



## **NEWS LETTER NR. 01/08**

### **September 2008 – a summary of the period 2007-2008**

#### **The year 2007 has marked two important milestones of our journey.**

During summer we have inaugurated, with a suggestive ceremony, the middle-class school of Tekelabi. The school is located in the homonymous valley, at a walking distance of one to three kilometres from most of the villages, so allowing many boys and girls to continue their education while helping in the same time their relatives in the fields.

Their joy and their mothers' joy along with the satisfaction of the teachers has been for us the greatest reward.

In June the other milestone. A bureaucratic achievement but not less effective: Amici di Marco Onlus has been officially recognized as no-profit association by the Italian Tax Authorities and as such authorized to operate. The necessary organizational steps were arranged soon after.

The association started the 2008 with a boosted enthusiasm. Also the non-positive news from Eritrea did not touch our willingness to pursue our targets.

Our work continues even if, as you will see, with some modification to the original program.

#### **Do not forget the smiles of the Hebo's orphans**

The orphanage remains one of our core targets. This year, thanks to the supply at very favourable conditions made by a Milan pharmaceutical company Pharma1000, Amici di Marco Onlus has purchased 2400 boxes of milk powder Bambilat1 and Bambilat2 with an expiry date towards the end of 2009. The commercial value of the goods is almost €20.000 but Pharma1000 granted a discount of 80% reducing our cost to a very affordable level.

The milk arrived in Eritrea in May and has been quickly delivered to the orphanage, just on time before the residual stock was consumed. The present supply is estimated to cover the needs for most of the 2009.

#### **Proteins and carbohydrates: food for the people**

The critical food situation in Eritrea suggested us to do something also in this direction. We have therefore decided to contribute with € 5.500 to the efforts of an humanitarian organization of Vicenza, the Eritrean Project Association. They operate as we do in Eritrea. It has been filled up a container of food making sure to make a good mix of proteins and carbohydrates: flour for bread, different type of pasta, rice, legumes, canned meat, canned ham, olive oil, canned tuna fish, canned fruits and marmalades.

### **Two containers of medicines**

We notice with great satisfaction that the interest and the confidence in Amici di Marco Onlus is growing.

This makes possible to obtain unexpected supports as the one given by a famous Italian pharmaceutical Company, Zambon Italia Srl. With great generosity they have made available a huge quantity of medicines. One hundred and eighty thousand boxes that required two full 40 ft. containers. The medicines were mainly constituted by painkillers with a wide spectrum effect and female disinfectants.

The two containers arrived in Eritrea by late may. The Eritrean Catholic Secretariat has taken care of the custom clearance and of the distribution.

The distribution has been done to hospitals and medical cares managed by religious organizations, voluntary laic organizations as well as by the Eritrean Health Organization.

The commercial value of the medicines shipped is well above one million Euro. The association took care of the organization and costs for collection, packaging and shipping.

At the moment we are working to make available a future supply of medicines from a foreign country as initiative of a donator. The medicines have been purposely selected for the exigencies of the orphanage of Hebo by Doctor Laura Claut, a podiatrist of a children hospital in Milano. Last year she spent some time in Hebo with us having so the opportunity to verify the real needs. At present we are trying to obtain the import permissions.

### **A small project for the Vincentian Fathers Community in Dekhamare**

In 2006 the fathers built a college for students of a religious school and for young preast under training. The college is in the parish of the Church of the Madonna of Perpetuo Soccorso in Deckamare, the same parish where the association built in 2003 the Youth Centre.

The building has been realized with the contribution of the Vincentian Community in South Spain ( Sivilla, Granada). With an important internal courtyard , more suitable for the hot summers of Spain than the strong rains and winds typical of the rain season in the Eritrean highlands, the building was in need of a coverage to avoid internal raining but keeping meanwhile a proper luminosity without greenhouse effect.

Amici di Marco ordered the project to a company specialized in the design of industrial building coverage, ZAV Srl and supplied the Lexan plates with anti UV treatment while the still frame has been manufactured locally. The coverage is only 80% completed since some missing material has been recently supplied.

### **The infrastructural project for 2008: a coherent choice**

Our major objective for this year was to start the project of upgrading to by-road of a severely unmade-up road that goes for 15Km from the town of Segheneiti to the villages of Hebo's valley. The road should have been suitable for transit of public and private vehicles giving a dramatic improvement to the growth of the area.

As we clearly anticipated in advance when choosing this project, its realization was subject to the approval of the local Eritrean Authorities to make the road by our own. After long time of discussions our conditions were not accepted and the permit thereafter not granted. The project is for the time being on hold.

Immediately after, together with father Zeracristos, we started to look after an alternate project within their priorities.

### **The new project: a Youth Centre for the community of Hebo and the nearby villages of the valley.**

One think is done already: the name of the centre will be Oratorio of San Giustino de Jacobis. Hebo is the place where San Giustino passed away in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One day we will tell you something about this great man.

The funds for the infrastructural project today available( € 35.000) have been transferred to the Vincentian Fathers so to give an immediate green light to the project.

The Oratorio of San Luigi Gonzaga in Milano will help us to transfer the know how on how to organize the activities of the Youth Centre in Hebo. We will try to progressively transfer their experience to Eritrea.

### **Amici di marco Onlus listed for the “ five per thousand”**

The association has been registered with the Italian Tax Authorities to be entitled to obtain a donation from the tax payers who have chosen to do so in favour of the association. The donation is equal to 5 per thousand of the tax paid in 2008 for the fiscal year 2007.

We had no time for a capillary information of this initiative but anyhow a good number of relatives and friends have been able to do it.

The experience of this first year will help us in being more efficient the next time should the Italian Govern re-propose the opportunity in future

