

Annalena Tonelli Center

Addressing the needs of the people and the community - August 09, 2006

Awdalnews Network, Borama, Somaliland.

Bulletin for the Annalena Tonelli Center No 1 / 2006

Welcome to Borama and the world of Annalena Tonelli, the UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award winner of 2003. There is now an urgent need of a joint action to keep the programmes initiated by Annalena going and protect her legacy.

Borama, a township of more than 140 000 people, is situated in the westernmost part of Somaliland, near the Ethiopian border. It is embedded in a valley surrounded by mountains. It is the capital for Awdal region. and today Borama is also the homestead for the Amoud University with its more than 600 students and four faculties.

Somaliland so far despite of 15 peaceful years since its in 1991 declared independence lacks the international recognition.

Bringing light and hope

Tuberculosis still today is one of the major killer diseases in the world.

The tuberculosis treatment facilities in Borama, Somaliland have been established since 1996 when Italian born lawyer and health worker Annalena Tonelli restarted her tuberculosis control programmes in Somalia after a few years' break caused by the civilwar in and out Mogadishu.

Dr Tonelli - or Annalena as she was known to her patients and most whom come in contact with her - was a living proof that one person can make a difference in the world. After taking a law degree in her native Italy, she took up teaching in Waajir, north-eastern Kenya, an area populated by ethnic Somalis. She saw there devastating effects of tuberculosis when untreated, resulting to social exclusion, deformities and a painful death.

Annalena dedicated her life to helping others. In Borama, moreover to providing treatment and cure for people affected with the TB she initiated many other community and welfare activities as well, e.g. raising awareness to fight HIV and FGM (female genital mutilation).

Annalena initiated in Borama also the first school for the deaf and the blind and undertook many other charitable activities as well, e.g. assisting the Flying Eye Surgeons' visits. Annalena always preferred to work independently, but her activities were generously supported first by her family and friends back home in Forli, Italy, and at later stages by international organizations like UNHCR, WHO and WFP and many local initiatives as well.

From manyattas to a modern hospital

Annalena started her activities in Borama with one ward and a needed amount of traditional huts to accommodate nomads with families for the best caseholding, until complete cure was achieved.

TB hospital facilities available at present (office building, nine wards, laboratory, x-ray, laundry, kitchen and store) have during the ten years of activities been constructed and renovated with the financial support of UNHCR and the Somaliland Ministry of Resettlement.

From the very beginning the hospital was open not only for patients of the Awdal region, but treats also cross-border patients, coming from Ethiopia and Djibouti.

The Annalena TB hospital today has 150 hospital beds and outpatient department has additional 150 visits per day. The staff is qualified and committed, numbering 51 (17 medical, 34 auxiliary and supporting).

The internationally standardized DOTS treatment for tuberculosis is very labour- intensive and demands a long-term commitment, mostly of six months, from both the patient and the health services.

The treatment regimen comprises 4-5 drugs that are administered free of charge to the patients. Drugs in Borama, like in other units in Somalia observing the DOTS strategy and approved for their diagnostic and treatment standards by WHO, will be drawn from and distributed by the *Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria*.

Annalena Tonelli was awarded with UNHCR's Nansen-prize in June 2003 for her extraordinary humanitarian achievements. With the many international organizations and partners providing material, logistical or

administrative support to the hospital, the role and contribution of the Italian NGO *Comitato per la lotta contro la fame nel mondo*, from her home town Forli, Italy was vital for providing the necessary human resources for health services.

After Annalena Tonelli's tragic death at her hospital premises 5 October 2003 there was a strong commitment from her friends and supporters, local, national and international, to continue and carry on her life's work.

During the subsequent years some administrative arrangements have been made, and since December 2004 all the activities initiated by Annalena Tonelli have been under one umbrella, the Annalena Tonelli Center and the project to sustain the center and its activities has been implemented by Italian NGO COOPI (*Cooperazione Internazionale*) with an earlier presence in supporting the health sector programmes within Somaliland.

In July 2006 the Annalena Tonelli center, however, faces serious challenges as the Comitato has informed COOPI and the management of the center of its total withdrawal in supporting the center.

The planning for sustainable resourcing for the Center's future has been underway during many months, and many international organizations have expressed their concerns for the continuation of high standard tuberculosis control activities in the Annalena Tonelli TB Hospital.

The legacy of Annalena Tonelli must be preserved

Though facing gaps in the financing there is a commitment from the part of staff, friends of Annalena and the implementing agency COOPI to prevent any serious disruptions to the activities of the Center and the TB hospital.

There have already been many contacts and pledges to come to support the Annalena School for the deaf in the future. Also potential supporters for the awareness campaigns have been identified by local and international organizations.

The most serious concerns thus affect the TB hospital, an important capacity center in Somaliland, or Somalia at large.

The funding of the case-finding and treatment of tuberculosis is secured for the coming years by agreements and contracts with the Global Fund (channelled through World Vision Somalia).

The cooperation with the World Food Programme providing necessary items for daily meals (rice, oil) for the patients will continue as well.

During the next few months, July-September 2006 there is, however a need to raise funds to cover all the incentives for both the medical and supportive staff and some modest running costs (essential drugs, the laundry, additional food items) as well.

During the same period some organizational adjustments and new networks created to find resources to meet the ends for the supporting activities in order to keep up the hospitals' fine achievements as measured of treatment results.

Request for financial assistance The immediate and essential needs of the Annalena Tonelli TB hospital for the next three months mount thus to some 10.000 USD per month.

This sum is covering the incentives for both the medical and supporting staff, essential, non-TB drugs, additional food items and cooking costs for in-patients, maintenance of the premises), items supported by the Comitato earlier.

The contributions from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (TB drugs, laboratory materials and reagents, training and supervision) are secured and mount to a monthly value of some 10.000 USD, the food items provided by WFP some 1600 USD.

From October on still there may be a financing gap of 3-4000 USD a month, but it is too early to define today as negotiations will be opened with the Global Fund of broadening their framework of support.

On behalf of the Annalena Tonelli TB center, its qualified staff and patients, we request you kindly you to come forward and to pledge your support to ensure the sustainability of the tuberculosis control services rendered for the people in Awdal region and the wider crossborder area as well.

This Bulletin will be distributed to its subscribers, individuals and organizations, four times a year by email to help you keep abreast of the situation and the prospects of the activities and to provide full transparency and accountability for all partners and sponsors.

Focal points have been nominated to contact and serve all regional, national and international, individuals and organizations alike participating to this joint effort. The brother of Annalena Tonelli, Dr. Bruno Tonelli will be invited to act as the patron for the network to be created in support of the Annalena centers future activities in Borama. We are at your disposal for any additional information or question you might have. Thank you for your interest and looking forward to your support

Yours sincerely,

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The contributions can be addressed through Dahabshiil (for local agents see www.dahabshiil.com), Annalena Centre Dahabshiil, Account No. Borama Dahabshiil, Do193 (Somalia/Somaliland)

The focal points to contact for information and for donor coordination are

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If Awdalians do not support Annalena Tonelli Rehab Center, who else will? -

August 13, 2006

Awdalnews Network, Borama, Somaliland.

Despite All Odds, It Is High Time To Stop The Begging Syndrome And Do It Ourselves!

It is certainly a fact that Western "Democracies" have already decided to refuse or ignore supporting the fledgling democracy of Somaliland when they immediately and unconditionally gave both moral and material support to THEIR PEOPLE in the new but highly volatile democracies of Eastern Europe even though that is total discrimination based on race or religion, pure and simple!

But sorry, had Somaliland had a few whites or Christians in its community, George W. Bush, Tony Blair and their friends would have long ago placed the success story of Somaliland at the top of their foreign policy agenda and would have unzipped their national purses wide open! This is unfortunate but of course, it is a reality. And it is how the discriminatory West had treated "others" for centuries!

Fortunately, however, many great men and women in that part of the world are humane enough to understand discrimination, its demeaning consequences and often come against their governments to redress this naked and ugly practice. And in the process, they redirect their personal resources if not the national policy of their countries favorably toward other nations.... and this is despite the fact that many Third World people, Somalis being the first, always play only victim and fail to help themselves....a total shame and irresponsibility on their part!

Dr. Annalena Tonelli, Bill Gates, Bob Geldof, Steve Bono, Presidents Carter and Clinton, Mary Robinson, Sophia Lauren etc. are just a few of those who cross the color and creed barrier and continuously reach out to others by contributing (morally and materially) toward many humanitarian services.... that is, they voluntarily donate generously to alleviate the suffering of many communities and organizations in different parts of the world.

Dr. Annalena Tonelli for instance; had cared for disadvantaged Somalis; she suffered with them for decades till she was heartlessly, murdered by wicked and morally sick persons who must be caught, brought to justice and mercilessly slaughtered in public by fire squad! Such persons, I believe, do not deserve any thing short of cruel maiming and death!

For many long and lonely days; for many long, lonely and sleepless nights and for many long, cold or life threatening years, Annalena Tonelli gave her invaluable time to give care to the sick; give care to the elderly, give care to the orphaned, give care to the terminally sick patients and give care to the deaf and the blind! In short, Annalena Tonelli was and remains, even after her death, a symbol of hope for many; she was the torch of light in their lives and she was the messiah sent to many Somalis in Wajeer, Merka and Borama to make a difference!

Consequently, in my view, to any morally or mentally fit person of any faith, the murder of Annalena Tonelli, like that of Richard and Enid Eyeington who were killed at Sheikh, Somaliland, is a painful one. It is an unforgivable crime; it was a crime committed to hurt Somaliland in general and the Awdal Region in particular; it was a crime whose architects intentionally carried out to destabilize the time tested fledgling democracy of Somaliland; and it was a crime perpetrated against mankind as a whole!

However, now that Dr. Annalena, the symbol of humanity in action for many, is gone. Now that the Tonelli family and friends can no longer financially support the Tonelli Center in Borama; Now that people are sick and tired of all Somalis and their everlasting problems, is it not time that Awdalians, act and take charge of their destiny? Is it not a high time they play an active role in their community? Is it not really a high time now to support the Annalena Tonelli Rehab Center project in Borama, Somaliland?

My Awdalian friends, unfortunately, despite these glaring realities, it is true that many of us who had the chance to experience how things work in today's world, we remain indifferent to our national plight. It is unfortunate but also true that our country and people's lives are in tatters. And it is unfortunate but true too that those of us who had the chance to migrate to better a life, live in apathy when it comes to helping their country and people.

Likewise, it is equally sorrowful but also true that our elders and intellectuals back home do nothing more than munch on the imported narcotic leaves of QAT daily, "enjoying themselves to ecstasy" but in the process waste billions of their meager resources while carelessly destroying and debilitating their health with this drug. And sorry, Somalis are probably the only people on this earth who smuggle hard currency out of our country to buy drugs in their tons, without considering the consequences!

In addition, it is also sorrowful that we are doing this at a time when nations in the West and those in the East compete for excellence and prosperity through hard work. We are doing this at a time when our people are

embarrassingly begging for bread on daily basis. And we are doing this a time when our people die from easily preventable diseases such as diarrhea and malnutrition in their multitudes!

My dear friends, have we realized that the Island Nation of Singapore for instance, is only one tenth the size of Somaliland and far less than the Awdal Region? Have we realized that its resources, short of that of the human resources are absolutely nothing? Yet today, it is an economic powerhouse and a symbol of success because of its hardworking people.

This means people alone can bring wealth and alone can take their nation to unprecedented boom. It is because of this human factor alone that the Island Nation of Singapore today prospers!

And my dear overseas friends, we know that whole institutions in today's world are run with donations, fund raising and sacrifices made by their expatriate communities. We know that, today's world is sick and tired of giving handouts to someone daily, but is willing to help those who are ready to help themselves. We know that unity is power; and we know that together we touch the sky, but we fail to apply that to our sweet home!

And in short, my friends, may I ask and suggest the following?

1. If some 500 Awdalians can buy a bundle of Qat for \$1.00 per person per day, can the same friends sleep, just one day, to raise \$500 per month?... that is one dollar per person per month!
2. Of the estimated 10,000 Awdalians working or having business of their own, can each one sacrifice to pay just one dollar per month? This would raise an impressive \$10,000 per month?
3. And better yet, can 1000 great volunteers each make a one time donation of \$100? This would produce an amazing \$100,000 sum that could establish complete health services for our whole community! And good health care system is one of the primary pillars of national development!

My friends just imagine we decide to do this; it is my firm belief that the international community would double if not triple it, after all, the benevolent world's new slogan is help yourself and we will help you!

But may I conclude this article by urging us to revert to:

- The self-help schemes tried in our country back in the fifties, when despite our comparatively low literacy rate and limited resources; we were wise enough to establish programs that helped combat drought and desertification!
- The promotion of coeducation ... the equal educational opportunity for boys and girls, established in our country back in the fifties without which our dynamic Somaliland democracy would not produce national women icons like Edna Adan Ismail or Ikran Haji Daoud.
- The strengthening and support of Amoud University whose graduates already contribute toward our national development.

And last but not least, please let us remember just one thing: **"It Is A High Time To Outgrow The African Begging Syndrome And Help Ourselves". And "If We Do Not Donate To Support Annalena Tonelli Rehab Center, Who Else Will?"**

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