

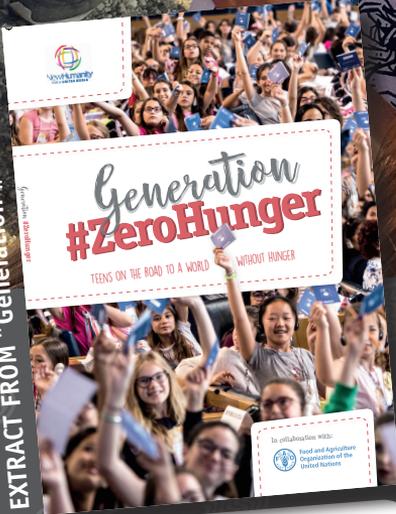


# #DARE TO CARE

## The Black Pathway

Each of us can be an active promoter of the Common Good. Let's look around our own towns and get to work.

EXTRACT FROM "Generation #ZeroHunger"



# The Black Pathway

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE!

MY NAME IS JANE, I AM 14 AND I COME FROM NEW ZEALAND! I ARRIVED IN ITALY JUST TWO WEEKS AGO. I'VE BEEN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS TIME TO GET TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE WORK THAT THE FAO IS DOING, AND TO DO WHATEVER I CAN TO BECOME A "#ZEROHUNGER WORLD CITIZEN."



This last part of the program of this historic, very first, #ZeroHunger Meeting has been entrusted to me. The atmosphere that has been created in the hall throughout our day together – from the stories you have shared, the games we have played and the activities we have done - has led me to make a wish: that we can meet again next year for a second edition!

But right now it's our turn! As you have seen in this first edition, we have already looked deeply into three of the Pathways that lead us towards our goal #ZeroHunger. Now we propose that we take a good look into another, a very important Pathway that, in its way, brings them all together. It's the *Black Pathway*.



I see there is a question from the hall. It's Imre from Hungary. What would you like to say?

**Imre:** Sorry Jane, I don't understand. Black isn't a colour of the rainbow like the other Pathways. What do you mean by saying "...it brings them all together?"

**Jane:** With the Black Pathway we refer to our participation in promoting the Common Good, that is, to all the ideas we can think of to improve the lives of the people who live in our areas.

This leads us to become active citizens, sensitive to the hardships as well as the beauty of the places where we live, and ready to unite ourselves with

those who already work for the Common Good. We commit ourselves to the fight against injustice, hunger and poverty – and we start with our own cities.

Try to think about it, Imre. If, in our hearts, we didn't care about making things better for all people, if we weren't interested in what happens around us, would we even consider the question of how to distribute the world's goods in a better way?



**Common Good:** the good that concerns everyone; all the beautiful and positive things that can help us, and others, to live in peace and harmony. Working to bring about the common good means being active, carrying out ideas and projects to improve the life of a family, a neighbourhood, a class or a city. Since the time of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, taking care of the good of the community has included participation in political life. It was the same in parts of Asia: in Japanese society, for example, the Samurai, who were loyal guardians of traditions, were both warriors and political officials.

**Imre:** Jane, it's true ... and probably we wouldn't even think about how to **avoid waste**, take care of the environment or fight for everyone to have an education...

**Jane:** That's right! To become citizens of a #ZeroHunger world, this kind of commitment and group participation is necessary.

It's like the way that each colour needs a colourless background in order to truly shine. So we have chosen black for this Pathway...

But I see that there is a hand up over there. Welcome. Please, what would you like to say?

**Salimah:** Hello everyone, I'm Salimah from Nigeria. I remembered that when speaking of the Red Pathway, we talked about the "Golden Rule" that invites us to do to others what we would like to have done to us and not to do to others what we would not like to have done to us. If we put the Golden Rule into practice we can't avoid becoming interested in others, and we will start doing to them what we would like to have done if we were in their place.

**Jane:** Exactly Salimah! In fact, the Golden Rule is the basis of every step we take on the journey. It is the first commitment we make as we travel on the Pathways.

There is a group in India that has already been working with this spirit for some time. Isn't that true, Priya?

**Priya:** Yes, absolutely! We are the youth of the Shanti Ashram, a community based in the hills not far from Coimbatore, in the South of India. We try to put into practice the ideals of peace and universal brotherhood proposed by one of our great countrymen – Mahatma Gandhi. We try to live by one of his mottos. It says, "You and I are one: I cannot hurt you without hurting myself." It seems to us that this is another way to express the Golden Rule. We put it into practice with many initiatives. India has 440 million children and young people, 60 million of whom are very poor. Some time ago, we initiated the "India Poverty Solutions" project. We invite schoolchildren to join this project by putting their savings into a money box for three months. After that time, one third of the money is kept by the ones who saved it, one third goes to their families and one third goes to poor children.

In Coimbatore 40 schools have joined us. This means the project has the involvement of 4,355 children and young people. Then the idea spread to other cities: Kochi, Mumbai and Bangalore, involving almost 100 schools



THE INDIA POVERTY SOLUTIONS PROJECT PROMOTED BY THE SHANTI ASHRAM COMMUNITY (INDIA) HAS ALREADY HELPED MORE THAN 20,000 CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS WHO HAD BEEN LIVING IN CONDITIONS OF POVERTY.



USE THE CAMERA ON A PHONE TO TAKE A PHOTO OF THIS QR-CODE AND YOU CAN SEE THE VIDEO OR YOU CAN USE YOUR SEARCH ENGINE TO FIND THE VIDEO OF THE INDIA POVERTY SOLUTIONS

and institutions with 58,237 children and young people participating.

The current goal is to spread the initiative further in India and to spread it to other countries.

But apart from giving money, we can also do many other things. One of us, a 14-year-old called Arun, after finding out about the poverty and hunger faced by families affected by HIV, started collecting food grains for them. This initiative has also spread and today we distribute food grains to 150 families.





**Jane:** Thanks, Priya, for sharing your projects with us!

If we just look around us, many ideas can come to us! In Kenya, to introduce children and young people to the Black Pathway, they use a very special cube! Teresa Ann will tell us some details of this experience.

**Teresa Ann:** Hello everyone, I'm Teresa Ann, a teacher at the Magnificat Project at Mathare in Kenya. This project is supported by the Association Azione Famiglie Nuove (AFN Onlus) The association's name in English means "Actions for New Families." The project offers activities to help the children of the Seme village and the Mathare slum in Nairobi to receive adequate nutrition and to study. We continue to follow the children, at least until they turn 14 or 15, with a programme focussing on respect for the other and reciprocity. Our primary commitment, however, is to ensure that the children have adequate nutrition. We have found that after a month with adequate food, these children regain their skills, and become strong and healthy. Once that happens it is possible to start introducing the Pathways to them. The tool we have begun using is the "Cube". It's a cube that has a phrase to put into practice on each of its six sides. Each phrase is designed to help us to start looking at the people around us in a different way and to learn how to become builders of fraternity and peace. Through this tool, and through playing, the children learn to: be first to reach out to others, treat each person with respect, share each other's joys and hurts, discover the good in others, treat others as you want to be treated, forgive those who hurt you. The circumstances in our villages are not straightforward and often parents can't take care of their children's education. So our work also involves trying to teach the children the values of respect and of peace and we start by trying to practise them ourselves. The Cube that the children throw every day helps us to spread a new way of thinking. We have seen that it helps to improve relationships and that the children become active peacemakers.

**Jane:** What a wonderful Cube! Do you have any more? I'd love to use one with my friends in New Zealand!

**Teresa Ann:** Of course!

**Jane:** Thanks for the gift, Teresa Ann! We come from very different countries, but with this Cube - *your* project can continue in *my* country!



Sometimes, hunger and poverty are very close to us, while at other times they may seem far away. But this doesn't mean that they are none of our business - just because they might not affect us closely. We can carry out projects together, even if we live far apart. This is happening in many places.

A very interesting example is that of the group "Drop by drop" with young people from Italy and from Thailand working together on this project.

**Matteo:** Hello! We are some of the students from class 4B at the comprehensive school "G.Giuliano" in the city of Latina, in Italy, and a group from Mae Sot, a city in western Thailand that shares a border with Myanmar to the west. I am Matteo, from Italy, and here beside me is Num, from Thailand. We came here accompanied by some of our Italian teachers and some Thai friends. But... let's start from the beginning. Some time ago, one of our schoolmates threw away his morning snack. When the teacher told him not to waste his food, because there are other children who don't have any food, we asked the teacher who were those poor children. So we got to know about Mae Sot, a place in northwest Thailand, where children and young people live as refugees. We looked up their location on a map of the world. What could we do for them? We thought of our bedrooms full of toys, and we understood that those of us who have lots of things could give something to those who don't have anything. So we collected toys, stuffed animals, notebooks and pens and we put them into boxes that we then decorated with our drawings.

**Jane:** And how did you do to get them to Thailand?

**Matteo:** When they heard about our initiative, a shipping company offered to send the boxes for free to Bangkok. Not just for the first time, but for the other shipments, too. In fact, after the toys, we started collecting clothes and school supplies and we also invited our other classmates, our teachers and our parents to get involved. Then it occurred to us that perhaps money was needed too. With photos sent to us from Mae Sot, and with the help of our teachers, we created calendars to sell so we could send the money we raised.

**Num:** Hello, I'm Num from Thailand. We distributed the things that arrived in the Italian packages in various villages of Mae Sot, in the refugee camp of Mae La, and at the Heavenly Home orphanage. We used the money raised to help children and their families in Vietnam by replacing the huts





where they lived with stone buildings. In a few places in South Vietnam the money sent paid for the replacement of reed bridges with wooden bridges. Perhaps the greatest dream we achieved together has been to build an actual school in Mae Sot! It has the same name as our project: "Goccia dopo goccia" ("Drop by drop").

**Jane:** Matteo and Num, you two have written to each other, and before today, you have only ever seen each other on a screen. Now you have met for the first time! How do you feel?



THE CHILDREN OF MAE SOT, (THAILAND) IN THE "DROP BY DROP" SCHOOL – THANKS TO THE HELP OF THEIR FRIENDS IN ITALY.



**Num:** As soon as we saw each other this morning we hugged each other!

**Matteo:** This experience of “Drop by drop” is really incredible - for me and for all of us. We started everything with a small step, a tiny drop. To that first drop we have added many others – ones that we could never have imagined. We will see what happens in the future...

**Num:** Yes, *drop by drop*, we can start a whole river!

**Jane:** You boys, your words have really moved me! Each time we take action to make the world a better place, it's like we take another step towards becoming **Citizens of the Zero Hunger World!**

Now, it's time to hear about the experience of some girls from Switzerland! Hi, girls!

**Aurora:** Hello! I'm Aurora and I'm 15. I'm speaking on behalf of the group.

In January 2018 we heard about the Zero Hunger Generation for the first time. The FAO invited us to work with them towards the goal - that no more people would suffer due to a lack of food. All 18 of us, a group of girls from Zurich aged between 10 and 17, immediately decided to commit ourselves to doing something!



First of all, we researched facts about the situation of hunger in the world. We were struck by a documentary on the FAO website, where we saw so many hungry children. There is enough food for everyone on the earth, but it is unfairly distributed! Every 8 seconds somebody in the world dies of hunger!

Next, we made a plan of how we could do something about it. Some of us checked the Internet to find out what activities were already being done in our country, while others investigated what we could do. Together we decided to look around our homes and to gather up all the things that we no longer needed. We put all these things together and organized to sell them at a stall outside a supermarket. At the same time we took the opportunity to inform people about the situation of hunger in the world. So, in front of a supermarket in Zurich, we sold our items, as well as some sweets and delicious sandwiches that we had prepared.

We made some large posters and put them up. They presented the dramatic situation of hunger in the world. We explained what is already being done and what still needs to be done.

We spread out to inform as many people as possible. Many listened, and we had very interesting talks with them. By the evening we were very happy about what we had been able to do for





TEENS ON THE STREET OF ZURICH (SWITZERLAND) INFORM PASSERSBY ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER

those who suffer from hunger. With great joy we found that we had raised 825.70 francs. We gave the money to a humanitarian project in Burundi.

**Jane:** What you have done is wonderful, Aurora! Now what will you do next?

**Aurora:** We have many other ideas, but first of all, we want to involve the media to inform as many people as possible. We want to touch people's hearts so that they, too, will want to work together with the Zero Hunger Project! It was finding out about this enormous problem that led us to make our commitment and do something.

Shortly after our supermarket Zero Hunger stand, the editor of a newspaper wrote to us: "Your commitment to hunger in the world has really struck us. From today, our newspaper will publish many articles that open our eyes to the situation of children in the world. It's our way to try to help make the world a little better. Keep up the good work!"

We have also been interviewed by a radio station...

We are only at the beginning... but just seeing this whole hall united together for such a great goal, it gives us a great push to keep going ahead!

**Jane:** Hearing about your commitment and what you have been doing in Switzerland gives us all a great push to go ahead as well! Thanks girls!



Yet we never stop feeling that something is missing and we are always trying, in one way or another, to find it somewhere - in any part of the world, or the spirit, anywhere except where we are, where we have been put. But that's where the treasure is, and nowhere else.

In the place that I feel is my natural environment, in the situation where life has placed

me, in whatever happens to me day after day, in whatever daily life requires of me: precisely here lies my essential task. Here lies the fulfilment of existence placed within my reach. It is under the hearth of our own house that our treasure is buried.

*Martin Buber*  
1878 - 1965

Another very interesting idea has come from Laurent, from Belgium!

**Laurent:** Hi, everyone! I'm Laurent and I'm 14 years old. A few months ago, while I was thinking about the great problem of world hunger, it occurred to me that **hunger is first of all a need**, a strong need, because it's the lack of something vital. I asked myself: "What do people around me suffer? In people's lives, is there some "Thing" (with a capital T) that no one can do without?" I wondered about it for days. And in the end I said to myself: "Yes, maybe it does exist. There is a real need. It's another type of hunger, apart from hunger for food: it's "hunger for love."

So I began to **look around my city and try to think of the places where there was more suffering**, where more love was needed. The children's hospital seemed to me to be the place to start. I shared the idea of wanting to **do something useful and fun for these people with my friend Lea**. We thought of dressing up as clowns to visit the children in the hospital.

We also thought that maybe our friends would like to join in. Didn't we, Lea?

**Lea:** Yes! While I was telling one classmate about it, others became interested. They liked the idea. I offered to come and try **to bring some joy** to the children's cancer ward. In the face of the suffering of these children, I realized that not only can I overcome my own problems, but I can also give a lot to those around me. I will never forget the smiles of those children and their parents. In one room we stopped to talk to a father of a child who was attached to so many tubes! I realized that sometimes even just being close to people is enough to give some comfort.

WEARING A CLOWN SUIT AND A  
SMILE YOU CAN BRING JOY TO  
MANY PLACES IN THE CITY



**Laurent:** In total there were five of us who went. Five friends – and for each one of us it was an unforgettable experience. By helping others we were also helping ourselves. Today the priorities in our lives are so much clearer. We know who we are, and we know what goals we want to fight for! We want to be part of the Zero Hunger Generation! The generation that reduces any kind of hunger to ZERO!

**Jane:** Dear everyone, the time for our Meeting is coming to an end. Hearing all these initiatives, perhaps we are wondering - where do we start and how do we get started? Are there any proposals? Are there any methods that could help us?

I see that there is an idea from Latin America... Welcome, Pedro.



**Pedro:** Hi, I'm Pedro, I'm 13, and I'm from Argentina. We would like to propose a method to everyone. It's called "**6x1 - Six steps for one goal.**"

It's a way to help us to get ideas, to plan and to implement initiatives of peace and fraternity starting from our own cities, from the neighbourhoods in which we live. As well as ourselves, other groups of children, in various cities of the world, are trying to put this method into practice. To understand how it works, we have prepared some slides to see together.



### OBSERVE

The first step is to look around us: to get closer to the local reality, to observe carefully everyday as we travel along the streets of our neighbourhoods. Then we try to work out what we see as the "grey points", the critical issues, the existing problems.



### THINK

After collecting our observations, we need to process them and prioritize them. First we assess the severity of the various problems we have observed. Then we assess how urgent it is to find a solution to each problem and whether each of those problems seems to be improving or getting worse. Then we come together to decide where to focus our efforts.



### GET OTHERS INVOLVED

As we make plans for our activities we will probably realize that we can't do it all by ourselves. It may be useful to encourage the participation of others (other children, young people, adults, friends, neighbours, teachers, catechists, Associations, Movements, authorities etc). Or perhaps we will find out that others in our city are already doing something to solve that problem and it becomes an opportunity to work together in a more effective joint project.



### ACT

Then we move on to the action phase: everyone to work!



### EVALUATE

After having worked on a project, you need to evaluate how it went so you can improve in the future. What were the difficulties? How did we solve them? What were our strengths?



### CELEBRATE

And to finish up ... a moment of celebration with all those who worked together: to recognize everyone's contribution, to thank each other, to look towards new goals.

**Jane:** Thanks, it's a great idea that we could all use in our own cities.

Before we all say goodbye, I would like to take advantage of the presence of an expert, Professor Daniela Ropelato, who is Professor of Political Science, as well as the Deputy Dean, at the Sophia University of Loppiano in Italy. Professor Ropelato, in this session we have talked about taking an interest in, and really participating in the lives of our cities. In your opinion, what is so important about becoming active citizens? Also, if some of us decide to enter into politics, what advice do you have?



**Daniela Ropelato:** Thank you for these questions!

After many years of research at the university, of experimentation with new ideas and of friendship and collaboration with politicians from all over the world, I have become more and more convinced that it is vitally important that you young people make your contribution. You should make it with all the generosity, intelligence and sincerity that are characteristic of people your age. I have two simple reasons for this. The first is because you are full of ideas and the people you represent are waiting for you to put these ideas into action as soon as possible. That way you can achieve the goals of peace and justice that are so close to your hearts.

A photograph of Daniela Ropelato, a woman with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a white top and a pearl necklace. She is holding a microphone and looking towards the camera. The photo is framed by a dark circular border with a white dashed line.

Daniela Ropelato



The second reason is because giving of ourselves is what gives meaning to our lives. You have the right to live for a great ideal. Don't let anybody, or anything, take that away from you! These ideas grow out of living the Golden Rule. They form the roots of the kind of politics that builds up the common good. (Unfortunately, it is very different from the kind of politics we often hear about on television or on social media!) For this reason, I am sure that among you, there are some who are already preparing themselves to engage in the politics of our cities, parliaments and governments of the future. Of course you will be the politicians of tomorrow! In one way you all will be, because there is a political responsibility that we all have to exercise, in our various professions, as we continue to weave relationships enlightened by the Golden Rule. On this basis, for some of you, the pathway of becoming a professional politician may open at some time or another in your lives. But it won't be so different for those of you who work in medicine, or the arts, or in the sciences...

This is what happens when young people have already established habits of choosing to share what they have; of listening to and trying to understand others' points of view; of distributing resources firstly to those who most need help; of forgiving others and of finding new and better ways to do things.



Of course, this is not an easy road: we need to study, we need eyes that can see the big picture, and it is necessary to keep ourselves grounded and closely united with a group of friends ...

A characteristic of the colour black that we have given to this Pathway should give us the courage we will need. Just as black contains all the other colours, so politics should become a place where everyone finds their place.

**Jane:** Prof. Ropelato, I have one last question to conclude our session - and this wonderful Meeting. Despite our enthusiasm, sometimes, when we look around us, we get discouraged. Do you believe it really is possible to change things? Is it possible, if we commit ourselves across the world, to end poverty and hunger? Can we young people really make a contribution towards this goal?

**Daniela Ropelato:** You're right: if we read the front pages of the newspapers, or chat on social media, there are many reasons to be discouraged. The problems are so vast and so profound. How can it be that



men and women never learn from their mistakes??? But there is hope! Always remember that an immense forest silently continues to grow, even if a falling tree seems to be the only interesting news. It's always easier to be passive and accept the negative analysis of situations, because that way you don't run any risk. Instead it is up to us to build and to create positive new realities! This has always been the case, and this is why, in the words of Chiara Lubich, "... we can define the history of humanity as an unstoppable march towards universal fraternity..." We are on that march, sometimes the horizon is not visible, but our role is that of the pathfinders who run ahead in order to show others the way. Many times throughout history this has been the role of the young people. Now this exciting journey towards #Zero Hunger needs your contribution. Even the way you give it is important. Since our modern era is characterized by the search for unity, our contribution must be characterized by our unity. That way the steps we will take, the words we will say – we, young people and adults together - will be even more decisive and more incisive. Let's not be content with anything less!

## THE BLACK PATHWAY IN ACTION

Since the beginning of our Black Pathway we have understood that there is a Rule that helps us to feel responsible for the good of all - and to actively engage in changing the world around us. It's a Rule that can help us to achieve great goals - like Zero Hunger. It's the Golden Rule. It seems very simple, but it's not always easy to put into practice. Sometimes you need a little training. So let's try to train ourselves in living the Golden Rule by playing this game.

**Ready?** You will need a fairly large space to play. Spread out some hand sized balls (or other objects of a similar size) around the ground. Then split up into pairs. In each pair one will be blindfolded, and the other will be the guide. The guides stand behind their partners with one hand on their shoulders. In their other hands the guides carry a bag to collect the items during the game.

**Action!** All the blindfolded players have to listen to directions from their companions behind them. These directions have to guide the blindfolded players up to the objects so they can collect them. Note: only the blindfolded players can collect the objects from the ground. Then they have to place the items into the bags held open by their guides. The winners are the ones who collect the most objects!



**Materials:** balls or small objects, blindfolds, bags

**Variations of the game:**

**Role Swap.** Try to add this rule: every time an object is collected and placed in the bag, the blindfolded one and the partner swap roles. Those who were blindfolded first become the guides and vice versa.

**Minefield.** Instead of collecting objects, each pair has to avoid them and get to the other side of the playing field without ever touching any of the “mines” scattered on the ground.

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

(Moment of reflection after the activity)

Try to gather in small groups to discuss these questions...

- What qualities should the blindfolded players put into practice during the game? And what about the players who were guiding them?
- How do you think this game could help us be better at living the Golden Rule?
- Can you remember the last time anyone put the Golden Rule into practice for you? And the last time you put it into practice for anyone else?
- If you were the mayor of your city, in order to contribute to the good of all, what would you like to maintain and what would you like to change?



#DARE  
TO CARE

