



Being a Leader at AIC: 3 Priorities

Teamwork, fluid communication and preparing the handover



Contents

Introduction to the topic	1
1. Teamwork	1
2. Good communication	2
3. Preparing the handover	4
Prayer	5

Introduction to the topic

After reflecting on the way of understanding and living the mission of leader as a service, taking inspiration from the Gospel (Reflection 1) and the notion of leadership as a commitment following in the footsteps of Saint Vincent (Reflection 2), this third and final reflection is dedicated to three priorities to which all good Vincentians must be attentive.



This reflection will look at:

- ✓ The basic rules of teamwork
- ✓ The importance of good internal and external communication
- ✓ The preparation of the handover

1. Teamwork

One of the essential elements in any Vincentian project is that it is the result of efficient and harmonious teamwork undertaken by a community of volunteers.

Harmonious collaboration doesn't happen by chance. It is the result of trust and respect on the part of the team members.

- ✓ **Trust** is built day by day. We learn to trust others when we see them exhibiting firm values, a positive attitude, skills, faithfulness to promises and reliable behavior. When it is mutual, trust promotes a wonderful team spirit and a high level of motivation on the part of everyone involved in the work.

*"Trust, where it exists, gives wings to creativity."
AIC Diploma 2017, Module 3*

- ✓ **Respect** is founded on the recognition that we are all equal in God's eyes, but also all different as we have our own characteristics and experiences. All the ideas that the team members bring are precious and are worth listening to. We must be open to different points of view.

To achieve **efficient teamwork**, the leader must **coordinate** the team well and **delegate responsibilities**. This means knowing the team members well and looking for the potential and skills in each of them so as to be able to entrust them with the tasks that are most suited to them.



Each team member has her own talents and differences among team members make them **complementary**. Each person has their own role, manages a specific part of the project, each part being essential for the rest.



The leader seeks to obtain a **commitment** from each of the members in light of the common objective, each person contributing to the best of their abilities.

Saint Paul tells us, in Chapter 12 of the first letter to the Corinthians, that within a community: "Not all are heads, not all are hands or feet..." but everyone works together as one body with Christ as the head.
AIC Diploma 2017, Module 3

A good leader also seeks to ensure **fluid communication** with and between the members of her team (*see point two*) and to **prepare the next team** (*see point three*).

2. Good communication

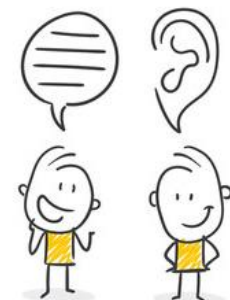
Good communication at every level is essential.

Communication within the international AIC network occurs at **several levels**. There is **internal** communication within the local groups, between local groups and the national Board, between the national associations in the international network and between national associations and AIC International. At each of these levels there is also **external** communication, concerning people who are external to AIC.

Good communication is essential at every level. It's what will **give life to our groups, our associations and our international network**. A group where the communication is good will be a group in which it's nice to be, somewhere we want to stay and get more involved in. So the quality of communication naturally influences the life of our groups and their revitalization.

Good communication is also about knowing how to listen.

Good communication is not just about giving information. **Informing** is necessary, but not enough. Communication is **also listening** and **taking an interest in the other**, what she has to say. It's about knowing how to welcome new ideas and taking the time to listen to what's going well but also what's not going so well.



Some ways of ensuring **good listening**:

- ✓ Making sure we have understood properly by reformulating what the other person has just said
- ✓ Not hesitating to ask questions and ask for clarifications
- ✓ Finding the right moment for each of the people we are in contact with

Why is it so important to have good communication with AIC International?

Having good communication with the 53 national associations in the AIC network allows the AIC international team to fulfil its mission of **supporting the volunteers** across the world in their service with the most disadvantaged people, notably by offering them ongoing training and **coordinating the international network** so that together we have a **bigger impact in our fight against poverty and injustice**.



Good communication about the local actions being carried out across the international is also vital for several reasons.

- At internal level, it allows us to **share experiences** and best practices with volunteers from the rest of the AIC network, whether this is through our website and/or our Facebook page or during visits and international meetings.
- At external level, having information about local actions allows us to:
 - a) Improve the **visibility of the actions** and services of AIC volunteers, which is essential to **attract new volunteers** and **encourage donors** to support our actions.
 - b) **Feed the work of AIC representatives**, who work within international organizations to raise public awareness about the issues of poverty and exclusion, by contributing the experiences of local AIC volunteers to make the voices of the most disadvantaged people heard within international bodies and so fight against the causes of poverty.



We are the spokespeople for our associations!

As AIC volunteers, we are often discrete. We have perhaps been educated not to talk too much about ourselves.

However it's not a question of speaking about ourselves, but rather about:

- **Thousands of AIC volunteers** who have been committing for more than 400 years following in the footsteps of Saint Vincent.
- **Our more disadvantaged brothers and sisters** who are living in situations of poverty and who need to be listened to, encouraged and supported to build a better future.

- **Our association**, which needs us to make itself known and to attract new volunteers who will allow us to ensure the continuation of our services and so to continue pursuing the **mission** that Saint Vincent has entrusted to us.

So, let's not hesitate to speak about our association to those around us!

3. Preparing the handover

In our Association, tasks and **responsibilities are not permanent**. Mandates are given for a limited amount of time. Saint Vincent planned for this in the 1st Rule.



Other than the fact that handovers create opportunities for individual and collective development, this way of functioning allows us to **prepare the team that will take over**, an essential step in order to ensure the **continuity** of our services and actions to support our brothers and sisters who live in situations of poverty.

This is an essential responsibility for leaders!

AIC's Suggestions for Reflection in Groups



1

Teamwork:

- Exchange some examples of positive/difficult **experiences** of teamwork.
- How can we overcome the difficulties encountered and the **improve** the quality of our team's work?

2

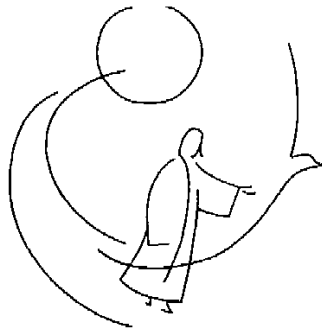
Good communication:

- What **challenges** do you encounter in the field of communication?
- How could you **improve** the communication in your group/association? With AIC International? With third parties?

3

Handover:

- What was **my experience** when I became a leader: my motivations? Challenges? What/who helped me?
- Have you thought about **who will follow you**? What can you do to **prepare and support her**?



Prayer

Lord, give us your **Spirit of sharing**. In our day, at any moment and when meeting, may we be concerned about sharing. Help us to share our joy and friendship; help us to share our experiences and ideas. Help us, Lord, to give and help us to receive, for sharing is not only giving to others, it is also, and sometimes even more about accepting to receive. Help us to realise that we have much to learn from others, because what they can teach us can challenge us.

Lord, give us the **Spirit of searching and listening**. Help us to perceive the message that others bring us from you. May our minds and hearts be open. Help us to question our traditional ways of thinking and acting; help us to understand that our traditions are only a value and a strength to the extent that your Spirit constantly renews them.

Lord, give us the **Spirit of faith**. Give us the conviction that our task is important, and when we doubt ourselves, remind us that you will help us to accomplish it.



Amen