**2009-2010 Executive Board Report**

The role of the Executive Board is to strengthen the links and the close collaboration between the national Associations, members of the AIC network, in order to make the best use of the good practices they follow in fighting against poverty.

The Executive Board Report for 2009-2010 provides a broad outline of the work of the Executive Board: to coordinate, lead and train volunteers in the network and to represent them.

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**I. Coordination and management of the AIC network**

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**II. Coordination**

The Executive Board ensures the main reason for its existence: to visit the various associations and through them it is the central point of coordination and decision to strengthen the links between associations on the same continent, and it enables them to take personal responsibility.

Regional coordination represents a delicate balance: action is not implemented on the spot, but on the contrary, the AIC network is located at Louvain la Neuve in Belgium; it is the centre of the international Secretariat and the other levels, and it acts as a facilitator of exchanges for various regions.

Based on a coordination plan, regional coordination is carried out through exchanging messages and information. In addition, the specificities of each region have been made known to national associations.

In 2010, the Vincentian family gathered to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the death of St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac. This gave rise to numerous celebrations, in order to highlight the « Prix Jean and Claire Delva » and two new projects were launched: Relais and Solidarité.</p>
The International Assembly in 2011 highlighted discrimination, which many women are still subjected to in the world and which is increasing. AIC is passionate about a world in which discrimination and the poverty that it exacerbates are eradicated. AIC has therefore made education an absolute priority for the 2009-10 period in order to respond to the forms of poverty that women face throughout the world.

In 2010, 34% of the world’s population was female, and it is estimated that in 20 years’ time, it will be 37%. The number of women is increasing, and so is their marginalisation. Women are more often than not from the ethnic minorities and are faced with new forms of poverty: lack of access to education, health, and sometimes malnutrition.

In order to do this, AIC has added value, and here are some of the strengths:

• Through its structure, AIC is a project which brings together men and women volunteers, who are engaged in a process of self advancement and in developing their own community.

• In Asia only 3% of the population is Christian. The beneficiaries are therefore mainly Muslim and Buddhist, and so the projects carried out are religious education projects.

• They receive little education, and material poverty reduces them to permanent dependence. Women must provide for their families, including their children, whether they are married or not. They are therefore involved in a form of prostitution.

• For women to gain self confidence. They set up projects to help young girls and single mothers, etc.), the volunteers are increasing the beneficiaries of the projects. They provide them with an education in order to develop their own community and their individual and personal follow-up (home visits and listening, friendship.

In Asia particularly, there are also a number of integration projects for illegal immigrants. The critical situation of these people is increasing. At issue, illness in particular (HIV/AIDS – malaria – tuberculosis – high-risk childbirth, amongst other things).

In Europe, the problems of loneliness, mental illness andrink abuse are more evident in city centres. These human problems are linked to poverty in certain sectors of the population (migrants and refugees) and the lack of access to medical care. Women suffer from these illnesses more than men. They are the first to be affected by addiction to alcohol and drug use, which makes them more vulnerable. They are the first to be affected by violence (against women and in their family), which leads to their suffering from depression and mental illness.

In Latin America, the problem of integration is more marked in countries that have experienced a period of political conflict. These countries are particularly exposed to the effects of discrimination. The volunteers are involved in a process of education and training for women who have children or are single mothers, etc.). They receive little education, and material poverty reduces them to permanent dependence. Women must provide for their families, including their children, whether they are married or not. They are therefore involved in a form of prostitution.

In Africa, the precarious situation of women and children in particular is linked to illiteracy, lack of education, and the lack of access to basic social security (health, food, clothing…). There is increase in the number of young girls who are forced into early marriage, prostitution and child labour. They receive little education, and material poverty reduces them to permanent dependence. Women must provide for their families, including their children, whether they are married or not. They are therefore involved in a form of prostitution.

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1. AIC projects

In each country, AIC teams are exclusively made up of local volunteers, responding to the forms of poverty which they encounter in their area. That explains the diversity of the 16,000 projects, responding to the developing needs on the ground and to new forms of poverty. The largest number of projects is those in which volunteers work alongside people, supporting them. They are projects which enable people to restore social ties. Indeed, the strengths of the AIC method are: a personal relationship with people who are in difficulty, helping them towards self-sufficiency and empowerment, in the various forms of poverty they are experiencing: homelessness, prisoners, families in difficulty, people with mental health problems, lonely people and elderly people, amongst others.

In the light of observing these forms of poverty, structured projects are developed which carry out organised charity, following the teaching of our founder, St. Vincent de Paul.

2. The different types of AIC projects 2009-2010

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3. Trends

In the AIC network, the training between two associations is mostly carried out via twinnings. This has led to a period of time (one year, two years), it is a means of exchanging information and knowledge. The twinnings method has therefore become a key part of their development and training, and enabling closer collaboration between the volunteers themselves and mutual understanding between the two partner countries.

The number of twinnings continues to grow. In 2009, there were thirty twinnings; now there are already more than 160. Far from diminishing, the links of solidarity between the AIC national associations are growing stronger with time. There are more and more twinnings between AIC groups who speak different languages, so for instance between AIC Latanais and AIC USA or AIC Madagascari and AIC Spain.