br. Douglas filled this category. Others were encouraged to upgrade their qualifications but few were in a position to do so. Up to ten teachers voluntarily resigned in various years, a few finding other desired employment, others having family issues or trouble with accommodation. Most staff members had varying degrees of experience and training but the few were registered as qualified. This latter quality was a key goal⁴.

Struggles, self-sustainability and support

These positives in student achievements and initial goals were balanced by continuing negatives. As Br. Leo had explained in a report to the Brothers' Area Council in 2011, living with "Wantoks" is a huge problem for students whose parents in the villages expect that their "Wantoks" will pay all their children's expenses⁵. In 2012 there was a solid drop-out rate of students, some finding an alternative school, and others unable to cope with the new increase of yearly fees from K. 300 in 2011 to K.500 for Grades 9 and 10, and K.600 for Grade 11. The reason for this was that the local Brothers' PNG Sector Plan had increasing self-sustainability as a goal. This aim at the school was aided by the TVET scholarship subsidies to La Salle- HYDC from the Government: they gradually increased from over 200 in 2012 to over 450 in 2016. The College also looked to help students who were struggling financially, and offered them certain mitigation in fee-payments. This fee and scholarship income-generation was balanced, however, by a drain on resources - raising teaching salaries by

10% per year, to maintain a stable staff ⁶. The larger context was that La Salle-HYDC was still heavily dependent on guaranteed annual funding of a substantial nature from the De La Salle Brothers.

Other local sources of income were from partnership-friends of La Salle-HYDC, the "PNG Tribal Foundation". It donated K10,000 to supplement needy students. It also made a documentary video of the school for the U.S. market ⁷. The Government Member for Moresby South provided scholarships for six students- K5,000 - and the Member for Goiala similarly for students in his constituency. The All Nations Women's Group gave K. 71,570 from the sale of a book of short stories by its members. "We have heard that children were unable to sit for exams due to school fee problems" ⁸. Its president said the money, provided for twenty female scholarships, was to help unfortunate youth become people who can make a change in society. The Business and Professional Women's Club of Port Moresby also had provided twenty scholarships for girls.

Noteworthy as a foreign donor was the Lasallian Foundation whose grants over the years totalled \$AUS 1.2 million by 2016. It had provided several teacher housing units, two buses, two ablutions blocks and a science room. In addition, its "Container Project" had sent thirteen containers of Australian-donated goods, a good portion of these going to Hohola. Items included computers, classroom furniture, text/ reading/ reference books, learning resources, stationery, tools and equipment for the workshops, building materials, sports equipment, equipment and furniture for the hospitality program, and large lights for the assembly hall. After being emptied, the containers had become secure storage units for the school ⁹.

Up until 2016 there were a large number of students who went without food so they could pay their PMV bus fares to and from school. That showed the continuing need for the "Breakfast Club" introduced in 2006. Volunteers from the Brothers' youth ministry program and student leaders staffed the "Club" which could have up to 150 students getting a meal before school on three days of the week (as mentioned previously). Despite continuing financial burdens on students and their families, these and other developments in the period 2012 to 2016 point to HYDC's continuity with its founding ethos and mission and its confident progress. In 2012 HYDC re-badged itself as "La Salle - Hohola Youth Development Centre". The mission in 2013 was the same as in 2001: that its young men and women would have the capacity to:

- Confidently take an appropriate place in their world;
- Have motivation to develop all their skills and talents to reach their full human and Christian potential;
- Gain and maintain employment, and so provide adequately for their family;
- Be compassionate and supportive members of the community;
- Live happy and fulfilled lives" ¹⁰.

The previous year, Br. Bernard Cooper, Area Chairman of the Brothers, had stated at the Brothers' regional meeting in Australia that La Salle-HYDC offered vocational education for 'at risk' settlement youth and a stable school community which helped break the poverty

trap. This made explicit the Lasallian orientation and mission spelt out above. In 2015 Br. Antony adopted the five "Guiding Principles" of Lasallian education that were current in De La Salle institutions in the Australia-NZ-PNG region. They spelt out the place of God and Christian worship and social action, the stance of being brothers and sisters to others in the community, and promoting the values of respect, honesty and achievement. These were often inculcated in the students and displayed prominently in the main courtyard of the College. In addition, the re-designed badge and school name was painted at the top of the entrance drive by an ex-student. The motto of the 1970's – "Never Give Up"- attracted the eye in the TVET sheltered plaza.

Improved facilities and development



43 Arrival of goods from Australia in a container donated through the Lasallian Foundation, 2013

A major expansion and achievement was the completion of the Incentive Fund project of 2012-13. (Indeed, it provided a strong case for HYDC becoming a technical college as outlined below). Br. Antony received news from the Incentive Fund in early May 2012 that the submission for building developments had been accepted. The Centre's submission, prepared by Br. Adrian Watson, was commended for its thorough and professional presentation and being most rational and clear in its proposal. It was one of only thirteen educational and health institutions selected by the Fund in its infrastructure funding timeframe. The official signing occurred with many significant officers from different PNG, Australian Aid, Church and school organizations present.

Of course, very prominent too, were a representative group of students who entertained the guests and witnessed the signing. The event took place at the school on Friday 8th June, a fitting and significant year, as the Centre celebrated its fortieth anniversary.

This second tranche of development funding from AUSAid assigned K.5,000,000, not Br. Leo's requested K.9 million ¹¹. The Project was completed by November 2013, after the TVET report for registration. It encompassed a new large multi-purpose hall, pathways and levelling a playing field. It completed a three-storied extension to the Administration building – offices, Electro-Technology classrooms, as well as an entrance driveway and security fencing. Such a huge undertaking had as Project Manager, Br Antony, the new Principal, when its initial project manager left the country. It was a huge task when he was managing and leading La Salle-HYDC as well.

Definable outcomes from this major project were seen from pre- and post-surveys in the Fund's completion report. Firstly, there was very high satisfaction from students and staff with the use of the new Br. Leo Scollen Memorial Hall. It was now used for a variety of occasions -

cultural events, hosting assemblies, liturgies and sporting events, including community use, e.g. training for the Pan-Pacific Games. Secondly, the electro-technology facility received very high satisfaction and the number of students intending to progress to Grade 11 TVET had significantly risen. A third major outcome was the possibility of higher enrolments including disabled students, and a certain degree of higher student prediction of possible skilled employment. Fourthly, an added benefit from the Project was the upskilling, as part of the Management Team, by the HYDC office staff. Their financial management, purchasing and reporting skills were increased – for their own professional development and in view of any future project¹². This was a deliberate strategy by the Principal. Lastly, "Champion" staff members of the project team learnt more educative skills.

Consolidation with modern facilities and plant could easily be a lure for thieves. In 2013 a large gang of criminals had overpowered the Security at night and stole thirty-nine notebook laptops from the school's secured computer room. These had been a grant from the Australian government. Morale of the technical-vocational stream final year students was badly affected, as all their saved work was lost. Many short-course community students, studying part-time, had their courses cancelled¹³. The PNG Tribal Foundation, the school's development partner, hosted a fundraising event, a "HYDC Benefit Concert" in the Hall in October 2014.



44: Opening of new facilities by Australian Consul-General, 2013, funded by APNG Incentive Fund

Security and safety had been a continual concern from the early days of the Sisters. Mr. Peter Maia had been employed by Br. Denis as a night security guard as well as teaching technical subjects. In 2002 two Brothers- one a visitor- were held up on a road outside Port Moresby and had their vehicle stolen, although it was recovered a week later. There had been a serious break-in and theft in the Brothers' house over the school holidays late in 2003. With an unsuccessful attempted break-in by four people in mid-March 2004, the Brothers decided to increase quickly the protection of their house already decided upon – cladding the building with colour-bond. With the assistance of some HYDC boys on work experience, this was completed in June that year. Shortly afterwards, a high-security metal fence surrounded the Brothers' area. A security man had been employed at many stages in Hohola's history.

A tragic commentary on danger in the community was the death of HYDC student Francis Vincent at the hands of "raskols"¹⁴ in Sept 1010. From 2014 onwards, Student Prefects have monitored fellow students for weapons as well as correct uniform as they enter the school. With these precautions, the College has been prized by students themselves as their place, a place of safety and enjoyment.

Quality teaching, policies, organisation

A further and defining achievement in Br. Antony's time of principalship was further professionalizing of infra-structure, in terms of teachers' status and development, the College's organisational structures and policies, and its curricular impact. "Capacity building" both in human resources (people) and material resources, as well as organizational systems was strongly pursued.

There was an increased student intake each year so that the total population reached 750 students by 2016. Linked to the expansion was the need for more qualified staff, but it was also to satisfy the demands of the Department to gain registration. Selected teachers were given paid leave to pursue in-service seminars and days. Two female staff trained in Fiji; two others went to Thailand for a conference. A Lasallian in-service conference took place in Lae, which nine teachers attended. In TVET's assessment report to the Department of Education in March 2013 it noted La Salle had teachers who were "qualified and skillful" and some in-servicing was taking place. But, it said, in order to gain registration, La Salle-HYDC required eight



45: Staff members – (lt. to rt.) Peter Maia (Campus Manager), Sakarias Pal (Religion & Personal Development Co-Ordinator), Louisa Opu (Deputy Principal -Academics)

new teachers for skills training to become qualified in their technical subjects which taught towards NC1 and NC2 certification. They would have to undergo CBT & A training and Certification IV¹⁵. Yet, the school's educational standing was such that in 2012 fourteen teacher trainees from outside colleges received placements and mentoring at La Salle.

The need for experienced and qualified teachers was always the foundation of a good school. At the end of 2014 Br. Antony was advertising for those with diplomas in teaching as well as three to five years' experience. Each year some teachers attended short in-service courses of five to six weeks. Teachers were to meet performance criteria planning and sequencing of subject topics were required, under the head of a department¹⁶. Louisa Opu, Deputy, gave in-service for trades / vocational staff once a term on lesson preparation / planning and term programs¹⁷. Most teaching staff were qualified by 2016. It had become a stable cohort. Total staffing now comprised 36 teaching and 20 ancillary workers. Their base salary was finally comparable to that of the Department when various deductions were removed for Department Schools' Association fees etc.

The Principal was fortunate to have another De La Salle teacher as a solid role model for others. Br. Douglas, the Head of English, was a ready resource person for other teachers learning their trade, till his departure at the end of 2016. He took on an extra English class to build expertise in that subject area. He was always approachable for staff seeking advice. Importantly, all other staff were Nationals. Peter Maia, who knew students and ex-students so well, was integral in ensuring good behaviour. Some past graduates would come from time

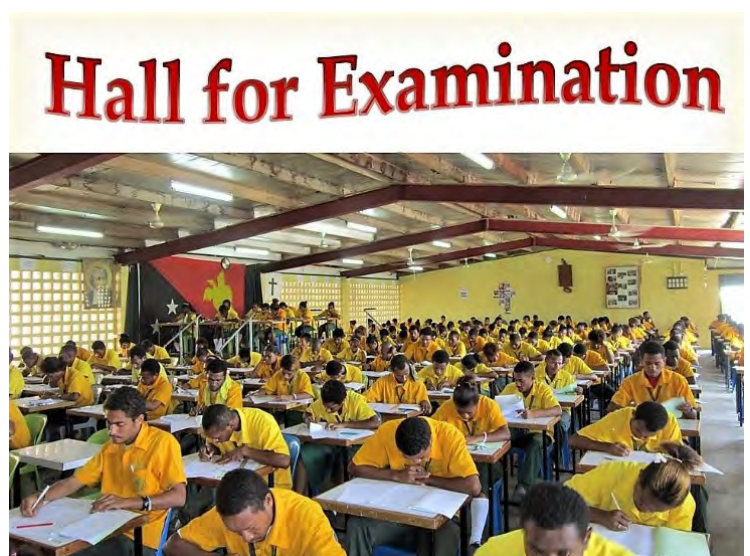
to time to inspire students on possible careers. Mathias Baihu and Sakarias Pal, other long-standing members of staff, were very strong supports in terms of behaviour and standards. Over this time, too, La Salle also accepted trainee teachers from Don Bosco Technological Institute and the PNG Education Institute at Waigani each year, emphasizing the fact of quality of teaching and school organization found at La Salle.

Another aspect of infrastructure that was given more attention was organization. A newly-designed organisational structure clarified all staff roles. By 2016 there were three deputy principals – Br. Thomas M. Yapo for administration discipline and guidance, Louisa Opu for academic curricula, and Alice Kalima for TVET (trade and vocational sections). Teaching had a clear structure of two educational pathways. Office management also was developed further. In April 2012, Mentie Knowles, ex-Provincialate Office Manager from Sydney, had arrived to streamline systems and educate ancillary staff in organization and procedures. She mentored the Office Staff in their duties, returning three more times to help new staff after replacements. Students were now required to carry ID cards and wear a fresh standard uniform - formal shirt for boys and skirt for girls.

Curricular development / Social issues

A further important part of infrastructure growth and capacity-building was broader curricular offerings. The areas of F.O.D.E. Studies remained – English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Commerce, as well as Religious Education and Personal Development in health and sports. With the registration of the Centre as “La Salle Technical College – Hohola” in 2015, national certification (NC1 and NC2) could be issued. Technical and Vocational Education training was now offered in six courses: Automotive Servicing and Light Vehicles, Carpentry and Construction, Electro-Technology (Electrical), Metal Fabrication and Welding, Office Administration (Business Studies), and Tourism and Hospitality (Commercial Cookery). In August 2012, local television news had reported the arrival from AUSAid of 44 lap-tops and docking stations, and two servers to expand students' technical skills in Computer Studies, an additional core subject. Regularly, the school offered a short computer course to the wider community. From 2013, every student from Grade 9 could take on a skills-based suite of courses and specialize increasingly each year level. The huge input of AUSAid funds had pushed this advance in vocational / trade facilities, funding that was a lasting legacy to Br. Leo's committed principalship and search for financial help. Br. Antony's hard work and leadership saw the rewards.

The solid curriculum offering of formal (F.O.D.E.) subjects and technical / vocational subjects was of a substantial character. An indication of this was the fact that all La Salle students were listed in the first 270 passes in F.O.D.E. National



46: New Br Leo Memorial Hall

Examinations in 2014 and 2015¹⁸. Those F.O.D.E. students who failed the examinations could self-learn at home and gain credits to re-sit. In 2015 and 2016 trade / vocational students graduated with NC1 for the first time. As the school entered an era of closer alignment with the other national schools as a new registered technical college it was important also to have clear policies and practices regarding core social values like child protection and gender equity. Updated policies and protocols were encouraged and bedded down with the AUSAid infrastructure funding in 2012-13. Such basic social and health concerns were education on STD's-HIV Aids, child protection, social inclusion and student disability. All of these were important in a modern PNG school environment.

As regards gender equity, 2005 had seen HYDC accepting 128 male applicants and 96 females. This may have partly related to courses available and lower rates for women in general education or the workplace. Gradually this discrepancy had been righted. Girls were encouraged to take traditionally male subjects such as carpentry and mechanics, and boys were encouraged to take traditionally female subjects such as tourism and hospitality. The 2013 enrolment policy was to provide 50% for each gender although entry level test-scores for males was higher than that for females. Issues relating to gender equality were included in week-long in-service for teachers at the start of the year. Sports carnivals held each term structured teams with equal numbers of male and female players¹⁹.

A required part of the Incentive Fund project was for the school to appoint three "Champions" for "Cross Cutting Issues" (CCI). They arranged and facilitated CCI activities for staff and students and a workshop on CCI issues for the employees of the contractors. La Salle-HYDC invited speakers to school assemblies. The speakers included ex-prisoners from Bomana Prison, twelve policemen from Bomana Police College, and speakers concerning family planning issues and healthy family life, including coping with disabilities. As part of their monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building, students and staff conducted a substantial baseline



47: Carpentry trade students with modern equipment

survey. This assessed attitudes to existing facilities and resources, and gauged the level of understanding of social inclusion issues at that time. The school decided to focus on gender equity and child protection for their social inclusion activities. The La Salle-HYDC child protection policy was revised and improved in line with the requirements of the PNG government. All teachers participated in one-week in-service training in Child Protection. The teachers were presented with a certificate at the conclusion of their in-service training.

Final-year students of 2013 were taught in class about HIV and AIDS before their last work experience program. These Grade 11 students presented a session on HIV and AIDS at a school assembly using a debating format that engaged and challenged all the students. Teachers became aware of the need for further education regarding this area by the quantity

and nature of questions asked at the end of the presentation by the senior students. La Salle-HYDC continued to offer the "Family Life Program" of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby to new students. This centred on sexual health and healthy relationships. In addition, Religion classes at the school follow an archdiocesan program that included topics such as social justice teachings and sexual awareness.

In addition to CCI issues, it is worth noting that La Salle-HYDC, as a Catholic school, actively promoted involvement in social justice activities among its students. Of course, it had always from its inception had an awareness of youth needs and Christian social justice, an



48: Students recognising Teachers' Day

example being the "Breakfast Club". The school also acknowledged the need for access for disabled students to the new facilities through the provision of pathways and ramps, and requested variations to the original contract to provide these facilities. Teachers and students attended a "We Care" Open Day, where the focus was on children with disabilities and what they are able to achieve.

In 2013, fifty-four students became involved in activities promoted by the Youth Against Corruption Association. In the same year, a further two students attended a symposium organised by Transparency International. Five teachers and thirty students attended a Human Rights Film Festival in Port Moresby sponsored by the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights. La Salle-HYDC students partnered with "We Care" to raise funds for the needy and visited the settlement areas to provide assistance to those less fortunate than themselves. Twenty-three students from the school attended a Lasallian Youth Gathering at Bomana in July 2013 during which the students visited and assisted in various social outreach projects. Throughout the first half of 2013 and as a result of the project, the Centre had provided leadership training and social awareness training for Head Prefects. Because the students from the settlements are representative of the many ethnic groups that make up the fabric of PNG society it was crucial that social inclusion policies were embedded in the La Salle-HYDC Teachers' Manual.

Students and learning

With these benefits, learning was being enhanced. Students were enjoying new facilities, learning more focussed skills from more qualified teachers with higher standard equipment. Over the years 2012 to 2016 student attitudes and behaviour had been of a high standard from the viewpoint of the Administration. A new pastoral approach for discipline was appearing through discussion and understanding by students of consequences of behaviour. A system for absences and behavioural incidents (written up by a student then communicated

to a pastoral teacher and Deputy) became normal. The PNG Child Protection policy was well known and a Discipline Committee managed issues. Levels of student expectations were increased so that a full new uniform, sports gear and identity card were universal ²⁰. In addition, enrolment now required the Grade 8 certificate, this being a stipulation of the Department in registered schools. Students with a greater grasp of literacy and numeracy helped better advanced learning. At the same time, a number of students left each year for various reasons - trouble with accommodation coming to city from rural areas, "Wantoks" finding it too expensive to support them, or some young people feeling uncomfortable in the school and withdrawing ²¹.

With these changes, learning also took place via peer ministry. Student prefects, chosen by their peers, were trained yearly by the Lasallian Youth Co-Ordinator via a weekend leadership seminar with other Lasallian schools in N.C.D. By 2015 a Student Representative Council had emerged. These leaders conducted annually a mini-seminar for the class captains & vice-captains. They also monitored student standards, by supervising entry to the campus each morning - noting possession of mobile phones, compulsory ID cards, as well as the required absence of graffiti-marking pens, betel nut or cigarettes. Class Captains had a role of supervision in classes with suitable awards at the end of term ²². Leadership and student interaction was developed with clubs of which "Youth for La Salle" was one.

In terms of Christian development, a regular "Angelus" prayer was said daily; in "Founder's Week" there were interschool activities, sports times and involvement with the "We Care" agency in visiting poorer youth. Later in each year the agency was helped with clothes and food collections. The "Lasallian Principles" were re-iterated and the custom grew of using

"brother" and "sister" in greeting people. Hopefully, from the Administration's viewpoint, a greater realisation of academic commitment and a positive future in the community developed as well. As a school Deputy ²³ said: "For many this is their first home - a supportive and safe place", as large numbers came from settlement living where there is no study facilities, sometimes not enough food, or unsuspected dangers. Overall, students had been judged to come up to the mark and the resultant morale of students had been high.



49: Advertising of Hospitality students' course

Registration and recognition

A very significant development took place in 2013. An Educational Departmental TVET assessment offered the assurance that "the current infrastructures and developments that the Institution has undertaken in order to comply with the technical institution is far beyond doubt that it can be elevated to the status of a Technical College or Technical Secondary School" ²⁴. The quite effusive report noted adequate electricity supply, safe workshops and

laboratories, fully-equipped classrooms, washrooms and a hall. Br. Antony's qualifications and experience were cited as a strong influencing factor ²⁵. The Report recommended formal registration, which would entail the Department taking "full responsibility in catering for salaries and other entitlements", regular inspections, training support, certification for Grade 10 and 12, and "support (for) the school through the National government fee-free education grant" ²⁶. Departmental teacher appointments and requirement of a balanced budget were other aspects. Expansion of technical and hospitality education, it was said, was one strategy of the National Strategic Plan, Papua New Guinea Vision 2050. Private providers, such as La Salle, would help to achieve this outcome ²⁷.

So, the College could transition to a registered technical college very soon; La Salle would be the first vocational school to complete the process. Yet the Archdiocese and the De La Salle (PNG) Area Council realised the inclusion in the national system with its assured source of income would come with some grave disadvantages - perhaps diminution of the Lasallian character, and control of any further infrastructure development. These very real costs had to be calibrated against the major advantages. One major benefit would be release from heavy dependence on overseas funding. It was also a better choice in order to avoid having to charge ever-higher school fees. Students would be eligible for a TVET scholarship of 75% of current fees. Thus, the very rationale of La Salle from its foundations would be consolidated with substantial help for poor settlement and village students. Youth could receive a nationally recognized training certificate.

In addition to eventual funding of staff salaries, there would be higher levels of staffing and funding of equipment, materials and electricity; a College could offer as many nationally recognized certificate courses as it wished (up to National Certificate [NC] 4). Teacher professional development to improve qualifications would be funded. The College would have five years to develop its courses, extend its classes to higher levels and upgrade its teacher qualifications. Lastly, the result would not require moving from a "Permitted Agency School" through an intermediate stage of a "Technical Secondary School". It would allow La Salle to become eventually a national tertiary institution.



50: Electro-Technology class

The decision to take up the pathway towards full State registration incorporated into the national educational system was decided on by the Brothers on 1 July 2013. It was not just a desirable outcome after five years of effort to get initial TVET accreditation, but it was a very prudent financial necessity ²⁸. (The previous year the De La Salle Brothers had decided that they would need to cap HYDC funding from overseas to \$AUS 200,000 per year). Entitlement

to offer TVET qualifications was finally granted at the end of 2014. The NC 1 certificate was granted for the first time to the 2015 Grade 11 graduands in the six trade and vocational courses. This achievement of status as a “permitted” private technical college with guaranteed TVET scholarship funding was a triumph that was first explored by Br. Leo in 2009: it was a further legacy to him. The serpentine avenues of Departmental bureaucracy had been negotiated! Future sustainability, not just in human resources, but with a more secure financial base and community credibility, would be a real possibility.

Many of these major changes and developments were inter-related and happened concurrently. It shows the complexities and burdens of office for the Principal as he energetically consolidated and expanded the footprint of the school in southern Port Moresby. Over five years, he had a major impact on La Salle Technical College. He had finally achieved the TVET part of registration that Br. Leo had as a goal several years before. Moreover, he had come to understand the HYDC culture and the national local community, adapting his decisions where needed.

Taking up the philosophy of the original Centre, he re-enforced that culture and provided clear practical outcomes for student achievement. With a forthright approach and a clear vision, he created a teaching faculty which was not only experienced but almost fully qualified. Teachers could see the strong organizational features and higher salaries that he introduced as beneficial – for themselves and students. Three Deputies were appointed and teachers’ roles were clarified. He established clear Lasallian features in the name-change and emphasis on its educational principles. Very important too, was his vision to pursue a project of providing teacher accommodation for those who struggled with poor housing or long travel times ²⁹.



51: Larry Aua (Campus Minister), with student and Matt Murrie, 'Share the Mission' Volunteer

A great asset was Br. Antony's good head for business and finance. There were improved practices of accounting and a tenacious drive for financial self-sufficiency. The new buildings of 2013 allowed expanded curricular offerings and a larger intake of students who, although paying higher fees, brought increased income from scholarships, which were partly the effect of registration. The upgrading and direction of the curriculum with the prize of NC1 and NC2 exiting credentials enhanced the school's standing in the community. These were some of the successes of a very capable, competent

and hard-working principal ³⁰. He was enthused, and enthusing of others in his initiatives: he could gather people around him to pursue a common vision. On a personal note, Antony as a head administrator had an open door for consultation; he was seen as “full of humanity... (everyone was) part of a family”³¹.

Milestones and achievements

Some striking milestones occurred in these years due in part to the growing reputation and growth of La Salle. One such highlight was in 2012. The PNG Government chose the school to host a visit by HRH Prince Charles. It was seen as an example of the successful melding of formal and technical education for very disadvantaged young Papuan New Guineans. Students displaying body art and thrumming Kundu drums led the exalted visitor up the entrance hill as Motu Koitabu dancers performed. The relaxed Prince chatted and asked questions of students within an international media throng. Braving the tropical heat, he witnessed the learning areas of tourism and hospitality, craft production and trade skills. Unfortunately, no Government representatives were present to explain how this schooling was aligning with the nation's goals projected to 2050, which emphasised the crucial need for skills-training to grow a powerful economy ³².



52: Students greeting Prince Charles 2012

A second highlight was the visit of Hon. Ms. Quentin Bryce, Governor-General of Australia, on 22 April 2013. She came, as part of a State Visit, to signalise the AUSAid grant in the Incentive Funds Programme of K.4.8 million which had built the Br. Leo Memorial Hall and a modern Administration building. A sea of students in bottle green and gold uniforms- the standard new dress of HYDC - gave a rousing welcome. Hip-swaying traditional dancers surrounded the guest as the school community escorted her to the new hall / gymnasium where she was officially addressed by the Principal, Br. Antony and given a brief outline of the Centre's history by two students. The gratitude to Australia for educational development in the nation was acknowledged especially the generosity to Hohola. In response, the Governor-General pointed to the crucial activity of education in a stable society, providing incentive and wellbeing. She noted the provision to PNG education overall of K.110 million since 2010 to pay for elementary school fees for 500,000 students per year. As various areas of the school were viewed, she was surprised and delighted to learn that most students would gain employable skills after three years at HYDC and that it was a place of dedication, positivity and a high standard of learning ³³. These two events greatly enhanced La Salle's reputation.

Forward planning and future challenges

By 2016, HYDC as a new technical college saw the need to fit into and support the National Education Plan for an increase in national skilled labour with its greater economic benefits, and hence reduction in poverty. Ultimately, this would drive greater productivity in the workplace,



53: Shared Lasallian Schools Leadership seminar

with the extra value of providing equal opportunities for girls in PNG society ³⁴. The AUSAid infrastructure project aimed to continue to help the school give a fine general education to settlement youth: to "further cater for the recreational, cultural, academic, vocational and pastoral needs of students" ³⁵. But importantly, in the coming years, the new La Salle could also profit by being a provider for advanced technical and vocational education at a tertiary level. This would lead to greater enrolment

numbers, the demand for more courses and increased number of facilities.

At the same time, the College had to be aware of possible dangers. At a meeting of all parties in July 2013 – representatives of the College, Catholic Education and the Government Department of Education – three issues were seen as challenges: a small pool of potential leaders for the College, the lure of higher wages and careers in the private sector for qualified technical personnel, and the unpredictability of the PNG educational bureaucracy in its staffing, resource allocation and school management ³⁶. The Archdiocese and the College had agreed that a Governing Council be established to plan the future and to bring expertise to any shifting sands that the future might bring ³⁷. A certain measure of independence could thus be reinforced.

To maintain a good degree of independence La Salle would continue to need external help. The Brothers in Australia had been a continual massive support from their own resources, and through the Lasallian Foundation, (as noted above). More staff room space as well as a refurbished library / resource centre were immediate priorities by 2016. The latter would be for the use of the wider community as well, providing more modern technological and web resources, broader curricular information and a place for learning away from the often minimally-suited home study environment ³⁸. To attract and retain teachers, financial help with local housing was also an important proximate need.

Instrumental in this planning was the outstanding aid provided since 2012 by Michael Brosnan, from southern New South Wales. A skilled tradesman and infrastructure planner who owned his own company, he returned several times as a volunteer project manager to upgrade accommodation and supervise projects of the Brothers' schools in PNG, especially Hohola. He also helped distribute items of various containers from the Lasallian Foundation containing computers, stationery, white goods etc. La Salle had completed building a single "Kit House" for staff accommodation. The Deputy Principal for Academics was offered this accommodation. There was a plan put in train for the construction of a "Lasallian Teachers' Village" on a local church site. This would accommodate thirty -seven teachers eventually, and include a kindergarten for children of staff and a sports / recreation centre. The Foundation, which had sent eight volunteer tradesmen to help in these years, was looked to for funding for this dream, together with overseas Catholic agencies like the Irish-based Misesan Cara Agency. By 2016 there were three teacher units in use.

As regards other personnel the continuing presence on staff of National Brothers, mentioned above, would always be important. They knew fully the culture and mindset of students and the local community. Being able to speak Motu or Pidgin they could be a bridge to help expatriate administrators and skilled teachers like Brs. Joseph and Douglas. Inculcating an indigenous faith was an important part of the school's philosophy. Into the future, one teacher had this to say: "What the Brothers are doing is really important in the country for people who have missed out on education... (they have) put themselves out and stand out for them" ³⁹.

Conclusion

The truly highwater mark in this era was the year 2013, the forty-year anniversary. The Centre, now La Salle Technical College, had morphed from a humble project for eight "at risk" young Port Moresby youth. It was now a striking, confident component in an advancing educational sector. As this story had played out over its forty-odd years the achievements had been many. The beginnings were an answer to a massive local need - a brave attempt to help Hohola young people to feel important and be part of the nation's educating endeavour. The Brigidine founding mission and vision - the "wild dream"- had remained and prospered. Thousands of students gained increasingly sophisticated employable skills from a broadened and carefully-honed curriculum. Sixty to seventy per cent had become immediately employable out of solid working experience sessions ⁴⁰. Many had achieved entry into high school through F.O.D.E. success as well as benefitting from a broader generalist suite of subjects. Over the years a small number of students left to go to another school to ease parental or carer financial pressures, or because of changed living circumstances ⁴¹. However, government scholarships were open to all, helping greatly with fee payment.



54: Br. Antony with winning Music Competition group

The initial self-help culture with produced student goods from the Sisters and Br. Denis' time which brought in essential income had largely disappeared. However, the very high morale of students and pride in belonging, instanced by teachers and evident to visitors, had taken root and produced the fruit of youthful confidence and satisfaction in learning. The burden of financing the project was significantly taken over by the De La Salle Brothers Province, a project it had hugely supported for over twenty-five years. The disinterest or, at least, lack of any substantial financial help from the education authorities, of Church or state, increased the burden on all of the six Principals. The critical impact of strong, impassioned Directors of the Centre and greatly committed teachers and religious has been a pattern throughout these chapters. While the registration process had - exceptionally - provided final-year students graduating with NC 1 (and in the near future NC 2) - the other goal of government-funded teachers' salaries and full student fee payment was still to come.

Yet teachers, originally a few, unqualified dedicated people with little experience, were now a very professional cohort, drawing quite substantial wages. Just as important was the fact that the sophistication of organizational structure had boosted the quality of teaching ⁴². Due to recruitment on experience and qualifications, the quality of staff had been enhanced. Stronger commitment, ownership and initiative in projects have been noticed ⁴³. Vitally, in terms of role-modelling, all the faculty, except two, were Nationals and two women were Deputies. This had been of consequence for girls' education ⁴⁴. Over the last four years till 2016 there had also been three National Brothers on staff -Thomas Waburi, Michael Bourke and Thomas Mabol Yapo. This association of Lasallian lay partners with Brothers had been fruitful, just as the original leadership of the Brothers had been a strong signal to the N.C.D. region since 1946 ⁴⁵. The continuing presence on staff of National Brothers- wherever possible - would always be important.



55: Graduation class 2013

By 2016, this level of education, the professionalism of teachers, students' attitudes and attainments as well as the modern facilities from the APNG Incentive Fund especially, had accorded a high standing in parents' eyes: "the majority of students are so proud... so happy that they are here" ⁴⁶. This related to their sense of self, an example of which was wearing the uniform happily to inter-school gatherings, as well as knowing

equivalent technical schools did not have the quality of equipment or facilities that they had. Their level of skills acquisition was consistently noted by employers in their on-the-job training weeks. Despite some 30% having to come back to school and look for a job themselves, they finally left with great self-satisfaction ⁴⁷. The end of their time at La Salle had become a huge event at graduation. From time to time, ex-students had asked to come back to inspire the current cohort to aspire and to realise their dreams, as they had done themselves.

It had always been a project of hope, always an enterprise of hard work, strong faith-filled commitment and pushing the boundaries. The young people, often at the margins of the community, had picked up hope and had started to live with new hope, carrying their lives forward. Teachers and Brothers had experienced the strength and the blessing of something beyond them, as they built with their young Papua New Guinean charges a partnership to be justly proud of. The saga continues!

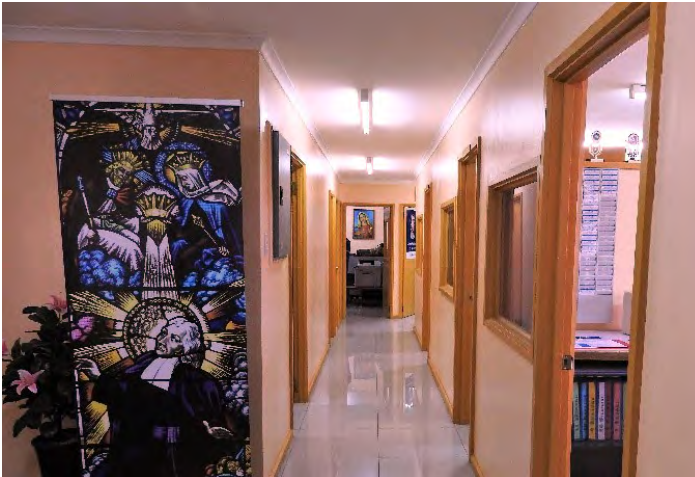
There are five of us and I'm the only girl in the family. Ever since I left school I've told myself not to give up or to sit back and watch while my school mates who made it to higher education enjoy life. I also wanted to be one of them. So, I left my remote area to live in a town and look for better access to what I was looking for. While living in town with relatives, life wasn't easy. I had many difficulties and struggled to survive. My relatives were of no real help to me but I tried my best to hold on through prayer. After a while I heard about this school from some former students. I decided not to ask my parents for any financial assistance, I even kept it a secret from the people I was living with. The only thought that came to me was to sponsor myself by looking after my cousins' children. Though this was a hard life I accepted it. Eventually I saved up a good amount of money and paid off my school fees. I am so thankful to the Lord for bringing me this far. I chose this school because it provided affordable fees and because it gave students like me who were not eligible to continue on to secondary schooling a second chance. My aim is to move on and strive for the best in the future.

(A Past Student)



56: Full School Mass, Sacred Heart Church

The Recent Years, 2012-2016



Pictures are from top left to right: 1. New Administration office. 2. The classrooms and technical workshops from 2012 APNG Incentive Fund. 3. New College badge 2013. 4. New Administration area (top level) and Electro-Technology complex. 5. Sports carnival energy.

Acknowledgements

I express my appreciation to all the teachers and staff who gave their time to be interviewed. This included several De La Salle Brothers and especially Sr. Maureen CSB, the third Principal and her successor, Br. Denis FSC, the latter interviewed from Palestine, his latest mission. The interaction with some other people was also invaluable. The first two -Mr. Peter Maia and Mrs. Ibene Fraghi - evoked the vibrancy and daring of their very early years as students, and then as teachers at the Centre. Mr. Philip Cahill, as a Brother and teacher on staff at a critical juncture, gave a broad and insightful interpretation of his commitment as well, as did Br. Doug O'Reilly. Both had worked over many years in Papua New Guinea.

In terms of content a large amount of primary material came from Br. Joe Gabel, unearthed documents which enriched the detail of Hohola's middle years immeasurably. This included letters, statistical information and handbooks, and a treasure trove of electronic pictures. The wholesale co-operation of the previous Director/Principal, Br. Antony Swamy, made my task so much easier. I had access to numerous school records, archival material, including important early photo albums, newsletters and a huge collection of electronic pictures, as well as office space to work.

I acknowledge the photographic archive of Hohola's early years provided by Br. Geoff Kennewell and the gracious help of Sr. Kathleen Butler CSB, archivist, in authorising access to the NSW Brigidine Provincial Archives, which provided especially rich 1970's material. Br. William Shaw gave some initial help in searching the De La Salle Brothers Archives as well. Many hours of production and formatting were expertly offered by Ms. Kate Mason of the Brothers' Provincial Office.

Lastly, an initial month's work and stay was greatly facilitated by the open hospitality of the De La Salle Brothers' community at Hohola. I appreciated also access from Br. Thomas, the Director, to the community's history materials.

November 2017

Appendix

HOHOLA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE / LA SALLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE HOHOLA

Brigidine / Lasallian Partners on Staff

(5 years service or more)*

Year	Name	Position
1973 - 1987	Mary Koanie	Basic English & Mathematics
1973 - 1979	Br. Nathaniel	Cane Furniture
1974 - 1977	Albert Roio	Basic Studies
1974 - 1980	Stephan Ure	Wood Work
1974 - 1980	John Fox	Driver
1976 - 2006	Augustin Kose	Art
1980 - 1990	Maria Abina	Home Economics
1980 - 2000	Basil Koru	Maintenance & Driver
1980 – 2008; 2011-14	Ibene Fraghi	Home Economics, Sewing
1980 - 1989	Morris Avio	Driver
1981 - 2005	Geno Iru	Drama & Music
1982 - 2016	Peter Maia	Wood Work, Deputy Principal, Campus Manager
1982 - 1990	Gwaibo Mao	Office & PayRoll
1984 - 1990	Agada Warmen	Craft Work
1986 - 1990	Bokana Gamara	Cane Furniture
199? – 200?	Sr Marie Mbigaman, A.D	Home Economics
1994 - 2001	Karo Andy	Screen Printing
1995 - 2000	Haro Oa Ivaka	Drama & Arts
1996 - 2000	Anna Peter	English & Mathematics
1997 - 2016	Mathias Baihu	Metal Fabrication / Supervisor
1997 -2006	Peter Aia	Drama & Sports
1998 -2008; 2010 -2016	Sakarias Pal	Religion & Personal Development
1999 - 2004	Marave Tau	English
1999 - 2009	Dadai Novah	Office Administration
2000 - 2005	Joshua Ako	English & Mathematics
2000 - 2014	Julie Hohovob	English
2000 - 2007	Lahari Illaro	Social Science
2000 - 2008	Pal Mary	Computing
2001 - 2008	Mary Tarino	English & Computing
2009 – 2011; 2014- 2016	Anthony Yambe	Social Science
2010 - 2014	Melinda Maro	English
2010 - 2016	Simon Ku	Mathematics
2011 - 2016	Doreen Duana	Office & Reception

* Srs. Miriam, Alice & Kanti (Indian Sisters of St. Anne) and Sr. Marilyn Chalk, OFM were other Partners that may have served for five years, but details are unknown.

Notes

CHAPTER ONE: PIONEERING WOMEN, A WILD DREAM

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33. Ibid., pp.19 & 37-41.
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36. Ibid., p. 19.
37. Personal Interview with Sr. Maureen Utber, 17.5.17.

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10. Personal Interview with Br. Hilary Walsh, 30.6.17.
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12. Interview with Peter Maia.
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14. Personal Interview with Br. David Hawke, 14.7.17.
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42. Brigidine, *The Lord is Present*, p. 42.

43. Interview with Sakarias Pal.
44. Cahill, *A Short History*, p. 18.
45. Interview with Philip Cahill.
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49. Personal Interview with Br. Bernard Cooper, 30.6.17.
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8. Br. Phillip Elwin, Email to author.
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12. HYDC, *Staff handbook 2005*, p.17.
13. Interview with Br. David Hawke.
14. Interview with Ibene Fraghi.
15. Interview with Br. Phillip Elwin.
16. Personal Interview with Br. Joseph Gabel, 17.5.17
17. Interview with Mathias Baihu.
18. Br. Leo Scollen, letter to Papua New Guinea Education Institute, 11.1.05.
19. Interview with Ibene Fraghi.
20. HYDC, *Staff Handbook 2005*, p.11.
21. It expanded by 2016 to a staff of five with two Program Officers going to the settlements and partnering with mothers in five programs – educational support for vulnerable kids, food help, women empowerment, early childhood care for orphans and HIV children and special needs for youth.
22. Interview with Sr. Marie Mbigaman.
23. Br. Paul Toohey, Email to author, 2.7.17.
24. Br. Leo Scollen, HYDC, Internal document, n.d.
25. Br. Leo Scollen, Facsimile to Prime Minister's Office, n.d.
26. Ibid.
27. Br. Joseph Gabel, Email to author, 21.8.17.
28. Br. Leo Scollen, Letter to Teachers, 25.11.05.
29. Ibid.
30. De La Salle Brothers Hohola, *History of the House 2005 & 2007*.

31. Interview with Sakarias Pal.
32. Personal Interview with Louisa Opu, 31.5.17.
33. "Wantok" : A close comrade, a person with whom one has a strong social bond, usually based on shared language, and so, often an adult from the same village or tribal group that the young person is from. Borrowed from Tok Pisin.
34. Br. Joseph Gabel, email to author.
35. Br. Leo Scollen, Invoice to N. Warren, 18.11.02.
36. Br. Joseph Gabel, Email to author & Br. Leo Scollen, Letter 5.11.2001.
37. Br. Leo Scollen, Memo to Teachers-Woodwork, 5.9.03.
38. Br. Leo Scollen, Memo to Teachers, 25.11.05.
39. Br. Leo Scollen, Facsimile, 2003?.
40. Br. Leo Scollen, Letter to Br. William Firman, 29.1.03.
41. Br. Leo Scollen, Letter to Nola Davies, November 2002.
42. Br. Leo Scollen, various letters.
43. Personal Interview with Br. Thomas M. Yapo, 1.6.17.
44. The Australia Papua New Guinea Incentive Fund had been set up in 2000 to drive development through consultation and partnership. It injected \$AUS 110 million into the economy, receiving 39 submissions from PNG in health, education, building infrastructure etc. It approved only agencies who had a track record of financial transparency and accountability. HYDC was one of a small number of institutions to receive funding.
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5. De La Salle Brothers Hohola, *History of the House 2007,2010, 2011,1212*.
6. Australia Papua New Guinea Investment Fund, *Australia's Innovative Aid Program in PNG-HYDC* [CD].
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9. De La Salle Brothers Hohola, *History of the House 2008 & 2009* for the following three paragraphs.
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11. Br. Douglas O'Reilly, Email to author.
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13. Personal Interview with Br. John F. Gari, 6.6.17 & De La Salle Brothers Hohola, *History of the House 2007*.
14. De La Salle Brothers Hohola, *History of the House 2011*.
15. Interview with Mathias Baihu.
16. Br. Douglas O'Reilly, Email to author.
17. Br. Joseph Gabel, Email to author.
18. Br. Leo Scollen, *Report to De La Salle Brothers, Area Mission Action Committee (AMAC)*, 10.6.11.
19. Personal Interview with Doreen Duana, 30.5.17, & with Sakarias Pal, Ibene Fraghi, Brs. Bernard Cooper, John F Gari, Phillip Elwin, various Interviews - for above three paragraphs.

20. Papua New Guinea. Department of Education, *National Education Board Meeting*. Minutes, November 2013, p.2.
21. Br. Joseph Gabel, Email to author.
22. *National Education Board Meeting*. Minutes, p.2

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2. La Salle- Hohola Youth Development Centre (LS-HYDC-PNG), *Historical Overview*, p.5.
3. La Salle Technical College Hohola. internal documents for this paragraph.
4. Personal Interview with Br. Antony Swamy, 3.6.17.
5. Br. Leo Scollen, *Report to AMAC*, 10.11.11.
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10. LS-HYDC-PNG, *Historical Overview*, op. cit., p.4.
11. La Salle-Hohola Youth Development Centre (LS-HYDC), *Project Completion Report: Hohola Youth Development Centre- Infrastructure Development Project, 2012-13*, pp.4-5.
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39. Interview with Mathias Baihu.
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43. Interview with Br. Thomas M. Yapo.
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