



TRAINING REFLECTION: APRIL 2018

AIC confronts the challenge of sustainable development Let us protect our “Common Home”

AIC’s work with regard to sustainable development:

Here are the 9 AIC grassroots projects presented during the 2017 General Assembly, that already include elements of sustainable development, for example, education with regard to the protection of the environment and the sorting of waste products; the utilization of local products with regard to food distribution; the construction of model homes with recycled bricks (bricks made from recycled plastic bottles and recycled garbage), sustainable agriculture and community gardens; planting trees to limit soil erosion and the utilization of solar panels.

You can find out more about these projects on our website: www.aic-international.org

AIC Belgium – Waremme: distribution of food to families in vulnerable situations

It’s a recipe for quality food distribution with an emphasis on sustainable development: encouraging a balanced diet, offering seasonal fruits and vegetables each week, involving the beneficiaries and getting them to participate, valuing people’s skills through practical actions and creating a friendly, welcoming and respectful atmosphere. This is what the volunteers from the Waremme group in Belgium offer every week.





AIC Brazil – Campina Grande: education about the environment for 30 children and adolescents living in a marginalized community

Alongside school support activities and meals, the volunteers offer workshops teaching about peace and citizenship, raising awareness about preserving the planet to guarantee a better future and art workshops to encourage artistic and cultural awakening.

AIC Colombia – Mocoa: Construction of a model home with recycled bricks

Making eco-bricks to build a ‘model’ home is a good example of AIC Mocoa in Colombia’s sustainable development action. The project encourages the creation of useful materials from waste and highlights the need to develop innovative ideas. The whole community is involved in this process, including elderly people from a home run by AIC volunteers.



AIC France – Saint-Valery-en-Caux: community garden

The volunteers in Saint-Valery-en-Caux have begun the cultivation of a community garden for disadvantaged people. The objective is to be able to offer people healthy and seasonal fruits and vegetables while at the same time revalorising vegetable gardening, the people who do it and market vegetables. This activity allows people to feed themselves and relearn techniques that have been lost, even in rural environments. It’s an easy project to carry out in terms of means, but it does require perseverance and a certain humility in the face of the whims of nature (no season or year is the same as the previous season or year). One learns how to live in accord with the rhythms of the seasons.



AIC Madagascar – Manaskara/Vohipenko: sustainable agriculture

For some time, the AIC volunteers in Manaskara have engaged in the cultivation of rice with mothers and their older children... putting into practice the advice of agricultural technicians who are concerned about preserving the environment and making the fields more productive.

The AIC groups in Ambolos and Vohipenko are engaged in projects that revolve around the cultivation of food and the planting of fruit trees. Families raise their own poultry and utilize the excrement of the poultry for fertilizer.



These two AIC groups collaborate with the Diocese of Farafangana's Green Plan, which is geared towards protecting the environment.

AIC Philippines – Pampanga: manufacture of solar lamps and fight against erosion



It's thanks to the support of the Department for the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that the AIC volunteers from the Pampanga region in the Philippines have been able to begin an environmentally sustainable tree planting project in order to prevent the erosion of the hillsides of the mega-dykes. These dykes, built at the foot of a volcano are designed to stop lava from covering the surrounding inhabited areas.

The AIC volunteers are participating in an exciting five year environmental project: planting 500 tree seedlings per hectare and maintaining a 7 hectare plot on the slopes of the Mont Pinatubo dykes. By preventing the erosion of the dykes, the trees that are planted will help to save lives if there are typhoons.

Furthermore, some volunteers have learned how to make solar lamps by putting together the component pieces, in order to sell them to disadvantaged families. There are three objectives in this: stop the families from having to pay for electricity, which is expensive; stop the use of candles – a frequent cause of fire and finally, protect the environment, as these solar lamps don't produce any pollution.

AIC United Kingdom: education for sustainable development

The AIC volunteers are raising awareness in the parish communities and the parish school about the concern for sustainable development. They are doing this through concrete and practical education with regard to environmental issues. They promote simple lifestyles and solidarity with those living in poverty. People are invited to make simple gestures, for example, reducing and



controlling their use of energy by insulating and using low energy consumption light bulbs, recycling, car-sharing, utilizing left-over food; etc.



AIC Vietnam - Ho Chi Minh: Waste sorting for better sustainable development

Garbage and waste are a societal and an environmental problem. Better sorting at source will reduce the cost of recycling and create a more favourable environment, facilitating the treatment, recycling and

reduction of waste. The volunteers' objective is to encourage society to sort its waste. Everyone is invited to get involved. *"Next time you change the dustbin, have a look,"* say the volunteers, *"Is there anything that shouldn't be there. Probably. Try to reduce by half the amount of waste you produce at home."*

AIC USA – Sustainable distribution of food

The AIC volunteers improve the distribution of food by putting a focus on greater sustainability: including for example, more fresh fruit and seasonal vegetables. They are careful about people taking only that which is necessary or which they can consume before the product spoils. The volunteers, concerned about bettering their activity in the future, state that the distribution of fresh products to people in need is simply a step towards more sustainable use of natural resources.



Conclusion

Little by little, we are coming around to the idea of transforming our lifestyles, so they consume less energy and are more respectful of nature and mankind.

Following Pope Francis and the UN who have spoken about the urgency of protecting our planet, let's act to address this challenge! Think of future generations!

- Let's commit to making a small gesture towards the environment each day at home
- Let's get together in AIC groups to decide together what aspect of sustainable development we could include in our actions.
- Let's mobilise ourselves to support the initiatives being implemented by our local, national or regional authorities in the area of sustainable development.

AIC's suggestion for reflection:

1. If possible, visit the website www.aic-international.org during your meeting to get more information about the projects mentioned above and see if you could use them to inspire yourself to implement one or more similar sustainable development projects in your group.
2. What initiatives have the local or regional authorities put forward near you in the area of sustainable development. How do you think you could mobilise yourselves to support them and bring new ideas?
3. After having studied the three training reflections on the protection of our “Common Home”, what concrete commitments could you make as a group to take better care of our “Common Home”?
4. What do you consider you have learned by studying these three training reflections on the protection of our Common Home?