

## **At Youth's Crossroads**

### **Pape Diop's speech**

In Senegal there is a neighborhood called North Guinaw Rails. This neighborhood was so flooded this winter that entire families were obliged to live in the water.

A 10 person team worked for three months in the North Guinaw Rails flood area. During this time we saw some poverty situations that were due to the water, but also for other reasons.

One day we were bailing out houses with buckets. We saw a lady lying down on a bed. She had fallen down in her house two months ago because of the floods. Ever since that time she was unable to leave her house.

Even though we don't have a lot of resources, we do have our hearts and strength and we emptied out her house. After that we talked together. We tried to make her feel better. Because physical and moral solidarity is important too.

Sometimes we go down roads to see the places where there is still a lot of water and that are impossible to get to. We try to evacuate this water so that people can get through.

Sometimes people even think that we're there for money. But we show them that we're there for the population. Sometimes too they insult us or look down on us. But that doesn't discourage us, because each person has to respect his engagement and support the others. Tomorrow the population will be grateful to you; remember the world wasn't built in just one day, so we have to be patient.

But after that people will know that we're there to help them. That's what motivated some people to join us in this group. They say that if it wasn't for us, a lot of people would have left the neighborhood because of the floodwaters.

Up until now the people have praised us and said that ATD Fourth World is there for them, and not for political reasons. And even right now, the municipality needs our advice because they spent a lot of money to buy this water pumping equipment. But these machines don't help the families that need them the most.

That's why we have our very basic material: spades, shovels, rakes. And nothing stops us. That proves that in life, there has to be people, and you have to look for people, not money. Because you run out of money. But good things, helping hands, people never forget that. That's why I tell people: teach me how to do things by myself. That's better than giving me money every day.

What really bothers me is that I see that these people have already had lots of problems and then the floods came and that was one more big problem for them to deal with. But when I look at this situation and people ask me if a world without extreme poverty is possible, sometimes I think that no, it's impossible. When you look at some things you can say that down in North Guinaw Rails, life is really too hard.

What I just told you is true. You can see the proof in the photos.