

Ignatian Advocacy Network (IAN): The emerging model Fernando Franco SJ

The goal of this document is to describe briefly the formation of the platform of Ignatian Advocacy Networks (IAN). The model described here is based on the conclusions agreed upon by the Conference (Assistancy) Coordinators of the Social Apostolate at the annual meeting in Rome (May 2009).

Rationale for the IAN

The call to engage in advocacy. General Congregation 35 has given the Society a call to engage in advocacy as a means to put into practice our mission of reconciliation, our vocation to build bridges.¹

The new structures of Jesuit governance. By establishing a new apostolic role for the six Presidents of Conferences, GC 35 has opened the way for more universal and global forms of apostolic government, which in turn provide a natural setting for the development of the IAN organisational model.

Apostolic discernment and planning. Fr. General has proposed five apostolic goals for the whole Society. The second goal speaks of the need for the Society to determine which the apostolic frontiers and global preferences might be. This implies a process of “creative and daring evaluation of all our apostolates that might lead to ongoing apostolic planning.”

One apostolic body for a universal mission. GC 35 strongly expressed the ideal that in the midst of great diversity we are called to live as one apostolic body. This has been felt and expressed at various international events, such as the Escorial Workshop, and the Ignatian Family gathering in January 2009 prior to the World Social Forum at Belém (Brazil).

Principles underlying IAN

Principle of differentiated apostolic unity. This principle emphasizes, first, the need for any apostolic work to have a clear Jesuit identity and to be inserted in concrete Jesuit structures of governance. It defines this unity as pluricultural and characterised by flat hierarchies. Symbols may help to understand this

¹“The complexity of the problems we face and the richness of the opportunities offered demand that we build bridges between the rich and the poor, *establishing advocacy links* of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interest” (D 3, no. 28). [Emphasis mine].

complex reality: multiple-centred entity, nodal point of a structure, and the 'hub'.

Principle of international apostolic subsidiarity. Conferences will play a double role in carrying out our mission. First, they will provide a regional context and a broader set of goals and priorities within which provinces will fix their apostolic plans. Second, in collaboration with other Conferences, they may increasingly adopt a new role in defining global apostolic priorities and in supporting international projects.

Elements of the IAN

One simple way of defining the main elements of the organisational model of the IAN is to analyse the relationships that bind together the various elements of the whole structure.

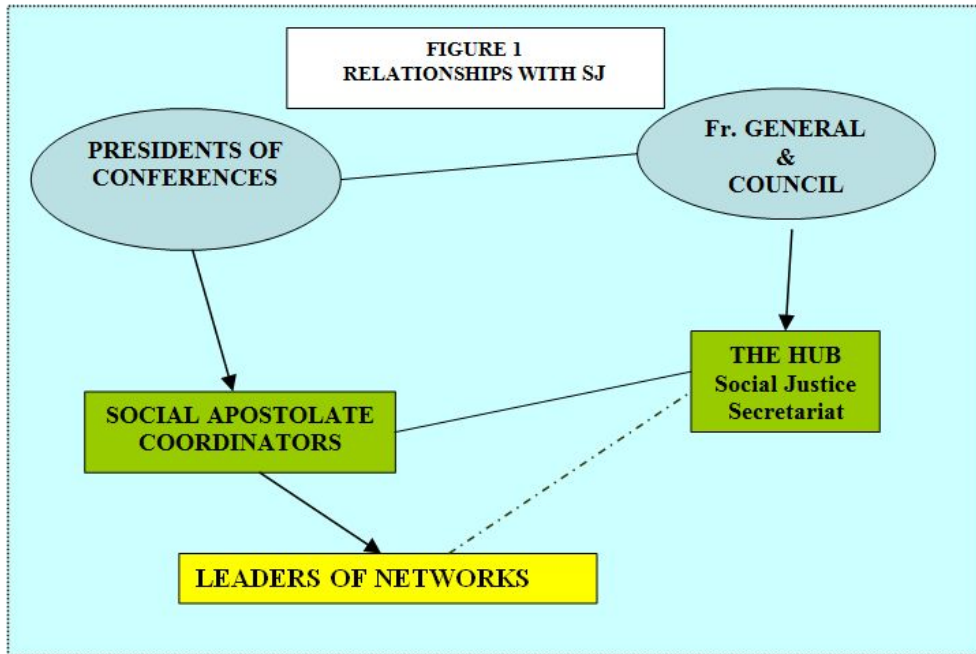
[1] Relationships with the Society of Jesus

From an apostolic point of view, the government of the Society includes the six Presidents of the Conferences as well as the Curia comprising Fr. General and his Council (Figure 1).

At a **general level**, the IAN needs to be approved and mandated by Fr. General and the Presidents. This mandate may be temporary, subject to further evaluation, and it may be partial, affecting some parts of the model. When they approve a network, the Presidents give a particular mandate to the Delegate or Coordinator of the Social Apostolate to become members, or to start or develop a particular network.

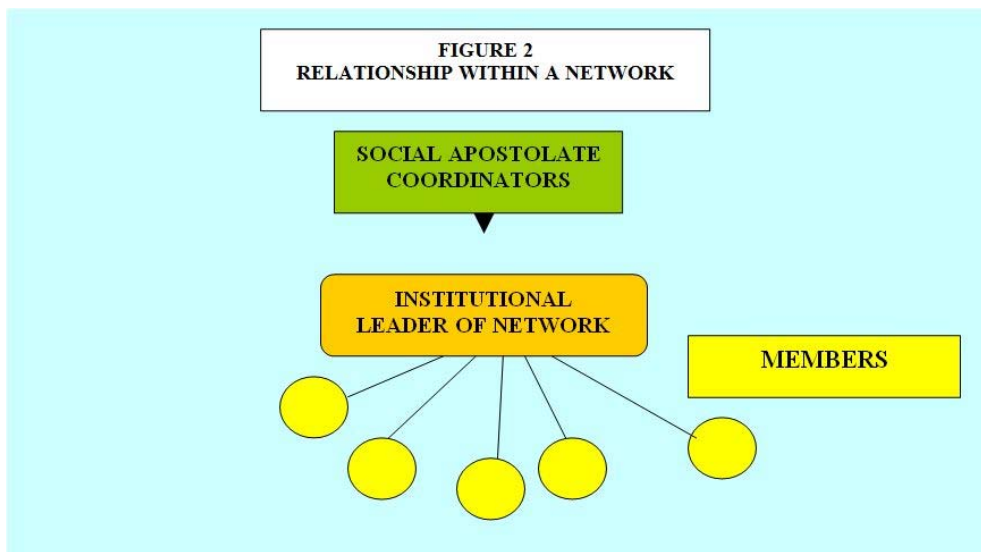
The group of **Conference/Assistancy Coordinators of the Social Apostolate** assumes, as a body, and with the support of SJS, joint responsibility for the functioning of IAN. **Each Coordinator** is responsible for the particular network entrusted to him. Financial responsibility for the network remains with its leader.

The **function of SJS** is envisioned as a 'hub', as a centre for accompanying, supporting, making the entire system dynamic. The broken line joining SJS to the group of leaders of networks (see Fig. 1) indicates that it does not have direct authority over the functioning of the networks and emphasizes its supportive role in making a multiple-centred reality function and remain connected to the 'centre'.



[2] Relationships within a network

The **leader** of the network is primarily a Jesuit (social) institution entrusted with the direct responsibility of managing the network. It is chosen by the Social Coordinator with the approval of the President of the Conference in consultation with SJS (see Fig. 2).



The **members** of the network will be Jesuit institutions approved by the corresponding Coordinator of the Social Apostolate in consultation with the President of the Conference.

Each network needs to have a plan stating at least a set of objectives, strategies and advocacy actions. The approval of an advocacy network may be given according to definite criteria.

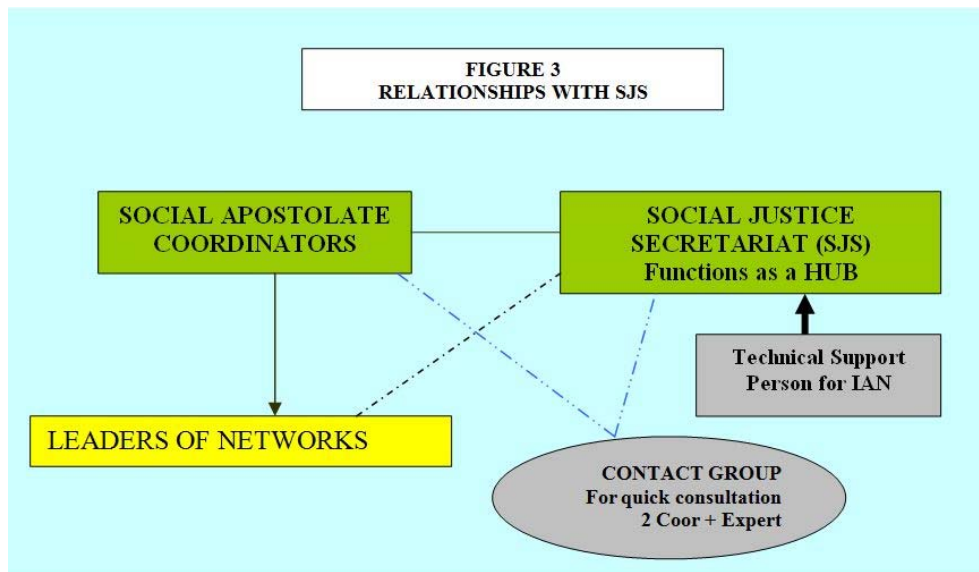
[3] Relationships with SJS

SJS, together with the group of Coordinators, is responsible for IAN (see Fig. 3). More particularly, it

- contributes to creating a shared global vision;
- helps with the development and the management of IAN networks;
- monitors and helps in developing instruments for evaluation; and
- provides legitimacy by connecting to Fr. General.

SJS is to explore ways of supporting particular networks by facilitating, whenever required, the provision of common services like formation and communication. This aspect will take some time to develop.

SJS is supported by the **Contact Group** (CG) whose function is to provide SJS with a quick reference for consultation and checking. The CG is composed of two coordinators and one expert in advocacy-networking appointed by SJS after consultation with the Coordinators.



SJS needs to have a **technical administrative support**, one competent person who can take responsibility for managing the day-to-day responsibilities of IAN.

We are in the process of preparing a Manual '*ad experimentum*'.

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IAN bibliography

Important background documents that were instrumental in the process of creating the Ignatian Advocacy Network.

Eguizábal, José Ignacio et al.: Ignatian Advocacy and Spirituality [link]

Franco, Fernando: [Thematic Networks: an Emerging Structure of Apostolic Action](#). In *Promotio Iustitiae* 101, May 2009. also see update in *Promotio Iustitiae* 102)

Turner, Frank: [A Model of Ignatian Advocacy](#). In: *Promotio Iustitiae* 101, May 2009.

Vera, José María: [Prophetic and Effective Advocacy](#). In: *Promotio Iustitiae* 101, May 2009.