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Educational and social initiatives which receive assistance from the Opus Dei Prelature

This article gives an overview of the educational and social initiatives which have formational and spiritual assistance agreements with Opus Dei. The data was compiled from public information about these initiatives and was updated in June 2024.

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The national editions of the Opus Dei website provide information on the social and educational initiatives in their own country with which the Prelature collaborates in some way. By way of example, you can see here initiatives from: Italy, United States, Chile, D.R. Congo, Philippines and Australia.

In most cases, these are educational and social institutions of a civil, non-profit nature, with a social and Christian purpose, promoted by members of Opus Dei together with many other people.

The purpose, vision and mission of these initiatives, as well as the responsibility for their administrative and financial affairs, belong to the people who founded

and manage them. This means that they are their owners and/or managers, through the civil entities (associations, foundations, social cooperatives, etc.) that they set up for this purpose.

In accordance with the lay and secular spirit of Opus Dei, the Prelature as an institution only assumes their pastoral care and Christian orientation, through an agreement with the promoters of each initiative.

Each entity is autonomous and has its own governing bodies. That is to say, they have a clearly identifiable ownership, they do not depend on the Prelature for their management or organisation, and the fact that they receive its pastoral attention does not configure them as a network among themselves.

Their income is generated through their own activity (for example, the

payment of tuition fees at a university) plus, in many cases, private donations and public subsidies in line with their purpose, as they are initiatives of social, educational, or cultural interest.

This article offers an overview of these initiatives, and updates some of the data - based on public information on these initiatives - which are periodically requested by journalists from the Opus Dei information offices. The approximate data are current as of June 2024.

Universities and colleges

There are currently 19 universities that have spiritual care agreements with the Prelature. In total, they have approximately 117,000 students. The universities with the largest number of students are the Universidad de la Sabana (Colombia) with 15,000 students, the Universidad Panamericana (Mexico) with 14,000

and the Universidad de Navarra (Spain) with 13,000.

Sorted by continent, these universities are: Africa (Strathmore University, Kenya; Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria; Universite des Lagunes, Ivory Coast), South America (Universidad de Piura, Peru; Universidad Austral, Argentina; Universidad de la Sabana, Colombia; Universidad de los Andes, Chile; Universidad Panamericana; Mexico; Universidad de los Hemisferios, Ecuador; Universidad del Istmo, Guatemala; Universidad de Montevideo, Uruguay; Universidad Monteávila, Venezuela), Asia (University of Asia and the Pacific, Philippines) and Europe (Universidad de Navarra, Spain; Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Spain; Universidad Villanueva, Spain; Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Italy; Università Campus Biomedico, Italy).

The most recent are the small Université des Lagunes in Ivory Coast, the incipient Villanueva University in Madrid, and the beginnings of a university in Sao Paulo (Belavista).

As for the business schools that have an agreement with the Prelature, there are currently 12, with some 11,500 students. Some are linked to the above-mentioned universities (such as IESE at the Universidad of Navarra) and others are independent (such as AESE Business School in Portugal). The most recent school is Strathmore Business School, which has a campus in Nairobi (Kenya) and another in Kampala (Uganda).

Primary and secondary schools

As far as schools (primary and secondary) are concerned, there are currently 275 with a total of 147,500 pupils. Among these schools, there are around 70 with a general

agreement with Opus Dei for Christian education; with the rest there are more limited agreements for pastoral care (religion classes, chaplaincy, etc.).

Several of these schools are grouped into educational companies such as Apdes, Institució, Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza, FAES, etc., which have their own constitution and management, and are independent of each other.

In addition, there are quite a few educational projects and groups in which there are Opus Dei members but which do not have agreements with the Prelature. There are also mixed cases, such as the Red Educativa Arenales (Spain), promoted by a member of Opus Dei, in which there are schools that have agreements with the Prelature (counted among the above) and others that do not.

University residences and halls of residence

There are currently 228 university halls of residence housing some 5,800 students. In addition, many other university students participate in their educational activities without living there. Examples of such residences are Netherhall House in London, the Residencia Alamos in Lisbon or Porta Nevia in Rome.

Vocational schools

There are 160 vocational-technical schools that have agreements with the Prelature. They offer a wide range of courses ranging from motor mechanics and art schools to hotel and catering or computer science, among many others. In total they have about 30,000 students. Some examples of schools that have emerged in recent decades are the Xabec Vocational Training Centre

(Valencia), Eastlands College of Technology (Kenya), Braval (for the integration of immigrants in Barcelona) , the PFP Akatio in Ivory Coast or the CITE Technical Institute in Cebu.

There are others with more years of experience such as the ELIS and SAFI Centre in Rome; Dualtech Training Center in Laguna, Philippines, Valle Grande in Peru, Veleiros in Sao Paulo, Kinal in Guatemala, CEAP (Centro Educacional Assistencial Profissionalizante) in Brazil, Midtown-Metro Achievement Centers in Chicago, the CEFIM Technical Institute for dual training in Bolivia, Kibondeni College of Catering and Hospitality Management, in Kenya, etc. Most of these centres specialise in vocational training, and try to help boys and girls enter the world of work. For example, the Elis centre in Rome has had 14,000 students who

got jobs after studying there (practically 100%).

In recent years, some of these educational establishments have been transformed following changes in the wider professional world. For example, several agricultural training centres have closed or have evolved into secondary schools (such as Camp Joliu in Tarragona), due to the evolution of local society; and several hotel and catering schools have also closed or have evolved into other sectors.

Many of these initiatives are located in marginal areas of large cities, where youth unemployment is high. For this reason, they try to offer scholarships to students, also using public and private grants.

Apart from these initiatives, there are hundreds of institutions, also of a humanitarian nature, promoted by people of Opus Dei and friends, but

with no formal relationship with the Prelature. Recently in Rome, for example, a brainstorming session took place in which 200 people from 70 different organisations took part, such as food banks, organisations fighting hunger, poverty, loneliness, etc.

Hospitals and medical centres

In Madrid there is the Hospital Centro de Cuidados Laguna, specialised in palliative care on site and at home. Also in Spain is the Clínica Universidad de Navarra, with sites in Madrid and Pamplona. By 2024, the Clinic will have reached the figure of one million patients treated at its two sites. The Policlinico Campus Biomedico di Roma (Italy) has a capacity of 357 beds. Through its hospital and emergency department, it treats 878,500 patients a year.

The Centre Medico-Social Walè (Côte d'Ivoire) treats about 90,000 people a year, including many AIDS patients. In Nigeria, the Niger Foundation Hospital and Diagnostic Centre, with 250 employees, cares for 34,000 patients a year. The Centre Hospitalier Monkole (D.R. Congo) has 110 beds, 12 of which are for premature neonatal intensive care. It is linked to the Institut Supérieur des Sciences Infirmières and the Centre de Formation et d'Appui sanitaire. It cares for about 125,000 patients a year, in addition to 13,500 primary care consultations in health centres in 3 hard-to-reach neighbourhoods of Kinshasa (Kindele, Herady and Kimbondi) and 5,000 people in Moanda, on the Atlantic coast of the country.

In Argentina, the Hospital Universitario Austral brings together some 800 doctors working in more than 70 low and high complexity

specialties, such as transplants, oncology, high-risk pregnancy, etc., and more than 500 nursing professionals. In Chile, there is the Policlínico El Salto, where family care is provided in the areas of general medicine, dental care, mental health and alcoholism rehabilitation, according to the needs of the local community. Other hospitals in Latin America include Clínica Unisabana (Colombia) and Clínica Universidad de los Andes (Chile).

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