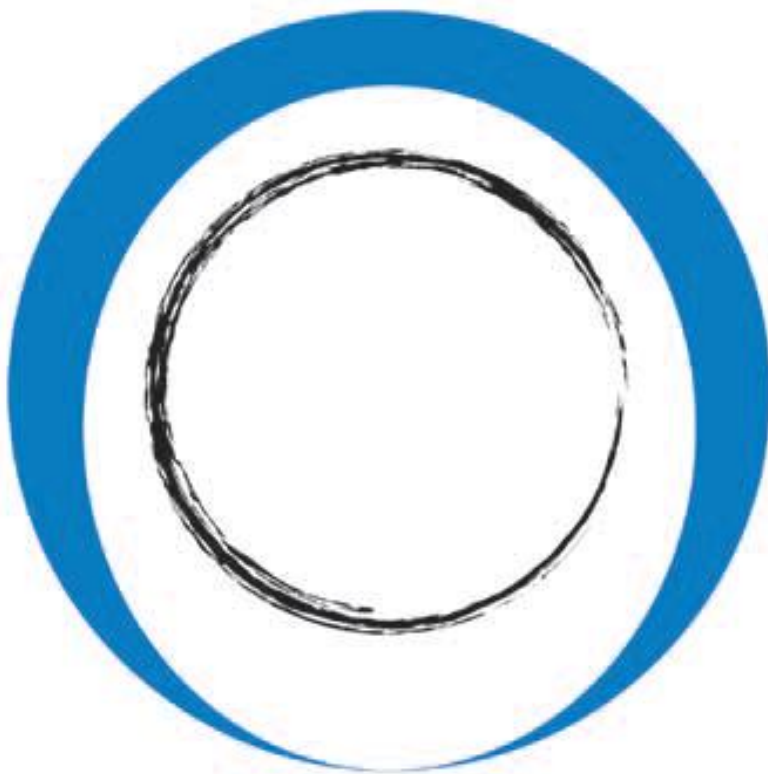


Atlas of Universal Fraternity

Realizing Fraternity



Dossier

United World Project

First edition

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Preface

THOSE WHO LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE WILL BUILD HISTORY

Thank you, dear young people, for your commitment to pursuing the dream of a United World, deeply involved in the complex events of our contemporary world and in the different situations you live in. Thank you for the stubborn bravery you show which is documented in the *Atlas for universal fraternity*.

Building a United World is a huge challenge, but it is “God's dream”, as Chiara Lubich loved to call it. And this is a guarantee as well.

Universal Fraternity is not a utopia. Humanity's journey towards it is a gruelling one but it is also unstoppable.

Pope John Paul II powerfully expressed this idea to the Youth for a United World whom he met at the Genfest in 1990: “Only those who look toward the future will be able to build history”. And we are building history right here and, thanks to your commitment and the commitment of many other young people like you, pursuing the United World Project with freedom and determination all over the world.

We only need to continue and have faith. Together with all those who see themselves represented by the ideals of the Focolare Movement, I am in this adventure with you.

Maria Emmaus Voce
President of the Focolari Movement



FROM THE GLOBAL TO THE UNIVERSAL

Trying to find the right image to represent the international relationships of our contemporary world, the choice is often between “the tower” or “the bridge”. The tower is an architectonic element, typically a military one, and it epitomizes a perception of threat that causes alarm and alert. The tower is the representation of defensiveness, of the “fortification”, of the sense of siege and the fear of invasion.

The bridge, on the other hand, is by definition something that unites two territories that would otherwise stay separated and defined by a river or a ditch that would be hard to overcome. The bridge, in a way, is an invitation to communication, to direct contact and dialogue.

Looking at the complex nature of peoples in the world we live in, we need to ask ourselves if these images – the tower and the bridge – are still two adequate options. We live in times where relations are mostly immaterial and they do not necessarily need “bridges” to exist; times in which it is all too easy to destroy both military and a civil “towers”.

To use another architectonic metaphor, the contemporary world – without indulging in the falsifying simplifications of the alleged “flatness” of the globe – is more and more like an open structure, an open-air assembly, a square: a meeting point, a place of equality.

But, is the world also a place where a new shared identity and a new sense of mutual belonging can be created? Not always. In fact, the truth is that there is a need for a new international political project, a global “new deal”, a new inclusive, pluralistic and equal alliance that goes beyond the military and economic alliances that already exist (beyond the “tower” and the “bridge”).

This is no utopia; it's enough to look at the state of the world to understand that it is not only realistic, but also urgent and necessary. The often mentioned but little visible (apart from some neo-hegemonic projects) new “global governance” may represent a unique possibility but it needs to go from the global dimension to the universal dimension. The United World Project, with its highly prized symbolic value and its fresh ideals, is a precursor announcing a new day, a new start.

In our world there is an abundance of “grand” ideas but there is a lack of really “great” ideas, even those which appear as small seeds. Cultivating this seed together, letting it blossom and grow is a patient, daily (and “strategic”) duty of far-sighted young people who want to live for, and in, a united world, not just in a globalised world.

Pasquale Ferrara

Diplomat, International Relations scholar
and Secretary-General
of the European University Institute of Fiesole, Florence.

A PLANET WITHOUT BORDERS

On Tuesday 9th July 2013 an astronaut goes out for his first walk in orbit. During an interview, he tells about how he feels every time he sees the Earth from the International Space Station. Paradoxically, from that distance, the habit of seeing the Earth in terms of location, city, neighbouring countries or different places such as the five Continents disappears: *"Since being up here, I have realized that this division was invented by us. There are no borders in the world! The world is just one! From this distance one can't see how high the mountains are, how deep the valleys are or how insurmountable a river is. Therefore the world becomes just one: without borders. The idea that on the Earth there are people who fight, who kill and who get themselves killed for the sake of the power of being in one place rather than another is absolutely alien seen from up here"*¹.

A planet without borders was also the dream of Tim Berners-Lee, the creator of the Internet: letting a large amount of information travel at the speed of light, erasing distances and differences, offering everyone the same access to knowledge. Men and women have fought, and continue to fight all over the globe, for a world without differences, with equality in terms of rights and opportunities. In these the first years of our century, names like Nelson Mandela, who recently passed away, San Suu Kyi and Muhammad Yunus readily come to mind.

A united world is also in the DNA of the United World Project, an ambitious project, like all the dreams of young people. Yet, what might look to many like utopia, has become real in the everyday life of millions of young people and adults, who have made universal fraternity part and parcel of their actions and political and legislative choices; through their artworks that express beauty and in the encounter with those who have made their faith or religion a path that can open welcoming horizons.

Universal fraternity was also the dream and ideal of Chiara Lubich, who, with her life and charisma, promoted, among other things, many of the 800 fraternal actions analysed in this pilot study that monitors how individuals, groups and people see universal fraternity in 38 nations. Universal fraternity is not understood as a mere thought but also as an action that is more than just a relic from the French Revolution studied in history books.

These pages tell the story of the United World Project, from the first steps, to the possibilities that this dossier offers to shed light onto the social and communitarian impact that fraternity can have on history. Some young people recently told us they are "Breaking any human barrier that we generate". This expresses their commitment to orienting their choices towards a greater good that goes beyond personal interest in order to take into consideration other people, the value of relationships of gratuity and initiatives full of relational capital.

We "no-longer youths" were there too, when Youth for a United World gave birth to the idea and then launched the United World Project. From the backstage we participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony on September 2012, in Budapest, in front of 12 thousand under-30s; young people who made their own the commitment towards a world fraternity, aware of the efforts that this project requires, but also full of the enthusiasm and creativity which are typical of the new generations. The workers of this fascinating challenge come from different ethnicities and cultures, belong to several Christian groups, follow different religions and they are guided by ideals of peace, solidarity, the uni-

¹ From the blog of the astronaut Luca Parmitano <http://blogs.esa.int/luca-parmitano>

versal good. They come from each corner of the globe but, they work together for this common project and set up factories, workshops, and many other initiatives with the firm intention of involving many others.

A great expert of young people's hearts and their longing for infinity, Pope John Paul II, invited them to launch out into the deep because it is great ideals that make history; he saw them as the *"watchers of the dawn, the lookouts who announce the light of the dawn"*². Chiara Lubich herself saw them, with us *"following different 'paths' to contribute to the creation of the unity of the world. According to their possibilities and the needs of their environments, they have healed rifts, erased divisions and thrown themselves into the most varied divides that set man against man, group against group: they followed the path of unity among people, races, the rich and the poor, different ethnicities, generations... and it led to a wonderful and fertile blossoming of constant and daily, committed actions"*³. We feel very lucky to witness this creative and ingenious breeding-ground of ideas. We feel that we are apprentices with the young people in this venture which brings together the expectations and challenges of the whole humanity.

Maria Guaita and Andrew Camilleri

Joint managers, Youth for a United World Movement

² Message for the XVIII World Youth Day, 13th April, 2003

³ Extract from the speech of Chiara Lubich, 30th March, 1990 at Genfest

Introduction

For a long time we have felt the desire to see a new culture grow, a culture that values the idea and the experience of fraternity; we wanted to make our contribution not only with the consistency of our daily actions, but also through study and research.

Each in our own way, we all found ourselves wondering: what can I do? If a deep change does not take place as soon as possible in order to affect people's mentality (and therefore through education and on a cultural level), even the best intentions and the isolated commitment of many people will not bring peace and acceptable living conditions for all peoples. The United World Project became the home where we met some time ago to transform this need into action.

It all started back in 2011 when we began to explore this idea, journeying into uncharted territory. The first time there were a little more than fifty of us, but we felt that we could represent many others, because among us there were young people with different experiences and cultures, from all continents. Someone started to dream: let's create a small committee of young people, with the support of some friends with a little more experience and let's begin to make a plan. Shortly after that, together with the International Secretariat of Youth for a United World, some members of New Humanity, a non-governmental organization, and the political Movement for unity, we took our first steps.

Faced with the deep crisis in our own countries, a crisis that today strikes at the dignity of so many different peoples – and a crisis that is not just an economic one, but also a cultural and ethical one – we realized that we could not wait any longer. It is necessary to create an alliance, strengthen our convictions through cooperation and give voice to those who, everywhere in the world, are open to dialogue, solidarity and true sharing. Those men and women like Chiara Lubich who indicated a new possible horizon, the unity of the human family and dedicated their lives to this idea. We decided to let her ideal inspire us.

Today, with the United World Project, we wish to share a new idea, with young people from all over the world, but not only with young people, of course! It is not true that nothing can be done. It is up to each of us to take action and become the protagonist of a new era. There is still space in the stories of our cities and our peoples to come together and recreate our society on the basis of a more mature understanding of our humanity, starting from the idea of universal fraternity and its practical application.

The workshop of the United World Project is now open and it was not just the Genfest that took place in Budapest in 2012, that gave us enthusiasm. Over the past few months we have been taking new steps with the participation of personages, the interest of several bodies and thousands of young people around the world and, especially in those countries where the tunnel of the economic crisis seems to be never-ending, we have got the confirmation that we are on the right path. Particularly passionate, among the others, was the interest expressed by the members of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UNDESA)⁴ in New York, the UNESCO⁵ in Paris and various National Committees of the same organization, in addition to "YOUTH IN ACTION", the program of the European Commission⁶.

Having completed this first universal fraternity Atlas, we have in our hands a tool that we can finally offer to those who wish to understand the idea that guided us and the possibilities that it offers. But our commitment continues, it does not end here.

It is necessary to carry on with the team work, with mutual respect and communication, being aware that what we started is just a piece of a bigger picture. We rely on our firm belief: we have a unique possibility in our hands, because – as Chiara Lubich herself told us – "after thousands of years of history in which violence and hatred have been experimented, today we have the right to ask that the world starts trying to understand what could be the fruits of love. And not just love between individuals but also love among peoples".

Ciao! Francesco Ricciardi (Italy), Melchior Nsavyimana (Burundi), Shemila Stella Cheng (Hong Kong), Joaquin Salzberg (Argentina), Anna Malapira (Australia), and on behalf of many, many others.

⁴ UN DESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Focal Point on Youth, Division for Social Policy Development

⁵ UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

⁶ Cf. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php



Chapter I

GENESIS AND MEANING OF THE UNITED WORLD PROJECT

by Mariagrazia Baroni and Francesco Ricciardi

«No man is an island, entire of itself.

Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind"

(John Donne, Great Britain)

FRATERNITY: AN OPEN INQUIRY

In order to open an inquiry, be it a journalistic, legal or social one, it is necessary to have facts and circumstances that, if disconnected on the surface, are at least connected by a *common thread*. Later, it is also necessary to go through all documents, studying and evaluating them, trying to understand what determined them.

This is what we wish to do in the following pages. We want to examine the actions of individuals and communities who, in complex contexts, sometimes difficult or even dangerous ones, manage to make a positive impact on events, showing that an unimaginable, silent and often hidden strength has the innate ability to trigger change. And this is applicable to a bad day as well as to painful (personal or global) events and places riddled with suffering. The effects of such changes will be surprising, but because a respectable inquiry can only be launched if it starts from the beginning, we want to leave space for the *facts* at once.



CHILE

Blossoming hope between earthquake and tsunami

27th February 2010, 03:40 am.
In Chile the ground shakes for long
and endless seconds, with absurd
violence, measuring 8.8 on the Richter scale. It is followed
by a tsunami that devastates entire towns on the coast.
1500 km out of the total five thousand of the country are
hit .

It will be remembered as the fifth most intense
earthquake on Earth.

"On that weekend, some of us were in a small
town of mud houses" some of the protagonists of this
story tell us. While walking the roads of one of the
neighbourhoods, they realize, in shock, that the streets
are full of people whose faces are covered in pain and
fear while trying to get the little they have left out of the
rubble.

They feel the pressing need to find practical
solutions to help the people who are still alive, are
starving, homeless and have nothing left. They
communicate with their friends, relatives, colleagues,
university and school friends that are in touch with
them, and they also feel the same desire to help.

Those hours are a sequence of phone calls to
those who live in the most damaged towns and their
thoughts immediately turn to Gonzalo, a young man
from Consitucon, whose house is near the sea.

For three days they do not hear from him, or from his family, but he is safe together with them. Despite the damaged roads and communications being down, three young people decide to go meet him with a small truck full of goods donated by the Focolari community in Santiago. "Losing the house where you lived for 21 years – Gonzalo tells us – was a hard blow. But without the support of these young people I would never have been able to feel so calm"

The same week, 60 people move to Cunaco to free the city of the rubble, demolish the already precarious walls of collapsed houses and help families, offering to listen to them. There is a lot of intense work to do, but the tiredness goes away every time we have a chance to help those who suffer. During Holy Week, after the emergency, these young people go back again. This time there are 57 of them. "Even though their houses

have been destroyed and they have so many problems – they tell us – they welcomed us with a smile on their face and a lot of love".

An experience that mobilized aid, comforted the soul, and created a bond between those who give and those who receive help: "This is what we learnt, the best reward, if we consider that these people have lost everything". "The care they showed for us when they offered us a drink or some bread made the gesture bigger and the food tastier. We've made a commitment to rebuild Chile and live here for a united world".



BURUNDI

When the pain of a country is mirrored within you

The civil war between *hutu* and *tutsi* in Burundi exploded in 1993, soon after the first multi-party elections in the country and it lasted for twelve years, leaving behind a terrible scenario of death with dreadful consequences for the population. In the eyes of Claudine, a young woman from Bujumbura (the

capital city), that country is and always will be a territory of "splendid green hills and plateaus". In 1993 Claudine was just 4 years old. Because of the war, her family, including eight siblings, lost everything. The house was destroyed and they were forced to flee.

The war ended in 2005, followed by a deep silence. "When I asked my mother, she would answer that what mattered was that we were alive and that we had to only

thank God for that". Nothing else. Anyway, "I did what she asked, praying for peace in the world".

But there were many open questions left in her heart and in her mind. "In my eyes there was the violence I had seen and I could not forget it. Slowly, I refused to watch TV and read newspapers. I could not sleep at night and even though I did well at school, that sense of fear never left me".

Claudine is assailed by many questions, and a few years later her dad dies of an illness. One question occupies her above all the others: why death? "But God was waiting for me – she continues – in fact God had never forgotten me".

During those months Claudine meets Youth for a United World: "I understood that God loves me, my family, and my people with the same immense love and supports us through our deepest sufferings. I want to make my contribution to build fragments of fraternity and that means reconciling with one's own personal history, with the events of one's own people and choosing engagement over isolation".

ITALY



For ten minutes a day

Every morning a mother takes her ten-year-old daughter to school. Every morning one of her classmates goes to school, alone, because her mother's working shifts do not allow her to do the same. She says: "One day, though, this woman came

to me and asked if I could occasionally take care of her

daughter too. I gladly accepted"

"From an occasional gesture it becomes a nice habit. Every morning I pick the girl up, even when the weather is nice and her mother is at home".

"I start getting to know the habits of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the religion followed by this family. I do not get an opportunity to invite them home, to give them a small gift or celebrate a birthday together. But I keep offering them this simple gesture, for ten minutes a day. Some time ago, the girl got into my car and gave me a little gift with a card: "For the comfiest taxi in the world!" Thank you!"

These stories are certainly not the only ones we could tell. They are "positive fractures" in the closed, selfish circuit of indifference, prejudice and violence. They burst into people's simple daily life, they penetrate into disasters and calamities, they find a place even within the absurdity of war.

But these are not chance happenings because from these case-based studies, conclusions can be drawn. They are not involuntary actions, even though they come from different situations and environments, they are responsible gestures, choices. They are the core of a revolution triggered both on a personal and intimate level and on a community and international level: it's the revolution of universal fraternity. On many occasions, universal fraternity was the moving force behind the history of humanity and the evidence of this are the millions of people that today decide to give without asking anything in return, to accept other people instead of discriminating, to forgive instead of breaking relationships. In other words, they decide to live like brothers and sisters.

INQUIRING ABOUT FRATERNITY

The United World Project (UWP) springs from a desire to create a historical and geographical map of universal fraternity. Its creators are the members of Youth for a United World. They come from 180 countries, from a variety of cultures, religions and nationalities. The group's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature made it possible for their inquiry to acquire a worldwide dimension. Therefore, it cannot be accomplished in just a few pages or in just a few years. The project, as showed in the first edition of this dossier, is taking its first steps, but the goal is an ambitious one: showing that universal fraternity is not only a way of orienting one's personal existence but can also become a new cornerstone of politics, economy, employment, sport, environment, communication, science and art.

One of the stages of the United World Project (UWP) is the institution of a permanent and international watchdog, the United World Watch aimed at promoting universal fraternity, monitoring fraternal actions of individuals, groups and peoples. Among its goals, it will also look at the different interpretations of the principle of fraternity through forums, studies and workshops.

Over the next five years, the project will aim at building bridges of fraternity with a different culture and a different continent each year. In 2012, the starting point was Budapest, where the Genfest⁷ took place. The following year, 2013, it was the turn of the Middle East, in Jerusalem on May 1st, in conjunction with the United World Week⁸ after which followed many different events in 130 countries of the world. In 2014 it will be the year of Africa with the title "Sharing with Africa". Held in Kenya between the end of April and the beginning of May 2014, it will see the meeting of young people from several African countries and other nations. This global connection will showcase those fruits and values deriving from this immense continent: dialogue, sharing, welcoming, collaboration, sense of community.

The next stages of this world tour, in 2015 and 2016, will be in Asia and America.

⁷ Cf. Keyword: Genfest, p. 19.

⁸ Cf. "United World Week, international exhibit of fraternity", p. 24.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

START UP: "LET'S BRIDGE" - GENFEST 2012, BUDAPEST

"Deep down although we may be Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims or Buddhists we are all similar and want the same things" (Kandi, Greece)

"During the Genfest there was a climate of friendship and brotherhood" (Chiara and Elena, Italy)

From August 31st to September 2nd 2012 the focus is on the city of Budapest, where 12 thousand young people are gathered together. They bring along with them their generation's issues, as well as the history of the 125 countries they come from. These young people have come together for the 10th edition of Genfest, entitled "Let's bridge". Another 500 thousand people are connected via streaming.

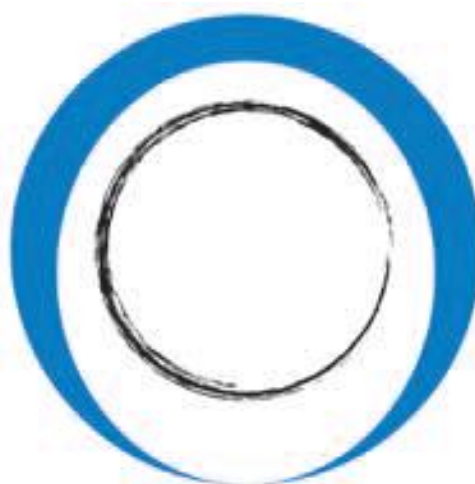
From the Sports Arena where they gathered during those days, they clearly express the need to rediscover themselves as brothers and sisters by putting people, relationships and gratuity at the center of politics, economy and science. Hundreds of thousands of young people believe in and work for a more united world, where love for other people, for their region, for their neighbors becomes authentic fraternity, a culture of openness and understanding, a seed of peace until the world truly becomes one. The United World Project (UWP) was born in this context, because the Genfest is not just a festival of people, but also a crossroad of ideals and commitments geared towards creating one large human family.

For these young people, fraternity is already a daily experience in places where different social classes, cultures and religions are a reality. "The beauty of the world is that, if we are open towards other people, we can share our differences," Katalyn Bogyay said, while speaking at the Genfest as the president of the UNESCO General Conference⁹, "even those things that we are not aware of." And Maria Voce encouraged them saying: "If the heart of those who are here changes, then the world starts changing. And the heart changes if it lets itself be permeated by the only value that all young people around the world perceive as the most important: love! Start loving concretely, then. The first steps are not huge actions, but small acts of love that make life great and have the power to change the world and influence society". "The Corner of universal fraternity" in Elisabeth

Square, the heart of Budapest, is the visible sign left in the "city of bridges" as a reminder of the event and a token of the commitment we made: being living bridges of the Golden Rule, "One should treat others as one would like to be treated by others", a rule that is commonly shared by the main traditions and cultures in the world¹⁰. The marble blocks, set up like seats on the grass, have this rule carved on them in 20 languages, including Braille, so that no one feels excluded from the possibility of knowing it and living it.

The United World Project (UWP) becomes, together with the Genfest, a new way to continue on this path back home, in our countries, with micro and macro actions of unity between different generations, within families, among groups and movements, among various Christian groups and among believers of different religions.

"It is really wonderful to think of the huge potential of young people! Just look at this crowd that walks the streets of Budapest. Our future is bright if we are united" (Catherine, Malaysia)



⁹ Cf. Greeting of Katalyn Bogyay to the young people of the Genfest 2012, Palasport Arena, Budapest, 31th August 2012

¹⁰ Cf. Keyword: Golden Rule. p. 21.

KEYWORD: GENFEST

The Genfest is a gathering of young people of the Focolare Movement. Started during the 1970s, when Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolari Movement, thought of bringing together the young people of the newborn Movement for a “festival”.

1973 The first Genfest in Loppiano, a little town of the Focolare Movement¹¹, with around 8 thousand young people. Title of the event: “Humanity, world beyond borders”.

1975 Around 20 thousand young people gather at the Sport Palace in Rome. Pope Paul VI greets them saying: “A new world is born”.

1980 During the Cold War, again in Rome – but this time at the Stadio Flaminio –, 40 thousand people got together. Title: “For a united world”.

1985 At the Sport Palace in Rome the Youth for a United World Movement is born.

1990 Genfest focused on the fall of the Berlin wall; visit of Pope John Paul II.

1995 For the first time the festival is broadcasted, via satellite and via Internet, all over the world. Youth for a United World launches the United World Week¹².

2000 The 9th edition of the Genfest takes place during World Youth Day, at the Stadio Flaminio in Rome.

2012 In Budapest, 12 thousand young people at the Sports Arena take part in the festival in the city of bridges: 500 thousand people are connected in the world.

KEYWORD: CHIARA LUBICH

Trent, 1920 – Rocca di Papa, 2008. Founder of the Focolare Movement and Youth for a United World, Chiara Lubich was born in Trent in 1920. She obtained a certificate as a schoolteacher and she started attending the faculty of Philosophy at the University of Venice; she then had to interrupt her studies because of the Second World War.

In 1943 she started a cultural, human and spiritual adventure together with some of her friends, soon joined by families, priests, factory workers, idealists and revolutionaries. This experience, born from the choice of following God, with time, brought together Orthodox and Evangelicals, followers of various religions, politicians, entrepreneurs, all engaged in a walk of peace, dialogue, renewal of civil and economic structures according to the principle of universal fraternity.

Lubich received awards, honorary degrees and acknowledgments, including the UNESCO prize for Peace Education in 1996 and the Human Rights Prize from the Council of Europe in 1998.

¹¹ The little towns of the Focolari Movement are centers with firms, schools, churches, meeting points where the temporary or permanent citizens are committed to living the spirituality of unity.

¹² Cf. “United World Week, international exhibit of fraternity”, p. 24

THE PLANET AT THE CROSSROADS

*"Here is the first idea: universal brotherhood,
one that sets us free from slavery
(...) opening our hearts, breaking all barriers
and embracing universal brotherhood:
I live for universal brotherhood!"*

(Chiara Lubich, Italy)

"The globalization that has been taking place since the beginning of this third millennium can become an achievement of maturity which humanity has never experienced before. We are living in a time of an "epochal turning point", of painful preparation for a new world.

But we need a soul: love. In the words of Pope John Paul II, "humanity is at the crossroads. What kind of civilization will prevail in the future of our planet? It rests on us whether it will be the civilization of love or the lack of civilization of selfishness that becomes a system".

Love – I observe it more and more as I am in touch with individuals and groups of different religions, races and cultures – is part of the DNA of every human being. It is the strongest force that can keep the whole humanity together. But it requires a complete and radical change of hearts, mentalities and choices.

After all, it is now commonly held in international relations that the meaning of reciprocity, one of the foundations of international relations, needs to be revised.

It is during these times that all peoples must go beyond their borders and look further, until we love other people's homelands as we love our own. Only then reciprocity among people will come to mean going beyond old and new values of alliances and profit, creating, instead, relationships with all, without conditions and interests, because people will see the "other" as themselves, as part of their same humanity and, in this perspective disarmament, development and cooperation will become possible.

A new reciprocity will come to life, able to make every people, even the poorest, a protagonist of international life, in sharing poverty and wealth. Not just during emergencies, but also in everyday life. Identity and potentiality will develop because they will be made available to other peoples, with respect and reciprocity.

Only then, if individuals and rulers will play their part, will we be able to dream to be part of a single global community. Utopia? Globalization started with Jesus when he said: "May they all be one". And not just that: he made us capable of that love that has the power to recreate the human family in unity and diversity.

So, it is enough to open our eyes: there are many "workshops" of this "new humanity" around the world. Might this be the moment to project them on a worldwide scale?"

Chiara Lubich

"Editorial", in Città Nuova, 2001/14

KEYWORD: "GOLDEN RULE"

*"Therefore, you should treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you;
this is the Law and the Prophets"
(Gospel of Matthew 7, 12)*

The golden rule is the common basis of all holy books and it is present in the cultures and traditions of many countries in the world. It is the object of sociological and philosophical studies.

Chiara Lubich defined it as "the root of the coexistence among peoples". This expression encloses in itself the importance of the fraternal relationship and, at the same time, it implies responsibility, not just from an ethical and religious point of view. The calling to love, to "enter" the life of others, is part of every human creature and it lets us discover the beauty of those who are different from us, becoming the essential dynamic of life.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE GENFEST 2012

**A SMALL IDEA CAME TO OUR MINDS:
"A SIMPLE ORANGE STRING ON OUR WRIST,
TO RECOGNIZE OURSELVES AND TELL EACH OTHER
THAT THE GOLDEN RULE IS OUR BOND,
A COMMITMENT THAT MUST BE TRANSLATED
INTO OUR LIVES, ALL OVER THE EARTH.**



TAKING STOCK OF THE SITUATION

"BE THE BRIDGE 2013", JERUSALEM

"When you drink water, think of its source"
(Chinese proverb)

From building bridges of fraternity to being bridges in our lives: this is the topic of the 16th United World Week. From April 24th to May 2nd 2013, 130 young people from 25 different nations gather in Jerusalem. "Be the bridge" is their motto, soon universally shared thanks to *social networks* that tell, step by step, the daily life of these "human" bridges. We chose a border country, homeland to the three main monotheistic religions. We walk the streets of a city whose name, *Jerusalem* [City of peace – Ed], encloses its calling.

We walk side by side with young Israelis and Palestinians who history divided with a wall but today want to show their country that a different future can be prepared through encounter, listening and gestures aimed at welcoming without prejudice while remaining aware of the wounds and injustices but not restrained by them.

During our week in the Middle East, several important meetings followed one another. We started with Vera Baboun (the mayor of Bethlehem) at the International Peace Center; then we met around 50 students and lecturers, both Christian and Muslim from the University of Bethlehem followed by a meeting with about 100 people from the Jewish community taking part in the seminar "Discovering humanity within other people" at the Kehilat

Yedidya Synagogue. And then peace concerts of the international groups Gen Rosso and Gen Verde in Bethlehem and Haifa; concerts broadcast worldwide, using music and beauty to meet the challenge of encountering the other.

On May 1st 2013, in Jerusalem itself, on the steps where, according to tradition, Jesus prayed for unity, we assess and evaluate the United World Project (UWP), while we are connected with Mumbai, Budapest and Loppiano (Florence) and in live streaming with 300 thousand young people. We report on the signatures collected to support the commitment to live according to the Golden Rule; we also contact some of the protagonists of the stories of fraternity collected in consideration of the creation of the watchdog, we focus on the commitments for the coming year and we announce the next stage of the project in Africa.

From its launch to this day, the United World Project (UWP) has grown as a *network* of individuals, young people and adults, committed to living according to the Golden Rule. So far, there are about 80 thousand¹³ people who live according to this life style and more than 800 actions of fraternity¹⁴ reported by the United World Watch.

¹³ Cf. website of presentation of the United World Project: www.unitedworldproject.org

¹⁴ Cf. Chapter III.



HOLY LAND

Inside the Synagogue

We were inside the Synagogue and a girl from Youth for a United World was talking about the project "Try Angels"¹⁵.

At that point, a question came to my mind: "How can I deal with Jews?" I did not accept the idea because in the past I had tried to

take a step towards them, but it had not gone well. In those days, while going to the Synagogue in Jerusalem, from the Palestinian Territories, at the Israeli checkpoint I had had to walk five times under the metal detectors. I had got angry and I had been tempted to skip the conference. But I resolved to be consistent with the decision I had made. And so I was.

¹⁵ "Try Angels" is a project that since 2007 offers a space for dialogue to 20 Jewish, Christian and Muslim boys and girls from the schools of Jerusalem and Abu Ghosh

Slowly, listening to the experience of this girl first and of another one later, my prejudices collapsed.

I took courage and the day after I found the strength to visit the Western Wall [the Wailing Wall – Ed] together with the other young people. While walking, one of them told me: "Try not to hate them". This sentence remained inside me.

While entering the area before the Wall, the impact with crying and praying Jews was quite a shock for me. At first, I thought that their way of expressing faith was unusual, but then I thought that everyone of us has their own way and I told myself: "Even if I cannot manage to love them, I would like to try and not hate them".

For me this was the most important "bridge towards other people" that I could build during the days of my experience with "Be the Bridge".

(Miriam, Holy Land)

"SHARING WITH AFRICA 2014", NAIROBI

"We were all born to be brothers"
(**Nelson Mandela**, South Africa)

The African continent, prophecy of the third millennium, has a privileged place and an original contribution to offer in this project. If the voice of every culture is indispensable to the concept of universal fraternity, we have a debt in particular towards Africa: we are convinced that all of humanity should enrich itself with the strong sense of community that characterizes this continent, its models of widespread participation and its brave paths of liberation.

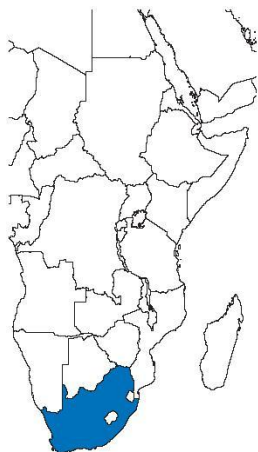
"Sharing with Africa" is an initiative that started within the United World Project. It is an invitation that we send everywhere and that is already a work in progress presenting a new reciprocity among its protagonists, young people from African countries, and young people from other countries and cultures from all over the world. Through various initiatives that blossomed in these months and others likely to happen in the future, "Sharing

with Africa" proposes to explore all possible ways of experiencing a profound intercultural exchange sharing stories, goods and values, sufferings, resources, ideals and accomplishments.

Together, we want to help make known Africa's vast cultural patrimony: the unifying vision of the world, nature and history that is the foundation of African societies is a priceless gift that must come to light in order to be transmitted more powerfully. The culture of Ubuntu is one of its most interesting expressions: an ancient word from the Zulu/Xhosa language, "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu" (I am because we are). It is a way of considering life which contains within itself respect, trust, collaboration and sharing.

For this reason, we recommit to journey together with the young people from Africa in order to go through the night that has divided us, relying on the firm belief that this communion will guide us towards a deep understanding of the ideal and experience of universal fraternity.

SOUTH AFRICA



Ubuntu and fraternity

"I met Mandela when he was released from prison. At that time, I had embraced the ideal of unity of Chiara Lubich. Ubuntu – the principle that inspired Mandela – has a lot in common with the ideal of a united world.

In 1944, Mandela with his passion had been able to have Ubuntu included in the manifesto of the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League, according to which Africa "regards the Universe as one composite whole progressively driving towards harmony whose individual parts exist merely as interdependent aspects of one whole".

Mandela put this principle into practice during his presidency and with his leadership, working for national reconciliation. We must keep his commitment alive for South Africa, for its problems and its social wounds.

My NGO cannot avoid facing such wounds either. I committed myself to fight corruption and provide the necessary answers. To those who used to tell me: "They will kill you, do not accept that job!" I used to answer that the Christian life I chose prepares me for death and I was even ready to die to fight corruption, even if this meant accepting to become a witness. But, in the end, amazingly, we found harmony, collaboration, trust, serenity and even more productivity at work.

I would like the United World Project to fight any kind of violence and bring mutual fraternity all over the world. I would like every young person that is involved in this project to say, like Madiba: "It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am ready to die"

(**Audrey Montshiwa**

*Director of the NGO St Joseph's Care and Support
Trust, Pretoria, South Africa)*

UNITED WORLD WEEK, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF FRATERNITY

"A proposal for all of us, for young people from all over the world, for national, international, public and private institutions, for everyone: a proposal, in fact an appointment for the United World Week. The goal? Highlighting and making the most of the initiatives that promote unity... at all levels"

(Youth for a United World, Genfest 1995, Rome, final greetings)

One of the initiatives included in the project is the United World Week, an international expo that, since 1995, has been a show case of the acts of fraternity happening throughout the world. Over seven days, a range of different initiatives are presented with the intention of influencing public opinion in several countries by showing that it is possible to create a united world through peaceful coexistence and respect of the dignity of all human beings and the identity of all peoples and communities.

The United World Week is suggested to cities, institutions and individuals of all ages in order to educate about the importance of paying attention to other people, peace, reconciliation and attention towards those on the margins.

Pope Francis, on the occasion of the 47th World Day of Peace, also reminded us that the foundation of peaceful living together among peoples is that "we belong to the same human family and we share a common destiny. This brings a responsibility for each to work so that the world becomes a community of brothers and sisters who respect each other, accept each other in his or her diversity, and take care of one another. We are also called to see the violence and injustices present in so many parts of the world, and which cannot leave us indifferent and immobile: there is the need for the commitment of all to build a society that is truly more just and united"¹⁶.

For almost twenty years, each edition of the United World Week has actively and simultaneously involved more than 300 thousand people from all over the world: from Guatemala to Australia, from the United States to Egypt, from Korea to the other "hot" areas of our planet. And millions more have been involved by this life style.

In 1996, during the first public "appearance" of this expo, one of the cities involved was Kreuzberg, in Germany, where people organized an "International Café" on those very streets that are often the set of fights among gangs. In 1998, in Lisbon, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, young people took part in the Expo of the Youth Ministers of the United Nations and in the USA they brought to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, a document on the *Culture of Giving and Unity among peoples*. In South Korea funds were raised to help many families in the North with difficult financial situations. Thirty thousand people signed a petition against death penalty.

The day after 9/11, the United World Week became a platform for debates and forums about world politics, welcomed moments of prayer and peace vigils, focused on meetings among young people from different religions arousing the curiosity of the media for its way of fighting terrorism through dialogue and the demolition of prejudices. During the following ten years, till now, there have been thousands of initiatives that have coloured the planet like a big fraternity workshop. Here are some examples: the study days on "The others and their differences: limit or springboard?" in France; the first Genfest in Nigeria with the participation of thousands of people, Christians and Muslims belonging to different ethnic groups; help and support activities in hospitals, welfare centres and poor neighbourhoods in Indonesia, Burkina Faso, Philippines and Brazil.



¹⁶ Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the 47th World Day of Peace, 1st January 2014

FROM AMATEURS TO EXPERTS

OF FRATERNITY

*"Well, perhaps your feelings may be different,"
Alice said; 'all I know is, it would feel very queer to me.'
'You!' said the Caterpillar contemptuously.
'Who are you?'"*

**(Dialogue between Alice and the Caterpillar,
Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)**

In Wonderland, Alice is not very lucky with her meetings during her adventures. No one – from the Mad Hatter to the Caterpillar, the White Rabbit and the Cheshire Cat – is interested in her. In the world where she finds herself, all relationships and rules are overturned. No one looks at reality from Alice's point of view, that is no one makes an effort to share the feelings, the astonishment, the adventures that Alice experiences.

The imaginary world created by Lewis Carroll around Alice is not very different from our reality: everyone lives their own life without caring about the other. But is this really conceivable today? The phenomenon of globalization of our times has pushed us into a dimension where our lives are more and more connected.

An example for all is the recent economic crisis: the failure of a US bank has affected the economic and financial system of many industrialized countries, thus generating a global crisis that shows how interconnected we are. We can say the same for the supply of energy, water and raw material for our computers or smartphones. The battles to gain possession of such resources involve the whole planet, from South to North. But there is more.

GLOBALLY IN CRISIS

According to many scholars, we went from globalization to a time of "global crisis" on all fronts: political, economic and social. The inevitable consequence of change is the clash between rights and growth, employment and health, innovation and natural resources. Changes are often quick and compulsive.

We can talk of clashes between individual and communal, local and global, national and global systems and the institutional crisis of politics. This crisis is worrying and it does not seem to have a quick solution in the short term because the economic, political, material and even idea paradigms have changed.

FAR BUT CLOSE

Is it possible, then, to think of a "network" that softens the falls and transforms crisis situations – like the present one – into an impulse towards the new? Many processes are already underway and they suggest a very active fraternal dynamic that fights individualism and gives new value to social relations, indicating new ways of reading and interpreting facts. It is clear that the models we have used so far are absolutely inadequate. There is much more talk about collective goods; referendums and activism, forums and mass demonstrations such as *flash mobs* have become common. Together with the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity today there are more practical actions, because words are not enough anymore. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" proclaims the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Brotherhood is loving other people's homeland (and their economy and politics) as our own, in order to create a united humanity enriched with many diversities. Today we observe that each State cannot limit itself to defend its own internal interests. The recent civil war in Syria has mobilized the diplomacies of several countries, international institutions and even the public opinion. "Listen to the clamour of the people" the Argentinean Nobel Prize winner Perez Esquivel wrote in a letter to the President of the United States Barack Obama last September to prevent him from bombarding a Syrian city.

Peace passes through fraternity, is what many acknowledge today globally, including religious and political leaders. And it is with this in mind that the Youth for a United World drafted the Manifesto called "Universal Fraternity: an idea of our times" that is presented below.

FRATERNITY: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

In a Project with such a broad participation and perspectives, together with outlining the objectives and defining the different stages, it is necessary to draft a manifesto. The following is ours.

At the dawn of the Third Millennium, humanity is faced with complex problems and pressing challenges. Global crisis is a frequent topic of discussion and there are many imminent threats to the life of many men and women.

Yet, there are also facts that express a diffused desire for peace and unity in every part of the world. There are brave actions, fragments of fraternity¹⁷ that are circulating in our cities: they build bridges between human beings, groups and cultures; they open paths of dialogue and indicate new paths to communities.

We, Youth for a United World, believe that fraternity is one of the signs of the time. It shows the historical destination of humanity. We feel that we need to make it visible.

We are present in 180 countries of the world; we belong to different cultures, religions and beliefs.

We come from different experiences and different sectors of society. We feel directly involved in professing the values of fraternity. We want to commit our freedom to create a more brotherly civilization. All together, we form a network drawing its strength from the Golden Rule that exists in so many civilizations and traditions, whose message sounds like: "Do to others what you would like them do unto you; don't do to others what you would not like others do unto you".

It is not one of the numerous global utopia in which one finds shelter, it means replacing selfishness with a constructive dimension of mutual love, gratuity, sharing, attention to the needs of others, dialogue and ability to reconcile.

We know that we are not the only ones possessing these goals. We believe that it is necessary to work together with all those who have decided to make fraternity the reason of their lives.

REALITY OF FRATERNITY

Where should we look to find fraternity? Not far from the events of our recent history.

In any case, the processes of international aggrega-

¹⁷ Cf. "The Iceberg", pag. 29.

tion, at macro-regional and local level, testify to the need to cooperate for the common good on an increasingly broader level. Likewise, there is a growing number of bodies and organizations whose goal is to safeguard human rights. As well as this, various initiatives are embodying the search for global fraternity through the reduction of foreign debt of poor countries, the ban of land mines, the creation of the International Criminal Court, the establishment of programs protecting the environment and campaigns for a globalization which reduces poverty and does worsen it, and many other initiatives.

The constant quest for peace among peoples is another sign of fraternity. We can recognize it in the rejection felt towards all the wars that still exist in the world.

From an economic point of view, the major analysis highlights that one of the causes of the crisis is the desire to attain profit without considering the common good. Nevertheless, even in this case it is possible to find actions of fraternity, for example the new paths undertaken in economic life and labor in terms of giving rise to versatile civil economic experiences. The worldwide experience of the economy of communion is an effective and convincing example.

In our multicultural world, dialogue among religions, cultures and beliefs is particularly important. We would like to remember the special contribution made by some Christian Movements, and entities from the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish communities together with those of the great African traditional Religions and secular organizations.

The journey made by the different peoples of the world itself shows fraternity as an engine that changes global history. It suggests new forms of participation, boosts initiatives of mediation and reconciliation, demands disarmament, evokes respect and guarantees the safeguard of natural goods for the future generations.

FRATERNITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

We live in an era of global interdependence. The world is progressively erasing distances. The value of resources lies in their accessibility; information travels in real-time and even aspirations and projects can be globally shared. What happens in one part of the world may have consequences in others. We are absorbed in a global network of relationships of reciprocity. We see it dramatically when a catastrophe from the other side of the world causes suffering there where we are or when a financial meltdown in a country far from us causes crisis in all other markets.

The same is also true of positive initiatives and factors which spread throughout the world. The quest for the good and the desire to construct it is taking on a global dimension. Great initiatives working for peace, democracy, human and social rights that often bring together citizens from all over the world are testimony to this. Such initiatives become “viral”, contagious, thanks to the new forms of communication.

We are however, projected towards a single destiny for all peoples of the earth. It is necessary, then, to learn to love the good of the other person as our own. “Love the other’s homeland as your own”, Chiara Lubich often repeated this during international gatherings. We are all in the same boat: we can sink or swim together. No one can expect to be happy and content on their own especially when instead around them there is great suffering.

In this era of global interdependence, which compelling principle can enable the global and local challenges to be overcome? The Youth for a United World have no doubts: fraternity.

The principle of fraternity in fact, indicates a path that humanity must go through in order to respect the freedom of all, and to desire the other’s good as one’s own. Fraternity generates reciprocity because it is contagious and it activates unity because it is not just about giving to those who have nothing: but it is about sharing their destiny right until the end. Fraternity promotes the common good on the broadest of levels and for the future generations as well. It contains those essential values that bring humanity towards the Third Millennium, through a historical process centred on the dignity of each member of the human family. Through this commitment, we, Youth for a United World, intend to achieve the objective that Chiara Lubich entrusted to us:

“Through the Youth for a United World,
I expect the world
to be convinced that it is called to unity”¹⁸.

¹⁸ Cf. Chiara Lubich, Rocca di Papa, 1984.



I PLEDGE, THEREFORE I LIVE FOR...

One of the components of the United World Project is the United World Network: where people freely commit to make the Golden Rule the focus of their existence and actions. The thousands of signatures collected over the past months come from many different places and have many different stories behind them. They are conscious actions, commitments, declarations of faithfulness to a lifestyle. More than one thousand signatures¹⁹ arrived from Burkina Faso where the gap between the rich and the poor is ever wider and the Internet is a privilege of a few. Here in 2013 a group of young people visited a hospital to bring basic necessities to the patients, sharing what even for themselves were essential goods.

Other signatures came from Scotland, where dialogue with people from different faiths and beliefs takes place during interreligious and intercultural study days in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

¹⁹ On the website www.unitedworldproject.org it is possible to sign on-line and download the forms for the signatures and other material, in 18 languages, to spread the initiative.

People signed up from Honduras as well, where the initiative “Lempira” is currently ongoing. A boy – the owner of a small t-shirt company – decided that he would donate a percentage of each t-shirt sold to buying a meal for the poor. The initiative was so successful that other well-known companies in this sector decided to promote it. Thanks to the funds raised and through the contribution of other groups, it was possible to organize two days of medical and dental check-ups and distribution of water, food and clothes for the poor.

Then there are the thousands of signatures indicating deeply made decisions; these are silent gestures but they have deep roots. They are signs sealing commitment to the project of universal fraternity proposed by Youth for a United World. For each of the approximately 80 thousand signatures from around world there are different stories, as many as the occasions that life offers to live the Golden Rule. Included in the list of signatures are those of representatives of institutions, artists, sport champions and world known personalities: among whom Juan Arias, former president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1987. So many drops in the sea, so many knots in a net: all these people share the desire to give themselves for the Golden Rule; a fluid and dynamic network, like our society, a network that acts in different situations, wherever fraternity calls.

IVORY COAST



The meaning of a signature

“It was on a Wednesday and we were at school. At ten o’clock we went to eat outside. In the canteen, next to us, there was a lady. While eating her meal, she had put her mobile phone on the table, but she forgot it when she left. When no one could see me, I took it and I said to myself: “It is a shame to waste such an opportunity”. It all happened in a fraction of second. Then I remembered the commitment I had made to respect the Golden Rule. It was on the day I had signed the sheet, while meeting with the young people coming from villages in Kassiapleu. By signing our names, we all had made a commitment to living for a more united world.

I started looking for the lady, but in vain, because, in the meanwhile, she had gone home. The classes had restarted when from my classroom I saw the lady again, she was looking for her mobile phone. I asked my teacher for permission to go out and I went to meet her. She was crying. When I got closer to her I greeted her by saying: “It was you who was sitting next to me, wasn’t it?” She asked me: “Have you seen my phone?” And I answered: “Yes, and I kept it for you”. She thanked me and asked me: “Would you like anything to drink?”. When I said “No, thank you” she said goodbye adding: “You are not like the other boys”.

THE ICEBERG

At this stage, we need to understand whether fraternity is really so widespread and whether it is able to be a means for resolving conflicts and a model of community for wider portions of humanity. Moreover, we need to understand whether this life style can be recognized in everyday life. We use an image that visibly describes our inquiry: the iceberg. This ice extension requires a solid and wide support in order to emerge above the surface. We can make an analogy with fraternity.

The part of the iceberg on the surface represents both the micro initiatives – those that we refer to as “fragments of fraternity” – and the macro initiatives – that we could call “portions of fraternity”, actions that can offer a solution for wider social problems and to conditions such as poverty, conflicts, and violations of rights. Fraternity can be an answer to all these situations. All this represents the visible tip of the iceberg. Then there is a daily fraternity, a solid network made up of the innumerable daily and ordinary relationships that are nurtured by openness to others, and by paying attention and listening to them. These actions can slowly change selfish habits or prejudices and they can strengthen and create fertile ground for many shared values. These represent the base of the iceberg, the submerged part that sometimes is ignored and underestimated despite being essential.

A lot of micro and macro initiatives, that can offer a solution for wider problems.



A vast network of acts of fraternity which, in our daily life, express the power of love in our relationships.



Chapter II

CULTURE AND FRATERNITY

by Daniela Ropelato and Alberto Lo Presti²⁰

INTERPRETING THE WORLD THROUGH THE LENS OF FRATERNITY

Our aim is to interpret contemporary culture keeping universal fraternity in mind.

It would take too long to dwell on a complex definition of culture here. In order to understand something about the challenges of today's world, though, we can look at an event that happened some time ago. In February 2011, the agency Survival International discovered an indigenous people in the Amazon Forest, between Brazil and Peru. It was photographed from an aircraft and it did not seem civilized (according to our general standards, at least). The images went round the world and they show some members of this community threatening the film operator with a lance while he was filming the village and the scene from the aircraft. It looks like a meeting between an advanced technological civilization and a primitive one. It is necessary to avoid misinterpreting it as the triumph of one over the other. It is worth noting that many voices were raised to protect the Amazonian community which was described as being "uncontaminated" and in need of protection from corruption. But the funniest thing is that many people looked at that community with the nostalgic sigh of someone wishing to change their life and move there with them!

This curious reaction tells a lot about the challenges faced by our contemporary culture. Is it really serving the

needs of human beings? Is it always able to keep the promises of happiness that it makes?

These are the questions that people have always asked. Finding the answers is a process that needs to start from an understanding of humanity, because only when we know what humanity is, will we know what our purpose is, and how to achieve it.

Such a project requires the support of all of our know-how and the different sciences. During this first stage, then, different disciplines must grapple with the meaning of our human nature, because we believe that in this very nature there is something useful to define universal fraternity.

The first step passes through anthropological knowledge that teaches us that the sense of sacred and the religious sentiment are universal factors and, therefore, they are useful to understand the idea of humanity. This knowledge starts from a simple observation: we all have a natural sense of boundaries since the human experience perceives its own contingency (we know that we are not immortal) and its helplessness (for example when we are faced with the unexpected). Human beings have always questioned the meaning of life, the meaning of death, the achievement of real happiness and all this produces an inner search that looks towards the transcendent. Everything is finite, limited and transitory. The need to make sense of life leads human beings to look for what is, instead, unlimited, permanent, and infinite.

This explains why experience of the sacred and the religious is so universal, and always current. It is enough to bear in mind that the hypothesis of the death of God and the eclipse of the sacred, developed mostly during the 20th century following the ideals of rationalism and secularism, has been shown to be absolutely unfounded.

Let's remain in the 20th century. In its worst moments, while torn apart by the bombing of the Second World War, God raised up a new spirituality in Chiara Lubich. A spirituality that was capable of writing an important page – the most important – of humanity's historical development: universal fraternity. In the midst of the destruction and decay of every human value, in the heart of Chiara and

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Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - Angelicum, Rome

some young women and men a single and earlier unknown truth appeared in a powerful way: God is the only ideal that does not crumble. God who revealed himself as love, love torn apart by the war, love which in His crucified and abandoned Son, experiences the suffering that affects all men and women. And it was exactly to respond to God's immense love that the Focolare Movement was born. The spark that generated it is evangelical Love shared with everyone, irrespective of their religion, political orientation, education, culture etc...

During those difficult years of the 20th century many had the dramatic illusion that a few books could have changed history; books such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Marx and Engels' *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Freud's *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book*, Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Marcuse's *One-dimensional Man*... How many disappointments! Today the covers of these books are all covered in dust; whereas Chiara and her companions had chosen the Gospel instead; which was truly capable of changing history, starting from small concrete acts in our daily lives right up to the construction of an international community based on universal fraternity.

At present, the diffusion of the ideal of fraternity of the Focolare Movement involves millions of people from all over the world including Catholics, Christians from different churches, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, followers of other religions, atheists and so on.

But how has this expansion been possible?

The love that Chiara has spread throughout the world is not simply human love, but it is evangelical love intended to tear down the barriers of division and spread out everywhere to everyone. This is why it is particularly suitable to promote and support the current change. Let's look, for example, at some of today's challenges. Some ongoing social, political and legal processes suggest the idea of humanity as a moral subject: these processes could include for instance, the creation of an International Criminal Court, multilateral agreements on investments, climate and environment conferences, and, the protest movements seeking a fairer distribution of natural resources (water, food, hydrocarbons). It is striking that these protests for more equity in people's life styles are often conducted by the citizens of those countries which benefit from the consequences of inequality: young people from industrialized countries. The *indignados* or *new-global* movements show this very clearly.

We are witnessing a process where rights, values, civic and democratic virtues are all expanding; a process which is unfolding following a multi-millennial tradition of Christianity.

Looking at the mythical traditions of the past and the ancient pre-Christian theologies, one will see that they had

a different idea of the divine. Gods were fellow-citizens, that is to say they would manifest themselves only to the people that they represented. For example, a community would entreat its own fertility goddess to favor a good harvest, without thinking of what would happen to other peoples: it was up to them to win their own god's favor! And in order to obtain this grace, it was necessary to pay attention to the correct observance of sacred rituals and, at most, love one's own community, i.e. one's own fellow citizens, in order to deserve the goddess' favor. In other words, people were brothers within the walls of their village. Those who were outside were neighbors, at most, but more often they were considered enemies.

Jesus, on the other hand, has a message that would break down any group's social barriers. He uses strong words to demolish the walls of the ethics of community, thus founding universal fraternity. Whoever loves their father or mother more than Jesus is not worthy of Him [*Mt* 10, 34-38], and that means that morals must go beyond the barriers of parental relationships, that is of the *genos*. Moreover, He seems to reject the privileged relationship with one's own mother and relatives, because he points out that whoever does the will of God is his brother [*Mt* 12, 46-50].

And this fraternity can only be a universal one, as Jesus reveals in his testament: "I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (*Gv* 17, 21). The social extension of the Christian experience has no pre-packaged limits. So, on the Christian horizon, one is not closed within one's own walls, and fraternity is not a vague and generic motto for those who accept to enter inside. Fraternity of its nature is for everyone, it's a matter of enabling people to discover this deep aspect of their human condition. It is not an illusory ideal, but an explosive historical power, that is able to break down the conflictual nature of national, class, and gender distinctions in order to reevaluate them in the light of reciprocity so that, in different ways, they can all become one²¹.

The fact that this is not just an illusory ideal is also shown by the findings of some scientific disciplines, such as economics, and the physical and natural sciences. They agree, for instance, on the so-called principle of interdependence. This principle has a simple expression: everything that happens in any given place may have consequences in any other. It was the field of economics that first elaborated such a rule in its contemporary version²², while other disciplines studied its physical and

²² This is commendably expressed by Paul the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians; "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". (*Gal* 3, 28)

mathematical dimensions starting, for example, from the work of the Chileans Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Today perhaps, one of the clearest expressions of this principle is that expressed by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman²³. The inevitable consequence of the principle of interdependence is what we could define as the principle of common destiny. There is full agreement on this as well. It states that we are all in the same boat and that it is impossible to save ourselves on our own, it is wrong to believe that we can build a happy island of our own if suffering is all around us. Chiara Lubich transmitted this principle to us with extraordinary words that, on the political level, are expressed as the need to love other people's homelands as our own, other people's political parties as our own. This is the most authentic understanding of the common good one which "requires the constant ability and effort to seek the good of others as though it were one's own good."²⁴.

SOLIDARITY AND FRATERNITY

Take note, then. All of this means that fraternity is not a longing of a group of pious people, but it is the value that contemporary culture demands and cries out for. Such a culture promotes the principles of a common destiny and interdependence which, to our minds, bear out the idea of fraternity. It is typical of fraternity to assume that no one is a stranger, that everything that happens to one person is crucial to other person too and that we all share the same objective. So, that which we call fraternity is a process which is already taking place. Failing to acknowledge fraternity as a value of contemporary culture means to defy the course of history.

Someone may wonder: why should we introduce the principle of fraternity when we already have that of solidarity that has been a frequent object of consideration over the past decades? Our firm belief is that today, the idea of solidarity on its own is not enough to found an equal global order that pays attention to the real needs of

people. As a matter of fact, solidarity has at times been understood as the mechanism whereby someone rich takes care of someone who lives in poverty. So, it has often happened that solidarity has supported imperialism's ideological affirmation. This was the belief that supremacy could be morally justified by carrying out actions of solidarity. Many voices have been raised against this ideological way of dealing with development and solidarity.

Today it is no longer enough to ask the rich to feel the moral obligation to take care of the poor. We need a broader vision of the human family. A vision capable of connecting the experiences of the men and women who do not exist yet, our descendants, with those of the past who can show us the pathway to our future (here we recall the community discovered in the Amazon Forest living a remote life style that we look at with nostalgia). The destiny of this human family is unity and the way to make it real is the discovery of universal fraternity. So, humanity can no longer be thought of as just a zoological category that is useful for distinguishing between human beings and stones, plants and other animals. Humanity is an authentic moral and political subject with its own rights. The acknowledgement of these characteristics of the human family is already in progress: it is enough to consider the resolutions adopted with regards to environmental policies and the values of justice that they imply (from the Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, to the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 and the Copenhagen Conference in 2009).

Solidarity, in this sense, has taught us a lot and it has made it possible for many people at the grass roots level to become aware of the needs of other people. But today this grass roots deployment of solidarity is no longer sufficient since ecology, pedagogy, nuclear engineering, political science etc... all stress that the choices we make today will have increasingly greater consequences on future generations: fraternity, then, is the relation that is capable of representing the interests of all and achieving the common good for all as well.

UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY: THE DIRECTION HUMANITY IS HEADING

A huge amount has been written about the transformations of our contemporary era and the challenges facing our knowledge and culture. The list of quotations that would be necessary to come to grips with the many existing points of view would be too long to consider.

Sometimes, however, it may happen that, observing history in all its details, we lose sight of the general direction in which humanity is heading. It is a bit like the

²² In the version considered here, the beginning of the problem of interdependence conventionally goes back to the following work: Joseph S. Nye Jr., Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston 1977. Interdependence, though, is a much older concept. Among the many clear formulations, those that stand out are that of Immanuel Kant in *The Metaphysics of morals* (III, §62) and some definitions from the thinking of the Renaissance and, going back in time, that of the ancient stoicism.

²³ "Whatever else "globalization" may mean, it means that we are all dependent on each other [...] Something that happens in one place may have global consequences [...] What we do (or abstain from doing) may influence the conditions of life (or death) for people in places we will never visit and of generations we will never know"; Zygmunt Bauman, *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts – London, England 2008, p. 71.

²⁴ *Compendium of the Church social teaching*, § 167

photographer who zooms in and does not realize that the detail they are focusing on is just an element of a much wider picture. Chiara Lubich taught us that we should look at everything, the detail and the whole, in the light of universal fraternity. She explained this concept in detail in Switzerland in 2004:

“Over the years, having experienced countless times in my life and in that of others the providential action of God and having directly come in touch with so many people, I have learnt to decipher the steps forward that mark the humanity’s development and I can now say that history – the history of humanity – is a slow but unstoppable journey towards universal fraternity. The facts are there for us to see, we need to know how to interpret them. The world has never been as deeply and visibly inclined towards unity as it is now. There are many signs of this - the unions between states and the processes of political and economic integration that are happening more often at continental level or in certain geo-political areas; the fundamental role of the international organizations, in particular the United Nations, to get to know, face and

manage the main issues that affect the life of peoples and countries; the development of an ever more extensive and fertile dialogue among many diverse people; the growth of social, cultural and religious movements which have appeared as new protagonists of international relations and work towards goals on a global level”.

History, according to Chiara, is always a story of love:

“A love which does not lose its characteristics: the involvement of the whole person, with the intelligence and the will to reach everyone, the intuition and the fantasy to take the first step, and the realism of putting ourselves in other peoples’ shoes. It is a love able to give of oneself without personal interests and to open new roads even when human limitations and failures seem to block them”.

This love makes us ready for any challenge and for such a universal ideal we believe that it is worth giving our energies and spending our life.



Chapter III

INSIDE THE UNITED WORLD PROJECT

by **Mariagrazia Baroni** and **Francesco Ricciardi**

*"Me and you are one:
I cannot hurt you without hurting myself"*
(**Mohandas Gandhi**, India)

This work is not meant to be a thorough analysis of fraternity in the world. This would have required a more scientific and rigorous methodology. Nevertheless, it is a starting point, the first steps of an inquiry, a collection of data on universal fraternity in contemporary history.

A process of analysing of the idea and experience of fraternity has begun, starting from a series of documents that the participants to the United World Project themselves offered to the research group in order to examine the meaning and characteristics of a series of initiatives and actions in different parts of the world and identify acts of fraternity. Is it possible to acknowledge that such actions, even if extremely different, are based on the same reality, i.e. universal fraternity? What characters come to light when studying these different actions? Is it possible to find some common elements that may guide the reconstruction of a shared definition of fraternity?

THE METHODOLOGY

It is useful to briefly describe the methodology that we adopted. Involving all 204 nations where the Youth for a United World Movement is present would have been extremely time-consuming. Therefore, for this first and experimental phase, we decided to identify the countries where Youth for a United World is sufficiently rooted in the territory and has enough historical memory to allow a more detailed analysis of the significant initiatives that have taken place over the years in terms of fraternal commitment. Together with the groups of young people that accepted to collaborate in these countries, other young people and groups from other nations that are close to the network of Youth for a United World joined the project in order to increase the distribution of the acts of fraternity around the globe to be taken as the object of our study. One of the goals of our research is that of progressively collecting the most information possible from very different geographical and cultural contexts in order

to advance the interpretation of the concept of fraternity in a broad intercultural dimension.

Therefore, we asked for the collaboration of 42 nations in 5 continents.

The fact that, in this first stage of our research, the majority of our case studies come from the European continent does not go unnoticed. This can be explained, firstly, because of the geographical origins and the development, during the first years, of the Focolari Movement. The Movement was born between 1943-1944 during the Second World War, in Trent (a city in the North of Italy). After that, many people joined the first community that was created around Chiara Lubich and her spirituality of unity. They had seen in this ideal of unity, in the Gospel put into practice and in love for one's neighbour a chance to change their lives. We are not going to analytically retrace the development of the Movement. But, if the center of irradiation was Italy, it is understandable why the Movement immediately developed in the neighboring countries and, later, farther away, reaching, in the past few years, all nations of the world.



Here is a synthetic chart

Continent	Nations
Africa	Burundi, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Egypt
Asia	South Korea, Philippines, India, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestinian Territories
America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela, USA
Oceania	Australia and New Zealand
Europe	Austria, France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, Greece, Albania, Luxembourg

"FRAGMENTS OF FRATERNITY"

Each of the nations involved was specifically requested to document some "fragments of fraternity", describing them analytically.

But what exactly are these fragments of fraternity?

At a world level, they are actions of prompt intervention to assist victims of earthquakes, floods, famines, wars etc... At a more local level, they include a series of actions rooted in the desire of building fraternity in our cities, in the neighborhoods where we live, in schools, at work, in fact, everywhere.

We realized that all around the world in ways perhaps unobserved, there is a real ferment of initiatives which each day support and encourage humanity's journey towards its common destiny²⁵. This does not mean denying the specific contribution of each people; on the contrary, it means highlighting the fact that all belong to the human family as the structure of humanity is relational and it can only exist with the contribution of everyone. This is the idea of a "fraternal interdependence", capable of generating on different levels an institutional structure and a political dynamic which sees authority shared between different places: a "community of communities". The words of Chiara Lubich are timelier than ever: "Without fraternity, no human being and no people is really and completely free and equal. Equality and freedom will always be incomplete and precarious until and unless fraternity becomes part and parcel of the political programs and processes in every region of the world"²⁶.

What is necessary, though, is finding criteria that can, even if roughly, guide the identification of a fraternal action, because, at a glance, one may risk to confuse an

action of solidarity or one that tends towards exclusion with a fraternal one.

Some examples may be useful to clarify. It is not possible, for example, to define fraternity as a "sectarian bond" that is typical of some *secret associations*, as in the case of Masonry or other similar organizations that filter those who can access them as in the case of student fraternity, or "class fraternity" and "racial fraternity" that are the foundation of aggressive nationalisms. These associations:

- exclude because they prevent some groups from entering the sphere of fraternity
- are partial because they deny the universal nature of the idea of fraternity relating it to subjects such as sects, classes, nations, races.

Universal fraternity, on the other hand, cannot be attributed to a specific subject. Doing so would inevitably cause an ideological clash that would only allow some people/groups within the sphere of fraternity while others, i.e. the majority, would be excluded.

Moreover, fraternity is different from mere solidarity. Even though it is true that solidarity can partially implement the contents of the principle of fraternity, the latter is more transparent and immediate in the way it highlights the need for equal relationships, while solidarity, in some cases, may tolerate differences between those who give and those who receive.

In order to explain this concept, together with a study group made up of lecturers and students from Sophia University Institute²⁷, we developed guidelines to identify those elements which are essential to define a fraternal action.

²⁵ *Compendium of the Church social teaching*, § 446.

²⁶ Chiara Lubich's message at the first World Independence Day, 12th September 2003, Philadelphia, USA

²⁷ The Sophia University Institute (IUS) is an academic research and training center. More info at <http://www.iu-sophia.org>

HOW TO IDENTIFY A FRATERNAL ACTION

An action that generates a fragment of fraternity:


Is carried out freely	→	No one can be obliged to fraternity
Is guided by the intention of doing good	→	The action is not carried out accidentally, but it is the result of a choice. It does not measure one's own advantage, but the good that the other receives.
Generates sharing and reciprocity	→	It is not limited to giving something, but it activates relationships of friendship, where people readily identify with and share with the others.
Respects the common good	→	The good that one does will not damage anyone else and it must be evaluated in consideration of the future generations too.
Is universal	→	The one who carries out the action does not discriminate and is ready to assist anyone.

A FORM TO TELL A STORY OF FRATERNITY

In order to collect the largest amount of information possible about the single “fragments of fraternity”, we created and shared a form that is available on the website of the United World Project: all those who wish to inform about a “fraternal” action, choice, initiative, both from individuals and groups, can find a series of questions to facilitate the description.

During the first phase of data collection, the International Secretariat of Youth for a United World received more than 800 forms. A copy of the form is available below.



FRAGMENTS OF FRATERNITY									
Title:	Eg: activity + recipients + location								
Field of the activity:	Eg: sport/university/art/humanitarian emergency ...								
City:	Eg: Rome		Country:	Eg: Italy		Date of compilation:	DD / MM / YYYY		
Duration of the activity:	Started on	DD / MM / YYYY	Ended on	DD / MM / YYYY	Frequency of the activity:				
Performers of the activity:	Eg: one or more people					Type:		Number:	
Eg: association, spontaneous group, institution ...									
Associazioni, Istituzioni o altre realtà che hanno partecipato:									
Activity targeted towards:	Eg: The elderly of the neighborhood, young people of different faiths, students ...								
Please describe in brief the activity?	Type:							Number:	Eg: 15
How did the subject (subjects) take the initiative? Describe the main circumstances:									
What is the main reason that prompted the subject (subjects) to take action?									
What effect has the action on the recipient / recipients and the environment?									
What effect has the activity on the subject /subjects who has taken the initiative?									
What is the core value promoted by the initiative?									
What assessment can be given at the end of the initiative / while the initiative is still taking place?									
									

A JOURNEY THROUGH FRATERNITY

*"Our duty as world citizens
is to commit ourselves to making all human beings part
of a community in which dialogue is possible
and where we hold dear other people's interests".
(Martha Nussbaum, USA²⁸)*

Since September 2012, when the Project was launched, to this day, 800 forms have been collected. The forms contain information about the type of fragment, the place where it was carried out, who worked on it and for how long. We selected some of them and, by intersecting meridians and parallels of latitude on the globe, we present here a journey through fraternity, in search of its many "fragments" spread all over the five continents. The remaining forms are available for further reference on the website of the United World Project²⁹.

Have your compass and map ready, then and let's start this fraternal tour of the world.

OCEANIA

There are about a thousand kilometres between Melbourne and Sidney and 3500 between Melbourne and Perth: these numbers describe a huge territory, inhabited by a very young population that is just 250 years old. Multi-ethnic because of the strong aboriginal presence, multi-religious because of the many churches, faiths, traditional religions that exist here, this continent plays the card of friendship to keep its many diversities together. The 17 forms collected tell that even fraternity has found fertile ground here, with an amazing potential.

Sidney, Australia Latitude 33° 52' 4" S Longitude 151° 12' 26 E - John tells that they developed many recreational activities, as well as cultural and musical ones: "Our motto is "connect to share". The reality of Oceania is a multi-coloured one and over the past few years it has been expanding and growing. In such a context in any activity it is essential to involve and integrate different generations".

Adelaide, Australia Latitude 34° 56' 0" S Longitude 138° 36' 0" E - In her eyes Anna has a youthful vitality. She recently graduated in "Interaction Design and Electronic Arts". For years she has been suffering from a rare form of skin cancer: Gorlin syndrome. "At first it was hard – she says – because the treatments were frequent,

painful and invasive. I was so tired and demoralized that I tended to isolate myself. I did not have much social interaction. Thanks to the support of my family and many friends, I understood that even this was an opportunity to open up to other people. I asked myself whether it would be possible to create a support group for people suffering from this terrible disease. Today we are working to create an app for smartphones, the "Aim", which stands for "Art is Med", that will be useful to connect and give voice to patients all over the world so that they feel less alone. The app will make it possible for the patients to share online their education, job and passions, but also to establish contacts with specialists, doctors and clinics. This way, thanks to the companies and organizations from various scientific areas that support the initiative, users will be able to share their problems. Today there is already a team working in this direction thanks to a website that was set up to support the action; the team has been joined by some support groups in the United Kingdom and in the USA who have promoted this approach on their websites. To date there are 23 families online and many others are showing their interest in the initiative".

Melbourne, Australia Latitude: 37° 52' S Longitude: 145° 08' E - Tom is a tall man, much liked by his friends. He says that in 2005 he had to move with his family to a newly built neighbourhood in Melbourne, where programs and venues for recreation were scarce. He could have decided to leave but he tried instead to find a way to do something for his community so that people could have opportunities to come together, share and meet. "There is nothing better than sport to bring people from various generation together. In that neighbourhood there was an empty park. So, I started spreading an idea that had come to my mind: creating a space where people could play football. I did not know who would join and there was a risk that I would find myself on my own. But there were many families that shared the same desire and enthusiasm. So, participants soon became so many that we could set up a team and then even a soccer club! Now we have 38 teams with more than 400 children and 40 old people. Every week we meet to play. The park has been renovated and now there are many pitches with their own lighting. But this is not the end of the story, because we also added locker rooms, a kitchen and a canteen. It's become a real meeting place".

²⁸ Nussbaum, M. C. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

²⁹ Available at www.unitedworldproject.org

AFRICA

Lush forests, breath-taking, majestic mountains combined with deserts and savannahs. Despite acute poverty and conflicts, it is celebration and joy which distinguish this continent. Beauty is the criterion that Africa uses to define its history and culture. The bond with the land is strong and wars are often generated by this visceral attachment. On this very land fraternity blossoms, as can be seen in this sample from the 110 forms received from Africa.

Kayanza, Burundi Latitude: 3° 4' 0" S Longitude: 29° 7' 45" E - "For us Africans – Malaika explains – relationships among people are fundamental. It is not always easy, but we try to build true relationships. Life in the villages is very important and it is from there that initiatives are often launched. For two years, between 2009 and 2011, together with many young people and adults we worked to bring water to Kayanza, a village in the North of Burundi. Due to the torrential rains, the population has often no clean drinking water. We began to look for the necessary construction materials and finance to create a water supply network. We involved the city council as well, so that we could work together. Many people joined in to help digging to lay the pipes. Then others joined us giving a hand, or donating materials or money, money which we used to pay for the equipment and the technical assistance. Thanks to the help and love of many people, we managed to build eleven fountains for the benefit of about 4 thousand people! Two of them are located in a college and in the elementary school in Murago Bubezi. Before this the students and teachers had to walk a long way to find a little bit of water".

Muramvya, Burundi Latitude: 3° 18' 0" S Longitude: 29° 40' 0" E - Thabo writes: "In Maramvya, 12 Km from Bujumbura, there is a refugee camp where more than 400 families live in extreme poverty after having escaped the civil war. Since May 2011, together with Youth for a United World, we had been wondering what we could do for these brothers and sisters of ours. Our first idea was to collect some clothes. When we reached the refugee camp, though, we realized that they had lots of other needs. During our following visits, we brought food but, above all we tried to make them feel loved and listened to. We organized games with the children and, thanks to these moments together, we managed to also meet their parents and we realized that they were suffering a lot. Many of the young people were not recognized as citizens and, therefore, they had no right to education, or health assistance. Through contacting the local council and we were able to secure citizenship for them. We also made progress regarding their education: during the school year 2012/2013, 234 elementary and secondary school students were able to receive the school equipment they needed.

Cairo, Egypt Latitude: 41° 32' 0" N Longitude: 13° 49' 0" E - "In April 2013 – Samia says – we organized an International Peace Festival in Cairo. There were around 1600 young people from 40 nations and 5 continents, an explosion of art and colours dedicated to the motto "Make a visible change".

Nairobi, Kenya Latitude 1° 6' S Longitude: 36° 49' E - "Fraternity may be very wide-ranging but it often starts from simple, small actions – Olakunle says. I live in Nairobi in the neighbourhood of Mathare where the streets are not always clean. There is garbage almost everywhere. For this reason, one day I took the initiative of cleaning the streets of the neighbourhood where I live. I started by asking financial support from my neighbours to buy the things that were needed to clean up and I shared my idea with some friends. To my surprise, other people from the neighbourhood joined promptly. We found ourselves sharing a moment of joy and donation on the streets! Since then, once a month we continue to honour the commitment we made. There is an atmosphere of the family working together in pursuit of the common good".

Abidjan, Ivory Coast Latitude: 5° 25' 0" N Longitude: 4° 1' 60" W - "In 2002 the war started in Ivory Coast" Rosine says with a lot of emotion. "Behind any armed conflict there is always a lot of suffering. Broken relationships, misunderstandings, death, mistrust, insecurity. There is a lot of fear, even within ourselves. With some friends, though, we told ourselves that fraternity is not built with words but with concrete actions. So the "cube of love" came to our minds³⁰. The proposal we made to young people, children, adults and old people was simple: to read the sentence on one of the six sides of the cube and try to put it into practice throughout the day. We committed to do it ourselves and then we suggested it everywhere we went: at work, in church, in the neighbourhoods, in schools, in the family. At night, each group met to share how it had implemented fraternity throughout the day. Over these years these actions helped to create a long-lasting reconciliation: mutual forgiveness among people and groups, within families, in villages and communities. In short, love penetrates the life of thousands of people". Here the brutal reality of war did not have the last word.

Man, Ivory Coast Latitude: 7° 24' 45" N Longitude: 7° 33' 13" W - "In the village of Grolé mothers are forced to bring their children with them when they work in the fields. Like this, they could not focus on their work nor could they

³⁰ The "cube of love" is a dice with six sentences on the sides; in order to become a creator of fraternity and peace, one must implement these sentences in ones' life. "Be the first to love", "love your enemy", "treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you", "love everyone", "love one another reciprocally" and "love others as yourself".

take care of their children. So, we decided to set up a nursery school dedicating two hours of our time each day to it. This way, before going to work, the mothers take their children to the nursery school and stay a little bit with us. Sometimes we also make food for them so that we can create some family moments to share our stories”.

Fontem, Cameroon Latitude: 5° 28' 6" N Longitude: 9° 52' 54" E - Silver, a young Bangwa, tells the story of his people: “Fifty years ago sleeping sickness was exterminating my people, affecting above all the children. Faced with this catastrophe, the Fon Defant, the old king of Fontem, decided to ask for the support of the bishops of the Christian churches, including a Dutch Catholic bishop, Monsignor Peeters. While in Rome for the Vatican Council, he asked Chiara Lubich to take care of the problem. The first group of doctors that was sent started working in a hut that was similar to the houses of the people of the village; their goal was to serve the local population rather than to revolutionize the world. Yet revolution is what happened: they managed to completely eradicate the mortality caused from the sleeping sickness. But the “miracle of the forest” was not just this. Slowly, peace and mutual love spread all over the village till all fights among tribes and against neighbouring villages stopped. In 2009, this desire of implementing universal fraternity extended to 18 Fons all over the region. In Fontem, over the past few years, a school and a hospital have been built where young people from all over Cameroon have found their home. Running water is available and there is a small church too. In short, a lot has been done. But, above all, all this happened without wanting to convert anyone. As a matter of fact, those who come to Africa often work with the aim of converting the local population. But all the friends of the Focolare Movement that have arrived in Africa over the years have honored the local culture and the peoples who live there, serving them with a spirit of mutual love and unity”.

AMERICA

“Plural” could be the adjective that best describes this continent: plural civilizations, traditions, somatic traits; plural institutional realities, associations, bodies that work from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego to collect the energy, creativity, needs and miseries of these peoples. The synergies among cultures and generations are some of the prerogatives of the 180 forms collected, some of which are presented below.

Netzahualcóyotl, Mexico Latitude: 19° 24' 00" N Longitude: 98° 59' 20" W - Margarita tells that “in the outskirts of Mexico City, in the town of Netzahualcóyotl [a town of a million people and a density of 20 thousand people per km² – Ed], housing there was built very quickly, to cater for people coming from all over the country looking for a job. These neighbourhoods were built untidily and completely out of proportion.

Poverty and huge social and health problems affect 80% of those who live there. In 1998, some young people of good will – following a request from the local Church – decided to join forces and offer the community accessible health services. The pharmaceutical dispensary “Igino Giordani” was set up in order to offer quality health assistance for free to those who cannot afford public care. Together with basic medical services, there is also eye - care, dentistry, dietary assistance to improve the nutritional level and the distribution of clothes and toys. Every year, there are about two thousand people who receive assistance and, after a quick calculation, 25 thousand people have used these facilities since its launch 15 years ago. The goal, though, is not just to assist people from a health point of view, but also to create fraternal relationships based on really listening to each other and on mutual sharing”.

Mexico City, Mexico Latitude 19° 28' N Longitude 99° 9' W - These initiatives have taken root in other areas of Mexico, and the experience narrated here by Álvaro illustrates this: “All over Mexico there are a number of long term projects. An example is that of the Community Center Alleluia “Las Águilas” founded in 1984, situated below the residential area of Mexico City, in one of the “neighbourhoods at risk”, where problems such as alcohol and drug addiction and prostitution are very common. The Center offers health services and possibilities for education. It also provides food and clothes. Everything is carried out in collaboration with the city council, the parish church and the private schools in the affluent areas that see the Center as an “active force” in solving the conflicts in the region. There are currently 14 people working at the Centre, including local people who are indispensable to build a society that is transformed from within. They offer their skills in several areas: psychological, medical, social, educational. The initiative continues also thanks to the collaboration of the German organization “Mexicogruppe”.

The people who approach the Center can also find family counselling, catechesis and several educational pathways.

Our goal is to show universal fraternity through our lives, trying to build real relationships. Sharing ones goods³¹ often becomes a natural part of life for those who are in touch with the Center. Over the years, there have been about 5 thousand people actively involved. As well as this, groups of doctors, dentists, social workers, nurses, young people and other volunteers have moved and spent periods of time in the City of Huejutla (in the State of Hidalgo) to assist 32 indigenous communities for free”.

Puebla, Mexico Latitude: 19° 01' 35" N Longitude: 97° 59' 23" W - Alejandro, one of the founders of Santa Maria school near the Focolare little town called “El Diamante”, explains that “the school was born with the goal of meeting the needs of the neighbouring population. To date, the institute hosts 500 students, from kindergarten to high school. But in order to keep it going, many children are also supported by the New Families Movement³². The collaboration between teachers, parents and public bodies makes it possible to provide a more complete education and allows the students to acquire the necessary knowledge to act positively in their socio-cultural context”.

Bahía Blanca, Argentina Latitude: 38° 43' S Longitude: 62° 16' W - Macarena recounts how “since 1995 the community organization “Nuevos Signos” has been active in Argentina, in the city of Bahía Blanca, promoting the intrinsic worth of individuals and families. In particular, it has aimed to benefit children through programs preventing ill-health, teaching about nutrition, giving psychological support and teaching in various subjects. From this endeavour, two community centres have come to life: “Nuoveos Horizontes” in Punta Alta which assists more than 200 people, and “Semillas de Esperanza” in Bahía Blanca that takes care of more than 80 children. The centers are now well known in the area and are places where children feel welcomed and loved.

Mendoza, Argentina Latitude: 31° 32' 15" W Longitude: 68° 32' 11" N - There are also some really good art-related initiatives. Miguel explains: “In 2008 we organized a charity concert called “A hand for Peace”: through a nominal ticket everyone could donate a book to a public library. Over time, though, other needs have arisen. Sometimes we have requested food, for instance, to help the poor. From May to November, about 120 chil-

dren, families and young people meet for seminars and workshops for four hours a week. During the final recital, then, more than 2500 people get involved. We estimate that, over the years, 30 local bands have participated, as well as some international guests and more than 13 thousand people! We try to make it an experience of fraternity for who take part in the seminars and for those who attend the recitals, where the barriers between the performers and the audience are demolished. To date, there have been five editions in Mendoza and two others in General Alvear and San Carlos. The main goal is to encourage young people to believe in a new culture: a culture of peace which is built up through small actions of fraternity”.

Brasilia, Brazil Latitude: 15° 45' S Longitude: 47° 57' W - The importance of the neighbourhood in promoting integration is highlighted by Gabriel: “Since 2007, in the capital city Brasilia an organization called “Higs 706” has been working with the government to develop public policies for the development of the territory trying to preserve, at the same time, the original plan of the city that was chosen by UNESCO as a world heritage site. The organization also aims at involving those who live in the neighbourhood into initiatives of participative finance organized by the local government and above all to create a greater collaboration with the citizens and a deeper knowledge of the different barrios of the city. To date, a thousand citizens have been involved and we have been able to propose a shared project to modify our square”.

Benevides, Brazil Latitude: 1° 21' 41" S Longitude: 48° 14' 40" W - Vânia, one of the citizens of Mariapoli Gloria describes to us the activities carried out in this little town of the Focolare Movement in the North of Brazil, another piece of fraternity. “Since 1992 we have been carrying out social activities with the most marginalized communities. Thanks to help received from AMU, in 2001 we launched the “Núcleo Educacional Fiore” project, providing education for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The “Distance Support” project of New Families also began with the collaboration of the City Council of Benevides, which provides the salary for the teachers. At the moment 315 children attend the school and 120 young people are involved extracurricular activities. The teaching focuses on putting into practice the rules of the cube of love's Art of loving³⁴. Since the majority of the students come from families with

³¹ A practice that comes from the Gospel of the first Christian community that used to put together everyone's money, belongings, skills and time.

³² Movement born on 19th July 1967. It operates in many areas regarding the family. The main goal is to show the absolute importance of mutual love and bring this once again to be a central aspect of this institution. It serves mostly broken families, divorced parents, abandoned boys and girls and all circumstances of marginality. More info at www.famiglienuove.org

³³ AMU is an NGO born in 1986; it is recognized by the Italian Foreign Ministry to implement projects of development cooperation in developing countries and development-oriented training and education. It is inspired by the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Together with the populations involved, it is committed to organizing sustainable activities for a concrete development, respecting the local social, cultural and economic reality. AMU is active in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and Eastern Europe. More info at www.amu-it.eu

³⁴ Foundation of the basic criteria to distinguish a fragment of fraternity

many problems, our priority is to help the children to rediscover their dignity through true and open relationships, without discrimination. Together with the Núcleo, then, there is a shelter where some doctors, psychologists and dentists – all volunteers – offer treatment, and in addition, carry out prevention work with parents. Children and their families are assisted through home visits and they receive care according to their needs. Moreover, in the Núcleo we also started tuition, sport, art and IT classes to avoid that – after school – these young people find themselves in risky situations on the streets. It is a way to offer them not only food and recreation, but also a space open to dialogue and group moments where we can help them to look at their reality with a new perspective on life. Over the years, there have been about 1300 children and their families involved in our projects, for a total of around 7800 people”.

San Diego, USA *Latitude: 32° 44' N Longitude: 117° 8' W* - Josh offers us his fragment of fraternity: “Every month, since 2010, some families meet to help homeless and unemployed people. Many give their support by preparing a warm meal. During the meal, everyone does something: there are those who serve, those who sing, those who clean and those who make the beds for the night. To date around 120 people have been helped”.

Houston, USA *Latitude: 29° 45' N Longitude: 95° 23' W* - Jaqueline, a young nurse, thinks that fraternity can radically change people's daily life: “In the hospital where I work there used to be a lot of tension. The main causes were the gossiping and the misunderstandings because coming from different places, we often spoke our native languages, excluding others from the conversation. This had created a difficult environment.

So, I suggested to our director to ask the employees to use the cube of love. The idea was welcomed by the people in charge of the office and the staff started implementing one of the cube's sides right from the start of the day. Since then there has been a huge difference in the way the nurses treat each other and the patients!”

ASIA

In a continent whose identity is a macro one, both in terms of extension and in terms of population, small is the unit of measure of the many acts of fraternity. In Asia NGOs are very active with many projects and initiatives that try to heal the wounds caused by natural disasters and extreme poverty. Here the effects of environmental and financial globalization are tangible and their victims are not anonymous numbers but real lives. Education and training are the characteristics of the forms we selected from among the 76 we received and that will be presented in the following.

Bethlehem, Palestine *Latitude: 31° 42' 11" N Longitude: 35° 11' 44" E* - In the *suk*, the typical local market, a group of young people is distributing orange wristlets, the same that were given to the participants at the Genfest to highlight the commitment to implement the Golden Rule.

Nadine, a young Christian Palestinian says: “It is wonderful to find ourselves brothers and sisters with universal fraternity in common. We live in a place where three different religions coexist, where sometimes, unfortunately, living together becomes conflict. In order to create a culture of mutual sharing and knowledge, for seven years, during Ramadan, we have been organizing a special dinner for our Muslim friends, where, they tell us, they find a welcoming atmosphere while we cook for them and with them. Through games, presentations, songs and other things we got to know each other's cultures. Over the years we have involved more than 100 young people and we also received support from the Latin Patriarch.

Amman, Jordan *Latitude: 31° 57' 18" N Longitude: 35° 56' 42" E* - Now a word from Joseph: “During the war in Iraq in 2003, many refugees came to my city to find shelter. They were exhausted and, since they were neither citizens nor residents, Iraqi children could not go to school. With Youth for a United World we started a course of Arabic, English, Math and Science that kept them busy for three hours two times a week, so that they could keep up-to-date with the school syllabus. It started with a small group of young people in a small room of the “Cilizian House” in an atmosphere of friendship and dialogue, interacting and sharing stories. The group then became bigger and we needed bigger rooms that were offered to us by the “Terrasanta College” managed by Franciscan monks. In this way 30 or 40 students could attend the courses each semester”.

Caesarea Maritima, Israel *Latitude: 32°30' 00"N Longitude: 34° 53' 59" E* - Amir is the protagonist of Run4Unity: “Every three years, since 2005, we have been organizing a show of unity around the world. Hundreds of thousands of young people from different ethnicities, cultures and religions run through some of the most

significant places on the planet to show their commitment to peace and unity. In 2012, we, the young people of Israel and Palestine, contributed too. We met at Caesarea Maritima with 400 boys and girls aged between 12 and 17 from the Palestinian Territories and various cities in Israel, Christians, Muslims and Jews. The topic of the initiative was "Together for a United World". To transmit this message, we chose 6 things to say yes to: yes to peace, respect, creation [ecology – Ed], life and family, solidarity and a just economy. Each "yes" was connected to a mathematical sign on our t-shirts, for example "+" meant "add love" or "=" meant "treat everyone equally". The games of the first part of the program and the show in the second part revolved around these "6 yes". The boys and girls were the true actors and directors of this event and its planning. Over the previous weeks many of them had spent time creating short plays, dances and songs, accompanied by messages of peace in English, Hebrew and Arabic. Even the presentation was presented in both languages of the Holy Land. Caesarea had been the scene of conflicts and had been inhabited by Jews, Christians and Muslims. Now, though, we were in that same place without contrasts or the desire to prevail, but together to build a better future".

Jerusalem, Israel Latitude: 31° 46' 8" N Longitude: 35° 12' 58" E - Fraternity is not necessarily a one way process and it can generate a positive chain reaction. Vidah's experience proves it: "Together with some young people from Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories, we had decided to take part in the Genfest in Budapest. The journey was expensive and we did not have enough money. We had come to know that in a monastery in Jerusalem there was a summer camp for children. The priests needed someone to wash up after the meals. But a few days before the beginning of our adventure, on May 20th 2012, in Emilia Romagna, a region in Italy, there was a violent earthquake. We realized that we could not just think of looking after ourselves, not at that time, because this emergency was something much more important. After talking about it together, we decided to send the funds we had collected from the washing up to the victims of the earthquake. After that, each day that we went to help the monks we felt more and more enthusiastic. In the end, the sum we had earned was quite considerable and we donated all of it to the victims of the earthquake. The journey, in a non-fraternal way of thinking, was not going to happen. But, to our great surprise, some people donated us the money that covered exactly the expenses for going to the Focolare young peoples' festival in Budapest".

Manila, Philippines Latitude: 14° 37' N Longitude: 121° 0' E - Masayos, a young Filipino, wrote to us: "I always thought that Asians were a bit closed, that they thought about themselves first and then then about the

others. But it is not like this. Fraternity has an explosive capacity, even when it comes to the hardest of hearts. This happened in 2009, when the island of Luzón and then the metropolitan area of Manila were hit by the terrible typhoon "Ketsana" on September 26th. An extremely violent storm caused floods and uprooted trees and houses. There were many, many victims. It looked like the city would not be able to get back up on its feet again. All over the world people showed their solidarity with us.

This terrible disaster brought out the best of my people. Filipinos – often divided by social class differences and personal and family interests – felt they were united like brothers and sisters belonging to the same family. Everyone helped their neighbors, sharing clothes and food. We also wanted to contribute and 50 of us young people managed to reach those who were most isolated to give them our support. Often, the practical assistance we were able to offer the people was not sufficient to meet all of their needs, but what mattered was that we were there with them and for them. There was one time when one of the victims offered us food. He had almost nothing and he was ready to give us the little bit he had. That day we left in tears.

Over time the general mood of the people did not improve because the storm had destroyed everything. So, we decided to organize a free concert to try and bring a smile back to their faces. Armed with our guitars and voices and a couple of loudspeakers, we set up a makeshift stage and, in the middle of our wounded brothers and sisters, we sang joyful songs that lifted their hearts. After the concert, the relationship with this community grew. We developed a series of food programs for children that are still in progress and today those that we had helped earlier have themselves become very active helping the children younger than them".

Jalaja is very happy and she tells: "With young people and some adults, every first Sunday of the month we visit the "Marillac Hills" Center, a place that was created in 1915 and named after the founder of the Sisters of Mercy of Santa Luisa de Marillac. The center accommodates and welcomes girls and young women who have been abused, or sexually exploited, victims of harassment, with unwanted pregnancies or problems with the law. We use these moments to spend some time with them, singing, playing and sharing their experiences. To date, there are five cottages for 35-40 young women from different backgrounds, religions and cultures. We have hundreds of experiences that we could tell. To share just one: on December 1st 2002 – while preparing for Christmas – we organized a small concert called "Munting Handog". We gave all of the proceeds to the community of "Marillac Hills".

Coimbatore, India Latitude: 11° 0' N Longitude: 76° 58' E - "Sometimes, then, we organize International

events where we can show universal fraternity and the coexistence of different religions”, Kalim writes from India. “It happened between August 7th and 12th 2009 for the “Super-Congress 2009” when we collaborated with the Hindu movement Shanti Ashram and we hosted about two thousand young people from 24 countries around the world. The event was broadcasted live via Internet and it reached 13.400 young people all over the world. With dances, songs and the sharing of experiences about the Golden Rule we showed the joy of living and the desire of building a united world. During the “Peace Festival” on August 9th, young people committed to be creators of peace and to say a firm “no” to any form of violence. Various seminars were held where everyone could share their life experiences of the Golden Rule. During those days, the young people visited 12 rural villages, various places of worship from different religions and many community centres. On the last day, 1200 students, families and members of about 30 institutes in Coimbatore met for the final ceremony. The meeting was held by Abdul Kalam, former President of India, who invited young people to reach for the stars acknowledging that they are the most precious resource in the world”.

Pune, India *Latitude: 18° 34' N Longitude: 73° 58' E* - “Here in Asia sport can be a means of promoting universal fraternity. For example, in January 2009 we organized a basketball tournament with young people from different parts of Pune. The event called “Sport4Peace” involved about 300 young people and it allowed us to promote authentic values of sharing through sports activities and showing the importance of fair play. It was a moment to show that these values are applicable to our daily life and they allow us to be open to peace and cooperation”. This is the fragment sent by Vishnu.

Seoul, South Korea *Latitude: 37° 35' N Longitude: 27° 3' E* - Choo tells us about some really good initiatives which came about working together with adults. “In March 2011, we began to raise funds for poor people. Small change that is often ignored by those who have it, but that when collected together can be useful for those in need. We collected 800 Euros in 2011 and 2000 Euros in 2012. Today the fund-raising is still going on. So far we have helped more than a thousand people. We also collaborate with other local and international bodies and organizations. For example, foreign coins that cannot be easily exchanged in Korea are donated to UNICEF”.

Busan, South Korea *Latitude: 35° 6' 10" N Longitude: 12° 2' 5" E* - “Each last Friday of the month, for seven years now – Choo continues –, with Youth for a United World in Busan, for four hours a week we go to visit people in prison who had been abandoned by their families. Gradually it has been possible to build a deeper relationship with each one of them”.

EUROPE

An old continent for its history and for its culture, yet still capable of novelty and searching questions that trace new paths in the fields of human rights, ethics, healthcare, policies of inclusion. Its research methods and thirst to discover, the value given to the human person, even with many contradictions tied to them, are a world heritage. The 413 fragments received from Europe present a jigsaw of stories and choices showing the many different faces of fraternity. Here we present a few of them.

Bucharest, Romania *Latitude: 42° 41' 51" W Longitude: 23° 19' 26" N* - Rózsa is a young woman from Bucharest: “Thanks to one of my teachers, every year since 2007, we have been dedicating one week to promote the culture of fraternity with a series of activities: we prepare cakes, we organize courses to teach handicrafts, and we involve 700 high school students. We also work with groups that we support to raise awareness about them within the community. It is wonderful to see how these students work hard to involve families and neighbourhoods in the city. In 2013 all our activities were aimed at helping a girl from Bucharest suffering from Leukemia”.

Kisvárd, Hungary *Latitude: 48° 13' 0" N Longitude: 22° 4' 59" E* - György recounts: “We’ve tried to look out for those most in need. In 1994, with Youth for a United World from Kisvárd, we met the people who live in the homeless shelter of our city. We had prepared poems, songs, warm meals and homemade cakes. Together, we also made a Christmas tree and, in the end, we had dinner together at the same table. The atmosphere was so intimate that many of them told us their stories. It was such a powerful moment that we repeated the experience the following Easter and, since then, twice a year, we have repeated these meetings.

Prague, Czech Republic *Latitude: 50° 5' N Longitude: 14° 25' E* - “In Prague the project ‘Man and Media’ organizes two forums per year,” Pavel explains. “In 2013, they took place in April and October. They are a place where media professionals, scholars and students can openly discuss values such as ethics in means of communication and independent journalism in the Czech Republic over the past 25 years”.

Szeged, Hungary *Latitude: 46° 15' N Longitude: 20° 10' E* - “After many years of teaching English – Márta explains – in February 2012 I retired. Yes, my life changed, but I could still give so much! So, I tried to make my knowledge available to others. Since then, three times a week, in my city, I organize free English classes for those who cannot afford to pay for them. Studying a foreign language, though, is just the excuse to stay together. We often stop to share about the things of daily

life and our personal lives. Moreover, this experience of gratuity goes beyond the classroom and the students help each other in other aspects of their lives as well".

Peter lives in the same city as Márta: "Since 1999 we have been organizing cultural events that are aimed at involving the minorities of our cities, such as Roma, so we can all learn from each other. We involve different organizations and institutions and students – around 400 every year – and we see that they become more and more sensitive to the problems and joys of others".

Štúrovo, Slovakia *Latitude: 47° 47' 56" N Longitude: 18° 43' 30" E* - Sometimes prejudices may not just involve ethnic minorities but entire nations as well. "During the United World Week in 2011 we organized a big meeting for 300 young Hungarians and Slovaks on the border between both countries. Beforehand we had organized some workshops in Esztergom, in Hungary and in Štúrovo, in Slovakia and there had been some initial difficulties. The inhabitants of both cities were not used to seeing people giving things for free". Nikola, the author of this fragment of fraternity, went to Štúrovo, to a home for old people: "We went for a walk with them and took them to a concert. They told us that they had not gone out in a long time because it was difficult for them to reach the city center. In those days we had the possibility to meet new people, thus showing the world that it is possible to live without hating a nation with whom we had had constant political conflicts. There is certainly a lot to do, but we are getting to know the differences which, instead of dividing us, make us richer and closer to each other".

Resita, Romania *Latitude: 45° 18' N Longitude: 21° 53' E* - "In Resita, a city in Romania – Cyril tells us – this year on Palm Sunday we organized an ecumenical march with three thousand people. It was called "Being Light", and the people came from a number of Catholic and Orthodox parishes. Starting from 2007, relationships of fraternity had already been growing between some Catholic and Orthodox groups. This year, though, our Churches celebrated Easter together and with the young people from both Churches we wanted to show that there are still people who build their lives on the basis of authentic Christian values. The Mayor of the city was very happy about the idea and stayed with us during the march. The event received wide coverage in the local and national media".

Basle, Switzerland *Latitude: 47° 33' 30" W Longitude: 7° 34' 23" N* - Jonas' fragment is about dialogue: "Also in Switzerland people see that dialogue with other religions is very important. In March, for example, we went with twenty young people to visit the new school for Muslim women in Basle. When we arrived, they welcomed us with a wonderful breakfast. They showed us their rooms and with big smiles on their faces they explained to us how

they live. It was not usual that young Catholics would be interested in their lives".

Zurich, Switzerland *Latitude: 47° 33' 30" N Longitude: 7° 34' 23" E* - Fabienne talks to us about care for those most in need in Switzerland: "Each year since 2000, the Youth for a United World in Switzerland have been organizing a "Volley day" with 24 teams and more than 160 players. Proceeds from the sponsors help contribute to projects supporting children and young people in developing countries. Besides this, the event has now become an occasion to raise peoples' awareness about universal fraternity. Over the years we have collected almost 200 thousand Euros".

Feldkirch, Austria *Latitude: 47° 15' N Longitude: 9° 36' E* - Alongside the acts of fraternity performed by groups of people, there are also significant experiences lived by individuals, as in the case of Reinhard, a 55-year-old from Austria. "Some years ago – on a work shift at the post office – I was stabbed by a young man with a mental illness: he stabbed me 27 times. The young man only stopped when, looking at him in the eyes and already sure I was about to die I told him: "I forgive you". Only then the young man dropped the knife he had in his hands. Psychologists maintain that I did not experience any trauma. I had to undergo surgery, I lost a lung and I have to use crutches, but miraculously I survived.

Today many people ask me to tell my story and why I forgave: teachers, priests, young people, Christians, Muslims and atheists. I have met around two thousand people so far. And every time I cannot help talking about the art of Loving, because for years, including on that fateful day, I have been throwing the cube of love. So many young people, after our meetings, ask me to explain this way of living. Every time they invite me it is a wonderful occasion to spread the ideal of fraternity, the Golden Rule, in the region of Vorarlber where I live. Some time ago, a young atheist told me: "You know, I am not interested in religion. But I am very interested in your way of living!"

Minusio, Switzerland *Latitude: 46°17'91" Longitude: 8° 61' 69" E* - Zoe moved with her family to a new neighbourhood five years ago: "In the new apartment building there were many families from different countries, Portugal, Macedonia, South America and from different religious backgrounds, Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox. With the desire of building bridges, in 2012 we organized a dinner with these people where everyone brought something typical of their country. After the initial doubts, the mixed group of guests accepted. That night there was a wonderful atmosphere, a spontaneous sharing that was just the first step for more intense interpersonal relationships that led to many small and big welcoming gestures. Now, during Ramadan, even Catholics take part

in the celebrations of their Muslim friends by sending them best wishes them or preparing some food for them for the evening. Muslims do the same at Easter. And this sharing lasts all year long”.

Athens, Greece Latitude: 37° 58' N Longitude: 23° 42' E - Alexandros writes: “I am a courier and I often do deliveries in the center of Athens. I drive almost always on the same streets. On a hot day in August, while driving, I realized that there was a homeless person in trouble, he was sitting bent over on the ground. I had seen him many times. That was his corner of the street, that cardboard was his house. But I had not ever stopped before. Yet, on that day I could not drive past, despite being late for my delivery. The local police asked me, from a distance, what I was doing seen that I could not park in that area. They threatened to fine me. I indicated that there was a person in trouble. They were still not interested but, ignoring their threat, I rushed into a shop to get a cool drink. I got closer to that man and I caressed his cheek to avoid awakening him suddenly. At first, with a questioning look, he wondered what was going on. He was tired and scared. Then, when he saw me he calmed down. I gave him the drink I had got and he answered with a smile. He thanked me many times. I left with a smile in my heart. His eyes, full of gratitude, had lit up my soul immensely. Even the policemen said goodbye with a smile. Since then, every time I drive through that street I stop to say hi to him. From this small episode, I realized that it is possible to build fragments of fraternity even when you spend the whole day in a van”.

Monterocco, Italy Latitude: 42° 51' 22" N Longitude: 13° 34' 33" E - Maria is one of the organizers of “Everyone’s New Year”: “It is neither a dinner for the poor nor a New Year of solidarity. It is a unique, fraternal experience where hundreds of people experiment a family reality, without roles or hierarchies.

This year there were about 700 of us in the gym of a school in our town. Right from the morning lots of us helping out. A director of the Bank of Italy cut ham the whole day and in the evening he served the tables with a smile. Daniela and Francesca – two girls who had never met before – wrapped some gifts before serving the tables and now they are best friends. During the whole day, strangers kept bringing food and equipment: everything was for free, a gift. At 20:40, Paola, on stilts, started this celebration of being together. Everything was done without special effects, VIPs or dramatic turns of event. In that hall there were poor and rich people, young and old people, churches and civil society, families, artist, workers, businessmen and women, children and everyone who strives for fraternity”.

Genzano di Roma, Italy Latitude: 41° 42' 4 W Longitude: 12° 41' 30 N - Fraternity in relation to

environmental education is a central topic for Roberto: “Thanks to the idea of our chemistry teacher, since 2008 we have been participating in the project “Giving to safeguard the environment”. We propose to people a “Pact of energy saving” and whatever is saved is used as scholarships for boys and girls in difficult situations. Students are at the forefront but we also involve our families and the community to internalize the attitude of “giving”, explaining and showing how it is a life style that generates a positive chain reaction, leading not only to personal and social wellbeing, but also to the safeguarding and protection of the environment. Every year more than 700 students from high schools in Palermo, Velletri and Genzano di Roma take part in this initiative”.

Locri, Italy Latitude: 38° 14' 32" N Longitude: 16° 15' 47" E - Rosalia talks about legality: “This topic is closely related to fraternity because it is involves overcoming difficulties and carrying out small daily gestures. Between 2005 and 2010, with “Be a Sign of Hope” young people from Calabria, Malta and Sicily left to go to towns in those areas of our country that suffer because of a long history of illegality and mafia. They took part in meetings of between 3 and 7 days in which they discussed topics that were closely related to fraternity: ecology, legality, sport, economy, psychology of relationships. They also organized sport and art activities and events in the city center.

Over the years, they have established many contacts with local and national organizations, both secular and religious. But above all, “Be a Sign of Hope” has become an occasion to plant the “seed” of universal fraternity in those areas where the lack of legality had deprived territories and people of their beauty.

Borgo San Lorenzo, Italia Latitude: 43° 57' 19" W Longitude: 11° 23' 0" N - Fraternity also revolves around the theme of family for Ilaria: “In 2004, a group of us, some young people and adults, began to take part in the “Family Point”, a training course providing family support. In April 2009, we launched the “Family Point Mugello” with a team of psychologists, educationalists, lawyers, doctors, accountants and journalists who gave their time and their expertise to this initiative. Current projects are the “Listening Help Desk”, the “Dyslexia Help Desk”, the “Project: Next” that offers scholastic support to children in elementary schools and the “Center for Life Support” that offers basic necessities for infants.

In addition, we periodically organize training and informative meetings about addictions, youth-related issues and counselling for couples. Over the years hundreds of people have been involved. And every time we see that giving is receiving, that opening up to others is a great richness and that we need each other. What’s the truth? At first we thought that we were just meeting the

needs of our community but then we realized that we were the ones who were receiving the most”.

Milan, Italy Latitude: 45° 27' N Longitude: 9° 17' E - Luca writes: “As happens in all prisons, in San Vittore inmates’ relatives cannot visit on Christmas Day or Easter Day either. “Good inside, good outside” is an initiative that was launched in 2011 and it aimed at donating at least one *panettone* [a traditional Christmas cake – Ed] to each cell. But, a few days later, we managed to donate a *panettone* to each of the 1600 inmates who could then celebrate Christmas. And we could celebrate with them”.

Elena continues: “Milan has always been a city with a high number of migrants who bring different needs with them. In 1983, some friends and I founded the “Associazione Arcobaleno”, with the purpose of offering services that would help immigrants to participate in the social, cultural and work spheres of the city. Over the years we have started many courses: Italian language, IT, counselling on integration issues and employment and many others. The organization works with the “Center for job orientation” and a service for the distribution of basic necessities, in collaboration with the Food Bank. As well as that, we set up art workshops and there are always lots of opportunities to celebrate, get to know each other and build friendships. Every year around 1200 people from 40 different countries join the organization”.

Naples, Italy Latitude: 40° 50' 0" N Longitude: 14° 15'

0" E - I realize that this desire to give ourselves to other people crosses Italy from North to South. Anna is a member of the “Centro Aquilone” in Naples: “It is a day center that was launched in October 2005 in the old town center of Naples. Its purpose is to prevent and take care of the problems of minors. Through the Center, we try to promote education for boys and girls as a tool of growth and personal maturity. We offer alternatives to the street culture and illegality. Between September and May there are dozens of young people who come to us. They are often children with problems and this is why we immediately try to build relationships with them, and an open, welcoming atmosphere. Sometimes it is not easy, but it is beautiful to see that some of them feel that they are part of a “small extended family”. There are many such Centres in the Campania region: the “Ferraro Foundation”, the “Life Center” and who knows how many others scattered all over the country”.

Rome, Italy Latitude 41° 54' 39" N Longitude 12° 28' 54" E - This journey around the world, following the idea of the United World Project, does not end here. The fragments of fraternity that we keep receiving to our official e-mail address (info@unitedworldproject.org) multiply by the day. You can find them on our website (www.unitedworldproject.org). You can add those that involve your city, your class, your workplace, your friends and that came to your mind while reading these stories. And the next edition of the Atlas may talk about you!



FINAL REMARKS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

by **Mariagrazia Baroni** and **Francesco Ricciardi**

This is not one of those journeys with an end, because this is a pathway, that of fraternity, that continues. Now all we need to do is map out our next steps. They are “our” steps, because you can also be an actor and protagonist of future developments by joining the Project and its three components.



UNITED WORLD NETWORK

First of all, if you have not done so yet, choose to implement the Golden Rule. To show your commitment you can sign our petition on the website www.unitedworldproject.org. If you want, you can keep in touch with those who are close to you and have already made this choice. You can do it by writing to info@unitedworldproject.org.

As well, you can promote the project through *social networks* or by organizing a paper collection of signatures (you can find all the information on the Project website).



UNITED WORLD WORKSHOP

We want to keep working for the United World Week to be acknowledged by the UN. Thanks to the NGO New Humanity³⁵, active in more than 100 countries, since 1987 we have been part of the UN network. Over the past few months, there have been frequent contacts with the UNESCO national delegations. We want to keep building bridges with international institutions (UN and UNESCO) in order to make our contribution to the creation of a more fraternal humanity.

If you want to communicate with us or if you wish to receive more material and advice, contact us at workshop@unitedworldproject.org.

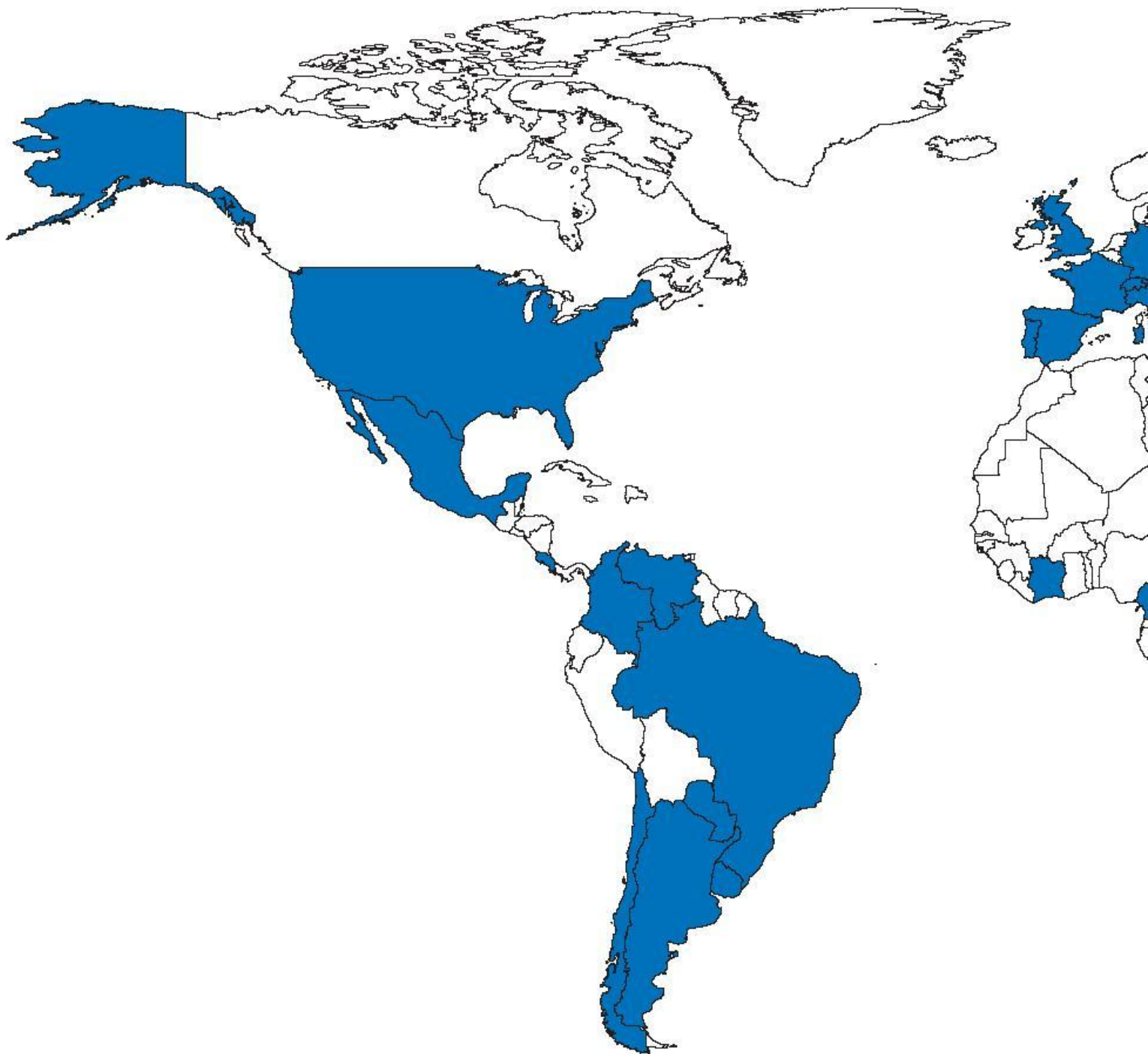


UNITED WORLD WATCH

The United World Watch – our permanent watchdog on universal fraternity – is a research center on the theme of universal fraternity made up of young people and supported by adult advisors. Its purpose is of studying the effect of universal fraternity both as a principle and as an inspiring factor for individual and collective choices and behaviours. The United World Watch: a) will collect and share all fragments of fraternity received; b) will promote cultural initiatives aimed at informing about and sharing the steps forward in terms of fraternity; c) will support research and studies that focus on the research interests of the watchdog; d) will collaborate with other bodies and research centres working on similar topics. In order to start the necessary experimental phase, during the first five years of activity, the work of the watchdog will focus, year by year, on a specific geographical area of the world. It will work together with other local partners. If you want to participate or receive further information, contact us at watch@unitedworldproject.org.

³³ New Humanity is an NGO born in 1986 with the purpose of promoting the spirit of universal fraternity according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Youth for a United World is its young branch. Further information is available at: www.new-humanity.org

An Atlas o



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The forms for the collection of data on universal fraternity came from the countries highlighted in blue.

The atlas was edited by Mariagrazia Baroni and Francesco Ricciardi

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