

## **A glimpse behind the scenes**

*General Assembly Diary 7, 30 January 2021*

As the Assembly continues to work on the priorities and lines of action for the next six years, today we'd like to offer a glimpse behind the scenes, to get to know the people who are keeping the "machine" working, without whom none of this could happen. The online nature of the event called for a network of collaborators and technicians specialized in different fields, indispensable not only for the efficacy of the digital platform but also to guarantee the juridical validity of this Assembly.

No less than 73 people comprise the technical team of the Focolare General Assembly. Many are physically present in the Movement's international centre at Rocca di Papa in Italy, while others collaborate remotely from many parts of world including Brazil, the Philippines, France, Guatemala, Britain, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Thailand and USA.

Twenty I.T. experts are working on the web pages and various apps. 14 hosts, divided into two teams, run all the various video-conferences. 34 translators in 7 countries guarantee the participants have simultaneous translations in 5 languages (French, English, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish). Then there is the 5-person squad responsible for the general coordination of all the technical teams.

But it's more than a network of collaborators or technical experts, according to Francesco Mazzarella, one of the video-conference hosting team working from Sicily. He writes:

*Behind the online Assembly, a group of people around the world, the so-called technical experts, have been 'meeting'. We've been getting to know each other and creating a bond far beyond the technical aspect because there's been a spiritual sharing among us too. It's come about gradually, through a process of what we could call 'techno-relationship'.*

*Most of the time, we don't think about all that has to happen before an event can take place. Today, the challenge goes via the internet, with the all uncertainties and challenges involved, and with all the possibilities it contains too.*

*To manage these moments online without seeing each other face to face, without being able to physically shake each other by the hand, is the real challenge of this Assembly.*

*But the greatest issue for the technicians is about making a gift of our own competencies, which have been acquired through much personal sweat and study. This requires a kind of exchange of trust. Let me explain myself. A technician, even those who have made a choice to follow the principles of the spirituality of unity in their work, is still a professional who takes personal pride in their work and their own skills. The willingness to share methods or procedures that have been learnt with so much personal effort and study is not automatic. It requires a real act of faith, trusting that the others are there out of love, trusting that by so giving we are contributing to building the Assembly. So it's a connection of electronic signals and of souls which constitutes the foundation and techno-relationships of this adventure called our online Assembly.*

Usually, the technicians only come to our attention when something isn't working properly. In this Assembly, it's different. Their work and their "style" are building this event, day by day. Thanks to each one of them!

*Focolare Communications Office*