



International Convention XI Final Declaration

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself. The Ethical and Socio-Political Dimensions of VIDES Volunteering

July 16-18, 2016 – Rome, Italy

We, the young people of VIDES -Volontariato Internazionale Donna Educazione Sviluppo (a nonprofit international association), participants at International Convention XI, coming from 32 countries: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo Brazzaville, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Poland, the Philippines, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Switzerland, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam, hereby adopt this Final Declaration at its conclusion so that all might carry out the Association's *mission* and *vision*, thus collaborating in the realization of the objectives of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Love is the heart of VIDES volunteering. It is the principal force which makes possible the construction of a society that is fraternal and in solidarity, in which the dignity of every human being is respected and every person is educated in how to establish relationships of harmony within oneself, with others, with Creation, and with God. The approach we take in our action is to guarantee a quality education which is inclusive and just, promoting learning opportunities for everyone.

So as to render our commitments effective over the next four years (2016–2020) we affirm that:

- Human beings are created by God for love: *“man and woman He created them, in the image of God He created them and gave them the command to increase and multiply”*.
- The experience of love, received and given, is fundamental for building family and, therefore, society, where all human rights are to be respected and guaranteed to everyone.
- The identity of the VIDES volunteer is free self-giving and the joy found in it. The volunteer enters into a personal relationship with another in a reciprocal dynamic of love which makes the best resources of each person grow and mature.
- We are called to grow in our humanity and in our love for others each day.
- For VIDES, authentic love for one's neighbor is expressed in the commitment to the holistic education of the person. Education is the key to gain access to the full enjoyment of all the rights that are in line with the new Sustainable Development Objective no. 4.
- An ethical nature on the part of the volunteer and the global citizen is necessary so as to render effective a paradigm of development which is based on the person and not on the economy.

- Education must be directed to the full development of the human personality and to reinforcing respect for human rights and for fundamental liberties. It ought to promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship.
- Love brings us to commit to a continual study and a critical reflection which spur us on to make proposals for our local and global realities: seeking to act locally while thinking globally. (*glocalmente* – “*glocally*”)
- Love brings us to broaden our gaze and to cultivate connections so that we may constantly seek the Common Good.
- The Declaration of Human Rights represents the universal language of love for our neighbor and permits us to establish authentic relationships of fraternity among peoples, religions, and different cultures so as to construct a society of peace.

We acknowledge that the three great challenges of our times are:

- the endemic increase of social inequalities within countries and among various nations which create new poverties and generate violence. This will inevitably lead to the loss of democracy and of peace.
- the ecological problem which calls for global *governance* so as to care for our planet as our Homeland and our common home.
- peace which is not only threatened but violated in so many areas of the world. Today, wars are the fruit of a combination of conflicts of interest which are both social in nature and related to identity, above all religious identity.

We commit ourselves to:

- Promote a type of volunteering which is educational and based on creative and critical thinking - allowing young people to contribute actively to political processes both in local society and in the complex and interconnected global one (*Youth Empowerment*).
- Promote an education which teaches: how to resolve conflicts, a profound appreciation for diversity, ethical reasoning, equality between genders, human rights and responsibilities, interdependence, multi-linguistic and multicultural competencies, social justice, sustainable development, and values - both in the formation of volunteers and in the work carried out when volunteering.

Such an education must:

- instill a sense of care for the earth and the correct management of all the ecological systems for the sake of our future generations;

- strengthen social relationships among individuals, institutions, communities, and countries; and
 - permit the young to assume active roles to confront and resolve the challenges in their own area by networking with other associations (VIDES and others) and institutions so as to become proactive collaborators for a world of hope, of justice, and of peace.
- Conceive and draw up strategic plans, projects, and activities which focus on educational needs and the development of the more vulnerable groups of the society.
 - Formulate the commitments of the VIDES groups, starting with their local communities: to work by involving the parents and the leaders of the educative communities and of the local institutions, both ecclesial and civic.
 - Promote education to and for human rights using both formal and informal educational tools to create a society that is more just, fraternal, and living in solidarity.
 - Make the "best practices" of VIDES known far and wide – to both public institutions and among the people – so that more young people will become involved in volunteer action in the style of the Association.
 - Be present in local institutions and on international bodies so as to form and to encourage the young to mutual cooperation.
 - Increase authentic fraternal and collaborative relationships as VIDES network among the VIDES groups, with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and with the members of the other Groups of the Salesian Family.
 - Utilize the media and social networks as efficacious instruments for the construction of a culture of solidarity, in a responsible and cognizant manner, so as to strengthen bonds of intercultural friendship and fraternal collaboration in favor of those who are in need and for to spread knowledge of our "best practices".

Therefore, it is resolved that:

We, the VIDES youth and the FMA Delegates, commit ourselves to contribute to the realization of the lines of action drawn up by General Chapter XXIII of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians by acting as bearers of joy and hope to the most vulnerable and by contributing, each according to his or her own specific characteristics, to the realization of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, paying particular attention to the promotion of the right to education as an expression of love towards our neighbor.