

Economy of Communion

a new culture

EXPO Edc



Business Parks
and Business
of Communion
for a Universal
Brotherhood



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A Society Without the Poor

With the profits of the Economy of Communion companies, we will live the reality of the first Christians, who brought everything they possessed and laid it at the feet of the apostles, and they distributed it the poor such that there was not a needy person among them.

We wish to stimulate all within the whole Movement, among those who have the possibility, to be open to the idea of setting up a company and to make it function in accordance with the Christian Social Doctrine.

A little charity, some acts of kindness, the little surplus of single individuals is not enough. It is necessary that entire companies freely place their profits in common.

A particular task is that of forming “new people”, because without “new people” we will not realize anything. These enterprises will be a reality in their communion of profits if there are “new people”.

(Chiara Lubich - Mariapoli Ginetta, 31.5.1991)



Chiara Lubich

The Challenge of the Business Parks



Polo Spartaco in Brasile

The proposal made by Chiara Lubich to the Brazilians in 1991 while launching the Economy of Communion was very precise: to pool together the little resources of many and to entrust them to the more competent so that they started companies beside the citadels of the Focolare Movement.

They were to be companies that were in a position to grow and prosper by creating jobs as well as profits, with which the needy could be helped to come out of their condition, and new people could be formed.

Therefore, Chiara was proposing the setting up of productive activities beside the citadels, which would thus fully become as the "city on the mount" where the Gospel and the new social law that it inaugurates, mutual love, were witnessed to in every sphere, including that economic.

However, time was needed in order to realize this project, while there was an urgency to uplift those people who were suffering from a situation of need, and whose condition had stirred Chiara to launch the EoC project.

Thus in order to respond to this urgency, it was providential that entrepreneurs who adhered to the spirituality of the movement, but whose companies were situated far from the citadels,

would all the same feel themselves called to adhere to the project by offering to contribute to it with their profits in order to improve the condition of the needy (various articles in this newsletter show how this can be achieved), and towards the formation of new people.

These companies, which were situated far away from the citadels, immediately felt part of the citadels by adhering to the EoC. Their workers felt the need to participate fully in the spirit that animated the citadels, the need to become "companies of communion". In the years that followed, Chiara initiated schools for their entrepreneurs and workers, which helped them to corroborate their commitment in time.

Today after fourteen years, some of the business parks are already operational, and others are in the process of being initiated. Their launching required the support, in some cases continuously over a number of years, of thousands of shareholders and the dedication of those responsible for their launching. But that was not enough. It was necessary to find those "new" entrepreneurs who would have managed them, persons with a true vocation which, if authentically lived, is not less totalitarian than that of the missionary who leaves everything in order to serve Jesus in the poor. And contrary to expectations, they were persons who were not rare in the eco-

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nomic world. This is one of the most innovative and prophetic aspects of the EoC.

These entrepreneurs do not create activities in the business parks as a consequence of an economic calculation. Indeed, the history of all the companies that operate today in these parks demonstrates that none of them would have been formed if they had been based on a mere economic calculation. All of them would have resulted as losses if the considerations were based on normal accounting criteria. The logic of the business plan would have rejected them.

And instead today, despite various adversities, they all prosper and produce profits.

Since we are dealing with a fact that is common to all the companies in the business parks, in my opinion this observation cannot be considered only as a case, a fortunate exception. Evidently, when we calculate the profit of a company we neglect some factor, which turns out to be decisive in the case of the Economy of Communion companies.

In spiritual terms we could assert that the factor which is left out in the calculation of the profit of these companies is "Providence". In other words that are more acceptable to all, we could perhaps say that the factor of success is connected to the positive relationships that the operators of the EoC companies know how to establish. They are those "relational goods" that had still not been produced at the moment of commencement of the company, and thus it is difficult to

account for the same in the book-keeping.

This fact suggests that the companies which form part of the business parks will probably have difficult moments at the time of commencement. The company that decides to join these parks will have to assume the entrepreneurial risk involved. However, it must not be left alone; it will need the moral support and the concrete help of all those who adhere to the EoC project, beginning with the inhabitants of the citadels. Moreover it will have to bear in mind and develop the emergence of those invisible, but very real, goods.

In some nations such as Argentine, Brazil, USA, Spain and Italy, "Associations for an EoC" have been formed at a national level. They gather together entrepreneurs, advisers, and friends of the EoC. On an international level, the "International Association for an EoC" was launched, to which the national associations desired to be linked. One of their first aims is precisely the concrete help for the construction of the business parks, as well as their promotion to new companies and with public administrations.

A network of love that will give the entrepreneurial candidates of the business parks the impulse to launch themselves in this adventure, and to go beyond the difficulties that await them. All the same, it is a network that must be paid for by the joyful carrying of all these difficulties one at a time. Ginetta Calliari, the companion to whom Chiara had particularly entrusted this project in Brazil, said that the first business park that to have been launched – the Spartaco Business Park – had cost "blood of the soul".

The future of the EoC is indissolubly tied up to the business parks. The great challenges that await us in the next few years is that of upgrading those parks that already exist, to complete those that are coming into existence, and to want them or to dream of them in places where they do not exist. They will depend on our generosity and creativity.



Polo produttivo EoC del Belgio

Communion and Dialogue within the Firm

We carry below reflections that derive from the experience of managing "Femaq", a foundry that adheres to the EoC project and is situated in the city of Piracicaba. They are have also been stimulated by a bachelor thesis in economics by Renata Motta Kurtz, at the Institute of Business Economics of the PUC University in Rio de Janeiro, with Prof. Sérgio Proença Leitão as the tutor.

Mendes de Barros affirms: "Solidarity is a fruit of communication, as well as its source and its sense.... solidal communication is expressed through the exchange of views, the touch of the body, the friendly embrace, and the affectionate kiss, in the smile and the pain shared....". However, communication is often used for the purpose of dominion and exploitation of the human being, and this kind of communication results in conditioning the development of the society in an individualistic sense.

The EoC project does not limit itself to productive activities that create work posts and share profits. It aims to show that a model of sustainable development based on the culture of communion is possible. One of the more arduous tasks is to transform the companies into places of communion; social bodies that testify this new culture.

The tension to foster communion in the company is expressed in dialogue, which to be true requires that we be free from our own ideas, biases, and truths. It is necessary that the company transforms and adapts its way of functioning, and its culture. But to what must it adapt itself?

This is the great, yet trivial novelty. It is a reciprocal adaptation. In communion there does not exist the perfect or the imperfect, the right or the wrong. There exists a path, a dynamic development of all the members of the group, a "co-evolution", because the values of communion are developed through communication. Without dialogue the corporate structures close in on themselves; neither the management nor the workers can identify alternative possibilities of action, they get demotivated and take it easy. The crises in companies often arise from the inability to communicate, while dialogue becomes the means to achieve harmony, creativity, and friendship by the elimination of divergences.

A profound dialogue is also indispensable in order to see the truth indeed as it is, beyond the distortions created by human thought. The biases that we often carry within ourselves lead to conflicts and unhappiness. There are many incoherencies of thought. For example, if we meet a person with a physical aspect similar to someone else who does not evoke good memories in us, we have a negative reaction.

Also the saying: "business is business; friendship does not count", shows that one is ready to use different logics according to the situation, the political party, the country, the colour of the skin.

On our own we do not have the elements to perceive the incoherencies of our thought. Dialogue equips us with elements of the truth and enables us to live communion by avoiding perception errors.

Profound dialogue is hardly experienced in the present business culture. However in the EoC enterprises there is the tension to make communion an everyday practise. But in order to realize the profound dialogue, an unconditional love is necessary. It is a love in the company that is certainly not a sentiment but fraternity, which necessitates the exercise of certain virtues:

Patience: no verbal attacks, no heavily laid warnings, knowing how to wait.

Goodness: to give attention to people, to valorise them, to help them recognise their positive side.

Humility: to be genuine, not to feel as masters of the truth and knowledge, non-exacting.

Respect: to treat people with the importance that is due to them.

Detachment: to keep in mind the needs of the others, even when one cannot comply with them.

Attention: to understand if someone carries a grudge, and to contribute in helping the person to overcome the same.

Honesty: not wanting to cheat or confuse the others. To be faithful to one's given word: to be committed to carry out a decision that has been taken.

Equality: One cannot count on the hierarchy in order to dialogue; it is experience and professionalism that will make us authoritative.

Forgiveness: True fraternity can only be achieved with forgiveness.

Communion should be built.

If something hampers dialogue it is necessary to intervene without finding faults in the persons, but by taking into considering attitudes, biases, moods, psychological illnesses, and other factors that can block the dynamics of dialogue. The dialogue must not exclude anyone. However, so as not to belittle communion, we must keep in mind the culture of each person, organizing the dialogue in groups or subgroups, thereby enriching the end result.

The goal is unity in diversity, and not in conformism.

Finally, for an *experience of dialogue*, the "purification of memory" from prejudices and biases, and knowing how to remain fully *immersed in the present moment* is fundamental.

Having done this exercise of virtues, a true dialogue brings about the emergence of speaking and listening from a "creative void" that makes space for an inner and outer listening. To speak and to listen become part of a whole that increases group unity, which gives rise to the wisdom to manage the company.

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Help for the Poor

Much progress has been made in these years in the study of the specificity of the EoC project with regards to the companies, the business parks, the education, and the cultural reflection. A similar progress has not been achieved with regards to another fundamental aspect of the project – the aid to the needy.

In these years we were able to gather a good part of the resources necessary for the needy, thanks to the profits of the companies and the contribution of the members of the Focolare Movement. However the qualitative aspects of this aid, of their being communion and reciprocity, have still not been sufficiently brought into evidence as Chiara outlined while introducing the EoC to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, on the 31st May 1999:

"Those who find themselves in financial difficulties and are the addressees of a part of the profit are not considered as "helped" or "beneficiaries" of the company. They are active and essential members of the project within which they donate their necessities to the others. They too live the culture of giving. In fact many of them forgo the aid that they receive as soon as they are able to obtain a minimum of financial independence."

In September 2004 Chiara added, *"... the aim for which the EoC came into being was to ensure that there are no more poor people within the Movement – as was the case with the first Christians – so as to give an example to the world, and later on to open itself to the world and to serve it as best as it can. ... one of the most profound causes of the terrorism that traumatises our world lies in the startling imbalances that still exist between the rich and poor countries."*

That *"... so that there are no more poor people among us ... and later to open ourselves to the world and to serve it ..."* to heal *"...one of the most profound causes of terrorism..."* shows the importance even for our times to offer the world an example of a new kind of aid to the needy.

Herein lies the importance of studying the experiences of those who have found in the EoC project a way to free people from situations of need whilst safeguarding their dignity and placing them in a condition to exchange and live the communion.

Among these experiences we would like to highlight that of Rio de Janeiro linked with the formation of young people, together with that of the Bangko Kabayan in the Philippines. In an attempt to live fraternity not solely within the company, the latter has decided to include among its clients also the needy without the assets to guarantee loans, by offering them the small financings necessary to start micro-productive activities as well as the support of experts. It was a micro-credit that initially required a remarkable investment even on the financial front, but today it is crowned with a huge success especially among the women in the poorer quarters of Manila.

A vital element of this project is the relationship with the customers who are helped to save money. This had led to the formation of 3,700 small family-based companies that can pay today for the education of their

children, as well as have small savings for any medical emergencies. They have also learned to organise themselves into a civil society by the creation of groups and organisations.

It is a kind of aid that is more demanding by providing a relief for the immediate problem of the needy with a sum of free grant money, even if is necessary to acknowledge that in some cases this can represent the only possibility for old and sick persons, and in particular health or alimentary emergencies. But in the EoC project these emergencies must represent an exception, and not the rule. In 2004, Chiara had already emphasised:

"...on becoming man, the Word of God did not retreat into solitude in order to meditate and pray in the years of his private life but he was a worker. This choice of his helped us to understand that work is constitutive of man ... it is such an important aspect of the human life that if it is lacking, one would witness a lesser man."

To receive a loan that can be repaid with the fruit of one's own work humanises us. Thanks to a contract that is based on an economic relationship between persons of equal dignity and free from every dependency, being helped then permits one to freely reach friendship, communion, and the reciprocity of love.

However in order to go beyond the simple economic aid, it is necessary to study the situation with the needy person, to become close to him or her, to find a way out of the situation together, perhaps also over a longer period of time. Thus it is necessary to prepare a project together and then present it to an organisation that then knows how to manage it, and that assures him the two elements that modern culture requires today: transparency, and results that are documentable.

In order to do this we need professionalism and experience that can be availed today via Non-Governmental Organizations which have been following since years projects financed even by public institutions, international aids, and the adoptions at a distance, which are constituted in several countries based on the Italian "Action for a United World".

These organisations would make it possible to document the results of these aids for those who study the economic novelty of the project, or who want to document it, as well as for the companies that share their profits and that feel the need of being sure that the money has not only been used well but also of knowing how it was utilised.

Lastly the passage of the aid for the needy through well-structured projects is also necessitated by economic considerations. Starting from this year it is possible in Italy to contribute without taxes towards works of solidarity certified as ONG recognized projects up to a sum of Euro 70,000. To use the profits of companies and the contributions of individual persons in this way would allow companies and individuals to deduct the aids from the taxes, thereby increasing the resources to be put in communion.



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Ten Years of EoC at Rio



When I arrived in Rio de Janeiro ten years ago, I was fascinated by the spectacle of its natural beauty. The Creator had indeed been generous in this city. But when I began to move around in the city, through its hills, around the neighbourhood by night, and by visiting the homes of the people of the Focolare movement community, I encountered quite a different reality – that of a city with two realities which were opposite, even if they seemed to merge into one unique scenario.

In the North existed the city of extreme misery and abandonment, lacking proper drainage systems, hospitals, and schools, and overpowered by violence and drug trafficking. In the South there was the city of palatial buildings and huge department stores, where the affluent society lived in houses as secure as fortresses, and dominated by uncontrolled consumption.

Almost immediately I realised that this natural beauty of the hills, beaches, and bays was also accompanied by another beauty – that of the poor shanty towns, of a suffering people but at the same time wonderful, welcoming, generous, working and creative; a cheerful people with a constant smile, that loves this city which houses nine million among locals and immigrants from every part of Brazil and the world. It is a section of humanity that forms the “carioca” people.

Smiles hid the pain of living in a city divided in two worlds – that of the rich who live in splendid houses, and that of the poor who wake up each morning on the sidewalks that form their beds, without knowing whether they will eat; they are those who live on the garbage of the restaurants. My house was located exactly between these two realities. We felt our helplessness, but the misery of the shanty towns called for something to be done: even a grain of sand contributes to increase the sea level.

Mahatma Gandhi said: “If we want to progress, we must not repeat history, but make a new history”. But where could one begin? Speaking with the friends of the Focolare movement community we understood that the most important and decisive thing to do was to invest in the shaping of the new generations.

Thus speaking with the families who shared our

spirit despite living in the shanty towns, we offered to help them overcome the vicious circle of misery, whilst respecting the dignity and freedom of each one, so as to kindle in them the hope that it was also possible for their family to live a different life, and to educate their children up to university.

It was our way of “making a new history”. In particular we focused on some families whom we helped regularly, day after day, with the resources that were generated by the Economy of Communion project.

They were approximately twenty families who lived in different areas of the region. In some cases it was urgent to improve the health situation of the family members, in other cases to help them in restructuring or constructing their living quarters. Often it was necessary to improve their food consumption; for some it was simply necessary to help them to find a job or to prepare them for a public competitive exam...

But on the whole our main aim was to contribute to the education of the children up to university.

Thus it is a long term project whose results after ten years are now visible. Today the situation of these families is quite different. They have produced graduates in mechanical, electrotechnical, and production engineering, a dentist, a physical education teacher, graduates in economics, students in journalism, accountancy, computer software, history, literature, photographers, and mechanics. The majority of these young people now have a fixed job or are in the process of finding one; some are still university students, while others are working towards it.

The result was not just a better quality of life, better health, housing, and education. It has created or consolidated a lifestyle based on communion, a reciprocal love that spurs those who have more to share it with the needy. These place their needs in common with simplicity, relying on the love of their new brothers and sisters.

This has also led to a greater participation in the spiritual life. Being lightened of their burdens they can place themselves more at the service of others.

There have also been results on the social level. Some of them have become protagonists of associations for citizens and students groups, contributing to transform the mentality in their neighbourhoods. After being helped, some of them began helping others to discover that they too could be in a position to change, that they too could make it.

We feel that the Love received in the form of communion provoked in all who were helped without distinction, to discover their capabilities. It is a capacity of a welcoming and generous communion that is manifested through the years in a thousand different ways.



Diviol Rufino

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Excerpts of letters received from people who participate in the EoC project by accepting to be assisted in some of their material necessities. This is done by utilizing part of the profits from the EoC firms, and the personal contributions of the members of the Focolare Movement.



Letters from Around the Globe

UWork for my husband

Ten years ago we have come to the city in search of work and better living conditions. If it had not been for the aid that supported us, we would have suffered from hunger. My husband has now found a job and we want to say a big thank you to God for this gift. Our happiness now lies in being able to give something from what we have to someone else who finds himself or herself in need as we were.

(Brazil)

RiRefugees from Congo

The mother of six children, now emigrated to Canada, and who was helped to obtain new passports after having lost the old ones whilst escaping from Congo, send this letter along with some dollars, in which she expresses the joy of having been able to settle down along with her family: "I'm sending you these few dollars to say that I now have a job and I can place in common the little that I have".

(Africa)

I was selected in a public competition

I was selected in a public competition and I have been employed as a teacher since three months now. I am happy! I'd like to tell you with joy that I no longer need the aid, which can now be given to another person.

(Brazil)

Giving even that which I cannot

I had learnt in my family to give to those in need, even if social differences create a barrier of submission and servility. I have understood that communicating one's own necessities, not as one who "asks the rich neighbour" but as to a brother of the same family, makes one feel helped without having "received alms". I have now concluded my studies and I can serve the society better. It is living the phrase "Give and it will be given to you". In this way I can do my part giving what I can and even what I cannot.

(Brazil)

A message from a thousand hearts

I live alone with two children. I work but the expenses are much higher than my wage and often I am unable to make ends meet. Now I receive an aid that seems to me as a spark of light, a message of love from a thousand hearts.

(Serbia)

Enabling the wheelchair to enter

Last winter we needed to increase the width of the bath door in order to enable my paralyzed son to enter in with his wheelchair. We began the work and when it was almost nearing completion we realised that we had no more money left. The aid that arrived enabled us to complete the job and also to buy firewood to keep us warm during the winter. (Serbia)

a cura di Carla Bozzani

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Giving and receiving: a fruit of reciprocal love

When my mother lost her job, we two sisters would have no longer been able to attend school. When an aid was proposed to us we were hesitant thinking that perhaps there was someone more in need of it than us, and we also felt it humiliating to receive help rather than to give it as we had been doing before. But we understood that we were part of a family in which the giving and the receiving were a fruit of reciprocal love.

(Philippines)

A pension of four dollars a month

My father is a retired engineer. However since he receives a pension of four dollars a month, he tries to earn something more by working as a shoemaker. My mother too works and when I come back from school, I help her out in baby sitting 10 children. Often I feel that all this work and sacrifices are useless because we are not able to come out from this condition of poverty, and I get depressed at times. I asked Jesus to find a solution and unexpectedly I received an aid. I felt deeply loved by Him and from those brothers and sisters who without knowing it made me happy again!

(Mexico)

To buy another cow

Our cow died at the beginning of the year. It was a great setback for the economic situation our family, which became very difficult. We carried on trusting firmly in Providence. The aid that we received allowed us to survive and we were also able to buy another cow.

(Serbia)

The aid is not just for me

Thank you for the economic aid that you send our people of the Huasteca Higuilguense aborigines! I'd like to say how I use the money that I receive. I divide the sum into three parts: with one part I buy rice, beans, onions, flour and what is needed by my school-going children (they have done well in their exams), so that they can have a normal nutrition; I use another part for the bus fares of my eldest son who goes to school in the city; and the third part goes for my husband's medicines. However whenever the neighbours come to ask for oil, or capsicum, I give it to them right away, because I know that the Lord gives this aid not only for me but also for them.

(Mexico)

To repair the house

Thanks to the sum I received, I was able repair my house in collaboration with my brother. It was an invaluable help especially when my earnings were not sufficient to meet my personal necessities. However I now receive additional income and therefore I no longer need the aid.

(Philippine)

The Progress of the Lionello Business Park



I am overcome with strong emotions on seeing the Business Park now in its final stages, with the productive unit roofed up and the structure of the offices more defined. It seems impossible to me, and yet there it lies. It's almost a miracle. It's natural to think back in time to the day when the land was purchased in May 2003, the very day on which the foundation stone of the Church of Loppiano was laid; to remember the joy when the bulldozers began the levelling operations; thirty days of uninterrupted diggings to clear 25,000 cubic meters of land in order to prepare the level on which the construction could begin. Then the unforeseen: in a certain point the land showed an unexpected geologic conformation; the bitterness of having to stop the site work and the knowledge that the construction costs would have greatly increased in order to consolidate the terrain.

Then the resumption of the works sheltered by nearly one hundred poles measuring eighty centimetres in diameter and fifteen metres long that were fixed into the ground; and a new stop in the works due to the rains that transform the clay soil of the site into a swimming pool. In the meanwhile, we too experience the effects of the Chinese miracle. The price of iron that increases by 70% and that of concrete by 40% compels us to reconsider the project with a lifting, which together with numerous cuts brings about a greater essentiality and moderation in the structure. As soon as it was possible work resumed in May 2005, and the construction site begins to take new contours, dimensions and colours.

The grey lattice of the foundation plinths and the connection riddles emerge from the ground, the span pillars of the production sheds are situated and cemented. As the work proceeds one is able to demarcate physio-

gnomy of the central gallery, the "square of the enterprises", the first and the second floors, the offices.

Subsequently the two wings of the lateral sheds are completed with the edge beams, the covering tiles, the shed, and the external panels.

Now one can already appreciate the dimensions of both the handicrafts and industrial productive spaces. And finally we can show those entrepreneurs who wish to initiate an activity in the business park, which would constitute their premises.

At the centre of the gallery looking upwards we show them that concrete slab suspended at the second floor offices level that will be transformed into meeting and formation halls to accommodate up to ninety persons. This will offer the entrepreneurs a modifiable space to hold assemblies, big or small conventions, meetings with agents, technical and organisational formation. One hundred square centimetres had been demarcated on the first floor for a bar and restaurant, but on seeing them someone has already proposed other possibilities. This sharing of ideas also means to edify together. I am amazed, it seems incredible, yet here I am within this "house". In the next few months various internal construction works of finishing, fixtures, doors and entrances, electrical and mechanical systems will be carried out.

If all proceeds as programmed, we should be in a position to house the first set of companies by June 2006.

Till now over 50% of the office space and 35% of the sheds have been booked. Unfortunately some of the companies in the production sector, who had shown their willingness from the beginning to transfer to the business park, can no longer do so today due to the unfavourable economic predicament in their sectors.

We decided as the board of directors to commit ourselves in trying to help these companies to live this difficult moment as best as possible. Since some months now we are making an effort to set into motion and to support all the resources of ideas, relationships, and professionalism that we have gathered, so that we can find the solutions together.

In the meanwhile we wish to introduce through the pages of this newsletter some of the first companies that will populate the business park. It is a sign that the miracle of the multiplication of loaves continues.



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The Pioneering Entrepreneurs of the Lionello Business Park



Giorgio Bombelli



Luigi Delfi

In this moment of stagnation of the Italian economy, it is rather unusual to decide to establish a new economic activity, moreover in a zone that is not particularly supported by government incentives and distant from one's own work context.

And yet this is happening within the ambit of the Economy of Communion project in Italy, as was the case years ago in Brazil when the Spartaco Business Park was launched in the midst of a full-scale economic crisis. While the Lionello Bonfanti Productive Business Park at Incisa Valdarno is its phases of construction of the various structures, we interviewed some of the entrepreneurs who plan to establish themselves in the park.

The lights of the EcieCityLights

Luigi Delfi and Giorgio Bombelli decided together to found the EcieCityLights (www.eciecitylights.it). Both of them are businessmen who operate from Milan. Luigi Delfi manages the ECIE Srl, which recently opened a branch in China (see article on page 15), and Giorgio Bombelli manages the BBL Srl.

Luigi and Giorgio, why are you forming this new company in the Lionello Business Park?

Our two companies that employ 60 workers altogether, have been operating in collaboration since some years for the development and the marketing of lights, dashboards, and other parts for the motorcycle industry.

We have now perceived that the acquired know-how and technology can be effectively applied in the civil lighting systems market. Thus the CityLights was constituted, through which our great desire to participate in the EoC project as a new entity with a determined project adds to the technical and market vocation.

The purpose of the EcieCityLights is to propose innovative solutions in the civil lighting systems sector, using the acquired know-how from the motorcycle sector, and with lighting sources that are environmental friendly as they use ecological and recyclable materials. We will produce torches, flash lights, garden lamps, small interior and exterior lights. These products will enable EcieCityLights to meet every operable need.

The desire to participate fully in the EoC project is the main reason for establishing ourselves in the Business Park, but naturally we will look for new opportunities and synergies with other companies

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that adhere to the Economy of Communion.

Our goal is that the company grows and operates in a market capable of producing profits to share with the needy.

Moreover, we consider it very important that both we entrepreneurs and our collaborators be introduced into a structure whose vocation is that of show new rapports, collaborations, availability within and outside the company; thus that "additional" which is intrinsic to the EoC project; the "culture of giving" that attracts us.

Two or three people will work initially on the premises taking care of the warehouse and the shipment of products, while the management and the logistics will remain in Lainate.

Later on we will provide for equipping the location with assembly lines of new products, both for the electronic as well as the technical lighting and esthetical components

Furthermore, we will create a retail point within the Business Park where the customers will be able to directly appreciate innovate lighting proposals.

Security, environment and quality: Alberto Recami & partners

Alberto, can you describe your new company?

We are 3 engineer friends and colleagues. I'm from Florence, Luca Vienni and Gianluca Zoppi are from Pistoia. We will deal with safety at work, environmental problems and systems of quality for the companies, firms, and services.

Each of us is specialised has his own specialisation and we will not be competing but helping each other in complementary sectors.

We three partners will not leave our existing activities, but we will also devote ourselves to the new company that is geared to offer a complete service which we today offer individually.

The activity which will be located in the Business Park is in the process of constitution, and its name and legal profile are still to be determined.

Why did you choose to establish yourselves in the Business Park?

Since some years I have been adhering to the Economy of Communion with my company 'Areco@' (e-mail: areco@tiscali) that has seven workers. I liked the aspect of living economics proposed by the EoC, and it completes my present "dimension". Its the same with my friends, though with different emphasis.

Our work is fundamentally professional in nature; we





operate in offices, construction sites, or with clients. Initially we will only open an office managed by one person with the right professional traits. Of course our services are primarily intended for those companies who establish themselves in the Business Park, but also for those in the surrounding region. Personally what strikes me most of the EoC is not so much or just the sharing of profits with the poor, but contributing to form new people; or rather to live economy, and one's whole life as well, in a new style. I leave others to delve into the theoretical part (for example, professors Bruni and Zamagni, who are exceptional in this aspect...). Basically I'm a practical person and I accepted this challenge because being in the business park in a certain sense "coerces me" to live the precepts of the Economy of Communion more fully.

The five from the GM&P Consulting Network

It seems that most of the new activities launched in these years in our country are in the service industry, particularly in that professional. The new businesses in the Business Park reflect this tendency to some extent. The GM&P Consulting Network (webpage: www.gmep.it) founded by Giovanni Mazzanti also operates in this sector.

Giovanni, can you describe the company a branch of which you are moving to the Lionello Business Park? The idea came about five years ago from the desire of the company's partners to live a fuller experience of the Economy of Communion. We were convinced that the innovative and fundamental aspect of this project lay in the fraternal rapports lived out in the carrying out of the company activity and with the customers.

The company vision is to create a pool of professionals who offer integrated services of quality to the companies. I've graduated in Business Economics and work since fifteen years as a management and organisational consultant, particularly in the monitoring of management and administrative management. Michele Mengoli is an Economics graduate and specialises in informatics applied to management monitoring. Eva Gullo has a degree in Political Sciences and specialises in relational dynamics within organisations. Alberto Frassinetti is an engineer with experience in organisation, business strategies, and marketing. Amadio Bolzani is also an engineer who worked for many years as a managing director of the Italian branch of a multinational company.

We cater to small and medium sized companies. We try to respond to their management require-

ments; we elaborate and realize consultancies and formation projects by bringing together technique and the culture of reciprocity.

How do you bring together technique and the culture of reciprocity?

InWe start from ourselves. It is not easy because we have different personalities, and professional and formative background, and each one is used to be somewhat a protagonist.

This implies the commitment of each one of us to lose one's own ideas in favour of the solution that emerges from our work together, to question one's own methods, and to remain open to the suggestions of the others. Thus, perhaps following even lively discussions, we manage to re-establish and safeguard that harmony which each of us acknowledges as having the most precious value.

All the same we can say that in these five years of working together, we have accumulated a certain experience of the difficulties and the joys of this "method", which involves an undisputable professional enrichment for each one of us. It is a difficult but edifying experience.

The fruits of this way of operating are new ideas, original solutions in the methods, innovative proposals for customers, and a profound growth in the professional rapport and friendship among us.

We were overjoyed when the Lionello Business Park came into being. It seemed to us as a concrete occasion for a communion of the skills and experiences among the persons and companies involved in the entire project. We showed our willingness to work for the business park right from the onset, for example by offering formative courses. And we have decided to open a branch office of our company in the business park as soon as the construction work is completed.

The business park for us is an opportunity to live the values we mentioned earlier, particularly in the service sector.

Is there some aspect in your way of operating that could be defined as being "counter-current"?

In a labour market wherein the rule of competition would advise a keeping to oneself of one's own industrial "secrets", professional patrimony, and the specific know-how acquired in time, the Business Park offers us the possibility to live the principles of trust and sharing, by offering our ideas, methods and skills in the collaboration and the evaluation with other consultants and the companies in the business park. In this way we can contribute together with the others to bring about a new company culture in the Economy of Communion spirit.



Cecilia Mannucci



Cecilia Mannucci: A chartered accountant with EoC values

Cecilia Mannucci has already opened her own office next to the developing structures of the Business Park. She will be one of the first professionals to transfer her practice to the business park. (Studio Rag.Cecilia Mannucci, e-mail: cecilia.mannucci@tiscali.it)

Cecilia, tell us how you work as a chartered accountant. I began my profession as a chartered accountant in 1989 in one of the famous offices in Florence.

I deal with fiscal and administrative advice for companies and private individuals. When I began my own, right from the onset I encountered prejudices according to which "the chartered accountant is one who helps me evade taxes".

I soon realised that it was not enough to have a good professional background and a good knowledge of the laws. Other qualities were also required such as patience, refraining from judging in the face of situations, knowing how to listen to the client all the way, and at times also the shrewdness to avoid being involvement in shady situations.

I try to organize my work in such a way as to avoid not taking ethical and moral principles into consideration, which my choice faith requires of me. As a result I have also lost clients for not approving of illegal evasions and loopholes.

Many of the situations I encounter lead me to evaluate circumstances that are difficult at times. You encounter injustice, see unfairness, and even feel powerless. However I do not let myself to be overwhelmed by problems, but rather I get involved in order to love the person before me all the way, I am also able to find a possible solution.

Recently I was approached by a group of youth who intended to start their own business, and they asked me for a projection of the taxes to be paid and the obligations they would be subject to. It was a suffering having to cite figures and to list things to be accomplished by them. It seemed as if this was cutting off their wings. But I also gave them a glimpse of the positive side, of all the importance of the commitment they were about to make, and also the implications that their business could have for society. I lead them to think not only of personal interests and gains. Often the rapport with clients is not simply based on a request for clarification or advice. With some clients there is that mutual esteem that made us discover the same belief in common values such as solidarity and love for the poor, which went beyond our cultural differences. I must admit that my choices did not have any negative impact on my professional growth. Rather work has increased a lot in

these last years, and I now have three collaborators in my office.

Why are you transferring your practice to the Business Park?

I asked the same question to myself, and I must admit with a bit of irony that if I had gone to a consultant to seek advice, or if a client had come to me with a similar project, I would have definitely discouraged the same. The present economic situation does not leave room for too many innovations. Such a kind of shifting involves so many variables that it does not look easy to reconcile accounts.

However there is the desire to undertake the risk, and not to bury one's own talents but rather to enable them to be fructified to the maximum in terms of professionalism and quality of services.

I am now already in a small provisional office in Loppiano a year earlier. What could have seemed as too anticipated a move has turned into a real and proper opportunity, which gives me the possibility to familiarise myself with this territory, and to evaluate from now itself new professional avenues.

I expect the Business Park to provide me with the possibility to confront myself with other entrepreneurs, and to enter into everyday rapports with them that are not based on utilitarian principles but on a greater challenge: that of establishing a communion among all, of being able to become a community of persons that does not close in itself but opens itself on the territory "contaminating it" in a certain sense with the culture of giving.

We wish the very best to these entrepreneurs who are thus determined to invest talents and resources in their choice of setting up office in the Lionello Business Park. In particular we wish that they not remain alone in this choice, and that the friends of the EoC project support the development of their companies as if they were shareholders, and even to consider becoming their first clients!



Fifteen Years of Prodiet



Dependenti Prodiet



On the 30th September 2005, workers, suppliers, customers, and representatives from the branches of the Prodiet Farmaceutica, together with all those who were associated with the company since its inception, were invited to spend an evening in Curitiba to celebrate the company's fifteen years of activity.

On this occasion, Professor Boris, who teaches in the Faculty of Economics and Administration at the University of San Paolo, was invited to address the invitees gathered at the Don Antonio restaurant, which is renowned for its Italian cuisine, and share his reflections on the theme of "Ethics in Business, Company Management and Social Responsibility" that is much relevant in Brazil.

The civil and religious authorities were also invited and the event was promoted via a press conference with the local newspapers, at which Professor Boris and the Director of the Centre of Communications of the Catholic University of Curitiba (PUC) were present.

The invitees, each of whom had been personally contacted, received a brochure with the history of the company and a pen with the Prodiet logo. They were welcomed in the large hall of the restaurant with songs by the Prodiet Vocal Group, which introduced the speech of the company president Armando Tortelli to the 270 persons present, who said among other things: "... besides the traditional aims of every company, Prodiet has been for us the realisation of the dream to bear witness that it is possible to build a company based on ethical principles, with the human being and not profit at the centre of the economic activity; the company that becomes an opportunity to promote the human person, that carries out its social role...". In conclusion he said: "I renew with all of you my commitment to ensure that Prodiet becomes a company that never accepts compromises. Instead we want each of our business activities to be a means for building a better world".

Professor Boris then presented his address in the presence of the federal deputy Gustavo Fruet, member of the National Commission for Ethics, the Secretary for Tourism of the state of Paraná Dr Jorge Demiate, and persons from other authorities. He began by saying:

"It is not always easy to find examples of correctness in the professional field, but certainly each of you recalls

a concrete example in the company of ethical behaviour and respect of the person. In my opinion Prodiet is on the forefront among companies for whom work is a synonym for ethics and above all respect for the human person".

Some impressions of those present:

A pharmacist:

"... Even if we were in many from different activities and market sectors, the Prodiet family succeeded in transforming the company event into a family gathering...."

The Prodiet Purchasing department manager:

"The event was really important to consolidate the life of the company and to mark our story. I am happy to have been present at the Prodiet celebration".

An employee:

"It was very important manifestation not only for the customers, but also for the suppliers. I spent the evening with transport operators who appreciated very much the initiative. I got to know better the suppliers with who I worked for years, and for the first time there was the opportunity to dialogue beyond strictly commercial rapports".

Another employee:

"Firstly I wish to express my satisfaction to form part of this group. This event left a terrific mark. The story of how the company came into being made us reflect on our dreams and on the possibility of realising them, thanks to commitment and dedication. The Vocal Group surprised everyone for its talent, and highlighted the activities additional to work fostered by the company".

The national director of the Hipolabor Farmaceutica Company:

"It was a sensational event! I heartily shared in this important moment. Without doubt the theme presented was a lesson for all of us, considering the daily happenings in the market in which we operate. We always knew about the ethical dimension of the organisation and the professionalism of Prodiet and its collaborators, and occasions such as these testify to the same".

The Director of the Medicinal Centre of the state of Paraná, who was impressed by the welcome, expressed himself thus:

"I was impressed by the smile on the faces of the employees. They all seem happy to work in the company...this evening has contributed to increase my esteem for your company".

Seeing the outcome of the initiative and the involvement of the participants, the president Armando Tortelli decided to repeat this event on the theme of ethics every year. In this way the values of the EoC companies could be more publicised.



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The Economy of Communion arrives in China



The ECIE Ltd was formed in 1991 in Milan to produce components for the motor-cycle industry. It was the initiative of Luigi Delfi, who managed to put together a group of collaborators having a lot of professional experience and with a capacity to develop new ideas and products.

The company sought to offer right away not just quality, but also an international service ranging from research and planning to production and assistance to the customer. The ECIE set as its main aim the satisfaction of the customer, which necessitates punctuality and efficiency, but is also based on a continuous flow of information and services, as well as on trust and mutual respect.

In just a few years the ECIE won the trust of important clients in the motor-cycle industry, who it continues to service with its current staff of 55 persons working in its main office at Lainate, where the company had shifted from Milan due to a lack of space.

The ECIE adhered to the Economy of Communion project, thus forming part of a greater project. This fact motivates Luigi Delfi and his family members who work with him in the company, not to be mere motors of the strategy and management of the

company. There is need to responsabilize the young managers who grew up in the company not only in technical aspects but above all in the sharing of values that sustain the company.

Thus a formative course was initiated that was open to all, starting from the functional heads up to the workers in every sector, with the aim of sharing values, vision and professional culture. It was a formation apt to develop the sense of belonging in the business adventure, to create that business spirit that is built first and foremost with the style of life, with the kind of relationships and the experience of communion within the company itself, and which is later also experienced externally with customers and suppliers.

In 2004, The ECIE decided to put at stake its capital and professional expertise, to start a new adventure that opens new possibilities for the future. It was the opening of a small company in China. At the inauguration in June 2005, Luigino Bruni was invited together with representatives from the ECIE. On that occasion he shared his reflection on this Italian-Chinese adventure and on the significance of the Economy of Communion in that country so diverse and distant. In the following article, we carry a part of his reflections.



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The Chinese Miracle and the EoC

I am sure that this day will be long remembered. The Economy of Communion world will certainly remember it, for the importance today's event holds for it.

China is the most important economic and social laboratory on the world scene. A very important event is unfolding itself in the China of today, on which the quality of economy and market society of the twenty-first century and beyond will depend upon. China's present population includes 1.3 billion people. It possesses its own language and a millenary culture. Since decades its people have emigrated and settled in many parts of the world – in all the southern coasts of Asia and the eastern coasts of Africa, the U.S.A., and Europe.

Let us consider some facts on the economic level. It is well known that today China has reached an increase in GDP of around 9% per annum. It is a process of growth that has been progressing over the last twenty years. Only a great people with a great culture can be capable of bringing about what is taking place in China today. At times one can sense in the West a certain concern on this growth rate, but I assure you that there is a greater admiration for what China is achieving. Therefore, the crucial question today is the following: what are the challenges that the Chinese economy and society must face and win? I would like to outline some of them.

There is an increase in wealth in China today, but perhaps social inequality is also on the increase. If we consider the other big world economies we will note that in times of a "boom", the economy experiences an increase of wealth linked with an increase in inequality. At the same time we also know that the economies continued to grow in time only they knew how to reach two other objectives: 1) to reduce the inequality so that the advantages of growth could be to availed of by a majority of people; 2) to enhance civil participation and democracy. In fact, the history of the democracies of the European market reveals that the economic development endures in time only if it becomes participated development, and if the so called "social capital" also increases together with physical and financial capitals.

I am convinced that the Chinese society, with its huge resources, will overcome this challenge. Likewise I am convinced that the culture that animates the EoC experience, and therefore the ECIE,

even if it is only a small seed in front of the complexity of such dynamics, can tell us something important in this regard.

The contribution of the Economy of Communion Tra Amongst the foundational aspects of the philosophy that inspires the EoC practise, we find the following:

a – Economic efficiency and solidarity (communion) are not in opposition to each other. In the Economy of Communion, the economic efficiency and the dimensions of solidarity mutually strengthen one another. Instead, the traditional vision of economics contrasted economic efficiency with solidarity. The "normal" market economy does not consider taking care of the poor and social justice as part of its competence. The capitalistic company considers to have full accomplished its duty once it has paid the taxes, and leaves solidarity for the State to take care of. The Chinese society and economy have a long and important history in which, and I firmly believe, the components of justice and equality play an important role. Now that China is experiencing an enthusiasm for the market (goods and money are essential means to enjoy more freedom from needs and the dependence on others), it must not forget its great millenary culture, which is also a culture of solidarity and fraternity, as its Confucian roots reveal.

b – The idea of economic activity advanced by the EoC then conceives the production and the exchange of goods and services as a service to the concrete person, a person that it places at the centre of its activity with all his or her aspects. Goods are well produced so that those who use it tomorrow feel respected; to be faithful to the contracts so that the positive relationship with customers and suppliers increases and strengthens in time; to pay a just salary to male and female employees, which would also suffice them to send their children to school, and in this manner to programme a better future at all times. Besides, the natural environment is taken into consideration with the same attention given to an old friend, because if nature is loved and respected it does the same in its turn, and we all benefit from this in the long run – it is in this area that the great Chinese humanism can be teacher for all. Lastly, a right and transparent rapport is sought to be had with public institutions, because without a good rapport with the State and the public municipality and administration, a company cannot grow and endure in time.

c – A company inspired by the EoC then is a com-

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munity of persons that knows how to look beyond the gates and walls of its factory, and to open itself to solidarity with the “least of the city”. And it does so in many ways, including the creation of new work posts to enable people who are excluded from economic development to enter within, and to thus enjoy a better life. But if and when possible, the EoC company wants to take direct care of those in need, because it knows that it cannot be happy on its own, and, as Confucius always reminds us, it knows that “One who does not foresee distant things, exposes himself to approaching unhappiness.” An economy knows how to grow in time if, as we said, it is able to include the people excluded, and to introduce as many people as possible within the growth.

In conclusion, being Italian I cannot not think of two Italians whom I feel particularly close on the occasion of the event that we are celebrating today: Marco Polo and Matteo Ricci.

Marco Polo reminds us that trade, the market or the economy is primarily an occasion of meeting among persons, peoples, and cultures. The Chinese culture was made known in all its splendour in Europe through the merchant Marco Polo, and Europe was made known in China. Therefore, Marco Polo was “much more” than just a merchant, who was able to look much beyond mere economic interest (without renouncing it). And other “merchants” who are returning to China today, would like to do so with the same respect and gaze full of marvel and admiration that Marco Polo had for this great civilisation. I am sure that the ECIE entrepreneurs are such kind of “merchants”.

The other Italian, who belonged to the same

district from where I come, is the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci. He presented himself to the Emperor at Peking in 1601, after having lived in the country for 21 years during which he studied the Chinese language and culture. He was designated and is still known as “Li Madou” or “the wise man of the West”. Fr. Matteo Ricci made himself “Chinese with the Chinese” to such an extent to become a true “sinologist” in the most profound cultural and spiritual significance of the term. He was able to bring about in his own person an extraordinary interior harmony between the spiritual person and the scholar, Christian and Orientalist, Italian and Chinese.

Matteo Ricci had a *deep respect and fondness* for the Chinese people and their history, culture, and tradition. His short *Treatise on friendship* (*De amicitia – Jiaoyoulun*), which had great success in China, remains an indisputable testimony of his loyalty, sincerity, and fraternity towards the people who had welcomed him. Today we are pleased to understand the arrival of the EoC in China as continuity with these two Italian friends of China: a merchant and a spiritual man, who also represent the two great souls of the Economy of Communion.

In today’s language the EoC tells us that friendship, which is the universal category of the human soul, and that makes life unhappy and impoverished when it is absent, can be lived *also doing economics*, even within a company. Therefore we wish that the nascent company can be a place where friendship is built day after day, to be able to then extend it even outside the company, until it permeates the surrounding reality.



The Family of the “Feito por nós”



The Kidelicia Ind. Com. Ltda was launched in 1994 thanks to the Economy of Communion project, as a contribution to development of the small town of Benevides in the state of Pará, Brazil. This town lacks industries and has high unemployment.

The company produces sweets and 100% natural marmalades, thereby valorising the large variety of tropical fruits produced in the region.

The company was not formed with any real initial capital, but from the contribution of people like us who are interested in the EoC project, who provided us with a freezer, office material, tables, recipients, a telephone line, and above all the services of an advocate, an accountant, and a chemical engineer.

We began by producing 500 kg of marmalade each month, with two production operators and an employee. The biggest hurdle then was arranging the money to buy the fruits during harvest time.

Today after eleven years we possess a shed and produce an average 9,000 kg per month for 209 customers, among which one national and one international company, and five distributors.

We produce marmalade and sweets: the snacks for some of state-run schools in Pará, and for two factories, one of which is in San Paolo.

We have twenty permanent employees and six apprentices, and we provide work for around thirty people from the external.

In these years we've also had difficult moments, but they always reminded us not to bank solely on our own strengths, but to entrust everything to our “invisible partner”.

Once, when we were faced with the difficulty of not having enough money to pay the salaries of the employees, we asked our “invisible partner” all together to help us find a solution, as we felt the commitment to be punctual with the payment.

Almost immediately we received an urgent request for a “kit” that contained various typical marmalades of Pará, which was to be gifted during a meeting. The payment would have been made immediately, and not in time as usual. We discovered and were grateful that the amount of the order corresponded to the sum needed for the salaries!

Every now and then other entrepreneurs would tell us that we would not have managed to survive. To have been able to make it whilst respecting the law was truly a challenge. But our invisible partner always made his presence felt; for example, by helping us

obtain a tax exemption, which an inspector who visited us called “a miracle”, since it was very difficult that the State would have conceded such an exemption to a company of our size.

We always try not to be enticed by the logic of profits. Once, an important client of ours proposed a underhand purchase, and seeing our refusal to comply, he threatened to cancel the order and not to do business with us anymore.

It was an important loss, but on recalling the project that had inspired our undertaking, we decided that if this was the price to be paid, then we were ready for it. But on the following day, the first email that we received was precisely from this customer, who was doubling the quantity of the order proposed the day before. We immediately celebrated this “hundredfold” received for our faithfulness.

We often have visits from the tax department. Once we were pointed out an irregularity that could have stalled our activity, and the inspector asked for a bribe to avoid imposing sanctions. We explained to him that we desired to be faithful to our duties towards the government and society, and therefore we preferred to pay the necessary fine and to make the necessary arrangements to correct the discrepancy.

However, when we set about to examine the modifications needed in the production cycle, we realised that they were not actually necessary, and it was something we were able to prove before the authorities.

In these years, we have built very positive rapports with all sectors of the health vigilance department, and recently some inspectors, who were being transferred to other offices, described our factory to their substitutes as a “model to be emulated”.

Our collaborators testify to the environment of a family that is experienced in the factory: “We are feel any difference between owners and employees, and neither between one sector of production and another; an environment of family exists among us”. This is testified by the fact that during a period in which one of the sectors finished their work earlier, the operators from that sector offered themselves to help out in places where there was a higher workload. In this way everyone could leave on time and the company could avoid paying overtime.

Once a particular worker's help was required, which meant that he would have had to interrupt his own work. At first he did not want to do so, but then he remembered that he too had been helped in the past. When he returned to his work post he realised that someone else had completed his work for him.

One day one of our employees, who we knew was very poor, asked us to give the sum that corresponded to her overtime work to the poor of the EoC project. We carried out her wish with great respect, accepting her offering from the hands of God. After some days she told us that she had received an unexpected income that was ten times more than what she had given to the poor. With this amount she was finally able to fit windows in her house and reinforce the foundations.

Our adherence to the EoC project would like to all the more a tangible sign of our commitment to build a more just, fraternal, and solidal society. Our latest goal is to come up with a product that is not of a good quality, but also with a price that is affordable for all.

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Journey to Romania



I was my first visit to Romania and it left had a strong impact on me. My first impression of the city after having landed at the airport of Cluj, which is the economic capital of pre-communist Transylvania, was of being struck by the situation of widespread misery that one perceives quite clearly.

For example, I was struck by the poor condition of the vehicles and the roads. The old “dacia” cars, belonging to the period of the communist regime before the 1989 revolution, are still very much in use. These cars are a cause of pollution within the city.

However if one goes beyond this first impression, as I began to do after speaking with the people, one discovers a young population with a great desire to change things, to grow, to improve. The city is teeming with people, and things move with enthusiasm.

The young people were the best part of the visit. Among the promoters of the seminar at the faculty of economics of Cluj, there was also the Association of Students (AIESEC) that is present in Romania too.

I found these young people intelligent, cultured, with a good command over the English language, optimistic, and oriented towards the future with a strong desire of being protagonists. It was thanks to these and many other young people present, that the seminar (held on the 14 October, with 150 participants) was a success. It was among the most dynamic, participated and profound seminars that I have attended in these last years.

Together with Stefan Tobler, a Swiss protestant theologian who has been living and working in Romania since some years, we presented the EoC under the ethical profile, which revealed its particular idea of “Corporate Social Responsibility”. The reports were much appreciated, and they facilitated dialogue in an environment that was both scientific, and friendly and informal.

Another important moment was the meeting with thirty entrepreneurs, students, and workers coming from all over Romania, who are closely involved with the EoC. We spent Saturday the 15th morning speaking about communion in a spirit of profound fraternity.

I felt that the presence of a few EoC enterprises in Romania was already significant and a sign of

hope. Besides being present, they are active with a desire to grow and contribute to improving their country's economy and society. It was truly a joyful moment.

Finally, the visit together with Stefan Tobler and Csaba (see the article on pg. 20) to the new shed that Antares is purchasing was significant. The shed is located in an earlier communist business park in which until ten years ago, 12,000 workers manufactured shoes (50 tonnes a day!).

A huge enterprise with British and German technology was originally present in that area already since 1911. It was one of the prestigious enterprises of Transylvania. Communism took over this enterprise and even made it function well for some time. Then in the later decades of the Ceausescu regime, when the same political and economic leaders no longer believed in a future for that system, the enterprises in the business park were progressively abandoned.

Csaba narrated to me a significant episode. They found dozens of closed boxes with shoes in the warehouse of the shed. When these boxes were opened they discovered that the shoes were used, soiled and worn out. How could this have happened? In the last years of communism, the workers continued to receive salaries but the shops were empty. So they used to come to work in their old shoes and left with new shoes on their feet!

The situation today is changing rapidly. On one hand there are still sheds that are abandoned, but there is an increase in footwear companies, especially from Italy (there would be much to say on the role of Italians in Romania, with some light and many shadows), who buy (with not much Euros) sheds and machinery, and make them functional once more. A hotel with an adjoining restaurant was opened by an Italian entrepreneur in the business park centre, and others are in the process of being opened.

Therefore an EoC company will soon be operative in this business park. One cannot but see a sign of the times, a “kairos” in this event. The Economy of Communion practised in freedom is being set up on the remains of the failure of a communism without freedom. There is a resurgence of the pre-communist economy as a phoenix from the ashes of a collectivist economy. However it valorises even the ashes of that failed attempt. It is not a return to the past but a looking ahead into the distance, by also recovering the sufferings, questions, and hopes of these past sixty years.

I have a strong impression that the EoC can contribute in the search of this “new” economy, which is neither the capitalism of the Transylvania of yesterday, nor that of today's Italians, but a new way. It is a way where freedom meets with communion, the market with solidarity, equality with fraternity.

As I journeyed homewards, those old cars I saw from the plane already looked better to me from above. That land appeared to me as a place of hope, and I felt a deep desire not to deter the race we had undertaken.



Luigino Bruni

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Antares' Experience



Stefan Tobler



I'm Laczko Csaba, and I encountered the Spirituality of Unity of the Focolare when I was a student. The light of this ideal has been a point of reference for me even in my professional life – I have been working for nearly twenty years now. It has guided me in my behaviour, in the choices I had to make, and in the human rapports that I had to build. I was always convinced that work can and must be a place wherein one could encounter God.

In 1992 I was fascinated by the challenge of the Economy of Communion, and I formed a small EoC company together with two other members of the movement from Trent. I left a secure job to undertake an experience filled with difficulties, which also led us close to bankruptcy. The results were modest from a financial point of view, but the experience was luminous with tangible manifestations of Providence.

Once, someone offered us a quantity of products at a very low price, which we could have resold at a price a hundred times higher. It seemed a good opportunity, but it was evident that the goods had been robbed. I heard an inner voice within me saying: "... you could accept the offer; perhaps you might become rich, but you will be no longer able to count on the providence of God that has always made you feel secure". It was easy to refuse the offer.

In 1997 I initiated a market research for a company, and I often shared my work experiences with those who shared the same ideal as me. These moments strengthened my conviction that to love was the most important thing in work: to love colleagues, owners, customers, even competitors who had the same right to success and professional satisfaction. I am convinced that this attitude led the principals to entrust me with the responsibility of launching and managing the Romanian branch of this company, which manufactures chairs. We began with two persons and we developed little by little. In this moment we provide work for 80 persons in Cluj and Bucharest.

Every day we experience the living together between different cultures and confessions, besides the ongoing efforts to improve professionally. At work we are Romanians, Hungarians, Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Reformists, neo-protestant confessions, and even a person without any religious conviction.

Laczko Csaba

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The first everyday challenge is to act ethically in an economical ambit that is often corrupt. Some of my collaborators share these values and thus we reciprocally support each other. It's encouraging to see how the others too adhere to this mode of behaviour, and refuse dishonest occasions and offers with simplicity. Once we participated in a tender for the supply of the kind of product we manufactured, which was organised by one of the most important institutions of the State.

We were awarded the tender, but after a week we were informed that our products were not technically complying. Another company which did not manufacture that product was awarded the tender in place of us. This company then purchased our products and resold them to that institute with a 40% overprice.

Notwithstanding all this, we decided to continue to participate in these calls for tenders, always maintaining the transparency of our offers, and the respect towards persons and the institute.

After some time the responsible of these calls for tenders began to point out to us the occasions as they presented themselves, and we were awarded the tender on various occasions.

At the beginning of this summer, we were struck by the tragedies following the flood in the Timis region. We felt it was necessary not only to help these persons in difficulty, but also to make other persons aware of these necessities. We contacted two families who lost their house and we proposed to our colleagues to collect money for them. The owners of the company committed themselves to double the amount collected.

It was truly moving to see the generosity with which each person donated. But the most beautiful thing is the rapport that was built among these families our work community. Some colleagues went during the weekend to help them rebuild their houses, and the rapport still continues.



The Spaceship Economy



Starting from the economists, most people believe that we are still in the so-called “cowboy economy”. The metaphor symbolises that one can draw on from the external an indefinite amount of natural resources (water, timber, game, minerals, etc), and release its refusal to the external, using it as a dumping basin with an unlimited absorption capacity. As a result in such a world even if a lone hunter cuts down a sequoia tree to obtain a toothpick for himself, and hunts down a bison to eat a beefsteak, the natural equilibrium would not be much affected thanks to the fact that he would be the only one to behave in this manner over a range of thousands of kilometres. On the contrary, forty years ago the economist Kenneth Boulding described today’s economic world rather as resembling a spaceship, i.e. a limited and closed system that cannot draw on provisions, air, water from the external (incidentally, it can only draw on solar energy), nor can it dump its wastes (in fact we are in a spaceship without an expulsion device), and yet it must guarantee survival to the astronauts, and if possible even a good life condition, right up to the end of the interplanetary voyage.

But if this is how things stand, it is not true that the course of the economic system is more satisfying when there are greater production and consumption flows. (Technical speaking, the expression “flows” brings to mind the quantity of materials that pass through the pipes and the conveyor belts of the industrial transformation factories, and - as we are generally prone to think - the more mineral and organic substances they transform the more wealth is generated for all).

Instead, the success of the spaceship economy is gauged in terms of stock, of consistence, i.e. in terms of the reserve tanks levels from which we draw on (that we wish remain as full as possible), the level of the recipients in which we dump (that we wish get filled up as slowly as possible), the condition of the equipments and the instruments (that must be cleaned, oiled, and used with extreme care), and lastly but not the least important, in terms of the “state ... of the bodies and minds” of the passengers.

In the spaceship economy it is easier to understand the real objective is that the passengers are well (the word “wellbeing”, which is much spoken of and that we measure today with the income flow, precisely indicates a good state). And in order to

guarantee that this objective is reached even in the future, we would like to obtain the same with production and consumptions flows as meagre as possible, which have a strong impact on the environment.

Kenneth Boulding’s appeal forty years ago to change our perspective is still valid, because in the meanwhile the econosphere [or world economy] was enlarged further, while the biosphere on which it rests has impoverished little by little.

Well done Boulding! His view point tells us many things that go beyond the environmental question though very important. For example, it tells us that if the “visiting card” of governments, when they present themselves to the electorate or for international concessions, was not the production flow (GDP) of their economy but the state of their citizens, perhaps they might have to be more concerned of the fact that a good part of them suffer from malnutrition, illiteracy, ostracism, deprived of a recognized role in society (something which takes place even in countries with an elevated GDP).

Once again, if it is true – as confirmed by the recent debate on economics and happiness – that well-being also consists in the introduction into a network of significant relations, and the sense we can make of our being and doing. Why then do we tolerate such an invasive sales promotion and why to we allow that governments themselves carry out publicity campaigns to spur the people to spend more, when we know new individual consumptions only lead to take away mental space and time (to buy, to use, to obtain money) from those activities that can bond us more with the others (like familiar and neighbourly solidarity, participation in associations, etc), or those that can help us to be at peace with ourselves, and with others as a consequence (silence, readings, meditations, prayer)?

Finally, the viewpoint Boulding advices us, or rather repeats to us from a different perspective, tells us that valuing the activity of an enterprise solely in terms of the turnover, profits, or workers employed is not enough, because the modalities, the organisation, and the stile of management have a strong impact on the state (of valorisation rather than of frustration, of involvement rather than isolation, etc.) of those who participate in the company (first and foremost the workers, but also the customers, users, or suppliers in some measure).

Dear workers and entrepreneurs of the EoC (but the same can be said to all those whose business activity is inspired by the same logic), if all this is true then we have all the more reason to think that your contribution to the wellbeing of the society is much greater than that visible from the balance sheets of your enterprises (which in any case we wish you success in maintaining sound).



Benedetto Gui
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Graduate Theses

So More than 200 graduation theses have been discussed from 1993 till today. Of these, over 150 have been made available by their authors on our internet site www.ecodicom.net and we received 10 others in recent months. The theses that are done at the end of a three-year degree course, range from going beyond the presentation of the Project by study its growth even with the aid of economic model (Simone Miliuzzi), to the complex PhD research of Kelen Christina Leite, in which the market as seen from the EoC viewpoint, is no longer only a means to gather wealth but it becomes an instrument of the redistribution of income, and an answer to the ongoing welfare crises.

Cristina Lochis defines EoC as a possible alternative to the current economic theory which is undergoing a crisis, while Sonia Gistici sees it as a challenge to the prevailing human praxis, describing the Lionello Business Park as a tangible witness to such a challenge.

Gibby Tshinoka from Kinshasa evaluates the contribution that the EoC could make in enabling the Democratic Republic of Congo to overcome its present economic and financial crisis. Claudia Herrero Martins from Brazil studies the EoC as a company management model that is a "propeller" of the company's development. She goes about this task by comparing the EoC with the "Corporate Social Responsibility" and "the Solidal Economy".

João Manoel da Silva Motta from Brazil, in the EoC case study, analyses the "communion" as the motor of a new civilising process for the third millennium, by applying the systematic theory.

Raimundo Leôncio Ferraz Fortes ascertains that the organizational style of the EoC, which places the person at the centre, generates a "contagious" relationality that goes beyond the limits of the company.

Angelo Di Cicco, in his study on "The Culture of Giving in economic behaviour" shows that thanks to the action of people who favour gifting in the market, not only do they prosper but they also improve the condition of the economic system itself. Lastly, in the ambit of a thesis on Hospitality and Spirituality, Letícia Botti de Souza points out the EoC as one of the main interests for those who visit the Mariapoli Ginetta in Brazil.

In conclusion, as always, we invite all those reflecting on this project to share their thesis once completed. All you need to do is compile the abstract form that can be downloaded from the homepage: www.ecodicom.net, and e-mail it together with the thesis files to antonella.ferrucci@prometh.it

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Three year Degree in
Economic e Social disciplines
Bicocca University of Milano
Faculty of Economics
December 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: The reason why the EoC can be an alternative to the prevalent Economic theory

Tutor: Prof. Luigino Bruni

The aim of the thesis is to define the justifications that make the EoC an alternative that is capable of helping the present economic theory to overcome the difficulties posed by globalisation. The first part speaks about the Focolare Movement, and describes the project by highlighting the allocation of the profits, and the culture of giving. The second part analyses the aspects that put the present economic theory in a critical position, and the EoC perspective is proposed as an alternative possibility.

Gibby Tshinoka Sangambo Spanoyannis

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Degree un Economics and
Finance
Université Chrétienne Cardinal
Malula/ISPL Kinshasa. RDCongo
28th September 2005

Language:
Franch

Thesis: Mechanisms of adoption of the Economy of Communion in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Tutor: Prof. C. T. Alexis Kaluwa Mwangala

The aim of the thesis is to verify if the adoption of the EoC in the Democratic Republic of Congo could contribute to enable the country to overcome the economic and financial crisis that is damaging it. This crisis hinges upon unemployment land the consequent poverty, the lack of investments and infrastructures, the lack of financial resources, the insufficient buying power, the foreign debt, etc. The study shows that the adoption of the EoC could contribute primarily by promoting the creation of new work posts, and by increasing tax revenues. Therefore the State would have the possibility to investment more, while the families would have a greater buying power, leading to an increase in domestic demand that is a stimulus for production.

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The theses made available by
their authors can be consul-
ted on www.ecodicom.net.

The site www.edc-online.org,
in 4 languages can be consul-
ted in the "news and events"
section for the latest updates
of appointments relating to
the EoC.

The other sections provide
bibliography, data, statistics,
articles, and much more.



Simone Miliozzi

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Three year Degree in
Economics and Finance
*Università Politecnica delle
Marche di Ancona*
22nd July 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: **The Economy of Communion**

Tutor: Lorenzo Robotti

The EoC is described, starting from the very close rapport from the very onset between ethics and economics in the traditional thinking of civil economics, which was then overlooked by the modern economic theory. The new reality of the EoC gives rise to the principle of reciprocity, which is in full tune with the Social Doctrine of the Church. The project is analysed with the help of economic models to explain its "survival" and growth in these last years. Finally, an attempt is made to analyse the EoC enterprise under the company profile, with specific reference to the aim of these enterprises, their management structure, and the informative system. Lastly, the novelty of the "industrial business parks" is presented.

Kelen Christina Leite

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PhD in Sociology
*Universidade Federal
de São Carlos - Brasile*
July 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: **Economy of communion: a cultural and political change in the principle-building of reciprocity in economic rapports**

Tutor: Dr. Paul Charles Freston

The thesis is unfolded by means of an ample bibliography review and many interviews with the various persons involved in the EoC (owners, employees, the needy) particularly from the Spartaco Business Park in Brazil, but also with contributions from Cameroon, Poland, Italy, France, and Argentina.

The EoC stimulates people to adopt a behaviour based on a rationality that is not instrumental and utilitarian, but that incorporates reciprocity. It is a rationality "of communion" that establishes a new rapport between capital and work within the project, and whose mediation is no longer the task of the State alone.

The EoC makes use of the market as a means of a redistribution of income. In this way it is no longer simply a means to gain wealth, but it approaches the concept had by the Civil Economics. Thus the EoC contributes to the heated debate on the rapports between the State and the market, and on the role of the redistribution of income. It takes on a socio-political significance as it challenges neo-liberalism and statalism, and because it shows by its existence that economic activity can make room within itself to include other principles too, thereby contributing towards a rethinking of the redistribution, the market, and reciprocity.

EoC takes on an important role in a phase in which the welfare policy crisis is examined – it was the only policy that allowed us till now to promote a certain "equality". This is because The EoC goes beyond the noted dichotomy between the moments of the production of wealth and its distribution, which till now was solely the State's competency. This shows that economic rapports are not split from human rapports. Therefore the culture proposed by the EoC can provide interesting ideas towards a new understanding of the nature and limits of the company, the market, the State, and of their rapport with each other.

Angelo Di Cicco

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Four-year Degree in
Political Economics
*Università degli Studi
"G. d'Annunzio" di Chieti e Pescara*
19th July 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: **The Culture of Giving in economic behaviour**

Tutor: Prof. Giuseppe Mauro

The EoC is a reality by now present and visible inside of the company sphere. It would be a challenge to transmit it inside the economic sphere imbuing it with the culture of giving. In order to do so there is need to give rise to a Theory of Communion, which is capable of supporting the ideas of the many people involved in the activity. To achieve this, the basic concepts of economic behaviour such as work, production, technology, environment, property and poverty, consumption, savings and the market are seen from the viewpoint of the culture of giving, and models are elaborated that show the concreteness of reciprocity in economic events. Lastly, the Bruni-Smerilli model on the paradox of reciprocity is described. It is thus shown in the end that thanks to the action of people who favour gifting in the market, not only do they prosper but they also improve the condition of the economic system itself.

Sonia Gistici

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Four year Degree in
Economics and Commerce
Università degli Studi di Pisa
21st February 2005

Language:
Italian

Thesis: **The development of an "Economy of Communion": the case of the Lionello Entrepreneurial Business Park**

Tutor: Prof. Marco Giannini

The aim of the thesis was to analyse the evolution of enterprises in the last few decades and to introduce the EoC as a possible model. The last few decades were particularly characterised by two phenomena: 1) the transition from the well established Fordist model to the emerging post-Fordist one. 2) The growing importance of ethics in modern society. The world is changing at a faster pace than ever before and enterprises are faced with specific challenges. The EoC came into being in within this social and cultural context, and the EoC enterprises pose a challenge to the prevailing human praxis. The industrial business parks, among which the Lionello business park in Italy, give witness to the same.

Cristina Lochis



Gibby Tshinoka



Simone Miliozzi



Kelen Christina Leite



Angelo Di Cicco



Sonia Gistici





Claudia Herrero Martins

Claudia Herrero Martins

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Degree in
Administration Sciences
Universidade Estadual de Maringá
UEM Brasile
11th January 2005

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: Economia di Comunione come alternativa di gestione aziendale e sviluppo sociale

Tutor: Prof. Antonio Gomes de Assumpção

The main aim of this thesis was to study the EoC as an alternative model of company management. The EoC project was compared with other alternative initiatives namely the "Corporate Social Responsibility" and the "Solidal Economy" in order to determine its impact on the development of the enterprise, and on the social context. The EoC differs from the other two initiatives for the sharing of a part of the profits towards social ends, and for the change of mentality resulting from placing the "human person" at the centre of productive activity.

A case study was carried out on FEMAQ in Piracicaba, which is one of the first EoC enterprises in Brazil. The EoC turned out to be a "propeller" of the development of the enterprise. In fact the indicators reveal that the enterprise showed a continuous growth from the moment it adopted this alternative conception of management. Therefore the EoC contributed towards the development of the enterprise, and in which the entrepreneur fulfils himself not only and mainly via economic success but via the social good that he thus produces.

The EoC is a long-term alternative vision to the "wild consumerism", which could lessen "the choking" due to the social imbalances that prevent a large section of the population from access to consumption. The EoC tends towards a sustainable development and wider spread wellbeing. Thus it contributes to the happiness of people: not only that of the needy, but of all those who adopt this form of communion, which even if applied to the life of the enterprise, comes into being through the everyday behaviour of each individual.



Letícia Botti de Souza

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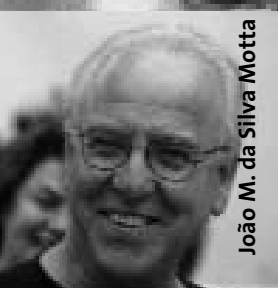
Degree in Tourism and Hotel
Management
Universidade Norte do Paraná
UNOPAR Brasile
11th November 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: Ospitalità e Spiritualità: il caso studio della "Mariapoli Ginetta", Vargem Grande Paulista – SP – Brasile

Tutor: Prof. Márcio Saviani

It is a research carried out on the "Mariapoli Ginetta" community, situated in Vargem Grande Paulista (Brazil). The "Mariapoli" (Cities of Mary) are a typical expression of the Focolare Movement, which are visited by many people each year. The aim of the research was to identify the kind of attraction and motivations that draw these visitors, with respect to the present society and the various models of modern tourism. The study highlights the great interest shown for the Economy of Communion project that came into being in this citadel, as well as for the concrete experiences of friendship, solidarity, and harmony that can be lived. The study reveals that the Mariapoli Ginetta could be a "model of hospitality", given that what the visitors take back with them are: the warm welcome, the "smiles", the love with no strings attached, and the sincere rapports among people that can be experienced in the citadel.



João M. da Silva Motta

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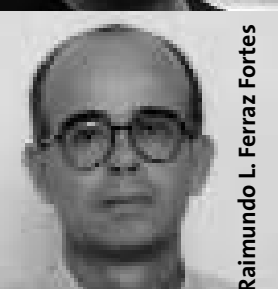
Second Level University Degree
Pontifícia Universidade Católica
de São Paulo - PUC - Brasile
10th May 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: Dalla cooperazione alla comunione. Scienza, movimenti sociali e processo civilizzante: studio sistemico del progetto EdC quale modello socioeconomico inclusivo

Tutor: Prof. Enio José da Costa Brito

Starting from the concept of "cooperation", the thesis aimed at proposing a methodology for a scientific analysis of the concept of "communion" as the propeller of a civilising process. Thus a case study was carried out on the EoC project to highlight the "principle of communion" which lies within it, and which draws inspiration from human and Christian values of unity, communion, and fraternity. Moreover, the analysis shows that thanks to the EoC, the building of micro-models of self-sustainable societies is now possible, which are alternatives to those of traditional economics.



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Second Level University Degree
Universidade Federal do Piauí
(Brasile)
26 January 2004

Language:
Portuguese

Thesis: The centrality of the human person in the organisation of the Economy of Communion enterprises

Tutor: Prof. José Machada Moita Neto

The aim of the research was to analyse the rapports between the owners of the EoC enterprises with all the company stakeholders, in order to pinpoint the organisational style. It emerged that the human person is at the centre of the EoC enterprises, since their owners consider their stakeholders as "persons". The kind of behaviour cultivated inside of the EoC enterprises gives prime importance to relationality, which is not a mere relation of exchange but a meeting of persons. The uniqueness of every person and the reciprocity of the relationship are respected. This relationality tends to go beyond the limits of the enterprise and reaches out to customers and suppliers, the needy and competitors. It seeks to influence national and international bodies towards the building of a solidal economy among peoples, based on the principles of communion and fraternity.

Brazil: EoC national congress and seminars

The EoC national congress was held at the Mariopoli Ginetta from the 26-29 May, with 512 participants from various parts of Brazil. Luigino Bruni and Alberto Ferrucci were also present.

Communion at work was highlighted as the aim of the EoC: "... among them there was no one in need ...". 65 Brazilian companies participated in the Expo.

The National Association for the Economy of Communion (ANPAC) was set up to represent and promote the EoC project. Armando Tortelli was elected as its president.

In those days, Luigino Bruni held conferences at the University of San Carlos, the Catholic University of San Paulo, and the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, in which he presented his new book in Portuguese entitled "EoC - Communion and new words in economics". The book is edited by Cidade Nova.

The EoC proposal was welcomed as a big sign of hope for Brazil. The comments of the participants, among whom were top ranking personalities from national political parties, showed in many ways that the EoC is a new culture that is needed in Brazil today.



Leo Andringa

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EoC schools in Italy.

The third lesson of the Mediterranean School was held on 3 June. On 6 June, the programme of eleven lessons of the North Italian School came to a conclusion. The Italian EoC School will re-open at Loppiano on 2 December 2005, with video link-up with various Italian cities.

EoC in Germany

A lesson of the EoC School in Germany was held from 11-12 July in the citadel of Ottmaring, near Augsburg. Luca Crivelli and Leo Andringa were present. Thirty entrepreneurs from Munich, Heidelberg, Solingen, and Lipsia attended the lesson.

Karl Schock, the representative of the Christian Directors Congress attended the following lesson from 1-2 October. He proposed that the EoC be proposed at the congress of Christian directors in 2007

EoC in Portugal

On the 24 July 2005, Benedetto Gui held a conference at the Catholic University of Lisbon. He was invited by Professor Ernâni Lopes, the Director of the Institute of European Studies, with whom Filipe Coelho collaborates. Gui's discourse on relational goods was much appreciated even by the mass media. An interview was given to the Expresso, the Portuguese weekly with the widest circulation.

The following day in the citadel Arcoiris, Filipe Coelho presented the EoC, and Benedetto Gui presented a theme entitled "Gratuity in the life of enterprises". Professor Manuela Silva of the National Commission for Justice and Peace saw a reason for hope in the EoC with reference to the local situation, towards the development of a vision of enterprise as a social good. The Portuguese TV broadcasted this dialogue, as well as the successive visit of the citadel and the nascent EoC business park, on the national network, in a programme called "Ecclesia".



Dialogue with Indian Universities

From the 22-20 July 2005, Leo Andringa presented the EoC project at various meetings held in the universities of Mumbai and Coimbatore. These meeting were organised in the context of a cultural exchange that began since years with Indian economic scholars.



USA: EoC Congress

It was held at the Mariapoli Luminosa on the 17 and 19 August. 45 entrepreneurs from the USA and Canada were present (20% attended the first meeting), among whom there were 3 Muslims. Lorna Gold presented the international reality of the EoC and its developments. The beauty of North America's vocation for economics came to light. A young graduate in international finance affirmed that the meeting had proved decisive in the making of his life choices. Others felt the call to delve into their choice of communion and evangelical poverty as a style of life, to the benefit of many.

The EoC at the Clinton Global Initiative

From the 15-17 September, Alberto Ferrucci participated at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York, in the capacity of President of the New Humanity NGO. Heads of States, politicians, economists, Nobel laureates, representatives from industry, philanthropy and finance, and international institutes came together to discuss on poverty and development, dialogue among religions, governability and environmental issues, with a commitment towards concrete steps on these themes. New Humanity presented the development project in the health sector, and of the formation in Kinshasa, RDC, which was aimed at the prevention of infant blindness, AIDS, malaria, etc, and the launching of small economic activities. The project that is followed up by the Action for a United World (AMU) and the Congolese Association of the Economy of Communion is also being financed by the profits from The EoC since some years.

The moments of dialogue provided the possibility to explain the specificity of the EoC. To guarantee their success, the establishing of a fraternal rapport with the local community must be placed before development projects.

EoC School for South East Europe

The second EoC School for South East Europe was held at the Mariapoli Faro, near Zagabria, from 23-25 September. Luca Crivelli was present at this school. 70 entrepreneurs from Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia participated in the same. Themes on the "Will of God in Economics" and the "three forms of reciprocity: contract, genuine reciprocity, and communion-reciprocity" were developed. These themes were particularly felt in the face of the diffusion of the submerged economy, and the risk that many resign themselves to a culture of illegality. After a lively dialogue, the participants visited the small firms of the citadel, the kindergarten, the stockings manufacturer, etc.



Dialogue with the Readers



I think it is worthwhile to share a letter sent by Armando Tortelli, the president of the ANPEC association launched in Brazil by entrepreneurs and supporters of the EoC project from all over this big country, to the associates in which the aims of the association are explained.

Maria Cohelo, Curitiba

Dear Associate,

In every human activity, persons and organizations seek to walk together to attain personal and collective goals. Society is organized in this manner. The Non Governmental Organisations, trade unions, associations, political parties, and many other group initiatives were formed to achieve these aims. They gear themselves towards the accomplishment of the aims which they came into being, through the strength of the collectivity.

The launching of the EoC in Brazil in 1991 answered to the expectations of many Brazilians. Entrepreneurs, students, workers, researchers, people who are close to us and are experiencing material difficulties, and many others from the most varied of activities, adopted the economy of Communion as a way of life, which little by little is spreading among others. After nearly fourteen years, we too have understood that the Economy of Communion needs an organ that represents it in civil society, and at the same time function as a propeller of communion among those who work in the company, and with the other companies in various social sectors.

With this aim in mind, The ANPEC – National Association for an Economy of Communion – was formed in May 2005, to represent the interests of the persons and companies linked with the EoC project in Brazil.

We are still in the initial phases, but we believe that by putting into practise the aims of the ANPEC, we will become instruments of the diffusion and development of the Economy of Communion project in our country. On behalf of the ANPEC board of directors, I remind each of the associates to always remember that the Economy of Communion has its origins in God. The onus is on us to be protagonists all together of this revolutionary initiative, capable to generate a new culture in our economic activities.

We hope to show the world that this new economic practise, in which the person is placed at the centre of human activity, is truly possible. In this way we will be consistent with the nature of the ANPEC.

We count on every associate, as well as on all those who wish to adhere to this important and courageous project. The world needs such silent revolutions.

Armando Tortelli

Vargem Grande Paulista, September 21st, 2005

Alberto Ferrucci

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I would like to share some reflections and suggestions that ensued in a meeting with Luiz Colella of the EoC in San Paolo, during my visit for work to Brazil.

1. The good part of profits of the EoC companies that were ordained to spread the culture of giving, were used in the past to improve the structures of the citadel. We feel that it's necessary now to focus more on the formation of persons interested in participating in the EoC. For example, an international "exchange" programme could be launched to enable young people to undertake internship programmes at EoC companies that are willing to receive them for, lets say, a period of three months. A part of the profits could be used for expenses of travel and lodging at EoC companies that are willing to contribute in some way towards the expenses. We think that in this way we will bring about a greater diffusion of the culture of giving than by the construction of new structures.

2. A part of the profits could also be used to encourage new activities, by financing the launching of small firms that are willing to submit an investment plan to a voluntary group of experts. Amongst the new potential entrepreneurs, we could privilege the needy who are helped, in accordance with the well-known cliché phrase "If you give a man a fish he will eat for a day, but if you teach a man to fish he will eat for the rest of his life".

3. It is a big challenge to succeed in making my company feel connected with the needy, and to be conscious of a fraternity with them. I spoke about this with Luiz in Brasile, where we were very close to the needy in the shanty towns, and we concluded that there need to be more direct rapports between the needy and the company so that fraternity becomes meaningful. Trips could be organized to enable entrepreneurs and workers to meet the needy, letters could be exchanged, which could include photographs as in the case with adoptions at a distance.

4. The international EoC centre issues an annual report on the use of the profits, which carries figures that are not accompanied with an annual statement in which the progress of various projects in the world are described. This report needs to be improved, in order to render it into a model of the EoC spirit that can be proposed to all.

Thus to recapitulate the four point: a distribution of the profits that is more focused on encouraging the culture of giving, and the emergence of future entrepreneurs; the assistance for launching new productive companies, especially amongst the needy; an increase in authentic fraternity between the companies and the needy; and finally an annual statement that reflects the EoC spirit. I realize that it is easier to suggest than to accomplish, and for this very reason I do not only propose myself as a suggestion maker but offer my availability to contribute towards bringing it about.



John Mundel U.S.A.

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Thanks for all these suggestions, which also reflect the thoughts of other EoC entrepreneurs. This Newsletter, which unfortunately is not always translated also into English, is an attempt to reply at least to the last idea, even if much more could be done. We will definitely avail of your willing support to accomplish!

X-NOVO

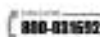
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L'UOMO E I RAPPORTI INTERPERSONALI AL CENTRO DELL'IMPRESA

*Attenzione alle esigenze,
alla salute allo svago
delle persone anziane
e malate*

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- * Residenze protette per anziani
- * Case di cura specializzate in salute mentale
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*L'attività lavorativa come
mezzo propedeutico
per la socializzazione,
la riabilitazione,
la crescita personale*

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- * Lavorazioni varie per conto terzi
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