

# Economy of Communion

a new culture

The time of the young entrepreneurs

## *EoC Report* 2011-2012

Editor's insert from Città Nuova n. 23/24 - 2012

36



New companies  
in Africa



Development of  
2012 projects



The impact of EoC  
on indigence

Economy of Communion  
a new culture  
Newsroom Insertion  
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Economy of Communion

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# Table of Contents

3	The Year of Young People and Entrepreneurs	Alberto Ferrucci
4	Developments in Africa, 16 New Enterprises	Iracema A. A. da Cruz
5	History and Geography of the EoC Universe	Luca Crivelli and Gian Maria Bidone
6	Destination of Profits and Contributions	Iracema A. A. da Cruz
8	The Development of EoC Projects in 2012	Francesco Tortorella
10	The Commitment of Young People for the Future of the EoC	Antonella Ferrucci
12	The Business Parks and the EoC Associations	Alberto Ferrucci
14	The Impact of the Economy of Communion on Indigence	Antonella Ferrucci
15	The Challenge of Productive Inclusion	Luigino Bruni
16	Formy 10	Vittorio Sedini

## AN ACT OF GRATEFULNESS

*We wish to thank all entrepreneurs and their collaborators for their trust in the EoC, notwithstanding the crisis of our times. We also thank all those, especially the young people, who in various parts of the world live each day with passion for the EoC. Thanks to each of you, the Economy of Communion is already a reality.*

The magazine Città Nuova which contains the newsroom insert "Economy of Communion - a new culture" can be mailed to whomever requests by contacting: [info@edc-online.org](mailto:info@edc-online.org). Those who wish to contribute to its publication or to the EoC project, can mail their contribution specifying the destination of funds to the:

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*New EoC enterprises have been started, owners, and the growing opportunities for enterprises in Africa, in spite of the crisis, as well as the dynamism of the business*

# The Year of Young People *and Entrepreneurs*

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The year 2011-2012 has been one rich with fruits and prospects. Business profits contributed to the EoC have grown notwithstanding the serious economic crisis of the times. New enterprises are being started and in many parts of the world interest in the EoC, in its experiences and in its ideas, is growing. Some fruits that we can share with joy are the many projects involving young people, the EoC African spring, and a major participation of the youth from various countries.

From many points of view, this has been a positive year: it could be considered the year of the youth and also a year of new dynamism for EoC entrepreneurs. After dedicating themselves to applying the fraternal lifestyle of living the economy in their enterprises that Chiara Lubich defined as "a commitment in growing together", entrepreneurs now feel they must look outwards: first of all to the Business Parks and then to EoC enterprises, contributing to "startups" even in faraway countries. There is also a growing desire to share this lifestyle with the great number of enterprises that, unaware of the EoC, are working towards a sustainable economic, social and environmental community.

This annual report gives a rundown of the shared profits allocated to the EoC project: monetary profits, which are the tip of the iceberg of "profits" shared, assume many forms. In some ways these monetary profits are modest in nature given the number of enterprises, but even more precious in this moment of crisis. To provide a valid econometric analysis, it would be useful to point out other forms of contribution that, when motivated by the values inspiring the EoC, hold for us the same importance as monetary profits.

To begin this evaluation, we have asked enterprises to calculate and communicate the destination of their profits when different from the normal accumulation of capital.

It is a matter of realizing the amount of profit used to strengthen the business first of all, then the amount used to increase the number of jobs available: the recognition of an increased number of jobs is important. Costs incurred by including workers who may need additional training, by a company that

changes production or service criteria to increase the number of positions in favor of those who may be less skilled initially, or money spent to maintain or improve the environment should also be considered. There will be a request to list costs incurred in offering apprenticeships to young people, of formation towards working in an EoC style, and of investments destined towards the creation of new jobs outside of the business. In addition, contributions given by the business to support the diffusion of the culture of communion will also need to be included and a value attributed to

services and the use of equipment offered freely. Giving an account of the sharing of profits will help the businesses, foundations, or other types of enterprises, also those which may not participate directly in the EoC lifestyle, feel closer to the EoC project. It will give a more accurate picture of the "profits" being shared and may stimulate ideas for further participation to those who give or are thinking of giving a more consistent amount of their profits in the future, to spread the culture of fraternal economy, the most concrete contribution that can be offered for the future of humanity.



EoC enterprises are increasingly places of effective communion and places of social transformation.

# Developments in Africa

## 16 New Enterprises

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The EoC continues to be generative. This is happening notwithstanding the economic crisis and its reflections on the life of people and communities in much of the world. In fact, new enterprises have been created and existing ones have joined the project in the countries of Spain, Egypt, Paraguay and in 16 other countries on the African continent.

The decisive impulse towards this development was sparked by the Pan African School held in Nairobi in January 2011<sup>(1)</sup>. Here, something special happened: the EoC was understood as a “way for Africa,” for the development of its people and communities through a specific formation to the culture of communion, a foundation for new entrepreneurship. In this way, small enterprises have multiplied and others have joined those already setup for the purpose of creating new workplaces, safeguarding the local culture, opening lines of communication with other peoples, and establishing relationships of fraternity and equality.

Many of these enterprises are small family enterprises such as wheelbarrow rental, resale of electric materials, a dry goods store, and a bread store. There are also some larger enterprises such as the Moyi Mwa Ntongo Medical Center at Kinshasa and the soap factory, SernDevelopment. Thierry Thienza, owner of the business tells us how he recently made an experience of reciprocity: “I had lost interest in working with other people. I could no longer share my ideas or projects. But when I heard the message of the Economy of Communion, I was touched because according to the EoC, one’s neighbor is the solution to all our problems. Well then, I changed my mind and started to share my ideas and thoughts with my neighbors, workers and friends. To my great surprise I was able to find a solution to the problem of materials and a friend of mine gave me a palm plantation to have the raw material.”

Ernest Pole Pole, still in Congo, gave life to a business that calculates projections for hydroelectric stations and communications. He has been prodded by the culture of giving and the desire to start an enterprise with the poor,

“to come out of poverty together.” He tells us:

*“The activity we started continually brings us fruits because we experience the beauty of the EoC that proposes reciprocity, gratuity and communion. I experience a great joy in personally seeing those with whom I work gradually improve their social situation: from poverty, to a situation that is tolerable, and then all the way to a financial stability similar to mine. I experienced a new hope gushing forth from a work of God.”*

The EoC Commission of the Congo and the Association for the Economy of Communion (AECOM), offer their service of coordination and support to the initiatives to spread the EoC and to the formation of new entrepreneurs.



(1) Many in-depth stories on EoC events in Africa in 2011 and their developments are available on the international EoC website – [www.edc-online.org](http://www.edc-online.org)

# History and Geography of the EoC Universe

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Figure 1

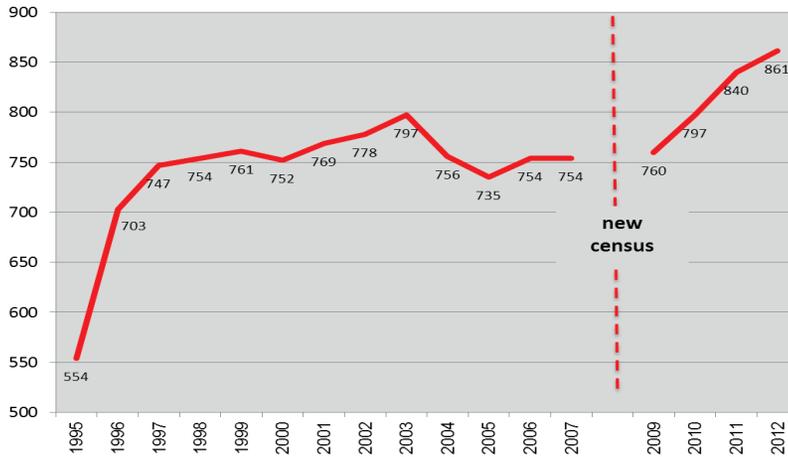
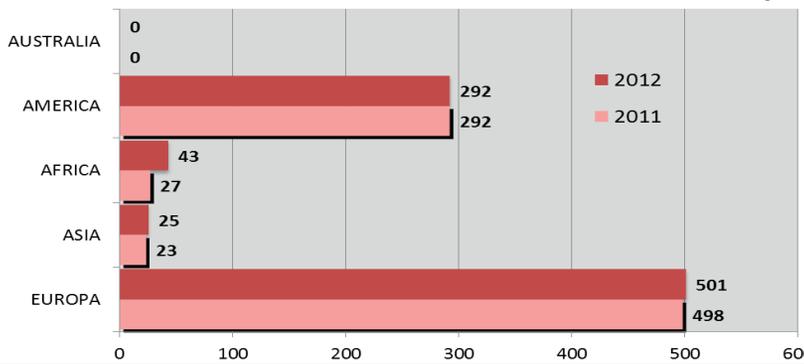


Figure 2



Every year in the world economy, enterprises are born as other enterprises die. The same is true for the EoC project: there are enterprises that end (because the owner retires or because the heirs follow different paths) and new enterprises that start, or decide to make the EoC principles their own. On average, there are 50 additional enterprises registered each year that, in a period of statistical stability, have compensated for the disappearance of a similar number of enterprises. But this statistic is also relative from the moment that the EoC way of life is put in place in various ways: the gift of part of the profits, the direct solution to social problems through actions taken by the business (for example, the offering of jobs to disadvantaged people), to a way of doing economy that creates community and fraternity.

Every statistical type of information has its merits but also its limits which should be recognized. The evolution of EoC enterprises can be seen in Figure 1 and shows how the project went through a great expansion in its first 6 years of life: the number of enterprises associated with the project grew rapidly until it reached 750 enterprises. Then a plateau phase followed which is inevitable – with numbers remaining substantially stable for the next decade, followed by a tendency towards growth beginning in 2009.

This, however, tells only one part of the story. A second perspective, not less important, is that during these past 20 years, the total number of enterprises associated with the EoC project for at least 12 months climbed over the 1,800 number mark. This fact is evidence of a greater dynamism.

As Chiara Lubich used to affirm, an EoC enterprise tries to be a “a structure built completely out of love.”<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Figure 2 merits a comment, at first look it underscores the significant stability in the way the enterprises are distributed geographically. Europe and America remain the two continents with the highest number of enterprises that are linked together. But the growth in enterprises registered by the African continent cannot go unnoticed: in 2011, it hosted its first EoC school; between 2011 and 2012 it witnessed, in terms of the number of enterprises, a growth that is truly extraordinary: 16 new enterprises equal to more than 60%!

(<sup>1</sup>) LUBICH, Chiara. 2001. *The Economy of Communion – History and Prophecy*. Rome, Città Nuova, p. 52.

From businesses and private donations we see streams created by a choice which feeds the river of sharing and irrigates cultural and economic change.

# The Allocation of profits and contributions

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The purpose of this table is to give a detailed look at the business profits and personal contributions from the sharing countries. It also gives information on how the contribution was utilized in favor of the people in need (to create activities, finance scholarships, help with salaries, food and lodging) and for the formation of 'new men and new women' both in a direct way, and through communication media.

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Both the sharing and the way the contributions are utilized happen through the structure of the Focolare Movement, organized in 56 geographical areas to which nations or group of nations refer.

This table states the name of the nation in which the headquarters of the Focolare is located for that particular area: for example, the nation 'Egypt' comprises the sharing and contributions also coming from Libya, Suban and Tunisia.

BUSINESS PROFITS								
Country	Income	Expenses for Indigents					Expenditures for a Culture of Giving	
		Productive activities	Schooling	Income Integration	Medical Care	Housing	Formation	Offices & Press
ALBANIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALGERIA	0	0	480	900	500	0	0	0
ANGOLA	0	0	2,050	0	3,936	2,870	0	0
ARGENTINA	47,907	0	0	0	0	0	20,000	32,313
AUSTRALIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUSTRIA	8,575	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BELGIUM	161,933	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BRAZIL	121,937	0	48,419	0	0	0	0	15,000
CAMEROON	0	0	1,250	3,360	1,950	1,320	0	0
CANADA	7,972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHILE-BOLIVIA	3,798	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHINA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COLOMBIA	0	0	8,248	1,315	1,877	576	0	0
KOREA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IVORY COAST	0	10,230	533	0	410	0	0	0
EGYPT	0	0	1,845	615	1,148	328	0	0
EL SALVADOR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PHILIPPINES	50,724	0	13,415	820	1,640	410	8,000	5,000
FRANCE	47,882	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GERMANY	28,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JAPAN	365	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,490
JORDAN	0	0	1,000	1,450	880	1,200	0	0
GREAT BRITAIN	2,390	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HAITI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INDIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IRELAND	1,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ITALY	62,314	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KENYA	0	0	1,532	6,500	1,394	2,214	0	0
LEBANON	0	0	0	2,651	1,711	2,437	0	0
LITHUANIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MADAGASCAR	0	0	1,000	400	0	0	0	0
MALTA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MEXICO	359	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NIGERIA	0	0	400	650	0	800	0	0
HOLLAND	3,864	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PAKISTAN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
POLAND	250	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PORTUGAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHECH REPUBLIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONGO DEM. REP.	0	0	4,428	4,141	10,168	4,879	0	0
RUSSIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S.DOMINGO	0	0	1,580	0	0	0	0	0
SLOVAKIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SLOVENIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36,000
SPAIN	18,565	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SOUTH AFRICA	0	0	0	800	500	700	0	0
S.E. ASIA	0	0	3,972	1,840	167	792	0	0
S. E. EUROPE	1,282	0	51,037	36,693	2,952	5,707	6,000	0
SWITZERLAND	161,303	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HOLY LAND	0	0	1,230	492	246	0	0	0
THAILAND	1,136	0	8,036	0	0	574	0	0
TURKEY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HUNGARY	5,311	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
URUGUAY	0	34,081	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	33,252	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VENEZUELA	1,527	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Balance Pre. Yrs.	8,159	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre Focolare Mov.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sophia Un. Inst.	0	0	0	0	0	0	200,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>780,604</b>	<b>84,311</b>	<b>150,454</b>	<b>62,628</b>	<b>29,480</b>	<b>24,808</b>	<b>234,000</b>	<b>93,803</b>
Administrative Costs								38,622
Website & News								25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>780,604</b>	<b>84,311</b>	<b>150,454</b>	<b>62,628</b>	<b>29,480</b>	<b>24,808</b>	<b>234,000</b>	<b>157,425</b>
To be Assigned								37,499



PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS				
Income	Expenses for Indigents			
	Schooling	Income Integration	Medical Care	Housing
0	5,904	1,722	1,640	1,394
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
9,546	6,704	22,325	15,072	11,856
6,442	0	0	0	0
10,799	0	0	0	0
11,312	0	0	0	0
37,077	20,956	85,484	75,045	13,217
0	0	820	1,170	0
699	0	0	0	0
1,978	13,690	3,785	4,731	2,523
11,609	328	0	630	392
3,944	0	8,789	935	2,551
9,868	3,280	984	0	0
0	0	0	1,230	0
638	0	0	984	0
3,986	3,903	18,949	10,345	4,198
3,924	16,996	15,175	5,070	4,522
15,878	0	0	0	0
28,346	0	0	0	0
10,015	0	0	0	0
850	0	0	0	0
5,300	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	210
0	2,996	806	240	403
3,250	0	0	0	0
177,967	0	1,000	0	7,514
509	0	0	1,928	0
3,672	1,366	595	1,129	0
0	280	1,410	350	0
0	0	600	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
4,797	5,945	2,665	1,681	0
0	0	0	350	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
3,446	3,280	4,510	3,280	7,790
10,648	0	0	0	0
3,856	1,435	1,353	1,066	1,271
0	0	0	4,264	1,025
0	4,838	4,428	2,870	2,542
0	0	0	1,000	0
3,998	1,561	3,765	184	0
4,882	0	0	0	0
23,279	500	0	0	0
280	0	0	0	0
1,305	0	0	0	0
3,674	0	7,193	8,954	15,350
44,189	0	0	0	0
1,150	0	738	3,444	492
2,256	0	0	574	0
1,200	0	0	0	0
1,073	0	0	0	0
2,216	3,444	984	14,834	0
20,333	0	0	0	1,423
2,057	8,413	7,946	3,506	1,402
20,000	0	0	0	0
36,390	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
<b>548,635</b>	<b>105,820</b>	<b>196,025</b>	<b>166,505</b>	<b>80,075</b>
<b>548,635</b>	<b>105,820</b>	<b>196,025</b>	<b>166,505</b>	<b>80,075</b>
		209		



Bolivia and Paraguay are added to the countries which are recipients of projects financed with EoC profits.

# The Development of EoC Projects in 2012

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The share of profits from EoC enterprises in the years 2011-2012 were distributed among the three categories we have been addressing for a number of years now in collaboration with Action for a United World ([www.amuit.eu](http://www.amuit.eu)): 1) assistance for basic needs of income, health, and living conditions; 2) support for education at the primary, secondary, university, and professional levels; and, 3) creation and consolidation of job opportunities in productive enterprises/activities.

Almost half of the resources (42.8 percent) were allocated to the area of education, sustaining 479 people in their programs of study and formation. Another third of the profits was used to offer subsistence assistance to 899 families. The commitment to the creation and consolidation of production activities, utilizing 24 percent of resources, focused on the creation of 35 new jobs. The program for the development of new enterprises focused particularly on two new ventures in Bolivia and Paraguay. In Bolivia, at Cochabamba, a triennial multisectoral project was begun, which attempts to tackle the social challenges families face in one of the poorer areas of the city. Activities provided scholastic assistance for children and youth; basic hygienic education for families; social assistance; professional formation, work orientation and above all, where EoC funds are applied, a program that provides microcredit loans to support small productive activities in that area of the city. The project, administered in collaboration with AMU, Fundación Unisol and the local EoC Commission, aims at

offering in the course of the first year, about 25 microcredits with a total of 150 loans given over a 3 year span. A couple of responses from those being helped include:

*"I thank the Centre, particularly the Chiara Lubich workshop, for having helped me live better: I am happy because I can provide for my family's needs without abandoning my children."*

These statements would be enough to capture the impact this project is making on the lives of these families in the zone: allowing mothers to not abandon their children.

In Paraguay, the project begun this year – also for a 3 year period – is about the support given by three economic activities carried out by families: a neighborhood store which offers groceries for daily use or in bulk; a hairstylist and a beautician beside it; an ambulant salesman selling his wares inside buses. It is a matter of consolidating these activities to guarantee stability to individuals who do this work and to their families as well, and to create new job opportunities: first of all for the husbands who have lost their jobs and cannot find others, and for some younger people as well.



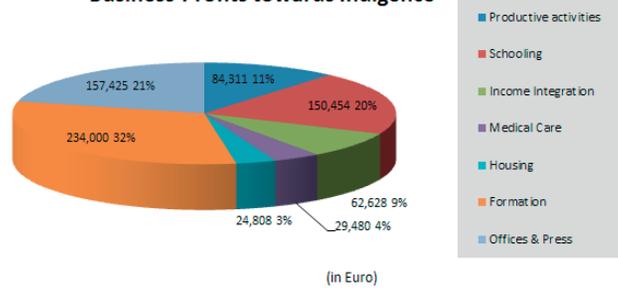


Continuing parallel to these two new initiatives, are the ongoing projects started in the past years in Brazil ("From the Street"), Philippines ("Golden Thread") and Uruguay (microenterprises for women) which involve about a hundred people. Through their letters, beneficiaries tell us of the important impact these assistance activities or development projects can make in their lives:

*"For a few years now, our family has been living a very particular situation: my husband's illness required four surgeries, the needs of our children with the many difficulties and the things we need to buy which our regular income could not cover. For this reason, the assistance which comes to us confirms each time that we are not carrying the burden alone. This year, our car broke down and the roof of our house needed repairs...we thank everyone who made it possible for us to face these challenges."*

*"It has been a few years now that I have been diagnosed with a bone disease, and without EoC's help I could not have undergone the treatments needed to make me feel a little better, plus I had to have a very special and expensive diet. I thank you from the bottom of my heart!"*

### Business Profits towards Indigence



*"I study economics and because of a new law this year I lost the right to be a working student. My health also deteriorated. I pursued my studies with great difficulty and had to find the money for medications. I am very thankful to God for the help that arrived through the EoC invented by Chiara and supported by so many, because I was able to survive this year."*

In each of these activities of assistance and projects carried out, the reciprocity dimension assumes a central role; it isn't just about sharing economic resources, it is about getting formed together in various dimensions to a culture of giving: the economy of communion, a sharing of knowledge, and forgiveness. Some experiences talk about the participation in the fruits of the beneficiaries, and of the impact that reciprocity made in the projects:

*"I learned that giving gives me more joy than receiving. I wove blankets for babies, we sold them all and I felt I wanted to give the income to contribute towards the cost of buying the Centre [in which the activities take place]."*

*"Thanks to these seminars, I learned to do my monthly budgeting. I don't have a steady income but I am writing down what I spend, and so far I have been able to set aside 10 Bolivians (editor's note: equal to 1.10 euros)."*

Talking about formation seminars on giving and professional formation, this mother said:

*"I am very happy because I have found freedom through forgiveness. I have abandoned the anger that consumed me and now I am happy."*

In a context where violence is one's daily bread, this achievement is also a liberation from poverty.

Chile and Italy, Brazil and France, Kenya and Portugal, have sponsored schools of formation, bringing to fruition the commitments made in San Paolo on May 29, 2011.

## The Commitment of Young People *for the future of the EoC*

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It was the young people from many nations who, on May 29, 2011, at the conclusion of the celebration in San Paolo of the EoC's 20 years, declared their commitment to bring ahead and spread the project of Chiara Lubich for the next 20 years, as the banner for the day suggested, "From 1991 to 2031." The numerous interventions and active participation to the initiatives proposed precisely for the youth in 2012, which we shall report on next, is a sign that this commitment has not been just a moment of enthusiasm, as can be inferred by visiting the website [www.edc-online.org](http://www.edc-online.org).

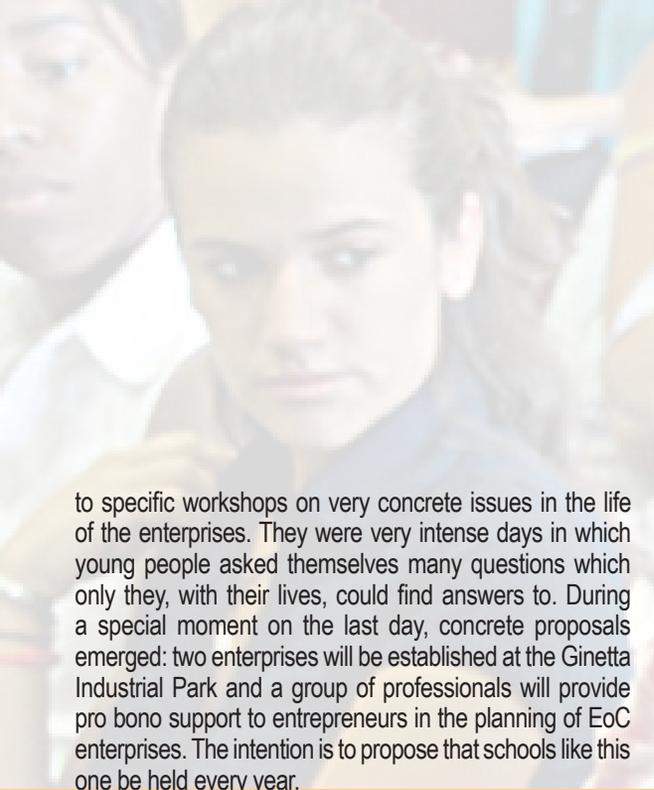


**ITALY, Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park, Loppiano (Fi) Workshop-School.** For three days in the end of June, 50 people from all over Italy (moved by the desire to understand more deeply how to set up an 'enterprise of communion') animated the workshop organized by the Italian EoC Commission, which was given the name: 'Start up the Future.' The meeting format which was well appreciated involved experts treating in depth EoC topics (a school) in the morning sessions, and work by groups on different issues (workshops) in the afternoon sessions. A second run is being considered in 2013.

**CHILE, Santiago - EoC School.** This is about a course wanted by the deans of two Chilean Catholic Universities, 'Silva Henriquez' and 'Most Holy Assumption', and organized at the beginning of July in collaboration with Sophia University Institute to introduce the EoC economic model as a concrete response to the 'provocations' of the encyclical, 'Caritas in Veritate.' For the 25 students who attended, a certain commitment was needed to digest the new messages they were absorbing. It was the lively testimony of the business owners – those who 'go against the current' – that helped the students capture the uniqueness of this way of doing business. It is the hope of the organizers that this school becomes the initial step towards the birth of new EoC enterprises in Chile.



**BRAZIL, Igarassu, Pernambuco - Latin-American School.** The title of the School held from July 12 to 15, was: "Communion, Creativity and Passion for a New Economy." There were 230 participants, many of them young people, from 19 states of Brazil and Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. The youth; productive inclusion; synergy with those who currently work for a new economy in the market and in civil life; and creativity: these were the key words that emerged from the very first day of the program which alternated between plenary sessions and sessions dedicated



to specific workshops on very concrete issues in the life of the enterprises. They were very intense days in which young people asked themselves many questions which only they, with their lives, could find answers to. During a special moment on the last day, concrete proposals emerged: two enterprises will be established at the Ginetta Industrial Park and a group of professionals will provide pro bono support to entrepreneurs in the planning of EoC enterprises. The intention is to propose that schools like this one be held every year.

**FRANCE, Army - “Economy of Communion”.** Surely, an experience to be repeated! This was the unanimous opinion of those participating in the workshop held from July 7 to 15. Coming from different backgrounds, the 12 young people who were present worked intensely on projects of setting up enterprises in the spirit of the EoC. Guided by advice from EoC entrepreneurs, they presented to some professionals in the business world the ‘business plan’ of three projects they had developed. But it was also a school of communion with a rich sharing of experiences. Mixing the economic dimension with the ideals that each one carries within himself is a challenge with difficulties that no one ignores: but the game plan, as we were reminded forcefully by a young participant, is immense: it is about changing the world!

**KENYA, Nairobi - The Second Intensive Course on the EoC.** The course, covered in the agreement drawn up in January 2011 with the Sophia University Institute, was held in mid July at Cuea, the Catholic University of East Africa. During the two weeks of lessons with Vittorio Pelligra and Simona Di Ciaccio, a special relationship was sought with each participant so that what was being studied would take on a meaning beyond cultural differences and context. It was about discovering a new way to do economy, a search for that ‘something more’ in gratitude, detachment, trust and the ability to cooperate that resides in each one of us, and a search for the possibilities of development that the EoC can offer Africa. Worthy of note was the discovery of the harmony that exists between the intensely relationship centered vision of the ‘Ubuntu’ philosophy which is endemic to



this region, and fundamental EoC principles. “Development is commitment and we want to become agents of change;” “The EoC is the vehicle for human development in Africa.” This is how two students synthesized the commitment that each one, like true pioneers, took away with them.

**PORTUGAL, Abrigada - First European Summer School.** “Towards a Bridging Economy” was the name given to this school which began as ‘European’ and transformed itself into ‘International’ through the bonding of over 70 young people from 18 countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America. These were young people, mostly between 19 and 32 years of age, many of them students but also workers and entrepreneurs in their first encounter with the reality of a business. ‘To build Bridges’ and to “transform brotherhood into an economic category” were the leitmotifs of the school: bridges towards true communities and organizations with a different logic, for a market created by inclusion. At the end of the school, eight entrepreneurial projects were presented with great commitment within various workshops. What emerged in the final impressions was the desire to communicate “to the millions of young people who work in the economy” this new vision capable of transforming the world.” A second event will be held in Madrid in 2013.

**FORMY.** Lastly, a final mention of the wellknown (by now) mascot, created in 2012 by Vittorio Sadini and conceived intentionally to transmit EoC values to the very young. Vittorio’s comic strip #10 appears on the last page. All the other cartoon strips of Vittorio can be accessed and downloaded from the EoC website.

Following the initial intuition of Chiara Lubich, Industrial Parks were set up near our little cities and a network of development was established among many enterprises in many countries.

# The Business Parks and the EoC Associations

ALBERTO  
FERRUCCI



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The proposal by Chiara Lubich to the Brazilian people in 1991 was to bring about near the little cities of the Movement and with the resources of everyone (“We are poor but we are many”, affirmed the Focolare’s founder), enterprises that would provide jobs and apply their profits to grow the business, to help the poor and to finance the formation of new people.

Some women volunteers of the Movement established a school for mothers; another volunteer, a small clothing business and still others, a medical laboratory; many contributed their savings, jewelry and land to raise the capital for the corporation that would be set up to build and manage the industrial park.

In 1992 in Brazil, the Espri was formed in this way. Today with 4,050 shareholders and a capital of 3.32 million real, they have established the Spartaco Industrial Park, where six enterprises employing 143 workers operate, while three other EoC enterprises have their centers

nearby.

In the same year in Argentina, the Unidesa was formed with a capital of 950.000 pesos contributed by 289 Argentinians entrusted with the job of reclaiming a swampy terrain in the pampa, close to the little city of Lia, creating a small park and equipping the rest for production: the Polo Solidaridad was formed where seven EoC enterprises operate while four others are also situated nearby.

In 2002 the EoC Nordeste was formed – with 1,138 partners and a capital of 1.75 million real which in a few years would build the Ginetta Industrial Park near Recife, where four enterprises with 24 workers, some coming from nearby favelas, operate. In Croatia, we have the Faro Industrial Park and in Belgium the Solidar Industrial Park: in both parks there are four active enterprises. In Italy the EdicSpa was formed in 2004 and today it has 5,706 shareholders with a capital of 6.3

## Associations and Industrial Parks of the World:

COUNTRY	NAME	TYPE	EMAIL	WEB SITE
International	AIEC	EoC Association	info@edc-online.org	www.edc-online.org
Argentina	AEAEC	EoC Association	ramon.cervi@gmail.com	www.aedec.org.ar
	UNIDESA	Solidaridad Park	unidesa@mariaopolis.org.ar	www.mariaopolis.org.ar/polo-solidaridad/
Belgium	SOLIDAR	Solidar Park	info@solidar.be	www.solidar.be
Brazil	ANPEC	EoC Association	anpec@anpec-edc.com.br	www.anpec-edc.com.br
	ESPRI	Spartaco Park	espri@espri.com.br	www.espri.com.br
	EDC NORDESTE	Ginetta Park	edc@pologinetta.com.br	www.pologinetta.com.br
Congo	AECOM	EoC Association	aecomprojet@yahoo.fr	
Croatia	UEZ	Polo Faro	udruga.ez@kc.t-com.hr	
Italy	EDIC Spa	L. Bonfanti Park	info@edicspa.com	www.edicspa.it - www.pololionellobonfanti.it
	L. BONFANTI	EoC Association	associazionelionello@loppiano.it	
	AIPEC	EoC Association	aipec.info@gmail.com	
France	AURORE EdeC	EoC Association	edc@focolari.fr	www.economie-de-communion.org
Nord America	EOCASSOC	EoC Association	eocassoc@gmail.com	
Portugal	ECNAL	Giosi Guella Park	raposo.jm@gmail.com	
	AEDC	EoC Association	geral@aedc-portugal.org	www.aedc-portugal.org
Spain	AEDC	EoC Association	edc@idealmail.net	



million Euros; in four years it built the great complex of the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park, near the city of Renata, at Incisa Val D'Arno, with 23 enterprises and 101 workers, which has become the symbol of Italian civil economy. In 2011 the Giosi Industrial Park was inaugurated in Portugal where three enterprises are located. The other enterprises that adhere to the project and operate in other places in the abovementioned countries, feel ownership of the Parks; to support them and help them grow, and also to help one another reciprocally, they banded together into associations all over the world forming the AIEC, the International EoC Association with its headquarters in

Italy; the associations collaborate in making the project known to other enterprises, to help with the creation of new ones, especially in Industrial Parks, and to organize schools for entrepreneurs and cultural events.

The Anpec association was formed in Brazil, the Aeac in Argentina, the Aedc in Spain and Portugal, the Eocassoc in North America, the Aecom in Congo, the Uez In Croatia, the AuroreEdeC in France and the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park in Italy, which Aipec joined lately, giving the Park new strength, enthusiasm and the involvement of civil society.

#### **The Central Commission for the Economy of Communion is composed of:**

Luigino Bruni, Alberto Ferrucci, Benedetto Gui, Carla Bozzani (Italia); Leo Andringa (Italia/Olanda); Iracema Andréa Arantes da Cruz (Italia/Brasile); Maja Calfova (Slovacchia); Cristina Calvo (Argentina); Luca Crivelli (Svizzera); Teresa Ganzon (Filippine); John Mundell (USA); Geneviève Sanze (Costa d'Avorio); Armando Tortelli (Brasile)

#### **Our contacts:**

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#### **Credits:**

Contributors to the EoC Report 2011-2012: Iracema Andréa Arantes da Cruz, Gian Maria Bidone, Carla Bozzani, Luigino Bruni, Luca Crivelli, Alberto Ferrucci, Antonella Ferrucci, Francesco Tortorella.

A research project intends to investigate the benefits received by indigent individuals who were recipients of aid during the first 21 years of EoC activity.

# The Impact of the Economy of Communion on Indigence

COMPILED BY  
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Jena Debbaneh, 27 years old from Syria, is in Italy with the Sophia University Institute<sup>1</sup> located in Loppiano (Fi) to lead research which will evaluate the impact of EoC projects on poverty. Funding for the research comes from the share of EoC profits destined for “the development of new people.”



project, and how I could apply it in my country: I was told that the best way to understand EoC was to live it. I tried to attend a Summer School but due to the war, it was not possible to leave Syria. But I did not lose hope. It was then that I came across an offer of a research grant. I said to myself: this is the way. I won the research grant and now I’m in Sophia.”

## Jena, what attracted you to the EoC?

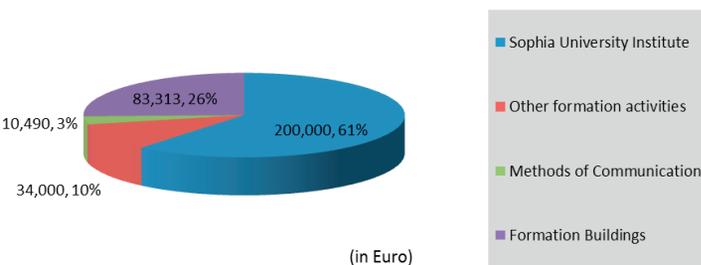
“The reasons go back to my adolescence when I went on vacation with a group of friends. We wanted to help those who lived in the slums that surrounded our city, Lattakia. Later, I studied economics and I had the opportunity to work with the World Bank and with the UN on projects aimed to reduce poverty. The poor were the object of the study and the research was carried out in a very professional way, but ‘without soul’: the focus was on ‘the number of the poor’ and not on ‘the poor people’ themselves, and this bothered me. In the autumn of 2010, I watched a video where Chiara Lubich talked of EoC projects to address poverty. It occurred to me that I had found the answers to my questions. The idea fascinated me; I searched for information to understand if truly it dealt with a ‘real’

## What objectives have you set for this research?

“After 21 years of EoC activity, we want to evaluate its impact on poverty. What follows after the initial stage of study of the EoC at Sophia, in association with the Association for a United World (AMU) and Cristina Viano, my research colleague, is a true and proper analysis. In reality, what we wish to know – to use an evangelical metaphor – is what the person who was helped by the Good Samaritan did after recovering from the episode with the bandits. Did his life change? How did it change?”

The EoC, with its projects for the poor, takes on the role of the Good Samaritan: what happened in the past 21 years to the people aided by this project? Did the way their personal stories evolve exhibit specific characteristics which can be associated with the EoC? The Gospel does not tell us what happened to the person helped by the Good Samaritan; with this research, we intend to discover it.”

## Business Profits towards Formation



## You said that the best way to understand the EoC is to live it: how did you put this proposition into practice in Syria before you found the opportunity to study at Sophia?

“There are two EoC aspects which I felt were important to live: the first is how to live one’s own work with one’s collaborators, trying to see the workplace as a family. The second is the communion of goods proposed by the EoC: this too I tried in some way to put into practice, while taking into account the urgent needs I saw in my community.”

<sup>1</sup> The Sophia University Institute ([www.iu-sophia.org](http://www.iu-sophia.org)) is the primary destination for the formation of new men and women.

To offer the poor person an opportunity to build his work and that of others.  
Poverty constitutes EoC's principal mission.

# The Challenge of Productive Inclusion

LUGINO BRUNI

In concluding the 2011-2012 EoC Report, particularly enriched by fruits and signs of hope, I wish to bring attention to what I consider an especially important challenge. I am referring to the use of profits given by enterprises to benefit those who find themselves in economic difficulty (one of three parts in which EoC profits are divided). I believe it is necessary to increase the number of entrepreneurial projects supported by us in collaboration with AMU.

The initiatives and aid given to countries and people in difficulty are indeed many: what then is the specific contribution the EoC can give – enterprises being its load bearing axis?

By contributing to the fight against misery and marginalization, by creating sustainable places of work, by giving life to small and medium enterprises, not only in developing countries, but in Italy and other parts of Europe where unemployment is becoming a serious form of poverty.

During the initial years beginning in 1991, the EoC, together with the entire Focolare Movement, addressed the problem of misery and indigence by offering not money or material goods but relationships and fraternal communities. The first and main form of helping the poor has been this communitarian and relational inclusion, also because if we do not change faulty relationships and do not generate new and positive ones, there can be no escape from poverty traps. Today, after 21 years of EoC, in the use of profits for direct assistance to the 'poor', the moment has come to develop also productive inclusion, so that it supports and empowers communitarian

inclusion. Productive inclusion signifies the offering to the poor not only new communitarian relationships, but also a workplace to enable him or her to become in turn a provider of work for himself and others in the community where he or she lives. The Focolare Movement has, among its foundational charismatic experiences, the invitation to supper which Chiara Lubich and her first companions gave to the 'poor of Trent' ("seated side by side was a poor person, a focolarina, a poor person...", they used to say), and in those suppers they used their best tablecloth and silverware.

Today, those "invitations to supper" can and must translate

into invitations to the poor to work with us in our enterprises where the 'dinner' becomes a fruit of work. All of this necessarily requires a major investment in local structures (commissions) so that it becomes possible to follow productivity projects with the necessary competencies and a new involvement

of young people who are always a constitutive element and essential to the EoC. Poverty is not only a dimension of the EoC: it represents its principal mission because communion is neither real nor full while there still exist people who cannot feed, clothe, take care of themselves, send children to school, and live the life they aspire to. For this reason, the art of poverty – living it, choosing it, caring for it – is the first kind of art that the project, in its totality and for anyone involved in it, must learn and practice, to go towards "That all may be one," which is the final aim of the Economy of Communion.



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# FORMY, FOR ME, FOR YOU

by Vittorio Sadini

10

