

Reciprocity between cultures made visible by youth for a united world.

Focus on: “Sharing with Africa”. Launching the Atlas of Fraternity.

United World Week, 1-11 May 2014. Maria Voce’s Message.

Africa, the focal point of a worldwide link-up. On May 1, at 13.00hrs Italian time a worldwide link-up (<http://focolare.org/live/y4uw/>) starting from Nairobi will bring together youth from the five continents. This will mark the opening of **United World Week 2014 (UWW): “Bridging cultures”**, a wide variety of initiatives focused on mutual sharing carried out by Youth for a United World (Y4UW) in different places all over the world. Link-ups with Japan, DRC, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Algeria, Portugal and Brazil are also planned. More than a hundred young people are expected to arrive at Nairobi (Kenya); about 50 of them represent the Sub-Saharan African peoples while the other fifty represent the other continents.

“Sharing with Africa”. This motto expresses the reciprocity that UWW 2014 would like to achieve through its focus on the African continent, an emblem of colours, cultures and challenges, thus exploring some of the pillars of the African cultures in mutual sharing and exchange of wealth.

Activities in various parts of the world. Youth for a United World will set up a network of initiatives, very often linked to situations encountered in everyday life. In **Mumbai** (India), they will be repainting the walls of an area badly hit by the monsoons; children of an orphanage who were also hit by this calamity will be helping in this initiative. Planting 200 trees is another activity to be carried out together with members of a local NGO. In **Harlem** (New York) a “Walkathon” will encourage the young people to abandon the street life of the area. “We will continue to love” is the motto of the youth in **Bangui** (CAR); these share with hundreds of refugees living in camps not only food and school supplies but also testimonies, music, thoughts on *the art of loving*, medicine for the deep wounds that afflict those who lose all they have. At **Abidjan** (Ivory Coast), the youth reflected on “Solidarity, a measure for African cohesion”, a value at risk of disappearing. These young people are now in contact with the lepers that inhabit the village of **Marchoux**, transmitting hope to them and to the chief of the village. In **Paris** (France), the theme “Bridging Cultures” will consider the *mission* and the project of Europe. In Portugal, at **Abrigada**, concerts, workshops and a forum will focus on the *golden rule*, the key to universal brotherhood. The activities in **Tagaytay** (Philippines) will be of a sportive nature. Preparations for activities in **Onitsha, Abuja and Jos** (Nigeria) are related to welcoming diversity. A concert for about one thousand young people will be held at **Ambatondrazaka** (Madagascar). **Loppiano** (Italy) will be transformed into a large square (**Spiazzaci**) to give visibility to a different Italy with ongoing initiatives on legality, interreligious dialogue and immigration. More information on www.facebook.com/y4uw.international?fref=ts

Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement expressed gratitude to the young people for their “commitment” and “staunch courage” in “pursuing the goal of a United World, while immersed in today’s complex situations and in realities that differ”. It is “enormous work” she continued to say “but it is *God’s dream*, as Chiara Lubich liked to describe it”. While ensuring her support to those who adhere to the ideals of the Focolare Movement, she recalled the words of John Paul II to Y4UW: “Only those who look ahead to the future make history”, and she concluded by saying that together with many others “like yeast in the dough, we are making history here and now”.

The Atlas of Fraternity: On May1 there will be the launching of **the Atlas of Fraternity**, the first document about 800 fragments of fraternity, brave initiatives propagated in cities to build bridges between individuals, groups and cultures, thus opening the road to dialogue and indicating new pathways to communities. Journeying the globe through this Atlas, one will see the fragments of fraternity that envelop the world. This is the first document about the United World Project issued after the Genfest 2012, that took place in Budapest. More information can be found on www.unitedworldproject.org

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