



Welcoming, supporting and making space for new volunteers in our groups



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Introduction to the topic

This is now the third reflection on the topic of recruitment: After highlighting the importance of **opening ourselves up to change** (reflection 1) and reflecting on **practical actions** that we could implement in our respective groups or associations **to recruit new volunteers** (reflection 2), this final reflection is about welcoming and supporting new volunteers.



We have learned from experience that sometimes we are so busy with our activities that we forget to look after newly recruited volunteers.

However, it is essential that we do everything we can so that any new member that joins one of our groups of volunteers feels **welcomed and well supported** during her first few months.

Let's not forget: "Meeting someone new is always a grace!"

1. Welcoming and making space

When a new volunteer joins our group, it is essential to **make time for her**:

- To make her feel at home, to present the members of the group to her and to ensure she **quickly feels trusted and warmly welcomed** by the whole team;
- To **explain** to her who we are, what we do and how we do it (our mission, activities, organisation, values, etc.), being careful to do so progressively so she is not overwhelmed;
- To **listen** to her and to allow her to ask questions.



Welcoming a new volunteering and making space for her means **accepting her as she is, with her talents and experiences**, which we must learn to get to know and **value**. We are invited to discover what she can teach us.

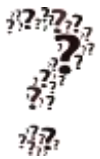
*Let us learn to see new volunteers as Christ did:
"Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him."
(Mark, 10:21)*

As members of **AIC-Italy** have shared with us, welcoming a new volunteer in our group gives us the opportunity to remind ourselves how important it is to **value each skill** and be **ready to change**, while remaining united through our mission and the teachings of St Vincent.

Making space for a new volunteer also implies making **some adaptations**:

- Reorganising tasks, perhaps changing roles;
- Entrusting certain tasks or responsibilities to other people in whom we have identified interesting potential for the future of the group.

“When we add a place at the table, we have to make ours a little smaller.”



Reflection in groups:

- ➔ **How do we welcome new volunteers?**
- ➔ **What challenges do we face?**
- ➔ **What else could we do? What could we do differently?**

2. Supporting

After this essential initial welcome, it is equally vital to continue supporting the new volunteer for a while.

We are invited to progressively help her **build** the **pathway** that is right for her and meets both her needs and those of the group, going **step by step** and respecting her rhythm.

We should ask her for regular updates on how she is feeling and, in the climate of trust and respect that we have strived to establish, we can invite her to **share** the joys and difficulties she has encountered in her Vincentian work.

Example from the AIC network: The Discovery Report

For several years now, the National Board of **AIC-France** has strongly encouraged all groups, whenever they welcome a new volunteer, to ask for her “Discovery Report” after her first month.

This means that each new volunteer is asked to share during a group meeting:



- What **surprised** her when she arrived in the group
- What she **appreciated**
- What she **didn't understand**
- Her **suggestions**



An invitation to listen and be humble...

In order for the Discovery Report to be truly enriching, it is necessary to take the time to listen carefully to the new volunteer to make use of her comments:

- If all the comments are positive, so much the better! We are invited to continue as we have been doing, while always looking to improve.
- If some comments are negative, we are invited to question ourselves, to understand what is not working and fix the issues.

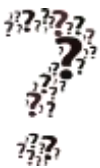
It is a moment in which we all need to prove we can be humble, as criticism is not always easy to hear. That's why we always need to bear in mind the **objective** of the Discovery Report:

***Improving the life of the group, its organisation and communication
to better serve the people we welcome.***

This will mean we are ready to listen serenely to the new recruits who are revitalising the group.

*“A new perspective helps us to question ourselves,
to identify potential problems that we no longer see out of habit.”
France Morane, President of AIC-France*

“Thank the Lord because a volunteer is a gift, a treasure.”



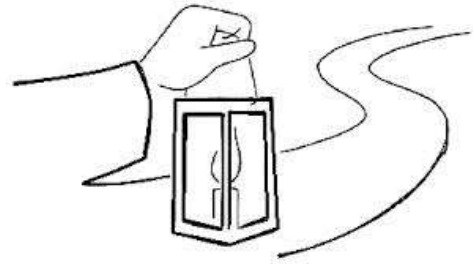
Reflection in groups:

- ➔ How do we support new volunteers?
- ➔ What else could we do? What could we do differently?
- ➔ What concrete commitment could we make in this area as we finish studying this topic?

Prayer

If I meet another

*“Lord, if I meet another,
Anyone that you put on my path,
Help me to be fully present and listen to them.
Keep reminding me that I am neither above nor below them,
But by their side, like a sister, as I speak with them.”*



*“Lord, if I must be quiet, may my silence be welcoming and respectful,
A silence that allows the other to listen to themselves and hope,
And not a silence of indifference or fatigue.”*

*“Lord if I must speak,
May my words be words of truth that open pathways in life.
Make me a messenger of Your word,
The word that brings light and sense to all life.”*

*“Lord, if I hear joy, let me be part of it.
If I encounter sadness, may a smile soften it.
And may my Christian joy shine through,
In order to make those that I meet
Happier, or less sad.”*

*“Lord, after these encounters,
Let me find the time and the will to entrust to you in prayer
All those you have put on my path.
Fill my heart with a feeling of love for them,
Because even if I meet thousands of people,
If I do not have love, I am nothing.”*