

# Economy of Communion

a new culture

## *EoC Report 2013-2014*

Working together in Serbia



Kenya:  
EoC Congress 2015



Ancilla,  
EoC for 20 years



The young drivers  
of Anpecom



**Economy of Communion  
a new culture**

Newsroom insert  
AIEC – International Association for an  
Economy of Communion

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## A THANK YOU FROM SOPHIA



This past 25th November, at the Sophia University Institute of Loppiano (FI), Alberto Ferrucci inaugurated a series of seminars on the Economy of Communion, sharing his own testimony about its creation. On that occasion, President Piero Coda wished to hand over a symbol of the university to him and to all of the EoC entrepreneurs, as a sign of thanking them for having supported Sophia by financing it ever since its foundation, through all these years.

The New City magazine containing the editorial insert, "Economy of Communion - a new culture" may be sent to anyone upon request to this email address: [info@edc-online.org](mailto:info@edc-online.org). Anyone who wishes to make a contribution to its publication or to the EoC project may send his/her donation,

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Entrepreneurs and workers have offered their time, expertise and resources to create new enterprises. It is a first response to the appeals of Pope Francis for an economy that does not forget about the poor.

# The EoC in the History of *the Present*

ALBERTO  
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Al Gore, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, describes in his book, *The Future*, the “balance of power” which is based on small groups of people in strategic positions in large companies, banks, universities, courts and in higher bureaucracy (none of them elected by the people), who are influencing politics and the economy. They aim to protect the balance of power and the privileges of wealth by blocking every unwelcome proposal arriving from politics, using the writers of laws in legal offices, using those who process the implementation of regulations and those who interpret the laws in force at court. One of the results is the continuing scandal of the huts around the skyscrapers, the Brazilian example of which led Chiara Lubich to launch the Economy of Communion.

When imbalances increase, as in recent years, the chickens come home to roost. Those who are in despair rebel however they know and however they can: some rely on barges to reach their expatriate relatives, others rely on political agitators or preachers' fantasies, and as a result they give rise to a series of bloody

conflicts in the world, accompanied by immense suffering that Pope Francis has called a «piece-meal third world war».

Looking at the world today Bergoglio would like a Church «witnessing to God's love for each human being, beginning with the poorest and the excluded, and developing humanity's journey toward unity with hope, fraternity and joy». Meeting the participants in the assembly of the Focolare Movement, the Pope indicated three objectives: *contemplate* «The great attraction of modern times: to penetrate to the highest contemplation while mingling with everyone, one person alongside others»; *go forth* «You received without pay, give without pay»; and *teach*, to be witnesses, being «the home

and the school of communion».

As an expression of the charisma of unity in civil life, the EoC must examine what is in tune with these proposals: as for contemplating a different society and economy, and making ourselves the home and school of communion, it seems that the testimonies of young entrepreneurs and scholars who have come for the first time to the Summer School are in this direction, along with the economists in the meetings organized by the Sophia University.

Francis also proposes to go out to all the poor and neglected: this year the Slotmob was created by EoC scholars against gambling addiction, and it has

spread throughout all of Italy, achieving positive outcomes in legislation despite the qualms of the “balance of power”.

And finally, with respect to giving freely, there is the testimony of the growth of the communion of the profits of companies, made even more noteworthy by the availability of the EoC entrepreneurs and workers. The online census has in fact brought up their willingness to do even more, providing their time, expertise and also resources to stimulate the creation of new EoC businesses. Entrepreneurs and workers are making the future growth factor of the project evident through their desire to “love the company of others as their own.”





# Half Winged Angels

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## Mexico: Building the Dream

"Building the Dream" was the title of the unforgettable inaugural Summer School of the Americas - North and South together - that took place in Mexico, in the Little Town of El Diamante, from 11 to 15 August 2014. A dream that is not a utopia, but a hope that we can accomplish together. A dream that concerns our professional life that is individual, but is also the dream of many: a united world. There were 50 young people from 11 countries: more than half of them had already started an entrepreneurial activity, while others were still planning. We talked about poverty, the EoC entrepreneur, gift and work, management and the difficulties of life. It was a week full of enthusiasm. The topics for discussion were coupled with experiences and much dialogue: questions to which everyone responded; experiences of young people and entrepreneurs who have come mainly from Latin America; workshops; classes taught by European and American professors; visits to the EoC businesses linked to the Little Town.

Luigino Bruni summarized the days lived and discoveries made together as follows: «The EoC takes new flight from and is revived by the poor and by the entrepreneurs who are willing to become poor for the sake of love. It is not the powerful who save the poor today, but they themselves: "You give them something to eat". We will see an EoC that grows in the world, even in the opulent world, if we start up again from the fringes, from their hunger for justice and life. The best way is not to try to "convert" the great entrepreneurs, but to seek out the poor (entre-

preneurs and not), and dream together with them.» The profound experience is summed up in what the young participants wrote at the end of the school: «We are "half winged angels" that must hug each other in order to fly».

We said good-bye to each other having already defined the appointments of the next Summer School: in 2015 in Brazil, in 2016 in Ecuador and in 2017 in the United States.

## Paris: A new economy for a more just world

The third European Summer School "A new economy for a fairer world" was held from 26 to 31 August 2014 at Army near Paris. 40 young people participated from 20 countries and 4 continents. The thirst for a more just world and the dissatisfaction with the current economic system have driven many young people to seek answers on the web. Among the options that Google proposed for a "just world" there was the EoC Summer School of Paris: many young





people came to Arny this way. After the intense days lived together, however, many found a vocation in themselves for the EoC and the desire to deepen it and to give their contribution so that it continues to grow.

Anouk Grevin, French Professor of Management from Nantes, who gave a lecture on dialogue as a managerial tool, says: «One of the most frequently recurring phrases during the final sharing of impressions was: "I saw that it's real." Communion is not just a programme for the economy, but - in the companies of entrepreneurs who have given their testimony - a life». The questionnaire at the end of the school showed a great desire to have more widespread online information on the EoC, and the desire to enable a network to keep in touch and continue the dialogue - not only among the young people but also with the EoC entrepreneurs. It's a powerful experience that is still continuing...

Those who want to get a closer look at the school can visit the Facebook profile "EoC Summer School".

### **Loppiano (Fi): self-fulfilment -> fulfil yourself at work**

From 1 to 3 October 2014 a group of 40 young people from all over Italy participated in the third edition of the EoC Workshop School at Polo Lionello Bonfanti.

It was a journey of training, but mainly dialogue and growth, reflecting on our aspirations and the importance of recognizing our talents in order to be able to fulfil ourselves in work not only as individuals, but as members of a community with a strong sense of belonging. Luigino Bruni reminded us that «work is never just taking a general place in the world, but a fundamental exercise to understand our place in the world» and especially

that pursuing a profession means fitting into a social network.

In a historical time characterized by the crisis of our economic models, the distrust of institutions and individualism, experiences such as this can give new hope.

## **The Summer Schools of 2015**

### **First Pan-African and International EoC School for Young People**

**Nairobi - Mariapoli Piero - 22-26 May 2015**

A school open to all young Africans will be realized in collaboration with the CUEA (Catholic University of Eastern Africa) in the days immediately preceding the EoC International Congress (Nairobi, May 27 to 31, 2015) for which the young participants of the Summer School will be invited to stay, offering their own youthful contribution to the worldwide EoC.

### **EoC Prague Summer School**

**Prague - Centrum Mariapoli Vinoř - 24-28 August 2015**

The fourth European EoC Summer School in English - after Lisbon (2012), Madrid (2013) and Paris (2014) - will take place in Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic. It is a city that in addition to offering its history, culture and architecture, invites young people (not only Europeans) to deepen and experience communion. Can communion be the way to overcome the current economic crisis affecting young people with widespread unemployment? Are there ways out that create jobs and human flourishing? Let's look for them together.

### **La Summer School americana**

**São Paulo - Mariapoli Ginetta - 26-30 October 2015**

A desire was born in the young participants of the School in Mexico to run the next Summer School in Brazil - in the heart of the EoC, returning to the Mariapolis Ginetta, near São Paulo (Vargem Grande Paulista). In fact, the proposal for the EoC was launched there by Chiara Lubich in 1991. Those who want to understand what the EoC is will sooner or later have to visit the places where it all started. The Polo Spartacus is the "guiding light" of a Brazilian EoC dynamic.

For info: [www.edc-online.org](http://www.edc-online.org); Facebook: EoC Summer School



It is not enough to divide the existing cakes, we need to create new ones to share. A new firm started production in January 2015 with the cooperation of a Belgian enterprise.

# EasyKit *Springs from Serbia*



Koen Vanreusel has been shareholder and manager of Batiself-Selfmatic for 20 years, an enterprise active in the EoC industrial park Solidar of Rotseelaar in Belgium. The company's success is closely connected to Koen's intuition of facilitating do-it-yourself plumbing and heating home maintenance, with an accurate customer service that is so dear to the Belgians.

Koen, along with his wife Lieve, have been generously participating from the beginning in the sharing of profits with those in need, as proposed by Chiara Lubich. But – like many other entrepreneurs – they feel it important to ensure «not to limit ourselves to divide up the existing cakes, but to create new cakes to share», that is, creating new work opportunities, especially in the countries that are most afflicted by unemployment. Last year, in an EoC meeting in Ottmaring, where he participated together with Kris and Johan, his co-directors, Koen said he was ready to share his business model with those who wished to apply it according to the EoC values in their country. It was by chance that a young engineer from Serbia was also present at that meeting in place of his father (from whom he inherited the spirit of the EoC). Atilla worked in a large company where the spirit of the EoC can only be given personal testimony: he likes technical solutions and so he told Kris and Johan about his interest in alternative energies (enough to have built a heat pump) and offered to collaborate with them, maybe producing something in Serbia for their company.

When invited to Belgium to visit the company, Atilla was inspired to apply Koen's business mod-



el in his country. He spoke with his wife Bogi about it who helped him with English translations and preliminary market research, recommended by Kris and Johan.

Bogi and Atilla started by consulting their friends, but soon realized the research should be carried out in a more professional manner. Therefore, both of them spent an entire weekend in the

big market of Novi Sad interviewing a multitude of people about the topic. From the investigation, the market for the do-it-yourself heating products seemed to be promising. They understood they had much to learn from Koen, Kris and Johan and so decided to spend their holidays in Belgium, although for two years they had given up on holidays to build their house. The attention and love of their hosts turned their trip to Belgium into the long-awaited holiday for their children.

Atilla had never thought of becoming an entrepreneur. Furthermore, he is in debt for the construction of their house, but after an open confrontation with Bogi and his family, and despite the expected career opportunities, he decided to quit work as an employee of the large company at the end of the year.

The company named EasyKit opened in January 2015: Atilla and Bogi are supported in their decision by the fact that Koen, Kris and Johan are with them, not only with their knowledge, but also by sharing economic risks, each one of them according to their ability, with Serbian shareholders and also ... - as they confirm it - with their Invisible Shareholder, operating from above. And who knows what surprises he is preparing!

The birth, development and confirmation of one of the first Economy of Communion businesses in the Philippines - despite the crisis

# Ancilla Inc., Success from a Garage

TERESA  
GANZON



efficiency, based on the values of unity, excellence, sharing, respect for the person, innovation and integrity. After three years Ancilla already had 40 clients, half of them multinationals and half of them local companies. The garage by then was a nice memory because the company had a stylish office in the centre of Manila and another one in Jakarta, with a total of 22 employees.

In 1990, the Asian economic crisis exploded. The company first proposed to cushion the negative impact the crisis created on the families of its associates. Instead of expanding, it increased their wages, thereby managing to keep the accounts balanced due to the fact that some of the largest customers remained loyal.

Ancilla currently consists of 15 members, employs 48 professionals and has a portfolio of almost a thousand clients, including the largest companies in the Philippines and the international ones operating there. It is a consultant for a large production outsourcing of goods and services and has received assignments from major public and private organizations, including the Philippine Association of Pharmaceuticals and Physicians.

In terms of sharing, Ancilla is active in providing food, clothing, shelter and school for children of many poor families, while a portion of its profits is used for the training of young people in the "culture of giving".

The challenge of the present is not only economic, but concerns the ethical sphere, too. The owner continues to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, according to which it should be forgiven seventy times seven when consultants prove to be unfaithful, and nothing negative is to be said of competitors who are sometimes incorrect. It is important to stay up to date with new technologies and new forms of counselling worldwide, and know how to compete in an increasingly global market through international collaborations.

Backed by 20 years of EoC experience, facing these challenges, Mrs. Puangco says: «If we continue to put the person and the relationships in the centre, God will make us understand what innovations we need to continue to provide quality service in our industry.»

Tita Puangco, who graduated in economics in the United States, and Renato, her husband, were among the first ones to respond to the invitation of Chiara Lubich to set up companies animated by the desire to live in communion, even to the point of sharing profits with the poor. Both had always had social justice close to their heart and felt that it was time to actually do something. They had to take their three young children into account as well as their little savings available. They made some calculations and, trusting more in the "celestial" than the "earthly" type of aid they decided that Tita would leave her good position of a banking executive to orientate herself towards becoming a business consultant and a university lecturer.

The arrival of three important pieces of advice was crucial. Tita decided, while generously giving birth to her fourth child, to create a consulting firm named Ancilla Inc. in their family home's garage, the name of which means "servant" in Latin, precisely with the objective of "helping" businesses improve their



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Many young entrepreneurs and scholars have been financially supported by the use of corporate resources and private contributions

# Shared Profits 2013-2014



This year the sharing of the profits of businesses and personal donations set in motion by the Economy of Communion has exceeded one million and 300 thousand Euros, a value close to that of the previous year despite the crisis that is creating hardships for the economies of the countries who would be more in a position to put goods in common than others are.

The number of families assisted (about 2000), remained virtually unchanged while the loans granted by the EoC to productive activities has been a little bit reduced due to the difficulty encountered in various countries of developing sustainable entrepreneurial projects.

To overcome this difficulty in the coming year, as an experiment, some local associations of entrepreneurs and supporters of the EoC will be financially supported, with the aim of enabling the development of viable business projects through improving the skills of their leaders so that they should be able to create work for the poor. In doing this, the poor contribute to the growth of the company and achievement of the economic balance.

On the cultural side, the funding of Sophia University Institute of Loppiano has been confirmed, as this is what the Economy of Communion considers the diamond drill for the formation of those who will bring a way of economic action inspired by the political and social "culture of giving" into the whole world and to their nations.

Regarding the youth: during the year there were schools held in Mexico, France and Croatia, with the participation of about 150 young entrepreneurs and scholars from more than 60 countries. For half of them it was the first time they met the EoC; these schools always plant an awareness as to the importance of these events for the diffusion and the concretization of the Economy of Communion by all those who participate.

In the coming year a larger share of the EoC resources dedicated to the teaching of the culture of communion will be used to finance the "Summer Schools", in the form of "scholarships" that allow young people to attend who otherwise would not have the resources to participate.





Country	Resources dedicated to communion (Euros)		Aid allocated to the support of the Poor					Aid allocated to the training of New People			
	Profits of businesses	Personal contributions	from the 50% of the profits + personal contributions				€ 888,303	from the 50% of the profits			€ 482,916
			Boarding + medical expenses	Housing	School	Work	Total	EoC Travels and Schools	Support for local EoC Facilities	Support for Training Centres	Total
Central Africa			13,393	4,320	3,222		20,935	1,500		2,000	3,500
East Africa			8,415	2,800	640		11,855	6,000			6,000
South Africa			990	360	360		1,710				
North West Africa			1,620		400		2,020				
North Africa	1,527			800	610		1,410	5,000			5,000
Argentina - Chile - Uruguay - Paraguay	103,614		38,242	19,371	19,447		77,061	5,000			5,000
Austria	8,057	9,349									
Belgium	270,000	8,951									
Brasil	62,676	2,213	129,627	21,750	41,544	34,101	227,023	8,000	8,100	10,000	26,100
Canada	22,747	14,29									
Central America			30,660	2,727	4,461		37,848	7,000			7,000
Colombia - Venezuela	8,305		25,966	5,800	17,046		48,813	3,000			3,000
Korea	25,556	19,275	5,400	2,800	7,520		15,720				
Egypt			2,160	720	1,500		4,380				
Philippines	35,540		22,680	2,080	15,254	12,000	52,014	32,600		31,000	63,600
France	46,692	7,732									
Germany	2,500	20,205									
Japan	605	5,762									
Jordan			1,710	800	480		2,990				
Great Britain	730										
Hong Kong		10,190	1,350				1,350				
India			1,959	669	3,353		5,981				
Indonesia			2,700	960	1,920		5,580				
Ireland	3,950	1,248									
Israel - Palestine			5,940	2,320	600		8,860				
Italy	138,431	141,227	6,120	13,320	5,128	9,650	34,218				
Lebanon			7,222	2,066	400		9,688				
Madagascar			293		1,340		1,633	1,000			1,000
Nigeria			765	320			1,085				
Oceania		2,093									
Holland (the Netherlands)	7,764	4,066									
the Baltic States			1,341	1,200	80		2,621				
Pakistan	1,871							6,000			6,000
Peru - Equador - Bolivia											
Poland	3,011		7,200	4,800	2,960		14,960				
Portugal		5,601									
Czech Republic			1,314	1,728	1,254		4,296	2,966			2,966
Dem. Rep. of Congo			21,015	5,200	7,240		33,455	13,000			13,000
Russia			5,310	2,000	3,360		10,670	2,500			2,500
Slovakia	1,165		6,277	881	1,028		8,185				
Slovenia		3,230						3,000			3,000
Spain	19,204	16,357							7,500		7,500
South East Europe	1,599		52,965	22,968	47,380		123,313	15,600			15,600
Switzerland	56,819	44,275									
Thailand	2,100	52	450		10,480		10,930	6,000			6,000
Turkey		1,000	153	384			537				
Hungary		1,250									
USA	42,980	6,934	2,957		1,440		4,397				
Leftover from previous years + Sophia University	98,390	94,375									
Institute										200,000	200,000
International Schools and Congresses								20,924			20,924
Newsletters and Website									44,571		44,571
Administration								3,340	11,481		14,821
To be assigned							102,765				25,834
<b>Total</b>	<b>965,833</b>	<b>405,386</b>	<b>406,194</b>	<b>123,145</b>	<b>200,447</b>	<b>55,751</b>	<b>888,303</b>	<b>142,430</b>	<b>71,652</b>	<b>243,000</b>	<b>482,916</b>

Through the site [Edc-online.org](http://Edc-online.org), employers and workers can confirm their membership in the EoC and share their talents and expertise for the development of new companies

# The Surprise of the Census

ALBERTO  
FERRUCCI



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Through the site [www.edc-online.org](http://www.edc-online.org) it is now possible for every entrepreneur to join or confirm their adherence to the EoC by providing information on the industry and the size of their company. Through the website they can declare both the profits they intend to make available for the poor and for training via the EoC as well as all other profits spent differently or given towards the "culture of giving". On another page the entrepreneurs and their workers can list the resources and skills that they are willing to share for free to encourage the creation or development of new EoC companies in the world.

A few months after the launch of the survey, 136 companies have directly entered the site to confirm their membership in the project: of these, 43 are Italian, 23 from the Iberian Peninsula, 10 from Northern and 10 from Eastern Europe; 13 from Brazil, 12 from Hispanic America, 10 from Africa, and 7 from both North America and Asia. Another 41 companies have registered as sympathizers, half of them from Italy and 12 from Congo, a country where the EoC is going through particular growth at present.

Many companies have declared profits shared with the EoC, some made mention of those used differently according to the "culture of giving", with amounts sometimes much higher than those shared with the EoC – anyhow, we consider this as the result of the project.

The real surprise of the survey is the fact that the business owners and various employees of more than half of the companies, including sympathizers, also wanted to list the professional talents they are willing to share for free for the development of



new EoC companies.

Professionalism of all types and from every country can be detected here, the majority of those registered are in their thirties and forties but there are also some in their fifties and sixties – what's more there is even a very youthful manager who is 80 years old. Half of those signed up are willing to relocate anywhere in the world, 20 percent are willing to move inside their own country, 30 percent in their city.

They are people from the most different types of professions: company managers, but also some who are experts in concert amplification, gardening, travel agencies, rearing chickens, credit assessment, micro-finance, civil and hydraulic works, market research, cultivation of bananas, training, process innovation, translation, production of TV movies, mechanical design, accounting controls, sales of cosmetics, clinical analysis, sustainable agriculture, galvanic metalwork, knitting courses, water collection, tropical agricultural, production and gilding frames and so on, and so forth.

Now it's up to us to meet the supply with demand, but with so much talent available, we can only feel rich: it is the wealth of the children of the Father!



# *The Impetus for the* **New Board of Anpecom**

ADRIANA  
MENDES



When a speaker questioned the role of the poor in the EoC Maria Helena Faller replied, «Perhaps the poor are not "known" so obviously because, being part of the EoC as protagonists, they are not placed in a separate category that identifies them as such». She also



explained that «many people who received help in the past from the EoC are now entrepreneurs or employees of the companies of the EoC, or somehow engage in building a culture of reciprocity, participating actively in the decisions». She concluded with her own testimony: «I can safely say that I've participated in the first part of this category: I was helped by the EoC when I was young, then I graduated, married and currently occupy the presidency of ANPECOM». Just last September 20th, the assembly of ANPECOM – the National Association for an Economy of Communion in Brazil – elected the members of

its executive direction, choosing Maria Helena Faller as president.

The new body is also made up by Marcelo Cassa, businessman and vice-president, and four other members of the Board featuring a significant representation of women and youth: for the administration Zilma M. Queiroz, consultant; for communication Rafaela Tortelli, expert in public relations; for legal affairs Simona Tesini, lawyer; and finally for financial affairs Herica G. Salvador, accountant.

The new direction is the result of a two-year long process in which the management of the association opened up – through meetings and work – to people who made themselves available to develop the Economy of Communion. After identifying the nominees, each was interviewed about their knowledge of the rules of the association and the recent work of the former directors. The "yes" of each of them expressed the feelings of all the protagonists of the EoC project in Brazil.

Among the proposals voted at the meeting, there was the creation of the council of entrepreneurs in order to «awaken and promote dialogue and the ongoing relationship between EoC entrepreneurs, supporters and associates, with the creation of an active space of communion and construction of an association for all».

In her speech after the election, president Faller talked about the spirit of the new management: «I do not intend to operate in discontinuity with the past of the association, since we have a deep respect for what has been achieved. The current phase is therefore not a "re-foundation" but a moment of maturation that we will try to live in communion, all together». She also commented that «it gave me great pleasure to accept this new role, because I'm sure it will be a shared with my friends: we will bring things forward together».



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Italy has become the largest gambling den in Europe. The machines have invaded the bars. 150 associations have created a grassroots mobilization

# An Anti-Gambling Operation. *Slotmob*

VITTORIO  
PELLIGRA



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The culture of chance, the search for a vain hope in the goddess of fortune and the multi-billion dollar industry have deeply changed our neighbourhoods and our cities, transforming Italy in the largest gambling den under the open skies of Europe in these past years, and the world's third largest in terms of the amount of money being burnt this way.

These «thieves of hope», as Pope Francis recently defined them, have a turnover of around 90 billion Euros per year in Italy, a sum that can easily arrive at 100 billion if we include the black part of the industry too. To understand the scale of the phenomenon it is enough to think that the Italian government defined a budget of "only" 36 billion Euros. In Italy there are about 600,000 slot machines - in the United States 800,000. The problem is that we (the Italian population) are 60 million while the Americans are 360 million.

How long does it take to play the worth of that figure? An estimated half billion hours, about 70 million working days, equal to one third of all the holidays of Italians. Gambling in Italy has become, by deliberate choice of governments, a veritable bottomless pit that draws a growing number of citizens in, including the under-age. Of course gambling addiction, pathological gambling, is around the corner – addiction that leads to ruin: families break up, assets are squandered, jobs are lost and one is led to commit crimes and then die by suicide.



## Wecoop

Wecoop is a board game born in Sardinia from the collaboration of the University of Cagliari, through the SmartLab spin-off, with the Solidarity Consortium, the Confcooperative Sardinia and a group of young economists, mathematicians, educators and designers who have conceived the idea and brought it to realization.

The game is a company simulator that incorporates a new economic vision that is civil and of communion. The goal, in fact, is not to earn more than others, but rather to gain "with" and "for" others. With his choices the



entrepreneur must not only contribute to the development of his own economic activity, but also to that of the area where he is active. At each stage of the game players need to decide about the emerging opportunities, dilemmas and unexpected events; they have to build a reputation, make investments, be in

compliance with the tax authorities, enter into alliances with competitors, build networks and, in the end, there will be a winner, but everyone will have competed and contributed for the development and growth of their entire area.

Wecoop is a game, but also a tool to spread a new economic culture in a light and entertaining way, one that is based on the principles of civil economy and the real experiences of cooperatives.

Wecoop is the allegory of a different economy that is responsible and civil, in which the market can be a place not only of economic but also human growth.

For info: [www.wecoop.it](http://www.wecoop.it)





tive, a campaign of grassroots mobilization.

For some time we had been thinking together with Luigino Bruni and Leonardo Becchetti about the issues of civil economy and communion, the virtues, the leadership of the consumers, the social role of the market, and so on. We wondered, at some point, what role could the “vote with your wallet” strategy take up in fighting the culture of chance. Hence the idea: let us organize events in cities, in which one or two hundred would go together to have breakfast or have a drink at the same bar, a bar of course, that by an ethical choice, said no to income derived from gambling. We would do all this to raise awareness of the issue, but also and above all, to reward the operators who have moved against the current by their unconventional choices.

The idea was born in June 2013 with three Slotmobs planned: in Cagliari, Milan and Rome. To date there have been 73 throughout Italy, triggering a nationwide network of over 150 entities, involving many more on the local levels.

The Slotmob campaign is a poly-centric thing; of course, there has been some coordinating work in recent months, for example by Città Nuova (New City) magazine or the young members of “Economics and Happiness”, but basically the initiatives come from below and on a local level. Associations and different

groups come together, identify a bar and organize a party, with moments of depth and playing games. This is why table football instantly became one of the symbols of the campaign, as it is a par excellence relational game.

Slotmob had strong media coverage, helped to change policies and decisions formerly favourable to gambling multinationals but, more importantly, it changed the way thousands and thousands of people look at gambling today: the way they walk into a bar and check for the presence or the absence of slot machines and perhaps also act accordingly. Another “side effect” is the social infrastructure that helped the formation of a valuable network of relationships between organizations and groups that were mobilized and began working together in the cities; and this network will be there even after Slotmob, and will be available for new initiatives of commitment and mobilization.

So Italy has become a fertile hunting ground for unscrupulous multinationals. What for? For the money, of course. By taxing gambling, even if only a little, governments have a steady stream of income on which to rely. It doesn't really matter if that money is taken at the cost of the families, from the lives of the most fragile and vulnerable, or if the social costs arising from gambling are more than the tax revenues made from it.

Therefore it is the citizens who should intervene, mobilize and choose to take care of their city and of those who have succumbed to the culture of chance. The Economy of Communion generates and promotes a vision of economic relations in which the market is a place of development, mutual help and civilization, in total contrast with the culture of gambling. Slotmob is an initiative born from this perspec-

# Thinking Together *about Economy in a New Way*

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Many long for a fair, correct, friendly economy that should be attentive to the needs of each person. Some have the necessary determination to translate this longing into concrete actions, even by themselves.

I was very impressed by a young entrepreneur who gave a powerful testimony at a recent meeting held in Tagaytay (the Philippines), saying she was surprised and happy to discover the existence of a whole network of people and businesses carrying the values that her father had taught her to live inside their company. Very often, however, you feel alone and helpless in a world that goes by another way, and so that longing for a “nice” economy remains dormant, inactive, frustrated by disappointments. Yet it is capable of awakening if there are others who share it and practice it openly.

Something similar is true for scholars, too. It is not easy to cultivate and profess an economic vision that leaves room for the most noble of human dimensions and forms of co-operation with no self-interest. To do this you must fight your way through – and by yourself is not easy – in a firmly established dominant vision that, if we simplify it a bit, describes the economic actors as separate and autonomous individuals, guided only by the compass of material interests. This is a vision that leads to forget the wealth of the motivation and ability of real economic actors, and so the opportunities for the creation of the common good that follows from them.

Today more than ever you can imagine that this way of thinking about the economy is inadequate, and many scholars desire a shared reflection that would allow for some components of an alternative vision. But how and where? During a recent visit to Providence University in Taiwan, it struck me that more than one of the colleagues I met there, who on other occasions had got to know

the proposal of the Economy of Communion, looked at Sophia University Institute as a privileged place in this regard.

Sophia is alive and running thanks to the important financial support it receives from businesses that belong to the EoC. I have always thought that Sophia did their part to earn this support by offering a degree course in the “culture of unity” – a solid foundation for work in social and economic



life as builders of cooperative relationships at all levels, and also with the stamp of fraternity. I am now especially convinced about this since a good fraction of the students choose a specialization in Economics and Management, pointing right in the direction of the EoC. Furthermore, I thought, there is also the doctoral program that prepares those enrolled for the world of research and higher education, and more than one person here is working on economic and managerial topics. I now realize, though, that there is a no less important additional task that Sophia is called to fulfil: to offer opportunities for meetings – in the form of seminars, conferences, summer schools – for that circle of scholars around the world that wants to draw from and, simultaneously, contribute to the conceptual elaboration of an “economy of communion”.



The spread of the EoC in Africa has spurred the idea of holding the next international congress in Kenya

# *The Poor are Remembered* in Nairobi

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«Remember, Luigino, I created the EoC for the poor. You do well to study, but always remember the poor». Chiara Lubich repeated these words to me many times in the ten years in which I joined her in the international commission, to coordinate the EoC. To redeem people from the poverty they suffer (quite different from the poverty they choose) continues to be the ultimate goal of the project, the meaning of our actions. As long as there are people on earth who cannot have a decent existence for lack of resources, no economic and social system can be defined as just, and much less as being one of communion.

The types of poverty loved and alleviated by the EoC in these 23 years of life have diversified and expanded. From the favelas of São Paulo and Brazil, we immediately passed on to the favelas of many cities; then we realized, through the tenacious action of entrepreneurs like Paco Toro (Spain) that to reduce poverty we could create jobs and together with the NGO called Azione per un Mondo Unito (AMU; Action for a United World) we started to support the development of micro production activities in various countries of the world. Finally, we observed that the present crisis had brought back old and new types of poverty into our rich Europe, too. Among these types there is the plague of gambling, which is devastating hundreds of thousands of families, especially the poorer ones. Hence the commitment of the EoC Italy to support the Slotmob campaign, which has taken place in more than 70 cities in just one year and is changing the mentality of many people.

Furthermore, in recent years, the EoC has been spreading especially on the African continent, where the number of companies that this year have started to pay profits to support the world's poor rose to 10, while 12 others have approached the project; there are several scholarships offered to young Africans, some of whom diligently attend the Sophia University Institute.

So, feeling attracted by this new and flourishing way of life, as an expression of reciprocity, we chose Nairobi, Kenya, to be the venue of our international congress, 4 years after the one held in Brazil in 2011.



We will be in that great city from 27 to 31 May and from 22 to 26 May 2015 for the first Pan-African school for young people that will also take place there. A continent that is still suffering too much because of predatory relations that many industrialized countries have had and continue to have with it (before forgetting it and then isolating it when feeling the danger of infection); a continent that is destined to be the main protagonist of the economy and society of tomorrow.

Africa's love of life, its youth, its ancient cultures, all these already say it in a powerful way. The EoC wants to go to Africa to love it, to learn from its culture of life, to practice communion and reciprocity. And to construct a new development model and a new economy. But we want to do this together, and in mutual esteem. At the feast of the peoples.





# FORMY, FOR ME, FOR YOU

by Vittorio Sedini

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