

KALONGO NEWS



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"We do not work for
our personal interest,
but for the good of
those people that hopefully
tomorrow will benefit from
what we have
made for them"

Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli

DEAR FRIENDS,

thank you so much! It is thanks to you if even in 2020, with a pandemic, we succeeded in guaranteeing treatments and care of high quality to thousands of people and to go ahead with our projects in Kalongo.

You are helping us to write a beautiful story, that started more than 60 years ago with Father Giuseppe and is carried on even now, despite everything, by people able to look beyond one's own history, laying good and deep roots in the future.

In September, Covid-19 also arrived in Kalongo. At the end of October a total of 44 cases have been registered, most of them within the hospital staff. It was inevitable, considering how much the staff is daily dealing with all the other health emergencies. After a period of care and isolation positive people were discharged and the staff returned to work. But there is an even worse threat than Covid itself and it is **the invisible effects of this sneaky virus**. In the last months the hospital is recording numbers that raise the alarm about the real health situation of the district and threaten the economic sustainability of the hospital.

Up to September 2019, the pregnant women in the ward of maternity were 1,262, this year in the same month they were only 345, as well as the number of children hospitalized in pediatrics, that in the same period fell from 1,432 to 434. A dramatic decrease that tells us how the health emergency is impeding the access to care of hundreds of people, aggravating an already precarious economic situation and triggering a dangerous vicious circle that from a lack of health inevitably leads to poverty and vice versa.

The obstetrics school, closed since March for the pandemic, has reopened at the end of September for 109 female students of the last two years. We are very happy for them but we are wondering what will happen to the 38 girls of the first year who for the moment cannot return to school.

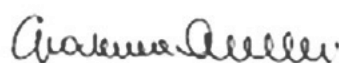
Many of them will be forced to abandon their studies because the even poorer families will no longer be able to afford the expenses for the school or will prefer to keep them at home to contribute to the sustenance of the family.

Although we are aware that we are facing a 2021 full of challenges, we will tenaciously continue to do our best to ensure the continuity and quality of care services offered by the hospital and the studies of the students of the midwifery school.

Together we can work for those without access to health and to an acceptable life, those who today feel also threatened by the pandemic, just like us.

We don't need to find any other reason to ask you to continue to support us. **Having you by our side today is all that matters.**

Merry Christmas dear friends, and above all **Happy New Year** to you all!



*Giovanna Ambrosoli
President*

“The pandemic is offering us the opportunity to speed up the progress, to work together worldwide, not to go back to normality but to make a stride forward”

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“If we are still speaking about Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli it is because **there is people who, in his name, keep carrying ahead his work**, his teachings and his hospital in Kalongo.”

THE GREAT LEGACY OF FATHER GIUSEPPE

Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli is current because its history contains all the ingredients that make him a priceless example, not an unapproachable holy card to be spread rhetorically, but a generous and professional approach to life. It is good to underline the last aspect, because it illuminates his path with a different light and explains to us that the **availability towards the others and the ability to take a risk need solid legs for walking**.

The choice to study English, to go to London to specialize in tropical diseases, the entrepreneurial approach and a healthy culture of doing are elements that cannot take second place with respect to faith and charity. They complement and strengthen themselves each other and talk to us about the importance of believing in studying, in training and investment of the own skills.

Not for nothing the midwifery school is part of Father Ambrosoli’s legacy; in there hundreds of Ugandan girls have graduated. Reading this book is a journey that speaks to us of yesterday, but also of today and tomorrow, because his hospital is still working at full capacity, with its 300 beds always full, and because this story shows that it has a contagious nourishment inside.

It shows how **courage, care and gratuitousness are able to fill a life with meaning, hope and love**; and above all, able to delete regrets, cynicism and apathy, the real diseases of our time ”.

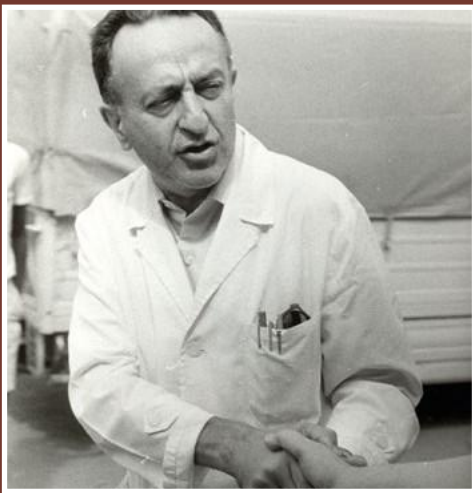
Mario Calabresi

From the book "Call me Giuseppe"

by Elisabetta Soglio with Giovanna Ambrosoli

WITH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TO THE AMBROSOLI FOUNDATION YOU CAN CONTINUE DOING GOOD ALSO IN THE FUTURE.

A SIMPLE, GENEROUS AND CONCRETE ACT THAT CAN FILL LIFE WITH MEANING, HOPE AND LOVE.





“Never turn off children’s smile”

Pope Benedict XVI, 2012

MALNUTRITION. THE FIRST SYMPTOM OF POVERTY

Malnutrition still represents in Africa a very serious problem for the balanced growth of millions of children. It happens when the nutritional intake is insufficient compared to what a child needs to grow; the chronic deficiency of the fundamentals nutrient undermines his health and development, causing a high risk of contracting other diseases and damages to the intellectual and psychological development. In Africa **the risk of death in the malnourished children is 10 times higher** than that of children who do not suffer from malnutrition and about half of the deaths below the 5 years is related to this problem.

Dr. Tito Squillaci, the pediatrician who spends long periods at Dr. Ambrosoli Memorial Hospital, explains the dramatic connection between malnutrition and poverty and the battle of the hospital against malnutrition.

“Malnutrition is the result of nutritional problems, but such problems are, in turn, closely related to the socio-economic situation of the family and to its cultural level. In fact, the problem often is not only the unavailability of food, but also the ability of the family to manage the scarce resources available. This is why malnutrition requires a complex approach. **Therefore, the hospital is sustaining the managing of medical aspects with a work of health and nutritional education.** First, it has an isolated environment that avoid nosocomial infections, which would be deleterious. The nutritional aspects are cared for by a qualified nutritionist.

A fundamental aspect of the action lies in the education of mothers, carried out by nurses and nutritionists, with practical tests of cooking and training on local foods and their correct use. In addition, after the discharge, or in the case of non-hospitalized children, the nutritionist makes visits to the villages checking the state of health of the child and of his siblings and the respect for a good feeding practice in the family. Unfortunately, not always it is possible to recover from malnutrition, there is a serious state in which mortality remains high but in most cases, however, **the child finds again the smile that he had lost, because a malnourished person no longer smiles ... ”**

GOAL “ZERO HUNGER” REMAINS A DISTANT REALITY FOR AFRICA

The latest report on **food safety and nutrition in the world*** declares that **in 2019 almost 690 million inhabitants of the planet suffered from hunger:** about 60 million more than five years ago.

And the pandemic is making things worse: the report estimates that by the end of 2020, due to the economic recession caused by COVID-19 emergency, another 130 millions of people and more, all over the planet, will fall into the grip of chronic hunger.

In all this, **Africa is the most affected area** and the most expected to be so in the future, with **19.1% of the population affected by undernourishment.**

The report calculates that by 2030, more than half of the chronic hungry people of the planet will be found in Africa.

This setback puts further in danger the achievement of the second “Sustainable Development” goal, which provides the zeroing of global hunger by 2030.

Indeed one of the first signs that a child is recovering during the nutritional rehabilitation therapy is the smile. But which risks a malnourished child runs in a context like Kalongo, where malaria, and today also COVID, threaten his health?

“A consequence of malnutrition is **the damage to the development of the immune system**, therefore the malnourished child suffers more serious consequences than the others when it contracts infectious diseases. Among these, malaria is the most widespread and fearful in Africa, responsible for most of the pediatric deaths. **If mortality for malaria is intolerably high, in malnourished people, the risk is even higher.** Contracting the malaria is not directly related to the nutritional state itself, but to the exposure to mosquito bites. The malnourished people always come from situations of great poverty and low cultural level, from contexts in which they do not adopt good measures that can reduce the risk of mosquito bites, such as disinfections of environments, reclamation of marshes, use of medicated mosquito nets, etc., so the risk of infection is higher than the rest of the population. Also the medical management of the patient is more complicated and risk of death is higher. An attack of malaria, or even repeated attacks, aggravate the nutritional state of the child, due to high fever and feeding difficulties.

The eradication of malnutrition has always been at the top of the agenda of any big international agencies, but we are still a long way off from the goal: according to Unicef, it causes the death of over 6 millions of children every year ”.

Help us to carry out the nutritional checks, to administer medicines, vitamins and the suitable therapeutic milk for each child. Support the training of specialized health personnel and visits to the malnourished children of the area.



At Christmas rekindle their smiles!



* The report published in July 2020 is the result of the collaboration between the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

“The schools have opened the road to success for many Africans. They provide also a safe haven for many children in tough situations to develop and thrive. We cannot be blinded by our efforts to contain COVID-19 and end up with a lost generation. We can safely re-open schools”

Matshidiso Moeti,
WHO regional director for Africa

INVISIBLE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

An UNFPA* study predicts that in the next decade due to the pandemic another

will occur, the main cause of death for girls between 15 and 19 years of age



13 mln

of child

marriages will occur due to growing economic difficulties caused by the pandemic.

It is estimated that in the next decade another

Properly trained **midwives**

help prevent 90%

Of maternal deaths during pregnancy, labour and postpartum period.

* United Nations Population Fund (United Nations for Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency)



BACK TO SCHOOL

Our midwifery school, closed since March due to the pandemic, resumed lessons on September 28th. The Ugandan government has in fact decided to reopen the institutions that have proven being able to guarantee the safety of their students. The provision concerns female students of the last two years that have to take exams.

Sister Carmel, the director of the school, told us how much all 109 students are thrilled to be back to school, even if it is necessary to watch over their enthusiasm so that they keep social distances and always wear a mask. The majority of them come from small rural villages, which are not been directly involved in the health emergency.

Safeguarding the school from contagion is of vital importance. If there were positive cases among the female students, all lessons should be interrupted and the school would be obliged to take care of infected students, with very few resources available.

Here the students feel safe but are very scared of the idea of returning to the hospital to complete their internship, especially now that the virus has infected some members of the hospital staff. Sister Carmel and the teaching staff have immediately worked hard to find solutions to ensure the students the necessary security to carry out their internship in hospital, to support them and prepare them in the best possible way for the exams, considering that in the long months of lockdown they could not study because they were working in the fields helping their parents and taking care of younger siblings.

But what worries Sr. Carmel the most today is the future of these young women. She knows that not all 38 students of the first year will return to school at the end of the sanitary emergency. The high pregnancy rate among girls who have returned to live in the villages will prevent some from continuing their studies and the economic crisis consequence of the pandemic will now make it impossible to

many parents to support their daughters' education.

At school, girls are protected and safe, they can concentrate in studies. **At home, in their villages, often they have to face risks worse than the virus itself** such as gender-based violence, early and forced marriages and being forced to leave school, giving up all their dreams.

The last gesture made by Father Giuseppe before he died was to protect the school girls and to guarantee them the possibility of finishing their studies. Since then at St Mary Midwifery School in Kalongo nearly 1,500 girls have graduated and they contribute every year to prevention of maternal and infant mortality.

We want to make sure that all our students can continue to learn, to be healthy, to feel safe and aware of the challenges they will face even after the pandemic.

Help us give the hope of a better future to the young students of the midwifery school, who like everyone of us deserve the chance to imagine their future, believe in their dreams and fight to make them come true. Dreams fulfilled that will be good for us too.

A STORY OF AN AMAZING FRIENDSHIP

The Missionary Support Group, better known as G.A.M: was born at the end of the 60s, on the initiative of some young people of the Ronago parish inspired by the departure for the Africa of two missionaries from the country: Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli and Sister Amelia. Over time the G.A.M has managed to involve the whole parish community.

Why did you chose to support the Ambrosoli Foundation?

After the death of Father Giuseppe it was natural for us to support the Foundation. It is true, we are a drop in the sea of needs of the hospital, we have no legal status, but we wish to express the missionary face of our pastoral Community. The life of Dr. Ambrosoli Memorial Hospital is one for all of us an essential reference in our existence and we would like that it continue to be for future generations.

We raise funds to support the hospital three times a year: in March, for the feast of St. Joseph, in September-October on the occasion of the missionary month and of the "Annual Day of the G.A.M." and in December with a "Sales Counter" to be invented every time. Our proposals are addressed to the whole community, to the groups of territory, to young people, to schools.



Kalongo is and will always be in our heart. We pray God for this bridge of love between us and them always be open open to guarantee the right to health of those people and so it can continue and consolidate over time this collaborative relationship and friendship born in the shadow of testimony of Father Giuseppe.

Giusy, ambassador of the Ambrosoli Foundation and member of G.A.M. Kalongo, 2018

BECOME AMBASSADOR

The ambassador friends of the Ambrosoli Foundation are a unique and irreplaceable wealth. Together with them we can make a difference for Kalongo.

Do you want to become Ambassador of the Ambrosoli Foundation?

- help us to let more and more people know the extraordinary work carried out in Uganda by the hospital and school of obstetrics in Kalongo
- organize a small fundraising event (even a remote one) involving your network of friends, family and colleagues, any occasion can become a special chance to donate
- give us a few hours of your time (even from home) and make your skills and abilities available to help us with our activities.

You can make the difference. All it takes is your YES.

Call us right now at **02.36558852**
Or send us an e-amil at **info@fondazioneambrosoli.it**



THE STORY OF LITTLE PATRICK ODONG

Patrick Odong is a 5-month old boy who lives in Agiki Agengo village, in Agago District.

His mother died shortly after giving birth. Since then, his aunt has been taking care of him. The baby has never been breastfed and is fed fresh milk, porridge and other milk replacers. Such food is not suitable for his tender age and is undermining his health.

Patrick Odong's older brother is six years old and suffers from pneumonia, his 74-year-old grandmother takes care of him.

Patrick was taken to the hospital by his aunt due to a head abscess, but doctors immediately became aware of the child's severe malnutrition. It is not only the absence of breast milk and inadequate diet that threaten Patrick Odong's health and life, but also poor hygiene and lack of appropriate care. The aunt does her best to take care of her nephew but that's not enough. The staff of the Malnutrition Unit is assisting Patrick Odong and from the very beginning had invited his aunt to participate to the moments of hygiene, health and nutritional education, organized for the parents of the little patients of the hospital, so that once she will be back to the village with Patrick, she will be able to take care of him in a conscious and appropriate way.

Access to basic health services and health and hygiene education are an essential prerequisite for reducing infant mortality in poor and remote area such as Kalongo.



GOOD NEWS FOR THE HOSPITAL STAFF

8x
mille
CHIESA CATTOLICA

Thanks to CEI funds (Italian Episcopal Conference) Coming from 8x1000 of the Catholic Church redevelopment interventions, for the second consecutive year,

of the accommodation of the staff living inside the compound hospital continue.

The interventions include the redevelopment of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings for doctors, nurses, clinical officers and midwives.

With the aim of improving the quality of life of the staff whose presence continuous, today more than ever in the midst of a global pandemic, is making a real difference in a remote context like Kalongo.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

To the companies friends of the Foundation, sponsors of our traditional Charity Dinner in Villa d'Este which they have chosen to support anyway, even though this year could not take place. This allowed us to be faithful to our commitments to support for a whole quarter an important part of the medical activities costs of the hospital.

Ambrosoli

LECHLER



la Collina dei Ciliegi

M&G
INVESTMENTS

SICURITALIA

UNINDUSTRIA

And a big thank to you who year after year participate to our dinner and that even today have chosen to stay next to us, once again and with confidence, despite not being able to share a so beautiful and special meeting moment.

KALONGO IS WAITING FOR YOU!

"I learned that you have to be strong because strength is the first medicine to survive in a context like this. That solidarity is a value that everyone here shows, even more people in difficulty, because it is important to feel everyone at the same level. That there is no stronger verbal language than an exchange of smiles: smile, in the language of my Kalongo patients, means request for help, respect, trust but also "Apwoyo", THANKS in Acholi language".

Ilaria Fumi, medical resident of Idea Onlus

It has now been 7 months since the last doctor left from Kalongo to return to Italy. Since then, due to the pandemic, none of our medical volunteers has had the possibility of taking off to Uganda, leaving a human void e professional difficult to fill.

APWOYO dear friends, volunteer doctors who have worked in Kalongo and that today are engaged in Italian hospitals, we hope heartily you may return to Uganda soon. Kalongo awaits you, and we await you, too!

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