*-Solidarity - cooperation - condivision*

**INCONTRO FRA I POPOLI (Joining people together)**

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**Jehosua or Muhammad**

*Leopoldo Rebellato*

Recently I have experienced a fine moment of conviviality with several friends, some Christians, and some Muslims. There was such a familiar (friendly ) relationship that we could joke on the question who was the greater prophet, either the Palestinian Jew Jehosua, called Jesus, or the Arab Muhammad, called Mahomet.

We were also on the same wavelength on the commandment which is the common basis for both our faiths: “Love your neighbour because it is the only way you can show you love God.”

At last we dwelt upon the practicability of the love for our neighbour, and we decided that all our choices, even the everyday ones, should be “prophetic”,  that is  they should make God appear in the kindness towards our fellowmen.

Then we tried to define what kind of criteria must be followed to be “prophetic” in case of choice, what kind of features our actions or  the tools we buy must conform to so that God and the love towards our fellowmen might be visible.

* **I open a bank account, I take up a life insurance policy….. I want to make my savings (if I have got any?) bear fruit .**

I look for the highest profit…..on condition that the bank doesn’t provide money for the arms race, that the insurance company doesn’t invest in property in the impoverished countries of the southern hemisphere, that my savings are not gambled on stock exploiting the weak points of the poorest nations. In other words I have to get information because…. if I make the wrong choice…. I will damage other people,….. if I make a good choice, I won’t damage anybody, and I can even do something good for my neighbour.

* **I have got children and I want them to become “citizens” (of the world!)**

It is a good idea to create opportunities for them to meet  and make friends with children of different ethnic and cultural origin. Even if they are still…. I can give them a little brother or sister in a far country by means of supporting them  at distance. And later, depending on their age, why shall we offer them ”perfect (well-served)” holidays with us ? What about suggesting opportunities of  life experience together with other people and international exchanges.

**A family celebration ( christening,  confirmation, first communion, birthday, wedding anniversary,…..)**

Have a good time! Don’t waste money and make a show! Food and beverages: from the  nearby surroundings, from joint purchase groups,  commercio equo, … bonbonnières (unnecessary objects): better do without! Or buy them at  the  Shops from the world. Presents? Better advise your guests to bring the money they would spend. There will be a box with the notice: “ Pleas put in the money you would spend on …. your gift; we will start support at distance in favour of a poor child, of a family in trouble,….”.

* **Planning a holiday**

A nice, quiet place……..relaxing in hotels where they fatten up who is already rich? Holidays only for relaxing, or meaning  also cultural  and human growth? It would be better to choose places that are comfortable but offer condivision, solidarity, respect of environment and of local culture!

In other words……before choosing and deciding I have to get information as every single choice might  even unawares damage or benefit! But how to get information?

At the end of this very interesting and pregnant  meeting of Christians and Muslims friends made me speak about the humanitarian association I belong to.

I was able to point out that Joining People Together ”offers both the opportunity of alternative holidays for families and groups, and periods of  sharing residence for single individuals or couples in various countries of the world ( from 20 days to as many months as they wish )”. To people aged from 15 to 25 they suggest wonderful adventurous “weeks for the young “ in Rumania, Umbria, or in the Dolomites. Couples, families, retired people, single individuals might support at distance children and families in trouble in Rumania, in the Republic of Congo, Chad, Cameroon, Nepal For people who want “to know and understand”.
Joining People Together has a mailing-list sending out a weekly alternative newsletter (register with cultura@incontrofraipopoli.it). You can get furtheer information from: A[ltreconomia](http://ltraeconomia/), [Altroconsumo](http://altroconsumo/), I[nternazionale](http://nternazionale/), [Misna](http://misna/), [Nigrizia](http://nigrizia/), [Aamterranuova](http://aamterranuova/), [Rainews](http://www.rainews.it/), Tvsat2000. Joining People Together put their money on accounts with Banca Etica, CreSud and a local cooperative bank.

*Leopoldo with  mons. Menegazzo and imam Said at the Solidarity Dinner 2014*

**At Cittadella**

**JE SUIS …  I  AM**

In conformity with instructions given by the town council  the centralsquare in the small  province town Cittadella, was to be empty on the 11th of January.

Instead,  JOINING PEOPLE TOGETHER has made it livelier than ever filling it with people of all colours. Holding pencils in their hands, reciting articles of the Constitution and of the Declaration of Human Rights, as well as passages from the Bible, from the Koran, and statements of Pope Francesco, launching colourful balloons, chanting a spiritual, hundreds of coloured citizens have demanded equal rights, and the freedom to organize cultural activities, meetings, and  freedom of worship. There were three hundred of them!
A couple of TV stations and various newspaper reporters were present.

*The flash mob organized by JOINING PEOPLE TOGETHER in Piazza Pierobon at Cittadella*

In this small town in the province of  Padua (one of the places where Joining People Together is present) people find it a little difficult to accept those who are different. That is the reason why the Association made a petition  to the Town Mayor.

**Dear Mr. Town Mayor,**

*we demand to grant the Cultural Muslim Association “Asar” conditions of equal rights and duties as the other associations in the territory, as well as the right to organize cultural activities, meetings and prayers.*

*We take note that a group of new citizens of our  town (who have been members of our commune for many years – though some of them are not Italian citizen yet – ,who  are well integrated in our economy- and production- circuits, with children and teenagers speaking our dialect and mingling with our children in schools and sports-teams, demand both to take greater part in our cultural life and to have  a place where they can carry out their own cultural activities and attend prayers*

*We make this demand because our Constitution states:”  Everybody has the right freely to profess his /her own faith in whatever form, be it individual or associated,  to propagandize it, and to worship both  in private and in public” (art.19).*

*We agree Talebans and  ISIS have recently been  the darkest and saddest products of  humanity, yet we don’t think  the approximately 250 Muslims who have been living in Cittadella for years are “terrorists”. On the contrary, to avoid deviances of such a kind (of our young “Venetians” too) inclusion is much better than exclusion. You react against fundamentalism welcoming diversity, a great conquest in the civil evolution of humanity.*

*In the past our own culture was foolishly and tragically thought to be superior to all the others, if not the only one…yet the positive values of the new cultures living together in our  Cittadella*

*can make our Venetian culture more beautiful.*

*W agree the inability of certain Muslim countries to accept faiths different from their own is wrong, but let us not make the same mistake! Remember Pope Francesco says the inter-religious dialogue is the  main pillar in the process of building up peace among peoples as well as  the antidote against religious fundamentalism of any kind.*

The petition was completed by the   signatures of 16 different associations and by 1.079 signatures of citizens approving and sharing the petition.

You can read the complete text of the petition on the site **[www.incontrofraipopoli.it](http://www.incontrofraipopoli.it)**

**Comments by some signers of the petition**

… I’m signing because Islamism encourages the equality of men and women, as the Coran states in 4:34 …

… I’m Italian of Moroccan Muslim origin, I love my Moroccan culture as much as the Italian one; I was born in Kenitra where there are mosques as well as some Christian churches and a synagogue….

…I am from Cittadella, and I want the town to be reborn in an atmosphere of sweetness and welcome..…

… I am not from Cittadella but I feel it is my duty to join this civil demand…

***8 March: woman***

**More piglets**

The social wounds deriving from  subsequent massacres of the peaceful population living in the large number of  small villages along Lake Tanganyika in the Congo are still deep and hurtful. In the little town of  Mboko (42.000 inhabitants) a group of thirty young “ Women Working for the Protection of the Environment” was set up for whom “environment”  chiefly applies to social  and productive life for their own  and the new generations’  wellbeing.

Joining People Together has agreed to their demand of help for the poorer families in the group  and in the country (Support at distance, type B: families).

Thanks to three Italian benefactors who readily heeded our appeal, the first family to be redeemed was the family of Miss  Andjelani Chimba, 23 years of age, left an orphan by both of her parents, burdened with six younger brothers and sisters to care for ( 4 females and 2 males). When her parents were murdered she succeeded in saving all of them having her hands heavily crippled by fire.

Chimba was given what she needed to build a pigsty (a shovel, a rake, a hammer, 2 kg of nails and several  wooden boards) as well as 2 fine pigs (a boar and a sow). A veterinarian  has taught her how to feed the animals and how to take care of them. An agronomist has helped her to start  a small plantation of batatas, cassava and local cereals to ensure the suitable nourishment of the pigs.

Trusting in the change which certainly will earn money for the family the headmasters of the schools formerly attended by her brothers and sisters have reaccepted them at school. How happy they were to restart lessons!

When the time comes, Chimba will give her association  FAPE a pair of pigs so as  to repay her “microcredit”.

*“I would like to meet and embrace  Chiara, Giancarlo and Alessandra,* - Chimba writes – who without knowing me have helped me I would love to share with them my joy of being able to reintegrate into society The members of  FAPE are now in a state of turmoil:  there is no envy against lucky Chimba, chosen by everybody because she was a hopeless case but other women  also hope somebody from a distant country will bear them in mind.

200 euros are enough, even put together with offerings of 50 + 100 + … euros.

*Chimba and the piglets of her social redemption.*

When you fill in your income tax return remember that you can give 0,5% of the tax you will pay to Jpioning People Together: quote the fiscal code number  **92045040281** and sign it.

**We will transfer the money thus collected to:**

- the Rom children at the institution providing supplementary lessons  and amusement after school in   Ioanis in Rumania

- the women in Nepal, in the  RD Congo and in Cameroon.

**Stop waste and start solidarity**

Keep on collecting plastic bottle.

In 2014 **9.840 kg** of plastic caps  (five million three hundred thousand  caps) were collected, making **2.066 €,**

Allocated to the construction of wells for potable water in the schools of Cameroon..

Welcome  Ester, daughter of Ariella, accountant with Joining People Together,and of Nico

*A centre for the welfare of widows in  Nepal
Request of support at distance*

**In the shadow of a big tree**

Nepalese women are subject to lots of discriminations and violence because of an intensely patriarchal society structure, but the lot destined to widows is much worse. The civil war, AIDS, and premature weddings produce a great number of widows – often still child-women – doomed to lives full of physical and psychological sufferings. The young widows remain in their husbands’ families where many of them are beaten, and tortured, suffer violence and abuse. Treated like slaves by their in-laws they are obliged to work hard doing all kinds of housework. They are excluded from the social and religious life of the community as they are considered “impure”, guilty of their husbands’ deaths  and jinxes. In some communities they are compelled to shave off their hair, they cannot wear embellishments or gaudy clothes which might make them attractive. Laughed at and abused by all the members of society, they have to live a life of penance, of chastity, and devotion in memory of their late husbands. They cannot get married again or they must marry their husband’s brother in order to avoid the passing on of their husbands’ possessions to another family, and to grant the full control of their lives and sexuality. Work opportunities are very limited and most families prevent the widows from finding some money-making activity outside their homes. Even their children are “branded” because they are considered children who will not receive strength and courage from their father, weak children who, for the rest of the family,  are not worth being helped.

The Nepalese association “**Women for Human Rights**” asks for the support of Joining People Together for the carrying out of a centre of assistance and first aid called **“Chhahari”,** which in Nepalese means “in the shadow of a big tree”. In the “Chhaharis” widows with their children, and child-widows can find refuge, health-assistance,  psychological and legal help; they learn self-confidence, and are taught a trade that makes them economically independent; they regain  freedom and get back into society.

The total cost is about **€** **15.000**  Even  € 50 – 100 – 500 - 1.000  can be useful. Work is already in progress.

*A group of women of  the  WHR in Nepal in front of  an  already finished ‘chhahari’*

**A goat that makes the difference**

Dear friends of Joining People Together, here is our report on the donations given to your association..

Last year the women we support had difficulty in finding the soil where they could cultivate, then the crop was devastated by a herd of cows; thus many groups of women worked to no purpose, earning nothing. We filed a complaint but ….. the herd belonged to a politician in Kinshasa.

This year – having the women gained self-assurance again – we have bought the seeds for sowing with your  money. We have also bought about ten goats giving them to ten groups of women so that they might start goat-breeding. The first born kid of each goat will be given back to the federation of groups: thus they will be able to help other groups.

Thank you for the help given to these groups of mothers whose lives are very hard.

  Sister Maria Pia da Kavimvira – Uvira (Congo RD)

*Sister Maria Pia and the women with the goats obtained by means of microcredit.*

*UWAKI (Union of Women farmers in Kivu-Maniema*

*Federation of  264 agricultural  cooperatives*

**From the yearly report  2013 of Uwaki**

During the year 2013 we carried out 164  community sensitization meetings  regarding the rights of instruction, property and inheritance of women and girls. They were held in 128 villages, animated by the leaders of Uwaki. Some bigger villages were offered the advantage of two or three meetings because of the interest shown by the community and the number of inhabitants .

7.204 people,  2.317 men, 2.415 women, 1.489 boys and 983 girls took part in this campaign; there was also a great number of children curiously listening and watching what was going on in their villages.

The **right of property**  was one of the most discussed topics. The debate touched  the management of properties, discussing the “expedient” of the men who, appealing to tradition, hold women incapable of managing property, so that everything she owns, goes to her husband as he is the one who paid the dowry to her family.

All these reasons were cancelled under provisions of  the constitutional law in our country that clearly state  private property is inviolable (article 34). The same disposition is supported by some verses of the Koran, particularly  the Surate 4:4, openly stating a woman has the right of property, moreover asking every husband to assign  the woman, or to give her back her properties and her resources.

As regards this right the situation  is slowly improving if you can trust the data given below:

* 103 women members of Uwaki have bought 105 plots of land where they have built houses, with documents in their names;
* 6 women have bought allotments for cultivation;
* 1.101 women are owners of 1.453 fishing ponds, and some even own two or three;
* 2.316 women are owners of  7.947 goats, contributing to their financial autonomy;
* 96 women have bought bicycles;
* 16 motorcycles are  the exclusive property of  16 women;
* 7 women own an oil mill each;
* 33 women have bought  33  personal  radios;
* 24 women have bought a sewing machine;
* 11 have bought each a solar panel for the production of energy in their home;
* 5 have  bought  a brick press;
* 12 have bought armchairs for their sitting-rooms.

As regards **the right to inheritance**, we can record some rather satisfying results following the sensitization meetings.

* 25 widows were treated well by the members of their late husbands’ families who wanted them not to be  deprived of property and to keep on living in their marital homes;
* One woman member has even been authorized to move from the site of mourning to go on a 120 km journey just three weeks after her husband’s death;  in the past that would be incredible and unacceptable in a milieu where women are compelled for about two months  to be shut in the house looking at the walls, before they can make any move.
* 1 girl has come into the inheritance of a plantation of oil palms after her father’s death;
* 1 woman has been reintegrated in her rights  by her brothers persuaded by the sensitization obtained: They  have decided to give her back some properties though 38 years had passed since her father’s death;
* In the municipality of  Kulu, province of Kailo, the  person in charge of this administrative

   sector was so touched by the message of  sensitization  that he called a meeting of the chiefs of the various villages in order to decide both  the abolition of all the troubles, customs and violence women were subject to after their husbands’ deaths, and to watch over the protection of their rights.

As regards **the right to work**, after the meetings of sensitization, 9 women were appointed assistant headmistresses of primary schools, five more headmistresses in primary schools  while four women were appointed inspectresses.

In 2012 among  1.206 teachers there were  66 female teachers in the subdivision Wamaza, which means only 5,47% were women. in 2013, in the same subdivision there are  123 female teachers of 1.408 (8,7%). In the same subdivision  in 2012 there was no woman among the 4 inspectors but now in  2013 among 7 inspectors there are 3 women (42,8%).

In 2012 in the health district of  Salamabila among   107 nurses  there were  27 women, that is  25,2%; in 2013, of 148 nurses 43 are women, that is 29%.

As regards school, in the school year 2012-2013, the women members of  Uwaki have sent: 6.202 children to primary school,  3.056 girls and 3.146 boys; 3.785 children to secondary school, 1.624 of whom girls; 698 young people to higher education and university, among them  326 girls. In  2012-2013 the 2.415 members of Uwaki sent to school a total of  10.685 children.

Besides the channel of meetings, the women and men leaders of  Uwaki - Maniema, also made use of the radio voice to help the fast and massive transmission of messages regarding the rights of women. In  2013, 30 radio–transmissions  were held on the topic of the rights of women by several local radio stations in  Kasongo, Wamaza e Kindu. The audience of these transmissions sums up more than 150.000 people, as the geographic reach of the radio channels goes beyond the borders of  the Maniema region..

*A group of women  of the Congolese association ‘Uwaki’ at the end of a sensitization meeting.*

**Between Christmas 2014 and Easter2015 Joining People Together has sent €52.142**

* **€ 30.057 to the far North of Cameroon to** Tammounde for the project “Society Enterprise, water and food in the Cameroonese Sahel”
* **€ 16.100 to the RD Congo to**l PEDER in Bukavu, to La Floraison in Baraka, to FAPE in Mboko, to AEJT and OFED in Uvira, to Muungano in Goma, to Pierre Shako in Kinshasa for the children and teens whom they teach literacy skills, send to school, to  university, or send to learn a trade, for the women  and the coperatives of young workers, for a contest of youth art for peace and non-violence.
* **€ 1.920 to Chad** to Caprosec indi Moundou for the children reintegrated in school and followed in after school activities, and as  studentships   for two young universitarians.
* **€ 2.010 to Rumania** to Caminul Francesco indi Beiuş  for the support of  school education of their children
* **€ 2.055 to Nepal to**l WHR for the construction of a Chhahari, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, t ogive shelter and assistance to widows and their children, victims of violence.

 Operative seat and postal address:

* 35013 CITTADELLA (PD) - Contrà Corte Tosoni, 99
* Legal seat: 35137 PADOVA - Via S. Giovanni da Verdara, 139
* Other seats: Bassano del Grappa (VI), Peschiera Borromeo (MI), San Secondo Parmense (PR), Jesolo (VE)
* Fiscal code: 920 450 40 281

Adama Loungue

Chairman of the Cameroonese ONG « Tammounde - Hope » has left us for eternal life on March 3,2015

*Adama Loungue, chairman of the Cameroonese ONG  ‘Tammounde – Hope’*

*Good journey  Adama, good journey to eternal life where God has called you before you lived 50 years on earth.*

*You considered me your older brother whom you could apply to whenever in trouble..*

*You were my younger brother whom I was to encourage in developing your great potential, especially when some corrupt people  tried to make you  the ”little slave” executor of their suspicious interests. How many long journeys we made together in the dust and the heat along the never-ending tracks in the outermost North-Cameroon and in  Chad, both, me a Christian and you a Muslim,  following the same ideal: making our own lives a gift to the poorest.*

*The children of your country,  Cameroon, rejoice at the potable water in their schools; many women have improved their income because they have become real farmers, breeders, traders, etc Many rural families, joined together in cooperatives, live better lives, the town of Maroua has benefited from the presence of hundreds of skilled craftsmen.  All that is the result of the attuning of your work with mine, thanks to the union in “agreement of  equal partnership”  of your Cameroonese ONG « Tammounde - Hope » and my Italian ONG  « Joining People Together », and also thanks to all the people, especially young ones, who have trusted you and me, making up the new generation of both our ONGs, being able to carry on your work, and little by little, mine too.*

*You told me one day: What gives me the strength to carry on my humanitarian work, even amidst enormous difficulties, is what Allah told us through Mahomet: None of you is a believer if he doesn’t want for his brother what he wants for himself.*

*Dear friend Adama, follow us now from the beatitude of God full of serenity you have disappeared into.*

*Leopoldo Rebellato*

***Dates***

## African Transports – Città dei Ragazzi

**Sunday, April  12  in the town-centre of  Cittadella** there is the Feast of the Voluntary Service - **Città dei Ragazzi**.

Joining People Together is there with its stand “African transports”

* **“Transport fruit”** in a basket on the head along a rough track,
* **“Transport  cotton”** from one basket to the other, creating a cloud of peace,
* **“Transport  your name”** from the Italian way of writing to the Arab one.

*African transport during Città dei Ragazzi.*

Children, boys and girls (4-12 years of age): ask your parents or grandparents to take you there!

Peace marches: marching with John Mpaliza

**Monday, April 13 :**

**15.00-18.00 march from Bassano to Cittadella.**

**Tuesday, April 14:**

**20.30: “Bloody mobile phones”;** public conference at the Centro San Giuseppe(**Cittadella –** Contrà Corte Tosoni, 99)

**Wednesday. April 15:**

ore **20.30: “Bloody mobile phones”;** publi**c** conference in Camposampiero at the Sala Filarmonica

**Thursday, April 16:**

**16.00: “Bloody mobile phones”; conference** for students and audience at the **Centro Diritti Umani** of the **Università di Padova** (Via Martiri della Libertà, 2)

*John Mpaliza,Congolese witness*

## Being Cosmopolitans

**Sunday, May 3, from 9.00 to 15.00** in the green area around  the  Centro San Giuseppe in Cittadella (Contrà Corte Tosoni 99) Joining People Together celebrates its 25th anniversary.

* Two exceptional witnesses: Kady Kasakarume, chairwoman of the Congolese ONG “Uwaki - Maniema” and  Mons. Antonio Menegazzo, who was the bishop of  El Obeid in Sudan for over 40 years
* Lunch (self-managed)
* Musical entertainment and games for children.

## Convincing ways out of  the food paradox

**Saturday May 9, 2015** at **9.30** in **Sala Rossini at the**  **Caffè Pedrocchi** in a **Padova**, Joining People Together opens the two days  of the  **1st Forum Patavino della Cooperazione Internazionale** with the  round table **“Let’s feed glocal: convincing ways out of the contemporary food paradox”**. International guest: Kady Kasakarume, charwoman of the Congolese ONG “Uwaki - Maniema”, partner of

 Joining People Together, will speak about the local programmes of rural development and about the emancipation of women in the part of her country, the Congo, where  isolation and exploitation  still act cruelly.

Organized by the Municipality of Padua together with some fifteen  associations of international cooperation and solidarity, the forum  offers expositions, discussion, and meetings, music and shows, traditional food from other countries, didactic and thematic courses..

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* *Dialogue with us on* ***skype****:* **Cittadella - Incontro fra i Popoli**
* Write us: info@incontrofraipopoli.it
* *Phone us* **049 5975338** (it’s  fax too)

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