

# *il bollettino*

4 A click for  
the environment

2 The Shareholders' meeting

10 The exhibition celebrating  
Monet's late works

30 Dreaming in Congo





This issue of *il bollettino* starts with a report from the **Shareholders' Meeting [page 2]** approving of the 2008 Financial Statements. Next is an interview with Marina Donati regarding the publication of the **Sustainability Report [page 4]** and an interesting environmental initiative, followed by beautiful images of paintings by **Monet [page 10]** accompanying the presentation of the exhibition that celebrates the painter's latest artistic period. Subsequently, a very important social issue is dealt with: a presentation of the photobook **Uganda Contro [page 15]** provides grounds for discussion on the African country and its prospects.

A new feature is also launched, that will be regularly presented in the future: the **notes for sustainable ethics column [page 22]**. This issue, in particular, focuses on recycling paper. Two articles on Generali Group activities follow: the **Miglioriamoci (Let's improve) course [page 24]**, teaching employees how to approach complexity and competitiveness in the workplace, and the organisation of **Genertel events [page 28]** to encourage team building and a sense of belonging. *il bollettino* then goes back to Africa with the **Dream per il Congo (Dream for the Congo) initiative [page 30]**, supported by Generali and promoting the fight against AIDS in this country. Finally, an article on the Venetian headquarters of the Circolo Nautico Generali at the **Squero Vecio (the Old Shipyard) [page 34]**, hosting important artistic events, rounds off the issue.

Enjoy the reading

## feature

The Shareholders' meeting

2

## fromthegroup

Let's become the agents of our own change!

24

Genertel events

28

## artandculture

Monet: a dream in a garden

30

The Squero Vecio's art tradition

34

## theinterview

A click for the environment: Marina Donati

4

## society

Uganda Contro

15

Dreaming in Congo

30

## lowimpact

Long live paper

22

### published by

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### printing

Graphart - Trieste

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# The Shareholders' Meeting

2008 Financial Statements: growing business and financial soundness

## Resolutions

The Shareholders' Meeting of Assicurazioni Generali, held April 24<sup>th</sup> in Trieste under President Antoine Bernheim, approved the 2008 Financial Statements and resolved to pay out a dividend of 0.75 Euro per share, including a 0.15 Euro payment in cash and the allocation of 1 free share for every 25 held, equivalent to 0.60

Euro based on the closing price of Generali shares at April 23<sup>rd</sup> (15.11 Euro). Shareholders set the number of members of the Board of Directors at 19, appointing the elected members of the General Council for the 2009-2011 period. The General Council is a high-level advisory body dealing with issues relating to Group development on the international insurance market and to

insurance and financial problems. The Shareholders' Meeting set the number of General Council members at 22, appointing Alejandro Valenzuela Del Rio – general manager/CEO of Grupo Financiero Banorte – as a new member, and confirming the appointments of Giorgio Davide Adler, José Ramón Alvarez Rendueles, José María Amusátegui de la Cierva, Francesco Maria Attaguile, Claude Bebear, Kenneth J. Bialkin, Gerardo Broggin, Giacomo Costa, Maurizio DeTilla, Enrico Filippi,

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## 2008 Financial Statements

2008 was marked by an exceptional economic and financial crisis, which also affected the insurance industry. Nevertheless, Generali's financial results for the year show a remarkable business development capacity and sound

Left:  
Generali Managing Directors  
**Giovanni Perissinotto** and  
**Sergio Balbinot**

Opposite page:  
President  
**Antoine Bernheim**



PH: MARINO STERLE

towards policyholders – enabled Generali to combine industrial development with financial soundness, as is witnessed by its 177% Solvency II index. Total gross premiums grew by 3.9% to 68,805 million Euro (+1.3% on equivalent terms) with higher average development rates compared to those recorded by the markets in which the Group operates. In particular, premiums grew both in the life (+3.2%) and non-life (+5.5%) lines of business. Profits for the year totalled 860.9 million Euro, as against 2.92 billion Euros in 2007 (-70.5%). This result was clearly influenced by the serious fall of financial markets, particularly in the latter part of the year, which led to an overall portfolio devaluation of approximately 5 billion Euro. In President Antoine Bernheim’s words: “Generali closes this difficult

technical profitability in the life and non-life lines of business. This satisfactory performance is ascribable to the strategy implemented over the last few years, focussing on the core insurance business and, in particular, on proprietary networks, traditional retail products and international expansion. In this scenario, Generali confirms its role as one of the best Groups in terms of capitalisation. The Group’s business risk profile and prudent financial management – always attentive to commitments

*“Generali closes this difficult year with a still growing business and one of the soundest capitals in the insurance sector.”*

*Antoine Bernheim*

year with a still growing business and one of the soundest capitals in the insurance sector. If, on the one hand, results have been inevitably affected by the global financial crisis and its impact on investments, on the other hand they show the solidity of our insurance activities, reflecting our long-term strategic choices. In the future, we will continue to pursue the prudent management that has always distinguished our operations. The dividend, as structured, allows us to reward our shareholders while keeping in mind the

interests of all the other stakeholders and attaining the right balance in the current economic situation.”

*Patricia Muñoz Lasca  
Emanuela Vecchiet*



## Culture - Writing and art for the Company

the complimentary volume presented to shareholders attending the Meeting

It is not a rare event for a rewarding, fruitful relationship to develop between the world of business and the world of culture. This becomes particularly desirable when a Group’s ultimate objective is to promote the concept of private insurance – a cultural no less than economic concept. For this reason Generali, while pursuing service quality and profitability to protect the interests of its clients and investors, is committed to supporting major cultural events such as the Monet exhibition. Equally important are the so-called “windows on culture” – of Trieste, Italy, and elsewhere –, which have originated and grown within the Company. In particular, the new book **La Cultura - Scrittura e Arte per la Compagnia (Culture – Writing and Art for the Company)**, offered as a gift to shareholders on the occasion of the Meeting and presented to the public on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Company’s Circolo Aziendale (Recreational Group), is dedicated to the rediscovery of these very roots.

The first part of the book brings together Claudio Grisancich’s articles on the theme of “memory”, published by *il bollettino* between 2003 and 2007, which were highly appreciated by readers. The articles included striking portraits of people in the forefront of the world of culture who worked at Generali, or were the authors of stories or drawings published in the corporate magazine. The reconstruction of the strong links existing between Generali and the world of culture and art is rounded out by two sections dedicated to the great illustrators who created posters for the Company and to a number of publishing initiatives of particular historical or literary relevance. The book ends with two poems and two short stories printed on blue pages that bring back the tradition of “drawer literature”: a feature of *il bollettino* from 1964 to 1968 and a metaphor of the Generali Group’s ability to draw ever new strength from its roots.

*Annamaria Miot  
Roberto Rosasco*



# A click for the environment

an initiative to raise Group employees' awareness  
of sustainability issues





**The 2008 Sustainability Report has been published. This year's illustrations are the result of a photography competition for employees, the theme of which was the environment. We discussed this with Marina Donati, head of the Group Sustainability Report and Corporate Social Responsibility Division.**

**Marina Donati, is the Sustainability Report going to be presented to an audience of students again this year?**

Yes, the presentation ceremony is planned for May 28<sup>th</sup> at the Milan Bocconi University and the audience will be mostly students, as

usual. Indeed, this event has always been targeted at young people, whose awareness of these vital issues is fundamental and should be encouraged. In particular, on the occasion of a presentation ceremony, a memorandum of understanding was signed to spread the culture of business sustainability among Bocconi students through a series of internships at Group companies.

**What is the structure of this year's Sustainability Report?**

Basically, we chose to keep the same structure as last year. The focus is

on insurance and banking activities, while the reference area includes the main countries in which the Group operates, namely Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Austria and Switzerland. Again, Israel was also included. Last year, however, the country had only been mentioned in relation to initiatives for the community and the environment, as the Report had to be published ahead of schedule. In the 2008 Sustainability Report, information has again been organized by category of stakeholder: direct (members of staff and shareholders), competitive (customers, contractual partners and issuing



*Above:*  
**Marina Donati**

*Left:*  
**Manaswee Upatham**  
**One blue sky**  
**Home for millions**

companies) or social and environmental (community and the environment).

**How has the Sustainability Report evolved since the beginning of 2004, when it was published for the first time?**

We have made the most of our team experience and of the suggestions received from the various stakeholders on different occasions and through the existing dialogue channels. This is why new sections have been added to the document, alongside in-depth analyses of significant issues for certain stakeholders, while other parts containing

less relevant information from the point of view of sustainability have been streamlined.

**Going back to the 2008 Report, how did the initiative to launch a photography contest for Group employees come about?**

The photography contest is part of a wider programme of initiatives intended to promote Group employees' awareness of environmental protection issues. This served as a follow-up to the

by images resulting from Generali Group initiatives. These included photos submitted for Fata's "Obiettivo Agricoltura" photography contest (2004 SR), for the development project of an agricultural estate in Romania (2005 SR) and for the "Radici del presente" ("Roots of the present") archaeological exhibition (2007 SR).

**In other words, your ultimate objective was to involve the whole Generali world in the preparation of the Sustainability Report...**

*"the jury intended to reward the photographers' technical and artistic skills, as well as consistency with the contest theme"*

"Risparmia, ricicla, ripensa" ("Save, re-use, re-think") campaign of the Sustainable Office project launched in December 2007: most of our colleagues welcomed this campaign and expressed their support of new initiatives in this field. This is how I came to recollect an idea sparked some time ago by Mr. Rosasco, editor of *il bollettino*, which had been temporarily shelved. I thought that a contest to illustrate the Sustainability Report with photographs taken by employees would be well received, given the popularity of this hobby all over the world. This would also give continuity to one of the features distinguishing our Report: each issue (except for the 2006 issue) is accompanied

Indeed, it was. The Sustainability Report my team and I prepare every year is not merely a document targeted at and sent to all stakeholders, but also a work that everyone can contribute to. The possibility of taking part in its preparation – for example by having one's own photo published in the magazine or even on its cover – helps bring employees closer to the issue of sustainability, stimulating their interest and commitment. This, in turn, is beneficial to the implementation of the Company's sustainability strategies and to the attainment of its objectives.

**"Ambiente: anch'io lo proteggo" ("The Environment: I protect it,**







Above, from the top: the  
contest winners:  
Stéphane Lesourd  
**Qui...**  
1<sup>o</sup> prize

Giuliano Tredici  
**Protezione**  
2<sup>o</sup> prize

Laurentiu Claudiu Alimpie  
**Reconciliation**  
3<sup>o</sup> prize ex aequo

Left:  
Carla Coghetto  
**Il giusto tempo**  
3<sup>o</sup> prize ex aequo



too”) is the title you chose for the contest. Did it take a lot of long and careful consideration to choose this title?

Honestly, no. Of course, we did consider other ideas, but we quickly discarded them in favour of this one. I have to say, this decision was also influenced by the fact that the Sustainability Committee – the organ in charge of defining sustainability strategies at Group level – chose energy and paper saving as the key environmental theme for 2008, on which to focus the Group’s attention and commitment.

*“The photography contest is part of a wider programme of initiatives intended to promote Group employees’ awareness of environmental protection issues”*

**How many photos did you receive?**

The contest secretary received approximately 400 submissions - mostly colour pictures, but also a few in black and white - sent by over eighty members of staff. I wish to stress that we consider these figures as thoroughly satisfactory, bearing in mind that this was the first time such a particular large-scale initiative was launched.

**What type of subjects were favoured in developing the chosen theme?**

The theme of environmental

protection was interpreted in various ways. Many photos simply bear witness to the beauty of nature, depicting magnificent or striking landscapes, flowers or animals. Others denounce the decay of urban or country areas due to inconsiderate human behaviour. Other photos – including the awarded works – were more closely related to the contest title, developing the themes of selective waste collection, alternative sources of energy, sustainable mobility, and reconciliation between man and nature. For example, one image found in

many photos was that of hands holding or covering elements from the animal or plant world – in an attitude of protection –, or opening to support them, signifying reconciliation and alliance between men, plants and animals, all pursuing the common objective of protecting the environment in which they live.

**Did you receive many applications from abroad?**

Geographically-speaking, participation was truly wide-ranging, with submissions coming from practically every country in which the Group is present.

**The winning photos surprised everyone. Did you meet the people who took them? What impression did you receive?**

The awards ceremony took place in Trieste at the premises of the Company’s Circolo aziendale (Recreational Group), which organized the contest. Three of the four winners attended the awards ceremony. Giuliano Tredici, who won second prize, unfortunately could not come. I was able to speak briefly with all three present. The first place award went to Stéphane Lesourd, a very young colleague (only 23 years old) who has been working for Generali France for about two years. Lesourd is a seemingly timid young man (but perhaps his shyness and silence were also due to linguistic difficulties, given that he only speaks French). He has always had a great passion for photography, but did not expect to win this contest. Carla Coghetto, who works for Generali Business Solutions in Mogliano Veneto, also seemed to be a reserved and simple, yet very cordial person. Like the other winners, she was initially sitting at the back of the hall. We had to single them out among the audience to give them the place they deserved, in the first row. Laurentiu Claudiu Alimpie, a Romanian colleague of Generali Asigurari, appeared to be the most at ease while surrounded by so much attention in a new environment. He was among the first to arrive and said



he was very happy to be given the opportunity to visit Trieste, which he was able to admire from the terrace of the Circolo. His pictures reveal a skilled photographer, however – as he himself pointed out – he is also an ecologist who wanted his participation in the contest to be his, albeit small, contribution to protecting the environment.

**The photos that did not win prizes were also masterfully taken...**

On this subject I would like to bring up the comments made by the most qualified, technically-speaking, members of the jury, namely artist Giorgio Cisco and professional photographer Gabriele Crozzoli, who expressly emphasized the high quality of the works submitted. Alongside the winning photos, many others show great technical ability, harmony in composition and a skilled use of colour, which the jury did not fail to appreciate.

**How did the jurors make their choices?**

The jury intended to reward the photographers' technical and artistic skills, as well as consistency with the contest theme – not just the environment, but environmental protection –, which was not always the focus of the works submitted. The jury also rewarded photographs (both traditional and digitally-processed) that illustrated the various aspects of environmental protection

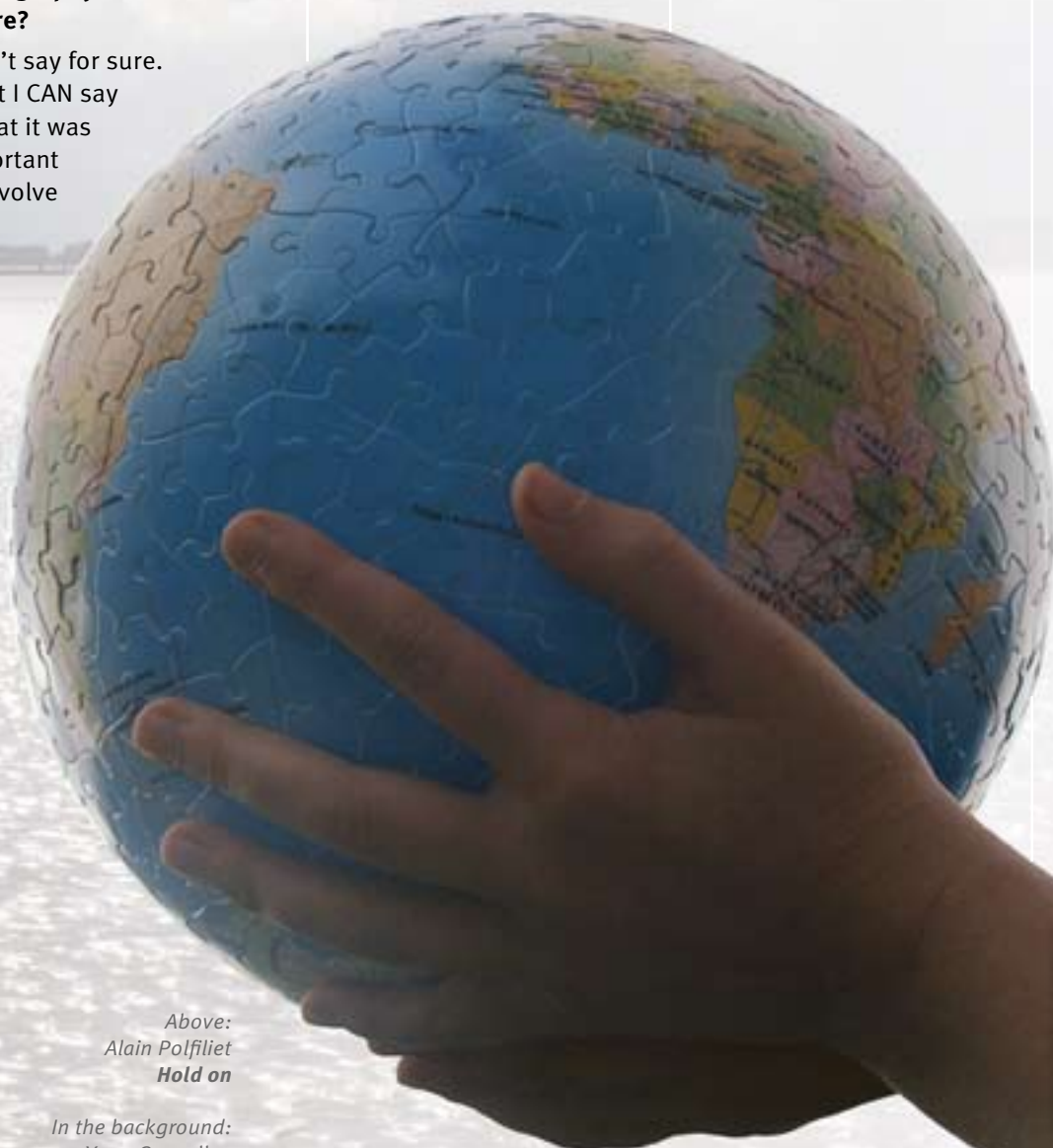
(sustainable mobility, the reconciliation between man and nature), highlighting the complex nature of this issue and launching a series of messages. However, the jury's choice almost immediately fell on a limited number of works, including the winning photographs, which were selected according to the above criteria.

**Will there be other photography contests in the future?**

I can't say for sure. What I CAN say is that it was important to involve

people from so many different countries, and that it would be nice to hold another, similarly far-reaching initiative in the years to come, possibly exploring a different means of expression.

*Elisabetta Delfabro*



*Above:*  
*Alain Polfiliet*  
**Hold on**

*In the background:*  
*Yann Gensollen*  
**Elements**



# A dream in a garden

The exhibition celebrating Monet's late works  
hosted at Milan's Palazzo Reale



“I am in ecstasy, I find Giverny to be a splendid village” wrote Claude Monet in 1883. He continued to show his appreciation for this village in 1890 when, believing it was “impossible to find a similar accommodation in an equally beautiful place”, he purchased the estate in Giverny. Giverny is a life’s dream, his real great project. In this estate he invested all of his energy, seeking to create the most important work of art: his garden, which is exactly the starting point of the exhibition entitled: *Monet - Il tempo delle ninfee* (The time of the water lilies), held in Milan

*Monet’s life can be divided into two phases: before and after Giverny, with Japanese influence providing a link between the two*

(Palazzo Reale, from 30 April to 27 September) and sponsored by Generali. The heart of the exhibition path consists of 20 masterpieces from the Musée Marmottan of Paris, home to the world’s largest collection of Monet’s works. In a completely empty meadow in Giverny, irrigated by an arm of the River Epte, a tributary of the Seine, Monet created a Japanese garden by digging a large pond in the centre, planting exotic trees, ferns, rhododendrons, azaleas, and weeping willows along the shores as well as thousands of water

lilies, of rare varieties and all the colours of the rainbow; framing everything with a Japanese bridge where the river flowed out of the pond. “I wanted to stay here where I am happy” said Monet, and so he did. He never left this place, except for short trips, and painted little else but landscapes, continuing to explore and study optical vibrations, chromatic influences, based on his perception of the iridescent sheet of water and of the aquatic plants it contained. After the great cycles of sheaves and cathedral façades, it was the time of the water lilies.

### Monet and Japanese art

Before Monet, no European artist had ever dedicated a whole series of works to a single motif. The forerunners in this genre were Japanese, in particular Katsushika Hokusai, the creator of many series including the famous 36 views of Mount Fuji. Monet was fascinated by Japanese woodcuts and became the biggest collector of these works (over 200 pieces) within his artistic circle. As a collector he had a keen eye; he never went to Japan, but became friends with writers, merchants, and experts who guided him in making quality choices. In his collection, we find works by Hiroshige, Utamaro and Hokusai: the best of *ukiyo-e* prints. We don’t know exactly when and how Monet fell in love with Japanese art, but this love







certainly accompanied him until he died; and not just physically – these prints cover the walls of his drawing room and dining room in Giverny – but also artistically. As the story goes, one day in 1871, Monet entered a shop in Amsterdam and was fascinated by some Japanese prints used to wrap food. This was the beginning of his collection; in his writings, however, the artist says he bought his first Japanese print at the age of 16 in 1856, in Le Havre. Regardless of the date, this discovery certainly changed Monet's life, which can be divided into two phases: before and after Giverny, with Japanese influence providing a link between the two. And it was at Giverny that the two worlds dear to Monet (already a mature painter) suddenly merged into something new, generating a different perception of image.



Nature may be represented in immobile yet fluctuating time. This was the discovery Monet drew from Japanese art and its images, from the innumerable, repeated views of Mount Fujiyama, of a bridge over water, of a

curved line suggested an idea of movement. The photographic style was matched by an essential perspective, with coloured surfaces and contrasting empty spaces.

*The painting becomes a reality of its own, in which light, colour and their interaction can be investigated regardless of reality and its forms.*

branch of roses in bloom. He also learnt how to “read” landscapes and nature through a single fragment; free from hierarchies, from the presence of man, indispensable in the eyes of Western culture. If present, man does not dominate nature but rejoices in being part of it. Monet tried to grasp the most profound element of Japanese culture, painting a sequence of views of his garden. Here, nature is described as immutable yet ever changing; an absolute nature, which, however, transforms over time: “Again, I have taken on things that are impossible to do: water swaying at the bottom... it is beautiful to see but it is absolute madness to want to paint it”. Monet thus transformed the influence of Japanese culture into a stimulus to overturn (also from a stylistic point of view) the traditional conception of image. Japanese prints were two-dimensional representations, with flat colours and no chiaroscuro, but dynamic: the simple and sinuous

## Il tempo delle ninfee (The time of the water lilies)

Monet treasured these elements, applying them to his artistic studies that finally led to the cycle of water lilies. In 1908, he wrote to a friend: “I am fully engrossed in my work. These landscapes of water and reflections have become an obsession. It is something that goes beyond the strength of the old man I am, yet I want to be able to express what I feel. Some I’ve destroyed [...] and some I’m starting anew”. Monet dedicated the last years of his life to creating this last, numerous, difficult series, which is also his last message. It is an innovative art, verging on abstraction, and the climax of Monet’s revolutionary artistic growth, moving away from traditional painting (intended as a representation of reality). This process had started with Impressionism and its study of light and colour. The painting becomes

Previous pages:  
background,  
Claude Monet, **Roses**, 1925-1926 oil on canvas, 130x200 cm  
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet

below left,  
Giraudon, **Claude Monet in his garden in Giverny**,  
1925 b/w photo – Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet

right, Katsushika Hokusai  
detail of **Goldfinch and Cherry Tree**, 1834  
polychrome woodcut, 25.3x18.5 cm  
Paris, Musée Guimet – National Museum of Asian Art

Opposite page:  
Katsushika Hokusai  
**The great wave off Kanagawa**, 1830-1832  
polychrome woodcut, 24.8x36.3 cm  
Paris, Musée Guimet – National Museum of Asian Art

Below:  
Claude Monet, **Water lilies**, 1907  
oil on canvas, 100x73 cm – Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet

Next page:  
Claude Monet, **Water lilies. Evening effect**, 1897  
oil on canvas, 73x100 cm – Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet





a reality of its own, in which light, colour and their interaction can be investigated regardless of reality and its forms. Leaving this artistic legacy, Monet proved to be a man of our times and paved a new high road that contemporary artists are still exploring.

## The exhibition at Palazzo Reale

In the last years of his life, Monet withdrew to his estate in Giverny, to paint in isolation surrounded by nature alone. And it is exactly this idea of immersion in nature that Claudia Zevi – curator of the exhibition –, Jacques Taddes, H el ene Bayou,

*“it took me a lot of time to understand my water lilies. [...] And then all of a sudden my eyes were opened to the magic of my pond. I picked up my palette... and since then have had no other models”*

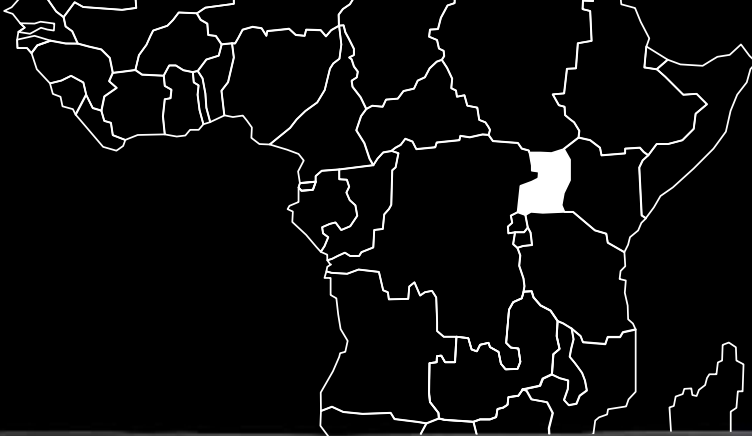
*Claude Monet*

Michel Draguet, Marco Fagioli and Delfina Rattizzi, wished to convey to visitors. Indeed, Monet’s twenty paintings guide us through all the stages of the long cycle of the water lilies: from the first phase, characterised by smaller paintings, to the second phase, with very large works, all through the artist’s dark period, when he risked losing his eyesight due to a cataract. Despite his difficulties, Monet continued to paint until he found

serenity again. Alongside the paintings, the exhibition includes ample photographic documentation with images of the garden in Giverny, as well as a reference to Japanese art, with sixty prints by Hokusai and Hiroshige (from the Mus e Guimet of Paris). The display of these works (in rotation for reasons of preservation) was made possible thanks to an exceptional collaboration between the two great French institutions. The

comparison between the idea of landscape in Japanese art and in Monet’s works is finally completed by a series of precious 19<sup>th</sup> century hand-coloured photographs of Japanese gardens.

*Deborah Zamaro*



# UGANDA CONTRO

Silvano Monchi | Antonio Manta

*“The apparent ease of travel, the proliferation of roads, cars, mobile phones and the possibility to use ever more sophisticated cameras all contribute to the profoundly flawed idea that preparing a photo report of the situation in Africa is now a relatively simple thing to do. In fact, the opposite is quite true, as is shown by the work that has been published. Much like all properly-performed research jobs, it has an internal harmony; it flows like a story, with striking details but also – and above all – a strong main thread, which is the result of a great deal of effort. A secondary aspect to most people, the intensity of light – that makes it difficult to take good pictures of black people – thus becomes a central element. Photos can only be taken when conditions permit, taking into account difficult transportation conditions when arranging transfers, and adjusting (or choosing to not adjust) to the way things are dealt with in Africa, which is very different from what we are*

*used to. Yet there is a feeling that these very difficulties drove the photographers to find unexpectedly successful aesthetic solutions”.* This is how Roberto Mutti, critic and journalist, introduced Silvano Monchi and Antonio

Manta’s work – the photos were taken on the occasion of a visit to the Diocese of Arua from 2 to 16 October 2007 – at the beginning of the book published by Fata Assicurazioni: In order to grasp the reality of these

territories, we interviewed the two photographers as well as Ivana Ciapponi, who prepared the texts of *Uganda Contro (Fighting Uganda)*, and Giuseppe Perissinotto, president of Fata. Since early 2005, Fata has been



FATA  
ASSICURAZIONI





PH: FRANCO SARRI

*Left:  
Father Natalino and Giuseppe Perissinotto  
at the presentation of the book*

The pictures accompanying this article are taken from the book **Uganda Contro**

*“we need to pool our strengths and skills to show the people down there the resources they have within arm’s reach”*

*Giuseppe Perissinotto*

contributing to Father Emanuel Maria Vura’s Uganda project.

**Silvano, how did you receive the proposal to document the situation in Uganda?**

I received the proposal from Giorgio Cagnetti, an engineer who works for Fata and who followed the whole operation, keeping in touch with us even while we were in Africa. I already knew him, as I am involved in the organisation of the “*Obiettivo Agricoltura*” (Objective Agriculture) photography contest (editor’s note: for further information on the 2009 contest, please visit the website [www.obiettivoagricoltura.it](http://www.obiettivoagricoltura.it)).

**Tell us a little about this journey...**

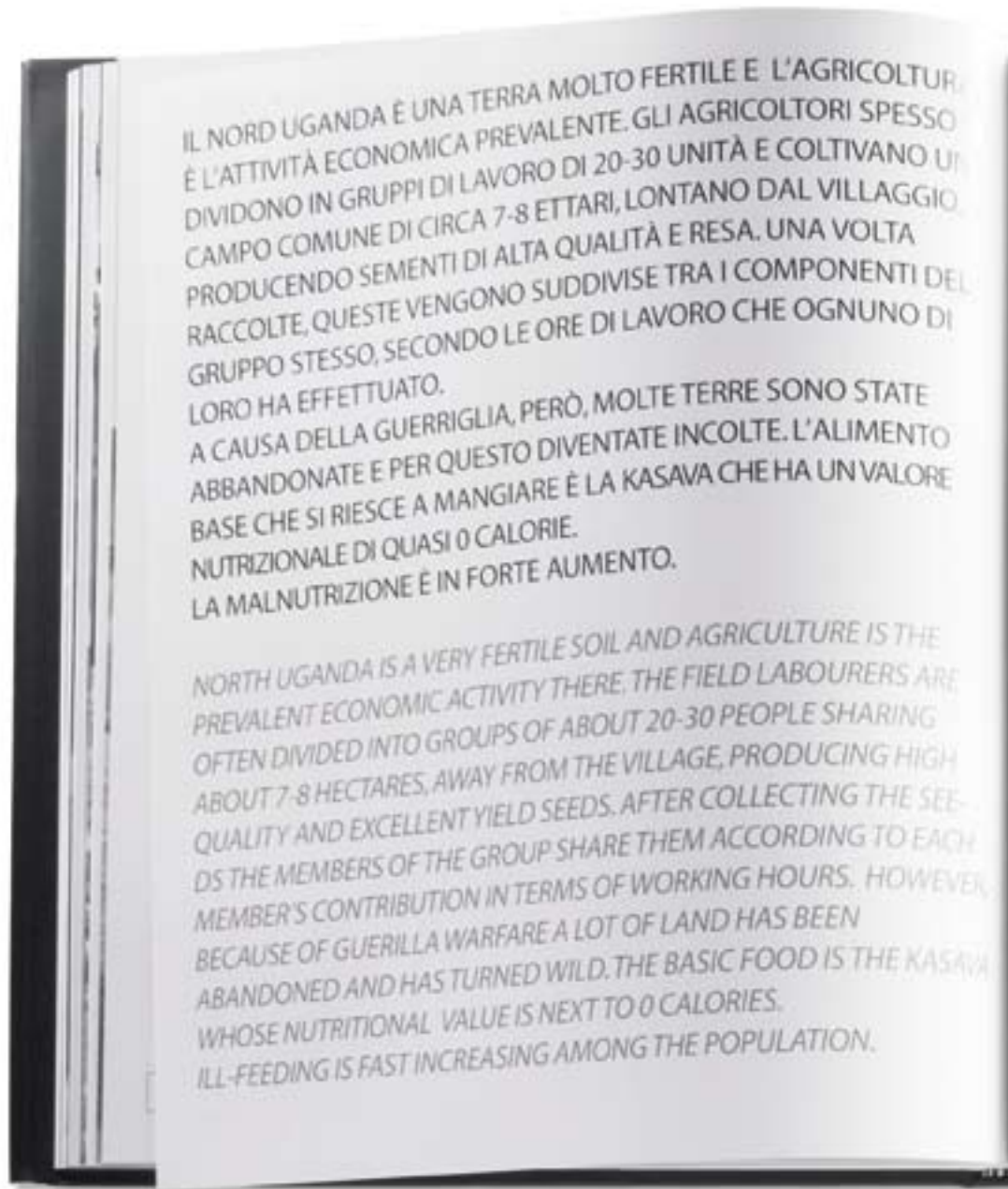
We left to prepare a photo report on Father Emanuel Maria Vura’s work, which Fata had been supporting for years. Based on the information we had, we expected hundreds of ex child soldiers but we found a much more complex situation. Indeed, Father Natalino – as everyone calls him – used to go into the forest and take the children back with him... but the people we met were children ten years ago: they’re adults now.

**Has Father Emanuel Maria Vura been doing this work for a long time?**

Yes, for a very long time: over the course of the years he has saved over four hundred children. Furthermore, ex child soldiers are not always welcome when they go back to their villages, so he does a lot to support their reintegration.

**Did guerrilla warfare also affect the villages where these children come from?**

Yes, the raids took place on their land in the Diocese of Arua, a territory as large as Tuscany and Umbria combined, in the far northwest of



## Interview with Giuseppe Perissinotto

President of Fata Assicurazioni

### Mr. Perissinotto, why has Fata chosen to support humanitarian activities in Africa?

Two elements led us to reflect on the African situation: this is a continent where people die of starvation, but which has at the same time an extraordinary productive potential. There is plenty of solar energy and the land is fertile. Water is missing, that is true, but not because it's not there: it's simply not being used. We find this consideration profoundly striking, given our agricultural origins. We can't let these populations stay in their countries and starve: we

must find a way to help them live with dignity on the land where they were born. And then, we were lucky enough to meet Father Natalino.

### How did you meet him?

He was a good friend of the spiritual father of Italian farmers, who make up a significant part of our agricultural insurance structure. We were immediately fascinated by his personality and thus we decided to support him with all of the resources we would allocate for social causes.

### So this is why you went to Uganda...

We most certainly concentrated our action in Africa after meeting this Ugandan priest. We support his objective – which is by no means easy to achieve – of taking children away from the guerrillas and helping them work the land.

Thus, giving them a job, Father Natalino also supports their reintegration in the social fabric by contributing to the sustenance of their own villages.

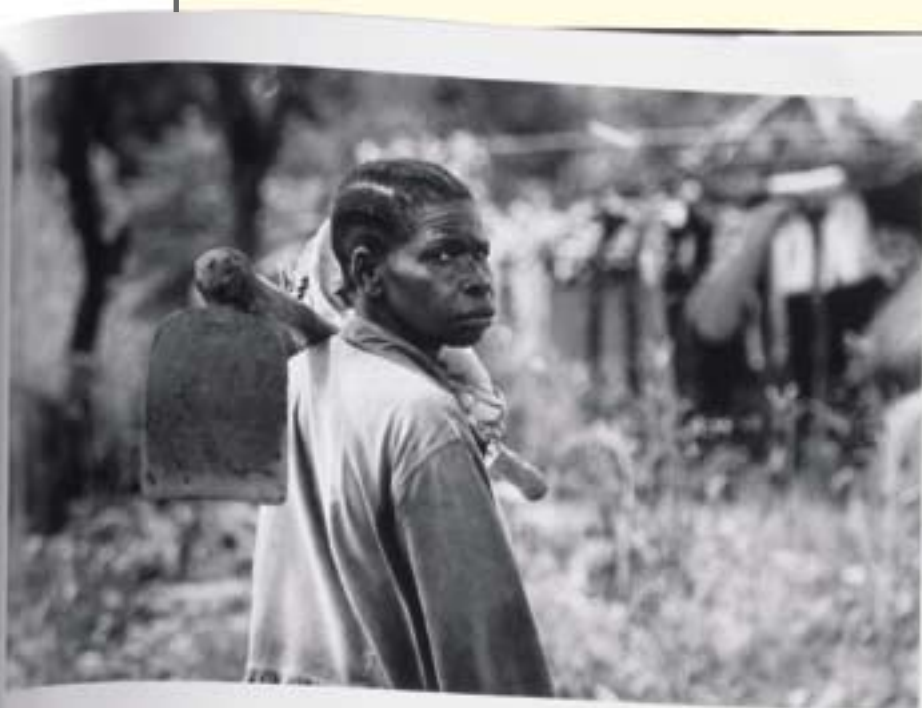
### The Diocese of Arua where he works is enormous...

It really is very large, there is an urban area as well as a peripheral area. Recently we also provided him with an off-road vehicle: sometimes the villages are so distant – even within the diocese – that he would spend entire days travelling on foot or by boat. However, we do realise that our contribution is small compared to local needs, and we believe it is very important to encourage other institutional and business entities to come into action, as we chose to do.

### This very book, *Uganda Contro*, has been intended to raise public awareness of the situation in this war torn country.

Yes, that is certainly the ultimate purpose of this book. The Senate immediately granted its support and made it possible to officially present the book in a magnificent setting. This allowed us to draw a certain level of public attention towards the initiatives underway in northern Uganda and other organisations have already chosen to support them.

Personally, I am convinced that this is what we should do: we need to pool our strengths and skills to show the people down there the resources they have within arm's reach. Nothing is as vital as water, and it would be enough if we could just show these people how to use it and how to best employ it in productive cycles.



the country, along the border between the Congo and Sudan. That is where Father Natalino works together with Bishop Frederick Drandua to help ex-guerrillas, their families and the people of the villages affected by the raids. This is also possible thanks to the group agricultural work organised on common land. In any case, the amount of initiatives Father Natalino is involved in is amazing... for example, we didn't know he had founded four orphanages. Our task was to document all these activities with images.

**And this, in what is considered a risky area...  
Did you ever fear for your safety?**

Actually, no. Except for the first day when, after we had landed in Kampala, we reached the proximity of the Nile by minibus. It was already night-time, and the ferry chief refused to take us to the other shore. We were near the Congo border and there were guerrillas. That's where we saw the first machine-gun. Fortunately, after an hour's negotiation Father Natalino convinced him to take us on and we continued our journey. However, even then we were frightened not so much for our safety, but for all the equipment... it would have been a mess to start the journey without our cameras.

**Speaking of equipment, what sort of obstacles did you encounter?**

We had little time with actual viewing light, good for photography, and we had to devise some stratagems to take good shots.

**Were you satisfied with the results?**

Yes, very much so, though I have to say that we were not immediately aware of the quality of our work. When we returned from our journey we were convinced that we had regular photos, that the work was worth little or nothing. Then, gradually, we forgot the sounds, the scents and the feelings that we had carried along with us and we began to look at the material with a photographer's critical eye. That is when we realised that the results were good.

**Antonio, how did the book project on Uganda come about?**

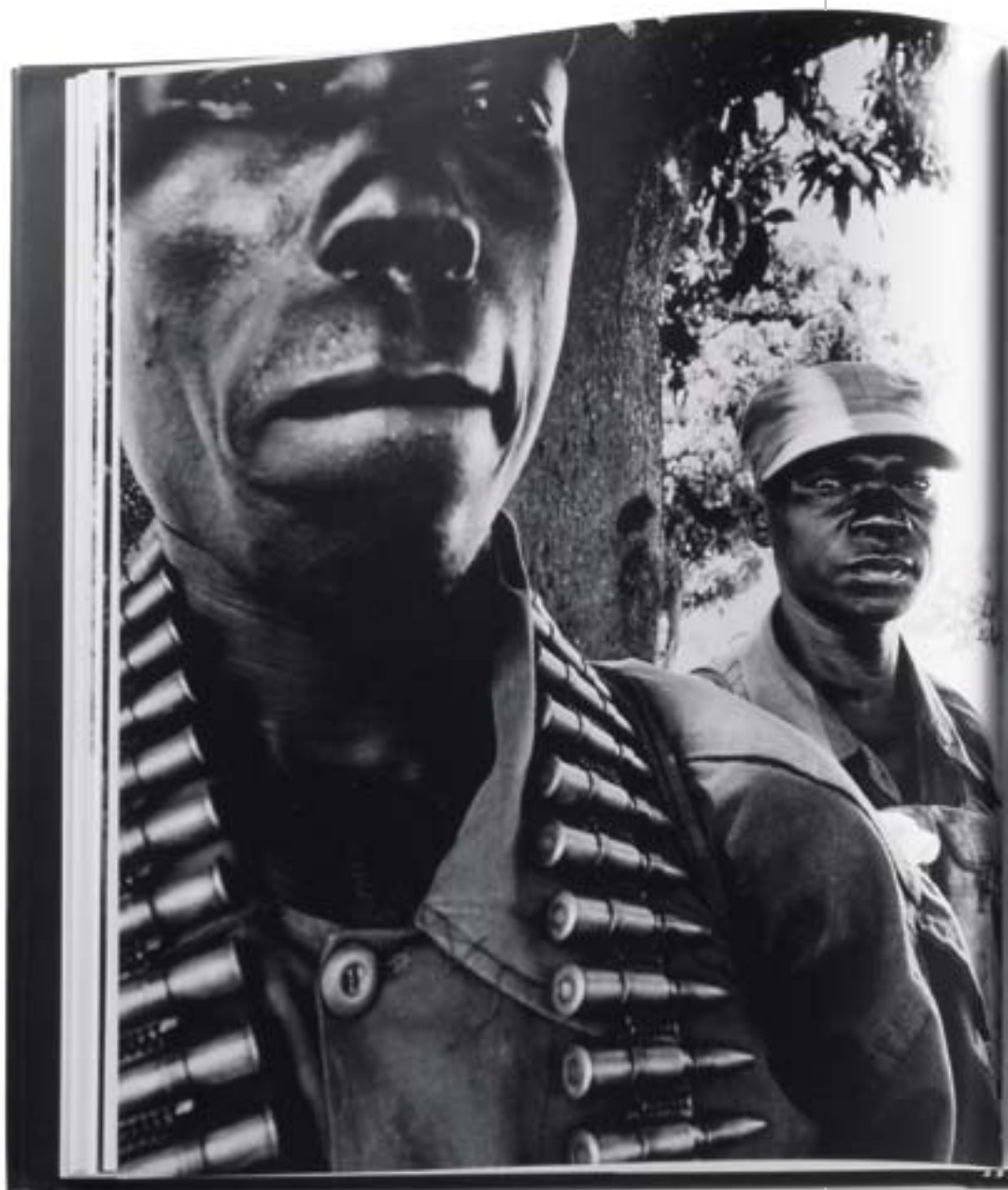
When Silvano received engineer Cagnetti's proposal, he asked me if I wished to join him in this adventure. He valued my experience in difficult, war-stricken areas.

**You are a consolidated team, having prepared other publications together...**

Yes, that's true, we've known each other for a long time. Together we prepared a book on Armenia and we went to Algeria for a photo report on the Saharawi people. These initiatives, however, were not as dramatic as the experience in northern Uganda. At the end of our stay in that country we were so jittery that we became irritated over nothing.

**Did it take a lot of time to get everything ready for the journey?**

Fata commissioned the work in early summer 2007. We had just enough time to get the necessary (seven) vaccines and left at the beginning of October.





*"I could not really explain the hostility that still dominates life in that country: the land is very green, very beautiful, these people could potentially have no problems with water or food"*

*Antonio Manta*

**What was your perception of the situation once you arrived in northern Uganda?**

Although we did not see anything in particular, aside from weapons, we could feel the tension... I would say that there was a strange sense of calm. Anyway, people mistrusted us, possibly because we were always the only white people there.

**You are an experienced traveller. Did you find this journey interesting?**

Yes, it was a great experience, which, however, left a bitter taste in my mouth: I could not really explain the hostility that still dominates life in that country.

The land is very green, very beautiful, these people could potentially have no problems with water or food; my mind goes to Dakhla in western Sahara, where people really have nothing to live on and goats would eat the cardboard boxes sent by humanitarian organisations. At the end of my journey, the only thing that was clear to me was the scope of Father Natalino's work!

**This priest is always on the front line...**

The rebels even shot at him, but he is not one to give up easily. He is an extraordinary person, beyond ordinary, a mountain of a man (we would always joke about this... I am not a twig either!), always full of energy and ideas. As deputy Bishop of the Diocese of Arua he travels far and wide through the territory, covering many kilometres every day by public transportation and on foot. What deeply moved me is that Father Natalino was the only priest I saw always wearing the white collar, even though this is a great risk as he can be easily recognised by the rebels.

**Ivana, you helped writing the texts of *Uganda Contro* because you had already published a book on these territories, but what is your background?**

I obtained my degree in political science from the State University of Milan and wrote my research thesis on the situation of child soldiers in Africa. I analysed all the measures taken to protect children in war torn areas from the point of view of international law, and then I devoted a whole section of my work to Uganda. Shortly after I graduated, a publisher asked me to review my work and deemed it fit for publication. It was an unexpected gift.



### How did you decide to focus your research on this region of Africa?

In 2001 I heard the account of a Comboni sister who had just returned from Uganda, speaking to the young people in my town. She showed us footage with direct testimony that really moved me; I knew that, in some parts of the world, children were used in armed conflicts but until that moment I had no idea of the violence associated with this phenomenon. To train the children, these rebels force them to fight with their bare hands, giving them a stick before they hold a rifle and fuelling violence between them. At the time, I was attending a new course on the international protection of human rights, which only analysed old cases. However, I felt that current examples should be examined, which even surpassed academic cases in their levels of brutality. For this reason, I decided to reveal what I had come to learn and organised my research work following my heart and sense of justice.

### Had you been to Uganda to widen your analysis?

Unfortunately that was not possible, because at that time there were frequent armed incursions by the guerrillas. I carried on with my work from here, interviewing the staff of international organisations returning from Africa, performing painstaking historical research and maintaining contact with the Comboni missions in Gulu, one of the most affected areas. This possibly made my work even more effective because people there are frightened, it's difficult for them to answer your questions and many do not want to give their opinion on the rebels... many have sons and nephews among them, who were kidnapped as small children. However, I was able to go there in summer 2005.

### Did you find inconsistencies with what you had discovered in your research?

I found confirmation of everything that was in my research work, in fact I'd say that it was even worse to see the situation with my own eyes, unfortunately.

I had a lot of reports on children entering rehabilitation centres, on the accounts of their captivity given to doctors, but to see them mutilated, some without arms or legs, sometimes with their faces mutilated, and so alone... that was a totally different thing.



*“I knew that, in some parts of the world, children were used in armed conflicts but until that moment I had no idea of the violence associated with this phenomenon”*

*Ivana Ciapponi*



**Do we know how many children have been kidnapped?**

Over twenty years of guerrilla warfare, 30,000 children have been kidnapped. Guerrilla warfare began in 1986, however the current leader Joseph Koni took command two years later, and then the mass kidnappings began. On top of that, in 2001 he gave orders to kidnap also small children from five years of age. According to several international sources, the rebels today have 1,500 children in their hands, while nobody knows the fate of 10,000 other children. Over all these years of guerrilla warfare, many children have managed to escape, the bravest by night on their own initiative, terrified of being caught and killed; others let themselves be captured by government troops during the raids.

**Are only male children kidnapped?**

Actually, no, adolescent girls are kidnapped, too. They are then used as sexual slaves and often given as wives to kidnapped boys. In several interviews, Joseph Koni has expressed the idea of creating a new community, purifying his ethnic group – he is an Acholi, as are these children, torn from their parents and indoctrinated according to specific rituals.

**What is the situation like today?**

Over twenty years of armed conflict, the rebels have claimed an unspecified number of victims – approximately 100,000 – and around two million displaced people. Since August 2006, peace talks have been underway between the Ugandan government and LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) rebels, to reach a global peace agreement that has not been signed, yet. Insecurity still rules, especially in the northwest border areas of Uganda. The rebels take refuge in the northeast forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and continue to launch massive attacks. According to Caritas Congo, at least four hundred died in the attacks during the week after Christmas. Hundreds of children were also captured, then taken into the woods and recruited as innocents into an army of slaves.

**What can you tell me about the book *Uganda Contro*?**

I tried to provide both a historic framework and a current description of the situation to introduce the images. I must admit that seeing Silvano and Antonio's pictures plunged me back into the past and I found myself there again, surrounded by the same faces and the same insecurities of the people I had found in the Gulu mission. The texts I wrote came to me naturally, as the photos documenting daily life in the Diocese of Arua are truly beautiful and touched something inside of me that I can never forget.

*Elisabetta Delfabro*





Certifies that fibres come from forests with sustainable integrated cultivation



Certifies the use of recycled or secondary cellulose fibres from high quality, pure raw materials

Certifies conformity with the 94/62 EC Directive, establishing the maximum level of heavy metal concentration



an appointment with environmental sustainability, open to collaboration with environmentally-oriented departments and colleagues

# Long live paper

a virtuous circle, where everyone does their part

After our debut with the new *il bollettino* in February, here is our next contribution to the environment: a column dedicated to sustainability. One of the ultimate goals of redesigning the corporate magazine was to reduce its environmental impact, with eco-friendly packaging, certified ink and paper and careful

unheeded: *primum non nocere!* (first, do no harm) To begin with, we decided to deal with an issue that was part of our everyday life: it seemed to us that paper recycling was particularly relevant to those activities that, like ours, are mostly performed inside offices. The subject of paper consumption is perfectly in line with the indications of the Group's

of our daily life, a problem or a resource depending on the approach we choose to adopt. Over the last few years, much has been said about eco-sustainable behaviour that, if considered and applied by each one of us, can make a difference. This type of behaviour should be adopted round the clock, both at home and at work, where we spend most of our time. Carefully recycling paper and cardboard, printing documents and email only if necessary, using both sides of paper sheets and printing front/back: these are just some of the more common recommendations, which, little by little, are becoming part of our daily practices. But will all of this paper really be recovered? Is there a concrete benefit for the environment? Many people probably ask themselves similar questions, especially those who live in areas where selective waste collection is still not methodically implemented or who do not realise, due to lack of communication from the authority, the advantages and concrete results of what is being done. Looking at the data collected, we can be rather optimistic.

distribution. To round out our commitment, this second issue sees the beginning of a four-monthly appointment with environmental sustainability, open to collaboration with environmentally-oriented departments and colleagues. In line with the Group's ethical principles, we undertake to address issues related to the well-being of the people and territory surrounding us. In doing so, we move from an old principle, shared but often

Sustainability Committee (involving representatives from countries in which the Company operates and defining sustainability actions at Group level), which proposed "energy and paper saving" as the theme representing its 2008 policy. Waste and recycling are therefore two key issues, frequently dealt with by the media in connection with damage to nature due to decay and poor management. However, waste is not merely an embarrassing news item: it is an integral part







*Expresses the neutrality value of a material obtained by adopting acid-free production processes*



*Refers to the 9706 standard and establishes the requirements determining the long life of paper*



*Identifies products and services with low environmental impact according to European environmental and performance criteria*



*Certifies that paper is chlorine-free*

Regulations are becoming increasingly specialized. In Italy, in particular, the crucial 1997 *Decreto Ronchi* (Ronchi Decree) implemented the European Directive on packaging recycling and collection, stressing a fundamental concept: every one of us is responsible for preserving the environment and protecting natural

and manufacturers play an active role in it. The former may make a significant contribution by systematically reusing and recycling materials, whereas the latter are called upon to apply a serious forest management policy. Processing only timber from sustainably managed forests, using wood from trees left

books, used paper sheets, bags, and boxes are a great source of wealth that must not be wasted. Indeed, it might live on almost until the end of time if it becomes part of a virtuous circle where everyone does their part. Recycling means saving raw materials, energy, money... it means reducing pollution.

*Paola Cabas*

*Waste [...], a problem or a resource depending on the approach we choose to adopt*

resources. Moreover, various sources report remarkably positive figures, showing that the number of “virtuous” municipalities is increasing, that the European paper industry is more and more involved in the fight against deforestation (in Europe and elsewhere, only 12% of timber is used for paper production) and that paper is the most recycled product (more than half of production comes from recycling – in Italy 56 tons for every 100 tons of paper produced). Nevertheless, deforestation and chemical pollution (for the treatment of raw materials) are still a problem and the most negative effect of the paper production cycle. Unfortunately, as yet no industrial production and transformation activities have been implemented, that do not negatively impact the environment in one way or another. However, a solution to these environmental problems does exist, and both consumers

over from other sectors (e.g. sawmills) and – obviously – collecting as much raw material as possible through recycling programmes: these are the major challenges ahead. The figures help us better understand how advantageous it can be to carefully separate our waste materials: to produce 1 ton of white paper, 15 trees, 440,000 litres of water and 7,600 KWH of electric energy are needed, whereas for 1 ton of recycled paper, 1,800 litres of water and 2,700 KWH of energy are sufficient. Careful, though: not all paper is suitable for recycling. A few simple things must be borne in mind when recycling: always avoid placing paper soiled with glue, oil or grease, contaminated paper from foodstuff, greaseproof or laminated paper in recycling containers, and remember that waste must be free from cellophane and any plastic, iron or polystyrene parts. Newspapers, magazines,

**Good news from the Group**

Most of Generali Group waste is recycled. On the subject of paper, following are some of the numerous important actions that have characterised Generali’s global commitment in 2008. FRANCE: rationalisation of the use of printed paper with a significant reduction of consumption (e.g. 345 payment notice templates were reduced to 12 templates). GERMANY: use of washable towels instead of paper towels. SPAIN: Europ Assistance reached a series of agreements with several public institutions to reduce the number of documents to be presented in hardcopy. HOLLAND: all printers are set for front/back default printing. USA: faxes are directly connected to the computer and viewed as email. BRAZIL: food baskets were purchased for the needy with the money saved from selling paper to the pulping mill.



# Miglioriamoci (Let's improve)

Let's become the agents of our own change!

Within the current state of affairs, studded with continual and sudden transformations, the Generali Group in Italy continues with its process of change and wishes to extend the shared leadership model – launched with the *Essere Leader* (To be a leader) initiative – to all levels of the organization and all employees. This

is the background of *Miglioriamoci* (Let's improve), the company's strategic alignment initiative, promoted by the Generali Group Innovation Academy and aimed at enhancing employee awareness of, and commitment in Group strategies. "*Miglioriamoci*" started off as a pilot programme in June 2007.

Its goal was to provide an approach allowing Group members of staff to better understand and flexibly handle today's complex and competitive situations, encouraging team culture and starting from self-management, time optimisation and knowledge sharing. The Group – explains Kristen Dunlop,





PH: ANDREA LAVARIA

Academy manager – chose to invest in its own employees and fully involve them in tackling the challenges posed by the market and the current working situation. Thus we “reinforce” the strategic processes underway and place an ever greater emphasis on the commitment of our members of staff”. Over 15 months, 164 “*Miglioriamoci*” courses have been held, with 2,230 participants and totalling an average participation rate of 38% of members of staff. Responses from our colleagues have been positive and, for this reason, the Group has decided to continue offering other colleagues this opportunity. The course, involving the entire organisation, is structured as a 3-day intragroup seminar – attendance is optional – and responds to a number of requests that came up on the occasion of the *Ascoltiamoci* (Let’s listen) Project. “Right from the outset, this programme has been aimed at helping employees develop a positive approach in managing

changes, promoting a culture of involvement and assertiveness at an operational as well as relational level”, says Claudia Stella, coordinator of the Academy managerial training programmes. “Thanks to *Miglioriamoci* – continues Stella – everyone’s ‘visual field’ can be widened to encompass new prospects

for collaboration with colleagues, even from other offices. People learn how to work in a condition of uncertainty and stress and to play an active part in seeking solutions to everyday problems; In other words, people are taught how to live better within the Company, which is what we hope remains with participants of our courses. The course has been designed to

encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own development, reinforce self-esteem, facilitate communication with other Group divisions and disseminate a common language making each person an essential part of the whole organisation. *Miglioriamoci* focuses on the individual, within

the framework of today’s continually evolving situation (at organisation, relationships and team level) consequently developing self-awareness on several fronts. “The *Miglioriamoci* project has achieved excellent results - says Marta Casini, project manager of the Generali Group Innovation Academy in the managerial area – and feedback from

the participants was extremely positive, beyond expectations. My experience with course participants over the months has been exciting and a motivation for professional growth. Of course, we did encounter some scepticism and doubts, but it was surprising to see how, over three days, people chose to let themselves be involved in the different activities and, consequently, were able to fully appreciate this experience. “The participants – explains Casini - had an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, to discuss them and acquire greater awareness of themselves, others and external reality. In particular, a workshop – spanning over the course’s three days – allowed the participants to put the subjects discussed with the course lecturer and developed with their own reflections, into practice, rediscovering themselves as individuals as well as integral and fundamental elements of the group”. Furthermore, each *Miglioriamoci* course has been introduced and

“To accomplish great things,  
we must not only act, but  
also dream; not only plan,  
but also believe”

Anatole France



## Participants' stories

*Elena:*

“Having reached the end of the *Miglioriamoci* course, I wish to say that I’m grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in this truly interesting initiative. I believe that if you come in with an open mind and a desire to improve, this experience can really represent an opportunity for professional, but also (and above all) personal and human growth.”

*Gianni:*

“The lecturer was remarkable in her professionalism, humanity and preparation, and was able to manage the situations of conflict and friction that the debate on course subjects inevitably generated. Staff support was also excellent and especially important in the final (tough, yet funny) phase of the course, when we had to put things into practice. I hope that this new path can continue on into the future: I think it is an important and stimulating opportunity for the Company and, consequently, for all of us”.

*Rita:*

“Having happily attended the *Miglioriamoci* course, I wish to thank you for having thought of the small, large population of part-time workers. Course feedback was absolutely positive, revealing a high level of satisfaction with course contents and with the lecturer, who – in an increasingly positive, sympathetic and creative approach – showed great professionalism, intelligence and empathy. I support the creation of new horizontal courses (especially professional) for part-time workers (many drops make the ocean...) and greater promotion of the continuous work in all sectors of GGIA.”

concluded by speeches delivered by Group officers and executives (on the first and third day), who shared the experience gained at the *Essere Leader* course with the class, expressing their feelings with honesty and sincerity. Uncertainties, doubts, confusion, but also hope, the desire to do well together and an optimistic approach to new challenges: this created a “positive contagion” that made people active and aware of their role at the core of a system that wants them to improve and be vital energy for the Company’s future. To keep the experience of *Miglioriamoci* alive, an

*The visual field is widened [...] People learn how to work in a condition of uncertainty [...] and to play an active part in seeking solutions to everyday problems*

interactive CD has been produced to elaborate upon course themes with specific readings for every educational unit. “With Memory Jogger, which we will soon distribute to course participants, we wish to be on the desks of our colleagues – concludes Claudia Stella – to remind everyone that individual effort and team work are the key to success. We want to leave our colleagues a



‘visual anchor’, a guiding light showing the way when the tasks ahead are more challenging than expected. And for those who have not yet taken part in a *Miglioriamoci* course, it would be a pleasure to have you and your experience in the classroom with us”.

*Federica Martufi*

*Here and on previous pages:  
a few moments from the  
**Miglioriamoci** course*





# Genertel events

The importance of collective events

Today, producing an event is becoming more and more difficult. First and foremost, the participants must be “dazzled”. You need to come up with something that has “never been seen before”, with a “wonder” effect. This

is why we often talk of *an event within the event*. But how does an event become unique? Memorability and exclusivity don’t just come from the choice of a specific location, but from something different. To begin with, the

whole event production campaign must be carefully planned. This includes defining a motivational strategy, a communication plan – from the launching to the follow-up – and organising all aspects of





the trip, developed and tailored to the company's characteristics as well as the communication specifically created for the event. Later, once the motivational strategy has been identified and the budget allocated, the campaign theme must be defined: a strong and clear guiding thread to give the event a consistent and well-defined identity. All forms of communication – from the classic trip programme to entertainment activities

appreciated and exploited as a key element of any communication plan.

### ***The event par excellence: the incentive trip***

The incentive trip still remains the most appreciated and successful event in Genertel thanks to its high added value, exceeding by far its economic value. However,

relationships with colleagues and executives in an informal environment, far from the usual working context. In any case, event planning must also (and above all) take into consideration the content. During conventions, distinctions between managers and employees tend to soften and the Company becomes a “community” and employees feel proud of their work, of their group and the Company as a whole. In other words, event production is one of the key elements to make an organisation a Great Place to Work!

*Nicola Cammisuli*

*The incentive trip enables the company to enhance its image, creating a certain group and favouring new relationships and integrating different elements*

and in-room gifts – must contribute to creating the campaign identity, generate expectations, arouse interest, stimulate action and create memory. Communication has already taken on a central role within Genertel, which is why meetings may be seen as significant growth opportunities. Hence, the importance of meetings, conventions and other collective events should not be underestimated, but duly

other reasons make it an extremely popular prize for both Genertel and its employees. If perfectly organised, the incentive trip enables the Company to enhance its image, creating a certain group and favouring new relationships, integrating different elements and making the trip a regular and anticipated event. Participants are given the opportunity to spend some time away and exchange ideas, establishing





# Dreaming in Congo

The *Dream* project is in Africa to treat, and not just prevent, Aids

Mbandaka, capital of Équateur province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a city surrounded by a dramatic and fascinating landscape in the middle of the rainforest, hidden between the bends of the Congo river where the waters merge with those of the Ruki river. Congo has

known nothing but war for ten years now, its richness being also its greatest curse. Enormous resources – from gold to diamonds, cobalt, copper, uranium and coltan (columbite - tantalite) – are the precipitating causes of a civil war that has its roots in ancient ethnic and tribal conflicts. Due to the scope

of interests revolving around these resources, however, the conflict has gradually extended to a large number of surrounding countries, becoming the “first African world war”. So, as we said, this is Mbandaka, exactly on the Earth’s equator. It is not easy to reach this place, as the wild and

beautiful nature surrounding it makes communications and travelling a continuous challenge. The great river, which is the most important line of communication with Kinshasa (capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), is also a victim of war and poverty, as the means once used



for crossing it have become unusable. Though remote, the area today is inhabited by 700,000 people, thus becoming the centre of a constant health emergency. For this reason, the Congolese Ministry of Public Health has warmly welcomed a pilot programme for diagnosing and treating HIV – only second to the war as the most serious scourge tormenting this country – in this area. Here, the percentage of HIV-positive people is at least two points higher than the 3% average rate in the rest of Congo.

But let's start from the beginning and go back to a day almost two years ago, when a doctor came to Generali to talk about *Dream*. This doctor did not go away empty-handed but with a promise: Generali would believe in, and make a concrete contribution to the project. And if the dream

the fight against HIV-Aids in Africa has been almost exclusively focused on prevention. This approach, however, as is shown by the spreading of the disease, has not helped defeat the emergency. This project introduces a new approach based on treatment as well as prevention, adopting what the western world calls a golden standard. The latter is based upon the evaluation of the viral load and on the HAART (*Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy*) and is currently considered as a model of excellence in the fight against HIV-Aids. This type of treatment is quite standard and within everyone's reach in western countries, but only became available to the African people thanks to the Dream project, providing it free of charge in its 31 operational centres spread out over 10 sub-Saharan countries.

*“Afropessimism is fought by working together, pooling human and financial resources. The world upside down, one could say...”*

*Gianni Guidotti*

finally came true, Generali would commit itself to keeping it alive.

*Dream* is the acronym for *Drug Resource Enhancement against Aids and Malnutrition*, a global programme to treat Aids in Africa launched in February 2002 by the Community of Sant'Egidio. For many years,

*“No western company is present in Congo, not only from a business point of view but also in support of charitable work – says Lodovico Floriani, deputy general manager of the Company, when we ask him why Generali chose to contribute to the Dream project – it is a place of war and poverty in which*







*“Thanks to Generali’s contribution, a molecular biology laboratory and a medical centre were built in Mbandaka”*

*Lodovico Floriani*



nobody has ever believed. Yet, development in Africa passes through trust and hope in a better future for its children: economic aid and infrastructures are not enough to defeat backwardness, what is fundamental is investing in culture, and this is exactly what happened with Dream: Thanks to Generali’s contribution, a molecular biology laboratory and a medical centre were built in Mbandaka – inaugurated 4 February – and a similar centre will be built in Kinshasa. In particular, these centres will provide training and information to the local population and working staff. People suffering from Aids are often ashamed of their condition and tend to hide it; sometimes people visit the centres, receive the medicaments but then share them with other sick people, making the treatment useless. Generali developed a three-year plan – concludes Floriani – to complete the centres and laboratories in Mbandaka and Kinshasa and make them fully operational. In the future, however, our commitment

will most likely concentrate on medicaments, to make sure that the programme continues.”

It is with this promise of hope and trust that the long and adventurous journey begins. We follow it through the story of **Doctor Gianni Guidotti**, a lover of Africa and coordinator of the Dream project.

“A container full of medical and laboratory equipment, an electrical system and all the necessary materials, from ladders to drills, left from Genoa in July and arrived in Kinshasa at the end of September. From there, a boat carried it up the great Congo River. There was a problem, however: the container was too big. We then watched as a human chain loaded the various items on different boats, and the journey up the river finally began. After a week’s navigation, we reached Mbandaka. Again, a long human chain loaded the equipment from boats to trucks, headed to the Dream centre. Our destination, at last! Only flying over it can

you seize the greatness, the beauty and infinite spaces of the great equatorial forest. Hours of flight over a green expanse where enormous empty spaces open up every once in a while, like stains on a carpet. The city of Mbandaka is only surrounded by forest and small villages, some still inhabited by pygmies. We visited one of these villages, where there is a school and children study in wretched classrooms of earth and wood. The proud teacher showed us some of his little pupils: they recited beautiful songs and poems by heart, holding a little exercise book and a pencil that they jealously guarded. They had just finished taking their lesson outside, where they had learned to build a fence with lianas and tree branches: a useful, practical lesson passed on by the teacher to his pupils. The children,



hundreds of them, looked at us with big eyes and celebrated, because these Europeans had come to bring them hope. On one side we noticed a little truck made with sticks and worn canvas: a carefully constructed toy for days and days of games in the forest. Along the road that cut through the forest, we frequently encountered little lakes surrounded by an amazing nature, which made us think of paradise. A group of children was swimming in one of these lakes and when they saw us arrive they were all happiness and joy. They wanted to play, so they began to show us their diving. The cameras made them curious, they would pose and love to see the pictures on the digital screen. Soon afterwards, we entered another pygmy village. Here we found children slicing fruit from the bread tree and boiling it. It was their daily meal...

On the first days of activity, patients who visited the centre wondered at the words written on the wall surrounding the building, saying "Here everything is for free". Yes, right, everything is for free. How can that be? In a country where you must pay for everything, and dearly. This is the challenge of the Dream project. To make the best of western treatments available to the African people, without asking for anything. Afropessimism is fought by working together, pooling human and financial resources and the efforts of

good-willed men and women who make the world more human. The world upside down, one could say... but with men, women and children in the centre".

Alessandra Gambino

Opposite page, above: some images from the Dream centre in Mbandaka, where a molecular biology laboratory was built with a contribution from Generali

Opposite page, below: one of the staff members, trained under the Dream project and working in the laboratory







Left:  
a detail of Canaletto's  
painting, with the  
**Squero Vecio** and  
**Rio dei Mendicanti**

## The Squero Vecio's art tradition

The headquarters of the *Circolo Nautico Generali*  
(Generali Nautical Club):  
an old shipyard and now a salon  
displaying artwork dedicated to “water culture”

The *Circolo Nautico Generali* has already represented Venice and the Company at many important international events. Among these, we wish to recall the 1<sup>st</sup> World Arts Festival in New York (1988), the Universal Expo of Seville (1992) and Lisbon (1998) and the “Marco Polo – Made in Italy in Cina” project (2005) that brought gondolas to sail the waters of the Chaoyang lake in Beijing. In addition to passing down the ancient tradition of Venetian rowing, however, the *Circolo* has also transformed its headquarters – the *Squero Vecio* – into an art salon that finds ever new sources of inspiration in the timeless magic of Venice. In ancient times, the *squeri* were everywhere in the city; here, wooden boats were constructed following traditional techniques passed down from generation to generation. Their name comes from a tool, the square, called “*squara*” in venetian dialect. They could be found in the most various locations: projecting over inner canals or in open

water spaces such as the San Marco basin, the Giudecca canal or the city belt facing the northern part of the lagoon. Among the few remaining *squeri* is the one on Rio dei Mendicanti, opposite the side façade of the former Scuola Grande di San Marco, now the city's civil hospital. This is the so-called *Squero Vecio* (Old Shipyard), as it's been the oldest, still used *squero* in Venice for the past one and a half century. Its charming location has been depicted by several famous artists, including Canaletto who, still a young painter

in 1720, painted the Rio dei Mendicanti with the bridge, the *squero* and gondolas. In later centuries, the building was painted by Francesco Guardi, the German artist Julius Rollmann and Filippo de Pisis. For the restoration of the *squero*, Generali received the Premio Torta (*Torta Prize*), established over thirty years ago by Ateneo Veneto to reward excellence in the promotion, design, direction or performance of restoration work in the city of Venice. The renovated *Squero Vecio* was inaugurated





in May 1978 and now hosts the headquarters of the Company's Circolo Nautico as well as a shipyard-school. Its connection with the world of culture, however, is still intact, thanks to frequent contacts with famous artists called to interpret, each in their own style, the theme of "water culture", to offer new representations of the *squero* for the "Omaggio al Canaletto" (*Tribute to*

*Canaletto*) series, and to create the trophies that Generali offers to the winners of the *Regata Storica* (Historic Regatta) every year. Many critics have written about the painters of the *Squero Vecio*, that include internationally acclaimed artists such as Vico Calabrò, Vittorio Citterich, Antonio Fiore, Goffredo Gaeta, Renato Missaglia, Armando Pizzinato, Alain Satié, Philip

Tsiaras and Paolo Valle, to name but a few. In particular, many 20<sup>th</sup>-century styles are represented in the works of the friends of the Circolo Nautico Generali: from impressionism to expressionism, cubism, futurism, lettrism as well as metaphysical, abstract, conceptual and pop art. For an artist of the *Squero Vecio*, painting Venice and the gondola thus becomes a challenge, an opportunity to find new forms and colours and to write the anthem of Water Culture.

Alessandro Paglia  
Roberto Rosasco

Below, left to right:  
Alain Satié  
*Venezia Hypergraph*

Philip Tsiaras  
*Venezia - New York*

Armando Pizzinato  
*Gondole immagine di libertà*

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