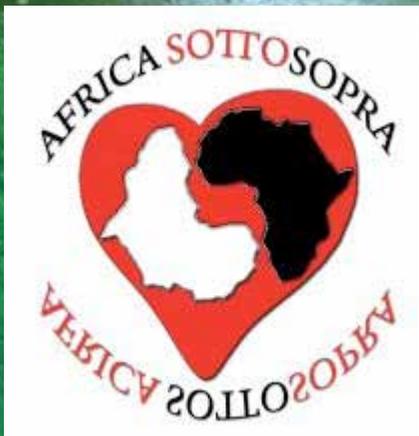




NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2014



Together
to grow



“VILLAGE OF THE HEART” PROJECT

The Clinic Post

by T. Leone

THE CHILDREN’S PAINTINGS

by M. Gamucci

SOME PHOTOS OF THE 2014 SUMMER CAMP

IMPRESSIONS OF A JOURNEY

WOLVES AND LIGHTENING

AFRICA SOTTOSOPRA’S EVENTS

edited by E. Metalli

**SAVE THE DATE: CALENDAR OF THE EVENTS
FOR 2014-2015**

MALAWI – BY H. AIPIRA

New Malawian Poetry

MALAWIAN BEVERAGES

by A. Pantaleoni

WALK
WITH
US



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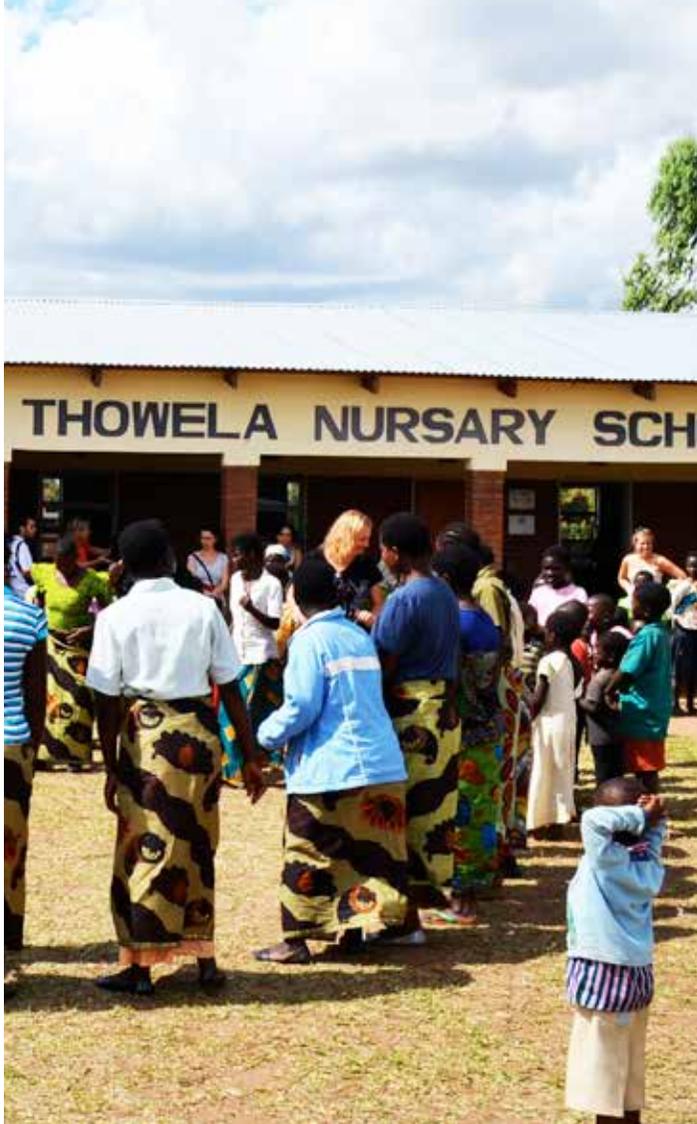
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“VILLAGE OF THE HEART” Project

by T. Leone



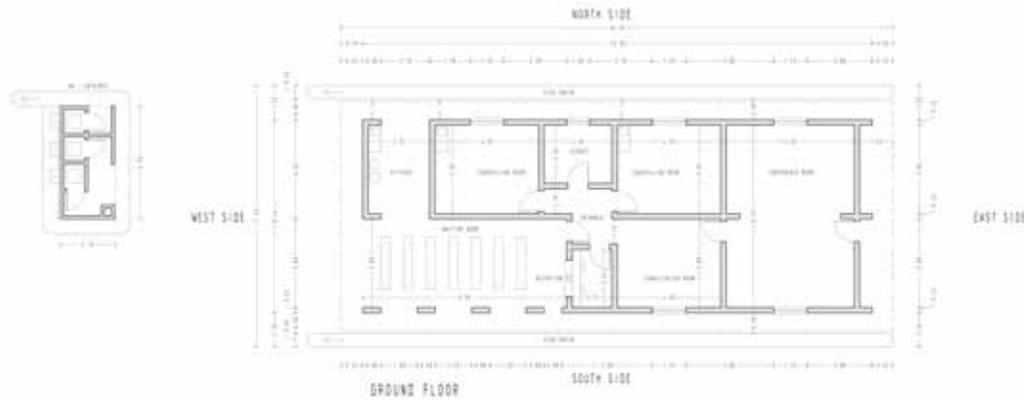
Health care in Malawi

The life expectancy in Malawi is of about 37 years. 83% of the population lives in rural areas, 65% lives below the poverty line and 29% lives in absolute poverty. In this dramatic picture children are the main victims of poverty and lack of cures and hygiene: 1 out of 8 dies before the age of 5 years! Maternal mortality is about 1000 deaths every 10.000 births and less than 50% of the villagers benefit of health care. There are 300 doctors in the whole country and there are practically no pediatricians amongst them. Cases of HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and cholera are amongst the highest in the world and the national health care system is not capable of covering the needs of the population.



The Clinic Post

by T. Leone



“The village of the heart”

It is NOT only an accommodation structure, but the center of a real development program for children, that carries out interventions meant for the child in order to accomplish its potential in a homely environment.

The condition of orphans in Malawi, just as in every poor country in the world, is frightening and merciless: for these children it means absence of assistance for their most elementary needs, absence of any affective point of reference, constant precariousness of life at all levels, total vulnerability, risk of ending up not on the road but at the edge of the road, and therefore, of society forever.

Beneficiaries of the project

The Community of Thowela and surrounding villages need a small Clinic Post that can provide the instruments necessary to face the health care necessities for the most diffused pathologies in Malawian villages, with particular attention to children and women.

Goals

The intervention is planned with the aim of creating a health service, offering first aid and maternity for the Community of Thowela in the Thyolo District, in an area where there are no public facilities and where the closest health center is at least 15 km away. Receiving and visiting patients in clean and hygienically acceptable rooms, with adequate instruments, guaranteeing the presence of professionally prepared personnel is our goal.



The women of the Committee "Rome with You Malawi Women", the Chief of Thowela village and a delegation of the Organization.

THE CHILDREN'S PAINTINGS

by M. Gamucci



The summer camp was born three years ago, when Tiziana asked me to prepare a project for the Ntawa Primary School children. It included breakfast, lunch and didactic and sports activities.

Therefore I thought of organizing a GRAPHIC-PAINTING WORKSHOP for about 60 children. I started with making the children use wax crayons because they're easier to use: they allow the mixture of different colours and do not need to be sharpened continuously, an action that would be almost impossible considering the large amount of children involved. This allowed me to save time and dedicate quality time to something else like observing the children, who immediately responded positively to the activity.

I'd like to make it clear that that was the first experience, both for me and for the children, in sharing a graphic activity, therefore even the volunteers were completely new to this.

The following year I continued the course using also tempera colours and brushes, in addition to wax colours. This caused a great sensation in all of us!!! The children didn't know that kind of colours and, above all, they didn't know what to do with and how to use the brushes. So they looked at me rather puzzled and perplexed as if to say, "what are these for???". As soon as I explained the use of the brushes, in next to no time I found myself immersed in silence. They were all completely engrossed and busy creating wonderful drawings on white cardboard, which I had chosen purposely so that they could paint with no difficulties on a rigid base.

After that came the paintings on canvas. The idea of bringing the paintings of our small artists to Italy was immediately welcomed with enthusiasm by the

group. I asked everyone I know to bring me old bed sheets, and I told them that their donation would have made many children happy. Others offered us the tempera colours and the brushes. It was a great success!!! All we had to do was block the sheets on the desks with some white scotch tape and, as if by magic, the children started to experiment how much they could press the brush on the cloth in order to obtain a good result. I must say that even in this workshop the children proved to be tireless. Especially when it came to drying the paintings; it was interesting to observe them talking to each other and comparing their paintings.

These canvases arrived in Italy well preserved in our suitcases. Some were given to the families who have a child in distance adoption and others were exposed for the fundraising for the 2015 summer camp and other projects of the Organization. The 2014 paintings will soon be exposed for the same reasons.



Some shots of the 2014 summer camp

Photos by Y. Morana, F. Ferretti, V. Marchesi





It all started in the autumn of 2011, when my colleague and, now great friend, Tiziana Leone proposed me to support her in a correspondence project with the pupils of a school in Malawi.

As an English teacher in a secondary school, the proposal appealed to me immediately: it was a great chance for me to offer my pupils the possibility of a cultural exchange with a different culture and world from theirs, by expressing themselves through the language that I try to teach them.

The pupils were enthusiastic: it was nice to see with what pleasure and commitment they replied to these letters and how happy they were when they knew that Ms. Leone and I were going to consign the letters directly to their receivers in December that year!! Their enthusiasm was contagious and I was “infected” by it... my acquaintance with Malawi had just begun. The journey only lasted a week but I can say that it was one of the most intense weeks of my life. So many emotions! After a very long flight, the first impact was extremely powerful: a beautiful landscape, an uncontaminated nature but at the same time, a surreal atmosphere. I felt as though I'd been catapulted from one end of the world to the other and, despite all that Tiziana had told me to prepare me for the experience, I understood that the only way you could get to know that place in a short time was by opening your heart and letting everything flow in through that way. That's how things went. In a short time Malawi managed to dismantle that armour that we all build around ourselves daily in order to live in our world and face the trials that life presents us. Nothing and no one can resist the look of a child who lives on little more than nothing, who doesn't even have a pair of shoes, who is exposed to many serious diseases and cannot be cured, who makes his own satchel with a plastic sugar bag and some string, who, if you offer your hand to him, he will take it and never leave it.....

I observed these children carefully, I went to visit their schools and I sat at their desks with them and there I

understood that what Tiziana and her organization are doing is right and important, because nothing is more important than education in Malawi. I understood it by how those 100 pupils (yes, you have understood correctly, 100!!!) of different ages sat in silence in a classroom of only a few square meters listening to their teacher who was explaining Greek history to them and they were trying to learn as much as they could because they often don't even have an exercise book to write in. How many times I repeat this to my pupils, when I don't manage to have their attention, they who have the luck of having everything and who, maybe for this reason, do not appreciate anything. Now those children have a precise face for me and it's Prisca's face, the sweet little girl who my family and I have adopted at distance. This is another wonderful way of keeping a close contact with a country that has given me and taught me a lot.

Zikomo Malawi!!!!

ANNA ACCORNERO, teacher
at Porto Romano School – Fiumicino – Rome



WOLVES AND LIGHTENING

Events organized
by Africa Sottosopra
edited by E. Metalli

The occasion

In this space we would like to recall and, in some way, “re-propose” some moments of aggregation of the Africa Sottosopra Organization, thus giving the people who participated the opportunity to remember the time spent together and maintain that memory alive. Also, this would give the opportunity to those who didn't participate to not lose the sense and the meaning of it all, but to actually find, amongst the summaries and the information, the curiosity to come and find out more about the next appointments (in the following page!)

Amongst the events that the Organization arranged or took part in in the past months, we would like to remember the presentation of the book “Wolves and Lightning” written by Fabio Pannozzo, for which we would like to thank the author, the anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Roberta Tucci, and the architect Massimo Minasi who very kindly hosted us in his Studio, and everyone else who participated to the events and activities, supporting us in every way.*

**The events also included the WALK AROUND GARBATELLA and the exposition space dedicated to the “Porto Romano Secondary School” of Fiumicino in occasion of the “Hamlet Or Not Hamlet” project. A combined theatre workshop between immigrants and Italians).*

The book

The book is a result of a research carried out in the space of the past forty years in the area of the “Ausoni” and “Aurunci” Mountains in southern Lazio. It gives a dialogical description of an archaic world where lightening or a wolf still represent the major dangers for shepherds and their animals, even nowadays. An elusive world, far away from today's rhythms and languages, where reality and fantastic reconstruction are tightly entwined, touching themes like music, the world of magic, the woman's role, the annual phases of transhumance, bush fires, characters and trades connected to the pastoral world. It is however a book that doesn't only speak about the past, it asks the reader and institutions unavoidable questions on the future of the mountains, on the tutelage of the land, on a development that cannot be disrespectful of nature. A detailed and precious introduction by Guido Crainz was very stimulating in this sense.

The Author

Fabio Pannozzo was born in Lenola on 27th September 1951. He is a doctor and deals with epidemiology and prevention at the ASL (local health authority center) of Latina. He has always been active in historical and musical research in the “Ausoni” Mountains area. In 1990 he published, for the Cultural Services Consortium of the Province of Latina, “Canto e Musica Popolare a Lenola” (Popular Singing and Music in Lenola), with music and lyrics collected locally and re-proposed with the “Border Brigands” (Briganti di Frontiera) – a folk band. In 2000 he produced a volume dedicated to “Maggio di Pasterna” for the Historical-Cultural Association of the “Ausoni” Mountains. In 2009, together with Sandro Rosato, he published “Piccole storie di emigranti nella grande storia del novecento” (Small stories of emigrants in the great history of the 1900s), a reconstruction of a hundred years of emigration from Lenola. He studies the connections between health and the territory in the province of Latina, particularly he collects data on cardio-vascular pathologies and tumors and on their risk factors, publishing several scientific papers for the Latina ASL.



NOVEMBER

Friday 21st

Solidarity market IFAD

Wednesday 26th

Environment festival: the waste of food

(Porto Romano Secondary School - Fiumicino)

End of the month

Concert by "Organi Caldi" (A folk/rock trio) and a photo exposition

DECEMBER

Solidarity markets

Second weekend

Christmas concert

Friday 19th

Christmas Party

(Porto Romano Secondary School - Fiumicino)

JANUARY

Tuesday 6th Epiphany party

Storytelling workshop for children

Second weekend

Theatre play "D.G. and his women"

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 17th

Great Carnival party

MARCH

Sunday 29th

Easter market

1st meeting for the presentation of the journey

APRIL

Sunday 19th

2nd meeting for presentation of journey

MAY

Cocktail party and concert

Tuesday 26th

3rd meeting for presentation of journey

Malawian curios' market and school fundraising fairs

JUNE

Theatre play - "Lab Uscita Artisti"

Tuesday 23rd

4th meeting for presentation of journey

JULY

Journey to Malawi and summer camp 2015

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

MALAWI

by HOFFMAN AIPIRA

from "The Time Traveller of Maravi"



Anchored firmly in the rich soil of our hearts and minds
This land, where the deepest and the most cherished
Of our Hopes and Dreams dwell - my beautiful country.

Write for posterity of forest green mountains and emerald
Highlands, of clear rivers deep and wide, sprinting from hilltops
And emptying in fresh water lakes that sparkle like rare jewels.

With valleys lush and fertile, we'll turn this arable land,
This country into the Garden of Eden and grow plentiful
Food to feed generations. Doing small things perfectly

And difficult jobs meticulously must be our goal. Learning
New technologies and mastering old truths - our wisdom.
We shall take a hard look at the path already travelled

And the road ahead. Above all, we shall remain united
And fiercely loyal to our values and rich cultural heritage –
Our enduring flame. Sure footed and confident, we'll make

Significant long strides forward, and we shall not
Rest, laying one brick after the other, one solid
Foundation stone after the other, cemented

With bold vision, honesty and hard work, and
Day after day, building this country together
As one, this Warm Heart of Africa.

MALAWIAN BEVERAGES

by A. Pantaleoni



We couldn't talk about typical Malawian food without mentioning the typical homemade beverages of this small but beautiful and welcoming African country.

Since ancient times man discovered various methods of preparing beverages and, as in most discoveries, it's probable that they were a result of a mistake. . . . It's interesting, though, to see how the techniques and the ingredients change just slightly from one end of the globe to another, depending on the ingredients found locally and on the equipment available.

In this case we are in Malawi and the most easily found ingredient is maize. Apart from being the basis of the Malawian diet, it is also the basis for the preparation of the three most common and most consumed beverages by the Malawian population.

Let's start from the easiest and the most consumed both by adults and children, since it is not alcoholic. We're talking about "thobwa". It's a drink that is prepared with water, maize flour (often whole grain called "ngaiwa") and a handful of millet flour or pound sorghum. First some water is boiled with the flour until it makes a sort of porridge ("phala"). More water is added and you continue to make it boil for about 15 minutes. Then a handful of millet flour or pound sorghum is added and the mixture is stirred with a wooden spoon. At this point it is taken off the fire and left to rest in a big clay pot ("mbiya") in a cool place. After two days the "thobwa" is ready to be served. It has a thick and grainy consistency, therefore before drinking it you have to shake the container in which it is served (cup, bottle or clay pot). "Thobwa" is commonly found for sale in the local markets and it is considered an energizing drink. Most people who cannot have breakfast at home or lack of filling food, fill their stomachs with some good old "thobwa" and the day starts with a nice load of energy. During the cold months it can also be found warm.

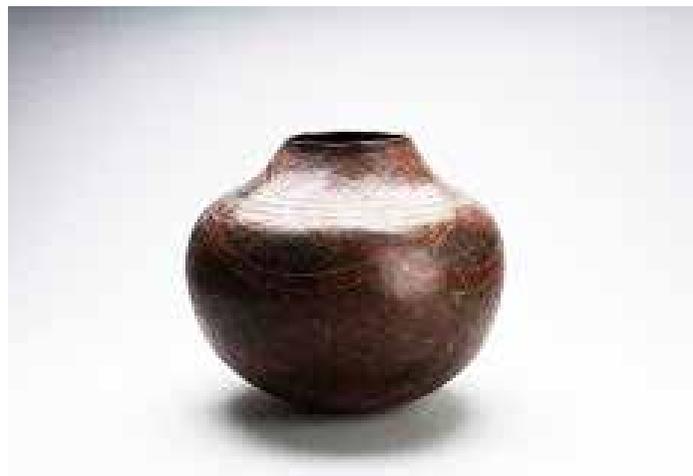
"Thobwa" is used in many occasions: it is offered to guests visiting and it is considered a celebratory drink, therefore it is consumed in great quantities at weddings.

If "thobwa" is left to ferment for 5 days it turns into "mowa" and becomes alcoholic. The word "mowa" means beer – in fact it is also called Africa beer by many non Malawians. It is made the same way in many other African countries and it is found in shanty bars or small shops in the villages. There is an industrial version called "Chibukhu" that is sold in 1 liter Tetra Pack packaging. This latter version can also be found in some bars and supermarkets. The way to drink it is the usual – shake and drink!

We can note how, more or less, the method is similar to the one used to make wine. Originally it is wine must and not alcoholic and then it becomes wine after fermentation. Finally, one of the most appreciated beverages by Europeans who visit Malawi is "kachasu". This is a distillate of maize or, sometimes, banana skin. It is therefore a kind of "grappa" or "cognac" (even the method of production is similar – the only difference is that in Malawi they use clay containers) and it is very alcoholic – around 60%!! It is produced throughout Malawi but according to many connoisseurs the best is to be found in the southern lake-shore areas. It is only found at the producers' houses and for most Malawian producers it is the main income.

These beverages are all very appreciated by Malawians and in some cases there is an abuse of them. As in many other parts of the world where the population has been or is subjected and works laboriously for a ridiculous salary, Saturday evenings are often dedicated to drinking, even excessively – dedicated to getting stoned. This is the sad side of this story, common to many populations in the world that have ended up turning to these evenings (see the origins of Blues, the Candomblé rites in Brazil, the Native American Indian rites, etc.). They are all subjected populations who use alcohol to soothe the burden of material and emotional deprivations and of humiliation. There is, however, an intriguing and primitive side to it since, very often, "mowa" parties are accompanied and cadenced by singing, drums and dances that go on all night until the break of dawn around bonfires. Even

if you're not participating personally to these parties, wherever you may be in rural Malawi, you can hear the singing and the drums filling the African night, adding that little bit more of charm to what it already has. These relentless rhythms become a sort of primordial lullaby that pulses with the heart of the continent, uniting the starred vault to the earth and the souls of the people. It is an experience that gives a great sense of belonging to that land, that you carry with you for a long time, if not forever.

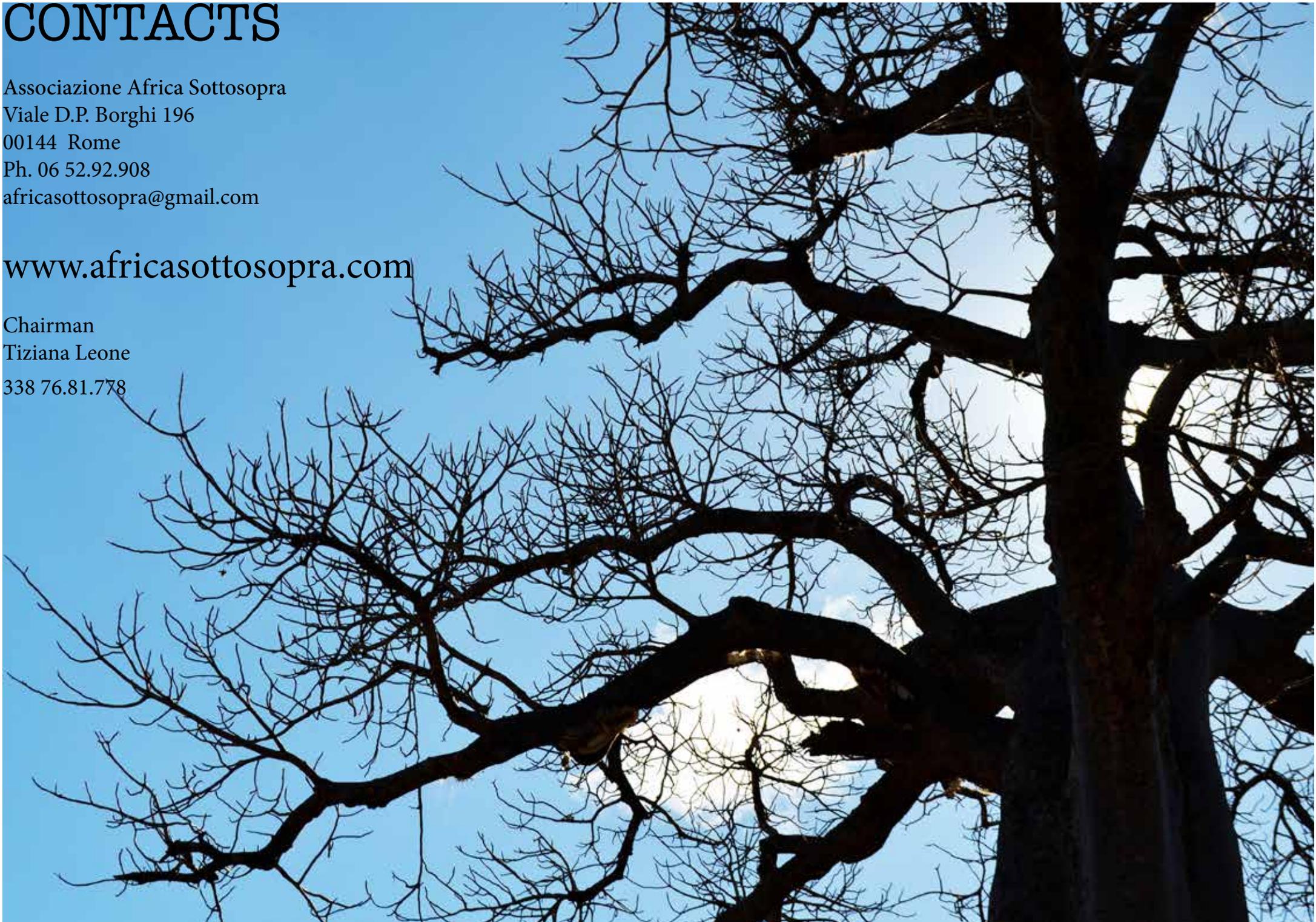


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