



**IX Workshop**  
**sull'impresa sociale**  
**L'innovazione**  
**dell'imprenditore sociale**  
 15-16 settembre 2011  
 Centro Congressi  
 Riva del Garda (Tn)

**IX Workshop on social enterprise**  
**Innovation and the social entrepreneur**

The Workshop on social enterprise is an annual event extended to a large audience designed to promote the interaction and exchange of innovative practices within and between the scientific community and practitioners (operators and managers of social enterprises, of non-profit organizations, of public and private institutions). The workshop is organized by Iris Network, the Italian national network of research institutes on social enterprise, and is held every year in September in Riva del Garda, Trentino, Italy.

The social entrepreneur – his role, his competences, his values and the cultures that inspire his job – is the spotlight of this year's edition. Not just concerning the traditional contexts – the non-profit organizations and the social services – where this role has progressively formed, but in new environments and with different approaches. There are many examples, thanks to international journalism: the reportage of the famous Italian journalist Federico Rampini dedicated to Stephen Goldsmith, a social entrepreneur that reformed New York's administration with social innovation initiatives; Muhammad Yunus's best sellers translated all over the world; the pop collaborative economy described in *Wired* by the economist Loretta Napoleoni; the *Financial Times* articles about the social business schools promoted by important Universities and, last but not least, the emphasis in the media on the David Cameron's Big Society that promotes a more widespread social entrepreneurship. These are some examples of a common tendency: the creation of "social" benefits is an element that marks the entrepreneurial act at large.

It's an important challenge for those who made a career and life choice of social entrepreneurship in unsuspected times, linking it to a particular business model. From one point of view it could represent an epochal opportunity to exploit years of experience in the field, contributing to enrich a management culture that until now was monopolized by the role of the entrepreneur that maximizes his own interest at the expense of important stakeholders (workers, local communities, other business patterns) and assets (environment, knowledge, cohesion). From a different point of view there could be the risk of colonization by those who, for opportunistic reasons, see in the goods produced and exchanged in social networks a new frontier in which to reproduce, basically unaltered, the dominant economic logic.

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The 9th edition of the social enterprise Workshop takes up the challenge after a deep study of the innovations of management, of product and in networks, shifting the focus to the people who operate as entrepreneurs in social organizations. Do operators improvise managers? Or does their experience outline a new way to manage? In this area as well there are a lot of changes. Managers of social enterprises grow up and diversify, change career paths, profiles professional levels. We are witnessing an important generational change, new forms of selection, evaluation and remuneration are introduced. The structure of the Workshop, as in past years, will be focused on the presentation and on the discussion of best practices. We are looking for initiatives that promote the innovation of the social entrepreneur either in an individual or collective form. On the one hand, considering empowerment actions of this figure – training, accompaniment, selection, management replacement, gender politics, sharing of the competences. On the other hand, collecting emblematic stories about social entrepreneurs – their power of innovation, highlighting creative abilities, leadership abilities and, last but not least, managerial and technical skills. How did you start up a social enterprise when no one believed in it? How did you find new responses to unmet needs? How did you motivate your collaborators at critical moments? How did you create unusual alliances and agreements? The examples are not few and will be analyzed and compared during the workshop. We would like open up to new generations of social entrepreneurs, providing spaces and opportunities for those who want to engage in this role, accomplishing new startups and looking to international initiatives.

To suggest a best practice to present at the Workshop please send an e-mail to [workshop@irisnetwork.it](mailto:workshop@irisnetwork.it). Use no more than 150 words to relate your innovation. The IRIS Network management committee will evaluate your suggestion and if it is accepted, we will contact you to go over and construct the presentation together. Priority will be given to early submissions and those sent in by June 30 2011.

Follow the development of the Workshop at [www.irisnetwork.it](http://www.irisnetwork.it). You may contribute by suggesting content and investigating your competences as a social entrepreneur.