



Priority Lines of Action

1. INTRODUCTION

When Father Miguel Augusto Muñoz Rodríguez, CM, the National Spiritual Advisor of AIC-Colombia, received the PLA 2020-2023, he understood the importance of them and decided to celebrate a Eucharist through Zoom to make them known to the volunteers in his country and share some ideas as to how to bring these suggestions for action to life.

We found this very impressive and asked Fr. Miguel Augusto, through the international Vice-President and Continental Coordinator, Clara Inés Díaz, to allow us to use his homily to explain to the volunteers all over the world the PLA that have come out of the experiences of the representatives of the four continents where there are AIC groups.

We sincerely thank both Fr. Miguel Augusto, for his commitment to AIC, and Clara Inés, for thinking of sharing these materials that can enrich us all.

2. WHAT ARE PRIORITY LINES OF ACTION?

When we talk about **Priority Lines of Action (PLA)**, we understand that these are the lines of action on which we propose to focus our common work in AIC for the more than 100,000 volunteers around the world. We establish them during the International Assemblies to which we are invited to represent the 55 countries, from four continents, which make up the International Association of Charities (AIC).

The Priority Lines of Action (previously called Operational Guidelines) have been drafted at each Assembly for more than 30 years.



3. PRIORITY LINES OF ACTION 2020-2023

1) To promote creativity and solidarity in facing contemporary poverty.

This first PLA is an invitation to come out of the paralysis that can cause us to fear the life-threatening pandemic. Jesus is inviting us to be wise and to know how to understand adequately what we are experiencing in order to respond to it with creativity. **Creativity** is the ability to reinvent ourselves, to create new ways of doing what we have always done, which is **charity**. We, the volunteers, can no longer adhere to programs or social projects that are no longer effective forms of charity. It is time to examine the viability of our services. Let us look outward, beyond our fellow volunteers, beyond the positions we hold in the association, beyond the “it’s always been done this way”, and let us focus on the people living in poverty. We must listen to them and look carefully at their everyday reality. Doing so will prevent us from providing theoretical solutions based on our whims that do not always help to improve their situation, but rather make them more dependent on the bread we offer them.

Let us be the voice of those who have no voice, of those who prefer to die from hunger out of shame, of those who because of their appearance are discriminated against when they work, of those who because of their ignorance are abused and their basic rights violated. Let us, as a matter of urgency, be promoters of **solidarity**, let us touch hearts, let us denounce injustices and make the world see them, let us leave selfishness and indifference behind to reach out to our most disadvantaged brothers and sisters. Let us also promote this solidarity among the people living in poverty, motivating them to walk together, united in order to move forward.

Let us not forget that, as St. Vincent says, “Love is inventive, even to infinity”. In other words, there is no creativity if there is no experience of love for God, only love moves hearts to care for the wounds of others. Only love reinvents, creates if possible. Every new work is born in the love of God.

2) To implement educational and transformative projects based on Vincentian charism.

Each volunteer must reflect in her actions the project of Christ, which aims to make each human being divine by touching their fragility.

We are asked to implement transformative projects based on systemic change. Projects that seek to move from being mere handouts to being empowering.

Education is a theme that should predominate in all our projects. A holy educator said: “to educate a boy is to educate a man, to educate a girl is to educate a family”. AIC, aware of the importance and necessity of this, has encouraged work aimed at women for many years.



Women are the emotional pillar and often the economic support in a family, they are the faith educators and those who teach children values.

The family, which has been severely attacked in recent times, is generally maintained by the strength, work and sensitivity of women.

This is why we direct our educational and transformative projects towards women: they are an example to us all.

Charity, in order to respond to the Vincentian charism, must be “affective and effective”. This attitude will prevent our services and projects from being mere social services. Do not forget that every project is born in silence, that is, everything we do must be born in prayer, so we can be certain that it is the Holy Spirit who is guiding and helping us to ensure that God's will is fulfilled in every initiative.

3) To strengthen networking and partnerships.

Working together was so important to Jesus that the first thing he did was to call his twelve disciples, accompany them and prepare them to undertake a task that had to reach the ends of the earth.

St. Vincent de Paul did not work alone either. He knew that charity must be an organized practice and so he called together eight women who were willing to serve in order to continue weaving the net of Christ. He also took advantage of the relationships he had with wealthy people of his time to achieve his ends.

A network as large as that of AIC, 55 countries in 4 continents, and the Vincentian Family, with about 4 million volunteers in 156 countries, helps us to work together on important projects such as the **Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA)**, whose goal is to change the lives of more than 10,000 homeless people around the world within 5 years.

By networking with other AIC volunteers, we get to know the projects and experiences of other volunteer groups, both within and outside our home countries. We get an idea of how they have obtained resources to carry out their services, and we may be able to replicate the projects that have been successful.

In future training reflections, we will share with you some of the Systemic Change projects that have benefited many people in various countries.

"Working together we will be stronger and more competent".

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us the creativity to implement transformational projects that respond to the signs of the times and for God to tie every knot in our network of charity.



4. QUESTIONS

1. Are you familiar with the PLA that were formulated at the International Assembly held in Chatillon, France in 2017?
2. Have you planned your activities so that they fit with the PLA put forward by AIC?
3. Do you think that the PLA 2020-2023 are related to the needs we are experiencing in the world today?
4. Have you had experience of networking with other groups or institutions?

