

# A JOURNEY THROUGH CULTURES AND EMOTIONS

## Tracing the way of Food

By Xi Fang

In the Danakil Desert of Ethiopia, an Afar woman is cooking bread in an ancient way wrapping it around a fiery stone; on the high Himalayan plains of Chang Tang, a Tibetan woman is preparing food for the whole family with a rudimentary pressure cooker; in Mali a group of women carrying, sifting and winnowing with *calabashes*, typical containers made from dried pumpkins; in Perù, a group of women are waiting in a queue for entering the market wearing colourful traditional costume; in a tribe of Odisha, India, a fisher woman is dragging a large fishing net into the sea with the elegance of a dancer...

These are the moments captured in different corners of the world, telling different stories about places and people who live in different ways, but share the same passion for life.

Claudio Tirelli, Roberta Ceolin, Carla Parato Milone and Giorgio Milone, four photographers, travellers of the different cultures in the world - have offered an extraordinary photo exhibition to the visitors of Expo 2015. Since 13 July, the exhibition *Extra-Ordinary Food – Long the Way of Food* has been installed in the Pavilion of KIP International School.

The exhibition has been organized by the Culture Association *Obiettivo sul Mondo*, which, since its foundation in 1992 has been dedicated in the discovery and documentation of unknown worlds, capturing hundreds of thousands of moments, collecting stories which are precious witnesses of the endangered ancient cultures.

With the partnership of Cittaslow International and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development of the United Nations), the exhibition has been first presented in the Castle of Abbiategrasso as a collateral event of Cittaslow International Assembly 2015, now in the KIP Pavilion and afterwards in Rome at IFAD.





From *amolé* (salt blocks) to *tofu* (a bean production), from Africa to Asia, situations, words, gestures, rituals, the exhibition is a journey through faces, emotions, hands that cultivate and ways of cooking and living. It is an extraordinary interpretation of the theme of Expo 2015, telling the stories tracing the different ways of food, the artery of all native communities, the stories about places and peoples who are safeguarding knowledge and experiences that could be considered precious heritage of humanity.

It is also a tribute to the life of rural areas where women are often the pillars of the community. They play a fundamental role not only in the care of children, in their education, in the preparation of food and other domestic problems, but also in the heavy work in gardens and fields, collecting water kilometres away from the village. Almost always discriminated and vulnerable, these women are tireless “propellers” who produce incomes and contribute to the wellbeing of the families and their own communities: forgotten realities, emarginated from the large economic politics or become their victims.

With the sensibility of a poet and the preciseness of an anthropologist, the authors of the exhibition try to attract the visitors’ attention to those unseen images, to the untold stories, to food which is the base of every living, elementary but fundamental need of everyone.

As one of the authors of the exhibition said: *The diversity of peoples corresponds to the diversity of the biodiversity which indigenous people have guarded for thousands of years. The model they offer us is extremely modern, in a holistic approach: the economic dimension is interweaved with environmental, social, cultural and spiritual sustainability.*

