



# B-WISE

Skills for the future : WISEs ready!

## WISEs Innovation

**Let's tell a typical italian scenario**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# PHASE 1 – The beginning

'80-'90



## WHAT HAPPENS

- In the '80 there was an association active in the hospitality of drug addicts.
- At the beginning of the '90, from this association a **cooperative** of personal services was born, which managed a residential community and other services.
- A few years later, in order to give an outlet for workers to the guests, business activities were undertaken: a cleaning service, the maintenance of green areas, the separate collection of waste (in the early years a dozen employees, 4 disadvantaged people).
- The association continues to ensure the collaboration of volunteers who are active both in accompanying the people inserted, and providing high professional skills. Some of them gradually become members of the WISE's board of directors.



## WHAT KIND OF INNOVATION?

- To perceive the importance of personal and economic autonomy in social reintegration paths
- consequently to develop entrepreneurial activities to support people
- To Experiment with an innovative form of integration between professional skills and volunteer work, which will continue in subsequent years.
- To Experiment with different forms of governance (multistakeholder) that help to take into account different needs (work, integration, local development, etc.).



# PHASE 2 – The consolidation

**Early 2000**



## WHAT HAPPENS

- After a few years in which the economic activities were conducted in an approximate way, with some cases of unhappy customers, the activities are professionalized and consolidated (40 employees, 15 disadvantaged)
- The WISE begins to employ also disadvantaged people with other forms of disadvantage (prisoners, people with mental distress, people with disabilities)
- The Municipality entrusts some important services (maintenance of green areas and cleaning of public buildings) to give work to disadvantaged people of the territory (90 employed, 40 disadvantaged)
- The WISE succeeds in accumulating significant profits = during 15 years of activity - 1.5 million Euros.



## WHICH KIND OF INNOVATION?

- To demonstrate the concrete possibility of carrying out business activities even with workers that other companies cannot employ
- To involve the institutions in the challenge of work integration, changing public priorities.
- To experiment with economic mechanisms of capitalization linked to the nonprofit nature (they capitalize "because they are nonprofit", not "in spite of being nonprofit").



# PHASE 3 – The CRISIS

2010 - 2011





# WHAT HAPPENS

- 120 workers, 50 disadvantaged (different forms of disadvantage)
- Revenues = 50% private companies, 50% public bodies (50% in ordinary orders obtained in the market of contracts, 50% agreed)
- 1.5 million euros in shareholders' equity
- Significant investments in vehicles for waste collection and environmental services
- The first phase of the crisis in 2008 did not have significant negative consequences



## THE CRISIS COMES - 2011

- In 2011, some public authorities stopped awarding contracts and generally set the contract prices too low.
- Several private clients go bankrupt or reduce their activity
- The cooperative faces a decrease income of 15%.
- No one is laid off, but action is taken in various ways:
  - A limited redistribution of hours among members (1 - 2 hours per person) for one year
  - Reserves are affected
  - Significant investments are made
  - A merger by incorporation of a smaller cooperative



## WHICH KIND OF INNOVATION?

- Resilience strategies both "on the defensive" (redistribution of hours and use of reserves) and "on the offensive" (investment and merger), which allows for getting through the hardest phase of the crisis without job loss
- Investments, made using reserves, significantly improve productivity
- The crisis is dealt with cooperatively attitude, unlike other production units in the area that are closing or relocating

# PHASE 4 – The RESTART

2014-2020





## WHAT HAPPENS

- Revenue and employment increased in 2014 compared to pre-crisis levels, and size increased due to the merger. 170 workers are employed, 60 disadvantaged.
- Investments concerned both the software part to manage the fleet of vehicles and to monitor the steps in waste management, and the equipment for the maintenance of green, which determined the possibility of relaunching
- During the crisis, faced with the difficulties of many WISEs and associations in the area, the company supported and hosted several people at its headquarters, initiating new collaborations.



## WHICH KIND OF INNOVATION?

- Technological and organizational innovations that make the WISE excellent
- Institutional innovations, thanks to the merger, that make the WISE more sustainable, with new organizational contamination
- Strengthening of the link with the Third Sector

# PHASE 5 – The COVID-19





## WHAT HAPPENS

- The WISE's type of activity has not been affected by Covid
- During the crisis phase, the WISE became a point of reference for many needs in the area, ES. by making its logistical capabilities available for the distribution of food and other basic needs.
- In the months that followed, this led to an increase in the number of people willing to volunteer at the WISE.





## WICH KIND OF INNOVATION?

- The WISE capitalizes on its central role in the community of reference
- The presence of volunteers reinforces the role in the community and increases the quality of job placement