

INTRODUCTION

In a vision of church as communion the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni is a gift of the Spirit to the particular churches in which the CLM are springing up. They are developing a new dimension of living the combonian charism in autonomy and communion with the rest of the Comboni family. As a lay missionary movement they are an expression of the missionary dimension of the particular churches (both the sending and the receiving ones) and live the values of the Kingdom of God within the daily realities (economics, political, social, cultural)

I. CRITERIA AND VOCATION PROMOTION

a) Criteria to be a CLM

- To be defined for their option of following Jesus Christ in an ecclesial context (that is an expression of the mission of the church with in the local Christian community.)
- A mature person lay, with missionary spirit "Ad Gentes", capacity of adaptation, coexistence and teamwork. With a clear option to leave.
- To possess an appropriate human, Christian, Combonian and professional formation.
- To have psychological and emotional stability, and appropriate state of health.
- To have a history of commitment in the service of others as an expression of their Christian faith.
- To commit oneself in the implementation of the aims of the Movement
- To have concluded the discernment stage.

b) How to work to recruit new CLM members

Through:

- Internet
- Missionary magazines (Mundo Negro, Kontinente, Alem Mar...)
- Testimonies on return from the mission
- Letters of those that are in mission
- Missionary animation
- Encounters, etc

II. IDENTITY

a) Layperson

- Are men or women, single or married, and mature.
- Involved in the secular life (work, family...)
- Aware of the value of the cultural diversity, they are formed in a human, professional and Christian way.
- In the country of origin they support themselves by their own work.
- They work for the values of the Kingdom of God, promoting the evangelization and liberation of people.
- They have a Christian vocation and the sense of ecclesial fellowship
- They have a mature faith and clear motivation for the missions.
- They are motivated by their option to follow Jesus Christ in an ecclesial and community context.
 - a) By encouraging in a missionary way the local Church and the society in which they live.
 - b) By working at the service of human liberation, of justice and peace.

b) Missionary

- The CLM live the mission “Ad Gentes” in answer to their Christian vocation.
- They have a clear and positive disposition to go to the mission among those non-evangelized people or those still needing to strengthen their faith as Christian communities.
- The CLM want to share (giving and receiving) their life (faith, capacities, etc.) among the people to whom they are sent.
- As Christians the CLM announce the Gospel:
 - With their testimony of life;
 - With their commitment in the civil society by means of their work and at the service of the integral human development, of human liberation, of justice and peace;
 - With their commitment in pastoral activities, promoting a ministerial Church;
 - Promoting the missionary awareness of the Church.
- They promote the missionary vocation.
- From the point of view of the poor making them the main protagonists of their own liberation.

c) Combonian

- As the Comboni Family, the CLM live their vocation through Daniel Comboni's charisma, re-creating it by the light of their lay status.
- In general they work in co-responsibility and in collaboration with the Comboni Family.
- This supposes:

- a) Identification with the charisma, the founder's knowledge and his spirituality, to be witness of Jesus' Gospel.
- b) “To Save Africa with Africa” being promoters and animators of local laypeople.
- c) To make a preferential option for the least in society (the excluded and impoverished), which to be authentic, is born of faith, which influences the world of politics, of education, of the economy, etc. willing to bear the cross with the crucified of today.
- d) Community Life as the fundamental dimension of the missionary life. That is carried out in the community of CLM (where it is possible), be it in the apostolic community with the Comboni Missionaries or other pastoral agents; maintaining an austere style of life and an attitude of sharing with people.
- e) Continuing in Europe the "missionary" work being carried out especially in the promotion of the justice and the solidarity, with an “alternative lifestyle” and maintaining the CLM presence in projects ‘ad extra’ in the various missions.
- f) As part of the Comboni Family, we believe that the CLMs , MCCJ, Comboni Sisters and seculars should come together for assemblies (as observers), retreats, feasts or special days of the Comboni Family, etc.

d) Autonomy and structures of the CLM

The CLM of all the Provinces although they are moving towards a future autonomy still depends some how on the MCCJ. For this they have created a certain structure with many similarities to each other. We summarized what could be used as the beginning of a small debate that guides us on how that road towards autonomy could be, and which at the same time unites them at continental and intercontinental level.

Essential elements

- The COMBONI LAY MISSIONARY (CLM) are a movement of the faithful people linked to the Institute of the ‘Comboni Missionary of the Heart of Jesus’ (MCCJ) depending on them and in communion with the whole Comboni family. This dependence is of provisional character and it will cease when the Movement has personnel of its own and the means that can guarantee its autonomy, for which it will be necessary to have had positive experiences of mission, and a formative and financial backing.
- The presence of a CLM coordinating team exists already or is still needed in some Provinces.
- There are branches for areas, caring for the formation of the candidates, and the reinsertion of those back from the mission.
- The CLM in order to be an alive movement needs the people who are in formation, those who are in mission and those who have returned to their home

countries. The movement should guarantee formation, looking for economical resources, to be a reference of the Comboni charism of the laity and to keep alive the spirit of the CLM movement.

- We believe it is necessary to prepare more lay people who are able to guarantee the formation and accompaniment within the CLM.

Financial autonomy

- 1.- The CLM movement is the first interested to find it's economical autonomy and there for it will take the necessary initiative to fullfill this aim.
- 2.- There will be personal commitment of each CLM according to their ability to contribute. They will have co-responsibility to the movement. Each CLM group should continue in its own process toward financial autonomy.
- 3.- The different Provinces provide MCCJ personnel for the formation and guiding of the CLM, as well as infrastructure and economic contribution (if necessary) or the administrations to carry forward the life of the CLM.

III. FORMATION

Different topics should take place during formation like human, Christian and Comboni missionary maturity. Considered at the same time are the spirituality, the identification with the CLM, the reality of the mission and in particular of the mission country and the project to which one will be sent (language, culture, ecclesiastic reality...) and its human aspects especially the resolution of conflicts and personal relationships. The participation of the CLM with experience in mission is important towards the formation of the new candidates.

Stages of formation

Several stages exist:

- **Stage of knowledge and first contacts** (Length varies according the candidate.)
- **Discernment stage** (Around one year, minimum) to know the candidate and to discern their vocation, etc.
- **Going in-depth stage** (it varies according to the Province, 1 or 2 years): it is developed in weekend encounters, seminars, retreats, etc.
- **Specific preparation** (an ideal of a minimum of 6 months of community experience):

Usually the CLM candidate has a course with other missionaries of the country, and it is more intensive course with residence in a Comboni house:

for the language preparation, study of the culture of the destined country, Comboni spirituality and charisma, etc.

- **Formation in mission:** includes six month period of enculturation (culture, language, etc.), specific formation for lay people, and supervision from someone outside of mission.
- **Permanent formation:** (Includes those who have returned from mission).

We suggest that there will be personal accompaniment in all stages of formation.

IV. PRACTICAL ASPECTS

a) Insurances

1. All those who leave for the mission should have health insurance and social insurance respect of retirement but their modalities are different according to the situation of the country and of the movement.

b) Contracts

1. In all the Provinces there should be contracts involving all the interested parties.
2. Fundamental points that should be part of the contract:
 - Project and work areas in which the CLM will be involved
 - Signatures of the people who are involved in the project (Provinces and CLM)
 - Economic aspects: participation of several parties (NGO, Province that sends, Province that receives, local Churches...).
 - Length of time.
 - That all the interested parts be involved and sign the contract.
 - Rights and duties of all parties should be specified (see IV d).

c) Economy

1. We see the goodness of committing ourselves to start a provincial common fund through personal contribution from the CLM and donations for the basic needs of the movement.
2. There are different ways of solving their economic problems:

Germany:

- For the 1 year projects: they depend more on themselves and the help of other entities (MCCJ, NGO, diocese, benefactors, friends...);
- For the three years projects: there is more participation and responsibility of several entities.

Spain:

- The projects are in hands of the CLM movement, in collaboration with the NGO “AMANI”, the MCCJ and supervised by the executive of the movement. The collaboration of all the parties is expected (CLM, entities, benefactors, friends...).

Italy:

- CLM depend on the Comboni Lay, MCCJ and other entities like the Episcopal Conference, diocesan offices, friends, etc.

Portugal:

- They depend much on the province MCCJ and on the work contracts with the State (teachers). The participation of the CLM is small.

Involving everybody

- Contribution of the same CLM
- Contribution of the CLM movement (executive, NGO...)
- Contribution of the local Churches (the one of origin and the one that receives)
- Contribution of the Provinces (the one that sends and the one that receives)
- Contribution of official entities (NGOs, Government...)
- Contribution of friends and benefactors
- Contribution from the projects where the CLM are involved.

d) Cooperation among agents

1. Task of the CLM movement

- The coordinating team keeps the dialogue with the receiving provinces (and the people in charge of the projects) and looks for those that are convenient for the CLM.
- To prepare and to send CLM to the mission countries;
- To accompany their progress and to assist them in their needs in their destination and on their return.
- To keep up the missionary awareness and to publicise the experience of the CLM in their places of origin.
- To keep in contact with their families, parishes, etc. during the period of the CLM staying in missions.

1. The Province that sends

- It collaborates in the preparation of the CLM as the main part of their collaboration with the Comboni Laity;
- It presents the CLM to the diocese of origin for their collaboration and sending;

- It presents the CLM to the Province of destination for the project worked out by common accord;
- It finds an appropriate moment for the sending out (assembly, combonian feast...).

2. The Church of origin

- The CLM feel part of a missionary local church which constitutes the privileged and supportive atmosphere for their missionary endeavour, before they leave and when they return.
- It supports them both spiritually and materially.
- It expects in its turn to be continually animated by frequent communication (letters, pictures...), and their involvement in mission animation at their return.

3. The Province that receives the CLM

- Knows the candidates or have enough information about them;
- Welcomes the CLM whole-heartedly;
- Offers a programme of formation and inculturation to the CLM;
- Helps the CLM to know the people and to respect their culture;
- Puts a person in charge of the CLM in the province. Promotes collaboration between local or foreign CLM.
- Favours a simple lifestyle like that people;
- Guarantees their independence as a group and the communion with the Province.

4. With the Church that receives

- It is important that the project has been born of recognition of the needs of the Christian community and of the local Church where the CLM will work;
- For this reason it is important that people and leaders of the community be involved as much as possible, in the setting up of the project (objectives, local people's participation, economic participation...), as in its realization and evaluation;
- To avoid the paternalism and the over-dependence, the priority of the undertaking should be the use of the human resources and materials of the place itself, and the formation of local agents that can take the project ahead.

These elements should be kept in mind in the formative programmes (base and ongoing) and kept in mind also in the contracts.

V - IN THE MISSIONS

a) Missionary areas

1. Criteria to keep in mind in the election of the mission field:

- The needs of the local Church;
- Places of first evangelisation and among the poorest and neediest;
- The preparation and talents of the CLM;
- Projects which have been approved by the province asks for the CLM;
- Projects have to be clear and sustainable safeguarding the continuity;
- Where they can live in a community that facilitates the mutual help, formation and internationality, and be signs of an evangelizing community and where everyone has a personal task to fulfil;
- Assistance to the CLM with children where it is necessary

2. Intervention models:

- Pastoral Model (Where the CLM community takes care of the parish or a large part of it is put in the hands of the community). We underline as positive aspects the possibility of working in the explicit announcement of the faith, as well as showing a pattern of Church nearer to the people.
- Social Model: (Inserted in problems of justice and peace, community development, and so on). It is a model that has a wide field of activities, helping also the insertion of the CLM community into the real life of the people.
- Working Model: (working in one's own local structures as another). In this way we don't create new things, but rather we support what they have already established, working from the inside, strengthening the local structures.

These models can be separate or exist together in the same community or work-area.

b) Methodology

1. Fundamental aspects of the Methodology

1.1.- "Save Africa by means of Africa"

- Recognition of people's dignity;
- Attitude of listening, cooperation, co-responsibility and fraternity;
- To form local leaders for the evangelisation and the human development;
- To form the local population and guide it so that the population itself is the main subject and the architect of its own destiny;
- To promote the growth and not the dependence of the people;

1.2.- To make common cause with people

- To avoid falling into the temptation of creating new superstructures neither personal projects;

- To be of service to the people, living without big pretension;
- Projects according to the needs and capabilities of the local Church;

1.3.- Inculturation and inter-religious Dialogue

- The knowledge of the language, of the country, of the area is important in view of respect for the culture, the traditions and the religion of the people;
- Insertion into the cultural background of the people with an attitude of humility;
- To know and to respect the beliefs and the way of living of the people;
- Being a sign of communion improving the interethnic and inter-religious dialogue

To be sensitive towards their spirituality and to transmit solid truths based on the Word, and not on our own views;

- Sense of giving and receiving. Only by accepting that we are evangelized by the poor will we be in a conditions of being good missionaries.

1.4 To evangelize as a community

- An apostolic community made of men and women, single or married, and children, the ordained, etc.

- To be signs as evangelizing communities;
- What is read in the Gospel, assimilated and lived in community, acquires due coherence and becomes a solution for our concrete life-situations;
- Mutual help. Dialogue should be a constant, present in the whole formative process of a CLM and a means of solving the conflicts occurring among those who live with others;

- Help to formation and internationality,
- The presence of a coordinator in each group should be something habitual.

They pretend a community life style sharing what they are, what they live and what they have

1. Other aspects

- It is important to maintain contact with the Church that has sent the CLM.

c) How do they live (Lifestyle)

1. To adjust the lifestyle to that of the people, to a sober and simple life. Without negating its own culture and identity.
2. An evangelical lifestyle adopting poor means.
3. A clear option in solidarity with the poor, demands of us to be with the poor, minimizing the gap
4. The CLM should be characterized by its availability, that is, putting itself at the service of the missions.
5. Austerity of means and structures should mark our lifestyle and our presence in the missions.

6. The community should be the centre of the mission and of our missionary style. Where there is a family it should be the first domestic community necessary to be taken care of and the place from where to evangelize.
7. It is necessary to avoid that there are only two people in the mission posts, since it creates a lot of isolation. It would be convenient ~~that~~ to form teams.
8. The intervention of the CLM as professionals should be framed clearly in an evangelisation context and be developed with a Christian spirit so that they may not be seen simply as technicians or helpers, but transmit the necessity of a person's complete development.

VI. UPON RETURNING HOME

a) Reinsertion

Reinsertion and evaluation is essential to complete the mission experienced and to prepare for further life. The return is a difficult moment, which should be taken care of and studied thoroughly

Some elements to keep in mind:

- To make an evaluation at the time of return.
- To provide a sum of money to facilitate the reinsertion of the CLM (enough for about three months...).
- To have somebody responsible for the welcoming at area or national level (an individual or the executive) to act as liaison and to mobilize the whole group in support of those who have returned (equally in the search for employment, etc.).
- The need to be helped in the process of social reinstatement, healing of traumas, and so on.
- It is advisable to have some time to oneself and for the family, to take part in some course of renewal, and so on.

b) Commitment with the CLM

1. According to their vocation it is hoped that the CLM on their return continue to be active in their local Church and in the CLM movement.
2. Sectors in which they can be involved:
 - To share their experience with different groups, ecclesiastic or civic;
 - To join a group of CLM already existent and to collaborate with them;
 - To participate in initiatives of Comboni family and of the local Church that aim at the animation and formation of society and of Christian communities on the reality and situations of the people of the impoverished countries with whom they had shared their time in the missions;
 - To participate in missionary animation, in the field of vocation promotion;

- To participate in the executive, in the formation of new candidates, in their welcome and guidance;
- To collaborate with the Diocesan Missionary Centres;
- To be involved in actions of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), to welcome immigrants and to involve in actions of justice and social solidarity;
- To collaborate with associations that support the missions and in particular the projects of the CLM.

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CLM's European committee