PRESS RELEASE

Successful conclusion to the 2015 European Summer School on Social Economy promoted by the Department of Economics of the University of Bologna in collaboration with AICCON (Italian Association for the promotion of the Culture of Co-operation and Non-profit)

At the beginning of July, 24 young researchers, students and practitioners from all over the world converged on an Italian small village, Bertinoro, for the 4th European Summer School on Social Economy (ESSE). The theme of the 2015 edition was “Personalisation and Social Entrepreneurship”, trying to connect innovative welfare policies/programs/initiatives and the role and functions of social enterprises (or innovative non-profit organisations).

About 10 lectures have covered all the aspects of the topic: from the analysis of the evolution of welfare state models in Europe, to the definition and practices of personalisation and co-production of social services; from the paradigm and ecosystem of social entrepreneurship to social innovation; from the measurement of social impact to the use of design thinking tools to develop social innovation initiatives.

Professor Dennis R. Young (Georgia State University) – one of the main experts on management of non-profit organisations – was committed to place the concept of personalisation into the existing theory and practice of Social Entrepreneurship. User was the key word. How the type of financing of social enterprises and its legal form influence users and how the characteristics of a social entrepreneur respond to the users. Furthermore, the economist Stefano Zamagni (University of Bologna) showed the relationship between social impact and well-being, analysing how social enterprises and non-profit organisations contribute to the quality of life. The case study of the English charity In Control, presented by Martin Routledge, was important to understand how the theory comes into practice and the Anglo-Saxon’s welfare model. Finally, the design lab on social innovation, organised in collaboration with the European research project SIMPACT (www.simpact-project.eu), gives to the participants the tools to design a social innovation initiative.

A key element of the Summer School was the visit to two Italian social enterprises: the social co-operative Paolo Babini, working on social services targeting mainly children and minors; and the social co-operative Ecoliving, and in particular the social project L’Apebianca, a sharing place where people can meet and buy ethical and sustainable goods and services.

Moreover, the ESSE gave to participants the opportunity to present their research projects or business ideas. During the dedicated sessions were presented 15 projects from Europe, but also from Asia and America.

Thanks to the residential approach, the variety of the participants and the presence of speakers coming from different universities, Italian and international, the 4th edition of the ESSE has been considered an intensive experience of exchange, debating and personal satisfaction.
“I came back from Bertinoro fully satisfied, with new ideas and concepts which will be useful for future research projects. In addition, the summer school has enriched me from a human point of view: I met some lovely people, teachers, staff, researchers with whom I will continue to meet and exchange experiences and ideas.” said Stefania Turri, researcher at Euricse (http://www.euricse.eu/).

“Being open minded and persistent, supported by people of good will, brought me this great experience. I hope many others will recognise this opportunity and share their experience” affirmed Dina Rakin, researcher at the European Movement in Serbia (http://www.emins.org/emins_english/content/index.html).

The ESSE was realised in partnership with the Department of Architecture of the University of Bologna, EMES (European Research Network), EURICSE (European Research Institute on Cooperatives and Social Enterprises) and SECS IRT (Social Economy and Civil Society Integrated Research Team) of the University of Bologna.

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