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EVG Newsletter

Foreword

Massimo Cardaci

This issue has been created for the ESRIN Sports Day of June 2005. In defining EVG initiatives for this event, we have realised that we never created a single document describing who we are and what we do... This newsletter is aiming at filling this gap.



join our aims and energies in something that could be of better help.

After several negotiations with the appropriate institutions, finally we could start. This achievement required the commitment of several people: Maurizio Fea in primis, but also Luis Steindl, Georges Proca, Paolo de Paola, Luciana di Domenico, James Dickson, and many others (including also my little contribution).

Do you know EVG?

Massimo Cardaci

EVG stands for **ESRIN Voluntary Group**. Beside the fashion of acronyms, there are 3 important keywords that highlight in full what we are. First, we are people working in ESRIN, regardless of affiliation, gender, religion, culture, nationality. Second, we are people that aim to help others through Voluntary donation of our resources, both in terms of time and in terms of money. Third, we are a Group, i.e. we work together as a single entity for achieving the common goal.

The idea of EVG was born in 1995, when several of us realised that there was a fragmentation of solidarity initiatives carried over by individuals. In the area of volunteer's activities, fragmentation means waste of resources and loss of opportunities: so the idea to

The first year was focused on understanding the activities on-going and to ensure a better support to all of them, exploiting the increased critical mass of people that were progressively joining the group.

In the following years we saw a progressive increase of the visibility, bringing-in more and more requests of help. The attitude *to deliver*, a keyword unfortunately really abused nowadays, did let our credibility to grow, bringing in more friends.

This increase required the Group to better structure itself. We built the concept of Key Interfaces: these are people specialised to cover certain areas of solidarity in both directions (collecting requests for aid and offering help collected elsewhere): homeless, disability, children, etc.

Anybody can join, either fitting in one of these specialised units, or creating a new one.

With this organisation, still in place, we can effectively distribute the resources collected: by letting all these key persons talking together, we could focus on key needs, ensuring help where it is needed.

Resources, yes, but which ones?

Since the beginning, getting resources to cope with the volumes of needs has always been a challenge. Not only financial ones, but also time of people...

Many of you know our presence in the ESRIN social events (Children Christmas party, and Sports' Day): in these occasions we usually sell goods hand-made by ESRIN people that we contacted and have raffles with goods donated to us. In the last years we have also sold the special olive oil made from ESRIN olives kindly donated to us by Site services.

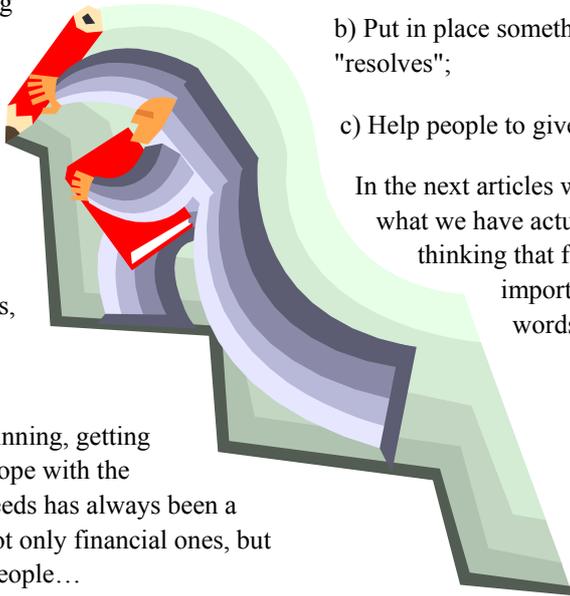
Others remember our ad-hoc calls for covering specific events (collection of clothes or funds). All these initiatives complement the kind donations from ESA and from other clubs.

We have also, a web site ("L'Orsa Minore" www.esrin.esa.int:8080), through which not only we document all our initiatives and publish our newsletter, but that also supports since 10 years people with disabilities all around the world (accounting for 20000 accesses per months).

Summarising, in the ocean of solidarity initiatives, EVG does since its foundation aim to contribute with an approach that we describe as:

- a) Ensure that the aid arrives in full to the people that need it;
- b) Put in place something that "resolves";
- c) Help people to give help.

In the next articles we will describe what we have actually done so far, thinking that facts will be more important than just words.



Our Sustained Activities

Massimo Cardaci

In this section we describe the situations we support in a stable manner. These are either people supported directly by us and "partner" organisations that we sustain. In all cases, these paths are guaranteed by one of our people being direct interface and member of both groups.

The list is here to stimulate your interest, and so it is not fully comprehensive (we are not here to make a dictionary of what has been done): for each of the groups mentioned hereafter, we have presented only the key activities. More details can be found on our web site (and asking to our people – see below: *How to Join*).

A) Rocca di Papa's Family House: orphan children.

We are supporting this ex orphanage since long time. Some sample activities: PCs for the kids room, helping in their study and recreational activities, school kits, gifts and sweeties for Christmas (collected during the ESRIN Christmas Party), funds for the transformation into family house (required by the law), tours in the area.

B) Peter Pan Association: children.

This association is working within the framework of the Bambin Gesù Hospital, focusing on children (Oncology section). We support several initiatives, including the realisation of the "Peter Pan" little house.

We have also contributed to improve the life of 150 Huaycan children. This is also done through the promotion (and direct purchase of tickets) of periodical theatre activities whose income is entirely devolved.

C) La Goccia Association: homeless.

La Goccia is focusing on the homeless people. We contribute financially to the procurement of food, blankets, clothes and other first need items distributed by them every Friday evening. We have also supported some specific single cases with medical needs and the provision of a Caravan.



D) Vivere Insieme Association: disability.

Vivere Insieme is an association active in the area of Castelli Romani (Rocca Priora). They focus on the support to people with disability (with particular

attention to their integration) and to their families (even organising holiday periods).

We support with stable funding their initiatives. In addition we have provided their premises with an area specially equipped for outdoor playing, and a special wheelchair to support entering in a swimming pool. We are also organising for Saturday 25th of June 2005 a visit in ESRIN of several people, to give them a different day.

E) Crescere Insieme Association: disability.

Crescere Insieme is an association active in Frascati since many years. A small reality without medical / curative objectives, but very appreciated for the periodical and practical support activities towards the people and their families: spring marathon of Castelli Romani, weekend tours, restaurant dinners, celebrations (birthdays, etc.), summer camps...

F) Single cases.

Confidentiality does not allow making names, but we are supporting regularly a child in Romania, medical visits, school, etc., and other personal cases. All selected with the wish to resolve.

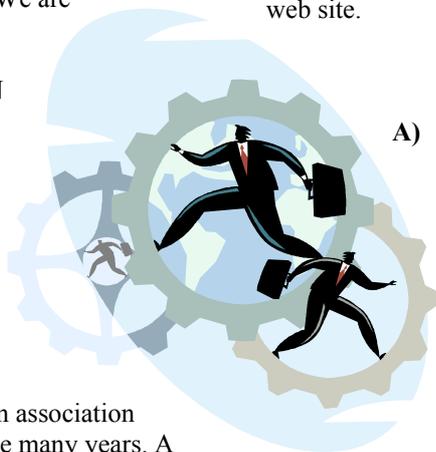
Our ad-hoc Activities

Massimo Cardaci

Hereafter there are other activities we performed. Their common element is the exceptionality, i.e. the ad-hoc measure. We know that the following list is far from exhaustive, but the goal is not to show how good we are. The objective is to show samples of what can be done all together.

These samples can be single events, or group of similar activities occurred over time. We did not give any particular order (except partially the chronology in which we started to apply ourselves on them).

You may see more details visiting our web site.



A) Helping directly people suffering from war or natural diseases.

We have collected clothes and other goods for the people in Kosovo: one of

our colleagues did bring the goods with a truck directly on site, and another one was there for some time to help on site, to ensure that nothing was lost. The same happened for the Earthquake in Umbria, Molise and, recently for the Tsunami in SriLanka (in which a complete school kit has been donated – as requested by them - to a full classroom to let complete the study).

B) Helping people suffering from war or natural diseases through partner organisations.

We know we cannot do everything in house. Nor this is our objective. This is why in these occasions we also use organisations we strongly trust. The support for the flood in Mozambique of year 2000 is an example.

The Tapponetto initiative (collecting plastic cups), to help people in Tanzania suffering from serious water disease, is another. It has been a way to link solidarity and environmental protection.

C) Donation of ESA PCs

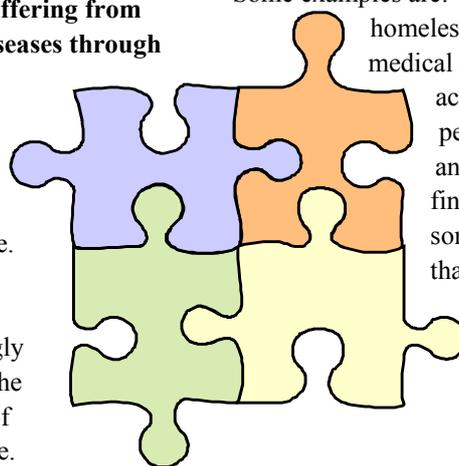
Computers and Internet are nowadays a necessity for many people that suffer from physical and/or psychological diseases. We have put in place several initiatives to bring ESA decommissioned PCs back to life, becoming instruments of help for these people.

Samples are the PCs for a young lady of a not rich family (that could use it to study and communicate with others) for the children of Ariccia’s Hospital (to let them study from the hospital and not loose the year); PCs for the disabled of the Istituto Giuliani of Colonna (to support their integration); PCs for the Casa Famiglia Fiordaliso, where live people affected by the terminal stage of AIDS.

D) Helping single persons with ad-hoc necessities.

In addition to the big events, there are also the day-to-day difficulties that single people have to resolve.

Some examples are: the caravan for a homeless person; the medical and dental support activities for other people (homeless and not); the financial support to some known families that suddenly lost one person (the one bringing in money).



How to Join

Massimo Cardaci

Let before say two words about joining EVG.

Joining to something is usually perceived as a very important commitment... If we join to a gym club, we feel obliged to attend (probably because of the

relevance of the fee), but we may at the end do not to: it is only a private decision that nobody will argue.

Solidarity is perceived to be not like that. This sense of obligation tends to keep many people away from volunteer's initiatives, thinking that they will feel pressed by others to attend, and that they will not be free to say "no". It is not matter of weight, it is matter of people, and this responsibility is seen as too heavy.

The approach that we put in place is different: we want to offer an opportunity to donate what people can / want. We offer a portfolio of options for any person; who has only money to give, but not time, who has only 5 minutes at month, who is only available for exceptional events, who is not sure, but wants to maintain the possibility to do something, who has a lot to give and does not know what to do.

Any person can find his/her own way.

Joining EVG is simple as for any other ESRIN club:

- 1) A signature, with a very limited donation (20 Euros per year – less than a pizza) and that's it.

- 2) The reassurance that your entire donation will go to volunteer activities (the organisation does not cost a cent).

No other obligations that you do not want to endorse (and you may change over time your involvement, to match your actual possibilities). The door is always open to listen your needs or wishes.

You may come anytime along the year to ask more information (and hopefully to join) by visiting:

Concetta Carideo (x.80613, Building 2 room 2221 - our Treasurer);

Maurizio Fea (x.80940, Building 14 room 14214 - our President)

Massimo Cardaci (x.80484, Building 2 room 2115 - our Secretary)

Who are we?

Massimo Cardaci

What does it means "who are we"?

We are nothing special. This is exactly the message: people like you. In this brief paragraph we want to show that there is nothing we do that anybody cannot do (eventually even better).

We work in ESRIN, like you, all day.

We have a house and family, like you, outside here (meaning: cleaning, ironing,

cooking, supermarket, schools, parking, etc. etc...)

We try to practice some sport and/or some hobbies, to keep our belly under control and our brain active, like you.

We have all our worries and happiness, stress and relax time, milestones and big list of things to do, that seem to never reduce in size. Like you.

We have the feeling that time is never enough, like you.

What we try to do in addition to all above is to give some priority to the culture of

"To Give",

so that some time is found also for the people waiting for our help.

Point to Ponder

Massimo Cardaci

We think you will find this common sentence very intellectually appealing. Take it as few words of humour, but at the same time we think that there is a lot more beside it:

*"Give to others what is Right,
Not what is Left"*

