

United World Week 2013 comes to an end

United World Project in progress: more than 700 initiatives towards universal brotherhood, the first developments regarding the permanent observatory.

During this sixteenth edition of the **United World Week**, numerous initiatives were set up by young people, who want to witness unity and peace by building bridges of brotherhood at all levels. "A united world begins with me," said a young Frenchman, summarizing this year's experience in which these young people had the leading role in a myriad of concrete activities organized at local level:

- In Nigeria 1,000, Christians and Muslims, from various ethnic groups participated in the first national Genfest. The governor of Anambra State and the Imam of the Muslim community were also present. One of the participants said: "Seeing Christians and Muslims together at the Genfest, I felt that building unity is not a dream but a reality."
- In Medan (Indonesia) the young people decided to build bridges with those who suffer; they visited patients suffering from AIDS. They commented: "We cannot say who was the happier of us two.... They were very grateful, and we commit ourselves to go back and visit them".
- In Burkina Faso, the young people went to a hospital to deliver clothes and soap to the patients, many of whom are very poor; but they have not stopped at just delivering gifts and greeting patients; they rolled up their sleeves and helped with cleaning the wards and the courtyard.
- The youth of Igarassu-PE, in the north-east of Brazil decided to go and visit the poor communities of Cuieiras, who make their living out of fishing. Besides organizing games for children, they set up the "United World Fair," where families could go to choose clothes and food. They wrote on face-book: "We are the bridges that can overcome social and cultural differences".

The kick-off to the **United World Week** happened on May 1 though a worldwide live transmission from **Jerusalem**, where the 250 young people present there were linked with thousands of others around the world. The two-way link-ups with **Loppiano** (FI), where 3000 young people were present, with **Mumbai** and **Budapest** reached more than a million people though social networks.

The **United World Project**, launched to the 12,000 young people participating in the Budapest **Genfest** last September, was presented everywhere, and through the initiative of collecting signatures on the site www.unitedworldproject.org, thousands are opting for the commitment to live the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

This Project also includes the setting up of a permanent observatory, that has already registered more than 700 "**fragments of fraternity**", occasional or continuous actions carried out by individuals or groups to promote brotherhood in everyday life, a principle neglected by modern society but a driving force in history. All this will be presented first to the UNESCO National Commissions of thirty member states, and subsequently to Dr. Katalin Bogyay, President of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris. Recently, some young people were received at the UNESCO headquarters in France, by the national commissions of the Ivory Coast, Hungary and Uruguay and by other institutions interested in this project, such as the Federal Senate in Brazil, a representative of the European Commission and the Secretary of State of Culture in Portugal.

United World Week – The aim of this annual activity organized by Youth for a United World of the Focolare Movement is to influence public opinion, by witnessing and promoting unity and peace at all levels. It started in 1996, and it is celebrated simultaneously in countries all over the world through a great variety of activities, involving the media and civil and religious institutions. United World Project will be asking institutions to recognize this initiative as one of international interest, while extending its implementations and objectives.

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