

Group work: centred on dialogue

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“Open Space Technology” is being adopted by the Focolare General Assembly to conduct its group work today and tomorrow. The system permits the 359 participants linked online around the world to divide into virtual working groups to speak and dialogue in a more intimate way, as if seated around the same table.

To facilitate participation across all the lines of latitude, the work sessions are organized in three different time zones, corresponding to the geographical groupings of Asia and Oceania; Africa, Europe and the Middle East; the Americas.

The fact that the Assembly is dedicating several days to working in groups, to consider and discuss a range of topics, demonstrates the strongly-felt need for a global dialogue at the heart of it all. This was evident from the start of the pre-assembly process two years ago which got many different Focolare communities around the globe involved. Individuals and groups participated in a worldwide program of reflection, and sent the Assembly Planning Commission over 3,000 proposals of what should be covered in these days.

These ideas were gathered and collated into 16 general topic areas. From these, a subsequent international survey among Focolare members identified four priority themes:

- a profound consideration of the roots of the charism of unity today;
- implementing the charism in all areas, in collaboration with the Churches, with institutions, with the faithful of different religions and with people of good will;
- giving particular attention to an integral ecology which considers how to take care of the person, the family and our common home, with an outlook to the future;
- living inter-generational dialogue, particularly with the new generations.

During these opening days of the Assembly, the participants have added another three macro-groups of topics, namely:

- family
- governance
- option for the least, for the excluded.

What emerges from the working groups over these days will form a substantial contribution to the production of the ‘final document’ which will outline the future direction and prospects “for the guidelines that will be elaborated and implemented above all locally and in profound synergy between the international centre and the Movement present in the different geographical zones”, as Maria Voce said yesterday.

The final document will be drawn up by an editorial team of eight Assembly members. The text will then be presented for approval by the whole General Assembly.

Focolare Communications Office

