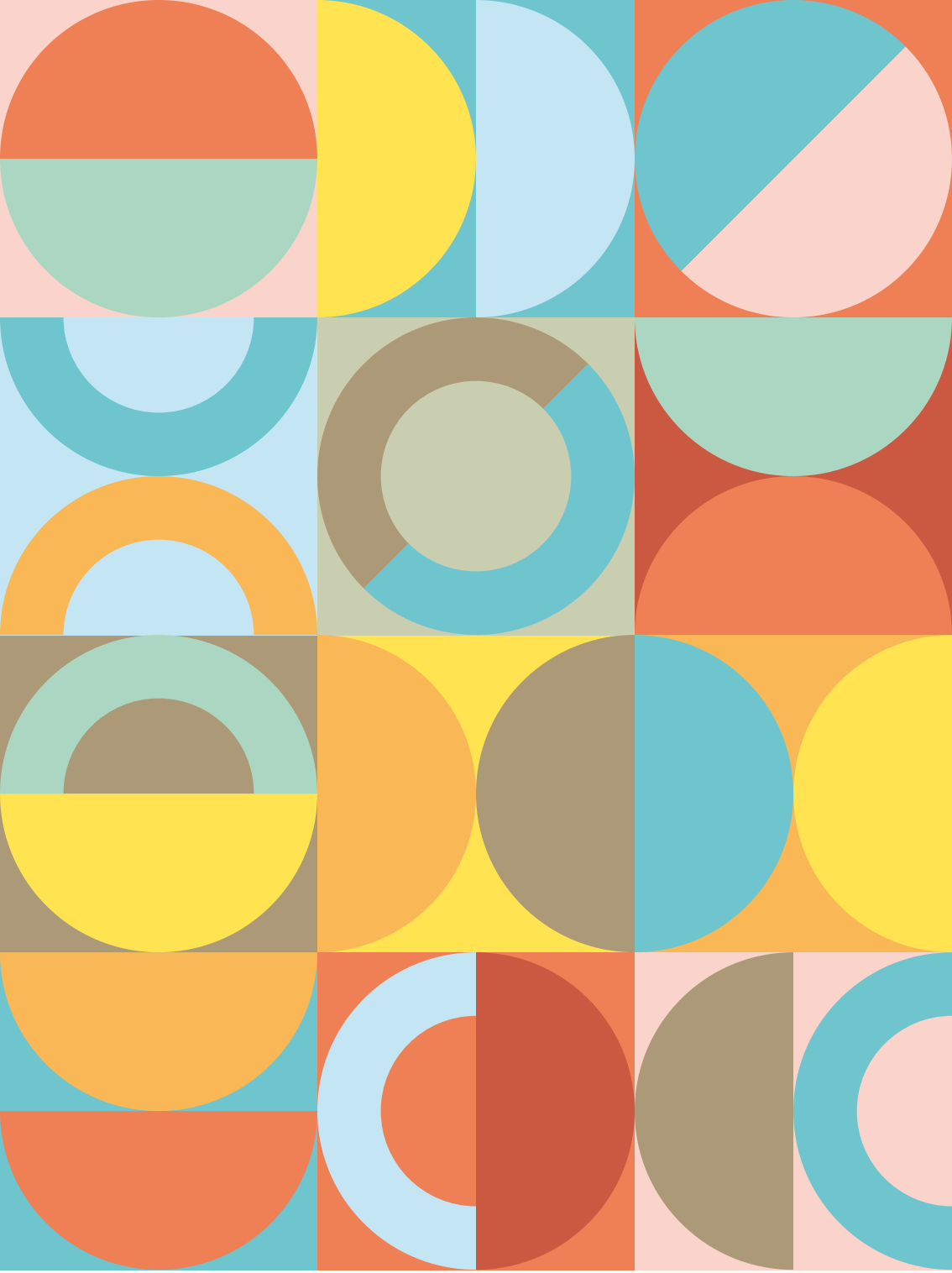

2024 Impact Report

isola

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Letter from the President

It is with a profound sense of duty and considerable pride that I present the 2024 Impact Report of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. This report represents far more than a summary of our activities over the past year. It is a thoughtful reflection on a period marked by both complexity and opportunity, in which our organisation deepened its roots within the local community and reaffirmed its purpose as a driver of inclusive growth in Catania and Sicily.

The year 2024 unfolded in a global context marked by significant political and social complexity. More than fifty nations went to the polls, involving nearly two billion voters worldwide. Such widespread democratic activity, while varied in nature, inevitably influenced global balances and, by extension, local dynamics. In this scenario, the contribution of the Third Sector and of socially oriented enterprises becomes not only relevant, but essential. These actors are increasingly called upon to offer stability, uphold shared values and deliver meaningful solutions to pressing societal challenges.

In 2024, despite the uncertain international landscape, Sicily recorded the highest rate of GDP growth in Italy. While this is undoubtedly encouraging, it must be recognised that economic growth alone does not resolve the deep-rooted structural issues and inequalities that persist across the region. We are firmly convinced that prosperity must go hand in hand with social justice, and that opportunity must be inclusive and fairly distributed.It is for this reason that our commitment remains both unwavering and deeply focused on addressing systemic inequality.

For Isola Catania, 2024 was the year we turned our plans into reality. After a year in 2023 spent co-designing and listening to the local community, we gained a deeper understanding of the strengths and challenges in our approach. This allowed us to refine our goals, making them more specific, measurable, and better aligned with both our aspirations and the practical capacity to achieve them.

A cornerstone of this evolution was the reconfiguration of our social business model. We shifted the focus from physical space management to programme and project development. This approach reflects our belief that meaningful impact arises not from the spaces we provide but from the content and purpose that animate them. The strengthening of Isola's Coalitions as facilitators of collective action has played a central role in this shift, enabling us to connect and activate diverse stakeholders in new and impactful ways.

To support this transformation, we expanded both our team and our shareholder base. These decisions were instrumental in enhancing our organisational structure, diversifying our expertise and equipping us with the necessary tools to meet the demands of a more ambitious and integrated mission.

Finally, we must highlight the remarkable events that defined our 2024: the major international events we helped bring to our region, which are detailed extensively in this report, and the founding of the Fondazione Marea. This initiative stands as a true act of love and courage, made possible through the generosity and contributions of hundreds of pioneers, all united in addressing one of Sicily's greatest challenges, transforming the Sicilian diaspora into a vibrant community. The Fondazione Marea is undoubtedly the first significant achievement of Isola Catania, positioning us as a hub for generative social innovation and a natural incubator for ideas, projects, and hope.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to our activities and projects: our team, the Board of Directors, our partners, the external professionals involved, and the many friends of Isola. I also wish to thank our partners, coalition members, institutions, grantmakers, clients, media, and communities, and, of course, all those who believe in our social enterprise and our commitment to a brighter future for Sicily.

Antonio Perdichizzi
President of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.

01

Reading Guide

1.1

Document Structure

The 2024 Impact Report of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. (hereafter referred to simply as "Isola") marks a new stage in our journey of growth and commitment to the communities of Catania and Sicily. This edition reflects a more mature organisation, increasingly capable of articulating both the impact it generates and the challenges it faces within the complex social, economic, and cultural context of Southern Italy.

The first section provides a methodological and regulatory framework. We have chosen to begin this report by setting out the relevant legislative references and our methodological approach, in order to offer readers a clear and transparent point of orientation. This section is essential for understanding how to correctly interpret the data, outcomes and reasoning presented in the chapters that follow.

The second section offers an overview of the organisation and the dynamics of the operating environment in which Isola operates, beginning with a contextual analysis. We considered it important to provide readers with a broad perspective on the territorial challenges we face, in order to clearly illustrate the scale and complexity of the issues we seek to address through our daily work. This is followed by a presentation of our impact strategy, which maintains strong continuity with the previous year's approach, but has since evolved to become more clearly defined, more firmly rooted in local realities, and more closely aligned with the organisation's actual capacity to deliver change.

The third section offers an in-depth account of Isola's activities, structured around our three social business units: Spaces, Coalitions and Projects. Within section 3.3, the impact projects are categorised according to four key impact areas: School, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Culture, Creativity and the Arts. Each project is presented through a summary sheet to facilitate clarity and ease of reading.

We have also chosen to include a dedicated section on major events, in order to highlight the three national and international events that we helped attract and organise in 2024.

While not part of our core operations, these events played a pivotal role in positioning both Isola and the wider territory around high-impact themes, while also bringing renewed energy and attention to Southern Italy.

The fourth section focuses on our organisational structure, governance framework, and responsible management practices. We have chosen to describe not only the formal composition of our management and oversight bodies, but also the way in which we view governance as a strategic lever for generating social value. Particular attention is given to the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) criteria into our corporate governance model. With this section, we aim to reaffirm that, for Isola, governance is not merely a matter of regulatory compliance, but a fundamental tool for aligning our operations with our social impact mission.

In order to ensure transparency, accountability and regulatory compliance, the fifth and sixth sections are devoted, respectively, to the management report and the report of the Statutory Auditor.

The final part of this Impact Report features a dedicated appendix on the establishment of Fondazione Marea, which we regard as the first major outcome to emerge from Isola's journey. We have chosen to include this section to highlight what we consider a pivotal moment in our development. It marks a natural progression that broadens our capacity to generate social impact. Fondazione Marea was created to pursue philanthropic initiatives and social innovation, opening new and complementary avenues of action that will sit alongside Isola's core work. Including this milestone in the Impact Report reflects our commitment to a model of development that is open, generative and increasingly grounded in the needs of the region.

1.2

Regulatory Reference and Objectives of the Document

This Impact Report, covering the financial year from 1 January to 31 December 2024, has been prepared by Isola, a social enterprise incorporated as a limited liability company, in compliance with Article 9, paragraph 2, of Italian Legislative Decree No. 112 of 3 July 2017 ("Revision of the regulation on social enterprises"). Its preparation follows the *Guidelines for the Drafting of Impact Reports by Third Sector Entities*, adopted by Decree of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 4 July 2019 (published in the Italian Official Gazette No. 186 of 9 August 2019).

In particular, this report reflects the provisions set out in Article 7, paragraph 3, of Law No. 106 of 6 June 2016 ("Delegation to the Government for the Reform of the Third Sector, Social Enterprises, and

the Regulation of Universal Civil Service"), which defines social impact assessment as "the qualitative and quantitative evaluation, over the short, medium and long term, of the effects of activities carried out on the reference community in relation to the identified objectives."

In line with the *Guidelines for the Implementation of Social Impact Assessment Systems for Activities Carried Out by Third Sector Entities* (adopted by Decree of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 23 July 2019 and published in the Italian Official Gazette No. 214 of 12 September 2019), Isola has undertaken a process of impact measurement aimed at reporting on its commitment to improving the social, cultural and economic conditions of the territories and communities in which it operates. This methodological choice reflects a deliberate commitment to adopting a structured and recognised framework for evaluating the social value it generates.

1.3

Methodological Note

Our aim is to ensure that the account of Isola's activities is not only accurate and transparent, but also supports a clear understanding of the social impact generated and the development pathways undertaken.

In shaping its impact strategy and the associated measurement framework, Isola drew inspiration from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopting them as a shared international reference. The SDGs provide a valuable framework not only for guiding action towards tangible outcomes in sustainable development, but also for ensuring alignment with stakeholder expectations at a global level.

For 2024, we have upheld the selection of SDGs identified in 2023, reinforcing the strategic alignment and continuity with our key areas of focus. The mapping of the relevant SDGs is presented in the graphic below.

The SDGs and targets pursued by Isola

Reference SDG targets

SDG 4	4.4	4.5	4.7			
SDG 5	5.1	5.5	5.B			
SDG 8	8.2	8.3	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.9
SDG 11	11.3	11.4	11.7			
SDG 17	17.17	4.5	4.7			

In drafting this Impact Report, we have adhered to the principles established by the relevant regulations. Our approach began with what is relevant, avoiding omissions and prioritising data and analysis that would provide stakeholders with a thorough evaluation of our work.

We pursued comprehensiveness by identifying the key stakeholders who influence and/or are affected by the organisation, ensuring the inclusion of all relevant information to allow them to assess the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of Isola. The aim was to create a broad and realistic representation of the impact generated.

Transparency was ensured by clarifying the methodological criteria used in the collection, processing, and organisation of information, particularly through models like the Theory of Change and the Social Business Model, an internal tool we developed to guide our impact measurement system. The principle of *neutrality* was upheld by presenting a balanced narrative that reflects both the results achieved and the challenges faced during Isola's growth. All activities, projects, and reported data relate explicitly to the 2024 fiscal year, in line with the period *competency principle*. To favour *temporal comparability*, we integrated 2024 data with comparisons to 2023 figures, highlighting trends and development trajectories, and we included spatial comparisons where relevant, particularly in relation to the southern and Sicilian context. *Clarity* was pursued by using accessible language that engages readers without specialist knowledge, while still maintaining conceptual precision. The *accuracy* and *traceability* of the information were guaranteed through the precise citation of sources and documentation of key data. We maintained a cautious approach to reliability, avoiding overestimations or underestimations and explicitly stating limitations, such as the inability to measure medium-term outcomes. Data collection was conducted through a variety of sources and tools, reflecting the complexity of a project like Isola. These sources and tools include: management software databases; administrative verifications; financial reports; project management tools; individual project reports; insights from social media, newsletters, and the website; internal meetings, focus groups, and qualitative analysis; mentorship and advisory sessions. Finally, the principle of *autonomy* was upheld: the preparation of the Report was coordinated internally by Isola, ensuring independent judgement and methodological consistency throughout the document creation process.

02

Isola

2.1

Key Challenges in the Local Context

In 2023, the annual Quality of Life survey published by *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Italy's leading financial and economic daily newspaper, placed Catania 92nd out of 107 Italian provinces. In 2024, the city moved up nine places to 83rd. While this marks a positive shift, it remains far from sufficient to bridge the deep territorial and social disparities. The survey considers 90 indicators grouped into six main categories: *wealth and consumption, business and employment, environment and public services, demographics, society and health, justice and safety, and culture and leisure*.

The categories that improved in 2024 include wealth and consumption (up by three positions), justice and safety (up by nine), and business and employment (up by as many as 24)1. These advances suggest that Catania and, more broadly, Sicily are currently experiencing a phase of apparent economic vitality. During 2022 and 2023, the region's gross domestic product (GDP) grew steadily, rising by 2.8 per cent in 2022 and by 2.2 per cent in 20232. This latter figure was the highest annual growth recorded across all Italian regions. However, GDP growth does not automatically lead to a fairer distribution of opportunities, nor is it enough on its own to address the underlying structural factors that influence quality of life. Indicators such as access to services, social mobility, education and civic participation remain heavily affected by territorial inequalities that the economic recovery has yet to resolve. In short, there is growth, but it is still uneven, fragile and incomplete.

1. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2024). *Qualità della vita – Indagine annuale.* ilsole24ore.com

2. SVIMEZ (2024). *Rapporto sull'economia e la società del Mezzogiorno.*

The local context is marked by numerous social, economic, and environmental challenges, which continue to generate significant disparities compared to the rest of the country. Since the beginning of its activities, Isola has chosen to address some of the area's most pressing issues through a targeted action plan, identifying four priority areas of intervention: educational poverty, labour market dynamics, the world of new enterprises, and the industrial sector.

Educational Poverty

ISTAT data from 2023 and 2024 confirms that school dropout continues to affect Southern Italy significantly, with rates well above the national average. The situation in Sicily is particularly concerning. In 2020, 19.4 percent of individuals aged between 18 and 24 left education and training altogether3, a figure that is considerably higher than both the national and European averages.

School dropout is closely linked to *educational deprivation*, a condition that goes beyond the simple lack of access to education. It also includes a shortage of territorial and social opportunities that support the cognitive and social development of young people[4]. Educational deprivation and school dropout feed into each other, giving rise to intermediate phenomena such as *implicit school dropout*[5]. This refers to students who formally complete their upper secondary edu-

3. Openpolis. (2022). *Perché l'istruzione equa è il primo strumento di giustizia sociale.* openpolis.it

cation and obtain a diploma but fail to acquire the skills and competencies expected at that level.[6]The most recent data, referring to 2023, shows that 13.6 percent of students in Sicily were affected by implicit dropout. Without access to quality education, opportunities for further training and employment decrease significantly[7].

Those most affected are young people from economically disadvantaged families with low levels of education, perpetuating a cycle of inequality that limits social mobility and makes it difficult for the next generation to improve their life chances.[8].

4. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2024). *Rapporto annuale 2024*.

5. Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Educativo di Istruzione e di Formazione. (2023). *Rapporto INVALSI 2023*

Labour Market

The labour market continues to face significant challenges in Sicily, with youth unemployment rates among the highest in Europe. In 2024, the unemployment rate for those aged 20 to 64 in Sicily stood at 13.1 per cent. Although this reflects an improvement of 2.6 percentage points compared to the previous year, it remains well above the European average of 5.9 per cent for the same age group.9 It is also the second highest unemployment rate among all Italian regions.[10] Youth unemployment continues to be a major concern. Among those aged 15 to 24, the rate reaches 35.7 per cent, while for the 25 to 34 age group it stands at 17 per cent. The situation is even more critical for women, with a female unemployment rate of 23.2 per cent.[11] Within the broader context of persistent structural challenges in the labour market, the NEET phenomenon continues to be a major concern. NEET refers to young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training. The report *Lost in Transition*, produced by the National Youth Council and the Institute for Educational and Training Research, offers a detailed examination of this issue, emphasising its particularly high incidence in southern regions and inland areas of the country.[12] According to Eurostat, in 2024, 31.4 percent of young people in Sicily aged 18 to 29 fell into the NEET category. This figure is significantly above the European average, which stood at 13.1 percent.[13]

New Enterprises

Sicily is witnessing a growing wave of entrepreneurial activity, marked by the emergence of new businesses, start-ups, innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and socially driven initiatives. This dynamism reflects a positive energy within the region's productive fabric. However, it has yet to reach a critical mass capable of generating significant economic value or stable employment.

According to the 2024 report on the competitiveness of productive sectors by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), the region plays an active role nationally, but facesstructural weaknesses: a predominance of micro-enterprises, low technological intensity, limited inter-firm collaboration and a strong reliance on public policy.[14] These challenges are not unique to Sicily but reflect broader national trends.

6. Consiglio Nazionale Giovani e Istituto di Ricerche Educative e Formative. (2024). *Lost in Transition: Contrasto al fenomeno dei NEET*. consiglionazionalegiovani.it

7. Fondazione Con i Bambini. (2020). *La mobilità sociale passa da un'istruzione di qualità per tutti*.

8. Openpolis. (2022). *Perché l'istruzione equa è il primo strumento di giustizia sociale*. openpolis.it

9. Eurostat. (2024). *Database LFST_R_LFU3RT*. ec.europa.eu

10. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2024). *Dati disoccupazione- dati regionali*. dati.istat.it

11. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2024). *Dati disoccupazione – dati provinciali*. dati.istat.it

12. Consiglio Nazionale Giovani e Istituto di Ricerche Educative e Formative. (2024). *Lost in Transition: Contrasto al fenomeno dei NEET*. consiglionazionalegiovani.it

13. Eurostat. (2024). *Database LFSE_22*. ec.europa.eu

As of 31 December 2023, there were 13,394 registered innovative start-ups in Italy – a decrease compared to 2022 but a 23 percent increase compared to 2019. More than 60 percent of these had no employees, and only 6.9 percent recorded annual revenues above €500,000, highlighting the fragility of this model.[15] The 2,766 innovative SMEs active in 2023 also remained small in scale, facing persistent barriers to accessing credit and investment capital.[16] In this context, southern Italy and Sicily in particular, continue to be marginal players in venture capital flows and equity crowdfunding activity, maintaining a gap with the innovation hubs of central and northern Italy. The non-profit sector, however, appears more dynamic. ISTAT conducts a triennial survey of the sector. According to the most recent data, as of 31 December 2022, Sicily had 23,272 active non-profit organisations, a 2.3 percent increase from 2021. These employed 49,663 people. In the Islands, social enterprises account for 8.3 percent of all non-profits – the highest proportion in the country.[17]

14. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2024). *Rapporto sulla competitività dei settori produttivi – Edizione 2024.*

15. Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy. (2024). *Relazione annuale sulle startup e PMI innovative.*

16. Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy. (2024). *Relazione annuale sulle startup e PMI innovative.*

17. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2024). *Struttura e profili del settore non profit – Anno 2022.*

18. Centro Studi Tagliacarne – Unioncamere, Fondazione Symbola. (2022). *Rapporto 2023.*

19. Centro Studi Tagliacarne – Unioncamere, Fondazione Symbola. (2022). *Rapporto 2022.*

20. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2024). *Qualità della vita – Indagine annuale.* ilsole24ore.com.

21. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2024). *Qualità della vita – Indagine annuale.* ilsole24ore.com.

22. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2024). *Qualità della vita – Indagine annuale.* ilsole24ore.com.

23. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. (2020). *Registro delle istituzioni non profit 2020.* istat.it

24. Osservatorio sull'Economia del Turismo delle Camere di Commercio. (2022). *Report annuale 2022.*

Cultural and Creative Industries

In 2022, the Cultural and Creative Production System contributed 5.6 percent to national GDP and accounted for 5.8 percent of total employment.18 With an economic multiplier of 1.8, each euro invested generated nearly two euros elsewhere in the economy. In Sicily, despite the presence of approximately 15,280[19] core cultural enterprises, directly engaged in cultural and creative activities, the sector remains relatively small in comparison to others. The regional GDP[20] attributable to the sector stands at just 3.7 percent, and employment in this field declined by 2.3 percent, largely due to infrastructural shortcomings and weak value chains. The region's cultural offer is unevenly distributed. According to *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Catania ranks 51st out of 107 provinces[21] for cultural facilities and events, but drops to 98th for the number of employees working in cultural enterprises[22]. Participation rates reflect a similar pattern: only 24 percent of residents in Sicily take part in cultural activities, compared with a national average of 36 percent.[23]

Participation is even lower among young people, at around 20 percent.[24] In this context, non-profit organisations play a strategic role. Nationally, 10.4 out of every 100 enterprises operate in the cultural and creative sector. In Sicily, the figure is 10.2 percent[25].

These organisations, mostly associations, social cooperatives and foundations, complement the for-profit offer by focusing on inclusion, accessibility and local engagement, creating spaces for community participation and dialogue. Cultural tourism further underscores the sector's potential. Over 51 percent of tourist spending in Sicily is linked to cultural consumption[26], a figure that exceeds the national average. This is a strong draw, especially for international visitors, and confirms the strategic value of culture for the Island's sustainable development.

2.2

Values, Mission and Objectives

Isola's journey continues to evolve, becoming increasingly embedded within the social and economic fabric of Sicily. Born from the idea of creating a space that welcomes and nurtures talent, ideas and opportunities, Isola has always aspired to be more than a physical location. It seeks to act as a catalyst for change, a bridge connecting Sicily to the wider world. From the outset, our aim has been to build an innovative model capable of addressing the challenges facing the region, through training, employment and social enterprise. The decision to establish Isola as a social enterprise reflects our commitment to combining the effectiveness and sustainability of an entrepreneurial model with the social impact and mission typical of the third sector. Isola is a hybrid entity that brings together the strengths of both worlds: the flexibility and growth potential of the for-profit sphere, and the social value orientation of the non-profit. This structure has enabled us to consolidate a clear identity and to strengthen our operations, while keeping our core focus on creating tangible opportunities for the local community.

LEGAL NAME	Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.
REGISTERED AND OPERATIONAL OFFICE	Via Museo Biscari 16, Catania
LOCAL UNIT	Piazza Cardinale Pappalardo 23, Catania
TAX CODE/VAT NUMBER	05973680878
RUNTS REGISTRATION NUMBER	92844
EMAIL	info@isola.catania.it
CERTIFIED EMAIL (PEC)	isola.catania@pec.it
NATIONAL COLLECTIVE LABOUR AGREEMENT (CCNL)	Federculture
LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE	Antonio Perdichizzi
SECTOR	Tertiary
PRIMARY ATECO CODE	91.22.00
SECONDARY ATECO CODES	68.20.02 - 85.59.20 - 82.30.0 - 90.39.09

Over the past year, we have continued to embrace the values that have guided our journey from the very beginning:, *Responsibility, Innovation, Sharing and Equality*, encapsulated in the acronym RISE. These values, first identified in our initial year of activity through a process of internal and external co-design, remain the foundation of our daily work and our vision of change. For us, RISE is much more than an acronym. It is a word that reflects our cultural orientation, our organisational principle and our approach to the challenges we face alongside our community. We continue to place these values at the heart of our actions, in line with the principles set out in our Statute and in pursuit of civic, solidarity-based and socially beneficial objectives. This commitment is reflected in our responsible and transparent management practices, and in our adoption of sustainability principles across our strategy, operations and governance. RISE. remains the common thread running through our work for the territory and for the people who live in it.

RISE

Responsability

We are driven by the desire to transform our territory into a better place, where young people can find the inspiration and opportunities necessary to shape their own future with confidence and determination, freely choosing the life path that best reflects their dreams and aspirations. We are committed to avoiding any negative impact on the environment. Instead, we strive to minimise our eco - logical footprint and actively support associations and projects dedicated to protecting the urban ecosystem. The choice of a historic building as our home, which we mainta

Innovation

We explore new paths, strategies, and approaches to address deep-rooted problems. Innovation is our driving force, compelling us to challenge the status quo and pursue significant ad - vancements. We harness the potential of techno - logy to offer opportunities for growth and inclusion. Being a hybrid, open, and hyper-connected space allows us to engage with different worlds and sectors, enabling us to experiment with innovative models of collaboration and economic sustainability, while succes - sfully attracting national and international stakeholders.

Sharing

To address the depopulation of the South, which is the significant social challenge we have chosen, it is crucial to collaborate and engage individuals and organisations that share our same objectives and values. We work diligently to enhance our ecosystem by building long-term relationships that enable us to have strategic partners alongside whom we can share our mission. Our objective is to serve as an open and impartial platform, employing methodologies and processes like Coalitions, to facilitate meaningful connections among stakeholders. We aim to establish an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, with the goal of contributing to the enhancement of opportunities available in Sicily and fostering the development of a dynamic community in constant evolution.

Equality

We believe that the diversity of audiences and activities has the potential to stimulate processes of social cohesion and inclusion. Therefore, we strive to build a society where everyone enjoys equal opportunities, regardless of their background or identity. Our efforts are focused on ensuring that no one is excluded and that every voice is heard. We envision Isola, like the Mediterranean, becoming a hub of cultures and individuals, each bringing value and contributing to collective growth through their unique qualities.

For us, RISE is much more than an acronym.
It is a word that reflects our cultural orientation

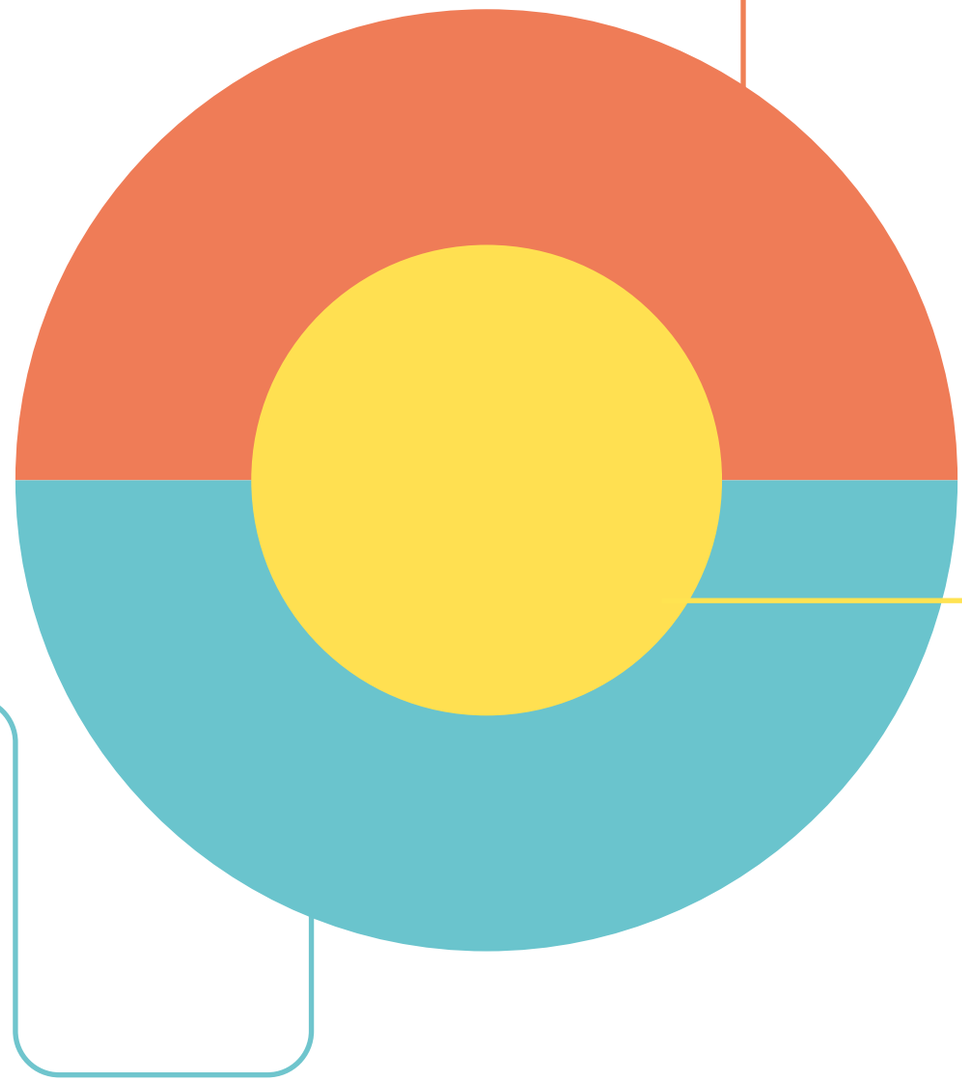
Isola's mission remains centred on enabling the creation of high-impact development programmes in the fields of education, skills and employment, entrepreneurship and innovation, and the culture of creativity and the arts. With a renewed awareness of our role, we have refined our impact objectives, reshaping them from the previous year to make them more concrete, measurable and aligned with our actual operational capacity. At the same time, we chose to represent more explicitly the relationship between our economic activities and social outcomes through our value chain, which gives tangible form to Isola's theory of change. In this framework, the logical progression from inputs to outputs, outcomes and impact becomes both clear and tangible.Spaces form the physical and economic foundation of our model. Coalitions represent its relational and ecosystemic core. Projects are the operational pinnacle, where intentions take shape through action.This value chain not only summarises our internal functioning, but also reflects the strategic approach through which we aim to contribute to the social transformation of the region, showing how each component of our system plays a distinct role in generating positive impact for the community.

Social value chain

IMPACT DIMENSION	INPUT	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	IMPACT	INITIAL PROBLEM
Education				Enhanced awareness among students of local opportunities in education, employment, entrepreneurs hip and culture Increased motivation to engage actively in local economic, civic and social initiatives Strengthened sense of belonging to the local community and greater confidence in the prospects of developing a professiona career locally	To increase students' awareness of the opportunities (educational, employment, entrepreneuria l and cultural) offered by the local area, and to foster their desire to participate in economic, civic and social activities	Educational poverty limiting young people's potential
Skills and Employment	Physical Hub Human Capital Financial Capital	Orientation, training, matching and networking initiatives	Immediate results for monitorin g each activity within orientation, training, matching and networking initiatives	Improved levels of self-determina tion and confidence in the professional future among individuals from underserved groups Acquisition of technical and transferable skills relevant to employability in high demand sectors Expansion of professional networks through direct engagement with local businesses, organisations and professionals	To increase the skills of individuals from underserved groups in high-demand professional sectors that support local employment opportunities	Unemployment and mismatch between labour supply and demand
Entrepreneurship and Innovation				Improvement of soft skills and employability among aspiring or new entrepreneurs participating in the programmes Strengthening of skills for the economic and operational sustainability of start ups and businesses in the consolidation phase Expanded access to strategic networks and resources at local, national and international levels	To strengthen the entrepreneuria l skills and capacities of aspiring or new entrepreneurs to support the creation and growth of impact-driven businesses	Lack of new enterprises and impact enterprises
Culture, Creativity and Art				Improved opportunities for professional visibility for beneficiaries in the cultural and creative sectors Increased collaborations with organisations in the cultural and creative sectors at local, national and international levels Expanded cross-sector collaborations with organisations operating in other fields	To expand the professional networks of cultural and creative sector professionals.	Lack of new cultural and creative enterprises

2.3

Social Business Model
and Revenue Model



Coalitions

Our coalitions constitute our network infrastructure: a platform that brings together people, organisations and visions. They act as mechanisms for networking and business matching, capable of generating dialogue, collecting intentions and stimulating debate. Coalitions serve as spaces for listening and discussion among public, private and third-sector actors, where ideas are developed and the foundations for collective action are laid. Their role is to enable, connect and nourish the vitality of the local ecosystem.

Projects

Projects are the tangible expression of the impact we seek to generate. They are the result of the integration between physical assets and relational infrastructure, and they address challenges in the fields of education, employment, entrepreneurship and culture. Each project is co-designed through a participatory and multidisciplinary approach, aiming to transform visions into scalable and replicable actions that generate real value for communities. Through our projects, we experiment with and promote social innovation practices capable of regenerating places and shaping the future..

Spaces

Our spaces are our physical asset: the tangible infrastructure through which people, ideas and energy flow. Coworking areas, training rooms, events and location-based services not only ensure economic sustainability but also enable connection and cross-pollination. These dynamic environments make our presence in the local area both visible and tangible, encouraging encounters between diverse communities and fostering the conditions for new initiatives to emerge. They represent the first enabling level of our ecosystem, a gateway and a platform for activation.

Building on this new representation, we decided to summarise the link between our *Social Business Model* and our social impact model through a new framework we have named the Social Business Model . This structure enables us to clearly describe how Isola's economic activities are closely connected to the creation of social value for the territory. Unlike traditional models, the *Social Business Model* also highlights the tangible contribution that the Social Business Model makes towards generating positive impact.

Social Business Unit

Social Business Model	Spaces	Coalitions	Projects
Impact dimension			
Position in the value chain	INPUT	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT AND OUTCOME
Intended recipients	CLIENT	MEMBERS	BENEFICIARIES
Revenue Model	RETAIL	MEMBERSHIP	GRANT
Percentageof Revenue	47%	18%	35%
Chanel	B2B / B2C	B2B	B2B2C
Services	Training rooms, co-working spaces, localisation services, event management	*Business & innovation matching*	Guidance, training, matchmaking, networking, acceleration

The starting point is our *Social Business Model* , which Isola develops through three social business units – Spaces, Coalitions, and Projects – each with a specific role within the value chain and its own revenue model and distribution channels. Among these, *Spaces* represent a strategic asset, providing the physical infrastructure and essential services that enable Isola's broader activities. Offering training rooms, coworking and event spaces, business localisation support, and event management services, this social business unit serves both individual clients, such as freelancers and *digital nomads* (through B2C transactions), and organisations and institutions in need of tailored spaces and services (through B2B transactions). Within the value chain, Spaces represent the essential inputs, creating the conditions necessary for project development, the formation of connections, and the generation of opportunities for the community. The Social Business unit *Coalitions*, which operates on a B2B basis, serves as an ecosystem platform for business and *innovation matching*, facilitating collaboration between businesses, professionals, and public and private entities. Here, member organisations are not merely recipients of services, but active participants in the change process. Within the value chain, Coalitions function as enabling activities: they create the preconditions for Isola to deliver transformative outputs. Through the development of strategic networks, knowledge exchange, and mutual support, these alliances enhance the capabilities of individual participants, contribute to positive territorial impact, and promote a vibrant environment for social innovation in Sicily.

Finally, the Social Business unit *Projects*, operates in an integrated manner with the other two units and delivers direct impact to final beneficiaries, including students, vulnerable youth, high-potential talents, entrepreneurs, creatives, and cultural practitioners. These projects, funded through public calls, internal resources, and fundraising, operate within a B2B2C model. The B2B phase involves securing the economic resources needed to implement the Projects, while the 2C phase represents the point at which Isola engages directly with end users, who are not paying clients but beneficiaries accessing orientation, training, or matchmaking programmes free of charge. Within Isola's value chain, Projects generate both the most significant *outputs* and measurable *outcomes*, meaning short term tangible changes that contribute directly to Isola's broader social impact goals.

03

Activities and Objectives

This section presents the operational core of Isola: the activities and objectives pursued in 2024 to promote social innovation across the region.

The year 2024 was marked by intense activity for Isola, characterised by the consolidation of internal processes and development strategies. We worked with energy and determination to expand and strengthen our team, welcoming new professionals who have enriched our operational and project management capacities. At the same time, our shareholder base expanded with the entry of new partners who chose to invest in Isola's vision, bringing fresh momentum and enhancing our ability to act. Alongside the continuation of our regular activities, 2024 saw Isola take part in national and international events of significance, consolidating our role as a hub for social innovation in the Mediterranean. To crown such a pivotal year, we closed the financial year with a capital increase that will enable us to support and accelerate growth in the years to come.

Key moments of 2024

- JANUARY
  - Support programme for the "Get it!" project
- MARCH
  - Launch of the Coalition for Culture, Creativity and the Arts
- JUNE
  - Award from the *Giordano Dell'Amore Social Venture* Foundation
- JULY
  - International youth entrepreneurship event "Gen-E"
  - Award decree for the "Italia Economia Sociale" grant scheme
- OCTOBER
  - International event on social entrepreneurship: SEOC – *"Social Enterprise Open Camp 2024"*
- NOVEMBER
  - "Pratolungo Unconference | Etna" gathering
  - "Future4Cities" Award by Will Media and From Collective
- DECEMBER
  - Launch of *Fondazione Marea*
  - Attainment of Gender Equality Certification (UNI/PdR 125:2022)
  - Completion of the capital increase

This section outlines our work across three main areas. We begin with Spaces – physical and symbolic places of connection that form the beating heart of our community. We then turn to Coalitions – strategic networks and alliances that strengthen our relational ecosystem and foster collaboration among diverse actors. Finally, we focus on our Social Impact Projects, through which we translate our mission into tangible action. The section concludes with an overview of the three major events that defined our 2024.

3.1 Spaces

Isola's physical hub, represented by the *Social Business unit Spaces*, is the strategic asset on which our Social Business Model is built. Through training rooms, coworking services, business localisation support and event management, these environments not only generate revenue, but also serve as the settings where we deliver our projects and nurture our community, keeping it engaged and connected. The Spaces are a strategic pillar – a key *input* that, alongside financial capital and human resources, enables the implementation of all our activities, supporting both economic growth and the creation of social value across the territory.

When shaping the collaborations that take place within our spaces, we place great emphasis on shared values and a common vision of social impact. We seek partners –whether businesses, institutions, networks, cultural practitioners or third sector organisations– who, like us, believe in a model of inclusive, sustainable and regenerative local development. We are guided by the belief that every hosted initiative can be an opportunity to generate collective value: enriching the social and cultural fabric of our local community or helping to position Catania and Sicily within an international network of relationships, exchanges and opportunities. In doing so, we actively contribute to building a positive and contemporary narrative of Sicily, one grounded in concrete visions of change and possibility. Whether it is an event, a training programme, an exhibition or a corporate initiative, our aim is to ensure our spaces are animated by experiences that inspire, connect and leave a lasting impression. Corporate *Retreats* and *Field Visit*, where university students from non-Sicilian institutions explore the local ecosystem, are two formats we first introduced in 2023 and have continued to invest in. In 2024, we hosted around twelve corporate retreats of varying scale for organisations such as the Institute for University Cooperation (ICU), UNHCR, Manpower, Aurora Fellows, and *Field Visit* for Università Bicocca di Milano, ESCP Business School, Northeastern University, Ohio University and Columbia University.

TITLE

Field Visit Woltemade Center

Center for Economics, Business and Entrepreneurship

CLIENT	Ohio Wesleyan University
DURATION	3 days
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	11

In 2024, we hosted a delegation from the *Woltemade Center* at Ohio Wesleyan University, composed of students and faculty from the *Corns Business and Entrepreneurial Scholars programme*. The group took part in a *Field Visit* organised by Isola as part of the "ExploringEntrepreneurial Endeavors in Catania, Sicily" project, aimed at gaining a first-hand understanding of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Over the course of three days, the programme was designed to provide a practical overview of the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship in the Sicilian context. Activities included meetings with startups and social enterprises such as Isola, Boniviri, Marea, AWorld, and South Working: Lavorare per il Sud, as well as guest lectures by University of Catania professors Rosario Faraci and Giorgia D'Allura. Workshops were co-organised with Professor D'Allura and PhD students from the Innovation Management programme at the University of Catania, offering a space for direct dialogue on the different paths of innovation in their respective countries. The students also had the opportunity to explore other local experiences, including *Etna Urban Winery*, a family-run business rooted in the territory, and Creation Dose, the largest mar-tech company in Southern Italy. The visit also offered moments of cultural and natural

immersion, with excursions to Mount Etna and other iconic locations such as Palazzo Biscari and the Monastery of the Benedictines. Funded by a *Theory-to-Practice Grant*, the initiative offered a meaningful opportunity for international exchange, intercultural reflection and territorial promotion.

"My favourite moment was during one of the sessions with Isola. Professors and students from the University of Catania joined us, and we had the chance to learn and work together on an activity. It was great to hear different perspectives and talk about our plans after graduation."

– Kevin Fratz, participant in the Field Visit

Isola Life, the space we dedicate to events, training activities and all occasions of public engagement, continues to host knowledge-sharing and networking events while also serving as a key venue for our long-standing strategic partners, such as Tree-Opinno, Manpower Group and Junior Achievement Italia. These organisations deliver training programmes and professional development courses aimed at a range of target groups, with a particular focus on NEETs. Whether developed in-house or led by external partners, our commitment remains the same: to create opportunities for young people in Catania and support those at risk of social exclusion.In 2024, we hosted sessions of the "Upshift for Ukraine" project, promoted by Junior Achievement Italia in collaboration with UNICEF, dedicated to Ukrainian boys and girls aged 14 to 21 currently living in Italy. We also welcomed initiatives from ManpowerGroup's NeetON project in partnership with Bosch Italia, LabLaw, the Human Age Institute Foundation and the Bosch TEC Corporate Academy, as well as the CODE Career Day by Tree-Opinno, Intellegere and the Steve Jobs Academy.This year also marked our participation in the Erasmus+ programme, where we acted as both a host and intermediary organisation for educational mobility projects. We welcomed seven trainees from Austria, facilitated their placements with local companies and provided additional support services for vocational education and training (VET), including logistics, Italian language courses and cultural visits around the region.This initiative represents an important step towards strengthening international ties and fostering the development of new professional skills in Catania. Other opportunities for young talent included "Start Me Up: Inspiring Innovation", the launch of the second edition of a training programme promoted by Eni Joule, the Eni school for entrepreneurship, in collaboration with Startup Geeks and EY; "Neodata Hackatania 2", an AI-focused hackathon organised by Neodata Group in partnership with the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at the University of Catania; and "PowerUp", a national roadshow promoted by Qonto, aimed at strengthening the local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

TITLE

NeetON

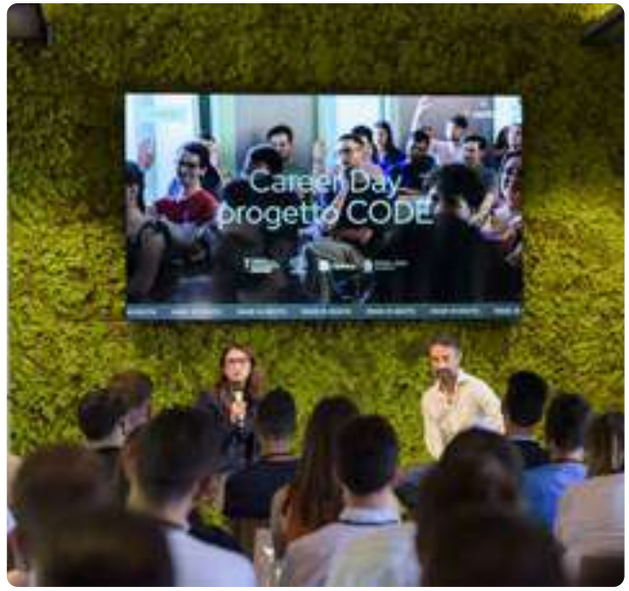
PARTNER/CLIENT	Manpower Group in collaboration with Bosch Italy, LabLaw, the Human Age Institute Foundation, and the Bosch TEC Corporate Academy
DURATION	11 days
PARTICIPANTS	15

In 2024, thanks to the partnership with Experis and Manpower, Isola had the opportunity to host one of the three annual editions of "NeetON" – a national programme promoted by Manpower Group in collaboration with Bosch Italia, LabLaw, Fondazione Human Age Institute and the Corporate Academy Bosch TEC. This technical and cross-functional training initiative is aimed at NEETs, with the goal of supporting their transition into employment. Launched in 2019, NeetON has involved over 230 participants to date, delivering more than 2,400 hours of training and achieving an employment rate of around 80% within six months of programme completion. The Catania edition trained a new cohort of industrial automation technicians, combining classroom teaching, digital content, and project work developed in collaboration with local companies. This project stands as a strong example of how cooperation between businesses, training providers and local hubs can create genuine opportunities for growth and professional integration – particularly in complex regional contexts like Sicily.

TITLE

CODE

Creating Opportunity for Development and Employment



PARTNER	Intellegere, in collaboration with Tree-Opinno and Steve Jobs Academy ITS
DURATION	1 day
PARTICIPANTS	68

Tree-Opinno is one of Isola's strategic partners, enabling the delivery of numerous training opportunities for young people in Catania. Among these is CODE, a fully funded digital skills programme selected by the Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale and officially launched at Isola in 2023. Designed for NEETs aged 18 to 34, CODE addresses the mismatch between supply and demand in the programming sector. The programme aims to train 125 young people through five specialist courses, each lasting 344 hours, with a focus on Back-End and Front-End Development. Courses are delivered in hybrid format, combining online learning with in-person sessions in both Catania and Palermo.

In June, during the summer edition of *Make in South*, a Career Day was held – an orientation event offering participants the chance to meet with companies and expand their professional networks. The event was one of several milestones in the project and played a key role in connecting young talent with businesses in the tech sector. It also featured the active participation of partner organisations engaged by Isola, who used the opportunity to present themselves and explore new talent for their own growth.

In line with our commitment to sharing knowledge and promoting diverse initiatives, we continue to make our spaces available for training activities, networking events, workshops, and open days focused on areas such as journalism, creativity, and other innovative fields. We work with both long-standing and new partners to create opportunities for continuous learning and professional development, sometimes even becoming a case study ourselves, analysed and explored as part of the learning process. In 2024, Isola hosted a range of events including "Il giornalismo che verrà" by Sicilian Post; the workshop "La voce e il suo doppio: l'organicità della voce e il corpo senza organi", promoted by Associazione Retablo as part of the "Scena Contemporanea 4.0" project; "Il progetto non può BAR/ARE", organised by Abadir within its Master's in Strategic Design and Creative Direction "Dalla Ford al fard", directed by Vincenzo Castellana; "Boost Your Talents" by Clapppp; the open day "IED on Tour 2025 – Catania" from IED; and "Errore! Macchine che sognano e altre storie", a seminar and workshop included in the training programme of "Magma – Festival di Cinema Breve".

TITLE

Il giornalismo che verrà

PARTNER	Sicilian Post
DURATION	4 days
PARTICIPANTS	20

In May, Isola hosted the sixth edition of the international workshop "*Il giornalismo che verrà*", a high-level, free training event for journalists. The workshop offered participants an intensive professional development experience, addressing the main challenges and innovations shaping the future of journalism. Over the course of four days, attendees explored key issues such as the use of artificial intelligence in investigative reporting, the creation of high-impact reportage, and strategies for pitching stories to international newsrooms. The programme also included discussions with leading figures in the field – renowned journalists, academics, and media professionals –covering ethical and economic questions facing the industry. It was a valuable opportunity for participants to enhance their skills and connect with a professional network of experts and peers.

TITLE

Il progetto non può BAR/ARE

PARTNER	Abadir Accademia di design e comunicazione visiva
DURATION	5 days
PARTICIPANTS	14

In September, Isola hosted a workshop led by Giulio Iacchetti as part of the Master's in Strategic Design and Creative Direction, coordinated by Vincenzo Castellana. The workshop focused on designing a refreshment area for Isola, not just a functional space, but one that encourages sociability, exchange, and a sense of community. A group of emerging designers developed three concepts, each shaped by principles of sustainability, inclusivity, and a vision

of Sicily that goes beyond the usual clichés. The designs explored everyday gestures and contemporary ways of inhabiting space, aiming to create an environment that reflects Isola's identity as a meeting point for professionals, creatives, digital nomads, visitors, local residents, and community members.

The process was enriched by conversations with coworkers and strategic partners such as Boniviri, FUD, Antica Dolceria Bonajuto, Moak, Folk, and Risto System. More than just a design brief, the workshop became an opportunity to reflect on what it means for Isola to create a space around food—one that serves not only as a practical amenity but as a way to express its identity as an open, dynamic and relational place where food fosters dialogue, connection, and cultural exchange, bringing tradition and innovation together in a warm and inspiring setting.

Our spaces are also designed as places of cultural production and exchange, open to collaboration with organisations that foster reflection on contemporary issues. In 2024, we hosted a number of events aligned with this vision, including a session on "Governance in Family Businesses" promoted by The European House – Ambrosetti, as well as gatherings organised by Bocconi Alumni, *La Sicilia*, the National Youth Council of ANCE, and Confindustria.

As part of a broader effort to build connections between cultural venues and local organisations, Isola has supported initiatives that form part of wider networks, acting as a stop, extension, or platform for new narratives. Some of these have become established fixtures in our annual calendar, such as "Agata on the Road", promoted by the Oelle Mediterraneo Antico Foundation ETS; "Catania Contemporanea – FIC Festival", curated by Scenario Pubblico; and the Isola Award presented within "Insula – Impressions of Sicily", a special section of *the Magma* short film festival. These initiatives strengthen the link between cultural production and local communities.

We also continue to support public-facing events that promote culture, local identity, and civic engagement, often led by dynamic youth communities such as Sicule Will, Destinazione Sicilia, and Katania MP. Throughout the year, these groups have brought energy to our spaces through a range of activities and gatherings that showcase Sicily's potential as a place worth investing time, ideas, and resources. Through talks, networking events, and podcasts, they have shared stories and offered new perspectives on the island.

TITLE

Catania Contemporanea

FIC festival - V edizione

PARTNER	Scenario Pubblico, Fondazione OELLE Mediterraneo Antico ETS
DURATION	10 days
PARTICIPANTS	52

For the third consecutive year, Isola took part in "Catania Contemporanea / FIC Festival", promoted by Scenario Pubblico and now in its fifth edition. On this occasion, we hosted the exhibition *Memorie di Etna – Memorie di Sicilia by Alfio Bonanno*, curated by the OELLE Foundation ETS. Closely aligned with the festival's theme – "Connections, Contamination, Art: In Search of Roots" – the exhibition gave powerful expression to these ideas through the artist's work: a poetic tribute to the landscape and to Mount Etna, to memory and identity, using collected materials that were transformed and reimagined as a visual narrative.

Our participation in the FIC Festival represents a valuable opportunity to contribute to the development of an interconnected cultural ecosystem that fosters dialogue between institutions and cultural venues active across the city. This citywide festival brought together a range of organisations and spaces, including Teatro Massimo Bellini, Associazione Musicale Etnea, Palazzo Biscari, Fondazione Brodbeck, IUAV University of Venice, Cinema King, Fondazione OELLE Mediterraneo Antico ETS, Associazione Città Teatro, the South-East Sicily Chamber of Commerce, and the Municipality of Catania, creating lasting synergies between content and context.

3.1.1

Make in South

4
No. of editions
2023 DATA: 4

334
SPRING 2024 participants
2023 DATA: 213

642
SUMMER 2024 participants
2023 DATA: 464

265
FALL 2024 participants
2023 DATA: 184

315
WINTER 2024 participants
2023 DATA: 444

1556
No.of participants in MiS 2023 editions
2023 DATA: 1305

31
No. of MiS events
2023 DATA: 40

14
No. of MiS events open to the public
2023 DATA: 28

9
No. of Education events within MiS
2023 DATA: 10

17
No. of Networking events within MiS
2023 DATA: 9

Our spaces continue to serve as the setting for *Make in South (MiS)*, the Community Meeting we have hosted since before Isola was formally established as a social enterprise. In 2024, *MiS* reached its 15th edition. Made possible thanks to the support of Manpower and Unicredit, *MiS* is a cultural and operational platform that, starting from the South, fosters dialogue on key issues such as social innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development, encouraging the exchange of best practices. For us, the event represents a shared time and space, a cultural infrastructure that hosts initiatives promoted by Isola as well as by other actors within our ecosystem. It is an open laboratory where diverse perspectives and energies come together. Each edition, held over three to five days, offers a rich public programme of talks, workshops, masterclasses, exhibitions and performances, all free and open to the wider community.

During the four editions in 2024 – Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter – the Coalitions became the main event of Make in South, shaping its content and defining the programme. Each edition was built around four thematic days, dedicated respectively to school, skills and work, entrepreneurship and creativity, and art.

The structure of the days maintained a balance between moments reserved for discussions among the members of the Coalitions, concentrated in the morning and early afternoon and activities open to the public, including training, outreach, and culture, designed to foster connections and multiply opportunities. From recurring formats such as "Pitch Match Deal!" to training events organised by Tree-Opinno and Junior Achievement, to more experimental initiatives like "Food Made Good," and community events such as "Risonanze#2," "Isola Connection – Christmas Edition," and "Magnum – Ti meriti un panettone siciliano," Make in South continues to represent a dynamic ecosystem of visions, ideas, and collaborations, bridging the public and private sectors, the local community and territory, as well as local skills and global networks.

6
No. of Artistic events within MiS
2023 DATA: 7

4
No. of Community events within MiS
2023 DATA: 7

1
No. of Impact-themed events within MiS
2023 DATA: 5

7
No. of Innovation-themed events within MiS
2023 DATA: 2

TITLE

Pitch Match Deal!

In collaboration with Arcadia Holding

EDITION DATES

Edition no.5 – 23.04 / Edition no.6 – 19.06
Edition no.7 – 23.09 / Edition no.8 – 19.12

"Pitch, Match, Deal!" is a format developed by Isola in collaboration with Arcadia Holding. Itaddresses those who dream of starting a business, those who have already launched a projectand are looking for new connections, and those who want to discover the most inspiringinnovation stories from Southern Italy. It provides a space for exchange and dialogue among startups, small and medium enterprises, investors, advisors, and professionals, where ideas, experiences, and opportunities come together. Launched in 2023 within the Make in South platform, the format has since become a regular and itinerant event that follows the rhythm of the seasons and editions of the festival. At the heart of "Pitch, Match, Deal!" lies human and professional exchange. The protagonists are young entrepreneurs who, with passion and vision, share their journey and engage in direct dialogue with those who can help grow their projects. In 2024, "Pitch, Match, Deal!" gave voice to different stories united by a responsible and innovative outlook. In the spring, the spotlight was on Ruralis, a Campania-based startup that enhances inland areas and promotes sustainable agriculture, pre-

sented by its founder Nicolas Verderosa. In the summer, Sestre, a Puglia-based startup founded by a team of five women committed to menstrual wellbeing and fertility, took the stage through the passionate account of Sonia Elicio. In September, we hosted Diego Lai, founder of Autentico, a startup offering RFID and NFC solutions to combat counterfeiting in the wine and spirits sector by ensuring authenticity and traceability. The final edition of the year, held in winter, took place behind closed doors. It featured a private meeting between Boniviri – the company that marked the launch of Make in South – and a group of businesses and potential investors, who analysed its growth journey with a focus on sustainability and strategic development. As the editions unfold, "Pitch, Match, Deal!" continues to prove itself a valuable tool for strengthening the local entrepreneurial fabric and building a fertile and inclusive ecosystem in Southern Italy where ideas and talent have the space to thrive.

TITLE

Food Made Good

"Dal campo al piatto" promoted by *Food Made Good* Italia and Boniviri

DATE

22 March 2024

"Food Made Good: From Field to Plate" was an event focused on sustainability in the food sector, highlighting how every actor in the supply chain, from production to food service, can make a difference through mindful choices and responsible practices. Far from being a theoretical concept, sustainability is expressed through tangible commitments like sourcing ingredients responsibly, reducing environmental footprints, and supporting a food culture that values equity and long-term well-being. The event began with a panel discussion featuring national and international experts, farmers from the Boniviri network, chefs and food industry professionals. Together, they explored how sustainability can be embedded at every stage of the supply chain, from agricultural production to food service, from ingredient selection to environmental responsibility.The aim was to promote good practices that can help drive positive change and contribute to building a more equitable, conscious and sustainable food system. Within this framework of insight and exchange, the "Food Made Good Italia 2023"award ceremony also took place. This initiative, promoted by Food Made Good Italia to-

gether with Boniviri, a benefit company and certified B Corp, recognises restaurants that meet the highest sustainability standards. The three winning restaurants – La Gardenia, Casa Format and Plante Lab – were acknowledged for their commitment to responsible ingredient sourcing, environmental impact management and for promoting menus that reflect sustainability values. Thanks to our long-standing partnership with Boniviri, we continue to raise awareness around sustainability in the food sector. Our aim is to support the spread of knowledge and responsibility throughout the entire supply chain. Events such as "Food Made Good" provide a valuable opportunity to activate communities, connect diverse worlds and give visibility to exemplary practices that can truly generate a positive impact on both the local area and the environment.

KPI Spaces

BUSINESS AREA	IMPACT AREA	KPI	2023	2024
Spaces	School	No. of programs designed for youth <20	0	1
		No. of participants aged <20 in programs hosted by Isola	0	25
	Skills and Work	No. of unique entries in coworking spaces	515	660
		No. of entries in coworking spaces	1871	2382
		No. of unique entries in coworking spaces by residents of the Metropolitan City of Catania	184	152
		No. of unique entries in coworking spaces by residents from other areas of Italy	168	146
		No. of unique entries in coworking spaces by visitors from other areas of the world	163	269
		Occupancy rate of the Hot Desk in the co-working space	74%	58,87%
		Occupancy rate of the Fix Desk in the co-working space	100%	100%
		No. of university Field Visit hosted	3	5
		No. of programmes hosted for university and post-university students	4	16
		No. of participants aged <20 in programs	146	416
	Entrepreneurship and Innovation	No. of located organizations	51	51
		No. of located free organizations	6	9
		No. of meetings hosted at Isola	187	74
		No. of corporate retreats	9	12
		No. of retreats by organizations specifically visiting Sicily to hold a retreat at Isol	5	12
	Art, Culture, Creativity	No. of events hosted at Isola (organized or hosted, excluding meetings	283	101
		No. of exhibitions	7	3
		No. of performances	6	1
		No. of concerts	2	3

SPACES SCHOOL SKILLS AND WORK ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ART, CULTURE, CREATIVITY

3.2 Coalitions

Coalitions

Launched in 2023, the *Coalitions* project is a pioneering initiative promoted by Isola, designed to build and activate a multi-stakeholder platform addressing four critical challenges affecting Catania and Sicily as a whole. The School *Coalition* focuses on tackling educational poverty, while the *Skills and Employment Coalition aims* to address unemployment, skills mismatches, precarious employment, and informal labour. The *Entrepreneurship and Innovation Coalition* responds to the decline of the innovation ecosystem and the shortage of new enterprises, particularly those with a social impact focus. Finally, the *Culture, Creativity and Arts Coalition* seeks to strengthen local cultural and creative industries.

> Through *Coalitions*, Isola provides an open and impartial platform to foster meaningful connections among stakeholders, build trust and collaboration, and ultimately contribute to enhancing the opportunities available in Sicily.

The Coalitions is a genuine community of practice through which Isola manages participatory processes, engages the most relevant stakeholders to build a strategic vision and foster systemic change, analyses data, studies and research, and develops collaborative projects to turn ambitions into concrete actions.

They serve as the functional link between our physical hub and our impact projects. Acting as a catalyst through their ecosystem-based structure, they enable us to sustain local dynamism by fostering dialogue and collaboration between public and private sectors, for-profit and non-profit organisations, local and global actors, and enterprises of all sizes. By building strategic networks, facilitating the exchange of diverse expertise and providing mutual support, they strengthen individual capacities and empower members to play an active role in generating positive change across the region.

Within the Theory of Change (and the Social Business Model), the *Coalition* functions as an enabling activity, creating the necessary preconditions for Isola to deliver transformative outputs and, through its broad portfolio of projects, generate genuine outcomes. During the year, we came to understand that maintaining the *Coalitions* as separate entities is in fact rather ineffective. For 2025, we will adopt a single membership programme—still called *Coalitions*—which will continue to focus on the four impact areas: education, employment, innovation and culture. The benefit of a unified platform is its capacity to encourage the hybridisation of expertise and cross-sector collaboration, thereby fostering innovative solutions to local challenges and promoting synergies between organisations.

PARTNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2024 COALITIONS

UniCredit
Manpower
pwc
Terna
bip.
Abadir Accademia di Design e Comunicazione Visiva
AITHO
ANCE CATANIA
Cosmico
JA Italia
NS netsense
Paradigma
THE WAVE

JULY 2024

The School Coalition at Gen-E

An off-site edition of the *School Coalition* was held as part of the Gen-E programme at the former Monastery of the Benedictines in Catania. Around 300 attendees took part, including representatives from public institutions, businesses and third-sector organisations. The event served as a call to join forces in support of schools and to tackle challenges such as school dropout, educational poverty and lack of opportunity in Sicily. Participants endorsed a manifesto and agreed a set of concrete actions, notably the memorandum of understanding between Junior Achievement Italy and the Regional School Office.

SEPTEMBER 2024

Experis "Tech Cities" Report National Debut:

In September, we presented the Experis "Tech Cities" report to the local ecosystem in its national premiere. This annual study by Experis Italy, a ManpowerGroup brand specialising in IT solutions, analyses the Italian labour market in the IT, digital and technology-consulting sectors. The report identifies Catania as one of Italy's top ten tech cities, affirming the combination of factors that make our region highly competitive: the quality of university education, the density of the innovation ecosystem, the quantity and calibre of local talent, and the economic advantages of localisation (incentives, tax relief and bonuses)..

SEPTEMBER 2024

Focus Group "Green Skills Academy"

During the *School Entrepreneurship and Innovation Coalition*, we initiated a dialogue with key stakeholders in our ecosystem around the "Green Skills Academy" project, promoted and supported by the Snam Foundation. This programme is designed to guide young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) through a structured learning and employability pathway in the renewable energy sector. Our region is particularly well-placed to develop a green transition supply chain, evidenced by the presence of 3SUN, Europe's largest gigafactory built by Enel. Isola Catania, together with the Snam Foundation is committed to ensuring that the green transition is also a just transition, tackling not only environmental but also social challenges.

SEPTEMBER 2024

Autumn of Innovation

We set out to connect and showcase the many voices within Sicily's innovation ecosystem, which in autumn 2024 generated dozens of events and opportunities, some of international significance, that warranted both narration and amplification. Among the most noteworthy were the "Premio 2031" presented by Danilo Mazzara; the Sud Innovation Summit in Messina, organised by Roberto Ruggeri; the Mediterranean Startup World Cup in Palermo, curated by Francesco Cracolici; the "Premio Innovazione Sicilia", also in Palermo, presented by Elita Schillaci; and, finally, the Social Enterprise Open Camp in Catania, co-organised by Fondazione OPES and Isola. All of these contributors – and many more – are actively shaping a new narrative of Sicily: contemporary, innovative and at the forefront of progress.

DECEMBER 2024

Roundtables on Regional Funding Calls:

Although Sicily has a vast pool of resources available for business incentives and the innovation sector, this does not automatically guarantee funding for everyone. The level of complexity has increased significantly; it is essential to be innovative and competitive, focusing on high quality project design and structured collaboration between organisations. For this reason, we launched a new format to share information and foster collaboration for improved access to regional facilitated finance opportunities, in partnership with Sergio Amato, who contributes to Isola's Coalitions through his Finance Consulting.

SEPTEMBER 2024

“La Cultura del futuro”

The September meeting of the *Culture, Creativity and Arts Coalition* alternated between discussion and project experimentation. We began with a conversation centred on the book “La cultura cura” by Noemi Satta and Emanuel Ingrao, with the authors in attendance, which provided a fresh perspective on the role of culture in care innovation and territorial regeneration. The “La Cultura del futuro” workshop, facilitated by Shifton, introduced a collaborative method for critically analysing the present and constructing transformation scenarios for Catania in 2040. Themes such as climate change, economic sustainability, accessibility and new forms of community emerged as key components of a cultural vision capable of shaping systems. The event reaffirmed the importance of integrating external inspiration, collaborative practice and strategic imagination into local development processes.

DECEMBER 2024

Magnum Contest

We concluded 2024 with the prize giving of the “Magnum, ti meriti un panettone Siciliano” contest, promoted by Farm Cultural Park, Di Stefano Dolciaria and Industria 01, with Isola nominating twelve projects from the Coalitions. The initiative, led by a local company, highlights the value of rootedness through corporate culture and social innovation. It provided an opportunity to map projects active across Isola’s four impact areas, offering a snapshot of the ecosystem’s vitality. The prize giving, enhanced by an artist’s print, celebrated connections and project development, closing the year with a collective wish for renewed energy

NOVEMBER 2024

"Inside" Project Focus

One of the *Coalitions* project's key activities is the analysis of data, reports, studies and research to share with participants both during meetings and asynchronously. Lacking the resources to produce wholly original research and reports, we have curated a wide range of sources at local, national and European levels, and we have also invited *Coalitions* members to contribute their own publications.

The opportunity to take a leading role in data processing and correlation arose thanks to a funding call issued under "MUSA – Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action", an innovation ecosystem financed by the Ministry of University and Research as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). This consortium brings together the University of Milan Bicocca as the proposing body, the Politecnico di Milano, Bocconi University, the University of Milan and numerous public and private partners.

The "InSiDE:Innovation and Sicily Data Engine" project aims to transform Sicily into a centre of innovation and knowledge by means of a hybrid physical and digital platform. This platform aggregates and analyses data drawn from the four core Coalition sectors –education, employment, innovation and culture– and turns it into strategic insight. "InSiDE" is intended to convert Sicily's untapped potential into tangible opportunities through robust data analysis.

In 2025, the partnership will launch an AI-enabled platform to collect and interpret information, identifying regional trends, challenges and development prospects. Central to this platform is a suite of clear, measurable indicators that draw on data from the four *Coalitions* areas –education, employment, innovation and culture– to generate strategic insights.

Beyond its digital capabilities, InSiDE leverages Isola's physical hub and the Coalitions programme to turn those insights into action. Through structured co-creation workshops, businesses, start-ups, institutions and community members collaborate on new initiatives and solutions. This phygital approach combines in-person engagement with advanced analytics, offering a novel response to Sicily's social and economic challenges. Fully aligned with the region's Smart Specialisation Strategy, InSiDE seeks to foster an integrated social-innovation ecosystem that delivers concrete benefits and promotes sustainable development across the island.

3.2.1

Future4Cities Award

Future4Cities is an annual festival conceived by Will Media and from Collective that explores, designs, and envisions the future of cities, recognising them as engines of progress and laboratories for social innovation. At the heart of the festival is the Future4Cities Award, which celebrates urban innovation projects across Italy, including initiatives led by public administrations, third-sector organisations, businesses, foundations, and citizen groups. A distinctive feature of the award is its open call for submissions, enabling the identification and mapping of hundreds of transformative initiatives nationwide. This process plays a crucial role in enhancing visibility and fostering connections among diverse actors who often operate withoutshared networks or reference points. The festival serves as a public forum to showcase

significant urban innovations and stimulate discussions on the challenges facing future cities.The Future4Cities Award encompasses four categories: Climate Action, Grassroots Projects, Urban Transformations, and Local Economic Development. In the latter category, our initiative, "Coalizioni per Catania," was honoured for its capacity to generate economic and social impact in our city through a collaborative and regenerative model. Our team had the privilege of accepting the award and delivering a brief speech of gratitude on 30 November during the closing event held at Superstudio Events in Milan. Receiving this recognition from Will Media and FROM Collective, organisations we deeply respect, was a significant

honour. However, participating in the Future4Cities festival offered much more than an accolade: it provided a valuable opportunity to engage with a dynamic environment rich in insights, high-calibre content, and forward-thinking perspectives on the future of cities. We connected with experts, young professionals, administrators, entrepreneurs, and innovators from across Italy, reinforcing our sense of belonging to a vibrant and active network committed to envisioning and constructing a different future.

One of the most moving moments of the festival was meeting fellow Sicilians living away from home. Some were already familiar with our work and greeted us with enthusiasm; others were hearing about Isola for the first time and were intrigued to learn about an innovative project rooted in their homeland. These encounters reinforced our awareness of the symbolic and tangible significance of our commitment to Southern Italy.

KPI Coalizions

BUSINESS AREA	IMPACT AREA	KPI	2023	2024
		No. of actors involved in this Coalition	16	22
		No. of meetings	2	5
		No. of actors involved in this Coalition	37	40
		No. of meetings	3	4
		No. of actors involved in this Coalition	22	37
		No. of meetings	1	4
		No. of actors involved in this Coalition	0	82
		No. of meetings	0	4

COALITIONS · SCHOOL · SKILLS AND WORK · ENTREPRE NEURSHIP AND INNOVATION · ART, CULTURE, CREATIVITY

3.3

Projects

Projects

Projects are the driving force behind our mission. They represent the culmination of an ecosystem that begins with our physical spaces, is strengthened through collaborative coalitions, and materialises in tangible initiatives that foster social innovation. As detailed in Section 2.3, each project emerges from attentive listening to the community, identifying genuine needs, and aligning them with opportunities for meaningful change. This approach ensures that our initiatives are deeply rooted in the local context and responsive to its unique challenges.

In this section, we present our projects categorised by their respective impact areas: Education, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Culture, Creativity and the Arts. This framework allows us to clearly highlight the structure of our interventions and the specific contributions each initiative makes to the overall impact system. Each project is introduced through a summary sheet designed to provide a concise and intuitive overview. Within each sheet, we offer essential information regarding the project's objectives, activities undertaken, target beneficiaries, and outcomes achieved.Our projects tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing our region –ranging from school dropout rates and youth unemployment to skills mismatches and the underutilisation of creative capital. We are committed to developing scalable and replicable models of social innovation that can drive lasting change. Since our inception, we have dedicated a significant portion of our efforts to supporting young people, believing they are the driving force behind a more equitable, dynamic, and resilient society. In line with this vision, all the programmes we offer are provided free of charge to participants. We firmly believe that unrestricted access to education, training, and empowerment initiatives is a fundamental lever for reducing inequalities, fostering participation, and generating positive impacts that benefit the entire community.

2024 Projects

IMPACT AREA

School	Skills and Work	Entreprene urship and Innovation	Culture, Art and Creativity
Futuro direzione Sud	Unmasking Disinformation	Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers	Cultural-BEES
	Work from Bed	Fempreneurs	Creativity Pioneers
			Abbiamo tutto manca il resto

3.3.1

School

Given the significant levels of educational poverty detailed in Section 2.1, we dedicated Isola's inaugural year to researching and testing various methods for engaging school-aged individuals. Acknowledging that families and schools serve as the primary and irreplaceable pillars of education, we explored ways to complement existing initiatives. Our aim was to enrich the opportunities available to students beyond the confines of home and school environments.

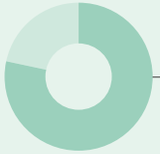
In addressing the challenges of educational poverty, as detailed in Section 2.1, Isola has prioritised supporting students in Catania to increase their awareness of the educational, employment, entrepreneurial, and cultural opportunities available within their region. Recognising that career guidance is often under-integrated within educational curricula, we have explored ways to incorporate it as a complementary activity alongside traditional teaching. While career guidance alone cannot resolve all issues related to educational poverty, it serves as a vital starting point. By exposing students to potential future pathways, be it further education or entry into the workforce, we aim to inspire them, broaden their perspectives, and motivate more informed decision-making. Our approach is grounded in the belief that informed choices regarding education and career paths can mitigate educational poverty. By equipping young people with the necessary tools and motivation, we strive to empower them to face their futures with greater confidence and purpose

In its first year of practical engagement with schools, Isola chose to focus primarily on highschool students. This decision stemmed from our identity as a hub comprising businesses and organisations that operate closely with the realms of work and higher education, sectors that highschool students are poised to enter imminently. In 2024, we launched "Futuro Direzione Sud," our inaugural post-diploma guidance programme designed to support young people in consciously shaping their educational and professional futures.

TITLE

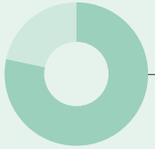
Futuro direzione Sud

PARTNER	University of Catania
DURATION	November 2024 – May 2025
PARTICIPANTS	260
AVERAGE AGE	17,7 years
GENDER	0,34% non-binary 53,74% female 45,92% male
NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED	13
NUMBER OF ORIENTATION HOURS DELIVERED	65h
AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS ATTENDED PER PARTICIPANT	5h



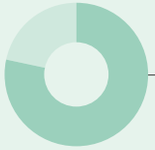
78,48%

Percentage of participants who reported finding the activity useful for their future choices



74,02%

Percentage of participants who reported feeling more motivated to continue their studies (whether technical, academic, or university-level



44,98%

Percentage of participants who reported feeling more motivated to stay in Sicily after completing highschool

"Futuro Direzione Sud" is a career and educational guidance programme developed by Isola and integrated into the "OUI, ovunque da qui" initiative of the University of Catania. The programme's name reflects a clear value-driven choice: to explore and highlight Southern Italy as a conscious and promising land, capable of attracting talent and fostering growth.

The programme engages highschool students, inviting them into Isola's spaces to participate in a three-phase journey: exploration of personal aptitudes, discovery of emerging sectors in the region, and orientation towards self-entrepreneurship. Through facilitation activities, practical workshops, and inspirational materials, such as documentaries featuring Sicilian role

models operating in growing sectors like energy, digital, agritech, tourism, and culture, we guide students in uncovering a territory rich in personal and professional growth opportunities.

Our aim is to strengthen students' confidence in their abilities and provide them with a comprehensive understanding of local opportunities. The goal is not to discourage those who wish to leave but to equip them with the tools to make informed decisions, free from resignation or negative stereotypes. We believe that choosing to stay in Sicily can be a positive and autonomous decision, grounded in a genuine awareness of the opportunities available, particularly in Catania.

3.3.2

Skills and Employment

The already complex labour market situation is further compounded by the issue of skills mismatch, a critical factor in understanding employment challenges in Sicily. According to the 2024 Confindustria Labour Survey, over two-thirds of Italian companies report difficulties in finding the necessary skills for their operations. This issue is particularly pronounced in sourcing technical profiles, identified by 69.2% of companies, and manual labour personnel, reported by 47.2% nationally and 58.9% in the industrial sector. The primary challenges are observed in key sectors such as the digital transition, where two-thirds of companies report problems in finding adequate competencies.[27] Regarding the growing demand for professionals with digital and STEM skills, the supply continues to lag behind the demand.[28]

This skills mismatch significantly contributes to perpetuating unemployment and exacerbates social vulnerability among those with limited access to training, upskilling, and reskilling opportunities. This creates a vicious cycle that hinders both economic and social development prospects.

In response to the challenges identified in the skills mismatch within Sicily's labour market, Isola has set a clear objective under its "Skills and Employment" impact dimension: to support underserved groups in enhancing their competencies in high-demand professional fields, thereby facilitating their integration into the local workforce. Building upon a thorough market analysis and continuous dialogue with businesses within the Coalitions, Isola has developed intensive training programmes, offered free of charge to the local community. These programmes are designed to equip participants with skills in sectors most sought after by the market. A significant effort has been made to create an offering that is genuinely supplementary, avoiding overlap with the numerous existing free initiatives. To achieve this, each course has been differentiated thematically, maintaining a highly specialised focus, and delivered in an intensive format that stands out for its concentrated approach compared to other courses. In the first year of operation, Isola promoted courses such as "Unmasking Disinformation" and "Work from Bed," and collaborated with Fondazione Snam on the planning of "Green Skills Academy," set to commence in 2025.

TITLE

Unmasking Disinformation

Navigating the Landscape of Journalistic Manipulations

GRANTMAKER	U.S. Mission to Italy
DURATION	January 2024
PARTICIPANTS	42
AVERAGE AGE	28,05 years
GENDER BALANCE	76,19% female 23,81% male
NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED	5 sessioni
NUMBER OF TRAINING HOURS DELIVERED	36h
AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS ATTENDED PER PARTICIPANT	36h

97,62%

Percentage of participants who completed the course

96,20%

Percentage of participants who reported being satisfied with the content

100,00%

Percentage of participants who stated that the programme exceeded their expectations

"Unmasking Disinformation: Navigating the Landscape of Journalistic Manipulations" is a training initiative aimed at journalists and communication students, focusing on disinformation, fact-checking and debunking. Supported by the Diplomatic Mission of the United States of America in Italy, the project forms part of our broader "Skills and Work" strategy, which seeks to equip young people and professionals with the competencies needed for meaningful careers in socially valuable sectors.

Over five days of activities, we welcomed a distinguished panel of speakers: Giovanni Zagni (Director of *Pagella Politica and Facta.news*), Thomas Kent (expert in international affairs and journalistic ethics), Daisie Sindelar (Vice President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty),

Anna Toniolo (journalist specialising in d sinformation and human rights), and Michele Spalletta (Communication Expert at Opinno Italia). The programme combined theoretical sessions in the morning with hands-on workshops in the afternoon, offering practical tools and techniques for verifying sources. Activities were delivered in both Italian and English.. Participation was offered free of charge to journalists and students from across Italy, with 10 places reserved for participants from Catania, 10 for those from other parts of Sicily, and 10 for applicants from the rest of the country. Travel and accommodation costs were reimbursed. During the same week, we also hosted the continuing professional development course *News Manipulation and Journalistic Ethics*, held under the patronage of Assostampa and the Order of Journalists of Sicily. This initiative reaffirmed Isola's commitment to promoting free, critical and informed journalism.consapevole.

TITLE

Work from Bed

Overcoming Life Barriers through a Digital Career

GRANTMAKER	Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale Impresa Sociale
DURATION	April 2024 - December 2025
PARTICIPANTS	30
AVERAGE AGE	40,93 years
GENDER	60% female 40% male
NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED IN 2024	1
NUMBER OF TRAINING HOURS DELIVERED IN 2024	8h
TOTAL NUMBER OF TRAINING HOURS FOR THE COURSE RUNNING FROM 2024 TO 2025	536h
NUMBER OF TRAINING HOURS COMPLETED BY EACH PARTICIPANT	8h

CALL	Prospettive Call for Applications	
PROJECT CODE	2023-PRO-00046	
PARTNERSHIP	LEAD ORGANISATION	Università Telematica degli Studi IUL
	PARTNER	Isola Catania impresa sociale s.r.l
		Intellegere società cooperativa sociale - impresa sociale
	SUPPORTING PARTNER	AEPI Confederation

"Work from Bed: Overcoming Life Barriers through a Digital Career" is a professional training programme aimed at unemployed or inactive individuals aged 34 to 50, residing in Southern Italy, who have physical, sensory, or invisible disabilities. The latter category includes chronic, disabling conditions that have been medically diagnosed, such as diabetes, kidney failure, neuropathies, endometriosis, vulvodynia, migraines, and phobias, which limit the ability to carry out everyday activities. The project aims to provide a fully online digital training course designed to create new employment opportunities, including for those with mobility restrictions.

The initiative responds to a context marked by significant regional and employment inequalities. In the South and Islands, inactivity rates among 35-49 year olds reach 18.5%, while only 35.8% of people with disabilities are employed, compared with a European average exceeding 50%. In Sicily alone, there are over 280,000 people with disabilities, yet only 19% have access to work, due to cultural barriers and gaps in training that severely restrict social inclusion.

The objective of "Work from Bed" is to encourage the employment inclusion of people with disabilities by promoting digital training paths to develop specialists in Marketing, E-Commerce, and CRM. This equips participants with skills in demand on the labour market, fosters personal autonomy, and opens up new job opportunities, including fully remote positions, supported by a final placement activity.

3.3.3

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Entrepreneurship is one of the key drivers of economic and social development at local level. In Sicily, as highlighted in our context analysis, the entrepreneurial landscape appears dynamic yet still fragile. Although the South and Sicily show signs of vitality, they continue to face structural limitations that hinder their full competitiveness. The average size of businesses remains very small, bringing with it a range of associated challenges.

Alongside these trends, there is growing vitality in female entrepreneurship, often driven by the need for self-employment. This data highlights the need to act on two fronts: on the one hand, by strengthening entrepreneurial skills, particularly among young people and women, and on the other, by fostering supportive environments capable of sustaining impactful entrepreneurial journeys, including through networking strategies, mentorship, and improved access to capital.

Against this backdrop, Isola has made a strong and deliberate commitment to promoting entrepreneurship as a tool for economic empowerment and social change. Our approach aims to foster conditions that support the creation and growth of enterprises that generate not only economic value but also social and environmental impact.

In response to the needs identified in the local context, in 2024 we launched two strategic programmes: "EIMSEB: Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers – Social Enterprise Bootcamp" a programme designed to build know-how in social entrepreneurship across the Euro-Mediterranean region and encourage the exchange of skills among traditional, social, and aspiring entrepreneurs from different countries; and "Fempreneurs: Female Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Education", a dedicated empowerment and training initiative for women in Sicily, aimed at supporting female self-employment and contributing to the reduction of gender inequalities.

Both programmes, offered entirely free of charge to participants, are grounded in an inclusive logic and the strengthening of local capacities. The dual objective is to support the emergence of new social impact enterprises and contribute to building a stronger, fairer, and more innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem, one capable of retaining talent, creating quality employment, and promoting sustainable development.

The following project summaries present the content, objectives, and outcomes of these twoinitiatives in detail. For Isola, they represent a significant step forward in strengthening its commitment to a future rooted in shared social innovation.

TITLE

EMIMSEB

Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers - Social Enterprise Bootcamp

GRANTMAKER	EU Commission
DURATION	September 2024 - June 2025

CALL	*Erasmus+ KA210-ADU - Small-Scale Partnerships in Adult Education*	
PROJECT CODE	2024-1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000252278	
PARTNERSHIP	LEAD ORGANISATION:	Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.
	PARTNERS	Asociación Arrabal Aid (Spagna)
		Esquare (Francia)
		Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation (Malta)
		Mataroa (Grecia)

"EMIMSEB: Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers – Social Enterprise Bootcamp" is a project aimed at promoting know-how in social entrepreneurship as a tool for civic engagement across the Euro-Mediterranean region. It targets traditional and social entrepreneurs, new and aspiring business owners, third sector professionals, and citizens with an interest in social innovation. Developed in a context where social entrepreneurship remains fragmented and undervalued, the project seeks to build a Euro-Mediterranean network, foster lifelong learning, and support the growth of active citizens and social entrepreneurs capable of driving change. For Isola, promoting entrepreneurial skills and building networks in the Euro-Mediterranean area is a strategic priority to encourage the creation of new impact-driven enterprises. A range of activities were launched in 2024, including: the partner meeting in Catania, which brought together two representatives from each partner organisation participation in the "Social Enterprise Open Camp 2024", organised with Isola's support, as described in section 3.4.2; the establishment of the Social Enterprise Observatory, which led to a study on social entrepreneurship in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the publication of a report available in English, Italian, Maltese, Greek, Spanish, and French. In 2025, the project will continue with the "Social Enterprise Bootcamp", an immersive programme involving 35 participants from the partner countries. Beneficiaries will include individuals from various target groups: citizens interested in the third sector, traditional and social entrepreneurs, new and aspiring entrepreneurs, and professionals from the participating countries.

TITLE

Fempreneurs

Female Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Education

GRANTMAKER	U.S. Mission to Italy
DURATION	Novembre 2024 - Settembre 2025
PARTICIPANTS	32
AVERAGE AGE	40,2 years
GENDER	100% female
NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED	4
AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS ATTENDED PER PARTICIPANT	24h
SATISFIED BENEFICIARIES	94%

CALL	Annual Program Statement 2024
PROJECT CODE	S-IT700-24-CA-0087

"Fempreneurs: Female Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Education" project was developed with the collaboration and ongoing support of the United States Diplomatic Mission to Italy, which has supported Isola since its foundation.

With this initiative, Isola aimed to combine its commitment to promoting social impact entrepreneurship and innovation with the American mindset, which makes the United States a global benchmark for new enterprise development. In this context, Fempreneurs also seeks to strengthen bilateral cooperation between Italy and the USA by creating a direct link between men-

tors and future entrepreneurs, while promoting shared values, key skills, and the ideal of empowerment embodied by the American Dream. Funded by the U.S. Mission to Italy, with co-financing from Isola, *Fempreneurs* was launched in December 2024 and will conclude in September 2025. The programme fosters gender equality and the development of women-led enterprises in Sicily through a bilingual (Italian and English) empowerment pathway, combining inspirational content, theoretical knowledge, and practical tools. Participants are supported by eight mentors, including Italian women who have emigrated to the USA, Americans, Italian-Americans, and Americans living in Italy, all with experience in women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Following a selection process involving 60 applications, 32 women aged between 30 and 56 were admitted to the programme. The first event, a four-day kick-off held at Isola, took place in December 2024. To support participation, travel reimbursements, accommodation, and childcare services were provided.

3.3.4

Culture, Creativity and Art

Biscari. This symbolic location is not only of historical and architectural significance, but also represents the starting point for our concrete commitment to cultural valorisation and the promotion of creativity, combining historical awareness with a forward-looking vision. That is how we began: with the desire to return a heritage asset to the community, giving new purpose to the space and enabling its discovery also through exhibitions. We chose art precisely because of its power to provoke reactions and bring urgent contemporary issues to the surface. Our awareness that the knowledge and beauty economy, together with the values of art, are key drivers of competitiveness for our economy led us to develop a consistent strategy of action and project development.[29]

The contextual analysis highlights key issues that demonstrate the importance of our impact objective: to expand the relational capital of professionals in cultural and creative organisations, and to increase opportunities for exchange and dialogue. The first issue concerns the economic and employment value of the cultural and creative production system, which in Sicily remains underdeveloped compared to the national average, despite a significant number of active enterprises. The second concerns the fragility of the cultural offer and the low levels of community participation, particularly among young people, in a context where the role of nonprofit organisations remains essential in generating inclusion, proximity and accessibility, and in sustaining spaces for cultural exchange and civic engagement across the territory.

In 2024, compared to the previous year, Isola strengthened its internal structure and organisation to respond more effectively to these needs. We pursued two main directions: on one hand, we began drafting targeted projects to apply for national and international calls aligned with our mission. These projects, focused on sustainability and heritage valorisation, aim to enhance the competitiveness of cultural and creative enterprises. In 2024, we worked on the implementation of Cultural Bees, a project funded by the European Union, and on planning *Coalitions Isola*; Culture, Creativity and Art workshops, promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture. On the other hand, we also directly supported certain initiatives as part of a strategic internal investment, in collaboration with partners and founding members including, in 2024, the Moleskine Foundation and Farm Cultural Park. These projects, the result of strong alliances, contributed not only to the creation of new spaces for exchange and dialogue, but also to the growth of a cultural network that reaches beyond local boundaries. They also responded to our key outcome of interest: supporting emerging artists and fostering connections among national and international creative enterprises.

25. Calabrò, A. (2025, marzo 31). *Cultura come il pane, la luminosità dei libri per ragionare di sviluppo sociale e civile. HuffPost*. huffingtonpost.it

TITLE

Cultural BEES

Creating cultural heritage businesses through hybrid earning models & hands-on curricula across borders

GRANTMAKER	EU Commission
DURATION	January 2024 - December 2026
PARTICIPANTS	23
AVERAGE AGE	17 years
GENDER BALANCE	56,67% female 43,33% male
NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED	3h

CALL	CREA-CULT-2023-COOP
PROJECT CODE	101129697
PARTNERSHIP	Junior Achievement Europe, Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Cyprus LTD, C.A. Innoeusphere LTD , Univerza V Novi Gorici, Consorzio Materahub Industrie Culturali E Creative, Danmar Computers Sp Zoo, Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Italy, Anci Lombardia, Ikonomicheski Universitet - Varna, Junior Achievement Bulgaria, Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO

"Creating Cultural Heritage Businesses through Hybrid Learning Models & Hands-on Curricula across Borders (Cultural BEES)" is a project funded under the Creative Europe Programme "(CREA) CALL CREA-CULT-2023-COOP." The initiative aims to develop and implement a training pathway and a digital toolkit designed to foster entrepreneurial skills in the cultural and creative industries among young people in the partner countries. The project officially commenced in February 2024 with the kick-off meeting held in Cyprus. Between May and July 2024, the consortium completed two key deliverables outlined in the project's second Work Package, in which Isola was directly involved: the *State of the Art Report and the National Ecosystem Forum Report.*

In June, we delivered the State of the Art Report, an analysis of the current landscape of the cultural sector in the partner countries, which serves as the foundation for developing the training pathway. In March, we organised the first local Ecosystem Forum, coinciding with the launch of the Culture Creativity and Art Coalition. The event brought together

cultural enterprises, schools and local stakeholders for a participatory moment of listening and co-design. At the heart of the day was a World Café-style workshop involving 20 students and 4 cultural organisations in discussions on the skills required in the sector, the role of schools, and the challenges of cultural work. This approach fostered a generative exchange across generations and professional spheres, highlighting the importance of relationships and shared vision in building more sustainable cultural ecosystems. The experience, documented in the National Ecosystem Forum Report, served as an initial test of the participatory methodologies that will shape the next phases of the project.

TITLE

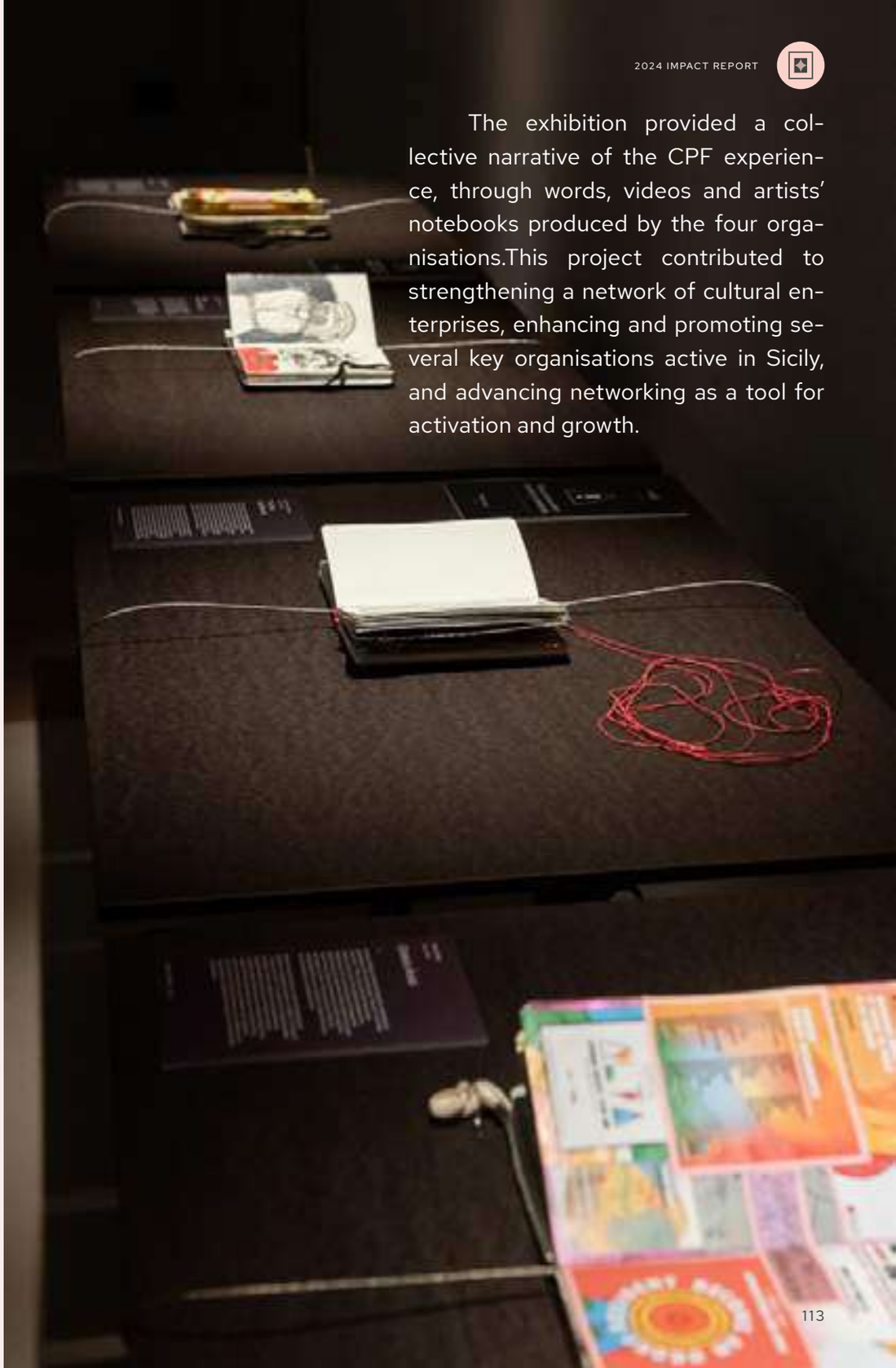
Creativity Pioneers @Isola

GRANTMAKER	Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.
PARTNERSHIP	Fondazione Moleskine
DURATION	19-22 March 2024
PARTICIPANTS	10 ICC
AVERAGE AGE	42 years
GENDER	14,29% non-binary 57,14% female 28,57% male

"Creativity Pioneers @Isola" is a project curated in collaboration with the Moleskine Foundation. It builds upon "Creativity Pioneers", the Foundation's collaborative philanthropic fund designed to support organisations around the world that use creativity as a driver for social transformation.

The first initiative within the project was a Field Visit, a three-day experiential residency which welcomed four organisations from the Creativity Pioneers Fund, selected from across the Mediterranean region, including two from Sicily. Over three intense days, Isola hosted a programme of exchange, dialogue and mutual learning: a journey through Catania and Sicily to discover cultural and artistic organisations that use creativity as a tool for social change. The itinerary included visits to Fondazione Oelle, Fondazione Brodbeck, Farm Cultural Park's embassy in Mazzarino, Collica & Partners gallery, and the Altamora Winery in Castiglione di Sicilia,all carefully chosen to foster connection, cross-pollina-

tion and idea generation, while deepening understanding of the shared dynamics and challenges within the Mediterranean region, with culture and creativity at the heart of a shared vision for the future. We hosted: Visual Voices (Cyprus), Fondazione Studio Rizoma (Palermo), Communitism (Athens), and Trame di Quartiere (Catania). Alongside the residency, the programme included a public talk – which also marked the launch of the *Culture Creativity and Art Coalition*,and an exhibition.



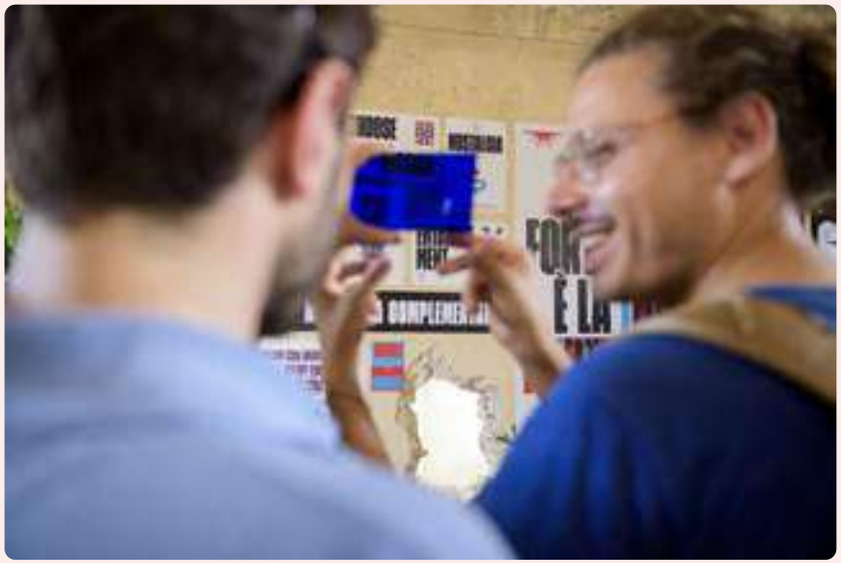
The exhibition provided a collective narrative of the CPF experience, through words, videos and artists' notebooks produced by the four organisations.This project contributed to strengthening a network of cultural enterprises, enhancing and promoting several key organisations active in Sicily, and advancing networking as a tool for activation and growth.

TITLE

Sicilia 2224 _ Abbiamo tutto manca il resto

GRANTMAKER	Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.
PARTNERSHIP	Farm Cultural Park
DURATION	20 June (opening)
PARTICIPANTS	11 artists
AVERAGE AGE	35 years
GENDER	27,7% female 72,7% male

"Abbiamo tutto, manca il resto" (We Have Everything, Except What's Missing) is a project conceived by Farm Cultural Park as a dynamic and collective platform to reimagine contemporary Sicily. Inspired by the famous quote from Pino Caruso, the initiative was launched as a public call by Andrea Bartoli and Florinda Saieva, aiming to reflect on the island's contradictions and envision new possibilities for change. More than just an exhibition, it functioned as a cultural device extended across space and time, engaging symbolic locations such as Farm, Isola, the Unfinished Auditorium of Aragona, and Civico 111 in Gela. Through the work of artists and creatives from different generations, the project tackled



themes such as diaspora, migration and incompletion, activating alternative visions for a fairer, more vibrant and more aware Sicily.

"Sicilia 2224" was the pavilion curated by Isola as part of the "Abbiamo tutto, manca il

resto" project. It explored the theme of Sicilian diaspora through a speculative and immersive narrative. Designed by Alessandra Rigano and Elisa Raciti, two young designers from Catania, the project imagined a Sicily projected into the year 2224, profoundly shaped by depopulation. The installation, exhibited at Palazzo Micciché in Favara and within the spaces of Isola, posed a pressing question: Who will inhabit Sicily in 2224 if we remain passive in the face of its emptying today? Coloured glass filters altered visitors' per-

ception of possible futures, inviting them to take a stance on the present, a powerful provocation in an election year. The project later evolved into a hand-bound publication collecting data, stories and testimonies, offering a collective and visionary narrative that weaves together critical awareness and shared responsibility.""Abbiamo tutto, manca il resto" concluded with the second edition of "Risonanze", a format designed for a broad audience: an evening event aimed at blending art, culture and conviviality. The evening featured performances by Alessio Bondì with Fabio Rizzo, Libero Reina, Katadeo, and a contemporary dance piece by Ocram Dance Movement in collaboration with Scenario Pubblico. Each artist, in their own unique style, gave voice to Sicilian culture, the theme of migration, and the call to collective responsibility.

The event celebrated Sicilian identity through music, dance and reflection – alternative forms of art that reveal the strength of community and culture as engines of change.

Project KPIs

BUSINESS AREA	IMPACT AREA	KPI	2023	2024
		No. of programs designed for youth <20	5	2
		No. of participants in programs designed for youth <20	178	283
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 54,06% males 45,58% non-binary 0,35%
		No. of programs designed for youth <20	0	2
		No. of participants in programs designed for youth <20	0	72
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 69,44% males 30,56% non-binary 0%
		No. of free orientation, information, and training events in the entrepreneurial field	4	4
		No. of programs delivered	2	2
		No. of participants in entrepreneurship guidance programs	97	86
		No. of participants in entrepreneurship training programmes	-	32
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 75% males 25%
		No. of programs delivered	1	4
		No. of artists involved	3	11
		No. cultural and creative enterprises involved	10	14

PROJECTS · EDUCATION · SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT · ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION · CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND ART

3.4

Major Events

Isola consciously chose to begin with a physical space, a real and accessible place. We believe in the value of presence: a space that becomes a point of reference, a relational platform, and a catalyst for opportunities for the city and the wider region. From day one, our goal has been to generate connections, spark transformative processes, and contribute to the cultural, social and economic vibrancy of Catania.

One of Isola's core missions is to build networks, attract national and international organisations, offer opportunities for dialogue and collective growth, bring new energy to the South, merge it with the local fabric, and share it anew, starting from the South.

In this spirit, 2024 marked a pivotal moment in which Isola attracted and co-organised internationally significant events such as "Gen-E", promoted by Junior Achievement Europe and Junior Achievement Italy; "SEOC", organised by Fondazione Opes Lcef and Consorzio CGM; and the "Pratolungo Unconference", conceived by Plurals, Campo Base and Onde Alte. Three distinct events, all aligned with issues close to our hearts: education, social entrepreneurship, and civic participation. As well as bringing urgent debates and forward-looking perspectives to our city, these events had a tangible impact on the local area, generating a significant economic boost through the presence of hundreds of participants and the mobilisation of accommodation providers, transport services and local suppliers. Even more importantly, we worked to ensure that each event was not an isolated or closed-off occasion, but a genuine opportunity for community engagement: volunteers, collaborators, professionals and citizens were able to take an active part and experience a collective, enriching and transformative moment..

The debates and encounters brought to Catania helped strengthen its position within international social innovation networks, generating connections, new initiatives and opportunities for sustainable development. The Isola brand – along with its spaces and approach – has been recognised and valued by national stakeholders, including foundations, public bodies and senior officials, consolidating our ambition to become a hub for social innovation in the South and across the Mediterranean.

3.4.1

Gen-E

PARTNER	JA Europa – Member of JA Worldwide; JA Italia – Member of JA Worldwide
DATE	2-4 July
PARTICIPANTS	Over 1000 (including 400 under the age of 25)
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	50
ECONOMIC IMPACT	€ 870.842,36

From the 2nd to 4th of July 2024, Catania hosted "Gen-E", Europe's largest festival dedicated to youth entrepreneurship, promoted by Junior Achievement Europe and Junior Achievement Italy. The event brought a thousand participants to the heart of Sicily, including students, teachers, entrepreneurs and institutional representatives from over 40 European countries.

The festival took place in two of the city's most iconic venues: the Monastery of the Benedictines and the Church of San Nicolò l'Arena. These spaces, rich in symbolism, reflect Catania's cultural and urban transformation. The Monastery, home to the University, served as the beating heart of the event: a place where tradition meets innovation, ideally suited to host an initiative centred on education, change and youth entrepreneurship. It was in its corridors, filled with university students, that the exhibition fair unfolded: a marketplace of ideas where finalist teams presented their projects to fellow students, teachers, guests and a panel of expert judges.Meanwhile, the impressive Church of San Nicolò l'Arena set the stage for the project pitches, offering a striking backdrop that gave voice to the energy and talent of the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Unlike previous editions, which were hosted in major European capitals such as Berlin, Paris, London and Tallinn, this time the choice fell on the South. It was Antonio Perdichizzi, founder of Isola Catania and outgoing president of JA Italy, who strongly advocated for Italy to nominate Catania rather than Rome or Milan:

"This important event is usually hosted in major European capitals. However, we chose to bring it where it was most needed."

– Antonio Perdichizzi, President of Isola Catania

In Sicily, the early school leaving rate exceeds 20 percent, reaching as high as 25 percent in Catania. Around 30 percent of young people aged 15 to 29 are NEETs – not in education, employment or training.

"We see GEN-E not as an endpoint, but as the beginning of a powerful new journey."

– Antonio Perdichizzi, President of Isola Catania

"Gen-E" marked a significant turning point: no longer just territories adapting to the world, but places becoming the centre of an international vision. It was an opportunity to demonstrate how the South too can be the origin of a narrative built on skills, innovation and youth participation.

Beyond the energy and enthusiasm of young people, "Gen-E" generated an economic impact exceeding one million euros, including both direct and indirect benefits, involving more than ten hotels and over ten local businesses. Above all, it provided a transformative opportunity for thousands of young women and men to imagine a different future based on their own passions and skills.

"Those three days enabled young people to begin seeing their future in a different light."

– Miriam Cresta, CEO of JA Italia

The three-day event featured a rich and varied programme, including awards, training sessions and exchanges. The beating heart of the event was the European competition, organised into several categories:

- Main Awards (highschool and University level, divided into Innovation and Businss Tracks)
- Signature Awards
- Online Awards
- European Competition Winners

The eagerly anticipated awards ceremony celebrated the work of an entire school year, encompassing prototypes, business plans, market analyses and discussions. Each student had the opportunity to fully engage in the experience by presenting their ideas and receiving valuable feedback.

Alongside the competition, the festival offered workshops, talks, podcasts and networking opportunities with major companies and European organisations. From Intel to HSBC, ManpowerGroup to FedEx, and including EIT, EY, BNY, UniCredit, Schneider Electric, Euroclear, Unioncamere, ANCE Catania, the Ministry of Sport and many others, partners and speakers created a unique educational programme. The official "Gen-E" podcast was also launched, comprising 17 episodes focused on key skills for navigating the worlds of work and innovation.

Among the most significant initiatives launched during "Gen-E" 2024 was the creation of the School Coalition, a strategic alliance promoted by Junior Achievement Italia and Isola Catania. The goal is ambitious: to build an educational infrastructure capable of guiding students through a journey of skills development, awareness and career and life orientation.

"We were literally covered in ash. But once everyone realised it posed no danger, fear gave way to wonder. That unexpected moment was truly magical. It made the event unique and revealed the strength of our territory, in all its complexity and beauty, as well as our ability to respond swiftly and resiliently."

– Antonio Perdichizzi, President of Isola Catania

3.4.2

SEOC

PARTNER	OPES | LCEF IMPACT FUND · cgm
DATE	24-27 October
PARTICIPANTS	370 (including 74 under the age of 30)
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	41
ECONOMIC IMPACT	€350.000 (including 74 under the age of 30)

The 2024 Social Enterprise Open Camp was held in Catania, hosted in distinguished venues including Teatro Sangiorgi, the Monastery of the Benedictines and Palazzo Biscari, and brought together an international community focused on social entrepreneurship and impact investing. It offered an immersive, in-person learning experience that brought more than 370 participants from 41 countries to the city for four days of meetings, workshops and networking opportunities.

This year's theme, *Beyond Inclusion*, invited participants to move past traditional approaches to diversity and inclusion, and instead explore business models with the potential to reshape the system. The real challenge was to think boldly: to see social enterprise as a force for systemic change. The programme began with two dynamic days of plenary sessions at Teatro Sangiorgi, where social entrepreneurs, academics, investors and key players from the global impact economy came together for keynote talks and panel discussions. From 25 October, the Monastery of the Benedictines, a baroque landmark and home to the University of Catania, became the setting for group work and workshops, culminating in the final presentations of each team's ideas..Seven themed workshops

formed the heart of the experience, each led by enterprises from Italy, Africa and Europe acting as real-world learning platforms. These included *Sustanza*, a Catania-based initiative promoting inclusion through employment; Kiron, which leverages digital education to advance equity; *Liquid Therapy* in Ireland with its sport-based therapeutic approach; and women's empowerment projects such as *Rio Fish* (Kenya) and *Made For A Woman* (Madagascar). Each case study offered a hands-on opportunity for dialogue, collaboration and innovation. With the guidance of two workshop leaders, participants explored critical issues around building enterprises that create tangible social impact. The outcomes were shared and celebrated during the final plenary session.

features is its strong commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Thanks to the support of partner organisations, 170 scholarships were awarded, covering accommodation, meals and registration fees. These enabled young entrepreneurs, students, changemakers and professionals from the third sector, with particular focus on Southern Italy, to take part.

Among these, ten scholarships were funded directly by *Isola* and reserved for young people from the Catania area, offering them the chance to engage with international peers and benefit from a high-impact learning environment. Catania wasn't just a backdrop, it was an active, welcoming presence throughout the event.

Isola co-managed the event's logistics, drawing on the city's cultural richness and selecting venues that deepened the immersive and intercultural nature of the experience. This included itinerant dinners in the historic city centre, with the final evening hosted at Palazzo Biscari, giving participants a chance to discover the sights, tastes and atmosphere of Catania in a uniquely engaging way. Art and creativity were also woven throughout the programme. From the logo and event concept designed by artist Robert Gligorov, whose work "Dove il fine inizia: una linea infinita", symbolised the continuous, generative movement of social enterprise: to live performances by Nairobi-based *Kake Wakake*, the *Jacaràndа* orchestra of Catania and the vibrant *Katadeo*, the event offered a collective soundscape that united cultures and rhythms..

SEOC 2024 was a global gathering with deep local roots. It positioned Catania as a key hub for international dialogue on social innovation, generating lasting connections, tangible impact and new opportunities for building a more inclusive, sustainable economy. The event's legacy continues through new projects such as the Green Skills Academy, developed in partnership with SNAM, and it has further strengthened *Isola's* role as a driver of social innovation across Southern Italy and the wider Mediterranean. This progress has been made possible through a strong and visionary partnership with *Fondazione Opes*.

3.4.2

Pratolungo

PARTNER	plurals CAMPOBASE onde alte
DATE	15-17 November
PARTICIPANTS	88 (including 13 under the age of 25))
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	1
ECONOMIC IMPACT	€71.432,05

From 15 to 17 November, the *Pratolungo Unconference | Etna* took place in Catania. Since its launch in 2022, this unique format has become one of the most dynamic and engaging spaces in Italy for meaningful exchange, collaborative reflection, and to explore new paths forward. Its distinctive feature lies in its approach: no fixed roles, no hierarchy, but rather a deliberate effort to bring together people of different ages, interests, skillsets and professional backgrounds.

Originally created in the hills of the Rieti basin, *Pratolungo* is curated by Alessandro Fusacchia, in collaboration with Massimiliano Ventimiglia and Lorenzo Micheli. It is made possible thanks to the involvement and support of a team of talented young professionals affiliated with the curators' three benefit companies: Plurals, Campobase and Onde Alte.

Participants, who are part of a dynamic and expanding community, are invited to step away from daily routines and immerse themselves in natural or urban spaces that encourage meaningful connection. The experience is designed to slow the pace, move beyond formal roles, and rediscover the value of listening, dialogue and collective imagination.

The November gathering began at *Isola*, where the group was welcomed in the *Sicilia Room*, immersed in a shared vision: *Marea*. Conceived in front of the "Big Dreams" board during the 2023 *Pratolungo Unconference*, this idea has, one year later, become reality: a new philanthropic foundation that transforms a critical challenge, the Sicilian diaspora, into an opportunity. The project was presented among the posters of *Sicilia 2224*, an exhibition created to raise awareness around the island's depopulation. It is in moments like this that the generative power of *Pratolungo* becomes clear: ideas are born, take shape, and, through meaningful human connection, are translated into action.

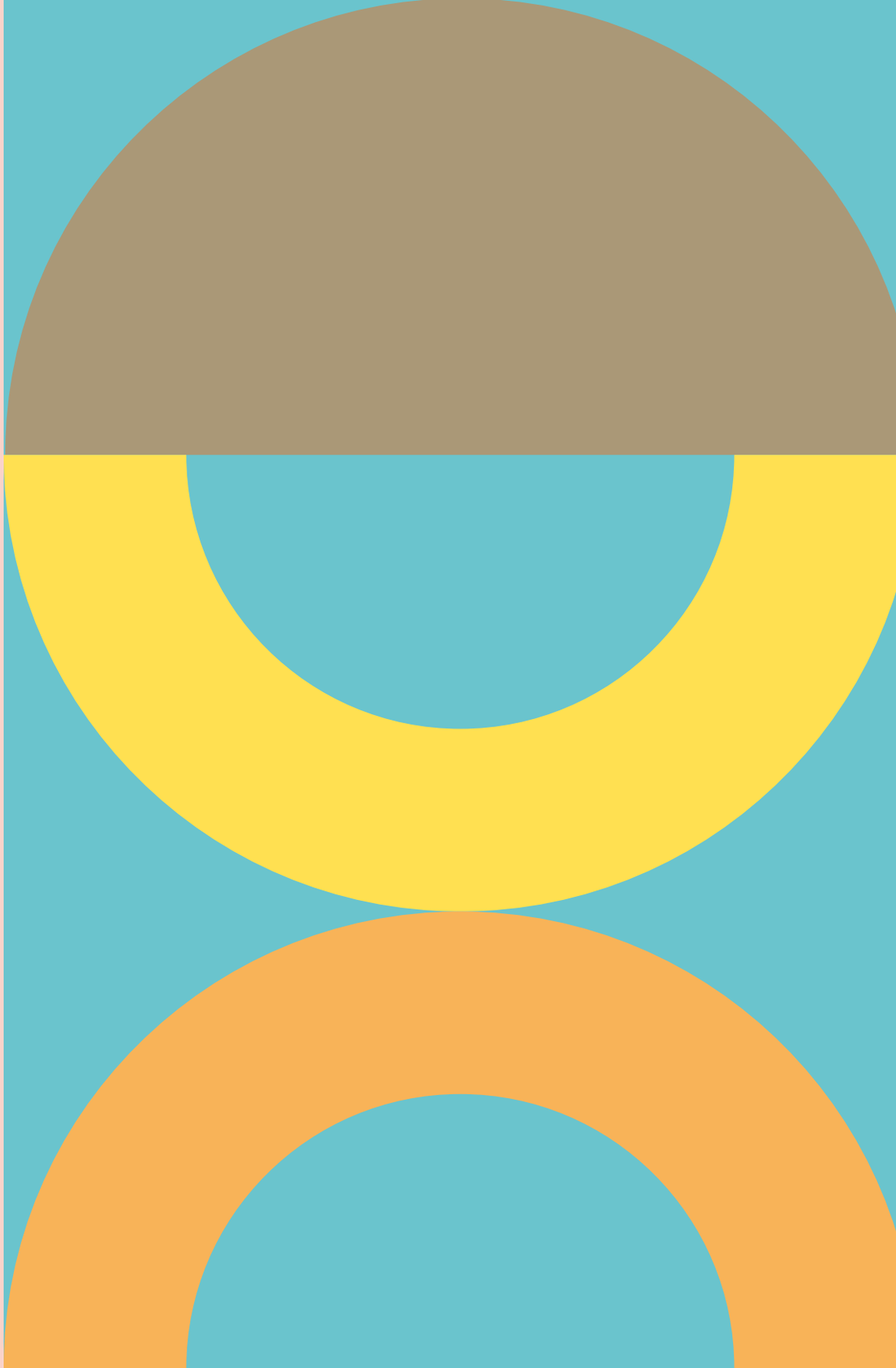
The programme then continued across a range of spaces that each contributed to deepening the experience. From the baroque grandeur of Palazzo Biscari, to the natural setting of Radice Pura at the foot of Mount Etna, and finally the return to the city in the foyer of Teatro Bellini, each location offered a setting rich in beauty and meaning. These places provided not only a physical space, but also the conditions to encourage reflection, exchange, and collective inspiration.

The closing moment, held in the foyer of Teatro Bellini, brought the experience full circle, returning to the themes explored in the opening days, from the stark portrayal of depopulation in *Sicilia 2224* to the encounter with Vito Teti, who guided us through a profound and poetic reflection on nostalgia and *restanza*. This concept of restanza was not merely about remaining, but rather about a deep-rooted connection to one's landa tension between belonging and displacement, between preservation and renewal. It is a generative sentiment, one that does not dwell on the past with regret, but looks to the future with a sense of responsibility.

For Isola, hosting the Pratolungo Unconference meant joining a group of extraordinary, curious and generous individuals. It was an opportunity to build networks, form new connections, and imagine on an ever-broader scale. At the same time, it provided a more intimate setting for reflection, offering a chance to acknowledge our common aspiration to pioneer new ways of coming together, driving change and making a meaningful impact. This is especially vital in a time that demands precisely this: the capacity to navigate collectively with purpose. It was also a chance to renew bonds with old friends, meet new ones, and weave relationships that will continue to spark exchanges, collaborations and new initiatives.

04

Structure, Administration and Responsible Governance



4.1

The Social Base and the Expansion of the Cap Table

Isola was established thanks to the shared vision of five founding entities. The first was a for-profit organisation, Arcadia Holding, which, through the commitment of forward-thinking Sicilian managers and entrepreneurs, initiated the necessary investments in 2020 to provide the city with an innovation hub and a community anchor, both of which were previously lacking. In a spirit of generosity, a decision was taken at the end of 2022 to establish an appropriate legal and organisational structure for the project. This led to the transfer of the relevant business unit and the creation of a new legal entity as a social enterprise and third sector organisation. Four not-for-profit organisations with strong local roots and a shared vision joined the initiative: *Farm Cultural Park, Scenario Pubblico, Fondazione OELLE Mediterraneo Antico and Junior Achievement Italia*. The alignment of values and cultural outlooks played a decisive role in forging an initial alliance that immediately recognised Isola's transformative potential.

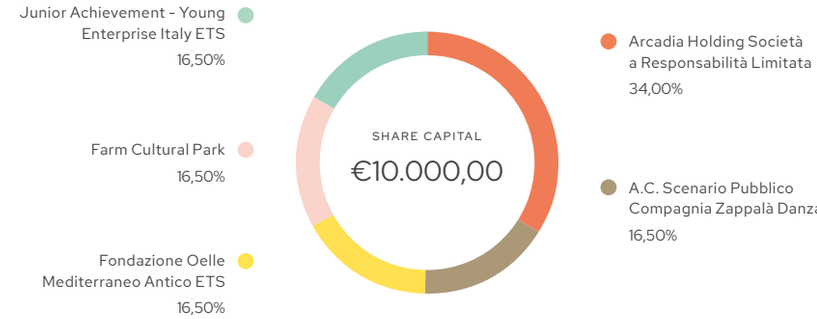
The initial share capital amounted to €10,000. However, over the course of 2024, the project began to attract interest from new national stakeholders based outside the region. These organisations chose to invest not only in the initiative itself, but also in the local area. This marks an important milestone, as it reflects growing awareness of the strategic role southern territories play within Italy's social innovation ecosystem. In response, we undertook a capital increase to enable three new partners to join the organisation: Fondazione Opes Lcef Onlus, Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore (FSVGDA), and Avanzi S.p.A., a benefit corporation.

Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore was introduced to Isola through Get it!, a programme designed to support impact-driven startups in their early stages. After being selected to participate, we took part in a structured programme of strategic support, mentorship and financial assistance. At the end of the programme, FSVGDA chose to support us with an equity investment of €50,000, recognising the value of our work and the potential of our development model.

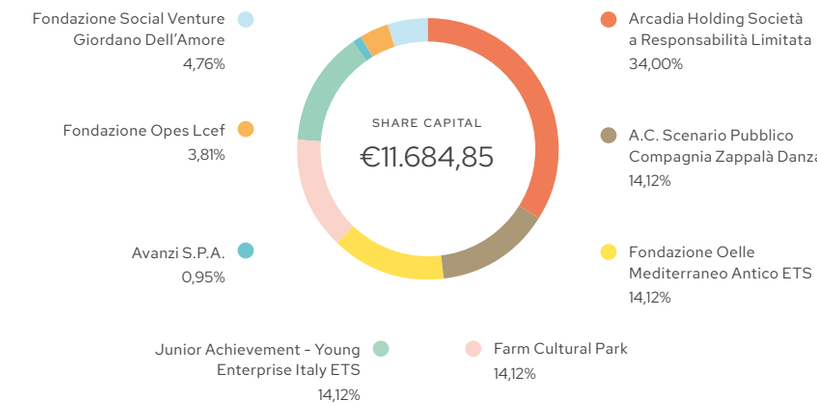
During the *Get it!* programme, we had the opportunity to work with Avanzi – Sostenibilità per azioni, one of Italy's leading organisations in the field of strategic consultancy and social innovation. The team at ACube, Avanzi's incubator, supported us in developing our impact theses and played a significant role in our growth as a social enterprise. This close and collaborative relationship fostered a sense of mutual trust and respect, which ultimately led Avanzi to invest directly in Isola by acquiring a stake in the organisation.

The third new shareholder to join Isola was Fondazione Opes Lcef Onlus, whom we first met in 2023 during the Social Enterprise Open Camp (SEOC) held in Todi. That first meeting evolved into a meaningful partnership when, in the months that followed, the foundation chose to co-organise the next edition of SEOC with us, this time hosted in Catania. Through the intensive planning and shared work that followed, Opes had the chance to develop a deep understanding of our project, the local context, and the city in which we operate.

Shareholders as of 31/12/2023



Shareholders as of 31/12/2024



As part of this journey, Fondazione Opes involved Fondazione SNAM, which chose to support Isola through *Restart*, an innovative philanthropic instrument developed by Opes. *Restart* is designed to support cooperatives and social enterprises with an entrepreneurial approach and strong social impact, by combining equity participation with strategic and operational support. The funding is provided in the form of equity, with flexible repayment conditions (ranging from three to five years), zero interest, no application fees, and a "forgiveness" clause to ensure the financial sustainability of supported organisations. Thanks to this instrument, Fondazione SNAM invested in Isola through equity participation by Fondazione Opes. This investment is a tangible expression of a shared commitment to generating long-term impact in the communities involved. It also reflects the legacy of the partnership between Opes and Isola through SEOC 2024 in Catania. At the same time, it marks the beginning of a broader dialogue and collaboration with Fondazione SNAM, aimed at fostering social innovation across Southern Italy.

The entry of these three new partners took place in the final quarter of 2024, following a resolution that increased Isola's share capital from €10,000 to €11,684.85. This step not only strengthened our financial structure but also expanded our strategic network, consolidating Isola's position as a nationally recognised player in the field of social innovation.

Arcadia Holding S.r.l.

TAX CODE	03420400834
SHAREHOLDING	34,00%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	16 December 2022

Arcadia Holding is a company established in 2016 and registered since 2019 in the special section for innovative SMEs. It operates as a holding company, investing in innovative businesses, startups, and SMEs based in Sicily, selected for their growth potential and their capacity to generate significant social impact.

Arcadia's mission is to enhance and develop the Southern Italian region, with a particular focus on Sicily, by providing expertise in consultancy and finance. The company fosters entrepreneurship through tailored consultancy programmes aimed at achieving shared goals in collaboration with the management teams of the supported businesses. In addition to consultancy services, Arcadia is committed to sourcing capital and making direct investments in the most promising entrepreneurial projects in the region. Investments may be made either directly through Arcadia Holding or via the creation of dedicated club deals involving networks of investors. A strong emphasis is placed on identifying and supporting emerging startups, assisting them in shaping a sound and sustainable business model capable of ensuring steady, long-term growth.

Arcadia positions itself as a true "beacon on the Island", guiding and supporting entrepreneurs as they navigate complex development and innovation paths. By combining capital, expertise, and a network of qualified contacts, Arcadia aims to build a robust and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that generates both social and economic value for the region.

ARCADIA
HOLDING

Avanzi S.p.a. S.b.

TAX CODE	12225960157
SHAREHOLDING	0,95%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	15 December 2024

Avanzi S.p.A. is an impact-driven company that has been working for nearly thirty years to foster sustainable change in how we produce, consume and live. It is founded on the belief that private interest and the common good can and must coexist, and that individual initiative can serve as a catalyst for collective wellbeing. At the heart of Avanzi's vision lies the ambition to overcome the traditional divide between state and market by building a social innovation ecosystem that places people and their real needs at the centre.

Avanzi's mission is to help this ecosystem grow through projects, pilot initiatives, entrepreneurship, and public policies that generate tangible impact. To achieve this, it brings together and enhances human, technical and financial resources, drawing on expertise and capabilities from the public, private and third sectors, while respecting the distinct roles of each.

Avanzi works with both public and private actors, from profit and non-profit sectors alike, offering professional services across a range of areas:

- a|change: strategy, change management, induction and training, reporting, impact evaluation, stakeholder engagement;
- a|place: urban policy, urban and property regeneration, community engagement, territorial activation;
- a|cube: incubation and acceleration programmes, product and service design, investment readiness, open innovation;
- a|finance:design and implementation of complex financial solutions for impact-driven initiatives and organisations;
- a|word: communication and content production for projects with high social and environmental value.

Since 2010, Avanzi has managed the coworking space in Via Ampère 61/a in Milan – a hub for like-minded organisations committed to social impact, also hosting public events and community gatherings.

To invest in Isola means believing in a form of innovation that grows in the margins, is nourished by relationships, and operates with a systemic vision. It means placing a bet on a vibrant, interdisciplinary network deeply rooted in its territory, capable of addressing one of Sicily's most pressing challenges, the ongoing diaspora and transforming it into a shared opportunity.

"This is what we mean by impact investing: generating measurable returns in terms of collective wellbeing, knowledge production, social regeneration, and the development of an entrepreneurial culture centred on impact. Isola is not just a meeting place; it is above all a space for innovation and the generation of social energy. And it is precisely this energy that Avanzi has chosen to invest in."

-Ilaria Pais, Manager Avanzi

avanzi

Farm Cultural Park

TAX CODE	93056910842
SHAREHOLDING	14,12%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	16 December 2022

Farm Cultural Park is one of the most influential independent cultural centres in today's contemporary cultural landscape, and one of the most vibrant initiatives dedicated to rethinking and reviving declining urban areas. It has received numerous accolades, including the prestigious Curry Stone Design Prize, awarded by the American foundation of the same name, as one of the 100 international experiences with the greatest social impact over the past decade, as well as the Human Design City Award from the City of Seoul. Farm was invited to participate in the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2012, 2016 and 2020, and has been featured in major national and international media such as *The Guardian, Vogue, and Domus*.

In recent years, it has been presented in Washington, Pittsburgh and Detroit as a guest of the US Department of State, at the Dublin Global Platform as a guest of the European Union, in Meishan, China as a guest of UNESCO, and in Abu Dhabi during the 10th World Urban Forum, hosted by the United Nations.

In 2021, Farm became an Official Partner of the New European Bauhaus. In 2022, it inaugurated two new initiatives in Mazzarino: "The Embassy of Farm", dedicated to cultural diplomacy, and "Plurals – broaden horizons", a new concept space designed for young people.

"Becoming part of Isola universe is both an honour and a deeply emotional experience. In every project ,and today more than ever with Marea, we feel the full strength of a vision that is inclusive, deeply rooted in the territory, and oriented towards the future. Isola reminds us that Sicily holds a powerful human and cultural energy capable of truly changing things. And it invites us to dream."

- Florinda Saieva & Andrea Bartoli, Farm Cultural Park

FARM CULTURAL PARK

Fondazione Oelle Mediterraneo Antico ETS

TAX CODE	04690650876
SHAREHOLDING	14,12%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	16 December 2022

Established in 2009 and chaired by entrepreneur Ornella Laneri, Fondazione OELLE Mediterraneo Antico ETS, with its operational and exhibition headquarters located within the Laneri family's hotel premises, adopted its current cultural and scientific direction in 2017. Since then, it has positioned itself as a cultural detonator, aiming to foster ongoing and contemporary artistic exchange among diverse ethnic groups.

The Foundation pursues its core mission through multiple avenues, with the aim of promoting emerging talent and encouraging cultural and demo-anthropological cross-pollination through the languages of art. It offers artists in residence dedicated spaces for work and reflection, enabling them to create pieces that engage with Sicily's historical and social context, and more broadly, with the Mediterranean region.

OELLE's vision takes shape through site-specific exhibitions designed around the unique artistic processes of each resident, as well as through educational activities involving students from primary schools to Sicilian Fine Arts Academies. The Foundation also organises workshops and initiatives focused on deepening the public's engagement with contemporary art.

The Foundation curates the photographic pavilion dedicated to Philip Stern, a moral legacy of the 1943 landing in Sicily entrusted by the renowned photographer. Its activities are documented in its Logbooks, publications intended to archive and preserve the memory of the projects carried out.

In addition, OELLE plays an active role within the national and international cultural landscape through collaborations with public bodies, private institutions and cultural partners, forming part of a dynamic and ever-evolving network.

Fondazione OELLE
MEDITERRANEO ANTICO ETS

Fondazione Opes Lcef Onlus

TAX CODE	96074340223
SHAREHOLDING	3,81%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	15 December 2024

Opes supports enterprises that generate social and environmental impact on a large scale through impact investing. Fondazione Opes-Lcef was established in 2012 as a pioneer in Italy and is internationally recognised for its support to social entrepreneurship through the use of patient capital. The activities undertaken include both financial support (such as equity participation, hybrid instruments, and debt) and pre- and post-investment support through mentorship, strategic guidance, and leverage for raising additional capital.

Special attention is given to female entrepreneurship, and for this reason, the Foundation has incorporated gender lens investing into its vision, applied both as an impact approach and a risk mitigation strategy. The Foundation also places particular emphasis on valuing diversity in all its many forms as a lever for promotion, growth, and entrepreneurial development.

Fondazione Opes-Lcef is also engaged in ecosystem-level accompaniment and training initiatives, the most notable being the Social Enterprise Open Camp, a unique training opportunity that brings together organisations working in social economy, innovative philanthropy, and impact finance. In 2017, the OPES LCEF charity trust in London joined the Opes network, and in 2023 the Trust established Opes Consulting in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2019, the Foundation promoted the establishment of Opes Italia Sicaf Euveca, an investment fund regulated by the Bank of Italy, which is an autonomous and separate entity from the Italian Foundation. The fund invests in organisations that generate positive impact on the environment, territories, people, communities, along their supply chains and at ecosystem level.

Together with the Charity Trust, the Foundation manages an active portfolio of 65 enterprises: 47 in Italy, 14 in Africa, and 4 in other parts of the world. Meanwhile, the Opes Italia fund has invested in 12 entities. In 2024, Opes invested in Isola, joining the company's shareholder base. This decision was driven by the conviction that Isola represents an innovative reality within the Italian landscape which, through multi-stakeholder synergies and partnerships, is creating, within the hub, a new model that is potentially effective and replicable for combating educational poverty and enhancing educational, guidance, and professional offerings.

By creating a true coalition, the social enterprise aims to become a centre for designing and developing educational pathways, launching academies, and retaining young people in Sicily who are interested in entrepreneurial development.

OPES | LCEF
IMPACT | FUND

Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore

TAX CODE	80022070157
SHAREHOLDING	4,76%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	15 December 2024

The Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore (FSVGDA) has been active since 2017 as the strategic and operational arm of Fondazione Cariplo in the field of impact investing. Through an integrated approach combining capacity building, investment and advisory services, it operates on both the supply and demand sides of capital and skills, supporting the growth of impact-driven enterprises throughout their entire life cycle. In doing so, it contributes actively to the dissemination of best practices and sector-specific expertise, triggering or accelerating socially and economically sustainable innovation processes. The development of skills is a central element of the Foundation's intervention model. Its capacity building initiatives, primarily delivered through the "Get it! – Percorso di Valore" and "Get it! For Partners" programmes, are designed to foster a more robust and structured demand for capital, which is a necessary condition for making impact investing a sustainable and attractive option for investors.

As part of this framework, in 2024 the Foundation invested €50,000 in Isola Catania, following a structured acceleration and mentorship pathway. The investment reflects the Foundation's recognition of the Catania-based innovation hub's vital role in supporting enterprise projects, innovative start-ups and SMEs, as well as in providing learning and development opportunities for local talent. As at 31 December 2024, the Foundation had invested over €11.5 million in 57 initiatives (53 enterprises and 4 investment vehicles), and had delivered 159 incubation and acceleration programmes to impact-driven start-ups through the Get it! initiative. At the end of 2024, FSVGDA also launched GDA Impact, an investment programme exceeding €60 million, distinguished by a number of unique features: a clear priority given to generating measurable social impact, with performance incentives granted only upon full achievement of impact targets; modest expected financial returns; and a long-term investment horizon of up to 20 years.

Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Italy ETS

TAX CODE	97339000156
SHAREHOLDING	14,12%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	16 December 2022

Junior Achievement Italia (JA Italia) is the Italian non-profit member of JA Worldwide, one of the world's largest global NGOs dedicated to young people. For over twenty years, it has been active in career guidance, financial and entrepreneurial education in schools, supporting the development of skills and innovative ideas that contribute to the growth of communities across the country.

The association is committed to tackling early school leaving, promoting the potential of younger generations, increasing confidence in STEM subjects and digital technologies, guiding students in their educational pathways, reducing youth emigration, and fostering inclusivity.

JA Italia has built a national network of business professionals, foundations, institutions, educators and teachers who, through principles of social responsibility and volunteering, deliver practical tools and teaching methods. With their support, JA Italia delivered more than 400,000 educational experiences over the past academic year, through a range of programmes and learning pathways for pupils aged 5 to 19.

In line with its mission to prepare young people for the future by equipping them to meet the challenges of the global economy and transition into employment, the association has placed the concept of the "enabling school" at the heart of its strategy.

"The enabling school," explains Miriam Cresta, CEO of Junior Achievement Italia, "introduces dynamic mechanisms of experimentation and cross-sector collaboration between schools, businesses and policymakers, with the aim of aligning the education system with emerging disciplines. The central figure in the enabling school is the teacher, to whom we seek to return the role of educator and promoter of each student's talent and potential. The enabling school hosts the challenges of tomorrow and the opportunities of all, embracing the intuition, creativity and diversity of each individual."

A.C. Scenario Pubblico Compagnia Zappalà Danza

TAX CODE	04639410879
SHAREHOLDING	14,12%
ENTRY INTO CAP TABLE	16 December 2022

Scenario Pubblico | Compagnia Zappalà Danza (SPCZD) is a nationally recognised Choreographic Centre, accredited by the Italian Ministry of Culture and the Sicilian Region. Founded by Roberto Zappalà, the centre is the driving force behind a cultural project that has promoted contemporary dance internationally for over 35 years. Its mission is to foster creativity and innovation in the field of contemporary dance, with a strong focus on regional engagement. The centre's deep local roots have generated significant and measurable impact. SPCZD's vision is to establish itself as a global point of reference for contemporary dance, acting as a catalyst for social and cultural transformation and using art as a tool for regeneration. Located in the heart of Catania, Scenario Pubblico is a vibrant cultural hub. It houses a 150-seat theatre, spacious rehearsal rooms, an artists' residence, a stage design workshop, an archive, and a restaurant. In addition to producing work by Compagnia Zappalà Danza, the centre also supports CZD2, a junior company composed of emerging dancers selected through auditions. Through the MoDem programme, more than 50 young artists from around the world live and train in the city for eight months each year. An annual residency call also supports emerging choreographers. SPCZD hosts a rich season of performances featuring international companies, and organises the Catania Contemporanea / FIC Festival, a city-wide event delivered in collaboration with numerous local partners. Its educational outreach includes initiatives for schools and students, including in marginalised areas, thanks to formal agreements with Teatro Massimo Bellini and the University of Catania. Participation in Isola Catania represents a strategic opportunity for Scenario Pubblico, which shares the goal of enhancing local cultural potential. This engagement reflects a commitment to expanding cultural and social impact, reaching new communities, and strengthening collaborative networks.

SCENARIO PUBBLICO
CENTRO DI RILEVANTE INTERESSE NAZIONALE

4.2

The Board of Directors and the Statutory Auditor

Isola's governance structure is defined by its Articles of Association and entrusted to the Board of Directors, which holds full administrative and representative powers. The composition of the Board remained unchanged compared to the previous year, thereby ensuring continuity and compliance with the required standards of integrity and professional competence. In 2024, the organisation undertook a strategic growth path that necessitated a gradual adaptation of its organisational structure. This evolution aimed to ensure regulatory compliance while safeguarding operational efficiency and enhancing the organisation's ability to grow in a robust, agile manner in line with its mission.

30-50 YEARS: 1 | 0

>50 YEARS: 0 | 2

9 MEETINGS
100% ATTENDANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Antonio Perdichizzi

Date of appointment as board member: 16/12/2022
Date of appointment as Chair: 30/12/2022
Term of office: until revocation

BOARD MEMBER

Miriam Cresta

Date of appointment: 16/12/2022
Term of office: until revocation

Ilaria Potito

Date of appointment: 16/12/2022
Term of office: until revocation

SUPERVISORY BODY

STATUTORY AUDITOR

Danilo di Giacomo

Date of appointment: 16/12/2022
Term of office: 3 financial years
Register of Statutory Auditors Number: 155236

Isola's governance model is based on the principles of participation and social responsibility. In keeping with this approach, also in 2024, Board members opted to invite staff representatives and key stakeholders to attend three of the nine Board meetings. These were specifically the meetings addressing topics of direct relevance to them, such as working conditions and the quality of goods and services provided. These representatives attended in an advisory capacity, without voting rights, contributing to discussions and the co-development of strategic decisions in a spirit of transparency and shared accountability.

The oversight body also remained unchanged from the previous year, with the same Sole Statutory Auditor in place. The Statutory Auditor is responsible for verifying compliance with legal and statutory obligations, overseeing financial controls, and ensuring adherence to sound governance principles. The outcomes of the oversight activity relating to this Impact Report are presented in Section 8 of this edition.

4.3

Structure, Composition and Enhancement of Personnel

Isola's mission is rooted in the creation of meaningful work opportunities, the professional development of young people, and the recognition of talent as a driver of collective wellbeing. The organisation itself serves as a testing ground for the very values it promotes, beginning with the people it engages. Individuals are at the heart of our organisation: passion and motivation are the driving forces that enable us to achieve our goals every day. We firmly believe that fostering social innovation requires recognising the individual as the fundamental unit of collective wellbeing.

This principle underpins our management approach, in which individual wellbeing is considered essential to generating shared value within the organisation. In line with this vision, 2024 marked a year of growth and consolidation for Isola. The expansion of our team was a crucial step towards establishing a more systematic and sustainable enterprise structure. We consider as part of our workforce all individuals who play a stable role within the organisation: employees with permanent or fixed-term contracts, collaborators under subordinate or quasi-subordinate contracts, self-employed professionals, and interns actively involved in operational processes. All these roles are included in the organisational chart.

contratto a tempo indeterminato. Over the course of the year, the number of permanent employees rose from 6 to 9. In addition, 3 fixed-term employees were active, 2 of whom were offered permanent contracts during the year. The team also included 1 collaborator on a coordinated and continuous collaboration contract (Co.co.co.), 3 freelance professionals with VAT numbers, and 5 curricular and extracurricular interns. Of these 5 interns, 3 had their placements extended and converted from curricular to extracurricular status, and were subsequently paid.

This growth coincided with a broader phase of organisational development, launched mid-year with the publication of three calls for new staff positions: Communication Manager, EU Project Manager, and Human Resources Manager. This process marked an important moment for Isola, initiating a more structured organisation and leading to the adoption of a corporate organisational chart, approved by the Board of Directors on 25 October.

The employment contract applied to staff is the *Contratto Collettivo Nazionale di Lavoro* (CCNL) FederCulture, the first national collective agreement

specifically designed for workers in the cultural sector. It guarantees protections and rights appropriate to the professional context in which we operate.

Salary structure:

RATIO BETWEEN HIGHEST AND LOWEST GROSS SALARY:	1,47

This salary structure reflects our commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of financial resources within the organisation, maintaining a balanced ratio between different levels of responsibility and seniority.

Personnel KPIs

	KPI	2023	2024	2024
	Age (employees and collaborators)	12 total	19 total	//
AGE	No. of employees aged <30	9	13	68,4%
	No. of employees aged 30–50	3	6	31,6%
	No. of employees aged >50	0	0	0%
GENDER	Female	8	12	66,7%
	Male	4	7	33,3%
TYPE OF COLLABORATION	No. of fixed-term contracts	0	1	5,3%
	No. of permanent contracts	6	9	47,4%
	No. of freelance contracts (with VAT).	2	3	15,8%
	No. of project-based collaborations	0	1	5,3%
	Internships (curricular and/or extracurricular)	5	5	26,3%
TYPE OF CONTRACT (employees only)	Employees	6	10	//
	full time	5	9	90%
	part time	1	1	10%
OTHER DATA	Fixed-term contracts converted to permanent	0	2 su 3	66,6%
	No. of extracurricular internships resulting in employment	1	0	0%
	Personnel attracted to Sicily	2 out of 9	3 out of 19	15,79%

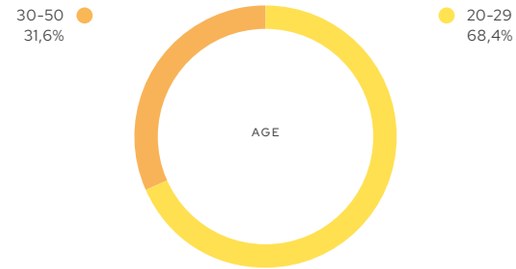
Investing in both professional and personal development is a fundamental principle for us. We believe that continuous training and active engagement are essential tools for fostering a stimulating working environment in which the development of individual skills contributes to the achievement of both organisational and personal goals.

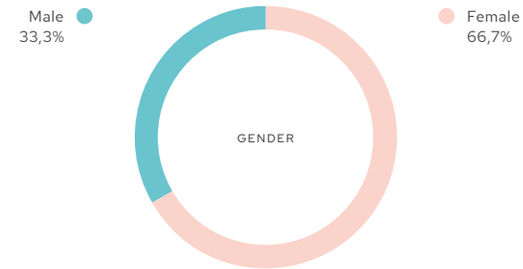
For this reason, alongside mandatory general and specialised training, including health and safety, fire prevention and first aid, we encourage our staff to take part in professional development opportunities such as advanced courses, seminars and conferences on topics relevant to the organisation. This approach helps keep skills up to date while strengthening our organisational ecosystem.

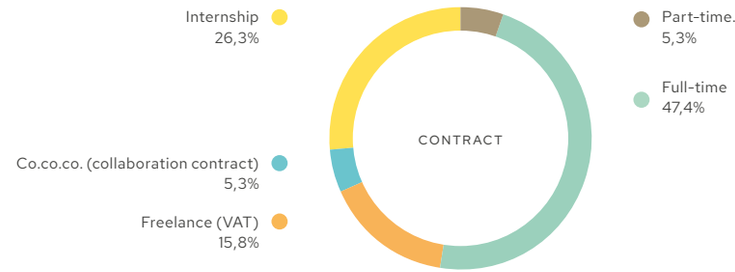
Alongside this, we are committed to promoting more structured and long-term training pathways. In 2023, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Catania, launching collaboration across several areas, including academic training for our staff and hosting student placements. The first initiative under this partnership was the launch of an Industrial Executive PhD programme, a scholarship funded by Isola and reserved for internal personnel. The selected project, "Isola: the multiplier effect of a social enterprise", submitted by our Impact Manager, was launched in 2023 and continued into 2024.

At the same time, we continued to welcome curricular interns from university and academic backgrounds, offering them the opportunity to gain experience in a dynamic and open professional setting. Although the shorter duration of these placements may limit integration into internal processes, we consider them valuable opportunities for career guidance and exposure to the world of work. Extracurricular internships, on the other hand, thanks to their longer and more structured format, allow for more active and continuous participation, supporting progressive engagement and the potential for more stable collaboration over time.

Personnel KPIs







In 2024, we also supported specific training initiatives aimed at developing managerial and organisational skills. Among these was participation in the "Agile Project Management" course, organised by TechSoup and Impact Skills, which provided practical tools for more effective and dynamic project management. At the same time, we launched an internal training programme that included a module on gender equality. This initiative, open to all staff including managers and executives, aimed to raise awareness of gender-related issues and to

prevent all forms of discrimination, bias or harassment.

We also promoted a range of initiatives to encourage participation and professional development, making the most of opportunities offered by the networks we collaborate with. These include Junior Achievement, Fondazione Opes, Moleskine Foundation, Prism Impresa Sociale S.r.l., Plurals, Onde Alte, Campo Base and the University of Catania. Events such as "Gen-E", "SEOC" and "Pratolungo" provided valuable opportunities for learning and growth, even in informal settings. Bringing events of this scale to Catania not only gave local young people the chance to apply and take part, but also represented a significant opportunity for individual development among our team members, who participated as corporate volunteers. While taking on roles different from their usual responsibilities, their involvement in these international events allowed them to explore key topics. Although staff took on roles different from their usual ones,

participating in these international events offered the opportunity to explore core themes for Isola –such as education, social entrepreneurship and culture– through different perspectives. At the same time, it enabled us to broaden our network, engage with diverse cultures and enrich our understanding of the world.

Another important opportunity for growth and development has come through participation in European programmes. These experiences have strengthened our team's expertise in strategic areas including sustainability, digital innovation and impact finance, while also expanding our network of international partnerships. By collaborating with similar organisations, we have gained practical tools to further develop our social enterprise model. In 2024, we participated in projects such as "SOFIGREEN", "ECO-TOURS" and "Digiset". These programmes, ongoing throughout 2025, are enabling us to experiment, learn

and apply new solutions to increase theeffectiveness and measurability of our impact.

Isola has promoted regular opportunities for dialogue with staff throughout the year as part of its commitment to participatory and transparent governance. The upper-mentioned meetings were aimed at strengthening employee engagement and fostering a shared understanding of the organisation's strategic objectives as well as its social and financial performance.

This open dialogue has been supported by a structured representation process, which includes the election of a Staff Representative. This role is filled through a transparent and inclusive process, and the representative is regularly consulted on matters relating to workplace wellbeing and organisational fairness. The coordination of these activities is entrusted to the Head of Corporate Governance, appointed by the Board of Directors. This role is responsible for ensuring the consistency and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement processes, including those involving staff.

The Head also conducts an annual review of internal relations and promotes a corporate culture grounded in active participation, open communication and the appreciation of diversity. Looking ahead, Isola plans to further strengthen these practices, consolidating a governance model in which employee wellbeing and the quality of relationships are seen as key drivers of sustainable and inclusive growth.

In this perspective, the adoption of structured internal procedures is a fundamental step: they ensure consistency, efficiency and transparency in the implementation of corporate values.

Procedure for Recruitment, Employment and Career Development

Isola follows a structured procedure for the recruitment, employment and development of its staff, grounded in the principles of fairness, inclusivity and gender equality. Every stage – from workforce planning to performance evaluation – is designed to ensure that decisions are based solely on skills, merit and achievements, with a strong commitment to preventing any form of discrimination.
Particular care is taken to use gender-neutral language, establish balanced selection panels and maintain transparency in career opportunities. The organisation also promotes internal mobility, pay equity and equal access to training and mentorship programmes, fostering an environment that supports the professional growth of every employee.

Procedure for Handling Non-Conformities

any non-conformities in relation to the gender equality requirements outlined in the organisation's management system. These non-conformities may relate to areas such as recruitment, training, career progression, remuneration or workplace culture, and are identified through audits, performance indicators, internal reports or tools such as the whistleblowing mechanism.OEach case is examined in detail to determine root causes and assess both severity and frequency, with the aim of implementing effective corrective and preventive measures. The solutions adopted are monitored through follow-up audits and regular reviews to ensure they remain appropriate and sustainable over time. Isola also ensures continuous training for staff in order to foster a workplace culture that actively addresses non-conformities and works towards achieving gender equality objectives.

4.4

ESG Commitment

Our commitment to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) issues is cross-cutting and involves both the internal and external dimensions of the organisation. We believe that social and environmental responsibility begins with the people who work with Isola and extends to the network of organisations, professionals and communities we collaborate with on a daily basis. While our external ESG engagement is detailed in the "Activities and Objectives" section of this report, we now turn to our internal ESG approach --the practices, pathways and systems that enable us to embody these values within the enterprise.

In 2024, we took part in *ECOTOURS*, a project co-financed by the European Commission and promoted by a partnership of six organisations, including Prism Impresa Sociale and the Fondazione Comunitaria di Agrigento e Trapani. The programme supports SMEs in marginal areas in their ecological transition and the development of sustainable tourism – in Isola's case, enterprise-based tourism. *ECOTOURS* provided a valuable opportunity to enhance the sustainability of our event planning processes, offering expert consultancy, guidance towards sustainability certification, and study visits that enabled us to align with best practices at the European level..

We were also selected as one of 90 enterprises participating in *SOFIGREEN*, a project co-funded by the European Commission and supported by a broad partnership that includes Fondazione con il Sud, Fondazione di Comunità di Messina and Banca Etica. The initiative aims to strengthen the competitiveness of social enterprises in the context of the ecological transition. Through *SOFIGREEN*, we took part in a 40-hour training course focused on impact management, sustainable business models and access to ethical finance.

Also in 2024, we initiated the audit process for *B Corp certification*, undertaking an in-depth assessment of our environmental, social and economic impact. By completing the *B Impact Assessment*, we identified new areas for improvement, including raising internal awareness and providing training on ESG topics, adopting corporate policies that translate our values into structured practices, and designing an integrated management system.

As tangible evidence of this journey, we have drafted and adopted four key policies, which are now publicly available in the "Transparency" section of our website.

Isola's policies are not static documents but dynamic tools embedded within an integrated business management strategy. A clear example of this is the Gender Equality Policy, which led to the development of a dedicated management system. This system began with the establishment of a Gender Equality Steering Committee, tasked with drafting and monitoring a Strategic Gender Equality Plan. The plan sets out specific actions and objectives across six key areas: recruitment, career development, pay equity, support for parenthood, work–life balance, and the prevention of harassment. The system also includes a structured procedure for managing non-compliance, supported by an internal register and corrective action plans. An annual training programme is delivered to all staff to promote an inclusive workplace culture, alongside a communication plan designed to ensure consistency between internal and external messaging. Furthermore, an internal audit programme monitors the effective implementation of these measures. At the end of 2024, Isola's gender equality management system was certified by RINA in accordance with the UNI/PdR 125:2022 guideline, achieving a score of 91 out of 100 within the "small enterprise" category. For Isola, obtaining this certification not only confirms the effectiveness, transparency and coherence of the actions taken, but also marks an important milestone in a broader journey to embed equality and inclusion in every aspect of our work, turning our values into tangible instruments of change.

1. Policy for the Identification, Classification and Engagement of Stakeholders

Isola recognises the fundamental importance of actively and inclusively engaging all stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable objectives. This policy outlines the procedures for identifying and classifying both internal and external stakeholders, with the aim of ensuring democratic internal processes, promoting active participation in governance by staff and stakeholders, and strengthening our inclusive approach to relationship management.

2. Human Rights Policy

Isola's Human Rights Policy reaffirms the organisation's commitment to promoting and upholding the principles enshrined in international conventions, linking them to the company's Code of Ethics and Conduct. The policy's core principles apply to all those working with Isola. Through this document, the organisation sets out its commitment to safeguarding human rights within its working practices and in its relationships with the wider community and society.

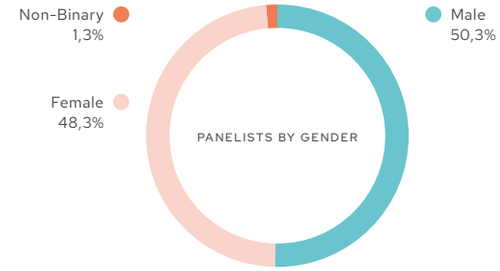
3. Work–Life Balance Policy

Isola fosters a workplace culture that values individual wellbeing as a foundation for collective wellbeing. This policy formalises the organisation's commitment to supporting employees in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Key areas of support include flexible working arrangements, assistance with care responsibilities, and the protection of the right to disconnect.

4. Gender Equality Policy

Isola is committed to promoting equality and gender parity, ensuring that everyone is afforded the same rights and opportunities. This policy sets out the organisation's commitment to ensuring that decisions on recruitment, career development, pay and training are based on skills and merit, free from gender bias. Isola supports shared parenting, actively counters discrimination and harassment, and provides awareness-raising and training initiatives for staff on these issues.

Our commitment to gender equality extends beyond our internal operations to the public sphere, where we actively promote a culture of inclusion. As outlined in our "Code of Ethics and Business Conduct", we believe that diverse and equitable participation in public discourse is essential to building a fairer society. In this spirit, we renewed our commitment in 2024 to ensuring adequate female representation at the events and initiatives we organise, by endorsing the "No Women No Panel" principle launched by the European Commission in 2018. To make this commitment operational, we mapped the gender of speakers involved in our events, with particular attention to the Make in South programme and its associated panels. The results of this monitoring exercise are presented in the infographic that follows.



Alongside the strengthening of our internal practices, in 2024 we continued to raise awareness of sustainability issues by directly engaging our community. We renewed our collaboration with AWorld, the official platform supporting the United Nations' "ACT-NOW" campaign, which was created to encourage individual action on climate change and sustainability. AWorld has been a partner of Isola since 2023, with a base at our premises, and supports us in our impact engagement efforts through micro-learning pathways on the 2030 Agenda and tools for calculating individual carbon footprints.

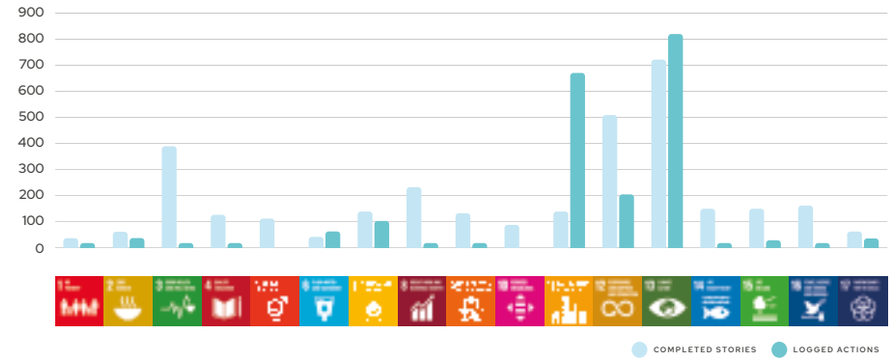
Over the course of 2024, we launched six internal challenges dedicated to the Isola Community, which doubled its number of users on the platform, reaching 158 members. Users completed a total of 55 hours of training through bite-sized educational content, the "stories", completing 1,733 stories in total, each accompanied by a short quiz to assess the knowledge gained. The most significant outcome was the high level of user engagement, with participants deepening their awareness of environmental and social sustainability through a combination of learning and gamification, helping to spread a shared culture of

responsibility. The platform also enabled the tracking of improved individual habits in relation to sustainability, estimating the total CO_2 savings generated by the new behaviours adopted. AWorld further identified the community's areas for improvement, linking the stories followed and the newly adopted habits to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby offering a concrete picture of the progress made by the Community in both knowledge and action.

Community savings monitored through the AWorld platform

2.457	=	291K	
Kg CO2 emissions avoided		Mobile phone battery recharges	
26,2K	=	164	
l of saved water		Bathtubs filled	
179	=	99	
kWh of saved energy		Dishwasher washing cycles	

SDGs explored by the Community on the AWorld platform



In 2024, Isola joined the Pact for Skills, a strategic initiative promoted by the European Commission to foster the reskilling and upskilling of the European workforce. The commitment reflects our concrete efforts to enhance employee competencies and support their professional growth in the context of the digital and ecological transition. As part of our impact area "Skills and Employment", the Pact also informs Isola's strategy to strengthen capabilities within the local community, contributing to inclusive pathways and improving employability across the territories in which we operate. The promotion of lifelong learning and continued investment in people remain key pillars of our vision for sustainable and inclusive development.

4.5

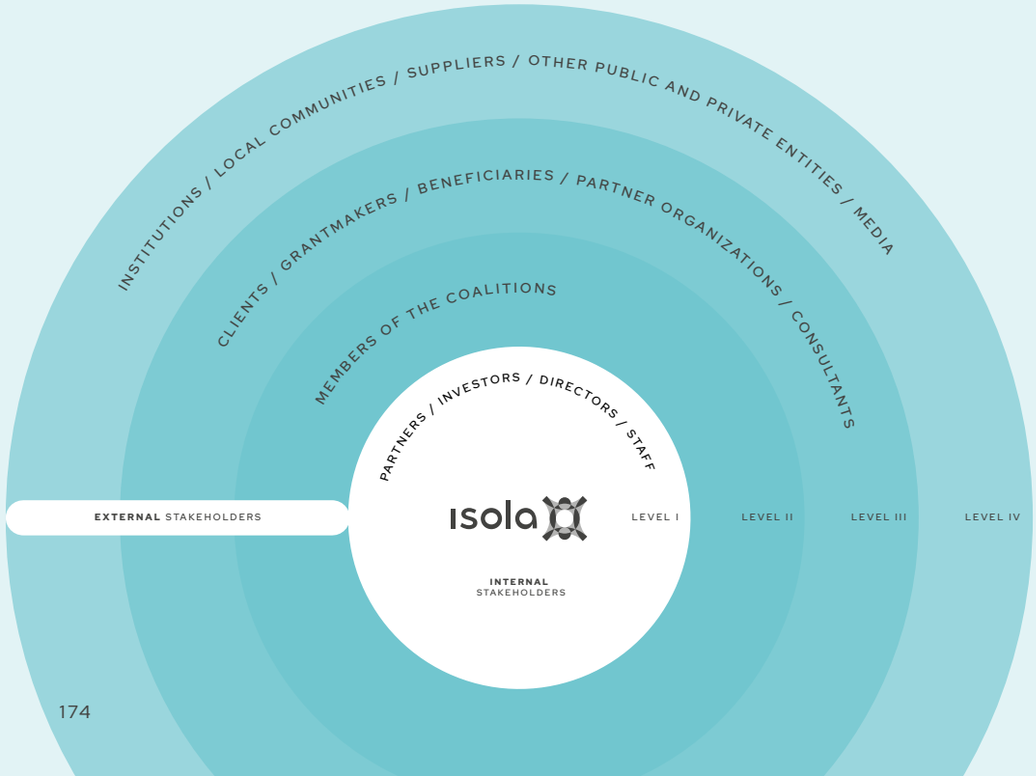
Our Archipelago

We take great care in engaging the actors within our ecosystem, which we like to refer to as our *Archipelago*. This term reflects our vision of Isola as a constellation of autonomous, yet never isolated, "islands" connected through meaningful and generative relationships that collaborate in the pursuit of social innovation.

Over the past year, the evolution of our strategy and the refinement of our service offering have prompted us to reconsider how we represent the network of relationships that supports and sustains our work. As a result, we developed a new visual representation that reflects each stakeholder's level of proximity to Isola's strategic and operational core. This approach allows us to acknowledge and enhance the different types of relationships each actor maintains with our organisation.

The new visual tool we have introduced is called the Proximity Map. It is a concentric-sphere diagram with a shared epicentre located at the strategic and operational core of the enterprise. Each stakeholder category is positioned in relation to its degree of proximity to the organisation's processes, distributed across four levels.

Proximity Map



Our Proximity Map currently consists of four concentric spheres, each representing a different level of closeness to Isola's strategic and operational core.

In the innermost sphere—the first level—are internal stakeholders: partners/investors, directors, and staff. These individuals form the very foundation of the enterprise, actively participating in its governance, daily management, and the setting of strategic priorities.

The second level includes a highly specific and strategic category: members of the Coalitions, that is, organizations holding structured memberships. These are not mere recipients of our activities but change agents who actively contribute to creating the conditions that enable Isola's impact generation. The Coalitions serve as enabling activities within the value chain: by building networks, fostering skills exchange, and providing mutual support, they enhance the capabilities of individual actors and help cultivate a fertile environment for social innovation in Sicily.

Due to their transformative role, Coalition members have been identified as key external stakeholders for the initial two-year period. According to the 2023 guidelines, they have elected a Representative of key stakeholders who participates as consultant in Board of Directors meetings where issues directly relevant to them are discussed, such as the quality of Isola's Goods and Services.

The prominence given to the Coalitions reflects our commitment to building stable and generative alliances capable of directly influencing the company's vision and actions.

The third level comprises five categories of external stakeholders, all deeply connected to impact generation:

- Beneficiaries: individuals or entities (start-ups, small businesses, organizations) who receive the value generated by our projects. They are the primary reason for our work and continuously guide our actions;
- Grantmakers: public and private bodies whose financial support enables many of our activities. They share our vision and allow us to experiment and grow;
- Clients: those who choose to use our services;
- Partner organizations:: entities with whom we co-design and co-implement initiatives
- Consultantsi: professionals providing support in management, project development, legal matters, or communications, contributing to the operational strength of the enterprise.

With these five categories, we maintain an open and attentive dialogue. We monitor satisfaction levels and emerging needs through periodic surveys, consultation meetings, individual interviews, and informal channels. Listening to and understanding requirements enables us to continuously adapt our offerings and enhance the quality and effectiveness of our impact.

The fourth and outermost level comprises stakeholders who, although not directly involved in strategic or operational processes, represent an important part of our ecosystem:

- Institutions;
- Local communities;
- Suppliers;
- Media;
- Other public and private entitiesi.

These actors observe and sometimes influence the context in which we operate. We consider it essential to keep them informed about our activities, the results achieved, and future prospects. Operating within a sphere of general interest, we believe that transparency and public sharing of information are both a duty and a sign of respect towards the territory and its communities.

While these stakeholders do not directly participate in defining our strategy or in the operational execution of our projects, we acknowledge their role within the environment where we operate. For this reason, we commit to keeping all stakeholders regularly informed through public communications, social media channels, and open events. Given that these activities serve the general interest, we consider it our responsibility to ensure an appropriate level of transparency, accessibility, and accountability.

05

Economic and Financial Overview

5.1

Management Report

Isola Catania closed its second financial year with a positive net profit, against a backdrop of significant operational, asset and fundraising expansion.

The 2024 financial year saw the value of production double, increasing from €545,671 in 2023 to €1,090,271 in 2024. This figure includes:

- Service revenue, which rose from €492,639 in 2023 to €553,765 in 2024 (+12.4%);;
- Other income and proceeds, which grew from €53,032 in 2023 to €536,506 in 2024, due to:
    - Public incentives supporting investments and operating costs (including the "Italia Economia Sociale" call by Invitalia and the Innovation Manager Voucher);
    - A fundraising campaign for the establishment of the Fondazione Marea;
    - Strategic partnerships and projects with both public and private funders.

This growth in activity was matched by a proportional increase in operating costs, with service costs rising by 178%, from €217,068 to €604,726, and personnel costs increasing from €111,729 in 2023 to €231,894 in 2024 (+107%), reflecting the expansion of the organisation's workforce.

A comparison of Isola Catania's activities in 2023 and 2024 is provided below:

Income statement

YEAR	2024	2023	Δ%
Value of production	1.090,00	546,00	99%
Personnel costs	(232,00)	(112,00)	107%
Service costs and use of third-party assets	(709,00)	(297,00)	138%
Raw materials, consumables and goods	(9,00)	(17,00)	-47%
EBITDA	140,00	120,00	16,6%

VALUES IN €/K

Sources of Funding

In 2024, Isola benefited from a solid and diversified revenue structure, which enabled the expansion of its activities and the implementation of key strategic investments. The financial resources that sustained the year's operations derived from a balanced mix of sources, ranging from market-based activities to public contributions, alongside support from private partners and fundraising initiatives. This mix reflects the growing confidence in the project from public stakeholders, social investors

Public funding Sources

- *Innovation Manager Voucher*, for the optimisation of processes and organisational models at Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.: €40,000.00;
- *Public call for grants to SMEs* for technical assistance, support services, and certification of Gender Equality (UNI/PdR 125:2022): €1,800.00;
- *Interprofessional funds for continuous training*, granted as state aid exempt under EU Regulation No. 651/2014 and as de minimis aid under EU Regulation No. 1407/2013 – B.E.S.T. 3: €3,600.00;
- *Support for the dissemination and strengthening of the Social Economy*, for the refurbishment of existing spaces—Isola Life and Isola Work—within Palazzo Biscari: €394,198.00
- *Tax credit offset – Mezzogiorno* 2021: €8,034;
- *Tax credit offset for capital goods* (Law 178/2020): €41,644

Public Grants for Project Implementation

- *"Coalizioni Isola Laboratori di Cultura Creatività ed Arte"*, supported by the Contemporary Creativity Laboratory promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity
- *"Creating cultural heritage businesses through hybrid learning models & hands-on curricula across borders"*, funded under the CREA-CULT-2023 programme of the European Union
- *"EMIMSEB: Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers – Social Enterprise Bootcamp"*, funded under *Erasmus+ KA210 ADU – Small Scale Partnerships*, European Union

Private Contributions for Project Implementation

- Funding granted by Fondazione Snam – *"Green Skills Academy"* project;
- Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore – *"Get-it! Acceleration Programme"*;
- Funding provided by the U.S. Department of State through the U.S. Mission to Italy – *"Unmasking Disinformation"*;
- Annual Program Statement call for proposals by the U.S. Mission to Italy – *"Fempreneurs"*;
- "Prospettive" call for proposals by Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale – Impresa Sociale – "Work From Bed"".

Capital Campaign for the Establishment of Fondazione Marea

Among the extraordinary proceeds, donations amounted to €273,939, of which €268,354 were raised through fundraising initiatives carried out in accordance with Article 7 of the Third Sector Code (Legislative Decree 117/2017). These contributions were specifically intended to support the establishment and initial operations of *Fondazione Marea – Ente Filantropico ETS*, formally established on 18 December 2025..

The capital campaign for the launch of Fondazione Marea, managed and promoted by Isola Catania, achieved a significant fundraising milestone, generating a total of €423,000 in financial contributions. Of this sum, €412,000 was received via bank transfers and credit card payments into Isola Catania's current account, while the remaining €11,000 was deposited directly into a dedicated account by the notary on behalf of Fondazione MeSSIna, Fondazione Comunitaria di Agrigento e Trapani, and Fondazione Hora.

After deducting costs related to personnel, specialist consultancy, meetings, organised events, and operational expenses, the net funds contributed to the initial endowment of Fondazione Marea amounted to €150,000.

Evaluation of the Shareholding Structure

As at 31 December 2024, the company's share capital amounted to €11,684.85, 100% of which is held by private organisations. Notably, more than 50% of the capital is owned by non-profit entities, reflecting both the organisation's social commitment and compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

The year 2024 also marked a significant strengthening of relations with the social impact finance sector. The company successfully completed a capital increase that led to the entry of three new strategic shareholders: Fondazione Opes Lcef Onlus, Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore, and the benefit corporation Avanzi S.p.A.. This development enhanced not only the company's equity base but also its reputational standing, through the involvement of nationally recognised partners committed to advancing impact-driven entrepreneurship.

As a result of the capital increase, the share capital rose from €10,000 to €11,685, alongside a share premium reserve of €98,888.

Investment

A key driver of this progress was participation in the *Italia Economia Sociale* programme, promoted by the Italian Ministero delle Imprese and Made in Italy and managed by Invitalia. The initiative supported the organisation throughout every phase of the process and included the involvement of UniCredit, as the financing bank, together with Cassa Depositi e Prestiti.This incentive, targeted at enterprises operating in areas of social utility and general interest, served as a crucial lever for the development of activities and implementation of planned investments.

During 2024, the first tranche of the funding was successfully reported, contributing to the coverage of expenses incurred for the expansion of the headquarters and the acquisition of new equipment, as well as technological and digital infrastructure.

In addition, we also benefited from the tax credit available for investments made within the framework of Special Economic Zones (ZES).

06

Monitoring by the Statutory Auditor

6.1

Monitoring by the Statutory Auditor: Procedures and Outcomes

To the Shareholders of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.,

The governing body has prepared the Company's Impact Report in accordance with recognised impact reporting standards, following the guidelines set out in the Decree of 4 July 2019 issued by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.This statement summarises the findings of the monitoring activities carried out to assess compliance by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. with its social purpose, focusing in particular on the exclusive or predominant pursuit of activities of general interest, the absence of profit-making aims, the ownership structure, the involvement of workers, users and other stakeholders in the organisation's activities, and working conditions within the social enterprise.

It is further noted that the results of the oversight concerning compliance with legal and statutory provisions and the principles of sound governance—as outlined in Article 10, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree No. 112 of 3 July 2017 and Article 2429, paragraph 2 of the Italian Civil Code—have been detailed in a dedicated report dated 12 April 2025. This report is annexed to the annual financial statements and, together with the present document, forms the complete record of the supervisory activities carried out during the financial year under review.

In accordance with the guidelines for the preparation of Impact Report adopted by Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies through Ministerial Decree of 4 July 2019, the Impact Report of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. is structured as follows:

Letter from the President

Section 1: Reading Guide
1.1 Document Structure
1.2 Regulatory Reference and Objectives of the Document
1.3 Methodological Note

Section 2: Isola
2.1 Key Challenges in the Local Context
2.2 Values, Mission and Objectives
2.3 Business Model and Revenue Model

Section 3: Activities and Objectives
3.1 Spaces
3.1.1 *Make in South*
3.2 Coalitions
3.2.1 Future4Cities Award
3.3 Projects
3.3.1 School
3.3.2 Skills and Employment
3.3.3. Entrepreneurship and Innovation
3.3.4 Culture, Creativity and Art
3.4 Major Events
3.4.1 Gen-E
3.4.2 SEOC
3.4.3 Pratolungo

Section 4: Structure, Administration and Responsible Governance
4.1 The Social Base and the Expansion of the Cap Table
4.2 Il The Board of Directors and the Statutory Auditor
4.3 Structure, Composition and Enhancement of Personnel
4.4 ESG Commitment
4.5 Our Archipelago

Section 5: Economic and Financial Overview
5.1 Management Report

Management Report
6.1 Statutory Auditor Report

Appendix: The Birth of the "Fondazione Marea"
A1. The Diaspora: From Threat to Opportunity
A2. The Capital Campaign
A3. The Day of the Foundation

This report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legislation, the *Code of Conduct for Boards of Statutory Auditors – Principles of Conduct for Boards of Statutory Auditors of Unlisted Companies*, issued by the Italian National Council of Chartered Accountants and Accounting Experts *(Consiglio Nazionale dei Dottori Commercialisti e degli Esperti Contabili), as well as the Code of Conduct for the Statutory Auditor of Third Sector Entities*, issued by the same Council.

The undersigned Sole Statutory Auditor (Sindaco Unico) declares to have adequate knowledge of the company, specifically with regard to:

the nature of the activities carried out;

the organisational and accounting structure.

Considering the size and complexity of the company, the undersigned confirms that supervisory activities have been conducted with positive results, consistent with the information previously acquired. It can therefore be confirmed that:

It can therefore be confirmed that:

- The main activities carried out by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. are consistent with its corporate purpose and with Article 2 of Legislative Decree No. 112 of 3 July 2017.

- The company, operating on a non-profit basis, conducted its activities in 2024 for civic, solidarity-based and socially useful purposes, adopting responsible and transparent management practices while encouraging stakeholder engagement;

- The Impact Report clearly identifies the members of the company's governing body;

- The shareholding structure of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. does not consist of a single individual, and the company does not form part of a corporate group;

- The provisions of Article 13 of Legislative Decree No. 112 of 3 July 2017 were complied with during the financial year.

Accordingly, the undersigned Sole Statutory Auditor certifies that the Impact Report has been prepared in compliance with the guidelines established by the Ministerial Decree of 4 July 2019, issued by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.

Catania, 12 April 2025

Danilo di Giacomo
Sole Statutory Auditor of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.

FONDAZIONE MAREA

Appendix: The Birth of the Fondazione Marea

Intro

In pursuing the mission of Isola Catania, which aims to create opportunities for young people in Sicily, we have observed with growing concern the ongoing decline of the youth population. Through in-depth research, we discovered that the depopulation of Southern Italy is not only a tangible reality but a steadily worsening trend. Statistics on migration over recent decades reveal an alarming picture, one that resembles a true diaspora. Faced with this pressing issue, we felt a deep responsibility to act. We realised that a dedicated response and a tailor-made project were needed. With the generative spirit of the third sector, we contributed ideas, people, skills, spaces and networks to incubate what we can now call our first and most significant outcome. Fondazione Marea was born out of this act of love and the generosity of 423 Sicilian women and men.

This appendix traces the journey from a shared vision to a collective achievement, reaffirming our conviction that only through unity can we shape the future

A.1

The Diaspora: From Threat to Opportunity

For too long, Sicily has seen its most talented young people leave, gradually losing the energy, dreams and skills that could have transformed the region. According to data from SVIMEZ – the Association for the Development of Industry in the South – around 50,000 people leave the island every year (including 15,000 Sicilians emigrating abroad). Between 2013 and 2022, more than 45,000 university graduates left Sicily. The scale of this phenomenon leaves little doubt: this is a real diaspora. And it affects more than just students or job-seekers. The diaspora touches the entire social fabric. The 2024 report from Fondazione Migrantes confirms that Sicily now has the highest rate of emigration among Italian regions, with over 826,000 Sicilian citizens living abroad. If this trend continues, it is estimated that by 2080 the population of Sicily will fall to just 2.8 million. These numbers reflect more than an exodus. They represent a slow yet relentless desertification of Sicilian society, emptying communities, weakening the economy and eroding the region's cultural fabric.

And yet, every crisis contains within it the seeds of transformation.

Fondazione Marea was born from a bold and renewed vision: to turn the diaspora from a threat into an opportunity. By bringing together those who identify as Sicilian, those who have stayed, those who have left, those who have returned, and those who feel connected "at heart", we aim to build new pathways for development by engaging both the global and local Sicilian communities.

Through a Venture Philanthropy model, Marea mobilises financial resources and skilled volunteers to support high-impact social projects. In a context where social enterprise remains relatively underdeveloped, Marea seeks to foster a vibrant ecosystem of social entrepreneurship capable of renewing Sicily's economic and social fabric. The goal is not to prevent anyone from leaving, but to change the direction of travel. To offer young people the opportunity to stay, to attract those who have left, to welcome those who choose Sicily, to create employment and development opportunities, to reduce the serious NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) phenomenon, and to nurture a new culture of philanthropy in our region.

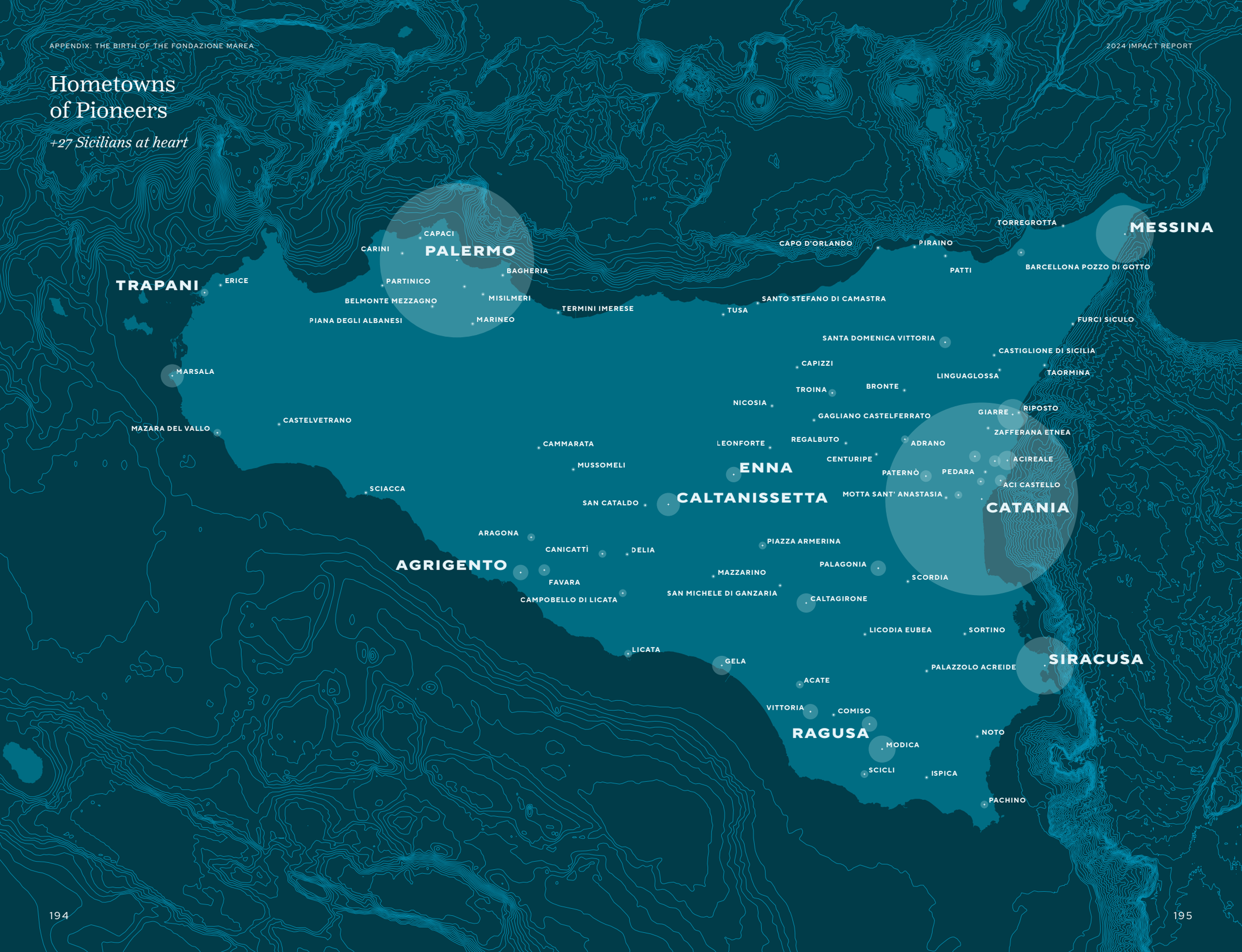
Because the future of Sicily is not set in stone. It is still to be written — together.

1. SVIMEZ. (2025). *Rapporto sull'economia e la società del Mezzogiorno 2024.*

2. Fondazione Migrantes (2024), *Rapporto Italiani nel Mondo 2024.*

Hometowns of Pioneers

+27 Sicilians at heart



Current cities of Pioneers

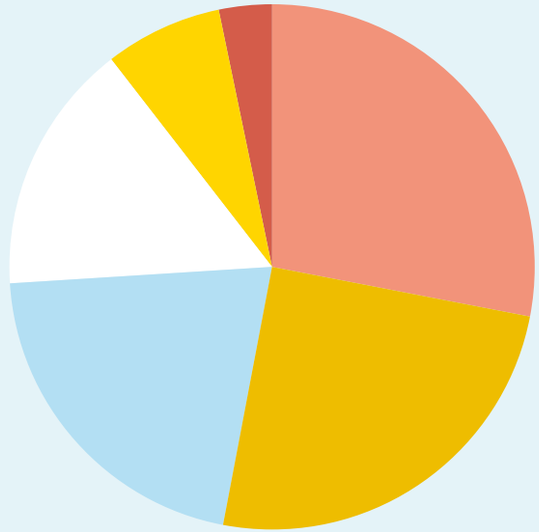
Europe

Current Cities of Pioneers

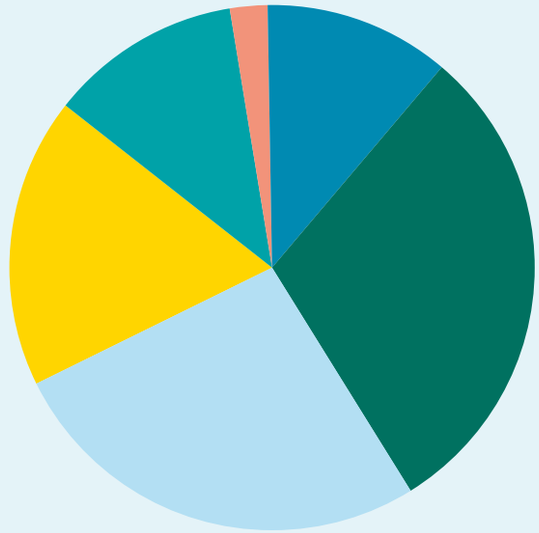
World

Connection to Sicily of Pioneers

- **28,0%** Sicilian-born person who emigrated
- **25,0%** Sicilian-born person who grew up in Sicily and never emigrated
- **21,0%** Sicilian-born person who emigrated and later returned to Sicily
- **15,2%** Sicilian-born person living between multiple cities
- **7,3%** Person not Sicilian by birth, but Sicilian at heart
- **3,4%** Person of Sicilian origin who did not grow up in Sicily



Age distribution of Pioneers



- 20-30 **11,2%**
- 31-40 **30,0%**
- 41-50 **26,5%**
- 51-60 **17,9%**
- 61-70 **11,8%**
- 71-80 **2,2%**

A.2

The Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign was launched by Isola Catania in June 2024 and marked the first major step of the project. The goal was ambitious: to engage at least 300 supporters, or "Pioneers," each donating time and €1,000, to raise €300,000 in six months. The funds would cover the creation of the Foundation, all operational costs and the legal minimum endowment. This campaign was more than a fundraising initiative; it was a movement. A movement shaped by dialogue, passion, trust and commitment. It was driven by a small, dedicated team created for the purpose, who deeply believed in the strength of the project and worked with determination. It was also a digital campaign that generated hundreds of posts and shares, and an international tour featuring 14 "Meet Marea" events across Sicily, Milan, New York, London and Brussels, along with over 650 one-to-one video calls to engage each potential supporter.

It all began with a simple yet powerful question: "Has Sicily ever asked for your help?"

The response was extraordinary. In under six months, Marea raised far more than the initial target. A total of €423,000 was collected, thanks to the generosity of 423 Pioneers and three Sicilian foundations (Fondazione di Comunità di Messina, Fondazione Comunitaria di Agrigento e Trapani and Fondazione Hora of Piana degli Albanesi). The Foundation's starting capital was set at €150,000 — five times the required legal minimum. The first public presentation of Marea took place through the language of culture, specifically design. Sicilia 2224, a speculative design exhibition curated by Sicilian artists Alessandra Rigano and Elisa Raciti, was hosted between Isola Catania and Farm Cultural Park (Favara, AG), as part of the quadrennial show Abbiamo tutto manca il resto. The exhibition offered a provocative, dystopian vision of Sicily's future, serving as a warning and a call to action for change. Thanks to collective enthusiasm, shared commitment and community generosity, Marea was not only founded — it immediately emerged as a solid, ambitious and forward-looking institution.

With the Capital Campaign, a new story began: a story of opportunity, in which Sicily once again takes control of its destiny.

DATI SULLA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

6
MONTHS

9
MEMBRI DEL TEAM

115
TEAM MEETINGS

646
ONE-TO-ONE VIDEO CALLS

9
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS IN SICILY

3
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS ABROAD

2
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS IN THE REST OF ITALY

15
OTHER EVENTS

A.3

The Day of the Foundation

Fondazione Marea was officially established on 18 December 2024 — a date chosen for its strong symbolic meaning, as it coincides with International Migrants Day, a reminder that Sicilians, too, are a people shaped by migration. In the historic rooms of Palazzo Biscari, 423 Pioneers, some physically present, others joining remotely from around the world, came together to formally establish Fondazione Marea. It was a moment of exceptional emotional intensity. The signing of the Articles of Incorporation before the notary was not just a legal formality. It was the celebration of a collective commitment. Speeches by Antonio Calabrò, President of Museimpresa, and Carola Carazzone, Secretary General of Assifero, helped place Marea's foundation within the broader context of contemporary philanthropy and the evolution of the third sector, reinforcing the historical significance of this milestone. From the beginning, imagination played a central role in our storytelling, as shown by the powerful vision of Sicilia 2224.

On the day of the Foundation, we followed the same thread: we sought to leave a mark that would express emotions, ideas and the future, rather than simply celebrate ourselves. The voice of Anna Castiglia gave sound to both roots and hope, weaving diverse experiences into a shared narrative. At the same time, artist and Pioneer Sasha Vinci transformed the presence of the Pioneers into a collective gesture with Sento le Maree, an

installation made of 423 small terracotta sculptures arranged like a symbolic map, tracing a path toward a new awareness. We believe it is gestures like these, shaped through image, sound and form, that lend meaning to pivotal moments and allow real change to take root in both time and memory.

From that day onwards, the work has not stopped. A new journey has begun — one that will bring the first Marea projects to life in 2025.

Timeline Summary

JANUARY 2024

The initial question that sparked everything: "*Has Sicily ever asked for your help?*" From the first conversations and intuitions, the vision of Marea began to take shape, activating the diaspora and Sicilian communities to create new development opportunities.

JUNE 2024

The first core team is formed within Isola Catania. The Capital Campaign is officially launched, aiming to involve at least 300 Pioneers and raise €300,000.

20 JUNE 2024

During the Make in South Festival at Isola, a print of The Great Wave off Kanagawa, donated by Andrea Bartoli and Florinda Saieva of Farm Cultural Park, becomes Marea's first symbolic icon. The exhibition Sicilia 2224, by Alessandra Rigano and Elisa Raciti, unveils a provocative and dystopian narrative on depopulation and its consequences.

SUMMER 2024

The first 50 Pioneers join. The community begins to grow, welcoming those who stayed, returned, left, or simply love Sicily.

18 SEPTEMBER 2024

Marea's landing page is published online. A single LinkedIn post launches the digital communication campaign, generating hundreds of interactions.

OCTOBER 2024

The international Meet Marea tour begins: 14 events in Sicily, across Italy and abroad, plus 15 additional invitations to speak at local events. More than 650 one-to-one video calls help engage potential supporters individually.

18 DECEMBER 2024

Fondazione Marea is officially established.

423 Pioneers make the dream a reality, exceeding all expectations.

The founding ceremony takes place at Palazzo Biscari, blending inspirational speeches with participatory art. The music of Anna Castiglia and the Sento le Maree installation by Sasha Vinci mark the symbolic beginning of a shared journey.

Sicily, where staying is possible, returning is meaningful, and arriving *is the start of something greater.*

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