

Terms of Reference (1): International Formation Office

INTRODUCTION:

"(Formation) has been the most discussed topic. The importance of formation has stood out as an essential element in order to guarantee an authentic and deep sense of belonging which is founded in a clear sense of identity and knowledge of the true nature of the OFS and its place in the Franciscan Family and in the church. It has been pointed out that there is a need to find new, original and effective ways to offer formation, especially initial formation, with uniformity and cohesion, worthy of an Order extended throughout the world, an Order that is called to develop a fundamental role of a mature apostolate that is accredited by the Church, in collaboration and in concert with the rest of the Franciscan Family." (Conclusions, General Chapter 2002)

The Rule of the OFS and especially the General Constitutions (CCGG) propose a formative process through the various articles, but it is not always possible, nor easy, to establish it in many fraternities around the world. It would be better to be able to implement formation with minimal (basic) content that is similar for the whole Order. It could then be adapted to the social, cultural and religious context according to the needs and realities of each National Fraternity.

It should be noted that this subject of establishing an office or secretariat for formation has been the most repeated proposal of the National Fraternities and International Councilors that responded to the Presidency survey sent with Circular 7/14-20 on May 8, 2015.

COMPOSITION:

If this proposal is approved, the Capitulars should propose some names to advise the Presidency on the composition of this Secretariat or Office of Formation, including its coordinator. It must have a suitable translation team.

The ideal number of people for this OFFICE or SECRETARIAT OF INTERNATIONAL FORMATION would be five brothers/sisters, among them would be a competent Spiritual Assistant (not necessarily a General Assistant because of their many responsibilities). We should have permanent collaborators and temporary ones. Among these members there should also be a qualified YouFra member. There could be one annual meeting and the rest could be through Skype and other means of communication, including e-mail.

MISSION:

Its principle mission will be to try to enlighten, unify themes and determine schedules... In short, to assist in the journey without taking away one iota from those responsible on National Formation teams and National Councils.

Once the projects are approved, the members of the team should have the freedom to seek help from qualified people in the various sectors of the formation topics that ought to be developed. They should always try to work in teams and to have consensus with the Office or Secretariat but always assuring efficiency.

Basic (Initial) formation does not change and in a world Order, Christian-Franciscan formation should be shared fundamentally in all latitudes (everywhere). Experience has shown this to us. This guarantee can be made if a dedicated body exists at the international level. We should not forget that we need a certain coherence between initial and on-going formation. And considering that, based on experience, the contents of formation should not change each time the National Councils change or the Presidency itself changes.

In the contents of formation, above all initial formation, one must ensure reasonable continuity. Formators who are well prepared at all levels of the Order are a fundamental resource. We must invest in formators and have a period without elections, be it in local fraternities as in other levels, except in the case of new fraternities. Formation is not "political," **it is life**, and it is founded upon Sacred Scripture, revelation, theology, spirituality, history, the law and the magisterium of the Church. And almost all these things do not change.

FINANCES:

Responsible parties:

- CIOFS Presidency, including anticipated expenditures in the triennial Budget;
- Raimundo Lullo Fund;
- Involved National Councils that have sufficient resources;
- Resources from organizations that can approve projects of a formative nature.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To create an INTERNATIONAL FORMATION OFFICE whose actions would be framed by the following guidelines:

- The coordinator should have responsibilities which would be shared collegially with the other members of the Office according to their capabilities and experiences in all areas.
- The permanent members of the Office should consider, write, propose themes, texts, presentations, projects and concrete programs of a general and local nature in order to help the national fraternities in their work in their own countries.
- To establish a team and/or Formation commission.
- To address and help with all formative concerns.
- To share ideas and suggestions from the National Fraternities

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

<p>TO UNIFY THE JOURNEY (OF INCORPORATION) OF THE OFS (TO ESTABLISH WORLDWIDE CONTINUITY IN THE JOURNEY TO BECOME A SECULAR FRANCISCAN)</p> <p>TIME PERIOD:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times together (the important thing is not the number of meetings or the number of years), • Formative Objectives and life in fraternity (here establish a minimum amount of time.) • Basic and concrete formative lines for each time period. Establishing objectives, contents... • To offer a total program, but leaving open the agenda (Different cultures, social and ecclesial realities ...) based on the General Constitutions and the CIOFS Formation Manual • Preparation of material and offering it always in Word so that it can be adapted to the different realities of each National Fraternity. Example: Workshop on the Rule... <p>A three-year period of time to act and always open.</p>
<p>TO COLLABORATE WITH ON-GOING FORMATION</p> <p>TIME PERIOD:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of formation material (Agendas, Specific booklets, power points and videos...) • To create information on the cloud (a type of library) where we keep all material that is developed and others available and to give access to those responsible for Formation and the National Ministers. (Do not forget the computer deficiencies of some areas of the International Fraternity.) <p>A three-year period of time to get it functioning and always open.</p>
<p>TO CREATE A FORMATION SCHOOL</p> <p>TIME PERIOD:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help organize COURSES FOR FORMATION FOR FORMATORS AT THE CONTINENTAL LEVEL, having a select group that is well prepared to support the actions of the members of the Office in a decentralized service. • To improve and multiply the National and Zone Formation Courses. To suggest ideas. Recommend (send) material for the workshops • Traveling formation schools • Formation scholarships at the Zone, National and CIOFS levels to form brothers and sisters on very specific themes <p>At least a year for its creation</p>

CONCLUSION:

The Life of Formation and Prayer of the Fraternity (the evangelized) has as its principal objective to develop one's vocation during one's whole life, and this Life of Formation and Prayer should take me to the Mission (to evangelize).

NOTE: We ask that our brother/sister capitulars not concentrate on specific topics and/or concepts, rather in the basic fact that the Secular Franciscan Order provide a permanent formation service at the international level that can focus on the fundamental/basic area which is at this time very lacking in our Order. And therefore, is extremely necessary.