** JOINING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

*n. 44 – December 2013*

# Sparks of God

**Bahindwa, THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN**

Young Bahindwa studied very hard to earn her degree in sociology in her country, in the heart of Africa|; she was clever and her father, a colonel, had a good salary. Getting a well-paid job after finishing her studies was easy for her.

One day she fell into a crisis. An old missionary asked her to become part of a humanitarian association he was just setting up. “You will engage in good works, you will be a true Christian” He even told her “For God also your sharp character can be useful.” Bahindwa accepted though she knew her salary would be half of what it was. And she became a great animator who was naturally biting. She scolded the husbands who were treating their wives as servants. She was very angry with the Europeans who by means of colonialism had caused her country to go along the way of progressive underdevelopment. She blamed the corrupt politicians and asked them to perform good actions for the people. She got angry with the members of the police and the soldiers – in her country actually armed outlaws – and didn’t suffer their abuse of power, at least,   when she was passing. She scolded the priests who wanted to be called lords and masters. And she decidedly reproached the women for their apathy regarding the many wrongs they were suffering.

Her social animation area was as large as an Italian region. For this reason she had been given a car and a motorcycle. And she went to the most secluded, smallest villages to encourage the co-operative societies of women which were forming in spite of war and ambushes. More than once she and her women were compelled to flee to the woods, and to sleep in the midst of spiders and snakes.

“The reason for my actions? I prove my love of God loving my fellowmen, and I try to convince everybody not to do to other people what they wouldn’t like to be done to themselves.”

**SPONSORSHIP FOR PEOPLE IN NEED**

1. **Sponsor a child in need** **(16 € a month; 198 € a year)** • Offering €198 I enable a child, a teenager, a young man or woman, to attend school, to be clothed, to get food and medical care, to become part of society, with the help of the people who look after him/her / parents if he/she has got them, or relatives, or adoptive family, or animators in the reception centre where he/she lives.
2. **Sponsor a family in need** **(€ 50, 100, 200 a year)** • With a sum from  EU 50 to  EU  200 I give happiness to a family in need living in a country with many problems, and I enable them to send their children to school, and,  perhaps, even to start some useful trade.
3. **Sponsor an humanitarian organization (50, 100, 500, 1.000)** • My offer will help to pay animators, teachers, psychologists, technicians specialized in wells and springs, etc for associations helping to improve the lives of local people in the Congo, in Cameroon, in the Chad, in Nepal, in Rumania.
4. **Sponsor a local community (€ 50, 100, 200, 500, 1.000, 5.000)** • With my offer of money, perhaps collected for my birthday or some other occasion, I help to build a well for potable water, or a school, or a health care dispensary, or to purchase a mill, etc for people who are active but economically poor.

**Inshallah, the Muslim**

Inshallah who has a degree in rural development, is happily married and has two nice children neither hid his faith in God (who is called Allah in his mother tongue) nor the way he practiced it. However, he didn’t attend mosque very often – his job as a manager of a humanitarian association didn’t leave him much free time.

He was often on the road in order to be with his animators, to look after technicians, to make purchases, or to receive inspectors of financial corporations. He liked everything to be well-done, knowing that he and his staff succeeded in making life better for many people.

Amid his many duties he tried at the hours of prayer to find some minutes and to lay out his prayer mat in the direction of the Mecca, and tot o prostrate himself to the supreme God. When he was on the road - without making a show of it- he took out his beads, and passing the ninety-nine beads through his fingers he used to pray in his mind: “ Allah is great, Allah is merciful, I thank you Allah.”.

During the Ramadan he duly observed the day fast. When he took the international delegations along the hot and sandy paths of the Sahel, he got up before day-.break to have some tea and a brioche, showing respect for the visitors who had breakfast and lunch, joining them only for dinner in the evening..

“It gives me the strength to carry on the work of good actions for the others, as God told us through Mohammed*: None of you is a believer as long as he doesn’t want for his brother what he wants for himself.”*

**Baranash, the Buddhist**

He happened to be born in the Earthly Paradise, the pearl of the East, at the foot of Mount Adam. In those times the English held the power, but his family, a very wealthy one, was well-respected. He had a disabled sister.

Then the English left, and he – young and enterprising – bought the hill one of them owned – a lonely site crowned by a beautiful villa. From there, at sunrise in the morning and at sunset in the evening, he enjoyed a marvelous view which made his spirit pure immersing it in the Absolute God’s mystery.

Baranash was pious, respected all the rules of Buddhism, always invited the bonzes to the important events in his family, for new activities he waited for the propitious day according to the religious calendar, and he always stopped his car when he was passing in front of a sanctuary to insert some coins into the alms-box. He knew that most of the money would “fatten up” the bonzes. “But – he said – there are some good ones too, and something will go to the poor.”

Growing older, his “pietas” became more evident. He tried hard to attain perfection – spending long time isolated from the rest of the world in the villa on the green hill.

When he died, the following words were found in his will  :: “The villa on the hill and the hill itself shall be turned into a hospitality centre for psychically and physically disabled women because that is what Buddha  has taught us: “ A condition which is not agreeable or pleasant for me, shall not be such for anybody else! Where I have lived in comfort, other people who are less lucky. Shall live now.”!

*From the book “Bisweka” by Leopoldo Rebellato*

***BOOKGIFTS***

*Have you got grandchildren or small children? As a present give them*

***Solo noi bambini giochiamo con i nostri diritti*** *(Only us children play with our rights - a painting sketchbook)* (ITA)

***Lo struzzo prodigioso e il sogno di Kadù The prodigious ostrich and Kadù’s dream*** *(a fairy tale explaining the need of water of less lucky children)* (ITA)

*Have you got grand-children or children attending primary school or secondary school, junior level? Give them:*

***The tale of chocolate*** *(a a fanciful tale about the history of chocolate)* (ITA)

***Celapuoifare7You can do it*** *(A fanciful tale speaking about personal, inter-generational, social, and ecological problems* (ITA)

*Details of the World/ D****ati del mondo*** *(all the states of the world on a single sheet (30 x 21 cm) stating surface areas, number of inhabitants, density and development index of every country* (ITA)

*Have you got teenage children or grandchildren? Give the:*

***Bisweka*** *(tales of lives around the world)* (ITA)

***L’Umana Commedia*** */ The human comedy (doubts, worries, fears, hopes, courage for people who want to be important)* (ITA)

Plans in  Cameroon

**The fifteenth well of potable water** was inaugurated in Africa.

It was realized thanks to the humanitarian engagement of **Joining People Together*.***

**THE ROUNDABOUT PLAY PUMP**

As a Christmas present 900 pupils in the small village of Kay Kay in the Sahel savannah in North Cameroon where one well serves 2000 people, will have as much water as they want, quality water, potable water coming up 45 m from underground, extracted by themselves while they enjoy a ride on a roundabout connected to a pump filling a tank from which a tube takes the water to a column provided with a tap.. That’s the reason why it is called a “roundabout Play Pump”.

The water is not only for drinking, washing, cleaning classrooms and WCs (also built thanks to Joining people together) but also for watering **500 small plants of Moringa Oleifera** trees planted around the well. The Moringa is the gift God gave to these climatically barren area; it is suitable for the drought, it grows very fast (within 6 months it is higher than an adult man), it is leafy and can be cut every second year, providing wood, leaves, flowers, pods (it is a legumen) and edible seeds rich in proteins, vitamins and mineral salts, and….. It offers shadow to the pupils at break-time.

On the site there is a local ONG called “Tammounde – Hope” directed by agronomist Adama Loungue that helped the teachers, the parents (associated in committees), and the pupils to realize this piece of work. Firms as well as technicians (quality) have all been recruited in Cameroon. The roundabout has been built and installed by the pupils and teachers of the Technical Centre in Maroua (CTM), which is the same as an Italian Technical Institute of Mechanics. All the local authorities, from the mayor to the village chief, and from the notables to women’s groups have been intensely involved in the project.

The well is run by a **Local Committee for the Administration of Water**. To pay the cost of ordinary maintenance families are charged with the sum of 300 francs in addition to the 3.000 francs of yearly school-fee for their children.

The manager and the teachers are setting up a small- medium enterprise to manage the production of Moringa as a means of corporate saving of the local school...

The realization of the project (well, plantation, animation) was made possible thanks to the financial investment of the Veneto and to the over thirty year long experience in the North of Cameroon of Joining People Together. The cost of the realized project is EU 98.800.

**Contribution in money** arrived from:

The Veneto Region(40.000 €), Valdese Church (20.000 €), Commune of Villa del Conte (1.000 €), Parish of St. Donato in Cittadella (500 €), Commune of Padua (2.000 €), Association 50 and +, Shopkeepers of Venice (1.000 €) and from some seventy school and firms among which the Colour Cafè in Bassano del Grappa) complying with the campaign “Tappa-Stappa: tappa lo spreco e stappa la solidarietà” (“Block up – uncork: block up/avoid waste and uncork solidarity; collection of plastic bottle-caps) backed up by Joining People Together cooperating with ’ANA-Gruppo Alpini di Villa del Conte (3.000 €) and many people of good will.  In addition to this 5/600 uncharged for hours of service by technicians and voluntary experts of Joining People together.

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| Reportage and projects in Congo RD  *Manuela Colombero*  *The Congolese association PDH (Promotion of Democracy and Protection of Human Rights)), partner of Joining People Together, engaged in the support of people who are arbitrarily imprisoned, particularly if under-age. Between 2010 and 2012, thanks to the voluntary and uncharged for service of PDH, 149 people have been released most of them under age ones. Recently the PDH has required Joining People Together to support their action in the prisons out of the chief town. We have structured their request in a small project called “Let us work together and protect the rights of the underage.” Manuela Colombero, a member of Joining People Together has made the experience of “residence of sharing”’ in the Congo and has taken there the sum requested by our friends from Euro) 1.200, collected in Italy thanks to some donors. Here is a short presentation of the l PDH by Manuela and an extract of the report the lawyers of the PDH have sent us.* |

***LETHAL CONDITIONS IN THE DETENTION SITES.***

***Alert of the PDH –lawyers who defend the prisoners.***

We have worked together with the staff of the PDH (Promotion of Democracy and Protection of Human Rights) Together with the staff of the PDH (Promotion of Democracy and Defense of Human Rights), we have worked in their office for some days, and two days were spent visiting the cachots and the prisons in the town of Goma.

There are usually two people in the office: Jean Marie, the secretary-factotum and Olive, the book-keeper. There is also the car-driver, the only one getting a regular wage. All of them are members of the association and contribute to it  making their periodical payments  The lawyers pas through as their office is quite close to the seat of the association but they don’t stay in if there is not a particular situation requesting their presence. The office is open to people who need advice in legal matters which the PDH examines deciding whether they can take charge of the legal assistance of the person.

The PDH has got four focal points (points focaux) in Nyiragongo, Masisi, Rutshuru, Kalehe. The voluntary assistants making them up perform a monitoring action of their areas in order to pass on information about what is happening, possible requests, and violation of rights.

Routine activities are visits to the prisons (sensitization of the people in charge of the prisons regarding the rights of the prisoners, release of the prisoners arbitrarily detained) and the drawing up of reports denouncing violation of human rights in the region.

The visits to the prisons are like this: first of al you go to the police authority in charge of the detention sites asking permit to enter. When the permit is granted you enter and meet the prisoners, you ask for their names, age, length of imprisonment, reason of imprisonment. After hearing al the prisoners you go back to the person in charge listing up al the irregular cases If you are lucky you may obtain a “ I’ll see what I can do”, and you leave,; sometimes you are told it is not him the one in charge of the particular prisoner but  the frontier police ore someone else.

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| *The population in our region is still suffering the anxieties of war and the uncertainties of their basic rights. In the  Masisi and at Kalehe we have found people rotting in ‘cachots’ (make-shift prisons in abandoned houses and cellars)which were so crowded that people could not lay down for sleeping, many of them sleep in the open in the court-yards, they receive neither potable water nor food.*  *Judges and lawyers do nothing to further their dossiers because thus they take advantage of relatives who bring food and ask for the release of the members of their family. Moreover there is the connivance of the political and administrative authorities who have no interest in establishing justice but are eager to please who offers more. And when you are in prison you never know when you will be released, you may remain for months or years  without verdict or without anybody furthering your dossier*  *The lawyers of the PDH - Goma* |

Reportage and projects R.D. Congo

Here are some results obtained by the lawyers of the PDH by means of our visits to some prisons in July.

**PRISON OF KARISIMBI**

* ***Amini Kubuya***, 19 years old, single, arrested for stealing a mobile phone; released without caution deposit.
* ***Baby Kulu Mukaso***, 18 years old, single, mechanic, arrested for stealing a spare part; released without caution deposit;
* ***Dieudonné Nyamunsenga***, 22 years old, single, motor taxi-driver, arrested for cheating, released without caution deposit.

**PRISON OF MUNZENZE**

* ***Alice Asifiwe,*** single, age unknown, arrested for attacking and beating up people; she got release pending trial.
* ***Nyirandimubanzi,*** widow, 62 years old**,** accused of murder; the PDH takes her dossier to the judge.
* **App Ndoba,** 31 years old, married, one child, policeman, arrested for transgressing orders; released because of his delicate health.
* ***App Mutipaya Kalamba,*** 39 years old, married, 6 children, arrested for injuring other people; The PDH deposits his dossier with the Director of Military Prosecution.

**PRISON OF SAKE**

* ***Kabuya Bahati,*** 16 years old, assistant driver, arrested for stealing empty beer bottles; released after convincing his parents to pay a fine
* ***Baya Basike,*** 26 years old, married, 4 children, student at the “Liceo specializing in classical studies”, Arrested for stealing a pig. The prisoner can at last inform the judge of paying the victim of his theft $ 250; released without caution deposit.
* ***Mapenzi Bandu,*** 18 years old, married, one child, sawyer of wood boards, arrested for stealing a board of a customer; released without caution deposit. .

**PRISON OF KIROTSHE**

* ***Janvier Bahati,*** 16, single, fisher, arrested for stealing a mobile phone; released because he had returned the phone to its owner.
  + ***Yalala Birere,*** 28 years old, farmer, arrested for not paying a debt (EU 6,00); released after signing a statement that he would pay his debt within a week.
  + ***Yvette Faida,*** 16 years old, single,  mother of a two year old son who is in prison with her, arrested for hurting her neighbour’s child; released without caution deposit
  + ***Tumaini Mugarira,*** 17 years old, ***Tubonera Rukeka,*** 15 years old, ***Murefu Ndihama,*** 17 years old, arrested for stealing cobaye and chicken. Released without caution deposit.

**Legacy**

It is an act, by which a person makes over after his/her death his /her properties or valuables to someone,

In the world to come we will live in the  never-ending beatitude of God according to the measure in which we have spread     goodness and  good actions  down here Leaving  our earthly life it would perhaps be  good to remember not only our heirs but also people in need and those who are helping them.

**By means of a legacy to Joining People Together you can extend your goodness to those who are in need.**

**From Joining People Together him/her… who is in need!**

From Easter to Christmas we have sent € 30.790 in favour of:

* 50 children and  8 families   in Bukavu, Goma, Uvira ( R.D.Congo)
* 18 children   of   Moundou (Ciad)
* 10 children and teenagers of Beius (Romania)
* 797 pupils of the school  in Kay Kay (Camerun)
* 5 groups of young of Mboko (R.D.Congo)
* The lawyers of the  PDH di Goma (R.D.Congo)

Reportage                            Sri Lanka

***In the den of the Tamil Tigers***

Accompanied by Father Sathya, we enter the Vanni, the heart of the civil conflict, reign of the Tamil Tigers’ militancy. Under a burning sun we go along the path of reddish earth. We Pas Mountains of rusting vehicles left behind by people in flight. Now and then an old Tamil roams the ruins looking for some buried memory. We pas alongside empty land, sometimes we see the foundations of houses or the outer fencing, sometimes we spot pieces of walls shredded by shots, pollarded palm-trees blackened by bombs.

Three years have passed since the end of the conflict but the inhabitants of Mullaittivu still take shelter in make-shift huts: intertwisted palm-trees, walls made of mud and nylon sheets to protect themselves from rain. We try to imagine what sort of human cruelty may have caused all this. Our mind seeks the memory of some old war-film we have seen. Father Sathya needs only shutting his eyes and he hears the noise of mines exploding nearby, the clang of canister shots on the wall, the shouts of terrorized people.

Father Sathya is a young Tamil priest; he is well-known at Mannar, the people hold him in high esteem and respect him. During the conflict, especially in the cruel final moment he stayed with the people trying to save the civil population trapped between the advancing government army and the retiring revolutionary army of the Tigers. He showed us the sites where he and his people took refuge during the civil war which lasted 27 years and ended in 209. He took us to Vanni. The civil conflict saw the government army SLA (Sri Lanka Army) face the LTTE (Tigers for the freedom of the Tamil Eelam), a revolutionary group fighting for the independence of the northern and eastern parts of the country. Sri Lanka is an island with great geographical, religious, racial and cultural differences. Two ethnic groups speaking different languages and professing different religions live there: the Singhalese (70% Buddhists) and the Tamil (18%, Christians and Hindus) after the colonial period and the achievement of independence in 1948 the Singhalese held the most important and powerful offices of state, excluding the Tamil who had presided under the supervision of the British Empire. Part of the Tamil population started to experience strong discrimination against their ethnic group and constituted the armed group that managed to control of a vast area of the country for many years. In 2009, after nearly thirty years of guerrilla warfare, the government decided to adopt a definitive resolution by means of heavy attacks and bombing thus wiping out the rebels together with forty thousand civilians. As it happens to war in faraway poor countries, little was heard about it and the civilian victims have remained faceless corpses.

Father Sathya has told us how the government army was bombing during the last months of the conflict the so called, *Heaven Zone* (that is safe areas where the civilians could take refuge according to the law of war). The excuse for the violation was the attempt to dislodge the rebels who, according to the army, had taken refuge there. And like every war also this one has left thousands of orphans, widows, mutilated people, children suffering remaining traumas, dead people who can’t rest in peace because they have not found justice. The present day president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, has refused an international inquiry into the crimes committed during the war and he doesn’t allow foreign journalists to enter the country and explain what has happened. Its sundown now, the skeletons of rusty vehicles seem on fire, the old Tamil people come back – we don’t know where to, perhaps to the humble mud huts in the shadow of the walls of their old houses. Father has finished his tale; he is tired out by his memories. The sun sets at Mullaittivu, and we, his two fellow travellers keep silent thinking: “What about justice? What about hope? Are they only illusion? **What can we who dream of a world of peace- do?**

From our stay in Ceylon, web ring back the tiny yet important hopes we found over there: they are the first Tamil associations striving to revive their people with dignity.  Now it’s up to Joining People Together to continue the dialogue with them, towards a horizon of “international cooperation” based on the dialogue between diversities.

*Fabio Martini e Margherita Facco*

Reportage Camerun

***“Nassara” in trasition***

*Giorgia Barbieri*

*“Your internship starts today!” -* Leopoldo said to me while we were entering in the primary school where he and his wife Maria were going to perform an educational activity named”Global citizens’ education”. So, my internship at Joining People Together began there, in the school desks, together with young teenagers that as me were listening to the fascinating stories of Leopoldo’s life, and it continued then in the offices of the association in Cittadella, where I was used to go as soon that I had some free time. All this was to prepare myself to another experience that I was about to start and for which I had to be ready: an internship at *Tammounde,* apartner NGO of Joining People Together in Maroua, one of the main towns in the north of Cameroon.

In Maroua I conducted a study about the creation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the photovoltaic energy sector, about the *moringa* (typical plant of the Sahel region) cultivation and about the iron production. I had the chance to analyze the financial and legislative systems, the challenges they face and existing facilitation to establish Cameroonian enterprises in Cameroon. I met really extraordinary, smart and motivated people, but also local administrators that often told me to be not able to answer to my questions (as a proof of the high rate of corruption in the country). At the end I conducted a concrete study that hopefully will help to improve the life conditions of many people there and will contribute to the country development.

I had to confront myself with a culture and local traditions totally different from mine. It has been hard sometimes but with humility and ability to adapt I was able finally to integrate myself and enjoy an authentic life experience.

I, “*nassara*” (which means “white” in Fulfuldé language), feel changed.. in transition, and this personal transition doesn’t end just here after my return in Italy, because now that I am in the Joining People Together’s environment, my transition will continue.

Romania

***My experience in Ioaniş (Romania)***

*Elisabetta Stocco* (16 years old)

Every time somebody ask me what I did last summer and I reply them that I went for a workcamp in Romania, I see their faces surprised and astonished. I know it might not sound very common for them, but I am very proud of this experience I have done! I finally understood that together with other people we can do great things, much more that we would be able to do alone, in our own ways. This is because in my opinion, being able to donate smiles and joy to those Romanian children is already an amazing achievement, considering that we had to cross the cultural and social barriers that divide our country, so considered as “developed”, to Romania which is unjustly defined as “undeveloped” one. I emphasize “unjustly” because, thanks to this experience, I realized that any country in this world should be considered undeveloped, and this is because every country has some richness to show and to be proud of. I think I have never seen so much happiness as I saw in those children. They don’t have any fashion clothes, sophisticated toys, fancy stuff like us, but they are full of enthusiasm and enjoying everyday’s life, and I think that these values come from the simplicity of their lives, something that here we define as “poverty”.

I was impressed by the tolerance they demonstrate among the several religions, the altruism and sharing among each other.

It could seem like a paradox for many people, but I want to conclude saying that Romania, a so called “poor” and “undeveloped” country, gave me an incomparable richness of inestimable value for me.

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*Visit our website:* [www.incontrofraipopoli.it](http://www.incontrofraipopoli.it)

Child sponsorship

***Romanian children***

*Ioaniş, 24th of July 2013*

Hello, my name is Alex, I’m the younger brother of Sebi and I’m thirteen years old. I live in Ioaniş (Romania) with my parents, Sebi and my other three younger sisters. In these days of vacations, Sebi is not able to join us at *Caminul Francesco* because he is away with our dad to work. Sebi is sixteen years old, he just finished the eighth grade at primary school and he is getting enrolled in the technical school of Beius to study mechanics. I like very much to come here at *Caminul Francesco* because I can learn useful things and play with my friends.

Thanks and bye, ***Alex Turla***

***Caminul Francesco:*** *is a Romanian organization, where Maria, Maddalena and Antonella, three nuns which are also partners and members of Incontro fra i Popoli, are running two centers – a post school centre for children and families that need support.*

I met Sebi in the late afternoon, he was tired and seated by the riverside, while his friends were playing in the river’s water. His eyes were looking far away. I got close to him and I asked:

*Where have you been today Sebi?*

I went in the forest for mushroom picking.

*Why are you picking mushrooms?*

I’m adult now and so I need to earn my money.. and also for my dad.

*How much have you earned today?*

*55 lei* (about 60 euro), but I had to pay 30 *lei* for the transport.

*You must have been far from here, I guess! How many hours did you work?*

I left home at 3 a.m. last night.

***Leopoldo Rebellato***

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| ***Membership letter***  The workcamp experience in Romania has been so great and intense that after I came back I had no doubts about whether or not becoming a member of the association Joining People Together. What impressed me more in this workcamp were the smiles and the authentic joy of the children, the kindness of the people we met, and the strong friendship that we built among us. So I would like to express my desire to become a member of Joining People Together, so that this summer experience in Romania will be not just kept as a nice memory, but can continue in my every day’s life. I would like return and offer to other people in need what has been given to me during this experience.  Emmanuele Stocco, 18 years old |

We warmly welcome also **Paola Sarzo** and **Elisa Marini** as new members of Joining People Together**.**

***Next events:***

* **Solidarity dinner:** a modest dinner (soup, bread, wine and tap water) to fraternize with who for which this kind of dinner is the rule, and to support our projects in Cameroon and the in Congo. Contribution 5 €***.***

***Saturday 14th of December 2013, h 7.30 p.m.***

***at Centro San Giuseppe, Contrà Corte Tosoni 99 – Cittadella***

* + - **One week experience in Umbria:** for youth between 15 and 25 years. We will visit some of the most beautiful places of the Umbrian region and spending evenings playing games and fraternizing, staying in a rural house, managing our stay by ourselves. Cost 150€/person. Inscription until the 7th of December (Tel: 3358367012)

***From 26th to 30th of December 2013 - at S. Giovanni di Spello (PG)***

* + - **“Joining People Together” fest**

***Sunday 8th of June 2014 in the wood of via Pezze in Cittadella***

* + - **Workcamp in Romania for youth between 15 and 25 years**

***From 19th to 28th of July 2014 in Ioaniş (Beius - Oradea)***