

The difference between humanist action and humanitarian help

There is a fundamental difference between humanist and humanitarian activities. After years of activity by many NGO's and humanitarian associations, the situation on our continent has not improved, in fact it has gotten worse. Many humanitarian efforts have only strengthened dependence on external help and reinforced the mentality of "we cannot".

In the face of so much human suffering, many positions and organizations today encourage people to unselfishly help the dispossessed and those who suffer discrimination. Associations, volunteer groups, and large numbers of individuals are on occasion moved to make positive contributions. However, while the action of those groups do not focus on transforming the underlying structures that give rise to the problems, nothing important will change. Their approaches are more closely related to humanitarianism than to conscious humanism, although among these efforts are many conscientious protests and actions that can be extended and deepened.

The Humanist Movement is neither an institution nor an NGO. It is not a political party. It is neither a religion nor a sect. The Humanist Movement's actions are not part of Humanitarianism. The Humanist Movement, indeed, has neither funds nor money. It is not a humanitarian organization. We believe in the human being, in the possibility for personal and social change. This is the foundation upon which we believe a truly human society can be built. This is why all new humanists get involved on a volunteer basis. The Humanist Movement does not give jobs.

What then is humanism according to new humanists? Humanism is demonstrated through the volunteers from different cultures and countries who organize themselves, grow and get stronger together in order to perform and develop the great changes that can be foreseen in the horizon, in such a way that these changes can be oriented towards a truly human society. Humanism is the expression in practice of the ideal to humanize the earth and to build a universal human nation, in which every human being has the same rights and the same opportunities because of the simple fact of being born human. We are an organization that is highly structured which works simultaneously for personal development and social transformation. Humanism is a sensibility, a way to look and to behave with human beings and the world. It is above all an attitude that, recognizing the intention and freedom of what is human, gets involved in the fight against discrimination and violence. In a clear way, humanism is expressed in every activity needed to give value to the human being, in the immediate environment, through concrete projects that are based on self-financing, self-organization and human work.

The central activity of conscious Humanism is to increase human organization and reinforce social action. Since the personal and social aspects are linked, the most important thing is to take charge of our situation, to give our environment a truly human direction that can deeply renew the life of each man, of each woman and each child.

Nevertheless, Humanism does not reject collaboration or interchanges with different organizations with humanitarian characteristics. Humanists only need a great deal of independence, a great freedom of judgment. This might not be so easy for humanitarian institutions that have their own dynamics and that are, in addition, dependent on economic and ideological matters. Therefore, we do not invalidate the contributions of humanitarians independent of the achievements or failures that might be found in their fight against suffering.

From Humanitarianism to Humanism there is a step, a step towards a more clear, and a more concrete and more feasible option that takes into account the human genre. The social action of New Humanists, opposite to charity, upon which Humanitarianism is based, is done based on the concept of the reciprocity:

"You learn, therefore you teach others!"

"You improve your personal situation or that of your city or of your neighborhood, so you work afterwards with the aim that others profit in your city or your district!"

"You received help - therefore you help others!"