



# Recruitment Strategies

Sharing experiences from the AIC International network



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## Introduction to the topic

In the first training reflection in this series, we discussed the **challenge that presents itself in our different associations**: being able to **recruit** and **mobilise new volunteers** and **make them loyal** so that we can continue to carry out the mission that Saint Vincent has entrusted to us with the most disadvantaged people.

We highlighted the importance of **opening ourselves up to change** and finding the right way of motivating people who might be likely to join us.

But **how should we do this?** This second reflection will give you some ideas to answer this question.

We invite you to use this opportunity to reflect on practical actions you could take in your respective groups or associations to recruit new volunteers.

### Be creative!

*Let's remind ourselves of the words of Saint Vincent:  
"Love is inventive, even to infinity!"*



The different actions that we propose in the following pages are inspired by the experiences that various AIC associations shared with us in the recruitment survey that we conducted at the beginning of 2019<sup>1</sup>. We would like to thank them for their precious contributions that enabled us to draft this reflection.

This reflection will allow you to appreciate once again the creativity of the volunteers in the AIC network.



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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to receive more information about one of the initiatives that is briefly presented in this reflection, don't hesitate to contact the International Secretariat at [info@aic-international.org](mailto:info@aic-international.org).

## 1. Setting clear objectives

In order to stop an objective from remaining merely a dream, it is important to make sure it is clear. Objectives should be **SMART**:

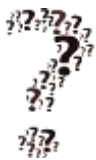
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific</li> <li>• Measurable</li> <li>• Achievable</li> <li>• Realistic</li> <li>• Limited in Time</li> </ul>					
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### Examples from the AIC network...



✓ In 2017, **AIC-Mexico** set itself the objective of **increasing the number of volunteers by 5% in the following year**. Thanks to the commitment of their volunteers, this objective was achieved and even surpassed: the number of volunteers increased by 7.7% during 2018. An encouraging result for the future of the association!

✓ **AIC-Bolivia** asked **each volunteer to invite at least one person she knew to join her group**. As a result, 11 new volunteers have joined the 84 volunteers in the association and 3 more are almost ready to do so.



#### Reflect in groups:

- ➔ What is your practical objective for recruitment?
- ➔ How many new volunteers would you like to recruit?
- ➔ How long will you give yourselves to do it?

## 2. Knowing how to communicate well

Many associations have noticed that having **attractive and modern means of communication** is essential in order to attract new volunteers.

This means having **digital tools** such as PowerPoint presentations, a website, a Facebook page, a WhatsApp group, etc., in addition to **traditional means of communication** like brochures and flyers.



There are certain **key elements to take into account** when communicating with these new tools:

1

**Message:**

- Choose short clear messages: go straight to the point
- Use language that is modern, simple and adapted to the target audience
- Talk about what motivates us and the meaning of our actions to get through to people
- Privilege authenticity by sharing short testimonies (from volunteers and/or people that we support through our services)

2

**Adapt the means of communication** to the message that needs to be conveyed and to the audience. Don't hesitate to use audio-visual elements!



3

**Promote interaction:**

- Look to engage interest and/or stimulate reflection
- Show our concern for the common good
- Allow for an opportunity to react and respond

**Examples from the AIC network...**

✓ **AIC-Italy** presented a project aimed at promoting the recruitment of new volunteers to an Italian foundation. This foundation gave the association a subsidy that allowed about 70% of the costs of the project to be covered.

The project included the following elements:

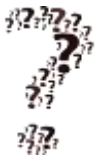
- The organisation of **seminars, meetings and workshops** in different regions of the country to make the values and activities of AIC volunteers known;
- The updating of the **website**;
- The creation of **WhatsApp groups**, used to send a message every morning with wishes for a good day and a prayer and sometimes an invitation to participate in an activity.
- The creation and distribution of a new **brochure presenting the association**;
- **Collaboration with a journalist** to disseminate news about several local actions being carried out by AIC volunteers;
- The publication of important **articles** in national newspapers.



**Encouraging results:** a hundred new volunteers have joined the association thanks to this project and more than **1000 people** have **participated** in the proposed activities and shown an **interest** in the association. Many have started to offer **precious occasional support**, not being able to commit fully due to time constraints.

This experience highlights the **importance of being open to different volunteer profiles and new forms of AIC volunteering** (see Reflection 1).

The majority of associations emphasised the importance of using **good means of communication** for recruitment. Some observed that these tools are more **appealing** if they focus on our grassroots actions and contain **audio-visual** elements.



**Reflect in groups:**

- **What tools do you already use to make your group or association known? Are they visual, attractive and up-to-date?**
- **Is it necessary to update certain tools or create new ones? Who could do this?**
- **Challenge: each person tries to present her association and what she does in 1 minute in a way that inspires enthusiasm.**

### **3. Personalising contact**

Personalising contact – which is one of the strengths of AIC volunteers – often gives very good results.

Talking about AIC to those around us and/or sending them a personalised invitation, by phone or email, to attend an information meeting, remains an excellent way of recruiting new volunteers.

#### ***Examples from the AIC network...***

All associations stated the importance of personal contact in recruiting new volunteers. Many shared practical initiatives in this regard:

- ✓ ***AIC-Brazil:*** *the volunteers organise friendly meetings to present AIC and then invite participants to come and discover the work that is being done.*
- ✓ ***AIC-Chili:*** *the volunteers give testimonies of their actions and services for the benefit of the most disadvantaged as a personal way of encouraging the people invited to join them.*
- ✓ ***AIC-Costa Rica:*** *the students that have benefitted from an AIC scholarship are invited to become AIC volunteers – as are their teachers.*

- ✓ **AIC-Cameroon:** women who are likely to be interested in being AIC volunteers are invited to help the volunteers in their grassroots activities to discover AIC and its actions.
- ✓ **AIC-Colombia and AIC-Spain:** meetings and sometimes lunches are organised to present the association and its projects to people invited via parishes, friends or word of mouth.
- ✓ **AIC-Central African Republic, AIC-France and AIC-UK** regularly make announcements at the end of Masses to invite the parishioners to join their groups.
- ✓ **AIC-Indonesia and AIC-Nicaragua:** the volunteers use their participation in activities organised in their parish or community to make their Vincentian activities known and invite the people they meet in these places to become AIC volunteers in one of their actions.
- ✓ **AIC-Nigeria:** the presentation of the association is done by raising awareness about the difficulties faced by people living in poverty and the need to support them.
- ✓ **AIC-Philippines:** a volunteer has been designated at national level to be in charge of recruiting new members, with the help of her team.

#### 4. Participating in recruitment campaigns

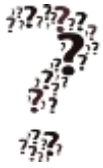
Sometimes it can be interesting to participate in recruitment campaigns organised by other entities on a larger scale, whether this is at local, regional or national level.

##### **Experience in the AIC network:**

- ✓ **AIC-France** took advantage of recruitment campaigns at national level. The volunteers mobilised themselves across the country to participate in charity and recruitment forums organised by local authorities. The volunteers had stands where they presented their actions and encouraged others to join them.



**And you? How could you recruit new volunteers?**



**AIC's suggestions for group reflection:**

- What concrete action could you carry out to recruit new volunteers? Could you take inspiration from the experiences you have seen here?
- Draw up an action plan for your initiative. Include the following elements:
  - The different steps that will be necessary
  - A calendar for implementing them
  - The resources needed for each stage (people, funds, material, time, networking, etc.)

*“The grace of perseverance is the most important of all; it crowns all other graces.” (Saint Vincent)*

**Prayer: Send us the crazy ones!**

Oh Lord, send us the crazy ones  
those who are fully committed,  
those who forget about themselves,  
those who love not just through words,  
those who really give themselves  
until the work is finished.

We need the crazy ones,  
the passionate ones,  
people able to leap into uncertainty,  
the unknown realms of poverty,  
those who accept that some get lost  
in the anonymous masses  
with no desire to come back,  
and that others use the superiority  
they acquire purely for their own ends.

This leap does not always mean  
abandoning one's background or lifestyle:  
it is a deeper rupture with the ego  
that up to now dominated.

We need the crazy ones today,  
advocates of the simple life,  
effective liberators of the poor,  
lovers of peace,  
free from compromises,  
committed to never betraying,  
dismissive of their own lives,  
able to accept any task,  
to go anywhere,  
to be both free and obedient,  
spontaneous and persistent,  
soft and strong.

