

YOUTH



The Road to Zero Hunger

Our so-called civilized, 21st century society is still plagued by the scandal of mass hunger. More than 800 million of our fellow human beings do not have enough to eat. New City reports on the visit last June, of 630 girls (aged 9 to 14) from the Focolare Movement, to the headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, in support of the Zero Hunger project.

Today's young people could become the first generation to eradicate hunger in the world. The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals say that on September 25, 2015, the 193 United Nations Member States approved by committing themselves to implement them within fifteen years (2015-2030). The second, the 'Zero Hunger Objective', is at the heart of the programme. And in order to achieve these goals, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) welcomed, at its Rome headquarters, on June 22, 630 young girls (aged 9 to 14), from seventeen nations, of the Focolare Movement. The event was followed by live streaming, by many other young people spread across the five continents.

The aim: a world without hunger

It is the first time that the younger generations of the Focolare Movement had visited the FAO headquarters. It was an emotional occasion, not only for the girls who took their seats in the prestigious main hall, but also for the FAO members. 'I'm really happy to see this room full of women, of young women,' said Marcela Villareal, FAO



director for the South-South partnership and cooperation division. 'I've been working here at FAO for over 20 years, talking endlessly in this room, but I've never seen it so beautiful, so full of young women. Thank you for your efforts to help achieve the Zero Hunger goal.' Today, 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger. In the last 10 years this figure has decreased, while last year due to wars and climate change it has started to rise again.

‘For us here at the FAO it is the biggest scandal of our time – said Villareal – and we fight every day so that these people have enough food but also a good life, where children can live a full life. We are convinced that with our work we can achieve a world without hunger.’

In September 2015, the United Nations signed the sustainable development agenda, which lists seventeen goals to be achieved by 2030.

‘Never before have world leaders promised to commit themselves together in such a wide and universal agenda – said Sabina Zaccaro of the FAO office for institutional communication – To defeat world hunger (objective 2) we need to overcome poverty (objective 1). But to do this we must all live in a sustainable way (objective 12), trying to solve the fight against climate change (objective 13).’

Everyone can do something

The young people of the Focolare, scattered all over the world, can make a strong personal and daily contribution to reach the goal by 2030. The FAO will be 73 on October 16, 2018 which will be a great opportunity to re-launch this goal.

‘We will use this birthday to communicate these issues to the newspapers, television, in schools, on the

first Zero Hunger citizens; with rights and duties to be respected.’

But what are the duties of Zero Hunger citizens? ‘One third of the food in the world is wasted and goes in the bin. I’m sure you do not want to be a part of this scandal,’ said Laura Hernández of FAO publicity. ‘There are things you can do at home. For example, when you have food, you can freeze it or eat it the next day. When you have food left over after a meal in a restaurant, you can take it home. Then check the food labels and do not be fooled. The ‘expiry date’, indicates when the food is no longer safe to eat, but if it says ‘best before’, it means that we can still eat it a few days after that date. Another important thing is water, a precious commodity that should not be wasted. And so when we brush our teeth, we should turn off the tap. Or we could remind mum and dad to use the dishwasher only when it is full, or the tumble dryer only when it’s needed.’

The first Zero Hunger citizens

Two of the girls who went to the FAO headquarters, Elena and Agnes said: ‘We are very honored and happy to be here. We are sure that from now on we will work with more enthusiasm for this goal. We now feel part of the zero hunger generation. It is a great dream to imagine that thanks to our contribution, in a few years there will no longer be hunger in the world. We are very happy to collaborate with the FAO because only by joining forces can we achieve such a high goal, as Zero Hunger by 2030.’

A group of boys of the Focolare Movement from eleven different countries have gathered ideas to understand how to help solve the problem of hunger in the world. ‘We have summed up our ideas with the motto of the three Hs: head, heart and hands, and our Charter of Commitment was born. Head for us means informing and studying the problem both at the global level and locally. Heart: becoming aware ourselves, involving as many people as possible to achieve our goal. And finally, work in a practical way, using our hands.

At the end of their visit, the girls handed over their Commitment Card to FAO. Then they made the symbolic gesture of the passport: they wrote their commitments on this document and signed it. They became the first Zero Hunger citizens. 🍷



Photos(2): Focolare.org

street,’ said Clara Velez Head of the FAO publicity office. ‘Every year we take a theme (immigration, climate change ...) and this year we will talk about zero hunger. And knowing that you are here today is beautiful. Here, on October 16 there will be representatives of all countries. And they will receive the book you were given today, which explains how through many daily actions we can do something to fight hunger. On the last page of the book there is a passport. Today you will become the

For further information see: <http://www.fao.org/home/en/>