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**INCONTRO FRA I POPOLI - JOINING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

n. 42 April 2013

**The non-political**

*Leopoldo Rebellato*

There are people, companies, associations proclaiming themselves "non-confessional", that is not linked to one or the other religious confession. Proclaiming yourself “non-confessional” sounds a bit like stating you are “non-religious”, that is above and outside the different expressions of faith and of the supporting structures which characterize every people and every era. An aim only the cosmopolitans reach..

It is difficult to say you are "non-faithful" (atheistic), that is without faith in something absolute, superior to all of us. We all have a deep creed supporting us, and giving sense to our lives: in some kind of God whom we apply to in some way, or in the non-God of our daily routines, of business, of money, of career..

It is easy to be "non –in- the party system", that is not to belong to any – more or less ephemeral - political party. Yet it is impossible to be "non-political". "I’m neither interested in politics nor does it concern me" What nonsense! There are even companies (boards) and associations which underline in their statutes and memoranda “We are “non-political”.

None of our social actions – small as they may be – can take place outside the political system which is the body of individual and joint social actions, everything we do, everything effecting other people and the environment. The fact is: “we are political individuals” because we are part of society. Every action we perform, every word we pronounce, every choice we make means taking sides, taking part in politics, participating in the government of the city-community (city-state).

Some time ago I read an article discussing the question whether, used in public sanitary installations, a paper tissue dispenser (meaning deforestation) is more ecological than a hot air dryer (electricity meaning pollution. The choice between deforestation and pollution ( or none of them) is not only ecological but also political (and ethical) because it effects the whole community.. Even the purchase of a banana is a political action: the choice of one brand name or the other, or the indifference to any brand name. What kind of ecological imprint is left by the production of this banana? By what kind of respect or defiance of the producer’s human rights is it produced? Even the choice of watching one kind of TV news than another is a political one..

Each of our choices effects the community directing it towards improvement or deterioration. It’s basic honesty which gives moral value to any decision we take, to any ideological. direction we follow. That is the reason why we must respect different ideas and points of view. Yet we should never stick the label of “basic honesty” on opinions and choices resulting from lack of interest, indifference, misinformation, on “I don’t know, I’ m not interested in knowing” .

Social slaves own up and repeat what mass media say, what the ruling politic demagogue states. Those who don’t take an interest in politics are useful for the politics of the strongest individual and, therefore, take part in politics. Either you choose or the others choose you, and make you an instrument of their “politics”..

And what about voluntary associations and social services stating they are non-political? Or even worse when they are requested not to take part in politics? Once I got a telephone call “ It is not good for your association to take sides ( for “Aye” in the referendum against the privatization of water). An association has to be “super partes” (neutral). He who does good, must not take political sides.” “Why – I was tempted to reply –only he who does evil or wants to be amorphous can take political sides?” Saint Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan, did not hesitate for a moment before taking sides when Emperor Theodosius massacred seven thousand people at Tessalononica in 390. With an angry letter he compelled the emperor to do penance for months and humbly to beg forgiveness in public Humanitarian associations are not allowed to be neutral. If they say they are “non political” they back the politics of the moment, and they assume joint responsibility for the choices made by the politicians. You cannot act in your country, in your territory, in the world as mere sanitarians healing the wounds caused by others, showing no interest, or refusing to know and to face the underlying reasons and those responsible for them. Rather than being loving Samaritarians we must be petitioners for critical analyses and promoters of resolutive actions that leave a mark on local and world politics, as well as on local and international public opinion..

Lack of interest and pietism are decisive choices of political alliance approving and following those who create injustice. Nothing is isolated, everything involves us. We are jointly responsible, though sometimes not guilty. But when we show no interest or restrict ourselves to healing the wounds, we become responsible..

**ASSOCIATION LIFE**

The new members of JOINING PEOPLE TOGETHER introduce themselves

After participating in the latest meeting of Joining People together, the two of us have made up our minds to become formally members of your great family, thus being able to contribute towards the growing of the association and to help the people who , as you have always said , do not lack in ideas but in opportunities..

Thanks to Joining People together, last year we had an opportunity to experience a one month stay of sharing in Cameroon. For us it has actually been a character-forming journey enabling us to live with the people, and among the people, and to get to know their daily routines, their customs and traditions.. We want to become members of Joining People together. Will you take us in?

Cristina Tolfo AND Sergio Bertoncello (Vicenza)

With you from Joining People Together I share the greatest values: solidarity, sharing, humility, family, humanity, peace, commitment, respect, cooperation, and love.

After nearly two years of collaboration I would like to officialize my position in order to be able to cooperate, to take part in and to promote the activities of Joining People Together, involving the largest number possible of people; so as to plant together with you lots of small seeds that might one day crowd the world as marvellous blooming trees, living this extraordinary life under the warmest and most brilliant light of the sun!

Hoping to go together along the endless, fine and stupefying streets of this life holding hands and supporting each other.

Gioia Bergamo (Venezia)

One year after graduating in Law, Politics and Institutions of the European Union, twenty months after starting as a trainee at Joining People Together, by the light of my ripening and of our common values I ask to be admit as a member to Joining People Together.

Michele Guidolin (Treviso)

My journey with Joining People Together has starter when one of its members sent me the document “Thesis waiting for an author from JPT” at the very moment when I was looking for the topic of my degree thesis. If I look at the time I have spent in the association my experience is quite small but if I think of the quality of the real-life highpoints, and consider the intensity of the precious experiences I have made, there’ s no need to ponder any longer. How difficult this particular historical moment is for the young! It is difficult to find a job, it is difficult to find ideals and values in society, it is difficult not to see and not to be disgusted by the spread of corruption in the ruling political classes which should really be the last hope to cling to in any crisis.

When, in a general context of this kind, you are lucky enough to come across a healthy and beautiful reality where solidarity, the respect for diversities, the joy of being one who serves fellow people are the pillars on which a fine operational structure has been built, only a. lunatic would hesitate to become part of it Joining People Together is the big tree a branch of which I want to be, a small branch doing its best to bear blossoms and fruit to give to hungry passers-by. I want to cling to this tree, to be anchored to its values and to its commitment to our fellowmen. Bearing blossoms and fruit means being a person with great dreams, and feet solidly kept on the ground in order to realize them. It means honouring every day, with every action, according to our personal abilities, the honest commitment to our fellowmen.

I want to be a member of Joining People Together because it has helped me open my eyes and my heart to lots of important things. I want to be part of it in order to have The example that - even in times of general driftage like the one we are living now- there’s always a big tree from which, being one of its small branches, to draw “genuine” vital nourishment.

Thus I apply for the membership of Joining People together.

Manuela Colombero (Cuneo)

Dearest Leopoldo and Maria , I would like these few lines, together with my wish to become a member of Joining People Together, to be my sincere thank you for opening the doors of your association to me, and for making me feel immediately part of this “family.”

There are many things I admire in your lives – first of all your wish to be , still and always, among young people teaching us confidence in our means, and helping us to see, Little by little, what our way in life may be like. And then, creating an association which born out of the humble dream of helping fellowmen , after many years is still alive, new, full of ideas and people.

For me, who studied international cooperation in books because there was no other way to bring this passion nearer to my life, it is still a fascinating discovery to see The utmost ideas of partnership, of decentralized cooperation, development of civil society, micro-credit being realized in a small office in the provinces Pleased to be part of this “risky business”, I would like to work together with you towards this goal, giving back by my own means the affection I am receiving from you and from Joining People Together.

Anna Caterina Mazzonetto (Padova)

With the present letter I would like to apply for the membership of the association Joining People Together.

My experience with this association started when I knocked at the door of JPT in the spring of 2011 looking for an opportunity to do trainee work for my studies in Cooperative Development. What happened later, was high above my expectations. Leopoldo has not only opened the doors welcoming me in his association but he has also stimulated me to start on a journey of sharing and personal ripening which is still in progress.

With Joining People Together I worked as a trainee for four months,, three and a half of which I spent in Nepal. Over there I was responsible for Fair Trade,, not in commonplace way but according to the attitude of Joining People Together, voicing the opinions and ideas of the Nepalese producers, a point of view which is often considered of secondary importance.

My experience with Joining People Together is going on…

Joining People Together has given me much, and I hope, in the years to come,I will continue to make contributions based on my personality and experience

Alex Pra (Belluno)

**Distance support – Community Projects**

**Young African farmers ask for help**

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Southern Kivu, along Lake Tanganjica still remain conditons of instability and insecurity due to the presence of banditism and armed groups, and the effects of war and massacres linked to the egocentrism of big economical interests (energy and raw materials) and of the bordering countries. It is a land of strong solidarity and, different from the recent past when lack of confidence and demotivation governed the people, nowadays there is a strong will of redemption and a strong will to live.

The Congolese association “Charité pour Tous” (Carità per Tutti), partner of Joining People Together, supports a series of micro-interventions in favour of five groups of young farmers.

Two groups of very young farmers need money to buy seeds, phyto-sanitarian products, and farm implements. Two other groups want to start a small breeding activity (purchase of 2 couples of pigs for breeding and the construction of a pig-pen). The last group which is more numerous and was plundered by the raids of guerrilla fighters who robbed them of their herd of goats, wants to re-start the breeding activity and to reintroduce fish-breeding in a pond..

Joining People Together has answered positively to their appeal..

The five groups of young farmers will be supported by an agronomist animator from Charité pour Tous and will get the necessary administrative help.

The association Charité pour Tous is also strongly involved in the processes of peace-making and of respecting human rights in the region they are operating in..

The total cost of the operation is 1.200 €.

Will we be able to support the endeavours of these brave young people?

**On the way with the women of the world**

An important international meeting on the conditions and emancipation of widows was held on February 4 and 5 at Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Among the people from 16 different nations attending the meeting there was also the Nepalese association ‘Women for Human Rights’, a partner of Joining People Together, which has been working for the promotion of the rights of women and their children for 15 years.

Women for Human Rights assembles about 80.000 women who are determined to have a future in a society in which the condition of the widow devoid of the basic rights due to any person reduces the woman to a social shadow being, and identifies her as a “ witch” to be despised and discriminated.

Joining People Together was reached by the appeal of these women to make the conclusions of the meeting they attended known, by the request to share with the women and men all over the world their scream of anguish, and their will of living.

They underline the problems of better information and deeper knowledge indispensable for the abrogation of laws, of traditional discriminating politics and customs, and of measures in favor of the economic autonomy of the widow and the limitation of her the impoverishment, as well as the problem of a chance to obtain proportional representation in order to have voice, to become voice, and instruction and health care for themselves and for their children.

Let’s not be unmoved by this scream, let’s not be unmoved in a country, in our country, where 580 women, 580 mothers, wives, partners, daughters and sisters, have been brutally killed in the last four years. Joining People Together helps WHR especially in the sector “micro-credit”. WHR offers women in particular need a sum of a little over 100 €. This sum gives them the opportunity of starting a productive activity (a dressmaker’s, a small commercial activity, a domestic breeding activity……) and pays the cost of education of their children.

**TESTIMONY**

Tulinabo

I am Tulinabo, chairwoman of the base-group of the women from Buholo, at Kadutu, on the outskirts of Bukavu (R.D Congo). The group is supported in its micro-credit activities by the PEDER..

It was my son who reported my poverty to the PEDER. My son, who had been a street child because I was to poor to feed him, was taken in by the PEDER, housed at first in a rehabilitation centre, later taught to read and to write, and then enrolled in a normal school.

Our group of women is composed of 10 partners who - like me – meet great difficulty backing the expenses for the education of our children. The PEDER has invited me and many other poor women to attend a course on the “jointly liable guarantee”, on how to obtain a micro-credit, on how to use it and pay it back. In case of difficulty of redemption of the loan the whole group is solidly behind the woman in trouble and repays the loan for her. And thus our group was born. It’s us who agree to the request of micro-credit of a partner, it’s us who weigh the pros and cons of her use of the money, as well as her credibility and her moral standards. We all sign her micro-credit contract and guarantee for her. In case “the jointly liable guarantee” should be needed, we all have contributed to a redemption fund. However, this common fund also covers our needs in the case of illness, childbirth, and other unforeseen difficult situations.

Athosa Luisa

My name is Athosa Luisa, I’m a widow and the mother of nine children.. I was at the end of my tether! My children were living on the street. I was torn by pain. In 2007, two of my children were approached by animators of the PEDER who took them to one of their rehabilitation centres. Later my children brought the animators of the PEDER to my house and that was the beginning of my recovery.

They gave me a loan of 120 $, a fortune for me. I bake brioches and sell them in the street in front of my house. Getting the micro-credit made it possible to improve the quality of the brioches I sell, but also to diversify the products on sale. I was able to start selling onions, salt, palm-oil, maize flour, peanuts – that is products which are consumed in my quarter on a daily basis. At the end of each day only half of the goods on sale remained, and I had a tidy sum of money in my pocket. I divided my earnings in four parts, one part for the needs of my family, one part as a reserve fund to build up some capital, one part for the expenses of education of my children, and the last part for the slow and gradual reimbursement of the loan.

Now I feel financially secure, and I have recovered my joy of living thanks to the PEDER and to those who have given it the money which has saved me.

Nyota Sylvie

I’m Nyota Silvie, 34 years, old, mother of seven children. My husband only works occasionally. Before obtaining the small credit from PEDER, we were in great trouble. Our first concern was to pay the monthly rent of 20 $ for the little house (if you can call it thus) where we live. Food... was not a priority, it couldn’t be a priority. The education of our children became possible only after getting the micro-credit

I used to sell local wine. With the money of the loan (120 $) I rent small premises, my small tavern, with a greater and more diversified number of customers. My Husband has helped me, He works with me now. I open my tavern at 7.00 a.m. and I close it at 7.00 p.m. I sell local banana wine, beer, and yoghurt which I buy in the near-by town of Goma. I cross the lake by ferry-boat on Saturdays, I do my shopping on Sundays, I come back and take up work on Monday mornings.

I am always present at the weekly meetings of my base-group, and I learn from the experiences of my companions. All my children attend school now, and my capital is growing.

**We commit ourselves because we cannot do without**

*Primo Mazzolari (1890-1959)*

We commit ourselves but not the others

Only ourselves and not the others.

Neither who is high up nor who is deep down

neither who has faith nor who has no faith.

We commit ourselves without expecting others to commit themselves to us and for themselves,

like we do and in a big way.

We commit ourselves without judging those who don’t commit themselves

without accusing those who don’t commit themselves

without condemning those who don’t commit themselves

without looking for the reason why they don’t commit themselves.

Without freeing ourselves from commitment because others don’t commit themselves.

We know we can’t compel anybody

nor do we want to force anybody,

devoted as we are and as we want

to remain to the free movement of every

spirit rather than to the success of ourselves or of our convictions.

The world turns round if we turn round,

it changes if we change.

It becomes new if we become new creatures,

it grow corrupt if we free the beast

that is in each of us.

The new order begins if somebody does his best to become a new man.

We commit ourselves because …

We don’t exactly know why we commit ourselves

but we don’t want to know

at least not at the moment

according to a well thought-out proceeding.

We commit ourselves to give sense to life,

sense to this life, to our lives,

a reason that is not one of the many reasons

we know well enough,

something useful that is not the usual snare generously offered to the young by practical people.

We live only once and we don’t want to be used in the name of some small interest.

We are not interested in a career

We are not interested in money

We are not interested in the success

Either ours or of our ideas

We are not interested to be remembered in history.

Our heart is young and we fear

the coldness of paper and marble

We are neither interested in being heroes

nor in being traitors in front of men

if it should cost us fidelity to our principles.

We care to throw ourselves away on

something

or on somebody who will still be

there

even when we have gone

and who is the reason for

our meeting together.

We care to bring an eternal destiny

into time

to feel responsible for everything

and everybody,

to start, even on long wanderings,

towards the Love, that has spread

a smile of poetry

on every creature.

We commit ourselves not to rearrange the world

not to remake it but to love it.

To love

Even what we cannot accept

Even what is not lovable

Even what seems to refuse love,

as behind every face,

and beneath every heart there is,

together with great thirst for love,

the face and heart of Love.

We commit ourselves

because we believe in Love,

the only certainty that doesn’t fear comparison,

the only reason enough to commit ourselves hopelessly.

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Between Christmas and Easter through “Joining People Together” € 42.195 were sent from Cittadella to those in need. The following people benefit from this sum:

- 25 children and 7 families in Bukavu ( RD Congo)

- 30 groups of women in Bukavu (RD Congo)

- 10 children in Kinshasa (RD Congo)

- 2 families and 60 children and teens in Beius (Rumania)

- 797 pupils of the school in Kay Kay (Cameroon) who will have a well and, therefore, water.

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**Your 5 x 1000 to JOINING PEOPLE TOGHETER will make the difference**

When you do your income tax return or you have it done by a tax consultant, please, remember that you can donate 5 x 1000 to Joining People Together: fill in the fiscal code number 92045040281 and sign.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If your gross income is: | You will pay a net tax of: | Your 5 x 1000 will be: | If you give your 5 x 1.000 to Joining People Together your contribution will become: |
| € 15.000 | € 2.570 | € 13 | Six months of school fees for a child who attend primary school in the Democratic Republic of Congo |
| € 20.000 | € 4.030 | € 20 | Monthly rent of a poor family in the suburbs of Bukavu - Congo |
| € 30.000 | € 7.170 | € 36 | Two adult pigs or two adult goats to start breeding for a group of young people in RD Congo |
| € 50.000 | € 15.210 | € 76 | Taps and pipes for a roundabout well in Northern Cameroon |
| € 75.000 | € 25.420 | € 127 | A very small credit for the opening of a production activity for a widow in Nepal |
| € 100.000 | € 36.170 | € 180 | Monthly wage of an animator working with the street children in RD Congo |

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**TESTAMENTARY LEGACY**

This is an act by which a person disposes of his/her properties and values in favor of a third part, after his/her death.

Each of us was born to live longer than the span of his/her life on earth. We will live in the eternal beatitude of God according to the measure in which we did good works and showed goodness on earth.

On disposing of our properties it would perhaps be good to remember not only our legal heirs but also who is in need, and who does his best to help.

Making a testamentary legacy in favor of Joining People Together, you will protract your goodness on earth.

*Cultural OFFERS*

**APRIL**

* Wednesday 17: Cittadella, Sala Consigliare - Villa Rina, h 21 **“On traces of two invisibile genocides in the D.R. Congo and in Sri Lanka”.**
* Evidence by Chiara Menegazzi, Fabio Martini, Margherita Facco
* Sunday 28: Cittadella, Piazza Pierobon, h 10 – 18 **“Town of Children – Festival of voluntary associations”.**
  + “**Lafricabirinto”** a 25 m long labyrinth-tunnel, an irresistible ludic – instructive attraction for children and youngsters (4-14 years old) discovering African environment and people.
  + **“TransAfrica”** a hurdle run for 5-11 years old children , they have to complete, as African woman do, carrying a basket full of fruit and vegetables on their heads.

**JUNE**

* Sunday 2: Cittadella - Boschetto di Via Pezze, h 9 – 16 **“Festival of Joining People Together”**
* One day of conviviality, friendship, in the midst of the spring green (for those who want) , h 9 Mass, then breakfast, human contacts and exchange of experiences, lunch together. There will be present p. Franco Bordignon, Saverian missionary and important social operatore since 1972 in Congo and Mirko Tommasi back from a year in the Niger with Médecin sans frontières
* Saturday 15 and Sunday 16: Passo Giau, **“Dolomites for the young”**
* Only for young people (15-25 years old). Compulsory for those who are enrolled for The Week for the Young in Rumania.
* Sleeping in tents and excursion among the Dolomite peaks around

**JULY**

* From Saturday 20 to Monday 29, at Ioanis (Beius - Oradea) **“Settimana Giovani Romania”**
* For young people (15 – 25 years old), journey in a small coach (a stop at Lake Balaton), stay in common rooms (male and female separate), self-cooking, insurance at the expense of Joining People Together, cost EU 250,00 (25 EU a day).
* Self managed life in common, under the supervision of an experienced and authoritative adult who knows the territory and takes care of the group and the single individuals.
* Wonderful experience of interethnic, inter-religious and intergenerational confrontation and exchange, as well as cultural, human and spiritual enrichment.
* In the morning with the rom (gypsy) children, in the afternoon with the rom (gypsy) youngsters: cooperative games and other ludic-instructive moments.
* Excursions to caverns, monuments, natural environment, attendance of celebrations of different religious rites, meeting with witnesses, monks, ministers and parish priests and their wives.

Enrolment within June 15 (until all the vacant posts are filled).