**Chapter III**

**AIC Today**

* **AIC’s Grassroots Actions**
* **Advocacy**
* Training Volunteers
* Communication
* Finances and Code of Ethics
* Legal Framework

**AIC’s Grassroots Actions**

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| Over **13,000 actions or projects to tackle poverty** are currently being carried out by volunteers from across the AIC network. The main objective is to support people living in poverty to help them obtain more independence and dignity.**Our strengths and priorities:*** Locally-based volunteers who set up the projects and work in teams.
* Special attention to poverty among women and children. They are the most affected by poverty and represent 80% of our beneficiaries.
* Offering people holistic support.
* Building social links to get people out of isolation.
* Priority to education, an essential tool in the fight against poverty, especially that of women. For adults, this could be literacy projects, professional training aiming for reintegration into the job market through income generating activities, or educational workshops. For children, there are often daycare centres, preschool centres, refresher courses, school bursaries and homework clubs.

The **participation of beneficiaries** is an essential element in the development of empowering projects. How is this done? By valuing people’s strengths and their own abilities to respond to the challenges they encounter, so as to be able to dream and act together to change the situation of poverty, adopting a ‘**facilitator**’ attitude.Thanks to the AIC network, **twinnings between AIC teams** all over the world allow special relationships to be established in a culture of solidarity: financial support, exchange of experiences, two-way training and co-management of projects. | Aiming for independence and dignityLocally-basedWomenHuman at the centreRebuilding social linksParticipation of beneficiariesBeing a ‘facilitator’Twinnings |

**Advocacy**

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| As a civil society organisation, AIC takes part in global networks where the efforts of public and private bodies are combined and interact. Through its presence among these institutions, AIC is in touch with a process of international reflection and receives information that contributes to its growth.* **At the public level**, AIC is an INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation) and has representatives with European and international bodies:

It has:* + Special Consultative Status with *ECOSOC – UN Economic and Social Council*
	+ Operational Status with *UNESCO – United Nation’s Council for Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication.*
	+ Consultative Status with the *Council of Europe*

AIC is a member of **international networks:** * + Participates in Catholic Centres of international agencies
	+ EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network
	+ WURN (Women’s United Nations Report Program & Network)
* In the **Universal Church**, AIC is an Association of Lay Faithful which:
	+ Is recognised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity
	+ Is a member of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum (for Human and Christian development)
	+ Is a member of Crescendo – Network for human and Christian ageing
	+ Is one of the ICOs (International Catholic Organisations) and attends their Conference (ICOC)
 | Giving people in need a voice at international levelInstitutional representation:**ECOSOC****UNESCO****Council of Europe**Representation within networks:**Catholic Centres****EAPN****WURN**Within the Church:**Pontifical Council for the Laity****Cor Unum****Crescendo****OIC** |

**Questions to reflect on in groups:**

1. **Among the strengths and priorities mentioned above, which can be found in the grassroots actions of your local group?**
2. **What do you think are the advantages of twinnings between AIC groups? (You can respond based on your own experiences or reflect on the possibility of setting up a twinning with another AIC group. In this case, please don’t hesitate to ask for further information from the International Secretariat).**
3. **Why does the presence of AIC in international networks and within the Church seem so important?**
4. **As an INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation), AIC is part of the civil society network. How can AIC work on behalf of those in need within this network?**