

New Board Member Orientation

Session III – May 25, 2021

Federation Initiatives: The Place of Innovation in L'Arche

This session will be led by Tessa Keating, L'Arche International Director of Operations, based in Seattle, WA, and Tina Bovermann, L'Arche USA National Leader and member of the International Leadership Team, based in Atlanta, GA.

With the L'Arche International and L'Arche USA Mandates and Strategic Directions as background information, we want to kick-off the session with a short “State of the Union” on the Federation today.

More than 50 years after its founding, L'Arche has grown exponentially into diverse cultures and settings. The traditional L'Arche model, imported from France in the 1960s, must adjust and renew itself to meet the needs of various people in today's societies. The death of Jean Vanier and the revelations of abuse and manipulation that were published in February 2020 have forced the Federation into its post-founder era. Still largely caught in the tangles of the pandemic, the reality of the last year has exacerbated the strengths and weaknesses of each community, of our federated structure, our funding mechanisms and mission-inherent tensions between the three dimensions of L'Arche, community, service provider, non-profit.

In this context, we would like to advance the thesis that L'Arche has entered a season of renewal and innovation. Regardless of whether L'Arche is lived in the U.S. or in Bangladesh, internationally or locally, we are all called to examine whether and how we meet today's challenges appropriately. Together, we would like to discuss the place of innovation in L'Arche and how we, as a Federation, can support and challenge one another to build innovation capacity.

Preparation Materials and Prompts:

- Read and peruse
 - **L'Arche International Mandate**
 - **L'Arche USA Mandate and Strategic Directions**
 - How do these mandates and strategic directions resonate with the mandate and strategy of your community?
 - Were you surprised by anything?
- Read through the **short list of definitions** that might help us align on language and consider:
 - How do these apply to your community?
 - Does anything stand out to you?
- Discover these **innovative initiatives** from across the U.S. and the Federation and consider how do you (seek to) innovate in your community?

DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY

The purpose of the Federation is:

- to unite Communities, and all those engaged in L'Arche, in a common vision and spirit as declared in the Charter of the Communities of L'Arche and the Identity and Mission Statement
- to embody the mission of L'Arche in very diverse cultural, religious, administrative contexts, and at the international level
- to foster solidarity among the Communities and Countries.¹

Mandate

1 : an authoritative command especially : a formal order from a superior court or official to an inferior one

2 : an authorization to act given to a representative accepted the mandate of the people

3a : an order or commission granted by the League of Nations to a member nation for the establishment of a responsible government over a former German colony or other conquered territory

b : a mandated territory²

Strategy

“A business strategy is a set of guiding principles that, when communicated and adopted in the organization, generates a desired pattern of decision making. A strategy is therefore about how people throughout the organization should make decisions and allocate resources in order accomplish key objectives. A good strategy provides a clear roadmap, consisting of a set of guiding principles or rules, that defines the actions people in the business should take (and not take) and the things they should prioritize (and not prioritize) to achieve desired goals.”³

Operations

“Operations is and has always been what gives an organization the power to act: to create value for its customers; to capture value for its shareholders; and to share value with its ecosystem.”⁴

Innovation

“a break from practice, large or small, that leads to significant positive social impact.”⁵

¹ DI-102, Article 5: Constitution of the International Federation of L'Arche Communities

² “Mandate.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mandate>. Accessed 17 May, 2021.

³ [Michael D. Watkins, Professor of Leadership and Organizational Change at the Institute for Management Development \(Switzerland\)](#)

⁴ [Marco Iansiti, Professor at the Harvard Business School](#)

⁵ [Nidhi Sahni, Laura Lanzerotti, Amira Bliss, & Daniel Pik, “Is Your Nonprofit Built for Sustained Innovation?”](#)

INNOVATION BUBBLES

Friends of L'Arche Metro Richmond A new Model

The LMR model is envisioned as a comprehensive community support system eventually composed of a broad array of supports and services in the community.



There are 3 elements that stand out for the first phase:

- The Community Life Group, established over the past 10 years and which is already flourishing, provides opportunities for ongoing interaction among persons with and without disabilities with an added component of leadership development for persons with disabilities in the form of elected officers working alongside their mentors.
- Sponsored Residential Services take place in a licensed or authorized home. One host family would support two individuals. The host family would already be connected to LMR opportunities for routine spiritual engagement.
- In pursuing partnerships with other providers of residential services (once formed and acted upon, this facet of the program will be called “L’Arche at”), LMRP would offer two additional services: 1) A focus on connecting each person in the home with at least one person without a disability who would be available to engage in activities outside of the home as any friend would. 2). A focus on spiritual development opportunities for each person in the home who wishes to participate. This could be establishing a weekly spiritual development or awareness hour led by the LMR community leader or an LMR spiritual leader.

L'Arche Egypt
L'Arche Beyond the Home
Our inclusion project in Egypt was led by L'Arche and developed in partnership with other local organisations. It shows the type of impact L'Arche can have when we reach out and share our knowledge and resources with others.



- Our community in Minia, near Cairo, Egypt recently partnered with other local groups to lead a project supporting 100 children with disabilities, along with their families and their villages, opening new doors of hope.
- L'Arche Egypt's partnership program supports the inclusion of children with disabilities and their families in five villages. In 2019 L'Arche Egypt led a group of five grassroots "village NGOs" in the Al Minia district to respond to the intense distress of children with disabilities and their families. The project, which combined education and health care, while building a sense of belonging for the children and their families, has made a significant difference to the lives of 100 children with disabilities and their mothers and impacted of the lives of approx. 1,400 hundred people.
- The project provided extensive "hands on" training to the staff of local village NGOs to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in five villages. It provided rehabilitation, healthcare and education services. At the same time, it educated families, especially mothers, about other services available to them, including early detection and early intervention, encouraging them not just to use existing services but to speak out for better ones. All of this work was underpinned by work to assist children with disabilities to integrate into family life and social activities in the villages.

Please reach out to sharon@larchesusa.org with any questions.