

KALONGO NEWS



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“Always have your eyes
turned to the future.
Be fertile soil on the way
with humanity”

Pope Francis

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am happy to share with you the real and tangible results we achieved together in 2023 thanks to the commitment of people, like you, who have chosen to walk alongside us.

During the year we were able to expand the type of medical services provided by the hospital, in particular for the treatment of disabilities, thanks to the contribution of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. Those services have been completely absent until recently due to a lack of space and above all adequate skills. In Uganda, disability is often seen as an evil to be eradicated and those affected by it as people to be abandoned. For this reason, our intervention will also have an important impact on the social life of people with disabilities.

"In the Western world, we say: 'I think, therefore I exist', here they say: 'I belong, therefore I exist'. An isolated and marginalized person is the one who feels the poorest and most miserable. Being alone is their greatest fear. Belonging to a community is their true treasure".

The words of Father Ramon, Comboni priest and parish priest of Kalongo, make us understand what it can mean for children, women and men to finally see their disability recognized as something that deserves attention, care and respect, and no longer as a fault.

I am really happy to share with you the outcome of the actions we have undertaken to support neonatal care. **In 2023 the neonatal mortality rate fell, from 2.18% in 2020 to 1.57%. This means that more fragile newborns have won their battle for life and been discharged from the hospital safely.**

These are just some of the results that we could have never achieved alone.

But the challenges to be faced are still many and they are not easy to face. The most important today is the coverage of the hospital's current costs, i.e., all those daily expenses necessary to guarantee its proper functioning and maintenance of the quality standards of the care provided.

If the hospital had to rely only on its own strength it would not survive more than a week. Hospital charges cover only 10% of the total requirements. But raising them would mean undermining the possibility for the most vulnerable families to access care. This is why our commitment and our efforts aimed at raising free funds cannot fail.

It is an ongoing challenge, **even more demanding today due to the difficult historical moment we are going through at a global level, and which imposes difficult choices on everyone.**

Support us, as you can and in the ways, you consider most effective to carry forward our commitment, your presence is fundamental for the future of Kalongo.

Thank you!


Giovanna Ambrosoli



A SEED BEARING FRUIT

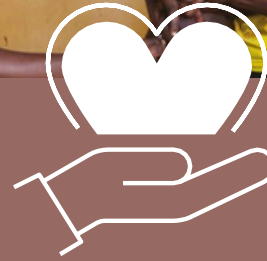
On March 20, 2024, we inaugurated the exhibition dedicated to Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli in Milan, at Palazzo Lombardia.

These are the words of the Archbishop of Milan, Monsignor Delpini, participating at the inauguration:

"What is expertise for? What is time for? What is money for? What is life for? Here, the story of Blessed Father Giuseppe says that all of this can be interpreted as the responsibility to make a gift for the community, so that life, expertise, time, money are not wasted, are not consumed in individualism, which ends up getting lost.

Father Ambrosoli was certainly a protagonist, a brave pioneer, however, he did nothing alone; great protagonists are never alone. The Comboni fathers and the family, the people who were able to create this flow of attention, of good, of means for the hospital, were and still are fundamental.

So that this seed continues to bear good fruit. Because it is important not only to do good but to do it well and in such a way that it is a growing seed rather than a challenge rising admiration and then disappears."



Se desideri maggiori informazioni sui lasciti testamentari:
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SO THAT GOOD NEVER ENDS.

With a bequest in your will to the Ambrosoli Foundation you change the future of those who live in one of the poorest and most forgotten regions of Northern Uganda, helping to carry on Father Giuseppe's work: the hospital and midwifery school of Kalongo.

Large assets are not necessary, even with a small contribution you can continue to do good in the future.

Father Joseph Ambrosoli

In the footsteps of Father Joseph Ambrosoli

Father Ramon Vergas, Comboni missionary, parish priest of the parish of Kalongo

When I arrived here in Kalongo, in September 2017, the impact, the great affection and devotion of the people for Father Ambrosoli were strong. It was very touching.

So, I tried to analyze his history, the history of this place. **And I immediately understood that I was in front of an authentic witness of the word of Jesus. Father Joseph did not limit himself to understanding Jesus but to living-like him.**

On the occasion of his beatification, I had the opportunity to dive even deeper into his life. And to talk about him to those who didn't know him yet. It was truly a beautiful thing, which I carry in my heart and which strengthened my love for Father Giuseppe and the desire that his example can help me and many others...

It is a joy and an honor but also a challenge for me to be here today, in a place sanctified by the presence of such a coherent man, so capable of transmitting God's love towards others.

I am sure that Father Ambrosoli from heaven looks

with joy at the work being carried out here in Kalongo, in his at the work being carried out here in Kalongo, in church and the hospital, at the immense service that the hospital does to help so many people

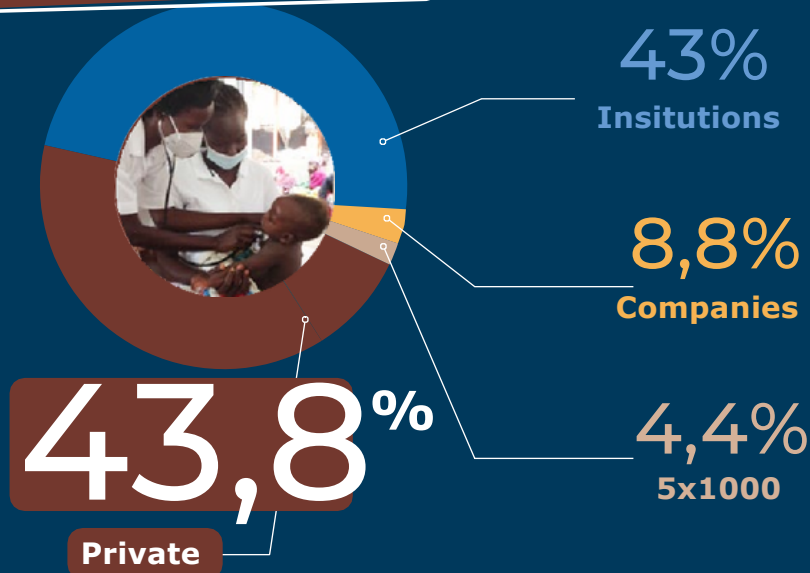
"If the hospital didn't exist, we wouldn't be here" the majority of people in Kalongo says. Because it's true, all these years, during war and health emergencies, it was **the hospital that saved lives, healed wounds, vaccinated children, helped people to survive, to be born, and also to die in a fair way.** That's why the people of Kalongo are very grateful today and feel that the time has come to give back something of what they have received, to the hospital, to the Ambrosoli Foundation and also to the missionaries. Because they want to continue, that the services do not decrease. People see the effort in carrying forward a hospital that grows at the same time as the community and its needs and **begin to understand that we can only advance together.**



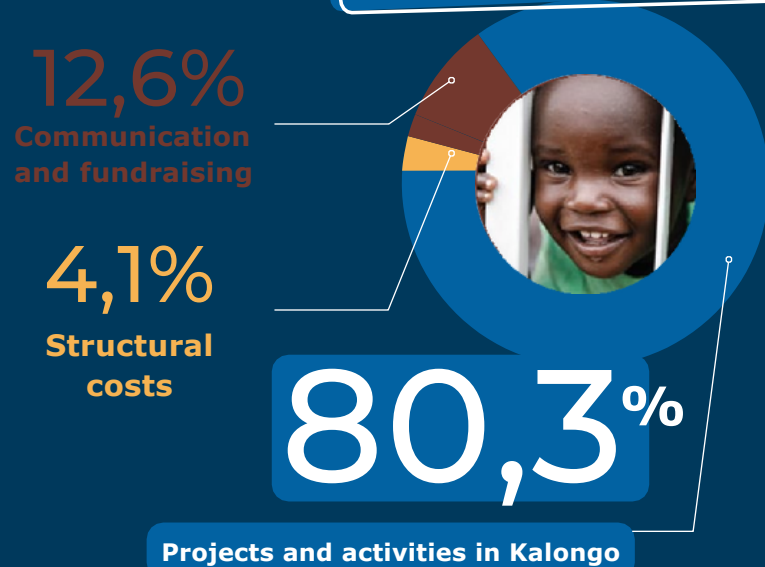
Our 2023



HOW WE RAISED THE FUNDS



HOW WE USED THE FUNDS RAISED



*Provisional data as of March 31, 2024, not yet validated for financial statement purposes

TOGETHER WITH YOU, WHO BELIEVE IN THE AMBROSOLI FOUNDATION, WE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO:

Admissions **11.473**

In Pediatric	3.819
In Maternity	4.154
In General Med.	1.713

29.444 Outpatients visits

5.874 Prenatal visits

2.659 Deliveries

490 Premature newborns

20.448 Pediatric vaccinations

2.738 Surgical operations

Medical and technical volunteers on mission in Kalongo **16**



TRAVEL DIARY



by *Ilaria Baron Toaldo, Fondazione Ambrosoli*

Tuesday, February 20

I am sitting here at the foot of the statue of Father Joseph, behind which Mount Oret rises. Finally in Kalongo. It's difficult for me to describe the emotion of this first time. I'll let the photos taken today speak for me.

Wednesday, February 21

There are some words, verbal expressions, which sometimes are used simply and lightly but which in Kalongo take shape and substance. They become flesh, bone and blood and only then you begin to understand their meaning...

This morning I visited the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit, which is currently home to eleven fragile newborns struggling to earn their **right to life**.

One of these was born at just 27 weeks of pregnancy. Smaller and lighter than the dolls my daughter plays with. He kicked with **truly astonishing force**, his tiny chest rising and falling with his breathing. I can't find words capable of describing how much vital force I saw in just over 700 grams of weight, and how much determination, patience and awareness in the face of those who take care of him, and in his mother sitting next to him.

Coming out of the neonatal unit, the first word that came to me was **miracle**.

It is truly incredible to think that in the nothingness of this vast savannah, thousands and thousands of kilometers away from modern and equipped Western neonatal hospitals, a place like this can exist. A place where every day, thanks to the presence of staff trained to care for the most fragile with very limited resources and tools, the right to life of the most vulnerable is defended

Thursday, February 22

Today I participated in one of the field visits, the so-called outreach, that the hospital organizes weekly to reach the most distant communities. We traveled in the savannah, for more than two hours on dirt roads, which gradually became narrower and more impervious. They were just small paths. I wondered how they can reach the villages during the rainy season, yet they do...

The community was waiting for us sitting in the shade of large trees. It seemed like a festive and colorful event, very different from the gray atmospheres that we breathe in our waiting rooms.

I saw health workers vaccinate the little ones, distribute drugs against parasites, carry out tests for malaria and HIV, visit pregnant women, administer the tetanus vaccine to adults. A truly unique and precious job that offer access to basic healthcare services to those who have no resources or means to reach the hospital independently.

All this in the heart of an arid, sunny and beautiful savannah.



February 20, 2024

February 26, 2024

February 21, 2024

Saturday, February 24

During the day, the courtyard of the pediatric ward is crowded with mothers with their children, pediatric patients who prefer to be outdoors instead of staying in bed.

You recognize them immediately because they have the cannula needle positioned on the wrist or hand. Some of them sleep lying on the floor or in their mother's arms, some others play. And as you watch the mothers talk to each other, eat while sharing the little they have, you see a community.

And then you understand that this innate ability to form a community, to welcome and share, is a fundamental resource that allows them to feel "at home" even here in the hospital and, above all, to resist the most difficult trials, giving each other strength.

I think this is their true wealth. Poverty, material poverty, is undeniable. There are mothers who do not have enough food to feed their children for the time they will be hospitalized, or to pay for the entire course of prescribed drugs. There are family members asking to discharge their dying loved one because they could not afford the cost of transporting the body to the village.

Yet, if you smile they smile at you, if you hold out your hand they shake it with gratitude, if you do something funny (like mispronouncing the few words in Acholi you know) they laugh out loud. If you let yourself be welcomed, they are ready to welcome you, filling you with something that is priceless...

Sunday, February 25

I am on the eve of my departure. It's Sunday in Kalongo too. This morning I attended mass in a church filled with people and children; the same ones who surrounded me at the exit to have their photo taken with an enthusiasm that was difficult to contain.

The hospital as a whole is quieter today, less crowded, even quieter. The most dynamic and noisy place is the space around the wash house next to the paediatrics, with mothers doing the weekly laundry.

Kalongo hospital almost seems a micro-universe in itself. But this is not the case: it is the beating heart and fundamental point of reference for a very large population that is truly deprived of everything. It offers basic and specialist medical services that no other second level facility in the district is able to offer.

Yet, the needs seem endless, the challenges to make it work best unspeakable. **But what would happen to these people if it stopped working?**

Monday, February 26

Can you feel at home after just one week's stay? Can you feel a sharp pain in your heart when leaving a place you've only known for a few days? Meeting Kalongo was even more intense than I could have imagined.

I leave this land, aboard a small four-seater Cessna on a very hot morning at the end of February, with two certainties: that of wanting to return as soon as possible and that of multiplying my efforts so that this extraordinary place can continue its very important work.

Kalongo is not that far away.

LEAVING FOR KALONGO

Maria and Francesca are the first volunteer midwives from the School of Obstetrics of the University of Milan- Bicocca to cross the threshold of the maternity and gynecology department of Kalongo hospital.

Two passionate and aware young women, with an open look and a generous smile. Sitting under the porch of the house that hosts them in Kalongo, on a hot afternoon at the end of February, we asked them what struck them most, what they will take with them at the end of these three months.



I am here to enter into a great story that has been going on for many years in which I participate giving my small contribution.

Maria Fossati, volunteer midwife



Maria

“First of all, the full awareness that the beauty of life is sharing, it is belonging. The first tool to face the hardship of life here is the community. Belonging to a community that turns to God is essential for them.

You arrive here thinking you can change, you can make the difference, but instead you find yourself feeling very small in the face of the need that exists. Then you discover you are not alone but inside a big story that has been going on for many years in which I participate by giving my small contribution. The desire to do something great remains but the awareness of not being alone reassures me and frees me from the worry that everything depends on me.

And finally the precious opportunity to encounter a completely different world that allows you to reconquer your own world, to understand it better thanks to this encounter.

Professionally I think that this experience is teaching me to think critically and have the courage to act. In a context like this, with limited resources, where there are no machines or people with more experience telling you what to do, you learn to ask yourself questions and make clear and instinctive choices, which you hope are the best possible choices to help that woman who suffers and trusts in you.



IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, I DON'T WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE

When I arrive in the delivery room, Caro, one of the midwives in the department, is preparing a woman for the operating room: one of the twins she is carrying is in pain, we need to proceed immediately with a caesarean section. But suddenly she is called for an urgent consultation, so **she puts the documents of the twin mother in my hands, and she says to me: "Go to the operating room"**. This is her third pregnancy, twins, and the woman suffers from epilepsy. This time I don't feel like going alone with such a risky woman. **I call Margy, another midwife.**

The anesthetist arrives and, despite the risk of epilepsy, decides to try spinal anesthesia anyway... bad choice, because **the woman begins to have a very powerful epileptic fit**. Doctor Obonyo intervenes immediately, the woman is intubated, sedated, and quickly incised. Margy receives her first twin in her hands: he is pale and hypotonic, in really bad conditions, she immediately takes him to the neonatal unit for resuscitation. **After a few seconds, the second twin is placed in my arms, he is also in pain;** I'm also running to the neonatal island: I urgently need an AMBU, the device for supporting respiratory activity.

But when I arrive, I realize that the only AMBU present is in Margy's hand, that **there is only a baby mask and that she is using it, and that there is only a pair of mustaches for oxygen...** I'm very nervous. But we are in Africa, the resources are what they are...

So, I start doing everything I can to help the little one: I dry him, I suck out his secretions with a strange little object they have here, which is inefficient, I start to stimulate him, but to no avail. **"He needs it too!" I shout to the nurse** who runs out of the room and returns with another AMBU, whose mask however is too big for a small nose and mouth like those of my little boy. In any case, **I start ventilation too... I hold my breath, my heart beating in my chest like a drum.**

I do everything I can. The little boy slowly seems to recover: he cries, he reacts. So, I stop, look at him and think that this is enough, but that we still need a little oxygen. The other twin is also a little better. So, we begin to use oxygen sparingly with the tools we have: a minute of mustaches for each twin, while we cover them with the same blanket to keep them warm.

Margy and I look at each other: **"If it hadn't been for you, I don't know what I would have done"** I tell her. She looks at me, with her eyes tired but overflowing with sweetness and her lips curved in a shy smile, and she says to me: **"If it hadn't been for you, I would have struggled too."**

**by Maria Emilia Fossati
midwife, University of Milan Bicocca**



TOGETHER WE TURN NEEDS INTO POSSIBILITIES

What are the concrete needs of a hospital like Dr Ambrosoli Memorial Hospital?



01
**Ensuring the right
medical equipment**



02
**Regularly restock
the pharmacy**



03
**Equipping medical
units with equipment
and appropriate
machinery**



04
**Supporting fair for
hospital staff**



05
**Update and train
human resources**

Your help is important and has a real impact in the lives of thousands of people.

Because every donation, even the smallest, is pediatric care, neonatal assistance, surgical operation, life-saving therapy....



**EVERY DONATION BECOMES HOPE AND
LIFE. ALWAYS.**

Donate now and if you can activate a periodic donation to Kalongo Hospital. You will give continuity and even more strength to your support.

10€



By donating 10€
you contribute to a
child's outpatient visit

ACTIVATE A PERIODIC DONATION

When you activate a periodic donation you are free to choose the amount and frequency (monthly, semi-annually, annually) and you can change or cancel it at any time.

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malaria treatment to a
patient from pediatrics

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35€



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first essential care for a
child born prematurely



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Memorial Hospital



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