EOC Meeting 2015

Catholic University of America
July 17, 2015
Outline

• The Original Inspiration
• The Marketplace as a Place of Encounter
• Today’s Challenges for the EoC
• What Does This Mean for the EoC in North America?
Mission

To promote a culture of giving and social justice through businesses animated with the values of universal brotherhood
Vision

The community is of one heart and mind (...).
There is no needy person among them.
GDP growth versus average level of happiness / percentage of very happy people (time trend)

Source: New Economics Foundation, 2004
The Multi-Dimensional Nature of Poverty
Three Types of Poverty

1. Convivial Poverty
2. Voluntary Poverty
3. Modernized Poverty
Destitution (misery)
The EOC Decalogue on Poverty and Wealth

Source: Prof. Luca Crivelli
1. A different vision of the poor ... who are considered as **brothers and sisters**, on an equal basis. They are people who cannot satisfy one or more basic needs (which ones should be carefully understood)
2. Convivial poverty, communion of goods and the joy that this evangelic life produces, have been the characteristics of the cultural environment in which the Movement developed in WWII
The EoC Way to Approaching Poverty (3)

3. **Voluntary poverty** (which in the Gospel is a beatitude) and moderation are the prerequisites to put in practice a culture of giving.
The EoC Way to Approaching Poverty (4)

4. The poor are at the same time those who are next to us (culture of proximity), but also people living in other parts of the world (cosmopolitan perspective of neighborhood; the “may they all be one” is the ultimate goal of the EoC).
5. People in need are brothers and sisters with whom one can live a relation of reciprocity. This relationship is rooted in the deep understanding of gratuity.
6. Objectives of the EoC are twofold:

(1) entrepreneurs sharing the profits (to fund aid programs and the spread of the culture of giving);
(2) EoC firms engaging in the creation of new job opportunities or suitable and affordable goods and services for people in need.
7. EoC Entrepreneurs are excited by the idea to innovate, to be agents of change, to solve concrete problems of the poor. EoC entrepreneurs are pushed to go beyond the simple sharing of profits ... to solve social problems and to produce social innovation.
8. According to the EoC, the aid to the poor can never be driven by “immunity”.

Being an expression of a communitarian experience, when we help we become fragile, vulnerable, open to the risk of contamination ... but exactly for this reason our helping act is therapeutic and definitely human.
9. The most valuable asset to solve destitution is the gift of different eyes, the eyes of the “culture of giving” which allow people to see things that other are not able to see, to see the blessing hidden in the wounds.
The EoC Way to Approaching Poverty (10)

10. There is full awareness of the existing differences (in terms of capabilities, power to make a difference and responsibilities) between entrepreneurs and people in need.

However, EoC actors are conscious that the people need to use their own feet to get out of poverty! Nobody can free poor people from destitution but themselves (through empowerment, inclusion, having goals and passion in their own life).
Challenges for the EoC

• Going out

• Together

• Suitably prepared
What Does This Mean for the EoC in North America?

• Finding/Supporting Local Projects
• Strengthening the EoC Network
• Continue Create Opp.ties of Formation
I am what I am by virtue of what all of us are without excluding anyone.

Ubuntu

Unlike the consumerist economy, based on a culture of having, the economy of communion is the culture of giving.

Chiara Lubich

Goods become "more real" when they are put in common, while goods become evil when they are not shared. Goods held as jealous possessions actually impoverish the owner of his or her ability to give, and of reciprocity, which is the true human heritage that leads to happiness.

Luigino Bruni