

COMMUNITY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Missionary Situation for Reflection

“We Never Agreed on What We Wanted to Become”

The formation community was busy and active. Everyone fulfilled his assigned responsibilities, the timetable was respected, and apostolic activities were carried out with dedication. Yet, after several months, the formator noticed growing dissatisfaction. Some formandi felt the community focused too much on academic achievement, while others expected greater emphasis on prayer, pastoral exposure, or fraternity. Community meetings often revolved around solving immediate problems, but there was little reflection on the broader direction of the community.

During the annual evaluation, one formandus remarked, *“We work hard, but I am not sure we are growing together toward the same vision.”* Another added, *“We have a timetable, but we do not have a common project.”*

The formator then proposed a process of community discernment. Together they reflected on their mission, identified common priorities, clarified responsibilities, and established concrete goals for the year. Gradually, decisions became more coherent, collaboration increased, and evaluations became more meaningful because everyone knew what they were trying to achieve together.

A community does not become missionary simply by living under the same roof. It grows into a missionary community when its members intentionally discern, plan, and journey together toward a shared vision.

Introduction

Every community is called to be more than a place of residence. It is a missionary community entrusted with a common vocation and a shared mission. This shared calling requires more than goodwill; it requires a common vision, clear priorities, mutual accountability, and regular discernment.

A community project is a practical expression of this shared commitment. It translates the community’s mission into concrete objectives, responsibilities, and action plans that guide daily life and apostolic service. Rather than imposing rigid structures, it helps members align personal gifts with the needs of the community and the mission entrusted to it.

For formandi, learning to prepare, implement, and evaluate a community project is an essential part of formation. It cultivates participation, responsibility, dialogue, planning, and discernment, qualities that will be indispensable throughout missionary life. A well-prepared community project transforms a group of individuals living together into a community intentionally growing together in communion and mission.

I. Claretian Vision of the Community Project

Community planning is not simply an organizational technique but an expression of missionary communion. It enables the community to discern God’s will together, translate its shared vocation into concrete commitments, and evaluate its fidelity to the mission entrusted to it.

The **Claretian Directory** highlights the importance of community planning as a normal expression of shared missionary life. It encourages each community to prepare its community project through prayerful discernment and dialogue so that it becomes a practical guide for living the common vocation rather than merely an administrative document (Dir., 66). The Directory further stresses that the community project should integrate the various dimensions of missionary life, promote participation and shared responsibility, and serve as a point of reference for community animation and evaluation (Dir., 170). It also reminds local superiors that animating the preparation,

implementation, and periodic evaluation of the community project is one of their essential responsibilities in fostering missionary communion (Dir., 431).

The **XX General Chapter** recognized the positive contribution that community planning had already made in strengthening participation and co-responsibility within the Congregation. At the same time, it offered a realistic assessment: *“In recent years the Congregation has provided such worthwhile tools as the plenary meeting and community planning, which have been very useful in helping each Claretian, in communion with the rest, to become a co-responsible agent of the community’s missionary life. While we must acknowledge that there is now more participation and co-responsibility in the programming and governance of our communities, we must also note that the results obtained have not been quite so positive: many community meetings have functioned poorly; in many cases, planning has been insufficient, superficial and not very practical, either because it has not been frequent enough or because it has dwindled into a merely routine formality”* (CPR, 15). This observation remains highly relevant today. A community project bears fruit only when it is prepared with sincerity, implemented consistently, and reviewed regularly.

The **XXIII General Chapter** reaffirmed the central place of the community project in Claretian life, calling every community to prepare its project “linking it to the pastoral projects of the local churches and of the Congregation, and making this project a constant reference for the progress of the community life and for its periodic evaluation” (TMHL, 71.1). Thus, the community project becomes the bridge between the Congregation’s missionary vision and the concrete life of each local community.

The **XXIV General Chapter** further emphasized that formation for mission necessarily includes planning and evaluation, urging communities to “promote opportunities in our communities that foster formation for mission, its planning and evaluation” (MFL, 56.3). Planning, therefore, is itself a formative process that develops discernment, collaboration, and missionary responsibility.

Finally, the **XXVI General Chapter** situated the renewal of community projects within the wider process of synodality and communal discernment: *“We commit ourselves to ... renew our community projects, in an attitude of discernment of God’s will, emphasizing listening to his Word, the communal celebration of forgiveness, care for each member of the community, pastoral planning and recreation in common. We will continue our conversations along the way, conscious that the Lord accompanies us and makes them fruitful”* (QC, 62).

Seen in this light, the community project is much more than an annual programme of activities. It is a spiritual and missionary instrument that helps the community discern together, walk together, and evaluate together, so that its communion continually serves the mission entrusted to it.

II. Why Every Community Needs a Community Project

A missionary community cannot rely solely on goodwill or routine. Without a shared direction, individual initiatives can gradually replace common priorities, leading to fragmentation, misunderstandings, and inconsistent decision-making. A community project provides a common framework that enables members to discern together, work collaboratively, and evaluate their growth with clarity and purpose.

The community project is not merely an administrative document prepared at the beginning of the year. It is a living instrument that translates the community’s vision into concrete commitments. It helps the members identify priorities, organize community life, coordinate apostolic responsibilities, and review their progress regularly. In this way, planning becomes an expression of shared discernment rather than a bureaucratic exercise.

For a formation community, the project has an additional formative value. It teaches formandi that missionary life is built through participation, dialogue, shared responsibility, and accountability. Instead of simply receiving decisions from the formator, they learn to contribute to community planning, assume responsibilities, and evaluate both personal and communal growth. These experiences prepare them for collaborative leadership and missionary service in the future.

A well-developed community project also strengthens continuity. Since community members and responsibilities may change over time, the project provides a common reference that preserves the community's identity and priorities while allowing sufficient flexibility to respond to new needs and emerging missionary challenges.

Ultimately, a community project helps every member answer four fundamental questions:

- What has God entrusted to our community at this stage?
- What priorities are we called to pursue together?
- How will we put these priorities into practice?
- How will we know whether we are growing in communion and mission?

When these questions are answered together through prayerful discernment and ongoing evaluation, the community becomes more intentional, more collaborative, and more faithful to its missionary vocation.

III. What is a Community Project?

A community project is a shared plan of life and mission through which the members of a community discern God's will, establish common priorities, and commit themselves to concrete actions for a specific period. It is the fruit of prayer, dialogue, and communal discernment, enabling the community to journey together with a common purpose.

The Scriptures repeatedly show that God's people do not accomplish their mission through isolated efforts but by discerning and acting together. Before choosing the Twelve, Jesus spent the night in prayer (Lk 6:12–13). Before beginning the Church's mission to the Gentiles, the community at Antioch prayed, fasted, listened to the Holy Spirit, and then sent Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1–3). Likewise, the Council of Jerusalem discerned together before making an important decision, concluding with the words, "*It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*" (Acts 15:28). A community project follows this same biblical pattern: listening together, discerning together, deciding together, and acting together.

A community project is therefore much more than a timetable or a list of activities. It gives direction and purpose to community life by answering fundamental questions: What is God calling us to be and do? What priorities should guide us? How will we translate them into concrete actions? How will we evaluate our fidelity to the mission?

It is not a document prepared by the superior or formator for the members, but a shared commitment developed and owned by the entire community. The superior or formator animates the process, but every member participates actively through prayer, dialogue, discernment, and responsible collaboration. As St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, "*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*" (1 Cor 12:7). Every member therefore contributes his gifts to the building up of the community and its mission.

For a formation community, the community project is also a valuable formative instrument. By participating in its preparation, implementation, and evaluation, formandi learn collaboration, shared responsibility, accountability, and communal discernment. They gradually discover that missionary life is not shaped by individual preferences but by a common vocation lived in communion. In this way, they learn to "*maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph 4:3) while respecting the diversity of gifts and responsibilities.

Because circumstances and missionary needs evolve, the community project should be reviewed and renewed periodically. It remains a living instrument that enables the community to respond creatively to new challenges while remaining faithful to its vocation. As the proverb reminds us, "*Without a vision the people lose their way*" (Prov 29:18). A well-discerned community project provides that shared vision, helping the community grow in communion, strengthen its missionary witness, and seek, above all, the will of God together.

IV. Characteristics of an Effective Community Project

Not every written plan becomes a meaningful community project. A project is effective when it is born from genuine communal discernment, owned by all the members, and translated into concrete actions. It should not become a document that is prepared at the beginning of the year and forgotten, but a living guide that shapes the rhythm of community life and mission.

An effective community project has the following characteristics:

Prayerfully discerned. It begins by listening to God before making plans. Like the community at Antioch, members seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer, reflection, and dialogue before arriving at decisions (Acts 13:1–3). Planning is therefore a spiritual act of discernment rather than merely an organizational exercise.

Mission-centred. The project keeps the community focused on its missionary vocation rather than individual preferences or routine activities. It constantly asks how the community can better participate in Christ's mission and witness to the Gospel in its concrete context.

Shared and participatory. Every member has both the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute. The project reflects the wisdom and gifts of the whole community, recognizing that *“we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another”* (Rom 12:5). Participation creates ownership, commitment, and mutual accountability.

Realistic and practical. An effective project sets achievable priorities instead of trying to accomplish everything at once. It identifies concrete objectives, assigns responsibilities, establishes timelines, and provides realistic means for implementation.

Balanced and holistic. It embraces all the essential dimensions of community life: prayer, fraternity, ongoing formation, apostolic mission, human growth, stewardship of resources, health and well-being, and care for creation. A balanced project prevents one area from overshadowing the others.

Flexible and responsive. While providing clear direction, the project remains open to new missionary opportunities and unforeseen circumstances. Like St. Paul, who adapted his missionary journeys according to the guidance of the Spirit (Acts 16:6–10), the community remains attentive to God's invitations in changing situations.

Regularly evaluated. An effective project is reviewed periodically rather than only at the end of the year. Regular evaluation helps the community celebrate progress, recognize shortcomings, revise priorities where necessary, and continue growing together. As St. Paul encourages, *“Examine yourselves”* (2 Cor 13:5); communities likewise benefit from honest and prayerful self-evaluation.

Ultimately, an effective community project is not measured by the number of activities completed but by the quality of communion it fosters, the fidelity with which it serves the mission, and the growth of its members as missionary disciples. When rooted in prayer, sustained by dialogue, and guided by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a practical expression of the community's shared commitment to follow Christ together.

V. Essential Components of a Community Project

While every community project should be adapted to the local context, certain essential elements help ensure that it is clear, practical, and effective. These components provide a common framework for planning, implementation, and evaluation.

1. Community Vision

Every project begins with a shared vision. Before deciding *what* to do, the community reflects on *who it is called to become*. This vision should flow from the Gospel, the charism of the Congregation, the needs of the Church, and the concrete reality in which the community lives. A clear vision gives unity to all subsequent decisions and keeps the community focused on its missionary identity.

2. Community Priorities

No community can address every need simultaneously. After prayerful discernment, the members identify a limited number of priorities that deserve special attention during the year. These priorities should emerge from the evaluation of the previous year, the stage of formation, the apostolic situation, and the needs of the community.

3. Goals and Objectives

The priorities are translated into concrete goals and measurable objectives. Goals express the desired direction, while objectives specify what the community intends to achieve within a defined period. Clear objectives make implementation and evaluation possible.

For example:

Goal	Objective
Strengthen community prayer	Introduce one monthly community recollection and a weekly faith-sharing session.
Foster fraternity	Organize a monthly community recreation and quarterly community outing.

Objectives should be specific, realistic, and achievable.

4. Action Plan

Each objective should be accompanied by concrete actions that explain how it will be achieved. The action plan identifies the activities to be carried out, the persons responsible, the timeline, and the resources required. This prevents the project from remaining at the level of good intentions.

5. Responsibilities

Shared responsibility is essential for the success of any community project. While the superior or formator animates the overall process, every member should have opportunities to contribute according to his gifts and responsibilities. Clearly identifying who coordinates each activity promotes participation, ownership, and accountability.

6. Timeline

A realistic timetable helps the community distribute activities throughout the year and avoid unnecessary pressure or last-minute planning. Some commitments are daily or weekly, while others may be monthly, quarterly, or annual. A timeline enables the community to maintain a healthy rhythm of life and mission.

7. Evaluation

Every project should include moments of periodic review. Evaluation is not primarily about judging success or failure but about discerning how faithfully the community is responding to God's call. It asks simple questions: What have we achieved? What challenges have emerged? What needs to be strengthened? What is the Holy Spirit inviting us to do next? Regular evaluation keeps the project alive and allows the community to grow through continuous learning and renewal.

These components are not rigid requirements but practical guides. Different communities may organize them in different ways according to their circumstances. What matters is that the project remains simple, participatory, realistic, and sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing demands of missionary life while keeping the community united around a common vision and mission.

VI. Developing a Community Project: A Step-by-Step Process

Preparing a community project is itself a formative experience. The way the project is developed is often as important as the final document. When members pray, listen, discern, and decide together, they grow in communion and shared responsibility. The following process offers a practical framework that can be adapted to the needs of each community.

Step 1. Begin with Prayer and Discernment

The process should begin by placing the community before God. Through prayer and the Word of God, members seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, asking not, "*What do we want to do?*" but "*What is God asking of us at this moment?*" As the disciples prayed before important decisions (Acts 1:14–26; 13:1–3), the community opens itself to God's initiatives rather than relying solely on human planning.

Step 2. Review the Present Reality

Before setting new goals, the community reflects honestly on its present situation. Helpful questions include:

- What have been our strengths during the past year?
- Where have we experienced growth?
- What challenges remain unresolved?
- What opportunities and needs do we perceive in our community and mission?

A realistic assessment prevents unrealistic planning and ensures that the project responds to actual needs rather than assumptions.

Step 3. Discern Priorities

No community can do everything. After listening to one another and reflecting on the signs of the times, members prayerfully identify a few priorities that deserve special attention during the coming year. These priorities should be consistent with the Gospel, the Congregation's orientations, the stage of formation, and the local missionary context.

Usually, three to five priorities are sufficient. Too many priorities often result in little being accomplished.

Step 4. Formulate Goals and Concrete Actions

Each priority is translated into clear goals and practical actions. For every goal, the community should identify:

- the specific objective,
- the concrete actions to be taken,
- the person or team responsible,
- the timeline for implementation,
- and the resources required.

The simpler and more concrete the plan, the easier it is to implement.

Step 5. Seek Consensus and Commitment

The draft project should be discussed openly until the community reaches broad consensus. While unanimous agreement on every detail may not always be possible, every member should feel heard and be willing to support the final project. Once approved, the project becomes a shared commitment rather than merely the responsibility of the superior or formator.

Step 6. Implement the Project

A community project bears fruit only when it shapes daily life. Community meetings, apostolic planning, formation activities, and important decisions should regularly refer back to the agreed priorities. Members should encourage one another to remain faithful to the commitments they have made together.

Step 7. Review and Revise Regularly

The project should be reviewed periodically—perhaps monthly or quarterly—to assess progress, address emerging challenges, and make necessary adjustments. Such reviews prevent the project from becoming a forgotten document and help the community remain attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of the year, the community conducts a comprehensive evaluation. This becomes the starting point for preparing the next community project, creating a continuous cycle of **discernment, planning, action, evaluation, and renewal**.

A community project is therefore not a one-time exercise but a dynamic process of conversion. As circumstances change and new missionary needs emerge, the community continues to ask with humility and openness: “Lord, what are you calling us to become and to do together?” This attitude keeps the project alive and enables the community to grow continually in communion and mission.

VII. Implementation and Monitoring

A community project achieves its purpose only when it is lived consistently. Implementation is not about completing a list of activities but about allowing the agreed priorities to shape the daily life, relationships, and mission of the community. As St. James reminds us, “*Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers*” (Jas 1:22). In the same spirit, a community project calls for faithful action, not simply good intentions.

1. Integrating the Project into Daily Life

The community project should become the reference point for community decisions throughout the year. It should influence the planning of prayer, community meetings, apostolic commitments, formation programmes, recreation, and the use of resources. When important decisions arise, the community can ask: *Does this help us live the priorities we have discerned together?*

2. Shared Responsibility

Implementation is a shared responsibility. While the superior or formator animates the process and ensures continuity, every member contributes according to his role and gifts. Individual responsibilities should be carried out with commitment, while members support and encourage one another in fulfilling the common project. In this way, the community embodies St. Paul's exhortation: *"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ"* (Gal 6:2).

3. Periodic Monitoring

Regular review helps the community remain focused and prevents the project from becoming inactive. A brief review during the monthly community meeting or a more comprehensive quarterly evaluation is often sufficient. These moments are opportunities not to assign blame but to discern together what the Holy Spirit is accomplishing in the community.

Some helpful questions are:

- Which commitments have we fulfilled well?
- What has promoted our growth in communion and mission?
- Which goals have not progressed as expected?
- What obstacles have we encountered?
- What adjustments are now needed?

Such reviews encourage learning, flexibility, and renewed commitment.

4. Annual Evaluation

At the end of the year, the community undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the entire project. This evaluation should be honest, prayerful, and participatory. It is an occasion to thank God for the graces received, acknowledge shortcomings with humility, and identify new priorities for the future. Rather than asking only *"Did we complete our activities?"*, the deeper question is: *"Have we grown as a missionary community?"*

5. A Living Document

A community project should never remain fixed when circumstances change. New missionary assignments, unexpected challenges, changes in community membership, or emerging pastoral needs may require the community to revise some objectives or strategies. Such adaptations are signs of responsible discernment rather than failure. Like the early Church, which continually adjusted its missionary plans under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6–10), every community is called to remain attentive and responsive to God's ongoing call.

When implemented with perseverance and reviewed regularly, the community project becomes much more than a planning document. It becomes a practical school of communion, shared responsibility, discernment, and missionary fidelity, helping the community to grow together in its vocation and mission.

VIII. Common Pitfalls and Good Practices

A community project can become a powerful instrument of communion and mission, but it can also lose its effectiveness if it is approached superficially. Recognizing common pitfalls helps communities develop healthier planning habits and remain faithful to their shared commitments.

Common Pitfalls	Good Practices
Preparing the project only to satisfy a requirement.	Treat the project as a process of communal discernment and renewal.
The superior or formator prepares the project alone.	Involve every member through prayer, dialogue, and shared reflection.
Setting too many priorities.	Focus on a few priorities that are realistic and achievable.
Writing vague or idealistic objectives.	Formulate clear, concrete, and measurable commitments.
Failing to assign responsibilities.	Clearly identify who will coordinate each initiative.
Forgetting the project after it is approved.	Refer to the project regularly in community meetings and planning.
Evaluating only at the end of the year.	Conduct periodic reviews and make necessary adjustments.
Resisting any modification during the year.	Remain open to revising the project when circumstances or missionary needs change.

Beyond avoiding these pitfalls, certain attitudes contribute significantly to the success of a community project.

- **Pray before planning.** Discernment is more important than efficiency. Communities first seek God's will before deciding on their own preferences.
- **Listen deeply.** Every member brings valuable experience and insight. Respectful listening creates trust and leads to wiser decisions.
- **Keep the project simple.** A concise and realistic project is more likely to be implemented than an ambitious document filled with numerous objectives.
- **Focus on quality rather than quantity.** The success of a community project is not measured by the number of activities completed but by the extent to which it deepens communion, strengthens missionary commitment, and promotes personal and communal growth.
- **Review regularly.** Frequent evaluation allows the community to celebrate progress, identify difficulties early, and make timely adjustments.
- **Remain open to the Holy Spirit.** Planning should never become rigid. Like the first Christian communities, the members remain attentive to God's unexpected invitations and willing to adapt their plans accordingly.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of a community project depends less on the quality of the written document than on the commitment of the community to live it. When members pray together, discern together, assume shared responsibility, and evaluate together, the project becomes a genuine instrument of missionary communion rather than merely an administrative exercise.

IX. Formation Strategies

Learning to prepare and implement a community project is an integral part of formation. Formandi should gradually develop the attitudes and skills needed to discern, plan, collaborate, and evaluate together. These competencies are best acquired through practice rather than theory.

Initial Formation

Formation communities should involve formandi in the entire process of developing the annual community project. Under the guidance of the formators, they should learn to analyse the community's reality, identify priorities, formulate practical goals, assign responsibilities, and participate in regular evaluations. Such involvement fosters ownership, shared responsibility, and accountability from the beginning of missionary life.

As formation progresses, increasing responsibility can be entrusted to the formandi. Senior members may facilitate discussions, coordinate specific areas of the project, or lead periodic evaluations, always under the supervision of the formation team.

Ongoing Formation

Community projects should remain an essential practice throughout missionary life. Every local community should dedicate time each year to prayerfully review its mission, evaluate its previous commitments, discern new priorities, and renew its project. This process keeps the community dynamic, responsive, and united in its missionary purpose.

Superiors and local leaders should be equipped to facilitate communal discernment, encourage participation, manage differences constructively, and foster consensus. Their role is not simply to administer the project but to animate a process in which every member contributes to the common mission.

Practical Formation Activities

Formation programmes may include practical exercises such as:

- Preparing a community project for a hypothetical formation house or local community.
- Reviewing an existing community project and identifying its strengths and weaknesses.
- Participating in annual community planning and evaluation meetings.
- Reflecting on case studies where the absence of a shared community project led to confusion, conflict, or ineffective mission.
- Learning to formulate realistic goals, action plans, and evaluation criteria through group workshops.

Signs of Growth

Formation in community project development is bearing fruit when the formandus:

- understands the value of communal discernment before planning;
- contributes responsibly to community discussions and decisions;
- balances personal initiatives with the priorities of the community;
- accepts responsibilities with accountability and perseverance;
- participates constructively in evaluation and revision;
- demonstrates flexibility and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and
- increasingly views planning as a shared missionary responsibility rather than an administrative obligation.

When communities regularly discern, plan, implement, and evaluate together, they cultivate habits of collaboration, responsibility, and missionary communion that sustain them throughout their lives. A well-lived community project thus becomes not only a management tool but also a school of synodality, preparing missionaries to journey together in fidelity to Christ and his mission.

X. Key Takeaways

- A community project is a shared plan of life and mission that translates the community's discerned vision into concrete commitments and actions.
- It is born from prayer, communal discernment, dialogue, and participation, not merely from administrative planning.
- A good community project integrates the essential dimensions of community life—prayer, fraternity, formation, mission, stewardship, and personal growth—into a coherent whole.

- Every member has both the right and the responsibility to contribute to its preparation, implementation, and evaluation.
- An effective community project focuses on a few realistic priorities, identifies clear objectives, assigns responsibilities, establishes timelines, and includes regular evaluation.
- The value of a community project lies not in the quality of the written document but in the community's commitment to live it faithfully.
- Periodic review enables the community to celebrate progress, learn from challenges, revise priorities when necessary, and remain responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Preparing and implementing a community project is a formative experience that develops discernment, collaboration, accountability, shared responsibility, and synodal leadership.
- A community project is a living document that evolves with the changing needs of the community and its mission.
- Ultimately, a community project helps transform a group of individuals living together into a missionary community that prays together, discerns together, plans together, acts together, and grows together in fidelity to Christ and his mission.

XI. Reflection Questions

Personal Reflection

1. How do I understand my responsibility in building and implementing our community project?
2. Do I actively contribute to community planning, or do I tend to remain a passive observer?
3. Am I willing to subordinate my personal preferences to the priorities discerned by the community?
4. How faithfully do I fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to me by the community?
5. What attitudes or habits make it difficult for me to collaborate effectively with others?
6. How open am I to evaluation, constructive feedback, and necessary change?
7. In what ways can I contribute more effectively to the community's shared mission?

Community Reflection

1. Does our community have a clear and shared vision that guides our life and mission?
2. Was our community project prepared through genuine prayer, dialogue, and communal discernment?
3. Does every member feel heard, involved, and responsible for the project?
4. Are our priorities realistic, mission-oriented, and adapted to our present circumstances?
5. Do we regularly review our community project, or does it remain largely forgotten after its approval?
6. How effectively does our project integrate prayer, fraternity, formation, apostolic mission, and community life?
7. What aspects of our community project have contributed most to our growth in communion and mission?
8. What concrete changes should we make so that our next community project becomes a more effective instrument of missionary life?

Community Dialogue

Conclude the reflection by sharing one concrete commitment that each member is willing to undertake to strengthen the implementation of the community project during the coming months. The community may then identify one or two practical actions that will help everyone grow in shared responsibility, communion, and missionary effectiveness.

XII. Practical Exercises

Exercise 1. Analysing a Community Project

Obtain the community project of your formation house or local community. Working individually or in small groups, evaluate it using the following questions:

- Does it present a clear vision and mission?
- Are the priorities well defined?
- Are the goals realistic and achievable?
- Are responsibilities clearly assigned?
- Does it include a timeline and methods of evaluation?
- What are its strengths?
- What improvements would you suggest?

Present your observations to the community and discuss possible refinements.

Exercise 2. Preparing a Community Project

Working in groups, imagine that you have been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the annual project for a formation community of twelve members.

Prepare a community project that includes:

- a shared vision;
- three to five community priorities;
- specific goals and objectives;
- concrete action plans;
- responsibilities;
- a timeline; and
- methods for periodic evaluation.

Present the project to the larger group, explaining the reasons behind your priorities and decisions.

Exercise 3. From Vision to Action

Choose one priority commonly found in community life (for example, community prayer, fraternity, apostolic collaboration, ongoing formation, or care for creation).

Develop a simple implementation plan by identifying:

- the objective;
- the concrete actions;
- the person(s) responsible;
- the timeline; and
- indicators that will help evaluate progress.

Discuss how the plan could realistically be implemented within your own community.

Exercise 4. Community Evaluation Simulation

Conduct a simulated quarterly evaluation of a community project.

Assign different members the roles of superior, secretary, and community members. Review a sample project and discuss:

- Which commitments have been fulfilled?
- Which have not been achieved?
- What factors contributed to success or failure?
- What modifications should be made for the coming months?

Conclude by revising the project based on the evaluation.

Exercise 5. Personal Commitment

After reflecting on this module, each forandus writes a brief personal action plan addressing the following questions:

- How can I contribute more actively to the preparation and implementation of our community project?
- What attitude do I need to strengthen in order to become a better collaborator?
- What concrete commitment will I undertake during the coming months to build a more participatory and mission-oriented community?

The commitments may be shared voluntarily in the community and reviewed during the next community evaluation.

These exercises are intended not merely to develop planning skills but to cultivate habits of prayerful discernment, shared responsibility, collaboration, accountability, and missionary communion. When communities learn to discern, plan, implement, and evaluate together, the community project becomes a genuine school of synodality and an effective instrument for living the Gospel and the Claretian missionary vocation.

Conclusion

A community project is far more than an annual plan or an administrative requirement. It is a practical expression of a community's shared vocation, enabling its members to discern God's will, establish common priorities, and journey together in communion and mission. When rooted in prayer, shaped by dialogue, and sustained through regular evaluation, it becomes a living instrument of missionary renewal.

For forandí, learning to prepare, implement, and evaluate a community project is an essential part of formation. It cultivates habits of listening, shared responsibility, accountability, collaboration, and synodal discernment that will remain vital throughout their missionary lives. In this way, they learn that mission is not the achievement of isolated individuals but the fruit of communities united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.

As the Claretian tradition reminds us, the community project should never become a routine document filed away after its approval. Rather, it should remain a constant point of reference that inspires the community to pray together, discern together, plan together, serve together, and evaluate together. Faithfully lived, it transforms the local community into a true missionary fraternity—one that continually renews itself in response to God's call and offers a credible witness to the Gospel through the communion of its life and mission.

Appendix

Appendix A. Community Project Planning Worksheet

This worksheet can be used during the annual community planning meeting.

Area	Questions for Discernment	Community Response
Community Vision	What is God calling our community to become this year?	
Community Reality	What are our strengths, challenges, opportunities, and needs?	
Priorities	Which three to five priorities require our attention?	
Goals	What do we hope to achieve for each priority?	
Action Plan	What concrete actions will we undertake?	
Responsibilities	Who will coordinate each action?	
Timeline	When will each action be carried out?	
Evaluation	How and when will we review our progress?	

Appendix B. Sample Community Project Template

Community:

Period:

Community Vision

A brief statement expressing the shared vision for the year.

Community Priorities

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Goals and Action Plan

Priority Goal Concrete Actions Responsible Person(s) Timeline Evaluation

Community Commitments

Prayer

Community Life

Formation

Apostolic Mission

Stewardship and Administration

Health and Well-being

Schedule of Reviews

- Monthly Review:
-
- Quarterly Evaluation:
-
- Annual Evaluation:
-

Concluding Community Commitment

Mindful of our common vocation and trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to live this community project with fidelity, mutual support, and missionary zeal. We will review it regularly, encourage one another in fulfilling our commitments, and continually seek God's will so that our community may grow in communion and become a more effective witness to the Gospel.

Date: _____

Community: _____

Signatures of the Members: _____

This template is intended as a practical guide rather than a fixed format. Individual communities should adapt it according to their stage of formation, missionary context, and the directives of their Organism and the Congregation. A simple, realistic, and regularly evaluated community project will always serve the community better than an elaborate document that remains unused.