



## Newsletter n°18 - September 2015



*Dear Friends,*

*while in the Cistercense Valserana monastery, as described later in this Newsletter by Stefania Romani, I was listening the exchange of ideas among the academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine of Parma and the President and General Director of DMI - the Indian Congregation that is opening a Faculty of Medicine in Dar es Salaam and has obtained, thanks to the intervention of Giuseppe Travaglini, the collaboration - my memory went back to the **single episodes that, one after the other, have built the story**, not yet completed unfortunately, of our Association, whose very beginning can be read in our website in the section Who We are/the Story.*

**1990:** *My wife Adele and I decide to do something for Tanzania, and our idea becomes a project, transforming it in a Dispensary with annexed Maternity*

**1991:** *In the Mons. Polycarpo Pengo's diocese is taking life the Dispensary, and he's also transferred to Dar es Salam, where he become Arcibishop;*

**1992:** *Pope Giovanni Paolo II asks the Nuncio Apostles Mons. Gianvincenzo Moreni to call me and inform me about the wish that Associazione Ruvuma realizes in Mbwani the Dispensary, as wanted also by Father Antonino Calabresi (the dear Father Tonino);*

**1995:** *The Dispensary is accomplished, and its management is entrusted to the San Vincenzo de' Paoli of Innsbruck Sisters, in August Mons. Polycarpo Pengo inaugurates the Dispensary, together, for his decision, with the Mufti competent for the territory, at the*

*presence of the Italian ambassador. Vittorio dies few months earlier, and his role of Responsible of the Health and Scientific activity is transferred to Giuseppe Travaglini, who, thanks to his network of connections and the respect he can boast in the medicine environment, obtains the permanent collaboration of doctors and paramedic staff, as well as of technicians and specialists.*

*And I stop here, to the 1995, by now 20 years ago.*

*Without modesty "not ostentation of the own value" but with humility "the awareness of the own limits, that does not feel proud of the success that follow", I affirm that our small Story can be read as the natural development of a good idea, that, thanks to lucky circumstances, has generated results higher than the intentions. Those, instead, who believe in Providence, think - a friend of mine who believe in Providence told me this - that It is not extraneous. I, without hauteur, feel instrument of both of the interpretations.*



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## In the Mbwani Hospital a great project to improve children's lives

We have already wrote many times in our past Newsletters about **Professor Andrea Franchella**, Director of the Operative Unit in Pediatric Surgery, Director of the Department Integrated Activity Reproduction Growth, and Vice President of the College of Management Hospital Company of the University of Ferrara.

Yet, many people know him simply like **the "surgeon who give back a smile to children"**.

Since 1995, in fact, Andrea Franchella, a long term collaborator of Associazione Ruvuma Onlus, periodically goes with his team in Tanzania to carry out medical missions in the Santa Maria Nascente Hospital of Mbwani. Their objective, each time, is to give back the smile to a children, dealing with those complex diseases like the cleft palate, a malformation very widespread among the local population, as well as surgical activities aimed at children.

During these missions, the priority is also to work side by side with the local doctors, with the objective to make them more independent.

**Even this year, Andrea Franchella chose to spend his "holidays" in our hospital in Mbwani**, and in this Newsletter he talk about his latest experience (*in the picture Professor Andrea Franchella in the operating theatre of the Mbwani Hospital*).



The Pediatric Surgery of the Arcispedale S. Anna and the Onlus Chirurgo e Bambino, in collaboration with Associazione Ruvuma Onlus, have realized in April 2015 a mission in Mbweni, Tanzania, relative to a project of cooperation in the field of health, which is lasting already since many years.

During this mission that took place in the Santa Maria Nascente Hospital from 18th April until 3rd May 2015, **91 children have been visited** (age between 3 months and 14 years), **61 of them have been operated** (52 males and 9 females), for a **total of 62 surgical procedures**.





Patients treated presented surgical congenital pathologies of the groin channel, of genitals, scars and keloid; together with local surgeons, have been treated also ano-rectal malformations, the outcome of an omphalocele and an abdominal hernia in two patients below one year age.

Together with the surgical activities, it has been carried out an intense activity in the Clinic of Department and in the Day Hospital, both as aid than as post-operational follow up for oncological pathologies than malformations.

**The development of the pediatric surgery as specialization in Africa is relative recent. In many areas is still non existent** due to the lack of infrastructures, services of anesthesia dedicated and of trained surgeons with an adequate knowledge of the needs of children.

**Therefore, life for children in the African continent is not easy. It's a constant battle against poverty, parasitic and other infections and illnesses,** trauma, weakening and congenital anomalies of the central nervous system, and many other factors that compromise the growth and development. Many of the surgical pathologies also, are diagnosed and treated in Africa in situations much less favourable respect to Western countries.

**Morbidity and mortality remain unacceptable high,** with large disparities between the different countries and urban and rural areas. It is in this framework that **this project represents a precious contribution towards the awareness towards pediatric surgery** and the expansion of the knowledge of problems of African children often neglected. Often, people arise debates about the importance of a surgical intervention in a continent where many other issues are a priority.

The esteemed cumulative risk for a child to have a condition requiring a surgical approach is of 85 per cent below the age of 15, and this represents a problem of public health.

**Obstacles to improve pediatric surgical assistance include a general lack of interest**

**for the surgical conditions affecting children** as well as its role still not well defined, and the lack of political commitment. Surgical training in Africa is also very variable and full of multiple challenges, something that further worsen the already not optimal level of surgical cures, **and the ill children depend from the health operators who have the possibility to find.**

Therefore, the only way to obtain what the social justice can offer to them is to **have competent and qualified surgeons who take care of them.** From this viewpoint, the peculiar aspect of my last experience, following the mission of December 2014/January 2015, is in the complete involvement of my surgeon colleagues and the Medical direction of the Mbweni Hospital.



**The activity of training based on the "training on the job" has been very effective and complete.** Together with Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini we worked in close contact with Doctor Ambrose Temu, with the medical director Doctor Daniel Muganuyizi, with the anesthetist Doctor Youssef Barabara, and in particular with all the operating theatre staff, especially the surgical nurses and the nurses dedicated to the pre and post operating assistance. The rules for the teaching are based on three cornerstones: to be competent,

to be able to decide what and how, and to whom transfer the competences, and being able to oversee the acquisition of the competences.

Our choice in the training field is based, as already said, on the **training on the job**, with the certainty that is **the most efficient road in the specialized training of African surgeons**. The training must develop ability, skills and knowledge of the limits that the different situations might create.

This **Italian-Tanzanian axis** to train specialized doctors and organize more autonomous and qualified health structure for children of African countries **is beginning to give some significant results**, which are fully part of the commitment that Associazione Ruvuma is carrying out since long, namely giving a *"small contribution for a better access to health and professional education to the inhabitants of Tanzania, to reduce the current gap between the quality of life in Italy and in that country, believing that the realization of the development cooperation is not only a duty but also a way to make more liveable our planet, a "shared home" to preserve for the future generations. We don't give for free fishes. We teach to fish"*.

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## Agreement between the University of Parma and the University St. Joseph, DMI

It has been an important event the one taking place on Thursday 16 July in the Monastery of Paradigma, better known as Valserena, and often regarded as the "Certosa of Parma" from the novel of Stendhal, a monastery founded in 1298, and recently restored by the University of Parma, as well as location of the prestigious Study Centre and Communication Archive.

In the former refectory of the Cistercensi Friars, it has been reached, thanks to the contacts started by Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini, Vice President and Scientific responsible of our Association, the **agreement between the Faculty of Medicine of University of Parma** and the newly founded **Faculty of Medicine of St. Joseph of the Congregation DMI**, Daughters of Mary Immaculate, **to which our Association has given the right of use of the Santa Maria Nascente hospital of Mbweni**, keeping however the scientific and medical responsibility.



The agreement, which will be shortly also formally approved by the Academic Senate of the University of Parma, defines the guidelines of a scientific and educational cooperation that will be actualized in

- (a) teaching programmes and shared research projects,
- (b) professional training through the transfer from Italy to Tanzania of medical and scientific know-how (creating the respective competences in a country as Tanzania where there is one doctor each 50.000 inhabitants),
- (c) exchange of academic staff and students.

The first course, which will start on the 1st October at the St. Joseph, will be of Physiology, with Italian teachers. With the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine, DMI keep on its project to build a system of university development for the young people of Tanzania, having already realized the Faculties of Engineering, Agronomy and Economy.

**A generous and forward-looking initiative**, coherent with the mission of the Congregation and generating a feeling of gratitude towards India by the future management Tanzanian classes. In this framework, there is the appreciation expressed by Fr. Arul Raj and Doctor Ananth Thomson for having obtained the connection to such a prestigious university such as the one of Parma. Present on that day to the formalisation of the contract agreement: for DMI, Fr. J.E. Arulraj (Founder and President of the Daughters of

Group of Institutions), Dr. Thomson Ananth ( President of the St. Joseph University Council ) for the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Parma, Prof. Leopoldo Sarli director of the CUCI Centro Universitario Cooperazione internazionale Prof. Alessandro Bernazzoli (Head of Research Division and International Relations), Prof. Alessandro Arrighetti (Faculty of Economy), Prof.ssa Lucia Chierici, who will have a role of connection between the two institutions. for our Association, Dr. Rodrigo Rodriguez, President and Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini, author, as we said before, of the initial contract

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## In Mbweni the official celebration for the delivery of the Camper for Mammography to the Hospital Santa Maria Nascente

Friday 28th August, S Maria Nascente Hospital, Mbweni.

In the large space next to the Maternity Department there is a joyful party atmosphere.

In a while, it will take place the **ceremony for the official delivery of the Camper equipped for the Mammography** to the DMI, the great Indian Congregation to which our Association entrusted the management and use of the Hospital, obviously including the use of the health equipment.



This Camper was **previously used by the AUSL of Rimini**, yet almost new since the residents of that area prefer to go directly in the efficient health structures of the Region rather than go up in a itinerant Camper.

Therefore, Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini successfully managed that **the camper was given to our Association at favourable economic conditions**; it has undergone an accurate revision thanks to the contribution of the Rotary Club of Seregno, Desio, Carate Brianza.

And there it is! happy to have passed the test of the Tanzanian Nuclear Authority, and happy to enjoy the equatorial sun and the interest by all the present staff of the Hospital and its patients.





The ceremony begins, with short speeches from the representatives of the institutions of the territory; followed by those of the Founder of DMI and head of the St. Joseph University, to which the Faculty of Medicine of the Hospital is connected, Father J. E. Arul Raj, Dr Rodrigo Rodriguez, Dr Euniac Bandio, Director of the Health Ministry and Welfare, messenger of a message from the Minister: the two Ambassador, the Ambassador of Italy Luigi Scotto and the Ambassador of India Sandeep Arya; Doctor Ananth Thomson, DMI General Director, Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini, Vice President and Health and Scientific responsible of our Association; Cardinal Policarpo Pengo, Archbishop of Dar es Salaam, who could not participate, commissioned Father Fulgenzio Cortesi, the founder of the Village of Joy, to represent him and give his blessing to the Ceremony.

Finally the ribbon is cut, we visit the St. Joseph Hospital at 15 minutes by car from there.

At 11.50 the mammography sections begin, and when we go back at around 2 pm, the nurse come to us with the list of the ladies who benefited from the service: 31 in total. The rest of the, chat pleasantly, waiting for their turn.



### **Rodrigo Rodriguez speech at the event of the official celebration for the delivery of the Camper for Mammography**

*This morning I found in my phone this text message in English: “Thanks for taking care of our mothers” signed Thomas. I don’t know Thomas, but probably he is one of the many babies delivered in S. Maria Nascente, or - may be is exactly him – one of the children taken care in the Village of Joy founded by Father Fulgenzio, whom we have the great pleasure to have with us, this morning.*

*Perhaps you don’t know that twenty years and two weeks ago, namely 14th August 1995, the Dispensary was inaugurated. My memory goes back to that day, where the young Archbishop Polycarp Pengo blessed the just built little Dispensary.*

*Some days before, I have begged Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan, to allow us to dedicate the Dispensary to Santa Maria Nascente, protector of Milan: in his written answer, he wrote me "affido alla Vergine tutte le persone sofferenti che saranno accolte e curate nel nuovo Ospedale"*

*I showed Archbishop Pengo this letter, he agreed, and decided to design himself – how clever graphic designers may be some (few) Bishops ... - the logo of Associazione Ruvuma: as you know, Ruvuma is the large river which acts a boundary between Tanzania and Mozambico, because Paolycarp Pengo at that time was the Bishop of Tunduru Masasi region.*

*From that day, thanks to our determination and the Divine Providence support, the Dispensary has gone up the ladder: Health Center, Hospital; recently, the Divine Providence has been extremely more effective, because It has decided that our Associazione Ruvuma would meet DMI, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate Indian Society, whom we have thoroughly entrusted the use and the management of the*

*Hospital – please let me express our gratitude to Founder, Fr. Arul Raj, by joining my hands and bowing to him (in Indian language: Namasté).*

*One of the guidelines of the health policy established by Doctor Giuseppe Travaglini, Vice President and Health Director of the Hospital, has been prevention: the Camper for Mammography is an emblematic equipment for prevention.*

*Consequently, apart from its important function, it conveys a message: prevention will help to save lives and suffering pains.*

*And, as a male, let me look and smile at to you, ladies, to tell you that women are an important, essential, positive part of the human race, and we must to take care of your health.*

*Now, I wish to express our gratitude to the Italian and to the Indian Ambassadors, because they have given us the honour of their presence in this ceremony, and because today the presence of you both has a special meaning, being two high representatives of our respective countries and this shows and confirms the warm friendship between Italy and India, which will not be distorted by passing situations: in a face, spots emphasises its beauty.*

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