

VIP Roma Mission 2013 to Kigoma, Tanzania

VIP Roma Project

in partnership with the
Jane Goodall Institute Italia Onlus



The origins and structure of the project

The project originates with two different experiences that the clown group VIP Roma has had in the course of its voluntary work. First, on missions to Burma in 2006, Cambodia in 2007 and Palestine in 2011, and second, its voluntary work with the Jane Goodall Institute Italy, the non-profit NGO that has worked since 1998 to strengthen positive relations between human beings, animals and the environment through cooperative projects in Italy and Tanzania. The common denominator of both associations is the desire to promote positive living. By working in partnership they intend to set an example within the world of international solidarity and allow their members to benefit from experiential exchange and sharing within their particular areas of competence.

The project will carry out a **mission of joy** in the Sanganigwa Children's Home, an orphanage located in the region of Kigoma in western Tanzania. The main objective of the mission is to introduce clown therapy as a tool to promote **positivity, and mental and physical wellbeing**. During the mission workshops will be held to encourage learning, and emotional and creative expression through play at the orphanage, in the day-care centre for street children, in selected primary schools in Kigoma and in the paediatric centre of the Maweni regional hospital. In this way the project will reach out to the greatest number of beneficiaries and embrace people of all ages.

There are currently 53 children living in the orphanage, and their ages range from 3 to 22 years. These boys and girls are of different ethnicities and religions, they have been abandoned, or have lost their parents to AIDS (each year in Tanzania about 1,000,000 people die of AIDS-related illness). Some are children who have been rescued from the street and who, thanks to the support programmes set up by JGI Italia, receive the benefits of an education, a healthy diet (the centre cultivates organic crops), and – perhaps more importantly - a safe environment in which to play. It is well known that **play** is fundamental in helping children become aware of their rights as individuals.

By playing and taking part in activities together, the VIP clowns will reinforce the unique identity of each child and help build **positive relationships**. The practicalities of this intervention in Kigoma are the result of a preliminary mission carried out in the area by clowns Spring (Simona Primavera) and Cookie (Francesca Pistoia) of VIP Roma.



The VIP Roma preliminary mission took place in the area from 11 to 19 October 2012. The following video shows the context and the people encountered:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QvjttnZ96c>

The partnership between VIP Roma and JGI Italia proposes a new way of combating endemic marginalization and poverty, and pursues the shared objective of sowing deeply and abundantly the fertile seeds that are capable of growing and taking root. ‘Roots and Shoots’ is the name of the international JGI programme, which is known worldwide and was launched by Jane Goodall, scientist, naturalist and expert in the study of primates. Some of the VIP clowns were fortunate enough to meet her and have fallen under her spell.

This woman, who has been appointed *Ambadress of Peace* for the United Nations and *Grande Ufficiale of the Italian Republic* in recognition of her activities in protecting biodiversity and supporting marginalized peoples, and her efforts in educating and mobilizing a large number of young people, has encouraged the **clowns of VIP Roma** to follow their own hearts and fight for the possibility that each one of us has to make a difference to the lives of other living beings. For more than half a century she has set an example of how we should live with respect and love for human beings, nature and the environment. **Jane Goodall is VIP, she lives positively!**



PROJECT PARTNER

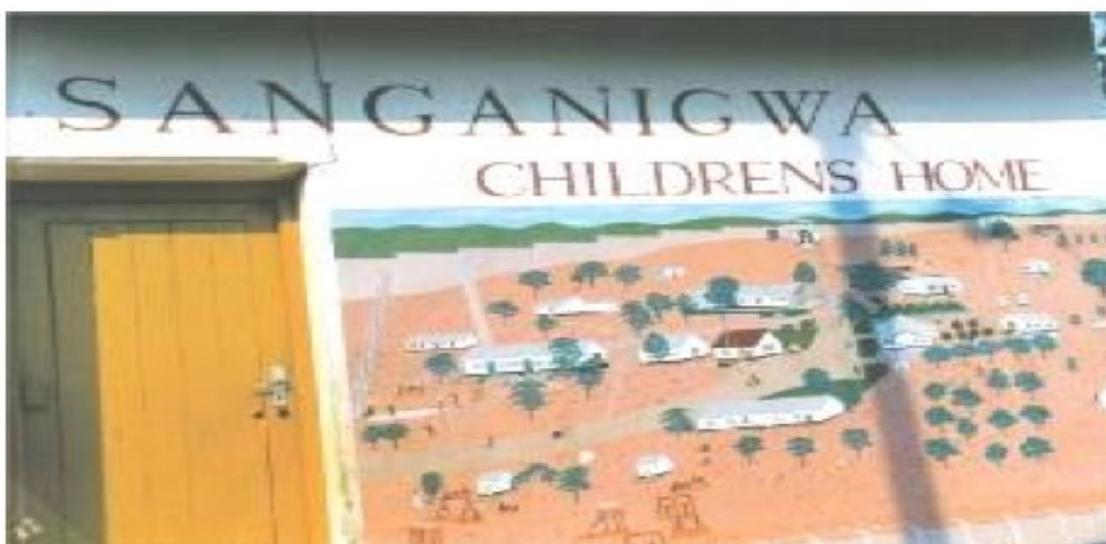
The Jane Goodall Institute Italia ONLUS (JGI Italia) www.janegoodall-italia.com

The Italian association is recognized by the Ministry of the Environment, and has worked in Tanzania since 1998 in the region of Kigoma, where the Gombe National Park stretches along the banks of Lake Tanganyika. The Park has become world famous for the studies carried out there by the English ethologist Jane Goodall on chimpanzees.

The goal of the association is to protect biological and cultural diversity, which is of course, indivisible from the fight against poverty. Environmental degradation is particularly acute in the poorest parts of the world where people are forced to draw intensively on natural resources in order to survive on a day-to-day basis. JGI Italia is present in the Kigoma region with conservation projects, training, microcredit and educational programmes that aim to improve social and economic conditions in local communities, and thus contribute to their development.

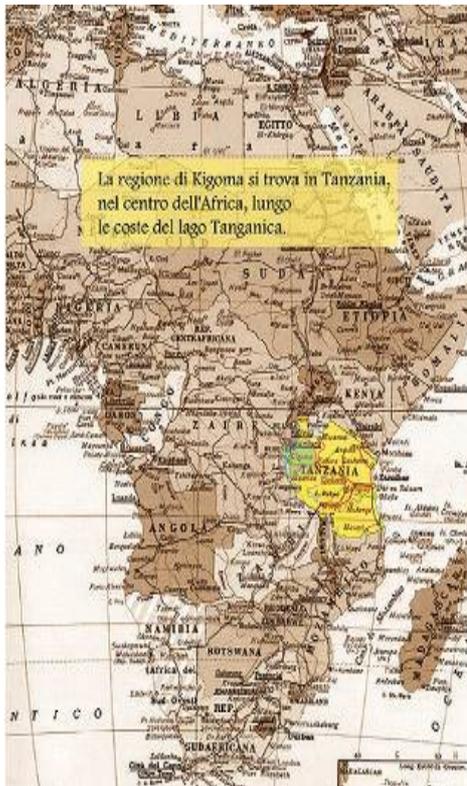
The association guarantees hundreds of disadvantaged minors, orphans and street children the benefits of health, psychiatric and educational support, and professional training in its centres: **Sanganigwa Children's Home A** (an orphanage) and **Sanganigwa B** (a day-care centre for street children).

JGI Italia is currently building eight family houses to shelter children in community-families. Four of these houses are already finished.



Socio-Economic contest in the country of implementation

a. Area of intervention



The region of Kigoma, whose capital is the city of Kigoma, is located in the extreme west of Tanzania, near the border with Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, at a latitude of between 3.6 and 6.5 degrees south and a longitude of between 29.5 and 31.5 degrees east. The region covers an area of 45 km², of which 8 km² are occupied by Lake Tanganyika. The last census gives the population of the region to be 1,674,046 inhabitants, with an average annual growth rate of 5 per cent.

The city of Kigoma has 144,256 inhabitants in the urban area and 489,271 inhabitants in its rural periphery. Sixty per cent of the population is under 19, and the annual demographic growth rate is from 4.3 to 4.5 per cent. The population is made up of different ethnicities, including many refugees from neighbouring countries. The annual per capita income in the region is US\$193.25. Most of the population lives in rural areas (87.9 per cent) and depends exclusively on agriculture for survival.

The main crops grown for income are palm oil, tobacco, coffee, cotton and peanuts. Livestock farming is constrained by the widespread presence of the tsetse fly. Kigoma region is one of the poorest parts of Africa and the planet, and the arrival of various waves of refugees (totalling 400,000) from the conflict in Burundi has led to a rapid rise in the vulnerability of women and children, who have lost their most basic rights and are frequently victims of exploitation and physical violence.

There are now nearly a million orphans in Tanzania. The number of primary schools in the Kigoma region is 596 and the enrolment rate is low. In 2002 it was recorded as 55 per cent; this means that in that year more than 150,000 children between 7 and 13 did not go to school. The deficit of classrooms is around 50.8 per cent, and for this reason there are more than 110 pupils to a classroom in the city of

Kigoma, with an average of 4.2 children to a bench.

Most of the elementary schools are unable to fulfil the very modest objective of one book per three pupils. The majority of schools lack running water, not to mention drinking water, and sanitation. The school infrastructure, the level of training of the teachers and the education given to the children are all very poor. Teaching methods are based almost everywhere on rote learning and the use of physical violence on the part of the teachers, with no attention to learning needs and the development of personality.

Female attendance in elementary school is distinctly inferior to that of males, despite the fact that there are more girls than boys in the general population. Many girls leave school because they fall pregnant at a very early age, even while still attending the elementary school. According to the latest statistics from the Ministry of Public Instruction, the majority of attendees finish elementary school, but only ten per cent go on to further study.

b. Natural Emergencies

From a naturalistic point of view the region of Kigoma contains two very important national parks, which are fundamental to the conservation of biodiversity: these are Gombe National Park and Mahale Mountains National Park. The first, situated to the north of Lake Tanganyika, is the smallest national park in Tanzania and can be

reached by boat from the city of Kigoma – a journey of about an hour.

Gombe National Park is world renown thanks to the continued activities of the English scientist Jane Goodall, founder of the network of organizations that includes the Italian association partner



of this project. Fifty years ago she began studying chimpanzees in the wild here, and made the discoveries that have made her internationally famous. Jane Goodall was one of the first women to devote herself to research into animal behaviour, at a time when the subject was exclusively reserved for men.



The Gombe Stream Research Centre founded by Jane Goodall, hosts scholars from all over the world, continues its research on the chimp

population, and currently hosts about 80 individuals. Gombe Park is considered a true treasure chest of biodiversity, given that it is inhabited by this community of primates. The chimpanzees and the park are a major economic resource in the area, which is better known to tourists than to Tanzanians.

In order to protect their environment and understand its value, local communities must become directly acquainted with the wealth of its natural resources. In 2012 children from the Sanganiwa Home over the age of 12 visited the Gombe National Park. We hope to be able extend this wonderful opportunity to other children from Sanganiwa and Kigoma during the VIP mission.

This experience entails the cost of the trip (hiring a bus to the port and a boat for an hour and a half to take us from Kigoma to Gombe Park and back across the lake at a cost of USD100 per person for foreigners and USD30 for locals), and hiring guides to teach the children about the natural environment and how to behave with the chimps. Given the objectives of the VIP mission in Tanzania (to help children participate in the social and cultural life of their communities and encourage their creative and personal development), **the experience of visiting the Gombe National Park would be extremely important and highly educational.**

Fundraising activities to promote this project should result in donations that will make this very special learning and educational experience possible.

To sum up, the city of Kigoma is located on the banks of Lake Tanganyika, and the lake area is considered one of the world's biodiversity hot spots, both for its geomorphologic characteristics and the number of endemic species of plants and animals it harbours.



c. Sanganiwa

The project will be implemented in a place called Sanganiwa (which in *kiha* dialect means 'welcome'): the Sanganiwa Children's Home is located in the city of Kigoma on the banks of the lake (10 minutes on foot from the orphanage where the VIP clowns will stay). The area in which the orphanage is located is one of the poorest in Tanzania. **Sanganiwa A** is the orphanage, and **Sanganiwa B**, also in Kigoma, is the day-care centre for street children. JGI Italia has been responsible for the maintenance and expansion of Sanganiwa B since 1998.



The diocese of Kigoma has legal responsibility for the orphanage, while the complex is owned by the Government of Tanzania. Local staff are all Tanzanian and include the coordinator – **Kenneth Hageze**



– who is helped in the daily activities of the centre by a social worker, a nurse, four dormitory assistants, a seamstress/laundrywoman, two cooks, a gardener, two nuns from the diocese, two guards and an armed guard who works at night. We would like to make clear that the night guard is armed in order to avoid the theft of hens and chickens, which has happened in the past. During the preliminary mission in October 2012 it was noted that the risks (for the VIP clowns) involved in

moving about the area freely to and from the centre, and in all other areas of intervention are very low.

The stories of what happened to these children before they arrived at the orphanage are diverse, but most of them have lost their parents to AIDS. Some of the older children joined the centre after having lived on the street, without any prospects, where they took the most difficult and humiliating jobs. Others have been brought to the orphanage by the police or the local church. Over the years JGI Italia has been able to take in 108 children, 24 have successfully passed through the school system and are employed today as teachers, electricians, seamstresses, waiters, park keepers, mechanics and carpenters. At the moment the orphanage is maintained thanks to the distance programme promoted by JGI Italia and its volunteers and thanks to donations made towards specific projects which help cover the costs of food, medicine, school and recreational tools, as well as covering the monthly salaries of the operators.

As already stated, JGI Italia supports 420 ‘street children’ through the day-care centre ‘Sanganigwa Street Children’, contributing to their education, their health care (in the most urgent cases with medical consultations and surgical operations), and also by providing healthy food. It also organizes an acrobatics course (very popular with the street children), a theatre festival and a project to train the children in tailoring and the techniques of batik.

d. Sanganigwa: from orphanage to sustainable village



Over the years JGI Italia has extended the capacity of the Sanganigwa centre and has built a new infirmary, a library, an art-house, a stable and two chicken coops.

The current goal of JGI Italia is to transform the orphanage into a ‘sustainable children’s village’ through the gradual addition of specific initiatives over the mid- and long-term which will make the centre self-sufficient in terms of energy and eventually, financially autonomous, able to generate its own profit.

The construction within the area of the orphanage of 8 new structures for family houses (4 of which have been completed, and 4 are in the process of completion) falls within this objective. Each of the houses can house 8 children, and should enable them to take an important step towards becoming fully adult and responsible.

In order to ensure that resources are correctly used, each structure will have solar panels, a vegetable garden and a system to capture rainwater and recycle water.

At the moment the rainwater capture system has been installed in just two of the houses. In order to make sure that funds are well spent, experts in the field were requested to make a careful assessment – it seems that it is necessary to purchase three tanks to irrigate the vegetable gardens around the family houses. One of the existing tanks does not work, it overheats and needs to be replaced.



The three new tanks would allow the orphanage to irrigate the vegetable gardens. Each tank is guaranteed to last for 20 to 25 years. The creation of the vegetable gardens will help guarantee a constant supply of vegetables for the children, and any surplus can be sold and the income will help contribute to the self-sufficiency and sustainability of the centre.

e. Sanganigwa: Health situation in the area of intervention

Tanzania is one of the countries in eastern Africa worst affected by the HIV virus responsible for the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) epidemic, a disease of the immune system, which increases vulnerability to infection. For those not familiar with AIDS, HIV virus is transmitted uniquely through sexual relations, blood transfusions using contaminated blood and hypodermic needles, or through transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

There are no children affected by or carrying the HIV virus in the Sanganigwa centre and in the institutions in which the VIP volunteers will be in contact.



Before admitting children to the Children's Home a medical exam is obligatory. If the children test positive for HIV, they are immediately directed towards other institutions able to give

them the care they need. The children in the orphanage are also tested regularly, and each time they fall sick. The same procedure is adopted in the schools that we will visit, and in the day-care centre Sanganigwa B. In the hospital, as advised by the director of the paediatric pavilion, we will be implementing activities in the open area in front of the hospital so that relatives of the patients can also join in.

The AIDS epidemic has had a significant impact on the people and the economy of the area. This is evident when we consider the orphan crisis. Often the relatives are unable to take care of them. The medics and social workers are careful to distinguish the children who are AIDS orphans from the others in need of help, mainly because the former are often stigmatized. In this respect the Sanganigwa Children's Home runs programmes of assistance that extend support and protection to all the orphans and children in need. A large percentage of children who have lost both parents find themselves banned from the schools and forced to live on the street. During the VIP Roma preliminary mission in October 2012, it became clear that it is necessary to continue to support the orphanage from afar.

This does not mean helping just one child, but an entire community of disadvantaged children: street children, victims of abuse and violence, children with handicaps who are abandoned or taken to the Sanganigwa Children's Home by relatives who can no longer

look after them. Adoption means participating in the life of a child who needs affection, supporting a child's growth, and giving them everything they need to grow up healthy. In this respect it is clear from the preliminary mission that the **Sanganigwa Children's Home** supported by **JGI Italia** is the ideal partner for the **VIP project**. A model of successful cooperation is built upon sustainable development. *"I'm not giving you the fish but the fishing rod, and I'll teach you to use it so that you can fish yourself"*. The VIP partner continues to search for ways to stimulate and create small examples of local productivity.



General aims of the project

The overall aims of the project are to:

- ✓ Encourage children to participate in the social and cultural life of their communities by reinforcing their identity as individuals and their awareness of the values of their country;

- ✓ Create a lasting and stable link between VIP Roma and the Kigoma communities;
- ✓ Guarantee conditions of respect for human rights, animals and the environment through activities designed to involve a steadily increasing number of abandoned minors and street children from Sanganigwa;
- ✓ Encourage the creative and personal development

Specific objectives

- ✓ To create healthy relationships and bring out the potential of the children of Kigoma to be happy and joyful, instilling positive emotions in them (hope, faith, joy, laughter) as they move towards greater social inclusion;
- ✓ To create a network to share and disseminate the principles of Living in Positive;
- ✓ To enhance to the full the experience of the beneficiaries by improving their quality of life;
- ✓ To establish contacts, positive exchange and dialogue with people belonging to a very different reality
- ✓ To allow the positive expression of insecurities, shyness and other difficulties, by improving communication among those in

positions of power and the children within the community

Activities in Kigoma

- ✓ Laughter Yoga: this practice uses breathing techniques based on yoga for laughter exercises. It shows that you can cultivate joy through laughter, positive thoughts and by moving your own energy. When people are encouraged to laugh, real laughter takes over, with all its accompanying benefits. The scientific theory that this method is based on maintains that the body does not recognize a difference between spontaneous and fake laughter and therefore the practice brings the same physiological benefits as natural laughter. By combining yoga breathing exercises with laughter exercises, the body and brain receive increased oxygenation, resulting in physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing. Laughter yoga can help reinforce the immune system;
- ✓ Workshops for emotional and creative play in the Sanganigwa Children's Home (clown gags, and skits highlighting the importance of biodiversity).W;
- ✓ Workshops of Art-therapy to stimulate play and creativity using recycled materials to make toys, puppets, kites, musical tools and/or just to play with;
- ✓ Activities at the Maweni Regional Hospital and in the primary schools of Kigoma;
- ✓ Visit to the Gombe National Park with 15 children from Sanganigwa. This experience will be shared by the children of Kigoma and the VIP clowns as they discover Gombe together. The visit will give the children an opportunity to become acquainted with their land and open an exchange with the park community which could be useful to them when they are older and seeking an occupation that will allow them to develop the resources of their own land.

Useful Informaation

Time - frame for the First Mission VIP TANZANIA 2013

25th Sept – October 13th 2013

Number and names of Volunteers Clown VIP leaving for the mission: 8

(Vip Roma: 1. Spring, 2. Cerca Cerca, 3. Miao Miao, 4. Cookie, 5. Malvasia (Vip Parma), 6. Gecko (Vip Piacenza), 7. Grey (Vip Pordenone), Atomo (Vip Alessandria);

Head of Mission Vip Tanzania D.ssa Simona Primavera (Clown Spring) – Mobile Ph: +39 329 33 55 647 - email : simo.primavera@gmail.com

Contact for Local Partner JGI: Mr. Kenneth Hageze - Coordinatore Sanganigwa's Children's Home - P.O. Box 71 – Kigoma - + 255 76749 2335 + 255 7134 92334
email : hagezekenneth@yahoo.com

Contact for JGI in Italy - D.ssa Daniela De Donno – President for JGI Italia
+39 06 36001 799 - email: direzione@janegoodall-italia.org

Thanks to **free donations** which also include the sale of promotional material (T-shirts, kiway with the logo of the mission), the volunteers clown of VIP Italia will support the local counterpart of the project approved in order to meet the needs of Sanganigwa's Children's Home.



MAISHA NI SAFARI
La vita è un viaggio...