

Ideas for Actions on 17 October

World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty

- Get ready to mark the day
- Reference Texts to use on the day
- Invite children and youth to mark the day
- Enable the voice and experience of people in poverty to be heard on the day
- Make known the historical places of people living in poverty
- Concerts and cultural events
- Some other ideas for actions
- Spiritual observance
- Write or record a testimony/message
- Send a message of support
- Make this day known through communication
- Participate in an event
- Let us know about your actions and projects!



Get ready to mark the day

You can mark the World Day personally with your friends, your family, and in your workplace, your place of study, your association etc. To help you, the [International Committee for 17 October](#) has drafted an [International Charter](#) for all groups, organizations or institutions who wish to associate themselves with this event. This short guide also serves this purpose.

The aim of the World Day is to promote the participation of people experiencing poverty, along with those who join them in efforts to tackle poverty and exclusion.

Reference texts

Some key texts are often used to publicly mark the day and can be read to capture a personal or collective gesture. In particular, we recommend the [text of the commemorative stone](#) of the Trocadero square, Paris, France, where the first 17 October commemoration took place in 1987 or the text [“I bear witness to you”](#) of Joseph Wresinski, the initiator of the World Day.

[Testimonies](#) from people in poverty or [messages of support](#) can be read too. They highlight struggle, dignity and courage of people experiencing and resisting poverty. These texts can be read by different people, from different backgrounds, highlighting our will to come together. [Here](#) are some examples of such testimonies.

Invite children and youth to mark the day

Children and young people can be supported to express their conviction that extreme poverty is not to be tolerated. Do not hesitate to allow them to have a real place in the events of the World Day. In

various countries, children and young people participate in the day through the school setting, for example.

Visit the [Tapori website](#), a worldwide network of children from different backgrounds who want to create friendship, for some ideas and materials for involving children and young people in the day.

Enable the voice and experience of people in poverty to be heard on the day

Central to 17 October is people in poverty having the opportunity to testify to their efforts and those of others in resisting poverty and exclusion. Such [testimonies](#) and [messages](#) hold a very important place at the heart of gatherings on the World Day and are a valuable record of the lives and efforts of people in poverty.

Make a call out to political, trade union, associative, religious, cultural leaders, so that on this day, they take a stand for the fight to eradicate poverty and commit themselves in their respective fields to take action to allow full citizenship for all. Engage your municipality or local government to mark the day with posters, conferences, special city council deliberations, etc.

Make known the historical places of people living in poverty

Often 17 October commemoration events take place in the community or close to other places of significance in the struggle against poverty.

Because extreme poverty condemns people to wandering, to precarious settlements and to insecure jobs, their physical roots are often erased. The places of history of people in poverty are places that bear witness to a forgotten past, places where humanity has suffered, and places which call for recognition.

Concerts and cultural events

People in poverty have often spoken through the songs of their struggles, resistance and hopes for a better future. Choirs and music groups around the world have taken up the challenge to organize special concerts, or to participate in World Day commemorations with a special repertoire of the songs of people in poverty.

People have also garnered their artistic talents into art exhibitions, drama, and dance performances that evoke the struggle against poverty.

Sports also bring people together. In various places soccer or other sports games are organized that focus on the group spirit of cooperation and friendship. Teams can be composed of players from various social and cultural backgrounds.

Some other ideas for actions

The World Day can also be marked through a variety of other activities, many of which do not require too much organisation and which can be done in small or big groups as appropriate.

Examples are:

- Arranging a walk or a march through a neighbourhood or town;
- Holding an information stand in your local market;
- Organising a community workshop to promote awareness;
- Planting a tree;
- Having a fun run for overcoming exclusion;

- Playing music in the street;
- Visiting people who are isolated or unwell;
- Getting involved in a community development or renovation project;
- Holding a coffee morning/evening and debate around a film such as: '[Extreme Poverty is Violence](#)', or the text '[I Bear Witness to You](#)';
- Taking time to talk with people about how the event and the day went.

You may also have other ideas for marking the day according to your opportunities, means and resources.

Spiritual observance

Concern for social justice and human rights is an important feature of many civil and religious organisations. On the occasion of the World Day, faith believers and members of various traditions can provide ways for people living in poverty to share in the rites, services, prayers or in the thoughts of their community.

Whether through a traditional service in a Rwandan village, meditation in a temple in Thailand, or through prayers in an Algerian mosque, an Israeli temple, or Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, or through interfaith gatherings, people of many faiths and traditions have commemorated the World Day in the manner of their choice.

You may wish to organise such a moment, or call on your religious leaders to encourage them to promote a time of reflection on the lives and efforts of people living in extreme poverty. You may wish to use Joseph Wresinski's [Universal Prayer](#) written for 17 October 1987.

Write or record a testimony/message

If you have experienced (or know someone who is experiencing) the injustices of poverty and exclusion, write about it so that others can become aware and join forces. These messages can be shared on the World Day. Send your testimonies and messages [here](#).

Send a message of support

You can send [messages of support](#) that are gestures of solidarity with the very poor. Excerpts from these messages are posted or read at 17 October gatherings, a selection of which will be posted on our website. The International Committee will not be able to respond personally to all messages received.

Make this day known through communication

Make this day known via your social networks, by posting on your social media outlets, on the radio, in your places of social engagement, at your work place, and with your family and friends.

"It helps to know we are not alone": this is what many people say during events on 17 October. Whether people gather by the thousands or just a small number coming together to commemorate the World Day, they are all part of a movement that breaks the isolation of people living in poverty and who are excluded. People have used different means to make those links real: from international radio communication between countries to simple conference calls, email correspondence, or exchanges of post cards.

Participate in an event

Several hundred events are organised around the world to mark 17 October every year.

These events are organized in schools, government offices, places of worship, slums, public squares, art galleries, urban centres, and villages in the heart of the countryside, among other places.

Planned events include commemorations, art exhibitions, concerts, conferences, religious services, government meetings, press conferences, internet message exchanges...

We regularly update our international programme of events. You can also [contact us](#) to know if there is an event near you that you might like to participate in.

[Click here to inform us of your actions and projects!](#)

Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty – International Committee for October 17
12 rue Pasteur, 95480 Pierrelaye, France
www.ovecomingpoverty.org
overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org