

09102014

teens

WORK IN PROGRESS 4 UNITY

TOGETHER TO
MEET PEOPLE
WHO ARE
DIFFERENT
FROM US

Ready to play the
full game

ZOOM

Global-Person Project:
many events in all
continents

Readings

The Hunger Games:
is it influencing today's
teens?

Music

We Are One

Together we can

Chicago: teens of different cultural backgrounds came together for a 4-day service retreat in the inner city. **Sicily:** two weeks of working together, teens and young adults, practicing solidarity and acceptance of others, helping the integration of undocumented immigrants into society. **Latin America:** a two-week project where more than 500 teens were engaged in social action in various countries of Latin America, immersed in a society marked by economic and social inequality, where many different cultures intersect. **Events that are apparently unrelated.** But only apparently. They are bound together by at least **two characteristics: teens on the front line,** aware and committed to comfort the pain and suffering of those around them; **people of different cultures,**

languages and backgrounds who want to meet, get to know each other, understand and respect one another. They are convinced that diversity can link them together, if they aim at the common good.

Together. This is the key word in this issue of Teens. Together we can be citizens fully aware and attentive to our communities by underlining the positive around us. Together we can go through the city, discovering all the many people who are committed to the dialogue between different religious communities. Together we can accompany those of different abilities and make them successful. Together we can find what makes us different and promote dialogue among everyone, with respect for one another, offering the opportunity to find solutions. **Together.**

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Contemplate go out, and Educate

Joy, emotion, surprise, and also curiosity, were among the many, diverse sentiments and expectations of the 500 participants of the Focolare General Assembly who met with Pope Francis at the end of September. The Pope also offered three phrases upon which all members of the movement can base their efforts as they seek to contribute to the challenging task of evangelization today. Firstly, he said, contemplation is an indispensable condition for effective action. Secondly, he said, they must go out in a spirit of dialogue, giving freely of themselves just as Jesus gave his life for us on the Cross. Finally, the Pope stressed the importance of forming young people, so that they too can serve the needs, concerns and hopes of men and women in the world today. Here is an excerpt of his address:

« In the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Saint John Paul II invited the whole Church to become "house and school of communion" (cf. n. 43), and you took this order seriously. As the Gospel exacts, we must form new men and women and, necessary to this end, is a school of humanity to the measure of the humanity of Jesus. In fact, He is the new Man that young people can look to at all times, that they can fall in love with, whose way they can follow to address the challenges that are before them. Without an adequate endeavor of formation of the new generations, it is illusory to think that a serious and lasting project can be carried out at the service of a new humanity.

In her time Chiara Lubich coined an expression which continues to be very timely: "today – she said – 'global-person' must be formed, men and women with the spirit, heart and mind of Jesus and, therefore, able to recognize and interpret the needs, the concerns and the hopes that shelter in every man's heart." »



the formula for changing the world

edited by
the staff

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In Latin America, a workshop with 500 young people from 27 countries included many concrete projects. Some of the youth share their experiences with us.

« Despite the different languages and nationalities...we will love one another's country."

This is the refrain of one of the songs from the Global Person workshop in July in Latin America. There were 500 teens of the Focolare from 27 countries and requiring six different translations. The title "Global Person" expresses what this is all about. Some years ago a group of young people asked Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare, what might be the model for people of the

coming generations. She told them that the global person is "one who is ready to receive into his or her own heart the treasures which are offered by people from all the other continents and is able to give his or her own treasures to all the others." But how do we do that?

Variety of language and culture alone is not enough to make us a "Global Person". In the first week at O'Higgins in Argentina we tried to get to know one another and share our ideas and experiences, both by learning more about politics and the economy, and also through music and sports. We took time to discuss issues that are important today, and also speak about our own experiences.

The guiding principle was to establish relationships from the perspective of fraternity. We decided to make a list of the ingredients for a successful outcome of our experiment, and to figure out what is the best combination of these ingredients:

- love + forgiveness = starting over again
- gift + welcome = reciprocity
- happiness + sharing = wow

Yes, the formula for the global person is clear: less selfishness, more love towards everyone, always beginning again...

Other workshops started up in many parts of the world at the same time as ours. On July 19 a conference call brought together in unity more than 10,000 locations.



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"Dear everyone" they about **teens**

wrote from Syria, "in our cities, we are collecting funds to help young people who have been orphaned by the war. Many are lacking in everything, even the essentials, and we too are without water, electricity and many other essentials, but we have experienced that by taking an interest in the needs of others, and putting ourselves at their service, our burdens and difficulties are easier to carry." There are also messages from Mexico, Spain, Italy, Argentina, Angola and Brazil...

Pope Francis brought us much joy by assuring us of his prayers, wishing "that all the participants at this event might become leaven that gives rise to a more committed and consistent Christian life." A few weeks after the end of the workshop, Aldana from Pigue', a town in southern Argentina, had the opportunity to personally thank Pope Francis, handing him our message which included lots of photos! Another important moment to help us get to know one another during the "Global Person Workshop" was an Expo in which every cultural group presented themselves. It was like taking a trip to all these countries, some of which we then actually visited.

In the second week of the workshop, we were divided into groups: each one in a different part of Latin America. We all lived the week together - the young people of that particular region and we "foreigners" - and we really felt that those places became our home, too. We learned some words of the local language, did some

dance steps, and tasted local specialties. But we also felt that the problems of each land were ours, too, and so we rolled up our sleeves, collected and distributed aid to needy people, visited slums to do some work or play with the children and teens. We promoted ecological projects, participated in moments of dialogue, and worked with the indigenous groups in some countries and with the traditional communities in the Amazon region.

It was an intense program but it produced a network of unexpected relationships. Countless quiet efforts made us see the many good and positive things there are in these communities, which are often hidden away from public view.

At the end it was hard to close our suitcases that were filled with so many gifts! But what they could not contain was the joy and the abundance we took in our hearts from this adventure! »



SOME PARTICIPANTS OF THE WORKSHOP WERE GREETED BY POPE FRANCIS IN ROME



FROM ARGENTINA TO THE WORLD

"The Global Person" happened in Argentina and in other places, too. During the summer of 2014, thousands of young people in various cities initiated all kinds of programs for building peace, promoting solidarity and experiencing a life of fraternity. Permanent and traveling workshops started in small villages and big cities. Projects began in which young people worked in their own neighborhoods or went to other countries to share with youth of other cultures. In Italy alone, more than 1200 young people are currently involved in various programs that have been developed in cities from the north to the south of the country. Programs include projects to protect the environment, work crews who recover and restore abandoned or degraded landscapes, and activities to help immigrants or people living alone, the elderly and the sick. Large and small events have also involved many adults: parents, teachers, civil and religious authorities.



IN OUR OWN WORDS



Reports from
the Global
Person Project



"Throughout these two short weeks, we were able to make the most of it by learning many things and creating strong relationships with others. The meaningful lectures and special moments we shared with everyone will always be cherished. We take these experiences with us as we begin Phase 3. This phase is ongoing and starts from our homes, with our families, and with our friends."

Andrew Choi and Christopher Piazza, Los Angeles, CA

LEARNING

"At first I found it hard to accept the others, but out of love I did and it was such a rich experience. Love goes beyond language and it overcomes language barriers."

Marie Komayombi, Dallas, TX

HOMBRE-MUNDO
En MENDOZA Argentina



WORLD

"Love is so much more than being kind; it is opening your heart to things outside your comfort zone. I always thought that I couldn't have a relationship with the Mexicans at church because we don't speak the same language. Now I realize that that's not true. I thought I was being kind to them before, now I realize that I need to completely change my way of interacting with them."

Maddie Wnorowski, NJ

"Everyone was so loving there! When I came back I told my parents that I wanted to live like that and to be someone who constantly loves."

Francesca Ferrara, Detroit, MI

UNITY

EXPERIENCE
BEAUTIFUL

"The kids from the neighborhood were all smiling, joyful and eager to help us. At first, I had a hard time because I could not see how they could be so happy when they had so little. Then, as we continued working together, I came to a realization; they were so happy because they have faith in God's love. They felt it every time they loved their friends, neighbors or visitors like us. Any absence of material possessions can always be filled with God's love."

Matthew Cali Tyler, TX

CHANGE MEMORABLE
LOVING

PEOPLE

FRIENDS

"I ended up painting with the little kids from a poor neighborhood in Buenos Aires. One of the little girls started painting over what I had started to draw and I was furious, scared, sad and upset. Then I realized that the painting was not for me, but for them to enjoy. I was happy to let go of my idea and be happy with her, if that was what she wanted to do to make the drawing beautiful."

Becca Bujnoch Houston, TX



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SONG BY THE AMERICAN RAPPER
PITBULL IN COLLABORATION
 WITH **JENNIFER LOPEZ** AND THE
 BRASILIAN **CLAUDIA LEITTE**

We are one

by *Francesco Gambale and
 Ana Paula Panzarini*

© AP Photo/Tharassis, Stavrakis

Summer 2014: Global Person Project in Latin America, land of soccer fans, who were closely following the Soccer World Cup. A spectacular event, thanks to stunts by great soccer players such as Neymar, Messi, Carlos Tevez and Van Persie. Here is the event's theme song which is called: "We are one."

DIt's really too bad that on the occasion of the World Cup in Brazil, the land of music, dance and folk traditions, the song is sung in English and Spanish, thus excluding

the Portuguese (except for one short stanza), the language spoken in this South American nation. But, beyond this, the Teens4Unity who had come to Latin America for the Global Person Project had already experienced and given witness to what the song hopes to happen: that we may see, among many waving flags, the formation of a united world. "One night, watch the world together." And, we are committed to keep on living like this, so that the unity built this summer will last, and not only for one night! ■

*Put your flags up in the sky
 (put them in the sky)
 And wave them side to side
 (side to side)
 Show the world where you're
 from
 (show them where you're from)
 Show the world we are one
 (one love, life)*

Oe oe oe oh la (3 v.)

*When the moment gets tough
 We've got keep going
 One love, one life, one world
 One fight, whole world,
 one night, one place Brazil,
 everybody put your flags in the
 sky and do what you feel*

*It's your world, my world,
 our world today
 And we invite the whole world,
 whole world to play
 It's your world, my world,
 our world today
 And we invite the whole
 world,
 whole world to play*

*Es mi mundo, tu mundo,
 el mundo de nosotros
 Invitamos a todo el mundo
 a jugar con nosotros*

Put your flags up in the sky ...

Oe oe oe oh la (3 v.)

Jenny, dale

*One night, watch the world
 unite
 Two sides, one fight
 And a million eyes
 Fool hard, it's gonna work so
 hard
 Shoot for the stars,
 fists rise up towards the sky
 Tonight, watch the world unite
 World unite, world unite, world
 unite
 For the fight, fight, fight
 One night, watch the world
 unite
 Two sides, one fight
 And a million eyes*

*Hey, hey, hey
 Força, força, come on sing
 with me
 Hey, hey, hey
 Olé, ole, come shout it out
 with me
 Hey, hey, hey
 Come on now
 Hey, hey, hey
 Come on now
 Hey, hey, hey*

Put your flags up in the sky ...

Oe oe oe oh la (3 v.)

Claudia Leitte, obrigado

*É meu, é seu
 Hoje é tudo nosso
 Quando chega o mundo inteiro
 pra jogar
 é pra mostrar que eu posso
 Torcer, chorar, sorrir, gritar
 Não importar o resultado,
 vamos extravasar*

Put your flags up in the sky ...

Oe oe oe oh la (3 v.)

We are one

nowteens

TOWARDS A UNITED WORLD THROUGH
WORDS AND IMAGES, EVENTS AND
WITNESSES



"Football is really popular in America, compared to soccer. Many people go to football games as a sign of school spirit. This past summer, I was in Argentina for the Global Person Project and over there it is all about soccer. You cannot imagine what excitement is like, until you have watched the final match of the Soccer World Cup with Argentinian teens. That was very different than any other sport event I had ever watched, and something I had not experienced before. Personally I am not a huge sports fan, but being there, getting to know so many new friends, I was just as excited as any of them! Although most people in America play soccer as a pastime, you can find kids in Argentina playing soccer almost all the time. It was clear that the World Cup is far more important to Argentinians than to anyone I know here in the US and I saw that a game of soccer can help to bring much needed unity."

Kevin Rivas, South Barrington, IL



getting to know one another key for understanding

edited by
the Staff

A CURRENT
PROJECT IN
BUENOS AIRES,
ARGENTINA,
INVOLVES ALSO
THE **NEW
GENERATIONS**

Elena Lopez Ruf has for some time been engaged in interreligious dialogue, especially in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. She is Argentinian, lives in Buenos Aires and works for the city administration in the Office of Worship where she is coordinator for a youth project. We asked her some questions about her role and the projects her office sponsors.

tradition and promote the right to religious liberty. I work on a team with people of different religions and also people who profess no religion. The work of our office, in fact, is "dialogue."»

You are working in particular on a youth project. What does it involve?

«I am coordinator of the RIJBA (Inter-religious Youth Network of the City of Buenos Aires) which has the objective of forming an interreligious network as a framework for dialogue among the youth of different religions, so that they can get involved together in social or cultural activities. It is the first time that a government is promoting a project like this. It is something new and therefore also a challenge. We started working on the network last year. First, I went with the person in charge of the Office of Worship to interview all the religious leaders of the city and invite them to allow their young people to participate in the RIJBA project.

What is the task of the Office of Worship?

«Buenos Aires is a multicultural and interreligious city. The Jewish community here is the largest in all of South America. The Jewish people have made an important contribution to Argentinian culture and, in particular, to the life of the city of Buenos Aires. The Muslim community is very numerous, and the Buddhist community is growing. They all live together without conflict. Our task is to publicize the rich culture in each



© Maria Ines Ghiglione

25 youth came to about **teens** Church, the first meeting including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians of different churches. Among the Catholics were representatives of several ecclesial movements. We decided together that the first step was to get acquainted with the religion of all the others present.

We have alternated the venues for our meetings to get to know more about our various religious traditions. In the church of the Franciscan friars, we learned more about St. Francis and discovered that he was a man of dialogue. In the Alba Islamic Center for Intercultural Dialogue, we heard about the Hizmet Movement and the values promoted by its leader, Fetullah Gulen.

In the past few months we have gone to a Greek Orthodox Church, the Presbyterian Church of Saint Andrew, and also participated in an Iftar (breaking of the fast at the evening meal) during the month of Ramadan. »

What have you done to continue this process of mutual understanding?

«We have organized together some activities for the city. On November 25, 2013, a day which Buenos Aires dedicates to our right to religious freedom, we organized an "interreligious bike ride" with stops at places like the Catholic cathedral, the Presbyterian

synagogue and the mosque. In each place of worship, someone from that community warmly welcomed us. There were fifty participants: including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and people of no religious faith. We will repeat this activity now in 2014. We are also organizing a photo contest on how young people in the city live their faith. We will have an exhibit with the best pictures. We're also working on a social project, a course to educate people on how to dialogue, and a project for the schools. Especially now, with the situation in the Middle East, we are also promoting moments to pray together for peace. »

What does it mean for you to work in this field?

«I am working on my law degree, but I want to devote myself to international law, to work for the transformation of conflicts and promote programs for peace. I believe that interreligious dialogue can be a means for building peace.

Working in the field is wonderful forme. From my childhood I was involved in interreligious dialogue. I really had a passion for it, because it has the capacity of transforming the people who were involved in it. Prejudices, and fear of those who are different from you, gradually fall away and you discover



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how much you can accomplish together, by sharing common values. I know that it also requires a change of mentality in our city. In Buenos Aires, there is religious and cultural diversity, but we do not know one another. Meeting and listening to one another is important for people to understand each other and live together in a society that is pluralistic, but has common values and objectives. I think that this experience of interreligious dialogue can be a witness of unity for our entire Argentinian society, which is in great need of dialogue.» ■



The Hunger Games

Is it influencing Today's Teens?



In the dystopian novel, *The Hunger Games*, the main character, *Katniss Everdeen*, thinks, "What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button? [...] What do they do all day, these people in the Capitol, besides decorating their bodies and waiting around for a new shipment of "tributes" to reel in and kill one another, just for their entertainment?" Katniss believes that the Capitol citizens are disgusting, dishonorable people because they find entertainment in children killing other children, and that they are cold and heartless because they are unfazed by the deaths of children. Likewise, many people think the same way about Hunger Games readers. However, it has been documented that reading the book has influenced readers, specifically teens, in both positive and negative ways. Journalist Jeremy Adams says that there are **5 positive lessons** that teens can get from *The Hunger Games*:

1. Killing is against human nature.
2. Wealth makes us less compassionate.
3. People are motivated to help others by empathy, not reason or numbers.
4. Power flows from social and emotional intelligence, not strength and viciousness.
5. Social connection trumps power and independence.

These lessons can be applied to everyday life, and we, as Teens4Unity, should remember these lessons as we grow up and become adults.

The Tetris Effect changes the way a person thinks or acts based on the games they play. However, it also exists in books and movies. It can be both positive and negative, but in the case of *The Hunger Games*, it is mostly negative. When the reader takes in all of the violence and death, it can make the reader see the world negatively and change the way they think and act.

Overall, everything comes down to interpretation and choice. One reader may read the story and get something positive out of it. Another reader may get something negative. It's all about how the reader interprets the book, and how they want to apply that interpretation in life. In the same way, we, the Teens4Unity, should always strive to get something positive out of things, whether it be books, or real-life situations. And we should always try to positively influence others.

by Emily White, Columbus, OH

