**OUR PROFILE**

SOLCO BRESCIA is a consortium of social cooperatives established in 1983 with the aim to promote and strengthen the local cooperation that at that time was innovating the Italian cooperative model towards the concept of solidarity (external mutualism).

Nowadays SOLCO Brescia has 99 members, all social cooperatives divided, according to the law, in type A (working in the field of social services) and type B (aimed at the labour insertion of socially disadvantaged people). Together they have turnover of more than 65.000.000 Euros and employee around 3.600 people, representing an important actor of local economy.

The consortium has the following aims for the benefit of its members:

* to be a place of political debate
* to be a strategic agency for the development
* to provide services to support their entrepreneurial action.

The consortium provides its members with the following services:

* Communication and information (financial opportunities – bids – legislation);
* General contractor (participation to public bid for services):
* Project development, management and reporting;
* Consulting services in areas such as ICT development, accounting, finance, human resources management, quality management, social reporting;
* Support to consultation processes for public social policies design.

SOLCO Brescia is also a regionally accredited training and work agency entitled to offer services, counselling and publicly funded training to people looking for employment, both disadvantaged or not. Within this role, it delivers its services also to citizens and private firms.

SOLCO Brescia has been one of the founders and now is member of the following social enterprises:

* CGM Finance, national consortium dedicated to financing Italian cooperatives. Created in 1998, its mission is to collect funds, cover the credit risk, train and consult enterprises on credit solutions. It has 405 members located throughout the country, a turnover of more than 680.000 € and loans for 14.723.495.
* IBS, Immobiliare Sociale Bresciana, local building society with the aim of funding estate development for social purposes.
* Koinòn, local consortium created with the aim of improving the quality of human capital and management processes of cooperatives by designing, delivering and financing high quality training activities. It has 12 members and a turnover of around 700.000 €.

Solco Brescia has a networking nature, it is itself a network of enterprises and has promoted the development of other networks, both at local and national level, that are represented also in other countries and at the EU level.

Thank to this aspect, SOLCO Brescia can easily promote the mainstreaming of ideas, innovations and tools in the social (and non social) cooperative sector at different levels. Besides, acting as general contractor and buyer for its members, the consortium operates at the intersection of the profit, no profit (and public) sectors allowing the exchange of best practices and the mutual learning. These features, combined with a strong administrative structure and a multi professional team (including ICT, communication, entrepreneurship and project management competencies) allow SOLCO Brescia to be the lead partner in the project.

The consortium maintains, both for the content of entrepreneurial activities to its role in local politics, relations with institutions and social and economic actors of their reference area. In the 30 years of its history, SOLCO Brescia has build a strong experience in the implementation and reporting of social projects supported by European, national and regional funds, also on behalf of its cooperatives.

The most significant projects carried out from 1996 to 2000 were 13, for a total amount of 2.309.742 Liras, from 2000 to date it has carried out 29 projects for a total amount of 1.395.440 €. Among the others:

* Research project on the quality of production processes in Brescia cooperatives;
* CO.P.IN, on innovation in social cooperatives;
* Concerto and THE WORLD-AT-WORK, on policies and action for the employment of socially disadvantaged people;
* Saturno, supporting the Start-Up of new social enterprises;
* Fuori Classe, on policies and actions for youth.

Besides:

* from 2010 to 2012 it was partner of the University of Verona in projects for research and innovation in the field of immigrants integration;
* from 2010 to 2012 it was a sub contractor of Province of Brescia, lead partner of ISEDE-NET project, financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the “European Community Programme for Transnational Cooperation SEE - South East Europe 2007 – 2013”. The project, with a budget 2.426.790 Euro and 12 partners (from Austria, Bulgary, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Ucraine), was aimed at: producing a research on the state of social economy in each partner country, carry on feasibility studies on new market sectors and new financial instruments and set up an European portal for delivering information and services for social enterprises;
* has supported a local authority in the presentation of a project under the sub - program Creator (site: http://www.creator7.eu/), locally promoted by the Province of Brescia. The project - called "Silhouette. Using novel communication and information technologies for the support of elderly's active participation in the information society ", has been approved and from 2010 to 2013 SOLCO Brescia has provided technical assistance (partnership and project management, reporting) to the local authority.

Since 2012 it has been promoting among its cooperatives the “Youth in Action” Programme; it has recently realized an Action 1.1 “Youth Exchanges” project, and presented an Action 5.1 “Meetings of young people

and those responsible for youth policy” together with a group of local non profit organisations and public authorities.

In 2013, together with the social cooperative Tempo Libero, Solco Brescia has presented two LDV projects:

1. “Lion” (youth mobility);
2. “Way to learn to work” (multilateral partnerships).

The second has recently been approved for financing: from September ’13 for two years, the consortium will take part in a research and best practices exchange on Vocational training and employment services for young adults, involving organizations from: Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Romania, Spain, The Netherlands and the UK (Scotland).

The following table shows the main data about SOLCO Brescia:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **YEAR OF FOUNDATION** | **PLACE** | **MEMBERS** | **EMPLOYEES** | **EXPERTS AND CONSULTANT** | **TURN-OVER** |
| 1983 | Province of Brescia  (Italy, Region Lombardia) | 100 (96 cooperatives + 4 local consortia) | 27 | 20 | € 5.551.948 |

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