

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.

Cross-disciplinary themes have guided the work of the Executive Board and are to be found at all levels:

- **The Operational Guidelines** which express the commitment of AIC to:

- **Strengthen responses to the poverty of women**
- **Support women and help them to take personal responsibility**
- **Make society aware of its responsibilities.**

- In addition, the methodology of the **Systemic Approach**.

I. Coordination and management of the AIC network

The Executive Board consists of 12 members elected during the 2009 Assembly. Each of the members has his/her own role, whether it is geographical, or the coordination of a continent, or a cross-disciplinary role, or training and representation, amongst other things.

The Presidential team meets three times a year, and the Executive Board met in 2009 in Mexico and in 2010 in Paris.

The international Secretariat is located at Louvain la Neuve in Belgium; it is at the centre of the information which is exchanged between the different members of the AIC network. The Secretariat circulates this information. Four permanent Staff and ten volunteers ensure the day-to-day management of the life of AIC.

The international Secretariat, together with the presidential team and the fund raising committee, manage the financial side.



An intense fund raising campaign has enabled some private money to be collected, as well as grants from private and public organisations, which financed in part the international Assembly in 2009, the training booklets, international representation, and the Seminars in Africa and Asia in 2009.

Every year the Secretariat organises two fund raising events in Belgium, a cycle rally and a cultural evening, both of which have been very successful.

II. Coordination

The Executive Board carries out this mission mainly through visits to the various associations and through regional coordination. The aim of regional coordination is to strengthen links between associations on the same continent, and it enables trends concerning poverty to be highlighted.

Regional coordination represents a decentralised level which is very relevant when faced with the different realities and cultures of the AIC network worldwide.

Based on a coordination plan, regional coordination is carried out through exchanging messages and information. In addition, numerous visits have been made to national associations.

In 2010, the Vincentian family gathered to celebrate the 350th Anniversary of the death of St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac.

This gave rise to numerous celebrations in every country, and provided an opportunity to deepen the roots of our mission « to support the poorest of the poor both materially and spiritually ».

III. Training

Training is an essential mission of the Executive Board. It takes place during international meetings, for example the international Assemblies in Mexico in 2009 and in Madrid in 2011; also continental training seminars in Cameroon and Thailand in 2009, and during visits – in recent months there have been visits to four African associations, eight in Latin America, three in Asia, seven in Europe and four States in the US. AIC regularly publishes training booklets, spiritual sheets and various documents (a virtual library of the documents already in existence has been put on the AIC website).

IV. Project Support

The Projects Service has its own corporate body within the international Secretariat: « AIC Solidarity ASBL ».

It ensures the monitoring of projects in developing countries, as well as the ongoing training of volunteers to teach them how to set up projects, to monitor them and to evaluate them.

During the last two years, more than 50 projects have been monitored. Amongst those, 21 new projects were started in 2009 and 2010. 31 projects benefited from a total funding of 146,137 Euros. A third of those funds was collected from outside sponsors and two thirds came from the AIC network, through twinnings and donations from different national associations.

A call for projects was launched, namely the « Prix Jean and Claire Delva » which funds innovative projects in the fight against violence towards women. Through this prize, AIC would like to raise public awareness on the right of women to a life without violence. In 2009 it gave the award to two AIC groups: one established in Queretaro (Mexico), for its project « Refuge and full support for 60 families suffering domestic and gender violence »; and the other in Peru for its project « Strengthening prevention against domestic violence in the district of Nueva Cajamarca ».

The Vincentian Family Committee for Systemic Change awarded its 2009 prize to AIC Madagascar for its Tsiry project.

The **AIC Solidarity Fund** enables emergency aid to be sent to associations when natural disasters occur, for example after the earthquakes in **Haiti** and **Chile**. Donations sent by national

associations were used for emergency aid, to buy medicine and food, and to help those suffering associations to resume their activities with the poor.

Madagascar, once again struck by tropical cyclones, received aid from the Solidarity Fund to finance the distribution of food and to purchase seed.

V. Communication and visibility

Emphasis has been placed on visibility to enhance the image of AIC and its external visibility. The 2010 training booklet had as its theme the visibility of AIC.

Communication tools are prepared with care: AIC INFO bulletin, a video clip promoting AIC, the AIC Website; the Website of AIC Solidarité (www.aic-solidarite.be) has been updated to enable greater visibility for AIC projects in the field.

Several associations, for example AIC Spain, AIC Madagascar, AIC Mexico and AIC USA have set up their own website.

VI. The presence of AIC in international organisations

The representatives create links between AIC and international organisations, both locally and internationally:

- **They speak about AIC actions**, denounce the various forms of poverty, and lobby and make proposals to UNESCO – ECOSOC – the Council of Europe – the Human Rights Council – Catholic centres – CRESCENDO – FAO;

- They **inform** volunteers of the main international themes, as well as the programmes and conventions of the UN bodies.

Currently, **the priority themes** are:

- human rights, especially the rights of women and children;
- climate change in relation to the poverty of women;
- the informal work of women;
- the education of young women and girls.

In conclusion, to work with AIC today, as in the time of St Vincent, is to be present for our poorest brothers and sisters, in their material, spiritual and relationship needs; above all it is to trust in their abilities.

The international Assembly taking place in March 2011 will open up new paths.



« *Education, a pathway to build together* »



AIC

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 ACTIVITY REPORT 2009-2010

Activity report 2009



AIC – the International Association of Charities – is an international network of more than 200,000 women fighting against poverty on 4 continents.

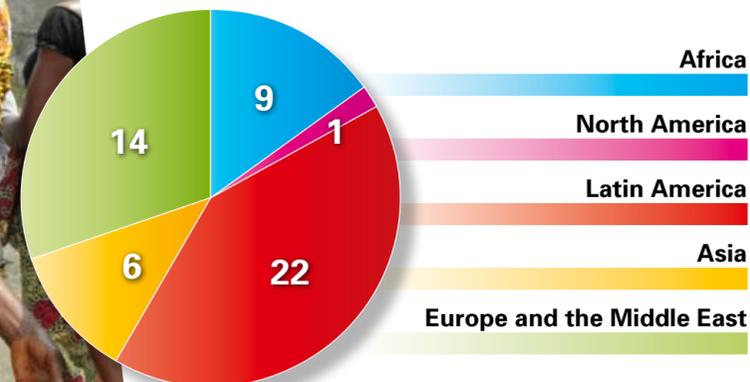
Through actions, adapted to each country, where they work alongside people, supporting them, they strive to restore the confidence of the most disadvantaged people, especially women and their children.

The objective is twofold: - to make people who are living in poverty self-sufficient and agents of their own destiny, and also to involve the authorities in this fight against the various forms of poverty.

This 2009-2010 Activity Report provides a broad outline of the actions carried out by the member associations, and presents the work of the Executive Board: to coordinate, lead and train volunteers in the network and to represent them.

Now AIC has more than 200,000 volunteers, involved in 16,000 projects and carrying out 50 million hours of voluntary work a year.

Number of national associations by continent



Actions in the field

The International Assembly in 2009 highlighted discrimination, which many women are still subjected to in the world and discrimination is a factor which increases their poverty.

Knowing the discrimination which women are subjected to as far as education is concerned, the International Assembly in 2011 is going to work on the theme: Education, a pathway to build together.

The 2009 Assembly voted for Operational Guidelines through which the AIC teams committed themselves to:

- strengthening their response to the various forms of poverty that women experience;
- helping women to take personal responsibility;
- giving the whole of society a sense of responsibility.

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: homeless people, prisoners, families in difficulty, people with mental health problems, lonely people and elderly people, amongst others.

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

- AIC is an association consisting **mainly of women working with women.**
- The **volunteers work locally**, in their own communities, so they are able to establish personal relationships, and this gives rise to greater confidence.
- In the association, there are groups made up of **women, themselves poor**, who are engaged in a process of self advancement and in developing their own community.
- Through its structure, AIC **is able to become involved at all levels**, local, national and international, to change unjust laws, for example in Peru with regard to elderly people.
- AIC **is present in international organisations**, both civil and religious, and it brings them examples of the poverty

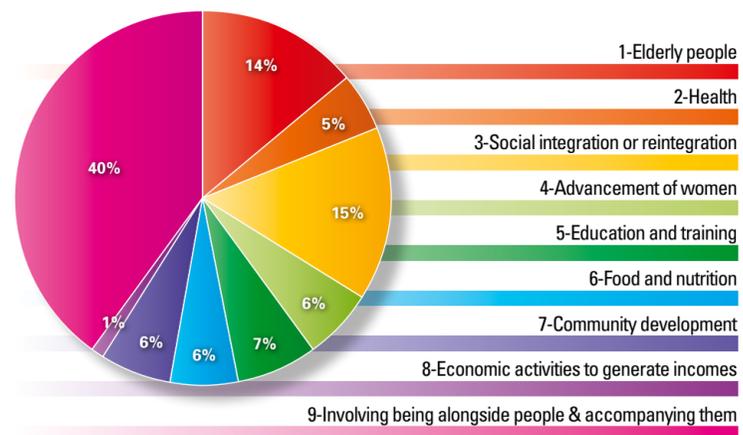
experienced on the ground, and it also brings them AIC proposals; it has the **role of alerting people**, for example the AIC manifesto in 2010, signed by the European associations as part of the fight against great poverty.

- AIC is implementing the **method of Systemic Change**; this process tries to take each situation of poverty in its entirety, to clearly identify the links which exist between the various elements of the « system », to see those which should be activated or reactivated, and it concentrates on the objective to be achieved.

From the Activity Reports of the 52 member associations of AIC, a singularity stands out: for the 16,000 projects of all sorts, **support for women experiencing poverty represents the 80% of activities of AIC groups.**

Charity», following the teaching of our founder, St. Vincent de Paul.

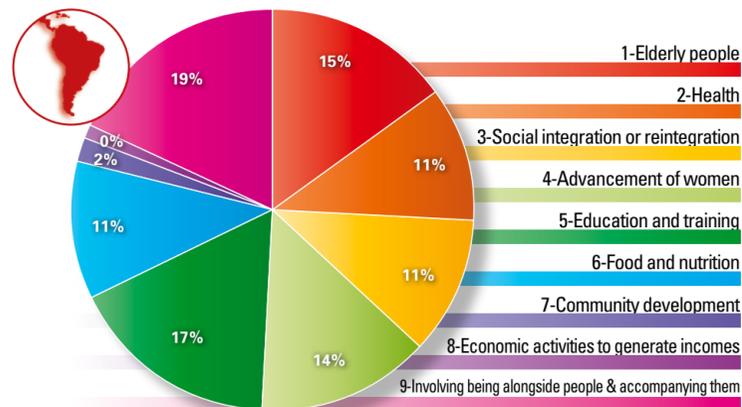
The different types of AIC Projects 2009-2010



2. Types of AIC projects carried out on each continent

The charts for each continent highlight the trends in each region and enable us to show the distinctive nature specific to each continent.

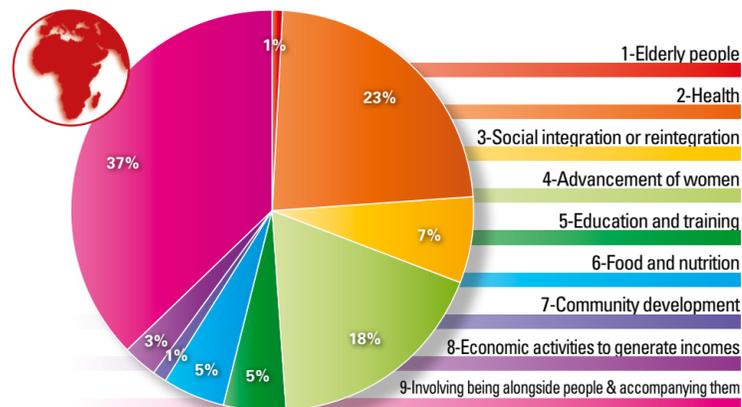
LATIN AMERICA: AIC is present in 22 countries



Trends

- In Latin America there are great inequalities: between rich and poor; between men and women.
- With the breakup of families there are more and more street children, alcohol problems, drugs, and AIDS, amongst young people.
- The massive migration of the youngest people leaves elderly people abandoned in their country of origin.
- There are numerous projects for the Advancement of Women, often linked to preventing domestic violence.
- Training projects for women are aimed at raising self-esteem and creating income generating activities.
- To respond to the increase in the various forms of poverty, numerous food and nutrition projects have been implemented.

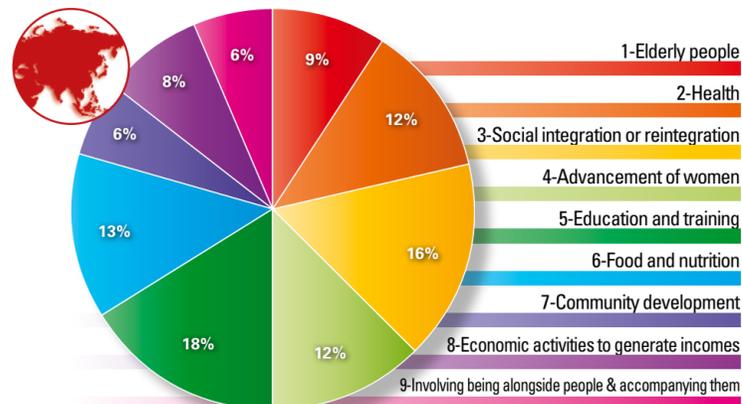
AFRICA: AIC is present in 9 countries



Trends

- In Africa, the precarious situation of women and children is increasing. At issue, illness in particular (HIV/AIDS – malaria – tuberculosis – high-risk childbirth, amongst others) and the lack of access to medical care. Women suffer more than men from the different forms of poverty: they are victims of blatant inequality and suffer from discrimination because of local traditions.
- They receive little education, and material poverty reduces them to permanent dependence. Women must provide for their family, which forces children to work from a very young age.
- Volunteers establish personal relationships, thus enabling women to gain self confidence. They set up projects to support women, and their education and training; and for children, canteens and help with education.
- There are also a number of integration projects for disabled people and projects for people suffering from AIDS.

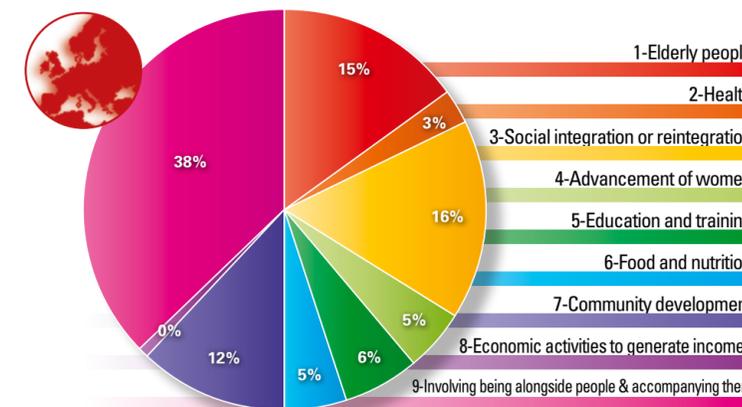
ASIA: AIC is present in 6 countries



Trends

- In Asia only 3% of the population is Christian. The beneficiaries of AIC actions come from all cultures, beliefs and religions and more often than not they are from the ethnic minorities.
- This diversity of profiles creates a diversity of actions, showing comprehensive and systemic attention to the individual: health – food and nutrition – education – micro-credit.
- Education and training projects are often in the form of grants for girls.

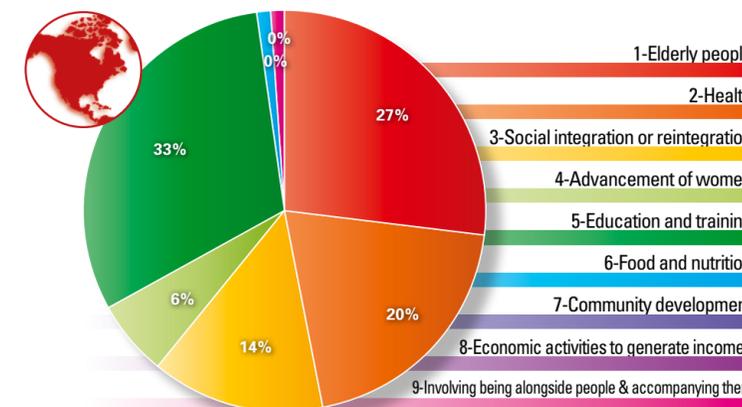
EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST: AIC is present in 14 countries



Trends

- In Europe, the problems of loneliness, mental illness and marginalisation are very much in evidence and require individual and personal follow-up (home visits and listening, amongst other things).
- The numerous projects working alongside people, and supporting them, have the aim of establishing social links, and of leading to integration and reintegration projects (in particular for migrants) and to community development.
- Faced with the increase in life expectancy, numerous projects have been implemented by volunteers to enable elderly people to meet together, and to create links of friendship.
- To respond to the increase in the various forms of poverty in certain sectors of the population (migrants and single mothers, etc.), the volunteers are increasing the number of nutritional projects (school canteens, social food stores, food distribution and clothes stores, amongst other things).

USA: AIC is present in 21 States



Trends

- The projects of the volunteers are aimed at responding to essential needs, such as health, nutrition and food, education and listening.
- Due to the financial crisis, food and nutrition projects have become more frequent.
- In the USA, the most disadvantaged people are excluded from the social security system and from health care. They lack social links which are essential if they are to change their situation of poverty. The position of the numerous illegal immigrants is poignant.
- Numerous projects for the empowerment of women are being developed in city centres.

3. Twinning

In the AIC network, the twinning between two associations is more than a form of material aid from time to time; it is a means of exchanging experience and mutual training and support, enabling closer collaboration between the volunteers themselves and mutual knowledge of the two partner countries.

The number of twinings continues

to grow. In 2005, there were thirty twinings; now there are already more than 50. Far from declining, the links of solidarity between the twinned associations are growing stronger with time. There are more and more twinings between AIC groups who speak different languages, as for instance between AIC Lebanon and AIC USA or AIC Madagascar and AIC Spain.

