



makesense

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1: Spring 2021

In this our first issue ...

- The Make Sense Project Overview
- Project Partners
- In Focus with Piero Lacomoni,
President, Fondazione MONNALISA



Welcome to the Make Sense Project ...

... **Supporting Teachers to promote social entrepreneurship.**

The Make Sense Project will support teachers to promote social entrepreneurship by providing them with the tools and educational methodologies based on the integration of two models:

- **Entrecomp** (European Framework for Entrepreneurship Competence)
- **Competitive Arena** (Market Innovation and Development model that aims to increase entrepreneurship, to be transferred to the school context)

The main goal is to develop **5 Key Skills** for social entrepreneurship, identified through a comparative analysis of the Entrecomp and Competitive Arena models:



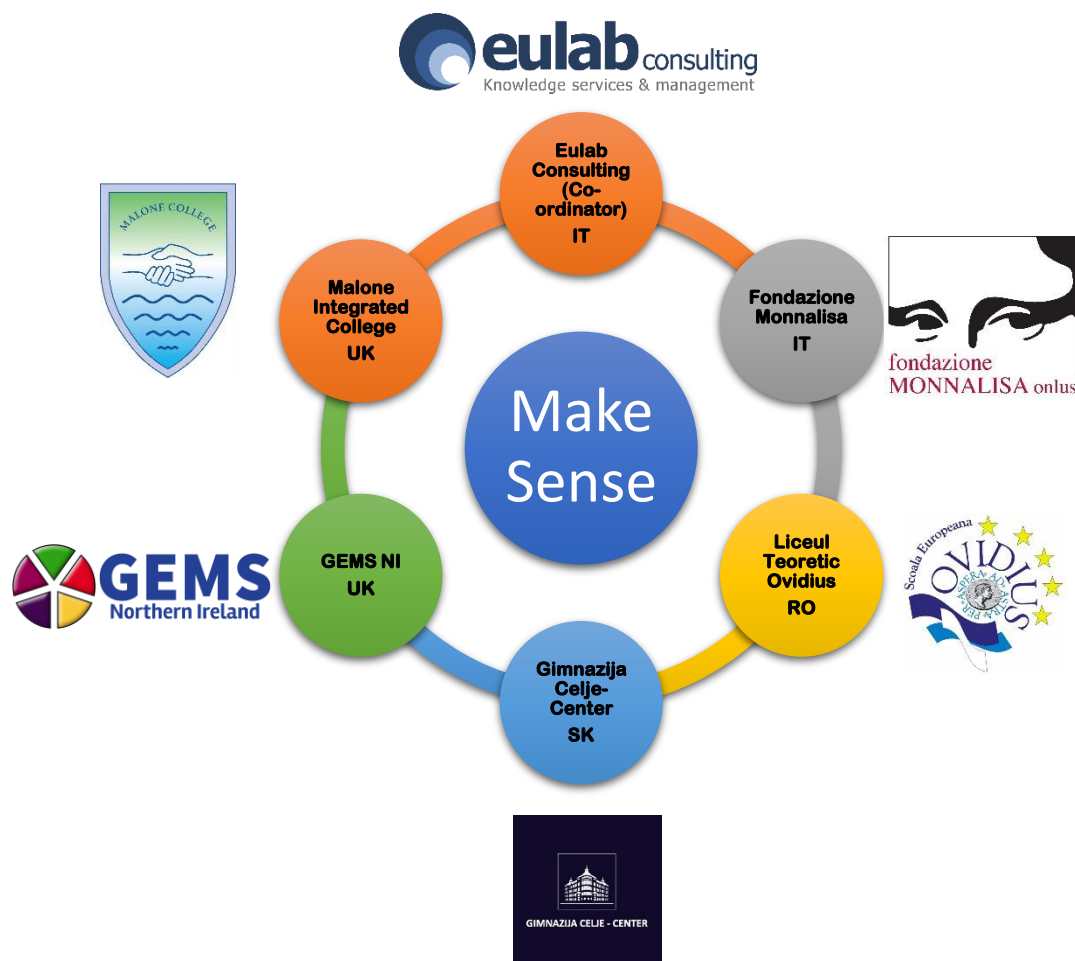
... **Creating and testing social entrepreneurship courses at school**

Key Project Activities

- In each partner country one high school will create and test social entrepreneurship courses at school; aimed to develop key competences both for teachers and students, designed to boost employability and civic participation
- 20 Students in each school will test a Social Entrepreneurship Path
- A minimum of 5 teachers in each school will participate in a blended training workshop (in class and online) to support the students and ensure a coherent project approach

Make Sense Project Partners

The Make Sense project partnership brings together organisations/institutions that have the shared commitment, knowledge, skills, experience and complimentary expertise that will drive the project and ensure it delivers high quality results.



Events and meetings

We are currently experiencing a Global Covid-19 Pandemic and living with travel restrictions and other measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

We hope that these restrictions alleviate during 2021 and our Make Sense partnership is able to meet and host multiplier events which are face-to-face.

We note that decisions on travel and face-to-face meetings will be based on the guidance available to partners at the time



In Focus with Piero Lacomoni, President, Fondazione MONNALISA

An interview with Susan Russam, GEMS NI



Fondazione Monnalisa was established in 2006 can you tell us about the background to setting up the foundation and its mission and objectives?

On my entrepreneurial paths since the beginning, I deeply trusted on the importance of welfare of my employees, in fact Monnalisa company has been many times awarded for its welfare and CSR policy; my entrepreneurial attitude expresses itself when I think a company as an open system to generate wealth and richness to other.

In 2006 with my family we decided to open the Fondazione Monnalisa for implementing specific project targeted on young generation education, specifically, the first decade on Fondazione Monnalisa all main activities were focused on the safe road policy education, so as to prevent car, scooter, bikes accident. In 2011 we built up a big Park, where more than 11.000 young people were trained on car safety education. Many primary and secondary schools were involved in project for bringing students to the Park, in indoor classes and outdoor driver testing.

These last 3 years, with my staff, managed by Mrs. Lucia, we decided to strengthen our strategy on supporting education for young people, in different areas as: Music, Artistic Craftsmanship, Social Entrepreneurial Skills. I have been worked with Mrs. Lucia since 25 years, as, together we founded up an association of 60 kids wearing SME, Consortium Bimbo Italia (www.bimbo.net) whose main goal was to promote and selling products together with all the member companies in international markets. Our "mantra" was: Alone we go faster but together we go further.

Now, every day, in Fondazione Monnalisa, we try to bring this further and visionary mood in our daily job routine, extended in a social ethic mission for Next Generation People Welfare.

The topics that I deal with Journalist and press with the professors and students of the Arezzo ethic academy, are inspired by the experience of my business initiatives since the birth of 53 years ago of experience. I started all alone in 1968 and registered as number 52279 of the Tuscan companies in the Arezzo chamber of commerce. At the beginning, Monnalisa was an individual company, now it employs 357 people, and it is listed on the Italian Stock Exchange since 12 July 2018. I have always manufactured kids fashion for children aged 3 months to 13 years, high-end, high added value in fashion in a total look from hat to footwear.

Over the years, the Tuscan region, the Province of Arezzo, the Italian and European Industrial and Artisan Associations have awarded the best business experiences and I acquired many awards that I have always shared with all my employees. Only To mention one, University of Siena in 2004, gave me an important international special award for having collaborated with 82 sub-suppliers and it was the international physicist Josph Stiglita who rewarded me in front of a big international audience.

Monnalisa Kids Clothing is a global brand, and you have extensive knowledge and experience in the children's apparel industry such as trends, best practices, sales insights and fashion cycles, how have you used this knowledge and experience to support the development of social entrepreneurial skills in young people?

I have always tried to forecast the markets demand, also attending at many trade fairs all around Europe, China, the Middle East, Japan, USA, Australia for over 20 years. In fact, I also led a consortium Bimbo Italia www.bimbo.net, as I mentioned before, where over 60 Italian companies were members, they produced clothing, accessories, maternity wear and children's bedrooms. I have also established a good relationship with these companies, purchasing their products, with the Monnalisa brand, which today has a value of more than 50 million euros.

Just a few words in my experience, I graduated as a chemical expert in 1964 and got a master's degree at the Bocconi and University of Padua, to learn about the various methods of sale. I started as a manager in a women's clothing company where I was able to learn how to work with sewing machines for the construction of a woman's suit. For this reason, I decided to get Monnalisa work from 1968 to today, with laboratories "in facon" that is subcontract and to devote myself more and more personally to international markets.

My particular attention has always been paid to the changes trending in the requests of mothers who were more avant-garde in fashion, trying always to be a pioneer in understanding market changing, before they also took place in the international luxury markets including: Gucci, Prada, Cucinelli, Burberry, etc

All these famous companies, have adult men's and women's clothing as their first market, no one produces for children as a core business, but they treat it under license while my Monnalisa company has occupied the market as a core business for over 53 years ago, and that's our value and unique proposition.

We often hear those entrepreneurs like Richard Branson are the mavericks that get their drive, ambition, creativity and mindset from within or perhaps, just get lucky – does this mean that building entrepreneurial skills requires a particular set of attributes to start with and that an entrepreneurial pathway is not for everyone?

Being an entrepreneur is doing the most beautiful job in the world. I don't think that entrepreneurs are born as entrepreneurs, but I believe that one becomes for the will to do something great, as because inside there is a special strength to listen at. My father was a craftsman who produced small steel tools, I wanted to imitate him, but he never wanted me to work with him, because he already had a partner, and the right companies are those in odd numbers, but 3 are too many, he always used to tell me Over the time, I have understood that being an entrepreneur means putting your ideas into practice with all your strength and the means you have the availability to. In my life, I had to invent the means, as I did not get them from the banks, who wanted continuous guarantees, or from the family. I have always financed myself thanks to my suppliers and trying to minimize the production time and credit time from my customers.

I love my job, it is the most beautiful job in the world, I grew up calm and I Feel like a boat captain, where the entire crew trusts me as for my foresight and fairness. In 53 years of entrepreneurial activity, I never have fired, but I always tried to find the right job according to each employee attitude.

I have hired myself all the staff, according to the first 150 collaborators, and I can say that I have not made big mistakes! I always looked for more talents and talents that people have, I did not look for specific skills, but the intelligence to adapt to the changing issues that all the companies have to face each day. They tell me that I bring good luck, but I believe that I am characteristically positive and from every bad event, I try to draw a positive side, changing the course of negativity. Being self-entrepreneurs is not easy and I know that time is the plus value, infact everything can be bought except the time that passes away.

I believe that becoming an entrepreneur is possible for everyone, but we must be good observer on what is happening around us, building up new issues according to our vision. We must have a real and clear vision of where we want to get at, it's important not wasting time and when you are in a critic difficult moment, face them with a serene and relax spirit.

Tell us about the Arezzo Ethic Academy and how it supports young people as future entrepreneurs – and what do you see as the key steps in helping a young adult to develop their pathway from a student to a social entrepreneur?

Arezzo Ethic Academy opened its school calendar in October 2019, involving 19 young students aged 20 to 24 years old that wanted to be trained as future social entrepreneurs. This was my dream! Helping, transmitting my Energy to young generation that live in a digital technological world but are thirsty of true and genuine entrepreneurial storytelling. I was happy, since the first steps, to be the promoter and involving in this project also

other good entrepreneurs of my Tuscan region, belonging to different areas except fashion, such as: jewellery, food, web marketing, organic healthy products.

Our Arezzo Ethic Academy students are trained in specific educational topics as: green marketing, ethic finance, sustainability in strategic management, ethic project management, soft skills, Environmental law, Green Specific Certification and SA 8000, business English. At the end of their educational course they are welcomed in different companies, partners of Arezzo Ethic Academy, as Internship trainers.

Now I'm involved in organizing our third Arezzo Ethic Academy year, and I'm very proud in getting so important sign of interest to attending at, from our Arezzo young generation. Now Fondazione Monnalisa has to make a selection of all the application we are receiving all days.

Fondazione Monnalisa is a partner in the Erasmus+ Make Sense Project – what were the key reasons you decided to get involved?

During our long experience with Bimbo Italia Consortium, we attended different European Calls, involving our entrepreneurs, member of the Consortium, to attend at specific activities such as: Incoming Buyer Events, Mission in specific Markets. 10 years ago, we also were granted on an Ethic Match Program with Spain, Portugal, India, Pakistan, where we, as Europeans, had to trainee the Indian and Pakistani entrepreneurs in good ethic policy as: No kids job Exploitation, Safety Procedure in Manufacturing. It was a relevant good experience for Mrs Lucia and myself, that we could share good practice with different countries.

On Make Sense Project, Fondazione Monnalisa was in contact with the leading partner: Eulab, to whom we told about our Arezzo Ethic Academy project, together we suddenly understood the good mutual vision we had in.

Mrs Lucia and myself we wanted sharing our experience with other European partners, involved in social entrepreneurial education, also in the public system to make a good contamination of good practice, and we are so excited to welcome all the Make Sense Partner in Arezzo, my home, for the last big event, together with our Next generation Social Entrepreneur, coming from Northern Ireland, Romania, and Slovenia. I deeply believe this is the best way to build a new European entrepreneurial mindset, starting from our young community!

The world is dealing with the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – we know that young people have been hit harder in terms of job losses and access to employment. Do you see social entrepreneurship as a career pathway for young people which can support employment and create social value?

The two years of Covid pandemic have brought great changes, but I do not consider the time spent at home or in the company as negative, I just not travelled around the world, as I used to!

Much time for thinking but never been frightened or scared about, what is happening, can actually give new life, new ideas, new horizons.

Last October 2020 I spent 27 days in Hospital Intensive care due to covid 19, I never have been frightened, I met so many people who loved me, not knowing me, just because they are professionally devoted to others: doctors, nurses, auxiliaries. Thank God! I appreciated taking my time for reflecting without losing hope.

For 2 years long Arezzo Ethic Academy project has demonstrated the great effort we are making towards a more open world targeted on young people, sustainability will help us to change our way of thinking and young people will be protagonists of great future opportunities.

Respect for our Earth is a concept that was born and deeply developed during the pandemic period, we are getting the more and more respectful in our daily choices, for a better future. I am confident that we will still be able to progress, despite the big multinationals companies willing that want to spread resources only for a few people, without distributing to many others.

We will understand that we all be well and wealthy when all, in our earth, we are well, even those who are coming out from very poor war countries.

And finally ... If you were starting to develop your business today what 3 pieces of advice would you give your younger self?

I never wanted to think of going back to time, because I lived my life well and I'm happy to be almost 80 years old and willing to give young people the space they deserve.

Hypothetically 40 years ahead of me, I would like to do these 3 things :

- Make the children happiest and happiest by making for them “things” that make feel them better
- I would like to learn to be more ethical conscious my heritage have to be better distributed for the benefit of all the community
- To Trust the others, building a team of young people and young mind that love their neighbour as themselves (not in the Catholic sense) and look for beauty in every step so as reliving a new Renaissance Spirit for the world to come: Only beauty will save us!

Many thanks Susan for this opportunity of storytelling my entrepreneurial life, and I'm very happy to work with you and your staff!



Update on progress

Our Kick-off meeting was held online on 22nd and 23rd February 2021 and whilst seeing each other on screen instead of a face-to-face meeting, was of course not as positive, it was very productive, and we made excellent progress in developing the project workplan and agreeing our schedule of tasks and activities in relation to Intellectual Output one.

.... Methodology training workshop

We held our training workshop on 25th March 2021 to support partners understanding of the **Entrecomp** and **Competitive Arena** Models. We are working on Intellectual Output one the **Methodology Toolkit**. IO1 is led by Eulab Consulting. In summary tasks include:

- 5 Teachers from each school (20 in total) will participate in training workshops in their countries on the Competitive Arenas Model

- Eulab Consulting will lead the design of a Toolkit containing:
- Reading materials on action research (AR) and Morphological Analysis (MA) methods
- A training module on the 2 methods and Competitive Arenas adapted for schools
- Tools and exercises on the methods adapted for use in schools
- Eulab Consulting will train 1/2 trainers from each school
- Each partner school will train at least 5 teachers
- On completion, at least 20 teachers/trainers will be proficient in the Toolkit

Next steps

In July 2021 Intellectual Output 2 **Evaluation Toolkit** will begin. Liceul Teoretic Ovidius will lead this IO. An update on progress/developments will be provided in Issue 2 (Summer 2021) of this Newsletter.

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